

University of Iceland
School of Humanities
Department of English

Fairyland Remains the Same

A Proppian Analysis of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

B.A. Essay

Anna Margrét Sveinsdóttir

Kt.: 1509684889

Supervisor: Anna Heiða Pálsdóttir

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to determine whether some new fairy tales share the same fundamental structure as the older ones. From ancient times, we have told each other fairy tales about heroes and villains and the struggle between good and bad. In each fairy tale, the characters and the environment vary with only the imagination as the limit. However, the narrative structure has turned out to be similar in fairy tales from all corners of the world. This interesting fact provoked me to examine the organization of a new fairy tale to verify this assertion. To accomplish this task I used one of the most popular fairy tales in later times as a research material: the first instalment in the book series about Harry Potter by J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (1998). The structure of the story is analysed by using the method presented in *Morphology of the Folktale* by Vladimir Propp, which is considered to be one of the fundamental tools to analyse narrative structure. Propp analysed Russian fairy tales and concluded that all fairy tales share the same rudimentary structure. In this thesis, the story of Harry Potter is analysed by reading the book thoroughly and marking relevant elements of the story according to Propp's method. In addition to how the elements of the story arrange themselves on the narrative axis, the existence of dramatis personae are also examined according to Propp's theory. In the analysing process, it was endeavoured to follow Propp's method as exactly as possible. The tabular data with the narrative elements is included in an Appendix to this thesis. I was intrigued to find that the structure of the story about Harry Potter closely follows Propp's theory and thereby supports the assertion about a common structure, even in modern fairy tales.

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1. Introduction

Fairy Land is always the same, and always has been, whether it is close to us—so close that we may enter it in a moment—or whether it is far off; in the stories that have come to us from the most ancient days, and the most distant lands, and in those which kind and clever story-tellers write for us now. (Bunce 7)

The words above are from the first chapter in *Fairy Tales, Their Origin and Meaning: With Some Account of Dwellers in Fairyland*, written by John T. Bunce and published in 1878. Through the ages fairy tales have inspired us with pleasure and comfort. As Jack Zipes puts it in the preface in his book, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre*: “If there is any single genre that has captured the imagination of people in all walks of life throughout the world, it is the fairy tale, and yet we still have great difficulty in explaining its historical origins, how it evolved and spread, and why we cannot resist its appeal, no matter what form it takes” (xi). Even though the origin of fairy tales is wrapped in a mysterious glow, it is known that fairy tales from all corners of the world are remarkably similar regarding structure and material. This similarity has raised speculations about whether the fairy tale motive is innate in humanity. Vladimir Propp, in his book *Morphology of the Folktale*, scrutinized the structure of the fairy tale and concluded that all fairy tales share the same fundamental structure. With this conclusion he also wonders about the origin of the fairy tales and considers the possibility of a psychological explanation: “‘A single source’ does not positively signify, as some assume, that all tales came, for example, from India, and that they spread from there throughout the entire world ... the single source may also be a psychological one” (Propp 106). Psychological or not, one cannot deny the similarity and repetitions of certain elements in the fairy tale up to date, and the new, as well as the old fairy tales still enchant its listeners and readers. The question is whether Propp’s claim that all fairy tales share the same fundamental structure, holds for a modern and longer fairy tale as well. With this question in mind, one of the most successful and popular fairy tales in later times will be analysed, the story about Harry Potter. In this paper, the first book in the Harry Potter series, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* (1998) will be scrutinised from the perspective of narratology, using Propp’s method, beginning with an introduction to the Harry Potter phenomenon, followed by a short extract about Propp’s methods, and finally the actual analysis of the book and a conclusion.

2. The Potter Phenomenon

Harry Potter, the protagonist of the series written by J. K. Rowling, is, in the first novel, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (1998), an orphan who has grown up with the family of his mother's sister, the Dursley family. The family ignores Harry's needs and treats him with disrespect and a common irksomeness. As a result, Harry is an unhappy, lonely boy. However, on his eleventh birthday his life changes dramatically when he learns that he is a wizard and not only that: he is a famous wizard in the wizard community. From that day, Harry's life becomes one exciting ride into the world of witchcraft and wizardry with thrilling adventures and invaluable friendships.

The reader can follow Harry in a series of seven books that span over four thousand pages: in the American, hardback edition a total of 4,195 pages to be exact. The first book was published in 1997 and the last in 2007. With each new instalment in the series, the books became thicker and the story darker as Harry grows from an innocent wizard boy, who knows nothing about magic, to a grown up man who has fought and conquered the most powerful and evil wizard ever known in the magic world.

The Potter phenomenon has been discussed and analysed from various angles: by people of diverse ages, genders and nationalities, from young fans to doctors in literature and professors of marketing research. Some have speculated whether the books' success is mostly due to a brilliant marketing plot, while others have asserted that the success is simply due to the quality of the story itself. Undeniable the marketing of the book and the after game with films and theme parks was brilliant. However, as Brown and Patterson in their article, "Selling Stories: Harry Potter and the Marketing Plot," note about the appealing of the story itself:

If the vehicle that transports consumers to Rowling's magic kingdom isn't necessarily the novels, there's no denying that when people fall for Potter they fall big. Almost without exception, informants find themselves spellbound, enraptured, caught up in the wonderful world of Muggles and Mudbloods, Hagrid and Hermione, Albus Dumbledore and Dudley Dursley. (Brown and Patterson 549)

Dr. Anna Heiða Pálsdóttir, in her article, "Harry Potter töfrar heiminn: Höfundurinn, útgáfuævintýrið og töfraformúlan," (Harry Potter Charms the World: The Author, the

Publication Adventure and the Magic Formula) deliberates possible reasons for the popularity of the Harry Potter books. She lists seven reasons that all involve the quality of the story itself. Her list includes: good plot, depth, Rowling's understanding of how it is to be a child, the underdog triumph, the classical fantasy formula and fairy tale elements. Like Brown and Patterson, she also concludes that whatever the magic formula is, Rowling has mastered it (Pálsdóttir 92-102).

However, the story itself has also attracted negative attention. It has for instance been condemned for heresy by Christian fundamentalists and it has even been considered harmful for impressionable children by literary critics. In fact, "[f]ew contemporary novels have attracted as much opprobrium as Harry Potter" (Brown and Patterson 545). Nonetheless, whether the story is considered good or bad the fact remains that "J. K. Rowling has succeeded in turning a new generation of children on to the joys of reading" (546).

This is precisely the reason for my first encounter with the Harry Potter books: I bought Harry Potter because of the rumour that people of all ages, who generally did not spend much time reading, seemed to make an exception for the Harry Potter books. I wanted my sons to read more, so I gave them the first two books for Christmas in 2000. I was not disappointed as they read the books and immediately began to wonder if and when the next book would be published. Out of curiosity, I took the books, meaning to scan them roughly, since I honestly did not expect to be taken away with this childish adventure. To make a long story short, I read the two books and was fascinated. It was like a magic. I enjoyed being in Harry's world, and admired how the author manages to make all the strangeness in the story function perfectly normal. My mind's eye saw Harry's world come to life, and I accepted it all. Not only the realistic everyday scenes, but also the magical world and the practical reason for the wizarding world to stay hidden from the eyes of muggles, as it is explained to Harry himself:

"But what does a Ministry of Magic *do*?"

"Well, their main job is to keep it from the Muggles that there's still witches an' wizards up an' down the country."

"Why?"

"*Why*? Blimey, Harry, everyone'd be wantin' magic solutions to their problems. Nah, we're best left alone." (*Sorcerer's Stone* 65)

It is not only the story itself that is appealing and acceptable, but also the story behind the story. To begin with, several publishers rejected the story until a relatively small publishing company, Bloomsbury, decided to give it a chance. The first book went immediately into bestseller lists and it was not until then that the marketing monster woke up. Obviously, the success of the first book is not due to some impudent marketing plot whatever happened later. At any rate, the story about Harry Potter provides a good material to examine whether new and longer fairy tales have the same fundamental structure as Vladimir Propp claims for the short fairy tales in his corpus.

3. Narratology and Vladimir Propp

One of the fundamental text of narratology study is Vladimir's Propp's book *Morphology of the Folktale*. It is worth noting that in the preface to the second edition of the book it is emphasized that the English title can lead to a confusion as the original title, *Morfológija skázki*, refers specifically to a fairy tale (Propp ix). The word morphology means the study of forms; thus, the title of Propp's book refers directly to its purpose: to study the form of fairy tales. The main characteristic of a fairy tale is the presence of some kind of magic or supernatural powers. D. L. Ashliman describes this world of magic in his book, *Folk and Fairy Tales: A Handbook*:

Fairy-tale characters accept magic as a natural and expected part of their everyday world....

In many respects the world of fairy tales resembles the fairyland of ancient legends ... this place can be in the sky, underground, underwater, or mysteriously integrated into our own world in a manner intangible and invisible to most humans. Fairy tales give their characters and vicariously the readers, access to this alternate parallel world, a place where magic abounds. These powers are supernatural only by this-world standards. By fairy-tale standards they are natural and subject to their own laws. (38)

Undeniably, this description sounds familiar for those who have read the story about Harry Potter.

Apart from the common elements, the structure of fairy tales has also turned out to be consistent. Propp analysed structure of 102 Russian fairy tales and after his study, he concluded that all fairy tales have a fundamental structure in common. According to Propp, the fairy tale structure is based on 31 functions or actions that can be organized into sequence on the narrative axis. A tale hardly ever contains all the functions. The functions do always appear in chronological order, that is to say, function number five before function number six et cetera. The rule about the functions order is elemental in Propp's theory. However, Propp also discusses functions that frequently deviate from this order as will be revealed on page 14 in this paper. Propp defines a function in the following way: "Function is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action"

(Propp 21). The list of Propp's 31 functions can be found in his book in Appendix IV. To make the illustration of tale structure facile, Propp assigned each function a sign and abbreviated definition in one word. For example, function number 8 of the 31 functions is assigned the letter "A" and the short definition "villainy".

To analyse a tale Propp uses a three-tier arrangement, firstly he breaks the tale down into a block of events or moves. Secondly, he marks each relevant action with a proper function and thirdly, if needed, the analyser can choose from several variations for each function. For instance, the function with the sign "A" represents the point in the narrative when the complication begins, "by means of it the actual movement of the tale is created" (30). This function (A), introduces villainy in the narrative with some action of a villain that harms other characters in various ways. Actually, Propp mentions 19 variations of this one function. To indicate which variation is used its number is put as superscript over the function sign. Therefore, if a tale has a villain that causes bodily injury, it would fit into variation number six that stands for: "The villain causes bodily injury," (32) and consequently be marked as A⁶. Let us take a practical example of how to choose a variant of the villainy function by looking into the fairy tale about Sleeping Beauty. The complication in that story begins when the evil fairy casts a spell on Sleeping Beauty. That action would match a variant number 11 in Propp's book, which he simply describes as: "The villain casts a spell upon someone or something" (33), and consequently the analyser would mark that villain action as A¹¹.

Because Propp's functions can be organized into building blocks, I found it appropriate and illustrating to put them in a table like the one that chemical elements are illustrated in a periodic table (see fig. 1).

Preparation				Conflict Struggle/Victory and / or difficult task/solution Liquidation Return				Dénouement and /or Recognition	
α 0	ε 4					K 19	O 23	Ex 28	Q 27
β 1	ζ 5	Complication begins with action of the villain				H 16	↓ 20	L 24	T 29
γ 2	η 6	A ^a 8	C 10	D 12	F 14	I 17	Pr 21	M 25	U 30
δ 3	θ λ 7	B 9	↑ 11	E 13	G 15	J 18	Rs 22	N 26	W 31

Fig. 1. Propp's functions organized into building blocks

As can be seen from Fig. 1 the first seven functions have Greek letters and belong to a preparation section in the narrative. The Greek letter α stands for the initial situation and does not count as a function, though many tales begin by describing the initial situation as Propp explains: “Although this situation is not a function, it nevertheless is an important morphological element” (25). Subsequently the complication begins with the entrance of some villain (A) or lack (a). The transference section often begins with action of the donor (D) which provides the hero with some kind of magical agent that helps the hero to solve a mystery or settle some misfortune (39). The narrative then develops through some kind of conflict and ends with some kind of dénouement.

To understand Propp’s approach it is useful to examine his corpus, which consists of Russian fairy tales from the Afanas’ev collection (Propp xxi). Afanas’ev is commonly referred to as the Russian Grimm as he collected folktales from Russia like the Grimm brothers collected folktales from Germany. The book *Complete Folktales of A. N. Afanas’ev*, published 2014, contains Jack Haney’s translation of Afanas’ev’s collection, *Narodnye Russkie Skazki*. In Haney’s book, each tale is numbered by the same number system that Propp uses in his book to reference the tales. In Appendix III in Propp’s book, Propp offers schemes of 45 of the tales he analysed and the number system made it possible to look up these 45 stories. That inspection illuminated following facts: the longest story in Propp’s schemes is 20 pages, the average page number for one story is 6 pages and the total number of pages for these 45 stories is 272 pages. With this in mind, it is obvious that the story at hand, the *Sorcerer’s Stone*, is, in all probability much more complicated than any story in Propp’s corpus. The *Sorcerer’s Stone* is 309 pages and only the first instalment of the series consisting of seven books that cover over 4,000 pages in the American edition.

Although Propp underlines that the functions are the main subject in his method, he identifies seven forms of characters or dramatis personae that can be found in fairy tales. These dramatis personae are the hero, the false hero, the villain, the donor, the helper, the dispatcher, and the princess or the king. This classification of character types is built on their action not who they are or their characteristics. So additionally, to how the functions order themselves along the narrative axis, Propp also examined how the functions distribute among the dramatis personae into what he termed as “spheres of action” (79). For instance the dramatis personae that Propp identifies as the donor has the tendency to have the functions D and F in its spheres of action and the dispatcher often has the function B in his spheres of

action and so forth. A complete list of how the functions tend to distribute among dramatis personae is to be found in Table 1 on page 16 in this paper.

One last thing to consider about Propp's method is the combination of a tale. Propp offers guiding rules about that matter:

Morphologically, a tale (*skáxka*) may be termed any development proceeding from villainy (A) or a lack (*a*), through intermediary functions to marriage (W*), or to other functions employed as a dénouement. Terminal functions are at times a reward (F), a gain or in general the liquidation of misfortune (K), an escape from pursuit (Rs), etc. This type of development is termed by us a *move* (*xod*). Each new act of villainy, each new lack creates a new move. One tale may have several moves, and when analyzing a text, one must first of all determine the number of moves of which it consists. (92)

Then Propp demonstrates several possible combinations of how a move develops in a tale, for instance, one move can directly follow another, a new move can begin before the termination of the previous move and two moves may have a common ending.

Before we begin to examine the morphology of Harry Potter, one thing needs explaining to avoid confusion. The first book in the Harry Potter series has two different titles depending on whether it was published in Britain (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*) or America (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*). My analysis is based on the American edition and from now on, that book will be referenced by using the title *Sorcerer's Stone*.

4. Propp and Potter

The structure of the Harry Potter books has been studied before using Propp's morphology as a tool. My examination of several analyses revealed the fact that analysers approach the task differently. To explain this statement and to gain insight into how it has been done before I want to discuss four Proppian analyses. Firstly, Dr. Joel Hunter in his paper, "Folktale Structure as the Key to the Success of the Harry Potter Series," analysed the books in order to answer if the success of them could be due to the their narrative structure. For each book he offers a symbolic string using Propp's notation for individual functions. The reader has no means to know what is behind these strings (each function) because Dr. Hunter does not include the narrative descriptions in his paper. Although, he states several times that the tabular data with the narrative description is to be found in the appendix, the appendix is not included in his paper in any of the copies I could find. This is a big drawback because without the narrative description behind each function in the symbolic notation strings, the reader can only guess and that is like having a cake recipe with a picture of the cake without information about the ingredients. Dr. Hunter's analysis of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in symbolic notion, taken directly from his paper, is as follows:

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \alpha \beta \gamma \delta \left[\begin{array}{c} \varepsilon \zeta \eta \theta \\ \varepsilon \zeta \eta \theta \end{array} \right] \begin{array}{c} \text{---} \text{H I K M N} \\ [D E F]^* \\ [D E F]^* \end{array} \\
 \begin{array}{c} \Lambda B C \text{ ---} \uparrow D E F G H J I K \text{ ---} Q E x T U W \\ \Lambda B C \uparrow D E F G H J I K \end{array}
 \end{array}$$

Very nice looking and interestingly well fitted into Propp's order, but as mentioned above, one has no means to know what is behind each function. According to Hunter's analysis, the story has a double move (recall that move begins with entrance of some villainy). In the evaluation of his analysis, Dr. Hunter states that none of the books in the series contains two villains except the book, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Hunter 17). This statement does not conform to my analysis since *Sorcerer's Stone* contains three villains: Draco Malfoy, Quirrell and Voldemort. All of them have villainy actions that influence the course of action, and thereby fulfilling the requirement for function according to Propp (Propp 21).

The second analysis I want to mention is, "Only for children? Reevaluating Harry Potter," a thesis written by Maiara Fischer Pioner. In her thesis, she uses Propp's functions to

analyse the second Harry Potter book in the series: *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. If we translate her analysis into a symbolic notation, we get:

a ß L D E T O M N Pr Rs A B C Ex ↑ U F J H I G K Q W

Now of course it is entirely possible when analysing a story to conclude that the story does not fit in with Propp's theory and this string does not present a structure that Propp introduced as a structure of a fairy tale. Nevertheless, the author does not acknowledge that, but seems to place all the emphasis on the fact that the story includes *all* the functions. Propp's theory does not require nor assume that, on the contrary, he claims, "it is necessary to say first of all that by no means do all tales give evidence of all functions. But this in no way changes the law of sequence" (Propp 22). Her emphasis on the significance of the story to include all the functions is clear in her conclusion. "As we can see *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* presents all the functions that Vladimir Propp has predicted ... although not in the same proposed order, which as previously explained, is not a problem per se, since wonder tales ... do not need to follow it strictly" (Pioner 55).

The third analysis I want to mention is from Jann Lacoss. She analysed the first and the fourth book, the *Sorcerer's Stone* and *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, also using Propp's morphology. This analysis is to be found in her article "Of Magicals and Muggles: Reversals and Revulsions at Hogwarts," in the book, *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon*. If we translate Lacoss' analysis of the *Sorcerer's Stone* into a symbolic notation, we get:

ß A a B D ↑ E F G H J L M N Q Ex T U (Lacoss 86-87)

Here it has to be noted that the villainy "A" and a lack "a" are variants of one function so either of them can be chosen, but not both on the same move as seems to be the case here as the narrative elements behind them are "[s]orcerer's stone is stolen" and "[s]orcerer's stone is missing" (86). Moreover, the sorcerer's stone was never stolen nor missing in the story.

The fourth and last analysis I want to mention is Paul Simpson's analysis of the film *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. If his analysis is translated into a symbolic notation, we get:

ß A B D M F N H J Ex T I U K (Simpson 73)

One thing to mention here is that Simpson assigns function to the narrative event “unknown to all, Voldemort [Villain] has taken over the body of professor Quirrell” (73). However, Propp’s method does focus on the narrative event in the same order as it is introduced by the narrator: “if a tale consists of elements A to Z, the structure of the tale is delineated in terms of this same sequence” (Propp xi).

Now we have discussed four Proppian analyses of the adventure of Harry Potter and two of them tackle the first book in the Harry Potter series, the same story that is analysed in this paper. It is valuable to get insight into how it has been done before. However, the dissimilarity in the approach and interpretation of the narrative elements as well as different results draws further attention to how Propp performed the analyses on his subjects. In chapter four in Propp’s book, “Assimilations: Cases of the Double Morphological Meaning of a Single Function,” he addresses the difficulty that can arise in different texts, but does not offer illumination of this problem except to the extent that he faced in his corpus:

It has already been shown that functions must be defined independently of the characters who are supposed to fulfill them ... they must also be defined independently of how and in what manner they are fulfilled. This sometimes complicates the definition of individual cases, since different functions may be fulfilled in exactly the same way ... This phenomenon may be termed the assimilation of the means of fulfillment of functions. This complicated phenomenon cannot be fully illuminated here. It can be examined only to the extent that this is necessary for subsequent analyses. (66)

In the view of the different results and approach in the Proppian analyses discussed above, together with the fact that Propp’s corpus obviously contains both shorter and more homogenous stories than the story at hand, I want to list out a few points that I had as a guiding light through my analysis.

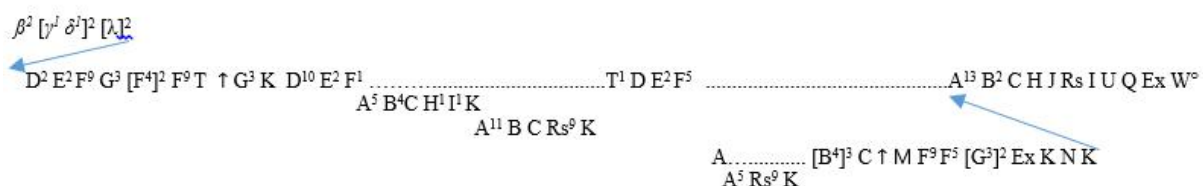
Firstly, I analysed the linear narrative as presented by the author and did not try to fit the story into an “acceptable” notation string according to Propp’s theory about the sequential order of the functions. To accomplish this, I preferred to match the functions as they appeared in the text over preserving the function order, having in mind the following words, ”your job

is to determine not only which functions occur, but where” (“Proppian Functions & Moves” 1). This last point is important as it underlines the objectivity that Propp emphasises in his book: “Here it should be recalled that the study of the tale must be carried on strictly deductively, i.e., proceeding from the material at hand to the consequences” (Propp 23).

I read thoroughly through the whole story and marked each action (function) chronologically; sometimes I used my own words and/or quoted the story. A reference number to the variant of the function is in superscript with each designation after the corresponding narrative element. Secondly, I picked only narrative elements that influence the course of action. Thirdly, because the entrance of a villain (function A) moves the story in a new direction it is important to recognise this function wherever it appears. Knowing the story, I know that Draco’s foul acts often have a huge influence on the course of action. Nevertheless, to prevent the extract from becoming too complicated I will not include the villainy actions of Draco to begin with but analyse them separately. I acknowledge that Propp did not divide his analysis this way, but as the story at hand is much longer and more complicated than any story in Propp’s corpus I think it is justifiable. Nonetheless, in the end, I translated all of the functions into one notation string: with both Draco as a villain and other villains. Finally, I examined how the functions distribute among the dramatis personae. The whole extract from the story *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* with the relevant functions marked after each narrative element is in Appendix.

The three notation strings from my analysis are as follows:

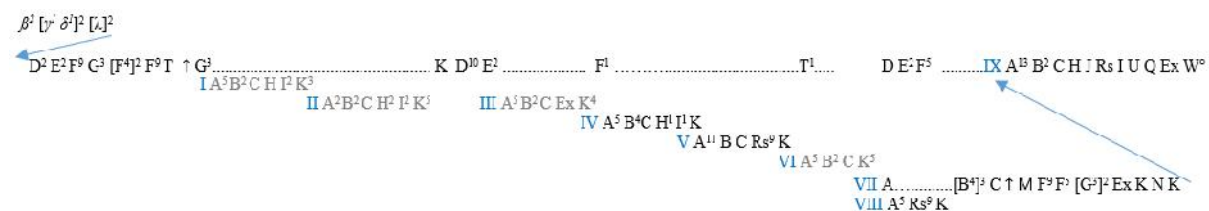
The symbolic notation, from the analysis in Table 1, in Appendix, illustrates functions without actions of Draco as a villain:



The symbolic notation from the analysis in Table 2, in Appendix, illustrates functions with the actions of Draco as a villain:



This symbolic notation illustrates the structure as a whole, with all the actions of the villainy and move numbers:



To begin with, the *Sorcerer's Stone* has nine moves. Four of the moves belong to actions involving Draco as a villain (functions involving Draco have grey letters in the notation string above), and five of them belong to villainy actions of Voldemort or his assistant Quirrell. The last move is the action of Voldemort when he orders Quirrell to kill Harry. In all of the moves except one move, Harry is a victim-hero, whereas only in the move VII when he decides to get the sorcerer's stone before Voldemort does, he is a seeker-hero. The difference between the two occurrences of the departure function (\uparrow), on the notation string, reflects the difference between the role of the seeker-hero and the victim-hero. The former instance of the departure function refers to the start of Harry's journey to Hogwarts while the latter refers to his trip to find the sorcerer's stone (move VII). Propp says about the departure function: "The departures of seeker-heroes and victim-heroes are also different. The departures of the former group have search as their goal, while those of the latter mark the beginning of a journey without searches, on which various adventures await the hero" (Propp 39). Propp's commentary about the departure function (\uparrow) matches perfectly with its appearances in the story.

The two main quests for Harry, in the story, present the task to get the sorcerer's stone (move VII) and in the last move to fight Voldemort (move IX). When the notation string is examined, it becomes apparent that there are seven moves that stand alone and terminate with some kind of dénouement that prepare Harry for his two main quests. These seven moves are numbered I, II, III, IV, V, VI and VIII. To confirm that, let us consider how each of these moves strengthens or prepares Harry for the two main quests.

In the first move, when Draco acts in the Hogwarts train by trying to spoil Harry and Ron's friendship, Harry shows unconditional loyalty to Ron and their friendship strengthens. Ron's friendship is extremely valuable for Harry through the story. The second move, when Draco takes Neville's Remembrall and provokes Harry to get it back, results in Harry receiving a broom and becoming a player in the Quidditch team. Furthermore, when Draco

tries to get Harry fired from the school (move III) by daring him to duel, Harry also benefits because he discovers where the sorcerer's stone is kept.

Quirrell is the villain in moves four and five. In move four when Quirrell lets the troll into the school, Harry, Ron and Hermione become friends after their fight with the troll. Each of them has talent that is necessary to get through the enchantments that guard the sorcerer's stone. When Quirrell tries to kill Harry in the Quidditch game (move V), Harry manages, with help from Hermione, to hang on his broom. As a result, he gets admiration from his schoolfellows and his status as a hero is thereby confirmed.

Finally, Draco's second attempt to get Harry fired from school (move VI) by telling McGonagall about their plan, when they send Hagrid's dragon away, leads to chain reaction. McGonagall catches them on their way home and consequently puts them in detention. The detention involves going into the forbidden forest (move VII) with Hagrid, where Harry learns about Voldemort's plan and why he wants the sorcerer's stone.

Thus, it is fair to say that these seven moves gradually drive the course of events towards the climax of the story and equip Harry in some way or another for his heroic act when he fights Voldemort and obtains the sorcerer's stone.

Evidently, there are functions that do not appear in a proper order according to Propp's rule. Firstly, the pattern of the functions DEF occurs thrice as a group of functions before the function A. About this group of functions Propp says, "[a] careful examination of the schemes will show certain deviations. In particular, one may observe that elements DEF often stand before A. Does this not break the rule? No, for this is not a new, but rather an inverted ... sequence" (Propp 107). Propp mentions another example of a deviation from the proper order and that regards the function K. About the function K, Propp reports that "misfortune [K] is usually given first, followed by the exit from home (ABC)" (107). This also matches with the structure of the tale at hand as can be seen in the notation string. Another example of out of order function in this tale is the function T (transfiguration), but Propp also notes that this function has a strong tendency to appear out of order: "The most unstable function in relation to its position is T (transfiguration)" (108). In view of Propp's notes about the deviance of the functions discussed above (functions D, E, F, K and T), they will not be counted as out of order functions. Besides these functions, relatively few functions appear out of order in the *Sorcerer's Stone*.

Now let us examine the two main quests: the quests to find the stone (move VII), and then the fight with Voldemort (move IX). The H-I (struggle and victory) and M-N (difficult

task and solution) pairs deserve special attention. In Propp's study, he concludes that a move can consist of both of them, neither of them, only H-I or only M-N. However, he also discovered that only three tales in his corpus had a development that had both of them in the same move. Therefore, he judges that both H-I and M-N pairs "are encountered within a single move so rarely that their exclusiveness may be considered regular, while their combination may be considered a violation of the rule" (102). This rule is not violated in the *Sorcerer's Stone* because no move has both these pairs. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Propp also observed that, "if one move contains a fight [H] and the other a difficult task [M], then the fight always occurs in the first move and the difficult task in the second" (Propp 103). Here we have a contradiction to Propp's discovery because move VII has the M-N pair and then move IX has H-I pair and thereby the H-I pair occurs after the M-N pair.

One more thing to note about move VII is that the function K (Harry has the stone in his pocket) is the climax of the story and that matches Propp's note about the function K: "This function [K], together with villainy (A), constitutes a pair. The narrative reaches its peak in this function" (53). Interestingly, all the moves that start with Draco as a villain have the A-K pair as they begin with A and terminate with K. Obviously these appearances of function K do not stand for action that can be seen as the peak of the story. However, once again it has to be recalled that Propp's corpus consisted of much shorter stories than the story at hand. Actually, none of the 45 stories in Appendix III in Propp's book has more than four moves.

Draco's villainous actions play a big role in changing the course of action in the story. Although, every time he tries to harm Harry, it backfires and Harry profits. For instance, after the second move, Harry says to Ron, "If he [Draco] hadn't stolen Neville's Remembrall I wouldn't be on the team" (*Sorcerer's Stone* 166). However, Draco's last move particularly influences the course of action because of the journey into the forbidden forest where Harry learns why Voldemort wants the Sorcerer's stone. Draco is the first villain acting in the story and it is interesting in the light of Propp's conclusion about the first villain: "Usually only the villain of the second move and the false hero are punished, while the first villain is punished only in those cases in which a battle and pursuit are absent from the story" (63).

Now let us examine how the dramatis personae in the story fit into Propp's discovery. As stated earlier, Propp recognised seven spheres of action. A Proppian analyser can mark dramatis personae parallel to the analysis of the functions or later:

Keep in mind, too, that roles are bound closely to the functions. If there is a Proppian Function annotation for the text you are working on, or you are creating one at the same time as doing the archetype annotations, make sure that the functions and archetypes are consistent. For example, the donor is implicated in functions D and F. If those functions are present in the story, then the character involved in those functions should be marked as the Donor. (“Proppian Archetypes Annotation Guide” 1)

In this analysis, the *dramatis personae* and the functions were marked simultaneously.

Before we look at how the *dramatis personae* fit into the story at hand, it is useful to list out how the functions tend to distribute among the *dramatis personae* according to Propp. See Table 1 below.

Table 1

Distribution of functions among *dramatis personae*

Dramatis personae	Spheres of actions (functions)
The villain	A, H, Pr
The donor	D, F
The helper	G, K, Rs, N T
The princess (or a sought for person)	M, J, Ex, Q, U, W
The dispatcher	B
The hero	C ↑ , E, W
The false hero	C ↑, E, L

In the *Sorcerer’s Stone*, the villains are Draco, Quirrell and Voldemort. The actions of Quirrell and Voldemort meld together as Quirrell is hosting Voldemort in his body and Voldemort controls Quirrell. They strike five times with actions marked as “A” and twice these actions lead to a struggle (H). Draco strikes four times with actions marked as “A” and two of them lead to struggle (H).

The story has three donors: Hagrid provides Harry with an owl and gives him the flute Harry uses to put the dog to sleep, McGonagall provides Harry with a broomstick, and Dumbledore sends Harry the invisibility cloak. All of them have actions marked D and F.

There are five helpers: Ron, Hermione, Dumbledore, Hagrid and Firenze. Ron, Hermione and Hagrid all have actions marked G. Dumbledore has actions marked K and Rs. Hermione has action marked Rs that leads to T. Firenze has action marked Rs.

The story has three dispatchers: Firenze (the centaur), Hagrid and Dumbledore. Firenze tells Harry why Voldemort is drinking unicorn blood and why Voldemort is after the sorcerer's stone. Later Harry learns from Hagrid that someone knows how to get past the dog. The information (dispatch) from Firenze and Hagrid provoke Harry and he identifies the necessity to stop Voldemort. These actions are marked as B. Dumbledore acts as a dispatcher by giving Harry information gradually throughout the story. Dumbledore's presence is strongly felt in the whole story and he acts as both a helper and a dispatcher when he gives Harry the invisibility cloak with a note asking him to "[u]se it well" (*Sorcerer's Stone* 202). Towards the end of the story, Ron asks Harry:

"D'you think he meant you to do it?" said Ron. "Sending you your fathers cloak and everything?"

...

"No, it isn't," said Harry thoughtfully. "He's a funny man, Dumbledore. I think he sort of wanted to give me a chance. I think he knows more or less everything that goes on here, you know. I reckon he had a pretty good idea we were going to try, and instead of stopping us, he just taught us enough to help. I don't think it was an accident he let me find out how the mirror worked. It's almost like he thought I had the right to face Voldemort if I could. . . ." (*Sorcerer's Stone* 302)

Finally, the story has one hero; Harry himself and his actions include the hero's spheres of action: C ↑, E, W. Overall, the distribution of functions among the dramatis personae, in the *Sorcerer's Stone*, closely follows Propp's notes about the spheres of action. (see Table 1).

The last thing to note about the spheres of action is how their execution can appear. Propp mentions three possibilities about this matter: one sphere of action corresponds exactly to one character, one character can fulfil multiple spheres of action or a single sphere of action can be fulfilled by multiple characters (Propp 81). In the *Sorcerer's Stone*, all these variants are present.

5. Conclusion

Let us return to the original question whether Propp's claim that all fairy tales share the same fundamental structure, holds for a modern and longer fairy tale as well as the older ones. To answer this question the structure of the first book in the Harry Potter series, the *Sorcerer's Stone*, was analysed using Propp's method.

In the analysing process, I learned that Propp's book is a treasure for all interested in morphology of fairy tale. His conclusion, about the common fairy tale structure, draws attention to the mystery of the origin of these tales. Propp himself speculates about this enigma in his book but hands this question over to historians for further investigation (106).

In spite of the complexity in the *Sorcerer's Stone* (compared to the stories in Propp's corpus), the narrative axis contains Propp's functions with relatively small deviations from the rule about functions order. In addition, most of the deviations proved out to exist in Propp's study often enough to be considered the exceptions that prove the rule. Likewise, the dramatis personae in the *Sorcerer's Stone* bear a significant resemblance to Propp's findings from his study. The same conformity is present regarding the spheres of action.

In summary, my analysis revealed that the structure of the book *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* confirms Propp's claim, about common structure in fairy tales, holds for new and longer fairy tales as well as for the shorter and older ones. In view of my conclusion, it seems fair to say that fairyland remains the same whether it appears in old or new fairy tale or in the words of John Bunce in the beginning of this paper: "Fairy Land is always the same, and always has been" (Bunce 7).

Appendix

Table 1

Narrative elements behind functions without actions of Draco as a villain

Narrative elements (page number)	Function ^{variant no.}
Harry's parents are killed by Voldemort and Dumbledore brings Harry to the Dursley family (<i>Sorcerer's Stone</i> 13).	β^2
The Dursley family lie to Harry about how his parents died and do not tell him that he is a wizard. Strange things often happen around Harry that makes the Dursley family angry and they forbid him to do these things (24).	¹
However, Harry cannot explain why these things happen. "Harry sat up and gasped; the glass front of the boa constrictor's tank had vanished" (28).	¹
When Hagrid comes to the island, Vernon forbids him to tell Harry that he is a wizard (50).	¹
Harry is informed that he is a wizard, (50) and by getting the letter from Hagrid, he learns that he has been invited in Hogwarts (51).	¹
Hagrid tells Harry how his parents died and now Harry knows that his aunt and uncle have been lying to him about his parents (53).	
Harry learns about an evil wizard whose name itself frightens people (54).	
Hagrid tells Harry that Voldemort killed his parents and Voldemort had tried to kill him (Harry) to (55). <i>End of preparatory section.</i>	
Harry cannot believe he is a wizard. Hagrid helps Harry to connect all the strange things to the fact that he is a wizard (55-58).	D ²
Harry responds to Hagrid's kindness (58).	E ²
Hagrid uses magic to transfer them from the island (64).	F ⁹
Hagrid shows Harry the way to Diagon Alley (71).	G ³
Hagrid buys an owl for Harry (81).	F ⁴
Harry buys a magic wand (85).	F ⁴
Hagrid gives Harry a ticket for the Hogwarts train and reminds Harry to be in contact if the Dursley family becomes too annoying (87).	F ⁹

When Harry comes back to the Dursley family he has changed in their eyes, “Dudley was now so scared of Harry he wouldn’t stay in the same room, while Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon didn’t shut Harry in his cupboard, force him to do anything, or shout at him” (88).	T
Harry starts his journey to Hogwarts	↑
Harry is helped by the Weasley family to get on the Hogwarts train (93).	G ³
Harry learns that the break in occurred on his birthday, the same day Hagrid emptied the vault 713 for Dumbledore. He reads about the break-in, “ <i>The vault that was searched had in fact been emptied earlier that same day</i> ” (142).	K
Harry shows excellent skills on a broomstick and McGonagall wants him on the Quidditch team promising to arrange for him to get a broomstick. Instead, she wants him to train hard (152).	D ¹⁰
Harry tells Ron that he (Harry) will start training next week (152).	E ²
Harry is given a broomstick that McGonagall arranged for him (164).	F ¹
Hermione is upset when she hears Ron talk disapprovingly about her. Quirrell informs Dumbledore about the troll in the school (172).	A ⁵
Harry and Ron know that Hermione is in danger because she does not know about the troll (173).	B ⁴
Harry and Ron decide to warn Hermione (173).	C
Harry and Ron struggle with the troll	H ¹
Harry and Ron manage to kill the troll	I ¹
Hermione becomes Harry and Ron’s friend. “But from that moment on, Hermione Granger became their friend. There are some things you can’t share without ending up liking each other, and knocking out a twelve-foot mountain troll is one of them” (179).	K
Someone tries to kill Harry when he is playing Quidditch, “His broom had started to roll over and over, with him only just managing to hold on” (190).	A ¹¹
Hermione and Ron assume that Snape is trying to kill Harry (190).	B
Hermione decides to act (190).	C
Hermione saves Harry (191).	Rs ⁹
Harry manages to stay on his broom (191).	K
Harry has proved his strength, “they were all so impressed at the way Harry had managed to stay on his bucking broomstick” (195).	T ¹

Hagrid gives Harry a flute for Christmas. Someone (unknown donor at that point) provides Harry with an invisibility cloak with a note "Use it well" (202).	D
Using the invisibility cloak, Harry finds the mirror of Erased (207).	E ² F ⁵
Some creature is hurting/killing unicorn in the forbidden forest (250).	A
Harry is attacked by that creature when he is helping Hagrid to find the hurt unicorn (256).	A ⁵
Harry is rescued by Firenze the centaur (256).	Rs ⁹
Harry learns from Firenze that the attacker was Voldemort and that Voldemort is killing unicorns and drinking their blood to stay alive (259).	K
Harry also learns from Firenze that Voldemort wants the Sorcerer's stone to be fully recovered and with the stone, he would be able to live forever (259).	B ⁴
Harry gets information from Hagrid how to get past the dog and that the stone is guarded with enchantments from some of the teachers. He also learns that Hagrid has been deceived by some stranger to tell how to get past the dog (266).	B ⁴
Harry connects the incident, together with the information from Firenze and that (266). Harry now knows that Voldemort is going to take the stone.	B ⁴
Harry decides to take the stone before Voldemort (270).	C
Harry sneaks out with Ron and Hermione to get the stone (274).	↑
Harry is faced with a difficult task, as he has to find a way to get through the enchantments that guards the stone. He uses the invisibility cloak to get past Filch, the flute from Hagrid to put the dog to sleep.	M
Hermione's knowledge and magic saves them from the Devil's Snare (277).	F ⁹
Harry uses a broomstick he find, and his talent as a seeker to get the right key (280).	F ⁵
They get past the chess table with help from Ron (283-284).	G ³
Hermione solves the puzzle to know from what bottle to drink from to get through the fire (268).	G ³
Harry is confronted with Quirrell and it becomes known that Quirrell is a traitor hosting the weak Voldemort in his body (288).	Ex

Things are liquidated. It was Quirrell that had tried to kill Harry in the Quidditch match (not Snape), it was Quirrell that had had let the troll in and all the misunderstanding regarding Snape is illuminated.	K
Harry manages to get the stone with the help of the mirror of Erased. When the stone is in his pocket, Harry has overcome all the enchantments that guarded the stone.	N
“Harry felt something heavy drop into his real pocket. Somehow — incredibly — <i>he’d gotten the Stone</i> ” (292).	K
When Quirrell cannot get the stone from Harry because he cannot touch him, Voldemort orders him to kill Harry (295).	A ¹³
“Quirrell raised his hand to perform a deadly curse” (295).	B ²
“Harry, by instinct, reached up and grabbed Quirrell’s face” (295).	C
Harry and Quirrell fight	H
“The pain in Harry’s head was building” (295).	J
Harry wakes up in the hospital wing. Harry learns that Dumbledore rescued him (297).	Rs
Dumbledore tells Harry that the stone has been destroyed	I
Dumbledore also tells Harry that Quirrell had died and Voldemort has been driven away from his dead host (298).	U
Now everybody knows that Harry is a hero	Q
Now everybody knows that Quirrell was a traitor	Ex
Harry and his friends are all rewarded for their bravery and ingenuity (305,306).	W ^o

Table 2

Narrative elements behind functions with actions of Draco as a villain

Narrative elements (page number)	Function ^{variant no.}
In the Hogwarts train, Draco insults Harry’s new friend and tries to spoil their friendship (108).	A ⁵

When Harry does not accept Draco's friendship Draco threatens him (108,109).	B ²
Both Harry and Ron stand up to defend themselves (109).	C
The boys struggle.	H
Draco loses his battle about Harry.	I ²
Harry and Ron's friendship strengthens. Harry has shown loyalty and moral strength.	K ³
Draco takes Neville's Remembrall (148).	A ²
Draco provokes Harry to get the Remembrall from him (148).	B ²
"Harry grabbed his broom" (148).	C
Harry and Draco struggle on the brooms (148-149).	H ²
Harry manages to get the Remembrall from Draco using his broomstick. "He stretched out his hand — a foot from the ground he caught it" (149).	I ²
Harry lands on the ground with the Remembrall (149).	K ⁵
Draco dares Harry into a wizard duel (153).	A ⁵
"Wizard's duel. Wands only — no contact" (153).	B ²
Harry decides to accept Draco's dare (155).	C
Harry discovers that Draco deceived him by telling Mr Filch (159).	Ex
It becomes clear that Malfoy had tried to get Harry fired from the school (163).	K ⁴
Draco threatens to tell about Hagrid's dragon (238).	A ⁵
It is forbidden to keep a dragon. Hagrid would be in trouble if it discovered	B ²
Harry, Ron and Hermione decide to help Hagrid to save the dragon by putting him in care with Ron's brother.	C
They successfully send the dragon away.	K ⁵

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