

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The first half of the concluding chapter focuses on style and the technical aspects of fairy tales. The second half sums up the different dimensions of the fairy tales. Fairy tales have a unique style of their own. The various narrative techniques used enhance the impact of the fairy tales and capture the attention of the readers.

Locations or settings of the stories give a framework to the fairy tales. The major part of the stories is set in royal castles or palaces or forests. In *Indian Fairy Tales*, most of the action takes place in forests or in palaces as in *How the Raja's Son Won the Princess Labam*, *The Ivory City and the Fairy Princess*, *The Son of Seven Queens*, *The Boy with Moon on His Forehead and Star on His Chin* *Loving Laili*. Andersen's *The Princess and the Pea*, *The Little Sea Maid*, *The Wicked Prince*, *The Nightingale* and *The Wild Swans* are mostly located in forests or palaces.

Generally, fairy tales have a special beginning and a special ending. 'Once upon a time' or 'Long long ago' or 'Once there was a king' are some of the well-known beginnings. Likewise, one could find endings like 'They lived happily ever after' as in *Thumbelina* and *The Butterfly*. But, however, it seems Andersen intentionally wanted to avoid this beaten path and has chosen to pioneer a path of his own. Fairy tales use simple and elegant language, as ornate style is difficult for children and common people to understand. Even the symbols and images used in these stories are simple and not complex.

“Narratology means ‘the study of narrative structures. Narratology is a branch of structuralism’ (qtd. in Barry: 222). According to Aristotle, there are three major elements in a plot. They are: the hamartia, the anagnorisis, the peripeteia. The hamartia means a ‘sin’ or ‘fault’ in a character. It is also called a ‘tragic-flaw’. Karen’s tragic-flaw in *The Red Shoes* is her vanity and her obsession with red shoes. A poor orphan in a miserable condition, she is adopted by a lady and her life improves. Instead of remaining grateful to her savior, she ignores her duty and chooses to go to a dance to show off her red shoes. Her vanity and pride drive her to perdition. She not only loses her patron and guardian but also her legs and finally her life. Karen’s suffering is all due to her vanity, ingratitude and self-centeredness.

In *Under the Willow Tree*, the hero, Knud’s tragic-flaw is he just lives in the past not realizing that he is only a cobbler’s assistant now, while the girl he loved has moved up the ladder and has become an adorable creature and an opera singer. In no way, he is suitable for her. Instead of accepting the reality and moving on with life, he still pines for her, knowing fully well it is futile. Hence he comes to a tragic end. At least, in the case of Karen, in the end, she makes peace with the Lord and passes away peacefully.

“The anagnorisis means ‘recognition’ or ‘realisation’, this being a moment in the narrative when the truth of the situation is recognized by the protagonist — often it’s a moment of self-recognition”(qtd. in Barry: 224). This stage in the life of Karen comes to her just before her death. She realizes her folly and gracefully accepts her punishment and makes peace with the Lord. But in the case of Knud, this stage does not come up at all, which is even more tragic.

“The peripeteia means a ‘turn-round’ or ‘reversal of fortune’. In classical tragedy, this is usually a fall from high to low estate as the hero falls from greatness”(qtd. in Barry: 224).

In the case of Karen, this turn-around goes up and down. She loses her mother and becomes a miserable orphan, she goes up when she is adopted by a lady, who provides for her and tries to educate and improve her status in life. But when Karen ignores her duty and lets her guardian die unattended; her state in life goes down again, actually, worse than what it was when the story starts. She loses her legs and finally dies. Thus, in the story of Karen, the turn-around is down-up-and-down. In the case of Knud, though he is sincere, hardworking and diligent, he does not get an opportunity to raise his station in life. But Joanna, gets this opportunity when she becomes a famous opera singer. This turn-around raises her station.

Vladimir Propp, states that in most of the fairy tales “one of the family members absents himself from home”(qtd. in Barry: 227). In *Punchkin*, the heroine Balna is abducted by the wicked magician, Punchkin. In *Thumbelina*, the heroine Thumbelina is abducted by a toad. In *The Boy with a Moon on his Forehead and Star on his Chin*, Katar saves the baby prince from the four wicked queens and hides him in his stomach and carries him to woods. This provides the twist to the story and takes it to its climax, when, truth triumphs after difficulties, fights and struggles. Balna's son leaves home in search of his father, uncles and mother.”The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked which prepares the way for his receiving either a magical event or helper. The villain is defeated. The hero is married and ascends the throne”(qtd. in Barry: 227). Balna's son fights with Punchkin and rescues all his family members with the help of a Malee. In the tale, *The Boy with a Moon on his Face and a Star on his Chin*, the prince at the end meets his father with the help of the fairy horse, Katar, punishes all the four wicked queens and rescues his mother from their custody and finally, he ascends the throne. It also happens in the story, *The Son of the Seven Queens*. The prince with the help of the wise princess rescues his mother and six aunts from the custody of the witch

and her daughter. He also rescues his father who was enchanted by the witch and her daughter for many years. He restores the eyes of his mother and aunts from the witch. Finally, he kills the witch and her daughter, marries the princess and ascends the throne. In all the above stories, the villains are defeated and destroyed and the heroes ascend the throne. They also marry the princesses of their choice.

According to Gerard Genette there are two basic narrative modes. They are 'mimetic' or 'diegetic'.

'Mimesis' is 'slow telling', in which what is done and said is 'staged' for the reader, creating the illusion that we are 'seeing' and 'hearing' things for ourselves. By contrast, 'diegesis' means 'telling' or 'relating'. The parts of a narrative which are presented in this way are given in a more 'rapid' or 'panoramic' or 'summarising' way. The aim is to give us essential or linking information as effectively as possible, without trying to create the illusion that the events are taking place before our eyes—the narrator just says what happens, without trying to show it as it happens.(qtd. in Barry: 231)

With poetic and vivid descriptions, Andersen brings a beautiful picture to the mind of the reader with minute details. One can easily visualize the setting in the tales of Andersen. His style is elegant, aesthetic, sensitive, graceful and lucid. He gives importance both to form and content, whereas in *Indian Fairy Tales*, the content is given more importance than the form.

Andersen chooses mimetic mode and describes the little elves from the flowers in *The Rose Elf* graphically and poetically. "Each flower opened, and invisible, but armed with poisonous spears, the flower-souls came out and seated themselves in his ear, and told him

bad dreams, and then flew across his lips and pricked his tongue"(HCA 379). His description of the city of Nuremberg in *Under the Willow Tree* makes the reader visualize the city in his mind:

Nuremberg is a wonderful old city, and looks as if it were cut out of an old picture-book. The streets seem to stretch themselves along just as they please; the houses do not like standing in regular ranks. Gables with little towers, arabesques and pillars, start out over the pathway, and from the strange peaked roofs water-spouts, formed like dragons or great slim dogs, extend far over the street.(HCA 506-507)

In *The Red Shoes*, Karen's reformation and her making peace with the Lord are put in soothing, peaceful words, "...then the sun burst forth, and overhead a little bird sang out, and the church bells sounded for early service. Everything was holy around her, and her heart was chastened"(HCA 497).

Andersen's description of the undersea world is also noteworthy in *The Little Sea Maid*. "The great amber windows were opened, and then the fishes swam into them; just as the swallows fly in to us when we open our windows; but the fishes swam straight up to the Princesses, ate out of their hands; and let themselves be stroked"(HCA 543). In *The Wild Swans*, Andersen brings out the pain and forbearance of the heroine in graceful words. "But a heavier ring lay close around her heart—sorrow for her brothers; she did not feel the bodily pain. Her mouth was dumb, for a single word would cost her brothers their lives, but her eyes glowed with love for the kind, handsome King, who did everything to rejoice her[...] but she was compelled to be dumb, and to finish her work in silence" (HCA 569).

Generally, the narration is simple and plain in *Indian Fairy Tales*. Even in places where there is scope for using poetic, descriptive, flowery, artistic and ornate words, Jacobs prefers diegetic mode and uses plain and simple words. In *How the Raja's Son Won Princess Labam*, Jacobs describes the parting of the prince with his parents in simple, plain words. "Then he himself got his horse all ready for the journey, and he said good-bye to his father and mother; and his mother took her handkerchief wrapped some sweetmeats in it"(IFT 5). Again the language was simple in *The Son of Seven Queens*. "The king was so carried away by the glamour of the white hind's magical beauty, that he went home at once, had the eyes of his seven queens taken out"(IFT 118). In *The Charmed Ring*, Jacobs describes the arrival of the prince and the snake in a matter of fact and routine words. "The young man and the snake reached their destination in safety; and information of their arrival was sent to the Raja. His Highness commanded his son and the stranger to appear before him" (IFT 92). In *Punchkin*, Jacobs for a change uses elegant and vivid prose. "Many many weary miles did he travel, till at last he came to a thick jungle; and, being very tired, sat down under a tree and fell asleep. He was awakened by a soft rustling sound, and looking about him, saw a large serpent which was making its way to an eagle's nest built in the tree under which he lay, and in the nest were two young eagles"(IFT 35).

There are two types of focalization: external and internal focalization:

For external focalization "the viewpoint is outside the character depicted, so that we are told only things which are external or observable — that is, what the characters say and do, these being things you would hear and see for yourself if you were present at the scene depicted. In the opposite, 'internal' focalization, the focus is on what the characters think and feel, these being

things which would be inaccessible to you even if you had been present. (qtd. in Barry :232-233)

Internal focalization can be found in all the dream stories of Andersen like *The Little Match Girl* and *Under the Willow Tree*. *The Little Match Girl* wants to get united with her dead grandmother, who according to her is the only person who loved her. Hence she often dreams of that happy occasion. Knud in *Under the Willow Tree* dreams of marrying his childhood love, Joanna. Internal focalization occurs when the protagonists become voiceless or remain silent out of some compulsion.

The mermaid in *The Sea Maid* is unable to express her love to the prince as she has sacrificed her voice to the sea witch to get human legs in return. The princess in *The Wild Swans* keeps weaving without uttering a single word so as to rescue her eleven brothers, who have become swans. Hence, what goes on in her mind is explained through internal focalization.

Generally, most of the stories, both Indian and Western are examples of external focalization.

There are two kinds of narrators. One kind narrator(the kind often goes with zero- focalized narrative) is not identified at all as a distinct character with a name and a personal history, and remains just a voice or a tone, which we may register simply as an intelligent, recording consciousness, a mere ‘telling medium’ which strives for neutrality and transparency. Such narrators may be called ‘covert’, ‘effaced’, ‘non-intrusive’ or ‘non-dramatised’. (qtd. in Barry: 233-234)

All Andersen's tales belong to the first type – zero-focalized narrative. This type is followed in some Indian Fairy Tales also. In *Punchkin*, *The Charmed Ring* and *The Son of the Seven Queens* from *The Indian Fairy Tales*, the story is told by a narrator and the narrator is not a character in the tale. The narrator is an outside voice.

The other kind of narrator is the kind who is identified as a distinct, named character, with a personal history, gender, a social-class position, distinct likes and dislikes, and so on. These narrators have witnessed, or learned about, or even participated in the events they tell. They can be called 'overt' or 'dramatised' or 'intrusive' narrators.[...] These dramatised narrators can be of various kinds: the heterodiegetic' narrator is one who is not a character in the story he or she narrates, but an outsider to it. (qtd. in Barry:234)

All the animal stories like *The Lion and the Crab*, *The Talkative Tortoise*, *The Cruel Crane Outwitted* and *The Pigeon and the Crow* are told by Bodisatta(Buddha) in the first person. Bodisatta is a character in all the stories. He narrates the story. He is assumed to be one of the main characters and the stories happen in his previous births.

Time is another important aspect of narratives. In a few tales, the reader is informed about what is going to happen in the future. In some tales, flash-back mode is used. This flash- forward and flash-back are technically called – Proleptic and Analeptic . Sometimes the story will 'flash-back' to relate an event which happened in the past and such parts of the narrative can be called 'analeptic'. Likewise, the narrative may 'flash-forward' to narrate, or refer to, or anticipate an event which happens later: such parts of the narrative can be called 'proleptic'. (qtd. in Barry :235).

All animal stories in *Indian Fairy Tales* are in the flashback or analeptic mode. The narrator of the tale, *The Lion and the Crane*, is Bodisatta. Only at the end, the reader is told that the lion was the traitor. The Lion was Devadatta, and the Crane was Bodisatta himself. The tale, *The Talkative Tortoise*, was narrated by the king Brahmadata's adviser. The king's adviser is none other than the future Buddha.

Many tales are in the proleptic mode as in *The Soothsayer's Son*, and *Loving Laili* from *Indian Fairy Tales* and *The Wild Swans* and *The Sea Maid* from Andersen. *The Soothsayer's Son* is about a prophecy. Everything happens to Gangazara according to his horoscope. It predicts four things: First, he has to endure poverty from birth. Second, he would spend ten long years in jail. Third, he would die on a sea shore. Fourth, he would live happily after that. Gangazara is confused. He wonders how a man could lead a happy life after death. But everything happens according to the predictions. In the tale, *Loving Laili*, Laili dreams that Khuda, God, through an angel directs her to marry Prince Majnun and nobody else. What she has dreamt becomes a reality that she marries Majnun.

The tale *The Wild Swans* is also in the proleptic mode. About the middle of the tale, the reader gets an idea about how the tale is going to end. The fairy warns Elisa that if her brothers who have been transformed as swans are to regain their old form, she has to gather stinging nettles and knit shirts for them, keeping silent all the time. If she fails, then her brothers will never regain their form. While reading this, the reader easily concludes that eventually she will win and her brothers will gain their human form. The question then is what hurdles she will have to cross and how she achieves this.

In *The Sea Maid*, to the dismay of the heroine, the little sea maid, the prince marries the princess. All her sufferings and sacrifices become meaningless. In despair, she looks for

death. But her sisters intervene and give her a knife from the sea witch. If she kills the prince before dawn, she can regain her old form as mermaid, her sufferings will end and she can lead a normal life again. Knowing the character of the little sea maid, the reader surmises that she would never do such a thing and the story is going to end tragically. This actually happens. Her true love prevents the mermaid from killing the prince. Instead, she throws herself into the sea to die. But she is transformed into foam. She becomes a spirit and the daughter of the air.

Stories are not always presented 'straight'. Often writers make use of 'frame narratives' (also called 'primary narratives'), which contain within them 'embedded narratives' (also called 'secondary narratives'). The 'primary narrative' really just means the narrative which comes first, rather than the main narrative, which in fact it usually isn't. The 'secondary narrative' is the one which comes second and is embedded into the primary narrative. The secondary narrative is usually the main story. (qtd. in Barry: 235).

In some of the *Indian Fairy Tales* like *The Lion and the Crab*, *The Talkative Tortoise*, *The Cruel Crane Outwitted* and *The Pigeon and the Crow*, there is primary as well as secondary narrative. The story starts with primary narrative and switches over to secondary narrative. The main story is said in secondary narrative.

A story has three basic elements: A beginning, middle and an end. All stories have this basic pattern. All the tales of Andersen have been written in this pattern. But there are some exceptions too. *The Tortoise*, *the Pigeon and the Crow*, *The Lion and the Crane* and *The Cruel Crane Outwitted* from the *Indian Fairy Tales* follow a different pattern altogether. There is a story within a story. There is a beginning of a story then there is beginning of

another story, then comes the middle and the end is followed by the end of former story. All the above stories begin with the story of Bodhisatta and Brahamadatta, followed by the story of animals.

In Andersen's stories, there is usually one narrative. The story is told in a single narrative or frame narrative. The narrator is not a character from the story but an outsider. Andersen's stories generally use third person omniscient narrator. He knows 'everything' about the story, and makes connections of which the individual characters are often unaware. At times, he is intrusive, making free comments on the characters and evaluating their actions; sometimes, he is unintrusive or impersonal, so that the reader is unaware of the narrator's presence. Stories are usually narrated in prose. Though some of the lines of Andersen are poetic, essentially all his writings are in prose. On the other hand, some Indian tales are narrated in prose and some in verse. In the following tales, one can find poetic descriptions and at the same time, elegant prose. In *The Lion and the Crab*, the crab that has been cheated by the lion and describes it in verse:

Ungrateful, doing no good,

Not doing as he would be done by,

In him there is no gratitude,

To serve him is useless.(IFT 2)

In *The Pigeon and the Crow*, the Pigeon curses the crow for its greediness thus:

You'll come to grief again, I know

It is your nature to do so;

If people make a dish of meat,

‘Tis not for little birds to eat. (IFT 225)

In *The Talkative Tortoise*, the future Buddha gives great philosophy of life in this simple verse:

Behold him then, O excellent by strength

And speak wise words, not out of season.

You see how, by his talking overmuch,

The tortoise fell into this wretched plight!(IFT 102)

The little lamb in *The Lambikin* joyfully sings poetically thus:

Fallen into the fire, and so will you

On little Drumikin. Tum-pa, tum too;

Tum-pa, tum too; Tum-pa, tum too!(IFT 19)

Andersen breaks away from the conventional way of storytelling. He beautifully blends reason and imagination, fact and fiction.

Elements of the short story, especially pathos and humour make the fairy tales more interesting and appealing. Pathos “in Greek meant the passions, or sufferings, or deep feeling generally, as distinguished from ethos, a person’s over all disposition or character. In modern criticism, however, pathos is applied in a much more limited way to a scene or passage that is designed to evoke the feelings of tenderness, pity, or sympathetic sorrow from the audience” (Abrahams 270). Andersen’s tales evoke pathos in the minds of reader and makes him empathize with the characters as in *The Little Match Girl*, *The Story of the Mother*, *The Child*

in the Grave, The Little Sea Maid and *Under the Willow Tree*. One could observe the overwhelming sadness in his tales:

The Little Match Girl dies, The Little Sea Maid is betrayed by her prince, the Fir Tree lies discarded after Christmas, sighing over past glories. Even tales that end happily — *The Snow Queen, The Ugly Duckling, Thumbelina, The Wild swans* — are heart-wrenching in their depiction of anguish endured along the way. Many readers find reading Andersen's tales a particularly wrenching experience—and yet they read them over and over, both attracted to and disturbed by their unflinching depiction of pain.(Feng Web)

The little match girl freezes to death on New Year's eve. "But in the corner, leaning against the wall, sat the poor girl with red cheeks and smiling mouth, frozen to death on the last evening of the old year. The New Year's sun rose upon a little corpse"(HCA 359). Many a reader may shed tears on reading these lines. They are so touching. These lines are so appealing that they may soften the heart of even tough-minded people. "When people heard the story of Little Girl with the Matches, they did not think of the author at all but wept like a child, unconscious of everything around them"(Feng Web). In *The Story of a Mother*, "A MOTHER sat by her little child: she was very sorrowful, and feared that it would die. Its little face was pale, and its eyes were closed. The child drew its breath with difficulty, and sometimes so deeply as if it were sighing; and then the mother looked more sorrowfully than before on the little creature"(HCA 88). This is another instance where the reader cannot go unaffected. The death of a child is painful not only to the mother but also to the reader. It saddens the reader and may make him shed tears, if he is soft-hearted.

In *The Child in the Grave*, “The sisters mourned as young hearts can, and were especially moved at the sight of their parents sorrow. The father was bowed down and the mother completely struck down by the great grief”(HCA 493). Here also the reader is inclined to share the grief of the bereaved family. Andersen brings to life the picture of the disconsolate mother so touchingly that after reading which no reader can remain unmoved:

Adults are always reduced to tears by Andersen’s tales — which are startling, fresh, and urgent in ways that we can only imagine, now that Andersen’s stories have acquired the patina of age and familiarity. Nineteenth century readers were particularly affected by the way the tales gave voice to the powerless — the young, the poor, the very old — and imbued them with special strength, wisdom, and connection to natural world(in opposition to the artifice of the reason or follies of society).(Feng Web)

“Humour is the term that grows back to the ancient theory that the particular mixture of the four humours determines each type of personality, and from the derivative application of the term “humourous” to one of the comically eccentric characters in the Elizabethan comedy of humours”(Abrahams 421). There is also subtle humor in some the tales like *The Emperor’s New Clothes*. The tardiness and sheepishness of the courtiers and the public, and the stupidity of the emperor evoke ridicule and laughter.

“Does your imperial majesty will condescend to undress?” said the cheats, “then we will put you on the new clothes ones here in front of the great mirror. The Emperor took off his clothes, and the cheats pretended to put on him each new garment as it was ready, and the emperor turned round and round before the mirror”(HCA 63). Andersen lampoons and ridicules the vanity and stupidity of the king and highlights the toadying nature of the

courtiers and false pretences of the people. He uses a child to expose them and put to shame all the others.

The Broken Pot is a humorous tale from the *Indian Fairy Tales*. The lazy hero day-dreams of selling his pot of rice and buying goats; then selling goats and buying cows; from cows to calves, to buffaloes, to mares, to horses, to gold, to house to marrying for dowry. He is so filled with self importance and arrogance, he dreams of kicking his wife. “While he thought this, he gave a kick with his foot, and broke the pot. All the rice fell over him, and made him quite white” (IFT 39). Foolish day-dreaming always results in misery. Building castles in the air is all right, provided one has strong foundations here on earth. This tale not only imparts a valuable message but also ridicules stupid day-dreaming. If one can visualize the dream of the hero and its end, one cannot avoid chuckling or guffawing.

The numbers three and seven are often used in fairy tales. Number three signifies light, spiritual awareness and unity (The Holy Trinity), the male principle. Number seven is the most potent of all symbolic numbers, signifying the union of three and four, the complement of the cycle, the perfect order. Four is associated with the life cycle, four seasons, female principle, earth, nature, four elements (earth, air, fire, water) as in *The Magic Fiddle*, *The Son of Seven Queens*, *Punchkin*, *The Tiger Brahman* and *The Jackal*, *The Soothsayer’s Son*, *In Pride Goeth before a Fall* from *Indian Fairy Tales* and *Andersen’s Thumbelina*, *The Tinderbox*, *The Snow Queen*, *The Little Sea Maid* and *The Little Match Girl*.

The Bonga girl in *The Magic Fiddle* has seven brothers. The Prince has seven mothers in *The Son of Seven Queens*. In *Punchkin* the King has seven daughters, Balna the heroine is the youngest of them all. The Brahman, in *The Tiger, Brahman and the Jackal*, prays for support against the tiger. He seeks the help of three — a pipal tree, a buffalo and a road. In

The Soothsayer's Son, the hero Gangazara rescues three animals — a tiger, serpent and a rat. In *Loving Laili*, Laili is separated thrice from her husband and united. In *Harisarman*, Harisarman cheats thrice — first his master and twice the king by his clever wit. In *The Charmed Ring*, the merchant's son gets three creatures — dog, cat, serpent from the money given by his father. In *Pride Goeth before a Fall*, three notorious robbers capture the cloth merchants. In *Thumbelina*, three creatures — toad, beetle, mouse — spoil Thumbelina's life. There are three monstrous dogs in the story *The Tinderbox*, which help the hero. The tale *The Snow Queen* has seven parts. The mermaid in *The Little Sea Maid* is the seventh and younger daughter of a sea king. She has six elder sisters. The match girl rubs three match sticks one by one against the wall before rubbing the entire bundle.

India being a land of many regional languages, *Indian Fairy Tales* are from many regions and many non-English words are used in translation. They are *Fakhir*, *Khuda*, *Pradhan*, *Bonga*, *Pipal Tree*, *Varana Tree* and *Jogi*. *Fakhir* is defined as “originally, a mendicant dervish. In mystical usage, the word fakir refers to man's spiritual need for God, who alone is self-sufficient. Fakirs are generally regarded as holy men who are possessed of miraculous powers, such as the ability to walk on fire” (Goli Web). *Khuda* means God. “Kut in Turkic means "the good luck bestowed upon a person" "the right (the power given by God) to be a leader, a ruler", "celebrated"” (Ancaliman Web). *Bonga* is “an idiot a silly person. *Bonga* is for males. *Bongii* for females. This word originates from Punjabi but it is a word commonly used affectionately with family and friends” (Hanks Web). *Pipal tree* is “fig tree of India noted for great size and longevity; lacks the prop roots of the banyan; regarded as sacred by Buddhists” (Lal Web). Sanskrit Dictionary defines *Varana tree* as a tropical tree and belonging to the family *Crataeva Roxburghii*. It is mentioned in the

Vedas as a sacred tree, capable of warding off inauspicious elements and evils and hence used in religious sacrifice. (Monier-Williams Web). “The *Jogi*”(also spelled *Jugi*, *Yogi*) is a Hindu community, found in North India [...] *Jogi* is a colloquial term for the "yogi", which refers to the people who practiced Yoga as part of their daily rituals” (Farlex Web).*Pradhan*: (also spelt as *Pradhan* (*Devanagari*: प्रधान) is a ministerial title used in regions of Hindu cultural tradition that equates to the more popular term Vizier in rank and function. The Sanskrit *pradhan* translates to "major" or "prime"; however, the more modern Hindi definitions provided by the Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary also include "chief" and "leader" (Farlex Web).*Brahman* is defined as “a member of the highest or priestly caste in the Hindu caste system. Also called (esp formerly): *Brahmin*”(Farlex Web). Here, in this tale, it is used to denote a person, a *Brahmin*, born in the priestly caste of the Hindus.

More than the content, the response, the tale evokes in the reader is considered to be important. It is obvious that the response of the readers would be purely subjective. What a tale evokes in the minds of different readers is bound to be different. Further, the frame of mind of the reader influences the response. Reader-response criticism “does not designate any one critical theory, but rather focuses on the process of reading a literary text that is shared by many of the critical modes”(Abrahams 330). Reader-response critics “feel that readers have been ignored in discussions of reading process, when they should have been the central concern” (Guerin 351). It is true and right that the writer cannot afford to ignore the reader and his response. In fact, this should be given more importance than normally done. The life of a tale or a narration depends largely on the response of the reader. If the readers simply

ignore it, then it will have to die. The reader-response theory empathetically states the importance of the reader:

The text is not the most important component; the reader is. In fact, there is no text unless there is a reader. And the reader is the only one who can say what the text is; in a sense, the reader creates the text as much as the author does. This being the case, to arrive at meaning, critics should reject the autonomy of the text and concentrate on the reader and the reading process, the interaction that takes place between the reader and the text.(Guerin 351)

The writer writes for the reader. If there is no reader, the writing has no value. For any writing to succeed, it needs not only the writer but also the reader. Both play vital roles. This is especially so in fairy tales. The very fact that fairy tales have survived so long and have withstood the onslaught of other competing media, like radio, television, newspapers, journals, magazines and stories belonging to other genres proves that it is able to sustain the interest of the reader. Further, even radio and television have started adopting fairy tales and playing them. Even movies have adopted fairy tales, making successful films. Any successful writer should be able to engage the reader and make him think. Only then the work has any value. Otherwise, it will be plain entertainment and will be lost; it cannot survive so many centuries.

Fairy tales have been studied from three perspectives: the children's perspective, the adult's perspective, and the critic's perspective. The child just enjoys the story. It has no expectations; it reads the story with an open mind. Fantasy, magic, supernatural elements appeal more to the child. Fairy tales arouse the curiosity of the child and engages its mind.

There are gaps which the child fills up with its own imagination and visualization. In dream, the child sees the tales re-enacted to its own satisfaction.

Fairy tales bring joy into a child's life. The mission of joy has not been fully preached, but we know that joy works toward physical health, mental brightness, and moral virtue. In the education of the future, happiness together with freedom will be recognized as the largest beneficent powers that will permit the individual of four, from his pristine, inexperienced self-activity, to become that final, matured, self-expressed, self-sufficient, socially developed educated man. Joy is the mission of art, and fairy tales are art products.(Kready Web)

Fairy tales expose the children to various dangerous and unsavoury elements of life like theft, trickery, violence so that when they encounter them later in life, they are prepared for it. "Fairy tales usually encompass object of trickery, mastery, power and justice, children in this age group (six to twelve) find the stories engage their own sense of moral and character. With fairy tale reading and exposure during grade school, children learn to identify and differentiate between right and wrong" (Cadena Web).

An adult looks for a message or valuable idea in the tales. An adult feels that it should not only entertain but also elevate. Though fairy tales are generally classified under children's literature, adults also enjoy reading them and find them interesting and stimulating. At times, they have a message not only for children but also for adults. This can be substantiated by the viewpoints of some adults.

Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist; but because they teach us that dragons can be beaten — whether they are fairy tale

dragons or real man-made human dragons that roam the earth as a curse to humanity [...] Fairy tales are not escape from reality; rather, they are the reality in a world in which good and evil are not abstract concepts, that no magic would save the human beings unless they had the wit and heart and courage to use their head[...].(Arjuna Web)

Tolkien also feels that fairy tales are for the entire humanity, not just for children, as they teach us about ourselves. “J.R.R. Tolkien says in his essay *On Fairy Stories*, fairy tales are not uniquely for children, but they are important for all of humanity. We need these tales, which are outside of our normal life, to teach us about ourselves”(qtd. in Spencer: Web).

Fairy tales are for adults also as they learn and their vistas broaden while teaching children these tales. There are many interpretations of fairy tales. It has different dimensions and connotations, ideas and viewpoints. Fairy tales have something to offer to every reader and it gives different insights when read at different stages of life. Hence, it retains its perennial interest and it remains new and refreshing forever.

While the majority of Andersen’s tales can be enjoyed by children, the best of them are written for adults as well lend themselves to varying interpretations according to the sophistication of the reader. Reading Andersen’s prose after growing up with abridged and altered versions of his stories can be a surprising experience. Andersen wrote children’s stories into which he carefully, skillfully embedded comedy, social critique, satire, and philosophy aimed at adult readers.(Feng Web)

A critic analyses the content as well as the technical aspects of the tales and evaluate their place in children’s literature from a scholarly angle. The critic is equally particular about

how it is being said. Critics who appreciate fairy tales find in them, mankind's struggle to humanize bestial, barbaric, evil and treacherous elements. The inference is this makes fairy tales worth-reading, for they are a reminder to the reader to struggle and face evil forces that crop up in life and take the joy out of life. As Jack Zipes states," The Fairy tale emanates from specific struggles to humanize bestial and barbaric forces, which have terrorized our minds and communities in concrete ways, threatening to destroy free will and human compassion. The fairy tale sets out to conquer this concrete terror through metaphors"(qtd. in Bobby :Web).

According to Wolfgang Iser, "A text does not tell readers everything; there are gaps or blanks, which he refers to as the "indeterminacy" of the text. Readers must fill these in and thereby assemble the meaning(s), thus becoming coauthors in a sense"(qtd. in Guerin: 355).What Iser says is very true. The writer cannot tell everything through his writing, especially in short stories and tales. Many things are left unsaid and left for the reader to fill up. In fact, the gaps or the blanks are very important, for these excite the fantasy of the reader and provide scope for the imagination and visualization of the reader. There is great scope for the reader, especially the young reader, to imagine, to fantasize and to visualize many things that have been left out in fairy tales. In *Loving Laili*, the reader is not told what she does for twelve long years in the forest, except that she has been searching for Majnun. It is left to the reader to visualize the hardship she would have encountered as a single woman in a dangerous forest. So also, she spends twelve long years in the stomach of fish, Rohu. Here also only the reader has to imagine what would have happened during these twelve years and how she was able to come out in tact after twelve years. In Andersen's *Under the Willow Tree*, Knud and Joanna who have been childhood neighbours meet only after they have both become adults.

What transpired in the gap is left to the imagination of the reader. The reader gets the only clue that she has become a famous opera singer, while he could raise himself only to the level of a cobbler's assistant.

As David Bleich says, literature is a mental creation. How the reader interprets it in his mind depends on his ability to symbolize. So it is true, meaning of a text is not found but is developed. "Bleich claims that individuals everywhere classify things into three essential groups: objects, symbols, and people. Literature, a mental creation (as opposed to a concrete one), would thus be considered a symbol. A text may be an object in that it is paper(or other matter) and print, but its meaning depends on the symbolization in the minds of readers. Meaning is not found; it is developed" (qtd. in Guerin : 358). Many a reader may find the little match girl in Andersen's *Little Match Girl* as an object of pity and empathize with her easily. Andersen depicts Karen in *The Red Shoes* as a symbol of arrogance, self-centredness and disobedience. However, in the end, by repenting for her sins, she is redeemed and becomes an object of pity. Likewise, the mermaid in *The Sea Maid* and Laili in *Loving Laili* are seen as symbols of selfless life and purity.

One of the criticisms against fairy tales is that there is so much brutality, violence and monstrosity in them and they raise the question whether such material would be fit for children. Folklorist Maria Tartar answers this criticism:

In fairy tales, you have that same brutality and monstrosity: there's something really primal about what is going on in these stories—and in those Weimar artists. What I admire about the Weimar artists is that they faced up to what's inside. Fairy tales also face up to the facts of life: nothing is sacred or taboo.

Meanwhile they glitter with beauty. I work at the weirdly fascinating intersection of beauty and horror”(qtd. in Lambert :Web).

Critics also acknowledge the timelessness, the greatness, the educative and entertaining value of fairy tales to children. Bruno Bettelheim states,” These studies reveal the timelessness, the greatness, the educative, moral, philosophical and ecological values found in fairy tales and how they charm and entertain children, elevate and uplift their thinking, how they help their imaginative and visualizing skills, how they help the children to develop solving-problem skills”(qtd. in Edwards:web).

Fairy tales have different dimensions. They always contain some moral or the other, either in a direct way or in an indirect way. They unobtrusively tell the reader through virtues what to do and through vices what not to do. When a person takes to the path of vice, he invariably meets with his nemesis, whereas, the follower of the virtuous path, after undergoing many trials and tribulations, is ultimately rewarded. Virtues like Honesty, Unconditional love and Loyalty are given more importance in *Andersen’s Fairy Tales*. India being a land where Gandhian philosophy of ahimsa is followed, the Indian fairy tales reflect virtues like Patience, Forbearance Persistence and Bravery. As far as vices are concerned, both the fairy tales severely condemn the vices and caution the readers not to follow them and as far as possible, shun them. Only in the presentation of death, eastern and the western tales differ. In Indian thought, life is cyclic and eternal. This is reflected in many Indian fairy tales. Laili, Gangazara and the bonga girl die and return to life. In Andersen’s fairy tales, death is more realistic, tragic and pathetic as in *The Child in the Grave*, *The Story of a Mother*, *Under the Willow Tree* and *The Little Match Girl*.

In the fairy tales of the east and the west, women have a minor, subservient, passive, inferior role to play unlike men. Generally, women are polarized; they are depicted as objects of beauty and enjoyment or as hateful objects of evil, villainy and wickedness. Both east and the west treat women's beauty as a commodity to be possessed. Invariably, the beauty of those women in fairy tale lands them in trouble, either they are abducted or imprisoned or abandoned. The fairy tales are male-centric. Proud and vain women like Karen and Inger are cruelly punished in Andersen's tales, so also the witches and ogress in both east and western tales. Western world being class-conscious shows preferential treatment to upper class women like the princess in *The Princess and the Pea*, the opera singer Joanna and gives scant respect to women who hail from lower class like Karen, Inger and the heroine of *She Was Good for Nothing*. The unjust practice of honour-killing which is very much prevalent in India is not a new phenomenon, for it seems to have entered into the western world long back as seen in *The Rose Elf* where the brother kills the sister's lover in anger.

Fairy tales delight as well as instruct the reader. Normally, the readers take the surface level meaning. But when one goes deeper, greater truths are revealed. Archetypal approach provides deeper and complex meaning. In spite of the differences in cultures, civilizations, traditions, values and periods, some of the basic archetypes have remained common to both east and the west. The collective unconsciousness provides a mirror to understand mankind. Though the Villain Archetype in the western and Indian fairy tales presents temporary success of the villains initially, in the end, they show the villains being destroyed, barring the ice maiden. A shade, less than the villains, the tricksters are presented in *Harisarman* and *The Emperor's New Clothes* playfully as persons who live by wit. While the trickster figures mean no harm to others, the Temptress Archetypes are bent upon ruining the others for material

gains(Balna's stepmother in *Punchkin* , the witch and her daughter in *The Son of Seven Queens*) or for love (*The Ice Maiden* and *The Snow Queen*). When analyzed, the Damsel in Distress Archetype shows no difference between the east and the west. The pattern more or less remains the same. Magic as an archetype is closely associated with religion. Laili in Indian fairy tale and Karen in Andersen's tale realize their wishes, be it Majnun or red shoes, through magic, it is their religious faith which ultimately gives them peace.

Some of the archetypes are culture-specific that one could trace the variations in the western and Indian fairy tales. The subtle difference could be spotted in the hero archetypes. In Indian tales, the character of the strong heroes is built on epical scale, whereas in western fairy tales heroes are normal, ordinary with some foibles as Knud in *Under the Willow Tree* and Soldier in *The Hardy Tin Soldier*. Wise Old Man or Woman Archetype is conspicuous in *Indian Fairy Tales*, as Indian culture insists on veneration to old people and ancestors, and emphasizes the importance of their counsel to the youth. As the western culture gives importance to individuality and privacy, the role of the wise old man or woman is less in shaping the youth. Hence the Wise Old Man or Woman Archetype is missing in Andersen's fairy tales. Though human beings all over the world are prone to dream, Dream Archetypes figure largely in the western fairy tales as in *The Little Match Girl* and *Under the Willow Tree*, while the Indian tale *The Broken Pot* depicts the futility of day-dreaming. Andersen's fairy tales abound in *Inanimate Objects Archetype*. He makes even the shirt collar, the street lamp, the metal pig, the candle, the gravestone and the red shoes symbolically represent various other things or concepts thus adding deeper meaning to mundane things.

The eco-approach points out nature's role in fairy tales in a subtle, delicate manner. A child's perspective of nature is different from that of the adult. A child sees and enjoys nature

without any expectation and accepts nature as it is, whereas an adult looks at nature from the utility point of view. One has to consider nature as a fellow being. The children must be made to realize that man cannot survive without nature, nature and human beings are not different but are one. Further, many fairy tales reveal that alienation of nature will lead to disastrous consequences for human beings. The fairy tales teach children to embrace nature, love nature, love mother earth as one loves one's own mother.

In literature, fairy tales have a special place. Their influence and impact justify their position in literature, especially in Children's Literature. Fairy tales are the store-house of wisdom of every culture. Fairy tales are a treat to both mind and the heart. Fantasy, supernatural elements and super human characters widen the creativity of the reader and also inculcate good moral for life. Children learn ethical, moral and spiritual values during their formative years. This ensures that they don't go astray easily, when they become independent and go into the outside world. These stories prepare them to face unexpected calamities and complex situations where they have to make independent decisions. They instinctively know what to do and what not to do. Today's children are citizens of tomorrow. To prepare them for the future is the duty of every parent, every teacher and the society.