

## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY FAIRY TALE: AN ANALYSIS ON PROPP'S THE FUNCTIONS OF DRAMATIS PERSONAE

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### ABSTRACT

This paper is aimed at analyzing the sleeping beauty fairy tale using Vladimir Propp's functions of dramatis personae. The analysis utilizes thirty one functions, however, not all that functions occur in a tale. These functions create a main framework in the story (Propp, 1968:25—65). The analysis reveals similarity between The Sleeping Beauty with any other folktale which came from Russia. There are thirty one functions of dramatis personae which can be distributed into seven spheres of actions. From these seven spheres of actions, there are seven characters that usually appear in the fairy tales. But in The Sleeping Beauty there are only five characters since there is no helper and false hero in this story.

Keywords: Sleeping Beauty, functions of dramatis personae, seven spheres of actions

*The Sleeping Beauty* is widely well known not only by children but also by adults. This folktale tells about a princess who got cursed in such a way that she slept for a hundred years. She was then saved by a prince from another kingdom. *The Sleeping Beauty* is also known as *Little Briar-Rose* in French while in German it is recognized as *Dornröschen* (<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/childlit/StWebPages/CarmelinaScalora/Comparisons.html>).

In this paper, The Grimm's version of *The Sleeping Beauty* is analyzed by using Propp's structural theory. The Grimm brother version of *Sleeping beauty* seems more faster than the other versions. By doing this, it looks like that the readers are not given enough time to know about the characters. In the story, The Grimm uses wicked stepmother, evil, or bad witches and hero winning in the end.

Vladimir Propp is Russian Formalism who writes *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928), *Historical Roots of Fairy Tale* (1946), *Russian Heroic Epics* (1958), and *Russian Agrarian Feastsdays* (1963). In his works, Propp analyzes a large number of Russian folk tales by breaking down into their smallest units. This paper tends to find out whether *The Sleeping Beauty* has the structure similar to Russian folktales, the ones that have been analyzed by Propp in his book called *Morphology of the*

*Folktale* (1928). Thus this paper is aimed at analyzing the sleeping beauty fairy tale: an analysis on propp's the functions of dramatis personae.

Propp's theory is about an accurate description of the tale. Then, the terms used for this context is the functions of its dramatis personae. In the tale, function is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action. A tale basically owns stable construction namely characters, actions, and the objects. Then, it may be briefly formulated in the following manner:

1. Functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled. They constitute the fundamental components of a tale.
2. The number of functions known to the fairy tale is limited.
3. The sequence of function is always identical.
4. All fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure

Propp claims that a tale has at least thirty one functions, however, not all that functions occur in a tale. Propp adds that when a tale has at any number of the functions, these functions create a main framework in the story (Propp, 1968:25—65). Those functions can be seen in the following table:

No	Function- definition	Designation
1.	ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF A FAMILY ABSENTS HIMSELF FROM HOME. (Definition: absentation)	$\beta$
2.	AN INTERDICTION IS ADDRESSED TO THE HERO. (Definition: Interdiction)	$\gamma$
3.	THE INTERDICTION IS VIOLATED (Definition: violation)	$\delta$
4.	THE VILLAIN MAKES AN ATTEMPT AT RECONNAISSANCE. (Definition: reconnaissance)	$\epsilon$
5.	THE VILLAIN RECEIVES INFORMATION ABOUT HIS VICTIM. (Definition: delivery)	$\zeta$
6.	THE VILLAIN ATTEMPTS TO DECEIVE HIS VICTIM IN ORDER TO TAKE POSSESSION OF HIM OR OF HIS BELONGINGS. (Definition: trickery)	$\eta$

7.	THE VICTIM SUBMITS TO DECEPTION AND THEREBY UNWITTINGLY HELPS HIS ENEMY. (Definition: complicity)	θ
8.	THE VILLAIN CAUSES HARM OR INJURY TO A MEMBER OF A FAMILY. (Definition: villainy)	A
9.	MISFORTUNE OR LACK IS MADE KNOWN; THE HERO IS APPROACHED WITH A REQUEST OR COMMAND; HE IS ALLOWED TO GO OR HE IS DISPATCHED. (Definition: mediation, the connective incident)	B
10.	THE SEEKER AGREES TO OR DECIDES UPON COUNTERACTION. (Definition: beginning counteraction)	C
11.	THE HERO LEAVES HOME. (Definition: departure)	↑
12.	THE HERO IS TESTED, INTERROGATED, ATTACKED, ETC., WHICH PREPARES THE WAY FOR HIS RECEIVING EITHER A MAGICAL AGENT OR HELPER. (Definition: the first function of the donor).	D
13.	THE HERO REACTS TO THE ACTIONS OF THE FUTURE DONOR. (Definition: the hero's reaction)	E
14.	THE HERO ACQUIRES THE USE OF A MAGICAL AGENT. (Definition: provision or receipt of a magical agent)	F
15.	THE HERO IS TRANSFERRED, DELIVERED, OR LED TO THE WHEREABOUTS OF AN OBJECT OF SEARCH. (Definition: spatial transference between two kingdoms, guidance)	G
16.	THE HERO AND THE VILLAIN JOIN IN DIRECT COMBAT. (Definition: struggle)	H
17.	THE HERO IS BRANDED. (Definition: branding, marking)	J
18.	THE VILLAIN IS DEFEATED. (Definition: victory)	I
19.	THE INITIAL MISFORTUNE OR LACK IS LIQUIDATED.	K
20.	THE HERO RETURNS. (Definition: return)	↓
21.	THE HERO IS PURSUED. (Definition: pursuit, chase)	Pr
22.	RESCUE OF THE HERO FROM PURSUIT. (Definition: rescue)	Rs
23.	XXIII. THE HERO, UNRECOGNIZED, ARRIVES HOME OR IN ANOTHER COUNTRY. (Definition: unrecognized arrival)	o
24.	A FALSE HERO PRESENTS UNFOUNDED CLAIMS. (Definition: unfounded claims)	L
25.	A DIFFICULT TASK IS PROPOSED TO THE HERO. (Definition: difficult task)	M
26.	HE TASK IS RESOLVED. (Definition: solution)	N
27.	THE HERO IS RECOGNIZED. (Definition: recognition)	Q
28.	THE FALSE HERO OR VILLAIN IS EXPOSED. (Definition: Exposure)	Ex
29.	THE HERO IS GIVEN A NEW APPEARANCE. (Definition:	T

	transfiguration)	
30.	THE VILLAIN IS PUNISHED. Definition: punishment)	U
31.	THE HERO IS MARRIED AND ASCENDS THE THRONE. (Definition: wedding)	W

Those functions can be distributed into seven spheres of actions which include (1) villain; (2) donor (3) helper (4) the princess and her father; (5) dispatcher; (6) hero and (7) false hero (Propp, 1968:79—80). The frequency of a character and the way of the characters are presented in the story can be recognized easily by those seven spheres of actions. The seven spheres are closely related to the emerging of character in every action. The emerging of the character in every action are connected to each other.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The writer analyses the story by using Vladimir Propp's Functions of Dramatis Personae.

### **(0) The Initial Situation. ( $\alpha$ )**

At the initial situation the author enumerate the members of a family, or introduce the future hero by mentioning his name or indication of his status. The situation is an important morphological element. At this part, the author introduces the initial life of the King and the Queen who live in their kingdom. The most important part of this situation is both the King and the Queen really want to have a child ( $\alpha 6$ ). They have hoped to have a child for many years.

A long time ago there were a king and queen, who said everyday, 'Ah, if only we had a child!' but they never had one. (Grimm, 1993:247).

This initial situation promotes the other functions of the dramatis personae to make the plot of the story. This initial situation enables the readers in getting the initial description of the main character. Propp (1968; 85) states that there are two forms of initial situation of the fairy tales, namely (a) the initial situation of the seeker and his family, and (b) the situation that describes the initial life of the victim of the violent conducted by the antagonist and their family. For some fairy tales, these two forms

of initial situation can occur in the stories, but *The Sleeping Beauty* has the second one.

**1. The hero acquires the use of a magical agent.**

The agent is a frog who appears so suddenly and gives magical words (F1) to make the King and the Queen's dream come true.

But it happened that once when the queen was bathing, a frog crept out of the water on to the land, and said to her, 'Your wish shall be fulfilled; before a year has gone by, you shall have a daughter.' (Grimm, 1993:247).

The magical agent(F) helps the King and the Queen to make their dream come true as written on. What the frog had said came true, and the queen had a little girl who was so pretty that the king could not contain himself for joy, and ordered a great feast. (Grimm, 1993:247)

**2. The villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family (a)**

One of the fairies curses the daughter of the King and the Queen's (A11). One the fairies who does not get the King invitation is disappointed and curses the baby girl that one day when she is fifteen she will prick herself with a spindle, and fall down dead. But the twelfth fairies softens it into deep sleep for a hundred year.

...she cried with a loud voice, 'The king's daughter shall in the fifteenth year prick herself with a spindle, and fall down dead.'...but the twelfth, whose good wish still remained unspoken, came forward, and as she could not undo the evil sentence, but only soften it, she said, 'It shall not be death, but a deep sleep of a hundred years, into which the princess shall fall.' (Grimm, 1993:247)

**3. An interdiction is addressed to the hero (γ)**

The curse makes the King take away and burn all the spindles in the kingdom and not allow anyone to have and keep spindles in their home (γ2). It is done as the effort to avoid and save the princess from the curse.

The king, who would fain keep his dear child from the misfortune, gave orders that every spindle in the whole kingdom should be burnt. (Grimm, 1993:247—248)

4. **One of the members of a family absents himself from home(β)**

The King and the Queen have a journey and leave the kingdom when their princess is fifteen years old (β1). This part is the preliminary misfortune(λ) when the antagonist has the chance to harm the hero or heroine.

It happened that on the very day when she was fifteen years old, that the king and queen were not at home, and the maiden was left in the palace quite alone. (Grimm, 1993:248).

5. **The interdiction is violated(δ)**

The violent takes place and the interdiction is violated. The princess, Sleeping Beauty, walks around the kingdom and find out an old woman who still has and uses a spindle. The princess is curious and wants to use it.

She climbed up the narrow winding staircase, and reached a little door. A rusty key was in the lock, and when she turned it the door sprang opened, and there in the little room sat an old woman with a spindle, busily spinning her flax. (Grimm, 1993:248).

6. **The victim submits to deception and thereby unwittingly helps her enemy.(θ)**

Sleeping Beauty does not know that the old woman trying to violate her, she agrees to help her (θ1). The old woman finally violates the Sleeping Beauty (A). She makes Sleeping Beauty and all the people in the kingdom fall asleep for 100 years (θ2- θ3).

‘Good-day, old dame,’ said the king’s daughter; ‘what are you doing there?’ ‘I am spinning,’ said the old woman, and nodded her head. ‘What sort of thing is that, that rattles round somerrily?’ said the girl, touched the spindle and wanted to spin too. But, scarcely has she touched the spindle when the magic decree was fulfilled, and she pricked her finger with it.(Grimm, 1993:248).

## 7. **Misfortune or lack is made known; (b)**

The announcement of the misfortune is done after the violation takes place and cause danger to all members of the kingdom where Sleeping Beauty lives (B4). This news is widely spread to all parts of the country.

But the story of the beautiful sleeping Briar-Rose, for so the princess was named, went about the country, so that from time to time kings' sons came and tried to get through the thorny hedge into the castle. (Grimm, 1993:249).

Many princes come and try to save the Sleeping Beauty from her deep sleep (B3), but they fail and die (F contr.). But they found it impossible, for the thorns held fast together, as if they had hands, and the youths were caught in them, could not get loose again, and died a miserable death. (Grimm, 1993:249).

One hundred years later, the news is brought again by an old man who tell a prince about the princes who tried to save Briar-Rose, the Sleeping Beauty (B4). He says that he gets this story from his grandfather. After long, long years a king's son came to that country, and heard an old man talking about the thorn- hedge, and that a castle was said to stand behind it in which a wonderfully beautiful princess, named Briar-Rose, had been asleep for a hundred years; and that the king and queen and the whole court were asleep like wise. He had heard, too, from his grandfather,...(Grimm, 1993:249).

## 8. **The seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction.(c)**

Knowing the story of the princess, the prince agrees to do a counteraction (C). As the seeker, the prince decides to leave his kingdom and seeks for Briar-Rose.

Then the youth said, 'I am not afraid, I will go and see the beautiful Briar-Rose.'(Grimm, 1993:249).

## 9. **The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked, etc.,(d)**

The agent tests the hero or the prince, but the prince does not realize it that he is being tested (d7). The old man who tells the prince about the sleeping beauty has

another roll as the agent who will help the prince. The test given by the old man is he gives some conditions that the prince cannot break, and he tells him about frightening story about the kingdom where the princess sleeps for a hundred years. The prince with his bravery and intention to save the princess pass the test without any difficulties (E1). The good old man might dissuade him as he would, he did not listen to his words. (Grimm, 1993: 249).

**10. The hero is Transferred, Delivered, or Led to the whereabouts of an Object Of Search.(G)**

The prince passes the test and seeks for the princess easily (F). He can pass the hedge of thorns, and make it change into a hedge of beautiful large flowers (G5). But in this case the agent does not give any magical agent, he only makes the prince get no difficulties in doing his mission. When the prince drew near the hedge of thorns, it was changed into a hedge of beautiful large flowers, which parted and bent aside to let him pass, and then closed behind him in a thick hedge.(Grimm, 1993:208).

**11. The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated.(k)**

After seeking to all parts of the kingdom, finally the prince finds the Sleeping Beauty who is sleeping. (K4). The prince, as the hero, succeeds with his mission to save Briar-Rose after doing all his previous actions.

Then he went on still farther, and all was so quite that a breath could be heard, and at last he came to the tower, and opened the door into the little room where Briar-Rose was sleeping (Grimm, 1993:250).

The prince who is in love after seeing the beauty of the princess who is in her deep sleep, kisses her and wakes her and all the people in that kingdom. And the curse is broken (K8). In this case the violation conducted by the antagonist is defeated by the hero.

There she lay, so beautiful that he could not turn his eyes away; and he stooped down and gave her a kiss. But as soon as he kissed her, Briar-Rose opened her eyes and



awoke, and looked at him quite sweetly.  
(Grimm,1993:250).

## 12. **The task is resolved.(n)**

The releasing of the princess from the curse is the end of the hero's mission to seek and save the princess, Briar-Rose (N). Then they went down together, and the king awoke and the queen, and the whole court, and looked at each other in great astonishment. (Grimm,1993:250).

## 13. **The Hero Is Married (W)**

The prince finally marries to the princess (W). In this story *The Sleeping Beauty*, it is not mentioned that the prince is given the crown of the kingdom, but he is allowed to marry to the princess, Briar-Rose. *The Sleeping Beauty* has a happy ending as stated on ; And then the marriage of the king's son with Briar-Rose was celebrated with all splendor, and they lived contented to the end of their days. (Grimm,1993:251).

## **Spheres Of Actions**

1. **Villain.** The function of this character as the antagonist and his violent is given the code A11, where the antagonist curses the little baby. The antagonist is one of the fairies who does not get any invitation from the King. She is disappointed and curses the baby.

When eleven of them had made their promises, suddenly the thirteenth came in. She wished to avenge herself for not having been invited, and without greeting, or even looking at anyone, she cried with a loud voice,' the king's daughter shall in her fifteenth year prick herself with a spindle, and fall down dead.'(Grimm, 1993:247).

In the other part of the story, the antagonist is an old woman who is spindling. This part is coded as A (villainy). The antagonist succeeds to harm her target. Through this old woman, the villain can harm all members of the kingdom.

2. **Agent.** The agent is coded as D and F. *The Sleeping Beauty* has these two functions. At the first part, the miracle agent is the frog who tells the King and the Queen that they will have a baby. The following part is when the agent appears again. This time, the agent is an old man who tells the prince about the *sleeping beauty*. With the help of the miracle agent, the prince succeeds in doing his mission. The coming of the agent is coded as d7. The prince who does not know that he is tested by the agent keeps trying to save the princess.

3. **Helper.** The helper in *The Sleeping Beauty* is not really clear. The existence of the helper can be known by the hero from the ease in doing his mission to save the princess.

4. **The Princess and her Father.** The role of the King and the princess is very clear when the King holds a celebration to welcome the birth of the princess. The King first appearance in the story is in the situation that describes the initial life of the King and the Queen who are lonely without any children in their family. And the last appearance of the King and the Princess is when the King holds a party to celebrate the wedding of the princess and the prince.

5. **Dispatcher** is the one who spreads the news about the misfortune. In *The Sleeping Beauty*, the role of the dispatcher is seen when the people spread the news to all parts of the country. The second role is seen through the role of the old man who tells the prince about the sleeping beauty.

6. **Hero.** The function of the hero is seen clearly in this story. The hero is a seeker. The hero is the prince of the other kingdom who tries to save the princess and all members of the kingdom. The hero also completes his mission and finally marries to the princess. There is victimized hero in *The Sleeping Beauty*.

7. **False Hero.** There is false hero in this story since the story ends with the wedding of the prince and the princess'. There is no violent but the curse made by one of the fairies.

## CONCLUSION

The fairy tale *The Sleeping Beauty* has the same structure of functions as the others which came from Rusia. Not all thirty one functions we can find in *The Sleeping Beauty*, as stated by Propp that not all functions appear in the stories. The thirty one functions can be distributed into seven spheres of actions. From these seven spheres of actions we can get seven characters that usually appear in the fairy tales. But in *The Sleeping Beauty* there are only five characters since there is no helper and false hero in this story.

## REFERENCES

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