

An Attempt at Applying Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* on Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*

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Abstract

The present paper is an attempt at approaching Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* from a morphological perspective based upon Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*. The paper is divided into two parts. The first part is concerned with a brief view of the nature of formalism: its background and its process of analysis. The second part is devoted to putting into practice what has been dealt with in the first part. It will be mostly concerned with the question as to whether all the functions of dramatis personae as stated by Propp figure in the object of analysis, *Great Expectations*. Finally, the paper will draw the conclusion as to whether the aforementioned elements constitute an organic unity.

Keywords: dramatis personae, folktale, formalistic reading, morphological substructure

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Introduction

A work of art is open to several interpretations. This feature undoubtedly gives justice to the view that a literary work is rich. It is so in the sense that it contains ideas, notions and themes that can be treated and appreciated differently. But if a literary work is an offspring of a genius, its richness, then, will take deeper dimensions. This is the case of Charles Dickens, one of the renowned Victorian novelists.

“That Dickens was a great genius and is permanently among the classics is certain, but the genius was that of a great entertainer, and he had . . . no profounder responsibility as a creative artist than this description suggests” Allen (1954. p.107). This passage makes it clear that Dickens' creative power resides solely and particularly in his ability to bring into being novels that make the reader enjoy him/herself.

This fact of enjoyment is attributed to the folktale, given the evidence that folktales take place in an imaginary world consisting of supernatural forces, extraordinary events and of super-human characters. This enriches the reader's imagination and gives him an opportunity to escape the hard facts existing in the physical world. But the task at hands does not really necessitate a deeper probing in this matter. The question that is asked here is how Dickens' books are approached.

In effect, Dickens' novels have been stimuli to a good number of books and articles written especially to illuminate his literary production. Moreover, Dickens' literary work was, and still is, fertile fields open to investigations and scholastic researches. In addition to sociological, psychological and biographical approaches, the formalistic one tries, in its turn, to find admittance into Dickens' literary work. Many a critic, however, have considered Dickens' work in the light of the novelist's life and his autobiographical accounts, and his psychological growth. All of these approaches, therefore, have tried to make sufficient illuminations of Dickens' work relying upon extra-literary materials, such as the writer's environment, his psychological growth and his personal life.

The present paper is an attempt at approaching Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* from a morphological standpoint based upon Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*. The paper is divided into two parts. The first part is concerned with a brief view of the nature of formalism: its background and its process of analysis. The main purpose of this part is to bring into focus the elements which would be dealt with throughout the attempt namely the dramatis personae and their functions together with the morphological substructure of tales.

The second part is devoted to putting into practice what has been dealt with in the first part. It would be mostly concerned with the question as to whether all the functions of dramatis personae as stated by Propp figure in the object of analysis, *Great Expectations*.

Finally, the paper would draw the conclusion as to whether the aforesaid elements constitute an organic unity. Also the conclusion would make it clear whether Propp's theory succeeds in achieving a formalistic reading of *Great Expectations*.

I- A General View of the Framework of Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*

Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* suggests a formalistic approach to literary texts. To better understand his theory, certain knowledge of the nature of formalism is required. In a simpler way, the formalistic theory deals primarily with the form of a literary work and leaves aside all the extra-literary materials, such as the writer's life, environment, philosophy and so forth. The point of interest of the formalist critic, however, is to state simply "what is the literary work, what are its shape and effect and how these are achieved. All relevant answers to these questions are to come from the text itself" (Harper & Row 1979, p.159). In accordance with this, the stress is put on the intrinsic material of the work of art regardless of the possible weight that might influence that very work.

By means of illustration one may take, for instance, Virginia Woolf's (1882-1941) masterpiece, *To the Lighthouse* (1927). In this novel, the writer provides us with pattern and formula through two analogous characters: Mrs. Ramsay who tries the best she can to give 'pattern' and 'formula' to people in life; and Lily Briscoe who attempts hard to give 'form' and 'shape' to her vision upon canvas in order to achieve a unified picture. In both cases, the object sought is '**oneness**' through art. This, so it is observed, becomes a little parable of formalistic research and discovery. This is quite justified on the grounds that "the artist experiences an underlying or transcendent reality that he or she captures and transmits by recreating on canvas the vision of **formal** relations and **harmonies**, or significant **form**" (Harper & Row, 1979, p.161).

If we go back to the Greek Era, however, we notice that there was some implied conscience of formalism, given the evidence that question as to the proper end of fine art was discussed in its exclusive appropriateness to poetry. Conversely, in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century "the Romantic movement... intensified speculations about form in literature, especially in the generation of concepts of 'organisms' of a work of art and that of living organisms" (1979, p.174)

What we can deduce from here is that a work of art should be seen as a whole, each part should be related to each other and to the whole., hence "oneness". But what is noticeable about the Greek and the Romantic Era is that there was a 'lack' of a systematic approach of formalistic theory. There were no schools, no journals and no manifestoes. The systematization and methodization come only with the development of new criticism. This modern school of criticism, that is, new criticism, stresses the importance of the form of a work of art.

For the Russian formalists, literature is not a matter of religion, psychology or sociology, but a particular construction of language. A work of art has got its own laws and mechanism which are to be studied separately. Vladimir Propp (1927), accordingly, is an adherent critic to the Russian school of formalism. The structural study of fiction might be said to begin with Propp's work on the Russian fairy tales. Propp provided for fiction a sort of simplification of form which has such an impetus on structural thinking.

In his book, *Morphology of the Folktale*, Vladimir Propp presents the sum-total of his view as to how to approach fairy tales through a morphological study. Propp stresses the importance of the dramatis personae and their functions in the tale. He sees that although the names of the dramatis personae change from one tale to another, their functions remain the same.

For Propp, any study of the tale necessitates the study of its dramatis personae, together with their functions. Propp wants to emphasize the importance of certifying the extent to which these functions really represent intermittent constants of the tale. This leads us to the core of the matter: how many functions are known to the tale? Propp indicates that the number of the tales is quite surprising. He specifies that “however various they may be”, the characters of a tale “often perform the same actions” (p.102). Since this point gains much importance in Propp’s theory, we shall dwell at length on it.

Vladimir Propp distinguishes between the means of realizing the function and the function itself. For him, the means is ever-changing. It changes from one work to another. It is ‘variable’. The function, on the other hand, is constant. Let us explain this and consider Pip’s and Oliver’s whereabouts in *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist* respectively. Pip, at the end of the book, is changed to a ‘respectable gentleman’ who marries a charming lady. Hence happy ending. Oliver, on the other hand, does not wed any body but is a changed boy. He has turned from a homeless and disrespectful boy to a conventional ‘fellow’. Hence happy ending. Thus, as Propp has observed, identical acts have different meaning and vice versa. Although we are presented with two morphologically distinct components, the action remains the same. Hence, to borrow Propp’s words, “function is understood as an act of character from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action” (p.120).

The sequence of the dramatis personae is not neglected in Propp’s book. It strongly relies on coincidence and violation of the logical development of events, on the grounds that tales have their own logic. In this respect, two Russian formalists give their viewpoints concerning the sequence of fairy tales. Veselovskij (1936) maintains that the selection and order of tasks and encounters (examples of motifs) already presupposes certain freedom. Another Russian formalist, namely Sklouskij (1942) holds that it is quite impossible to understand why, in the act of adoption, the accidental sequence of motifs must be retained. In both views the two men agree, though in different terms, that the sequence of events get distorted in fairy tales. But this distortion, after all, is justified. We have already said that fairy tales possess laws of their own. A tale, Vladimir Propp observes, “...has its own entirely particular and specific laws” (p.127).

To be explicit, we may refer to the structure of *Great Expectations* as being a testimony to what has just been discussed. In *Great Expectations*, the violation of events is quite apparent: Pip, the orphan from the marches, comes into ‘expectations’ right away when he has been longing to be a ‘gentleman’. Also, Magwitch whom Pip finds in the churchyard is Pip’s benefactor. More, Estella, the haughty lady of jewels and charm, is the criminal Magwitch’s daughter etc.

Propp also stresses the importance of another point. It is connected with the presence or absence of functions in tales. He holds that in no respect are all the narrative functions found in all tales. This by no means alters the development of events. But the absence of certain functions, Propp notices, does not change the order of the rest. Dickens, in most of his novels, structures his plots without actually losing the thread of narration. In this respect, Propp stands on firm grounds when he asserts that all fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure.

Before he gives any details concerning the functions of the dramatis personae, Vladimir Propp indicates that “the study of the tale must be carried on strictly deductively; i.e. proceeding

from the material at hand to the consequences...but the presentation may have a reversed order” (p.192). His aim in so saying lies on an attempt to make the task easier for the reader to grasp the meaning for his theory. And as he gives more importance to the *dramatis personae*, Propp enumerates these functions. They are one and thirty in number. Since they are of paramount importance, it would be worthwhile stating the most important ones of them-leaving the others till the next part.

The first in number is *one of the members of a family absents himself from home*. Knowing that the case of absence might not be the same, Propp indicates that an excessive form of default is embodied in the death of parents. The second comes *an interdiction which is addressed to the hero*. This function sometimes figures in all tales and some other times does not. But it is important, all the same. Third comes the fact that interdiction is violated in order to heighten the mood of the tale. Four in number is *the appearance of “the villain (who) makes an attempt at reconnaissance*. Fifth *the villain (who) deceives his victim to take possession of him or of his belongings*. The fourth and fifth functions introduce the villain to the tale. It is of paramount significance since the apparition of the villain sets out the mood of the tale and gives worth to the hero. Six in number comes *the victim (who) submits to the deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy*. Seven in importance is that *the villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family* (p.192). The injury can be psychological or physical, or in the case of Pip's both psychological and physical. These functions, together with those which are not enumerated here, constitute the backbone and the morphological corner stone of fairy tales. Propp, surprisingly enough, postpones the definition of the tale till the last chapter of the book. The delay can be justified in assuming that Vladimir Propp wants to start by giving the major components of the tale and afterwards defining the tale through a morphological point of view.

The tale (*skäzka*), as defined by the formalist, “may be termed any development proceeding from ‘villainy’ or a ‘lack’ through intermediary functions to marriage or reward”. What is striking about this definition is that Propp's description of the tale is by all means different from the conventional definition of the tale-the Oxford English Dictionary's for example. Propp, nevertheless, proceeds to distinguish between tales with a single move and tales with more than one move. He warns the morphologists not to be misguided by what he terms ‘brief moves’. After this, Propp advances to give an example of the way a tale should be analyzed- a task we shall elaborately see in the second part of this paper.

The problem of classifying fairy tales gains a great importance from Propp. He goes so far as to trace the source of the tale. He sees that the construction of fairy tales is not dissimilar to that of legends, individual tales about animals, and isolated novellas. In this respect, Propp makes it clear that

A similar construction is displayed by a number of very archaic myths, some of which present this structure in an amazing pure form. Evidently this is the realm back to which the tale may be traced. On the other hand, the very same structure is exhibited, for example, by certain novels of chivalry. This is very likely a realm which itself may be traced back to the tale (p.198).

This passage, as a matter of fact, is quite revealing. It is significant in the sense that tales are not restricted to one kind of literary genres with regards to their structure. Elements of a fairy tale can be found in romantic novels, myth-books and the like. And it is no coincidence that such a well-known novelist as Charles Dickens should make use of fairy tales elements.

As to the source of the fairy tale, Propp wonders whether all tales, being not dissimilar in form and shape, take their rise and emanate from a single source. Propp is fully aware that the task is not that of a morphologist. But he ventures to find some answers to the question he has posed. For Propp, all tales pertain to one source. As far as Propp is concerned, 'a single source' does not necessarily mean that all tales come from Asia and spread from there to the other parts of the globe, taking different shapes and forms in the course of transition. If the case be so, the potential human creativity becomes abused. Tales, however, are the product of the human imaginative power. A power that enables the story teller to give birth to stories superbly made up.

Propp, however, likens the development of tales to "...every day life and religion...A way of life and religion die out, while their content turn into tales". Let us take, in this respect, the American South which has witnessed a hard collapse, physically and spiritually. Its old-established traditions have turned into legend. In Faulkner's novels, for instance, "the past takes on a sort of super-reality: its contours are hard and clear, unchangeable" Faulkner (1927). Even the ancestors come to be seen as mythical figures, endowed with extra-ordinary deeds. That is why we can say with Propp that although a way of life vanishes, its solid dimensions are set forth in tales.

Propp comes back to the patterns he draws for the tale. He once again asserts that "an absolute stability would seem to be unconfirmed by the fact that the sequence of functions is not always the same". This assertion is of great significance. It is significant in the sense that it lets the morphologist free to approach tales that do not, of necessity, contain all the functions enumerated by Propp. This is quite helpful in approaching Dickens' *Great Expectations*. As already stated, if a function does not figure in a tale, this does not mean that the structure of the tale gets affected. Propp notices here and elsewhere that "often it is possible...according to certain rudiments that this absence amounts to an omission"

Whether or not Propp's theory can be relevant to Dickens' novels, especially *Great Expectations* is what will appear in the course of this paper. And from which source Dickens has got these elements is not fully displayed. We have no clear-cut evidence that Dickens was influenced by *The Arabian Nights*. But what we are quite sure of is that the novelist, in a passage in *Great Expectations*, describes the downfall of Pip as that of a Sultan. Pip imparts to us the sudden decline he witnessed by saying:

"In the Easter story, the heavy slab that was to fall on the bed of state in the flush of conquest was slowly wrought out of the quarry, the tunnel for the rope to hold it in its place was slowly carried through the leagues of rock, the slab was slowly raised and fitted in the roof, the rope was rove to it and slowly taken through the miles of hollow to the great iron ring...So in my case; all the work, near and afar, that tended to the end, had been accomplished; and in instant the blow was struck, and the roof of my stronghold dropped upon me" (*Great Expectations*, Chapter 38)

The passage shows the extent to which Dickens was interested in Eastern stories. There is a reference to the fairy novels in which Dickens seemed to have been interested – *The Sultan of Minsar* and *Tales of the Genii* as examples. And it is no surprise that Dickens make use of elements of fairy tales in his novels, especially *Great Expectations*.

To sup up Vladimir Propp's theory, we can say that the formalist has started with the question of categorizing and constructing, through a sort of organization, folktales. He tries to mark out the difference between 'constant' and 'invariable' morphological elements. He does this through his scrutiny of one hundred Russian fairy tales. Further, Propp has drawn four specific rules which have made the study of folk literature and fictions rely on a new basis. These rules are as follows:

- a) Functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled. They constitute the fundamental pattern of the tale.
- b) The number of functions known to the fairy tale is limited.
- c) The sequence of function is always identical.
- d) All fairy tales are of on type in regard to their structure .

Thus far, we might as safely say that Propp's theory of the folktale could find admittance into our subject matter. This is partly or wholly due to the fact that "Dickens was the great entertainer, the greatest entertainer, probably, in the history of fiction" Allen (1954). This view may be exaggerated; however, it contains some truth in it. What Allen wants to convey is that the aspect of amusement in Dickens' novels is what makes the latter a well-known novelist. So with Vladimir Propp's theory in mind, let us proceed to make apply it on our subject matter.

II- A morphological attempt at studying *Great Expectations* as a fairy tale based on Propp's theory.

Having considered the major morphological elements that could be found in tales in general, the task that follows hard upon is to see whether all the functions enumerated by the Russian formalist, Propp, do figure in our object of analysis, *Great expectations*. Therefore, the first thing that we must start with is to break down the text-the novel- into major morphological components. This should be done through the grouping of the functions that are to be found in our subject matter.

It is stated by Propp that a tale normally always starts with what is called 'initial situation'. This 'initial situation', however, provides a general atmosphere of the tale, especially with regards to its hero per se. In the very first page of *Great Expectations*, there is a somewhat innocent description of how the child, Pip, tries to know his real identity. Pip declares that "I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them; my first fancies regarding what they were like, were unreasonably derived from their tombstones" (*Great Expectations*, p.35)

From here it is made clear that the would-be hero is parentless. He is living with a sister who is married to a blacksmith. Poverty and orphanage are the atmosphere which Pip lives in. This situation is reinforced by the fact that the narrator gives us a global view of the place where the 'future' hero resides: "My first vivid and broad impression seems to me to have been gained on a

memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain, that this bleak place was the church yard" (Great Expectations, p.35)

Thus, the initial position of the hero is made at full length. It is marked by hardship and misery. That is why Vladimir Propp asserts that "although this situation is not a function, it nevertheless is an important morphological element". Propp has indicated that through this situation "the members of a family are enumerated or the future hero is simply introduced by mention of his name or indication of his status". The first pages of our object of analysis make it plain that not only is the name of the hero mentioned but also his social rank is announced.

Although 'the absention' of which Propp speaks in his book does not literally find room in *Great Expectations*, the formalist gives another alternative which is kept within the scope of the first function. This alternative lies in the fact that "an intensified form of absention is represented by the death of the parents". Therefore, the earlier pages of our novel make it clear that the hero-to-be is parentless and taken charge of by his sister. Here arises a question. What is the difference between 'the initial situation' and what Propp calls 'absention'?

On the surface level, one might say that there is no difference between the two, since both of them revolve around one idea: the parentlessness of the hero. But, in truth, *there is* a clear but deep difference between these two morphological elements. 'The initial situation' is not a function but constitutes an important morphological ingredient in the tale. Moreover, through 'the initial situation' we come to know the number of people the family is composed of. 'Absention', on the other hand, *is* a function. And this is morphologically important.

Whereas 'the initial situation' tells us the number of people in a given family, the first function of the dramatis personae indicates that "one of the members of the (that) family absents himself from home" Propp (1927). Thus far, in *Great Expectations* this 'absention' amounts to the death of the hero's parents. So instead of being cared for by a merciful father, Pip is surrounded by a mother-surrogate who "(has) a great reputation with herself and the neighbors because she (has) brought me up by hand" (*Great Expectations*, p.39)

It is noted in Propp's theory that 'interdiction' follows immediately 'absention'. For, according to Propp, "the tale generally mentions an 'absention' at first, and then an 'interdiction'. But in some tales, the course of the event may be reversed to the point that "interdiction can ... be made without being connected with 'an absention'" . In the case of *Great Expectations* 'interdiction' comes next to 'absention'. In this our novel respects the order suggested by Propp. Here an illumination must be made, though.

An interdiction is normally imposed on the hero of the tale by his parents. But when the parents are no more alive, the prohibition comes from the hero's elders or seniors, either through warning or through ruthless pieces of advice. In fact, one of the ruthless patrons of Pip is Pumblechook. The name itself is suggestive. It is so in the sense that this man-Pumblechook-always makes Pip get shaken by the elder's nonsensical claims of a patron. This 'patron', in effect, keeps on time and time again giving 'sermons' to Pip. On one occasion, Pip tells us that:

It became sheer monomania in my master's daughter to care a button for me; and all I can say my grasping and procrastinating conduct on the fatal morning, is, that it was

worthy the general feebleness of my character. Even after I was happily hanged...Pumblechook sat staring at me, and shaking his head and saying, Take warning, boy, take warning" (Great Expectations, p.145

So, as it appears here, prescription comes under the form of warning directed from Pumblechook the patron to Pip the helpless. Further, on another occasion, the same patron warns Pip to be grateful to those who brought him by hand. What is noticeable about Pumblechook's warning is that they are not dissimilar, in their surface structure, to what we can find in the Russian folktales wherein interdiction is made through a piece of threatening advice, such as 'be wise' or 'take care of your little brother'.

Vladimir Propp suggests that 'interdiction' goes hand in hand with 'violation'. Both functions constitute what Propp calls 'a paired element'. In *Great Expectations*, however, violation takes some deeper significance. Pip's violation of the interdiction is twofold: it comes from within and from without. Throughout the first stage of the novel, we have noticed that Pip is no longer satisfied with his status. His dissatisfaction is justified on the grounds that he has always been the center of his elder's mockery. Propp tells us, in his book, that interdiction is motivated. This is morphologically significant in regards to the hero of our novel.

In this respect, Pip confesses the reality of his situation and says that 'I am not at all happy as I am. I am disgusted with my calling and with my life'. And what further motivates and intensifies Pip's sense of discontent is his exposure to *Satis House*, being a totally different world from his own. This dissatisfaction, nevertheless, leads Pip to be no longer grateful to those who brought him up by hand. Instead, he would fain like to repudiate his old associates and cronies. In this sense, Pip's violation takes on yet another dimension. It becomes a violation of the sanctity of human relationship and warm fellowship.

At this stage, Propp notices that "...a new personage who can be termed the villain, enters the tale...the villain may be ... a devil or... a witch" (p.192). Strangely enough, in *Great Expectations* we have both Orlick and Miss Havisham as devil and witch respectively. However, when we first take notice of his appearance, Orlick seems to be "*a broad-shouldered loose-limbed swarthy fellow of great strength, never in a hurry, and always slouching...he would slouch out, as if he had no idea where he was going and no intention of ever coming back*" (*Great Expectations*, p.140)

What is really striking about the description above is that Orlick is no better than a devilish figure given demon-like delineation: 'great strength', 'Cain', and 'the wandering Jew'. This fiendish figure, however, causes physical harm to Pip. Anyone, while reading *Great Expectations*, can well remember the famous scene in which Pip is entrapped by Orlick, the villain of the tale. Here an important element crops out: 'trickery'. Orlick has used some of his treachery and tricks to isolate Pip and kill Pip thereupon. To execute his devilish plan, Orlick has sent a letter to Pip, calling him to come in the indicated place as soon as possible. And when

"I (Pip) turned round to do so, and had taken up the candle in my hand, ...it was extinguished by some violent shock, and the next thing I comprehended, was, that I had been caught in a strong running noose, thrown over my head from behind" (*Great Expectations*, p.434)

So, here, Orlick, the villain, 'attempts' to deceive his victim (Pip) in order to take possession of him. This is morphologically important. And equally important is that the victim submits to the deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy. Had he known what awaited him, Pip would not have come in response to the letter he receives from Orlick. Pip, however, emerges from his 'abduction' seriously injured in his arms.

On the other hand, when we first take sight of Miss Havisham, she appears no better than a sorceress. Pip reports to us how he sees Miss Havisham, the witch

"I saw that (the) dress had been put upon the rounded figure of a...woman, and that the figure upon which it now hung loose, had shrunk to skin and bone. I had been taken to see some ghostly waxwork... (and) once I had been taken to one of our old march churches to see a skeleton...Now, waxwork and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me" (*Great Expectations*, p.87)

What is suggestive about the passage is that all the requirements of a dangerous witch are present in Miss Havisham. Not even so, but also her 'dwelling' is associated with darkness. Light is never admitted to her strange house. This gives it a sense of melancholy. It also gives Miss Havisham an atmospheric opportunity to brood revenge against male sex. In other words, Miss Havisham's place of residence is not dissimilar, in its darkness and perverseness, to Fagin's home. Dickens' description of the Jew's house, in *Oliver Twist*, does not contradict Fain's evil character:

"The walls and ceiling of the room were perfectly black with age and dirt...In a frying-pan, which was on the fire, and which was secured to the mantelshelf by a string, some sausages were cooking, and standing over them, with a toasting fork in his hand, was a very old shriveled Jew, whose villainous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair" (*Oliver Twist*, p.27)

As it appears from the description of Fagin is that the points of similarity between him and Miss Havisham are strikingly abundant. Both are associated with darkness. Both dwell in dark places. In them both, outward darkness reflects their inward psychic enigma. And if Orlock causes physical injury to Pip, Miss Havisham effectuates spiritual harm to the hero. She has given rise to Pip's spiritual injury when she lets him believe that *she* is his benefactress. The moment he receives his materialistic expectations, Pip links Miss Havisham with his fortune. Pip takes it as axiomatic that Miss Havisham will make him be "removed from his present sphere of life and be brought up as a 'gentleman'".

More than that, Pip takes it for granted that "Miss Havisham (is) going to make my fortune on a grand scale" (*Great Expectations*, p.165). Furthermore, this 'witch' would encourage her ward, Estella, to make Pip believe that she (Estella) is designed for him, together with wealth and higher position. The dramatic irony lies in the fact that "upon the return of Magwitch (Pip's real benefactor), Pip is forced to wake up and recognize that life is not, after all, a fairy tale. He learns that the source of his wealth comes from a run-away convict. This, in effect, causes Pip's spiritual and psychological harm. We are to remember, by means of illustration, that injury caused to the hero is an important morphological element. And what of great significance is that Pip's injury, in its physical and spiritual senses, is caused by the mischievous villains of the tale.

That a tale contains both villainy and lack at the same time is mainly due to the genius of its maker. Although the Russian formalist observes that at times 'villainy' is replaced either by 'lack' or 'insufficiency', *Great Expectations* combines the two important morphological components. Accordingly, in the first pages of the novel, we have noticed that the would-be hero is deprived of something-of many things, as a matter of fact. In the course of narration, we come to know that Pip is bereaved of complete human kindness. Here a clarification should be made.

Vladimir Propp notes that sometimes "the structure of the tale demands that the hero leave home at any cost. But in Pip's case, it seems impossible for him to go to London to be trained as a 'gentleman', as he is poor. Propp, in this respect, points out that the story teller should employ what he calls 'the connective incident' to accomplish the removal of the hero from home. In accordance with this, we notice that although Pip is relatively poor, he is to go to London to be educated as a gentleman. So the journey from Pip's village to London is quite significant. This form of 'pilgrimage' on the part of the hero signifies a search for a better life, given the evidence that Pip has grown dissatisfied with the life he leads in the marches as a blacksmith's apprentice. More than that, Pip, before he leaves home, has been tormented by his patrons- a point back to which I will come.

Assuming that Miss Havisham is his benefactress, Pip gets infatuated with her ward, Estella. In the process, he becomes passive. He becomes passive as to the source of his real sponsor, and passive in his view of the lady with whom he has fallen in love. Pip goes so far as to "allow himself to be pushed along, never challenging that he must not look too closely into the source of his ...fortune...He is passive in longing for Estella" Monyahan (1946). The latter embodies for him all he hankers after: gentility and higher social position.

If, on the surface level, the hero seems to be passive he is, in reality active. This seems paradoxical. In this sense, Vladimir Propp observes that the hero needs a 'magical agent'. In *Great Expectations*, this 'magical agent' takes the shape of a devilish being: Orlick. At close scrutiny of the novel, there appears that almost all the characters who have effectuated the hero's injury-both physical and psychological- get punished. And who by? Ironically, they have been castigated indirectly through Pip's 'punitive' agent: Orlick. It is no surprise, then, that Pumblechook be attacked by a gang led by Orlick. It is also no fallacy that Orlick sets upon Mrs. Joe whom Pip fearfully dislikes. All this indicates that 'passivity' is but outwardly seen. In this respect, Propp observes that "*If the agent received is a living creature, its help is put directly (or indirectly) to use on the command of the hero. With this the hero outwardly loses all significance; he himself does nothing*" (p.50).

In the case of Miss of Miss Havisham's, there is no Orlick. That is, when Miss Havisham gets burnt, the man who has effectuated Pip's revenge has not been present. How can we account for this? Propp tells us that one of the morphological functions of the tale is that "the hero and the villain join in direct combat-struggle". This happens when Pip goes to visit Miss Havisham after the marriage of Estella. He enters with the 'witch' in a struggle that begins verbally and then takes on a somewhat physical fight. Let us consider the following passage wherein Pip 'tries' to put out the fire off the 'witch':

"I had a double-caped great-coat on, and over my arm another thick coat. That I got them off, closed with her (Miss Havisham), throw her down, and got them over her; that I dragged the great cloth from the table for the same purpose, and with it dragged down the heap of rottenness in the midst, and all the ugly things that sheltered there; that were on the ground struggling like desperate enemies, and that the closer I covered her, the more wildly she shrieked and tried to free herself" (Great Expectations, p.414).

In the passage above, Pip tells us that he wants to rescue Miss Havisham from fire. But how can it be that a person watching a lady burning into flames of fire, then jumping with courage to her rescue? Pip, however, in the process of sketching his rescue is determined to remark that 'we were on the ground like desperate enemies'. Hence, the struggle with the villain is a morphologically significant element in the structure of the tale.

Perhaps the most significant of all functions is that which necessitates a difficult task to be done by the hero per se. Propp observes that that the hero should; and ought to, perform an undertaking. This morphological ingredient is present in *Great Expectations*. Upon the return of the hero's real benefactor, Pip has been faced by a number of difficult tasks; the most important of all being the task related to the run-away convict, Magwitch. Here some illumination must be made. Pip's real 'donor' is a transported convict. This means that the convict has no right to set foot on his home-country.

Driven by a desire to see 'his brought up London gentleman', Magwitch risks his life. Here an important morphological function intrudes. Pip, for whose sake the convict come back home, should and ought to save the man. This means that Pip, being a hero, has to make an effort to rescue the convict. The task, then, is of great danger. In effect, Pip resolves to help the 'donor'. He decides to smuggle the convict through a boat. More than that, the fact that the convict's security depends on the responsibility of Pip causes him to become morally disturbed to the point that he wonders "where I *might* go, what I *might* do, or when I *might* return...vex(ed) my mind...for it was wholly bet on Provis's safety" (*Great Expectations*, pp.444-5). In the utterance quoted above, we notice the repetition of 'might'; which indicates that the task at Pip's hand is very perilous and imbued with doubt.

What is striking, at this very stage, is that in the process of getting the convict out of England, Pip is pursued. The pursuit of the hero, to be remembered, is a morphological function which is of great importance to the structure of the tale. And we have already noticed, the villain Orlick seems to dog Pip's footprints, and keeps watching his moves. Because of that villainous figure, Magwitch's safety is threatened.

At this point, the novel draws to its close. Pip, through the journey he has made from the village to the metropolis, has learnt a great deal. He has learnt that "the world is not a vast mammary gland from which he can draw rich nourishment with moral impunity" (*Great Expectations*, p.446). Here arises a question. Is it not compatible and suitable that Pip, the hero, having been exposed to various hardships and misery, get a reward?

As far as the morphological structure of the tale is concerned, the hero should by all means receive a reward. Pip does. His reward is intensified and solidified through his marriage to a lady

whose hand Pip "(takes)... and in all the broad expanse of tranquil light... I (see) no shadow of another parting from her" (*Great Expectations*, p.493). This ending or 'closure', however, is justified, because there has been 'liquidation' of misfortune: the villains of the tale get punished. Both Orlick and Miss Havisham vanish from the hero's life by getting imprisoned and by being no longer alive. We are to be reminded, nonetheless, that the castigation of the two villains is a function which comes close to the novel's closure.

What is quite noticeable about *Great Expectations*, however, is the very limited number of the morphological functions it contains. This does not by any means affect the structure of the work as a whole. On the contrary, the novel retains its structural unity. And as far as Vladimir Propp is concerned, all tales are of one type in regards to their structure. This means that although *Great Expectations* as a fairy tale presents only some morphological functions that are ranged from lack, villainy to Pip's marriage, the organic unity of the tale is preserved.

Conclusion

In the course of our analysis, it appears clearer that Charles Dickens's use of folktale elements is not due to chance. It is something really systematized and methodized. For although the Victorian fiction seems, on the surface level, to have cut itself from medieval literature, novelists still tended to use some primitive requirements of prose writing. This is quite apparent in the narrative forms that, though having known some considerable evolution, still retain the pristine narrative devices.

Dickens, being one of the famous early Victorian prose writers, took his literary material from different sources. The folk substance, however, seems to have been given justice by the writer? His use of folk material enables the novelist to bestow upon his characters some mythic and universal characteristics. In *Great Expectations*, however, Dickens' handling of folk material and substance figures in a manner that is strikingly astonishing. It is striking in that the narrative techniques used in fairy tales and myth books are not dissimilar to the narrative devices used in our object of analysis.

This is why we have observed that *Great Expectations* makes use of such artifices as exaggeration and points of hyper coincidences. In this respect, we may refer to a greatest figure in the world of drama, William Shakespeare. This great poet and playwright had himself made use of fairy tale components in some of his comedies. Particularly in *The Winter Tale* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, fairies are given considerable importance. But the question that concerns us most is the following: Has Propp's formalistic theory of the folktale succeeded in achieving a formalistic reading of our subject-matter, *Great Expectations*?

No doubt, Vladimir Propp's theory suggests a new way of approaching works of art. This theory, in fact, is a kind of intellectual revolutionary reaction against traditional approaches. For Propp, however, a work of art must be regarded as a work of art: no more, no less. In his book, Propp insists on the presence within literary works of every thing necessary for their analysis. In other words, Propp seems to emphasize the importance of structural tightness in works of art. Therefore, it is thanks to Propp's theory that we have been able to break *Great Expectations* into its major morphological components.

In fine, the novel appears to possess an organic unity, and although the novel does not contain all the functions enumerated by Propp, it still preserves its sense of oneness. This notion of oneness is well-observed in our dissection of the novel. *Great Expectations*, however, begins by an 'initial situation' of the hero, moves to what Propp calls 'intermediary' functions, and ends in the hero's marriage. More than that, we have seen that what Propp seems to insist on in his *Morphology of the Folktale* is depicted in *Great Expectations*.

We have noticed that Pip is warned to be 'grateful' to his elders, which is in a sense a kind of 'interdiction'. And immediately after that, we have seen that this 'interdiction' is violated the moment Jaggers the lawyer announces Pip's expectations. Hence Propp's 'paired-element' is retained. We have also noticed that the hero of the tale, Pip, has unintentionally submitted to the deception of the 'villains'. Orlick has tricked him thereby attempting to kill him. Miss Havisham, on the other hand, deceives Pip in letting him believe that *she* is his benefactress. Hence: the achievement of 'villainy' which is an important function stated by Propp. Further, the use of the 'connective incident' is quite apparent in our novel; otherwise, how can we explain Pip's removal from the marches despite his relative poverty? More, we have been able to notice that Pip goes through what is called 'initiation', during which "the hero undergoes a series of excruciating ordeals in passing from ignorance and immaturity to social and spiritual adulthood".

To be more accurate, we can say that the hero of our tale has gone through three different phases: 'separation', 'transformation' and 'return', in the course of which Pip has learned a great deal and is finally rewarded. His 'reward', in fact, amounts to his marriage to Estella. Hence: happy ending. We have already seen that the structure of *Great Expectations* proves to possess an organic unity. This unity makes the relationship between each of the parts and the whole moves to an understanding of the whole work.

This leads us to conclude that Dickens' handling of folk material is what has made Vladimir Propp's theory all-pervading in our object of analysis. It is also due to the fact that Dickens "was a fantasist, and he forces us to accept the world he creates by the sheer compelling power of the intensity of his imagination... it was an hallucinatory imagination" Allen (1927). Here W. Allen ascribes Dickens' prolific creation to the novel's creative power, and it is due to his imagination that Dickens, consciously or unconsciously, followed the narrative devices implemented in fairy-tales by his predecessors.

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