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Jostein Gaarder's *The Orange Girl* as a Modern Fairytale

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By

Arjun Prasad Kaphle

University Campus

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Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Approval Letter

This thesis entitled “Jostein Gaarder’s *The Orange Girl* as a Modern Fairytale” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Arjun Prasad Kaphle has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

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Arjun Prasad Kaphle

July 2009

Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English
Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Arjun Prasad Kaphle has completed his thesis entitled “Jostein Gaarder’s *The Orange Girl* as a Modern Fairytale” under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2065/05/01 B.S. to 2066/03/22 B.S. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voice.

Mr. Chitra Kumar Karki

Supervisor

Date: -----

Abstract

This present research work attempts to study Jostein Gaarder's *The Orange Girl* (2004) as a modern fairytale by examining the subtle fairytale narrative techniques in a modern context. It is modern in the sense that though the author makes use of the elements of mystery intended for the young boy, he does not follow the appropriate sequence of plot elements and character archetypes similar to those in the fairy tales. Gaarder leads the readers to a philosophical inquiry about human existence and this world by exploiting few elements of fairytales. He sets the story in the modern setting, the real towns of Norway, and uses the scientific realism instead of magic realism as he frequently talks about the progress of Hubble Space Telescope and gives factual dates in the course of narrating the story.

Contents

	Page No.
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
Chapter I: Gaarder and Fairytale Writing	1-8
Chapter II: A Critical Study of Fairytale and Folktale	9-29
Chapter III: Gaarder's <i>The Orange Girl</i> as a Modern Fairytale	30-47
Chapter IV: Conclusion	48-50
Works Cited	

Chapter I

Gaarder and Fairytale Writing

This research is a study of Norwegian author Jostein Gaarder's recent novel *The Orange Girl* published in 2004. It attempts to examine the author's use of fairy tale narrative techniques which he employs in modern times to lead the readers to a philosophical inquiry about human existence and the short amount of time humans have to spend on the earth. So, the novel deals with the scientific, philosophical and spiritual issue as it is more about contemplating questions about life than answering them. In the story, Georg is a fifteen year-old young boy who discovers a letter written to him, by his late father Jan Olav more than a decade ago. This letter found unexpectedly behind the pushchair by Georg's grandmother takes on the role of a letter from 'beyond the grave,' allowing Georg to come to know his father in a way he would otherwise never have been able to achieve. The purpose of his father's letter is to tell Georg the story of the mysterious "Orange girl," for whom Georg's father searched in Oslo and Seville, and to make him solve this mystery. From behind the grave, his father keeps asking him to solve the mystery. Georg becomes obsessed with finding the identity of the girl. Georg finally manages to solve the mystery as he realizes that this elusive and mysterious girl is no other than his own mother.

In the meantime, Olav keeps asking Georg about the latest developments of Hubble Space Telescope. Here, Gaarder makes use of scientific realism instead of magic realism. Scientific realism is the view that the world described by science is the real world. Gaarder uses the narrative technique of fairytale as he employs the mystery of fairy tales but in a modern

setting. It is modern in the sense that though the author makes use of the elements of mystery intended for the young boy, he does not follow the appropriate sequence of plot elements and character archetypes similar to those in the fairy tales. Gaarder leads the readers to a philosophical inquiry about human existence and this world by exploiting few elements of fairytales. He sets the story in the modern setting, the real towns and cities of Norway. He does not begin the story in “Once upon a time-like fashion”. He gives factual dates of different events in the course of narrating the story.

Fairy tales are found in the history of folkloric tales. The term “fairy tale” is loosely applied to folktales and to modern fairy tales. Originally fairy tales had no authors and have evolved through the centuries by word of mouth. So, many stories with variations appeared in many countries and became popular. Although fairy tales are meant for children, they equally give pleasure and knowledge to adults. These tales have distinct and typical elements that distinguish themselves from other types of tales. One of the first elements of fairy tales is that they often start and end with special words like “once upon a time,” “a long, long time ago,” and “they lived happily ever after” (Bredsdorff 6). When we read those words, we know that the story could be a fairy tale. Another element of a fairy tale is that the story often takes place in a castle, a forest, or a town. This is called the setting. The setting is where the story takes place. *Little Red Riding Hood* is set in the forest, and part of *Cinderella* is set in the castle of the prince. Fairy tales always have at least one good character, or person, in the story. An example of a good character is Cinderella. Fairy tales often have bad characters, too, like Cinderella's mean stepsisters. Another example of a bad character is the evil witch in “Hansel and Gretel.”

Very often, one of the characters is from royal or noble family, which means that the person is a king, a queen, a prince, or princess. A good example of this is *The Princess and the Pea*. Characters may also be animals, like the wolf in *Little Red Riding Hood*, or the bears in *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Magic is often an element of fairy tales. In *Cinderella*, there is a fairy godmother who helps Cinderella go to the ball in a fancy dress and carriage. In *Jack and the Beanstalk*, Jack buys magic seeds that grow into a beanstalk. One of the most important elements in a fairy tale is that they always have a problem that must be solved. For example, in the *Princess and the Pea*, the prince wants to find a real princess to marry. His mother, the queen, helps him find a real princess by putting a pea in the bed to find out if the princess can feel it.

Among many fairy and folk story writers, Hans Christian Andersen has carved a niche in the genre of fairy tales. Andersen was creative writer has written stories such as “The Emperors New Clothes”, “ The Little Mermaid”, “The Nightingale” which have become classic in Japan, China Russia and Vietnam, and children “everywhere follow the fate of ‘The Ugly Duckling’ without necessarily realizing that it is the story of the author himself” (Bredsdorff 7).

In 1875, on the occasion of Andersen’s seventieth birthday, the London *Daily News*, a paper founded by Dickens, paid homage to Andersen:

It has been given to Hans Andersen to fashion beings, it almost be said, of a new kind, to breathe life into the toys of childhood, and the forms of antique superstition, the tin soldier, the ugly duckling, the mermaid, the little match girl, are no less real and

living in their way than Othello, or Mr. Pickwick, or Helen of Troy. It seems a very humble field in which to work, this of nursery legend and childish fancy. Yet the Danish poet alone, of all who have laboured in it, has succeeded in recovering, and reproducing, the kind of imagination which constructed the old fairy tales. (qtd in Bredsdorff 7-8)

Andersen's style was unique and far removed from that of the traditional folk or fairy tale. He sprinkled his narrative with every kind of conversational touch – crisp, lively openings, to catch the listener's attention at a swoop, frequent asides or parentheses, little bits of Copenhagen slang; much grammatical license; and above all, a free use of particles-those nods and nudges of speech, with which Danish (like Greek) is so richly endowed. So, Andersen completely maintained the conversational tone in his tales that you are quite shocked.

In the whole realm of poetry no domain is so boundless as that of the fairy tale. Elias Bredsdorff concludes by quoting Andersen's own definition of literary genre in which he was, and still is, the unsurpassed master:

It reaches from the blood –drenched graves of antiquity to the pious legends of a child's picture book; it takes in the poetry of the people and the poetry of the artist. To me it represents all poetry, and he who masters it must be able to put into tragedy, comedy, naïve simplicity and humour; at his service are the lyric note, the child like narrative and the language of describing nature. In the folktale it is always Simple Simon who is victorious in the end. (10)

Thus, the innocence of poetry, overlooked and jeered at by the others brothers, has reached farthest in the end.

Literature Review

Jostein Gaarder's early writings were contributions to philosophy and theology textbooks and in 1986 he published his first book, *The Diagnosis and Other Stories*. He then wrote two books for children before publishing *The Solitaire Mystery*, which won the 1990 Norwegian Literary Critics' Award and the Ministry of Cultural and Scientific Affairs' Literary Prize. With the publication of world famous book, *Sophie's World* in 1991, Gaarder gained international fame. His first book to be translated into English, *Sophie's World* was also the top-selling book in Germany, France, and Great Britain. It has been published in forty-four languages and in 1995 *Sophie's World* was the best selling book in the world. His other works include *The Frog Castle* (1988), *The Christmas Mystery* (1992), *Bibbi Bokkens Magic Library* (1993), *Through a Glass, Darkly* (1993), *Hello? Is Anybody There?* (1996) *Brief Life as That Same Flower* (1996), *Maya* (1999), *The Ringmaster's Daughter* (2001), *Checkmate*, (2006) and *The Yellow Dwarves* (2006)

Gaarder is well known for writing from children's perspectives and most of his books are for a young audience. He often uses meta-fiction in his works, writing stories within stories. *Sophie's World*, however, has bridged the gap between audiences of different ages. The hero of the story, Sophie, turns fifteen during the course of the novel. However, the book is subtitled "A Novel About the History of Philosophy," and in it Gaarder tackles 2000 years worth of Western philosophical thought. Much of the book's popularity stems from the fact that it takes complicated ideas and presents them in language

comprehensible to young adults. It has been used as a textbook in many freshman year introductory surveys to philosophy. Gaarder himself taught high school philosophy for eleven years, so he must have been extremely aware of both the pitfalls and the importance of teaching the subject. His book has received acclaim both as a novel and as a history. Gaarder's manner of treating the philosophers is extremely helpful because often each chapter focuses on a single thinker or a single line of thought. Therefore, the book can be to understand a particular philosopher. At the same time, the plot is intricately woven through the history of philosophy, and so reading the book as a novel is pleasing and gives the reader a solid grounding in the history of western intellectual thought. It is possible that Gaarder wanted to come up with a way of teaching philosophy that would not be very pedagogical. *Sophie's World* has been popular with children and adults alike because it teaches philosophy clearly and in an entertaining manner.

Jostein Gaarder has written several novels which have received a host of criticism from many critics. Since the English version publication of *The Orange Girl* in 2004, it has earned recognition as a text exploring the sense of wonder of the world, but in subtle and sensitive manner. Mikhail Bakhtin claims that the writer is amazing in presenting stories in the most subtle manner. He writes: "Gaarder takes the most ordinary happenings and writes about them in a magical way, creating a truly refreshing tale" (34). Similarly, other critics hold that *The Orange Girl* explores issues like alienation, death and mysticism, most widely discussed issues, since post World Wars. John Thieme comments on the novel, "The narration of the forth coming death of Jan Olav is the representation of alienation of modern man" (64). Interpreting

the text from the point of view of an individual's plight, Thieme states, "*The Orange Girl* is a story of a modern man's exile from the society" (42).

Gaarder poses a big question in this book: philosophy verses reality, but the leisurely way he prepares readers for it may make most of the readers lose their interest, at least initially. As James Anderson writes, "the most leisurely and subtle technique, he uses sometimes arises doubts on his intellectuality" (22). But, James Anderson has all praise for the techniques applied by Gaarder to give a finishing touch to his ideas. He says: "He closes with his answers in such a way, readers who get that far will be left to mull over their own" (28). All this proves that Gaarder deals with issues relating to human life and this world – philosophical issues for that matter in his books. But he does this by employing the narrative technique. This makes him a fairy tale writer.

But, in the present researcher's view, the novel is more about contemplating questions about life than answering them. Set in Norway, with references to people, places and events there and in Europe, the novel is basically about a man's fairy tale like love-story. The issue of fairy tale has been overlooked or ignored by many critics. So, this researcher takes this issue to explore the simplicity and possibilities of gnome reality scattered all over the modern society.

The thesis has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outline of the work – a short elaboration on the hypothesis, a glimpse of Jostein Gaarder and a short critical response. Moreover, it gives a bird's eye view of this entire work. The second chapter tries to explain the theoretical modality briefly that is applied in the textual

interpretation. It discusses the origin and elements of a fairy tale as a theoretical tool to analyze the text.

On the basis of the theoretical framework established in the second chapter, the third chapter analyzes the text at a considerable length. It analyzes how Gaarder re-lightens the magic of fairy tales in a modern setting in *The Orange Girl*. Finally, the fourth or the last chapter sums up the main points and the findings of the research work.

Chapter II

A Critical Study of Fairy Tale and Folklore

Generally, a fairy tale or fairy story is a literary genre that tells a story, usually for children, about interesting fictional and folkloric characters such as fairies, goblins, elves, trolls, witches, giants, talking animals and enchantments, or other magical creatures, often involving a far-fetched sequence of events. Fairy tales often feature a fight between good and evil; evil always loses to a triumphant hero or heroine. The story often takes place in a castle, a forest, or a town. In modern-day usage, the term “fairy tale” is also used to describe something blessed with unusual happiness, as in fairy tale ending or fairy tale romance; though not all fairy tales may merge into legendary narratives. However, unlike legends and epics, they usually do not contain more than superficial references to religion and actual places, persons, and events.

Although fairy tale is wonder tale involving marvelous elements and occurrences, it is not necessarily about fairies. The term embraces such popular folktales as “Cinderella” and “Puss-in-Boots” and art fairy tales of later invention, such as *The Happy Prince* (1888), by the Irish writer Oscar Wilde. It is very difficult to distinguish between tales of literary and oral origin, because folktales have received literary treatment from early times, and, conversely, literary tales have found their way back into the oral tradition.

As is well known, there is a classical fairy-tale canon in the western world that has been in existence ever since the nineteenth century if not earlier. The tales that constitute this canon are “Cinderella,” “Little Red Riding Hood,” “Sleeping Beauty,” “Hansel and Gretel,” “Rapunzel,” “Rumpelstiltskin,” “The Frog Prince,” “Snow White,” “Bluebeard,” “Beauty and the Beast,” “Jack and

the Beanstalk,” “The Princess and the Pea,” “The Little Mermaid,” “The Ugly Duckling,” “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp,” “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves,” and so on. These tales became canonized because they were adapted from the oral tradition of folklore for aristocratic and middle-class audiences as print culture developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and basically reshaped and retold during this time to reinforce the dominant patriarchal ideology throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Consequently, the most telling or catchy tales were reprinted and reproduced in multiple forms and entered into cultural discursive practices in diverse ways so that they became almost “mythicized” as natural stories, as second nature. We have been responding to these classical tales almost as if we were born with them.

In a deep misunderstanding of their true nature, the fairy tales have been portrayed as a “leftover of pre-Enlightened mental frameworks” (Citton 549). Such prejudices were shaken by several pioneers of the 1970s and 1980s like Jacques Barchilon, Raymonde Robert, Jack Zipes or Ruth Bottigheimer or by closer readings of exceptional authors like Crebillon fills and texts like Didert’s *Bijoux indixcrets*. They are now about to be dramatically reversed by a new generation of French scholars, who manage to re-inscribe the worst of Perrault, d’Aulnoy, Hamilton, Gueulette, Moncrif, Pettis de La Croix, Voisenon, Bibiena or Le Prince de Beaumont not only within a rich, clever and highly self-conscious the optical reflection on literary poetics, but also within an “astute and timely dialogue on the promises, limitations, and stakes of modernity” (Citton 549).

Fairy tale is quintessentially one of the modern and rare genres that could claim no paternity among the Ancients, and therefore had to invent its own rules

and agenda. According to Yves Citton, it is the unfolding of this highly modern literary project, “the most advanced literary venture of the period” (549). Thus, fairy tale can be described as a typically postmodern remix of various pre-existing materials, bits and pieces taken from the folkloric elements, from the literary traditions of short stories and their various framing techniques. It can also be described as the newer genre of the novel.

This unprecedented genre is the most advanced incarnation of a “hyper-skeptical frame of mind, in full synch with the most scandalous text written by Pierre Bayle” (Citton 550). Far from simply embellishing old tales taken from the people comforting that group in its superstitious sleep, the likes of Perrault and d’Aulnoy invented new literary forms and a new vocabulary which expose to everyone the mechanisms and consequences of suppression, both capturing its power and denouncing its manipulations.

Fairy tales vary according to culture, language and religion in different parts of world. However, their sole purpose is didactic as it appears in all arts of the world and gives some moral vision of life. They provide the readers with delight and help shape the thought of children and adult alike. The fairy tales not only entertain children but also inspire adult in the functioning of their adult life with glory, achievement and success. A story that names a specific real person is a legend even if it contains a magical occurrence. Fairytales are sometimes spiritual, but never religious.

Originally, the stories we call fairy tales, were merely a kind of tale, not marked out as a separate genre. The genre itself was first marked out by writers of the Renaissance, who began to define a genre of tales. Later it became established through the works of many writers, becoming an unquestioned genre

in the works of the Brothers Grimm. In this evolution, the name was coined when the *précieuses* took up writing literary stories. Madame d'Aulnoy invented the term *contes de fée*, or fairy tale.

The oral tradition of fairy tale came long before the written form. Tales were told or enacted dramatically, rather than written down, and handed down from generation to generation. Because of this, the history of their evolution is necessarily obscure. The oldest known written fairy tales stem from ancient Egypt, (c. 1300 BC), and fairy tales appear, now and again, in written literature throughout literate cultures, as in *Cupid and Psyche* or the *Panchatantra* in India. The stylistic evidence indicates that these, and many later collections, reworked folk tales into literary forms. What they do show is that the fairy tale has ancient roots, older than the Arabian Nights collection of magical tales such as the *Vikram and the Vampire*, and *Bel and the Dragon*. Allusions to fairy tale appear plentifully in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and the plays of William Shakespeare. (Jones 35)

The origins of fairy tales have been traced as far back as Egypt in the thirteenth century before Christ. When manuscript copying and printing made possible the collection of these stories, they appeared as basic materials for such great storytellers of the middle ages like Chaucer, Boccaccio and others. As most of the parents and people of those times were illiterate, these fairy tales were a major source.

In its literary form, the fairy tale as genre did not really begin to assume an existence until the fourteenth century in Italy, and even then its existence was precarious because there were very few writers and readers of fairy tales. Certainly, fairy-tale motifs can be found in ancient Indian, Chinese, and Arabic

scripts, the Bible, and Greek and Roman literature, and there are numerous fairy-tale features and themes in medieval literature, especially in the Latin poems and stories, courtly romances, leis, legends, fabliaux, primers, and exempla.

However, there was no distinct and distinguishable genre in literature called the fairy tale until the seventeenth century, first in Italy and more importantly in France because there was no textual community to cultivate and institutionalize it and because the vernacular languages had not yet fully developed into literary languages. So, Jack Zipes writes:

Without the appropriate conditions of reception and transmission in large groups of textual or literate communities, the fairy tale could not have established itself as a genre. Within these communities, the oral performance, recitation, and communication continued to play a major role (3).

A textual community is a micro-society organized around the common understanding of a script. The rise of a more literate society in the eleventh century automatically increased the number of authors, readers, and copiers of texts everywhere in Europe, and, as a consequence, the number of persons engaged in the study of texts for the purpose of changing the behavior of the individual or group. This was the rationale behind much reformist and some orthodox religious agitation, to say nothing of communal associations and guilds. These textual communities were not entirely composed of literates. The minimal requirement was just one literate, the interpreter, who understood a set of texts and was able to pass his message verbally to others. By a process of absorption and reflection the behavioral norms of the group's other members were eventually altered. The manner in which the individuals behaved toward each

other and the manner in which the group looked upon those it considered to be outsiders were derived from the attitudes formed during the period of initiation and education. The unlettered and semi lettered members thereby conceptualized a link between textuality, as the script for enactment of behavioral norms, and rationality, as the alleged reasonableness of those norms.

While it is clear that there were numerous types of “oral communities,” which shared and used many kinds of folk narratives performed at court and at the hearth and other distinct places where tales were exchanged, and that these communities were later to serve as models or frames for the conception of literary fairy tales, textual communities concerned with fairy tales were not formed until the sixteenth century, and it was really not until the end of the seventeenth century in France that full-fledged textual communities emerged and solidified the institution of the literary fairy tale as genre in Europe.

It is with the rise of textual communities, court entertainment, schools, reading societies, academies, literary associations and institutions, and salons and the interaction with oral traditions of storytelling, the formation of the fairy tale as genre took place, and this formation made the tale linguistically malleable, accessible, and purposeful as a mimetic linguistic formation that carried relevant information about the survival of the species, in particular, the survival of individuals, representatives of different social classes, who are bent on improving their status and condition in society. The form and information constitute its psychological appeal and explain why the brain gradually recognized basic fairy tale types through a cognitive module. As memes – cultural replicators or public representations – particular fairy tales were endowed with and recognized as having great value in communities and

societies, and their mimetic value resides in their potential to assist human beings to become more alert to particular signs, to improve their situations, and to adapt more successfully in a changing environment. Fairy tales as mimetic forms can only be successful if they can copy themselves and are interpreted and revised successfully to address a society's cultural needs and demands. Moreover, they will only be effective if they can mutate and blend in altered and adapted forms that respond to environmental transformations. Dawkins maintains that

co-adapted meme-complexes evolve in the same kind of way as co-adapted gene-complexes. Selection favours memes that exploit their cultural environment to their own advantage. This cultural environment consists of other memes which are also being selected. The meme pool therefore comes to have attributes of an evolutionarily stable set, which new memes find it hard to invade. (qtd in Zipes 23)

Like genes, memes are selfish and seek their own advantage. They will mutate and affect the brain so they can be effectively reproduced to maintain their relevance. This leads to a troubling problem. Again, to quote Dawkins:

However speculative my development of the theory of memes may be, there is one serious point which I would like to emphasize once again. This is that when we look at the evolution of cultural traits and at their survival value, we must be clear whose survival we are talking about. Biologists, as we have seen, are accustomed to looking for advantages at the gene level. What we have not previously considered is that a cultural trait may have evolved in

the way that it has, simply because it is advantageous to itself. (qtd in Zipes 24)

This last point is important because Dawkins does not believe that we are totally determined by our genes, and that his position in the nurture versus nature debate is a judicious one. If we know that genes and mimetic linguistic forms are selfish, and if we recognize what they are and how they influence us, we have the power to select them, “rebel” against them, and change them so that the human species and the environment might be transformed in such a way to make civilization itself more humane. At the very least we can endeavor to “map out” our individual destiny and common destiny and seek alternatives to change ourselves and our environment. Fairy tales provide us with hope that some relevant transformation is possible.

Generally, oral fairy tales are about elusive creatures that folklorists study, record and try to trace through history. It is in oral form and an invigorating field of study. The *New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of English Languages* defines fairy tale as “a story for children about fairies, or about magic and enchantment, very improbable and lie” (146). The folk imagination sees fairies as living in everyday surroundings such as hills, trees, streams, and sees fairy rings, fairy table and fairy seeds in natural objects. Marcia Lane in *A Way of Looking Fairytales* writes, “Fairytale is a literary story or folk that has a sense of the numinous feeling or sensation of supernatural or the mysterious, crucial story that happens in the past tense and a story that is not tied to any specifics” (123). This shows that a fairy tale has supernatural or magical quality.

Folklorists have tried to trace the history of fairy tale from every culture over many centuries. Thus, the oral fairy tale may have existed for at least that

long, although not perhaps recognized as a genre. Fairy tales, and works derived from fairy tales, are still written today. The older fairy tales were intended for an audience of adults as well as children, but they were associated with children as early as the writings of the *précieuses*. Folklorists have classified fairy tales in various ways. Among the most notable are the Aarne-Thompson classification system and the morphological analysis of Vladimir Propp. Other folklorists have interpreted the tales' significance, but no school has been definitively established for the meaning of the tales. Moreover, Jack Zipes has written extensively about the literary fairy tales and the need to define it. In *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, he writes:

To expand and expound upon the subject and definition of literary fairy tales as a genre that distinguishes itself from the oral folktale in so far as it is written by single identifiable author, it is thus synthetic, artificial and elaborate in comparison to the indigenous formation of the folktale that emanates from communities and tends to be simple and anonymous. (321)

He further explains the difference between literary and the oral folktale. He does not entail that one genre is better than other. But in fact it can only be understood and defined by its relationship to the oral tales as well as to the legend, novella, novel and other literary fairy tales that it usually adapts and remodels during the narrative conception of the author.

Although the fairy tale is now a clearly distinct genre, the definition that makes a work as a fairy tale is a source of considerable dispute. Vladimir Propp, in his *Morphology of the Folktale*, criticized the common distinction between 'fairy tales' and 'animal tales' on the grounds that many tales contained both

fantastic elements and animals. Nevertheless, to select works for his analysis, Propp used all Russian folktales classified as folklore in a cataloguing system that made such a distinction. His own analysis identified fairy tales by their plot elements. One universally agreed on factor is that the nature of a tale does not depend on whether fairies appear in it. Obviously, many people, including Angela Carter in her introduction to the *Virago Book of Fairy Tales*, have noted that a great many of so-called fairy tales do not feature fairies at all. This is partly because of the history of the English term 'fairy tale' which derives from the French phrase *contes de fée*, and was first used in the collection of Madame D' Aulnoy in 1697.

Carter herself points out that talking animals and the presence of magic seem to be more common to the fairy tale than fairies themselves. However, the mere presence of animals that talk does not make a tale a fairy tale: especially when the animal is clearly a mask on a human face, as in fables. Max Luthi argues that, fairy tales are equally important to adults. He believes that not only do they learn to cope with the oedipal difficulties but also learn to face the world independently. Luthi in *The Fairy Tale as Art from and Portrait of Man* equates the predicament of the modern man with that of the fairy tale hero and describes in this manner:

He explores neither the world within nor the world around him. He wanders through the world and acts. He runs into the most valuable figures and enters into relationships with them, as adversary, disenchanter or suitor. Does what is right, without thinking much about it and often without realizing. Even when he

sits down helplessly and weeps, he is acting properly: it is exactly his weeping which summons the helper. (141)

In his essay *On Fairy Stories*, J.R.R. Tolkien agrees with the exclusion of 'fairies' from the definition. He defines fairy tales as "stories about the adventures of men in *Faerie*, the land of fairies, fairytale princesses, dwarves, elves, and not only other magical species but many other marvels" (16). Some folklorists prefer to use the German term *Marchen* to refer to the genre, a practice given weight by the definition of Thompson in his 1977 edition of *The Folktale*. It is a tale of some length involving a succession of motifs or episodes. It moves in an unreal world without definite locality or definite creatures and is filled with the marvelous. In this 'never-never land,' humble heroes kill adversaries, succeed to kingdoms and marry princesses. The characters and motifs of fairy tales are simple and archetypal. In them are present princesses and goose-girls, youngest sons and gallant princes, ogres, giants dragons, and trolls, wicked stepmothers and false heroes, fairy godmothers and other magical helpers, often talking horses, or foxes, of birds, glass mountains, and prohibitions and breaking of prohibitions.

The fairy tale, told orally, is a sub-class of the folktale. Many writers have written in the form of the fairy tale. These are the literary fairy tales, or *Kunstmarchen*. The oldest forms, from *Panchatantra* to the *Pentamerone*, show considerable reworking from the oral form. The Brothers Grimm was among the first to try to preserve the features of oral tales. Yet the stories printed under the Grimm name have been considerably reworked to fit the written form. Literary fairy tales and oral fairy tales freely exchanged plots, motifs, and elements with each other and with the tales of foreign lands. Many 18th century folklorists

attempted to recover the “pure” folktale, uncontaminated by literary versions. Yet while oral fairy tales likely existed for thousands of years prior to the literary forms, there is no pure folktale. And each literary fairy tale draws on folk traditions, if only in parody. This makes it impossible to trace forms of transmission of a fairy tale. Oral story-tellers have been known to read literary fairy tales to increase their own stock of stories and treatments.

The first collectors that attempted to preserve the plot and characters of the tale and also the style, in which they were preserved, were the Brothers Grimm. Ironically enough, this meant although their first edition remains a treasure for folklorists, they rewrote the tales in later editions to make them more acceptable, which ensured their sales and the later popularity of their work. Such literary forms did not merely draw from the folktale, but also influenced folktales in turn. The consideration of whether to keep *Sleeping Beauty* reflected a belief common among folklorists of the nineteenth century. The folk tradition preserved fairy tales in forms from pre-history except when contaminated by such literary forms, leading people to tell inauthentic tales. The rural, illiterate, and uneducated peasants, if suitably isolated, were the folk and would tell pure folk tales.

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm saw fairytales as remnants of ancient myths, playful descendants of ancient intuitive vision of human life. Grimm describes the methods of storyteller Frau Riemann and recounts her stories thoughtfully, accurately with common vividness and evident delight. Their contemporaries took their retelling as their face value and began to recognize ethnographic worth of folk tale and the importance of preserving the language in which the stories were told. The two brothers didn't retell the fairy tales exactly as they heard

them but carefully edited them, simplifying or embellishing them according to their poetic inclinations and pedagogical intentions. Thus, Grimm brothers and their tales certainly opened the gates to a new world of folktales as a distinct genre.

Sometimes they regarded fairy tales as a form of fossil, the remnants of a, once-perfect tale. However, we can say that fairy tales never had a fixed form, and regardless of literary influence, the tellers constantly altered them for their own purposes. The work of the Brothers Grimm influenced other collectors, both inspiring them to collect tales and leading them to believe that the fairy tales of a country were particularly representative of it. Ethnographers collected fairy tales over the world, finding similar tales in Africa, the Americas, and Australia. They also encouraged other collectors of fairy tales.

Two theories of origins have attempted to explain the common elements in fairy tales found spread over continents. Orenstein elaborates: “One is that a single point of origin generated any given tale, which then spread over the centuries. The other is that such fairy tales stem from common human experience and therefore can appear separately in many different origins” (77). Fairy tales with very similar plots, characters, and motifs are found spread across different cultures. Many people hold this to be caused by the spread of such tales, as people repeat tales they have heard in foreign lands, although the oral nature makes it impossible to trace the route except by inference. Folklorists have attempted to determine the origin by internal evidence, which can not always be clear.

Originally, adults were the audience of a fairy tale just as often as children. Literary fairy tales appeared in works intended for adults, but in the

19th and 20th centuries the fairy tale came to be associated with children's literature. The *précieuses*, intended their works for adults, but regarded their source as the tales that servants, or other women of lower class, would tell to children. The Grimm Brothers titled their collection *Children's and Household Tales* and rewrote their tales after complaints that they were not suitable for children. In the modern era, fairy tales were altered so that they could be readable to children. The Grimm Brothers concentrated mostly on eliminating sexual references. Rapunzel, in the first edition, revealed the prince's visits by asking why her clothing had grown tight, thus letting the witch deduce that she was pregnant, but in subsequent editions carelessly revealed that it was easier to pull up the prince than the witch. The moralizing strain in the Victorian era altered the classical tales to teach lessons.

The nineteenth century discovery of folktale was followed by waves of scholarly research each with its own version of the origin. By the 1960s a tremendous vogue of writing and circulating literary fairy tales had been set in motion for children and adults. After different scholars, critics researched this genre and various perspectives changed, modern students of folklore follow the scheme of study that was originated in Finland under the leadership of Julius and Kaarle Krohn. Now these stories are premeditated not only by type but by motif which is the smallest elements in tale having a power to persist within a specific tradition.

In contemporary literature, many authors have used the form of fairy tales for various reasons, such as examining the "human condition from the simple framework a fairytale provides and some authors seek to recreate a sense of the modern issues" (Grant and Clute 333). Sometimes, especially in children's

literature, fairy tales are retold with a twist simply for comic effect, such as *The Stinky Cheese Man* by Jon Scieszka. A common comic motif is a world where all the fairy tales take place, and the characters are aware of their role in the story. Other authors may have specific motives, such as multicultural or feminist reevaluations of predominantly Eurocentric masculine-dominated fairy tales, implying critique of older narratives. The figure of the damsel in distress has been particularly attacked by many feminist critics.

Other notable figures who have employed fairy tales include A. S. Byatt, Jane Yolen, Terri Windling, Donald Barthelme, Robert Coover, Margaret Atwood, Kate Berheimer, Espido Freire, Tanith Lee, James Thurber, Robin Bly, Gail Carson Levine, Jasper Fforde and many others. It may be hard to lay down the rule between fairy tales and fantasies that use fairy tale motifs, or even whole plots, but the distinction is commonly made, even within the works of a single author. The most notable distinction is that fairytale fantasies, like other fantasies, make use of novelistic writing conventions of prose, characterization, or setting. Any comparison of fairy tales quickly discovers that many fairy tales have features in common with each other. Two of the most influential classifications are those of Antti Aarne, as revised by Stith Thompson into the Aarne-Thompson classification system, and Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale*.

Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale*

Vladimir Propp extended the Russian Formalist approach to narratology. The *Morphology of the Folk Tale* (1928) was an attempt to reduce all folktales to one structure. Where, in the Formalist approach, sentence structures had been broken down into analyzable elements known as morphemes. Prop used this

method by analogy to analyze folk tales. By breaking down a large number of Russian folk tales into their smallest narrative units, Propp was able to arrive at the conclusion that there were thirty-one generic narratives in the Russian folk tale. While not all are present, he found that all the tales he analyzed displayed the functions in unvarying sequence. Chandler Harris says that Propp's formula could also be applied to television as well. He says:

The literary analysis methods of scholar Vladimir Propp can be used to study the narratives of television programs to reveal plot functions regarding the presentation of mysteries and their resolution. Propp's methods, which were developed to study folktales, focus on narrative structures such as repeated actions and plot elements as a way of defining genres. (45)

Contending that fairy tales could be studied and compared by examining their most basic plot components, Formalist Vladimir Propp developed an analysis that reduced fairy tales to a series of actions performed by the dramatist personae in each story. Prop argued that all fairy tales were constructed of certain plot elements, which he called functions, and that these elements consistently occurred in list of thirty-one generic functions, proposing that they encompassed all of the plot components from which fairy tales were constructed.

The Proppian "Fairy Tale Generator" explores both the possibilities and pitfalls of strict Proppian analysis through its implementation. Prop asserts that any combination of his functions will create a viable story. The generator works by randomly choosing a possible interpretation of a function and stringing them together to create a story. The result is usually an oddly coherent narrative, flitting in and out of focus, but with large parts of it obfuscated and obscured. It

is in these holes, this slippage that Proppian analysis fails. Proppian analysis also fails in the lack of consideration given to other such literary devices as voice, tone, and theme all of which are as vital to the construction of a compelling narrative as structural events.

Occasionally, some of these functions are inverted, when the hero receives something for a while, still at home, the function of a donor occurs early. More often, a function is negated twice, so that it must be repeated three times. Pier Paolo Piciuccio suggests that Propp's outline of the fairytale could be used to study a difficult story like *Wuthering Heights* as:

Many of the difficulties we experience in understanding *Wuthering Heights* are removed when it is regarded as a fairy tale. Yet, even then, the novel does not fit the standard structures proposed, for example, by Vladimir Propp. Some of the difficulties which have prevented previous critics from seeing fairy-structures as central to an interpretation of *Wuthering Heights* are removed when we combine this perspective with the well-established narcissistic framework of the story. (223)

Use of Proppian analysis reveals that fairy tales do share several similarities as far as basic plot elements. However, attempted Proppian analysis of several tales reveals that, his claim of a uniform plot progression does not hold. Propp's analysis also fails to recognize the importance of such story components as tone, mood, characterization, and writing style just to name a few. According to Propp, a cohesive story can be formed by connecting a series of any set of the thirty-one functions in order. This project explores this component of Propp's argument by randomly generating a fairy tale from

selected functions. Each function has several passages written specifically to express that function, and the generator will randomly select one passage for each selected function. While each passage appropriately expresses its respective plot element, the tone, characters, and settings may vary. The randomly generated fairy tale demonstrates in order to create a cohesive and well-written tale.

These roles could sometimes be distributed among various characters, as the hero kills the villain dragon, and the dragon's sisters take on the villainous role of chasing him. Conversely, one character could engage in acts as more than one role, as a father could send his son on the quest and give him a sword, acting as both dispatcher and donor. Hasan El-Shamy comments on Peter Gilet's assessment where he presents an inclusive picture of the Proppian system in relation to the majority of morphological constructs and collateral theoretical schema as:

The principal refinement that Gilet introduced to Propp's system of thirty-one "Functions" is its reduction to five Functions. These are still drawn from the action of the story-line, and will almost always be present in a given story. To these five so-called Functions he added a division in the hero's world between a normal realm, and, a state or place which is ruled by a dangerous being endowed with magic powers. Gilet labeled this site "An Other World". The rationale for this addition is that it is essential to the correct mapping of any tale of this sort since without it all Functions remain unsituated and to that extent ambiguous. (52)

Propp's approach has been criticized for removing all verbal considerations from the analysis, even though the folktale's form is almost always oral, and also all considerations of tone, mood, character, and, anything that differentiates one fairy tale from another. Structuralist Claude Levi-Strauss used Propp's monograph on the *Morphology of the Folktale* to demonstrate the superiority of the structuralist approach, and the shortcomings of the Formalist approach. Defenders of Propp believe that such criticisms are largely redundant, as Propp's approach was not intended to unearth meaning in the fairy tales he examined, nor to find the elements that differentiate one tale from another, but to unearth the elemental building blocs that formed the basis of their narrative structure. The study of the fairy tale may be compared in many respects to that of organic formation in nature. Both the naturalist and the folklorist deal with species and varieties which are essentially the same. With entirely different aims and focuses Kirkpatrick and Milne illustrate and evaluate some of the varied ways in which studies of folklore during the last fifty years have become, for better or for worse, a part of biblical criticism. The results are both instructive and sobering. Burke O. Long, reviews their work in relation to Propp's and writes:

Her goal is to provide a systematic examination of Propp's major work and to evaluate its potential for biblical studies. The structural model which Propp developed for analyzing the Russian "heroic fairy tales" offers a useful, though limited, tool for studying surface in the Bible and for dealing with the problem of identifying particular literary genres. Milne. expounds Propp's pioneering efforts. They demonstrate the originality of his break

with the established modes of 19th century comparative study of folktales, and his contribution to this century's development of linguistic models for studying such narratives. (79)

Propp's next book, *The Historical Roots of the Magic Tale* (1946), sought to show that folktales originated in ritual, especially initiation and funeral rites. In 1948, along with other Soviet scholars, Propp came under official attack. His *Morphology* was criticized for being too formalist, and his *Historical Roots* was said to be too dependent on Western scholarship and too willing to place Russian narrative in a global context.

All fairy tales by nature are orally transmitted and are therefore simple and understandable to children and everyone else. The plot of almost all fairy tales is formalistic, tightly structured pattern of actions, inviting and figurative reading. These tales follow traditional introduction and conclusion, optimistic structure, quest involving test of characters such as moral, physical and psychological. Every thing complexity in initial stage is at last simplified into reality. All fairytales generally have flat representative characters who are basically stereotypical and archetypal, characters are revealed primarily through their actions and differing natures.

As a distinct form of literature, fairy tales have different functions and aspects, even though their main distinct importance lies in helping children cope with psychological problems of growing up and integrating their personalities. Fairy tale is not only a distinct form of art portraying imperishable, eternal world and wisdom but also significant in the manner in which it describes that world, its external appearance which varies from people to people and from narrator to narrator and delights us. Through the retellings over centuries fairy tales have

become more refined. They have come at the same time with overt and covert meaning according to time and address at all levels of human personality. Thus, communicating to people belonging to every age Mircea Eliade in *The Uses of Enchantment* describes:

Fairytales are expression of a psycho drama that answers the deep need in the human being. Every man wants to experience certain perilous situations, to comfort exceptional ordeal to make his way into the other world and he experience all this, on the level of his imaginative life by hearing or reading fairytales. (35)

Therefore, for this reason fairytales carry important messages to the conscious, preconscious and unconscious mind. Depending on what level each is functioning at a time by dealing with universal human problems, these stories preoccupy the child's mind to help them develop their budding ego. It also rearranges, ruminates, and fantasizes a child and fits unconscious content into conscious fantasies which enable them to deal with their ego development.

In conclusion, we can say that fairy tales readers are as old as the history of human civilization. It is a literary form which has been passed down through different ages and phases in different forms and aspects till the present time. Children find these narratives interesting and influencing because of its presentation of unusual life, the way the pet animals speak, many different discoveries, heroic adventures, growing experience, poverty, family problems, cultural clashes, war, robbery, death, hard struggle of life, beautiful places, foods, desires of selfhood, external environment, and inner psychological problems which they have heard from their elders.

Chapter III

The Orange Girl as Modern Fairy Tale

Jostein Gaarder's *The Orange Girl* is inspiring, imaginative yet philosophical and captivating. It has the quality of a modern fairytale as it has several elements of a fairytale though it explores philosophical issues about human existence in the modern time. The story is set in real town in stipulated time in Norway. A smooth and short story with a twinge of thrill that becomes engaging both for teens as for adults. It is an entertaining and easy to read story with its underlying big questions about the meaning of life and the universe. *The Orange Girl* is short and simply constructed, but it takes on some big questions about the meaning of life and the universe. It is imbued with the sense of awe and wonder that is Jostein Gaarder's hallmark. Although it is intended for teenagers, it is written in the unmistakable Gaarder way that reaches readers of every generation.

Although the story does not begin with the traditional fairytale phrase "Once upon a time", as in the tradition of the fairy tales which often take place in a castle, a forest, or a town, the story of the orange girl begins one afternoon in the town of Oslo in a magical and supernatural fashion. Gaarder relates most of the story of Georg Roed's father, Jan Olav. However, he begins with Georg's part of his story which serves as a prelude to the subsequent story of Olav. He shares the fact with the readers that Jan Olav died eleven years ago, but he mysteriously tells us that both the father and the son "are writing the story together" (1). The second paragraph adds to this mystery as Georg says: "These are the very first lines of this book, and I'm the one doing, doing the writing, but my dad will get his chance a bit later. He is the one with most to tell" (1). His

part of the story possesses the element of magic too as he tells us that the letter containing the story of “The Orange Girl” is discovered from the back of the push-chair all of a sudden after eleven years later of Olav’s death. Georg’s grandparents recollect – in a magic-like fashion – Olav’s request to keep safe the tram for Georg when he grows old enough. The letter is discovered at the appropriate time Olav wanted. As Olav wrote the story of “The Orange Girl” for Georg, he had “tucked the story in the lining of the red-push chair” and he had requested his parents not to give it for jumble sale. And more surprisingly, Georg’s grandmother recollects about this and pays an unexpected visit to Georg’s parents to inform them about the push-chair. All this reflects the elements of a fairy tale.

Georg comes to know through his grandparents that his father wrote the story of “The Orange Girl” for him. This seems like a mystery to him. Georg writes about the sudden discovery of the letter containing the story of his father:

Just how it got there is a bit of a mystery. It can’t have been totally accidental because the story Dad wrote when I was three and half had connections with that push-chair. I don’t mean it’s a story about a push chair, it isn’t. But Dad had written the story of “The Orange Girl” so that I could read it when I was old enough to understand it. He wrote a letter to the future. (4)

Georg’s grandmother becomes excited as she brings a large envelop for him. Georg becomes curious as to what the letter contains in it. It is sealed on the outside all that is written is “To Georg”. He is confident that it is not “grandma’s writing, or Mum’s, or Jorgen’s either” (6). Gorgen is now is Georg’s step-father. He rips open envelop and pulls out a thick wad of paper. After opening the letter,

he reads the first line which shocks him as the letter is addressed to him –like fairy tales are about magic and wonder written for children. His father addresses Georg: “Are you sitting comfortably, Georg? It’s important that you’re at least sitting tight, because I’m about to tell you a nail biting story . . .” (6). Georg is much more puzzled by the thought of the letter’s authenticity. The first sentence of the letter directly addressed to Georg evokes the fresh memory of his father’s live voice of eleven years before, which seems to “come alive again and was sitting in the room with the family” (6). And after finding out the letter the grandparents come to believe to have solved an initial puzzled set forth by Olav as Georg says: “She [his grandmother] believed she might have solved a long-standing puzzle. . . . This sounded pretty mysterious, and it was” (6). So, this puzzle associated with the push-chair containing a letter takes entire eleven years to crack this puzzle. She finally manages to clear herself of suspicions which are fully justified that the push-chair “wasn’t just a push-chair; it was a letter-box” (7). The story of the push-chair makes Georg excited and throws him in dilemma whether to believe the story or not, so he says that it is never possible to tell if parents and grandparents are telling the truth. What he finds the biggest riddle is the thing that everybody in the family should have known about the personal computer of his father on which he must have worked for the story of “The Orange Girl”. This remains a mystery to him.

When Georg opens the letter of his father, he finds his father directly addressing his son to be fully prepared to listen to his story with all attention and even trepidation that might distress him in the course reading the story because like in all the fairy tales, evil is presented. Here, Gaarder talks about ghost – though he does it so as to teach him about different aspect of human life. His

intention is to make his son conduct an inquiry in to human life. Though Olav presents himself as a ghost as he is addressing his son after eleven years of his death, he acts as a guide to his son. He addresses:

The truth is that I feel like a ghost already, and I have to catch my breath each time I think about it. I begin to understand why ghosts go in for so much sighing and hooting. It's not to scare their descendants. It's just that they find it so hard to breath in a time other than their own. We don't only have a place in existence. We also have an allotted span. (9)

This passage brings a philosophical question and makes Georg inquire what human life is. Olav seems to urge Georg to act as a good character to overcome all hurdles that life poses on the worldly life.

Before leading Georg to more philosophical issues, Olav reminds him of the time they spent together and bow Georg at the time played with different toys. Olav tries to establish a cordial rapport with his son. He in the letter writes:

Do you remember your big wooden train set? You play with it for hours everyday. I glance down at it now. At the time of writing, trains, track and ferries lie strewn across the lobby floor, just had to haul you away from it so that we'd get to assembly at the nursery school on time. But it's as if your small hands are still moving the pieces. I haven't dared shift so much as a piece of rail. (10)

Then Olav further talks about the computer, tricycle and their visits that the further and son played games on it. He also asks Georg about the progress of "Hubble Space Telescope": he also asks if "the astronomers have found out

anymore about how our universe is put together” (14). All these things are the reality of the modern times, which are discussed and explained in a manner that resembles a fairytale. In this sense, this becomes a modern fairytale. This makes Georg doubt whether his father possessed supernatural quality. He asks himself if his father “could be clairvoyant? or was it pure coincidence that he was asking me about the Hubble Space Telescope only a few weeks after I’d completed my special assignment?” (15). This shows that Georg finds it very difficult to accept the fact that his father is dead. So, this sends another “shiver down his spine” (15). Fairy tales do the same to the children. So, Georg seems to urge his father to immediately tell him the story of “The Orange Girl,” because Olav first warms up Georg before delving directly into the story of “The Orange Girl”. Olav writes:

As long as you’ve been alive, I’ve longed to tell you about the orange girl some time. Today – I mean at the time of writing – you’re much too young to understand the story. And so it must form my small bequest to you. It will have to lie waiting for another day in your life. Now the time has come. (13)

Now Georg comes to the much-awaited part of the letter where the story of “The Orange Girl” begins. Interestingly, this story begins in the real town Oslo, Norway – a modern setting for the fairy story. Even the way Gaarder begins the story is quite similar to the fairytale as Olav relates the story that took place long way back. He writes, “The story of the Orange Girl began one afternoon when I was standing outside the National Theatre waiting for a tram. It was sometime towards the end of the 1970s, and it was late autumn” (18). In the course of his narration of his story, he gives the actual date in the modern time. Olav relates

that he finally catches the tram which is jam-packed with people; then he tells Georg what he notices inside bus is a lovely girl standing in the aisle clutching a huge paper bag brimful of luscious-looking oranges, who is wearing an old, “orange anorak” (18). Gaarder frequently uses the yellow colour image to describe the girl which he does not reveal its significance. He keeps it a mystery because he tells Georg that it “wasn’t really the boy of oranges that made the biggest impression on me, but the young woman herself” (18). The girl fixes a level gaze on Olav and he says that she impressed him in such a way that he would never forget her as he says that “she exercised an almost uncanny power over me” (19). This shows that the girl possesses some special characteristics which Olav finds enchanting. Olav makes his story more interesting by complementing on her beauty and comparing her to a squirrel. Here, Gaarder presents an animal image – an element of fairy tale. Olav narrates:

Her smile had enticed a couple of dimples out into her cheeks and, though it had nothing to do with them, she reminded me of a squirrel; she was certainly every bit as cute. If we really had spent a life together, perhaps it was as two squirrels in a tree, I thought, and the idea of living a playful squirrel’s life with this mysterious orange girl was uninviting. (19)

As Olav is traveling in the same tram with the girl, he relates that the ‘mysterious girl’ has a bag full of approximately eight or ten kilos of oranges. When the tram comes to a sudden halt and Olav pushes her, the bag falls down her hand and the oranges are scattered all over the floor of the tram. The oranges fall on people’s laps, which makes Olav feel guilty for the embarrassment that the girl goes through as he somehow holds himself responsible for what happens

to the girl. He feels as if he “had ruined her life” (21). Olav writes that he has ruined his own life as he has developed a crush on the girl. He even takes armful of oranges which he refuses to part with. After the tram pulls up at the next stop, and the girl requests him to give back some of her oranges, he refuses as he says: “I nodded in confusion to what, in my eyes, was the almost supernatural orange girl, and the next moment she simply picked up one of the oranges from my precarious armful and vanished into the street as playfully as a sprite in a fairy tale” (22).

When the “The Orange Girl” vanishes Olav embarks on the search for her like a prince seeking for the princess. He paces up and down Frogner for hours whole afternoon. He sees everything vaguely resembling an ‘orange anorak’. But the girl seems to have evaporated. At another moment, he imagines himself to be like a “perplexed hero in the film of an action-packed fairy tale. He couldn’t find the princess he was seeking. No effort was spared, but he was totally unable to track her down. It was as if the whole film had got caught in a loop” (24). In the course of following her, Olav sees some fresh orange peel in a rubbish bin, which he takes as a last trace of her presence; he follows her because he feels that as if by magic she manages to interpose herself between him and the rest of the world.

As the fairy tales are generally meant for children or addressed to children, in *The Orange Girl* Olav addresses directly to Georg by the name in between his narration of his story of the elusive girl. Though Georg strongly feels that it is hard to grow up without a father, it only gets really scary when his dead father begins to speak to him from the grave because the thought of his father’s hint at “coming back as a ghost” makes him live in fear. Georg, puzzled

by his father's strange acts, calls his father "weirdo" (28). Olav is engrossed in the nightmarish image of the girl in such a way that he starts seeing her in the same orange anorak with an identical bag of oranges which "seem as unreal as a mirage" (30). The Orange Girl becomes a fairy to Olav because everything seems elusive about her. Olav writes:

From that moment on the oranges began to form the kernel of the truth I had to seek out. What kind of oranges were they anyway? Their golden skins seemed to shine so brightly that I felt like rubbing my eyes. Their colour was of quite a different hue to the oranges I'd seen before. Even with the peel on I seemed to be able to smell their tanginess. Ordinary oranges they certainly were not!

(30)

Then Olav poses a mystery about the Orange girl. He presents a problem – a riddle to Georg to solve about the girl as he cannot solve himself at the beginning. When Olav finds her next time with the same orange bag, he no longer feels shy. He only senses a cool power flowing out through her fingers and into his. He thinks that she "possessed some kind of supernatural power, and . . . it was connected with the oranges in some way . . . a riddle . . . a marvelous riddle!" (32). So, Olav believes some powerful but inscrutable forces at work" (32). "The Orange Girl" thus seems to be quite elusive. Olav has a very short moment of meeting before she rises gracefully and sails out of the café with the great bundle in her arms. Gaarder writes:

Only four lines have been spoken by these two. Her: 'you twit!
Her: 'Can I have an orange to take with me?' him: 'sorry, sorry!
And him: 'you're a squirrel!' the rest is dumb- show. The rest is a

riddle. Can you solve this riddle, Georg? I couldn't, and may be that was because I was a part of. (34).

However many times Olav has tried to find the girl, Olav has been able to see her twice up to now, as Georg now calls her a "chimera". He even draws analogy between "a sea monster" and the girl. (34)

Olav goes on describing "The Orange Girl" as she has the hobby of buying different varieties of oranges. He sees her haggling over the price of a ten-kilo bag of oranges. She enjoys making every effort to pick out oranges that are as different from another as possible, in size, shape and colour. This makes Olav feel and say. A riddle she was, and a riddle she remained" (40). When Olav sees the girl next time, she is not seen in the orange anorak this time and no big bag of oranges on her lap. She is wearing a black coat and her hair is "gathered at her neck by a large hair-clip of what looked like silver, yes, the purest fairy tale silver; perhaps that hair-clip was fashioned by one of the seven dwarfs who, time and again, save show-white's life" (48). She seems a genuine orange girl . . . full of seductive secrets . . . taken from another fairy tale with quite different rules from ours". (49). Olav at times has taken her as a "spy" but he at another time has taken her as a religious figure "celebrating the birth of our saviour" (49). Olav further mentions angle to go around the orange girl on the Christmas day. The girl has the magical silver hair-clip when anything can happen. Anything angels float clandestinely down and orange girl through the streets as if nothing untoward was happening" (50).

At their meeting, "The Orange Girl" speaks very little. She says to him, "it's you . . . you were a real twit . . . don't worry about it; you were so sweet" (52). The girl is from quite a different fairy tale from the ordinary ones, and

therefore from a fairy tale with very different rules. As we can well perceive that there are two parallel universes, the one containing our sun and the moon, the other with the unfathomable fairy tale on which the orange girl had suddenly begun to open the door. As he has already compared the girl with a squirrel which lives sometimes there and Olav names his story as a fairy tale “Come-Into-My- Dream” (53). When Olav and the girl depart, she hurriedly stops a passing taxi, which reminds him of the fairy tales Cinderella, in which Cinderella “had to hurry home from the ball before the clock struck midnight or the spell would be broken” (54). And he himself compares himself to the prince of Cinderella who is “left alone on the palace balcony – deserted alone” (54). At the time of departing, when Olav asked her when they can meet next time, she replies that he can meet her after six months, which makes Olav sad as he cannot wait for even five minutes as he says: “I can wait until my heart bleeds with sorrow” (56). Olav is surprised as he cannot understand why the girl wants to keep Olav away for six months. She even assures him that they can stay together for the next six months. She does not disclose the reason. This is a real mystery for Olav. To his surprise, the girl knows his name is Olav without asking him. Olav poses this riddle to solve before Georg as follows:

How are you doing, Georg? Can you? 1) say why she bought so many oranges; 2) tell me why she looked deep into my eyes and held my hand in the café without saying so much as a word; 3) say why she studied each and every orange she brought at Youngstorget fruit market – perhaps to prevent any two looking identical; 4) discover any clues as to why we couldn't see each

other for six months; and 5) guess the biggest conundrum of all, how she knew my name. (60)

Olav then tells Georg that if he could solve this riddle, he would know the reality regarding “The Orange Girl”. Olav at the same time accepts that he has not been able to read the clues and make any diagnosis. This makes Georg suspicious about the girl, so he questions whether she was “a witch who managed to bewitch” his father (70). Perhaps, as a result he died and he couldn’t share this with his son. Georg recollects his father’s earlier narration: “She just squeezed my hand firmly and tenderly- as if we were soaring weightlessly about in space, as if we’d drunk our fill of intergalactic milk and had the entire universe to ourselves” (70). Georg questions whether the girl could be from another planet so that his father frequently talks about Hubble Space Telescope.

As the girl already knows Olav’s first name, he believes that she must know his surname as well. Olav writes that she knows the address of his old house in Humleveien. Olav finds it wonderful to have the girl who knows everything about him that the explanation of the riddle itself. She does not disclose the fact that she went all the way to Spain at their meeting – like Cinderella who leapt into her carriage only seconds before it was turned into a pumpkin” (75). Olav tries to explain to Georg that “perhaps the orange girl walked undercover for the UN’s inspectorate of oranges (UNIO)” (76). Perhaps “a wholly new and horrendous orange disease has developed, so she was constantly at the Youngstorget fruit market inspecting the condition of the oranges” (76). That is why she took her weekly samples. Olav offers another explanation as he writes:

Perhaps she had been all the way to China. I'd found out long before that the orange originally came from china. But if The Orange Girl had gone on a pilgrimage all the way to china, where once the planet's first orange had blossomed, I still could never have sent a post card with an address like The Orange Girl, China. It would have been much too difficult for the Chinese postman to find her amongst more than a billion other people. I should have succeeded all right, but I could not guarantee that the Chinese postman would be as diligent as me.

When Olav could not trace the whereabouts of the orange girl, he visits different places – cities and towns borrowing money from his parents for the air tickets. He then visits the Orange Courtyard which the girl earlier frequented leaves a note for her, which reads: “I've been thinking of you as well. No I can't wait any longer” and in that he adds a little matchstick drawing of his face. But at second thoughts, Olav remembers her rules. This reminds Olav of the story of Cinderella. He asks Georg why Cinderella had to be back from the ball before midnight thus:

If Cinderella is to get the prince, she must tear herself away from the ball before midnight. It's as simple and straightforward as that. She must abide by the rules. If not, she will lose her ball gown, and her carriage will get turned into a pumpkin. And so she ensures she gets home before the stroke of twelve – she just makes it – losing only a glass slipper on the way. Oddly enough, it's this slipper that leads the prince to her in the end. The two ugly sisters did break the rules, and they really got it in the neck. (78-79)

Olav comes to the conclusion that if he managed to see the Orange Girl with a large bag of oranges in her arms on the Christmas Eve three times in a row she would be his. But Olav expresses his helplessness and impatience to wait that long. He finds the note of “The Orange Girl” which says: “I’ve been thinking of you. Can you wait little longer? (80). Olav grows impatient and breaks the rules as he goes to Spain to meet her. After waiting for four and a half hours in the Plaza de la Alianza, “The Orange Girl” comes

fluttering into the orange plaza. Not in old anorak, of course . . . she was dressed in a little fairytale summer frock, which glowed as red as the bougainvillea that festooned a high wall in the background and had long attracted my admiration. Perhaps she’d borrowed Sleeping Beauty’s dress, I thought, or pinched it from one of the fairies. (83).

Olav relates that a young man is with the girl when he notices her. He imagines the moment when Olav must have looked rather like the grate Cinderella was cleaning out when the prince arrived to save the yoke of her step-mother and two ugly sisters. They notice him, but actually it is not the Orange Girl who picks Olav out first, but the bearded man. He clutches the Orange Girl’s arm, points him and says in such a loud and distinct voice that the whole plaza could hear. But Olav is concerned for the girl. He writes:

The Orange Girl caught sight of me under the orange tree. For an instant or two she stood stock still by a large fountain in the middle of the plaza and stared at me, but she was struck so motionless that after the first second it looked as if she’d been in that same attitude for a full hour or two and could no longer break

out of it. But then she did move. Sleeping Beauty had slept for a hundred years, but now she had come back to life again as if it was only a split second since she'd fallen asleep. She came running over to me, put an arm round my neck and simply repeated what the Dane had said: 'Jan Olav!' (84)

The man whom Olav thinks of as an evil character leaves saying "it looks as if I'm in the way here" (84). Olav then feels relieved with the departure of that man and he finds himself with his beloved. So he says: "We were rid of him. The guardian angels were on my side" (84). The girl then reminds of his not following the rules set by her.

When Olav implores that he could not wait that long and demands everything that she did mysteriously, explained to him, the Orange Girl asks him if he did not remember her. Olav says that he needs some clues. Then she mentions the birthplace of him, Humleveien and hers, Irisvein, his neighbouring town. Then she reminds him of the roads he used to play and she also tells him about the detached house of Kloerveien, which was a large hummock with bushes and trees around it. At this, Olav seems to wake from deep hypnosis and the word "Veronika" comes from his mouth. Finally he realizes that the orange girl is no other than his childhood friend. When they were around seven years of age, Veronika's parents had left the city. Olav remembers the song which they would sing when playing together:

I know a little boy

Who'd like to play with a little girl.

All day long would be such joy,

In our very own world . . . (88)

Though Olav solves the major puzzle regarding the identity of “The Orange Girl,” he still finds many unanswered questions as his acquaintance with girl has almost driven him crazy, has certainly shaken his “existence to its core” (88). Veronika explains to Olav that she wanted him “to discover her all over again,” to recognize her all over again. This is the philosophical point that Gaarder makes her – though we see and encounter many things everyday in this world, we just take them for granted; we do not question them and see them critically. This is the way to learn about human life and the world. Veronika wanted Olav to understand all this, so she acted like a fairy tale heroine and talked in riddle.

The Orange Girl also tells him that she wanted him to be true to her so she maintained a distance from him. This she makes clear by saying that she is different from all the women; he found her special, so he followed her. She says that no two similar things or beings are exactly alike in the earth: “No two orange are alike, Jan Olav. Even two blades of grass aren’t alike” (94). At this, Olav feels foolish as he failed to take note of such things. They stay at a rented room and Olav spends the night telling Veronika various long tales full of amusing details unit far into the night. It seems finally the fairy tale hero and heroine are reunited after a long time parting with each other. Next day when they wake up, Olav finds his love Veronika in his lap. He no longer can tell what is “imagination and what is reality” (96). He finds her as his life partner. In this way, Olav relates his life experience to his son in a fairy tale narrative so as to make explore the human life and the world in a much critical way. So, Olav keeps reminding his son Georg about the scientific development as he frequently talks about the Hubble Space Telescope. Olav clarifies:

I believe I've used the world 'riddle' many times in this letter. Attempting to understand the universe is perhaps comparable to doing a great jigsaw puzzle. . . . It's as much a mental or intellectual riddle, and we may have the answer to it within us. We are here, after all; we are the universe. Perhaps we are not fully developed. The physical development of human beings necessarily had to precede the psychological. Perhaps the physical nature of the universe is merely a necessary external material for its own self-awareness. (109)

Gaarder, through the narration of Olav, talks about the evolution and the existence of the physical world instead of magic about the world. He does not talk about the imaginative and far-fetched subjects. Olav further relates how Newton suddenly understood the existence of universal gravity. He further writes:

I've got a crazy notion: Darwin had an almost equally spontaneous insight into biological development on earth. Great. The Einstein discovered a correlation between mass, energy and the speed of light. Excellent! And, in 1953. Crick and Watson demonstrated how the DNA molecule, the genetic material of plants and animals, was constructed. Brilliant! But then one could also imagine a day – and what a day it would be Georg! – a day when some pensive soul had a flash of inspiration and solved the very mystery of the universe. (109)

What Olav does here through this explanation is that he is teaching his son about the scientific exploration of the exploration of the world. But he teaches this

through a different technique which is similar to that of a fairytale. This makes Georg think about the cosmic exploration and he comes to understand that his father wanted to ask him to study everything about that. As his father had wrote that The Hubble Space Telescope is “a cosmic sensory organ”, Georg can now understand that mankind has taken one step further by putting the Space Telescope into the orbit round the planet (111). Georg discovers that scientists had powerful telescope and space shuttle in 1990. He comes to realize that it is a great leap forward for the universe because it is on behalf of the entire universe that man is trying to find an answer to what the universe is. He concludes that “it has taken the universe almost fifteen years to graft on something as fundamental as an eye to see itself by” (111). In order to arrive at such thesis, it takes a whole hour for Georg. This is because of his father’s inspiration that he becomes engaged in the study of science.

Olav also associates the role of Veronika, “The Orange Girl,” in making him see this world from different perspective. He mentions that it was Veronika who taught “me to look more closely at the finer points of nature, and there were so many of them. We might pick a blue anemone or a violet and stand there studying the little wonder for minutes on end. Wasn’t the world just one enormous fairytale?” (113). Olav himself compares the world with a grand fairytale as he weaves the mystery of this world in a fairytale-like fashion. But he set the story in the modern time and scientific subject. Olav further says to georg:

Imagine that you were on the threshold of this fairytale, sometime billions of year ago when everything was created. And you are able to choose whether you wanted to be born to a life on this

planet at some point. You wouldn't know when you were going to be born, nor how long you'd live for' but at any event it wouldn't be more than a few years. All you'd know was that, if you chose to come into the world at some point, you'd also have to leave it again one day and go away from everything. (125)

In this way, Olav after many years of his death, through his fairytale narrative technique, helps his son to explore the human life and this world in an imaginative and philosophical way. So, the novel *The Orange Girl* is a modern fairytale with a philosophical twist.

Besides, the story is written in two point of views - Georg being the narrator and Georg's father through the letter. The style of portraying this story in a magical way, starting from Georg's father's encounter with the "Orange Girl" till the end is really wonderful. This shows Gaarder's creativity of weaving this magical story from the ordinary, everyday life issues without making it dull or depressing at all, no matter how close they are to reality. This is a powerful book, one remarkable story that leads everyone into thinking of the meaning of life and death, and how life could be appreciated even in small, simple ways. It is truly a wonderful story that will not only enthrall the younger readers but to the adults as well.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

This present research work on Jostein Gaarder's *The Orange Girl* interprets the book as a modern fairytale as. The study examines the use of fairytale narrative techniques which Gaarder employs to lead the readers to a philosophical inquiry about human existence and the short amount of time humans have to spend on the earth. The book is set in the modern town of Norway, and the real events and dates are mentioned. Though Gaarder infuses the elements of mystery, he does not use the magic as it is used in the traditional fairytales. Rather, he makes use of scientific realism. The story deals with the philosophical issue as it is more about contemplating questions about life than answering them. In the novel, Georg Roed is a normal fifteen year-old young college boy who discovers a long letter written to him, by his late father, Jan Olav more than a decade ago. This letter which is found behind the pushchair by Georg's grandmother takes on the role of a letter from 'beyond the grave,' allowing Georg to come to know his father in a way he would otherwise never have been able to achieve. The purpose of his father's letter is to tell Georg the story of the mysterious "Orange girl," for whom Georg's father searched in Oslo and Seville, and to make him solve this mystery of life that lay ahead. He tells his story about how he had met the Orange Girl, and how his choice on their fairytale-like relationship had in turn started or changed everything.

His father keeps asking him to solve the mystery from behind the grave. Georg becomes obsessed with finding the identity of the girl, but in the end, it reveals him his own identity. Georg finally manages to solve the

mystery as he realizes that this elusive and mysterious girl is mother than his own mother. So, by using his typical narrative technique in *The Orange Girl*, Gaarder re-lightens the magic of fairy tales but in a modern setting in Norway.

The Orange Girl is a thought-provoking fairy-tale romance imbued with the sense of awe and wonder. The story is inspiring and captivating story as it provides the readers with a lesson that we should not cease to explore human life and the world and the end of all our exploration is to arrive at some conclusion. The story is very interesting and the moral is inspiring. The prose in the book is extremely simple but the setting is modern and narrative includes both the first and the third person, giving book the feel of a modern fairy tale. To unravel the riddle of the “Orange Girl,” Georg Roed must make use of the philosophy and his learning. But the truth is more complicated than he could have imagined. The story is search for wisdom, spirituality and love.

The Orange Girl is a remarkable tale about the most magical of all fairy tales. Ingredients of a fairytale can be found in the novel. Fairytale elements like setting, dreams, magic, riddle, comic charm and spiritual enlightenment are subtly embedded to the novel. But the setting is modern unlike in the traditional fairytales. Gaarder’s narrator, Olav himself compares the world with a grand fairytale as he weaves the mystery of this world in a fairytale-like fashion. But he set the story in the modern time and scientific subject. The teachings of a wise old man, a house with Hubble Space Telescope, and a modern decorated table with the computer on it all reinforce that *The Orange Girl* is designed on the trajectory of a modern fairy tale.

Gaarder's strategy for revealing the truth to Georg Roed is a significant aspect of the novel. In this way, by following the structural pattern of a modern fairy tale, Gaarder creates philosophical intensity to overcome depression and isolation of Jan Olav on the one hand and to enlighten his son on the other. In this way *The Orange Girl* is a modern fairy tale as Gaarder takes scientific subjects and the most ordinary happenings and writes about them in a magical way, creating a truly refreshing tale though he does not make use of the magic as used in the traditional fairytales.

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