



Extended Abstract

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Comparative Analysis of the Two Stories *The Alphabet Village* and *The Star Tree* based on Propp's Theory of Morphology

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Introduction

There is a subset in Human Sciences called comparative literature that examines the relationships between different nations, cultures and languages. By examining literary works, comparative literature explores the depth of these connections and reveals how intellectuals in the literary realm have learned from other nations, how deep is this learning, and how it has manifested in their own works. Comparative literature itself encompasses various schools of thought, one of which is the American school of comparative literature. This school allows us to identify the similarities and differences between works and to determine the degree of proximity between two works in terms of their content structure, narrative structure, and the quality of their transmission of concepts and values. For a more accurate evaluation, Propp's morphology model is also used simultaneously, which has a structuralist nature and includes functions that, while examining the details of a work, also provide the reader with a general overview of the work. Additionally, the two selected works belong to the realm of children's literature: *The Star Tree* in Persian literature and *The Alphabet Village* in Arabic literature. These works strive to impart lessons suitable for the age and psychological state of their young audiences and to convey their intended content in accordance with the

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principles of children's literature. The protagonist of the Persian story is a pine tree, while the protagonist of the Arabic story is a child.

Research Methodology, Background, and Objectives

This research is based on the American school of comparative literature, comparing the two stories *The Alphabet Village* and *The Star Tree*, and combining it with the Propp's morphology model and the principles and rules of children's literature.

The background of this research can be examined in two parts: First, regarding the Persian work, no research has been conducted on it to date; therefore, it can be claimed that this research is the only study conducted on it. Second, regarding the Arabic work, some examples of articles and theses have been found, but none of them have been based on the American school of comparative literature, Propp's morphology theory, and the principles of children's literature simultaneously. On the other hand, some narrative researchers believe that by rearranging the desired functions of Propp and removing some of them, Propp's theory can be applied to all stories. Many researchers have used Propp's model to analyze and critique stories, which can be considered one of the goals of such research. Although understanding how the intended content is conveyed by authors from different cultures in the field of children's literature is another important goal pursued in this research.

Discussion

This research seeks to determine the level of conformity between the two stories based on Propp's morphology theory and to find specific functions of Propp's theory in both stories that influence children and through which concepts and values are transmitted to young audiences. Moreover, it aims to understand the role of different cultural backgrounds. The Persian story is about three trees that want to give a gift to a newborn baby and her mother. Among them, the pine tree has nothing to give. The Arabic story is about a boy named "Hassan" who lives in the village of letters and is friends with everyone in this village except for the letter "R". He cannot pronounce this letter and faces a challenge. Both authors try to depict situations for children that they may find themselves in for any reason, experiencing moments of stress and anxiety, and not knowing how to decide and behave. Here, the author comes to the aid of the child and begins to educate him. However, to understand how this education has taken place and to what extent it has been done correctly, it is examined using the components of Propp's morphology theory. The thirty-one functions of this model are applied to the texts to determine how many of them exist in the texts and for what purposes. These functions have been used in the text of the two stories for various reasons such as introducing the story, simulating a child's confrontation with difficulties, raising the possibility of seeking help from others as a solution, warning against doing bad things, accepting flaws and using new methods for progress, not

being alone, strengthening children's courage in facing life's difficulties, keeping children away from pessimism, encouraging continuous effort, hoping for a bright future, and so on. Then, the functions found from Propp's model, in accordance with the principles of children's literature, are also examined in the field of comparative literature to determine the extent of similarities and differences between the Persian and the Arabic stories. Also, the type of emphasized values and the methods of their transmission are identified.

Conclusion

The findings of this research indicate that twenty-one of Propp's functions were employed in both stories. The only significant difference between the two stories lies in their opening scenes, where the use of an omniscient point of view and the concealment of characters while still being discernible has led to a stronger evaluation of the Persian story compared to the Arabic one. Additionally, in both *The Star Tree* and *The Alphabet Village*, most actions are non-physical and internal. Most of the identified functions have a gentle nature and are used to promote the character development of children. In this regard, both authors have been successful, particularly evident in the function of punishment. Furthermore, to avoid causing psychological harm to children, the hero's test phase in Propp's theory has been omitted from both stories. The preservation of delicacy in both stories is evident in the type of magical object, even in the characterization of the antagonist, the nature of evil, and its punishment. Moreover, despite cultural differences, nearly identical values have been emphasized in these works, and the protagonists have exhibited similar reactions in similar situations. The observable functions in both stories have been used to promote the child's personal growth and to prepare them for making better decisions in the future.

Keywords: comparative literature, function, children's story, the theory of morphology

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