Chapter I: Construction of Fantasy in C.S.Lewis’ *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*

The chronicles of *Narnia* demonstrate how reality is distorted to create the sense of fantasy. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1950) is the first book of the Lewis heptalogy in the Narnia series. If we look at the beginning of the novel we find a prefatory epistle to a young girl named Lucy. The letter goes like this,

MY DEAR LUCY,

I wrote this story for you, but when I began it I had not realized that girls grow quicker than books. As a result you are already too old for fairy tales, and by the time it is printed you will be older still. But some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again. You can than take it down from some upper shelf, dust it and tell me what you think of it. I shall probably be too deaf to hear, and too old to understand a word you say but I shall be,

Your affectionate Godfather.

C.S.Lewis (*Narnia, 110*)

There are few important aspects in this letter. Lewis realizes that he needed to act as an accomplice of the child reader, so even the prefatory epistle serves a purpose. The letter though addressed to a particular girl engages all the readers. The author of children’s fantasy is conscious of this. He needs to surprise the reader and make his narrative unpredictable. The reader knows very well that the situations and characters in the narrative presented before him have no real existence, but one would still read it as it is a distorted representation of what one may not expect to find in a real girl’s grown up life. The author tries to create suspense, a pretext for a different not grown-up’s world which is a kind of grown up’s world. We should not look at the worlds of Narnia from our perspective, which are bound by our rational human instincts. In Narnia, we have the sense of the real world being manipulated by calculated strategies.
While unraveling the mysteries of fantasy text, it may appear to be preposterous for us to try and question how such fanciful things can happen but we must give ourselves to believe that they happen. Before attempting to find out how fantasy operates in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* it is important to throw some light on two observations, one by Tolkien and the other by Lewis so that these can form the framework of the discussion. In an article *Of Stories* Tolkien elucidates more on such aspects of story writing.

“The reader is looking not for actual surprises (which can only come once) but for a certain ideal surprisingness. It must be understood that the plot is only really a net whereby to catch something that has no sequence in it, something other than a process and much more like a state or quality”\(^1\)

There is another observation by C.S. Lewis which I would like to refer to and which sums up, it seems his notion about such literary fantasy so that we can see how he applies these to his own tales. He defines fantasy as following as “any narrative that deals with impossible and preternaturals”\(^2\) This ‘impossible’ world is where we are led into. None of these definitions formulate fantasy but nevertheless raise a few important issues. In such texts the ‘surprisingness’ holds the key to our understanding of the texts. The title, ‘*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*’ is a magnificent one as it captures the imagination of the child reader. The author identifies himself with the child when he introduces such a title. This is exactly where the narrator becomes an accomplice of the child and can relate to the three seemingly unrelated objects, the ‘lion’, a ‘witch’ and a ‘wardrobe’ and at once Lewis initiates an adventure, full of horror, suspense and suddenness.

\(^1\) C.S. Lewis.*The Allegory of Love*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1958; p45

The novel begins in a house in real time London. The child is always at awe about his own house, the places where his parents ask him not to go, the places where his parents keep important things and he is not allowed to touch; places like the wardrobe for instance. The settings of Narnia are as Collins Mills terms ‘domestic:’

“The domestic can still be an appropriate setting for children’s stories, but such settings can be led to fantastic explorations in classics such as in Nesbit’s stories and C.S. Lewis’ Narnia Tales.”

But from this domestic framework emanates a very constructive structure which may be examined into. So, domestic household becomes a symbolic tool for creating fantasy of home and shelter; as the narrator makes use of domestic activities to narrate the story of Narnia.

At the very outset, Lewis becomes an accomplice of the reader and engages the young reader when he starts the search of the wardrobe. Many little girls would have related to Lucy. So domesticity becomes a tool for generating fantasy. In this context I must refer to Piaget.

The wardrobe is indeed a portal, which leads into this outer world but there is just another world, having distinctive features just like ours; in fact, an entirely new world waiting to be unraveled, with its own landscape and geographical details, created realistically for the reader. Lewis manipulates the imagination of the The child in most cases there are strategies of shock

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4 J. Piaget. “Piaget’s theory” In P. Mussen (ed). Handbook of Child Psychology. 4th edition Vol. 1. New York: Wiley, 1983.p107, “The intuitive substage commences when the child is around 7 years of age. There is an emergence in the interest of reasoning and wanting to know why things are the way they are.” If we refer to the intuitive phase that Piaget talks of, we see that as children move into the phase of intuitive thought, roughly ages four to seven, they shift from, the egocentric “it's me” to ”I see what's happening,” becoming able to react realistically to the environment. The interplay of these plays shows a new, extended symbolic imagination so that they can project themselves into other roles and think in terms of other people. They are moving towards the stage of ‘conservation’ in terms of recognizing differences between how things look and how they really are.
and wonder, surprise and awe; Lucy is absolutely fascinated and transfixed at what she experiences in the wardrobe. The places in Narnia are astounding and phenomenal.

She took a step further in –then two or three steps- always expecting woodwork against the tips of her fingers but she could not feel it….But instead of feeling the hard, smooth wood of the floor she felt something powdery and extremely cold. “This is very queer,” she said, and went on a step or two further. (Narnia, 113)

Lewis manipulates the child’s sense of the real and engages the child reader in a journey in which the author continually acts as an accomplice of the child. Lucy’s child like apprehension is kindled when she gets bewildered in the wardrobe. She meets a peculiar creature here. The description is specific and illustrative.

He was only a little taller than Lucy herself and he carried over his head an umbrella while with snow. From the waist upwards he was like a man, but his legs were like a goat’s (the hair on them was glossy black) and instead of feet he had goat’s hoofs. He also had a tail…He was a Faun. (Narnia, 114)

The term faun is dropped in casually as if one is supposed to know. There are two significant issues that come up here. First it must be stated here that this is the first of the many liberties that Lewis takes with normal patterns of semantics. He continually coins words and phrases that tweak the sense of reality. Lewis adopts many such language games in which he exploits the possibilities of language to manipulate a certain sense of reality.  

5 Ludwig Wittgenstein. Philosophical Investigations. Trans, G.E.M. Anscombe. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1953.p76, Wittgenstein describes language as a game in which words may be used in a multiplicity of ways: for example, to describe things, to ask questions, to report events, to speculate about events, to make requests, to give commands, to form hypotheses, to solve problems, and to perform other acts of communication. The meaning of a word may be defined by how the word can be used as an element of language. A word may be given different meanings, according to how it is used in
From now on the reader will judge everything from the parameters of the world of the fauns and other Narnia inhabitants created realistically for us. ‘Real’ human parameters are sidelined. The faun is surprised to see a human “You are in fact human”. (Narnia,114) Such distortion of reality stirs up the child’s imagination who finds such words truly fascinating. It creates a field of reference and once more the author works as an accomplice narrator. Different ‘polyphonic’ voices tend to creep up and create an atmosphere of the carnival which Bakhtin had suggested. Bakhtin believes carnival is “the feast of becoming, change, and renewal” and “hostile to all that [is] immortalized and completed”. Such scenes of the Narnia world certainly depict growth and change. It is carnival’s subversive qualities, its suspension or inversion of hierarchical relationships, which start to become apparent in these scenes. As Raman Selden and

Peter Widdowson describe carnival, “hierarchies are turned on their heads (fools become wise, kings become beggars); opposites are mingled (fact and fantasy, heaven and hell)”. As Sue Vice explains, “Carnival laughter is directed at exalted objects, and forces them to renew themselves.” Carnival’s ritual debasement of an exalted being at the hands of a usually powerless populace is enacted time and again when we have talking animals and speech in the mouths of the Fauns.

The place Narnia is localized and located.

“This is the land of Narnia,” said the Faun, where we are now; all that lies between the lampost and the great castle of Cair Paravel in the eastern sea. And you—you have come from the Wild World of the West?”. (Narnia, 115)

We can thus understand that there is transference of epithets as stated earlier as a strategy for subverting the adult sense of the real. Lewis successfully creates the world by transferring a close replica of the real world to it.

The faun in question is Mr. Tumnus whom she meets at a lamppost in the midst of the forest. She accepts his offer to have tea in his home. Afterward he confesses that he had planned to betray her to the White Witch, who has ruled Narnia and made it "always Winter, but never Christmas". She has ordered all Narnians to report or capture any Son of Adam or Daughter of Eve. Instead, he escorts Lucy back to the lamppost.

The child reader is led into territories which it can identify with. There are two things that need to be mentioned here. First, the author locates the fauns and their habitat as something very obvious. The author creates an identity for them. When the Faun inquires from a human about ‘human things,’ the human race here is the outsider, so to say. In the land of Narnia what

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matters is the ‘Narnian’ way of life. The child reader is taken on a journey over this land and the narrative suggests the point of view of the inhabitants of Narnia. For example when Lucy enters the bathroom of Mr Tumnus, a Faun, she comes across a whole range of books among which prominent were “A Case Study in Popular Legend” and “Is Man a Myth?” We are given to understand that amongst the Fauns humans have dubious statuses; as though we would surmise: “Do ghosts exist?” These titles show how terms are juxtaposed in fantasy. Fantasy resembles a metaphor.

The mention also must be made of the portal topos which Lewis adopted. The wardrobe is the portal through which Lucy entered the Narnia land and also left it. On her return to her house from Narnia, her siblings are unable to believe what she says and regards it as tomfoolery. She later returns to Narnia during a game of hide-and-seek with her siblings. Doubts are however foiled soon as Edmund, Lucy’s brother ventures into Narnia soon after. There is an interesting passage when Edmund sees a reindeer in Narnia during his first visit:

> The reindeer was about the size of Shetland ponies and their hair was so white that even the snow hardly looked white compared to them, their branching horns glided and shone like something on fire when the sunrise caught them. Their harness was of scarlet leather and covered with bells. On the sledge sat a fat dwarf who would have been about three feet high if he had been standing. (*Narnia, 123*)

I quote this long extract as it serves a lot of purpose. The comparison that Lewis draws is very interesting. The author compares the reindeer to a Shetland pony. This is a very precise comparison, a comparison which any child reader of England would readily associate with as it is quite familiar with the Shetland pony. The narrator uses the trope of transference of epithets. We have a reindeer which has no physical existence but fictional existence only being compared to a real pony. Since the child reader can readily associate with a Shetland pony it can relate to this comparison and visualize it. The reindeer becomes alive for him. The accomplice narrator is
at work. Lewis exploits the child’s capacity to associate. This is as an effective trope. Further, we can suggest that there is a manipulation of the real. Real is not obliterated but aggrandized. Lewis substitutes a real reindeer or a Shetland pony with this reindeer which naturally does not exist for real. He employs a similar narrative device when a little later when in this passage after giving us graphic, pictorial details of the reindeer, Lewis describes a fat dwarf and his dress and again, little later, ‘a great lady.’ Her physical descriptions and the analogies drawn titillate the interest of the child reader. When Lewis mentions that the lady was “taller than any woman Edmund had ever seen,” the reader naturally queries how tall she is? The child would visually engage the tallest woman he knows of and then try to draw the figure of a woman who is taller than her. Once more, the author uses signifiers from the real world. This works upon the imagination of the child, which is beyond the reach of the rational or adult sense of reality. Another analogy drawn towards the end of the same paragraph which describes the lady’s face once more puts the imagination of the reader to work.

Her face was white—not merely pale, but white like sugar on icing sugar, except for the very red mouth. It was a very beautiful face in other aspects but was cold and white and stern. (Narnia, 123)

We can understand how the child reader would try to shape out the face which is white and not merely pale. There are, as many as three analogies to relate to the whiteness, ‘snow,’ ‘paper’ and ‘icing sugar.’ The exception is her red mouth and Lewis also does not fail to mention that otherwise it was a beautiful face and further more that ‘but it was proud, cold and stern’.

Here we can again refer to a very important argument by Piaget. Much of Piaget’s thinking about

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9Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay. *Aesthetics: A Cognitive View*, Kolkata: Dasgupta and Company, 2011, Tirtha Prasad Mukherjee works out in his dissertation while referring to the issue of how iconic art “iconic art miniaturizes (or aggrandizes) visual features; it replaces reality with artifice, familiarity with strangeness”
the child's cognitive development is based on four kinds of operations. They are ‘assimilation and accommodation, conservation, and reversibility’\(^{10}\).

Gradually, as the story advances, we find that there is a lot of danger in Narnia and the Queen has usurped power and is creating havoc. Edmund has started to encounter the Fauns much to the dislike of the Queen. The conversations that emerge are quite remarkable. In Chapter 4 which is titled *Turkish Delight*, the Queen retorts to a situation in which a human (Edmund) has intruded into the land of which she is presently the ruler.

> “Ha!” said the Queen speaking more to herself than to him. “A door from the world of men! I have heard of such things. This may wreck all. But he is only one and he is easily dealt with”. (*Narnia, 127*)

The reader’s imagination is once more engaged with tropes of shock, horror and suddenness. The reader cannot wait to see how the queen of Narnia would do with treat a human child, what exactly would become of him. The reader is worried about the fate of Edmund. Edmund is however petrified at this juncture and he is at his wit’s end but is lured by her. She encourages

\(^{10}\) Jean Piaget. "Piaget's theory". In P. Mussen (ed). *Handbook of Child Psychology*. 4th edition. Vol. 1. New York: Wiley, 1983. p85. Piaget holds, “Conservation and reversibility are related, in a sense. Conservation has to do with the child's ability to deal with the difference between appearances and reality, the difference between making judgments on the basis of surface characteristics and being able to make inferences about the real characteristics that underlie appearances. The tendency to deal with surface characteristics may extend, also, to social understanding so that the child forms ideas about people and social situations solely on the basis of outward appearance.” Piaget's classic example is about the young child who believes that a taller and thinner glass contains more liquid than a shorter, fatter glass, even though the child has watched as the water was poured from the short to the tall container. On a simpler level, it may have to do with the question as in our present case, how the lady in question, the dwarf and the reindeer are depicted in the text do not exist for real but are made to look like real. Both ‘conservation’ and ‘reversibility’ of thinking are operational here as also ‘assimilation’ and ‘accommodation’.
him to bring his siblings to her in Narnia, with the promise of more Turkish delight and of being made a prince - and eventually the King of Narnia when she dies. The narrative is gripping enough to keep the reader engaged. The accomplice narrator has already confided in the reader about the evil nature of the queen and that she is an evil witch. Edmund who has been lured by ‘Turkish Delight’, a very tasty dessert in Narnia, cannot believe in the wickedness of the witch. Lucy discovers Edmund by the lamppost, and they return through the wardrobe. He does not pay much heed to Lucy’s warning though he is slightly nervous.

“Who told you all that stuff about the White Witch?” he asked.

“Mr. Tumnus, the Faun,” said Lucy “You can’t always believe what the Fauns say,” said Edmund, trying to sound as if he knew far more about them than Lucy. (Narnia, 128)

Lewis works upon the imagination of the child reader here. Edmund, a little boy, is unable to decide which side he would take as he does not know the truth. The narrator acts as an accomplice of both Edmund and the child reader. A child’s sense of reality is not similar to the rational views of reality that an adult links to.

There is an invariable festive spirit, quite close to what Bakhtin calls the ‘carnivalesque’. John Stephens (1992) has applied Bakhtinian theory to the study of children’s literature and identified three types of carnivalesque texts: ‘time out’, ‘inverted ideology’ and ‘endemically subversive’. It is understandable that the conclusion drawn by Stephens is very pertinent to the

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thesis that we are trying to develop. These will help us in trying to arrive at a proper definition of fantasy.\textsuperscript{12}

The way these in this tales churn out the ‘para-real’ world is really very special. A review from The \textit{Sign} adds more to it:

If your children have not yet been introduced to Aslan it is high time they were: he would accompany then for the rest of their lives. And beyond a spiritual journey for anyone who reads it is hard to believe that there are many Christian in the country at all who need an introduction to the land of Narnia, to Aslan the Lion, or the children who journey in those wonderful, if sometimes, perilious regions.\textsuperscript{13}

The pagan elements fused with the Christian elements give us an extra moralistic dimension which is another important aspect of such stories. These ‘perilous regions’ are constructed realistically as the author gives attention to even the smallest of details. He adopts some strategies to twist reality, as Lewis himself points out.\textsuperscript{14}

The narrative abounds in magical elements and fantasy is born out of it. The rules of Narnia that are created realistically by the

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid,116, An effective terminology by which to define the modal difference between fantasy and realism and thereby to distinguish crucially different ways in which signs evoke multiple signification along a chain of referral, is to define fantasy as a metaphoric mode and realm as a metonymic sound.

\textsuperscript{13} P.S.Beagle, \textit{Introduction to the Fantasy Writings}, New York; Ballantine,1979, p vii

\textsuperscript{14} C.S.Lewis. \textit{On three ways of writing for children,Readings on children’s literature}; ed.Egoff, Toronto:Oxford University Press,1980,p5, To construct ‘plausible and moving ‘other worlds’ you must draw on the only ‘other worlds’ we know, that of the spirit.
narrator predominate. The ‘normal’ human sense of the real is subverted and substituted with rules which are constructed realistically for us.

These are realms into which we must look at from points of view of the inhabitants of these lands whom the author creates as protagonists of his fantasy. That is the primary condition. We need to analyze Tolkien’s take on what he labels as ‘secondary worlds.’

The narrative of Narnia which creates such a world is built upon indices which are realistically structured. Magic is the conveyor and the chief index of the narrative. One has to give oneself to believe that such a world exists. One knows that such worlds cannot exist on physical level, but art or as Tolkien quips ‘magic’, makes the created world ‘real.’ The rules of this world dominate and it is only desirable that we surrender to the principles of these bizarre worlds which are created by substituting the real for a distorted version of it. The fantastic world is real, once we enter it and it is created by the creative faculty of the author as Tolkien suggests.

We must understand fantasy through this paradox which Tolkien himself failed to understand. In Lewis’ narrative, every word, every paragraph has its value. An instance that I intend to pick up, events that occur at the end of Chapter 5, when the four siblings; Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy decide to enter the Narnia world for an adventure. The chapter engages the reader in more stimulating encounters that the reader can hardly wait for it. The very traditional

15 J.R.R.Tolkien, On Fairy Stories; The Tolkien Reader, New York:Ballantine,1966. p38, “What really happen is that the story maker proves a successful ‘su-sub-creator’. He makes a secondary world which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is ‘true’ : it accords with the laws of this world. You therefore believe it while you are, as it were inside. The moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather art has failed. You are then out in the primary world again, looking at the little abortive secondary world from out side”

16 Ibid.46, “Creative fantasy…. may open your hoard and let all the locked things fly away like caged birds. The gems all twin to flowers or flames and you will be warned that all you had (or knew) was dangerous and patent, not really effectively chained, free and will; no more yours than they are you.”
“what happens next?” strategy naturally does not get subverted as in so many post modern narratives. The very last line of the chapter needs discussion.

“Peter held the door closed but did not shut it; for, of course, he remembered, as every sensible person does, that you should never, never, shut yourself in the wardrobe. (Narnia, 133).

Lewis refers to something which the child would relate to. The reader realizes that this concept is not an unfamiliar one for him, it is not too ‘sensible’ to shut oneself in a wardrobe since it is madness by normal perceptive standards. We do not move away from reality but embark upon a journey of a distorted version of the real. The possibilities of getting shut inside a wardrobe and the possible consequences are alarming for him. So the narrator explores a very real problem and exploits the reader’s sense of reality by introducing a problem which really matters to it. Lewis introduces a referent so that an unreal entity like a magical wardrobe is once more associated with a very real wardrobe, something which makes the narrative more exhilarating, mysterious and full of a strangeness that makes the narrative more pregnant with an unborn suspense. Such tropes as these while incorporating references can easily work upon the child reader’s imagination; they are instances which invite the accomplice narrator to depict a world replete with such ‘magical distortion’ in full flow.

Piaget in his discourse on child learning suggests succinctly.17

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17 Jean Piaget, "Piaget's theory". In P. Mussen (ed). *Handbook of Child Psychology*. 4th edition. Vol. 1. New York: Wiley, 1983. p83, The child's cognitive while e development is based on four kinds of operations. They are assimilation and accommodation, conservation, and reversibility. The first two are closely related, for Piaget's stance is that the child develops units of knowledge about the world, called schemata. As the child takes note of new information about the environment, that information is assimilated into his or her thinking (schemata) and the thinking and behavior are accommodated (changed) to reflect those new perceptions. In assimilation the person adapts the environment to his or her own use, though that is limited by ability to consolidate the new experiences with previous experience. Accommodation, the reverse of assimilation, occurs when the individual modifies existing thought structures so as to incorporate the new experiences
Following Piaget’s postulates we can conclude that the child reader assimilates the fact that a child should not enter a wardrobe and even more should not shut oneself in it and reversely accommodates this experience into his comprehension of the textual problem here. Lewis manipulates the sense of the real yet once more. Soon after, all four children enter Narnia together while hiding in the wardrobe after an encounter with the professor’s housekeeper, Mrs. Macready. Lucy guides them to Tumnus’ cave but finds it ransacked, with a notice from the witch Jadis’ police about his arrest for ‘high treason.’ The notice displayed ‘through the carpet to the floor’ is very relevant for the discussion:

“The former occupant of this premises, the Faun Tumnus, is under arrest and awaiting his trial on a charge of High Treason against her Imperial Majesty, Jadis, Queen of Narnia, Chatelaine of Cair Paravel, Empress of the Lone Islands, etc, also of comforting her said majesty’s enemies, harbouring spies and fraternizing with humans. (Narnia, 136)

There is a moment of crisis here. The narrator tries to give the reader a manipulated sense of the real. Lewis in fact takes great pains to present everything in a manner that borders the real. Not only does this notice serve as a narrative continuum but plays upon the sense of wonder in the child and intensifies the mystery. It replaces a real notice that the police can issue for a law-breaker. Interspersed within the depiction of these periods of high tension, the narrator is very particular in his description of the Narnia inhabitants. Lewis use referents from the real world as a trope to work upon the child’s imagination. For example while describing a bird he suggests:

“You couldn’t have found a robin with a redder chest or a brighter eye!” (Narnia 137) Here Lewis refers to the robin, a bird with a red chest. So once more, the child’s imagination is set to work. He visualizes a robin and how red a robin chest really is and then tries to figure out how a ‘redder’ chest might look. Such comparisons are very significant for Lewis and for this brand of
fantasy. Continuously the narrator picks up examples and referents from real life which the child reader can easily pick up. Here they meet a beaver couple who are addressed as Mr. and Mrs. Beaver who tell them of a prophecy that Jadis' power will fail when two Sons of Adam and two Daughters of Eve fill the four thrones at Cair Paravel, the seat of power in Narnia.

“There are trees,” said the beaver. They are 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. (Narnia140)

These are trees which truly have ears. The speaking beaver evokes a lot of surprise for some time then the speaking trees are introduced. The signifiers ‘tree’ and ‘ears’ belong to distinctive language games that construct reality in two distinctive spheres of reality, botanical and anatomical, vegetative and physiological are juxtaposed at random, yet with a kind of paradigmatic design. This is a calculated strategy that Lewis continually conjures in the pages of this fantasy. He continually raises the expectations of the readers and keeps frustrating them or shocking them as the narrative moves on. I will quote a few lines which will demonstrate further how the accomplice narrator works.

And then between them he thought, must be her place, only a mile off or less. And he thought about Turkish Delight and about being a King. (And I wonder how Peter would like that? he asked himself) and horrible ideas came into his head.)” (Narnia142)

The portion in bracket is particularly significant in this aspect. The normal sibling rivalry is exploited here and the reader can easily associate himself with this situation. This is a fantasy text in which characterization is worked out with enough depth so that fears and joys of the characters are evident throughout as they strive to discover themselves and to experience success and hence get more exposed in the narrative. This is an ongoing process by which the author
emerges as an accomplice narrator. The emerging potential of such a narrative does not cease to wonder the reader.

At the beginning of Chapter Eight, the beaver describes something. The reader is already acquainted and familiar with a beaver but he is not yet acquainted with the information which the beaver would impart, “Ah that’s bad,” There is no doubt he was taken off by the police. I got that from a bird that saw it done.” (Narnia, 149).

We can say that there is a double distortion of reality as the author works upon the child’s sense of reality in a way that it explores the child’s imagination, working on his sense of wonder. The same topos is at work when Susan is unable to understand who Aslan is. There is great tension in the Narnia world. The inhabitants like the Beaver continuously talk of one Aslan, their actual king. The Narnians seek the removal of the witch and restoration of their actual king Aslan to the throne.

For example an assertion like “They say Aslan is on the move” raises expectations in the mind of the reader. Aslan is a household name in the Narnia world and it is assumed everyone knows of him. In the Narnia world it is difficult for a Narnia inhabitant to take in the fact that does not know who Aslan is. So the beaver retorts, “Aslan? said Mr. Beaver. “Why don’t you know? He’s the king” (Narnia 146) and little later when Lucy nervously queries, “Is-he a man?” the beaver is shocked, “Aslan, a man!”, said Mr. Beaver sternly. “Certainly not. I tell you he is the king… Aslan is a lion, -the Lion, the great lion.” Once more the Narnia world with its intricate political hurly burly gets portrayed here realistically. We can get here a Bakhtinian sense of polyphonic exchanges, here operational between man and animal. Heteroglottic language and carnivalized action create polyphonic exchanges in which power relations between characters are negotiated; in the episodes in which the action is operative most profusely.
providing the guarantee of the psychological basis of fantasy that we return to reality rather than discard reality. I will focus, however, it is not only the adult and child characters who are engaged in this transaction but also humans and animals. It is also Aslan. Nonetheless, at certain moments in each book, the nature of the power struggle between true that the carnival pageantry of these novels at times seems orchestrated by the central figures of humans and animals helps to move these texts in the direction of a more explicit polyphony and a more carnivalesque style of action. Bakhtin’s notion of carnival appears germane to the novels of Lewis in general. Lewis brings together heterogeneous collections of characters from all orders of being—humanity, mythology (Greek, Norse, Christian), the animal world (both talking and non talking beasts), and other fictional sources (for example, nursery rhyme and fairytale figures and have them mingle in festival-like gatherings reminiscent of medieval carnival celebrations. For another, the interaction among these disparate characters often results in the suspension of hierarchical barriers and in what Bakhtin calls “carnivalistic mésalliances” that mingle “the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid” 18

As Bakhtin argues, all distance between people is suspended, and a special carnival category goes into effect: free and familiar contact among people. 19 This is a very important aspect of a carnival sense of the world. People who in life are separated by impenetrable hierarchical barriers enter into free familiar contact on the carnival square. Lewis uses the trope of substituting the real by introducing a distorted sense of real by assuming that Susan should have known who Aslan is. The narrative style makes good use of the child’s imagination and his sense of reality in a way that the child can continuously associate and refer to such situations.

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19 Ibid 12
Very deftly generated language games create fantasy. The narrative style is full of such well calculated language games which explore the possibilities of the real. There are two camps which are pitted against each other; the camp of the Witch and the camp of Aslan. The camp of the Witch is stronger. The battleground between Good and Evil is drawn with deftness. Meanwhile, Edmund sneaks away to Jadis’ castle, which is filled with statues – enemies she has turned to stone. Jadis, the witch is furious with Edmund for coming alone and is angrier still when she hears that Aslan is in Narnia. The narrator uses the tropes of horror, shock and suddenness in this context. Real life situations are distorted. Nowhere in the narrative does Lewis allow the reader slip off the track and maintains the terseness of the narrative so intricately that the conversation between a boy and a wolf does not seem unnatural at all.

Lewis consciously exploits and shatters the normative sense of reality. He realizes the requirement of the narrative very thoroughly “Now me must go back to Mr. Beaver and Mrs Beaver and the three other children” (Narnia156).

The narrative space is so perfectly balanced that it moves on steadily. The story was in the witches’ house very recently and now it enters the territory of the beaver once more. Lest we forget the beaver in the heat of events emerging at the house of the witch, the narrator reminds us of the need of ‘going back’ to the beaver. The word ‘must’ in the context of this reverting back to the beaver is of central importance. This ‘must’ is a narrative necessity. In this case it is a language game which manipulates the real by distorting it in a way which the child can associate to. Further we can refer to a significant assertion by Piaget.  

20 Jean Piaget. Sociological Studies. London: Routledge, 1995, p68, “Knowing reality means constructing systems of transformations that correspond, more or less adequately, to reality”
Lewis constructs such situations which exploits the normal notions of reality. He continuously uses associations, referents to distort the sense of reality. A very curious example occurs in the example given below. “It wasn’t nearly such a nice cave as Mr. Tumnus’s, Lucy thought—just a hole in the ground but dry and earthy.” (Narnia 158) What is the mode of reference? The reference is to another hole which Lucy had seen in the Narnia world; so the comparison is a manipulation of reality in which the narrator works as the accomplice of the child reader. The Narnia world is realistically constructed for us. Lewis makes it a point to keep the narrative rolling all the time. The arrival of Father Christmas and his declaration ensures a development in the plot. There was a prolonged winter and the witch was responsible for it. Snow begins to melt as Jadis’ spell over Narnia starts to break. Winter ends, and Father Christmas appears with presents for the three children and the Beavers.

“I’ve come at last,” said he, “She has kept me out for a long time, but I have got in at last. Aslan is on the move. The Witch’s magic is weakening.” (Narnia 161)

As the battlefront is drawn between the Witch and Aslan, the narrative heads for a climax. There is a graphic description of the creatures that were with Aslan. There are creatures like ‘Tree Women’ and ‘Well Women’ (Dryads and Naiads as they used to be called in our world,’ ‘great centaurs’ ‘a unicorn’, ‘a bull with the head of a man’ and ‘a great dog.’ We need to comment on the comparison that Lewis initiates with reference to the Dryads and Naiads. ‘Our world’ is a significant phrase as we can see there is a continuos attempt to separate the human normative world and the realistically shaped world of fantasy. As Piaget had suggested the child here can relate to a familiar term and thus
…move beyond concrete experiences and begin to think abstractly, reason logically and draw conclusions from the information available, as well as apply all these processes to hypothetical situations.\textsuperscript{21}

It is amazing how Lewis manipulates the sense of reality and tries to work out a comparison with beings like Dryads and Naiads which have no physical existence but are a part of imagination. Here the accomplice narrator is operative in full swing. Further we can see how once more our ideas of size and proportion are aggrandized.\textsuperscript{22} Every page, every paragraph is craftily constructed to distort our sense of reality. The detailed descriptions of the battle between the Witch and the Lion are diligently built up on the lines of preparations of any ‘real’ battle, but every time the sense of reality is being distorted. In this context we can also relate to the traditional topos in fantasy of representing the conflict between Good and Evil. Aslan welcomes the children and the Beavers to his camp. One of the most fundamental disruptions to established power structures is inherent here in Aslan’s granting linguistic ability to some of the animals, an assault upon the long-established presumption of superiority possessed by humans over other life forms. Immediately, the animals begin to speak “in their different voices, low or high or thick or clear”\textsuperscript{23} and their modes of discourse are as diverse and multi-accentual as those of the human characters. Readers should perhaps be prepared for this rejection of anthropocentrism by the earlier revelation that the divine being creating this world has not taken a human but a lion form.

Peter is shortly engaged in his first battle, killing Maugrim, chief of Jadis's Secret Police, to rescue Susan. Aslan's forces rescue Edmund just as Jadis is about to kill him. Jadis approaches in truce to parley with Aslan, insisting that, according to "deep magic from the dawn of time", she has the right to execute Edmund for treason. Aslan speaks with her privately and persuades her to renounce her claim. That evening, Aslan secretly leaves the camp but is followed by Lucy and Susan. Aslan has bargained his own life for Edmund's. Jadis ties Aslan to the Stone Table and kills him with a knife. The next morning the Stone Table, symbolic of the witches’ power is broken and Aslan is restored to life, telling Lucy and Susan that "deeper magic from before the dawn of time" (which Jadis did not know about) will resurrect an innocent killed in place of a traitor. Aslan allows Lucy and Susan to ride on his back as he hurries to Jadis's castle. There he breathes upon the statues, restoring them to life. Peter and Edmund lead the Narnian army against Jadis's army. Jadis is winning until Aslan arrives with the former statues as reinforcements. The Narnians rout Jadis’ army, and Aslan kills Jadis.

Very significant is the premise of Lawrence Kohlberg who linked Piaget’s thinking to a moralistic structure and developed a hierarchy of moral development. Although a number of value hierarchies have been developed, Kohlberg’s formulation is perhaps the most widely used. We can understand that such interaction in a story like this will allow children to objectify their own situations and inculcate notions of ‘Good’ and ‘Bad’. I will discuss a few instances from the text to see how Lewis describes battle situations. In Chapter 14, entitled ‘The Triumph of the Witch’ we find temporary victory of Evil but the voice of the accomplice narrator is always there to tell the child reader that they need not worry about the fate of Good. When the voice of the narrator operates it serves more purposes than one. I will quote an extract which will suffice.
I hope no one reads this book has been quite as miserable as Susan and Lucy were that night; but if you have been—if you’ve been up all night and cried till you have no more tears left in you—you will know that there comes a sort of quietness. You feel as if nothing is ever going to happen again. *(Narnia, 183)*

The author in this direct address to the reader uses the tropes of horror and suddenness. Very interesting and suggestive also is the title of Chapter 15 from which this extract has been taken; “Deeper Magic from the Dawn of Time.” A little later in the same chapter there is a description of birds, foxes, dogs, satyrs, centaurs and other beings rendering once more a Bakhtinian sense of the carnivalesque. While discussing the participants of the battle, Lewis becomes very specific.

(Giants of any sort are now so rare in England and so few giants are good—tempered that that ten to one you have never seen a giant when his face is beaming. It’s a sight well worth looking at.) *(Narnia, 188)*

There is a conscious attempt to engage the reader so that the child readers’ sense of the real gets stimulated and the reader gets involved as we have demonstrated earlier using Piaget’s observations. Lewis continuously tries to distort the real in such a manner that it looks perfectly normal as it were. For example when a faun casually remarks that all ‘buffins’ are one of the most respected of all the giant families in Narnia” *(Narnia 190)*, we can see how the word buffin having so semantic value as such gets coinage very casually with great effect. Lewis indeed pays a lot of attention to such nonsense that he creates. As the climax is drawn the story is wound up and Lewis continues to act as an accomplice of the child reader, “And as you can see, this story is nearly (but not quite) at an end.” *(Narnia 194)* The Pevensie children are named kings and queens of Narnia: King Peter the Magnificent, Queen Susan the Gentle, King Edmund the Just, and Queen Lucy the Valiant. Fifteen years later, the siblings are hunting for a white stag when
they find the lamppost in the forest. Beyond it, the branches become coats. They come through the wardrobe in Digory's house and are children again. Lewis rounds up the chapter with another statement addressing the reader.

And that is the very end of the adventure of the wardrobe. But if the Professor was right, it was only the beginning of the adventures of Narnia. (Narnia 197)

This keeps the options open for the next book. The narrative space is maintained. As this engrossing book draws to its closure we can deduce a lot many things. The author keeps the ending open, keeping the narrative ready for another book in the series. The author we have seen continually used referents and tropes that distort the reality and tweak the traditional sense of the real by employing many interesting devices as demonstrated. So children’s fantasy operates when the author acts as an accomplice narrator working in tandem with the child’s thought process, manipulating the sense of the real. The narrator evokes the world by manipulating the sense of reality by calculated strategies.

Before going into the next chapter I will list the other Narnia texts:

1. Prince Caspian. London
2. The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader”.
3. The Silver Chair.
4. The Magician’s Nephew
5. The Horse and His Boy
6. The Last Battle.

Now I must very briefly look into each of these texts one by one because it is essential in our scheme of things how Lewis progresses with his heptalogy.
Fantasy is carried forward in each book by adopting similar strategies as in the first book, by manipulating the real.

The second is titled *Prince Caspian* (1951). The four children reappear and they require a magician to save the prince from Uncle Miraz. They wait for a school bus in an ‘empty’ sleepy country station when they are transported to Narnia. The Prince escapes and they go to restore the throne and the adventure goes on. There are certain dwarves and fairies all of whom enter his secondary world and create the world of the para-real. There is Dr Cornelins, Caspian, Peter, a giant and others who toil in this world of magic and charm and take part in the battle of good versus evil. Lucy can remember the time when trees can talk and Peter has a few tricks up his sleeve.

The third book is named *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952). Edmund and Lucy along with the not so forthright Eustace look at the picture of a ship on a wall. This picture becomes lively and they rush towards it and are in it. And once more arrives Prince Caspian who saves their lives. He must find out seven Telmarine Lords whom Miraz has sent away. There are obstacles and there is a green lady who enslaves and transforms Eustace into a dying dragon. Aslan reappears and there are impressions of the Silver Sea, the end of the world, and rebirth, better life and such associated phenomenon triumphing.

The next in series was *The Silver Chair* (1953). Lewis in this book takes up a scathing attack against reactionary social views and the travestying of progressive school and ridicules it. Jill and Eustace call upon Aslan at a precipice. They are sent to find Relian for old king is rearing death and is in need of an heir.
There are four signs given to Jill. They encounter difficulties after which they find the prince who was enslaved by a witch with a venomous serpent lurking.

The next title reads *The Boy and His Horse*(1954). A boy Shastha comes to know he will be sold to Tarkaan by his father. Apprehensive, he scoots out with the Narnia bred talking horse Bree. In the course of the adventures he meets the girl Avris and there are good princes (Prince Corin) and evil Prince (Rabadash.) and lands of queens and other fantastic elements. The sixth book is entitled *The Magician’s Nephew* .(1955)  We are treated with a flashback of how Aslan created Narnia with power of spirits. There are more characters. Polly, Diggory’s uncle and Diggory too has a couple of rings. There are adventures galore and Queen Jadis is disturbed and Diggory and Poly are put into “The wood between the worlds” and there are magic pools in this ‘in between place.’ Diggory knows he is responsible for waking Jadis whose final confrontation is with Aslan and the obvious happens, good reigns over evil. It all comes down to *The Last Battle* (1956) the last of the *Narnia Chronicles*. This is a tale of high fantasy at its best which all goes forward to the inevitable win of good over evil.

I will continue to demonstrate how Lewis conjures more such magic by referring to the last text of the series, *The Last Battle*, thereby reaffirming the thesis that I am trying to build up.