IDEOLOGY AND MEANING IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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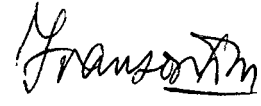New Delhi-110067

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Certified that this dissertation entitled **Ideology and Meaning in Children's Literature** submitted by **Rina De** in partial fulfilment of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** is entirely her own work and has not been considered for the award of any other degree either at this or any other university.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Introduction

This introduction, like most others, is to invite the reader to meet the work, or the ideas set down in it. And for that reason, it will outline what is to follow in the ensuing chapters. The subject of this dissertation is children's literature, more specifically in relation to ideology. However, this is not an exhaustive study of ideology in all the books written for children, but an analysis of two such texts from the entire corpus of children's books.

The first part of the dissertation (the first two chapters) intends to set out the approach to the subject matter and the contexts of reading and interpretation of the books. The first chapter is an attempt to contextualise the study of children's literature, beginning with the argument whether children's literature can be called a genre, or whether it needs to be indicated by a broader term, so that sub-types within it can be suggested by that name. The discussion includes an overview of what is understood by children's literature, the expectations attached to it, its definitions. This brings up the question as to what should be its basis—whether it can be better identified by its subject matter, style and language, or the implied reading community. This is followed by a survey of different understandings of the notion of the child in terms of his or her cognitive processes and skills. The section that follows contains an account of evolving attitudes to children over the ages, or the history of childhood related to developments in family relations, in the social and economic spheres, and how all this has affected attitudes to children and to the writing of children's literature. This chapter also includes a brief history of the development of children's literature and the various forms it took at

different stages in history, resulting in changing forms in the books written for children. And finally, there is an attempt to find out what textual peculiarities distinguish children's literature from literature for adults. The above overview of the notion of children's literature and its related fields is to provide a contextual perspective to the subsequent study in the chapters that follow.

In view of the obvious connection between books written for children and the questions of control, an understanding of ideology in general and literature as an ideological form seems essential to the study. The second chapter contains an account of the materialist understanding of language and literature from Marxist and psychoanalytic points of view. This account deals with the works of Althusser, and his theory of how ideology transforms individuals into subjects by an operation which he calls "hailing", and how this is achieved through Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). What thus seems to take place outside ideology takes place, in reality, within it, so that those who are very much within an ideological framework believe themselves outside it. One of the effects of ideology is the practical denegation of the ideological character of ideology by ideology. Althusser's concept of ISAs is taken up and further developed by Balibar and Macherey in their essay 'On Literature as an Ideological Form'. The insertion of the individual into ideology, through the formation of the subject is explained by Jacques Lacan's theory of the subject's entry into the symbolic order. This chapter becomes the basis of analysis of two children's books in the chapters following it.

The second section of this chapter contains a discussion on the fantastic mode, which is an integral part of children's literature in general and particularly the two books which are the objects of my study. Fantasy, as a form, is discussed in this dissertation in the context of its ideological implications, probing into the question of whether it can be considered a subversive form.

In Chapter Three, there is an analysis of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871), while Chapter Four analyses Enid Blyton's *The Enchanted Wood* (1939). Both the analyses (in Chapters Three and Four) comprise an enquiry into the various constructions and formations in the text, and into the language used. The use of language in Carroll's book is studied in terms of the construction of two co-existing, parallel logical and metaphorical systems, where neither gains dominance over the other, making the co-existence of multiple meanings possible. Also, since the insertion of the subject into ideology is through language, there is an enquiry into whether the subversion of language, in this text, through the destabilising of conceptual categories and metaphorical systems, could be considered to be a subversion of ideology itself.

Chapter Four includes, as has already been stated, the analysis of Enid Blyton's *The Enchanted Wood*. Enid Blyton's books have the added dimension of being a part of popular culture, being arguably the most popular books for children for more than fifty years. They reveal the nature of popular culture, and the ways in which dominant forms of social imagination try to fix certain social values in a story, and give them place,

name and continuity. They also show the construction of an ideal subject, who embodies all the desirable traits of a conforming individual, and the undesirable characteristics are embodied in fictitious characters who are constructed as the 'other'. There is, in children's literature, (since the birth of adventure stories for children, which were no longer overtly didactic like the earlier books) a construction of a child's world, which is in most cases a world of fantasy and which seemingly negates the assumptions of the real world. However, this fantastic world is, more often than not, realised, within the space of the text itself, by actually making the course of the narrative seem to be a dream, or belonging to the distant past or to an unknown or faraway place, thereby achieving a spatial temporal and cognitive distancing of the fantastic happenings of the text, upholding, thus, in the final analysis the supremacy of 'realistic' reason.

This dissertation, thus, deals on the whole with children's literature in terms of ideology, and my choice of texts is to show that in spite of the close association of children's literature and the processes of socialisation of children with overt or covert didacticism, as is evident in a text like *The Enchanted Wood*, this ideological subsumption need not necessarily be a universal phenomenon, as is obvious through the existence of books like *Through the Looking-Glass*, where the very categories of ideological constructions around children stand critiqued and subverted.

Chapter One:
Child, Childhood and Children's Literature

Children's books have and have had great social and educational influence, both politically and commercially. From a historical point of view, children's books are a valuable contribution to social, literary and bibliographical history; from a contemporary point of view, they are vital to literacy and culture. They are perhaps the most interesting and experimental of texts, in that they use mixed media techniques, which combine word, image, shape and sound.

Throughout history, literature has had many forms and these forms have had a changing popularity. For some centuries, in the western world, there has been a growing literary interest in fiction, so that now, one type of fiction, the novel, has come to be a predominant literary form. Within this literary form are a number of recognised choices of how works of fiction should be presented. There are, for example, romances, thrillers, and biographical novels. Since these genres are products of history, they die, and new ones are formed.

> Though there are no intrinsic norms and constraints that determine how we must read literary texts, as soon as we begin to read the text norms and constraints of some sort will come into operation since the very activity of reading cannot take place without them....It would be bad faith to conceal the fact, even from young students, that no norms and constraints are integral to literary discourse and therefore privileged. Certain norms will, of course be dominant and there may be justification for stressing their advantage and the dangers of discussing them, but there can be no justification for claiming that these norms are intrinsic to the very existence of literary discourse.

K. M. Newton, *Twentieth Century Literary Theory*[1]

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[1] Peter Hunt. 1991. *Criticism, Theory, and Children's Literature*. Blackwell. Oxford, U.K., Cambridge, U.S.A. p.43, from K.M. Newton. (ed.) 1988. *Twentieth Century Literary Theory, a Reader*. Macmillan. London.

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Even though the study of genre usually implies an essentialist approach, it can be defined socially and historically. At a particular time in history, a set of characteristics come to be seen by readers, writers, publishers, critics and others, who comprise the literary world, to constitute a distinct type of literary work.

Writers take part in a complex set of relationships, capable of change by any of the parties involved, all of whom have expectations for others as well as for themselves. These relationships are referred to by Musgrave as "relations of expectations", a term used by B. Sharret.[2] Because of the constraints of these relations of expectations, the writer always reveals or writes from a certain position, in relation to the ideological climate. Therefore, what a writer writes, and the way he is read, is ideologically determined. Out of the interaction of the authors and the readers, the meaning of what is written emerges. The relations of expectation put pressure on the action of those involved in any literary network, and therefore, well-defined genres emerge. These genres are coherent responses to contemporary social circumstances, or to the circumstances of the recent past. This notion is further complicated by the presence of the publisher, who selects on the basis of what he believes the public wants and often makes judgements on what they ought to, or ought not to have. Apart from the publisher, the literary critic is another mediator in the process of literary production. The critic controls, both what is being

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[2]P.W. Musgrave. 1985. *From Brown to Bunter: The Life and Death of the School Story*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. London. p. 3, from B.Sharrett. 1982. *Reading Relations*. Harvester Press. Brighton.

published and also shape the tastes of the reader, thus limiting both *what* is read and *how* it is read.

The contemporary relations of expectations include within their structure, those genres presently acceptable to authors, readers, and to intermediaries. Whatever changes there are within it, would be minor and would not cause any changes to the groups involved in the particular genre concerned. Genres exist as long as those in political power succeed in preserving their residual hegemony. This power supports or eliminates a given genre, according to their view about its political significance. This may particularly be the case, where children read the books under consideration, since political socialisation into a status quo is often seen as an important function of childhood. The resultant culture will not only be the dominant one, but will also influence the form of any counter-culture. A new genre emerges with the emergence of really new ideas, which require a shift in the relations of expectation. They are socially constructed and socially sustained. A close reading of a number of representative books reveal the characteristics of the genre and the structure of feelings presented by the writers.

In the study of children's literature as a genre, it would be useful to consider different opinions regarding the nature of children's literature and what the generic characteristics./

> I come more and more to the view that there are no children's books. They are a concept invented for commercial reasons, and kept alive by the human instinct for classification and categorisation. The honest writer... writes what is inside him and must out. Sometimes what he writes will chime with the instincts and interests of young people, sometimes it will not...If you must have a classification it is into books good and bad.

Marcus Crouch, *The Nesbit Tradition*[3]

One way of defining children's literature would be to define it as books read and enjoyed by, and thought to be suitable for a group currently defined as children\ This definition, however, is problematic because it includes every text ever read by a child. Excepting a few, like *Treasure Island*, and Lewis Carroll's Alice books, most books cannot outlive their time, and since the childhood to which it is addressed is so different, they can only be of antiquarian interest. Therefore, by saying 'children's literature' we usually refer to contemporary books written for children.

Peter Hunt in his books quotes various authors defining children's literature. He quotes John Rowe Townsend:

> Yet children are part of mankind and children's books are part of literature, and any line which is drawn to confine children or their books to their special corner is an artificial one.... The only practical definition of a children's book today - absurd as it sounds- is 'a book which appears on the children's list of a publisher.[4]

He points out that defining a book by its characteristics would be to describe the least deviant and least interesting aspects of he book. As a better example of such a definition he cites Miles McDowell:

> Children's books are generally shorter; they tend to favour an active rather than a passive treatment, with dialogue and incident rather than description and introspection; child protagonists are the rule; conventions are much used; the story develops within a clear-cut moral schematicism which most adult fiction ignores; children's books tend to be optimistic rather than depressive; language is child oriented; plots are of a distinctive order, probability is often discarded; and one could go on endlessly

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[3]Peter Hunt. *op cit.*, p. 43.

[4]*Ibid.* pp.62-3, Quoted from J.R. Townsend. 1971. *A Sense of Story*. Longman. London. p. 9.

talking of magic, and fantasy, and simplicity and adventure.[5]

Fred Inglis has presented another such list of six characteristics: In books written for them, children are the protagonists, not so much so that the readers may identify with the heroes, but so that they may recognise them as people like themselves. There is less concern with probability than in adult books in plot and in circumstances; this convention enables the author to remove the parents and other awkward adults from the scene and also to allow employment of coincidence, hair-breadth escapes and other supernatural and other extraordinary occurrences. Children's books are now, but not always so in the past, shorter than books for adults, partly taking into account their readers stamina. This characteristic also depends on another convention- the conscious limitation of formal intricacy and simplicity in syntax. Inglis also notes the "greater simplification (though not superficiality) of moral issues, together with painstaking and explicit commentary."[6] Musgrave mentions three others apart from these: that the tone for most writing for children is optimistic, that the writing is presented in an active, rather than passive, way and finally that there are a number of conventions relating to techniques or to the forms of the narrative that are often found to play an important role; these include time- travel, initiation into adulthood and the rise and fall of fortune.[7]

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[5]*Ibid.* p.63. quoted from Miles McDowell. March 1973. 'Fiction for children and adults: some essential differences'. *Children's Literatures in Education*, 10. Reproduced in Writers, Critics and Children. ed. Fox et al., pp. 141-2.

[6]Fred Inglis. 1981. *The Promise of Happiness: Value and Meaning in Children's Fiction.* Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. p.101.

[7]P.W. Musgrave. *op cit.* p. 4.

✓ Despite the flux of childhood, the children's book can be defined in terms of the implied reader. A reading of the book will imply who the book is designed for and what value is given to a text will depend on the circumstances of use.

Since, in children's literature such importance is attached to the reader of the book, that it determines to a great extent what the book is like, it would be useful to have an idea of the concept of the child reader. The following section will be a survey of, first the understanding of the idea of 'child' and second the history of the notion of childhood and attitudes to children.

Child

✓ Nicholas Tucker pinpoints some aspects of childhood thought to be common across time and culture. These include physical smallness and weakness, receptivity to the prevailing culture, spontaneous play and sexual immaturity. They are thought to be incapable of abstract thought, to have smaller attention span and to be at the mercy of their immediate perceptions.[8] There is, however, the problem of generalising, since the individual child will differ from the norm.

In his book *The Child and The Book*[9] Nicholas Tucker has posited different stages of development of the child according to the theory the child psychologist Jean Piaget. In different stages the child can be said to have different attitudes to death, fear, sex, perspectives, egocentricity,

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[8]Nicholas Tucker. 1981. *The Child and the Book: A Literary and Psychological Exploration*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. p. 1-4

[9]*Ibid*. pp. 4-5.

causality and so on. They will be more flexible in their perceptions of the text and more open to radical ideas and less bound by schemas. On the other hand, they have less knowledge of language and book structures. Their distinctions between fact and fantasy, between the desirable and the actual are unstable and are capable of unconscious animism since the attribution of human characteristics to inanimate objects is less controlled than it is in adults.

According to Jean Piaget,[10] the child's thinking remains animistic until the age of puberty. The child assumes that his relations to the inanimate world are of one pattern with those to the animate world of people. Bruno Bettelheim quotes Piaget's examples saying that to a eight year old the sun is alive because it *gives* light and does probably because it *wants* to. To the child the stone would be alive because it can *roll* down the hill. Therefore, there is no real separation between objects and living things for the child. And since the child is self- centred, he expects animal to talk about things which are really significant to him, as animals do in fairy-tales and fantasies.

Bettelheim points out that Piaget's research on the child's mental processes demonstrate that the child is not able to comprehend the vital abstract concepts of the permanence of quantity and reversibility. And until he can do that he can experience the world only subjectively. In his early years till about age eight or ten, the child can develop only highly personalised concepts of what he experiences.

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[10]*Ibid.* pp. 4-5

They can be said to belong to a different culture and have different modes of thinking and different story shapes. The relationship between the developing reader and the text is a complex one.

Childhood

The concept of childhood is extremely complex if one considers it diachronically. In the past these ideas have ranged from the romantic notion of a child as pure and innocent- the noble savage to the as having been born evil as a result of original sin. When mortality rate was high, and in strata of society where poverty and subsistence were the norm (that is, until the eighteenth century), the view of childhood as a protected developmental stage was not possible. In medieval times there was little concept of childhood; in Elizabethan times, little concept of different needs. The rise of the middle classes in the wake of the Industrial Revolution suggests that it is contrasts that defines childhood.

Down the history of children's literature, different kinds of childhoods were aimed at and in the process defined. Books for the working class child seem to be more harsh than those for the sheltered middle classes. Therefore, the definition of childhood shifts even within one homogeneous culture, just as the understanding of past childhood shifts.

Fred Inglis dates the modern idea of childhood as having emerged at the end of the eighteenth century, due to a great shift in values. According to him, the history of childhood is an incalcation in the history of the family. He sees it not as a part of a natural evolutionary process but as a "contingent arrival in the consciousness of a smallish number of symbol-makers, especially poets and the more or less cultivated audience who read

them."[11] More specifically, he refers to the poetry of Blake and Wordsworth:

> Blake and Wordsworth were the first geniuses of English Romantic literature to place the meaning and experience of childhood at the centre of their picture of morality and of the growth of the imagination. Indeed it partly defines a Romantic that he takes such a view of children: the expansion of the sensibility into areas of experience which had been forgotten since Shakespeare, the new attention bent upon subjects long exclude from the discourse of normality - upon children, outcasts idiots, foreigners - these are among changes which we call romantic, and our world is their consequence.[12]

However, the time when Blake wrote his *Songs of Innocence*(1789) was also the time when the children had to suffer utmost misery and wretchedness because of the industrial revolution.

Fred Inglis quotes Peter Laslett's account of childhood in the pre-industrial world, from his book, *The World We Have Lost*.[13] It says that very little is known about the actual lives of the children at that time - the role of the father in the upbringing of the child, the childhood games and so on. Even though children seemed to constitute about 45% of the population, there is something that Lasset calls "mysterious" about the silence about these multitudes of children in the statements made by the people of that time about their own experience. Whatever information there is about children, is regarding what they were taught at school, which was mostly Christianity and a little classics, and about the rigour of their

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[11]Fred Inglis. *op cit*. p. 70

[12]*Ibid*. p. 71

[13]Ibid. p. 72. quoted from Peter Laslett. 1965. *The World We Have Lost*. Methuen. London. p. 105.

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treatment there. Even less is known of the poor children. Very few children went to school at that time, and Laslett assumes that they were as peremptorily treated at home as they would be in the classroom.

From the portraits made of the children, it is obvious that they were dressed like adults, but it is not clear whether they were treated like them, though the notion of the world of a child as distinct from the adult world seems to have emerged only with the Victorians. According to Inglis, the extremely high population of children and high mortality rates explains "both a certain necessary unfeelingness on the part of seventeenth century writers and parents towards children who only looked set for a relatively long life if they got as far as 20, and the far greater consciousness of individual potentiality on the part of modern parents who have confidence that they will see their children well into middle age and their own demise."[14]

Keith Thomas refers to the work of Philippe Aries- *Centuries of Childhood*- which claimed that before the early modern period the idea of childhood did not exist.[15] The discovery of childhood as distinctive phase in life with its own emotional and intellectual characteristics, was a gradual process with faint beginnings in the thirteenth century but not fully accomplished till the seventeenth century or later. Only then were the older children sent off to schools which protected them from the harsher facts of life. But there the children were subjected to a new severity - children were harshly disciplined and regularly beaten. It was only in the eighteenth

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[14]*Ibid.* p. 73.

[15]Keith Thomas. 1989. 'Children in Early Modern England.' in Gillian Avery and Julia Briggs (ed.) *Children and their Books: A Celebration of the Works of Iona and Peter Opie.* Clarendon Press. Oxford. p. 45.

century when the attitudes softened. John Locke was one of the first and most influential of those who urged that children should be encouraged to learn for pleasure rather than out of fear.

Before industrialisation the lives of most children were "grim enough before industrialisation and worse, as always, for the poor."[16] However, it is an extremely selective, partial and optimistic to account for the changing attitudes towards children in the terms Llyod De Mause has: "the Infanticidal Mode (Antiquity to the fourth century AD)," to "Abandonment Mode (fourth century to thirteenth century), Ambivalent Mode (fourteenth century to seventeenth century), Intrusive Mode (eighteenth century), Socialisation Mode (nineteenth century to mid-twentieth century)", triumphantly concluding with "Helping Mode (begins mid twentieth century)".[17] This latest mode, as indicated by De Mause results in the child who is "gentle, sincere, never depressed, never imitative or group-oriented, strong-willed and unintimidated by authority."[18] However, according to Inglis, the change is basically one of visibility. The cruelty and punishment that were inflicted as public signs in the past, have disappeared into the anonymity of the home and bureaucracy in the present. The role of the commercial bourgeoisie in the formation of the modern family was essentially spatial as Michel Foucault pointed out in his *The Order of Things*. Before the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries,

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[16]Fred Inglis. *op cit.* p. 71.

[17]*Ibid.* p.80. quoted from Llyod De Mause. 1974. 'The Evolution of Childhood' in his own volume, *The History of Childhood.* pp. 1-74.

[18]*Ibid.* p.80 quoted from Llyod De Mause. 1974. 'The Evolution of Childhood' in his own volume, *The History of Childhood.*

life was more communal than private. The urban middle-classes were the first to promulgate the idea of the family as a self-contained, autoletic unit, shut away from public view. Inglis, nevertheless, adds that there has been a change since the Renaissance in Europe "north-west of the Mediterranean and west of the Volga"[19] so that one can speak of a new image of childhood as emerging from the upheavals of the Romantic movement, international revolution, and the new industrial technology. This change, as mentioned earlier, took place throughout the eighteenth century.

From the contrasting pictures of human nature one based on a powerful rationalist pessimism and the other from the confident Romantic sense, arose two moral traditions. The first or low view considered children and adults alike to the "limbs of Satan" and children are neither "too little to die nor too little to go to hell".[20] The "high" picture comes from the Romantics, who believed that morality begins from the human heart and that heart is the "moral motor" of the 'little innocent',[21] the intuitively virtuous creature who will act well if the environment allows him to and who will only be corrupted by the "depravities of a society too long sunk in its unnatural and hypocritical ways". [22]

When the significance of the meaning of childhood changed the two moral attitudes of the little innocent and the limb of Satan were modified to suit the personalities involved, the dominance of the new bourgeoisie and the defensive redoubt into which the family retreated. From this, came the great tradition of children's novels. It sprang from the impulse to change the

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[19]*Ibid.* p. 81.

[20]*Ibid.* p. 81.

[21]*Ibid.* p. 82

[22]*Ibid.* p. 82.

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scale of childhood, the sense that even though the new age brought hope for the wretches who had been discounted from history for centuries, the idiot boys, chimney-sweeps, illegitimate children, orphans pickpockets and so on, the age also drove children to worse miseries in the coal mines, factories, building sites and slums.[23] //

The family is considered to be the centre of social meaning for the child. And from the mid- nineteenth century, the imagery used to describe the family included terms like, 'haven', 'refuge', 'harbour', 'arbour', 'garden of Eden', 'secure little plot', 'tiny domestic principality' and so forth. As Inglis says:

> ...The conditions of the nineteenth century political and economic life forced the *haute bourgeoisie* who were the prime makers of the symbolic and expressive culture - the values and meanings their members really sought to live by - to build a new moral system to express, contain, and resist the unprecedented experience of the new political order.[24]

Family structure was made the ground of personal values and there was a new importance attached to individual sensibility and moral autonomy. These changes brought a drastic intensification of emotional life in the bourgeois family. In the Victorian bourgeoisie what was new to the child about his father's invisibility during the day was the set of values confirmed and signified by his absence. Father expressed power, authority, and discipline and ruled largely in his absence. He represented hard-headedness, industriousness, courage, heroism, resourcefulness, self-control, leadership, magnetism and so on. And manliness, in turn, connoted

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[23]Ibid p. 83.

[24]Ibid p. 84.

command, mastery, power, conviction. "In men, the target or object was action, and women were both the prize and the audience." The clear boundary between public and private life corresponded to the line between outer and inner life. Inner life was placed in the care of the loving and sympathetic mother and centred upon feelings and outer or public life was abstractly embodied by the absent father. These ideas were the basis of children's literature. Writers sought to create an ideal social order out of the values that were at hand.

Since children's literature defines itself in terms of an audience which itself cannot be precisely defined, it is usually considered to be a non-subject for the academic. Its subject-matter being simple, ephemeral, popular and designed for an immature audience, is not considered a fit subject for serious study.

However, children's literature lends itself very well to literary theory. The use of feminism, politics, narrative theory, cultural studies, psychology and so on can be very rewarding. Literary theory in recent times has rethought the relationship between text and reader. Plurality of meaning is being recognised as applying to all readers. Since it now allows evidence about the reader all other disciplines represented by the children's world also get involved.

Children's literature has unique sub-types, which we can call genres now, within it- the school-story, the girls story, the boys story, religious and social propaganda, fantasy, folk and fairy tales, interpretations of myths and legends, the picture book and the mixed media texts.

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In the next section, I will survey the historical development of the literary form of children's literature and see how distinct genres came into being in different points in history.

History of writing for children

Narratives of adventure were appearing in England from round about fourteenth century and while they were not written specifically for children they became popular with young readership. They belong to the romantic tradition, usually rooted in French or other European sources and were invariably in verse.

Later prose narratives appeared in the form of chapbooks, the first cheap printed books for a popular market. Few chapbooks before the late eighteenth century were written or printed with children in mind, but towards the century's end, reading material was being produced in some quantity for children. This consisted of a medley of old tales from the chapbooks, and lively new ones which stated how good children were rewarded, and naughty ones were punished with frightful fates.

Children's books, therefore, have become a recognisably discrete 'type' of text since the middle of the eighteenth century. In the 1800s there were stories in magazines like *The Boys Own Paper*. There were the books of R.M. Ballantyne(1825-94), W.H.G.Kingston(1814-80), Captain Marryat(1792-1848), T.Mayne Reid(1818-83), G.A. Henly(1832-1902). There exists a distinct cannon of works for children, from Lewis Caroll(1832-1898) to William Mayne. The 'classic' authors- Carroll, Graham, Nesbit, Milne and Ransome have received scholarly treatment.

On the other hand, even though there is a huge number of 'major' authors who have contributed to children's literature, their contributions are

seldom mentioned in major critical works. Among these authors are Thomas Hardy, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Charles Dickens, W.M. Thackeray, Oscar Wilde, Aldoux Huxley, John Ruskin, T.S. Eliot, Graham Greene, Christina Rossetti, Cecil Day-Lewis, Mark Twain, John Masefield and several others. However, these texts for children are considered necessarily inferior to their other works.

There are others, like Robert Louis Stevenson, Russell Hoban and Penelope Lively who have equal distinction in their writings for both children and for adults.

Some texts by eighteenth and nineteenth century authors like those of Hofland, Edgeworth, Day and Barbauld were once children's literature but have ceased to be so.

The history of the development of children's literature would provide a fair idea of the expectations from and developing attitude toward children's literature. This is also related to the conception of a child down the ages.

The beginning of the nineteenth century saw the production of less overtly didactic stories by a few writers. However, there were no identifiable collection of children's books which had more entertaining narratives. In the 1840s there was a major addition to types of books available to older children especially boys- the adventure story. This tradition was rooted in *Robinson Crusoe* which was published in1719, and the books were known as the Robinsonades. Among them are Captain Marryat's *Peter Simple*(1834)and *Mr. Midshipman Easy*(1836)-the second, however, was not written for children. Even though moral earnestness was still present, Marryat does present a story with interesting details about

strange places. Among others are R. M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1858), W.H.G. Kingston's *Peter the Whaler* (1851) and *The Three Midshipmen* (1873).They were the most prominent of the early adventure story writers. Here was introduced a new motif into the adventure story, that of·the young Englishman, often a young boy, who goes into the wilds, mingles with the `natives' and hunters and comes back toughened, having learnt their ways.

Thomas Hughes established the tradition of the tradition of the school story with his book *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. Knowles and Malmkjaer quote Thomas Hughes "my sole object in writing was to preach to boys: if I ever write again it will be to preach to some other age".[25] He felt that his readers should have a view centred on family, patriotism and God.

By the 1880s the tradition of English authors producing male oriented juvenile fiction was well established. In G. A. Henty's works, the Empire and the concept of Englishness or Britishness were essential ingredients. Henty was a propagandist for Empire and British interests and presented an ideal of resourceful and patriotic young manhood. There grew a tradition of 'brave' and 'dashing' heroes. Talbot Baines Reed (1852-93) wrote *The Fifth Form in St. Dominics* for the *Boy's Own Paper.* Which was published as a book in 1887. The public school was by then a well established and respected institution where examples of honour and decency and patriotism were taught and glorified. They form the basis of the code of behaviour was supposed to bind all the boys together as

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[25]Knowles and Malmkjaer. 1996. Language and Control in Children's Literature. Routledge. London. p. 15. quoted from Thomas Hughes.

members of a hierarchical society with a particular system of dominance. If any boy happened to deviate from any of these codes, his contemporaries themselves would make their disapproval known. In these books the writers perpetuated certain stock ingredients like the triumphant win at cricket or rugger, loyalty to friend and school, types like the bully and the sneak and incidents like stolen question papers and so on.)✓

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) wrote *Stalky and Co.* in 1899 and is about power relations and hierarchy of the school. The school story can be considered to be an 'imperial manual'. P. W. Musgrave links the growth of the school-story to the establishment and defence of legitimate authority, both at home and in the Empire, which meant a lot to those in power from the nineteenth century through to 1936.[26] The obsession with themes of school rebels and fights and inter-school rivalries in sports is related to the opportunities they provide for boys to stand up against others, against the majority or even against adults. This was a key quality in the version of manliness that the schools were dedicated to teach. The recurrence of these elements in the plots was implicit in the genre because a well understood didacticism was central to the genre. Courage to stand up for oneself especially against majority was a vital part of it. Contrasts were created to these heroes in the form sneaks and bullies.

(This can also be connected to the construction of an English identity, through the hero (for example Tom Brown in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*) the upper-class, white, courageous, honourable, patriotic, upright, brave boy from Rugby school, knowledgeable in Latin and Greek, good at football and cricket, interested in fishing and bird-nesting, who was

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[26]P.W. Musgrave. *op cit.* p. 244.

to grow up into an ideal Christian Englishman. This is also brought about through the exclusion of the undesirable traits personified in school bullies, sneaks and cruel and authoritarian headmasters, who were rejected by their construction as the other.)

(At this time there were several books written both for children and for adults. F. Anstey(1856-1934) in *Vice-Versa*(1882) is critical of school masters and private schools. He wrote in the realistic mode introducing elements of fantasy and magic. R.L.Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883) is not explicitly didactic and does not preach Christianity.)

(With the progress of the nineteenth century, the adventure and school stories reached a much wider audience because of the popularity of the weekly magazines. The magazines for boys were a reaction to the earlier low priced publications known as the 'penny dreadfuls'. These descended from the sensational chapbooks, and the gothic novels. They were not originally meant for boys but provided an escapism in terms of cheap and sensational fiction for mass readership sold by newsagents. The Boys Own Paper was published for eighty years from 1879. The 'penny dreadfuls' saw the creation of *Sweeny Todd the Demon Barber of Fleet Street*.)

[Stories for girls did not establish a tradition of female readers like the story of Ballantyne did for boys. Girls stories that were to become 'classics' were pioneered in the United States. Among them were *Little Women*(1868) by Louisa M. Alcott(18332-88) and *What Katy Did*(1872) by Susan Coolidge (1845-1905). For girls, writers like Charlotte Yonge(1823-1901), Juliana E. Wing(1841-85) and Mary Louisa Molesworth(1839-1921) continued to reflect the moral and religious purpose of earlier writers.)

The nineteenth century saw the beginning of a trend in children's literature which has become a significant feature of children's literature since then. That trend involves the use of fantasy and imagination and a movement away from the use of real world settings. Most of these books demonstrated a reshaping of the moral tale, as in Charles Kingsley's *Water Babies* (1863). However, Lewis Carrol's Alice books are not didactic like Kingsley's, but, as Knowles and Malmkjaer put it - "anarchic"[27]. The two Alice books moved away completely from the moralising tone of earlier works for children. The children's book in the fantastic mode can be considered to be a work of the imagination as against the view which argues the necessity of presenting children with facts. Many of these books were based on fantasy and involves the use of magic. However the magic and the fantastic in the literary fantasy is different from that in a traditional fairy tale where the entire tale is based upon it. Here, these elements are presented in relation to the realistic elements in the text. These books reverse worlds and indulge in absurd logic and word play. This age began with the publication of Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* in 1865, and lasted till the early 1900s. The other works include George MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871) and *Bevis, the Story fo a Boy* (1882), Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*, Edith's Nesbit's comic fantasy- *Five Children And it* (1902), Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908), Francis Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911), A. A. Milne's *Pooh* books and the works of Beatrix Potter.

Fairy tales which were not approved of earlier also began to be adapted and published in England at that time. Grimm's fairy tales were first published in English in 1823 and Hans Christian Anderson's works

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[27]Knowles and Malmkjaer. *op cit.* p. 225.

throughout the 1940s. These publications and the literary fairy tales were a reaction to the materialistic culture founded on greed and self-interest and benefiting the urban rich and the new middle- classes to the neglect of the new mass of poor people, after the Industrial Revolution. This led to a new thinking regarding the foundations of life, nature, child rearing practices, the possibilities of human freedom and the possible sources of social cohesion. It is in these context that this new emphasis in children's literature can be placed. According to Zipes,[28] the fairy tales were considered to be a way of socialising and influencing the minds of the middle-class children who read them.

According to Jack Zipes, the transcription of what was originally an oral art makes the stories and their themes enter into literacy, into civilisation and history. He seeks to explain *why* this came about, in relation to the development of *civilité*. He traces the historical origin of the literary fairy tale to the end of the eighteenth century in France, and to groups of aristocratic women who gathered in salons. They were the ones who set the groundwork for the institutionalisation of the fairy tale as a proper genre to be used with children who were to be educated according to a code of *civilité* that was being elaborated in the 17th and 18th centuries. Zipes traces the origin of *Beauty and the Beast* as an example of how the fairy tale as a genre can be understood by an comprehension of its social function. He refers to Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde* to explain the term institutionalisation. Bürger argues that :

works of art are not received as single entities, but within

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[28]Jack Zipes.1989. 'The Origins of the Fairy Tale for Children or, How Script Was Used to Tame the Beast in Us' in Gillian Avery and Julia Briggs (ed.) *Children and their Books: A Celebration of the Works of Iona and Peter Opie*. Clarendon Press. Oxford. p. 121.

institutional frameworks and conditions that largely determine the function of the works ...the consequences that one may observe or infer are not primarily a function of its special qualities but rather of the manner which regulates the commerce with works of this kind in a given society or in certain strata or classes of a society. I have chosen the term "institution of art" to characterise such framing conditions.[29]

Bürger divides the development of art into different phases : sacral art, courtly art and bourgeois art.

	Sacral Art	Courtly Art	Bourgeois Art
Function or purpose	cult object	representational object	portrayal of bourgeois self-understanding
Production	collective craft	individual	individual
Reception	collective (sacral)	collective (sociable)	individual

Zipes examines the rise of the literary fiary tale in the light of Bürger's notion of institution. The literary fairy tale was first developed in salons by aritocratic women as a type of parlour game, as a demonstration of their intelligence and education through different types of conversational games. The challenge was to invent new linguistic games and refine older ones. The women would refer to folk tales and use certain motifs and tell the tales as a literary divertimento or intermezzo. Embellishment, improvisation and experimentation with well known folk or literary motifs were stressed. Up until 1700 there was no literary fairy tale, they were all oral. The fairy tales were used in refined discourse as a means through

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[29] *Ibid.*, p.120.

which women imagined their lives might improved. Gradually the tales were changed to introduce morals to children that emphasized the enforcement of a patriarchal code of *civilité*. Fairy tales with strong morals and messages for children in primers and collections intended for young audiences of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie were written.

Zipes traces the origins of *Beauty and the Beast* back to the publication of Apuleius' *Cupid* (1669) and *Psyche* (1671). The books project images of women who are either too vengeful (Venus) or too curious (Psyche), and whose lives must be ordered by Jove. These two themes were reworked by Madame D'Aulnoy in several fairy tales like *The Ram* (1697), *The Green Serpent* (1697), and so on. Her intention was to present the woman's viewpoint on love, fidelity, courtship, honour and so on. The themes in both stories is sincerity and fidelity and qualities that make for tenderness which were of interest to those women. In both stories the heroes or the princes are transformed by spells to a ram and a serpent respectively, and which were to be broken after a certain period of time. D'Aulnoy makes both men toe the 'fairy' line of civility and obey the decorum that demands great respect for the tender feelings of an aristocratic woman, since she is against forced marriages. The justification of Beauty's right to marry the prince is part of a series of discourses on manners that constitute the major theme of the tale, which is: virtuous behaviour is true beauty. Therefore, fairy tales which appear to stimulate and free imagination actually contains coded messages about civil behaviour and good sense - to "tame the beast in us." [30]

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[30]*Ibid.* p. 133.

Bruno Bettelheim[31] sees fairy tales as 'useful' because, according to him, it allows for vicarious satisfaction to children's anxieties and fears because they are externalised. He further sees them as providing resolutions to Oedipal conflicts and problems of sibling rivalry and helping the child to cope with his childhood problems and become better persons, as a result of it. This imples an attempt to universalise the effect of the tales on children, an approach one needs to be cautious of. According to Peter Brooks, traditional psychoanalytic criticism generally falls into three categories, depending on the object of analysis - the author, the reader, or the fictive persons in the text.[32] Bettelheim's book attempts to psychoanalyse the reader, in terms of the effect of the book on him or her. These approaches, according to Brooks displaces the object of analysis from the text to some person, "some psycho-dynamic structure" whereas it should rather focus on the text.[33]

There was no significant development in the beginning of the twentieth century. Most books were similar to and belonged to the sub-genres of the earlier adventure and school stories. Among the prominent publications are Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*, J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. C. S. Lewis' Nairna books are different in that they deal with subjects which were taboos in children's books. He dealt with pain violence and death, but there were clear divisions between good and evil, right and wrong and so on. Among the popular books of this time were the initial publications of Enid Blyton. Later in the second half of this century, there was a great improvement in

[31]Bruno Bettelheim. 1977. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. Vintage Books New York. p. 111

[32]Peter Brooks. 1994. *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling*. Blackwell, Oxford. pp. 21-2.

[33] *Ibid*. p. 22.

the writings for children. Among books of significance written at this time, were *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1958) by Philippa Pearce, *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* (1960) and *The Moon of Gomrath* (1963) by Alan Garner, *The Ghost of Thomas Kempe* (1973) by Penelope Lively, *Carrie's War* (1973) and *The Peppermint Pig* (1975) by Nina Bawden, Robert Westall's *The Machine Gunners*(1975). Roald Dahl was another author who is still extremely popular with children. He too, fuses strands of adventure, fantasy and magic in his books. His first book is *James and the Giant Peach* (1961), after which he published a series of children's books including *Charlie and Chocolate Factory* (1964), *Danny, the Champion of the World* (1975), *The Witches*(1983), *Matilda*(1988) and others.

In the 70s grew another subsection in literature for children. These books were written for adolescents who had grown out of children's books but were yet too young for adult novels. This group could be called the teen novel, and included books by Judy Blume, Betsy Byars, Paul Zindel and others writing mainly in the tradition of J.D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*.

The text

The tendency in children's literature to guide understanding and limit interpretation has given rise to certain fixed codes and styles in narration. These codes reveal little of what the author thinks. The stories are made familiar and predictable and therefore makes for easy reading. The level of actual presentation of new information is low. As a result it prescribes the level of reading rather than implying readership.

The writers assume what the book should be. The mode is defined mostly by stylistic features of implication within the text. Peter Hunt says:

The audience is 'created' by the writer much more directly than

with a peer text, in the sense that the text does more than display its codes; grammar and contracts; it suggests what a reader must be or become to optimise the reading of the text.[34]

This, to a great extent restricts the readers interaction with the text. Hunt quotes Roger Fowler:

> Linguistic codes do not reflect reality neutrally; they interpret, organise and classify the subjects of discourse. They embody theories of how the world is arranged: world views or ideologies. For the individual these theories are useful and reassuring, making his relationship with the world simple and manageable.[35]

Most of these codes are markers of an oral discourse- the most common of them being 'once upon a time', 'and they lived happily ever after', punctuated occasionally by 'well' or 'then'. The author/narrator in this case is in total control of the storytelling-dominant and all-knowing and their simplification often tends towards patronisation.

This mixture of spoken idiom and simplification has become typified in children's books and writers seem to follow them automatically. The reporting clause in indirect speech is also very common in writings for children. Therefore there is an abundance of 'she said' and 'he said'. This mode of reporting implies that the reader needs to have things explained. Controlled narration by restriction of interaction finally proscribes thought. There is an element of closure, a distinct sense of ending in the text. Their

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[34]Peter Hunt. *op cit.* p. 91.

[35]Ibid. p. 89. from Roger Fowler. 1986. Linguistic Criticism OUP. London. p.27.

plots are resolved and finally normality is restored and security is emphasised.

The novel for the older children may have the form of the bildungsroman, the growth novel. In this the characters, while they return home, do not satisfy all the requirements of closure. They have changed, and the book is in some ways ambivalent. Another mode is the mature or adult mode. In these books, endings are ambiguous. They resolve a part of the problem but leave a lot open.

The understanding of the novel depends on the text skill of the reader who can identify intratextual codes, allusions and generic constraints. One needs to know what is significant both to oneself and to the structure of the text- to recognise cohesion in a text, to assign importance to events, to identify the genre and what kind of attention it requires of us. Peter Hunt quotes Frank Smith:

> When the reader starts to decode the text, authorial intentions are replaced by expectations....The problem is, unless we know what we are supposed to take notice of, we cannot organise our expectations- and as a result, we cannot predict....The more unconventional the reader finds the text the less the reader is likely to have any relevant expectations about it and the less understandable it is likely to be.[36]

Children being unskilled readers would find every text unconventional. Experienced readers are in that sense reading variations on themes and structures they have already experienced and absorbed, which the child has not.

Experience (or 'creation') of a text is the convergence of two code-

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[36]*Ibid.* p. 89. quotes Frank Smith . 1982. *Writing and the Writer.* Heinemann Educational. London. pp. 95-6

sets; those of life (knowledge of the world, probability, causality and so on), and of text (knowledge of conventions, generic expectation, intertextual reference and the rest).

Chapter Two:
Literature and Ideology: The Road to
Fantasy

A book for children is invariably linked with the question of control, and the techniques through which power is exercised over the reader. Even outside the text itself, it is evident in the idea of a canon, which is in a way a literary hierarchy. This hierarchy is based on the notion that some books are intrinsically better than the others. This in turn implies that there is a body which decides such a literary hierarchy. Hence the existence of a kind of literary priesthood, the idea of good and bad readings, and better and lesser books. This gives the impression of an intrinsic value system which places some books over others, concealing the fact that there is actually a cultural/power system which finds it expedient to make such divisions. Consequently there is more value attached to a generalised response than a personal one.

In children's literature, the notion of good books and bad books acquire an added dimension of being 'good for' or 'bad for'. One of the characteristics of these books is the noticeable attempt to guide understanding. Following from the discussion of style, narration, and control in the texts, they could be called, in Barthes terms, 'readerly' texts as opposed to 'writerly' texts which are more open to input from the reader.

In children's literature, the narrator- narratee relationship is usually an unbalanced power relationship. Because of the authoritarian and educational dimension and because of the power codes of adult-child and literature-child relationships, the book to a certain extent defines the reader. This exercise of power can be seen in the attempt to tell more than show, to explicate rather than demonstrate.

All literature, and especially that written for children can be regarded as an ideological form. It cannot be considered apart from the specific effects it produces which themselves are determined materially within certain social practices. For the theoretical basis of such considerations, I will briefly talk about Etienne Balibar and Pierre Macherey's essay 'On Literature as an Ideological Form'.[1] They develop on Louis Althusser's notion of literature as an Ideological State Apparatus (ISA).[2] Althusser in his essay 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' talks of the material modes of Ideology. The ultimate mode of ideology is the insertion of the subject into a metonymic chain of signifiers which takes place in what Jacques Lacan calls the symbolic stage. In the following section I will refer to these theoretical approaches to find out how ideology operates in language.

Balibar and Macherey argue that the literary phenomenon does not exist outside its historical and social contexts. Rejecting the notions of 'creation', and 'creativity', the Marxist theoreticians consider literature to be a product of social practices and having a material process through which it comes about. It is one of the many ideological forms which is historically determined and transformed, and also historically linked to other ideological forms.

Ideological forms are manifested through these determinate practices in determinate social relations, what Althusser calls *Ideological State*

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[1] Balibar and Macherey. 1981. 'On literature as an Ideological Form' from Robert Young (ed.) *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*. Routledge and Kegan Paul London.

[2] Louis Althusser. 1971. 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. Trans. Ben Brewster.NLB. London.

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Apparatuses (I.S.A.s). The objectivity produced in literature is considered to be linked to a given linguistic practice which in turn is inseparable from the relevant academic or schooling practice which determines how it is read or received as well as how it is produced.

// Literature is historically constituted in the bourgeois epoch as an ensemble of certain definite practices in language which provide appropriate fictional effects and serve to reproduce the bourgeois ideology. Literary production is determined by language because it depends on the existence of a common language which codifies linguistic exchange. This common language, which is the historical outcome of particular class-struggles is required to unify a new class domination, therefore unifying it and providing it with progressive forms throughout the epoch. This enforcement of the dominant ideology is carried out by the school.

In this context Balibar and Macherey refer to the linguistic division which results from the education system as the basis of the contradiction between different practices of the same language. The contradiction is between the basic language taught in primary school and literary language which is reserved for advanced levels of teaching.

The ideology of literature works to negate it's material base and represent it as style, genius, creativity - things outside the process of education. To see literature as ideologically determined is not to reduce it to moral, religious and political ideologies as is done outside literature. Nor is it to see it as an embodiment of ideology. It is rather to see the specificity of ideological effects produced by literature and the techniques by which it is produced.

Materialist analysis rejects the notion of 'the work' and related ideas like the 'author', considering them to be written into the ideology of literature. The text is produced under conditions which represent it as a finished work, whereas it is actually materially incomplete, disparate and diffuse from being the result of the conflicting, contradictory effect of superimposing real processes. These processes cannot be hidden except in an imaginary way. Literature presents this reconciliation as natural and therefore necessary and inevitable. Ideological struggles in the language of literature are not outside it but are rather constitutive. The specificity of literary language produced is determined historically in the bourgeois set-up by the development of a common language and of the system of education.

A literary language is an imaginary solution to ideological conflicts inasmuch as they are formulated in a special language which is both different from and also within it. It realises and masks the contradictions which constitute it. It is this displacement of these contradictions which can be called literary style.

Balibar and Macherey in their essay show how identification is produced through the modes of fiction and realism. Referring to Brecht, they show how the ideological effects of literature materialise through the identification of the reader with the hero or the anti-hero.[3] Literature therefore simultaneously constitutes the ideological consciousness of the reader along with the fictive consciousness of the character. This constitution depends on the constitution and recognition of the individual

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[3]Balibar and Macherey. *op cit.* pp. 89-90

as subject.

Althusser, in his essay 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' has shown that ideology 'hails' individuals as subjects and giving it one or more appropriate names. In the ideology of literature, the names given are Author, Reader, Work, Character and so on. In literature, the constitution of the subject takes place through the fictional world because the process involves both concrete and abstract persons.

All description in literature and fiction depends on a story which is analogous to life. Fiction, therefore, gives the impression of having a referent, either in 'truth' or in 'reality'. It is accordingly judged by "standards of verisimilitude and artistic licence"[4] Literature, however cannot be defined simply as an appearance or a representation of reality. It is, rather, the production of a reality which is material and also a social effect. Fiction and realism, therefore are not concepts for the production of literature but relations produced by literature. The referent therefore is not a given which exists before the text but is an effect of the discourse itself. To produce the imaginary referent of reality, it is necessary to have certain expressions that give it the impression of being real.

Literature transforms individuals into subjects, giving them an individuality which is only hallucinatory. It also opposes them to objects by placing them in and against a world of 'real' things but always in relation to it. The effects literature produces are not ideological in a general sense, but particular ideological effects being specifically religious or political. In

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[4] E. Balibar and P. Macherey, 'On Literature as an Ideological Form' in Robert Young (ed) *Untying the Text*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London. p. 90

this, the writer is the material agent, who works under conditions which individuates him and are not within his control. Apart from being an effect of material causes, literary effect is also an effect on individuals who are socially determined socially and who operate under conditions which force him to treat literary texts in a particular way. These conditions decide the way a text is read and the associated cultural practice.

The reading of texts can be seen in terms of the Freudian understanding of a dream, which sees the dream as a train of associations, but which are in actuality forced and predetermined and which develops and realises its ideological effects. Both the text and its commentaries are produced from the same ideological conflicts arising out of the same historical contradictions.

The text gives rise to discourses which reproduce the same ideology and enables individuals to appropriate ideology and make themselves it's 'free bearers' and even 'free creators'. Literature gives the impression of being open to interpretations, an appearance of freedom which is also an effect of domination.Subjection means one thing to the members of the dominant class: freedom to think within ideology, a submission which is experienced and practised as a mastery, another for those who belong to the exploited classes ... subjection means domination and repression by the literary discourse. The domination effect of literary production presupposes the presence of the dominated ideology within the dominant one. The literary effects do not abolish the class struggle but bring about the dominance of the dominant class through literary style and linguistic forms of compromise.

Marxism considers social formations to be constituted by material production and determinate practices. The existence and transformation of each mode of production implies definite economic, political and ideological practices. Ideology is " not a slogan under which political and economic interest of a class presents itself. It is the way in which the individual actively lives his or her role within the social totality".[5] Ideology is the practice for the production of specific articulations and meanings, and for that it requires the support of certain subjects. It appears as natural ideas, a normal way of thinking, common sense masking the fact that it is actually a production of a representation in a social practice. The practice of ideology is successful when it has produced the 'natural attitude', when the relations of power are not only accepted but also perceived as the way things are, ought to be and will be. Ideology produces the way in which the subject acts and the coherency of the subject against the contradictions of the society in which it is placed. It produces the subject as the place where specific meanings are realised in signification. In Althusser's view, ideology works to reproduce relations of production, the relations between classes and between men and their world. It puts individuals in positions of:

> submission to the rules of the established order, that is, a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in words'.[6]

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[5] R. Coward and J. Ellis. 1977. *Language and Materialism*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. London. p. 67.

[6] Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' from *Lenin and Philosophy*.N.L.B. London. p. 127-8.

The materiality of ideology, according to Althusser is affirmed by it's investment in concrete institutions. Since these institutions seem to function to reproduce ideology and individuals as subjects for it, he considers the materiality of ideology to be a fact of concrete institutions. He calls these institutions Ideological State Apparatuses and considers them to be a regulating force for the existing power relations by means of ideas. He lists them as educational, religious, political, legal, trade union, communications and cultural apparatuses. Considering the previous discussion on children's literature, both educational and cultural dimensions seem to be at work simultaneously.

Ideological practice is considered to be 'doubly material' because-- first, it fixes subjects in certain positions with respect to particular fixities of discourse, and second, ideology is made concrete through specific material apparatuses. Ideology works to determine the limits for a certain mental horizon within which the individual can operate. Ideology treats the individual as a consistent subject by a mode which Althusser calls an 'imaginary' process. In his words, what is represented in ideology is "... the imaginary relations of ... individuals to the real relations in which they live."[7]

Jacques Lacan demonstrates the construction of the subject in language through the imaginary identification of the self as an unified whole which takes place in what he calls the 'mirror stage'. This places the subject in relation to the outside. This imaginary wholeness is retained is retained by the child as a prototype for all future identification as it enters

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[7] *Ibid.* p. 155.

cultural and other specific formations as a language using subject :

> The subject of ideology has a consistency which rests on an imaginary identification of self : this is simultaneously a recognition (since it provides subjectivity, enables the subject to act), and a misrecognition (a recognition which involves a representation in relation to forms which include the work of ideology).[8]

It is not only because ideology is produced by concrete institutions that it is a material force, but also because it produces fixed relations in which the individual represents himself in the social formation, which are material.

Ideology necessitates a theory of the relation of subjects to signification and therefore an analysis of ideology involves the problem of language. Psychoanalysis is concerned with the subjective processes and their construction in relation to language. Here language is no longer considered to be a carrier of thought but language and thought make the existence of each other possible.

The practice of signification shows the constitution of a positionality which takes place in what Lacan calls the symbolic order. Lacan's subject is a subject in process. This understanding is based on Lacan's emphasis on the signifier as the determining factor in the construction of the subject. The notion of the subject is considered to be produced in relation to the social relations by the fixing of it's signifying chain to produce certain signifieds. He also specifies the symbolic system to be the positionality required to use language at all.

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[8] Coward and Ellis, *op cit*,. p. 76.

'Symbolic relations', whose determinacy can be traced in the history of the unconscious, are the positions necessitated by predication, i.e., a subject different from and able to differentiate within a predictable outside.[9]

Lacan draws a dividing line between the signifier and the signified, expressing it in the algorithm :

$$\frac{S}{s}$$

such that the signifier is "over" the signified, "over" corresponding to the bar separating the two stages. This bar resisting signification, allows Lacan to focus attention on the signifier, which is said to float or slide, engaging in multiple relations with signifieds. Bowie says that for Lacan, the search for meaning has to necessarily go through language and here, "variously connected signifiers extend to the horizon in all directions. When the signified seems finally to be within reach, it dissolves ... into yet more signifiers."[10] Lacan's signifier has an "active colonising power" over the signified - it "anticipates", the signified, "encroaches upon it" and "enters into it". Bowie cites some examples like "Never do I" where meaning is already being created before the sentence is complete. The presence of the word "but" in "black but comely" and "poor but honest" causes an entire value system to come into view.[11] He further says:

> The manifestation of the unconscious in dream language is distorted (Freud's 'psychic distortion') as a primary process of meaning, as metonymy, a relation in meaning that exists only in a 'the *word to word connection*', that is, between signifiers, without introducing signifieds as a necessary component at the

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[9] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

[10] Malcolm Bowie, *Lacan*, Fontana. p55

[11] *Ibid* p. 65.

root of the unconscious.[12]

Lacan expresses this with the formula :

$$f(S...S)S \cong S (-)s$$

Metonymy functions (f) by the displacement from one signifier to another, ($S...S$) where the first signifier, S, is equivalent ($\sim$) to the second signifier S, such that no signified (s) can appear except after the barrier (-) which dislocates the unity of the sign opening the signified only through the system of signifiers. [13] The unconscious is therefore always in process. It is through this system that the subject is constituted, for its identity is not 'essential' but is, rather produced by it's insertion into something which lies outside its 'self '. Subjectivity comes to the subject when it subjects itself to the signifiers of the linguistic-symbolic system. Before this, the subject, not yet recognisable as such, experiences itself as an unmediated totality, and not as the determinate element within the symbolic system.

The construction of the subject in language is a complex process. It takes place through major shifts in identification. It involves the notion of 'splitting' or separation of the subject, first, from it's sense of continuum with the mother's body. Then with the illusory identity of the ideal ego of the mirror stage. The mirror stage makes the identification of the 'I' possible by beginning a process by which it is perceived as separate. Gazing into the mirror at its own reflection, the child sees an image of itself as a unity, as complete, but this ego is imaginary, in the sense that the child is identifying itself with an image that comes from elsewhere. The Ideal-I is

[12]Christopher Tilley (ed). 1990. *Reading material Culture*. Basil Blackwell. Oxford.

[13]*Ibid* p 232

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possible only by entering into a relationship with 'the Other', through the mediation of which makes the ego become possible, and will be the basis of all later identifications. The child identifies and focuses its desires on the mother, who performs the role of the Other. Tilley discusses, in this context, Freud's account of the fort/da game, where :

> the coming and going of the mother introduce the child into the alternatives of presence and absence, satisfaction and non-satisfaction, the structure of language, around which its whole life will be organised.[14]

This, however, does not complete the difference between the self and the other. The signifiers into which the child has entered needs to have a referent. The mirror phase constitutes the subject by producing for itself a signifier, the mother in place of the other, upon which its identity is dependent. the child perceives its own identity from the understanding of the mother as separate.

Finally, comes the separation by which the subject finds itself a place in symbolisation. The castration complex or Oedipal phase functions to relate the Ideal-I of the mirror phase to a series of categorical subject identities, specifically of sexual difference and the taboo which imposes a prohibition on the identification with the mother as the focus of desire. The signifiers of the symbolic order are instituted at this stage, pivoting around a single point which Lacan calls the Name of the Father, the mythical father as the figure of Law, signified by the phallus which acts to determine the signifying chains. Identity shifts into the symbolic order as the presence or the absence of the phallus becomes the feature that determines

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[14]*Ibid.*, p. 232.

differences - male as presence and female as absence. The unconscious comes into being as a result of the structurings that transform the subject as it enters the symbolic and subjects itself to its codes. The subject finds itself a place from which to represent itself. In order to use language, it is necessary for the subject to take a position in terms of meaning. This positioning is possible only after the initial splitting of the subject to form itself as distinct from an outside. It is achieved through two dominant states, the mirror phase and the castration complex. When this positionality is achieved, the desire of the subject develops according to the constraint imposed by the formation of the family, religion, state and so on.

Psychoanalysis has studied the construction of the subject from the position of language. It has studied dream language as a process of signification. Freud considered the signification of dream to be like a rebus or a hieroglyph. This signification takes place through the processes of condensation and displacement, which transform the latent thought of dreams into manifest contents. According to Lacan, condensation is the "structure of superimposition of signifiers, which metaphor takes as its field ..."[15] and displacement refers to the "idea of that veering off of signification that we seen in metonymy...."[16] Either several thoughts appear condensed in one symbol, or the representation of unconscious desire is displaced into another symbol to accommodate dream censorship. The signifying function as posited by Lacan is made up of metaphor and metonymy : "the direction of the signifying chain is determined by the effects of combination and substitution in the signifier : the signified -

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[15] Malcolm Bowie. *op cit.*, p. 70.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

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meaning is generated by these effects."[17] The form of dreams is a language in that it is a structure with its own logic and syntax. This notion of language is translinguistic[18] and studies how language functions. It thinks of the signified as a function of the signifier, accounts for the signified in relation to the signifier ("the signifier in fact enters into the signified"- Lacan)[19] and aims at an understanding of the production of the subject and meaning in language. The subject and signified are produced simply by a discursive work, and their presence can be defined only in terms of a topology. Julia Kristeva uses this analogy to indicate the necessity of studying the configurations of the discursive space of the subject in relation to the other and to discourse.

(The above discussion on the nature of language and of literature in terms of ideology will form the basis of the understanding of the books to be taken up for analysis. The first of the two books for children, which are to be foci of the next two chapters is Enid Blyton's *The Enchanted Wood* (1939), which belongs to a series of three, the other two being *The Magic Faraway Tree* (1943) and *The Folk of the Faraway Tree* (1946). The other is Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass: And What Alice Found There* (1871). This book along with *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) are considered to be two of the greatest in children's literature, enjoying readership both with adults as with children.

The two books belong to different periods and entirely different acclaim in the history of children's literature. For reasons, however

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[17] Coward and Ellis. *op cit.*, p. 99.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 136

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different, both have an extremely wide readership among children. Enid Blyton's books belong to what may be called 'popular' literature for children. Blyton wrote about six hundred books, many of them about natural history, bible stories and so on, out of which less than 10% are still vigorously read and marketed today. The books which are still being enjoyed by children are the books about adventure and excitement. where children are drawn into the story and taken to places by a fabulous story-teller: " I think children like them because they give them a child centred world where adults are the butts of jokes very often. One of the secrets, I think, of Enid Blyton's success is that... she makes them powerful..." - Kim Reynolds (Internet papers). Enid Blyton is still one of the most popular writers for children, in spite of the severe attack against her books in the 1970s and the fact that she is hardly ever mentioned in critical works on children's literature as a writer of any consequence.)

(Fantasy and adventure are devices which are used so often in children's books that they have become a part of their generic characteristics. Both *The Enchanted Wood* and *Through the Looking-Glass* involve child protagonists entering a fantastic world, in the first by climbing the faraway tree and in the other by going through the looking-glass, where they encounter various characters from fairy tales and nursery rhymes. The following section will be an enquiry into the different conceptions of fantasy as a mode in literature. It will also be a consideration of fantasy in terms of ideology)

Since the inception of critical interest regarding fantasy, various definitions and theories have been put forward concerning its nature.

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Among the earliest was Louis Vax's (1960).The definition concerned the subject matter of fantasy, which included werewolves, vampires, parts of human body coming alive and so on. Kathryn Hume quotes Eric Rabkin, who gives a more formal definition of fantasy, saying that "the perspectives enforced by the ground rules of the narrative world must be diametrically contradicted in order for the fantastic to appear...The truly fantastic occurs... when the prevailing perspectives are directly contradicted" and the changing ground rules are recognised as such by the characters.[20] Tzvetan Todorov defined fantasy in the context of the relationship between the reader and the work:

> The fantastic requires the fulfilment of three conditions. First, the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events described. Second, this hesitation may also be experienced by a character ... and at the same time the hesitation is represented it becomes one of themes of the work ....Third, the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text : he will reject allegorical as well as 'poetic' interpretations ....The first and the third actually constitute the genre, the second may not be fulfilled.[21]

The laws of the reader's familiar world should not be able to explain events occurring in the world represented. The quotation continues :

> The person who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions ... The fantastic occupies the duration of this uncertainty. Once we choose one answer or the other, we leave the fantastic for a neighbouring genre, the uncanny or the marvellous ...The possibility of hesitation between the two

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[20] Kathryn Hume. 1981. *Fantasy and Mimesis*. Methuen. London and New York

[21] From Neil Cornwell. *The Literary Fantastic*. Harvester/Wheatsheaf. New York. As quoted by Nabanita Banerjee in her unpublished dissertation, titled 'Fantasy as Reality: Modes of Representation in *Yoga-Vasistha, Alice in Wonderland, Through The Looking-Glass* and *A Topsy-Turvy Tale*' submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in 1997.

creates the fantastic effect.

However, Rosemary Jackson points out that Todorov's discussion on fantasy does not consider its social and political implications and that it does not relate the literary texts to their cultural formations.

· Kathryn Hume cites W. R. Irwin's three-fold understanding of fantasy, involving the author, the work and the reader. Irwin's view on the subject matter is to do with a logical establishment and development of an impossibility. This is followed by an account of his idea of the relationship between the author and the reader:

> To repeat, narrative sophistry, conducted ... to make non-fact appear as fact, is essential to fantasy. In this effort, writer and reader knowingly enter upon a conspiracy of intellectual subversiveness, that is, upon a game. Moreover, this game, led by the writer prompting participation by the reader, must be continuous and coherent.[22]

Hume also refers to Marcel Schneider, a French theorist who alludes to the relationship between fantasy and psychological desires of both reader and author :

> For each of us hopes to be saved, and not only in another world but from now on, here below, thanks to the assurance that serves at the same time as talisman, secret, and recourse to invisible powers.[23]

J. R. R. Tolkien thought of fantasy as a "recovery, escape, and consolation all adding up to joy." By recovery, he meant the refreshing effect of defamiliarisation. Whereas Todorov thought of fantasy in terms of a hesitation, Irwin game and Tolkien joy, Rosemary Jackson stresses

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[22] Kathryn Hume. 1981. *Fantasy and Mimesis*. Methuen. New York and London. p 15

[23] *Ibid.*, p.20

fantasy as subversion and as a means for dealing with what has been repressed and therefore inexpressible. She sees fantastic literature as literature of desire, for something experienced as and absence or a loss - "for fantasy characteristically attempts to compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints"

> The fantastic is predicated on the category of the 'real', and it introduces areas which can be conceptualised only in negative terms according to the categories of nineteenth century realism : thus, the im-possible, the un-real, the nameless, formless shapeless, un-known, in-visible. What could be termed a 'bourgeois' category of the real under attack. It id this *negative rationality* which constitutes the meaning of the modern fantastic.[24]

According to her, fantasy expresses desire in two ways, by the *telling of* desire and by *expelling* it. She further says that often desire can be expelled by telling, so that it can be vicariously experienced by the author and readers. In this way, fantastic literature:

> ...points to or suggests the basis upon which cultural order rests, for it opens up, for a brief moment, on to disorder, on to illegality, on to that which lies outside the law, that which is outside the dominant value systems. The fantastic traces the unsaid and unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'.[25]

Literary fantasy, according to her, is an index of the limits of the established, dominant cultural order. It can be said to be concerned with *limits* around the 'human'. In this context, Jackson refers to Michel Foucault's comparison between religious and secular fantasies, who has

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[24] Rosemary Jackson. 1981. *Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion*. Methuen. London and New York. p3

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

proposed that both kinds have the same ontological function : An exploration of the limits of being. Foucault suggests that literature of transgression occupies the 'place where the sacred used to play, for transgression takes limit to the edge of its being, to the point where it virtually disappears, in a movement of pure violence.' She quotes Foucault:

> Perhaps the emergence of sexuality in our culture is an event which has several levels of meaning : it is.linked to the death of God and to that ontological void which that death left at the limits of our thought : it is also linked to something which is obscure and tentative - a form of thinking in which an interrogation of limits replaces a search for totality and in which a movement of transgression replaces a movement of contradictions. It is linked, finally, to a questioning of language by itself, in a circularity which the 'outrageous' violence of erotic literature, far from breaking, manifests from its earliest entrance into language. (Foucault 'Preface a la transgression' p. 767)[26]

Fantasy deals with unconscious in an obvious way. She cites Juliet Mitchell who says:

> The way we live as 'ideas' the necessary laws of human society is not so much conscious and *unconscious* - the particular task of psychoanalysis is to decipher how we acquire our heritage of the ideas and laws of human society within the unconscious mind, or, to put it another way, the unconscious mind *is* the way in which we acquire these laws.[27]

Jackson continues, saying that literary fantasies, expressing unconscious drives, are particularly open to psychoanalytic readings and frequently show " in graphic forms a tension between the 'laws of human

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[26] As quoted by Rosemary Jackson in *Fantasy :The Literature of Subversion*. p. 79.

[27]*Ibid.*, p. 6

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society' and the resistance of the unconscious mind to those laws."[28] In ideology, one experiences real relations in imaginary ways, the ways which are lived through various systems of meanings, such religion, family, moral codes, education, culture, law and so on. This is a primarily unconscious process, and since literature of fantasy deals with unconscious material, it would be interesting to look at the ways in which that material deals with the relationship between ideology and the human subject.

Fantasy, is generally believed to be an explicit violation of what is considered to be a possibility. To study the subversive nature of ideology, Jackson refers to Mikhail Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* and links the characteristics of fantasy to those of *menippea*, which in Bakhtin's terms are "violations of the generally accepted, ordinary course of events and established norms of behaviour and etiquette...they form a breach in the stable, normal course of human affairs and events and free human behaviour from predetermining norms and motivations."[29] For Bakhtin, the *menippea* was conceptually linked to the carnival, a suspension of everyday law and order. Carnival is thought to dissolve differences, allowed free contact between hierarchies and broke sexual taboos - carnival life as "life drawn out of its rut", a life "turned inside out", " life the wrong way round". Jackson also refers to Sartre who defines fantastic literature as one in which definitive meanings are unknown, objects no longer have transcendent purposes, so that means have replaced ends.[30]

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[28] *Ibid.*, p.6

[29] As quoted by Rosemary Jackson in *Fantasy : The Literature of Subversion.* p. 15

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 18

Jackson presents a model for understanding fantastic literature. For her, the desire for otherness in a secularised culture is directed towards "absent areas of the world." Fantasy creates an alterity in which this world is replaced or dislocated. She uses the notion of paraxis, which she borrows from optics, to explain this dislocation or deformation. This term can' be taken to mean par-axis, that which lies on either side of the principal axis, that which runs alongside the main body. this place or space of the fantastic also implies an inextricable link to the main body of the real which it shades and threatens. A paraxial region is an area in which light rays seem to meet after refraction. In this area, object and image seem to collide, but in fact neither object nor image genuinely reside there. The paraxial region, according to her, is the space of the fantasy, whose imaginary world is neither real nor completely unreal, but located somewhere between the two.

Playing upon the difficulty of interpreting the events or things as objects or as images, it serves to disorient the reader's categorisation of the real. Fantasy "re-combines and inverts the real, but it does not escape it". Irene Bessiere in her *Le récit fantastique: la poetique de l'incertain* sees the fantastic to be intimately related to the real, to be anti-rational rather than irrational. It reveals reason and rationality to be arbitrary and shifting constructs therefore scrutinising the category of the real. Contradictions come to the surface and are held "antinomically" in the fantastic text, as reason is made to confront what it traditionally refused to confront. She places the fantastic between Sartre's *thetic* and *non-thetic*, where thetic refers to all that is can be taken to be real and substantial, and non-thetic as that which can have no linguistic form, that is, outside language. Since the

fantastic relies on words for its being it cannot be non-thetic, because if it did it would cease to be. It is situated within the thetic and 'pushes' towards the non-thetic.

The goal of the fantastic art is considered by Jackson to be " the arrival at a point of absolute unity of self and other, subject and object, at a point of zero entropy. Lacan has identified the longing for this unity as the profoundest desire of the subject, referring to it "as an eternal and irreducible human desire ...an eternal desire for the nonrelationship of zero, where identity is meaningless."[31] (Lacan, *The Language of the Self.* p.191). Many fantasies show a return to a state of undifferenciation, a condition which exists before the mirror stage, where there is no differentiation between self and other. "To get back, on to the far side of the mirror, becomes a powerful metaphor for returning to an original unity, a 'paradise' lost by the 'fall' into the division with the construction of a subject."[32] The movement from undifferenciation to towards ego-formation effects the subject's insertion into the symbolic order. Julia Kristeva's exposition on Lacan's theories shows that this insertion is inseparably linked to the subject's acquisition of language and syntax, by which the social code is created and sustained. To break the symbolic by dissolution or deformation of language, is considered by Kristeva to be a radical and subversive activity.

This dissolution of language can be taken to be a desire for regression into the imaginary, which is free from the confinement of the

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[31] Jaques Lacan as quoted by Rosemary Jackson in *Fantasy :The Literature of Subversion*. Methuen. London and New York. p. 77.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

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symbolic order. The imaginary is "inhabited by an infinite number of selves preceding socialisation, before the ego is produced within a social frame."[33]

Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* can be analysed in terms of being a fantasy, with respect to the possible subversion of ideology. An analysis of the text will be presented in Chapter-4. Enid Blyton's book, however, presents problems if considered as a fantasy. In terms of handling of language and content it functions in an entirely different manner from a fantasy as discussed in the previous section. It can be said to be closer to the traditional fairy in terms of its elements and its use of formulaic devices. The author is an authoritative, knowing voice which is positioned with absolute confidence and certainty towards events, giving the impression of being a true version of what happened. The reader, like the protagonist is simply a recipient of events which execute a pre-ordained model. It would fall into Jackson's category og the marvellous rather than the fantastic.

Enid Blyton's book also has the added dimension of being a part of popular literature. Ina discussion on popular literature Roger B. Rollin refers to Norman N. Holland who says that "we will enjoy and value those literary works from which we can achieve an exciting balance of fantasy and management of fantasy."[34] Here, the enjoyment referred to is of a very personal, private enjoyment, where the evaluation depended on the extent to which the work offered materials out of which one can shape largely

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[33] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

[34] Roger B. Rollin. 'Against Evaluation : The Role of the Critic of Popular Culture' from 'Bob Ashley (ed)1989. *The Study of Popular Fiction : A Source Book*. Pinter Publishers. London. p. 19 .

unconscious fantasies, which causes involvement. and the extent to which the reader can cope with, manage that fantasy preventing the feeling of threat, or the lack of involvement. The threat is of the subversion that fantasy is all about and this kind of literature allows the reader to be unaffected by it and therefore comfortable in the orderliness of the world around)

Chapter Three:
Lewis Carroll: The Subversion of
Language

Lewis Carroll, along with C. Kingsley, G. Mac.Donald, K. Grahame, B. Potter, E. Nesbitt, J. M. Barrie and A. A. Milne, was one of the first ones to use the fantasy mode in children's literature without any didactic purpose. These literary fantasies do not follow many of the conventions and restraints of more realistic texts. "They have refused to observe unities of time, space and character, doing away with chronology, three dimensionality and with rigid distinctions between animate and inanimate objects, self and the other, life and death."[1] Unlike fairy-tales which are "narratives predicated on upon magic", the magical elements in fantasy are fantastic only relative to the realistic elements of the work. A fantasy is a story based on and controlled by and overt violation of what is generally accepted as a possibility. According to Carpenter and Prichard, fantasy is "a term used (in the context of children's literature) to describe works of fiction, written by a specific author (i.e. not traditional) and usually novel length, which involve the supernatural or some other unreal element".[2]

This Chapter will contain an analysis of Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking Glass and What ALice Found There(1871).

The Real World

Starting from the beginning of Lewis Carroll's text, up to the point where Alice goes through the mirror is set in the real world of Alice's drawing room. It is about a "pretend play" which Alice acts out with her

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[1] Knowles and Malmkjaer.1996. *Language and Control in Children's Literature.* Routledge. London and New York. p.224, from Rosemary Jackson. 1981. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion.* pp. 1-2.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 225, from Carpenter and Prichard. 1984. *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature.* Oxford University Press. Oxford.

kittens. Thought, feeling and language attributed by Alice to the kittens in this play expedites her entry into the conceptual world and the later fantastic happenings. Her imaginary conversation with the kittens is a kind of role-playing of the adult-child relationship. This role-playing serves to trivialise the power-play and the notion of reward-punishment which is a part of this relationship.

> "Oh, you wicked little thing!" cried Alice, catching up the kitten and giving it a little kiss to make it understand that it was in disgrace. (p. 2)

By juxtaposing "little kiss" and "disgrace", the idea of punishment and reproach is made trivial. This is further emphasised a little later when "kissing" is used in a context where it symbolises an expression of love when Alice talks of the sound of snow against the window panes :

> Just as if someone was kissing the window all over outside. I wonder if the *snow* loves the trees and fields, that it kisses them so gently. (p. 5)

In the world of Alice's play, she takes the role of the adults and in the place of the child are the kittens. Like adults, she decides that it was the "black kitten's fault entirely" and the white kitten "couldn't have any hand in the mischief" (p. 1). The motif of reward and punishment begins to take shape at the point where she enumerates the black kitten's faults. However the nature of the faults ("you squeaked twice while Dinah was washing your face this morning", p. 4) highlights the absurdity of considering little actions to be faults and the saving of their punishment for "Wednesday week" (p. 4).

Immediately afterwards, Alice goes on to her own faults and the punishment meted out to her by adults. The "adults" here could be her parents, governess or nurse—anybody imposing order onto her—referred to in these circumstances of parental authority as 'they', in a 'me' and 'them' opposition—as the other who acts as an impediment to her self assertion. The theme of punishment is exaggerated to a point where it becomes ridiculous:

> "Suppose they had saved up all *my* punishments!...What *would* they do at the end of a year? I should be sent to prison..."(pp.4-5).

Then:

> "Suppose each punishment was to be going without a
> dinner; then...I should have to go without fifty dinners at
> once!" (p. 5).

The two forms of punishment mentioned here involve confinement and denial: the denial is of food, which is a source of sustenance. The theme of food introduced here recurs throughout the text. The denial of food in the context of a hierarchical relationship is a punishment here. However, when food is being denied by a figure in the lower position in the hierarchy, it becomes a cause for punishment. This is the case when Kitty denies food to Snowdrop:

> "Fault Number two; you pulled Snowdrop away by
> the tail, just as I had put down the saucer of milk
> before her." (p. 5)

Confinement and denial appears to be a recurring aspect of the world on this side of the mirror. The book starts with Alice in the confined space of her drawing room where a view of the outside world is through a window. This involves a defined space with its implied

orderliness, a defiance of which leads to punishment. The first line of the book establishes this certainty—"One thing was certain". The "drawing room" and the fireplace evoke the notion of home and family where the same rule applies. Dinah and her kittens appear to be a model for Alice's own family. Dinah's ritualistic washing of her babies draws attention to the value attached to tidiness—a form of ordering of things. The "poor things" are held up by the mother (confinement) and the young ones are made to believe that "it was all meant for its own good." (p. 2)

In the hierarchy, Alice places herself above Dinah, a position from where she can tell Dinah that she "ought" to have taught the kitten "better manners"(p. 2)—the ought implying a compulsion regarding a set way in which things are done and "manners"—a setting up of a code of behaviour implying conformity. The animals found in this side of the looking glass are pet cats—domesticated animals unlike the fawn, the lion and the unicorn, which she encounters beyond it.

"Let's Pretend"

From within this enclosed space of the house/drawing-room, Alice's "let's pretend" (p. 5) seems to be a challenge to the hierarchy and confinement. After the first time Alice says "let's pretend", the narrator goes on to give an account of her past pretend games. The first game she played with her sister is a play on identity as well as on language: "Lets pretend we're Kings and Queens"(p. 6). When her sister ("who loved being exact" (p. 6) protested that they could not because there were only the two of them, Alice suggested that her sister be one of them and she herself be the rest.

The next game was with her nurse. This pretence would involve

the child being the aggressor (hyena) and Alice does manage to "frighten"(p. 6) the nurse (who is supposed to be an agent in creating a socially conforming subject) and transform her into a passive victim. This game shows a desire for a reversal of power roles.

In the third game, Alice asks Kitty to be the Red Queen. Kitty with folded arms would look like the queen, defining the position of royalty by posture. Kitty is threatened with punishment at her refusal. The threat made here, however, is not of confinement, as in the earlier cases, but of transgression of the confined space within which they were expected to operate. With the introduction of the idea of the Looking-Glass world and of figures to be encountered with there, the threat of confinement seems to begin to get inverted, because the punishment was to be to put the kitten through the mirror and out of the room. This threat is the projection of the desire of transgression.

The fourth game is about the desire for and an actualisation of the dissolution of the boundary of the enclosed space. It begins with Alice saying,

"Let's pretend there's a way of getting through it, somehow, Kitty. Let's pretend the glass has got all soft like gauze..." (p. 8)

The Looking-Glass is a way out of confinement, and not the window for Alice and soon it began turning into "a sort of mist" (p. 8) at her words. It is described as "a sort of mist", as "melting away", a "bright silvery mist". This was perhaps the beginning of the dream, implied by the allusions to mistiness.

Alice had wondered earlier whether there would be "pretence" in the world beyond—whether there would be an actual fire or smoke, or whether there would be a "pretence". From this side of the mirror, the Looking Glass House was an inversion of what was there in the drawing room.

The Looking Glass House: Entry into the Secondary World

The entry into the Looking Glass House starts with Alice going through the glass and jumping down into the Looking Glass room. Here she looked for connections with the world she had come from. Alice belonged to the other world throughout, visiting an alternative world. There seemed to be a real fire in the fireplace. However, the warmth here is associated with the lack of adult supervision. Adult authority was the agent of separation of Alice from this warmth (another denial).

> "So I shall be…warmer, in fact, because there'll be no one
> here to scold me away from the fire." (p. 9)

The me/them opposition operates here, but in the form of achieved freedom :

> "When they see [me] through the glass in here, and can't get at
> me!"(p. 9)

The ideological worlds of the adults are still restricted within that space from which Alice has managed to escape. 'They' are considered to be the aggressors in the aggressor-victim relationship which Alice's pretend-play attempted to subvert earlier by her desire to pretend that she was a hyena and her nurse, a bone.

> The objects which could be seen from the "old room" belonged
> in some ways to the world Alice had rejected, and were

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"common and uninteresting" but that "all the rest was as different as possible". (p. 9)

Whatever was 'fixed', defined and controlled by the world of the old room breaks free of this fixity in the new world. The pictures that were still and fixed in the old room "seemed to be all alive" (p. 10)

The clock of the chimney piece "got the face of a little old man and grinned at her"(p. 10). Here, the old man (supposedly a part of the adult would in the old room) is no longer an aggressor (he smiles at her).

The movement of the chess pieces in a chess game is controlled by an external force (the player) into determined and restricted movements. In the Looking Glass World, The chess pieces acquire a life of their own. The voiceless are endowed with the power of speech.

However, she is still invisible in this new order and still within a house though a different one. The orderliness of things, tidiness which was a part of the values of the old room. are still with Alice. Looking at the White King "she thought she might as well dust him a little, he was so covered with ashes"(p. 12) and having cleaned him she says: "there, now I think you are tidy enough"(p. 13). The room of the Looking Glass House was not kept "so tidy as the other"(p. 10). Here, we can refer back to Dinah's cleaning ritual in sequence-one, and the emphasis on orderliness, which is missing in this new domain.

The 'Sense' of Language: Meaning and Identity

The fixing of meaning and control of action by the dominant forces—the mode of operation of ideology—is rendered non functional in

this House. What we have in this book is a continuous presentation of alternative meanings, alternative systems of understanding and language. Both systems are presented as parallel and paradoxical. The word paradox is opposed to *doxa*, which means 'common sense' and 'good sense'. According to Deleuze,[3] good sense is said to be of one direction only: "it is the unique sense and expresses the demand of an order according to which it is necessary to choose one direction and hold onto it."[4] Good sense plays an important role in the determination of signification. Therefore, the presentation of paradoxes is in that sense opposed to 'common' or 'good' sense, where common sense recognises and good sense foresees. Language becomes impossible because it has "no subject which manifests itself in it, no object to denote, no classes and properties to signify according to a fixed order."[5] As opposed to the unidirectionality implied in sense, what we have here is a bi-directionality and accordingly if the real world signifies one direction of one sense, one understanding, one system of metaphor, the fantastic world denotes the other.

This bi-directionality is there at every point in the text, the two messengers are going in two different directions, one going and one coming, Tweedledum and Tweedledee make the two directions indiscernible (the finger posts pointing to their house and their 'contrariness' in spite of their similar looks). Alice sees two fingerposts, both leading to one road—"To Tweedledum's House" and "To the House of Tweedledee". Once again, Alice is led towards a 'house'. The two fingerposts, which should suggest different directions actually lead to the

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[3] Gilles Deleuze. 1990. *The Logic of Sense. Columbia* University Press. Columbia

[4] *Ibid.* p. 74.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 76.

same place—a house with two names. However, this being the world of the looking-glass, Alice does not arrive at the house. She meets Tweedledum and Tweedledee under a tree. Their names, as suggested by the dictionary, refer to "two persons resembling each other so closely that they are practically indistinguishable."[6] It also says that the names are after proverbial rival violinists called by the same names supposedly representative of Handel and G.B. Bonocini, who had musical rivalry. Here the rivalry is over a rattle. One represents the 'contrariwise' of the other, and the two contrary meanings produced by the two of them dissolves the possibility of fixing of meaning as might have been suggested by their similarity. Their collars are marked Dum and Dee, indicative of this difference. The moment Alice seeks what may be common between them (Tweedle), she is interrupted. The conversation that interrupts her again reveals their contrariness.

> "If you think we're waxworks," he [Dum) said, "you ought to pay, you know. Waxworks weren't made to be looked at for nothing. No How!"
>
> "Contrariwise," added the one marked 'DEE', "if you think we're alive you ought to speak." (pp. 47-8)

The contrariness swings between the inanimate (waxwork) and the animate.

There is past and future but never the present (Jam yesterday and jam tomorrow but never jam today). Even Humpty Dumpty, the *master* of words, destroys 'commonness' of sense by creating his own sense of words. He creates differences in such a way that no fixed quality or

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[6] Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary. Reader's Digest Association Ltd. London. p.1624.

measured time can be brought to bear upon an identifiable object. His neck and waist, tie and belt are indiscernible and for that same reason, he refuses to recognise Alice because she has the same face, eye, nose, mouth as every other human being.

Carroll's Alice finds herself transported from one place and situation to another. She moves from the enclosed world of her living room into another world through a mirror. She interacts linguistically and physically with animals, chess pieces and figures from nursery rhymes of the parallel and paradoxical world whose parallel set of rules is obvious through the interaction, through the use of puns and inversion of metaphors.

The clear distinction between magic and reality becomes blurred. The book adopts a child's perspective to highlight the absurdity of many of the rules of the adult world. The separation of the world of adults from the world of children is clear from the very outset where the adult world is distinctly made the 'other' through a clear division of 'me' and 'them'.

Apart from language and family, education is another means of socialisation satirised in the novel. R. Jackson in her book *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (1981) suggests that Carroll's creatureless names, nonsense in language, indicate a shift towards language as signifying nothing, and the fantastic itself as language. She says that the art of fantasy draws attention to the "process of representation" and that it moves towards an "anarchic discourse" by combining units in new relations.[7] Knowles and Malmkjaer in their discussion of the Alice books say that Alice's confusions in the Looking Glass World

...is to highlight the tenuous nature of the link between

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[7]Rosemary Jackson. 1981. Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion.

language and reality. His impression seems to be that
language gives the impression of certainty and orderliness,
but that impression is misleading in a number of ways.[8]

Throughout the book, language and meaning are made ambiguous
and certainties implied in signification are done away with through the
alternative system of signification:

"Am I addressing the Queen?"
"Well, yes, if you call that a-dressing," the Queen said." It
isn't my notion of the thing, at all." (p. 64)

The Queen, with her own logic of things makes a different
meaning from 'addressing'. Her understanding of it is "a-dressing"
in the sense one would say *awaiting*—a sense of a state of
continuous dressing. On the other hand, it could also mean
undressing in the sense one would use the word *apolitical*. Her
"notion of the thing" does not overlap with Alice's (p. 64) and
hence the text keeps presenting a parallel logic of words and their
understanding.

Later when asked her age, Alice says, "I'm seven and a half
exactly". "You needn't say 'exactually,'" the Queen remarked, "I can
believe you without that."(p.67). The word "exactly" a marker of
precision for Alice becomes one for truth in the Queen's "exactually".

Alice tells the red Queen that she had lost her way. At which the Queen
says:

"I don't know what you mean by *your* way: all the ways

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[8]Knowles and Murray. 1996. *op cit.* p. 237.

about here belong to me." (p. 70).

In her conversation with Humpty Dumpty, he offers to repeat poetry to her:

> "...only I don't sing it," he added as an explanation.
> "I see you don't," said Alice.
> "If you can see whether I'm singing or not, you've got better eyes than most," Humpty Dumpty said severally. (p. 92)

White Queen becomes a sheep later and Alice finds herself in her shop. Alice, deciding to survey the shop before buying anything, says:

> "I should like to look all round me first, if I might."
> " You may look in front of you, and on both sides, if you like," said the sheep: "but you can't look all round you-unless you've got eyes at the back of your head."
> (p. 72)

The metaphors in the Queen's language clearly do not overlap with Alice's. The logic of looking "all round" her is not a simultaneous action. It is divided temporally as one or the other. The Queen's understanding of it is a simultaneous looking at all the objects at the same time. As she tries to look around her, Alice finds that the objects on the shelf she tries to focus on vanish. The object of desire kept eluding her so that wherever she looked for it, and went on from one empty space to the next space, just like in the game of chess—she had to move from the space she occupied into the next empty space towards her objects of desire—and in the same way, that fixed meaning eluded her in this world of alternative logic and language.

The connecting link between Alice's language and the other becomes thinner until she completely fails to understand it as with the

words "feather" and "crab" used by the White-Queen-turned-sheep. The only connecting link in their conversation is reduced to Alice's "bird" which by extension was taken up by the Queen when she mentions "goose" (p.75).

The elusive nature of the desired object/meaning in that world recurs again with the rushes "...the prettiest are always further" (p. 77) and the closer she moves, the further the rushes move away. This is also the case, when she moves towards the egg she decides to buy in the shop which moves progresively away from her. The egg moves away from her and strange branch like things appear in the place of the shelves until finally the egg turns into Humpty Dumpty.

At another place Alice explains to the Red Queen that she has lost her way:

> "I don't know what you mean by *your way*," *said* the
> Queen: "all the ways above belong to *me*." (p. 25)

Sometimes these ambiguities do not create any problems, but there are occasions when they lead to serious problems in communication.

At times different underlying logical structures are hidden by identical surface forms. The Red King's logic of language in one particular part of the conversation involves going by the surface form of a sentence rather than the logical structure.

> "I see nobody on the road, "said Alice.
> "I only wish I had such eyes," the King remarked in a fretful tone. "To be able to see Nobody." (p. 99).

"I see nobody" is considered by the King to have the same logical

structure as "I see him". He misses the different logical structure of the sentence, and the conversation continues along the same lines, so that "I see Nobody" becomes understood as "I see X". The king loses the aspects of a set phrase used by Alice.

> "I beg your pardon?" said Alice.
> "It isn't respectable to beg," said the king. (p. 100)

The logic of the king's language is a very literal logic. When Alice's use of language is metaphorical that of the Looking-Glass people is literal, and at other points of time it is the other way round.

> "There's nothing like eating hay when you're faint..."
> " I should think throwing cold water over you would be better" Alice suggested. "or some sal volatile."
> "I didn't say there was nothing better... I said there was nothing like it." (p.101)

His literal logical sense differentiates between "nothing like" and "nothing better". When Alice said. "Would you be good enough to stop a minute—just to get—one's breath again" (p. 103), again "stop a minute" is taken by the king to have the same meaning as "stop a person".

The illusion of certainty that language creates is shown to be the illusion that it is. The book completely subverts the concept of language as a tool for representation of a concrete material reality. Fixity of language begins to become tenuous. That certainty of meaning and the user's and the audience's shared understanding of it, which is one of the assumptions in the use of language, and the peculiarities of a language group, like sayings and idioms, are broken when a signifier does not refer to the conventional meaning attached to it. The language and the metaphors of the Looking-Glass beings are different from Alice's— making meaning ambiguous. The conversation between the White King

and the Queen is one such occurrence where two persons involved in a conversation have different metaphorical systems. The King says, "I assure you, my dear, I turned cold to the very end of my whiskers!", to which the Queen replies, "You haven't got any whiskers."(p. 13)

Control over language is also gradually lost and what is expressed is no longer what is meant. The White King says:

> "I can't manage this one a bit; it writes all manner of things that I don't intend". (p. 14)

The subject matter of what the King writes is also about the loss of balance ("He balances very badly"p. 14). Alice, however, still has control. She is the agent of the meaning, which comes out through the King's writing.

Jabberwocky

This poem is found in the Looking Glass book and Alice can read it "the right way"(p 47) by holding it up to the mirror. Except in the first and the last stanzas (which mean nothing until Humpty Dumpty explains it) only the verbs make sense—'beware', 'bite', 'catch', 'shun', 'took', 'sought', 'rested', 'stood', 'came'. Words that fail to make sense are the nouns, adjectives and adverbs. The subject and object, that is things, belong to a parallel world of the Looking-Glass beings but the action is still comprehensible to Alice. This is perhaps the beginning of the problem of identity presented in the text. Therefore, what Alice understands of the poem is that "*somebody* killed *something*" (p. 18) where somebody and something could be anybody and anything, and also their nature could not be determined. All that is clear is the action of the subject—"killed".

The descriptions of nouns as well as verbs in the form of adjectives and adverbs form portmanteau words, having meanings, which belong to an entirely different order of signification. The Looking-Glass people, as is obvious from Alice's interaction with them, possess this parallel system of meaning.

Carroll's use of portmanteau words in this poem is of great interest. They are defined by their function of contracting several words and of enveloping several senses (frumious = fuming + furious). A portmanteau word is formed only when it coincides with a particular function of an esoteric word, which it supposedly denotes. According to Deleuze,[9] in Jabberwocky, there are a great number of words, which are fantastic but do not form portmanteau words, like 'toves'(badgers, lizards and corkscrews), 'raths'(green pigs), and the verb 'outgribe'(bellowing, whistling and sneezing). Examples of portmanteau words are 'slithy'(lithe + slimy), 'mimsy'(flimsy + miserable). In each case, there are several contracted words and senses, which are organised to form a total sense. Carroll's explanation to portmanteau words is provided in his Preface to *The Hunting of the Snark*:

> Supposing that, when Pistol uttered the well known words—"Under which King, Bezonian? Speak or die!" Justice Shallow had felt certain that it was either William or Richard, but had not been able to settle which, so that he could not possibly say either name before the other, can it be doubted that, rather than die, he would have gasped out "Rilcham!".

The law governing all names is that their sense can be denoted by other names. The name saying its own sense can only be nonsense. The portmanteau word is itself the principle of an alternative the two terms of

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[9] Deleuze. op cit. p. 46.

which it forms (frumious= fuming-and-furious and furious-and-fuming).
Therefore, one word leads to a multiplication of senses.

Plant life (flowers) acquires the anthropomorphic dimension of speech and plants attribute the names of flower parts to Alice—calling her hair "petals" (p21). This language is again their own. No human being would have used such vegetative metaphors to describe human subjects. The plants' reference to Alice's hair as petals and description of the Queen as being more bushy than Alice confirms the fact that naming is language specific, and that there may be more than one metaphorical universe.

There are a series of puns here on flower parts—indicating that the beings of the Looking Glass world have a different system of metaphors altogether. The willow tree would protect plants from danger.

> " It could bark," said the Rose.
> " It says 'bough-wough'" cried the daisy : "
> that's why its branches are called boughs !" (p.
> 22)

Explaining why flowers in the other side could not talk, it says:

> "In most gardens ... they make the beds too soft ...
> so that the flowers are always asleep."(p. 23)

Metaphors are used in contexts in which they could also be understood literally.

> "There was a silence in a moment, and several of the pink
> daisies turned white." (p. 22)

This comes in response to Alice's threat to pick them. After this, the Tiger-lily says:

"...it's enough to make one wither to hear the way they go on." (p. 22.)

In the actual world, there is no relation between the bark of a dog and the bark of a tree.

. Colloquial expressions are considered literally as in the case of the Red Queen when Alice told her that she'd lost her way. The Queen was quite indignant.

> "I don't know what you mean by your way : all the ways
> about here belong to me." (p. 25)

The Red Queen loses track of categories in her exaggeration to establish superiority in worldly knowledge over Alice.

> "I've seen gardens compared to which this would be a
> wilderness..."
> "I've could show you hills in comparison with which you'd call
> that a valley."
> "I've heard nonsense, compared with which that would be as
> sensible as a dictionary." (p. 27)

Alice, however, as characterised by other beings in her world, is still in firm grip of categories :

> "A hill can't be a valley, you know." (p. 27)

∕ The loss of identity is a prominent preoccupation in this book. The loss of proper name is an adventure, which is repeated throughout the book. The singular or proper name is guaranteed by the "permanence of savoir".[10] But when this dissolves, all identities disappear from the self.

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[10] Gilles Deleuze. op cit. p. 3

Alice sees something from the top of the hill and thinks it is a bee. Whether one can at all identify/name an object by its characteristics is what is problematised here. The bee described here was "bustling about among the flowers, poking its proboscis into them ..." (p. 33). This proboscis could also be the trunk of an elephant. Therefore, it is also a question of perspective and sensory perception. Alice was watching from about a mile off and her confusion arises when she acknowledges that "nobody ever saw bees a mile off..."(p. 33). and yet it was "just as if it was a regular bee" (p. 33). Then the identity of the object slides from being a bee to an elephant and the flowers into "something like cottages with roofs taken off, and stalks put to them..." (p. 33).

In their insect-naming game, the gnat argues on the function of names, which can be for referring and for calling. The gnat says:

> "Of course they answer to their names?" the Gnat remarked carelessly.
> "I never knew them do that."
> "What's the use of having names," the Gnat said "if they won't answer to them?"
> "No use to *them*," said Alice, "but its useful to the people who name them, I suppose. If not why do things have names at all?" (p. 39)

This starts the age old debate in Western Philosophy—the Realist-Nominalist one and there are numerous arguments on either side throughout the text, where in Realism names refer to the inherent essence of things and in Nominalism, names denote particular things that are talked about. Here, Alice takes up the Nominalist position, suggesting names to be tools by which one can conveniently denote objects without having to point.

However, a few pages later, Alice comes to a wood where things have no names. Here, the other, Realist point of view is argued for. Alice comes across a Fawn who does not realise that Alice is a human being.

> "So they walked ... Alice with her arms clasped lovingly around the soft neck of the Fawn, till they came out into another open field ..." (pp. 44-5)

As soon as they reached the end of this wood, "the fawn gave a sudden bound into the air and shook itself free from Alice's arms." (p. 45)

"I'm a Fawn!" It cried out in a voice of delight, "And, dear me! You're a human child!" A sudden look of alarm came into its beautiful brown eyes, and in another moment it had darted away at full speed." (p. 45)

Therefore, names are no longer tags. They acquire meaning. Names have a connotation as well as a denotation. If there were no names, then communication would be impossible without pointing and so would generalisation, if one had to depend on conditional responses.

The gnat talking of names says how convenient it would be for Alice if she could go home without her name. If her governess could not remember her name, she could not call her and Alice could miss her lessons.

However, back in Alice's world she was already inserted in her own social set-up in terms of class and position. Alice's response to the Gnat's statement was that if her governess would forget her name she would call her "miss". The Gnat puns on "miss" saying that in that case she could "miss" her lessons. There is on Alice's part a fear of losing her name. The notion of loss of name is related to the separation and object.

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The epistemological debate regarding names and meanings continues from the world of the Looking Glass insects. Humpty Dumpty asks Alice what her name means.

> "Must a name mean anything?" Alice asked doubtfully.
> "Of course it must, "Humpty Dumpty said with a short laugh. "My name means the shape I am—and a good handsome shape it is too. With a name like yours you might be any shape almost" (p. 81-2).

/The position Humpty Dumpty takes here implies that words refer to the idea of things—a Realist position. Immediately afterwards he takes up the other position the Nominalist one when he argues about the advantage of unBirthday presents.

> "That's glory for you "says Humpty Dumpty "I don't know what you mean by glory"'... Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. "Of course you don't till I tell you. I mean 'there's a nice knock down argument for you!'".
> 'But glory doesn't mean a nice knock-down argument' "Alice objected.
> "When I use a word,"... "it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less."
> "The question is, " said Alice "whether you can make words mean so many different things" "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, which is to be the master, that's all."
> (p. 88)

Later on, Humpty Dumpty uses the world 'impenetrability', in an exercise of solipsism, and makes it mean that "we've had enough of that subject and it would be just as well if you'd mention what you mean to do next, as I suppose you don't mean to stop here all the next of your life. Just as a master would pay his workers for overtime, Humpty Dumpty the master of meaning making says words extra." (p. 88)

The question is how much do we actually depend on past usage for meaning? In one way, words are our "masters"—so that communication is possible, and in another, we are the masters making poetry and propaganda possible and the point is that if at all we are masters as far as the second meaning goes, whether we can make words mean what we like to and whether agreement which enables communication is what we go by. Humpty Dumpty takes the first alternative.

The Knight proposes to sing to Alice. The **name** of the song is called: *Haddock's Eyes*. The **name really is**: *The Aged Aged man*. The **song is called**: *Ways and Means*. The **song really is**: *A-sitting on the Gate* (pp. 124-5) Two things can therefore be said about a name.

What all this suggests is that the name of any *thing* has both a real (*is*) and an appellative (*is called*) dimension. The *real* names given here are rather weird and ungrammatical, while the appellative ones seem more like ordinary titles.

The assumption is that the signifier is not necessarily directly related to the signified. It is a discussion on the function of words. In Roger W. Holmes's "The Philosopher's *Alice in Wonderland*"[11] there is an interesting discussion on the passage. He takes up the name 'John Keats'. 'John' (the name) is called 'Giovanni' by Italians, 'Johann' by Austrians or Germans, 'Ian' by Irish. It can therefore be deduced that 'John' is what Keats's first *name is called* in England. The question therefore is that if a single name takes different forms in different linguistic contexts, then what

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[11]Roger W. Holmes. 1971. 'The Philosopher's *Alice in Wonderland'* in Robert Phillips (ed.) Aspects of Alice: Lewis Carroll's Dreamchild as seen through the Critics Looking-Glass. Victor Gollancz. London. pp. 164-5.

the *real* name is. It could either be the names themselves taken collectively, or *something* which the names refer to, as in a common noun, 'day', *'jour'* (Fr.), *'tag'* (Ger), refer to the same *something*. But what about the *name itself* of what is called 'day'? Clearly it has no name, but is only *called* 'day' or *'jour'*.

Considering the distinction between things and what things are called, and continuing with the example of Keats, Holmes argues in the following way. A person intimate to Keats might call him 'Jack' (what a *name is called*). Describing him as 'England's greatest Romantic poet' is an example of what the *thing* is called. However, neither his pet name 'Jack', nor the epithet already referred to, can exhaustively describe Keats *himself*. Coming back to the problem of the song referred to in the text, then what is the *song itself*, if it neither is the name of the song nor a description of it? The song itself can, therefore, only be *the song itself*.

Alice, to be a Queen in this chess game has to knock off the enemy. Alice's reaching the eighth square is not enough to make her a queen. She has to pass a viva-voce examination. This sequence is of a fight between two kinds of logic, Alice's, and of the either Queen's, especially that of the Red Queen.

The Red Queen assumes a superior position—"Speak when you are spoken to." (p. 133) Alice, the Queen, ignores the implications of a hierarchical relation. She is now the Queen's equal. She says,

> "But if everybody obeyed that rule, and if you only spoke when you're spoken to and the other person always waited for you to begin, you see, nobody would day anything." (p. 134)

The Red Queen's attempt is to make her remain a child—"Why dont you see child" (p.134) or "What do you mean by if you really are a Queen?"(p. 134) or, "What rights have you to call yourself a Queen you know, till you've passed proper examination"(p. 134). The Red Queen's position is threatened. She continues performing the superior role:

"Always speak the truth think before you speak... you should have meant" (p. 134)

Her statement asserts the importance attached to the 'meaningful' in normal speech—"What is the use of a child without a meaning? Even a joke should have some meaning and a child's more important than a joke." (pp. 134-5)

After this, the examination begins and it becomes progressively a test of subversive logic rather than of mathematics. In mathematics, subtraction and division are necessarily within a particular category of things. But in the White Queen's logic it is not. Dividing a loaf by a knife, according do the White Queen's logic, would leave bread and butter.(p. 136) The Queen asks, "Take a bone from a dog: What remains?" (p. 134) , to which Alice answers:

"The bone wouldn't remain, of course if I took it - and the dog wouldn't remain; it would come to bite me and I'm sure I shouldn't remain." (p. 134)

Here the space for the 'remainder' is evidently restricted to the spot where the bone was taken away. The Red Queen's answer was that the "dog's temper" would remain because the dog would lose it(p. 137). Here,

there is an extension of mathematical operations from mere numbers to everyday reality. After this extension is made, it is verbalised to produce bizarre results.

The two parallel usages of language, in the following passage are based on homophony. For each of Alice's usages, the Queen's understanding is of its homophonous words.

> "... how is bread made?
> "I know that!" Alice cried eagerly. "You take some flour..."
> "Where do you pick the flower?" the white Queen asked. "In a garden or in the hedges?"
> "Well it isn't picked at all," Alice explained: "it's ground..."
> "How many acres of ground...." (pp. 137-8)

The parallel logical system runs through this conversation based on different understandings of 'flour'/ 'flower' and 'ground' (verb)/ 'ground' (noun). When Alice gets confused over the cause and effect relationship between 'thunder' and 'lightning' and immediately attempts to correct herself, the Red Queen says:

> "When you've once said a thing, that fixes it, and you must take the consequences." (p. 139)

With the passage of time, the hierarchy in the relationship seems to be less rigid until it is reversed, and Alice assumes the role of the mother singing lullabies to the sleeping Queens.

The etiquette of introducing strangers is extended during the feast to introducing Alice to the food that was being served: "Alice - Mutton;

Mutton - Alice" (p. 146), and when Alice offers a slice to the Queens, the Red Queen says,

> "certainly not, it isn't etiquette to cut anyone you've just
> been introduced to. Remove the joint". (p. 147)

The same thing happens with the pudding, which is offended at being cut. The food begins to acquire human qualities. Food is anthropomorphised earlier also, when insects are composed of food items.(pp. 39-41) After this, there is chaos—a total rejection of orderliness. Identities seem to merge and get blurred so that Kangaroos look like pigs, people push and shove, inanimate objects assume life. pp. 150) And finally, Alice acquires the power to knock off the Red Queen and win the chess game. Alice shakes the Red Queen and she turns into a kitten.

"Which Dreamed It?"

Dream is a mode which is very closely linked with literature written in the fantastic mode. A dream can be seen as a negation of the real. Both Alice's dream and her going through the mirror are made to overlap in such a manner that one does not know which is which. As a matter of fact, it is a riddle whether it was Alice's dream at all.

Rosemary Jackson sees fantasy as ".. a literature of desire which seeks that which is experienced as absence or loss."[12] Fantasy attempts to compensate for the lack that results from cultural constraints. The text draws attention to the very working of ideology through *méconnaissance*. For Lacan, looking into the mirror gives one a sense of wholeness which is the imaginary identification of the self. Alice actually leaves the real

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[12]Raosemary Jackson. op cit. p. 3.

conditions of her existence and enters this imaginary or virtual world. This in Jackson's terms would be entering the "paraxial region", in which fantasy, the mode of the book, itself belongs. The parallel nature of the two worlds in the text, of the language used in these two worlds of fantasy and reality, can be expressed through Jackson's concept of "paraxis". As the word 'paraxis' suggests, fantasy lies along the axis of the real, and many of the terms used in the context of fantasy, like 'through', 'edge', 'beyond', 'reversed', 'inverted' and so on, express this.

The opposition between dream and reality has an important role in the text. The notion of reality here can also be linked to the problem of identity, which is a recurring theme in the text. Alice's unreality is manifold. First of all, Alice is a fictive character in a novel written by Lewis Carroll, thereby being the creation of an author. Secondly, she is narrated by a narrator, and therefore the construct of a narrative process. Thirdly, Alice enters the Looking-Glass world, and thus her oneiric narrative becomes unreal from her own perspective too. What problematises her unreality all the more is that alternatively, Alice could also be a part of her own dream or even the Red King's dream.

> "He's dreaming now," said Tweedledee," and what do you think he's dreaming about?"
> Alice said, "Nobody can guess that".
> "Why about you!" Tweedledee explained clapping his hands triumphantly, "And if he left off dreaming about you, where would you suppose you'd be?"
> 'Where I am now, of course," said Alice.
> "Not you !" Tweedledee retorted contemptuously "you'd be nowhere. Why you're only a sort of thing in his dream!"
> "If that there king was to wake," added Tweedledum, "you'd go out—bang! —just like a candle."
> "I shouldn't!" Alice exclaimed indignantly. "Besides if I'm only a sort of thing in his dream, what are you, I should like to know?"

"Ditto" said Tweedledum.

"Ditto, Ditto !" cried Tweedldee. (p.57)

In the context of the dream, the question raised is that *where* would she be if the King stopped dreaming about her. The question is related to her spatial position if the King did that. This *where*, the question of spatial positioning is used in the context of going out of the dream also (that she would go out of the dream). This going is then connected to the going out of a candle, using the spatial metaphor in ordinary usage. However, this going out is made unusual by using the word 'bang'.

Here, there is a play on the Idealist argument that to exist is to be perceived (ultimately in the mind of God). Roger W. Holmes in his essay 'The Philosopher's *Alice in Wonderland*' in that sense considers the Red King to be performing the function of God. But immediately afterwards the problem in the argument is presented.

Tweedldee shouted this so loudly that Alice couldn't help saying,

> "Hush! You'll be waking him, I'm afraid, if you make so much noise."
> "Well its no use your talking about waking him," said Tweedledum, "When you are only of the kings in his dream. You know very well you are not real." (p.57-8).

This raises the question about the nature of reality and about the subjectivity of knowledge—whether one can at all be sure of anything except through experience. Alice puts forward as her counter argument, the usual criterion for distinguishing between reality and dreams:

> " I am real !" said Alice, and began to cry.
> "You won't make yourself a bit realer by crying," Tweedledee remarked, " there's nothing to cry about."
> "If I wasn't real," Alice said- half laughing through her tears, it all seemed so ridiculous—I shouldn't be able to

cry."
"I hope you don't suppose they are real tears"
Tweedledum interrupted in a tone of great contempt. (p.
58)

If Alice's existence was in the dream of the Red King, her tears
should also be there.

Games, Rules and a Predetermined World

Opposed to the 'house' is the world outside, to which Alice comes

through the garden. There are hills, brooks, hedges, forests and so on.

Whereas, the order inside the house is made to seem natural, the

categorisation in the world outside is made explicit to indicate that the

imposition here is external.

There were a number of tiny little brooks running straight
across it from side to side, and the ground between was
divided up into squares by a number of little hedges, that
reached from brook to brook. (p. 27)

In a game of chess the player is the agent which moves the chess

pieces. Alice says to the Red Queen

"I wouldn't mind being a Pawn, if only I might
join...though of course, I should like to be Queen best!" (p.
28)

One of the meanings of 'pawn' (*Readers Digest Universal*

Dictionary)[13] is "a person or thing used to further the purposes of

another". The Red Queen, has the power to make Alice a pawn as well as

to decide that she could be a Queen at the Eighth Square.

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[13]Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary. *op cit.* p136

The Queen measures and marks out distances with pegs and determines Alice's movement from the second to the eighth square.

As a Pawn moves two squares in its first move, Alice would quickly go through the third square by train. Alice, the Pawn, realises that her movements are determined and it will soon be time for her to move.

Rules of a game or of interaction comprise a recurrent theme in this book. They can be placed in the same group as orderliness and categorisation. The Red Queen first sets down the order of her movements.

End of two yards — give Alice directions

End of three yards — repeat them

End of four yards — Good bye

End of five yards — leave (p. 31)

At the end of two yards, she sets the rules for Alice's movements according to the rule of chess. However, at the end of three yards she does not repeat them. She breaks the second rule she sets for herself. Here she makes another set of rules for Alice. The first rule has to do with Language—"Speak in French when you can't think of the English for a thing"(p. 32). The second has to do with posture—"Turn your toes out as you walk"; and the third with identity—"Remember who you are" (p. 32)

The theme of predetermined action and the related concept of games and rules (because they imply fixed rules and moves) recur throughout the text. These games and rules imply that there are certain fixed ways of

doing things, which are determined earlier by some authority and the non-observance of which would imply deviance. This, in this specific context would refer to a game, as of chess, or rules of battle, and by extension take on an ideological dimension, as in the context of manners, etiquette, obedience, conformity and so on, where the agency is more concealed and the action has more of an impression of naturalness than in a game.

In this text, these occurrences are decontextualised or exaggerated so that their effect becomes subversive to a great extent. Unlike the completely anarchic world of *Alice in Wonderland*, this is a completely determined world, where one has no choice. This determined nature is so emphasised that it draws attention to itself, and very often the agency of determination, which is mostly language, is revealed. Tweedledum and Tweedledee, The Lion and the Unicorn, the Red Knight and the White Knight "must" fight at regular intervals, irrespective of their feelings.

The determination of one's world normally takes place through language. This refers to the nature of language, signification in the context of the earlier discussion. In the Looking Glass World, however, the naturalness of this determination (which is the effect of ideology) is lost. Even the use of nursery rhymes is an indication of this power in the context of language. Actions are eternally fixed by words./ Tweedledum and Tweedledee fight over a rattle, not because they want to but because the rhyme says they do, and therefore they must.

> " We must have a bit of a fight, but I don't care about going
> on long." (p62)
> The poem goes :
> Tweedledum and Tweedledee
> Agreed to have a battle;
> For Tweedledum said Tweedledee
> Had spoilt his nice new rattle.

Just then flew down a monstrous crow,
As black as a tar-barrel;
Which frightened both the heroes so.
They quite forgot their quarrel. (p. 48)

The word 'Agreed' suggests that there was no real conflict. That the fight was over a 'rattle' underplays 'battle'. They also go off hand in hand into the wood to get their battle-dresses and swords.

As if to emphasise the determining character of the rhyme, Alice says just as the battle was about to begin—"I wish the monstrous crow would come" (p. 63), and as if to confirm that statement it does.

Codified behaviour or etiquette, which is a part of socialisation is exaggerated in the text. After a reasonably long conservation, Tweedledum says,

> " You've been wrong!... The first thing in a visit is
> to say 'How d'you do?' and shake hands." (p. 49)
> This is taken out of the context in which it usually
> occurs. After dancing with both of them to the tune
> of "Here we go round a mulberry bush"(p. 49)

Alice finds it difficult to start a conversation. Alice didn't know how to begin a conversation with people she had been just dancing with.

> "It would never do to say 'How d'you do' *now*?"
> she said to herself : "we seem to have gone
> beyond that somehow!"(p.50)

/In the Looking Glass world, rules are taken out of the context of games and brought into the sphere of everyday action and behaviour. The world of the Queen is determined by these rules and her own logic. Alice says

"I'm so glad it (crow) is gone..."
"I wish I could manage to be glad !" the Queen
said. "Only I never can remember the rule". Later
her rule to stop crying seems to be to consider
things seeing Alice cry she says.
"Oh, don't go on like that!", "Consider what a
great girl you are, consider what a long way
you've come today. Consider what o'clock it is
consider anything, only don't cry".
'Can you keep from crying by considering
things?...
"That's the way its done. (pp. 69-70)

The entire interaction with Humpty Dumpty is a game, like of chess
with the players who are allowed alternate moves. Alice's question's are
taken by Humpty Dumpty to be a test of knowledge and her concern to be
a riddle.

"Why do you sit here all alone?
"Why because there's nobody with me!... Did you
think I didn't know the answer to that? Ask another."
"Don't you think be safer down on the ground?"
"What tremendously easy riddles you ask!" (p. 82)

The game was going too fast for Humpty Dumpty, so he suggested
they go back to the last remark but one. When Alice fails to remember it he
says,

"In that case we start a fresh, and its my turn to
choose a subject— ("He talks about it as if it were a
game" thought Alice) "So here's a question for you.
How old did you say you were?"
Alice made a short calculation and said "seven years
and six months".
"Wrong !" Humpty Dumpty exclaimed triumphantly
"you never said a word like it."
"I thought you meant 'How old are you'," Alice
explained.

"If I'd meant that, I'd have said it". (p. 84)

Here it is Humpty Dumpty who is being literal while Alice sticks to metaphors and idioms used commonly in her world.

·Like Tweedledum and Tweedledee, and the Lion and the Unicorn, the Red Knight and the White Knight clash on the chessboard. The White Knight ousts the Red Knight from the board. In this game, however, the battle is not just between the players but also amongst the chess pieces. To occupy space in the wood, like on a chessboard, the other occupant has to be ousted. They too have rules and they, too, shake hands and part after the game is over. The White Knight remarks to the Red Knight, "You will observe the Rules of Battle of course." (p. 113) Alice wondered what these rules were. The rules involved, as in chess, the knocking down of one or the other. Alice's guesses about the rules were

> "One rule seems to be, that if one Knight hits the other, to be, that if one Knight hits the other, he knocks him off his horse, and if he misses, he tumbles off himself." (pp. 113-4)

However, this battle ends with both the Knights falling off but it was declared to be a victory for the white Knight.

Space and Time

Linear movement and direction is reversed, as if through a mirror. Alice is out of the confined space of the house, but breaking free from the influence of the house proves to be a problem. Alice's destination is the hill so that she can get a complete view and therefore an understanding of the garden. She seeks a linear and unidirectional way to meaning but it eludes her.

"Here's a path that leads straight to it --- at least, no, it doesn't do that ....Well this turn goes to the hill, I suppose --- no, it doesn't......Well then, I'll try in he other way" (p. 19) .

The confinement symbolised by the house seems to be inevitable as every path she chose went "straight back to the house". She was always coming back to the house. this return seemed inevitable to her.

"I know I would have to get through the Looking Glass again --- back into the old room --- and there would be an end to all my adventures!" (p. 19)

So she resolutely turns "her back upon the house" attempting to reject that world. However her attempts have an orderliness about it which has to be broken. She has to realise that what seems obvious, commonsense and natural, is just one and the accepted way of doing things. In the Looking Glass world there are alternative ways also. As long as she was within the house --- even the Looking Glass house --- direction did not pose a problem. Once out of that enclosed space it becomes problematic. In going to meet the Red Queen later in the sequence, Alice discovers the Looking Glass sense of direction. The reason for her failure can be illustrated as someone looking for something behind him through the mirror and walks towards the image, thus progressively moving away from the actual object.

The concept of time plays an important role in *Through the Looking Glass*. Times seemed to be mirrored in the looking Glass World. If time is drawn as a straight line-in a one dimensional graph in the + x axis, its mirror reflection would move in the opposite direction along the -

x axis.

And this concept of time is spoken about by the white Queen.

"What sort of things do you remember best? "Alice
ventured to ask.

"Oh, the things that happened the week after next."
The Queen answered in careless tone. "For
instance, now, she went on, sticking a large piece of
plaster on her finger as the spoke, "There's the
King's messenger. He's in prison now, being
punished; and the trial doesn't even begin till next
Wednesday: And of course the crime comes last
of all."

"Suppose he never commits the crime?' said Alice.

"That would be all the better wouldn't it?"....
Alice felt there was no denying that. "if course it
would be all the better," better," she said: "but it
wouldn't be all the better his being punished. (p. 68)

Here and where the Queens scream and pain came before the prick,
the cause-effect order is reversed. The time here has to be time-with-
direction. Within this temporal framework, purposeful significance such as
catching the brooch in order to pin it is eliminated.

Another temporal reference of a different kind is made when Alice
suggests to the white Queen that she needs a lady's maid.

"I'm sure I'll take you with pleasure!" The Queen said.
"Two pence a week and jam every other day."(p. 65)

Present becomes past and future becomes present - is one idea
which is problematised. By its nature tomorrow does come but by
definition it never can. The paradox here is that, in the same words the
queen promises Alice jam and also makes it clear that she can never have
it.

The Knights inventions had to does with the tackling of the law of gravity. His inventiveness can be connected with the amount of free space and movement that he is allowed on the chessboard. Of all the chessmen, the Knight alone has the power of leaping. The horseman's leap is symbolised by the ability of the Knight to move two squares in any direction and one at night angles to that direction - a cross section of a leap. The occupants of other squares make no difference to his moves. He can leap to a vacant square, take an enemy piece on deliver a check over their heads - as the white Knight does here. This freedom of movement allows him to perform miracles.

In his encounter with Alice his first attempt to master gravity mentioned here was his experiment with a deal box which he carried upside down to prevent the rain from getting in. Here his mastering was partial because he massed the fact that gravity would act on his clothes and food kept inside the box which had fallen off.

By then the Knight seemed to know that things always fall down. His theory of keeping hair from falling was this.

> .... First you taken an upright stick. Then you make
> your hair creep up it, like a fruit tree. Now the reason
> hair falls of is because it hangs down - things never
> fall upwards, you know." (p. 117)

Obviously he connect the falling down of hair with the force of gravity.

His third experiment was his invention of a method to climb over a gate.

> "The only difficulty is with the feet. The head is high enough
> already ... Now first I put my head on the top of the gate -
> then the hairs high enough - then I stand on my head then the

feet are high enough you see then I'm over you see." (p. 121)

Both time and space which are problematised in the text are brought together in the concept of speed. Alice has to run with the Red Queen. The two of them run extremely fast but there is no physical displacement. to Alice's question :

"Are we nearly there ?" (p. 29)
the Queen says "....... Why we passed it ten minutes ago" (p. 29)

The "there" used as a marker for space by Alice is interpreted by the Red Queen to be an indicator of time referred to by her "it". This seems to be the case because the have not moved at all since starting. The Queens "it" in that case refers to the point in time when the running started.

Calling Alice's country a slow sort of country, the Queen says : "Now, *here*, you see, it takes all the running *you* can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run twice as fast as that."

They run for more than ten minutes and their displacement is zero.

If speed (v) = displacement (s)/ time (t)

$$v = s/t$$ and if s =

0, then logically $v = 0$. However, for there to be a great speed as there seems to be here the equation has to be inverted according to the logic of the Looking Glass world since, inverting the equation we get $v = t/s$, and

here if s=0, then v becomes undefined.

Food

/Food seems to be one element in children's literature which is for the construction of the children's world. In this book too, this theme recurs throughout, in various forms. It is anthropomorphised in the section where Alice and the gnat talks of various insects made of food and during the feast, where mutton and pudding acquire lives of their own.

Alice and the Gnat go into a discussion of the insects in their respective worlds and their diet. To Alice's mention of horsefly, the Gnat talks of the "Rocking horsefly" whose body is made up of wood and feeds on sap and sawdust. Even though sawdust comes from food, the Rocking horsefly's wooden body lives on sawdust. Food here serves to constitute the body by a reversal of cause-effect.

The Snap-dragonfly is "made of plum pudding, its wings of holly leaves, and its head is a raisin burning in brandy"(p41). It lived on Frumenty and mincepie and makes its nest in a Christmas box. Here food is not for survival. The insect itself and its food evoke an atmosphere of celebration, possibly Christmas --- holly leaves, plum pudding, raisin burning in brandy, Christmas box and so on.

The Bread-and-Butterfly, again evokes the idea of food for survival by the words "thin slices", "crust", "weak tea". 'Bread and Butter' is associated with survival and quite naturally leads to Alice's and quite naturally leads to Alice's question:

> " Supposing it couldn't find any?"
> "Then it would die of course."
> "But it must happen very often," Alice said thoughtfully.

"It always happens," said the Gnat. (p. 41)

This refers to the inevitability of death for the lack of food.

The theme of bread and butter recurs again in this section. When there is the minimum of bread and better the King can have it when he feels faint. But when that resource depletes there is dehumanisation - one has to resort to hay.

Hatta, the messenger eats bread and butter and tea because he did not have it in confinement (prison) and he is denied food.

Hierarchies

> The train journey recreates the world of adult child relationships. Expecting the "small" voice which seems a friendly voice, all others --- the guard, the gentleman in white, the goat, and the beetle assume positions of domination over her --- made obvious in their dialogue. the Guard for example, speaks to Alice from a position of adult authority : " Don't make excuses ...." (p. 34)

The gentleman dressed in white paper says

> "So young a child ought to know which way she's going, even if she doesn't know her own name." (p. 35)The "ought to know" is negated by the first part of the sentence "so young a child"(p. 35), and the relevant expectations in terms of knowledge in a young child. It is negated further by the last part of the sentence where the expectations are reversed. A young child would be expected to know her name and not necessarily which way she was going. This is reiterated by the Goat who says "she ought to know her way the to the ticket-office even if she doesn't know her alphabet."(p. 35)

These passengers collectively decide on what she "must" do and assume the authority to make such decisions. This kind of assumption of ultimate authority is shown to have the effect of dehumanising the child. Here in the Looking Glass world it is made obvious and ridiculous because the dehumanisation is internalised. She "must", according to them be sent as "luggage", "she *must* go by *post*", "she *must* be sent as a message by the *telegraph*" and so on. (p. 37)

The little voice instead of telling her what she "must" do or "must" be gives her the choice what the others do not. It says she "might" make a joke, allowing her, apart from choice, the capacity for speech. It places her as an equal when it says "I know you are a friend, ... a dear friend and an old friend." (p. 37)

The hierarchisation implied by the presentation of Kings and Queens are similarly subverted through making them ridiculous.

Through the Looking Glass shows how language can be used to allow a multiplicity of meaning and also a subversion of ideology, with the help of parallel systems of meaning.

Chapter Four:

Enid Blyton: Literature of Ideological Subsumption

This chapter will deal with the analysis of Enid Blyton's book- *The Enchanted Wood*, with occasional references to the two other books belonging to the same series- *The Magic Faraway Tree* and *The Folk of the Faraway Tree*. These books can be called literary fantasies, dealing with three young children- Bessie, Fanny and their brother Jo and their adventures in the Enchanted Woods and on the Faraway Tree. The analysis will have as its background the notion of ideology outlined in Chapter-2. The methodological tools would include the identification of Thompson's modes of ideology and their associated strategies referred to by Knowles and Malmkjaer.[1] It would also involve a study of how the fantastic mode operates in these books in terms of construction of a separate and distinguishable world of magic and of supernatural beings, apparently rejecting the ideological implications of the world of everyday life and its hierarchical organisation.

In *The Enchanted Wood* there is a systematic construction of a world of fantasy- a world for children in deliberate opposition to the world of reality. This construction takes place in stages through, first, by an attempt, as in fairy tales, to give it a sense of timelessness- "There were once three children..."[2] This can be regarded as a device which by removing the particularities of time and space attempts to give it the authority or weight of being an eternal phenomenon. However, the fairy-tale rejection of time-space is not successful here as immediately afterwards, the post industrial set-up of the book becomes rather obvious by the mention of towns with its associates- "dirty houses and the tall

[1] Knowles, Murray and Kirsten Malmkjaer. 1996. *Language and Control in Children's Literature*. Routledge. London and New York.

[2] Enid Blyton. 1939/1997. *The Enchanted Wood*. Dean. London.p. 1

chimneys."[3] Following from this, is the second stage in the construction of a world of fantasy- the rejection of 'town' in a *town-country* opposition and the privileging of the country, where magical things can happen. The father of these three children had a job in the country, and they were to shift from the town into the country.

> The children pressed their noses to the window and watched the dirty houses and the tall chimneys race by. How they hated the town! How lovely it would be to be in the clean country, with flowers growing everywhere, and birds singing in the hedges![4]

With the construction of the *town-country* divide, is associated the *nature-culture* opposition: "What fun to be in the country!" said Jo. "I shall learn all about animals and birds!" It is linked with *trees, flowers, birds, streams, hillsides, big fields, winding country lanes and dark woods, roses hanging for the walls- red and white and pink and honey-suckle all round the door.* [5]. As an extension, the country posited here gradually comes to be associated with the fantastic world. the country seems to be the place where magic is possible. The children come upon the enchanted wood through coincidence, a device which is again a common one in a fairy tale- "...they *suddenly* came into the wood...." Opposing the "ordinary" in the world of day to day life, this new world is posited as "different",- its trees are "darker green than usual", it is a "mysterious sort of wood", The "noise the trees make is different", the trees seem to be "whispering secrets-real secrets, that we just can't understand"- as if representing the world of the unknown and perhaps the unknowable. The

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[3] *Ibid* p. 1

[4] *Ibid.* p. 5

[5] *Ibid.* p. 6

unknown is linked up with "magic" so that the presence of "fairy-folk" in such a wood would not seem unnatural. Therefore, there is obviously a privileging of the, first, the country over the town and as a corollary, the magic and the fantastic over the ordinary and, hence a negation of the actual in favour of the fantastic.

TOWN ➡ COUNTRY ➡ ENCHANTED WOOD ➡ FARAWAY TREE

→ REAL ←   → FANTASTIC ←
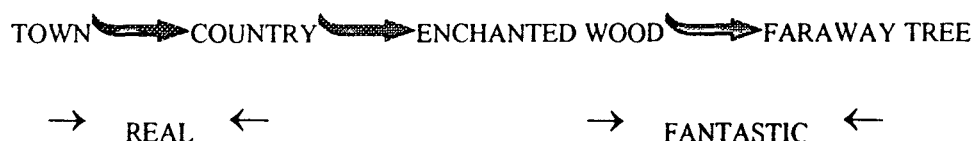
This separate space created in the text for the children in the story is aimed specifically at the child reader for whom the book is written. In this exclusive space, there is, seemingly a denial of entry for the adult world, which is represented by parents in this particular case. Parents of the children are never given entry into the enchanted wood, which is inhabited by fairies, gnomes, elves and pixies. These elements are borrowed from the traditional fairy tales and immediately become recognisable as markers of the child's domain. The effect of this intertextual reference is to provide a context in which these texts are read and in a way to condition the reader's response to these texts. They suggest metalingual cues through which a text's codes may be recognised and understood. The fantastic mode attempted here links up with the contextual function through which this text indicates the fantasy context in which it is operating and to bring into play the relevant generic expectations. It draws on the convention in which interaction with fairies, gnomes elves and pixies are made possible and it also draws on the assumption in most literature about the child's animistic imagination, which allows, for example, interaction with the three bears and Goldilocks from the fairy tale *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* in *The Enchanted Wood* with Little Miss Muffet in *The Folk of the Faraway Tree*. These cross-references to fairy-tales and nursery rhymes firmly set these

books in the realm of fantasy stabilising the ways in which they are to be read, reinforcing preferred meanings and values and also define children as audience. The construction of the child's world here is made to appear natural by the inclusion of these elements which acceptably belong to the child's domain- nursery rhymes and fairy tales.

The significant division in the texts become that between the real[6] world and the fantastic world. In the real world the town has already been eliminated by leaving it and coming to the country (In *The Folk of the Faraway Tree*, the presence of the 'town' is felt again when there is a visitor from there- Connie. She is portrayed as a disruptive force in the world of fantasy until the qualities of urbanity in her are removed). The representatives of the domain of the real are the 'parents' and those of the fantastic world are the fairy tale creatures- Moon-Face, Silky, the Angry Pixie and the others. The children have access to the Enchanted Wood and the Faraway Tree but their entry to that world is monitored by the real world. Physical crossing over of the boundary, (the ditch) separating the real from the fantastic, by members of the real world - the parents, is not possible. However, for the supernatural beings, such a transition is easily made as when Saucepan Man or the Barn Owl visit the children. In general the two are kept separate in terms of space and do not meet except when Saucepan Man comes visiting and meets the mother of the children. There is surprise on the part of the mother at the "queer" man, but there is no rejection of that world, or a total mutual exclusion of one from the other, in which case they would never have met. Therefore, the fantastic space of the children in the text is recognised and accepted as the children's world.

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[6]I will use the term 'real' in this context to refer to what is not fantastic. I will also use it interchangeably with ordinary in this Chapter. In the context of the discussions on ideology the word real was used in an entirely different sense.

In that, the children are empowered to have a space for themselves.

The next section will investigate into the portrayal of the relationships in the 'real' world, which would include the family and the implied power relations including gender relations. It would also include a study of a system of values suggested in the text.

The Ordinary World

In *The Enchanted Wood* certain patterns of gender and family relations and of certain social codes are portrayed in a specific way and rationalised so as to make them appear natural and desirable. Most obvious of them is the portrayal of gender roles as depicted in the 'ordinary' world occupied by the family. The family can be divided into sub-groups of 'parents' and 'children'. And these in turn into father and mother, in the first and boys and girls in the second.

Taking the smallest groups into account first, we will consider the micro-groups of 'father' and 'mother'. Before a detailed discussion on the nature of portrayal of these groups, I will consider them in terms of their collocation. As discussed by Knowles and Malmkjaer in *Language and Control in Children's Literature*, the notion of collocation derives from J. Firth, M. Halliday and J. Sinclair. It relates to the tendency of certain words (nodes) in spoken and written texts to occur in the vicinity of certain other words(collocates). This tendency of these words to draw associations is called their semantic prosody. The members of any linguistic community have in common vast quantities of implicit knowledge about collocational relationships and semantic prosodies of terms and expressions, and also writers and pressure-groups who may use this knowledge implicitly or explicitly. For example, the word 'black' has the tendency to occur in

expressions like *black sheep of the family*, *black magic*, *black Wednesday* making the semantic prosody negative. This prosody may spill over to onto the persons referred to as *black* man/ woman/ boy/ girl. This can also be contested in expressions such as '*black is beautiful*'. Collocation, therefore, allows writers to encourage certain reactions from readers to specific things, without explicit statement and in the process also encourages associations between phenomena in the fictional world and those of the readers' extra- literary experience. The latter is particularly important in fantasy fiction if the fantastic world is to be of any consequence, or even comprehensible, to the reader.

1.	...now their	*father*	had a job in the country
2.	two men helped their	*father*	and mother to pile ...
3.	the children...to go with their	*father*	and mother to catch a train at the
4.	as the children's	*father*	could not afford to...
5.	two men were moving all the furniture into the little house	*father*	helped.

6.		*father*	was going to work the next day
7.		their *father*	set them to work
8.		*father*	came in as they were finishing. He had been shopping for Mother in the village and he was hungry and tired.

9. "That must be the wood I've
heard about this afternoon," said *father*   It has a strange name, children
10. they had to help their mother and *father*   all they could
11. "Its called the Enchanted Wood"
                     said their *father*

"People don't go there if they can
help it. It's funny to hear things
like this nowadays, and I don't
expect there is anything really
queer about the wood. But just
be careful not to go very far
into it, in case you get lost.

12.   the children did not tell their   *father*   and mother about the
13.   *father*   lost some money

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In four out of the thirteen places where the word father occurs, the word is associated with his role as the economic provider of the family. The first(1.) example shows that the entire family has to move because of his new job in the country side. The second and the fourth examples(4. and 12.) show that his earning was rather meagre and therefore the family had to be careful about how they spent their money. Where father and mother occur together, indicate the common area of duty. Except no.10. all other examples suggest and define the sphere of activity for the father. Even if he is involved in domestic work it is mostly of a kind which would require some physical strength like carrying things or doing gardening. Otherwise it would involve some work out of the domestic space, the home, like going for shopping. In no. 10., the father's role suggests rationality and wisdom, in a rational- emotional opposition, where the man is associated with reason and the woman with emotion. This division is evident in the relationship between the girls and the boys where 'thought' and 'reason' is ascribed to the boy and feeling and emotion to the girls.

Collocations of 'mother' are very different in this respect.

1.	*mother*	went to light the kitchen fire
2.	*mother*	cooked eggs for them
3.	*mother*	hoped there would be someone to give her washing to do...
4. Can you spare us for an hour,	*mother*	
5. Yes, run along, said	*mother*	
6. "Jo, Bessie, Fanny", suddenly came their	*mother's*	voice from the cottage not very far off. "Tea-time, tea-time!"
7.	*mother*	had new bread and strawberry am for them
8. "You can take your tea out today," said	*mother*	"You've worked well, all of you and you deserve a picnic. I'll cut you some sandwiches and you

			an take a bottle of milk."
9.	worked hard ... hoping their	*mother*	would say they could have an a whole day to themselves ,
10.	"Very well," said	*mother*	"You can go tomorrow..."
11.		*mother*	said they could make toffee
12.	saucepans clanging so loudly that	*mother*	looked quite alarmed
13.	"Don't make such a noise,"	*mother*	said
14.	He clashed his pans so loudly that	*mother*	jumped
15.	"Whoever is he" said	*mother*	in wonder
16.	"Very well," said	*mother*	who wanted to get on with her washing
17.	the children helped their	*mother*	clean the whole house down
18.		*mother*	will be anxious

The above list of collocations with 'mother' is not exhaustive and the occurrences of this word is far more widespread than 'father'. The sphere of the mother's activity as obvious here is within the domestic sphere and within that, mostly concerning cooking and washing. Of the eighteen examples cited here, six are concerned with cooking and serving food for the family, three with washing and cleaning and the rest with looking after the children. As opposed the father's reason, the associations with mother are to do with emotions and the notion of caring and concern. Wherever there is a possible overlap between the two worlds, for example when Saucepan Man comes visiting, it is only in the presence of the mother(who is on the side of emotions). This construction of the woman is in accordance with the stereotypes which link women with emotionality and men with rationality. It is also here, that the depiction of women in such stereotypes is linked to that of children. This is such that when the Saucepan Man enters this world, there is a possibility of the mother's world and the fantastic to meet even though she finds him 'queer' and 'strange'.

She is also aware of and believes in the presence of the other beings from that world which the father is completely unaware of. The father is completely excluded from this set-up in that the father's world and the world of the fantastic never can meet even in speech. This reason- emotion opposition as well as the town-city and the ordinary- fantastic divides can be thought of as extensions of the opposition between culture and nature. And in each of these oppositions there is a categorical negation of the former in favour of the latter.

This reinforcement of differentiation between the sexes in the adult world spills over to the gender role division between boys and girls.

A. 1. What fun to be in the country, said   Jo   I shall *learn* all about animals and plants
        2. I shall *pick* as many flowers as I want to, said   *Bessie*
        3. And I shall *have* a garden of my own, said *Fanny*
B. 1. ...said   *Bessie   in delight*
    2. ...said   *Jo   thoughtfully*
    3. ...said   *Fanny*
C. 1. "Its a magic wood," said *Fanny* suddenly
   2. "There might be fairy folk there", said *Bessie*. "Shall we jump over
     the ditch and go in?"
   3. " No," said *Jo*. "We might get lost. Lets find our way around before we go into big woods like this".
   4. " Ooh!" said *Fanny* shivering in delight.
   5. "Don't lets go too far," said *Jo*. " We had better wait till we know the paths a bit better before we go deep into the wood.
D. 1. "When do you suppose we could go up the Faraway Tree?"

Fanny

kept asking. "Oh, do lets go, Jo."

2. *Jo* wanted to go very badly- but he was a little afraid of what might happen, and he knew that he ought to look after his two sisters and see that no harm ever came to them.

/Jo's role is an extension of the fathers role - associated with caution, rationality, learning and thought. The girls, on the other hand are associated with feeling, spontaneity in expression of delight, fantasising about magic and fairy folk. /It is through the naturalisation of these patterns that family as an institution and within it gender hierarchies are being established and maintained. The portrayal of such everyday interactions and practices in various forms in different contexts construct a network of cultural positions and values, embodied in everyday activity. The representation of social identities in stereotypical terms is a common form in the signifying process. This form of mediation translates the complexity of social relations into a set of simple distinctions. This works through the exclusion of possibilities, and it is through this exclusion that a certain set of social values are endorsed as inevitable and natural. It also supports certain beliefs and myths about social identities and cultural norms. These may become entrenched and take on an authority which eludes the pressure of change. The stereotypes like the good child, good father good wife, limit and contain the polysemic structure of the text. As... , in 'Ideology and the Cultural Production of Gender', comments on the extent to which children's books "represent a sexual division of labour far more rigid than even the sharp differentiation we know to exist. Many children whose mothers are in regular employment must be surprised to find that the mothers in early school reading books are invariably and exclusively

engaged in housework...and the existence of such rigid formulations in many different cultural practices clearly indicates a degree of hard work being put into their maintenance."[7] These are examples of the practices which in the context of systematic denial of opportunities for women, attempt to 'compensate' for this by a corresponding ideology of moral worth.

At the next larger level, the opposition is between adults and children. Adults are ascribed a superior power position and agency in the socialisation of the children, in this text. And that is guided by certain informal but nevertheless influential protocols on the upbringing of children and of relationships within the family as an institution, influencing the seemingly natural and personal bond between parents and children. It is a portrayal of codes of relationships within the institution, its different characteristics through the use of different genres resulting in distinct ways of behaviour for each relationship. The children's entry in to the fantastic is dependent on whether they are good children through a part of a system of a reward-and- punishment. "You can take your tea out today," said Mother. "You have worked well, all of you, and you deserve a picnic."[8] "You can go off after lunch by yourselves," she said. "You have been very good today."

The fantastic

The fantastic world is constructed as an alternative world to the real

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[7]Michele Barrett. 1980. 'Ideology and the Cultural Production of Gender'. in *Women's Oppression Today*. NLB. London. p. 108

[8]Blyton. *op cit.* p. 20

world, for the children, through the exclusion of the real world and the fixities associated with it.' An exclusive space for children can only be in the Enchanted Wood. For children, that space can only be away from the 'real' world which positions children as subordinate in the adult-child hierarchy.'The fantastic world is free from existing categorisations of the other world.' This world has its own parallel set of categorisations, which are of a different order from those of the other and allow for more flexibility.'The construction of the 'otherness' of this world is through its description as different, as darker, mysterious, linked more closely to the night (when it is said to come alive with activity, when more fairy folk appear and also the time when the children are allowed to think about the place).

⟋ The folk of the Enchanted Wood are made recognisable and acceptable through the intertextual relationship of this text with the folk and fairy tale tradition. It allows for brownies, pixies, gnomes and elves to exist in that domain. And the interaction of the children in the fiction, with them, is possible only in this place. It makes possible the strangest of things- toadstools growing in seconds for Brownies to hold a meeting, a single tree growing acorns, plums and strawberries at the same time. In this world there is a multiplication of possibilities and alternatives- rabbits talk, trees whisper, the people of the faraway tree have magic powder in their pockets, the children interact linguistically and physically with fairy tale creatures. Fixities of time and space are flouted.

It is never the same land at the top of the faraway tree, allowing the child the tools for free fantasy. In the Roundabout Land, the entire land is a merry-go-round. Movement is circular instead of being linear. It evokes the spirit of a carnival, a fairground. The peculiarity of the land was that

nothing changed, no one new came and no one left it. The construction of this sense of timelessness conjures up a circularity in time(a negation of linear time in the world of the ordinary) as well as space/ In the land of ice and snow, a snowman created by children takes on life of his own. This snowman which was under the control of its creators, who "threw stones at him to break him up", inverts the roles and assumes life and a position of power- "So that night I crept away here and made myself King" - and from that position of dominance he made his own slaves(the polar bears). He also makes Jo his servant. However, even this hierarchy is broken when the snowman is melted. The next land is the Rocking Land, where money (an important factor in the real world) has no place. The Land of Take-what-you-want and Happy-Birthday Land offer wish-fulfilment. In the real world, the lack of money, which hinders the purchase of necessities does not pose any problems, so that the children can take back the hens, the goat and the garden spade needed by their parents. Moreover the childhood fantasies of toys, fancy clothes and food are also satisfied./

This is, therefore, clearly a world parallel to the world of the ordinary, a fantastic space./Fantasy literature is considered to be fantastic in relation to the real elements within the text and within this text too, the two are clearly juxtaposed. Children's literature, by its very nature makes certain exclusions, the most important of which are sex and sexuality. The adoption of the fantastic mode in children's literature in the nineteenth century was a conscious movement away from the overtly didactic nature of children's literature before that time. It also had to do with the change in the attitude to the nature of childhood starting in the nineteenth century which recognised a need to protect children from the harshness of the real world by offering them an alternative world free from its traces.

However, it can be shown that in the mode of operation of this book there is a parallel line running through the fantastic elements which perform an ideological function.[1] The next section will trace the confirmation of certain patterns of interactions which are hidden by the construction of a secondary world of fantasy and also ways in which a clear distinction is made between the desirable and the undesirable through the construction of the 'other' and its rejection through expurgation.

Prominent among the divisions in the text are the clear-cut distinction of gender roles and types, the juxtapositions between the supernatural and the real, between children and adults, good and bad, helpers and opponents, and so on. According to Thompson, fragmentation is one of the modes of operation of ideology and the operation takes place through the associated strategies of 'differentiation' and 'expurgation' of the 'other'. The shaping of the 'other' is done mostly through the linking of physical attributes to moral rectitude. Differentiation in children's literature often takes the form of an exaggeration of the difference in size between diverse groups as in stories involving giants. Often the relationship between physical size and moral uprightness is inverse.

In *The Enchanted Wood* an example would be the portrayal of the gnome who attempted to rob the Brownies. Fictive characters in popular literature of this kind are seen in terms of essential types. According to this belief, a group looks and behaves in ways different to certain other groups- a belief which led to the differentiation between racial and class groups and the attribution of certain essential moral characteristics to these groups. This differentiation is projected on to fairy tale characters and their stereotyping in this case. Such coding implies that criminality is an issue which can be represented only by a division into criminal and non-criminal

types which are closely linked to the group to which they belong as in the case of linking criminality with class or race./The wrong-doer is punished not so much because of the crime committed but rather because they are entirely different from the law- abiding group./

·   An _ugly_ _gnome-like_ fellow was _creeping_ up silently behind the meeting on the toadstools. None of the brownies saw him or heard him.

"He's after that bag!" whispered Jo. And so he was! He reached out a _long arm._ His _bony fingers_ closed on the bag. He began to draw it away under a bush.

Jo jumped up. _He was not going to watch people being robbed without saying something!_ He shouted loudly:

"Stop thief! Hi, look at that gnome behind you!"....As quick as lightening Jo put out his foot and tripped the running gnome....Jo tried to grab the gnome - but he was up and off _like a bird._

"The gnome got into whatever place there is at the top of the tree today," said the biggest brownie. "He may live there for months and never come down again. It's no good waiting for him- and certainly no good going after him. His name is _Creepy, because he is forever creeping about quietly."_

/Physical description - ugly, gnome-like, having long arms and bony fingers, his movements- is linked up with criminality in this case and physical attributes become a marker for ethical degradation./ And the gnome is very obviously described as the belonging to an entirely different moral order from the children. It is made a part of their responsibility to act

against such people and actions. On the other hand 'goodness' in people is associated with another kind of look. For example, the physical description of Silky matches with her nature which is placed on the side of the 'good'.

At that moment the yellow door opened and a *small* elf looked out. *Her hair was fluffed out* round her shoulders...The elf *smiled*. She had a *very sweet face*.

"Come in for a moment," she said. *"My name is Silky because of my silky hair...."*

Silky was pleased. She sat there brushing her *beautiful golden hair* and ate sandwiches with them.

Here, smallness in size, sweet face and beautiful golden hair is associated with sweetness of character. These stereotypes are made to appear obvious, commonsensical and natural. In fact even the names used are also related to both types - moral (as in Creepy) and physical (as in Silky) , such that the stereotypes formed by the names and natures may overlap. The beings who reside on the faraway tree all belong to some kind of stereotype. The first one encountered on the tree is the Angry Pixie.

...and suddenly the window was flung open and an *angry little face* looked out, with a night-cap on.

" Rude creatures!" *shouted* the *angry little man*...

...The pixie disappeared and came back with a jug of water. He *flung* it at Bessie. She gave a scream.

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"Perhaps you won't peep into peoples houses next time," said the pixie with a grin, and he _slammed_ his window shut again and drew the curtain.

Moon-Face is described as "the moon faced person", "Moon-Face beamed at her", "...said Moon-Face beaming again just like a full moon", "the door flew open again, and Moon-Face beamed out" and so on. Dame Washalot always washed clothes and threw the dirty water down the tree soaking anyone who happened to be in the way. Nobody knew Mister Watzisname's name who was always snoring and got into a nasty temper whenever he was woken up. Well established codes of the traditional fairy tale are used for peopling the text. It is of the order of passive female characters and active male ones, the moustache twirling villain or the blond hero in the popular novel. These kinds of character conventions reproduce stereotypes, or mythic figures who represent a concentration of attributes that social groups consider ideal and desirable or contemptible. They are used to depict sets of social values in the form of positive or negative characters. They are generic figures, and readers who are familiar with the genre may recognise them from the details of look, speech style or ethnicity. The 'badness'of those who deviate...is usually signalled in some obvious way as though we have to be advised that they are evil"[9] Evil people in her books tend to smell bad or look unclean or unshaven. Conventionalised images together with a formulaic narrative structure work to express and reinforce dominant cultural attitudes and beliefs.

The episodes with the Magic Snowman and the Red Goblins show the expulsion of a figure which represents the undesirable in a particular

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[9]Bob Dixon.1989. 'Catching Them Young 2: Political Ideas in Children's Fiction' from Bob Ashley (ed) The Study of Popular Fiction. Pinter Publishers London. p185

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social set-up./ Jo's entry into the Land of Ice and Snow is a result of an act of defiance ("Jo didn't listen"), of heedlessness, and his unpleasant experiences there a punishment and a retribution for that act. This episode brings up the whole notion of guilt and retribution, and the consequence of deviance with regard to the children, who are within the fold of the "us" and a more severe form of nemesis for those belonging to the category of "them". The separation of the *other* begins with first a separation in terms of physical attributes, which has all the makings of a stereotypical villain - "...he saw in front of him a *big strange creature-* a snowman! He was just like the snowmen Jo had so often made in wintertime- *round and fat and white,* with an *old hat* on his head and a *pipe in his mouth.*" That was established in a concrete manner by action. It was through an exercise of power that he made the polar bears in to his slaves denying them the power of speech (possibly through magic, since the polar bears miraculously get back that power immediately when he snow man is melted) and action.

Jo's offence was disobedience and the magic snowman's was a craving for power, which he attempted to exercise on the "good"', in a good/bad opposition where the good is portrayed as the *us* and the bad as *them.* The magic snowman belonged to a space which, too, was 'unnatural'- "And there, strangely enough, the moon and the sun were in the sky at the same time...both shining with a pale light." The Magic Snowman had for his servants polar bears who did all his work. Seeing Jo he wanted a servant who could talk and would build a house for him in exchange of which he would pay him with a fur-coat.

According to Knowles and Malmkjaer[10], " ...fragmentation may take

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[10]Murray Knowles and Kirsten Malmkjaer. 1996. *Language and Control in Children's Literature.* Routledge. London, New York. p57.

the form of expurgation of the other: creating an enemy within or without (Thompson, 1990: 65). In fiction, 'the other' can take many forms, from the school bullies to witches and tends, of course, to have those characteristics which the writer finds desirable." It is a common practice to "superimpose" the *other* on a main character by *magic*. It serves to unite the reader and writer against the undesirable characteristics of the *other* and endorses the modes of behaviour which the writer and often the adult characters in the story, advocate. " In other words, it unifies the 'good' child with 'good' adults against the common enemy, the 'bad' child and the 'bad' adult. The presentation of the 'unnatural' and self-destructive use of power by that particular group is expurgated with death (in this case) and possibly exile or some other form of catharsis somewhere else, and this serves to highlight the harmonious manner in which the representatives of the different groups can work together for common good.

There takes place, first, a distinction between the two groups of good and bad. And these groups become contending forces, represented by the children, the *good* people on the faraway tree- Moon-Face and Silky - and Goldilocks and the three bears on the side of the *moral* and the *virtuous*, and the Magic Snowman and the polar bears under his control, on the other. The battleground, too showed the presence of both elements of the desirable and the undesirable on a common plane- "How strange it seemed to see roses blossoming over the walls, when ice and snow lay all around." The roses were in the cottage of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, which was transported to this other land so that the good could be retrieved from the power of the bad - the Ice-and-Snow land of the Snowman. The return of the cottage from this land indicates that both cannot exist together, and that good has to prevail over evil. The difference between the two is also constructed in terms of warmth and coldness. So, when the

Snowman enters the domain of the good, a " chill fell over the room. The white bears were frightened of him for he was their master. He shut the room and glared at everyone out of his stone eyes."[11] And the threat he present is of over powering them with respect to that difference. " Oho! What will you say if I turn you into ice and snow, everyone?" - "Nobody said anything"- because there is an acknowledgement of his power. The battle begins with the declaration of the other as "enemies". The ejection of the magic snowman from the scene is the culmination of a battle between the two groups, the archetypal war between good and evil.

For the maintenance of the domination of the *us*, there is a rationalisation of the use of violence and cruelty by this group - "After all, if people are fighting you, you can't do much but defend yourself...". The physical power of the Snowman is never denied. He with his "big fat body" was a considerable contending force. In fact his opponents were unable to defeat him on his own terms - "The Snowman was so big and the polar bears were so fierce that very soon the teddy bears, the children and Moon-Face were driven backwards." Ideology functions through the naturalising of certain patterns. Here, for the retrieval of a position of power by the dominant group, there is a representation of the use of violence as necessary and a natural course of action. In fact, the punishment for the Snowman is not just banishment, but complete annihilation. This is presented in a way where the act of cruelty is not just made justifiable but also pleasurable. In the annihilation of the Snowman, the warmth-coldness difference is taken up and warmth is victorious over coldness. Moon-Face beats him in this exchange.

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[11] Enid Blyton. *op cit.* p.73.

They all knew now what Moon-Face's plan was. He meant to make the room so hot that the Magic Snowman would melt. Clever old Moon-Face! A trickle of water began to run from the Snowman's broad white back which was near the fire. Moon-Face pointed to it secretly and grinned....They could see smoke pouring from the chimney of the cottage and knew that Moon-Face must be keeping up the fire. The bears ooomphed every now and again, and the children whispered to one another.[12]

When they manage to melt the Snowman there is satisfaction - "Then suddenly the door of the cottage was flung open and Moon-Face stood there, his big face beaming like a full moon." The justification of violence and cruelty is that it is for common good and that is how it is rationalised.

The other incident where there is an encounter between the desirable and the undesirable is in the war with the Red Goblins. There is a homogenising of the goblins. They all have "pointed ears, wide mouths and wicked little eyes!" This tendency of homogenisation of the other is there in other books of Enid Blyton as well. Bob Dixon in his article comments in the context of her exclusion of the other, that the stress in her books is on the upper middle-class English and that other people are held in contempt, despised and hated to the degree that they deviate from this assumed norm. He points out that we are never told which country the foreigners come from in Blyton's stories.[13]

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[12]Enid Blyton *op cit* p. 75

[13]Bob Dixon, 1989. 'Catching Them Young 2: Political Ideas in Children's Fiction' from Bob Ashley(ed) *The Study of Popular Fiction.* Pinter Publishers, London.p184.

The contention with the Red Goblins is more explicitly a power struggle between the two forces. This power is embodied in the magic spells owned by the virtuous and upright people in the tree- Moon-Face, the Pixie and so on, whose desire is also to have control over that kind of power. The Red Goblins try to gain control by limiting their movement in space by locking them up. They hold them hostage to get their spells- "Well, they want some magic spells that the tree-dwellers know." However, the goblins are fooled into believing that they would get what they wanted but are instead captured by the children and Moon-Face. The Goblins, like the Snowman cannot have a place in the world of the children because they are outsiders. Their punishment is that they are permanently sent to the land of another category of outsiders -the Land of Wizards, Their punishment is for their desire for knowledge of secret potions and spells and and therefore for powerand the punishment dooms them to a place of eternal powerlessness, as servants to "the Mighty- One the Wizard." In this way the dominant group representing the *good* are able to retain their power and remove the threat of another force contending for the same.

The most prominent aspect of Enid Blyton's books as pointed out by Bob Dixon in his article is her the "insistence on conformity - and conformity to the most narrow, establishment-type beliefs, practices and values... "[14] The conformity he talks about has mainly to do with ideas. He ascribes it to a belief that the more closely people resemble one another, the more they'll think alike. He says that this resmblance in looks has to be connected to ecomomic factors, and also to racial considerations. "Moral

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[14]Dixon. *Ibid*. p. 184.

attitudes can only be related to basic economic circumstances, though not in the simple and superficial sense we find in Blyton's work, where the implication is that greater wealth and status mean greater goodness."[15] Dixon then links the question of conformity to a strong sense of hierarchy and underling it a fear. This fear, he says is the fundamental factor in the whole ideological complex- "a fear of what is different or unusual, a fear of the non-conformist and the unconventional, a fear of anything that's new and threatens change."[16] Finally, Dixon connects her immense popularity to this conformty.

> Blyton has done her work well. If a parent knows the name of only one author of children's books, it's hers. If a shop sells books for children at all, it'll probably have ten times as many Blyton titles as those of any other author. There always seems to be a demand for stories written to a formula, stories which are totally undemanding and conventional, but while children undoubtedly feel the need for security and reassurance, there is no need to suppose that it has to be provided in this way.[17]

Therefore, through the alternative world that is presented for the children involving the fantastic and adventurous, there is a parallel line of ideology and conformism, restricting possibilities and endorsing conformist behaviour.

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[15]Ibid. p. 185.

[16]Ibid. p. 186.

[17]Ibid p186.

Conclusion

been analysed to show subversion of ideology in one, through language, and ideological subsumption in the other, though both texts use the fantastic mode. Fantasy, therefore can neither be considered to be universally subversive nor universally redolently regressive and escapist.

Children's literature uses the fantastic mode as a means of negating the real world, so that a construction of a world exclusively for children is made possible. It claims to make use of the understanding of some aspects of childhood thought to be common across time and culture. These include physical smallness and weakness, receptivity to the prevailing culture, spontaneous play and sexual immaturity.

Writers for children make use of the common belief that children are more flexible in their perceptions of the text and more open to radical ideas, being less bound to schemas. On the other hand, they have less knowledge of language and textual structures. Their distinctions between facts and fantasy, between the desirable and the actual are unstable and they are capable of unconscious animism since the attribution of human characteristics to inanimate objects can always be shown to be less controlled and thus more likely in children than in adult human beings.

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According to Jean Piaget, the child's thinking remains animistic until puberty. The child assumes that his or her relations to the inanimate

Bruno Bettelheim[1] quotes Piaget's examples saying that to an eight year-old the sun is alive because it *gives* light and does probably because it *wants* to. Similarly, to him or her, the stone would be alive because it can *roll* down the hill. Therefore, there is no real separation between objects and living things for the child. And since the child is self-centred, he or she expects animals to talk about things which are really significant to him or her, as animals do in fairy-tales and fantasies.)

These assumptions regarding the child make the use of fantasy possible in children's literature. The use of fantasy in children's literature can be explained by the simultaneous working of two parallel functions, the fantasization of reality, which allows the writer to construct a child's world in which a there is an overturning of certain fixed conceptual categories, and, the realisation of fantasy in which the text in a sense negates or, rather distances the child from the fantastic world in terms of time (long, long ago), space (in a faraway country), or by using the oneiric mode, to nullify its possible subversive effects. Ideological subsumption takes place because these parallel lines, which also can be said to run in different directions (one being overtly dominant ideology-perpetrating and the other covertly doing the same by a negation of the possibility of subversion), never meet and therefore there is no space for conflict between these two. This absence of a plane where the two can meet and resolve their mutual exclusivity into a holistic aesthetic leads to, in most of children's literature, an easy subsumption to the demands of dominant ideology.

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[1] Bruno Bettelheim. 1977. The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales. Vintage Books. A Division of Random House. New York. p46.

This is clear in *The Enchanted Wood*, where the subversive possibilities of stereotypical others, like the ugly elf, the snowman, or a girl like Goldilocks, are all relegated to the domain of the fantastic, whereas the real life men and women adhere to their roles in a most pathetically normative manner. This ideological construction gets further strengthened by a location of this fantastic world in spatially and cognitively distant domains like the countryside or the Arctic. This is how the two opposing strands of utilisation of the fantastic work hand in hand in this very typical example of children's literature to fortify and prescribe the dictates of dominant ideology.

However, as the main argument of this dissertation runs, this double enforcement of ideological constructions might not always be the case. The two anti-parallel strands might get the all so wanted conflictual space, and thus stand to subvert itself under the overbearing contradictions of its own existence, in some work or the other. This is precisely what happens in *Through the Looking-Glass*, where the two can be said to meet. Alice's going through the mirror, where she enters the virtual world, or in Rosemary Jackson's terms "the paraxial region" where fantasy exists, is at one and the same time one whose point of departure, as in the case of any virtual image of the self in a mirror, is always the real, and the only way to know the appearance of one's 'real' self, albeit through a 'virtual' image. Lewis Carroll's problematisation of the basic circularity between the real and the fantastic at the end of the book, is a questioning of one of the stock devices of most of children's literature, and a subversion of one of the most potent intents of dominant ideology on a rather unsuspecting child

readership.

Whereas, ideological texts, like that of Blyton, work by distancing the reader spatially, temporally and cognitively, from the subversive effects of fantasy, in Carroll's text, the two parallel meaning systems do not allow the dominance of one over the other so that the real is as much fantastic as the fantastic is real. This 'duplicity' in children's literature as regards its ideological handling of the trope of fantasy is what this dissertation argues for in its probe into the relationship between ideology and children's literature. In the final analysis, what can be said about the ideological nature of children's literature is that in its use of fantasy lies the genre's responsive extremes—the dogmatic perpetration of the most normative of hierarchic categories, as well as occasional sparks of a possible resistant subversion.

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