CHAPTER -III

FANTASY AND THE ADULT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP :

ALICE’S ADVENTURES IN THE WONDERLAND AND HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER’S STONE

All classic books of children talk about ideals. Adult books seek to depict and explain the world as it actually is where as books for children portray it as it should be or as it could be. Child readers usually come to the world of books in expectation of stories which would take them away from the paltry restrictions of life. Adults, on the other hand, want the children’s books to be endowed with some instructions and a certain set of morals apart from fun and entertainment. Children desire to get submerged in the world of fantasy and read stories where they can come across people who can fly, fairies who can grant boons, geese that lay golden eggs, the lamp that can turn their fortunes, spaceships piloted by children, anything that matches with their idealized and fanciful world.

Fantasy is closely associated with children’s writings and is considered to be at the core of all children’s literature. Since long fairy tales and fables have been considered to be more suitable for children and today they have become a part of children’s literature canon. Many a critics have argued that the outpouring of the works of fantasy in the mid nineteenth century, marked the beginning of a new era in children’s literature. Fantasy comprises of stories involving supernatural or impossible - magic, ghosts, talking animals and superhuman heroes, time travel, hallucinations and dreams. The emergence of fantasy books such as Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1865), which had imagination, adventure and playfulness at its centre, played a most significant
part in the development of a ‘true’ children’s literature. Alice’s Wonderland, Peter
Pan’s Neverland, C. S. Lewis’ Narnia, Baum’s Oz, Tom’s Midnight Garden or Harry
Potter’s world of Hogwarts can be regarded as psychological portrayals of childhood,
‘places from which one is exiled as soon as one grows up’. J. M. Barrie took the children
on an adventure to Neverland in Peter Pan (1905), Kenneth Graham rendered them an
access to the surprisingly human jaunts of Ratty, Mole and Badger in the Wind in the
Willows (1908) and Charles Kingsley thrust them into underwater excursion with The
Water Babies (1863), C. S. Lewis opened a wardrobe door into Narnia (1950-6), Philip
Pearce in Tom’s Midnight Garden enabled the children to step back in time (1958), and
George Lucas took them on an expedition of the alien worlds through space in Star Wars
(1976). The fantasy genre has continued to grow and evolve in the contemporary times
as well which is well exemplified in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter Series (1997-2007),
Philip Pullman's trilogy His Dark Materials (1995-2000) and Stephenie Meyer's Twilight
Saga (2005-8).

When an author writes about a fantasy world like Wonderland or Narnia, it’s a
make-believe world he is creating which can be imagined but cannot actually be
inhabited. Similarly all adults who write about childhood, depict a world that they cannot
directly experience any longer. According to this view, prominently put forth by
Jacqueline Rose in The Case of Peter Pan or The Impossibility of Children’s Fiction
(1984), any children’s story can be regarded as an adult’s fantasy of what childhood is, or
should be. All fiction can be said to comprise of element of fantasy as it presents an
imaginary world of people and events (Rose 24). Many critics have explained fantasy as
one which depicts events that could not, rather than did not happen. However this

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explication is also ambivalent: Matthew Grenby points out that ideas of what is possible and what is impossible or supernatural vary according to time, place and point of view (Grenby 145). The modern readers look upon the stories of witchcraft and magic as fantasy while for medieval readers they would have seemed to be within the range of possibility. Philip Pullman's Trilogy, His Dark Materials (1995-2000) portray the cosmology of Christian Church as a diligently constructed fantasy, but for billions of people around the world existence of God is not only a likelihood but a certainty.

According to Peter Hunt the traditional explanation for children's enchantment with fantasy is a romantic one: "that children are closer to the unknown, the unseen and the mystical...[besides] for children the distinction between reality and unreality is blurred, so therefore they scarcely have to suspend disbelief..." (Hunt 269). Karen Coats remarks:

As an ordinary human activity, fantasizing or creating fantasies plays a crucial role in establishing the life-world of a subject ...we could say that children are thrown into a world that they did not make and yet must make something of, and the tools they have to craft a coherent and meaningful existence consist of their bodies, the languages of their social world and a culturally scripted set of narratives and representations that they internalize, test and use innovatively to construct a sense of self ("Fantasy" 76).

Rose argues that the child portrayed in books for children especially fantasy is constructed by an adult. Rose further remarks that the child in fantasies such as Peter Pan, or Alice in the Wonderland is the result of adult's desire for an eternal, innocent child. Rose suggests as quoted by Rudd:
this Romantic child figure is a product of an adult need to create a space of innocence, beyond the divisions of society (of sex, gender, ethnicity, etc.), most keenly seen in Rousseau's ideal creation, *Emile*. Although such a child could never exist, fictional versions of this being have regularly been presented to children as role models (Rudd, 238).

Karen Coats basing her argument on Lacan's psychoanalytical theory of Desire and subjectivity observes:

> By offering substantive representations for words and things to the child, stories, especially those found in children's literature, provide signifiers-conventional words and images-that attach themselves to unconscious processes and have material effects on the child's developing subjectivity. Thus we could say that the stories we read or are told as children have as much to do with shaping our subjectivity as do our primary existential relationships. (Kindle edn. location 40-42).

Thus we can say that fantasy and child readers meet on a paradoxically familiar space. Writers of Fantasy construct worlds in the manners similar to those children have utilized to build their own worlds: the world of family relationships, home and outdoor spaces, which includes names of persons, places and concepts, fears and time shifts.

Psychologist Bruno Bettelheim considered fantasy useful for a child's psychological development. Bettelheim believed that fantasy help children in dealing with fearful and negative emotions and remarks that "without fantasies to give us hope, we do not have the strength to meet the adversities of life. Childhood is the time when these fantasies need to be nurtured" (Bettelheim 21). Fantasies seem to address
multifarious aims and issues. It can be a way to explore moral issues without complications, or it can allow writers to address themes too subtle or too difficult to deal with in realistic fiction. It can be a basis for social or political satire or a way to overcome frustration, resentment as in Catherine Storr's *Marianne Dreams* (1958) or in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* Trilogy (1995-2000). Texts like *The Water Babies* by Charles Kingsley use fantasy as a medium for justice. *The Water Babies* reveal the plight of child chimney sweeps who were frequently ill treated and often died due to the nature of their work.

Fantasy has often been assumed to be an antithesis to didactic and moralist tradition found in seventeenth and eighteenth century children's literature. However didacticism could be implicitly traced in the nineteenth century fantasies of Charles Kingsley and Mac Donald as well as in C. S. Lewis and Tolkien's works in twentieth century. Fantasy cannot not be regarded as an exclusively different category from realistic fiction. Often the super natural and the normal exist together in fantasy texts in various proportions and combinations. Kenneth Graham's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) or E. B. White's *Little Stuart* (1945) or *The Trumpet of Swan* (1970) display a blend of reality and fantasy in different degrees. Carroll’s Alice Books and Rowling's Harry Potter books also invariably begin and end in the realistic worlds. Therefore it can be said that fantasy books depict things which are different from the existing ideas of reality, rather than which are completely supernatural or impossible. Thus, Fantasy creates a common space where the real and the magical, the didactic and the free, the conventional and the modern, the adulthood and the childhood can meet to create a world, which is not, but which could be and this is well exemplified in the two most
renowned works of fantasy - *Alice in the Wonderland* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*.

The publication of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1871) produced in the second half of Victorian era, heralded the first golden age of children’s literature in which fantasy played a central role. These two novels are regarded as one of the most influential works of fantasy and have retained their iconic status till date. They have continued to inspire adaptations, imitations and parodies and most recently in 2010 one more movie has been produced by Tim Burton, which depicts the adventures of a teenage Alice in ‘Underland’. Several words and phrases which first appeared in the Alice books, such as ‘chortled’, have been accepted in the language, and many phrases have become popular maxims such as ‘The rule is, jam to-morrow and jam yesterday—but never jam to-day’. The author is almost as celebrated as the books: fifteen biographies in English have been written on Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, who wrote a small number of his books under the name of Lewis Carroll. Thus, Dodgson, ‘Lewis Carroll’, and the ‘Alice’ books became international phenomena, and British national institutions. There are Alice in Wonderland rides at Disneyland in Paris and California, a White Rabbit Statue (unveiled by Lloyd George in 1933) at Llandudno, and 2,525 items on Dodgson-Carroll are displayed at the University of Texas at Austin. Such incredible fame of Alice Books have raised many questions:

What exactly are the ‘Alice’ books? What is the reason behind their global, persistent appeal? Can they be regarded as harmless, innocent children’s stories, simple fantasies with peculiar characters and nonsense verses?  or as Peter Hunt questions, are they, "allegories of Victorian and Oxford society, intricate textures of mathematical,
philosophical, and semantic puzzles, or symbolic explorations of 'some of the deepest existential problems in a light-hearted way'? Or gifts of love (or possibly lust) from a frustrated academic to a young girl? " ('Introduction" Kindle edn. location 105).

Most of this confusion rises from the fact that they had been initially written for children—and today they have become more accessible to, and interesting for, adults. They hinge on the conflict between the idealized view of what a children’s book should be and what childhood should be, and the complex and the ironic relationships between adults, childhood, and stories.

_Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland_ narrates the story of a young girl Alice, who falls through a rabbit hole into a fantasy world inhabited by peculiar, anthropomorphic creatures. Alice’s sojourn into the wonderland and her encounter with different creatures in that land is a critique and satire of the adult world. _Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland_ was reputedly written for a real child: Alice Liddell, the daughter of Dean Liddell at Christ Church College, Oxford, where Lewis Carroll was lecturer of mathematics. The ‘Alice’ books are more complicated than what they seem, and they are connected in a complex way to the complex personality of their writer, and to a swiftly changing Victorian world. Juliet Dusinberre remarks that "cultural change was both reflected and pioneered in the books which children read. Radical experiments in the arts in the early modern period began in the books which Lewis Carroll and his successors wrote for children " (Dusinberre 5). In the same way Humphrey Carpenter observes that Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland "was published just as the two great religious spearheads of the nineteenth century, the Evangelicals and the Oxford Movement, were losing their
original force, and in its anti-religious sentiments, it heralded the coming of an era of scepticism" (Carpenter 68-9). However the idea of the innocence of the book has continued to persist and it is specially rooted in the myth behind the creation of this book. Charles Dodgson, a shy, stuttering Oxford mathematician-clergyman, and his friend the Revd. Robinson Duckworth, on an idyllic ‘golden afternoon’ (On 4 July 1862), took three little girls, the daughters of the Dean of their college, on a small excursion on the River Thames or Isis. While rowing on the river, Dodgson made up an impromptu story about one of the girls, Alice Liddel. At the end of the day, Alice requested him to write it down. He wrote it out and illustrated the story, 'Alice’s Adventures under Ground', and gifted it to her on 26 November 1864. Later Caroll expanded it and renamed it as *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. It is a fascinating tale, perhaps only partially true; but like other myths about books supposedly written for specific children—Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows* or A. A. Milne’s *Winnie-the-Pooh*—it is culturally important that it should be true.

Carroll’s intimate relationship with real Alice and his friendship with other young girls have always been a subject of hearsay and are viewed with suspicion by a modern audience. Although Carroll’s relationship with Alice, as per some critics, is possibly unimportant to the books, but his close relationships and idealization of young girls shed light on certain aspects of Victorian society which are important to the text. Gattegno remarks, "that, behind the conventional vocabulary and all the moral and religious attitudinizing of the age, Carroll's very denials make it clear how fundamentally sexual was the importance of little girls in Carroll's life" (96). Nineteenth century
England witnessed an increased emphasis on the importance of childhood and the education of children which in turn facilitated the growth of moral tales and didactic literature. At the same time the influence of Romanticism led to an emphasis on naturalness and innocence of childhood and it advocated children’s freedom from social and rational constraints. It is interesting to study how Carroll took part in the genesis of a genre which gradually emerged from the long tradition of didacticism and moralism in children’s books of decorum and conduct, to evolve towards entertaining books intended to amuse them along with instruction. The Alice stories have made Carroll, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson’s nom de plume, famous throughout the world. They were written at the beginning of a predominantly creative period, often regarded as the First Golden Age of children’s literature. The publication of such celebrated works of fantasy such as Charles Kingsley’s *The Water-Babies* (1863), George MacDonald’s *Dealing with the Fairies* (1867), Carroll’s “Bruno’s Revenge” (1867) and MacDonald’s *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872), to cite a few examples, took place within a decade. Whether the Victorians were the first to consider entertainment and imagination as the domain of childhood, remains a debatable question for historians, but it cannot be denied that a more self-conscious and sustained idea of childhood emerged during Queen Victoria’s long reign. F. J. Harvey Darton described *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* as

the spiritual volcano of children’s books … the first unapologetic … appearance in print, for readers who sorely needed it, of liberty of thought in children’s books … Henceforth … there was to be in hours of pleasure no more dread about the moral value … of the pleasure itself (Darton 260).
English Romanticism had transmitted a new view of childhood as intrinsically good and innocent, an idea which was further spread during the Victorian period by intellectuals, reformers, authors, publishers, interior designers, and even producers of greeting cards. The Victorian concept of the child remained unsteady because it contained within itself a trace of another child, naturally corrupted by Adam’s original sin, ripened for improvement and instruction at the earliest stage of life. The two views remained in constant tension during the Victorian period. Both these features of Victorian childhood are manifested by Carroll in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. Alice herself is the outcome of the conventional Victorian School constructed on firmly defined social codes and intensely didactic education. Carroll has parodied the rigid Victorian doctrine in his work and Wonderland embodies an escape from these restraints and a step towards a more imaginative and liberated childhood.

According to Mary Thwaite liberating elements of fantasy are central to Carroll’s text and other Victorian fantasies for children. She observes that “the child, at last, was put to the centre, and her need to wonder and laugh and roam and to live in a world of her own making was recognized” (Thwaite 81). Unlike his predecessors and contemporaries, Carroll adopted a less didactic and more sympathetic narratorial tone towards his readers, closing the gap between the narrator and the child reader and addressing the child on her own terms. *Alice* books are free from moralizing and throughout the text, Alice’s own thoughts and her commentary on her experiences are allowed to predominate. The narrator interrupts only to show the sense of absurdity of the adult world as exemplified in the 'Eat Me' episode of chapter 2. The cake Alice eats makes her grow nine feet tall and Alice rebukes herself for crying: "‘You ought to be
ashamed of yourself,’ said Alice, ‘a great girl like you,’ (she might well say this), ‘to go on crying in this way! Stop this moment, I tell you!’” (17). The narrator's remark here is not made to draw the readers' attention towards correct conduct, but it is an absurd comment meaning Alice is literally great (in the sense of large) and thereby make fun of typical adult behaviour.

Critics have pointed out that Alice's excursion into the wonderland is an exaggerated portrayal of the daily experiences of the young children in the adult world. The strange rules, manners and behaviours of the inhabitants of the wonderland are not comprehensible to Alice just as the adult code is not being understood by a young child in the everyday world. Alice is continuously bewildered and frustrated in her endeavour to understand the people and creatures she encounters in wonderland as in her meeting with the Mad Hatter:

"'What a funny watch!' she remarked. 'It tells the day of the month, and doesn't tell what o'clock it is!' 'Why should it?' muttered the Hatter. 'Does your watch tell you what year it is?' 'Of course not,' Alice replied very readily: 'but that's because it stays the same year for such a long time together.' 'Which is just the case with mine,' said the Hatter. Alice felt dreadfully puzzled. The Hatter’s remark seemed to her to have no sort of meaning in it, and yet it was certainly English. " (62)

Alice’s effort to comprehend the rules of wonderland is a mimic of a child striving to understand adult life and behavior. The nonsense verses that Carroll uses in the Alice Books and in its sequel Through the Looking Glass are all parodies of famous
Victorian poems which illustrate that adult rules can be equally nonsensical and unfathomable. Alice is perplexed to hear the Mad Hatter recite:

“Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!* 
How I wonder what you’re at!”

You know the song, perhaps?’ ‘I’ve heard something like it,’ said Alice. ‘It goes on, you know,’ the Hatter continued, ‘in this way:—

“Up above the world you fly 
Like a tea-tray in the sky. 
Twinkle, twinkle——”’ (63-4).

And when Alice makes efforts to recite IsaacWatt's famous didactic verse, " How doth the little busy bee", she is perturbed to find herself narrating the actions of little crocodile instead,

" ‘How doth the little crocodile* 
Improve his shining tail, 
And pour the waters of the Nile 
On every golden scale!

‘How cheerfully he seems to grin, 
How neatly spreads his claws, 
And welcomes little fishes in, 
With gently smiling jaws!’" (19)

Although Wonderland is complex and erratic, both of Carroll’s books can be regarded as Bildungsroman in which Alice grows as a person and progresses from immaturity and
innocence to maturity and experience. The Alice Books cannot be considered as didactic in conventional sense, but as in other Bildungsromans, they portray the difficulties of interaction with the adult world in a dramatized manner and thereby render the reader with an oblique education and commentary on the construction of a stable identity.

Alice's expedition into the wonderland can be looked upon as a journey towards psychological development and creation of her own identity. Alice's journey commences with her fall down the rabbit-hole, which can be looked upon as a kind of birth. Carroll narrates the event:

The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way, and then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down what seemed to be a very deep well... Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her and to wonder what was going to happen next (10).

Alice undergoes a gradual growth in wonderland and her adventures are equivalent to a child's passage to maturity. In the beginning of her journey she comes across small, cute creatures - rabbits and mice, who are sweet and meek. As she moves ahead she meets more terrifying adults: the Duchess, the Hatter, the Queen. Alice's interactions with them are not the pleasant and safe interactions of the nursery. Duchess rudely tells Alice to mind her own business when she attempts to stop the cook from throwing things.

‘Oh, please mind what you're doing!’ cried Alice, jumping up and down in an agony of terror. ‘Oh, there goes his precious nose!’, as an unusually large saucepan flew close by it,...
‘If everybody minded their own business,’ the Duchess said, in a hoarse growl, ‘the world would go round a deal faster than it does’ (53-54).

These new acquaintances are not much of a help to Alice. Instead they confront her. They are competitive, whimsical, selfish and cunning. She encounters all type of adult concerns too: anger, fear, nostalgia, death, judgment. These confrontations help Alice discover her real sense of self, which she had misapprehended to be set and stable. She begins to doubt herself and to change physically in size as well as psychologically.

Alice's journey can be understood as a quest for identity. In Wonderland she keeps on growing and shrinking till she is able to find her right size. When she grows more than nine feet in height, she is confused about herself and her body being one. She thinks of sending a letter to her right foot.

‘or perhaps they wo’n’t walk the way I want to go! Let me see. I’ll give them a new pair of boots every Christmas.’ And she went on planning to herself how she would manage it. ‘They must go by the carrier,’ she thought; ‘and how funny it’ll seem, sending presents to one’s own feet! And how odd the directions will look!

Alice’s Right Foot, Esq.

Hearthrug,

near the Fender,

(with Alice’s love). (16)

Later she is baffled as to who she is. She wonders whether she has actually become like her friends - Ada or Mabel. She asks her own self:

But if I’m not the same, the next question is “Who in the world am I?” Ah, that’s the great puzzle!’ And she began thinking over all the children she knew that were
of the same age as herself, to see if she could have been changed for any of them... ‘I’m sure I’m not Ada,’ she said,... and I’m sure I ca’n’t be Mabel...(18)

Alice is dumbfounded and completely confused when the Caterpillar bluntly enquires of her, "Who are you?" She is not able to give a proper answer.

Alice replied, rather shyly, ‘I—I hardly know, Sir, just at present—at least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.’ ‘What do you mean by that?’ said the Caterpillar, sternly. ‘Explain yourself!’ ‘I ca’n’t explain myself, I’m afraid, Sir,’ said Alice, ‘because I’m not myself, you see.’ (41)

For caterpillars such transformations are natural as they are regularly metamorphosed into moths or butterflies. But for Alice it is a matter of great worry which is revealed when the Wood Pigeon questions her as to what difference it will make whether she is a little girl or a serpent: " It matters a good deal to me", said Alice quickly.

Alice is not only acquiring a sense of self but she is also learning other crucial lessons about the rules and ways of life and their dismal fickleness. Alice is not able to understand the Queen's croquet game as it seems to her not to follow any rules.

‘I don’t think they play at all fairly,’ Alice began, in rather a complaining tone, ‘and they all quarrel so dreadfully one ca’n’t hear oneself speak—and they don’t seem to have any rules in particular: at least, if there are, nobody attends to them—and you’ve no idea how confusing it is all the things being alive: (75).
But to all others it is comprehensible. As often discussed before, this parallels the way that many aspects of the adult world might appear to a child when she encounters them for the first time. M. O. Grenby remarks,

[Alice] is proud of knowing how judicial trials work, but the Wonderland court works on principles that she cannot fathom. Only the Cheshire Cat seems to acknowledge that there are no rules and one can never fully make sense of what is happening. (164)

Alice books are not infused with light-hearted freedom: the books are actually concerned with discipline, logic, life and death, passion, identity and a ruthless critique of the adult world. Some critics have pointed out that the most important and often neglected, fact about ‘Wonderland’ is that it is not a ‘land of wonders’, but rather ‘a land where one wonders’. When Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland was first published, Michelle Landsberg, a Canadian critic, did not include it in her compendious guide, "the World of Children’s Books (1989)", because she remarks "it terrified me so much as a child (particularly those sinister, surrealistic Tenniel drawings) that it is the only book that I have ever defaced; the nightmare of shrinking and stretching held a fevered horror for me"(Landsberg 5). According to Peter Coveney it had ‘the claustrophobic atmosphere of a children’s Kafka’ (246).

It has been said that children do not find the ‘Alice’ books as extraordinary as adults do, because they present an all-too-familiar world to a child—a world of rude, aggressive adults, all playing complex, bewildering games. And even if Alice does, for a while, hold her own against them, in the end, it’s only a dream. For adults, the books provide some uncomfortable images and pose uncomfortable questions—and challenge
many accepted ideas about themselves and their children. However there is no doubt that
the books were written for children, especially for Victorian Children and it means that
adult readers are listening in to a conversation not intended for them. Nevertheless as
adult readers one must contemplate on W. H. Auden’s observation: ‘In assessing their
value, there are two questions one can ask: first, what insight do they provide as to how
the world appears to a child?; and the second, to what extent is the world really like that?’
(Auden 37).

The Alice Books are intricately layered. First layer is the conscious, personal
level, using events, characters, and places known to Alice Liddell and Dodgson’s close
circle. Next there is the matrix of philosophy, mathematics, and linguistics—serious
games for both child and adult readers. The third layer is the world of references to
Oxford and national personalities and politics skillfully crafted by a well-educated
Victorian scholar and a gentleman. Finally, the last layer comprises of the passages
which seem (specially in Through the Looking-Glass) to be very personal—conscious or
unconscious expressions of Dodgson’s inner psyche. As Derek Hudson put it, "the
“Alice” books were in some degree an autobiographical miscellany, woven together with
extraordinary skill: an Odyssey of the subconscious"(Hudson 73). One can conveniently
deduce from this that these books cannot be regarded as outright ‘nonsense’, if one
defines nonsense as occurring when the mind is unable to make an association: as
pointed out by a critic, "nonsense … requires as few relations … as possible". (Sewell
143)

Carroll consciously uses his personal circle in the episode of the Mad Tea-Party,
in Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. The Dormouse narrates a story:
'Once upon a time there were three little sisters ... and their names were Elsie, Lacie, and Tillie: and they lived at the bottom of a well—’ ‘What did they live on?’ said Alice, who always took a great interest in questions of eating and drinking. ‘They lived on treacle,’ said the Dormouse, after thinking a minute or two' (p. 65).

The Dormouse is often assumed to be referring to the Christian Socialist theologian F. D. Maurice, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s pet wombat. But what is most noteworthy is that the three little sisters in the well refer to the three Liddell sisters. Elsie is a pun on Lorinda Charlotte’s initials, ‘Lacie’ is an anagram of Alice, and Tillie is an abbreviation of Matilda, Edith’s nickname. And the treacle well is not nonsense. Medicinal springs in Oxfordshire were known as ‘treacle wells’ and treacle is an obsolete word here means ‘balm’.

All of above allusions might have been within the grasp of the real Alice, (at least in Dodgson’s expectations) but the mathematical and logical puzzles dispersed through the text, are dull and difficult for children to decipher. To Dodgson, there was nothing dull about mathematics. And so, when the confused Alice is trying to recall her math lessons that she knows: "Let me see: four times five is twelve, and four times six is thirteen, and four times seven is—oh dear! I shall never get to twenty at that rate!" (p. 19), Dodgson is having a good deal of fun with dullness as well as dull readers. Martin Gardner draws attention of the readers that this mathematical progression is not nonsense, "the multiplication table traditionally stops with the twelves, so if you continue this nonsense progression—4 times 5 is 12, 4 times 6 is 13, 4 times 7 is 14, and so on—you end with 4 times 12 (the highest she can go) is 19—just one short of 20 "

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To a modern reader this might seem outside the range of children, especially of twenty-first-century children. But Dodgson would have probably not agreed with it because he had great faith in the capabilities of the Victorian children. He doesn’t avoid themes generally regarded as tabooed for children’s books: when Alice meets the sleeping Red King in *Through the Looking-Glass*, she comes across Tweedledum and Tweedledee and engages herself in conversation with them. They discuss Bishop Berkeley’s view that we are all nothing but ideas in the mind of God. But immediately Alice, the pragmatist, refutes the idea ("If I wasn’t real … I shouldn’t be able to cry", p. 168). The worlds which Alice encounter are not places of liberty or escape, but are full of other people’s rules and regulations. Carroll’s interest in the discipline intrinsic in games is seen throughout the books, and especially in *Through the Looking-Glass*. Dodgson’s version of the games initially might have been derived from real-life chess games with Alice Liddell and her siblings but later it plays with the logic and validity of moves and turns. And Alice excitedly utters, ‘It’s a great huge game of chess that’s being played—all over the world’ (p. 144).

Readers have often found themselves tempted into complex analyses of the books for, as we have seen, Dodgson’s literary method was to insert complex allusions into his texts, and to play with both the language and his readers. However, some of the interpretations of the books seem worth mentioning than others: Richard Wallace, remarks that Dodgson was Jack the Ripper, and that "these crimes began as a caper, fuelled by rage, boredom, antiestablishment feelings, and emboldened by years of
successfully hiding Victorian smut in his children’s works” (Wallace 262). At the other side of pendulum is Virginia Woolf, who observed in 1939: "Only Lewis Carroll has shown us the world upside down as a child sees it, and has made us laugh as children laugh, irresponsibly. Down the groves of pure nonsense we whirl laughing, laughing" (Woolf 255). However, with that remark, Woolf gave momentum to a myth that had been carefully perpetuated by Dodgson, who described his books as "innocent and healthy amusement … for the children I love so well".

The most significant and contentious aspect of Alice books, as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, is that through them Caroll discovered a way of discussing his own needs and obsessions. Victor Watson remarks:

[Dodgson] … established new possibilities for children’s books. He showed how they could be made into an imaginative space for writing about the dynamics that exist when adults and children engage with one another—dynamics that might be complex, loving, intimate or problematical, but were no longer just authoritarian. He demonstrated how a children’s story could become a celebratory utterance of greeting, farewell, or longing. Since that time, many of the greatest children’s books have had about them a touch of the valedictory (Watson 18).

Critics generally believe that Dodgson portrayed himself into the books—usually as misunderstood or sympathetic characters—the Dodo, the Knave of Hearts, the Gnat, the Gryphon, the excised ancient Wasp, and perhaps the sardonic Cheshire Cat. The episode with the White Knight in Through the Looking-Glass, brilliantly depicts Carroll's private-public farewell to his ‘dreamchild’ Alice. The White Knight says to Alice: ‘I’ll
see you safe to the end of the wood—and then I must go back, you know. That’s the end of my move.’” (p. 211). The Knight can be looked upon as an paradoxical self-portrait of an undamaging, simple-minded man who invents peculiar and unsuccessful things, who delivers a lecture on the logic of language, sings a nonsense song to a sentimental tune, and, keeps on falling off his horse, "‘generally … on the side on which Alice was walking’” (p. 214). Peter Hunt observes, " The image that Dodgson then creates, the image that Alice ‘always remembered most clearly’, is a romantic, Pre-Raphaelite picture, and there is a sharp and sad acknowledgement of the inevitability of loss” ("Introduction" Kindle location 605). The Knight turns back and tells Alice,

‘You’ll wait and wave your handkerchief when I get to that turn in the road! I think it’ll encourage me, you see.’ ‘Of course I’ll wait,’ said Alice: ‘and thank you very much for coming so far—and for the song—I liked it very much.’ ‘I hope so,’ the Knight said doubtfully: "‘but you didn’t cry as much as I thought you would.’” (p. 222).

Kaen Coats explaining the relationship between Carroll and Alice and adulthood-childhood association in Lacanian terms remarks,

Somewhere between desire and language, somewhere where desire meets language, or language meets desire as itself, Lewis Carroll and J. M. Barrie have created Alice and Peter Pan to hold a more or less permanent place as signifiers of the modernist desire to preserve the notion of a pristine childhood, marked primarily by a belief that becomes anesthetized or repressed as we grow older. In each case, the writer's commitment to language combines with his desire to create
structures in which we feel at home...(" Looking Glasses" Kindle Locations 1083-1086)

As J. M. Barrie remarks at the end of *Peter and Wendy* (1911) ‘and thus it will go on, so long as children are gay and innocent and heartless’— and surely what keeps on going, is a complex statement of desire and loss and an unending paradoxical dialectic between the child and the adult.

J. K. Rowling creates a similar fantasy world – the magical world of Hogwarts School of Wizardry, in her most popular and phenomenal work - *Harry Potter* Books. On 1st July 1997, with the publication of Rowling’s first book of the Potter Series – *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* by Bloomsbury, there began an another remarkable age of Children’s Literature and an unprecedented publishing and media phenomenon. The book received the British Book award for Children’s Book of the Year and was shortlisted for Carnegie and the Guardian Children’s award. It sold five million copies and by 2008, it stood at number twelve on the best selling books list of all times and it’s film briefly became the highest grossing film ever in the UK. The six Potter books that followed made Harry Potter into a global brand with an estimated Pound 76 billion, and made Rowling herself a fortune estimated by the Sunday Times as amounting to some Pound 560 million. *Harry Potter and Sorcerer’s Stone* heralded a second boom in the publishing of children’s books, the first one being the one which began in the second half of Victorian age with the publication of the *Alice in the Wonderland*. An entire generation of children and their parents have read and journeyed with Harry Potter from his first entry into the Wizard school to his leaving it in sixth form. Children dressed up as Harry Potter, played Harry Potter board and video games and in the real world now
there is a platform 9 ¾ at King’s Cross Station. And Christ Church, Oxford is no longer primarily the haunt of Carroll’s Alice but also of one of the ghosts of Hogwarts.

The Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone narrates the tale of an orphan boy, Harry Potter, who travels from the real world of the Dursleys – ‘the muggle world’ to the magical world of Hogwarts school of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The seven novels of the Potter series portray the life of the young wizard with the lightning-bolt forehead scar who learns about his magical powers on the morning of his eleventh birthday. Harry is enrolled at the Hogwarts School where he receives education and lessons of a beginner wizard. He undergoes many adventures with his two friends cum classmates, Ron and Hermione and meets people and animals with magical powers, both good and evil. He returns at the end of each novel to the real world of the ‘Muggles’ to spend his vacation breaks and summers with his mother’s unloving and uncaring relatives, the Dursleys.

The question that is often raised is what has made this conventional and ordinary looking tale into an extra ordinary phenomenon? Is it the "cosmic" battle between good and evil depicted in the books responsible for its universal appeal? or is it that the stories, although replete with conventional morality, are not overtly didactic, moralizing, or formally instructive? or is it the implausible range of genres - fairy tale, bildungsroman, school story, adventure story, detective novel, fantasy, quest narrative - woven together in one novel that allows each reader to satisfy her preferences?

Critics like Jack Zipes question the phenomenal aspect and the idolization of the Harry Potter books and the media hype surrounding the event of the releases of Rowling’s novels and not the texts themselves. Zipes observes that serialized literature –
from adult popular romances such as Harlequin Romances to the young adult Goosebumps, Sweet Valley High, and Babysitters Club series – is often found to be literature transformed into product and is designed not to stimulate readers’ imagination and intellect but rather to instigate customers to ‘buy and rebuy’ the books and its byproducts. Jack Zipes remarks

Phenomena such as the Harry Potter books are driven by commodity consumption that at the same time sets the parameters of reading and aesthetic taste. Today the experience of reading for the young is mediated through the mass media and marketing so that the pleasure and meaning of a book will often be prescripted or dictated by convention. (” The Phenomenon” 290).

However British Children’s Literature scholar Peter Hunt refutes Zipes' observations and argues that the authors and the books most read by the large number of children should be given more critical attention and carefully examined. It is the attitude and ideology of these writers and books which is most likely to be embossed into the national consciousness through subconscious osmosis. ( Hunt, "Introduction" 15   )

The novel invariably depicts the ‘cosmic’ battle between the good and the evil and interweaves the incredible range of genres together – fairy tale, bildungsroman, boarding school narrative, detective novel, adventure story and fantasy quest tale which lures the child as well as the adult readers. According to Christine Schoefer, the success of Harry Potter rests on the “glittering mystery and nail-biting suspense, compelling language and colourful imagery, magical feats juxtaposed with real life concerns” ( Schoefer np). The appeal of Harry Potter Books can also be accorded to the traditional fairy tale like rags-to-riches myth surrounding Potter’s story as well as to Rowling’s own
personal history - a single mother dependent on welfare, sitting in a cafe and writing the books while raising a daughter by herself. It resembles the fairy tale about the perseverant, resilient girl who is recognized as a princess and lives happily ever after.

Harry Potter is portrayed as a model of Goodness, with his unruled hair, broken glasses, and slight frame – the nerdy underdog-turned-hero whom we are conditioned to appreciate. His adventures and continued triumphs allow adults to indulge in fancy and recall the "golden world" of childhood for which they are often nostalgic. Simultaneously, child readers take pride in themselves when as children Harry Potter and his friends shoulder heavy responsibility at Hogwarts. Rowling's novels allow children to identify with a character who himself though seemingly powerless like them, is able to defeat the all powerful Voldemort. As a tiny and apparently helpless infant boy, Harry Potter had revealed his remarkable magical power when he outwitted the fatal spell of the mighty wizard Voldemort.

Professor McGonagall’s voice trembled as she went on. ‘That’s not all. They’re saying he tried to kill the Potters’ son, Harry. But – he couldn’t. He couldn’t kill that little boy. No one knows why, or how, but they’re saying that when he couldn’t kill Harry Potter, Voldemort’s power somehow broke – and that’s why he’s gone.’ (12)

As the novel- *Philosopher's Stone* opens, Harry comes across as a bright but meek, honest and innocent boy who has no sense of control or influence in the Dursley household and is often patronized and ill treated by them. His aunt Petunia often orders him to do various household chores:
‘Well, get a move on, I want you to look after the bacon. And don’t you dare let it burn, I want everything perfect on Duddy’s birthday.’... Harry was used to spiders, because the cupboard under the stairs was full of them, and that was where he slept.(19)

All of a suddenly on his eleventh birthday, Harry is "rescued" from this miserable existence due to the wizardry inheritance he receives from his dead parents. He receives a letter from the Hogwarts school, which read thus:

HOGWARTS SCHOOL OF WITCHCRAFT AND WIZARDRY
Headmaster: Albus Dumbledore
(Order of Merlin, First Class, Grand Sorc., Chf. Warlock, Supreme Mugwump, International Confed. of Wizards)

Dear Mr Potter,

We are pleased to inform you that you have a place at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Please find enclosed a list of all necessary books and equipment. Term begins on 1 September. We await your owl by no later than 31 July.

Yours sincerely,

Minerva McGonagall (51)

The fantasy world of Hogwarts which Harry is going to inhabit - is a magical world but not completely without adult rules, regulations and discipline. Harry is enrolled at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry due to his natural magical talent and he receives a celebratory status from day one due to the power he had illustrated in his early
defeat of "Dark Lord" Voldemort. When he visits Diagon Alley for shopping, he is immediately recognized:

‘Welcome back, Mr Potter, welcome back.’ Harry didn’t know what to say. Everyone was looking at him. The old woman with the pipe was puffing on it without realising it had gone out. Hagrid was beaming. Then there was a great scraping of chairs and, next moment, Harry found himself shaking hands with everyone in the Leaky Cauldron. ‘Doris Crockford, Mr Potter, can’t believe I’m meeting you at last.’ ‘So proud, Mr Potter, I’m just so proud.’ (69)

Harry is frequently rendered opportunities to prove his academic abilities, athletic talents, and command over his own decisions and actions. Harry manages to kill the full grown mountain troll-a huge giant, who had got inside the Hogwart castle, with the help of Ron and saves Hermione Granger and earns five points for his house - Gryffindor. Hermione narrates the whole incident to Prof. Mc Gonagall,

‘I went looking for the troll because I – I thought I could deal with it on my own... If they hadn’t found me, I’d be dead now. Harry stuck his wand up its [Troll’s] nose and Ron knocked it out with its own club. They didn’t have time to come and fetch anyone. It was about to finish me off when they arrived.’ (178)

The novel further appeals the young readers when admirable adults are made to accept their errors. At one instance, when Harry and his best friend break the rules of the school, the head master Dumbeldore exempts them from punishment and remarks, "[T]he best of us must sometimes eat our words." He then confers Special Awards on the boys for Services to the School. Harry during his stay in holidays at Ron Weasley's home gives
his expert comments on the 'life of Muggles'. Mr. Weasley, an adult, and a wizard with an important position at the Ministry of Magic, likes to sit next to Harry at dinner and inquire about the life of non magical people. He also inquires with excitement about such banal things as electrical plugs and mail delivery. Giselle Liza Anatol observes:

The incredible number of characters and intricate details in the books similarly allow the child reader to feel intellectual power: by participating in quiz shows and trivia games, she can display a mastery of the written materials as well as feel that she is an insider, a compatriot with the characters who experience the fictional incidents (Anatol Kindle Locations 107-113).

After entering Hogwarts, Harry becomes a model for young boys. Like young heroes today, Harry captivates young readers (and adults) because he has been endowed with the supernatural powers that we observe in numerous T. V. shows and films such as The Power Rangers, X-Men, Star Wars, Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Jack Zipes notes, "Harry 'acts out' his role with wand, invisible cape, and broomstick to determine his destiny, and though adults may help him, he is literally the one who has the power to use for the benefit of goodness" ("The Phenomenon" 295). Harry almost always wins in the Quidditch game (a spatial game that resembles computerized baseball, basketball, and hockey played on broomsticks) and also discovers the mystery of the philosopher's stone with the help of his buddies - Ron and Hermione. All of Rowling's novels have a fairy tale happy ending. It is known from beginning to end that Harry will be victorious over evil, and this again may be one of the reasons behind the immense popularity of Rowling's novels. Zipes remarks on the limitations of Rowling's novels:
What matters is a feeling of security that we gain after reading one or more of Rowling's novels. They are carefully crafted to make us delight in the good clean way that her protagonists set the world aright without questioning the real conflicts that the majority of children in the United Kingdom and North America face (The Phenomenon 296).

Like many fantasies rationality is always secondary in Rowling's novels. Harry's natural abilities - his chosenness and courage, he seems to have inherited are always at the centre. Ron helps Harry and Hermione through the deadly chess game. It is Hermione who helps to solve the riddle that gets Harry into the final stage. Hermione allows Harry to go into the final stage without any protest because she has now understood the truth of the magic world: that Harry is the gifted and chosen person to defeat the evil power - Voldemort. She remarks "Harry - you're a great wizard, you know" and that is more important than her 'Books! And Cleverness!' (Stone 208). Suman Gupta comments on the unthinkingness of Harry Potter books,

the Harry Potter phenomenon is such because these books offer exactly what we [adults] unthinkingly desire within our world and because of the current condition of our world and despite the constitution of our world. These are desires born in our world; these are not created by the Harry Potter books, merely realized in them in a certain (attractive, readable, undemanding) form. More and more people in more and more contexts unthinkingly read the Harry Potter books...(303).

Thus Rowling's Harry Potter fantasies depict an idealized picture of the world - a world which is not, but which was or which could be. It is a world which had been a dream of many English Adults like Rowling. Harry Potter Series came at a time when the whole of
England was looking ahead to a 'New England' with the past hand in hand. This 'New England' is a blend of the past and present. Andrew Blake in his essay "Harry Potter and the Reinvention of the Past" remarks:

All this is also part of the re-engagement with history, but here the imperial past and the multicultural present take an imagined Englishness in different directions. They offer a potential, at least, for a cultural definition of a nation that is ethnically inclusive, globally connected, and aware of the present.

This nostalgia for the past culture is well exemplified in the movie version of *Philosopher's Stone* when we first meet Harry at his aunt and uncle's suburban house, number 4, Privet Drive, Little Whinging, Surrey - small, boxy houses, brand-new but trying to look like country cottages, each with a company car in the driveway: a very English way of living"(Blake 305). But this old-style houses are equipped with central heating and air conditioning and other modern equipments. Either the old is remodelled so that it can contain the new, or the new is represented as traditional. The same is true of Harry Potter books. Harry Potter in *Philosopher's Stone* is a deliberately retrolutionary created figure. The story explores the old and underneath the surface deals with the new: past literary forms and present concerns exist side by side. Harry can be compared to the legndry king Arthur, who worked as the body-servant of a nondescript young knight, Sir Kay. He is guided by Merlin, an older and wiser man( like Dumbeldore) who has magical powers, into his inheritance of power and majesty.

*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is a fusion of legend, magic, past and the modern world. Retrolution happens in detail in the novel. Harry travels to his new school on the Hogwarts Express which is a steam train, a symbol of the past life. Harry's
shopping experience at the Diagon Alley is both contemporary and old. He becomes a part of the mid nineteenth century public school story, but it also has contemporary features such as the wizarding instruments - the 'Nimbus Two Thousand' the fastest ever 'broomstick' (a wizarding instrument used for playing the Quidditch sport) similar to our latest small aero planes or choppers. Hogwarts has strict and conventional rules of conduct and discipline but simultaneously it is modern and updated in its teaching ways and modernized in the use of wizarding equipments. Thus it is the past childhood which comes to the surface in the present adult and interacts with the contemporary adulthood and childhood to create a significant whole. Rowling by a blend of the past and the present, the old and the contemporary, helps Harry travel on the magical path to discover his true identity, transform from an ordinary to an extra ordinary boy as well as transit from childhood to adolescence during his seven years stay at Hogwarts.

Many critics have dismissed Rowling as a talented mimic whose works lack originality, however, one should not forget that many renowned works of literature refer back to earlier traditions. Robert Louis Stevenson remarks while talking about his inspiration and influences for Treasure Island: "No doubt the parrot once belonged to Robinson Crusoe. No doubt the skeleton is conveyed from Poe.... The stockade, I am told, is from Masterman Ready" (Hunt 234). And as Salman Rushdie writes in Haroun and the Sea of Stories: "Nothing comes from nothing ... ; no story comes from nowhere; new stories are born from old-it is the new combinations that make them new"(Rushdie 86).

Children's literature did not exist as a distinct category before Rousseau, when children were considered to be miniature adults or adults in the making. As soon as the
idea of the child as separate and distinctive had set in during the Victorian age, a genre of literature which could accommodate their needs was needed. But the importance of adult involvement in the shaping of the genre was such that, paradoxically, writing for the child often meant creating an idealised image of the child from the point of view of an adult writer. Fantasy served the purpose of the Victorian writers to construct an idealized image of childhood and give vent to their suppressed adult desires and expectations and many classic fantasy works as Alice books were created during the second half of the nineteenth century. Similarly during the contemporary times fantasy is again popularly utilized to create idealized pictures of the childhood and adolescent worlds by blending the traditional and the modern, the old and the new ways of storytelling and the adult thought and the childhood imagination. Perry Nodelman observes that "children's literature is frequently about coming to terms with a world one does not understand - the world as defined and governed by grownups and not totally familiar or comprehensible to children" ("Some Presumptuous" 178). Good fantasy works delineate this experience, by transferring its characters into a past time or a new world where, initially, all is strange and puzzling to children as in the adult world. While dealing with the perplexities of this new world, children subconsciously learn to decipher the confusions of the adult world or they are often endowed with strength and power, which they lack in the real world, making them feel equal to adults.

Both Alice in the Wonderland and Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone depict through the mode of fantasy how Alice's adventures in the wonderland and Harry’s experiences in the Wizardry School of Hogwarts parallel the psychological challenge of making the developmental transition from childhood to adolescence and thereby assist
the vast readership of children and early adolescents in making this transition themselves. Both the fantasies exemplify how childhood aspects of fancifulness, mutability and potentiality convene with discipline, orderliness and permanence of adulthood to create a common space and establish a coherent whole and ‘psychological stability’.