CHAPTER - II

GROWTH OF FANTASY FROM THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY TO EARLY 20TH CENTURY
T.S. Eliot has rightly said in "Tradition and Individual Talent" that every great writer not only imbibes something from the literary artists who precede him, but also, because of his originality, leaves an indelible mark on the imaginative writers who follow him. Rudyard Kipling, more than any other writer, proves this statement true. He forms a strong link in the chain of fantasy writers, which starts with Edgar Allan Poe, the father of the English short-story, and continues in Salman Rushdie, the most controversial fantasist of the present time. On the one hand, his works show a marked influence of short-story writers like Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Washington Irving, Oscar Wilde, Lewis Caroll and others who preceded him. On the other, he foreshadows H.G. Wells, George Orwell, C.S. Lewis, Tolkien, Salman Rushdie and others who followed him. However, the most wonderful thing about Rudyard Kipling as a writer of fantasy tales is his versatility.

Whereas Poe excelled in gothic fantasy, Hawthorne in allegorical fantasies, Lewis Caroll in animal fantasies and H.G. Wells in science fantasies, it goes to the credit
of Rudyard Kipling that he excelled in all kinds of fantasies. He has given wonderful animal fantasies which occur in *The Jungle Books* and *Just So Stories*, historical fantasies which appear in *Rewards and Fairies* and *Puck of Pook's Hill*, gothic fantasies which occur in *Life's Handicap* and *Plain Tales from the Hills* and scientific fantasies which appear in *The Day's Work* and *Many Inventions*. Moreover, Kipling has dealt with a variety of themes in his fantasies. Whereas Maupassant has dealt with psychological, Oscar Wilde has dealt with moral, Hawthorne has taken up spiritual, Orwell has taken up political and Tolstoy has dealt with ethical problems of people in their fantasies, Kipling has dealt with moral, spiritual, psychological, political as well as ethical problems of people in his fantasies. Before analysing some of the popular fantasies of Kipling to see what kinds of problems he has dealt with, it will be better to analyse some of the popular fantasies by the short-story writers who preceded him. This historical survey of the popular fantasies will enable us to understand and admire Kipling's fantasies in a better way.

It would be quite appropriate to begin this historical survey with Edgar Allan Poe (1809 - 1849) whose "The Black Cat" has been singled out by Brooke-Rose as the prime example of "pure fantastic." Poe, in fact, is the first talented writer to accept the short-story as a
distinct form of literature and give his best to it. Others before him had treated it either as a kind of poor relation of the novel or as a receptacle of material which could not be used in their normal writing career. It is for this reason that he is sometimes referred to as the Father of the Modern short-story.

Poe had a deeply complex and morbid personality which in literature expressed itself in a series of wildly improbable and terrifying excursions into the realm of the fantastic and the uncanny. He is not only the originator of horror and mystery fantasies, but also holds his own with all those who came later and built their achievements on his shoulders. None before him had explored the unknown and mysterious highways and byways of the unconscious, nor had anyone succeeded in creating a world so weird or so overpowering in its impact. In Poe's horror fantasies, two themes recur persistently - death and stages in the decomposition of human flesh, and analysis of the processes of fear and strange states of mind. In more than half a dozen stories, the theme is premature burial. In such stories we hear the cries of entombed men and women and shudder at ghastly suffocations. The details that Poe weaves in the texture of these stories make our flesh creep. In "Berenice" Poe has extended the horrible details to the length of making his hero rob a corpse of its teeth. In stories like "The Black Cat" and "The Imp of the Perverse,"
he has analysed strange states of mind and in "The Case of Mr. Valdemar," he has conveyed hallucinated horror with "crushing" effect.

"The Black Cat," which has appeared in most of the anthologies of short-stories, is, using Todorov's phrase, "pure fantasy." Throughout the story, we hesitate between the natural and supernatural explanation of the incident of the Black Cat's reappearance. In this story, Poe takes up a homely theme but invests it with a wealth of superstitions and gruesome details which create an atmosphere of a murky and clammy kind. The narrator's fondness for pets, his subsequent aversion to them, his perverse murder of Pluto, the startling appearance of the murdered cat's image, the appearance of another cat with identical characteristics, the hideous murder of his wife and the exposure of his quilt through the ill-omened cat form a sequence that grips one's imagination and sends shivers down one's spine.

The narrator's reiterated protestations that he neither expects nor solicits belief and that some calmer and more logical intellect will be able to reduce the phantasm of his mind to the commonplace lend not only credence to his narrative but also disarm any scepticism that may assail the reader's mind. This, as a matter of fact, is an effective weapon in Poe's armoury and he uses it most often to create an impression of verisimilitude.
Most of the readers note the simple device employed in the first paragraph to make this strange story credible. A condemned man is telling the story of his life "plainly, succinctly, and without comment."\(^1\) The events are terrible, but perhaps, says the narrator, "some intellect more calm, more logical and far less excitable than my own"\(^2\) may be able to piece them together in a proper succession of causes and effects. In thus leaving explanations to the more erudite, the narrator gives the impression of telling the plain, unvarnished truth. In fact, throughout the story the reader hesitates between the natural and supernatural explanation of the incident described in it.

"William Wilson", another tale by Poe, also offers two interpretations - (1) the supernatural that the double actually exists, and that the murdered man is in fact physically identical with the double whom Wilson had known in his boyhood (2) the psychological that the double and the murdered man are simply a figment of Wilson's deranged imagination. In the case of the mesmerist tale "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" the facts are presented as "authentic" case history. But here also the readers are impressed by the fantastic ambivalence. "The Fall of the House of Usher" is also open to multiple readings - the supernatural, the psychological and the burlesque.
Another author who made a distinctive contribution to the tradition of writing short-stories in the fantastic vein is Nathaniel Hawthorne, a contemporary of Edgar Allan Poe. Nathaniel Hawthorne had a wonderful gift of fantasy and mystery and his writings are characterized by intellectual detachment. As he lived a part of his early manhood in seclusion and solitude, he was in a position to perceive and enjoy the world of fantasy, dreams and subconscious and also to realise that the ordinary matter-of-fact world and the world of fantasy were really separated only by a thin veil. If we go through some of his fantasies, we shall realise the fundamental reality that underlies them and not regard them merely as the iridescent spray of an excitable imagination. In "Rappacini's Daughter" we have what is, on the surface, a fairy tale of love and poison, charmingly told, yet apparently remote enough from ordinary life. Beatrice has been brought up by her father in a garden of beautiful flowers which derive their fragrance and loveliness from poison. Living and breathing as she does in an atmosphere of poison, she is like one of the flowers, lovely as well as poisonous. Then she falls in love, and her lover finds out, to her horror, the tainted source of her life and beauty. The father is persuaded to destroy this poison in her nature, and administers a powerful antidote. The poison is annihilated, and with it her life also; for poison to her has become a second nature, a law of life, although it is
law of death to others. The psychological truth, underlying this ingenious little fantasy is incontestable, and Hawthorne, instead of leading us away from reality, as some weavers of fantasy do, brings us through fantasy to the very heart of reality.

"The Snow Image", another famous story by Hawthorne, is a delicate and exquisite little fantasy, told with the simplicity of Hans Anderson. No more charming commentary on the mischief wrought by kind, well-meaning, but unimaginative people could be desired. "The Story of David Swan" is another popular fantasy by Hawthorne. It deals with a young man who, while waiting for the coach to take him to the town where he may try his luck, falls asleep under the shade of some trees growing near the highway. While he is sleeping, several persons pass by. A man and his wife, attracted by his youth, wish he were their son. Had he awakened just then, the half-formed resolution might have been confirmed; but he does not wake up and they move on. Then comes a maiden tripping along; she is fair and sweet and made for love, and she looks with longing eyes on the sleeping youth. Again, if he had woke up just then, what might not the future have held for both of them? She looks wistfully at the upturned face and in her turn passes on. Then come men with murder in their hearts. They see the sleeping youth and covet his bag. But before they can
actualise their ugly designs the rattle of the coach is heard on the road. The youth wakes up and jumps on the coach, unconscious of the fact that during a brief space of time, while he was resting, wealth, love and death had each appeared in turn, and in turn passed him by. Through this simple episode, Hawthorne has beautifully commented on the possibilities of life, of the things that nearly happen. He has illustrated the truth of the idea that "Ignorance is bliss", by taking a page from the life of David Swan. Like all other fantasies of Hawthorne, it is also a didactic fantasy and the lesson embodied in it is its essence.

In short we can say that Hawthorne's fantasies are never meaningless; they are symbolic. Symbolism is a perilous weapon save in the hands of a great artist. In Hawthorne's hands, it is nearly always attractive, for it is never too obtrusive, never overcrowded. Donatello's pointed ears (in The Marble Faun) are delicately suggestive of his animal nature; the red stigma over Dimmesdale's heart suggests the corroding remorse within; the likeness of The Great Stone Face to that of the eager seeker who is expecting it to see it externalised as some other, never dreaming of himself, is a beautiful reminder of a familiar text. Sometimes the play of symbolism runs thin, as in "The Birth Mark" and the symbolism asserts itself overinsistently; but given the mood (and Hawthorne is essentially a writer for certain moods), the fantasies touch
the imagination delicately and pleasantly, like flowers that brush the face in the gloom, dimly seen but faintly fragrant.

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), a great short-story writer and novelist of the 19th century, also made use of the fantastic in his short stories. His short-stories have no artifice whatsoever. They flow so naturally, so effortlessly that one is hardly conscious of an artist's hand manipulating the narrative so as to distil some significance out of it. There is always some significance in Tolstoy's tales, for he was a writer who had a definite point of view and attempted, almost invariably, to stamp it on whatever he wrote. Sometimes he managed to do so without violently jerking his material in which case the finished piece did not suffer in any way at all, but acquired depth and even dispassionateness. But sometimes, the material did not take artificial grafting such as he sought to impose upon with the result that his writing became a piece of didactic tract-mongering without the artistic power and concentration that his novels usually have. In the final reckoning one can see that he succeeded as often as he failed.

Judging from this angle, however, "Godson", "Ivan, the Fool" and "The Imp and the Crust" are successful pieces of writing. These are beautiful fantasies which have a deep spiritual and moral meaning embedded in them. In "The Imp
and the Crust", Tolstoy creates a fantastic world of a devil and an imp who turn a noble peasant into a drunkard by providing him more than he needs. Through this short story Tolstoy has described the evil effects of drinking on human-beings and has told us how drinking dehumanizes a man completely. The last words of the imp to the devil are significant: "The Blood of Wild animals is always in man; but as long as men have only as much as they need, it is kept under control." But when a man begins to turn God's gift into strong drink for his own pleasure, the blood of the fox, the wolf and the pig in him all shows itself. If he goes on drinking, he will always be a wild animal.

There is no doubt that Tolstoy was a writer of intensely moral and religious susceptibilities. He firmly believed that art had no value unless it was instinct with morality. That is why there is a strong moral appeal in all his writings. The moral, however, is in no way obtrusive; it pervades his writings and creates imperceptibly its effect upon the reader's mind. His stories are indeed both absorbing and elevating. They are "earthly stories with a heavenly meaning." They not only entertain, but also inspire and uplift the readers. Naturally Tolstoy stands before the world today not only as a towering figure of Russian literature, but also as an apostle of peace and "simple living and high thinking."
Frank R. Stockton (1834-1902) is one of those writers who have won immortality through a single literary work. He is not among the front-rank story writers, but his story "The Lady or the Tiger?" is certainly among the best stories of the world. It has been translated into many languages and has always aroused discussion as it did at the time of its publication. Stockton is mostly known for his fantastic tales included in *The Floating Prince and Other Fairy Tales*. Even in his books for adults, he continued to make the same use of absurd situations that had made his juvenile stories popular. His fame now, besides "The Lady or the Tiger?" rests on the whimsically fantastic novel *Rudder Grange*.

"The Lady or the Tiger?" has been called an enigmatic fantasy. It starts as fantasy. It is about a queer king with a queer sense of justice that the author presents before us. He is semi-barbarous and autocratic so much so that he can turn all his "varied fancies" into facts. His poetic justice of both reward and punishment is purely a matter of chance. Guilty or not, an accused may be devoured by a hungry lion or married to a charming woman. "It mattered not that he might already possess a wife and family, or that his affections might be engaged upon an object of his own selection."4 That is the interesting situation that is presented before us.
But it is not the fantasy alone that appeals to the reader; it is the enigma - the enigma of the princess whether she should throw her lover into the jaws of the tiger or into the arms of the most charming woman - whether she should destroy her lover and consequently herself at a single stroke or be slowly consumed by a hundred pangs of jealousy. It is a universal enigma. It is not only the heart of that "hot - blooded, semi-barbarous" princess that has to decide, it is every heart, that throbs in a man's or a woman's bosom. It is a psychological problem that every reader has to decide for himself. Most readers have failed to decide it - that is the whole charm of the story. It does not finish when we come to the end of it; it begins and stays with us for hours and days. We revert to it again and again, discuss it from all angles and yet leave it undecided. It is this literary puzzle based on human psychology that has made the story charming and its author immortal.

Henry James (1843-1916), who is better known as a novelist than as a short-story writer, has written a few famous ghost-stories which have found their place in most of the anthologies of short-stories. Two of his stories "The Turn of the Screw" and "The Aspern Papers" have been written in the tradition of Pure Fantastic as defined by Todorov. For Henry James, the "ghost story" has been "the most possible form of the fairy tale."
has attracted an enormous amount of critical attention, and controversy has long reined over the perceived alternatives of the psychological (hallucinatory) and supernatural (ghostly apparition) interpretations. Todorov seizes on this tale as an example of the fantastic. Do the ghosts exist or not? For Todorov, "the answer is obvious: by maintaining the ambiguity at the tale's heart, James has merely obeyed the rules of the genre." The case for this has been persuasively argued in detail by Brooke-Rose and there is no need to rehearse the arguments again here.

The story "The Aspern Papers" has often been compared with Pushkin's "The Queen of Spades." But if we go through these stories a number of times, we find that "The Aspern Papers" by James is far more extensive in its atmosphere and especially its psychological treatment than "The Queen of Spades." The story in "The Aspern Papers" runs like this. The scene is Venice, presumably in the 1880's. The nameless narrator is an American literary scholar who is passionately involved in work on a celebrated American poet of the romantic period namely Jeffrey Aspern. In the course of their researches, the narrator and his London collaborator, John Cumnor, have discovered that a mistress of Aspern's, Juliana Bordereau, is unexpectedly still alive and living in Venice with her middle aged niece Tina. Sensing the probable existence of unknown Aspern papers, the
investigators have tried writing for information but have been unceremoniously rebuffed. The narrator arrives in Venice to try other means of access and conspires, prompted by his confidante, Mrs. Prest, to pose as a lodger seeking rooms, and in particular the use of an all too rare Venetian garden, in the spacious palazzo of the now impoverished Bordereau ladies. Following a preliminary interview with Miss Tina, the narrator, using a false name but admitting to being engaged on literary work, is rented room by the venerable Juliana, but at an outrageous cost (about twenty times the going rate, and in gold). After six weeks devoid of contact with his landladies, the narrator chances upon Miss Tina in the garden and, making a clean breast of his true intentions if not yet of his name, endeavours to enlist her assistance. Tina confirms the existence of valuable papers and gives a cautious undertaking to help. The narrator, anticipating Juliana’s imminent death feels terrified lest she should destroy the papers. From interviews with Juliana, he suspects that Tina has come to know his secret, although she has not disclosed it. Sure enough, Juliana tantalises him by producing a miniature portrait of Aspern, purportedly for valuation. Following this scene, Juliana is taken ill – or so at least it would appear – and her life is despaired of. The narrator reveals his real identity to Tina and learns from her that the papers have been moved; apparently by Juliana, from their
previous location. He absents himself from the house for some time, returning late at night. Finding all quiet, he cannot resist the temptation of glancing round the Bordereau quarters in the hope of locating the papers. About to rifle a wooden secretary, he is suddenly confronted by Juliana, who denounces him as a "publishing scoundrel" and faints. Conscious of having lost his nerve and blown his chances, the narrator leaves Venice for a twelve day trip. On his return he finds that Miss Juliana is dead and buried. Some what to his surprise, Tina receives him and makes him a gift of the Aspern portrait; still constrained by her aunt's wishes, however, she affects an unwillingness to show him the papers, unless and until he should become "a relation." The writer panics at such a suggestion and flees into the city. Returning late and sleeping on it, he seems to decide that the price might be worth paying after all, but in a final interview an impressively dignified Miss Tina informs him that she has now burnt them.

Though the story has a number of things common with Pushkin's "The Queen of Spades", it is also different from Pushkin's story in many ways. In Pushkin's story, Hermann apparently receives a ghostly visitation and feels subsequently haunted by the countess. But in Henry James's "The Aspern Papers", there are only the "feelings of being haunted" - of the narrator by Aspern, and of Tina by Juliana. Banta writes of James: "He carefully poured newly
attained psychological insights into the receptacles of the early romancers, gothicizers and tellers of fireside tales." In so doing, in using "The Queen of spades" as a highly suitable receptacle, James removed the overt elements of magic and the supernatural, but permeated his resulting performance with vestigial fantastic imagery, thus providing an excellent exemplar for Lurri Mann's categories of the "veiled" fantastic.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) has also written a number of powerful fantasy tales. Though an invalid throughout his life and often a helpless sufferer, he has been able to delight his numerous readers by his skilfully written and vivid stories of open air adventure by land and sea. His reputation as a delightful story-teller can be well-gauged from the fact that the natives of Samoa where he passed the last years of his life loved to call him Tusital - the teller of tales.

Ariel, Hamlet and the shorter Catechist cross and recross his pages as we read them. Probably each reader of Stevenson retains most clearly one special place. It is the Ariel in Stevenson that outlasts for some the other moods. If any one phase can be said to strike the keynote of his temperament, it is the whimsical, freakish, but kindly Ariel - an Ariel bound in service to the Prospero of fiction - never quite happy, longing for his freedom, yet knowing that
he must for a while serve his master. One can well imagine why John Addington Seymonds dubbed Stevenson "Sprite". This elfish element in Stevenson is most apparent in his stories.

The figures in his stories are less flesh-and-blood persons than the shapes—some gracious, some terrifying—that the Ariel World invokes. It is not that Stevenson has no grip on reality; his griphold on life was very firm and real. Beneath the light badinage, the airy, graceful wit that plays over his correspondence there is a steel-like tenacity. But in his stories he leaves the solid earth for a fantastic world of his own. He does so deliberately; he turns his back on reality and plays with phantom passions. Even his historical romances look like the ghostly editions of Scott.

His brilliant fantasy is revealed in The New Arabian Nights. His spirit of romance at a time when the crude tendency to realism held the field of fiction, found expression in The Treasure Island. Both of these publications roused much enthusiasm. With the publication of Kidnapped, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, The Master of Ballantrae, The Black Arrow and St. Ives, Stevenson's fame as a popular writer was firmly established. Treasure Island is considered to be a popular adventure fantasy whereas Kidnapped and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde belong to the school of "Sword-and-sorcery" fantasies.
In the composite figures of Jekyll and Hyde, Stevenson achieved a mythic formulation equalled only by Frankenstein and Dracula. Further, as everyone knows, Jekyll and Hyde as a phrase has become part of the English Language. Stevenson's last work Weir of Hermiston too has around and within it a vestigial aura of the supernatural.

However, Stevenson differs from other Victorian fantasists in two respects. Firstly, he is a fastidious stylist, while the majority of the writers do not care a whit about their style. Secondly he has an elusive and freakish humour which again is alien to the usual temperament of the fantasist. Both of these qualities impart a unique distinction to his work, though they carry with them also certain drawbacks. This sense of style gives Stevenson's best romantic work, whether in the more boyish moods of Treasure Island and Kidnapped or in the graver vein of The Master of Ballantrae and Weir of Hermiston, a splendour of workmanship and artistic appeal, fully counterbalancing the obvious indebtedness to masters like Scott and Dumas.

Maupassant (1850-1893) is another short-story writer who has contributed a few famous short-stories to the tradition of the "pure fantastic" as defined by Todorov. He has also expressed his views on fantastic in his essay "Le Fantastique"; these have been seen to approximate to the
more modern approaches of Todorov (on hesitation) and H.P. Lovecraft (on fear). From the considerable body of novels and short-stories written by Maupassant, a recent critic has computed a total of eighteen tales, spanning the years 1875 to 1890, as belonging to the genre of pure fantastic.⁸

Maupassant has written two stories on the theme of the severed hand. In "La Main", the hand features in the framed narrative of an examining magistrate. It refers back to the fate of an Englishman living in Corsica, the land of vendetta, who keeps a dessicated hand (said to have belonged to his worst enemy) chained to the drawing room wall. He dies of strangulation, with no sign of an assassin; the hand is broken and missing from its chain, having left, however, one of its fingers between the clenched teeth of the corpse. Investigations lead nowhere until the magistrate suffers a nightmare in which "I dreamed that I saw the hand, that horrible hand, running like a scorpion or a spider across my curtains and walls. Three times I saw that hideous relic galloping round my room, using its fingers as legs."⁹ The next day it is found on the Englishman's grave, the index finger missing.

Just as the proprietor of the hand retains a cool exterior while keeping loaded guns ready, periodically horse-whipping the chained hand, the narrating magistrate
also expresses a cool disbelief in the supernatural, while simultaneously dwelling on details which clearly belong to the code of the supernatural. The contrasting attitude of the narrator and of his narratees, a group of ladies (plus the implied reader), is shown further by the reception given to the magistrate's rational theory (that the rightful owner of the hand was not dead at all, and that he came looking for it with the hand he had left). The ladies do not believe the narration nor do most of the readers; and one suspects the magistrate too does not.

Maupassant's best-known story in the fantastic vein must be "Le Horla" written in 1886, with a definite revision in 1887. In this story, the diary writer feels himself gradually threatened and dominated by an invisible being which he christens "Le Horla"; determining eventually to kill it, he traps it in his bedroom and burns down the house, the servants and all; however, still believing it to be alive, he resolves on committing suicide as a final solution. Throughout the story, we find that these strange beings, because of their invisibility, become particularly horrifying. We may, however, consider the whole story only the vivid hallucination of an approaching madness. Maupassant, undoubtedly, intended both interpretations to be valid.
Through an invading creature which seems to come from within and without, this story furnishes something of the old and something of the new models found in fantastic literature—the double, the vampire, the evil spirit (of demonic or other possession), and now the alien and the mutant. This seems to be accompanied by or may be, the product of, any of the psychological conditions hitherto known to this literary tradition: persecution mania, schizophrenia, hysteria, hypnosis, or even animal magnetism. Maupassant's "Le Horla" thus looks both ways: its modernity has been frequently commented upon, but at the same time it can be seen to epitomise and recapitulate many attributes of the nineteenth century fantastic literature.

The greatest quality of Maupassant as a short-story writer is his objectivity. He observes without prejudice and reports without partiality. He does not come between the story and the reader. The story tells itself. The action, and not the writer, reveals character. There is no philosophy or ethics about him. Unlike Tolstoy, he does not exhort; he exhibits. He has no wrongs to right, no rights to vindicate. There is no "purpose" behind his work, no "palpable design." His world is peopled with all sorts of characters, but he himself is not there. He completely obliterates his own personality. He has no deep philosophy, no theories of art, no moral or social prejudice, no wealth of ideas to propagate. He is neither profound nor exhaustive.
but he is simple and naive. He goes on describing gently, sometimes even mercilessly, what he observes about him. All he says is "Look"; he does not care to decide whether it is good or bad. He leaves that to the reader's judgement and marches on. This makes him one of the most enthralling of writers in the world literature. Plot is the most important thing for him just as atmosphere is the most important thing for Poe, message is the most important thing for Tolstoy and style is the most important thing for Stevenson.

Oscar Wilde's (1854-1900) stories transport the readers to the fantastic world of angels and giants, talking birds and beasts. These stories which find a place in The Happy Prince and Other Tales set a new trend in their field. He uses poetic language in them and like a clever magician he whets the curiosity of his readers. His stories are really works of sheer charm.

One of the stories "The Selfish Giant" revolves round the idea "Where play the children, heaven descends." It transports us to a mysterious world where even the flowers speak like human beings, not to speak of birds and trees. The story runs like this. There was a garden which belonged to a Giant. As the Giant had been away for seven years, children would play in his garden among flowers and fruit laden trees. When the Giant came back, he built a high wall around his garden and frightened away the children. It
so happened that with the departure of the children, the winter, the snow, the frost and the hail permanently settled in the garden. The summer or the spring never visited it. But one day suddenly, the trees and plants got covered with flowers and birds began to sing. The Giant discovered that the change had occurred as some children had crept into the garden through a little hole in the wall and were sitting on the branches. He also saw a little boy crying bitterly under a desolate tree as he was unable to climb up the tree. The Giant's heart melted. He went forward and helped the little one on the branch. As he did so, the tree also broke into flowers. The children who had run away out of the Giant's fear came back and the garden looked gay. The children came there everyday but the little child never visited again the Giant who had grown old. Once he caught sight of the little child who was wounded in hands and feet. The Giant wanted to kill his tormentors but the child said that these were wounds of love. In fact, the little one was Lord Christ in disguise. The Lord said to him, "You let me play once in your garden, today you shall come with me to my garden, which is Paradise." The next day, the Giant was found dead all covered with white blossoms.

"The Happy Prince" is another charming fantasy which has appeared in most of anthologies of short-stories. It deals with the life of a prince who found real happiness
in the service of suffering humanity. When he lived in a palace, full of luxuries and pleasures, he was far away from being happy. But when he sacrificed his most precious possessions for the poor and the sick, he attained real happiness.

"The Nightingale and the Rose" is another symbolical fantasy rich with implications that transcend the immediate context. The writer wishes to tell us that true love demands devotion, dedication and sacrifice. But the student is incapable of rising to the occasion and so he fails to possess the most precious thing - Love. Nightingale sings of love and feels its pangs keenly. In fact she understands the secret of the student's sorrow and has an instinctive kinship with him. The professor's daughter wants a red rose as proof of the student's sincerity of love but a red rose can be found nowhere. To obtain one is not only a difficult task, but also one demanding toil and agony and surrender of oneself - the virtues which the student does not possess. Though he has learnt all the secrets of philosophy, yet not one of them has sunk into his heart or modified his character or given depth to his feelings. He laments because he is helpless and that is the end of it.

The nightingale who happens to overhear him feels deeply stirred. She knows what love is and without much ado she decides to suffer the torments of slow and painful death
so long as it can help a true lover to win his beloved. This is her only condition; but so intensely does she feel about it that even the indifference of the student who only knows the things that are written down in books fails to chill her ardour. And then she offers the supreme sacrifice. In lines charged with beauty and emotion, Wilde describes the delirium of her passion and the anguish of her death. As Wilde puts it, "Bitter, bitter was the pain, and wilder, wilder grew her song, for she sang of the love that is perfected by the death of the love that dies not in the tomb."11

But the student did not understand the significance of the nightingale's sacrifice. No wonder he was rejected. He was rejected by the girl because the Chamberlain's nephew had given her jewels which cost far more than flowers. The power of wealth could have been countered if there had been sincerity in the student's heart. In this case, not only was there absence of sincerity on his part, but also a positive pitiable blindness to the consecration of heart that the nightingale had displayed so magnanimously.

What does it all add up to? Love is a benediction that can be had only in return for sincerity and self-surrender. Those who philosophise about it and do not apprehend its spiritual overtones and undertones not only fail to live it and enjoy it but also are unable to
recognise its presence and perceive its ineffable bliss. It is due to the delusions of intellectual grandeur that people commit such follies, and the pity of it is that even after having committed them, they remain unconscious of what they are missing. And yet, those who are made for love such as the nightingale die uncomplainingly, happily because that is the logic of their natures and compulsion of their psyche.

Sincerity of emotions, the role of intellectual convictions as a code of conduct, the artist's need for experience and emotional richness, the problem of identity between emotions and deeds, and various allied questions are projected in a symbolic form in most of Wilde's stories which fall in a separate category from his plays. As a matter of fact, Wilde was a dual personality; one aspect of it was reflected in the wit and intellectual agility of his plays and the other aspect in the short stories. The two did not fully fuse together at any stage which explains the inadequate achievement of his early promise. However, his brilliance and inventiveness and wealth for imagery and talent for imaginative symbols is undoubted and his stories are striking example of one of the two aspects of his uncommonly gifted and fertile mind.

While Wilde's short-stories evoke "wonder" in Tolkien's sense, his novel The Picture of Dorian Gray evokes hesitation in Todorovian sense. Although imbued with the
particularly Wildean theme that "each man kills the thing he loves", *Dorian Gray* was basically conceived, years before it was written, on the idea of a young man selling his soul in exchange for eternal youth - an idea that is, as Wilde said, "old in the history of literature but to which I have given new form." Thus Wilde's devil's bargain, without a devil, or "secular version of a demonic pact" brings us finally to the nature of the fantastic in *Dorian Gray*. The story of the novel ostensibly belongs to the realm of the marvellous, but the supernatural is at best tentative. Carol Oats observes that the consequences of a Faustian pact with the Devil are dramatized, but the Devil himself is absent, which suggests that the novel is an elaborate fantasy locating the Fall within the human psyche alone. Miltonic references also support a reading of the novel as allegory of the Fall, as well as psychological allegory.

The next landmark in the world of fantasy-tales is "The Monkey's Paw" by W.W. Jacobs (1863-1943). Though W.W. Jacobs usually wrote humorous stories, in this tale of supernaturalism and terror, he has touched a new vein. For a quiet, almost naive beginning, a gripping climax, a powerful denoument, and more than these, for sheer sustained dramatic tension, it is unbeaten and a class by itself.

For a tale of supernaturalism, it is imperative to achieve the suspension of disbelief about which Coleridge

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talked so much with reference to his poetry. Failure to do so recoils upon the author and the reader feels both cheated and let down. In fact more stories get wrecked upon these shoals and it is rare to come across a successful piece of writing in this difficult and highly skilful art. Jacobs, however, has done it admirably. He has managed to create the right atmosphere and invest his characters with the psychological probability. The slushy weather, the lonely, out of the way place, the Sergeant Major with his background of India, teeming with fakirs and jugglers, a monkey's paw dried to a mummy with a spell on it, people wishing for death and having their wishes granted build the appropriate background to the credulity and cupidity of the ill-fated family with its disastrous train of events.

On the whole, a harrowing pattern is woven by the granting of the three wishes. The first wish is made in a casual off hand manner without much hope of its coming true, the second is a reckless bid to wish away the blight that has fallen upon their lives, and the third becomes imperative, if the second is to be prevented from taking its dreadful course. The sequence is arranged with the inexorability of fate and the remorselessness of tragedy.

As a matter of fact there is a strange and compellingly tragic quality about this story and even repeated readings do not release its grip on the imagination.
which, as it were, is held in a vice. One throbs with agony and suspense at the weird sequence unfolding itself pitilessly and hauntingly. The fate of the father and the mother and the emptiness that descends upon their lives creates an atmosphere of profound desolation and sadness and at places, it reaches moments of tension and terror that chill one to the bone. In short we can say that "The Monkey's Paw" is one of the best horror-fantasies of English literature. That is why it is one of the most widely anthologized of all stories.

H.G. Wells has given to us some of the best scientific fantasies like "The New Accelerator", "A Tale of Negative Gravity", "The Stolen Bacillus" and "The Magic Shop." In fact, he was the first important writer to project his imagination on the facts of science and create a world of fantasy as also scientific probability. At the time he started writing, scientific research had reached a stage where it was possible to look into the future and speculate on the various new avenues that were opening out. And if the imagination of one who chose to speculate was as impish and as sound as that of Wells, the result was bound to be stimulating as well as startling.

No one in recent times has told so many tell tales as H.G. Wells. Most other writers usually confine themselves to homely themes, themes that have their artistic compulsion

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in some impression or perception which is insistent enough to seek outlet. But not so Wells. His was a restless, impish mind. It was always trying to invert things, to turn them upside down, to see how they would look in different permutations and combinations. On top of it, his mind was both fertile and inventive. He would ask himself, for example, what would happen to a man if he were to take a medicine that would accelerate all the faculties of his mind and body. Or again, what would be the consequences of earth being invaded by the inhabitants of Mars, a planet not very far from our own?

In this way, he cast the search light of his imagination into scores of hidden and unexplored recesses of the known body of scientific knowledge and came out with brilliant anticipations some of which have been confirmed in subsequent years. Today, when we find dozens of writers writing about space and rockets, interstellar travel and radioactivity and similar fancies, their ancestry can be traced directly to Wells and the world, door of which he held ajar. This was a very original thing he did. He stimulated the imagination of scientists and laymen alike and gave them new awareness of what science could do. Today everyone is convinced of the tremendous potentialities and possibilities of science, but when Wells first gave his fancies to the world, it was like revealing a new dimension.
In "The Stolen Bacillus" Wells deals with the possibility of death and destruction on a massive scale, if a scientific invention or discovery is put to an inhuman use or if there is transgression of a law of science. In this story, Wells is concerned with the scientific discovery of bacteria which cause disease and death to both plant and animal life. Science in itself is neutral. Its goodness or badness depends upon the use to which it is put. The bacteriologist's principal objective is to eliminate disease and untimely death. But the anarchist wants to use the bottled bacteria for another purpose, that of destroying life. We shudder at the thought how, if the anarchist had succeeded in polluting the water supply at its source, the entire population of the city could fall a prey to the epidemic and the city laid waste. In the present day world we are faced with the nuclear holocaust. But the prospect of bacteriological warfare is no less dreadful. The story manifestly evidences H.G. Well's concern with human well-being. The bacteriologist in the story goes crazy when he learns that the bottle containing the bacteria has been stolen by the anarchist visitor. A master craftsman as H.G. Wells is, he makes the narration lively by his unfailing touch of humour at the same time that he gives us an insight into the disturbed state of mind of scientist as he dashes out of his apartment in a mad pursuit of the
anarchist. He marshals the details of the story in a manner that they engage our attention, arouse suspense and sustain our interest to the last.

"The New Accelerator" is another scientific fantasy. It deals with the discovery of a medicine known as New Accelerator which enables a man to think, move and work infinitely faster than he at present can do. Explaining its effect on man, the scientist Gibberne told the narrator: "Remember you will be going several thousand times faster than ever you did before, heart, lungs, muscles, brain - everything - and you will hit hard without knowing it. You won't know it, you know. You'll feel just as you do now. Only everything in the world will seem to be going ever so many thousand times slower than it ever went before. That's what makes it so deuced queer." 14 After the scientist and the narrator had taken the medicine, the world seemed to have changed completely. As they were going fast all over, the world seemed to be going very slowly. People changed to a picture, smitten rigid, as it were, into the semblance of realistic wax. While both of them had lived half an hour, the world had lived a few seconds only. Thus the whole world seemed to have stopped for their convenient inspection. However, soon the effect of medicine was over. They felt relieved to see that the whole world had come alive again, was going as fast as they were or rather they were not going faster than the rest of the world.
"The Magic Shop" is another pure fantasy. It describes some of the most queer and eccentric tricks of the conjuror. But everything in the story is made to look real. Never for a minute, do we imagine that we are in some grotesque or fanciful place. It appears that the shop lies round the corner where we can enter any day at will. Shopping goes on there as if it were a grocery or fruit shop. The details given make it real and life-like. It reminds one of Coleridge's art of making supernatural look natural. In fact, the way both the father and the son react to some of the tricks shows how well the author has succeeded in a complete "suspension of disbelief." When the shopman vanishes, they stare at each other with amazement. The father finds the magic "a little too genuine" for his taste and at times feels nervous. The long flexible nose of the assistant appears to him "like a thing in a nightmare." He does not want Gip to see it. The climax comes when Gip himself is made to vanish and the father is frightened. "Stop this folly," he says, "where is my boy?"15

But we should not forget that H.G. Wells who is known to the modern readers as a writer of scientific fantasies, as a social reformer and as a sociological novelist, is at bottom essentially an ideologist who uses the various forms of letters, fiction or the essay as means of airing his ideas. At first sight we might be inclined to
place him in the same category as Rudyard Kipling who is also, strictly speaking, an ideologist. And certainly, they have this in common — to each the literary form of their work is a secondary matter; they are primarily concerned to promulgate certain ideas and theories, and they use the form which seems to them the most convenient or suitable for the moment to effectuate their aim. Kipling has a theory of life, which, whatever be its merits or demerits, gives a homogeneity to his work — poetic or fictional. H.G. Wells has no definite theory of life. His writings are not the varied and continuous expression of any distinctive systematised outlook. If we carefully examine the themes underlying his scientific fantasies, his novels of middle class life and his social discussions, we discover a highly stimulating melange of ideas dealing with the conduct of life, but little organic connection between any of these ideas, and frequently a good deal of contradiction as to the relative importance of various ideas. Thus the way to assess his value as an intellectual force is not to regard him as the exponent of a new social philosophy but as a brilliant free lance skirmisher.

Whenever one thinks of H.G. Wells, one is also reminded of Jules Verne, who threw so many imaginary scientific speculations into ingenious narrative form. There is a significant kinship between Verne and Wells; but it is
only superficial. Jules Verne's ingenious mind never sought for any underlying human significance to his scientific speculations; Wells never, in his wildest fantasy, lost sight of the human factor and the cosmic note.

Before tackling Kipling, it would be better to remember that the tradition of the fantasy-writing was successfully carried forward by a number of writers after Rudyard Kipling. Horror fantasy, as a form in its own right, flourished in the tales of M.R. James and Walter De La Mare. In the twentieth century, we have been provided some beautiful religious fantasies by C.S. Lewis, sword and sorcery fantasies by T.H. White, psychological fantasies by Mervyn Peake, fantasies of the fairyland by Tolkien, animal fantasies by Richard Adams, pure fantasies (in Todorovian sense) by Toni Morrison and political fantasies by Salman Rushdie. One of the reasons why fantasy has always remained a popular form of writing is that fantasy, unlike realistic literature, being outside of our world and thus far from our immediate and personal concerns, more readily avoids personal and topical themes in favour of more universal ones. In short, fantasy is a universalizing element in literature. That is why it has remained a popular mode of writing through all ages.

Another reason for its being a popular mode of writing is that a fantasy has many levels of meaning. Asked
for his view of what it is in a fantasy work that appeals to readers of the ages of 9 to 10 to 85, Lloyd Alexander replied. "It seems to me that in a funny kind of way it has to do with substructures and subtexts and attitudes and feelings below the surface of the work itself." 16 "Subtexts" is the most appropriate word to describe the multiple levels of meaning and appeal that characterize fantasy. It is precisely this trait that gives works such as C.S. Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia an enduring appeal. On one level these books are meaningful example of effects of one's behaviour on others; on another they are Christian allegory; on another they are still more universal and archetypal stories of humanity's origins and destiny. Another example is Natalie Babbitt's Tuck Everlasting. On one level, this work is fascinating description of perpetual youth; on another, it offers a profound commentary on the nature of time and the problems of living outside time. Kipling's fantasies also belong to this category of fantasies. They have many levels of meanings. In the subsequent chapters, an effort is being made to unravel some of the mysteries behind these simple looking fantasies.
REFERENCES


2. Ibid.


6. Ibid., P.129.

7. Ibid., P.139.

8. Ibid., P. 99.


13. Ibid., p. 106.


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