

A Comparative Structuralist Analysis of Two Igbo folktales

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DOI: [10.55559/sjahss.v2i05.103](https://doi.org/10.55559/sjahss.v2i05.103)

Received: 06.04.2023 | Accepted: 01.05.2023 | Published: 05.05.2023

Electronic reference (Cite this article):

Ugwuoke, E., & Onu, J. (2023). A Comparative Structuralist Analysis of Two Igbo folktales. *Sprin Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(05), 31–44. <https://doi.org/10.55559/sjahss.v2i05.103>

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ABSTRACT

The paper attempts a comparative structuralist analysis of two Igbo folktales. The primary aim of the research is to examine the adherence of Igbo folklore to linear structure of Propp's structure of Russian folklore. In particular, it analyses the functions found in the two Igbo folktales selected for the study to find out if all the thirty-one functions proposed by Propp could be found in each of the folktales. It also makes a comparative analysis of the two tales. The study is premised on the Proppian model. Descriptive method is used in analysing the functions identified in the two Igbo folktales. The study's discoveries indicate that both the Igbo folktales comply with Propp model's sequential arrangement. It was also found in the study that thirty-one functions cannot be anticipated to transpire in a story since their occurrence relies on the story's context. The study further identifies reward/punishment model as one of the striking structural pattern of Igbo folktale.

Keywords: *Folktale, comparative, structuralist, functions and motifeme*

Introduction

Folktales are a classification of narrative tales that exist in all cultural. They have disseminated through spoken storytelling rather the scripted text and mirror cultural convictions, cultural heritage, customs and societal norms. Igbo folktale has been preserved for centuries as a component of longstanding folklore tradition representing Igbo humor, romance and sagacity. Earlier studies of Igbo folktales had focused on the narrative content or motifs but have left out the study of the structural patterns that make up the story lines in different type of tale.

The present study which centres on the comparative structuralist analysis of Igbo folktale is done with consideration of Vladimir Propp's analysis of Russian folklore in his book, "morphology of folktales". Propp claims that all tales had an identical sequence of function or functional event and the same basic structure, despite their differences in the dramatic personae. A folk story is a story believed to have occurred and is primarily told for entertainment purposes, despite reflecting truth and imparting moral lessons. Folktales

constitute a unique aspect of the Igbo cultural heritage, showing a diverse range of enduring wisdom and traditional values. Folktales serve as a medium through which the Igbo pass down their hopes, emotions and aspirations from one generation to the next.

Scholars have analyzed the structure, purpose, and content of folktales in their studies. Classification of folktales largely relies on the major criteria of form, function, and field, the narrative structure of a tale can be regarded as the form, its social purpose, the function, and its content as the field. Research on the tale studies indicates that the classification is primarily based on the narrative motifs or content of the stories such as animal tales, trickster tales, and phenomenon tales.

On the other hand, classifications of tales based on a structural analysis are not exempted from critical comments to begin with Propp's (1958) ground-breaking morphological classification of Russian fairy tales. Propp's examination simplifies folktales as a sequence of actions undertaken by the protagonist of each story, without considering narrative tone (an essential element of African oral literature) or external embellishments. Instead, it breaks down numerous Russian folktales into smaller, separate functions.

Plots in folktales are also seen as comprising elements pertaining to phrases, namely the beginning, the body (middle development) and the ending. Msimang (1986, p. 40) points out: conventionally, the beginning and ending are known as the exposition and resolution respectively, the middle sometimes refers to as the body. Exposition is one of the most important elements. It serves as the introductory part of the story. The narrator provides the audience with necessary background material. It is within this element that narrator discloses the information necessary for the basic understanding of characters and their relationship, so that one can be aware of the possible future conflict.

The body forms the larger part of the plot. It is in the body that events become complicated. The action which starts with an imbalance, progresses to the climax. The body is dissented by Canonici (1993, p.143) as "major section of the story in which the conflict situations develop up to its climax". Conflict can be seen as two forces which are interrelated in the plot of the story. It may involve a collision of views, concepts or beliefs. Divergent standpoints about mutual interest, complicating ideologies may give rise to a clash between characters in a story.

The conflict becomes more intense and fiercer as tension progressively rises. During this stage, each event or action is a tributary towards the enlargement of the complication which culminates in the climax. Tension is generated when conflict intensifies. The listener become curious and wonders what is going to happen next, they become tenser when there is a continental strain and crises. The interest and attention of the audience is aroused in the exposition, and expectations should never be fulfilled until the climax.

Resolution can be viewed as the last element of the plot. The narrator unravels what has happened up to the climax. The length of the resolution depends on the events of the story. In the resolution, any disturbances or conflicts are resolved, loose ends are tied, and all issues are brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Occasionally, there may be reversal or moment of last suspense when the antagonist attempts to regain the upper hand, only to be unsuccessful.

In the present study, Igbo folktales will be investigated to find out whether such analysis does apply to Igbo folktales. Propp's work has been the subject of criticism. For example, Dundes (1965), Grane (1977), Gilet (1999) and the binary opposition in myth by

Strauss and Propp himself have in one way or the other criticized Propp's work. The present study is intended to make a comparative structuralist analysis of two Igbo folktales with a view to identifying how Propp's morphology of folktales works in Igbo narrative.

Literature review

Numerous studies have been conducted on folktales in Africa and beyond, exploring elements such as structure, function, form, and the introductory and concluding formulae of folktales. The study is mainly categorized under two approaches, the first one being the structuralist approach which is based on Propp's (1958) theory, and the second approach is the descriptive approach as illustrated in Finnegan's (1970) work. In the present work, Propp's morphological model will be used in the analysis of the two folktales.

Propp's Theory

Vladimir Propp, a Russian structuralist and folklorist aimed to dissect tales into their constituent parts in his work, "Morphology of the Folktale". Propp's "Morphology of the Folktale" aimed to analyze folktales by examining their individual components and their interrelationships within the story as a whole. Propp classifies the components of the tale into two groups, namely the variable and the invariable. In Propp's classification, the variable components of a tale include the characters and *dramatis personae*, while the invariable components, which he calls functions, refer to unchanging actions within the tale, such as the role of a trickster. Propp (1958) observes that though the dramatic characters' names may differ, the actions or functions they perform remain constant in a tale. For instance, the role of a trickster could be played by different animals such as a hare, tortoise, or lizard in different stories. (P.20). It can be inferred that a tale may assign the same actions to different characters.

The Functions within a tale are the structural units in Propp's theory. In his study of 100 Russian folktales, Propp identified 31 functions although the functions do not all appear in a tale. The 31 functions are: (1) Absentation (2) Interdiction (3) Violation of interdiction (4) Reconnaissance (5) Delivery (6) Trickery (7) Complicity (8) Villainy or lack (9) Mediation (10) Beginning counter action (11) Departure (12) First function (13) hero's reaction (14) Receipt of magical agent (15) Guidance (16) Struggle (17) Brandings (18) Victory (19) Liquidation (20) Return (21) Pursuit (22) Rescue (23) Unrecognized arrival (24) Unfounded claims (25) Difficult task (26) Solution (27) Recognition (28) Exposure (29) Transfiguration (30) Punishment and (31) Wedding.

Propp's "Morphology of the folktale" centres on the narrative structure of folktales. He concentrates on the syntagmatic organization of folktales and refers to it as the morphology of folktale. He proceeds to say that functions must be defined according to their place in the course of narration. Furthermore, he raises the question of sequence; he rejects the notion of a free or accidental sequence and purposes that the sequence is fixed. Functions, therefore, are invariably constant and limited in number. Propp's theory is relevant to the present study because it analyses the folktales according to type of actions performed by different characters in the tale.

Empirical studies

Haring's (1972) research on Machako's folktales in Kenya focuses on the analysis of the traditional narrative patterns through morphological study. Four Machako folktales,

which include “Crocodile and Monkey”, “Mr. Little Hare, the Guinea Fowl”, “Limo and Yo”, and “Mr. Bear and Mr. Rabbit”, were gathered by him. His conclusion was that all the collected folktales fall within the well-known genre of trickster tales. In addition, he recognized six morphological components. The first element is similar to Propp’s initial situation. These six morphological elements in Machako’s folktales are: (1) False friendship (2) Contract (3) Violation (4) Trickery (5) Deception and (6) Escape. The morphological importance of false friendship as the initial situation derives from the fact that it gives the sequence to the appearance of the motifeme. A motifeme refers to an action executed by the characters in a folktale. Within the aforementioned morphological elements, false friendship serves a character, while contract, violation, and trickery constitute the conduct associated with false friendship. Harring also argues that Machako's folktales do exhibit the traditional sequences of the thirty-one elements called functions by Propp and motifemes by his follower Dundes (1965).

Furthermore, he says that the morphemic sequence is the irreducible expressive element of folk narrative.

Neethling (1979) in his study of Xhosa folktales using Propp's theory identifies about 30 out of 31 functions of Propp's morphology of folktale. The only function which he thought was lacking in Xhosa folktale is branding. The study is guided by Propp's and Dundes's models. The finding of the study reveals that Hare is the leading character and he is clearly cheated by tortoise. Themes such as love, greed, jealousy and hatred are directly and indirectly taught to the young, using the tales. Characters are classified into two clear categories: the successful and the unsuccessful tricksters. Propp & Dundes's theory is applied to the analysis of the plot structure of the trickster’s tales and various functions such as contract, grand, discover, capture/triumph and gloat were found in the trickster tales. Tales with a less complex plot follow the sequential system of Propp's theory. The law of fixed order is maintained in Tswana folktales.

Mbah and Mbah (2007) in their analysis of the Igbo folktales using Propp's theory identified 22 functions in Obaraedo an Igbo folktale. All the identified functions in this folktale followed the chronological sequence outlined by Propp in his morphology of folktales.

Okudo (2012) carried out a study in Obaraedo, conformity to Proppian morphology. The finding of the study reveals that Obaraedo has some motifemes which are believably in line with the sequential occurrences of the Propp's morphology of folktales. The study identified up to seventeen morphemes that are functions and there were themes that are left out where the tales stop corresponding with the morphology of folktales. The functions identified in Obaraedo are not as many as the thirty-one functions but have the same chronology as the functions in Propp's model. By the conformity of Obaraedo tale to Proppian morphology, one can say that the theory is very useful in studying tales of the Igbo people of Nigeria. Twenty-one functions were identified by Okudo (2012) in Obaraedo as against the twenty-two functions identified by Mbah and Mbah (2007).

Song (2017) investigated the narrative structures in Korean folktales. The study compared the Korean and English versions of the folktales. The study comparatively analyses the narrative structure of the two versions of Korean and English folktale stories: the original Korean version and their English version rewritten by American writers. The analysis showed that the process of trans creating folktales to adapt to different cultural backgrounds involves

a modification of the narrative structure. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the story schematic and patterns of folktales differ across cultures, reflecting the cultural orientation of their respective audiences.

A comparative study of the Jaka Tarub (Indonesia) and Tanabate (Japan) folktales was conducted by Wandata and Negoro (2017). The objective of the study was to identify the cultural components and structural similarities and differences between the two-folk tales. In analyzing, the researchers employ three approaches, namely Greimas narratology structuralism approach, to analysing the story structure, cultural approach to analyse the cultural elements and comparative literature approach. The study's findings showed that they were both commonalities and variations in terms of the cultural aspects and narrative structure of the two-folk tales. However, both Jaka Tarub and Tanabate did not influence each other as they represented their own characteristics which were descriptions of the society where they came from.

Summary of the Reviewed Literature

The related literature reviewed show that structuralism is a critical theory by which we can use to analyse folktales. However, most of the works reviewed so far concentrated on the analysis of folktales in other African countries with regard to trick, trickster character and characteristics of folktales and very little has been contributed with regard to the structure of Igbo folktales for example, Mbah and Mbah (2007) and Okudo (2012). The present work intended to take these earlier works further by comparing structurally two Igbo folktales because it is evident from the available literature that the analysis of Igbo folktales using Propp's model requires more exploration. That is why this investigation is necessary.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents two Igbo folktales and analyses their functions in comparison with the sequence of the thirty-one functions of Propp as to show their degree of conformity.

FOLKTALE 1: Obiadi

Otu nwoke na nwunye ya mụtara ụmụ asaa. Nke bụ obere nwa n'ime ha ka a na-akpọ Obiadi. Nne na nna Obiadi na umunne ya dum hụrụ ya n'anya nke ukwu n'ihia na ọ mara mma nke ukwu. N'ihia ya ha zụtara ya otu ọja. Ọja ahụ mere ka obi na-adị ya ụtọ mgbe niile. Ebe ọ bụla ị hụrụ Obiadi, ihu ọja n'ọnyụ ya. Mmadụ niile were ọja ahụ mara ya nke n' otu ụbọchị o soro ndị mụrụ ya na umunne ya gaa ọrụ n'ubi o chefuru ọja ahụ mgbe ha na-ala.

Mgbe o chetara ọja a ka ha laruru ụlọ n'etiti ehie, o wutere ya nke ukwu, o wee malite ikwa akwa si na ya ga-alaghachi azụ n'ubi icho ya. Ma mgbe o kwuru nke a nne ya na nna ya na umunne ya malitere riowa ya ka ọ hapụ ịga n'ubi n'etiti ehie ahụ n'ihia na ndi mmụọ na-anọ n'ụzọ n'etiiti ehie ọ bụla, na ha ga-elokwa nwata ọ bụla ha hụrụ n'ụzọ. Ha kwekwara ya nkwa izutara ya ọja ọzọ ga-amaka nke mbụ ahụ na mma mana geghi ha ntị, kama ọ nọdurụ ala n'otu akụkụ na-akwa akwa, jukwa iri nri ehie nke ya. Ka nne ya na nna ya na umunne ya nọ na-eri nri ehie nke ha, ọ dighi onye maara mgbe Obiadi jiri zopu were ọsọ gawa n'ubi ahụ icho ọja ya.

N'etiti ụzọ ọ malitere izu ndi mmụọ di ichie ichie. Mgbe nke mbụ ọ zutere bu naani otu isi hụrụ ya, ọ kwusiri ya juo ya ajuju si, nwa ntakiri adighi atụ egwu, olee ebe ị na-aga? Obiadi wee kowaara ya na ya na-aga icho ọja ya chefuru mgbe ha gara ọrụ n'ubi n' ụtutu, ma o

geghi ntị n'ihe ọ na-agwa ya. Mgbe o na-achọzi ilo ya, oke egwu malitere ịtụ Obiadi, o wee malite ịbụ abụ a wee rịọ ya si:

Nwa mmụọ biko Meere m ebere
Nwa mmụọ biko Meere m ebere
Na nne m sịkwara m ejela
Na nna m sịkwara m ejela
Umunne m sịkwara m ejela
Na mmụọ nochiri n'onu uzo
Mmụọ biko Meere m ebere
Mmụọ biko Meere m ebere

Mgbe o kwusiri ihe ndị a, ebere ya mere mmụọ ahụ nke ukwu, o wee hapụ ya. N'oge na-adighi anya o zutekwara mmụọ nke isi abụ. Tupu nke ahụ ajuo ya ihe ọ bula ọ malitere ịbukwara ya abụ. Ka ọ buchara mmụọ nke a mekwara ya ebere, hapukwa o gafere. Ka o na-agakwa o zutere mmụọ isi atọ di n' udi agadi nwanyi. Mgbe o juru ya si ya: "Nwa m, olee ebe i na-aga? O malitere ịbụ abụ.

Agadi nwaanyi, mmụọ ahụ wee lee ya anya si ya, o o nwa m ebe ọ bu na ichoghi inu ihe ndi muru gi gwara gi, gawa na gi bu ekweghi ekwe ga-ekwe n'ute ekwere. Nke a mere ka egwu tuo ya nke ukwu ma mgbe ahụ ọ mazighi ihe o ga-eme. Jewe ejewe ekweghi ya, ma lawa alawa ekwekwaghi ya. O wee guzo n'ebe ahu nwa oge na-eche ihe ya na uwa ga-eme. N'ikpeazu, o tachite obi gawa icho oja ya. Ka o na-aga o zutere mmụọ isi anọ, na nke bu isi ise na nke bu isi isii riokwa ha otu o siri rịọ ndi mmụọ atọ ọ buru uto zute, ha mekwara ya ebere, hapukwa ya, o wee na-aga n'ihu ya wee huọ mmụọ nke isi asaa jogburu onwe ya, nke agwo ojiri asaa no n'isi asaa ya, na nke anwuru oku na-apu n'ahụ ya dum. Mgbe Obiadi huru ya, ahụ malitere ima ya jijiji, o wee na-ariọ ya si:

Nwa mmụọ biko Meere m ebere
Nwa mmụọ biko Meere m ebere
Na nne m sịkwara m ejela
Na nna m sịkwara m ejela
Umunne m sịkwara m ejela
Mmụọ biko Meere m ebere
Mmụọ biko Meere m ebere

Ka ọ na-abụ abụ a, ajo mmụọ ahụ wepuru ihu ya. O geghikwa ntị n'ihe ọ na-agwa ya. Mgbe ọ busiara, o siri ya, nwa m, ori anu o na-eri anu awo? Ebe ọ bu na gi bu nwata sawara usa wee rie ogwumagala ogwumagala ga -afo gi n'olu ugbo a, n'ihina a siri na ọ bu ihuchata uto ka mgbo ji atụ enwe n'isi. Mgbe o kwusiri ihe ndi a, ọ buru Obiadi loo n'afọ ya.

Mgbe nne na nna Obiadi na umunne ya risiri nri ehie lee anya Obiadi n'ebe ọ nori akwa akwa ma ha ahughi ya, ha zipura nke toro ya ka o gaa n' uto gara n'ubi choo Obiadi. Mgbe o rutere n'uzo ahụ zute ajo mmụọ ahụ, o lokwara ya. E mesia ha zipukwa nke atọ ka o gaa choo Obiadi na nwanne ya ma mgbe o rutere ebe ahụ, ajo mmuo ahu lokwara ya. Nne na nna ha wee na-ezipukwa umu ha ndi foduru n'otu n'otu ka ha gaa choo umunne ha na-efu efu wee ruo mgbe ajo mmụọ ahụ losiri ha asaa. Mgbe nne na ha cheere umu ha ma ha alotaghi o kwara akwa gara icho umu ya.

Mgbe o zutere ajo mmụọ ahụ o lokwara ya n'afọ ya. N'abali mgbe nna ga ahughizi nwunye ya na umu ya iwe were ya nke ukwu. O wee were mma o ji ete nkwu na-agho nko karia agbuba e ji akpu isi zoro ije n'ike gawa icho ha. Mgbe ajo mmụọ ahụ lokwara ya na

mma nkwa ya, o n'ime afọ ya were mma ahụ gbawaa ya afọ. Mmụọ a dara gwodoo ka osisi ukwa kporo nkụ, ya na nwunye ya na umu ya isii putara, ma Obiadi aputaghi n'hi na o nwuolari n'ime afọ ya. Ha wee buputa ozu ya, buru ya laa n' ulo ha. Mgbe e lisiara ozu Obiadi, otutu mmadu biara na-ekele nna ha n'ike o kpara, na-ekwutokwa Obiadi jiri isi ike ya wee gbu onwe ya, wetakwara ndi muru ya oke ahuhu.

Ihe Mmuta

Akuko a na-egosi okwukwe ndi Igbo nwere na o dighi mma ka nwata na-enupuru ndi muru ya na ndi okenye isi. N'echiche ndi Igbo, o kwesiri ka nwata na-eme e kwute ekwe, wee ruo mgbe o toputara mmadu. Na mgbe ochie anyi nuru na a dighi acho nwata na-eme isi ike mgbe aka kpara ya.

English Translation of Folktale 1

Once upon a time there lived a husband and a wife who has seven children. The last child was called Obiadi. The parents and his siblings so loved Obiadi because he was very handsome. They bought Obiadi a flute to keep him happy all the time. The flute keeps Obiadi happy and each time one sees Obiadi, the flute was always in his mouth. Obiadi is known for blowing this flute. One day he went to farm with his parents and brothers, but he forgot his flute at the farm.

When they reached home in the afternoon, he remembered that he has forgotten his flute at the farm. He now decided to go back to the farm that afternoon to collect the flute but his parents advised him to stay back because evil spirits are hovering along that road that leads to the farm in the afternoon. There after the parent invited him to come and take his lunch but he refused and went to one corner of the compound and started crying. As his parents and other six children were eating, Obiadi sneaked away and went to the farm to collect his forgotten flute. On his way he met a spirit with one head who interrogated him on where he was going. When the first spirit he met wanted to swallow him, he sang a song for the spirit and the spirit had mercy on him and left Obiadi to continue his journey. The song reads:

The spirits please have mercy on me
The spirits please have mercy on me
My mother told me not to go
My father told me not to go
My brothers told me not to go
Spirits please have mercy on me
Spirits please have mercy on me.

After he had sung the song, the spirit had mercy on him. But instead of going back, Obiadi foolishly continued his journey to the farm. On his way to the farm, he met other spirits with two heads, three heads to the one with six heads. Obiadi pleaded with each of the spirits to have mercy on him by singing the song he sang to the first spirit he met on the way and they all released Obiadi. On meeting the seventh spirit with seven heads and a pot of fire on his head, Obiadi got frightened but it was too late for him to go back home. Obiadi explained to the fearful spirit with seven heads that he was going to the farm to collect his flute that he forgets there but the fearful spirit didn't listen to him. When this last spirit wanted to swallow Obiadi, he sang the same song he has been singing to the previous spirits

he met on the way. As Obiadi was singing, the evil spirit took his eyes away from Obiadi. At last, the evil spirit swallowed Obiadi.

When Obiadi's parents and brothers could not find Obiadi where he sat crying when they were eating, they started looking for him. The second to the last child was sent to go and look for Obiadi. On his way to the farm, he was swallowed by the same evil spirit that swallowed Obiadi. The third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh children were sent to look for Obiadi but they all ended being swallowed by the evil spirit. At the end, the mother of those seven children went out to look for her children and was equally swallowed by the spirit. In the night, the father of the seven children sharpened his wine tapping knife very well and went to look for his wife and children too and was eventually swallowed by the same evil spirit. Inside the belly of the evil spirit, he saw his wife and seven children. He then used his sharpened knife to cut an opening the evil spirit belly and the evil fell down and died. Then Obiadi's father, his wife and the other six children who were still alive came out from the spirit belly. Obiadi was already dead and so they brought out his body, took it home and buried him. Later many people came to visit Obiadi's father to congratulate him for his bravery lesson from the folktales. This folktale serves as a warning to all those children who do not take their parent advice or the advice of elders around them. In Igbo cultural value, children are expected to heed the advice of their parents and follow their footsteps until they grow up.

Analysis of Text one; "Obiadi" using Proppian Model.

Initial Situation There lived a husband and wife that had seven male children. The last was called Obiadi and was very handsome.

1. **Observation:** Obiadi's father, mother and their seven children went to a farm.
2. **Interdiction:** When they came back from the farm, Obiadi realized that he had forgotten his flute in the farm.

Absentation 2: Obiadi went back to the farm to collect his flute contrary to the parents and brother's advice.

3. **Violation:** Obiadi disobeyed his parents and brother's advice not to go back to the farm that afternoon because the evil spirit used to move around there in the afternoon to devour people they see there at that time of the day.
4. **Complicity:** As Obiadi was going back to the farm to collect his flute, he met different categories of spirits ranging from one with one head to spirit with seven heads respectively. The first six spirits accepted Obiadi's plea and left him but the seventh spirit he met did not have any mercy and eventually swallowed Obiadi.
5. **Meditation:** When Obiadi's parents and his elder brothers did not see him, the father sent Obiadi's brothers one after the other to look for him and they were all swallowed one after the other by the fearful spirit with seven heads and consuming flames all over its body. Obiadi's mother was equally swallowed by the same fearful spirit.
6. **Beginning counter action:** Obiadi's father sharpened his wine tapping knife and set out to look for his wife and seven children and was also swallowed by the fearful spirit. When Obiadi's father got swallowed by the fearful spirit, he used his tapping knife to pierce the spirit's belly and the spirit died and fell to the ground like a dried bread fruit tree. Then

Obiadi's father, mother and six others came out of the spirit's belly alive. By then Obiadi was already dead and they carried the corpse back home and buried him.

7. **Struggle:** When the evil spirit swallowed Obiadi's father, he used his wine tapping knife to pierce the fearful spirit's belly and it died.

8. **Victory:** Obiadi's father, mother, and his six brothers were rescued through Obiadi's father.

9. **Misfortune Liquidated:** Obiadi's father, mother and his six brothers returned home safely.

10. **Return:** Obiadi's father and members of his family returned home

Punishment: Obiadi died because of his stubbornness and members of his community condemned his inability to heed his parents and brother's advice which eventually cost him his life. He was devoured by the fearful spirit and subsequently died.

11. **RECOGNITION:** After the burial of Obiadi, many people came to thank Obiadi's father for his bravery in saving members of his family and the entire community from the menace of the evil spirit.

In Obiadi's tale, the following eleven functions of propp's model are identified: Absentation, interdiction, violation, and complicity, meditation beginning of counter actions struggle, victory, misfortune return, punishment and recognition.

FOLKTALE II; Nneka and her mother in-law

N'otu obodo o nwere otu nwaanyi ya na nne di ya bi n' otu ulo. Nne di ya kporo ya na nwayaa si. Nneka bu nwa mgbenye. Nke a mere ka ihe na-esiri Nneka na nwa ya ike. Di Nneka gara ahia n'obodo di anya. Nneka duru nwa o du ka o ghara imetu ihe o bu la bu nke nne di ya aka. Mgbe Nneka gara ahia izuta ihe ha ga-eri nwa ya na ndi ogbo ya biara na be ha gara kuru miri n'ihu na o nweghi mmiri di n'ite Nneka.

Ihe a were nne di Nneka oke iwe o wee tie nwa Nneka ihe n'ebe odi ukwu. Mgbe Nneka nuru mkpu akwa nwaya oge o na-alota, o jiri ososo were bata n' ulo imata ihe mere nwa ya ji ebe udi akwa di otu a. O chotara na obu nne di ya tiri nwaya ihe ahụ n' ihi na o nuru mmiri di n' ite ya. Nne di Nneka tara Nneka uta n' ihi na o zughị nwa ya nke oma nke mere na o gara n' ite ya ga akuru mmiri onunu ma kunyekwa ndi enyi ya. O gwakwara Nneka ka o mee ngwa ngwa ga akughechitere ya mmiri ahụ n'egbughi oge obula.

Nneka rioro nne di ya ka ya kughie chiriya mmiri ahụ n'ututuechi ya makana ubochi ahụ bu ubochi ndi obodo ha anaghi agan' iyi di ebe ahu ikute mmiri. Eke bu ubochi ndi mmuo na-agaghari n'uzo ahia ahụ. Nne di Nneka anabataghi aririo a ma oli. Nke a mere ka Nneka gaba ikute mmiri ubochi ahụ na-agbanyeghi nsogbu chere ya n'ihu.

Mgbe Nneka na-aga n'iyi ahu o zutere otu mmuo nke choro iko Nneka ogwu ma Nneka gbuoro ikpere ya n'ala kosara mmuo ihe mere ya ji aga ikute mmiri n'iyi na ubochi Eke. Mgbe mmuo ahụ huru nsopuru na nkwanere ugwu Nneka nyere ya, o hapu ya ka o gawa njem ya, ka Nneka na-aga o zutere mmuo nna ya nwuru anwu kenyerere ya otu ogwu o ji achusa ndi mmuo no n' uzo iyi ahụ mmuo nna Nneka gwakwara ya ka o tinye ufo du ogwu ahu o nyere ya n'ime iyi ahụ mgbe o ruru .

Mgbe Nneka ruru n'iyi ahụ o huru eze mmuo iyi ahụ. Eze mmuo iyi ahụ were oke iwe mgbe o huru Nneka na agbanyeghi na Nneka kowara ihe mere ya jiri biawa iku mmiri n'iyi ahụ ubochi Eke . O kuru Nneka ogwu o wee kpua isi. Mgbe Nneka chetara ogwu ahu mmuo nna ya nyere ya mgbe o na-aga n'iyi ahụ, Nneka were ghanye ogwu ahụ n' ime iyi ahụ. Mgbe

Nneka mere nke a eze iyi mmuṅ ahụ bere akwa ariri were gbafuṅ. Ugbu a, Nneka bidoro hụwakwa ụzọ ozo ma kuru mmiri o chogara n'iyi ma jiri anuri lota na be ya.

Nlota Nneka n'udo gbagwojuru nne di ya anya n'ihia na o tughị anya na Nneka ga-eji ndu ya lota si n'iyi ahu. Nne di Nneka gara koro onyeisi ala na Nneka na-ata amusu. O were gaa hu Eze Iyi mmuṅ ma lota na ndu. O gwakwara onyeisi ala na o bu amusu Nneka na-ata mere O jiri were gaa hu Eze Iyi mmuṅ ma lota na ndu. O gwakwara onyeisi ala na Nneka ganu iyi ma o buru na o si na ya anaghi ata amusu iji gosi na aka ya di icha. Nneka mechara nuṅ iyi n'ihu arusi obodo ahụ. N' ututu echi ya Nneka nuchara iyi ndi mmadu gara ma hu na Nneka ka di ndu ebe onṅ n' ihu arusi ahụ ha wee mata na aka Nneka di ocha. Nke a nyere otutu mmadu obi anuru. Ugbu a ajo omume nne di ya agbarala onwe ya n'anwu ihere were ju nne di ya n'ihu. Nne di Nneka nwuru n' ihu arusi a na-egbughi oge o bu. Mmadu niile gbakotara ebe ahụ kelere Nneka maka ndu oma ya.

Ihe Mmuta: Ehi na-enweghi odudu na chi ya na-achuru ya ijiji. Ezi omume amaka.

English Translation of Folktale 2. Nneka

In a certain town, a young girl named Nneka who married a young farmer lived together with her mother-in-law who hates her and her child and makes everything difficult for her. She is an orphan. Nneka's husband travelled for business transaction in another town. When Nneka was going to the market to buy food items, she instructed her son not to touch anything that belongs to her mother-in-law.

Immediately Nneka left to the market, the son's friends visited him and they played as usual. After playing with his age mates, they were thirsty and seeing no water in her mother's house, he decided to take from the grandmother's pot and also gave to his age mates. The grandmother was very angry and beat the child mercilessly. Nneka heard her child scream and rushed to know the cause. Nneka's mother-in-law blames her for not training her child well and told her to replace the water immediately since she wants to cook.

Nneka pleaded with her to manage the one remaining and promised to fill the pot and even other pots for her the next day, but she refused. Nneka resolved to go to the stream to fetch water for her mother-in-law at all costs to as her mother-in-law threatens to throw them out of the house.

Nneka went on her mission to replace the water on Eke day that is bound by humans to visit because the spirits do gather around the bush leading to the stream and around the stream itself. There Nneka met a spirit who wanted to cast spell on her, she bowed immediately and humbly stated her issues with her mother-in-law and she ended up coming to the river.

The spirit seeing her humility and having pitied the small child in pain, allowed her to continue her journey. On her way, she met her father's spirit who confined with her and gave her some charm to ward off other spirits, and to throw some into the river when she reached there. With the help of the charm, Nneka reached the stream. The goddess of the stream was angry and cast a spell on her, when Nneka had narrated her ordeal to her. Nneka in her blindness remembered the father's charm and threw it with her last strength into the river and the river goddess cried in pain and vanished. Nneka regained her sight and fetched the water happily.

She returned and gave the water to her mother-in-law and told her how she saw the goddess of the river in reality and how she defeated her (the goddess of the river). Nneka's mother-in-law was jealous and scared too. She reported to the king that Nneka is a witch since

she came out alive after meeting the river goddess. Nneka was cast into the evil forest for two days. She survived in the evil forest. Her father's spirit saved her. Nneka returned to the village unharmed and healthy to everyone's disbelief. Her mother in-law claims that Nneka has used her witch power to survive, that she should swear to their oracle for her to prove her innocence. Consequently, Nneka swore before the oracle and her hair was shaved and was mandated to kneel in front of the shrine for a night, to get ready for the oath swearing the next day. Everyone gathered the next morning and saw Nneka in front of the shrine alive. The oracle was brought and Nneka swore and nothing happened to her. Everyone was happy and satisfied that Nneka was innocent. Her mother in-law's evil deeds were exposed and she covered her face in shame. Her 'mother in-law was stricken with instant death by the oracle and everyone present congratulated Nneka for proving her innocence.

From the folktales we could see that culture prohibits people from fetching water from the said river on Eke day. Among all the lifeless substances and things that appear in African folklore, water is the most symbolically significant. Water is generally acknowledged as a symbol of renewal and purification, the genesis of life. The cleansing and purifying qualities attributed to water apply not only to physical impurities but also to spiritual impurities that may result from violation of taboos. In the folktale, "Nneka and her mother in-law, Nneka's mother in-law instructed her to go and fetch water from a river forbidden by human being on Eke day out of jealousy and hatred. Nneka was able to draw water from the river on that Eke day at a great risk because spirits killed those who violate this custom. Nonetheless, upon hearing Nneka's grievances, the river spirit relented and set her free, astonishing her mother – in-law who had wished for Nneka's demise. One could infer that Nneka's miraculous survival suggests that goodness will inevitably prevail over wickedness. This shows the society that it is unjust to punish someone when the cause is genuine.

Analysis of Function in Tale 2

Nneka and her mother -in-law.

Initial Situation: Nneka a young girl got married to a young farmer and they were blessed with a child. She was living with her mother in-law who despised her and makes everything difficult for her, unknown to her son.

1. **Absentation:** The husband travelled for a business transaction and Nneka went to their village market.
2. **Interdiction:** Nneka warned her child not to go near her grandmother's belongings.
3. **Violation of interdiction:** The child after playing with his age mates was very thirsty and seeing no water in their house, decided to take from the grandmother's pot and also gave to his age mates.
4. **Villainy/Lack:** the grandmother was very angry and beat the child mercilessly.
5. **Mediation:** Nneka heard her child scream and rushed to know the cause. Her mother in-law blames her for not training her child well and told her to replace her water immediately she wants to cook.
6. **Counteraction:** Nneka pleaded with her to manage the one remaining and promised to fill the pot and even other pots for her the next day, but she refused. Nneka resolved to go at all costs to provide the water because her mother in-law threatens to throw them out of the house.

7. **Departure:** Nneka went on her mission to fetch the water on Eke day that is bound by humans to visit the stream and around the stream itself.
8. **Testing:** Nneka met a spirit who wanted to cast spell on her, she bowed immediately and humbly stated her issues with her mother in-law and how she ended up coming to the stream.
9. **Reaction:** The spirit seeing her humility and having pitied the small child in pain, allowed her to continue her journey
10. **Acquisition of Magical Agent** – Nneka met her father’s spirit who comforted her and gave her some charm to ward off other spirits and to throw some into the water when she reaches there.
11. **Guidance** – With the help of the charm, Nneka reached the stream
12. **Struggle** – The goddess was angry and cast a spell on Nneka, even when she had narrated her ordeal to the goddess. Nneka in her blindness remembered the father’s charm and threw it with her last strength into the stream.
13. **Victory** – the goddess cried in pain and vanished.
14. **Resolution/LackLiquidated** – Nneka regained her sight and fetched water happily
15. **Return** – Nneka returned and gave the water to her mother in-law and told her how she saw the goddess of the stream in reality and how she defeated her.
16. **Pursuit** – Nneka’s mother in-law was jealous and scared too. She reported to the King that Nneka is a witch since she came out alive after meeting the river goddess. Nneka was cast into the evil forest for two days.
17. **Rescue** – Nneka survived in the evil forest. Her father’s spirit saved her.
18. **Arrival** – Nneka returned to the village unharmed and healthy to everyone’s disbelief.
19. **Claim** – Nneka’s mother in-law claims that Nneka used her witch power to survive, that she should swear to their Oracle for her to prove her innocence.
20. **Task** – Nneka’s hair was shaved and was mandated to kneel I front of the shrine for a night, to get ready for the oat swearing the next day.
21. **Solution** – Everyone gathered the next morning and saw Nneka in front of the shrine alive. The oracle was brought and she swore and nothing happened to her
22. **Recognition** – Everyone was happy and satisfied that Nneka was innocent.
23. **Exposure** – Nneka’s mother-in-law’s evil deeds were exposed and she covered her face in shame.
24. **Punishment** – Nneka’s mother-in-law was stricken with instant death by the oracle.
25. **Unidentified Elements** – Everyone present there congratulated Nneka for proving her innocence.

LESSON DERIVED FROM THE TALE:

The tale teaches us that good must ultimately triumph over evil. It also shows that it is unjust to punish someone when the cause is genuine.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TWO FOLKTALES

When comparing the progression of the storyline, from introduction to conflict to climax, in the analyzed folktales, it is noteworthy that both tales utilize Propp’s narrative structural format identically. The motivation to accomplish the objective has propelled the narrative in both folk tales. The roles identified in the two folktales heighten clashes and generate apprehension and excitement. The audience or readers are able to identify and empathize with the protagonist as a result of these functions. The presence of tension and

suspense in a story creates a captivating sense of curiosity in the audience or reader, making them eager to uncover the tale's finale, thus ensuring their sustained interest in the narrative.

SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE TALES: "Obaidi" and Nneka and her mother-in-law.

In tale 1, 'Obiadi,' the following functions were identified: Absentation, interdiction, violation, complicity, mediation, beginning of counteraction, struggle, victory, misfortune, return punishment and recognition. The functions that are absent in tale 1 include: reconnaissance, delivery, receipt of magical agent, branding, return, pursuit, unrecognized arrival, unfounded claims, difficult task, testing exposure, and wedding, trickery, solution, transfiguration, guidance.

In tale 2, "Nneka and her mother-in-law", the following functions were identified: Absentation, interdiction, violation, villainy/lack, medication, counteraction, departure, testing reaction, acquisition of magical agent, guidance, struggle, victory, resolution, return, pursuit, rescue, arrival, claim task, solution, recognition, exposure, punishment and unidentified elements.

Both tales are in line with the sequential occurrences of the morphology though the functions identified in the two tales are not as many as 31 functions. In both tales, the initial situation, departure, interdiction, violation, medication, counteraction, victory, punishment, misfortune liquidated, return and recognition were present. In both tales, there was instruction. Obiadi's father, mother and siblings instructed Obiadi not to go back to the farm to look for his flute because spirits used to move around along the road leading to the farm. In the same way, Nneka instructed her child not to touch anything that belongs to her mother-in-law. In both case of tale 1, Obiadi died because he refused to obey his parent. Thus, Obiadi died out of his stubbornness but in tale of Nneka and her mother in-law, Nneka's mother-in-law died because of her jealousy. There was no trickery in both folktales.

DIFFERENCES IN FUNCTIONS IN THE TWO FOLKTALES

In folktales 1, it was Obaidi who violated the instruction given to him and he died at the end as punishment while in folktale 2, Nneka's mother-in-law died due to her jealousy instead of Nneka's child who violated her mother's instruction not to touch anything that belongs to her mother-in-law. Another noticeable difference is the number of functions that appeared in each folktale. In folktale1, twelve functions were identified while in folktale 2, twenty-five functions were identified. This shows that all the tales do not contain the same number of functions. Nneka used humility and respect to overcome all the obstacles she faced in the process of collecting water from the stream on Eke day which was prohibited for human for mother-in-law while Obiadi in folktale 1, was punished due to his disobedience. In tale 2, the following functions: testing, reaction, acquitting of magical agent, pursuit, rescue, arrival, claim, task, exposure and unidentified elements were identified in tale 1. All the functions identified in tale 1, are present in tale 2.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study's findings suggest that (i) Igbo folktales follow the first sequence of Propp's morphology. In folktales 1, twelve functions were identified while in folktale 2, twenty-five functions were identified showing that all tales do not contain the same number of functions. The functions in any story are constrained, and the sequence of these functions remains unaltered. None of the two tales have all the functions.

The results of the study indicate that (iii) one of the striking structural patterns of Igbo folktale is that of reward/punishment model. The good is also rewarded while the wicked is punished. Propp's belief that folktales adhere to a fixed series of character functions is reflected in the genre's storytelling. To explain the cause -and -effect relationships that are

essential to a narrative, story actions are delineated by pre- and post- conditions that describe the state of the plot. The spirit with seven heads could not pardon Obiadi against his disobedience to his parents to judgement and gave him the appropriate punishment while in the case of Nneka and her mother in-law, the ill treatment for Nneka was reserved and her mother in-law died as a result of jealousy.

CONCLUSION:

The discussion made in this paper has shown that folktale of Obiadi and Nneka and her mother-in-law follows the Propp's "Morphology of folktale". Applying the Proppian morphology to folktales of "Obiadi" and "Nneka" and her mother in-law reaffirms the usefulness of the theory in analyzing the stories of the Igbo people. This is imperative for both validating the relevance of Propp's morphology and advancing the examination of Igbo folklore.

It can be inferred that Nneka's survival in the face of peril demonstrates the notion that good will eventually prevail over evil. This shows the society that it is unjust to punish when the cause is genuine. In Obiadi's tale, it could be concluded that disobedience is bad and that children should follow the advice of their parents and elders until they are mature to act on their own.

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