Harikrishnan M.P. "New world philosophy of Narnia: Recognition and resolution of crisis." Thesis. Centre for Research and Postgraduate Studies in English, St. Thomas' College (Autonomous), Thrissur ,University of Calicut, 2021.

Chapter One

Introduction

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (*REVELATION CHAPTER 21 KJV*).

New World has been a theme that has acquired universal significance since the birth of human history. From the time of explorations and invasions to the present scientific expeditions to the outer space have all been motivated by the attempts to assimilate New World in terms of space. Various movements, ideologies, philosophies and policies have been trying to invoke a New World in terms of time. Transformation of the present world and invention of a New World in its place is the conscious and unconscious attempt of the individual as well as communities. Intellectuals and thinkers emphasize the transformation of the human mind or that of the outside as the means to achieve an effective transformation of the world. Emphasis on either of these may vary according to individual ideologies, but the dissatisfaction with the present condition of the world is a common factor. There are also a few schools of thought that give equal emphasis on the intrinsic world and the extrinsic world. Transformation of the material world and that of the psychological process are mutually interconnected and inseparable. Therefore, the advent of the New World in its integral sense involves the transformation of the landscape along with the mindscape. This justifies the titular significance of this research work.

The concept of a renewed world of future has been visualized and idealized throughout history. Along with many religions, modern science and the various branches of modern knowledge incessantly thrive for reshaping the present and invoking the desired future world. Arts and literature are also constantly engaged in new

experiments of aesthetics which influence the present generation and modify the inclinations of the forthcoming ones. Political propaganda, social and economic welfare schemes and organizations all function on the anticipation of a better future world. The socialists too dream of and work for the establishment of communism which is characterized by an ideal world. *The Republic* by Plato, *New Atlantis* by Sir Francis Bacon and *Utopia* by Tomas Moore are all examples of literary works which describe ideal worlds envisioned by thinkers and writers. Ideal nature described in such works has been challenged by Samuel Butler through *Erewhon*, Aldous Huxley through *Brave New World* and George Orwell through *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Both optimistic and pessimistic discourses find their place in the future worlds imagined and envisaged by writers and thinkers. Calamities and cataclysmic events serve as a common threshold for optimistic and utopian discourses as well as pessimistic and dystopian ones. The cataclysmic events are outlived in the case of utopian worlds whereas the dystopian worlds are products of irrevocable massive devastation. Children's Literature and Fantasy often foreground optimistic and hopeful endings. Such literary genres often portray themes and contexts where the solution is foregrounded instead of problems. Whatever may be the case, apocalypse or massive annihilation plays a pivotal role in determining the destiny of the future world. The post-apocalyptic world which exists after a dissolution process determines the success and failure of the present living generation on earth. Both the utopian and dystopian kinds of literature can affect the collective psyche to act wisely and avoid the impending devastative events. The former instils hope to work ahead and tackle the existing issues, while the latter warns the recipients of the hazardous results of impending issues.

Post-apocalyptic Vision

The manifestation of a New World is often associated with massive destruction and cataclysmic events which is referred to as the apocalyptic phenomenon. Usually, the birth of a New World is anticipated after the occurrence of turmoil which is associated with class conflicts in Marxism and apocalypse in the biblical context. Both the secular and the religious are carried away by the notion of apocalypse and the ideal world in both cases is a post-apocalyptic one. Scientific studies also confirm the facts of impending destructive phenomena which in the present context are reflected in the form of global warming, exhaustion of natural resources and global climatic change. The scientific community cannot guarantee that there will be a better world but predicts massive destructions as an aftereffect of environmental exploitation. John Leslie at *The End of the World: The Science and Ethics of Human Extinction* highlights the role of destructions caused by man-made systems and those of unpredictable natural phenomena. Chemical warfare, biological warfare, nuclear bombs, chemical pollution, nuclear radiation, population explosion, man-made diseases, artificial intelligence, natural epidemics and cosmic phenomena like the black hole, galactic expansion, falling of asteroids and comets, are all varieties of these destructive phenomena. Among them, the impact of human-centred disasters holds humanity as responsible for their annihilation. Overpopulation, overcrowding cities, pollution, global warming, wide-spreading diseases and various forms of warfare are often found to be interconnected and mutually complementing factors of annihilation (25-132). The future world is expected to be an inescapable dark one, where human suffering is inevitable. Preparing human perspective to deal with these critical issues and enabling individuals to adapt to changes can be seen as preparatory steps for the future world. In the contemporary world characterized by globalization the individual

identity is often contested with a global identity. Hence the entire humanity can be addressed as a single entity which faces common threats.

The idea of apocalypse and the human role in triggering the phenomenon are also utilized by individuals to spread fear and insecurity among the public. Many religious institutions and environmental organizations are found out to hyperbolize the hazardous effects of economic ventures and scientific innovations. The misuse of religious beliefs and blind activism have created a culture of fear among the public, through propaganda. Such trends have been questioned by scholars and critics. *Apocalypse Not: Science, Economics, and Environmentalism* by Ben W. Bolch and Harold Lyons examine such cases in America, which continue to stagnate social progress and public life. They question the unfulfilled and impractical political statements which claim to offer cost-effective eradication of pollution. It is equally an irony that certain animals are stamped as endangered, while the others are subjected to extensive commercialization. With the example of cattle farms, it is substantiated that the conservation of any type of animal can be made possible only through commercializing them. Religions too emphasize the role of the human being in summoning apocalypse through the exploitation of the environment. Bolch and Lyons point out that religions are interested in increasing the number of their followers instead of eradicating the threat imposed on humanity. They affirm that contemporary environmentalism indirectly aspires for the death of humanity by opposing technology, emphasizing on communal farming and dissuading international trade (1-3). Though the aforementioned formulations are anti-environmentalist, many dimensions of misusing conservation are foregrounded. Manipulating the concept of apocalypse to stagnate human life, is a serious issue which has to be checked by policymakers and individuals. This also reveals that religious and secular institutions are interested in the phenomenon of

apocalypse, though many of them fail to create inspiration to work for a post-apocalyptic New World.

Familiarizing the Globalized World

The contemporary world is characterized by globalization which introduces the concept of an interconnected world. Digital explosion and the technological boom were seen as factors which provide interactive space between the nations. Trade, tourism, commerce and education are all made interactive and accessible to people all around the globe through globalization. The rise of a new global culture and the vision of a global citizen envisages a New World different from the previous era. Interconnectivity of various cultures and common platforms of interaction provided by a globalized world, conceptualize the emergence of an egalitarian society.

There are several theories formulated regarding the concept of globalization, which either exposes its foibles or exalts its positive aspects. Whether it be positive or negative, globalization has become popular among the masses and has laid influence even on the private lives of people. Being an inescapable reality of the present age, globalization is manipulated and utilized for fulfilling different intentions. The concept of an egalitarian society is relevant in the global context which tends to culturally unite different geographical locations. Douglas Kellner in "Globalization and New Social Movements" analyses the inherent possibility of globalization to upgrade the existing society. The corporate world and the governments cannot be looked upon to provide progressive facilities based on the standards of globalization. The activists and the common people should work for subverting the unfavourable social trends to create an egalitarian society by foregrounding democratic values. Globalization has given birth to many technologies which have been instrumentalized by corporate

institutions to maintain power over common people. Instead of opposing globalization, Kellner suggests that people should utilize new possibilities of globalization and employ suitable strategies to achieve social justice and uphold democratic values. The present society can move towards an egalitarian society only by making changes in the current strategies of the education system and by incorporating traditional streams of knowledge (315-316). This gives a picture of subjugation unknowingly accepted by people in the contemporary world, who fail to recognize the hegemonic strategies employed upon them. Both government and private agencies equally assert their control over people through the technologies inherent in the process of globalization. The common motifs of these hegemonic powers and their magnitude over nations may vary.

The third world nations who were once occupied by colonial rule, experience the continuation of the colonial rule even in the post-independent period. Unconscious submission to euro-centric culture in the present global context is a reiteration of the past slavery in a new form. The native cultural tropes and myths play a significant role in the collective consciousness of colonized nations. The case of India is a fine example of this. Elleke Boehemer observes in *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* that the British colonial process primarily manipulated the mythical notions and belief systems of India to establish their rule over the nation. Indians believed that the present age is the dark and degrading aeon of *Kaliyuga*, which was incorporated into history by the colonizer (22). This challenged the fundamental integrity of the natives to resist the onslaught of colonialism and made the Indians unconsciously submissive to the British rule. The hangover of this pessimistic notion can be observed in the post-colonial era, which has been pointed out and remediated by intellectuals and critics. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in *Other Asias* highlights the necessity to come out of the

cultural corruptions created by the colonial rule. She states that the concept of common Human Rights on a global level is an arbitrary one, but emphasizes on constant effort to achieve it. Along with this, Spivak calls for a study of the present corrupted culture from the grass-root level, which will result in the rectification of the culture of responsibility. The present education system which is a remnant of the corrupt colonial model has to be undone through constant endeavour by reinstating democratic habits in people in a responsible way. She contrasts such a method of teaching with, nationalism imposed upon children and speeches that stunt individual identity (56). These statements give ample proof that the post-colonial scenario of third world nations like India reflects the reminiscence of colonial culture. The role of belief systems and myths in shaping individuals and collective psyche has a prominent place in addressing oppressive discourses. Globalization paves the way to address the issues of subaltern communities on a global level and lead to their cultural resurgence.

Children's Fantasy and The Chronicles of Narnia

Literary works written by adult writers intended for the readership of children are categorized as the genre of Children's Literature. Children's Literature is distinct from the mainstream adult literature as it has children has its central characters and the narrative depicts the perspective of the child characters. Beginning from the earliest forms of storytelling and folklore this genre extends up to digital forms like movies and graphic novels. Children's Literature includes a variety of writings ranging from toddler tales and picture books to young adult novels. These books are published and marketed according to the age group of children. The nineteenth-century marked the proliferation of this genre through writers, translation of works and their wide circulation. This included the compilations of Norwegian folk tales by Peter Asbjornsen and Jorgen Moe, the collection of tales by Brothers Grimm and narratives by E.T.A.

Hoffmann in German, similar compilations and creations of fairy tales by Hans Christen Andersen in Danish, and didactic publications by Johann David Wyss from Switzerland. The middle of the nineteenth century is often referred to as the Golden Age of Children's Literature which extended the genre beyond the constrains of didacticism and foregrounded the aspirations of child protagonists. *The Adventures of Pinocchio* by the Italian writer Carlo Collodi, *Peter and Wendy* by J.M. Barrie, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain, *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling, *The Water Babies* by Charles Kingsley and *The Treasure Island* by R.L. Stevenson; introduced child protagonists who invoked a renewed aesthetics among the masses. This is evident from the numerous translations and adaptations which were later popularized and has been doing so in the form of cartoons, comics and movies. Following the tradition of George McDonald in Children's Fantasy Literature, several writers created timeless works in this genre like *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien and *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis. Children's Fantasy became popular through later writers like Ursula K. Le Guin, Dianna Wynne Jones, Philip Pullman and J.K. Rowling who authored several bestsellers.

Children's Literature and especially Children's Fantasy occupies the position of a popular literary genre relevant in the contemporary world. From the popularity of the novel series, Walt Disney movies, comics and graphic novels have proliferated the genre. Themes related to fantasy can be faithfully represented through the use of graphics and animation in movies and video games. Globalization has made a direct impact on the culture of childhood and altered aesthetics of Children's Literature as a Euro-centric one. Emer O'Sullivan in *Comparative Children's Literature* examines the changes in children's culture, which expanded internationally. Western centred

and American centred commercialization foreground the concept of the child as a consumer in the contemporary globalized world. The United States with the aid of media and agencies monopolises marketing and distribution of cultural goods for children (123). This gives the picture of Euro-centric culture overpowering the entire world especially the third world nations. The latter cultures along with their own Children's Literature seldom create a fandom in the globalized world. In such a situation the ethnic culture of marginalized communities and previously colonized nations can be highlighted by re-reading the mainstream literary texts in the light of their culture.

Children's Fantasy is itself a marginalized form of literature which is characterized by a wide range of popularity among the people of different age groups. Despite its popularity among the common masses, Children's Fantasy has not secured a prominent place in academic and intellectual circles. Textual interpretations of this genre are mostly made by literary and critical theories, whereas fantasy theories are less utilized for analytical purposes. Being a popular literary and cultural genre re-readings and interpretations made on Children's Fantasy can influence a large group of people. The solutions to the critical issues faced by marginalized communities over the globe can be effectively undertaken by the selection, reading and analysis of specific texts. As Boehemer had pointed out about the myths concerning the nature of the present world, similar ones regarding the future world can equally influence the mindset of humanity. If oppression can be invoked through confirmation to myths and belief systems, so can subversion and resistance. If understanding the present world and aeon as a dark one can create subjugation, the anticipation of a New World can result in liberation from oppressive rule. Conceptualizing such a world of emancipation should also be able to provide solutions to practical issues concerning the contemporary world. Else the whole attempt will remain unfulfilled as an impractical utopian

one. Reiterating the idea of Spivak, the attempt to correct the corrupted culture should

not be confined within the practice of indoctrinating nationalism or restrictions im-

posed on the development of individual identity.

The aforementioned facts point towards reading and analysing texts of Chil-

dren's Fantasy that reflect the theme of a New World. Fantasy Literature by its innate

nature can break up existing boundaries and expand beyond the restrictions imposed

by reason and logic. The texts that concern with Human Rights and work out solu-

tions in terms of Human Values can be identified only through attempts of close read-

ing. *The Chronicles of Narnia* in this context becomes a relevant text of research

which can influence recipients all around the world. This fantasy work written by C.

S. Lewis consists of seven novels which are set in Britain during World War II. *The*

Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, *Prince Caspian*, *The Voyage of the 'Dawn*

Treader', *The Silver Chair*, *The Horse and His Boy*, *The Magician's Nephew* and *The*

Last Battle; are the seven novels which together are referred to as *The Chronicles of*

Narnia. Among the books of Children's Fantasy, *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S.

Lewis stands out with its unique narrative and unending popularity. This series of

novels by a British author has found a place in movies, stage performances, video-

games, radio and television adaptations. The uniqueness of the Narnian narratives is

that it sustains a huge fan following, even amidst several other publications and best-

sellers belonging to this genre were launched. The influential nature of this work often

points to the instigative forces behind its creation. Lewis and Tolkien founded a group

called Inklings where writers read and discussed their writings. Moreover, the influ-

ence of writers like Beatrix Potter and George McDonald can be seen as inspirational

forces on Lewis in the creation of Narnian novels. Spiritual discourses and social up-

gradation are finely interwoven in these narratives. These novels follow the notion of

"Eucatastrophe" where, even the most devastative events connote a hopeful ending. The setting of the story is in an imaginary fantasy world named Narnia which has anthropomorphic characters as its inhabitants. The child protagonists from the real world are transported to Narnia where they go through a series of adventures. The key figure which runs through all the novels is Aslan the lion who is an epitome of Divinity. Along with the transcendental, social concerns addressed in the text enable the juvenile protagonists to find solutions to issues faced. Aslan acts as a leader and a source of inspiration for the children who overcome hazards and take appropriate decisions. Different shades between the ideal and the real worlds are represented through the societies of Narnia, Telmarines, Archenlanders and Calormenes. Critical and analytical studies reveal different levels of interpretations and many possible readings of the Narnian series. Such approaches on the novels open up concerns of humanity inherent in the text but unnoticed by readers or even scholars. Uncomplicated themes and narratives with the vividness of imagination make Narnia evergreen in the minds of readers, even in the fast pacing contemporary age.

Like a typical Children's Fantasy, the work deals with the journey of protagonists who are British children, into the parallel world of Narnia. Along with adventures in Narnia the seven novels sort out several issues governing the human world. The work written during the 1950s has anticipated critical issues of the globalized and digitalized 21st century like exploitation of the environment, domestic violence, gender discrimination, human trafficking and terrorism. Spiritual and transcendental discourses of the text are often interrelated with concerns of society. The protagonists are instigated to resolve the impending problems through self-imitativeness with minimal interference of divine providence. Narnia depicts a replica of a unified society which fosters diverse cultures and communities. It is depicted as a "Free Land" that gives

space for refugees and maintains peace with other nations. The Egalitarian nature of Narnia often tends to interpret it as a representation of Utopian fantasy. This idea is confuted by Alice Jenkins in "Getting into Utopia", where Narnia is termed as different from Utopia and Faery. The only reference of Utopia in Narnia is described as the land visited by the protagonists in the final novel of Narnian series, *The Last Battle*. Alice in the context highlights the concept of Heterotopia formulated by Kevin Hetherington. Heterotopia defies the pessimistic impossibility of Dystopia and blind optimistic confidence of Utopia, by providing a fluctuating space in between them. It defies the existing methods of hermeneutics and defies the definitions of realism, fantasy, utopian or dystopian genres. Heterotopia allows the recipients and writers to maintain their attempts to reach utopia while continuing to fluctuate between utopian and dystopian possibilities (26-35). Such an effect can be achieved in the case of fantasy works only by re-reading them from different perspectives. This also provides a practical space to enliven the concept of the New World, without being deluded by hyperbolic optimism and degrading pessimism. Heterotopic representation of the real world can be seen as reflected in this fantasy work, which is subjected to further analytical study.

Addressing and Solving Critical Issues

Ayya Vaikundar was a social reformer and spiritual leader who influenced and inspired the later reformers and movements of South India. He was born on March 12, 1809, to Veyilal Ammaiyar and Ponnumadan in Poovandanthope of Kanyakumari which belonged to the State of Travancore. The parents were forced to rename him as Muthukutty, instead of the superior nomenclature Mudichoodum Perumal [Crowned King], which the high caste lords forbid them to use. Since childhood, he was well aware of social evils like caste discrimination, unethical taxation, forced labour and

gender inequality; and raised voice against such injustices. He created awareness among the masses, especially the downtrodden segment of society to resist injustices imposed by the local government and their colonial masters. Following a sudden epiphanic revelation on March 1, 1833, Muthukutty emerged from the sea of Thiruchendur as Ayya Vaikundar to dissolve the evil that has dawned upon humanity. The following eighteen years of social activities lead by Ayya Vaikundar stands as a testimony of his efficiency as a social reformer. His teachings united all the people of all castes and instilled self-respect in them. This enabled the marginalized sections of society to resist the exploitative measures and laws of authorities. Following the complaints from the local authorities, Vaikundar was imprisoned by the King of Travancore but was forced to release him after 112 days. Ayya Vaikundar refined the traditional concept of *Dharmam* as uplifting the downtrodden and practically succeeded in evoking a socio-cultural revolution based on this value. Common meal system, Upper Cloth Revolt, right of worship, education and healthcare for the marginalized sections, empowered them to procure the basic rights denied by the exploiters. Ayya Vaikundar left his mortal body on June 2, 1851, and his birthplace began to be addressed as reverentially as Swamithope [Grove of the Lord]. Despite being an illiterate person emerging from the lower section of society he was able to initiate reform movement of South India and successfully implement social changes from the grass-root level. Thus, Vaikundar stands as a role model to activists, governments and people in general.

The reform movement initiated by Ayya Vaikundar is known as Ayyavazhi. Ayyavazhi means the path of *Ayya*, where the Tamil word *Ayya* connotates many meanings like Divinity, lord, father, a common reverential address and even used as an abbreviated form of Ayya Vaikundar. Ayyavazhi is based on the teachings of

Vaikundar, which can be traced from textual resources like *Akhilathirattu Ammanai* and *Arul Nool*. The movement synthesizes spirituality and social wellbeing as mutually and interconnected entities. It functions on the cardinal value of *Dharmam*, which is interpreted as "uplifting the downtrodden". *Anpu* [Love and Compassion] is foregrounded as the cornerstone for establishing Unity and Harmony among the entire humanity. Ayyavazhi works for dissolving the discriminations and exploitations based on religion, caste, creed, gender, social status and occupation. The establishment of Samathuva *Samajam* in 1838 marked an official expression of the movement in society. The movement worked for and became successful in the eradication of social evils like gender discrimination through the Upper Cloth Movement. Political exploitations like unethical taxation and forced labour were destabilized by creating self-confidence and awareness among common people. Through the common meal system and common sacred well of Muthiri Kinaru, Ayyavazhi created a sense of unity by defying caste discrimination and social discrepancies. Vaikundar consecrated Mirror and Lamp for worship in worship centres known as Pathis, where people of all religions and castes were allowed entry. Social service activities were conducted in Pathis and they served as spots for imparting education to the lower sections who were denied formal education. Ayyavazhi condemns the worship of beasts, images of clay, evil spirits, animal sacrifice and blood oblations. The movement is based on the worship of Singular Divinity underlying in the entire creation and inherent in each being. Ayyavazhi anticipates the advent of the Golden Age referred to as *Dharma Yugam* which is characterized by the unification of the entire creation. The statement "One World, One Aeon, One Language, One God, One Caste, One Religion, One Community, and One Government", by Vaikundar reveals the prime importance

attributed to the value of Unity and necessity of every individual to work for inward and outward transformation.

Scholars like Velayudhan Panikkassery in *Anayatha Deepangal* identifies Ayya Vaikundar as a renaissance leader, social revolutionary and spiritual master who emerged from downtrodden section of society. Vaikundar enabled people to break off the bondages and taboos imposed upon them by developing self-esteem and unity among them. He instigated public awareness against the unjust rule of the local government and their British colonial masters, which denied the civil rights of the lower caste people. How could a person think in such a way, even before one and a half centuries before renaissance movements budded in India? Anybody who studies the impeccable ideas and methods of action of Ayya Vaikundar is ought to think so. All the works he did became ideals for the later renaissance leaders. But he did not have any idols to look upon. Everything manifested from within his mind (13). Ayyavazhi can be and is being subjected to studies of various dimensions like social, political, anthropological, philosophical and religious. The discourses inherent in the movement plays a significant role in uplifting the marginalized communities and creating self-awareness among individuals.

Reading *The Chronicles of Narnia* as a text of Ayyavazhi can reveal the heterotopic dimension of the text. The followers of Ayyavazhi still lead their lives based on a heterotopic space maintained for more than two centuries after the demise of their leader. They always anticipate the advent of *Dharma Yugam*, which is characterized by an egalitarian world devoid of oppression and exploitations. Narnia holds a parallel reference to the Golden Age which was created as the result of human pursuit. Ayyavazhi too believes in the role of human beings to practice a life of dignity and adhere to the value of Dharmam, which would lead to the dissolution of the present

evil aeon of *Kali Yugam*. Here the concept of the present age as evil one is subverted by belief in the ideal *Dharma Yugam* and actions plans are suggested to people to constantly upgrade contemporary society. Ayyavazhi proves as a practical remedy to the colonial culture of corruption that continues to linger in the present post-colonial era.

Euro-centric shades of *The Chronicles of Narnia* can be demystified by approaching the text with a reformative school of thought like Ayyavazhi. Inherent discourses of marginalization and attempts of subversion can be identified and appreciated by this reading. The major character Aslan who is popularly visualized as a Christ figure and the popular notion of interpreting the Narnian series as a Christian text is questioned through this research work. Parallel reading of the Golden Age of Narnia and the *Dharma Yugam* of Ayyavazhi highlights the necessity to address all existing issues of humanity, instead of concentrating on specific ones. Globalization and the trend of Americanized cultural dissipation are contrasted with the concept of the New World as depicted here. Here the New World is not merely an egalitarian one, but it is based on global harmony that gives equal opportunity and space to all cultures and communities. The study tries to analyse the scope of a total transformation of the world which includes metamorphosis of the landscape and the mindscape. Practical application of Human Values is affirmed as the remedy to solve critical issues of humanity, which makes Human Rights accessible to all individuals. Ayyavazhi can be understood as a perfect tool of interpretation as it has already proved its potential by invoking social reformation in South India and has also heavily influenced the later socio-cultural movements.

The study extends the limited scope of text within euro-centric and American circles, to the entire world by including the concerns of marginalized sections.

Accordingly, the transformation of the present world is impossible without uplifting the downtrodden. Rosemary Jackson points out in *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, that the real transformation of society is possible by re-reading the works of fantasy (10). The research attempts to unravel the inherent potential of Children's Fantasy by analysing and interpreting its inherent discourses. The child within the adult and the adult in the child are all addressed through the study which maintains the synthesis of aesthetic and analytical aspects. Myths, images and symbols are analysed along with parallel reading of narrative themes. Interpretation of the Narnian series through various literary and critical theories becomes indispensable to analyse multiple dimensions inherent in the text. Such an effort can be narrowed down by analysing the text with Ayyavazhi which is multi-dimensional and inclusive by nature.

Research in Brief

The Chronicles of Narnia is a series of seven novels written by C.S. Lewis, which occupies a prominent position in Children's Fantasy Literature. Along with the aesthetic and religious connotations attributed to the texts, the fantasy world depicted in them reflects critical issues relevant to the real world. A close reading of the narratives helps to identify various aspects of individual and social life inherent in the text. Resolving them involves them a Healing process which varies textually and contextually, intending to transform the present world. Re-reading the Narnian narratives can reveal multiple dimensions of meaning and propose solutions to impediments stagnating the advent of a New World.

Data collection method was employed to collect printed and online resources like books, journals, periodicals, newspapers, blogs, forums and websites. Field visits were conducted to collect resources and conduct interviews of persons concerned with

research topics. Seminars, conferences and workshops related to the research topic were attended and research papers were presented, to have a deeper knowledge on the subject. Language study and translation were undertaken to access and interpret the resource materials of Ayyavazhi in the Tamil language. Theory of Self-Actualization by Abraham Maslow was used to understand the relevance of spiritual discourses in the conditioning of human psyche. Cultural Studies was employed to analyse NWMs [New World Movements] like Rastafarianism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Santhigiri and Sanmarga Philosophy, which distinguish themselves from NRMs [New Religious Movements]. Thematic criticism was used to analyse the common themes of NWMs, which were subsequently analysed with contextual relevance. Among the various theories related to Fantasy, the concept of primary and secondary worlds was identified as the fundamental one upon which other theoretical formulations were based upon. The seven books of the Narnia series were analysed by the "Grammar of Fantasy" by John Clute to understand the variation in the degree of Healing in each of them. *The Lion. The Witch and the Wardrobe* was identified as the narrative which depict complete Healing. The same was identified as the primary or proto text of *The Chronicles of Narnia* based on the formulations of Peter J. Schakel and Colin Manlove, which is substantiated by thematic analysis of other six Narnian novels. Thematic criticism is employed to identify the following issues from the Narnian series: economic exploitation, social discrimination, political oppression, religious monopoly and malpractices, environmental exploitation, terrorism, human trafficking, domestic violence and gender discrimination. A comparative analysis of each of them in the text is made through Ayyavazhi, which reveals the approach towards the Healing process. Post-colonial concepts of "cultural corruption" by Gayatri Spivak, "enculturation of myths" by Elleke Boehemer and "Dharmic Protest" by Ranajith Guha help to understand the

issues of post-colonial cultures in the contemporary world, which extend the scope and space for *Ayyavazhi Dharmam*. Reader Response criticism enables to understand the extent of fan following for the Narnian series especially in India and examines changes in the reading culture of the present world.

The thesis entitled *New World philosophy of Narnia: Recognition and Resolution of Crisis* is divided into five chapters including the Introduction and the Conclusion. The research work begins with Chapter 1, which is the Introduction. This provides insights into the fundamental nature of the study conducted. The chapter highlights the concept of the New World which is the core topic of the study. The anticipations of a Post-apocalyptic world are described as a common topic of interest for the scientific and religious communities. The ideal nature and egalitarian nature of the New World is compared with the contemporary world characterized by Globalization. Influence of Globalization on Children's Fantasy is identified as a Euro-American centric one. Children's Literature, especially Children's Fantasy is highlighted as a popular genre in the present global context, following the digital explosion which includes graphics and animation. Hence it is utilized as an instrument of social refinement by invoking its inherent potential for transformation of the world. *The Chronicles of Narnia* becomes a fine selection which deals with the concept of transforming the present world into a New Egalitarian World. Ayyavazhi is selected as the interpretative tool, which has proved its potential in initiating the social renaissance in South India. The chapter also highlights the necessity of this re-reading which foregrounds heterotopic discourses and saves the fantasy text from being trivialized as a Utopian one. The chapter also provides a summary of the contents of each chapter and describes the methodology adopted for the research.

The second chapter entitled 'Fantasy and the New World', examines various theories related to Fantasy Literature. The genre Children's Fantasy is examined to point out its potential in incorporating transcendental discourses. The Narnian novels are mapped with fantasy theories and the "Grammar of Fantasy" by John Clute is selected as an interpretative tool. The theme of the New World is analysed with relation to New Religious Movements [NRMs], to identify the existence of New World Movements [NWMs]. Rastafarianism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Sanmarga Philosophy and Santhigiri are examined to formulate common characteristic features of NWMs. The reasons for selecting *The Chronicles of Narnia* as the text for study and Ayyavazhi as the interpretative tool is explained.

Chapter 3 is titled as '*The Chronicles of Narnia*: *A Text of Ayyavazhi*'. Here a comparative study of the Narnian series is made with the Ayyavazhi movement. The criticisms against C.S. Lewis and the Narnian books are examined and answered through critical evaluations made on the text. An overview of the textual narratives is provided along with a brief biography of the author. The transcendental discourses embedded in the text are evaluated based on available resources and critical studies related to life and ideologies of Lewis. The function and values of the Ayyavazhi movement are described along with a brief overview of the life history of Ayya Vaikundar. Comparative analysis of *The Chronicles of Narnia* and Ayyavazhi is made by identifying common characteristic features of NWMs in them. Parallel readings of mythography and symbolism are made, which confirm the Narnian series as a text of Ayyavazhi.

The fourth chapter titled 'The New World of Narnia: Recognizing and Healing Crisis', analyses *The Chronicles of Narnia* through Ayyavazhi to identify and solve critical issues. The chapter examines and resolves ambiguity in the order of reading

the Narnian books, by adopting a parallel reading for convenience of the study. John Clute's "Grammar of Fantasy" is applied to identify the variation in the degree of Healing in each narrative. Based on critical studies and aforementioned formulations, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is identified as the primary or proto-text of the Narnian series. The text is analysed through the tool to examine the Healing process of various issues of the real world as reflected in the fantasy text. *Ayyavazhi Dharmam* is identified as the New World Philosophy which proposes solutions to critical issues through practical application.

Chapter 5, is the Conclusion of the study. Here the popularity of the Narnian series in the contemporary world is revealed and examined, which includes the Indian context. The contemporary scenario of the Ayyavazhi movement and its socio-political ramifications related to it are described. Concerning the abovementioned facts, this chapter reveals the significance of this research, which inspires to re-evaluate the text and the movement according to the present context. The scope and significance of this study are discussed, which opens up new perspectives and approaches towards the topics of research.