Chapter 2: Distortion of the Real in C.S. Lewis’ *The Last Battle*

The Last Battle lies right at the end of the Lewis’ *Narnia* series heptalogy. As I have demonstrated at the end of the previous chapter the chronological progress is a part of an authorial plan which has been developed artfully through the six books and *The Last Battle* is a natural conclusion to the series. There are different stories but there is a link nevertheless as the characters overlap as do the themes. It is structured very craftily at the end of the series. In the six books we have come across adventures which bordered the real and the fantasy is created with distortion of reality not as ‘transcendent other’¹ as Frye would suggest but through conscious strategies. I would like to quote the first lines of the text:

In the last days of Narnia, far up to the west beyond Lantern Waste and close beside the great waterfall, there lived an Ape. He was so old that no one could remember when he had first come to live in those parts, and he was the cleverest, ugliest, most wrinkled Ape you can imagine. He had a little house, built of wood and thatched with leaves, up in the fork of a great tree, and his name was Shift. (*The Last Battle*, 669; my italics).

The very first lines are expectedly very engrossing and tight and they require multiple comments and throw open a lot of complexities. As in the case of other ‘real’ descriptions of Narnia the details are very specific and pertinent. The location is made very specific. The reason I have italicized some portions of the extract is to show the precision of the details about the Ape. Lewis locates the Ape in a locale and stirs the imagination of the reader about its age. At the very beginning the

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narrator addresses the reader while trying to describe the Ape. We find the accomplice narrator already at work. Lewis goes on working as the accomplice of the child. He introduces tropes and imagery of the non-real comprising shock, horrors, suddenness and wonder. As earlier he also indulges in transference of epithets and tropes which introduces the fantastic.

Not only does Lewis engage the reader who would like to frame ‘the ugliest and cleverest and most wrinkled ape’ he has actually ever seen and then try to envisage the present ape named ‘Shift’. Lewis next introduces Shift’s companion Puzzle, a donkey. Once more Lewis engages the reader:

There were very few Talking Beasts or Men or Dwarfs, or people of any sort, in that part of the wood, but Shift had one friend and neighbor who was a donkey called Puzzle. At least they both said they were friends, but from the way things went on you might have thought Puzzle was more like Shift’s servant than his friend. He did all the work. *(The Last Battle 669)*.

At the very outset Lewis adopts such ‘realistic’ descriptions which are at the skeletal structure of such fantasy texts. Lewis does not wait long to allow the narrative unfold itself. We have these beasts continuously talking and we find them discuss a lion being slaughtered and Shift summarizes:

“Oh, it wasn’t a Talking Lion,” said Shift. “You needn’t bother about that. There are no Talking Beasts up beyond the Falls, up in the Western Wild. This skink must have belonged to a dumb, wild lion.” This by the way, was true. A Hunter, a Man had killed and skinned this lion somewhere up in
the Western Wild several months before. But that doesn’t come into this story. *(The Last Battle, 671).*

The faithful reader of Narnia tales would at once apprehend the lion in question might be Aslan, the undisputed lord of these lands but the narrative does not hinder the comprehension of a new reader also. Lewis would soon clarify everything in the course of the narrative without being repetitive. So when there is talk of a hunter who had killed and skinned a beast, Lewis makes a seemingly innocuous statement like “This by the way was true.” This again has complex levels of design on the part of the narrator. The narrator continuously tries to give the impression that one is reading about a real event The idea of reality is distorted to help the readers glide into the realm of fantasy. The description is very specific. They are assured that the slaughtered lion in question does not belong to the Narnia world but of ‘another world,’ which we must understand is the world of the reader; the real world. Here the author talks about a lion from the real world as one which is unfamiliar in the unreal Narnia world. The narrator looks at the world from the view of a child. He uses signs and codes which a child can pick up easily but may be in an adult rational thought process would give it a miss. But in the non-rational, non-logical fantastical sense it means a lot. It meets the psychological requirement of a child reader and manipulates the sense of the real. These are essential ingredients that comprise the basic paradigm of fantasy. If we study Piaget’s cognitive developmental levels we understand that a person’s intellectual or mental development occurs in steps and it steps upon the previous one.2

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The normative idea of the ‘true’ and ‘real’ are continuously either aggrandized and minimized\(^3\) as we find in a specific narratorial description like;

He held the needle between his lips and took scissors in his left paw. *(The Last Battle, 672).*

In this context, once more very specifically constructed so as to resemble the real, Shift seeks to use the skin of the slaughtered lion mentioned earlier on Puzzle so as to make him look like Aslan and make him pose as Aslan to execute some evil designs. I would like to quickly shift attention to the end of the First Chapter in which the Ape is trying to make a proposition about the possible return of Aslan and the probable signs that can herald his return.

“No, no,” said the Ape (whose mind worked very quickly). It’s a sign the other way. I was just going to say that if the real Aslan, as you call him, meant us to go on with this; he would send us a thunderclap and an earth-tremor. It was just on the tip of my tongue, only the sign itself came before I could get the words out. You’ve got to do it now, Puzzle. And please don’t let us have any more arguing. You know you don’t understand these things, What could a donkey know about signs?” (pg 674).

The Ape negates the donkey’s idea that the clap was an evil premonition. On the contrary he considers it to be something very positive and heartwarming. These are very significant codes. We are made to understand that ‘Thunder clap’ is a very subtle pattern, a signifier in the Narnia world which has some very suggestive

connotations. ‘Thunderclap’ and ‘earth tremor’ are signs that are to be related to certain connotations exclusive to the Narnia world. Shift and Puzzle discuss signs which Puzzle feels could be from Aslan. This is what I would like to refer as manipulation or distortion of referents. On another plane we must say that the narrator takes the deviation from normality to a different level altogether, a level in which fantasy operates and we have a very gripping tale in the offing. The narrator has already opened his cards with deft conscious narrative strategies as Stephen further demonstrates:

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 metaphorical mode and realm as a metonymic sound.4

The chart above is indeed very close to our understanding of fantasy. Stephen’s attempt ‘to define fantasy as a metaphorical mode and realm as a metonymic sound’ indeed confirms the postulate that fantasy is a sign which operates by distorting.

By the end of chapter 1, the plot has been introduced and the reader knows of Shift’s sinister plans. The Second Chapter opens with more references to the possible return of Aslan. There is a court scene, not of humans but of beasts of Narnia. An array of beasts is seen discussing different issues which are central to the administrative setup of Narnia. They avidly await the return of Aslan because it is only he who can redeem them. There is a Bakhtinian sense of carnivalesque which is prominent here as we would find in carnival pageantry. As Stephen suggests, these

are “carnivalesque” texts that “interrogate the normal subject positions created for children within socially dominant ideological frames”.\(^5\) We must refer to the heteroglotic languages and polyphonic exchanges within power relations, between characters are negotiated. It is however; true that such carnival pageantry is reflected by such parleys which distort the reality. I will quote a line from the text to drive home the point. The fantastic beasts have gathered to discuss the state of affairs in Narnia. There are centaurs and unicorns amongst others. The centaur declares:

> I drink first to Aslan and truth, Sire, and secondly to your Majesty.” He finished the wine (enough for six strong men) at one draught and handed the empty bowl back to the page. \((\text{The Last Battle, 676}).\)

The centaur is doubtful about the return of Aslan. He feels that the stars would have heralded his return with some signs if it actually happened. He has few takers for his theory but the reader, with whom the narrator has already confided in as an accomplice knows it.Further we must comment on the bracketed portion. If we try to explain the purpose served by such a bracket we understand that it is intended to make the statement even more specific and pertinent, but what does such precision in a fantasy like this aim at? It is to distort reality by tropes which the child would relate to. Every line of the text is a trope to drive home a point. All assertions are calculatedly adjudged and aimed to a purpose.

> There was no reason, of course, why one should not meet a Calormen or two in Narnia – a merchant or an ambassador – for there was peace between Narnia and Calormen in those days. \((\text{The Last Battle, 679}).\)

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Lewis gradually introduces rather innocuously different parties in this para-real world who would have a central part in this story. For example, Lewis introduces another land in the Narnia world, Calormenes and briefly introduces the place. Calormen is going to have a crucial role in the novel. These are the techniques which Lewis has continuously been building up. In a seemingly casual manner he has tried to mention about peace between two places at a particular time of history. Neither of these places actually exist but for fictional space. It is thus assumed that peace does not always prevail between these places and won’t prevail at a particular time may even in the near future.

The beasts anticipate avidly the return of Aslan. Towards the end of Chapter 2, there is fight between Tirian, the king of Narnia and Jewel; his aide with two Caloremenes who had tied up a horse from Narnia. There is a lot of confusion as the horse mentioned here confirms he was tied by Aslan’s orders.

“And then,” said the king, “the horse said it was the King’s orders. The Rat said the same. They all say Aslan is here. How if it were true.”

(The Last Battle, 682).

Tirian surrenders to the Caloremenes as he interprets it as Aslan’s will. Nothing for the Narnias is more important than Aslan’s will. The reader is fed with doses of horror and suspense. The reader already knows what the Narnians do not. The narrative is carried forward by such very realistically constructed conversations.

The real is being subverted for a ‘distorted’ version of the real. Tactics regarding language games need to be noted here. ‘Could’ and ‘tamed’ are italicized. What purpose do such italics serve in a narrative? They emphasize upon this words so as to suggest when spoken one needs to give a deeper intonation on these.
passage little later in the same chapter we find a commotion involving Talking Beasts and the Ape as the Ape poses as a mouth piece of Aslan.

Another very common trope in such fantasy tales as mentioned earlier is the transference of epithets which Lewis does quite naturally. In these passages, epithets like ‘talking miraculously’, ‘bewildered’, ‘whimpered’, ‘mouthpiece’, ‘skill’ and ‘courage’ are all used at one breath and transfixed in the narrative space involving these amazing beasts. The transference occurs to a world which does not exist ‘really’ but is created realistically with such common signifiers.

The Ape continues to pose as Aslan’s mouthpiece and suggests that Aslan has made an arrangement with the Caloremenes by which Narnians would go to Caloremen, work and earn and there would be overall development of Narnia. He also orders cutting down Talking Trees for lumber. The money will be paid into "Aslan's" treasury, held by Shift, on the pretext that it will be used for the good of the Narnians. But when he compares Aslan and Tash; evil Caloremen God strong doubts are raised.

Even titles of chapters are of great significance. The introductory lines of each chapter are very critical. Chapter 4 is titled, *What happened that Night*. Even before one reads the chapter one would realize that there would be a sense of mystery and wonder in the chapter which invariably operates in this title. Shock, horror, suddenness, mystery and wonder are the chief purveyors in the world of magic as an inevitable question associated with traditional grand narratives ‘what happens next?’ not considered so important in post modern critical parlance obviously gains central importance here. Tirian was bound up and hit on his lips.
What worried him worst at the moment – for it is often little things that are hardest to stand – was that his lip was bleeding where they had hit him and he couldn’t wipe the little trickle of blood away although it tickled him.

(The Last Battle, 687)

Lewis ceaselessly draws analogies to draw the attention of the child reader, so that he can assimilate with his real life experiences and relate to his cognition of the real. As the child reads on he can associate with the real beasts he knows of, their sizes and shapes and try to relate to the ones in Narnia which do not actually exist for real but are created realistically. Here we need to apply Piaget’s concepts of assimilation and accommodation.6

There is always a sense of urgency and emergency which keeps the narrative very tight. The beasts get restless as Aslan is expected any moment.

“Aslan! Aslan! Aslan!” cried the Beasts. “Speak to us. Comfort us. Be angry with us no more. (The Last Battle, 689)

He calls on Aslan for help and receives a vision of Digory Kirke, Polly Plummer, Peter Pevensie, Edmund Pevensie, Eustace Scrubb, Lucy Pevensie, and Jill Pole, though he does not know who they are. The people in the vision also see Tirian and, though Tirian can't speak to them, they guess he is a messenger from Narnia. A few minutes later by Narnian time – although a week after his time in the other world – he received a vision of Digory and Polly at the same time. Then, as he began to leave the vision, he saw four figures standing in the moonlight, and he was able to see them clearly.

6 Jean Piaget,”Piaget’s theory”. In P. Mussen (ed). Handbook of Child Psychology. 4th edition. Vol. 1. New York: Wiley,1983,p75, “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. Assimilation occurs when humans are faced with new or unfamiliar information and refer to previously learned information in order to make sense of it. Accommodation, unlike assimilation is the process of taking one's environment and new information, and altering one's pre-existing schemas in order to fit in the new information.
later from their perspective – Jill and Eustace arrive in Narnia to help the Narnians. The beasts are able to make headway as they are able to rescue the King from the bondage.

While she(Jill) was speaking the Boy(Eustace) had produced a knife from his pocket and was quickly cutting the King’s bonds: too quickly, in fact, for the King was so stiff and numb that when the last cord was cut he fell forward on his hands and knees. He couldn’t get up again till he had brought some life back into his legs by a good rubbing. (pg.693).

The king in question is not a real life king but Tirian, the king of Narnia who is being rescued. So again, descriptions which actually exist in a real life situation are distorted realistically for a plane which does not exist. Another case in point is the detailed description of meal offered to a starving Tirian, the King of Narnia..

There were two hard-boiled egg sandwiches, and two cheese sandwiches, and two with some kind of paste in them. If he hadn’t been so hungry he wouldn’t have thought much of the paste, for that is a sort of food nobody eats in Narnia. (pg 694).

That Lewis mentions ‘for that is a sort of food nobody eats in Narnia” is not just an innocuous assertion but very critical for our understanding of the text as such assertions are conscious attempts to locate Narnia into a specific plane just as it is in the case of all such narratives. A different world, the world of the para-real is being created and shaped out to such perfection that we can get transferred to the other world that has been created. We must judge things from those parameters of Narnia which the narrator creates and no other as we are transported into that world. There is a girl from the real world who has entered the Narnia world. She is being judged from Narnia parameters. Here we have a girl from the real world being trained by a character from the world of the ‘para-real’.
First he had given Jill some practice in archery and found that, though not up to Narnia standards. *(The Last Battle, 699)*

As the battle between Good and Evil which has been developed consciously over the last 6 books, gets more and more engrossing, we can see that issues of morality take centre stage as Good must prevail over Evil. It is the forces of evil who are pitted against those of good and it is good which will prevail. That children's fantasy is an extension of reality, and therefore of real life itself we would suggest further how all those issues relevant to the way a child makes any "moral" or "normative" sense of that kind of world also derives from reality itself. Thus in CS Lewis Narnia shows how powers of reason, natural decision making ultimately triumphs in the scheme of things. Hence Lewis representation of fantasy reveals a very deep understanding of how challenges and obstacles are negotiated in real life- and by extension how such a strategy becomes a moral within the narrative.

The preparation for the battle will commence in the chapter, *A Good Night’s Work*. As Tirian embarks on a journey with his beasts, While describing the preparation of the battle Lewis uses seemingly simple language games like ‘here’ and ‘bears’ which attain great significance as these create fantasy by substituting reality. The battle lines are drawn realistically with real signifiers and interludes. The description gets so real that the reader might be tempted to believe it for real and just in case one may forget that it is not a real life situation we are being engaged into and that the battle royale which is realistically been created in the work of fantasy, there is a rejoinder by Tirian in the very typical C.S.Lewis style. Tirian lashes out in euphoric praise of Jill to Eustace, swearing ‘by the mane’. The use of a ‘mane’ as a swearing word is a distortion of reality and one of the many languages games that Lewis engages in. The comparison to a Driad is very significant. Here is a real
human who is being compared to a nonexistent unreal entity created realistically. The magic is created by such associations and referents and a different world view is projected out every time. We get engrossed into this magical narrative. We are in a community where ideology is very much significant and here we have to embark upon a journey of hierarchy and ideals that Bakhtin had famously formulated.\(^7\)

The beasts that are under a lot of tension also get some time to relax. As we see at the end of Chapter 6, The gathering resembles any army in real life gathered after a hard day’s work. Lewis substitutes real life situations of a battle into the world of fantasy. There is a sense of the real being created. There is no relief and hardly a breathing space is allowed. But not for long, as Lewis never stops to provide the reader with doses of mystery and suspense which continue endlessly because these are the tropes on which his fantasy functions as a distortion of the real with parameters that actually border the real. There is a very realistic depiction of the warfare between the Narnians and the Calomerenes. At the end of each chapter we find it linked to the new one. Chapter 6 ends with a moment of crisis as the Calomerenes are leading a band of dwarves away.

“Stay!” thundered Tirian as he stepped out on the road. “Stay, soldiers. Whither do you lead these Narnian Dwarfs and by whose orders?” (The Last Battle, 704).

\(^7\) Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World. Trans. Hélène Iswolsky. Bloomington: IndianaUP, 1984, p22. As Bakhtin argues, “all distance between people is suspended, and a special carnival category goes into effect: free and familiar contact among people. 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.”
The reader can hardly wait to go to the next chapter. Lewis continuously attempts to specify the details of all the characters. This description of Narnia dwarfs is a case in point.

Narnia Dwarfs, though less than four feet high, are for their size about the toughest and strongest creatures there are, so that Poggin, in spite of a heavy day and a late night, woke Fully refreshed before any of the others (The Last Battle, 709).

This band of dwarfs are also rescued, but because their faith in Aslan has been shattered, they refuse to help, claiming "the dwarfs are for the dwarfs". Only one dwarf, Poggin, is faithful to Tirian, Aslan, and Narnia.

There is a conscious strategy to relate to real signifiers so that the child readers can readily adhere to and accommodate to previous expressions. This we can relate to Piaget’s theories, more specifically the fourth stage.8 While describing an eagle in Chapter 8, Lewis once more uses real life signifiers but of course the size and other parameters are aggrandised and our idea of reality is tweaked.9 There are different characters which get involved in the battle on both sides, those of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ as an eagle, for example. So the epithet ‘bird like claws’ is transferred from a normal bird to one which is magical and non-existent. Not only does such

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9 Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhayay, Aesthetics: A Cognitive View, Kolkata: Dasgupta and Company, 2011, I would like to use the theory of aggrandizement and miniaturization which Tirtha Prasad Mukppadhayay, in his thesis relating to icons. He writes “iconic art miniaturizes (or aggrandizes) visual features; it replaces reality with artifice, familiarity with strangeness.”
distortion of reality create the fantasy, it also aids in creating the narrative space that
the narrator designs. At the very beginning of this chapter the narrator has already
assumed the status of an accomplice narrator by directly addressing the readers.

At first glance you might have mistaken it for smoke, for it was grey and
you could see things through it. *(The Last Battle, 712).*

The Narnians anxiously look up apprehending the creature above.

But how if half the Narnians-including all the Dwarfs-just sat and
`looked on? or even thought against him? The risk was too great. And
there was too the cloudy shape of Tash. What might bit do? *(The Last
Battle, 714)*.

The accomplice narrator is at work. There is a conscious ploy to take on child
reader’s imagination and give a spur to his cognitive abilities as we can see if we
dig into Piaget’s premises.¹⁰ There are moments of crisis in the novel as the beasts are
at their wit’s end and have no clue how to survive against the onsloughts of evil
powers. They always wait for more disasters:

As Eustace, the king and the Dwarf were all staring up at look at
the sky. Jill shuddered, remembering what horrors they had seen
already. *(The Last Battle, 716).*

Lewis builds up the tension regarding the cloudy being. The identity of the thing referred to is
not known; whether it is a friend or foe or what could be the reason for its arrival. Engaging the
readers is a very significant aspect in the narrative, may be more so in a fantasy
literature. There is the reader who is asked so many questions. The tropes of horrors
and suddenness suffuse the text and serve as chief purveyors of magic. In this

the adolescent's thought is when children are more likely to solve problems in a trial-and-error fashion.
Adolescents begin to think more as a scientist thinks, devising plans to solve problems and systematically
testing solutions.”
context they do not know whether the thing in the air is a friend or a foe. It turns out to be Fairsight, a friendly bird who however brings in bad news. The eagle named Fairsight is a friend who brings in pathetic news for the Narnians. The Calomerenes are taking advantage on the Narnians.

Narnians who are in bad shape so much so that the king is tempted to declare in a somber, grave mood befitting the impending fall of a great empire in reality.

“So,” said the King after a long silence, “Narnia is no more”. (*The Last Battle, 718*)

This comes in as a shock for the reader. The trope of introducing such shocks is quite common in this text. In Chapter 9 the tropes of shock and suddenness dominate.

As the shocks and betrayals and let downs never cease as we can perhaps see in any real battle we find here also a case of camaraderie and solidarity shown by Jill and Eustace who refused to go back to the safety of their house as the king felt that such trouble was quite unbecoming of and underserved for such young children. They decide to fight resolutely against the forces of evil. Jill and Eustace are human kids and they participate in this battle. While describing the battle Lewis continuously introduces new characters, Tirian refers to a cat which is causing them a few problems. The comparison, once more, is made to a natural phenomenon which occurs in everyday life so the reader can visualize the cat.

If you had not known he was a cat, you might have thought he was a ginger coloured streak of lighting. (*The Last Battle, 718*)

As the plot thickens, the crisis deepens and the descriptions of the battle are drawn more and more realistically which transports the reader into this ‘para –real’ world.
will quote a small paragraph from the text which comes a little later. Tirian is concerned about the well being of Jill and Eustace.

When Tirian realized that the two strangers could not get home (unless Aslan suddenly whisked them away), he next wanted them to go across the Southern mountains into Archenland where they might possibly be safe. (*The Last Battle*, 719).

Such meticulous particularizing lies at the crux of Lewis’s fantasy and we are certainly led to this amazing territory. The places, ‘Southern Mountains’ and ‘Archenland’ do not exist for real but are presented in a very real manner as though they were real.

What follows in the novel is a very real description for survival, existence, identity and above all the eternal fight between good and evil. The aspect of morality is very central and understanding of this text for the elaborated in the Christian context. Narnia certainly has a very strong Christian connection. I will try to sum up the story from of the battle and then take up a few extracts to demonstrate how Lewis creates fantasy.

Tirian and his small force advance on the stable where the false Aslan is kept, and engage Shift and the Calormenes in battle. All the animals are killed – many by the dwarfs, who attack both sides. Tirian throws Shift into the stable, and Tash, who now haunts the stable, swallows the ape whole. In the last desperate struggle, Eustace, Jill, and Poggin are thrown into the stable. Tirian, left alone and fighting for his life, drags Rishda Tarkaan, the leader of the Calormenes, into the stable.

On the other side of the stable door lies a vast and beautiful land. Much to the Calormen leader's surprise and terror, Tash appears, and snatches him up under an arm. Tirian finds Peter,
Edmund, Eustace, Lucy, Jill, Polly, and Digory all standing before him, and Peter orders Tash to leave. Aslan appears, and as they watch at the stable door, all of the people and animals, including those who had previously died, gather outside the barn and are judged by Aslan. Those who have been loyal to Aslan or the morality upheld by Narnians join Aslan in Aslan's Country. Those who have opposed or deserted him become ordinary animals and vanish to an unmentioned place.

We are wondered at the fact how meticulously and persistently Lewis develops fantasy. So an epithet which is normally used with reference to real life situations is now used in the realms of fantasy. So if we go back to some definitions provided by critics on fantasy which I have already analyzed earlier, we will understand how these fall short. For example, J.R.R. Tolkien calls it “the most nearly pure form of art”\textsuperscript{11} and Northrop Frye adds “fantasy transcends the limits both of the naturally possible and morally acceptable”\textsuperscript{12} and Forster says,

\begin{quote}
 a ban of light that is intimately connected with them time, character, logic, or their derivatives in the novel at one place and patiently illumes all the problems, and another place shoots over and through them as if they did not exist.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

By the time the reader reaches the end of Chapter 10 (The good) Narnians have managed to salvage some ground:

\textsuperscript{11} J.R.R.Tolkien,On Fairy Stories; The Tolkien Reader, New York; Ballantine,1966; p37

\textsuperscript{12} Northop Frye, The Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays , Princeton; Princeton University Press,1971;p32

\textsuperscript{13} E.M.Forster, Aspects of the Novel and Related Writings(1927),London;Edwin Arnold Publishing,1979;p41
Here stand I, Tirian of Narnia, in Aslan’s name, to prove with my body that Tash is a foul fiend, the Ape a manifold traitor, and these Calormenes worthy of death. To my side, all true Narnians. Would you wait till your new masters have killed you all one by one?". (The Last Battle, 729)

There is an open invitation to the beasts of Narnia imploring them to stand up and for a fight for their leader. The narrative space is always maintained. If in the previous chapter we find a lot of suspense at the end, it makes the reader inevitably go to the next chapter which is even more enticing. We are bound to enter into this space as the suspense and horror is gripping the reader by now. The battle lines between good and evil are drawn with great dexterity in this chapter. But we see this is very pattern in such texts operate on the lines of a moral fabric. Kolberg looks at different stages of moral development of an individual which is closely linked to our understanding of fantasy. That children's fantasy is an extension of reality, and therefore of real life itself we would suggest further how all those issues relevant to the way a child makes any "moral" or "normative" sense of that kind of world also derives from reality itself.

Thus in Narnia, CS Lewis shows how powers of reason, natural decision making ultimately triumphs in the scheme of things. Hence Lewis’ representation of fantasy reveals a very deep understanding of how challenges and obstacles are negotiated in real life- and by extension how such a strategy becomes a moral within the narrative. Another very significant tool to understand the moral fabric is a reference to Propp’s analysis of folk tales. At least one chart may be looked at and analysed.

Aslan/Tirian versus Tash and the Calomerens
Cooperate versus compete
help versus hinder
escape versus imprison
defend versus attack
initiate versus respond
disguise versus respond
pretend versus reveal
love versus hate
unravel versus mystify
pursue versus evade
search for versus evade
tell truth versus lie
allow versus prohibit
question versus answer
rescue versus endanger
protect versus threaten
suffer versus punish
dispatch versus summon
allow versus interdict
retain versus lose¹⁴

We see how Propp’s formula holds good for our cause as at every level there is a good versus evil format which the fantasy of Lewis holds forth.

There is also a Christian context in Narnia which celebrates the victory of good over evil. In this chapter the odds continue to swing between ‘Good’ and ‘Evil.’ The last bit of Chapter 11 is an excellent manifestation of how fantasy can operate. I will quote a small extract to drive a few points home:

“Oh, well done. Well done!” shouted Jill. The King’s party were cutting their way right into the enemy the Unicorn was tossing men as you’d toss hay on a fork.

Every single detail is worked out. The comparison of a unicorn tossing men with a horn is drawn very judiciously. We can see how a epithet which exists in normal parlance is deftly transferred into a world of fantasy. Real is distorted, a distorted version of the real is replaced by fantasy. At every point there is tension shock and suspense. These are the common tropes in the narrative. The author is conscious about acting as an inferior to the child. Moreover there is a obvious attempt to try and engage the cognitive capacity of the child. Children continue to love fantasy and they enjoy fantasy without always worrying about whether or not a story is "real." Such a procedure calls upon aspects of both ‘conservation’ and ‘reversibility’, as Piaget views the concepts, and requires more sophisticated thinking than children at the early and middle sections of the stage can probably handle.\(^\text{15}\)

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With adequate help from likeminded forces which are ‘good’, Tirian and company manage to salvage some pride. If we consider, for example, this extract from Chapter 12, Lewis, as always, is never short of engaging himself with the reader. He tries to interact continuously with the child’s mind and acts as his accomplice.

A man who is fighting a dozen enemies at once must take his chances wherever he can; must dart in wherever he sees an enemy’s breast or neck unguarded. In a very few strokes this may get you quite a distance from the spot where you began. *(The Last Battle, 738).*

By now however the climactic part of the novel is reached as the narrator winds up different ends of the story. It is now clear that the world of Narnia is one in which exclusively typical rules are realistically created. The author constructs the world using signs and codes that are readily used in the framework of the real all the time. Once we are in this world, we must follow the dictum and principles of that world only. So when Lewis talks about dress materials used by Narnia Fauns, he tries to distinguish this from dresses that humans wear. By doing so, once more, he is able to create the para-real world.

He was fresh and cool and clean, and dressed in such clothes as he would have warn for a great feast at Cair Paravel. *(But in Narnia your good clothes were never your uncomfortable ones. They knew how to make things that felt beautiful as well as looking beautiful in Narnia and there was no such thing as starch or flannel or elastic to be found from one end of the country to the other. *(The Last Battle, 740).)*

The child can relate to the dress materials that he is used to and try to visualize the dress material described here. Once more we must refer to the developmental theories of Piaget that we have discussed earlier. The same topos is used in the next chapter.
when Lewis tries to describe a fruit that participants in the battle savour after an arduous round of fight.

What was the fruit like? Unfortunately no one can describe a taste. All I can say is that, compared with those fruits, the freshest grape fruit you have ever eaten was dull, and the most melting pear was hard and woody, and the sweetest wild strawberry was sour. And there were no seeds or stones, and no wasps. If you had once eaten that fruit, all the nicest things in our world would taste like medicines after that. (*The Last Battle*, 742).

‘Our world’ is a very significant phase. The author continuously segregates the Narnia world solely to local habitat and situation by transferring epithets from the real world to the world of fantasy. Lewis acts an accomplice narrator here. The child’s imagination would run amuck as he would be engaged continuously in such comparisons. Epithets once more are transferred from the real world to an unreal one. New terms and trends peculiar to Narnia are rounded up with proper definition. As Lewis tries to take the text to its climax, time after time he provides gripping description of the fight between the two opposing parties during which the odds continuously swing between them. A very significant aspect of such narrative lies in how real times are subverted and epithets are transferred into the world of fantastic

So ‘talking’ in this world characterizes a being and not ‘talking’ is considered a bane and type of aberration. The accomplice narrator is always functioning. As Ch 14 starts, we have a sense of a camaraderie that befits a narrative involving real people scaling the heights of Bakhtin’s carnivalesque.

Aslan’s arrival signals the victory of the virtuous:
They all stood behind Aslan, on his right side, and looked through the open
doorway. (The Last Battle, 754)

The chapter ends once more with the Narnia world once more unfolding before us as we
have the carnival pageantry that has been discussed a while ago and the ‘para-real’ world
is made operative in full swing. There is celebration otherwise.

So the humans sat down on the grass. And when the Dogs had all had a
very noisy drink out of the stream they all sat down, bolt upright, panting,
with their tongues hanging out of their heads a little on one side to hear the
story. But Jewel remained standing, polishing his horn against his side.
(The Last Battle, 754)

The battle being over the leaders must now tell the masses of the truth. There is an
entirely significant speech both in the context of the narrative towards the end of the
last chapter. It is such distortion of the real that I have continuously tried to develop
in the course of my thesis. Lewis winds up this chapter in an attempt to wind up the
entire narrative. Once more the epithet normally used in real parlance is used in the
world of fantasy. After the battle is over Narnia has been saved and the evil forces
under Tash are being punished. The vegetation is eaten by dragons and giant lizards. Father
Time calls the stars down from the skies into the sea, which rises to cover Narnia. The series
ends with the revelation that it was only the beginning of the true story, "which goes on forever,
and in which every chapter is better than the one before." Many Narnian years have passed since
Eustace and Jill helped ensure the Royal line. But when they are jerked back violently into this
strangest of lands they find the present King in danger and Narnia facing its darkest hour. With
Eustace and Jill at his side, the King, the noble unicorn Jewel and a few remaining loyal subjects
must stand fast against the powers of evil and darkness and fight the Last Battle to decide the future of this once glorious kingdom.

There is the need for all to return to their own places.

And soon they found themselves all walking together – and a great, bright procession it was – up towards mountains higher than you could see in this world even if they were there to be seen. But there was no snow on those mountains: there were forests and green slopes and sweet orchards and flashing waterfalls, one above the other, going up for ever. And the land they were walking on grew narrower all the time, with a deep valley on each side: and across that valley the land which was the real England grew nearer and nearer. (The Last Battle,)

The problems have been resolved. Once more the lines are gripping and have in them a narratological grip which has made the Narnia world so real and so vibrant. Just before the end Aslan informs the children of a “real” railway accident that killed Lucy’s parents. I must quote the last paragraph of this brilliant narrative.

And as He spoke He no longer looked to them like a lion; but the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all stories, and we can most truly say they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before. (The Last Battle, 767)

Lewis manipulates reality and distorts it to create a ‘para-real’ world.