Chapter II

FANTASY LITERATURE

Fantasy Literature, one of the rising and the most powerful genres of children’s literature is a genre, which has undergone an evolution from an earlier detached, light-hearted approach to a deep, didactic and powerful one, inculcating values of today, forcefully through the characters of fantasy. The very word ‘fiction’ perpetuates unreality, thus no work of fiction can be called real. No work of fiction eventuates exactly the way it was written; but an explicit work of realism like Alex Hailey’s *The Roots* is clearly converse to a patent artefact of fantasy like Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. Yet, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* contains characters like those one could meet in ‘real life’. Its protagonists speak English, Alice breathes air, has two legs like any other young child. As Eric S. Rabkin suggests in *The Fantastic in Literature*, an emphasis upon this antithetical relation to reality continually appears in the individual work itself:

While fairy tales use the World of Enchantment as their location, and are therefore highly fantastic, a true fantasy
such as *Alice* continues to reserve its ground rules again and again [. . .] Fantasies may be generally distinguished from other narratives by this: the very nature of ground rules, of how we know things, on what basis we make assumptions, in short, the problem of knowing infects Fantasies at all levels, in their settings, in their methods, in their characters, in their plots. (37)

Fantasy and our conception of what is fantastic depend upon our view of reality: what we find improbable and unexpected follows from what we find probable and likely, and the fantastic will therefore necessarily vary with the individual and the age. Many of the basic assumptions which the Middle Ages or the eighteenth century made about society, human nature, the external world and the laws that govern it appears bizarre upon this bank and shoal, while many of our century's slant towards body and spirit, like its technological, artistic, and political creations, would appear as pure fantasy to earlier times. Air travel, telecommunications, lasers, and creation of appurtenance were found only in the realms of magic and faerie but a short time ago. Nonetheless, obsolete ideas of reality in the early works of painting and literature do not, by themselves, create in us today a sense of the fantastic. This
requires a second element and this is something disparate from the usual; the reaction of a character within a literary work or some other contrivance, which signals to us that certain elements have to be accepted as fantastic and certain as real.

Fantasy is one of the most ambiguous notions in literary criticism, and it is often, used to denote anything that is not straight realistic prose, especially within the alentours of children’s literature. It has been treated as a genre, a style, or a narrative technique, and it is sometimes regarded as purely formulaic fiction. Fantasy literature is a modern phenomenon, although certain ancient authors may be viewed in terms of fantasy (Homer, Ovid) and although some important features of fantasy can clearly be traced back to Jonathan Swift, fantasy literature owes its origins mostly to Romanticism, with its interest in folk traditions, its rejection of the previous, rational-age view of the world, and its idealization of childhood. It being, a conscious creation, authors choose the form which suits them best for their particular purposes. The purposes may be instructive, religious, philosophical, social, satirical and entertaining; however, fantasy has distinctly lost the initially sacral purpose of traditional fairy tales. Fantasy is also an eclectic genre, since, besides fairy tales, it borrows traits from myths, romance, picaresque,
science fiction and other genres, blending seemingly incompatible elements within one and the same narrative, for instance Pagan and Christian images, magic wands and laser guns and many more. Fantasy is a genre under total and fast paced evolution. Many integrants which make literature fantastic completely depend on the writer.

The most common denomination for the various representations of magic in fantasy literature is the concept of the Secondary World. Thus, fantasy can be assumed roughly as a narrative combining the presence of the Primary and the Secondary Worlds, that is, our own real world and some other, magical or fantastic, imagined world. Patterns of introducing magic into the everyday events in fantasy literature, of combining the Primary and the Secondary Worlds, can vary from a complete magical universe with its own geography, history and natural laws to a little magical pill that enables a character in an otherwise realistic story, to understand the language of animals.

The second element which has arrested the attention of authors and readers is the time element. This specific motif, that is, time distortion in fantasy literature has motivated some scholars to view the texts where this motif occurs as a special sub-category of fantasy. Time-motif, is influenced by contemporary scientific thought, especially the
theory of relativity, more than any other fantasy integrant. Authors of fantasy meet a scope of problems when they venture on the exploration of time patterns. These relate to the questions of predestination and free will, of the multitude of possible parallel times, of time moving at different paces or even in different directions in separate worlds, the mechanisms of time displacement, and the various time paradoxes. Some scholars maintain that time-shift fantasy is the most intellectually demanding of all types of modern fantasy for both writers and readers. Time-shift fantasy allows the author more freedom to elaborate in sophisticated patterns while it allows the readers to see them more clearly. However, complicated time relations are present in all fantasy texts, independent of the dominant type or theme. In fantasy, the character may easily live a whole life in the imaginary world while no time will pass in his reality.

**The Two Principal Motifs in Fantasy**

Most scholars make a clear distinction between what they assume are the two principal motifs: Secondary Worlds and time travel or time displacement. There is undoubtedly more obsession with time as such in time-shift fantasy, that is, in the very notion of time, its philosophical implications, and its metaphysical character. But as to the construction of
a magical universe and, as a direct consequence, the build-up of the narrative, there are surely more similarities than differences in novels involving time shift or a Secondary World as the dominating pattern. The principal feature of time fantasy, time distortion, is also present in the Secondary World fantasy. At the same time, what is believed to be the principal pattern of the Secondary World fantasy, the passage between the worlds, is most tangible in time fantasy. This passage is often connected with patterns like the door, the magic object, and the magic helper, all of which are manifest in the Secondary World fantasy.

Events can be interpreted in two possible ways in most fantasy novels. They can be accepted as ‘real’, as having actually taken place. This means that as readers we accept magic as part of the world created by the author. But magic adventures can also be accounted for in a ‘rational’ way, as the protagonist’s dreams, visions, hallucinations or imaginations caused, for instance, by fever or physical or emotional disturbance. The next approach draws a clear distinction between the marvellous, the fantastic and the uncanny. The essence of the fantastic lies in the hesitation of the protagonist when confronted with the supernatural. This faltering is due to the factor that goes beyond the accepted natural laws. For the fantasy protagonist, the appearance of
witches or unicorns in his own reality, or being transported into another world, presents a serious dilemma. The events may be actually happening, causing us to accept the existence of magic in our own world. Alternatively, the characters may decide that he or she is dreaming or hallucinating but no definite answer is found in the text. In recent fantasy literature, from the 1980s on, the boundaries between reality and the Secondary World became more elusive and the passage often subtle, so that the hesitation is amplified. Further, following the development of natural science, fantasy literature tends to view parallel worlds as equally real, so that nothing is, positively, acknowledged as the utmost reality. Contrary to the straightforwardness of fairy tales, fantasy accepts more than one reality and more than one truth just as it accepts more than one world and more than one time.

**Backdrop in Fantasy Literature**

Just as cited earlier, the backdrop of fantasy is a very deviant component. This backdrop initiates the entry from the real world into the magical world. Most works of fantasy like Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* and J. K. Rowling’s novels share fantastic settings and characterisation, a prerequisite for fantasy literature. Though the settings in Lewis Carroll’s
works differ very much from J. K. Rowling’s, their worlds differ completely from the world that surrounds the reader. The works of these two writers frequently, describe a process of transition from a realistic world to the fantastic, and this is usually depicted initially in the novel. And when they do not, the travel of another sort often plays a significant role.

Apart from the transition, the setting of a work is the most obvious sign of a fantastic. Lewis Carroll’s works and J. K. Rowling’s series of novels are set in different worlds completely. In Lewis Carroll’s works, Alice must make a transition from her world to the new. In *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, she very famously goes ‘down a rabbit hole’ and once underground, she attempts to make another transition, this time through a small hole in the wall. While in *Through the Looking Glass*, she goes ‘through the glass [. . .] into the looking glass room’ which is simply the anteroom to an entire looking glass world. The works of J. K. Rowling also involve a transition from the ordinary platform, King’s Cross Station to platform number nine and three-quarters, King’s Cross Station, where the Hogwarts Express waits for the next transition which involves a journey from the railway station to Hogwarts School of Magic. The worlds of both the writers are
essentially normal yet slightly off – a dichotomy present in other
fantasies as well. Eric Rabkin writes that this is what differentiates a true
fantasy from a fairy tale, that it “continues to reserve its ground rules
again and again” (qtd. in George P. Landow, *Fantasy in the Conceptions
of the Real*). Alice’s worlds are defined by the ground rules of fantasy.

*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*’s world is frequently concerned with
the issues of size (certain things when eaten make one larger, while
others when drunk make one smaller). The world of *Through the
Looking Glass* is governed by a complex adherence to the rules of chess.

The world of Harry Potter is regulated by studies, discipline,
competitions, fights and relationships. While the worlds of J. K. Rowling
and Lewis Carroll have paradigms, which are unlike those of reality.

Mac Donald’s *Phantastes* resembles the Alice books with regard to
travel. The protagonist Anodos finds a ‘path to fairy land’ (23) that takes
him to another world. In Rowling’s *Philosopher’s Stone*, Harry Potter is
welcomed ‘to Diagon Alley’ (56).

Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King* and Browning’s *Child Roland to the
Tower Came* also take place in two completely different worlds.

Tennyson’s world is a mythic Camelot while Browning’s world is a
creation of many places which cannot be pin pointed. But on the other
hand Tennyson’s protagonist does not undergo any transition from one
place to the other as seen in Lewis Carroll’s and J. K. Rowling’s works.
The narrator in Browning does not make any transition as mentioned
above. Yet the worlds of these writers are defined in certain ways which
make them works of fantasy. Tennyson’s Camelot has its rules of
conduct and chivalry as well as premonitions and dreams. Browning’s
world is somewhat similar albeit in vaguer terms. These two texts
involve a lot of peregrination. Browning’s poem is a sort of travelogue
following the narrator on his quest. Tennyson’s *Idylls* is a sequence of
poems, each telling a separate story or is a separate entity by itself.
Travel does play a powerful role in both these writers as several
characters make voyages. These voyages denote some shift in vicinity.
The settings of these works clearly position them as fictions. But the
purlieus don’t make them fantastic. All these works create an essence of
reality even in their most fantastic moments, because they follow certain
internal criterion. All these works are also characterised by the travel of
some kind or the other which is a transition from the real world to the
fantastic. This transition is important because as George Landow writes
“something[. . .] must signal us that we are meant to take certain
elements as fantastic” (*Fantasy and the Conceptions of the Real*). By
depicting the voyages or wanderings, these writers hint to the readers that they are creating fantasies. This gimmick is one of the most significant appurtenant of fantasy literature.

**Personae in Fantasy Literature**

The next significant component after transition and time travel is the character without which no tale is complete. The characters that inhabit these fantasy worlds are a signal to the reader that the work is a work of fantasy. There are varying degrees of reality in the characters of these works. Sometimes the characters are so ordinary that one assumes that the writers are assuring their readers that the protagonist is ‘just like you.’ Even when the characters are drawn true to life, there are other elements which create a world of fantasy. Just as the world created by Carroll and Rowling, they create characters that are plainly of another world. Carroll’s books are full of anthropomorphic animals, human playing cards and many more. Rowling’s novels are set in Hogwarts School of Magic and are populated with wizards, goblins, elves, giants, centaurs and anthropomorphic animals. These characters follow Rabkin’s requirement for ground rules in fantasy. In Carroll’s texts, the frequent use of anthropomorphic animals (i.e., animals that speak, think and act like humans) is always housed in realistic situations. When Alice
first meets some talking animals, she frightens away a group of birds by mentioning her cat. While Carroll describes the birds in very human terms – they all find “various pretexts” to leave Alice (Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, 46) – they do so only because they are birds, who fear cats in the real world as predators. Even the most abstract character like the animated playing-cards, follow a version of the real world’s rules. The Queen card is indeed the Queen of Wonderland and the King and Jack play their appropriate roles as well.

**Goblins, Elves, Giants and Centaurs in Rowling**

On the other hand, Rowling’s goblins, elves, giants and centaurs introduced to the reader vividly, are similarly anthropomorphic. Thus the goblin is described as follows: “The goblin was about a head shorter than Harry. He had a swarthy, clever face, a pointed beard and Harry noticed, very long fingers and feet.” (Philosopher’s Stone, 56) While the giant is delineated as “A giant of a man was standing in the doorway. His face was almost completely hidden by a long, shaggy mane of hair and a wild, tangled beard, but you could make out his eyes, glinting like black beetles under all the hair.” (Philosopher’s Stone, 39) The elf as illustrated by Rowling: “The little creature on the bed had large, bat-like ears and bulging green eyes the size of tennis balls.” (Chamber of
*Secrets*, 15) The centaur, which is more human than the goblin and elf is portrayed so “To the waist, a man, with red hair and beard, but below that was a horse’s gleaming chestnut body with a long, reddish tail.” *(Philosopher’s Stone*, 184). All these descriptions develop these characters in our own minds very life-like and captivating. The above creatures have a deep understanding with the protagonist of the novels. They respect and admire Harry in all the novels. Each of these creatures has motivations and their personal identity.

**Wizards and Fantasy**

Rowling’s books are also populated with different kinds of wizards. Some of these wizards are born in ordinary families where magic was not heard of before like Hermione Granger, while Ron comes from a wizard family whose members are completely accomplished wizards, deeply interested in lives outside their existence and their world. On the other hand, Harry brought up by ordinary human beings, who detest magic with absolutely no connection with the magical world knows no magic until his eleventh birthday. Powerful, mysterious and flamboyant, the wizard has been a compelling figure in fantasy literature for as long as the genre itself has existed. Their pointed hats, mysterious ways, their wands and great deeds are familiar to any reader of fantasy
literature. Our childhood heroes and nightmares, as many of us grew up on stories fraught with their adventures. Within the fantasy text, these complex personalities can serve several important roles, taking the part of either the hero, counsellor, or menacing villain. Regardless of the actual role they play within a given story, wizards have several common elements and characteristics that typify them.

Wizards, in essence, are those characters who are able to manipulate the world around them through superhuman or magical means. The worlds they inhabit and the paradigms that bind them vary greatly from novel to novel, but the important integrants of the character type itself remain more or less the same. One of the great strengths of the wizard figure is that, nearly any type of character can be one. Authors have created wizards out of men, women and children of prototypes, backgrounds, dispositions, and abilities, but although almost any type of person or character in fantasy literature can be a wizard. These wizards have several important leavens in common. Wizards are first and foremost a concentration of the fantastic world in a relatable form. Though their powers and abilities vary, based on the fantasy world in which they exist, they are wizards precisely because of their control of fantastic powers beyond our conception of reality. Great magic, access to
wisdom, courage, determination and knowledge beyond that of normal men are their stock in trade, and they exist in a fantastic setting that we appreciate, but cannot always relate to. However, their humanity allows us to understand them to some extent, giving us some insight into their motives, desires, and actions and at the same time enabling us to relate to them to a greater degree than we would be able to in the case of another kind of fantastic creature, such as a dragon or unicorn, whose personality and motives are intentionally inhuman. In many subtle ways, this combination of fantastic and relatable elements allows wizards to serve as a bridge between the world we understand and the fantastic world we are trying to enter. Wizards in fantasy literature are rarely static figures. They are almost always driven by some quest or desire that they utilize their power to achieve. The quest is always towards something although that something often becomes clear only with the seeking of it. This quest usually has spiritual and religious overtones and the quest hero is appointed or ordained to his mission. It is always a grave, serious undertaking, quite often life-threatening, marked by a sense of struggle, of imminent danger in which the character must call upon all of his will and power to proceed. The goal usually leads the reader to a keener understanding of himself and the world. This is one of the primary
distinctions between wizards in fantasy literature and those in the older fairy tales and knightly epics that preceded the fantasy genre. In folk and fairy tales, which are more focused on the adventures of knightly heroes, the wizards often serve as no more than a plot-furthering device, giving the hero a quest to pursue and equipping them for the trials they eventually face. The adventure in fairy stories does not usually have a precise goal and it can lead anywhere. It may be undertaken for any number of reasons like boredom with one’s present situation, a wanderlust, a dissatisfaction with things as they are or it may be merely a whimsical frolic.

**Wizards and their Roles**

In fantasy literature, these wizards as mentioned earlier have been assigned varied roles, they themselves can play the role of hero like Harry Potter, and even those who are not actively heroic characters like Ron Weasley, Neville Longbottom, Ginny Weasley, Fred Weasley and George Weasley have goals and desires which drive them, and are generally much more dynamic figures than those of the preceding fairy tales. Wizards in Rowling’s novels have been involved in many widely varied pursuits, from the search for greater knowledge or wisdom to the quest to destroy a great evil, or an attempt to gain greater personal
wealth or power. It is not so much what they are pursuing that is important, as the fact that they are pursuing anything at all. With the emergence of the fantasy genre, the wizard became a distinct individual with goals and desires, an individual whose personality almost inevitably undergoes a transformation of some kind throughout the course of the story, as with any good character, which can be the result of experience and knowledge.

**Wizards and Moral Implications**

Most wizards specialise in the power of magic. In dealing with the mysterious powers of magic, wizards also provide the author with an opportunity to address important issues of morality. The force of magic with which they work, a fantastic element is at least relatable to other forms of great power in the world today, like money or political control. In fact, magic can in some ways be seen as a metaphor for power itself. Both allow those who posses them to alter their circumstances and the world around them, either for good or bad. The wizard with his spells often faces the same kind of challenges and choices as a modern day politician, only in a more controllable setting. Thus, wizards in fantasy literature often serve a very didactic purpose for the reader, allowing them to question and consider, in an indirect way, what they might not
otherwise have had the perspective to see.

**Limitations in Wizards**

Finally, the great power of wizards requires some form of opposition and limitation within the text. A wizard with unlimited power would in fact be a god. In many ways wizards are best defined by what they cannot do, rather than what they can. Often this limitation is achieved through the nature of the magic they use. Usually the magic of a world is restricted in application, or there is some sort of cost associated with its practice that limits its use to a large extent. All books in which humans can practice magic have some sort of practical limitation placed upon its use. In *The Lord of the Rings*, magic is a very subtle force. The story is focused much more upon the growth and development of the various characters through their experiences, and while the whole world is imbued with great wonder and mystery, and fantastic creatures abound, the active use of magic is rare. Additionally, what little magic is practiced carries a great and dangerous price. The One Ring, though useful in many ways, is exceedingly dangerous, and Sarumon's use of the Palantir corrupts him and turns him to an evil alliance with Sauron. In Rowling’s novels, magic is a very prominent force like in *The Lord of the Rings*. Yet all the stories emphasise on the
growth and development of the various characters physically and emotionally as they grow in age. Though the magic that is practised has its positive side and there is quite often a price to pay.

In most fantasy literature, wizards can and do play many different roles. Though in some texts they serve different purposes at different times, for the most part they fall into the category of active hero, counsellor, or villain. The role of an active hero is a common position for a wizard to fill, though often the wizard in question is either young like Harry or is somehow just beginning to learn how to control and utilize his powers. As with all other types of heroes, a wizard should learn and grow through the course of their adventure. However, due to the internal and mental nature of their power, their challenge often becomes much more focused on morality or character development than on actual skill or power. As they grow in knowledge and character through their experiences, they equivalently grow in power and ability. These heroes are emphasised by the writers with their qualities and motifs, the traditional hero on the other hand exudes many qualities like courage, determination, selflessness, sacrifice, love of truth and fearlessness towards death.
The Wizard as Hero

The wizard, Harry from J. K. Rowling’s novels is a prime example of the wizard as hero. He begins the novel more or less unaware of the realm of magic in his world or of his own latent ability. Lacking training, his power manifests itself when he unconsciously makes things happen when he is angry or extremely emotional. His challenge in the wizard world is, like that of many wizards. It is a challenge of the mind and heart, rather than one of sheer power. Harry begins his own story in the role of the hero, but in subsequent books in the series, his role is on par with Hermione. Hermione, his best friend and the sister he never had, proves to be greater than him in bookish knowledge and in magical ability. But, she ends up quite often a victim of experiments and miscalculations. Though Hermione plays a very active role in the story, the true hero of the text is Harry. In many ways, Hermione's crucial role involves in teaching and guiding Harry much of what he needs to know to defeat the Evil Lord, and though Harry finally overcomes the evil that threatened to destroy the world, it was Hermione who saved them both from death, earlier on, and afterwards. Hermione advises Harry in many ways as a friend, sister and a guide and on many topics. She can be considered as a primary counsellor in the novels.
The Wizard as Counsellor

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish the role of hero and counsellor, as the two often bleed into one another. The clearest way to distinguish between these two roles is to examine how the wizard influences events. The wizard fulfilling the role of the hero intentionally exerts his power to directly affect events. However, although the wizard in the role of a counsellor may at times directly affect events as well, he primarily influences the course of events by influencing others. His true role is that of a catalyst, as he provides insight, direction, and occasional intervention to others in an effort to facilitate their stories, actions and motifs. Professor Dumbledore, the Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Magic in Rowling’s works is clearly a counsellor in all the novels. He influences and helps Harry to overcome his hurdles, to come to terms with himself, to develop his talents and confidence to destroy the Horcruxes and the Evil Lord. No one would have known about the Horcruxes or the true nature of the Horcruxes without the help of Dumbledore.

Gandalf the Grey, and later the White, from the epic *The Lord of the Rings*, is another example of a wizard who functions primarily as a counsellor. Though at times he plays an active role in unfolding the
events of the story, for the most part, he serves as a catalyst, driving other characters to action and self-realization. Without Gandalf, neither Frodo nor Bilbo would ever have left the Shire, and Aragorn might never have taken his rightful place as the king of men. Until Gandalf discovered its true nature, no one knew what the Ring really was, and it was under his direction that they took up the quest to destroy it in the first place. With the words, "The Ring will not be able to stay hidden in the Shire much longer; and for our own sake, as well as for others, you will have to go, and leave the name of Baggins behind you" (Tolkien 61), Gandalf set Frodo on the path to Mount Doom, and he continued on in this role for most of the story that followed.

Even at his most active, Dumbledore still operates through a process of equipping others with knowledge and ability, getting them to the right place at the right time, giving them what little extra help they might need, and letting them do the rest on their own, thus boosting their self-confidence. For example, when the Evil Lord had finally risen to power to annihilate Harry Potter, he didn't work a massive spell to wipe the threat from the face of the world. Rather, he gave council and direction and left the fight to Harry Potter himself as he gathered help in the form of the Members of the Order, the children of Hogwarts, the
goblins and the elves. Though the counsellor is as powerful as or even more powerful than the hero, he usually takes a back seat all the while protecting the hero. The hero and the counsellor are positive characters in spite of numerous flaws in them.

**The Wizard as Villain**

The next role that wizards often play is very divergent from the first two. Wizards in fantasy literature often take the role of the villain, a part they are particularly well suited for. Wizards often make excellent, believable villains. Their great power offers a solid, significant challenge to the heroes who oppose them, and their motives are often quite clear and understandable to the reader. Evil wizards act in an attempt to gain something through their power, usually at the expense of others. Immortality, absolute power, great riches; all these and more have been the object of the evil intentions of wizards in fantasy literature countless times. The Dark Lord or Voldemort from Rowling’s texts provides an excellent example of the wizard as villain. His power enslaved nearly the whole realm of the Magic World killing any one who opposed him until he tried to attack Harry Potter’s family who were completely against him. He became a maimed creature with the attack; but rose once again to power with the help of his faithful followers, the Death Eaters. Harry
Potter who unknowingly carried part of the Evil Lord in him sabotaged many of his plans, aware of the evil plans of the Wicked Lord through the ‘Soul’ connection. The Evil Lord’s power is challenged by Harry Potter because he could not comprehend how a year-old baby could destroy him in the first place. He decides to destroy Harry Potter because of the prediction that only one of them would survive. Here, we see a wizard using his powers, not for the good of the world but for his own ends – in this case the complete domination of an entire world though Dumbledore inspires and instructs Harry to search for the Horcruxes and destroy them which will end in the Evil Lord’s destruction.

Without his Horcruxes, Voldemort will be a mortal man with a maimed and diminished soul. Never forget, though while his soul may be damaged beyond repair, his brain and his magical power remain intact. It will take uncommon skill and power to kill a wizard like Voldemort, even without his Horcruxes.

*(Half-blood Prince, 475)*

Dumbledore reassures Harry that with the destruction of the Horcruxes which carry his divided soul, Voldemort will be shaken and then only can he be destroyed. Though wizards in the role of villain are a
common sight, they are none the less compelling and effective for all their familiarity. At first glance, an evil wizard intent on conquering the world is clearly a purely fantastic figure. Figures like the Evil Lord and the Death Eaters belong firmly placed in the realm of fantasy fiction. Yet, the characteristics that make them villains are those that we the readers must face in our own lives in some form or another. The struggle against some force greater than us is a common theme in life. A dictator oppressing his country, a corrupt multi-national corporation, crooked politicians, and many of the other great forces of life that work for their own ends at the expense of others have a striking amount in common with the wizardly villains we have encountered throughout our reading and will encounter again.

This, then, is the familiar figure of the wizard, one of the most complex and dynamic literary archetypes, spanning various textual roles and being played by many different characters. This stereotypical wizard figure has in fact become so familiar, that in the post-Tolkien days, many authors attempt to find some kind of variation of the wizard figure, or even to achieve variation through the satire of the classic wizard figure. The wizard, Schmendrick from *The Last Unicorn* is an excellent example of this trend. So also is Neville Longbottom in the Harry Potter
books. He is just familiar enough for us to draw parallels and
correlations between him and other famous wizard figures, yet he and
Schmendrick for example are really nothing alike. Neville, a timid
wizard is cowed by everyone. His primary skill is failure, and throughout
the book he manages to fail spectacularly at almost every magical
undertaking he attempts. During the first Potions class, Neville
Longbottom manages to explode his cauldron without meaning to do so,
resulting in severe blisters and burns all over him. These and other
humorous moments cast Neville Longbottom as an incredibly comic
classic character, despite his magical ability. The few times he does succeed,
right up to the end of the adventure, are usually mistakes or the results of
a random expression of his power. Neville Longbottom is an
intentionally comic figure, poking fun at the traditional figure of the
sombre, poised wizard always in control of himself and his surroundings.
Yet even as he satirically mocks the classic fantasy wizards, he strives
to, and eventually succeeds at, becoming one of them. When the
adventure is nearly over, Neville Longbottom is transformed from the
comic failure to a great and powerful wizard, on par with Harry, or
Hermione, or any of the other great wizards of the fantasy tradition as he
destroys Nagini, the snake, one of the Horcruxes with the Gryffinder
The Role of Animals in Fantasy

The next motif, scattered in all fantasy novels are the animals that speak, those that do not speak but understand the language of humans and their feelings, and the anthropomorphic animals. Books like Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* show the latter kind of animals whereas in Rowling’s books, one comes across animals which sense the feelings of human beings, animals which talk but behave like animals, animals which are visible only to those who have lost their loved ones like the ‘Thstral’ and the fourth category the ‘Animagus’ which were humans who could turn into animals whenever they wished to do so. Both types of story have their merits and their difficulties. The author who tries to portray a real animal from within is up against the basic fact that we do not and cannot know what it feels like to be animal. True, the more the author knows about the animals he is writing about, the better qualified he will be to attempt that perilous imaginative leap into the animal mind. But the procedure must still be speculative. Perhaps as a last resort that all the writers can do is to stretch their own imagination and those of their readers by pretending to be part of the animal family. The humanized-animal story also has its
risks: it can easily degenerate into sentiments and whimsy, and even into falsehood, as when we tend to distinguish between ‘good’ animals usually meaning nice furry ones and ‘bad’ animals which are slimy or snappy and generally not cuddly. In fiction, the humanized or semi-humanized animal has a long tradition behind it. African folk tales and Western folk tales are full of humanized animals. In the African folk tales, the animals have broadly human attributes modified by their animal characteristics. In the Western tales, there is a loose camaraderie between man and animals. This kinship is something that is exhibited in a very naïve way even among small children. Small children do not usually differentiate between themselves and animals or the people around them.

In children’s literature, animals were given a good start in the eighteenth century. Even by the end of the eighteenth century, and the beginning of the nineteenth century, when liberal-mindedness in writing for children was most insisted on, animal stories with an element of fantasy was managed to be written and approved. Animal stories appeared intermittently in publisher’s list during the first half of the nineteenth century, but there is nothing which is of any real interest today. Many stories were written during this time but the only one worth
mention was Anna Sewell’s *Black Beauty*. *Black Beauty*, the only book of Anna Sewell, was written to induce kindness, sympathy and an understanding in the treatment of horses. This text expresses the ups and downs of a horse’s life. The whole story is narrated by the horse himself. Throughout the novel the author was concerned to put across her message, and that was only from the horse’s point of view – which is naturally her point of view. Even though the whole book does make interesting reading, it emphasizes on the treatise of the care of horses, illustrated with numerous examples. It survived only through its successful appeal to compassion in children and because it carried conviction too.

**The Theme of Death in Fantasy**

Fantasy literature introduces the theme of mortality to make the readers relate to the story and the characters. It is unavoidable because it brings in reality into the world of fantasy. The theme of mortality and immortality, well thought out and sometimes subtly presented, appears in the works of many well-known figures in fantasy literature, especially C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, Ursula K. Le Guin, Peter S. Beagle, Stephen R. Donalson, Gene Wolfe and J. K. Rowling. Though these works often begin by presenting death as fearful and portraying
immortality as desirable, ultimately they attempt to transcend death, answering the question why one should not feel it: because the after-life can be wonderful, because mortality in fact provides more advantages than immortality, and because death and life form a cycle of life; without one or the other, the stage of life would become incomplete. Most people view death with fear, and many works of fantasy literature reflect this attitude. Death has been part of mankind from the beginning of the world. Yet, to date, death is a mystery that eludes proper elucidation. In ordinary terms, the terminus of life is death. Both C. S. Lewis and J. K. Rowling use death as a suspense maker in their narratives creating excitement and fear in the reader’s mind. In Rowling’s *Chamber of Secrets* the main character experiences a death-like feeling when he is attacked by the Basilisk, the King Serpent in the secret chamber. Harry feels “If this is dying, thought Harry, it’s not so bad. Even the pain was leaving him [. . .]” (236). By portraying death and its psychological effects on the living, J. K. Rowling effectively narrates the battle and affects the reader’s emotion. Death is viewed from a myriad of perspectives. The most fundamental questions of existence are pondered upon, with more often than not, a negative slant. The possibility of sadness brought by the loss of loved ones touches upon the reality of
human beings’ mortality, to which every reader can relate. In *Goblet of Fire*, Cedric Diggory is an innocent victim of the Evil Lord. In *Order of the Phoenix*, Sirius Black is killed by Bellatrix, one of the Death Eaters, a follower of the Evil Lord. The loss of his godfather devastates him, for Sirius Black was the closest being he had ever had as family. Repeatedly J. K. Rowling portrays death in her sixth and seventh novels.

In *Half Blood Prince*, Harry faces the death of his counsellor with shock. He believed his counsellor to be the greatest wizard of all time, indomitable and never to be defeated by anyone or anything at any time in his life.

[. . .] but there was still no preparation for seeing him here, spread-eagled, broken: the greatest wizard Harry had ever, or would ever meet!

Dumbledore’s eyes were closed; but for the strange angle of his arms and legs, he might have been sleeping. Harry reached out, straightened the half-moon spectacles upon the crooked nose and wiped a trickle of blood from the mouth with his own sleeve. Then he gazed down at the wise old face and tried to absorb the enormous and incomprehensible truth, that never again would
Dumbledore speak to him, never again could he help [. . .]

*(Half Blood Prince, 568)*

Harry Potter, who has always depended on Dumbledore realizes that there are many things that he would have to face in the future without any guidance and support. However, as much as one dreams about immortal beings, human beings can never escape death. Mortality confronts fantasy writers as a reality in life. Among other concerns, the omnipresence of death percolates through. This reality inspires many fantasy writers to come up with ways of accepting death and mortality. There is complexity about Rowling’s dalliance with death. Rowling portrays what comes after life so alluringly that one does not have to worry about death. Only mortals like human beings possess kindness. Furthermore, some immortals cannot experience life the way mortals do. Rowling values humanity and uses it to argue against immortality. For Rowling, a human being is capable of loving and should nurture this powerful emotion. This is communicated through Professor McGonagall in *Half Blood Prince* after the murder of the headmaster Professor Dumbledore. Tonks tries to persuade Lupin, a werewolf, to marry her, but scared about the future, he is afraid to commit himself to marriage and commitment believing that she deserves somebody better. Rowling
uses Professor McGonagall as her mouth piece: Dumbledore would have been happier than anybody to think that there was a little more love in the world’ said Professor McGonagall curtly (Half blood Prince, 582).

Finally, like Le Guin, Rowling offers a different approach to mortality. Both these writers portray death as a natural stage of life, with a hint of a belief in a reincarnation: all those who love Harry appear to his aid and help to shield him in Goblet of Fire to enable him to escape from Voldemort who has arisen once again to power. In Hogwart’s School of Magic, Pevees and Headless Nick, creatures from the dead, are still very much present haunting the corridors of Hogwarts though they have been dead for centuries. Moaning Myrtle, a victim of the Basilik, in Chamber of Secrets is upset when Harry, Ron and Hermione talk about her as if she is dead complaining that even the dead have feelings. She has a terrible fascination for Harry Potter even though she has been dead for fifty years. Rowling portrays these characters from the dead as having feelings like those alive in order to communicate to her reader that they were once breathing air just like any of them creating eeriness to the gothic setting.

The balance of the Universe is maintained through birth and death. Most fantasy writers bring in reality into their works by exploiting
these motifs. Death for Le Guin and Rowling represent a part of a cycle of life, which, along with other things, constitute the balance of the world. When one craves immortality and tries to make it come true, the balance in the universe is disturbed. In *Deathly Hallows* the whole wizard world join hands with Hogwarts School of Magic to destroy the Evil Lord and the Death Eaters, his followers. The armours, tables, desks, chairs join in the defense commanded by Prof. McGonagall. Rowling like Le Guin implies that without death, life does not exist. Both of them argue that death and life go together and that human beings cannot choose to have only one without the other.

The question of mortality and immortality always stays in our collective consciousness. The vision presented is that death is not the end, there is the apocalyptic light of sunrise and the affirmation of a new day. Unlike realist fiction, bound by the need to explore real social conditions and human being’s limitations, fantasy literature can explore philosophical questions that transcend the realm of the real. Fantasy writers, therefore, often bring up the issue of mortality and immortality in their works. They often portray death as fearful and dream about immortal beings, a reflection of the general attitude of most people. Fantasy writers still face the fact that human beings, no matter how they
view death or crave immortality cannot escape death. These writers then try to offer an answer, an explanation to mortality in different ways. The merit of each explanation is relative. It may depend on personal belief, but the central message is clear; embrace your life and indeed your mortality, not only because you cannot escape death, but because mortality is in fact the positive thought of your life.

The Free Rein of Fantasy

Fantasy marks a departure from the real world to a magical place infused with imagination, adventure, and wonder. Within this literary tradition, writers have the freedom to invent a separate or self-contained fantasy world, by combining realistic elements with those, which are entirely from the author's own perspective. This construction provides such writers with a new means by which they can define, explain, and comment on the universal aspects of human existence and reality. By means of this outlook, fantasy provides authors with a fresh and original approach to convey traditional, archetypal beliefs and ideas. Lewis Carroll and J. K. Rowling employ fantasy in this manner to create a new accessibility to literature which gives pleasure to the child and the adult alike.
The next element that fantasy writers exploit is the duality in human nature. This typical literary concept is represented in various ways by fantasy writers. It is usually seen as a physical separation of the person into two halves: the individual and his shadow. The writers of fantasy thus symbolize the intangible force of human evil in a concrete, corporeal form. The struggle to overcome and triumph over one's shadow illuminates the individual's challenge for reconciling the opposing forces of good and evil within the self. J. K. Rowling has developed this concept in the creation of the Evil Wizard, the Dark Lord. The Dark Lord divides his Soul into seven in order to attain immortality and power. His attempt is foiled by Harry Potter even when Harry was a child. Harry survived the attack of the Dark Lord because of the shield erected by his mother’s self-sacrifice. The Dark Lord’s second attempt is once again thwarted permanently by Harry Potter even though the Dark Lord has saved his seven souls in different objects. Harry Potter realizes that the only way to destroy the evil Lord completely is to destroy himself as the seventh part of the soul was buried in his soul.

With self-knowledge and self awareness, the individual now has the ability to act deliberately, in accordance with his own conscience,
and to maintain an inner strength to overcome human weakness. By awakening individuals to the reality of their existence, writers of fantasy create complete human beings who become heroes, when they sacrifice themselves for the good of the world. Ultimately, human beings come into the world with the power to carve a path of light or darkness, of good or evil; people must acknowledge that with that power comes significant responsibility for oneself as well as for one's surroundings. In order to maintain the self and this power, the individual must reconcile the forces of good and evil in his nature and come to know his true self completely. Equipped with the faculties of self-restraint and moral consciousness, human beings must struggle to find the inner strength to triumph over their weaknesses and enrich their world with goodness.

**Values in Fantasy**

Many books of fantasy include magical beings, like dragons, unicorns, and wizards, and fictional places, like Middle Earth, Fairy Land, and Earthsea. These literary elements all contribute to the work's sense of adventure and imagination. However, beneath the fantastic surface of all the terrible, the beautiful, the magical, the supernatural and mysterious, beyond all the fantastic, exists an exceedingly more important message with moral implication. Throughout many works in
this genre, writers often emphasize the essential responsibility that comes with the power of a position, the power of knowledge and the power of goodness in human life. Many heroes in fantasy demonstrate the need to resist the temptation of evil and to learn by means of their own failures, the ultimate virtues of self-sacrifice, humility, and self-knowledge. Finding the inner strength and goodness to triumph over one's own weaknesses remains an important theme in the works of fantasy and in every day human life. By self-realization and in remaining true to oneself, human beings can learn to live deliberately as whole, unified beings. Fantasy literature emerges as a genre deserving serious attention through the messages it conveys to the reader, and possibly a second look from those who have deemed it as superficial and insignificant.

Fantasy genre is often misunderstood, even criticized and viewed as only entertainment, but little else. The complex, dynamic figure of the wizard is one, among many examples of the strength and flexibility of the genre, however. The fictional setting and focus on imagination and creativity, which often frees the author to address whatever issues he or she desires, allows the creation of versatile character types. These characters, like the wizard, are able to fill many roles and serve whatever
purpose the author desires. Fantasy genre is in fact an incredibly strong and vibrant one, in which wizards have played an important role and will most likely continue to play for as long as the genre itself exists.

**Myth, a Predominant Motif in Fantasy Literature**

Myth, highly exploited by writers of fantasy lends credibility to the work. Manipulation of these exponents adds a powerful twist to tales of fantasy. It is an inevitable component that gives the stability that is much needed. Myths are stories that originate in the folk belief of nations and races presenting the supernatural as the dominant element. Mythology evolved as primitive man searched his imagination and related events to forces as he sought explanation of the earth, the sky and human behaviour. He arrived at the conclusion that a higher power controlled the phenomena of nature and those gods and goddesses represented such virtues as wisdom, purity or love. Gods took the form of man and woman, but they were immortal and they possessed supernatural powers.

This motif deals with relationships, that of human with Gods, and gods among themselves. Acceptance and fulfilment of destiny, the struggle of people within and without, between good and evil forces is abundant with action. Myths filled with suspense, are short and can be
classified into Creation Myths, dealing with the creation of the Universe; Nature Myths, which interpret natural phenomena like seasonal changes, animal characteristics, earth formation, constellations etc.; Hero Myths, refer to a hero who is given certain tasks or feats or a quest to accomplish, which he does successfully or dies in the attempt after succeeding.

The recurrent quest patterns in myth, common to most cultures, are exploited to the maximum by fantasy writers. Rowling, a typical fantasy writer has exploited to the maximum the myth motif as is illustrated in her chapter. These characters, the backdrops, the action packed lives, are symbolic representations of today’s mankind. They represent the human race where with the development of science, technology and media, one is forced to believe in such modes of life.

This chapter has elaborately studied fantasy literature, its strategies and how it is manipulated by different writers, with special emphasis on Rowling and Carroll. The next chapter is an analytical study of Lewis Carroll, his works, his personal and societal influences and the narrative techniques employed by him as a writer of fantasy literature. Lewis Carroll exploited on some of the motifs of fantasy and yoked it with his ideas and age into two powerful texts as illustrated in it.