

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 Four

The New World of Narnia: Recognizing and Healing Crisis

“If, then, you sometimes fall, do not lose heart, or cease striving to make progress, for even out of your fall God will bring good, just as a man selling an antidote will drink poison before he takes it in order to prove its power” (‘Summary of St. Teresa of Avila’s Interior Castle’).

Reading *The Chronicles of Narnia* as a text of Ayyavazhi creates a new space for understanding the issues addressed through the narrative. Resolving critical issues existing in the human community becomes a precursor to the advent of the New World. This is true in the case of Ayyavazhi, where the movement has created a lasting impact on society through the social renaissance. In the case of Narnian narratives, the context is that of a secondary world which can be deciphered as a reflection of the primary world. The fantasy takes into consideration issues related to the primary world and describes the approaches of resolving them. Before beginning to read *The Chronicles of Narnia*, it becomes necessary to address the ambiguities regarding the approach towards the reading process.

How to read *The Chronicles of Narnia*?

Ambiguity regarding the order in which the Narnian series should be read, is an unresolved matter for the readers as well as the critics. Will the reading order affect the aesthetic receptivity and whether it will change the inherent meaning, are some of the questions hovering over this issue? Prioritizing any one or more than one among the seven novels and fixing the first one in the reading order are also subjects of endless debates. It is interesting to note that the books were published, circulated and

popularized in the following order, which was quite different from publication trends prevalent today.

1. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe: A Story for Children*
2. *Prince Caspian: The Return to Narnia*
3. *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*
4. *The Silver Chair*
5. *The Horse and His Boy*
6. *The Magician's Nephew*
7. *The Last Battle: A Story for Children*

Later the order was rearranged to the chronological events happening in textual narratives. Therefore, the following order has been adopted by publishers and continues till now.

1. *The Magician's Nephew*
2. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*
3. *The Horse and His Boy*
4. *Prince Caspian*
5. *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*
6. *The Silver Chair*
7. *The Last Battle: A Story for Children*

The order in which Lewis completed writing each book is different from the order of their publication. This difference makes it clear that the author did not want the books to be published in the order they were written by him. Margaret Patterson Hannay in "Further Up and Further In: The Chronicles of Narnia" explains the order of completion of the Narnian series. Lewis began writing *The Lion, the Witch and the*

Wardrobe in 1939 and took almost ten years to complete it in 1949. *Prince Caspian* was completed by the end of 1949, *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'* and *The Horse and His Boy* were completed in 1950 and *The Silver Chair* in the following year. *The Magician's Nephew* was completed only in 1954, many months after writing the final book *The Last Battle*. Hannay observes that Lewis had created the first book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* unintentionally from a series of images and he later tried to incorporate religious ideologies into the narrative. The latter seems to be scarcely noticed by many who simply love the landscape of Narnia and affiliate with Aslan as a person missing from the readers' world. It is observed that the Christian elements of the text is highly problematic due to cross-cultural discourses and open-ended statements like in *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'* where Aslan asks Lucy to know him by another name in their world. Genesis described in *The Magician's Nephew* is different from the Biblical concept, as the creations spring from within the pre-existing landscape of Narnia. There is no question about temptation, as evil enters Narnia from another dimension. Apocalypse too is differently portrayed in *The Last Battle*, where Narnia ends in ice rather than in fire as per the Biblical concept and the New Narnia is a garden instead of the post-apocalyptic city of New Jerusalem. Hannay cites several examples which conclude that the Narnian series help the juvenile readers to inculcate wisdom, strength, courage, compassion, fortitude, socialization and prepare to deal with adverse situations of real-life (63-76). The differences from Christian narratives are pointed out along with the emphasis on underlying values of the narratives. The observations of Hannay convey that the Narnian novels need not be read in their chronological order of events, as they do not provide an exact Biblical chronology. Thus, reading the text as a Christian narrative or not is no way related to the order of reading the books.

Walter Hooper claims to have jotted down directly the “Correct Order” of reading the novels from Lewis himself, and this is adopted by Harper Collins while publishing the series. This led to the emergence of the current trend to release the Narnian series in the chronological order of narratives. Peter J. Schakel questions this trend and intent in “The “Correct” Order of Reading The Chronicles of Narnia?”. He identifies two orders of reading the Narnian series which are: the order of publication and the order of narrative chronology. It is highlighted that publishers like Harper Collins claim that the novels have been rearranged following the “original wishes” of the author. Such a trend was established only by 1994, before which the books were read by readers in the order in which they were published since 1950s. Shackle questions the credibility of authorial intention in intervening the reading process of the readers. He cites numerous examples which prove that *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* creates gaps and engages the readers with inquisitiveness and arrests their attention to sustain the aesthetics of the reading experience. The finest example is that of the descriptions of Narnian landscape when Lucy for the first time enters into Narnia, and the introduction of Aslan given in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Whereas beginning with *The Magician's Nephew* before reading the other books, slacken the magnanimity of Aslan. This answers the unfilled gaps like the mystery behind the Lamp Post, which on the other hand would have arrested the attention of readers who would begin with *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Thus, changing the reading order and beginning with *The Magician's Nephew* can seriously affect the receptivity of the readers. The letter written by Lewis on April 23, 1957, is cited as an example to prove that the author himself does not impose any restriction of the reading order and approves the readers’ own choice in the matter (91-99). This observation highlights the reader-response critical viewpoint, which emphasizes active

engagement between the text and the recipient. Lewis hereby indirectly approves the Barthian concept of “Death of the Author”, which broadens the scope of multiple readings of the same text. This also overrules the finding of Walter Hooper who claims that Lewis insisted on an authentic way to read the books. It is also worth notice that no such re-ordering of these novels was emphasized by the author during his lifetime.

From the aforementioned facts, it is up to the readers and critics to read or analyse the works as per convenience. The next question arises on the necessity to assign priority on any of the books and the resultant impact made on the reading process. It has been observed in the previous chapter that *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* resembles Ayyavazhi, as both of them describe the organic evolution of a New World. Therefore, among all the textual narratives of Narnian series; *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is selected as the core text. Apart from the subjective concerns of this research work, former is renowned the first book written among the Narnian novels and has been the most influential one among the public, due to its immense popularity. Apart from this *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* exists as the primary or proto text of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, from which all other textual narratives have evolved.

Such an observation has been made by Colin Manlove in an essay entitled “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe”. He observes that this is the only book among the others which stands out as an open-ended one and it serves as a parameter based on which the narratives of other books are presented. Manlove reveals that the concept of cultural plurality of Narnia was initiated through this book and Lewis never planned to write any of the other six novels in the initial stage. He points out that this novel is unique among the others due to the centrality attributed to the

development of the individual self, social corporation and employment of micronarratives in the form of subplots. Among the Narnian series, this one subverts the theme of narrowness and foregrounds the space for growth and expansion. Manlove remarks that Jadis, the White Witch has converted Narnia into her mirror image where the land has been completely frozen. The arrival of Aslan leads to revocation of the spring season and his activities executed as adventures through the Pevensie children lead to emancipation from her misrule. Manlove observes that *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* represents an ever-growing space where the readers along with the characters move from limited to more expansive landscapes. A similar theme of eternal expansiveness can be observed in the other six Narnian narratives, where *The Last Battle* factually addresses the experience of eternal growth (Manlove, “The Lion,” 159-168). These observations not only assert the importance of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as a socially relevant text but synthesizes social reformation and spiritual outlook. This text is an authentic representation of Ayyavazhi as a spiritual movement which works for social reformation through unity and inclusiveness. Development of individual self and inculcation of social harmony, eternal growth and development are the themes of this book as is in the vision of *Dharma Yugam* in Ayyavazhi. Narnia as a frozen and clogged mirror image of The White Witch melts into a lively landscape with the arrival of the effulgent Aslan. This concept by Manlove perfectly fits into the lamp and mirror used by Ayyavazhi for worship. Here landscape and mindspace are undifferentiated and cleansing of which is made possible through enkindled enlightenment.

Following the aforementioned observations, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is taken as the primary text of research and the other six correspond to as its subtexts. The observations and analysis of the other six Narnian books are not

devalued but considered as explanations given to the primary text. A close reading of the text confirms the fact that there are intricate similarities among the narratives of the other six books of Narnian series with *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Prince Caspian: In this book the true heir of the throne Prince Caspian is living in the forest, as his uncle Miraz has usurped the throne of his father King Caspian X. He can regain the throne only through the intervention of human beings in the form of Pevensie children and the Narnians. The case of Prince Caspian is similar to that of Aslan in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, where the latter is the true owner of Narnia and the land has been usurped by Jadis for almost a century. Aslan too awaits the arrival of human agency in the form of four Pevensie children and succeeds in his mission through the combined effort of humans as well as the Narnians.

The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader': This book describes the challenging journey made by Edmund, Lucy, Eustace and Reepicheep along with Caspian and his crew to the utter East. There they finally meet Aslan and Reepicheep finds a place in his country as per the prophecy at the time of his birth. Similarly, in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the Pevensie children travel through many hurdles to finally meet Aslan at the Stone Table, where their problems began to resolve. They are also backed up by prophecies as foretold by Mr and Mrs Beaver, which finally becomes true with the death of Jadis and their coronation at Cair Paraval.

The Silver Chair: Here, Prince Rilian is allured by the Lady of the Green Kirtle and made her slave in the underworld through enchantment. Puddleglum the marsh wiggles arrives there and disenchant him along with Eustace and Jill, by stamping on the witch's magic fire. His leg gets seriously burnt and later Rilian kills her. During their journey to save Rilian, Eustace and Jill forget the signs given by Aslan. The

consecutively make mistakes, which are all channelled into beneficial results. The mistake makers themselves become the saviours who rescue the Rilian. This is similar to *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, where Edmund is tempted by Jadis using the Turkish Delights and she later enslaves him. He is made free by Aslan who voluntarily sacrifices his body at the stone table and later resurrects himself. The mistake made by Edmund becomes the reason for the success of Aslan from whom death begins to turn backwards and Aslan finally kills Jadis. Edmund who committed the mistakes, saves the Narnians from being turned to stone; by breaking the magic wand of Jadis, in the battle.

The Horse and His Boy: This narrative depicts contrasting binaries of the free land of Narnia and the land of oppression which is the Calormen. Archenland and Calormen represent the primary world governed by reality, whereas Narnia represents the secondary world which operates in fantasy. The narrative is based on interactions between the good and the evil, where the protagonists finally reach their cherished destiny outliving their traumatic past. Binaries of good and bad can be easily deciphered from the polarization of Narnians under Aslan and Jadis in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Here the primary world of England is contrasted with the secondary world of Narnia. The protagonists overcome the tyranny of Jadis and finally establish their peaceful rule in Narnia.

The Magician's Nephew: In this novel, the protagonists enter into the secondary world to witness the creation of a new world named Narnia, from the void. Aslan the lion creates Narnia through his magical song, and finally relinquishes his claim over the world by transferring power to the non-magical human agency namely Frank and Helen. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* the protagonists enter into the fantasy land and witnesses the recreation of Narnia from a frozen state of oppressive

rule. After defeating the evil forces Aslan coronates the protagonists as rulers of the land and quietly slips away to ensure decentralization of power.

The Last Battle: The narrative describes apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic experiences of the protagonists in Narnia. Narnia is annihilated by the forces of nature and the protagonists enter the Real Narnia which is an ideal replica of the old world. People are themselves responsible to pass through judgement process and the worthy find entry into the New World. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* describes a fierce battle almost comparable to an apocalypse where all Narnians pawn their lives to win or die. The miseries of Narnia are healed and the protagonists experience an egalitarian New World free from oppression. The good people who are turned into stone by Jadis are brought back to life by Aslan and the forces of evil are annihilated in the battle.

From the aforementioned facts, it becomes clear that *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* can be considered as the primary text and the other six narratives are its extended expressions. Analysis of any of the Narnian series, therefore, contributes to the studies conducted on the primary text. The other Narnian books differ superficially from the primary text on account of difference in plot, characterization and degree of emphasis on specific themes. Each critical issue is approached and solved differently in each narrative of the Narnian series. A close reading of the narratives can reveal the inherent issues within a specific text and how they are resolved.

Recognition and Healing of Critical Issues

Reading each book of *The Chronicles of Narnia* using a particular theory can reveal the issues embedded in the text, within its specific framework. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the narratives of each of the Narnian series is analysed through

the “Grammar of Fantasy” by John Clute. This is helpful to understand the stages of Wrongness, Thinning, Recognition and Healing within the narrative structure of each of the books. Clute’s Theory is used for analysis instead of other literary and critical theories because the latter tend to confine the reading within their predetermined frameworks. Clute’s Theory can reveal the multidimensional issues within the text in the form of Wrongness, which becomes a decisive factor and creates an impact on the narrative context. The narrative content of each book of the Narnian series can be analysed into the stages of Wrongness, Thinning, Recognition and Healing. Wrongness provides an insight into the disruption of order and Thinning reveals its degree of intensity. Recognition is a point where the characters become aware of solutions to the issues and their practical application leads to Healing, where social order is re-established. In all the cases, there need not be a linear progression of these four stages and often there are overlappings between them. Following is an analysis of *The Chronicles of Narnia* through Clute’s Theory which reveals the four stages of narrative development in each book.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe: Wrongness has already happened in the form of a century-long reign of Jadis, which has led to eternal winter in Narnia. This fact is revealed by Mr Tumnus and later elaborated by Mr and Mrs Beaver to the Pevensie children. They become aware of the intensity of the tyrannical rule when Edmund is confiscated by Jadis, which marks the Thinning. The protagonists recognize that the war against Jadis is the only solution to save Narnia when they meet Aslan. He sacrifices his life for Edmund and soon resurrects himself, which marks the beginning of Healing by ending the process of Thinning. Resurrection of the Narnians from stone statues into their original form and destruction of Jadis completes the Healing process. But the Healing process had already begun when the protagonist travel to

meet Aslan, where they see that winter along with the magic of Jadis is fading away. Healing is complete in this narrative and the Golden Age is established.

The misrule of Jadis is characterized by overt expression of power and dictatorial reign. This is the crisis that has affected Narnia and the solution is in the form of a combined effort from Aslan and the Pevensie children. Peter who leads the battle in the absence of Aslan and Edmund. Edmund takes the risk of destroying the magic wand of Jadis and thereby express the values of courage and intelligence according to the situation. Aslan himself embodies courage and fortitude by sacrificing himself to save Edmund and thereby the inhabitants of Narnia. The Healing process reverberates even after Aslan leaves Narnia and is carried out by the Pevensies who are now rulers of the land.

Prince Caspian: Similar to the previous narrative, here too the Wrongness has already happened before the protagonists reach Narnia. The Pevensies are made aware of the colonization of Narnia by Telmarines and usurping of the throne by Miraz. Thinning process happens with the escape of Caspian from Miraz, and heightens at the point where Narnians are attacked by the Telmarines. Recognition phase begins when Pevensies meet Aslan and Peter fights a duel with Miraz to win back Narnia. Healing happens when Aslan unleashes the forces of nature and walking trees, who defeat the Telmarine armies. Here the Healing process is incomplete as, even though stability is brought back in the social order, the damaged done by the Telmarines has not healed.

Peter uses intelligent tactics to fight a duel with Miraz, as the Narnians were very small in number when compared to the vast army of Telmarines. This attempt encompasses the value of living with dignity, however powerful the enemy may seem

to be. The idea of invoking the White Witch to defeat Miraz is foiled by the timely intervention of Pevensies, as it would lead to the transfer of power from a utilitarian tyrant to a totalitarian tyrant. Prince Caspian joins the marginalized sections of society and works for their upliftment, apart from his own benefit. Forces of nature play an important role in destabilizing the tyrannical rule of foreign invaders and Healing the crisis that has afflicting the native community.

The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader': Here Wrongness has happened a generation before the setting of this story when the seven lords of late King Caspian IX, were exiled by Miraz. The narrative thus begins with the Healing process where the Pevensies and Eustace join Caspian on his journey towards the east to find the missing lords. There are several interplays between Thinning and Recognition as the narrative progresses through dangers of the voyage through various islands and the unique experience learnt from them. Healing completes with Edmund, Lucy and Eustace meeting Aslan after Reepicheep reaches Aslan's country. Here even though the Healing process is completed, unfulfillment still lingers on as the protagonists are denied entry into the country of Aslan; where Edmund and Lucy cannot even enter Narnia anymore.

Each obstacle in the journey is overcome through courage and intelligence of the characters. Practical wisdom and tactics help the protagonists to escape from the slave traders and the sea serpent. Life of dignity led by Reepicheep enables him to reach the cherished goal of his life, Aslan's country. The Healing process in the narrative enables the characters to inculcate the value of fortitude, as they have to patiently overcome the difficulties before reaching the country of Aslan.

The Silver Chair: Two parallel narratives can be identified in this text which culminates in a common juncture of Healing. The first narrative is from the perspective of Prince Rilian who goes missing from Narnia and Wrongness begins with this event. Thinning has been happening unnoticed by the inhabitants of Narnia or by Rilian who has been enslaved by the Lady of the Green Kirtle who is building a tunnel from the Underland to the Overland of Narnia to conquer the latter. Recognition happens when Rilian is released by Eustace, Jill and Puddleglum from the bondage of the enchanted Silver Chair. Rilian is now able to recollect that he had been an intellectual prisoner of the Queen of Underland and identifies her intentions to defeat Narnia. The second parallel narrative has Eustace and Jill as the protagonists who are sent by Aslan to find the missing prince. Wrongness happens when they pay heed to the Lady of the Green Kirtle and receives the hospitality of the “Gentle Giants” at the city of Harfang. Later they come to the Recognition that the pleasure of staying at Harfang distracted their mission and lead to a near-to-death experience from the cannibal giants. The common point of Healing is when Puddleglum disenchant the magic spell of the Lady by stamping on the fire and Prince Rilian kills her to release the enslaved Earthmen. This text is unique with parallel threads of narratives and a common nucleus of Healing. Healing is incomplete as there are remnants of evil giants who remain a threat to society.

Puddleglum, who risked his life to save fellow beings and society, embodies courage and fortitude. He stamps on the magic fire and disenchant the Earthmen from the slavery of the Queen of the Underland. The protagonists subvert the preconceived notions of Rilian and release him from intellectual subjugation. The narrative raises voices against hegemonic indoctrination and fascist forms of government.

The Horse and His Boy: In the case of this narrative, Wrongness is a process that is currently happening when the protagonists Shasta, Aravis, Bree and Hwin, make their journey towards Narnia. Narnians staying in the palace of Tisroc at Tashbaan amounts to the Thinning process which imposes a risk on their lives. Recognition takes place when Aravis overhears Rabadash planning to conquer Archenland and later Narnia. Simultaneously Edmund, Susan and other Narnians recognize the evil intend of Rabadash seeking Susan's hand for marriage, and they stealthily leave Tashbaan. Healing happens with the defeat of Rabadash and his transformation into a donkey. Even though the protagonists move to a safe zone, the misrule of Calormenes is not eradicated and the inherent social injustices are not rooted out. Hence the Healing process is only a partial one.

Shasta and Aravis leave their respective homes towards the free nation of Narnia, to live their life with dignity. They express the values of courage and fortitude, which help them to overcome the difficulties of their journey and take decisions as per the demand of situations. Both of them look for the welfare of society amidst their errand and informs Archenlanders about the invading attacks. Aravis who was a Calormen herself transgresses the social canons and finally reaches the cherished free nation of Narnia.

The Magician's Nephew: The narrative introduces the concept of parallel worlds and the protagonist travels through them. Here, Wrongness happens much later, after the protagonists enter the secondary world. Jadis the destroyer of the land of Charn is awakened by Digory, which marks the beginning of Wrongness. Thinning is described by the havoc created by Jadis in England and culminates when she reaches the newly created world of Narnia. Recognition of the solution to the evil in Narnia is made by Aslan who asks Digory to compensate his wrongdoing. When

Digory takes the Silver Apple by overcoming the temptation of Jadis, Recognition process is completed. Aslan plants the Silver Apple in Narnia which grows into a tree denoting Healing of all impending harms. Healing happens when Digory's mother is cured of her illness and the Jadis is kept off from Narnia for a hundred years. The healing process here is incomplete and sustains an impending threat from Jadis in future.

Digory and Polly use their soft power to overcome overt exertion of physical power by Jadis in the form of violence. The protagonists undergo individual development through constant endeavours of supporting society and thereby inculcate the values of non-violence and courage. Overcoming the temptation offered by Jadis, Digory exemplifies the quality of selflessness and intelligence of sustainable development. Conservation of existing resources and long-term planning for the welfare of future generations is also an inherent theme of the narrative.

The Last Battle: Wrongness in this book begins when Shift the ape gets a lion's skin from Caldron Pool and forces the donkey named Puzzle to wear it. Thinning follows when Shift announces the return of Aslan who is Puzzle in lion's skin and exploits the Narnians by associating himself with the talking cat Ginger and the Calormenes lead by Rishda Tarkaan. From deforestation of Lantern Waste, Thinning continues till apocalypse and outlives all attempts of Healing. King Tirian comes to the Recognition of the crisis that has engulfed Narnia when he observes the activities of Shift and Calormenes. Healing in this narrative is a post-apocalyptic event when Aslan creates the Real Narnia after dissolving the older one. The Healing, in this case, is incomplete and inorganic as the protagonists have to die to reach the New Narnia, which is a result of the failure of Healing in the old Narnia.

Courage, Fortitude and dignified life are the values that enable the protagonists to fight against the oppressors till the end. They never succumbed to the pressure of situations nor were they disheartened by their repeated failed attempts. The protagonists exhibit discrimination and intelligence to identify hegemonic currents within society.

According to the aforementioned analysis of *The Chronicles of Narnia* by Clute's "Grammar of Fantasy", variation in the degree of Healing can be deciphered from each book of the series. The seven novels of the Narnian series can be arranged in the ascending order as per increase in the magnitude of Healing: *The Last Battle*, *The Magician's Nephew*, *The Horse and His Boy*, *The Silver Chair*, *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*, *Prince Caspian* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Complete Healing of the crisis happens in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* which is referred to as the Golden Age. The critical situations are directly addressed and subverted to transform the landscape of Narnia and the mindscape of its inhabitants. To foreground the concept of total global transformation as described in Ayyavazhi in the form of *Dharma Yugam*, it is justifiable to select *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as the primary text. This also confirms to the concept of Eucatastrophe put forth by Tolkien and does not confine the text as merely a utopian one. Reading *The Chronicles of Narnia* as a text of Ayyavazhi saves it from being marginalized as an impractical utopian narrative. This can be understood from the concept of the ideal egalitarian aeon of *Dharma Yugam* conceptualized in Ayyavazhi, which influenced the subaltern section of society and resulted in social reformation movements of South India.

Healing or resolution of the critical issues in the text are carried out by the protagonists through their love and compassion for the fellow beings, which is termed as *Anpu* in Ayyavazhi. Individual development and social resurgence are inseparable

and the Healing process is based on values of Ayyavazhi like Living with Dignity, Courage and Fortitude and *Dharmam*. Following the teachings of Vaikundar, the characters of the novel employ practical wisdom to solve the issues through self-initiative. They follow a hygienic and unsophisticated lifestyle, confirming to nature and ecosystem. Like followers of Ayyavazhi, the rulers of Narnia and the friends of Narnia together work for upliftment of the downtrodden and have unconditional faith in their master, Aslan. Reliance on Aslan inspires and instigates them to face adversities of life and take appropriate decisions. Another important formulation of the aforementioned analysis is that each book of the Narnian series cannot be mapped to a particular theme or social issue. There are multiple critical issues embedded in a single book and sometimes common themes can be identified from more than one of these novels. Economic exploitation, racial discrimination, political oppression, religious monopoly and malpractices, are the common themes that are addressed in the Narnian series when analysed through Ayyavazhi. Such a reading also considers contemporary issues like domestic violence, gender discrimination, human trafficking, terrorism and environmental exploitation.

The following is a cross-section of Narnian series which analyses specific critical issues and provides insight into the resolving process. Apart from their confirmation to Ayyavazhi, the issues discussed are common to many societies of contemporary world. Therefore, the study has universal relevance and provides scope for similar cross-cultural readings. Choice of Ayyavazhi prompts the reading to foreground the value of non-violence, which dilutes factual connotation behind the scenes of violence, as struggles against injustice and oppression.

Healing Economic Exploitation

Economic stability constitutes the fundamental framework of a society and discrimination on economic basis denotes the lack of social evolution. Narnia depicts a completely evolved society where social hierarchies are irrelevant and the society is seldom concerned about the economic status of the other. The Narnian series describe the invasive forces like Telmarines in *Prince Caspian* and Calormenes in *The Horse and His Boy* and *The Last Battle*, who unleash tyranny and exploitations in the nation. Economic benefits of these foreign powers are the main reasons of the conquests and invasions made by them against Narnia. It is interesting to note that none of them try to adopt the social structure of Narnia, nor do they tend to make any change in their social values. The presence of Aslan as a leader can be seen as the reason for the integrity of Narnian values and social harmony of its inhabitants. This is a clear reflection of Ayyavazhi, which stands against discrimination of any kind and fosters unity among members of the society. The ideal nature of Ayyavazhi and Narnia can be understood in contrast with Telmarines and Calormenes.

Economic deprivation is the characteristic of social degradation and such a condition can destabilise society in inflicted nations, as well as the adjacent countries. Famine, malnutrition and natural disaster can create such a condition, apart from man-made wars and conflicts. *Prince Caspian* symbolically depicts the hazardous condition overcome by the protagonists, who have been victims of tyrannical power. Nikabrik the Dwarf, tries to persuade Prince Caspian for reviving the White Witch, who would fight for them against the oppressive ruler Miraz. For this purpose, Nikabrik takes help from his friends Hag and Wer-wolf who subsequently reveal themselves as “hunger” and “thirst”. They describe their powers and show eagerness to finish off the enemies of Caspian. They explain their powers to live for a hundred years on starving, to remain unfrozen on ice for a century, to sustain unquenchable

thirst for people's blood and to hold on the bite and leave its impact on a person even after death (Lewis *Prince* 392). Agitations or wars fought through or fought for hunger and thirst can be disastrous. Wars waged to inflict poverty on the rival community and wars fought to appease personal bitterness cannot help to create stability in society. Lewis indirectly gives a hint of these hazardous tendencies happening in the form of World War II, while he was writing the book. In the context of Narnia, if Caspian had agreed to the plan of Nikabrick, hunger and thirst would have revived the White Witch and she would have established her tyrannical rule in Narnia after defeating Miraz. This would have been much worse than Miraz's rule and can be testified from the description of her reign in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. This scene also reflects the after-effects of social revolutions that evolved from hunger and thirst of humanity. The after-effects of the French revolution and the disintegration of USSR are a few examples of wrongdoings that followed the movements that were created for the right reasons. Nikabrick was a victim of social and economic deprivation like other Narnians who were marginalized and exiled by Miraz. Yet he chose to oppose the oppression through motivation derived from personal vengeance. This is different from the approach of Peter to regain Narnia, who fought a duel with Miraz to minimize violence and bloodshed. This bears resemblance to Ayyavazhi where social revolution at the cost of violence is least approved as a solution of humanity.

Narnia is described as a free land which is characterized by harmony between all sections of society. This egalitarian context is contrasted with Calormenes who exhibit various levels of socio-economic disparities. Slavery and poverty are inseparable features of that society, which are altogether absent from Narnia. This is the reason why characters like Bree, Hwin, Shasta and Aravis travel to the free land of Narnia, in *The Horse and His Boy*. As they make their journey through the Calormen city of

Tashbaan, Lewis describes the downtrodden sections of society in contrast to the noble class. The narrative describes the city of Tashbaan as a magnanimous and beautiful city with palatial buildings, towers and market places. Calormen lords and nobles are carried by slaves in a palanquin, and the less privileged sections of society have to make way for the higher ones. On the other hand, there are beggars, children in rags and slaves without foot wares. Foul odour emanates from garbage heaps, unbathed people and dogs, which describe their unhygienic and marginalized conditions (Lewis *The Horse* 228, 230). The description sheds light into social stratification in Calormen society which ranges from rulers, warlords, nobles, merchants, soldiers, peasants, up to the slaves. The pathetic condition of slaves and beggars can be understood from their unhygienic appearance and surroundings. Similar social stratification can be witnessed in many nations, including the underbellies of cosmopolitan cities in the contemporary world.

“Work, Vocation and the Goodlife in Narnia” by Devin Brown reveals the views of Lewis on the economic structure in society, Lewis in the Narnian series questions economic upliftment of elite class at the cost of the common masses. He condemns idleness and insists on activities performed by the individuals to upgrade the society. The contemplative thought process and should practically work for upgradation of society rather than confine humans within ideal ideas of idleness. Lewis borrows the Marxian concept of acting according to individual ability and need, which will lead to the overall progress of society. Brown cites the example of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, were the animals who are disenchanted actively participate in the battle against Jadis, according to their natural ability. The gifts given by Father Christmas to the Pevensie children are also according to the need and ability of each one. Along with this, Lewis emphasizes on the intention behind an

individual's action, which resemble the teachings of Thomas Aquinas and Buddha. Thus, Narnian narratives testify with examples that, the manner in which a person works in society is more important than the superficial nature of the action. The governor Gumpas in *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'* accumulates large capital through unethical and illegal means of slave trade. He justifies this action in proportion to the enormous amount of wealth accumulated effortlessly and advises the king about social progress through this method. King Caspian dismisses him from the governorship, as the king's idea of social progress includes the welfare of the entire society without confining to the elite class. In *The Last Battle*, Shift, the tyrant ape redefines the freedom of work as different from an individual's subjectivity. Asserting the need for social welfare, Shift lectures against selfishness and simultaneously asserts his selfish motives on Narnians. The concept of impersonal and unbiased decisions is highlighted by Lewis as the necessity for social progress. This is reminded to King Caspian by Reepicheep, the mouse, in *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*. The ruler of the nation should marginalize the importance of private life, foreground the sense of duty and earn the faith of the subjects (Brown, "Vocation, Work", 86-91). This reveals the view of Lewis that asserts parallel importance to spiritual values and the socio-economic progress. Social concerns can be actively addressed only through individuals who work for the benefit of the entire society by looking beyond personal benefits. The anecdote of Reepicheep advising Caspian is itself a proof of Narnia being an egalitarian society, where the ruler assimilates and accepts ideas from a mouse. The society depicted here destabilizes social stratification based on economic status and foregrounds democratic values within the framework of the monarchy.

This is similar to the economic policies and social harmony depicted in "*Dharma Neetham*" of *Akhilathirattu Ammanai* when Chozhan ruled *Kali Yugam*.

The ruler constructed temples, wells and ponds with banks, and also built frontier walls. Without the distinction of the poor or the rich, he used to thoroughly observe, question and settle the disputes of citizens. Service centres were established to provide food for the poor and shelter to provide drinking water were also constructed. These services were provided day and nights to all the needy and visitors. The policies to obtain taxes from the violators were not harsh, but practically levied. The king fostered the knowledge of the Divine name throughout the nation and followed the traditional spiritual procedures without failure (Harigopalan *Akhilathirattu* 7). This reminds that even in the diabolic aeon of *Kali Yugam*, peaceful and harmonious society can be established if the ruler incessantly works for social welfare. The scenario is slightly different from that of Narnia, as Narnia is already in an ideal condition and doesn't need service activities or welfare programmes. When invasive forces capture and exploit the land of Narnia, it has to be brought back into its former glory. There are several occasions where Narnians offer food, drink and shelter to the strangers who visit the country and extend hospitality. Caspian, Aravis and Shasta are the persecuted who find refuge in the free land of Narnia. This trait can be related to the Indian subcontinent which has sheltered persecuted races like Jews and Zoroastrians and welcomed individuals like Dalai Lama and Tasleema Nazarene.

Healing the harms of economic exploitations are undertaken by Aslan and human agencies, which is similar in all Narnian books. In *Prince Caspian* even though the misrule of Telmarines is ended by invoking the natural forces, the in-between steps of Healing have much relevance. Aslan sends Peter, Edmund and Lucy to stop the wicked plans of Nikabrick, where the latter is killed along with the Hag and the Wer-Wulf. The importance of timely intervention and proper council are highlighted here. In the case of Governor Gumpas in *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*, Caspian

himself dismisses him from the governorship and appoints Lord Ber as the ruler of The Lone Islands. Slave trading is abolished and economic stability is re-established in society. In *The Horse and His Boy*, the invasion of Calormenes under the leadership of Rabadash is curbed by Archenlanders and Narnians. *The Last Battle* describes the destruction of Narnia as an aftermath of the oppressive rule of Calormenes. The critical situations are resolved in *The Horse and His Boy* by Aslan who transforms the defeated Rabadash into a donkey and indirectly warns the Calormenes from attacking Narnia. In the case of *The Last Battle*, even Aslan is unable to control the crisis that has happened and is forced to make Healing through an apocalypse. This illustrates that the economic stability of a nation determines its social security and even the very survival of the human community. Even though here, the good Narnians are unable to defend their nation against the exploitations of Shift and invasions by Calormenes, they are finally rewarded by Aslan by giving entry into the Real Narnia. Apart from the religious connotations of it, this New World creates a space for the growth and development of human potential. That may be the reason why all those who have maintained progressive outlooks and creative values find a place in the Real Narnia. This includes Emeth who opposed Aslan, but his inquisitiveness for knowledge makes him eligible for the New World. The idea behind an egalitarian New World creates hope of progressing life through adverse situations. Such an experience of Eucatastrophe is incorporated into the Narnian series through the introduction of a post-apocalyptic New World in *The Last Battle*.

Sequential Healing is common to Ayyavazhi which describes incarnations of Divinity through aeons. There are references to exploitations on the economic ground like unethical taxations, forced labour and slavery. The very dictum of Vaikundar is not to work without wages and to lead a dignified life. The definition of *Dharmam* in

Ayyavazhi is uplifting the downtrodden, which in the physical sense denotes the resurgence of economically backward sections of society. Alike these concepts, the protagonists work against slavery and forced labour imposed by Shift and Calormenes on the Narnians. Courage and Fortitude help the individuals to fearlessly stand against oppressions and respond responsibly to life situations. The Courage and Fortitude exhibited by the protagonists in *The Last Battle* is an example of adherence to the cause of public welfare, even at the point of death. The conceptualization of apocalypse itself can denote a complete inversion of the prevailing systems of oppression and establishment of an egalitarian society. In *The Last Battle* some facts stand out like, the absence of a strong leader to work for the cause of common masses. Almost the entire race of Narnia is unable to detect the Wrongness that has happened, until things have irrecoverably worsened. This is different from the other Narnian narratives where appropriate measures were implemented as the trends of exploitations and plans of enemies were detected in early stages. Even in the case of conquests made in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Prince Caspian*, the Narnians were not intellectually subjugated to those hegemonic powers. They had understood the critical situations and were waiting for the right time of outburst. The case of *The Last Battle* leaves the destiny of Narnians to themselves, without any intervention from Aslan. But they fail to achieve social stability and succumb to the control of hegemonic powers in the absence of their leader, Aslan. This reflects the innate inefficiency of humanity which always long for living ideals in the form of leadership. This may be the reason why Vaikundar who assigned responsibility to the people to root out the evil aeon of *Kali Yugam*, assures them of his arrival in the future to commence *Dharma Yugam*. Narnians were assured of no such hope, as Lewis was planning a judgement scene modelled on Christianity. Hence all good Narnians enter the Real Narnia after their death and

find blissful life in the proximity of Aslan. Anyway, in both cases of Narnia and Ay-yavazhi, individuals are themselves held responsible for their bondage and emancipation.

Healing Political Oppression

Lewis as an academician, was not known for his genius in political discussions. But he had his own views on politics and nation-building. *C. S. Lewis on Politics and the Natural Law* by Justin Buckley Dyer and Micah J. Watson, explains the views of Lewis regarding the relationship between the nation and its members. Lewis was not completely convinced of the democratic form of governments, as he saw that human beings are susceptible to lack of wisdom and goodness. His concept of government is characterized by mutual protection and preservation maintained between the government and the people. The government should do the duty of maintaining law and order in the nation and curtail criminal activities in society. The people should be able to choose and replace governments through revolutions if necessary (98). This is the form of government depicted in the land of Narnia, which ensures freedom and security to its inhabitants. Narnia can be understood by correlating in contrast with societies of Telmarines and Calormenes. The latter are examples for the political issues and exploitations of the primary world, which are reflected in the narratives of the secondary world of Narnia.

Different forms of political powers are depicted in various narratives of the Narnian series. Narnia itself stands out as a form of the monarchy with democratic characteristics. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Prince Caspian* and *The Horse and His Boy* there are altogether four rulers of Narnia, which depicts a decentralized form of monarchy devoid of power hierarchies. The rulers directly interact

with the subjects and consider their opinions while making decisions. Narnia is characterized by mutual love and support between rulers and subjects. Important positions of power are occupied by Narnians according to their eligibility and skills, rather than considerations of race or gender. Kings and queens participate in battles and equally involved in policymaking of the nation. There are no forms of social hierarchies and social status attributed to any particular groups or communities. These progressive characteristics of the Narnian nation lend it the reputation of the free land. Refugees find space in Narnia and invasive power try to plunder its resources, which highlights the prosperity of the nation. Such characteristics of Narnia are much similar to the past glory of Indian subcontinent which attracted voyagers like Columbus and commenced colonial invasions through the Da Gamma epoch.

Colonization and imperialist forms of rules are described in *Prince Caspian*, where Miraz represents the past nine generations of Telmars who had been exerting their power in Narnia. The narrative also describes the repetitive expressions of power politics and Miraz is a crystallized epitome of colonial conquest. Miraz assassinated his brother King Caspian IX for the throne and finally Miraz, in turn, is treacherously stabbed to death by his own Lord Glozelle who repeats the patterns of his master. There are multiple layers of power politics inherent in the novel which defines the history of Narnia after the reign of Pevensies. These historical developments are narrated by the Dwarf Trumpkin in *Prince Caspian*, to the Pevensie children. Nickabrick refers the native inhabitants as Old Narnians, and the New Narnians as the Telmarines who have colonized the native land by obliterating the former aboriginals. The Old Narnians are driven out of the mainstream society and annihilated immediately on being found out. The natural resources are plundered for the nation-building process of the Telmarines, who have rooted out the culture and traditions of the natives. This evident

from the experience of prince Caspian who is not allowed to speak or think about the history of Old Narnia which is referred to as silly stories by Miraz. The tutor Doctor Cornelius reveals to Caspian about the colonial conquest of Telmarines and their annexation of Narnia. Later, Caspian began to understand that Narnia is twice marginalized nation when he grows up. “He also began to see that Narnia as an unhappy country. The taxes were high and the laws were stern and Miraz was a cruel man”. Doctor Cornelius eventually asks Caspian to flee from Narnia as, Queen Prunaprisma the wife of Miraz has delivered a male child who will become the heir of the throne after Miraz’s rule, and Caspian is a threat to his lineage. The tutor narrates the legacy of the power politics played by his uncle, who treacherously eliminated all the supporters of his dead brother and accessed the throne for himself. Cornelius reveals that Miraz who was the murderer of his brother Caspian IX will weed out Prince Caspian who is the legitimate heir of the throne (Lewis *Prince* 338-343). The narration reveals the case of Miraz’s as a peculiar one, as he not only becomes a threat to the native Narnians but is a cruel ruler to his own Telmarine people. Excessive taxation and misuse of the legal system reveals the heightened degree of his tyranny. Like the colonizers of the real world, Miraz and his ancestors try to invent their version of history by silencing the documented history of the native Narnians. Cornelius represents the voice of the oppressed sections who try to reclaim their lost space through Prince Caspian. Caspian with the aid of the Pevensie children and Aslan win back Narnia after defeating the Telmarines.

Anything and everything that exploits and oppresses is considered as the personification of the evil aeon *Kali Yugam* known as *Kalineechan*. The colonial powers are considered as the extension of *Kalineechan* and a more diabolic force than the latter. *Akhilathirattu Ammanai* describes the colonial powers as *Venneechan* [The

Wicked White], who is the offspring of *Kalineechan*. The clan of *Venneechan* will establish his rule all over the world and subdue even *Kalineechan*. The former will replace the traditional and native cultures, by enforcing their ideologies, religion, sciences, calendar and systems of knowledge. The skills of navigation, warfare, treachery and political diplomacy are their major powers. Their rule will intensify the suffering of good people in the aeon of *Kali Yugam*, by magnifying its power (Harigopalan *Akhilathirattu* 116-119). These descriptions match with the colonial conquest of the real world as well as with the Telmarine reign in Narnia. The creation of their systems of knowledge and marginalization of the native knowledge is carried out through revisions in the education system. The history of the natives is replaced by the colonial canons, which is implemented through the process of cultural indoctrination. Subversion of the colonial canons is carried out by Doctor Cornelius using the same educational system, where he contrasts the present condition with the past glory of Narnia. Thus, the revolution of emancipation originated from Doctor Cornelius which was executed by Caspian with the help of Narnian rulers and Aslan.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe describe Narnia as a frozen landscape for a hundred years under the tyrannical rule of Jadis. Jadis is referred to as the White Witch who uses her magic wand to turn all her opposers into stone statues and maintain her reign through the physical expression of power. This provides a faithful representation of totalitarian and dictatorial forms of government. Any form of violation of her order invites death in the form of metamorphosis into stone statue or imprisonment. Secret police forces are used as agents to execute the orders and create fear of subjugation in the subjects. Jadis employs Maugrim and other wolves who arrest, investigate and assassinate the subjects as per her orders. Though soft power and

strategies are used to maintain a hold over the nation, physical power in the form of military forces is used to ensure the sovereignty of her rule.

Since the period of the two World Wars fascism has been detected and later detested by the people as forms of exploitations. Lewis was writing the Narnian books during the period of World War II, where fascist forms of governments had emerged as decisive forces of global politics. The reflection of such political entities can be understood by a close reading of the Narnian narratives. *The Silver Chair* narrates the political campaign planned and executed by Lady of the Green Kirtle, who is the Queen of the Underland. She gains control of the Earthmen and even Prince Rilian who are made to believe that they are followers of a just ruler, who is a noble lady. The Earthmen work like slaves for creating tunnel towards the Overworld which she intends to conquer. This is the major feature fascist regime where the common people are unaware of the oppressive intentions of the ruler. When Jill, Eustace and Puddleglum accidentally reach the Underland, they are taken by the earthmen to meet the black knight, who is Rilian himself. Eustace Scrubb reveals that this very Lady had evil intentions to kill them and she had sent them to be feasted by the cannibalistic Giants. The hegemonic control of the Lady of the Green Kirtle makes Rilian believe that she is the epitome of all virtues and he bluntly disagrees with Eustace. He is ever sure of her good intentions and tries to convince the visitors of the same. He elaborately explains her plan to conquer the Overworld and he would destroy the enemies with the large army of Earthmen. Rilian expects the Lady to coronate him as the ruler of the Overworld and reveals he would explicitly follow her words. The Queen is rhetorically referred by the prince as a “deep politician” which fits her true definition. This is confirmed by the Queen who ensures that Rilian does not interact with anybody while he is allowed to visit the Overworld (Lewis *The Silver* 619-622). Indoctrination

policy of the Queen cannot be successful in a polyphonic society like Narnia. Therefore, she insulates the Prince from everybody in the name of safety. Later the protagonist saves Rilian from the enchantment of the Lady and he remembers how he had been abducted by that Queen of the Underland. The same rhetoric speech and the magical spell of indoctrination are tried upon the visitors by the Queen, which is foiled by the determination of Puddleglum. The Queen is killed by Rilian, which results in the release of the Earthmen from her enchantment.

The Horse and His Boy depict the diplomatic stand of politicians and the diligent employment of their intelligence to secure position. In Chapter Eight of this novel, Aravis accidentally overhears the conversation of Tisroc the ruler of Tashbaan, his son Prince Rabadash and his Grand Vizier Ahoshta. Rabadash is contrasted with his father Tisroc as the former is emotionally vulnerable, while the latter uses his manipulative intelligence. Despite disagreements from the Tisroc, Rabadash wants to attack Narnia and make Queen Susan his wife. Rabadash plans to attack the castle of Anvard with his two hundred horsemen and defeat King Lune. Later he plans to attack the castle of Cair Paraval at Narnia, kill the Narnians in the absence of the High King Peter and abduct Queen Susan. The conversation reveals that Rabadash is mad with lust for Queen Susan and vengeance of the Narnians. He is determined to accomplish the mission despite of the arguments put forth by Tisroc and the suggestions given by Ahoshta. Hot discussions happen at the end of which Rabadash is allowed to do as he pleases and he leaves to conquer Archenland. The political stand of Tisroc is revealed to Ahoshta after Rabadash leaves and is overheard by Aravis who was hiding. Rabadash was a threat for Tisroc, who feared his hot-blooded son may kill him to become the ruler of Calormen, which was not a new trend in the history of that nation. If Rabadash dies his father would be relieved and would make his next son the heir of

the throne. In case Rabadash succeeds in his conquest, vast nations like Archenland and Narnia would be added to his empire (Lewis *The Horse* 256-261). Such political stands can be seen in the rulers of nations throughout history and are relevant in the contemporary world. The anticipation of new political stands is subject in interpretations and helps in making proper decisions. In this case, there is no time for anticipation or interpretation and Aravis who hears all their plans warns the Archenlanders through Shasta about the forthcoming attack from Calormenes.

Healing of political oppression is carried out in different ways through the various narratives. In the books, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Prince Caspian*, people of the marginalized sections of the society are gathered and the protagonists fight the oppressors with their support. Social resurgence and unification of various communities help to create an upsurge against the political domination of the tyrannical powers. This is similar to that of Ayyavazhi where Vaikundar unified eighteen castes together and boldly stood against the divide and rule policy of the local government, which they had borrowed from their colonial masters. Courage, fortitude and dignity of the protagonists are revealed from their fights against the forces of oppression. Peter courageously faces Jadis and her army even in the absence of Aslan and wins the battle with the aid of Narnians and Aslan. He uses the strategy of challenging Miraz for duel combat rather than a battle, as the Narnians were less in number and cannot win over the huge army of Miraz. Finally, the Telmarines are defeated by the trees and forces of nature enlivened by Aslan, which suggest the resurgence of the subaltern communities, who have been silenced by thousand years of oppression under the Telmarines. This is a reflection of the social renaissance initiated by Ayya Vaikundar who uplifted the subaltern sections and influenced the later renaissance movements including the Indian independence movement against colonial rule.

Proper use of the available time leads to the success of Narnians against the invaders in *The Horse and His Boy*, where Shasta delivers the news of Rabadash's attack on time to alert King Lune. Here the practical knowledge and skill of an individual helped in resolving the political issue. *The Silver Chair* describes the role of common citizens in solving the complicated problems of the nation. Two children and a Marsh-wiggle subvert the political strategies of the Lady of the Green Kirtle through their courage. Puddleglum found Aslan as a source of inspiration and did not succumb to the rhetoric indoctrination of the Lady as he led the dignified life of a Narnian. The values of Courage and Fortitude empowered him to stamp on her magic fire and extinguish it, which led to the liberation of the entire society from her enchantment.

Healing Religious Monopoly and Malpractices

The Narnian narratives do not give importance to religion and ritualization. None of the Narnians performs rituals and invokes Aslan as a deity. Even though Aslan represents Divinity he never allows himself to be worshipped or advises the people to follow any forms of worship. This is similar to Ayyavazhi, where Vaikundar never allowed people to worship his physical form. None of the followers of Ayyavazhi worships the images or sculptures of their master. Vaikundar installed Mirror and Lamp as symbols of worship in shrines known as Pathis and Nizhalthangals. The Lamp symbolizing knowledge and the Mirror symbolizing the innate existence of Divinity in every individual conveys a unique spiritual experience. This is similar to *The Chronicles of Narnia*, where the characters are made to seek strength from within themselves and face adverse situations, in the absence of Aslan. The Narnians live on the values for which Aslan stood and his very idea without physical proximity inspires them to take proper decisions and solve critical issues. Aslan thus

makes him deliberately absent from Narnia to indirectly initiate the people into the spiritual awareness of Abstract Divinity existing within each individual.

It is also an irony that in the fantasy text that involves a lot of magic, the main character Aslan cannot be invoked by any sort of magic. Instead, Aslan calls all the protagonists into Narnia through his supernatural powers to solve the issues. Magic, witchcraft and sorcery do not have positive connotations in Narnia. The tyrannical oppressors are witches like Jadis, the White Witch in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and the Lady of the Green Kirtle in *The Silver Chair*. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* describes the tyrannical rule of Jadis who exerts her power over Narnia by creating eternal winter in the landscape through her magic. She uses her magic to enchant Edmund by creating his favourite dish Turkish Delight and thereby manipulates him to trace her enemies. When the Narnians attack her and save Edmund, she uses magical powers to transform herself into a boulder and the Dwarf into a stump, to escape from the sight of her enemies. Jadis also wields a magic wand with which she metamorphosizes her enemies into stone statues. Each of these magical powers is subverted by Aslan in different ways. The mere arrival of Aslan brings back spring into Narnia and the winter along with the ice dissolves away. Jadis claims the blood of Edmund who is a traitor as per the inscriptions made through Deep Magic from the Dawn of Time. Aslan makes a treaty with her by allowing himself to be sacrificed on the Stone Table in the place of Edmund. Jadis agrees to this and after elaborate magical rituals at the midnight, she kills Aslan with her stone knife. Thus, the Deep Magic becomes appeased along with Jadis and the hoard of her diabolic allies. Unexpectedly Aslan resurrects the following morning according to the Deeper Magic before the Dawn of Time and gives life to all those whom Jadis had converted into statues. In the battle that happens between the good and the evil, Edmund destroys her magic wand

and Aslan kills Jadis to end the tyrannical rule. In *Prince Caspian*, Nikabrik along with his allies the Hag and the Wer-Wulf try to revive Jadis again, which was disrupted by the Pevensies and Trumpkin. Jadis exhibited multiple powers of witchcraft and sorcery, while the Lady of the Green Kirtle only has the power of verbal enchantment. The latter also can transform herself into a green serpent and finally, Prince Rilian kills her in this form, to release the Earthmen from her enchantment.

Magic, sorcery and witchcraft usually denote oppressive forms of power in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, which contrasts with Aslan who is a seemingly ordinary lion. The exception is the magician Coriakin in *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*, who is introduced to Lucy by Aslan himself. Despite this exception, Aslan never encourages the people of Narnia or the protagonists to learn or rely on magic, sorcery or witchcraft. This is the fundamental outlook of Ayyavazhi movement and Vaikundar opposes these tendencies which have become part of many religions. "Thiruvachkam – 4" of *Akhilathirattu Ammanai* describes the proclamation of Vaikundar made to people regarding the abolition of religious malpractices. *Dharmam* is sustained by eradication of perversions in spirituality, which has to be followed by avoiding offerings, bribes, arm-swing, blood oblations from animal sacrifice and other formal rituals. After the declaration, Vaikundar incinerates evil spirits by burning them in fire. Later he confiscates the powers of the magicians known as *Malayarachar*, who have been practising magic, sorcery, demonolatry and witchcraft for many generations. The magicians who have become powerless take refuge under Vaikundar, following the instructions of a fortune-teller woman. He commands them to surrender all their powers acquired from witchcraft, black magic and sorcery and to stop the worship of evil spirits. Vaikundar asks them to adopt agriculture for livelihood and stop misleading the innocent people. As they have not brought their manuscript books of sorcery for

surrendering, the *Malayarachar* take oaths to never again use their demonic crafts or worship evil deities (Harigopalan *Akhilathirattu* 252-263). Vaikundar invoked changes in the ideology of people and the religious practices adopted by them. Ayyavazhi equally condemned religious monopoly, as the individuals can directly correlate with Divinity without any intermediary persons. Following the dictum of “*Thiruvachakam – 4*” forms of worship involving violence and non-violence are to be avoided. The movement subverted the role of sorcerers like *Malayarachar* and the brahmin priests, who represented religious power centres of the lower and the upper castes respectively. Decentralization of religious authority was the intention envisaged by Vaikundar, through this movement.

Lewis introduces the concept of Tash as contrary to that of Aslan. Calormenes worship Tash as their god and claim themselves to be his descendants. *The Horse and His Boy* explains the concept of Tash from the experiences of Aravis a Calormen Tarkeena, who flees from her nation to escape from a forced marriage. Like any other Calormen citizen, she has been instructed that Narnia is a primitive uncivilized nation which worships the demonic god named Aslan in the form of a lion. Tash, on the other hand, is a gigantic bird with wings and many hands. Tashbaan is the capital city of Calormen nation which has a golden statue of Tash who is worshipped through blood oblations and human beings are sacrificed on his altar. Aravis has been familiarized with the religion of Tash since her childhood. Following this culture of cruelty and violence, Aravis detests the lower sections of society including peasants, servants and slaves. Aravis, unconcerned of the slave girl, drugs her to sleep and escapes on the back of the talking horse Hwin. Aslan in the form of a lion tears the back of Aravis as a punishment, in proportion to the beatings received by the innocent slave girl from her masters. Eventually, Aslan appears before Bree, Hwin and Aravis while they

were staying with the Hermit. Aravis experiences that Aslan is an embodiment of love and compassion, which is contrary to the Calormen conception. Aslan reveals that it was he who tore her back with his paws, as he intended her to experience the suffering of the slave girl who was badly beaten by the step-mother of Aravis. Aravis by now becomes a changed person in her social outlook and accepts Aslan along with his values (Lewis *The Horse* 218-221). This is similar to the teachings of Vaikundar who tried to diminish the distinction of caste and social strata. It is a known fact that he unified different castes and classes of society, to subvert the social canons of discrimination. Aslan, through a punishment, teaches Aravis to be an inclusive person and to free herself from the norms of social discrimination. The development of such progressive and humane values makes Aravis the perfect choice to become the Queen of Archenland and later the mother of Ram the Great.

Religion becomes a tool of power politics when individuals exert control over social groups using their monopoly. This is a valid reason behind the trend of secularizing institutions in the contemporary world. The transition between Chapters Eleven and Twelve of *The Last Battle*, marks a decisive point in the fate of Narnia. *C.S. Lewis in Context* by Doris T. Myers examines this transition point which problematizes the social and spiritual discourses of the text and the context. The themes of religious monopoly can be known from Shift in *The Last Battle* where the ape claims himself to be an aged human and the mediator of Aslan. He simulates a false Aslan by dressing the donkey named Puzzle, in a lion skin and announces to the Narnians that Aslan has arrived in their country. He terrorizes the Narnians about the return of Aslan and convinces them that Aslan and Tash are one. Calormenes began spreading their power by subverting the concept of traditional spirituality. Through indoctrination process Rishda and Shift make them believe that Aslan is Tashlan. A revolution

is unleashed by King Tirian who opposes the invasive forces of his nation and the Narnians have to choose between him or Shift. The patriotic natives despite many betrayers on their side support Tirian and fight the invaders till death. This situation describes the unity of all Narnians without distinctions of creed and community. Creatures of all kinds belong to either side of opposers or supporters of Narnia, where the latter finds a place in Real Narnia. Longing for freedom prompts Rilian to fight against the injustices and reveals his emotional maturity to handle all adverse situations (175-178). This is similar to the colonial conquest where the native culture and religion are marginalized by the forces of invasion. Vaikundar opposed the cultural corruption of the colonizers by strengthening roots of the native culture through cultural unity. Vaikundar had to go through trial and imprisonment due to the havoc created by common masses who opposed the tyrannical rule of the landlords and allies of the king. Here they did not adopt physical forms of violence like the Narnians but firmly disagreed to obey the oppressive norms like unethical taxation, forced labour and biased laws. However, in both cases, the old social order is replaced by a new one, where the oppressive canons are subverted. The values exhibited by the protagonists is similar to that of the other books and resembles the values of Ayyavazhi. The values of Courage and Fortitude helps the protagonists to avoid any hasty action on their part and to act appropriately to the situation. Their courage is put to vigorous test and they prove it by incessantly fighting till the end. The spirit of patriotism and their confidence in Aslan prompt them to lead a dignified life and die with dignity.

The Healing of religious malpractices like witchcraft, sorcery and demonolatry is undertaken by human agency in many cases. The humans always have the moral support of Aslan and they invoke social progress by forsaking such perversions of religion. When the rule of Jadis ends, the Golden Age is established in Narnia. This

denotes the change of social order which is a product of the reformation movement lead by Aslan. Aslan in the form of a spiritual leader exhibits his supernatural powers to escape from the death inflicted by Jadis. Subversion of the tyrannical rule of Jadis in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is similar to the social reformation movement initiated by Ayya Vaikundar. Like Aslan's resurrection from Jadis's hands, Vaikundar too escapes from several attempts on his life made by the *Kalineechan*. The exhibition of spiritual power is indeed deeper magic than that of the oppressor's occult science. In *The Horse and His Boy*, Aslan reveals his values, sense of justice, compassion and love, to Aravis who can see the contrast between Calormene religion and Narnian spirituality. Tash the diabolic god of Calormenes who feeds upon people's blood, represents the culture of violence and tyranny in both psychological and social levels. Aslan on the other hand is not an intangible idea like the former, but a real palpable individual who lives among the common people and guides them. Apart from the political overtones, this Narnian novel describes solutions to all issues through human agency. Though indirectly guided by Aslan, the protagonists resist the culture of Calormenes and defeat them in battle. This narrative incorporates the least degree of fantasy, except the final scene where Aslan transforms Rabadash into a donkey. Thus, the religious practices, sorcery and witchcraft are directly condemned in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* while they are indirectly exposed in *The Horse and His Boy* through a contrast with the culture of Narnia.

The Last Battle gives a clear view of religious monopoly through the character Shift, who commands the entire inhabitants of Narnia by assuming an authoritative role. This narrative does not give hint on the use of magic or the existence of the supernatural, either by the supporters or the opposers of Narnian values. The Caloremene commander Rishda Tarkaan within himself is sure that there is nothing

called Tash, but outwardly he uses the deity's name as a means to terrorize and exert control over Narnia. The entire nation of Narnia is controlled using the religious monopoly of Shift, which is supported by Rishda and his army. Here the malpractices are different from their strict religious context and include deforestation, forced labour and forced extraction of wealth. Social, economic and ecological dimensions of Narnia are controlled through the creation of a new cult by combining Aslan and Tash to make Tashlan. Narnia which withstood many adversities in the former narratives now disintegrates completely due to aberrations in the fundamental spiritual values of the nation. Thus, the real Healing happens only after total annihilation of the landscape takes place.

Healing Social Discrimination

Various aspects of society and the forms of discrimination are described in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. It is obvious that the free land of Narnia is free from any form of discrimination, but the incipient forms of Wrongness create an imbalance in the social order. Forces of invasion usually exert their control over Narnia based on magical powers, political strategies, hegemonic and overt expressions of power. Aslan himself has divided the inhabitants of Narnia into two classes of talking animals and mute animals. The talking animals are asked to be kind and generous towards the non-talking ones. This is an analogy of human and animal interaction represented by Lewis, which employs balance and harmony between them. This is the only visible form of social stratification present in the Narnian series, and on the other hand, Narnia represents a mosaic of different socio-cultural groups.

The free land of Narnia as described by Lewis, provides an awkward experience to the forces of oppression. This is evident from the characters of Uncle Andrew

and Jadis in *The Magician's Nephew*. The narrative gives insight into the socially marginalized sections, which incidentally are common to the primary and the secondary world. When Digory questions Uncle Andrew for defying from the promise given to Mrs Leafy, he justifies the deed by referring himself as belonging to the category of profound scholars, intellectuals and sages. Andrew considers small children, women, servants and common people in general as insignificant beings who are subject to regulations. The superior people like himself have distanced themselves from common forms of pleasure and are not subjected to common norms (Lewis *The Magician's* 19). Here the canons of oppression are inherent in Andrew who tries to execute them as per his capacity. His unethical experimentation sends Polly to a parallel world using a yellow ring and forces Digory to fetch her back using the green rings. Jadis too reiterates the ideology of oppression when Digory and Polly ask her about the destruction of Charn using the "Deplorable Word". Jadis too proclaims herself as belonging to the superior segment of society who are vested with special privileges. Therefore, she is least bothered or guilty of killing the common sections of society including animals, children and women. As a Queen, she asserts herself to be free from all rules and implies thereby making her actions justifiable (Lewis *The Magician's* 14). Contrary to the case of Uncle Andrew, Jadis held authoritative power and social privilege, which enabled her to destroy the land of Charn. These are examples of inherent oppressive canons and variation in their practical execution. The marginalized sections of the society include small children, women, servants and animals, which are referred to as being common. This sheds light on discrimination based on physical maturity, gender, social profession and anthropocentrism. The final one is relevant in Narnia because many of the inhabitants are anthropomorphic beings. The very nature

of the land is subversive to anthropocentric canons. Thus, Narnia finds the utilitarian Andrew and tyrants Jadis, unfit in its design.

The Narnian series describe three societies which can be distinctly identified as Telamrines, Archenlanders and Calormenes based on their racial identity. Telmarines are invaders from the human world who conquered Narnia and settled there like the colonializers of the real world. The Calormenes belong to the nation of Calormen located far south of Narnia and Archenland. Tashbaan is its capital. Tash is the god worshipped by this race who are constantly engaged in warfare and conquest.

Archenland, located immediate south of Narnia is a peace-loving nation which reverberates the values of Narnia but is inhabited by human beings instead of anthropomorphic beings. Archenlanders/Calormenes constitute a binary which represents societies based on contrasting power relations. The readers can easily identify the collective unconscious of these two races which in the case of latter is based on values of subjugation and exploitation. By providing contrasting examples of oppression and resistance, Lewis provides an insight into the inevitability of social reformation.

““Beautiful Barbarians”: Anti-Racism in *The Horse and His Boy* and Other *Chronicles of Narnia*” by Jennifer Taylor clarifies that Lewis depicted anti-racist discourses in his works and he was against the trends of oppression. Racial discourses in the western culture and those embedded in the human psyche are faithfully depicted in the form of imagery in the Narnian chronicles. Lewis opposes the opinion that children are a separate race and he emphasizes on universal unity of human race. He destabilizes political establishments that are based on racism and disapproves mutual unconcern of collective consciousness in human beings. This is the reason why Lewis does not depict Narnia as an absolute condition superimposed upon people. Those who intend to reach freedom need not convert themselves into Narnians like which is

expected of organized religions. An individual can reach Aslan through one's own culture and this proves that truth is beyond the restrictions of culture. The example of Emeth is cited in this context where he reaches Aslan despite being a worshiper of the evil deity Tash. Even while following Tash, Emeth unknowingly served Aslan throughout his life. Thus he finally reached the Real Narnia due to his own unflinching sincerity. The concept of transcendental truth is depicted as omnipresent and culturally all-inclusive. In the Real Narnia, the Calormen nation along with the city of Tashbaan is present with magnanimous glory. This clarifies that Aslan does not marginalize anything as absolute evil, which includes the nation of the extremely diabolic Calormen race. The Calormenes destroyed the culture of Narnians and eventually began killing their people who defied their dictatorial rule. Racial identification is therefore merely a pretence to carry out the power politics of the authorities. Lewis epitomises Aslan as a powerful figure who subverts the oppressive powers by transcending the boundaries of geography and culture. Degradation of values, racial discrimination and lack of spiritual awareness can be resolved by the unification of the entire humanity, which is the intention of Aslan (175-176). This is the quintessence of Ayyavazhi, which does not marginalize any individual or community including the tyrants and the oppressors. The movement aims at transformation of the collective consciousness of all individuals including the oppressors and the oppressed, to create reformation of a global level. This is the reason why Vaikundar always referred to misuser of power as *Kailneechnan* [manifestation of the evil aeon of *Kali Yugam*] and such oppressive communities as *Kalineechna Kulam* [the race of *Kalineechnan*]. It is a fact that Vaikundar never instigated vengeance upon any individual or a particular race, including the king and his allies who imprisoned him. Vaikundar neither surrendered his values to their oppressive stands nor did he succumb to their political strategies. He unified the

eighteen castes proclaiming the unity of the entire human race and instilled the egalitarian value of global harmony by creating spiritual awareness.

The Narnian series depicts the upliftment of people in general, which includes females who have been subject to oppression. Aslan through his physical presence and mostly as a source of inspiration helps the children to develop their capabilities and inspire them to provide solutions to issues. The studies of Cornell and Devin Brown has been cited in Chapter II, which disproves the critical accusations of Lewis being a sexist and a misogynist. Monika B. Hilder in “Jack, the “old woman” of Oxford: sexist or a seer?” cites the example of a female protagonist who develops over time, into mature and skilful individuals. Lewis does not create tomboy characters out of the girls who reject all typical feminine characteristics and exclusively embrace stereotypic masculinity. She cites the example from *The Magician’s Nephew* wherein at the end of the narrative, Polly acquires the abilities of swimming, climbing, riding, baking and climbing when she makes contact with the family of Digory. These defy the general stereotypical norms of male and female, as the protagonist learns a variety of skills both relevant to males and females. Lewis never superimposes the institution of marriage on his characters, especially the females. That is why Helen, Daughter of Ramandu and Aravis all choose their life partners and accept happiness in motherhood. Lady Polly, on the other hand, is described as unmarried in *The Last Battle*, and Lewis in no way gives an impression that she should have chosen to marry to live happily. In the combination of dual protagonists, Lewis never describes as one superior the other even though the pair consists of a boy and a girl. Thus, Peter and Lucy, Eustace and Jill, Shasta and Aravis equally indulge in progressive actions in Narnia. Thus, Hilder disproves the views of critics like Kath Filmer who connotes the Narnian series as misogynist expressions of the author. She also gives examples of female

protagonists who excel the male ones in solving critical issues. In *Prince Caspian* Susan saves the life of the Dwarf Trumpkin before Peter, by shooting a Telmarine soldier when he was going to assassinate the Dwarf. Lucy willingly goes to the house of the Magician and disenchants the invisible people, to save her people in *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*. Jill as a pathfinder in *The Last Battle* leads the other protagonists to Stable Hill, to rescue Puzzle and Jewel. The presence of unique and independent female protagonists is an exclusive feature of Narnian narratives. Their confidence and capabilities are highlighted throughout the seven books, making them unparalleled examples (106-107). Like the Narnian text, empowerment of women is a fundamental feature of Ayyavazhi. Upper cloth revolt initialized by the movement is an example of uplifting the women from being degraded as sex symbols. Education of women in Pathis is also a vision envisaged by Vaikundar, and equal status is given to all the people irrespective of distinctions of class caste or gender. Spirituality acts a unifying force in both Ayyavazhi and the Narnian narratives, which unifies the entire humanity beyond the gages of gender or social class.

Narnia devoid of social stratification always portrays the rulers freely interacting with the common subjects. Peter, Susan, Edmund, Lucy, Caspian and Tirian are accompanied by Centaurs, Fawns, Unicorns, horses and even mice. Sometimes, the seemingly trivial individuals are given positions of excellence. In *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*, Reepicheep the mouse reaches the Country of Aslan, through his valour and determination. The entry of the other protagonists including the rulers of Narnia is procrastinated by Aslan himself. It is also a unique fact that Reepicheep is the only character who reaches the abode of Aslan while alive. All the other friends of Narnia reach the Real Narnia only after they die, that too in incidents like train accidents and battles. This is described in *The Last Battle* where all the protagonists and

the chosen Narnians enter posthumously into Real Narnia, where they are welcomed by Reepicheep who was already present there. The mouse qualifies himself to reach Aslan on the basis on his actions and values, instead of belonging to any social class. This is similar to Ayyavazhi in two respects, following the social and the spiritual dimensions. Reepicheep becomes liberated and enters the realm of enlightenment while he is still alive. This is a feature of Indian spirituality, which is also reflected in Ayyavazhi. The mouse considers Aslan as a source of inspiration and has been influenced by his words, which is described in *Prince Caspian*. A lifelong commitment to his master and following the values of Courage and Fortitude leads to the fulfilment of his destiny. In Ayyavazhi too, the teachings of Vaikundar are followed and people lead their lives based on values upheld by him.

The downtrodden sections are uplifted by Aslan through subversion of tyrannical forces in each Narnian narrative. New social order is created in each case, where the inhabitants enjoy freedom from forces of exploitation. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Aslan fights a battle with Jadis, which reforms the society and establishes the Golden Age. Social conflicts are also evident from *Prince Caspian* and *The Horse and His Boy*. In the former book, the imperialist Telmarines are sent away from Narnia, after they were defeated by the walking trees. The existence of walking trees and talking animals proves that the subaltern can speak and also act. This connotes that the downtrodden sections are revived by Aslan who creates social revolutions which are described in the form of battles. Creating a renewed social order and resurgence of the working-class people are the essential themes inherent in the Narnian series. This is analysed by Gracia Fay Ellwood in *Taking the Adventure: Faith and Our Kinship with Animals*, where she examines *The Magician's Nephew* as a text of social evolution and revolution. Frank the cabby driver stands out among the other

characters for his kindness and bravery. He not only belongs to the working class, but cares for his horse Strawberry as a comrade. Frank becomes delighted when Strawberry gets transformed into a talking-winged horse. He asks permission from the horse before making Digory sit on his back, for the mission of bringing Silver Apple. He always thinks from the perspective of his horse and expresses empathy for the hardships endured by the latter. Aslan not only allows him to reside in Narnia with his wife Nellie but coronates the couple as King Frank and Queen Helen who become the first King and Queen of the land. The liberation of the working class from oppression and uplifting them to a higher social status is a revolution created by Aslan. The metamorphosis of a dumb horse into a talking and flying horse connotes the emancipation of marginalized sections from oppressive canons. Despite endowed with supernatural powers, Aslan who is the creator of Narnia identifies himself as a normal beast who is only another member of the vast Narnian community (174-176). These facts equally reflect the essential motif underlying Ayyavazhi that redefines *Dharmam* as uplifting the downtrodden. The essential spiritual value of the movement encourages people to recognize the underlying Divinity in all the creations including humans and animals. Social emancipation and spiritual empowerment become inseparable in Narnian narratives and Ayyavazhi.

Resolving other Contemporary Issues

Environmental Exploitation

Environmental concerns and ecocriticism were concepts and terms unheard during the times of Lewis. Yet the author on several occasions highlighted the correlation of humans with the natural world, in the Narnian series. The utilitarian ideology of Uncle Andrew in *The Magician's Nephew* and the dichotomy between economic

greed and human need is explained and highlighted in the series of Narnian books. Such violence towards the animal world and the fear psychosis behind it is analysed by Kevin Kinghorn in “Virtue Epistemology: Why Uncle Andrew Couldn’t Hear the Animals Speak”. Andrew constantly indulges in cruel experiments on animals, which reshapes his mental grid with fear and hatred towards all creatures. This is the reason why he is unable to understand the language of the inhabitants of Narnia. He is terrorized by their presence and even falls unconscious with fear. Never for even a single instance does Andrew think about the reason behind this fear of animals, nor does he think whether this fear is necessary at all. Self-reflection never crosses his mind even when he witnesses the calmness and love with which others interact with the animals. He has fixated on his self-centredness and is completely devoid of self-awareness. The characters like Digory, Polly and Frank are contrasted with him through their friendship and kinship with the creation and the creatures of Narnia. Andrew is compared to the Telmarine race in *Prince Caspian*, who had made enmity with the trees. As a result of their hatred towards the trees, their collective psyche develops fear and they begin to believe that the woods are haunted (22-24). Andrew is a cross-section of the larger section of humanity who are unmindful of their relationship with the animals and the environment in general. The lack of affinity towards the natural world is the only palpable reason behind environmental exploitation and human-made natural hazards. Living in conformity with nature and adoption of vegetarian lifestyle have connotations in Ayyavazhi beyond mere ritualization. This movement emphasizes on *Anpu* [Love and Compassion] as the value which not only uplifts the downtrodden human beings but the entire creation. Love towards the entire creation is emphasized by Vaikundar that subverts all canons of discrimination between humans and humans, and human and the environment. This is established through spiritual awareness of the

Singular Divinity, *Ekam* which coexists within all the creations including the humans and the non-human. Narnia as a text and Ayyavazhi as a movement raise voice against the apathy of human beings towards nature and the necessity to change their anthropocentric mindset. Such posthuman concerns were introduced to humanity even before the theories of ecocriticism and environmental activism were established.

The real world of human beings and the ideal world of Narnia are not only contrasting with their outward settings, but with their outlook towards nature. Through the example of Narnia Lewis tries to draw a margin between conservation and exploitation of nature. The ideal nature of Narnia is often contrasted with the trends of environmental exploitation in the nation of Calormen. *Narnia and the Fields of Arbol: The Environmental Vision of C. S. Lewis* by Mathew Dickerson and David O' Hara traces the similarities between contemporary society and the Calormenes. Use of technology, commercialization and industrialization are intended for the progress of society. But their hazardous trends and by-products are not taken seriously by modern society as well as the Calormenes. Practices like mining and deforestation are considered as a part of social progress by Shift, who popularizes extensive agriculture through slavery. He explains and convinces the Narnians that, exploitation of natural resources will lead to economic stability and progress. The urbanization process is suggested by the names of institutions ranging from roads to schools, that will spring up in Narnia which will be filled with big cities. Introduction of saddles whips and prisons; indirectly suggest that the legal system will be reversed and Narnians will be subjugated by the policies of the new government. This is identical to the status quo cherished by modern society that marginalizes agrarian culture with the industrial trends of progress. The speech delivered by Shift is compared to many of the political leaders who speak for economic progress of society which challenge the sustainability

of natural resources. The development thus envisaged by Shift is not a long term one and finally results in the complete annihilation of Narnia (134-136). This is similar to the cataclysmic events anticipated by scientists, which are the expected outputs of extensive environmental exploitation. Ayyavazhi similarly makes many prophecies of natural calamities and even changes in the resources of the present world. “*Thiruvachakam – I*” of *Akhilathirattu Ammanai* clarifies that the religions will become corrupt and commercialized, along with the transformation of geographical features. The exploitation of intrinsic values and the external environment, receding of oceans, extensive urbanisation, increase in commercial outlets for food and commercialization of religious symbols, are predicted as the final indications of the apocalypse (Hari-gopalan *Akhilathirattu* 191). This is similar to the trends of urbanization, religious corruption and commercialization unleashed by Shift in Narnia. Disasters of environment mark the final phase of destruction and which is followed by the manifestation of Real Narnia. Such descriptions subvert the predetermined canons of anthropocentrism and caution the readers to re-evaluate their attitude towards conservation of the environment.

Terrorism

The Narnian Chronicles depict the reign of terror ravaged by invasive powers on several occasions. References of Jadis, the White Witch conquering the land and the attacks of Calormenes are all explicit expressions of terror, that has already taken place when the protagonists arrive in Narnia. These are examples of terrorist occupied nations, which stunts the growth of society by spreading fear psychosis in the collective consciousness of the masses. This is the reason why an average Narnian tremble with fear at the sight of Jadis and it is only the followers of Aslan who dare to resist her authority. It is through military power that the forces of terrorism are resisted in

Narnia. This is similar to the scenario of a contemporary world where anti-terrorist military operations are common features of many nations. In *The Horse and His Boy*, the Calormen attacks on Narnia and Archenland can be related to modern forms of terrorism. Surprise attacks and trespassing the frontiers are common features of terrorist groups in the secondary world of Narnia and the real world. As the setting is modelled on medieval Europe, bombarding shells and suicide bombers are not present in Narnia. Rabadash wants to expand his empire by conquering Archenland first and then get hold of Narnia. He plans to attack Narnia and stealthily abduct Queen Susan to fulfil his conditions from King Peter, which is similar to the ransom calls made by modern-day terrorists after hijacking or kidnapping people. Hostility with neighbouring nations and intention to expand the borders are features common to terrorist-controlled nations in our world and same is the case of Calormen nation. Here too the Narnians and Archenlanders resist the forces of terrorism using paramilitary forces and their union is similar to that of world nations jointly resisting terrorism on a global level. *The Last Battle* gives the description of a terrorist occupied territory, which is a common phenomenon in many nations of the contemporary world. The woody area of the Lantern Waste is occupied by the Calormen army under the leadership of Rishda Tarkaan. They set up their camp on Stable Hill, which is managed by Shift and his ally Ginger who uses Puzzle as a pawn. Similar to many nations in modern world, here too the ruler King Rilian is unable to detect and control the terrorist forces that have infiltrated into the nation of Narnia. The collective psyche of the masses is governed by religious canons which are used as sources of power to empower terrorist activities. Shift interconnects the images of Aslan and Tash and creates the god named Tashlan, which is used to manipulate the religious sentiments of Narnians and create a fear psychosis in them. This too resembles the phenomenon of

the real world where the terrorist groups are ideologically based upon canons of religious fundamentalism.

In the case of the real world, no permanent solution has been achieved by the use of violence to curb terrorism. A chronological reading of the Narnian narratives too expresses the same fact, where the entire nation is destroyed through forces of terrorist oppression in *The Last Battle*. This proves the futility of using violence to resist violence and highlights that fact the battles in Narnia should not be taken as factual expressions. This is a reason why this research work has adopted a parallel reading of each Narnian book and related six of them as expansions of the primary text: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. This provides experiences of Healing as palpable solutions to issues like terrorism, where the battles indicate collective forms of resistance that does not involve physical violence. Melting of wintery snow from Narnia and Aslan killing Jadis in battle indicate the transformation of the landscape as well as that of the mindscape. This has been earlier stated in 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' by Manolve that Narnia is a mirror image of Jadis, the White Witch. Following this notion, Lewis does not promote the culture of violence and all forms of violence including terrorism can be alleviated by the unification of human beings. The presence of Aslan indicates that the unity of human society should be based on awareness about individual emancipation through upliftment of society. Vaikundar too resisted violence through his courage and fortitude instead to resorting to violent methods. He emphasized on the unification of humanity which acted as a power that subverted various forms of oppression. Like the *Dharma Yugam* of Ayyavazhi *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* depicts the Golden Age devoid of any misuse of power.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking in the form of slave trading is represented in the Narnian books like *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'* and *The Horse and His Boy*. In both these cases, the involvement of Calormenes is the common factor, who promote the demand and supply of human beings as mere products in the market. *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'* describes the rule of Governor Gumpas in the Lone Islands, who makes huge capital by selling his subjects to the Calormenes. His policy of “end justifies means” is subverted by King Caspian who dismisses him from the governorship and appoints Lord Bern as the Duke of the Lone Islands. Here Caspian uses his political power to abolish slavery, as in monarchy the king’s command is equivalent to law. This is similar to the abolishment of forced labour, slavery and other forms of discrimination legalized through democratic rule, as an influence of Ayyavazhi. An explicit description of slavery is given in *The Horse and His Boy* through the character of Aravis. She is an affluent Tarkeena who elopes from her home to avoid a forced marriage arranged by her parents. For this, she drugs a slave-girl who later gets brutally beaten by the stepmother of Aravis. This reveals the inherent unconcern about slaves and marginal communities in the mindset of the elite class, which is the expression of their oppressive attitude. The pathetic condition of slaves is revealed by the description of Tashbaan city where the slaves are devoid of footwears and live in unhygienic conditions. Yet, Aravis, on the other hand, subverts the canonical animosity towards the slave community through her love towards the oldest of slaves. This man dearly loved Aravis and took care of her since her childhood, which created a bondage deeper than that of her parents. He writes a false letter on her behalf to her father, which helps in the swift escape of Aravis (Lewis *The Horse* 223). Such a deviation from the traditional canon of violence towards the marginalized sections stands out as the primary reason for Aslan choosing her to be the Queen of Archenland. Here the

social canon of oppression is subverted by Love and Compassion, which is similar to that of Ayyavazhi. *Anpu* [Love and Compassion] is considered as the power of unification employed by Vaikundar, which helped to harmonize and unify the eighteen castes. All the reform activities of Ayyavazhi have such values as the underlying source of power. Thus, Aslan chooses Aravis, on the basis of the Human Values like Love and Compassion inculcated, and not by her social status or class. He does so only after purging her consciousness from the ill-treatment afflicted upon the slave-girl. As mentioned earlier, it is a fact that the Healing process in *The Horse and His Boy* is incomplete. This is clear from the fact that, even though the freedom of Narnian inhabitants is maintained by resisting the attacks from Calormenes, the malpractices of oppression and slavery continue in Calormen nation. Neither Aslan nor the other protagonists try to work for the reversal of the situation in Calormen and uplifting of the downtrodden became a practice confined within the geographical boundaries of Narnia. This can be seen as a tragic flaw which is referred to as “hamartia” by Aristotle in *Poetics*, which leads to the reversal of action that culminates in tragedy. The responsibility of the final tragedy in *The Last Battle* owes to the ignorance of oppressive trends of human slavery by the rulers of Narnia. Like the Calormenes who after repeated attempts invade and spread their tyranny in Narnia, the kings or queens of Narnia never tried to, if not invade but at least influence the Calormenes through their ideologies against oppression and slavery. Finally, Aslan appears to dissolve the entire creation of Narnia, which shows his inability to directly execute the Healing process.

Domestic Violence and Gender Discrimination

Lewis highlights the issues like gender abuse and domestic violence in *The Horse and His Boy*. Aravis who belongs to a wealthy Tarkaan family is forced upon

marriage with an aged man named Ahoshta Tarkaan. The reason behind this is revealed as the social prestige of creating an alliance with the Vizier of Tisroc and a large amount of wealth obtained in the form of dowry. The social anomalies of premature marriage and dowry system are questioned by Lewis in this book. This is substantiated by the elopement of Aravis from her home to find a secure space in the free land of Narnia. The character of Aravis is contrasted with that of her friend Lasaraleen whom she meets in the city of Tashbaan. Latter is alarmed at the elopement of Aravis and she persuades her to marry Ahoshta and lead a luxurious life like her own. Aravis is least interested in the statuesque of an aristocratic life nor is she overwhelmed like Lasaraleen about the pompous lifestyle of the palace (Lewis *The Horse* 205-208). The revolutionary outlook and quest for freedom make her the beneficiary of Aslan who clarifies her consciousness and provides inspiration. She becomes the Queen of Archenland and the wife of King Corin who is initially introduced into the plot as Shasta. The early life of Shasta as described in Chapter 1 reflects the issue of domestic violence and child abuse. Arsheesh a fisherman who is the foster father of Shasta has been behaving cruelly to him since his childhood. As Shasta is cut off from the outer world, he is unable to compare his state with that of other children in their families. He is forced to cook food, clean the cottage and repair the fishing nets. He usually gets beatings from Arsheesh when the latter was in a bad temper and Arsheesh scolded Shasta by finding his faults. His inherent disliking towards Arsheesh proves true when he overhears the conversation between the latter and a Tarkaan lord who wishes to buy Shasta as a slave. Shasta is at once horrified at his fate and simultaneously relieved that he is not the biological son of this abusive foster parent (Lewis *The Horse* 205-208). Like Aravis, Shasta also sets off towards the North to reach the free land of Narnia, by boarding on the talking horse Bree. The condition of Shasta

highlights the issues of physical abuse, especially child abuse and child labour. These issues have now become common in the contemporary world where even the biological parents in many cases turn abusive. Thus, child labour and child abuse are detested as criminal activities and have been legally penalized in many nations.

The childhood of protagonists like Caspian in *Prince Caspian* and Digory in *The Magician's Nephew*, also reveals the inherent themes of child abuse and domestic violence. Caspian who had been raised under the royal surveillance of the usurper king Miraz is initially unaware of his malicious intentions. Caspian is usually ignored by his uncle Miraz, but the latter severely scolds him, violently shakes him by shoulders and threatens him, merely for showing interest in the history of the Old Narnia who represents the oppressed class. Miraz dismisses his Nurse who has been the only source of love for the boy and himself is apathetic towards the sorrow of his nephew (Lewis *Prince* 335). Caspian later gains solace from his tutor Doctor Cornelius who acts as a mentor, friend and well-wisher to the boy. Here the Healing of the issue is done immediately and prepares the character for facing further challenges of life. Instead of physical harassments, Digory is psychologically repressed by his uncle Andrew in *The Magician's Nephew*. Here Andrew the magician forces his nephew Digory to find out Jill who has been vanished by his experimentation. Uncle Andrew risks the life of a young girl Jill into trouble and harshly argues with Digory by justifying his deed. When Digory cautions the ultimate consequence of his wicked sorcery Andrew accuses him of being silly as he was brought up by women (Lewis *The Magician's* 21-22). This reveals the misogynist attitude of Andrew who lays hegemonic control over children like Digory and Polly. Here domestic violence is in the form of hegemony, rather than physical expressions of power and the threat on his power is levelled by accusing women who have ingrained silly facts into the minds of children.

The stories and values transmitted by grandmothers and mothers are marginalized by the rational and scientific temperament of Andrew, who is fixated on the utilitarian value of everything. Uncle Andrew and Jadis, the White Witch who carry similar traits represent the variations in their degree of exploitation. Andrew wants to utilize Narnia, the Land of Youth, for commercial purposes and replenish the material things from the physical world and be a millionaire. He also plans to start hospitals, health resorts and amass a huge amount of money from them. For fulfilling his intentions, he too like Jadis, intends to kill Aslan who is the creator of Narnia (Lewis *The Magician's* 67-68). The oppressive trends of both the magicians Andrew and Jadis are subverted by the intervention of Aslan. The former transforms himself into a better individual with lesser selfishness and lives with the family of Digory. The latter gets subdued for the period of one hundred years and returns to create total tyranny than mere domestic violence. Here it is implied that domestic violence is the proto form of social exploitation. Oppression against individuals in private life is extended towards the subjugation of the entire members of society. Like the subversive trends of Aslan, Vaikundar too initiates the transformation of the individual consciousness along with changes invoked in the society. Social reformation is achieved through the refinement in the thought process of individual members of society.

Ayyavazhi Dharmam and the Inherent Values

The term *Dharma* is the Sanskrit equivalent of *Dharmam* in the Tamil language. *Dharma* is a pluralistic concept and incorporates several layers of meaning in different schools of thought in India. To understand the contextual relevance of *Dharmam* it is necessary to understand the connotations of *Dharma*. Surendranath Dasgupta in *A History of Indian Philosophy* summarizes the underlying meanings attributed to the word *Dharma* according to various traditional schools of Indian

philosophy. The *Mimamsa* school defines *Dharma* as those desired results obtained by performance of rituals according to the Vedic scriptures. This is a purely materialistic outlook where there is little relevance of Divinity or spirituality and the performance of actions contrary to the injunctions of Vedas is termed as *Adharma* that accounts for sin. Vedic definition of *Dharma* does not emphasize on non-violence, but schools like Buddhism, Jainism, Pasupata and Bhagavata strictly prohibit animal sacrifice and emphasize on the value of non-violence. The later Smritis attributed to Brihaspati, Manu and Yajnavalkya, Puranas like *Vishnudharmottara* and epics like *The Mahabharata* introduces *Dharma* as a universal concept. Self-realization is understood as the ultimate goal of *Dharma* and Puranas like *Srimad Bhagavata* extends the scope of *Dharma* to the devotion of God as a means of Self-realization. Apart from these stages in the development of *Dharma*, there are other *Dharmas* which are related to *Asramas* [stages of life], *Varnas* [castes] and various human life conditions. The evolution of *Dharma* from the gratification of senses, to the inculcation of human values like truth, non-violence and self-restraint, and finally to the spiritual fulfilment of Self-realization summarizes the various dimensions of *Dharma* (2-11). These observations by Dasgupta reveal the diachronic evolution of *Dharma* from a materialistic to a social and finally to a spiritual dimension of life. The *Dharmas* according to different stages of life known as *Asrama Dharmas* also give priority to spiritual attainments, but only at the final stage of human life which is dedicated to *Moksha* or liberation. This reveals that spiritual discourses were also inherent in India from the early stages, but they were foregrounded and popularized in the later periods.

Dharma was popularized as a doctrine by Gautama Buddha, which aimed in the liberation of the individual through Nirvana or Enlightenment. Even though Buddhism acquired different changes and got divided into separate schools, the eight-fold

path of *Dharma* is recognized as the fundamental principle of it. Buddha is renowned for his contribution to social reformation, where his teachings subverted the traditional canons of oppression. He emphasized on *Ahimsa* or Non-violence which fosters unity in humanity and thus created stands against caste and gender discriminations, animal sacrifice and ritualization. Compassion is considered as the greatest power for transforming individuals and thereby changing the entire society. *The Buddha-Carita* or *The Life of Buddha* by *āsvaghōṣa* clarifies this concept. The following verse is cited from the translation of Edward B. Cowell. “Since then, when I attain this righteous end, my escape from hence will be for the good of the world, — O best of steeds, by thy speed and energy, strive for thine own good and the good of the world” (5.78). The intention of monastic life according to Buddha is the liberation of oneself and the liberation of the world. Here we can find a synthesis of social commitment and spiritual fulfilment. Thus, spirituality does not intend to escape from the world, but functions within the world to make it a better place of living. *Dharma* is utilized as a powerful tool for subverting canons of oppression based on class, caste, gender and race. The changes invoked in society by Buddha is proof of the practical credibility of *Dharma* and highlights its value above impractical philosophies of jargoned rhetoric. According to Joseph Campbell in *The Masks of God*, India has been contributing and still has much to give to the value system of the western world. He finds out that human values are steeply receding in the western world, which is looking forward towards India for its Upanishadic and Buddhist teachings which fundamentally arise potentially from the power of the human mind and operates by relating to the symbolism of occidental thought (630). Indian spirituality which includes Buddhist philosophy and Upanishadic teachings are relevant to the western world as they are universal by nature. The practical significance and cardinal nature make Indian spirituality

acceptable and applicable to the entire humanity. Therefore, *Dharma* which is a common value of Buddhism, as well as the Upanishads, is understood as a globally significant force.

It is a well-known fact that the fundamental value of Ayyavazhi is *Dharmam* and the whole reform activities of the movement revolve around its practical application. The concept of *Dharma* was also utilized in the later period of Indian history as a source of emancipation through resistance. This became possible through the existence of *Dharma* as an embedded discourse in the culture of Indian society through many ages. *Dharma* was revived in the form of an ideology which empowered Indian Independence movement, to subvert the oppressive colonial rule of the British Raj. Ranajith Guha in *Dominance without Hegemony* argues that both the colonialists and the social hierarchy in India function on common operating principles of misinterpreting and misreading the fundamental dimensions of *Dharma* embedded within the subalterns. Especially in its final stages, the British colonial power had to face popular forms of protest from the public, which were instigated and motivated by the power of *Dharma*. This phenomenon of Dharmic Protest as Guha calls it, was interpreted as Rightful Dissent by the colonialists. *Dharma* re-defines itself through its transcendental nature by endowing the people with the duty of dissolving *adharma* [injustice] which has originated as a result of degradation in *rajadharma* [duty of rulers]. This confines the role of rulers as mere executives of power and destabilizes their monopoly over position and the nation. This motivated Indian public to make rectification of deviant trends in the ideal functioning of government as per the vision of *Dharma* and this led to public resistance against the policies of British Raj (59). This trend adopted in the Indian independence movement is closely related to the Ayyavazhi movement that questioned the power politics of oppression at the grass-root level. Ayyavazhi did

not pick up momentum at a national level, due to the lack of strong leading forces after Vaikundar and he was able to work for only a limited span of eighteen years.

However, the findings of Guha prove that the movements after Ayyavazhi though directly inspired or not by it, utilized *Dharma* as an instrument of social emancipation and resistance against political oppression.

As mentioned earlier Ayya Vaikundar redefined *Dharmam* as: “Uplifting the downtrodden”. Here *Dharmam* incorporates many dimensions associated with it. Social service of giving alms and charity is the basic Tamil connotation of *Dharmam*. Ayyavazhi launched the system of common meal system and encouraged the people to indulge in social service activities. *Dharmam* in Ayyavazhi also includes a plethora of values associated with the Sanskrit word *Dharma*. Non-violence, truth, self-restraint in the form of fortitude, self-confidence in the form of courage, living a dignified life, unity, harmony, love and compassion all are variegated expressions of *Ayyavazhi Dharmam*. As per the vision of Vaikundar, the practice of *Dharmam* in its entirety will lead to the dawn of the New World and a new aeon of *Dharma Yugam*. This inspired people to work for establishing a renewed social order, where the existing conditions of oppression will be obliterated. The practical implication of *Dharmam* can be verified from teachings given and adhered by Ayya Vaikundar during critical situations faced in his life.

When the soldiers of the king came to arrest and torture Vaikundar, his followers began to resist them and retort back their violence. Ayya Vaikundar immediately asked them to calm down and enlightened them with his following words.

பொதுக்கென்ற கோபமதைப் புத்திதனி லடக்கிப்

பொறுத்து இருந்தவரே பெரியோரே யாகுமக்கா

அறுத்திட வென்றால் அபுருவமோ எந்தனக்கு

வம்புசெய்வதைப் பார்த்து வதைக்கவந்தே னக்குலத்தை

அன்பு குடிகொண்ட அதிகமக்கா நீங்களெல்லாம்

பொறுத்து இருங்கோ பூலோகம் ஆளவைப்பேன்

O, Children! Only those who contain the outburst of rage within their intelligence and have the fortitude, are bound to become great. When the races who consider: "killing is nothing exceptional" began to act cruelly, you saw that and longed to kill them. O! Children with limitless Love and Compassion, all of you wait with fortitude. Thou shall be given the world to be ruled. (Harigopalan *Akhilathirattu*; my trans.; 275)

The values of Love and Compassion [*Anpu*], Courage and Fortitude are expected to be adhered by people even in the worst situations of life. Anger is to be contained within intelligence and non-violence is to be foregrounded. The teachings of Vaikundar demand proper use of intelligence according to the situational demands. He did not want to create another bloody revolution in history by instigating his followers to attack the soldiers of the tyrant ruler. According to *Akhilathirattu Ammanai*, Vaikundar was already aware of the impact of his trial and imprisonment. He was confident of his capability of overpowering the forces of tyranny. The teachings imparted to people proved valid because he emerged unharmed from the prison even after several attempts on his life. Moreover, his later reform activities were by no means interrupted by the ruler or his allies.

When Vaikundar was bound by ropes and was taken for trial, people gathered on roadsides and lamented on their ill fate. They had been greatly relieved by the

advent of Vaikundar in their clan who was the only support for all miserable people. Now that he was captured and beaten by the Evil One, the people felt themselves to be lonely and destitute. Hearing their pleas and cries Vaikundar instilled them with confidence and assured them of his successful return which would eventually lead to their redemption.

மலையாதுங் கோநீங்கள் மாமுனிவன் புத் ரரே

அலையாதுங்கோ மக்காள் அய்யா திருவாணை

இப்பூமி தன்னில்வந்து இத்தனை நாள் வரைக்கும்

கைப்பொருளுக் கிச்சை கருத்தில் மிகநினைத்து

கைக்கூலி வேண்டிக் கருமஞ்செய்தே னானாக்கால்

இக்குவ லயததில் இனிவரேன் கண்டிருங்கோ

தர்ம்மமது நிச்சித்துத் தாரணியில் வந்ததுண்டால்

நன்மைக் கடைப்பிடி நான்வருவேன் நானிலத்தில்

ஒன்றுக்கும் மலைய வேண்டாங்கா னுத்தமரே

என்றைக்கும் நானிருப்பேன் என்மக்கள் தங்களிடம்

ஆளுவே னோர்குடைக்குள் ஆனவை குண்டமனாய்

வாழுவோம் மக்கா வையகத்தில் நாமாக

விரு தம்

ஒன்றுக்கும் மலைய வேண்டாம் உகபர நாத னாணை

என்றுக்கும் மலையின் மீதில் ஏற்றின தீபம் போலே

கன்றுக்குப் பாலு போலும் கண்ணுக்குப் புருவம் போலும்

என்றுக்கும் மக்கா வுங்ள் இடமிருந் தரசு ஆள்வேன்

முன்முறை விதியா லிந்த முழுநீசப் பாவி கையால்

என்விதிப் படவே வுண்டு இறப்பு அவன்தனக் கென்றதாலே

பின்விதி யெனக்கு நன்றாம் பெரும்புவி யாள்வோம் மக்கா

உன்விதி நல்ல தாகும் ஒளிவறா வாழ்வீர் தாமே

O! Offsprings of the Great Sage, do not get dishevelled. In the name of The Divine Lord, do not either wavered. From the time of arriving on this earth, all these days having well thought in mind about the tangible wealth; to make it into various modes I indulged in action to obtain the resultant bribe [return result]. If I had fixed upon *Dharmam* and arrived on the earth, wait and watch, I shall come again to this world. Having adhered to goodness I shall come to all the four landscapes. O! Excellent ones! See that you need not wander for anything. I shall be ever-present in the proximity of my children. Having manifested as Vaikundam, I shall rule under an umbrella. We shall live as ourselves in the world.

Verse

In the name of The Transcendental Lord of the aeon, you need not wander for anything. Forever like a lamp placed on top of a mountain, like milk for the calf and like eyebrow for the eye, I shall rule forever from your proximity.

Following the previously destined dictum, my destiny has to be shaded in the hands of the Omni-Cruel Evil One, and his destruction is through me. O! Children! The future destiny is good for me and shall rule the magnificent world.

Your destiny shall be good and we by ourselves shall live in endless effulgence. (Harigopalan *Akhalathirattu*; my trans.; 277)

Here Vaikundar refers to himself as the Great Sage and instils confidence in the people by reminding them of their identities as his children. Being the progeny of a Great Sage amounts to inculcation of Courage and Fortitude. They are expected to wait patiently for the safe return of their master, who himself is the embodiment of Courage and Fortitude. Vaikundar rhetorically refers to the marginalized sections as his tangible wealth and his reformation works undertaken for uplifting them are the attempts for their upliftment. His trial and torture by the king, is referred to as a bribe for releasing the downtrodden section of society from the oppression of the ruler and his allies. *Dharmam* is foregrounded as the greatest power which can outlive all critical situations of life. This cardinal value of Ayyavazhi is projected as the source of strength which helped Vaikundar to emerge safely out of the prison in spite of several attempts on his life. Here *Dharmam* is visualized as inseparable from goodness and this replenishes Divinity by highlighting its expansive dimensions. Vaikundar assures the people of forthcoming New World where they will live with dignity in their elevated identities. This egalitarian world will be immensely prosperous that people will have no necessity to yearn for anything. Vaikundar assures that he in the form of Omnipresence will pervade the world, rule and unite the entire humanity. The following verse in the metrical form of *Viruththam* narrates that the suffering endured by Vaikundar in the form of imprisonment and tortures was known to him as inevitable process for his future success. His love and compassion towards the entire creation is expressed by the analogy of lamp over a mountain, where Vaikundar enlightens everyone without distinctions. His teachings are universally relevant and not confined within the boundaries of religion, caste, race, gender, nationality, creed or community.

He embodies the milk of motherly love, which sustains life and nourishes the people who are compared to calves. He assumes a paternal role and assures to safeguard the people like the brow which safeguards the eye. He reaffirms the people of a bright future which will be ruled by the effulgence of Vaikundar in the form of his values. The New World is described of an endless state where humanity will never have to stoop down into the clutches of oppression. Here the people are endowed with the hope of a new aeon that operates on the value of Unity and their courage is elevated to a higher degree for working towards this ideal condition. The people are assured of not only material prosperity, but they shall live in the infinite effulgence of Omnipresent Divinity. All the material and immaterial wishes of the people will be fulfilled in the New World, when they will have to no more wander for fulfilment. Vaikundar always identified himself with Divinity that transcends the limitations of time and space, by which he assures the people of his ever-existing proximity. This is the reason behind the worship of Mirror and Lamp in the Pathis consecrated by Vaikundar. Here the individual identifies and worships Omnipresent Divinity, which is inherent in everybody. Ayyavazhi stands out as a spiritual movement that empowers individual identity instead of enslaving people into religious dogma.

The final words which were spoken by Vaikundar before he leaves his mortal body summaries the practical implication of *Ayyavazhi Dharmam* and the inherent values. *Akhilathirattu Ammanai* describes the scene where Vaikundar decides to shed his mortal frame and lies down on a cot. The loving people approach him and express their sorrow of losing his proximity forever. Vaikundar consoles them and thus utters his final words of instruction.

உடற்க்குள் குறியாய் ஒத்துமிக வாழுமென்று

சொல்லிமக்கள் கையைத் திருமுகத்தோ டேசேர்த்து

இல்லியல்பாய் வாழும் யாமுழித்து வாரோமெனப்

பதறாமல் நீங்கள் பண்பா யொருப்போலே

சிதறாமல் நீங்கள் செய்யஅனு கூலமுமாய்

இருந்துமிக வாழும் என்றுநாமம் கொடுத்து

Sustain the qualities even amidst distress and live united prosperously. Having said this, he placed the palm of his people on the Divine face. May all of you live by transcending nature and We shall come together. May all of you live in abundance: by becoming culturally united, without being perturbed, existing without getting dispersed and by working favourably. With these words, he initiated them with *Namam*. (Harigopalan *Akhilathirattu*; my trans.; 360-361)

They are asked to adhere to the qualities and values imbibed from their preceptor, instead of lending faith to any scriptures or rituals. The people are advised to maintain Courage and Fortitude which will help them to overcome distress and dangers facing their lives. The value of Unity and material prosperity goes hand in hand according to Vaikundar. Only unified efforts can lead to the growth of individuals and culminate in the prosperity of the entire community. The final physical contact of the master and his message of unity emphasize on the unification of the entire humanity based on love, rather than organizational fervour and utilitarian necessities. Unity in Ayyavazhi emphasizes on the heart to heart relationship and harmony among the members to the entire creation, which is based on *Anpu* [Love and Compassion] as exhibited by Vaikundar to the people. He implies the spiritual harmony of each individual with Divinity, where the limited nature is transcended to reach spiritual unity.

Vaikundar problematizes the concepts of physical and spiritual dimensions by foregrounding the values of unity and harmony. Ayyavazhi thus considers the external harmony among individuals and the expression of refinement of consciousness.

Vaikundar wishes the people to foster unity based on culture, where Love acts as the power that unifies people belonging to various cultural backgrounds. He expects the people to remain ever courageous and unwavering in all situations of life. Along with Courage, Vaikundar wishes the people to inculcate Fortitude which prevents them from being scattered away. Apart from adherence to the aforementioned values, working according to favourable conditions like situational demands and necessities of society can ultimately lead to the prosperity of the individual and the society. To emphasize the impact of his teachings, Vaikundar immediately marks *Namam* [white soil in the shape of a lamp flame], on the foreheads of the people. The words of advice and spiritual initiation reflects the emphasis given on the inculcation of values and their practice. Ayyavazhi confirms that each individual is responsible for one's own destiny and destiny can be changed by adherence to *Dharmam* and the inherent values.

Ayyavazhi Dharmam: Healing Critical issues of Narnia

Re-readings of the fantasy texts can help to identify the critical issues embedded in the secondary world as the reflections of the primary world. Reading *The Chronicles of Narnia* as a text of Ayyavazhi proposes solutions to the issues depicted in the textual narratives. The practical and diligent application of the values of Ayyavazhi can be perceived from the characters in Narnian narratives, who successfully resolve the crisis inflicted upon them. Here Aslan and Ayya Vaikundar are identified as similar manifestations of spiritual leaders who are equally renowned as social reformers. The following values of *Ayyavazhi Dharmam* are identified as those which play a pivotal role in resolving the crisis faced by individuals and the society in general.

Dharmam, *Anpu* [Love and Compassion], Courage and Fortitude, Living in Dignity, Harmony, Unity, Non-violence and Truth.

Dharmam: *Dharmam* which means charity in the Tamil language, acquired expansive and inclusive dimensions through its reinterpretation in Ayyavazhi. *Dharmam* in Ayyavazhi as previously mentioned is an umbrella term which incorporates all the inherent values that would enhance the progress of individuals and the society in general. Adherence to *Dharmam* is considered as the only criterion to find a place in the egalitarian aeon of *Dharma Yugam*. Adherence to *Dharmam* is evaluated as a powerful form of resistance, which can lead to the emancipation of marginalized sections. Definition of *Dharmam* according to Vaikundar is uplifting the downtrodden, which synthesizes the spiritual value with its physical connotation. All the other values are the extensions of *Ayyavazhi Dharmam* and function for uplifting the marginalized sections of society.

The Golden Age in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is the direct result of *Dharmam* followed by Aslan who uplifted the downtrodden sections of Narnia from the tyrannical rule of Jadis. Love and Compassion to the entire Narnians made Aslan sacrifice his life for their emancipation, which was a decision that demanded great courage. Fortitude made him endure the tortures and insults of the evil creatures and kept up his life's dignity by never morally succumbing to Jadis. He inspired the Narnians with the values of Harmony and unified them together to resist the forces of oppression. The Narnians reflected the truth and sincerity which Aslan showered upon them, by opposing the forces of tyranny in the battle against Jadis. The Pevensie children ruled Narnia in an ideal way even in the absence of Aslan, which earned them titles according to their values. Peter became renowned as "the Magnificent", Susan was entitled as "the Gentle", Edmund was addressed as "the Just" and Lucy became

famous as “the Valiant”. Together they ruled Narnia in the aeon renowned as the Golden Age. As observed before, a parallel reading of each Narnian book revealed that complete Healing of the Wrongness can only be observed in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. This is the only narrative where values are coronated as rulers of the nation, instead of monarchs with traits of subjectivity. Thus the Golden Age of Narnia can be equated to *Dharma Yugam* of Ayyavazhi where the value *Dharmam* rules the world instead of personal biases.

Anpu [Love and Compassion]: The word *Anpu* in Tamil can be almost be translated as Love and Compassion in English. This value of Ayyavazhi is foregrounded as the fundamental principle of human co-existence. Vaikundar hoisted a saffron-coloured flag with a three-pronged mark in white colour, where the central one resembles the flame of a lamp. This instilled the value of Love and Compassion and thereby the followers of Ayyavazhi are referred to as *Anbukodi Makkal* [The people of Love Flag]. Vaikundar himself embodies this value through the Love and Compassion he showered on the marginalized people, for which he undertook the risk of being imprisoned. His Love and Compassion extends to the entire creation including the oppressive people who retorted back with violence. Such inclusiveness is implied through the practical adherence of this value, which fosters other values like Harmony and Unity among humanity.

The overall culture of Narnia is based on *Anpu*, which instigates the inhabitants to welcome the newcomers to their land, without any inhibitions. Narnians provide food and hospitality to even the people whom they are suspicious about. This is evident from compassion exhibited by Trufflehunter and Trumpkin who protects and takes care of Prince Caspian even before they made kinship with him. Aslan himself is depicted as an embodiment of Love and Compassion. He allows himself to be

executed by Jadis on the stone table, to save Edmund and safeguard the future of Narnia. Aslan knew that he would resurrect unharmed even if he gets killed by the White Witch, which proves that he did not blindly adhere to the value of *Anpu*. Aslan used his intelligence and strategically defeated the plans of Jadis, by offering his life as a sacrifice. This marks the final words of Vaikundar who advises to execute the values as per favourable conditions and according to the situational demands. Aravis in *The Horse and His Boy* is punished by Aslan as she had drugged a slave-girl and was unmindful of the punishments received by the latter. Aslan later helps Aravis to inculcate the values of Love and Compassion, and motivates to think beyond the restrictions of caste and social strata.

Courage and Fortitude: Ayyavazhi considers these values as powerful instruments of emancipation. Vaikundar insisted his followers to inculcate Courage and Fortitude, without opposing the forces of oppression with physical violence. Vaikundar himself followed this dictum by imposing no physical resistance against the king or his forces who imprisoned him. However, he never hesitated to proclaim his teachings against the misrule of the king and united all communities against the policies of oppression. When the king asked him to confine his teachings within his birth community as the condition for releasing him from prison, Vaikundar firmly disagreed to it and tore the agreement with his fingernails. The powers of oppression were finally subverted and Vaikundar was released unconditionally. The practical adherence of the master to his teachings and the successful results motivated the followers to uphold the values of Ayyavazhi.

Aslan courageously embraces death by the hands of Jadis and he exhibits immense fortitude by enduring the tortures inflicted by the evil forces of the White Witch. Puddleglum exhibits Courage and Fortitude by extinguishing the magic fire of

the Lady of the Green Kirtle by stamping on it. He endures the burns inflicted upon his leg but succeeds in liberating everyone from the enchantment of the Lady. Similar to the final words of Vaikundar, Puddleglum moves beyond the limitations of his nature and risks his own safety. The protagonists in *The Last Battle* exhibit an unprecedented degree of Courage and Fortitude, in the greatest critical situations of life. King Rilain, Jewel, Eustace, Jill, Poggin and all other faithful Narnians fight for the emancipation of their nation against the forces of invasion headed by Rishda Tarkaan. Edmund courageously and skilfully destroys the magic wand of Jadis during the battle in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Moreover, that battle itself is proof of the courage exhibited by Peter and his army, who readily face the enemies even in the unexpected absence of Aslan. All the protagonists in the Narnian narratives accomplish their tasks by confirming to these values and the characters like Eustace in *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'* inculcate them through personal experiences in Narnia.

Life of Dignity: Vaikundar insists on a dignified life as a prerequisite for the annihilation of the evil aeon of *Kali Yugam*. Ayyavazhi foregrounds the necessity of self-confidence for social progress and individual transformation. The consecration of Mirror and Lamp for worship provides awareness about the underlying Divinity inherent in each individual. This evokes a sense of self-confidence and dignity in the place of guilt and fear, which helps in the evolution of human consciousness.

Vaikundar advised the people to live with dignity and be fearless of any forces of oppression including humans and the supernatural. Vaikundar never allowed to forsake his dignity even while enduring the experiences of trial and imprisonment. The teachings in practice beyond mere preaching created a deep impact on the people and resulted in social resurgence.

Puddleglum in *The Silver Chair* is never ready to surrender his dignity and accept the arguments put forth by the Lady of the Green Kirtle. He firmly believes in his experiences of Narnia however logically the latter tries to negate its existence. Puddleglum's love for his land and its inhabitants prevents him from forsaking dignity and embracing the indoctrination of the Lady. The self-confidence sustained from his dignified life, helped him to act courageously and subvert the power of this tyrant ruler (Lewis *The Silver* 633). All battles in Narnia including *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Prince Caspian* reflect the dignity upheld by Narnians who are ready to face dangers and death for the safety of their nation. *The Last Battle* is a fine example where the protagonists have to testify their valour and dignity to the greatest extent. The protagonists in this narrative fight courageously until the end of their life, instead of accepting the slavery of the Calormenes. Here the Narnians value a dignified life as superior to a subjugated existence under oppressive powers. Reepicheep is a character who is renowned for his dignified life and valour. Even being born as a little mouse, he is able to reach the country of Aslan purely through his qualities and actions. Through this example, Lewis tries to highlight the fact that even the lowest sections of society can reach the highest possible heights.

Harmony and Unity: Unity of all the creations is the essential trait of Ayyavazhi, which highlights the concept of Omnipresent Divinity inherent in all living beings. Unity and Harmony are associated with Divinity, while disharmony and divisions are considered as evil. On the social level, Vaikundar applied the same spiritual principle of unity whereby he unified the eighteen communities of society. Here Unity is not based upon utilitarian principles or social statuesque. Ayyavazhi emphasises on unity based on mutual harmony of the members of society beyond the restrictions of caste, class, gender, community and religion. Such unity is possible only through

Anpu [Love and Compassion], where every individual care for fellow beings and try to uplift others.

There are various forms of unified communities depicted in the Narnian series. The Calormenes constitute a community who live together but sustain mutual hatred. Moreover, the Calormen nation is characterized by domestic violence and civil riots. This materially prosperous nation is a harbinger of social inequalities, power politics and various forms of oppression. This is an example of superfluous unity realized through the tyranny of military forces, where the inhabitants are under constant threats. Archenland is a nation that exhibits unity through systematization and political harmony. Their society is modelled upon Narnia, where the ruler and the inhabitants are peace-loving. Narnia is depicted as a natural habitat where the inhabitants are in constant harmony with nature. The inhabitants are anthropomorphic and mythical beings who live in mutual harmony. Various events in the Narnian series foreground the necessity of unification of all inhabitants and this harmonizing process of society is initiated by Aslan. The presence of Aslan as a leader and his values enlivened by the rulers of Narnia together try to maintain the ideal nature of the land in spite of invasions from external disruptive agencies. These values get infiltrated into the society of Archenland, where human society tries to relive the values of Narnia. Here Archenland and Calormen try to connect with our primary world by providing cross-sections of progressive and regressive forms of society.

Non-violence: Ayyavazhi is a movement that does not encourage any form of violence, physical or mental. Vaikundar proved with his life and activities that social resurgence and eradication of social anomalies can be achieved without the execution of violent forms of resistance. As a policy to cause minimal pain to other beings, most of the followers of Ayyavazhi adopt a vegetarian form of lifestyle. This movement

follows the teachings of Vaikundar which prohibit animal sacrifice and other forms of worship that involve physical violence. The strong stance exhibited by Vaikundar during his trial and imprisonment proves that non-violence is not a form of weakness but a powerful instrument of resistance.

The Narnian book *The Magician's Nephew* describes the origin of evil in the newly created world of Narnia. Digory wanted to ring the brass bell in the Hall of Statues and he violently subjugates Polly by twisting her arm, when she opposes his attempt. The Evil Queen, Jadis is awakened and later this very epitome of evil enters Narnia. Thus, Aslan uses the term "violence" twice to refer to the pain inflicted by Digory on Polly, in the land of Charn (Lewis *The Magician's* 82). This proves that physical violence in its subtlest form is the primary source of evil, which precedes all other forms of oppression. Considering this case, it is inevitable to conclude that the scenes of battles described in various books of the Narnian series should not be interpreted in terms of physical expression of violence. Hence the scenes of fighting should be understood as attempts to overrule the rule of tyranny and exploitation. The narration of the origin of evil in Narnia is similar to the concept of Primordial Evil in Ayyavazhi which is referred to as *Kroni*. *Akhilathirattu Ammanai* describes the birth of *Kroni* with a magnanimous torso and multiple limbs. The primordial manifestation of evil is from the collective consciousness of the entire creation, and this spontaneously happens when the thought of subjugating the others arise together in the minds of the entire creation (Harigopalan *Akhilathirattu* 13). Here too the thought of violence is considered as the primary source of evil, which later evolves into various forms of oppression. The solution of violence is identified as *Anpu* [Love and Compassion] which harmoniously unites the entire creation and subverts all kinds of regressive canons.

Truth: The Absolute Truth in the form of Divinity is worshipped in Ayyavazhi in the form of Lamp and Mirror. Truth as a value is correlated with *Dharmam* and the former is arbitrary in the experience of individuals. What is true for the oppressor cannot be the truth according to the experience of the oppressed. *Dharmam*, on the other hand, has been redefined by Vaikundar as uplifting the downtrodden. Truth in the form of value is often associated with prescriptive morality which is commonly understood as not uttering lies. Vaikundar does not try to impose prescriptive teachings on people but addressed the fundamentals of human values. Unflinching belief in one's conscience can be understood as Truth in Ayyavazhi, which is expressed in the outward form of Courage. Hence the traditional notion Satya Yuga [Aeon of Truth] is absent in Ayyavazhi, and *Kali Yugam* is followed by *Dharma Yugam* or the aeon of *Dharmam*.

In the Narnian series like *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Prince Caspian*, Lucy faces cynicism and mockery from the outward world for adherence to her notion of truth. Lucy is disbelieved by her siblings about the experience of the fantasy world of Narnia, which they had to later accept as truth. Similarly, in *Prince Caspian*, Lucy sees Aslan and follows him despite discouragement from her siblings. In this case, too the latter confirms the experience of Lucy as true, when they later see and talk to Aslan. Confirming to the aforementioned evaluation of Ayyavazhi, truth manifests as Courage in Lucy. Lucy becomes renowned as "the Valiant", which denotes the Courage arising from her truthfulness. In *The Magician's Nephew*, Digory follows his conscience and confirms with his notion of truthfulness. Thus, he outlives the temptation by Jadis who tries to persuade him to use the Silver Apple for healing his mother without the permission of Aslan. Similar to the final words of Vaikundar, he acts beyond his limited nature and works for the welfare of the entire society.

Aslan asks him to plant the Silver Apple in Narnia which grows into a tree for the benefit of the entire society and along with that, Digory's personal need is also fulfilled. Truth inherent in individual consciousness is foregrounded as a power of empowerment, which outwardly manifests in the form of Courage and Fortitude.

The Chronicles of Narnia is verified as an inherent reflection of *Ayyavazhi Dharmam* and its inherent values. The parallel reading of each text with emphasis on *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* foregrounds *Ayyavazhi Dharmam* as an inclusive and universal principle, with practical implications of invoking significant changes in the society. *Ayyavazhi Dharmam* can be identified as the New World Philosophy of Narnia, which acts as a pivotal force in the advent of an egalitarian New World. Here the term philosophy is far from any concept or intellectual diagram without practical implication. The critical issues in the fantasy text reflect those of the real world and the possibility of resolving them cannot be merely negated as a figment of imaginative fantasy. This is ensured by re-reading the fantasy text through *Ayyavazhi*, where the latter has proved its credibility by invoking social reformation. Thus, the Golden Age of the fantasy text and *Dharma Yugam* of the reform movement problematizes the contours between improbability of the secondary world and possibilities of the primary world.