

Narrative Mosaics: Decoding Howl's *Moving Castle* as a Postmodern Fairy Tale

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Abstract

Diana Wynne Jones's *Howl's Moving Castle* (1986) is a fantasy novel that centers around the story of a new mythology created by Diana Wynne Jones in 1986. The narrative unfolds in an idyllic realm, establishing a fresh mythos centered around enchantment, animate things, limitless spatial dimensions, and the quest for immortality and the ideal human being. Consequently, the study will focus on the primary components of this mythology and how they have been adapted in the research presents the novel of *Howl's Moving Castle* that delves into a range of themes, including love, courage, heartbreak, and the passage of time. Initially, Sophie acknowledges the reality that she would perpetually be the eldest among her sisters. She believes that the oldest son is burdened with the label of failure. As a result, she sees no justification for exerting any effort to alter this predetermined outcome. Sophie is driven to pursue her fortune despite her efforts to find a solution that will rejuvenate her lost youth. Nevertheless, the witch has another plan as she metamorphoses Sophie into an older woman. Subsequently, she compels Sophie to venture off in pursuit of her fortune. In this research will show the decoding of the novel and explain the mosaics that was narrated.

المخلص :-

قلعة هاول المتحركة (١٩٨٦) للكاتبة ديانا وين جونز هي رواية خيالية تدور أحداثها في عالم مثالي، حيث السحر والأشياء المتحركة والأبعاد المكانية اللامتناهية والسعي إلى الخلود والإنسان المثالي. وبالتالي، ستركز الدراسة على المكونات الأساسية لهذه الأسطورة وكيف تم تكيفها في الرواية، بالإضافة إلى مجموعة من الموضوعات، بما في ذلك الحب والشجاعة وألم القلب ومرور الوقت. في البداية، تعترف الشخصية الرئيسية في هذه الرواية (صوفي) بحقيقة أنها ستظل إلى الأبد الأكبر بين أشقائها. إنها تعتقد أن الابن الأكبر مثقل بوصمة الفشل. ونتيجة لذلك، لا ترى سبباً لبذل أي جهد لتغيير هذه النتيجة المحددة مسبقاً. تنطلق صوفي بحثاً عن ثروتها على الرغم من محاولاتها لإيجاد حل يعيد لها شبابها الضائع. ومع ذلك، فإن الساحرة لديها خطة أخرى حيث تحول صوفي إلى امرأة أكبر سناً. بعد ذلك، تضطر صوفي إلى المغامرة بحثاً عن ثروتها. في هذا البحث سنقوم بشرح فك رموز الرواية وتوضيح الرموز الأدبية التي وردت فيها..

Keywords :- **The Potency of Narrative , The Realm of Ingary , Fantasy, conflict, themes, decoding, mosaics**

1. Introduction:-

Howl's Moving Castle is a work of fantasy literature penned by Diana Wynne Jones, a British novelist. It was initially released in 1986 by Greenwillow Books, a publishing house based in New York. The book was a finalist for the prestigious annual Boston Globe-Horn Book Award and received the Phoenix Award two decades later. In 2004, the book was transformed into an animated picture with the same title. This film received a nomination for the prestigious Academy Award for Best Animated Feature. Howl's Moving Castle is the inaugural installment in the book series known as the Howl Series. In addition, this series includes Castle in the Air, which was released in 1990, and House of Many Ways, which was published in 2008. According to World Cat, Howl's Moving Castle is the author's most frequently held book among participating libraries, with its first sequel, Castle in the Air, following closely after (Mc.Ribin.2021).

The author of Howl's Moving Castle novel

Diana Wynne Jones, a British author, was born on August 16, 1934, and passed away on March 26, 2011. In addition to being a novelist, she was also a poet, scholar, literary critic, and short story writer. Her primary focus was writing fantasy and speculative fiction novels targeted at children and young adults. While commonly categorized as fantasy, some of her work also integrates science fiction themes and aspects of reality. Jones frequently delves into the concepts of temporal displacement and the existence of parallel or many worlds in his writing. Notable literary works by her include the Chrestomanci series, the Dalemark series, the three Moving Castle books, Dark Lord of Derkholm, and The Tough Guide to Fantasyland (Jones,2012).

Jones has been recognized as a source of inspiration and creative influence for numerous fantasy and science fiction writers, such as Philip Pullman, Terry Pratchett, Penelope Lively, Robin McKinley, Dina Rabinovitch, Megan Whalen Turner, J.K. Rowling, and Neil Gaiman. Gaiman, in particular, has praised her as the most exceptional writer for children in her time. The user's text consists of three elements enclosed in square brackets. She has received several award nominations for her work. She was a finalist for the Hugo Award twice, received nominations for the Locus Award fourteen times, and was nominated seven times for the Mythopoeic Award, winning it twice. Additionally, she was a two-time nominee for the British Fantasy Award, winning it in 1999, and a two-time nominee for the World Fantasy Award, winning it in 2007 (Jones,2009).

Fantasy of Diana Wynne's novel:-

Fantasy is differentiated from science fiction and horror genres by the lack of scientific or macabre elements, although such themes can occasionally be present in fantasy. The fantasy genre in popular culture often showcases locations that closely resemble Earth yet possess a distinct feeling of unfamiliarity. Fantasy, in its most

expansive definition, encompasses the creative output of several writers, painters, filmmakers, and musicians, spanning from ancient tales and stories to contemporary and widely embraced works (Armitt,1996).

Fantasy is a type of speculative fiction that incorporates magical aspects. It is commonly situated in an imaginary world and often draws inspiration from mythology or folklore. The term "fantasy" can also refer to a literary work in this genre. This may be traced back to oral traditions, which later evolved into fantasy literature and play. Since the 20th century, it has extended its reach to encompass various media, including film, television, graphic novels, comics, anime, and video games (Rabkin.1975).

The Potency of Narrative in Howl's Moving Castle:-

All objects are in motion within Howl's Moving Castle. The castle can relocate, and even while it remains relatively stationary, the lock on the entrance shifts to facilitate its opening towards Porthaven, Kingsbury, or Wales. Various spells are plentiful, causing Sophie to transform from a young girl into an older woman and revert to her original form. Lettie transforms Martha, while Martha transforms into Lettie, resulting in both of them assuming the identity of Lettie. Howl alters his name, appearance, attire, and hair hue, resulting in calamitous outcomes comparable to Anne Shirley's ill-fated endeavor. Additionally, he swiftly changes his romantic interest when she reciprocates his pursuit. Suzanne Rahn refers to the persistent movement that defines *Jones's dreams* as "postmodern." According to Rahn, in these fantasies, rules might change abruptly, fundamental assumptions can be reversed, and the universe itself may be unstable, oscillating between entirely different interpretations of reality or veering toward complete chaos (147). She concludes that Jones writes for contemporary children confronted with an unpredictable future, offering a "vaccine" to protect against the impact of future uncertainties (Priest,2011).

I want to provide an alternative interpretation of the eternal motion exhibited by this specific mobile fortress. Reading Howl exposes one to an immense amount of imaginative vigor that surpasses any limitations imposed upon it. It establishes boundaries and surpasses them, transforming the narrative into a symbol of the creative process. It exemplifies the storyteller's ability to command objects such as mountains or castles, relocating them effortlessly and being obeyed. Diana Wynne Jones used the metaphor of constantly shifting components in her description of her artistic method, which appears to parallel the movement of Howl's Castle. While contemplating these ideas, I am conscious of exerting a significant amount of deliberate control. I experiment with rearranging the different components of the book, exploring various combinations, and incorporating additional concepts to assess their compatibility. I continue to manipulate these ideas until they form a structure that allows me, on a personal level, to gain knowledge and insight." (p.3).

She states, "The level of excitement produced by magic is immeasurable and should never be underestimated." It is comparable in magnitude to creativity" (p.9). The tale reveals that Sophie possesses a remarkable ability to animate objects through the power of communication. The writer effectively uses the language of storytelling to do this. Sophie imbues life into her walking stick and the hats in her shop, not only bringing them into existence but also guiding their essence ("You possess an enigmatic charm," "You will need to marry someone wealthy," "Your heart is pure, and someone of influence will recognize it and fall in love with you (p.10) (Jones,2009). Similarly, Jones breathes life into Sophie, Howl, Calcifer, and the Witch of the Waste. According to Deborah Kaplan, characters in Diana Wynne Jones' works who possess the ability to compose or narrate stories have significant control over their own lives as well as the lives of others. Kaplan refers to this as "the capacity of language to shape the world" (p53). The potency of this power is undeniably evident in Howl's Moving Castle, and it serves as the driving force behind all forms of storytelling and narratives (Kaplan,1997).

The author asserts it, therefore causing it to become reality. When the author states that we are in Kingsbury, it means that our current location is Kingsbury. Similarly, if the author mentions Porthaven, we are now situated in Porthaven. The residents of the mobile fortress have the ability to simply rotate the handle on the entrance to access any of the accessible realms; the writer can simply jot down a few words, type a sentence or two "Meanwhile, back at the ranch" to transport her audience, although this ability to bring life to her stories does have its restrictions. Sophie instructs a little group of ferns and flowers, saying, "Transform into daffodils!" "You vile creatures behave like daffodils in June!" The magic fails to take effect when the individual in question, referred to as "she," goes to see her daffodils. They had experienced a severe malfunction (Wynne,2021).

The moist brown objects were extending from a container filled with a very noxious liquid, which she had never encountered before. It is reasonable to assume that all authors will reluctantly acknowledge this time. In Howl, Jones highlights the influential nature of storytelling through several compelling methods, the characters demonstrate an understanding that they are inside an intentionally constructed fantastical realm constrained by the established literary norms of the fairytale genre. Jones incorporates myths and folktales into her writing because she believes that ordinary life sometimes reflects or embodies these old narratives (Jones, 2021).

The Realm of Ingary:-

These occurrences are more prevalent than the majority of individuals perceive. Skeptics should reflect on the frequency with which they have experienced a sense of identification with Cinderella. In the opening page of Howl's Moving Castle, we are informed that in the realm of Ingary, being the eldest of three siblings is considered a significant misfortune. It is widely acknowledged that of the three of you who embark on a journey to seek your fortunes, you are the one who will fail first and experience the most

severe failure. Typically, in actuality, particularly in systems that follow primogeniture, the eldest individual tends to achieve the highest level of achievement. Contemporary birth-order studies continue to support this observation. Therefore, in fairy tales, the conventional assumptions of reality must be disrupted. It is the individual with the lowest probability of success, specifically the youngest, who ultimately achieves success (Sadner,2004).

However, in the context of residing within a fictional realm, where improbable outcomes prevail, the concept of being the least probable is rendered irrelevant. In a universe characterized by a reversal of positions, the first individuals who have transitioned to the last position would thereafter reclaim their original first position, defying the conventional literary expectation and creating a disorienting effect. Ultimately, Howl suggests to Sophie that they should live happily ever after, indicating their recognition of fairy tales while simultaneously asserting their autonomy from them. By stating "I think we ought to do x," Howl acknowledges the actual possibility of not doing x. Sophie acknowledges that her life with Howl would be significantly more exciting than what is often portrayed in stories, as indicated by the counter-story's depiction. Following that, there is a significant scene depicting Howl's return to the contemporary realm of Wales, where his nephews are observed engrossed in playing video games (Shaw,1985).

Sophie eavesdrops on a boy reciting from the screen: "You find yourself in a magical castle with four entrances. Each begins in a distinct dimension. Within Dimension One, the castle is in a perpetual state of motion, and there is a possibility of encountering a perilous situation at any given moment" (p.161-62). In her work, Maria Nikolajeva credits Jones as one of the pioneers in utilizing the computer game metaphor in the realm of fantasy literature, as seen in Howl (p.39). According to her interpretation, the phrase suggests that the figure "Howl" in the novel is a computer-game character, representing the projected identity of a young boy. Additionally, the mystical kingdom of Ingary, where the story unfolds, is seen as cyberspace, a virtual world displayed on a computer screen. As a mother who is really tired of her boys' excessive preoccupation with video games, I cannot tolerate this diminishing interpretation of Howl as merely another video game! However, the computer game analogy highlights the intentionally crafted aspect of Howl's narrative, emphasizing Howl's story as a work of fiction (Verdonk, 2002).

Furthermore, the interactive nature of video games, where player decisions directly impact the unfolding of scenarios, strengthens the notion, previously mentioned, that an author engages in a collaborative rather than authoritarian relationship with their characters. Occasionally, it is impossible to instruct lilies to transform into daffodils. Howl implies that Sophie willingly participated in her enchantment: after he failed to remove the Witch of the Waste's spell from Sophie, he deduced that she "enjoyed being in a state of disguise" (p283). Jones states that her characters frequently astonish her by behaving

autonomously based on internal urges she has not yet understood, as mentioned in her work (p8) (Leech,1981).

This suggests that she might uncover new insights and discoveries about her characters as she writes. The curse inflicted upon Howl by the Witch of the Waste manifests as a tangible poetry derived from the esteemed literary work of John Donne, specifically his renowned composition: "Go and Catch a Falling Star." Obtain a mandrake root that is capable of causing pregnancy, inform me of the whereabouts of all previous years, or reveal the identity of the one who divided the Devil's foot. Instruct me in the art of perceiving the melodic songs of mermaids, or in warding off the painful effects of jealousy, and discovering which direction propels a virtuous mind. (p.134)" (Jones,2001).

Sophie and Michael's unsuccessful early endeavors to decipher the poem as the incantation required by Michael might be attributed to the influence of amateur endeavors in literary interpretation that run parallel to their own. "What significance do previous years hold, after all?" Does this imply that one of those desiccated roots must produce fruit? . . . Is it possible that the wind may function as a pulley of any kind? The result of subtracting 37 from 136 is 99. Jones cleverly employs the idea of assigning poetry to Howl's nephews as a homework task, which is perceived by the boys as both a source of amusement and a burden ("Decide what this is about/Write a second verse yourself" (p.134)). While in Wales, Howl presents the lads with the missing assignment sheet and inquiries about its nature. Neil responds by comparing it to a poetry, using a tone similar to how most individuals would describe a dead rat. When literature is transformed into homework assignments, it loses its vitality. However, when acknowledged as a text with the potential to profoundly impact individuals' lives, it retains its living power (Jones,2009).

Sophie attempts to cast spells on some of Howl's clients, while Calcifer, the cooperative fire demon, provides her with instructions: "Retrieve the yellow powder from the fourth jar on the second shelf..." Those spells mostly rely on faith. Avoid displaying any signs of hesitation when you hand it on to him" (p.144). The enchantment of a story mostly relies on the reader's voluntary acceptance of the narrative despite its implausibility. Belief can include the entirety of a successful spell, as exemplified by Sophie's act of giving a fearful dueler a substantial amount of cayenne pepper despite her knowledge that it lacks any magical attributes. Despite acknowledging her feelings of being an imposter, she wants to be at the battle. The number is 146. Undoubtedly, the duelist survives to witness another day or segment of his and Howl's narrative. With a firm conviction in the presence of Sophie, Howl, and the incompetent dueler, we persist in our reading. Calcifer, the possessor of the fundamental magical force that propels Howl's castle, can also be interpreted from this narrative perspective (Jackson.1981).

A contract ties together Calcifer and Howl. This arrangement ensures that Calcifer can use his magical talents for the rest of his life, while Howl gives up his heart to Calcifer in return. Numerous writers perceive themselves as having entered into a desperate agreement

with the muses, surrendering their hearts in return for their ability to generate. When the criterion for the curse to be completed is just the presence of an honest mind, Sophie contemplates that if this meant Howl's mind had to be honest, there exists a possibility that the curse may never be realized. The final need for the curse seems to be fulfilled when, in the book's finale climax, Howl exclaims, "I am a coward." The only approach I can use to engage in such a terrifying task is convincing myself that I am not performing it (Hatim, 2004).

Despite his numerous falsehoods, Howl consistently displays his lack of courage. He readily embraces Sophie's characterization of him as a "slithered-outer" with a sense of cheerfulness: "Indeed, we are both well aware of each other's flaws." The number is 75. He openly admits his intention to manipulate Sophie into tarnishing his reputation with the king, avoiding the perilous task of rescuing Wizard Suliman from the Waste (Tehran,1982). Howl has endeavored to conceal his benevolence; he has strived to establish a reputation as a malevolent figure akin to Bluebeard, who drains the vitality from young women. Sophie is taken aback when she realizes Howl has been kind towards her: "Please pay attention." He is not malevolent in any way! He is not! The number is 293(Jones,2002). To conceal his increasing fondness for Sophie, he has maintained a constant barrage of insults centered around her unappealing long-nosed look. In my opinion, the true display of his sincerity lies not so much in his last-minute admission of his lack of bravery but rather in his willingness to put his life and physical well-being at stake despite his contracted obligation to be heartless to save Sophie. The truth in a fictitious realm is the same in our reality: the significance of love and its ability to influence and transform both physical and emotional landscapes. In her contemplation of fantasy, Jones commends the production of fantasy narratives to enable readers to expand their imagination's limits and subsequently apply their imagination to their own existence (Catford, 1993).

Howl's Moving Castle as a Modern Mythology:-

Researchers have widely regarded Howl's Moving Castle as contemporary mythology. The concept of New Mythology primarily revolves around the rise of a novel heroic archetype that surpasses traditional cultural frameworks and challenges them with contemporary values (Ballard, 2017). Advocates of categorizing Howl's Moving Castle as New Mythology assert that Sophie Hatter exemplifies the characteristics of this paradigm, serving as a heroic figure. Howl's Moving Castle draws from several mythological tales, including Cupid and Psyche, Cinderella, Bluebeard, and Beauty and the Beast, but frequently undermines and challenges the conventional elements in these stories. To illustrate, near the story's beginning, Jones establishes Sophie's role in mythology as being the firstborn among three siblings and destined to experience failure before the others (Ballard,2017).

Analyzing the vocabulary used in Howl's Moving Castle.

Multiple instances of metaphorical language may be found in Howl's Moving Castle. **2.2.1.**

The first examples:

ST: There was a conspicuous dark mark on the moors toward the northwest.

TT: The palace is like a tall black streak in the open field to the northwest.

The example demonstrates that the translator elucidates the readers with the visual characteristics of the castle. The figurative language employed in the above text is metaphor since it compares the castle and the towering black smudge. The figurative language employed in the text is a simile, as it utilizes the word 'like' to establish a comparison between two entities (Abrams,1999).

The second example.

ST: They are known for treating their pupils with utmost respect and reverence... TT: They are renowned for treating their students like kings and queens.

In the given example, a character in the novel informs Lettie that Mrs. Cesari treats the learners with utmost respect and admiration, comparing their treatment to that of royalty. The writer seeks to compare the treatment of individuals by the 5 earners and the kings and queens. The two examples above employ simile as figurative language, using the word 'like' in their statements. Figurative language serves two objectives. There exists both a utilitarian purpose and an aesthetic purpose. A functional purpose serves as a semantic indicator associated with the meaning. The artistic objective of literary works is to enhance the aesthetic quality of their form. According to Shaw (1985), figurative language is frequently characterized by colorful and inventive expressions, which can enhance the vibrancy, strength, and effectiveness of writing. In her novel "Howl's Moving Castle," Diana Wynne Jones skillfully animates the characters of Sophie Hatter and Wizard Howl by employing a spell that effectively persuades the reader to invest belief in them.

Moreover, this enables the reader to embrace the notion of mobile fortresses, reversible curses, and the supremacy of affection in conquering any hindrances. If she ever manages to ascertain the identity of the young individual who serendipitously inspired the story, we may join her in expressing our heartfelt appreciation. The novel written by Diana Wynne Jones features an extensive ensemble of people and many intricate plotlines that were too intricate to be adapted into the film (Ognusiji,2000).

Consequently, the story excludes characters like Martha, Sophie's second sister, and the narrative element where Markl (referred to as Michael in the novel) courts her, portraying him as a teenager rather than a little kid. Jones engaged in a conversation with Studio Ghibli executives regarding the picture but did not contribute to or participate in the film's creation. In the summer of 2004, Miyazaki traveled to England to privately show Jones the completed picture. She has been cited as expressing, "It is extraordinary."

Regrettably, I do not possess any contribution as my expertise is in writing books rather than creating films. Indeed, the adaptation is expected to diverge significantly from the novel, which is entirely appropriate (Maria,2000).

Diana Wynne Jones's *Howl's Moving Castle* (1986) is innovative in its departure from the conventional norms of standardized patterns seen in typical fairy tales, establishing the groundwork for a fresh kind of mythology. As part of a trilogy, the book has been specifically crafted to cater to the evolving preferences of readers in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The intended demographic mainly consists of adolescents with the cognitive capacity to comprehend and derive pleasure from the narrative's significance and the ramifications of the protagonist's choices (Christopher,2011).

Conclusion:-

Adults may also find the narrative enjoyable, mainly if they interpret it on a deeper level, appreciating its sardonic and satirical nature, which continuously parodies the repeated features found in traditional folk or fairy tales. The novel's title serves as a cautionary indication to readers that it deviates from the conventional fairy tale structure, although including all the essential ingredients. These elements, however, are arranged in a distinct sequence and presented in unconventional connections and combinations.

From this standpoint, the readers' curiosity is piqued as they realize that they will go on a voyage uncertain about what to anticipate or should anticipate the unforeseen. Ultimately, the narrative will center around a mobile fortress, serving as a metaphorical backdrop for modern society's dynamic and evolving conditions. The text portrays Howl's castle as a lofty, somber, and ominous wizard's tower, which contrasts significantly with the intricate depiction in the film. The castle in the film can be interpreted as a satirical imitation of the machinery showcased in the movie, propelled by steam-powered mechanisms and enchantment. *Howl's Moving Castle* delves into topics such as destiny, youth, courage, and love. The first two factors mainly influence Sophie's development. Initially, her subjective understanding of fate leads her to assume that she is destined to experience failure due to being the eldest among her three sisters. In contrast, Howl perceives himself as the arbiter of his destiny, exhibiting fearlessness towards societal opinions and the expectations imposed by traditions. The Witch of the Waste's spell manifests Sophie's sense of failure by transforming her physical look into an aged and lackluster one.

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