

# **Excavating the Fairy Tale: Rethinking Morphology and Narratology through Yoshifumi Kondo's *Whisper of the Heart*.**

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## **Abstract**

This paper proposes a method to excavate hidden stories within narrative texts by way of using two theoretical approaches to narrative, Vladimir Propp's morphological framework and Mieke Bal's narratological framework, in conjunction with each other. In order to establish the method's validity, the paper also aims to provide an example of its use, by way of the film *Whisper of the Heart*. The two theories are first rigorously examined, after it is identified that Propp's framework can identify the narrative structure of a fairy tale within *Whisper of the Heart*, where Bal's framework can identify narrative context within *Whisper of the heart*. The paper then establishes how these two identifications can be used productively in conjunction, to produce a complete fairy tale through a dual analysis of *Whisper of the Heart*. The dual analysis is then conducted successfully, resulting in a complete fairy tale. While it is demonstrated that analysis can be performed successfully, since it is only performed on one case study, the feasibility of its application to other texts is not conclusive. The paper proposes several avenues of further application that may conclusively demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed, as well as indicating several other possible applications of the method, were this to be demonstrated.

Keywords: Excavation, Hidden Stories, Morphology, Narratology, Fairy Tales, Narrative Context, Narrative Structure, Identification.

## **Introduction**

This paper will argue that there are stories that exist within stories: that a story of a certain type or genre might be hiding (fragments of) a story of a different type or genre and that these hidden stories can themselves be identified. I like to think of this identification in the frame of excavation: There is a dig site, which is the original story, and there are ruins, which are the stories within that story: other narratives, looming just under the surface. They too are a part of the landscape which is the dig site. A small part, perhaps, but once these hidden stories are found they are not only interesting to study in and of themselves; their study also tells us more about the landscape, providing new information on the original story.

I will demonstrate the existence of these hidden stories and the possibility of their excavation by excavating a fairy tale from the film *Whisper of the Heart* (1995). The tools I will be using in this hypothetical excavation are analytical narrative theories. I will be using two separate theoretical approaches, the morphological structure outlined by Vladimir Propp in his seminal work *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968), and the narratological framework outlined by Mieke Bal in her book *Narratology: An Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (2017). Propp's theory will be used to excavate the basic structure of the fairy tale hidden within *Whisper*, while Bal's theory will examine how the contextual elements of *Whisper* can be used to imbue this structure with further meaning. In effect, this process will not only excavate but also fully reconstruct the fairy tale hidden within *Whisper*.

*Whisper* is an animated film, based on a manga<sup>1</sup> with the same title, written by Aoi Hiiragi (1990). The film was produced by the renowned Studio Ghibli and directed by Yoshifumi Kondo (1995). *Whisper* also served as Kondo's directorial debut, with his previous work within the Studio comprising mostly of character design and storyboarding work for Isao Takahata, one of the studio's primary directors (*Grave of the Fireflies*, *Only Yesterday*, *Pom Poko*) alongside Hayao Miyazaki (*Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind*, *Princess Mononoke*, *Spirited Away*). The latter also had a hand in the production of *Whisper*, writing the screenplay for Kondo.

Kondo directing the film was significant for Miyazaki as well, as Kondo was his protégé at the time. Miyazaki had intended to retire after *Whisper's* completion, passing the torch, as it were, to Kondo. Sadly, Kondo passed away in January 1998, not three years after *Whisper's* release, making it the first and last film he directed.

The film itself follows a young girl in Junior High in Tokyo named Shizuku Tsukishima, and her attempts to find her creative voice and her way in the world outside of the rigorous academic structure of Japanese society. These attempts culminate in Shizuku's decision to write a fairy tale about the statue of a cat she finds in an antique shop, who is called the Baron.

The film concludes with Shizuku, having finished her fairy tale, standing on a hill overlooking Tokyo with Seiji, the boy who is her main source of inspiration and her romantic interest. Shizuku, having realised that she is not competent or experienced enough to be the writer she wishes to be, makes the decision to keep improving herself in order to eventually become that writer.

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<sup>1</sup> Japanese graphic novel

The fact that the writing of a fairy tale is central to *Whisper*'s narrative already indicates an indirect connection with fairy tales. This connection makes it more plausible that there are some elements of a fairy tale structure hidden within *Whisper*'s narrative, making it a more valuable case study to act as an example of excavating a fairy tale structure.

In addition to this, a primary reason for choosing *Whisper* as a case study is that the works of Studio Ghibli as a whole invite close comparisons with fairy tales. *Pom Poko* (1994), another feature directed by Isao Takahata, has similarly been linked to other types of folklore, as it overtly draws upon imagery from Japanese folktales (Ortabasi 2013). *Ponyo* (2008), directed by Hayao Miyazaki, was loosely based on Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid* (1837). It is also not particularly a coincidence that the Studio has most of its English translations and dubbing produced and managed by Disney, another animation studio whose filmic history is steeped in the tradition of folklore and fairy tales.

Contrary to other examples of animation within these two studios, *Whisper* remains fairly ordinary in its setting, shying away from the fantastical elements that distinguish the style of much of Disney's and indeed, Studio Ghibli's work. In this respect, Kondo takes after Takahata, whose later films like *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988) and *Only Yesterday* (1991) are heavily grounded in realism. This means *Whisper* does not immediately invite the comparison. This distinguishes *Whisper* from a film like *Ponyo*, as excavating the fairy tale from the latter would be overly self-evident and thus not particularly useful to this paper.

Choosing *Whisper* as an object of analysis should serve to demonstrate the general applicability of this proposed approach, that a work does not have to be steeped in folkloric tradition for a fairy tale to be discovered within it. In many ways, *Whisper* is an ideal object for this analysis: one that evokes the notions of a fairy tale so as to not muddle the clarity of the analysis, while being far enough removed from the thematic and fantastical tradition of fairy tales to prevent its excavation being a self-evident, one-to-one transition.

There has been very little direct academic discussion of *Whisper*. The only substantial work relating to its narrative consists of a section in Jonathan Lack's honours thesis *Seeing With Eyes Unclouded: Representations of Creativity in the Works of Hayao Miyazaki* (2014). As Lack's approach is significantly different from my own, being a more thematic examination of the film, I will refer to his work only occasionally to illustrate certain points.

There are two main obstacles that need to be overcome when excavating the fairy tale within *Whisper*. The first obstacle lies in that narrative information will need to be transferred between two different mediums. The medium of the fairy tale, which, in its current modern iteration is most often a literary work, and the medium of *Whisper of the Heart*, which is film. The second obstacle lies in the fundamental difference between the structure of the narrative in *Whisper of the Heart* and the structure of the narrative in a traditional fairy tale. I will show that by using the theoretical approaches of narratology and morphology, it is possible to get past both of these obstacles, making the excavation completely possible.

### Methodology

For this excavation, the theories of morphology and narratology will each need to perform different roles, as stated earlier. I will identify these roles through a thorough examination of both theoretical frameworks. I will argue that it is possible to use Propp's proposed morphological framework to identify, within a text, the components present in the narrative structure of a fairy tale. I will then proceed to show that the identifying of this narrative structure does not constitute a complete excavation of a fairy tale, as the structure is merely a sequence of events and possesses no contextual meaning. After showing this, I will then argue that there are concepts within Bal's framework which can be utilised to provide the identified narrative structure with this contextual meaning; that by examining the events of the identified narrative structure within the context of their original text, they can be imbued with contextual meaning. This process, I argue, will thus be able to produce a complete excavation of a fairy tale from any given

narrative text. Additionally, I will show that any similar morphological framework can be used to produce this excavation, making it possible to excavate any type of story from a narrative text.

Once the theoretical method of excavation has been identified, I will use the example of *Whisper* to demonstrate its effectiveness. This will be split into two separate parts: the morphological analysis, which will identify the components of a fairy tale's narrative structure within *Whisper* and their morphological notation, and the narratological analysis, which will imbue these components with contextual meaning. This paper will only detail the results of both of these analyses; the complete morphological and narratological analyses of *Whisper* will each be included as an appendix.

## **Vladimir Propp's Morphology**

### A Historical Introduction

Vladimir Propp's 1928 *Morphology of the Folktale* is often considered to be rooted in the school of narrative theory known as Russian Formalism (Bordwell 1988, Liberman 1984, Lesinskis 2010). Propp being a contemporary of the movement itself and his approach being reflective of its central ideas plays no small part in this consideration.

Russian Formalism originated during the Russian Revolution of the 1910-20's, and was primarily focused on reducing narratives to their core components. The discipline of Formalism itself had a broader scope than Russia however, with authors like T.S. Eliot (1919, "*Tradition and The Individual Talent*") in American literature and I. A. Richards (1924, "*Principles of Literary Criticism*") in British literature producing seminal works for the discipline's theoretical ideas.

Because of this, the emergence of the discipline is of a somewhat decentralised nature, and consequently no formative text exists that represents its ideas. However, two of the seminal works within Russian Formalism are Viktor Shklovsky's 1917 essay "*Art as Technique*", and Boris M. Eikhenbaum's essay "*The Theory of the Formal Method*" (1926). In Shklovsky's essay, he posits that the process of creating art stands in direct opposition a formulaic, learned exercise, with the goal of art being to engage these learned exercises in a process of defamiliarisation. Eikhenbaum's essay concerns the Formal method's focus on creating "a special scientific discipline concerned with literature as a specific system of facts" (4), emphasising the meticulous reduction of an analysed text down to these facts, so the system may be identified.

These concepts of defamiliarisation<sup>2</sup> and reduction lie at the core of Russian Formalism. The reduction of a text down to its core components was a process that was achieved due to defamiliarisation. By abstracting the literary facts out of the text, one could view them in the context of their larger system, without needing to consider their original context or their authors. Perhaps that is also the reason that during this period the folktale, a type of narrative with its roots in oral storytelling and by its very nature authorless, became a more valuable subject of study and topic of discourse (Eleonskaya 1912, Skaftymov 1924, Volkov 1924, Aarne 1910).

Given the historical and theoretical context of his work, Propp's focus on folktales can thus be seen as being highly influenced by the tenets of Russian Formalism (Benson Loc 272). However, as Benson (2003), Bordwell (1988) and Liberman (1984) all note, Propp himself makes little mention of Formalism in his introduction to the *Morphology*. The only member associated with the group he directly mentions is Viktor Zhimursky, who was himself only a fringe Formalist, and did not directly associate with the

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<sup>2</sup> (this action of taking it out of context is termed 'ostraneniye' by Shklovsky, which literally translated means 'estrangement', but is usually translated with defamiliarisation, as the two concepts are very similar)

school (Wellek 1986). While Propp's theory can be considered to be rooted in Formalists concepts, the impetus for his research seems to have come more from his contemporary scholars within folktale studies.

Many of Propp's fundamental concepts in the *Morphology* can in fact be traced back through earlier studies into the folktale, specifically the works of Eleonskaya, Skaftymov, Aarne and Volkov. Elena Eleonskaya provided the early framework for analysis of a folktale in 1912, as a collection of narrative roles which perform a sequence of actions, an early example of what Propp would later define as functions and spheres of action. This theory was later revisited by Aleksandr Skaftymov (1924) who proposed that these sequences could be ordered chronologically.

Antti Aarne, one of the students of the Finnish school of historical-geographical research, published the first of a number of tale catalogues to come, by the name of *The Types of the Folktale* in 1910 (trans. 1928 by Stith Thompson). It was, in Aarne's words the first "system that arranged the various types to be found in the variegated multitude of folk-tales and united them into a well-ordered whole" (qtd. in Thompson, *Folktale*, 416). This is one of the first instances of the use of a so-called literary 'corpus' to examine and categorise large bodies of folktales.

Volkov's theory of the folktale, mentioned directly by Propp in his introduction to the *Morphology*, includes many elements of Propp's theory (the numbering of various different elements of the tale, the establishment of central narrative 'themes' and the usage of Eleonskaya's narrative roles in conjunction with these themes). Propp, in his introduction, primarily criticises Volkov's methodology, drawing the basis of his analysis into question, and pointing out that Volkov's themes purport to be exclusionary when, in fact, they are not, "Do not tales exist in which three brothers (third category) procure brides for themselves (fifth category)?" (Propp 8).

Propp's research in the *Morphology* can be seen as a direct attempt to improve upon Volkov's theory, and is thus not only a synthesis of the work of scholars such as Aarne, but also constitutes an attempt to reconcile certain inconsistencies in the study of the folktale, and expand the application of fertile ideas within the discipline.

### The Morphological Structure

I will attempt here to give a brief but comprehensive overview of Propp's morphological structure. These include the functions of the tale, the seven spheres of action of the dramatis personae, the moves of the tale, and the motivations of functions. There are some smaller elements of the structure which I will not be able to account for, but these are left out purely because they do not modify the theory substantially, and are not noteworthy enough to be worth critiquing.

The foreword of *Morphology of the Folktale* begins with Propp explaining his use of the term 'morphology', a term meaning "the study of forms" (Propp xxv). Propp references the term's use in botany, where the term denotes the meticulous studying of the structure of a plant. He then asserts the central claim of his work, "it is possible to make an examination of the forms of the tale which will be as exact as the morphology of organic formations." (Propp xxv). Propp's *Morphology* is centred fully around substantiating this claim to exact examination.

This aim of this exact examination can be further broken down into four core observations which Propp attempts to justify. These are:

- *1. There exist certain functions (actions or groups of actions) which are the fundamental components of a fairy tale, and do not change depending on which character is performing them* (Propp 21).

- 2. *These functions are of a limited number* (Propp 21).
- “3. *The sequence of functions is always identical*” (Propp 22, italics taken from text).
- “4. *All fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure*” (Propp 23, italics taken from text).

This is done by taking a corpus of fairy tales, namely those collected by Aleksandr Afanas'ev in *Russian Fairy Tales* (First published 1855-1863), and analysing them for textual consistencies.

In doing this, Propp finds 31 *functions*. Most of these do not appear in every tale, but every tale contains at least some of these functions, and always in a consistent sequence. Propp gives each function an individual definition and description, as well as a symbol. I have listed each function below, first with their definition, after which follows a brief summary of their description, and finally the symbol for the function.

#### Propp's functions

1. Absentation (Family member leaves home) symbol:  $\beta$  [this function is always preceded by the *initial situation*; The initial situation is also given a symbol ( $\alpha$ ) but is not assigned a function.]
2. Interdiction (An order to be followed or rule not to be broken is introduced to the hero) symbol:  $\gamma$
3. Violation (The order is not followed or the rule is broken) symbol:  $\delta$
4. Reconnaissance (The villain attempts reconnaissance) symbol:  $\epsilon$
5. Delivery (The Villain receives information from reconnaissance) symbol:  $\zeta$
6. Trickery (The Villain attempts deception in order to take someone or something) symbol:  $\eta$

7. Complicity (The object of the Villain's deception is fooled and helps the villain obtain the person or item) symbol:  $\vartheta$
8. Villainy (The Villain harms or injures a member of the family) symbol: A
  - a. Lack (A member of a Family either lacks something or desires something) [This is a sub-function and can potentially replace 8 if necessary] symbol:  $a$
9. Mediation, the connective incident (The hero is informed of the lack or villainy and is then either dispatched or allowed to go) symbol: B
10. Beginning counteraction (The hero decides to right the lack or villainy) symbol: C
11. Departure (The hero leaves home) symbol:  $\uparrow$
12. The first function of the donor (the hero is tested to prepare him to receive a helper or a magical agent) symbol: D
13. The hero's reaction (the hero reacts to the test) symbol: E
14. Provision or receipt of a magical agent (The hero acquires a magical agent) symbol: F
15. Spatial transference between two kingdoms, guidance (The hero travels to another kingdom or is guided there) symbol: G
16. Struggle (the hero and the villain clash) symbol: H
17. Branding (The hero is branded, leaving a physical mark) symbol: J
18. Victory (Defeat of the villain) symbol: I
19. Liquidation<sup>3</sup> (The consequences of villainy or lack are set right) symbol: K
20. Return (The hero goes to return home) symbol:  $\downarrow$
21. Pursuit, chase (The hero is pursued by either the villain or something directly affiliated to it) symbol: Pr

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<sup>3</sup> Propp never directly gives the definition of this function. It is not completely clear why this is the case, but defining it as 'Liquidation' seems to follow the general rule of thumb for Propp's definitions. I state this simply to make it clear that 'Liquidation' is a working definition.

22. Rescue (The hero escapes pursuit with aid) symbol: Rs [Many tales go straight to 31 here]
23. Unrecognised arrival (The hero arrives home or somewhere else and is not recognised) symbol: o
24. Unfounded claims (A false hero presents a false claim to the hero's achievements) symbol: L
25. Difficult task (A difficult task, such as a riddle or a test, is posed to the hero) symbol: M
26. Solution (The task is resolved) symbol: N
27. Recognition (The hero is recognised) symbol: Q
28. Exposure (The false hero or the villain is exposed) symbol: Ex
29. Transfiguration (The hero gains a new appearance) [often performed by the helper] symbol: T
30. Punishment (The villain or false hero is punished) symbol: U
31. Wedding (The hero is married and ascends the throne)<sup>4</sup> symbol: W

These functions, according to Propp's analysis, can account not only for the structure of the totality of all the tales in his corpus, but also for the structure of the totality of all fairy tales.

In my brief summaries of their description I have left out a key component to Propp's method, namely the examples Propp provides from his corpus. These examples are organised into groups and numbered. They are extremely exhaustive, which is why I have excluded them, but I will provide a brief example of their use so as to avoid confusion when discussing my analysis.

The first function, Absentation ( $\beta$ ), provides three examples:

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<sup>4</sup> Marriage is not actually implied in this function, despite its title.

- “1. The person absenting himself can be a member of the older generation ( $\beta^1$ ...
2. An intensified form of absention is represented by the death of parents ( $\beta^2$ ...
3. Sometimes members of the younger generation absent themselves ( $\beta^3$ ).” (Propp 26)

Thus, in the enumeration of functions, if the tale states that ‘Jack’s parents left for work’, the function would appear as  $\beta^1$ , if it instead stated that ‘Jack’s parents died during the first months of the cold winter’, the function would appear as  $\beta^2$ .

Following on from the functions are the spheres of action, performed by ‘*dramatis personae*’, which is Propp’s name for Eleonskaya’s notion of replaceable characters. Any of the individual characters in a fairy tale can perform any one of Propp’s functions. A grandmother could be both a donor and a helper, for example. The individual characters distinguish themselves from *dramatis personae* by the fact that *dramatis personae* are confined to their role. As such, one individual character can play the role of multiple *dramatis personae*. The role of a *dramatis personae* is determined by the functions associated with that role. These collections of functions are what Propp calls ‘spheres of action’. Propp distinguishes seven of these, six of which are taken directly from Volkov’s work (1924):

1. Villain (Consisting of Villainy, Pursuit, and Struggle)
2. Donor (Consisting of the first function of the donor and provision or receipt of a magical agent)
3. Helper (Consisting of spatial transference between two kingdoms; guidance, liquidation, rescue, solution, and transfiguration)
4. Princess and her father (Consisting of difficult task, branding, recognition, exposure, punishment, and wedding)
5. Dispatcher ( Consisting of mediation; the connective incident)
6. Hero (Consisting of departure, the hero’s reaction, and wedding)

7. False hero (consisting of departure, the hero's reaction, and unfounded claims)<sup>5</sup>

In describing the functions, Propp also notes that some functions are more intricately connected than others and can thus be grouped together. For example, if there is an Interdiction ( $\gamma$ ), the interdiction must be followed by a Violation ( $\delta$ ) of the Interdiction. Similarly, if there is a Villainy (A) or Lack (a), it must be eventually concluded with Liquidation (K).

This last combination is what Propp terms a *move*, which in its essence signals the start of a second tale within the original tale. Moves are used when tales contain more than one act of villainy. When a second act of villainy occurs, there must be a second occasion of liquidation too. What is more, in reaching this second act of liquidation, the functions that are placed sequentially between the two functions can occur again, regardless of if they have occurred already in the original tale. It is thus necessary to create a new sequence of functions separate from the initial sequence in order to avoid structural confusion. The notation of a move is done in this manner:

$$(1) \quad \text{I.} \frac{\text{A}}{\text{W}^*} \quad \text{II.} \frac{\text{A}}{\text{W}^*}$$

Moves will not be used in the analysis of *Whisper*, but a basic understanding of their use will be necessary for the critical examination of Propp's framework later in this paper.

The concluding part of this summary of the *Morphology* concerns Propp's musings on *Motivation*, meaning: the inherent motivation behind certain functions. I say musings because while Propp does discuss motivation, he does not provide any concrete theoretical way to analyse it. Propp observes the fact

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<sup>5</sup> All these are paraphrased from Propp 79-80

that certain functions are always preceded by a motivation<sup>6</sup>, and that these can vary wildly. However, this discussion does not really move beyond conjecture, as he himself acknowledges:

*“There is reason to think that motivations formulated in words are alien to the tale on the whole, and that motivations in general may be considered with a great degree of probability as new formations.”* (Propp 76, italics added)

Though motivations do not perform a central role in Propp’s framework, they will be essential when identifying the limits of its execution.

I feel I should also make clear, after having laid out Propp’s structure, that his structure does not define the fairy tale as a genre, nor, I would argue, is that its intention. Propp himself gives no indication anywhere in his theory as to how many of these functions must be present in order to determine whether a work is a fairy tale (Lieberman xxxi). This lack of demarcation is important because it establishes Propp’s work as non-categorative. Propp does not pretend to have created a structure by which one can tell if a particular work is a fairy tale. As Lieberman puts it, Propp “did not define wondertales, he only redefined them” (xxvii). Propp’s intent to redefine also rings true in his methodology. Due to being centred around a corpus, his work is generated out of existing fairy tales. The structure is created by the presupposition of a genre which is imposed upon the corpus, the structure itself does not presuppose the genre.

Propp’s *Morphology* was published right at the point of decline for Russian Formalism, and the spread of his work suffered as a result. The ideological and political landscape in Russia both aided formalism in its eventual decline (Fitzpatrick 198), with the school of Russian formalism as a whole being declared as “bourgeois modernism”, Propp’s works were among those to be critically torn apart and

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<sup>6</sup> E.g. Villainy causes the motivation which causes the dispatch of the hero in *Mediation*

academically reviled (Lieberman xii-xiii). The most notable influence of Russian Formalism in its time period is its contributions to the work of the Prague Linguistic circle, where methods similar in form to Propp's structure were used (Benson Loc 308, Lieberman xix-xxx).

This also meant the translation of Propp's works was a staggered affair. The *Morphology* was eventually translated in 1958, where its sudden inclusion into the broader academic discourse has led to various approaches to the theory. Propp's structure has been used in structuralist analysis (Levi-Strauss 1963, Greimas 1966; 1973), film and television studies (Wollen 1976, Kuhn 1994, Bordwell 1998, Harriss 2008), studies into story generation (Peinado et al. 2004, Lim, 2008, Veale 2014, Gervás 2013; 2016), and early narratology studies (Barthes 1966, Todorov 1977). Stephen Benson, in his book *Cycles of Influence: Fiction, Folktale, Theory* (2004), has even charted the influence of folktale studies (Propp in particular) on the development of the discipline of narratology as a whole.

*Morphology* also spawned several research projects, such as additional morphological analyses which applied Propp's method to different corpi. Examples of more explorative study into Propp can be found in the 2011-2014 research project *What Makes Stories Similar?* (Fisseni et al.), or the theory's application to modern folktales (Rutherford 2008, Lahlou 2017). Further influences of Propp's approach can be found in the Digital Humanities, where the use of corpi (vastly larger than Propp's 100 tales) to facilitate data-oriented literary analysis has become commonplace (Moretti 2017, Heuser et al. 2016, Algee-Hewitt et al. 2015).

### Criticisms of Propp

The proposed use of Propp's framework in this paper as an identifier of hidden narrative structures has not been attempted previously. As such, many critiques of Propp's framework and its applications simply

do not apply to its use in this paper. However, I do believe these previous critiques merit examination, in order to help contextualise and justify the way I propose to use Propp in this paper.

Propp's framework has quite a polarising position within academic discourse. Some of its detractors hold that Propp's methods of arriving at the framework are inherently flawed (Lieberman 1984; Bremond et al., 1984), others such as Greimas merely suggest changes can be made to the framework itself (1976). Some hold the further applications outside of his corpus to be problematic, either because his methods and conclusions are too specific (Gervás, 2013), or because they are too broad (Bordwell, 1988, Lieberman 1984). In fact, in the case of Bordwell and Lieberman, they each paradoxically suggest it is both too specific and too broad.

Supporters of his theory often operate under the assumptions of its soundness and its ability to successfully distinguish the fairy tale from other works (Lahlou 2017, Barthes 1977, Lesinskis 2010), or claim that Propp unintentionally produced a structure that not only shows a uniformity between fairy tales, but a uniformity within all narrative (Greimas 1976, Wollen 1976). Greimas attempted to indicate this by adapting Propp structure to make it more uniform. However, as Gervás (2013) notes, taking this stance on Propp is problematic, as his functions can very easily lend themselves to generalisation, making demarcation by way of functions impossible. Wollen, in his analysis of *North by Northwest*, also falls into this trap, using an adapted version of Propp's structure to categorise every instance of the film, only to end up with what amounts to a very sparse retelling of its plot and nothing more. Attempts to make Propp's framework 'fit' other texts do not fare well in general (Bordwell 1988). Thus it would seem the framework may have more to offer when taken as strictly and precisely as possible.

This idea that Propp's framework is somehow universal, while flawed, does attribute additional merit to the thesis of this paper. If there are, as this paper supposes, these stories within other stories, then it is suddenly glaringly obvious why Propp's structure is easily applicable to other narratives. Not due to some

universal quality it possesses, but rather due to the fact that these other narratives may *contain within them* the structure of the fairy tales Propp purports to have identified.

Most of the critiques mentioned above I will not address in detail in detail as I believe they do not pertain to the arguments made in this paper. For instance, with regard to the aforementioned criticism of the flawed nature of Propp's methods: this study does not attempt to defend Propp's methods as flawless, In fact, I consider the concerns raised by Liberman regarding Propp's incomplete application of structural principles to be extremely valid (Liberman lxxx). This study merely attempts to use Propp's morphology as an example of the constructive use of morphological structures as a whole when applied towards the aim of uncovering hidden stories. The fact that the *Morphology* is not completely robust is regrettable from a theoretical point of view, but in no way does it compromise the aims of this study.

The paradoxical double criticism of Bordwell and Liberman noted earlier however, does in fact directly relate to the aims of this study, and as such needs to be addressed. The criticism itself is directed at any possible application of Propp's framework, arguing that the paradoxical nature of the broadness and simultaneous specificity of the framework prevents any functional use of it. While this criticism must be addressed, addressing it will require a more thorough examination of Propp. As such, I will postpone addressing the paradoxical double criticism until the moment I engage more directly with Propp's theoretical concepts and their limitations.

## **Introduction to Bal's Framework**

Mieke Bal's narratological framework operates fundamentally upon the distinction between story and fabula. "Fabula is a series of logically or chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors." (Bal 5). This definition already highlights a crucial distinction between Bal and Propp's utilisation of the fabula. Propp's framework focuses purely on what Bal describes as 'events'. The totality

of Propp's functions does not construct the fabula as defined by Bal, operating at a somewhat intermediate point between the concepts of story and fabula. Bal's fabula is also more extensive than Propp's functions, as it includes causation and identifiable actors.

Story, in Mieke Bal's words, is "the context of that text [the fabula] and produces a particular manifestation, inflection, and colouring of a fabula; the fabula is presented in a certain manner." (Bal 5). The story analysis consists in identifying the context for the fabula, in order to determine the way in which the fabula is coloured. This means that, for Bal's framework, the colouring of a text is considered as a central formal element, something absent from Russian formalism and, indeed, from Propp.

Bal's definitions of story and fabula are not completely separated. In fact, due to the roles of the two concepts, an analysis of one will always inform the other. In analysing the story, the analyst must necessarily consider the fabula to determine how it is being contextualised, and in analysing the fabula, the analyst must be aware of the way it is being coloured by the story.

Fabula analysis and story analysis are often interlinked because of this. Story analysis serves to uncover the fabula, and the uncovering of the fabula serves to establish which parts of the text contribute to the construction of the story, i.e., whichever parts do not present the fabula as is.

As with Propp's theory, I will only be further examining parts of Bal's theory which are crucial for the eventual analysis and synthesis with morphology. This will be a rather stripped-down version of the narratological framework Bal presents, simply because its analytical focus will be to provide Morphology with the narrative context that it lacks. I will be disregarding Bal's examinations on Temporality (included in these are Rhythm, Frequency as well as most of her examinations into Sequential Ordering). The inherent sequential structuring of Propp's functions serves as somewhat of a subsumption of many of the temporal concepts established by Bal. Temporality, specifically Sequential Ordering will be used, but

sparingly, only when necessary to understand the further context of a Proppian function within the broader narrative of *Whisper*.

How the analyst determines the way in which a text is presented (i.e. the way the the 'story' is constructed) relies heavily on the presence of a 'narrator'. Bal's narrator is a 'storyteller', the one through whom we are viewing the narrative at any given instance.

Narrators are defined by two separate groups of binaries. The first binary consists of a character-bound narrator, whose viewpoint can be attributed to a certain character, and an omniscient narrator, who as an all-knowing entity can not be confined to a single character. The internal narrator, a narrator present in the text, and an external narrator, a narrator present outside the text, constitute the second binary. For instance, if an omniscient narrator begins to enter into a dialogue with the reader, they then can be classified as internal, as opposed to if a character-bound narrator is speaking about events that occur long after their death, they then can be classified as external.

Bal begins her discussion around focalisation by writing:

*"Whenever events are presented, it is from within a certain vision... Through the mediation of the text we are confronted with a vision of the fabula...I will refer to the relations between the elements presented and the vision through which they are perceived as focalization."* (Bal 132-133).

Through her elaborations on focalisation's relation to the analysis of the presentation of narrative, it is plain to see how focalisation is heavily linked to Bal's concept of a narrator. It speaks to the ability of a narrator to 'focalise' or observe a certain individual. If an omniscient narrator suddenly starts describing the behaviours of a guest at a party, then that guest is the one being focalised. If, however, the narrator then moves towards describing the thoughts of said guest about the host of the party, then the situation can be determined as the guest, who is being focalised by the narrator, focalising the host. This means that

crucially, any observation about the host, while seemingly being done via the focalisation of the guest is, in fact, also being done by the focalisation of the narrator.

'Discourse' adds another layer to this observance. Indirect discourse forms the framework in which it becomes clear the narrator is now focalising the speech, the narrator describes the events of speech as they happen. Direct discourse is most commonly determined by quotation marks. It is a way of categorising when it becomes clear that the character themselves is speaking, that it is a direct translation of their speech into text. When the distinction between these two becomes muddled, it falls under the rather nebulous distinction of Free Indirect Discourse, which is when the distinction between character speech and the narrator's speech is no longer completely clear.

Bal examines the topic of characters rather carefully. Bal's conceptualisation of a character within a narrative text is twofold; of resistance and of predictability. I will not be using the latter distinction, as it falls within the scope of Propp's theory, being subsumed under Propp's definition of the spheres of action.

In discussing the first distinction Bal concedes that there is a tendency to find a character within the confines of a text. "On the other hand," she states, "the people with whom literature is concerned are not real people." (Bal 105). By this Bal means that however much a reader may want or believe them to, a character can and does not exist outside of a text. This wanting or believing is expressed in Bal's concept of "character-effects" which are the ways in which the distinction between a character in the text and an actual person becomes (for the reader) trivial (Bal 105). Bal goes on to conclude from this that it is outside of the endeavour of narrative studies to project a realism that is not there, and that as narratological analysts, "we restrict our investigation to what is presented to us in the actual words of the text." (Bal 106). This part in particular of Bal's framework is a crucial addition to Morphology, as it

allows for a contextual examination of actors within their functions and of the roles of the dramatis personae that Propp's structure does not.

Bal's use of the concepts of time and space is quite self-evident. They are used to establish the distinction between the story and the fabula, where the story is presented in non-sequential terms either spatially or temporally. Since *Whisper*, when Propp functions have been extracted, contains none of these, these terms will be crucial for identifying where non-sequential information can be used to imbue Propp's function with meaning.

## **Justification of the Conjunctive Use of Morphology and Narratology to Excavate the Fairy Tale**

Having sufficiently introduced both theoretical frameworks, I will now explain exactly how every facet of these frameworks will be used to conduct their respective analyses. To do this, I will examine each individual facet of the frameworks critically with regard to how it defines the merits and the limits of its respective framework. Additionally, since the process of excavation requires both frameworks to be used in conjunction with each other in order to produce a complete fairy tale, this critical examination will also explain how the theoretical combination of morphology and narratology facilitates this creation; how the facets of morphological and narratological frameworks can be used to identify narrative structure and narrative context respectively, and how the facets of the frameworks can be used in conjunction with each other in order to synthesise narrative structure and narrative context into a complete story.

I will show that Propp's morphological approach, while highly effective in identifying a text's narrative structure, has little to offer in identifying its narrative context, while the opposite is true for narratology. I

will also highlight key points where the theories complement, overlap, and contradict each other. Through doing this it will become clear that the difference in limits between narratology and morphology does not make them incompatible, but rather enables them to be used in tandem with each other to create a synthesis of a certain identified narrative structure and a certain identified narrative context. This theoretical justification will provide the basis for the synthesis of the narrative structure of a fairy tale and the narrative context of *Whisper*.

### Examination and Definition of the Limits of Propp's Framework

I will first examine the limits of Propp's morphological framework by engaging directly with each facet of his framework. During this, I will also address the previously mentioned paradoxical double criticism of Propp, for which I will use James Bordwell's critique of Propp's in his essay "Appropriations and Improprieties: Problems in the Morphology of Film Narrative" (1988) as an illustrative example of the ways in which this paradoxical double criticism actually serves to directly illustrate the success of Propp's framework.

Propp's morphological framework is faced with a significant problem. It cannot explain every aspect of the fairy tale it purports to be a uniform structure for. Propp's approach to examining the morphology of a fairy tale is to define sequential actions via his functions. These functions are first defined by Propp through example:

*"Let us compare the following events:*

*A tsar gives an eagle to a hero. The eagle carries the hero away to another kingdom.*

*An old man gives Sucevko a horse. The horse carries Sucevko away to another kingdom.*

*A sorcerer gives Ivan a little boat. The boat takes Ivan to another kingdom*

*A princess gives Ivan (1) a ring. Young men appearing from out of the ring carry Ivan away into another kingdom, and so forth.*

... From this we can draw the inference that a tale often attributes identical actions to various personages. This makes possible the study of the tale according to the functions of its dramatis personae.”(Propp 19-20, italics reversed, present in original)

By viewing the tale in this particular way, Propp creates a structure which is centered around action. The examples Propp gives here are all taken from his corpus, but the wording is Propp’s own, summarising the events as they appear in each tale. It is from this summary that Propp takes his concept of a ‘function’, which Propp later directly defines as “*an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of action.*” (Propp 21). I will return to the problems this specific definition poses for some specific functions later, but for now I want to draw attention to the way this conclusion is reached. Propp essentially dilutes these statements of their context and their individual character, making it so that any function will only be based around what it is that is being done or achieved. As he states, a function is defined by its “significance for the course of action” (Propp 21). The function is what pushes the action forward.

While defining narrative through actions is certainly plausible and justifiable, narrative is not inherently an action-centric exercise. Franza Kafka’s short story *Metamorphosis* (2016) serves as an excellent example of this. If defined by the functions that move the course of action forward, it would be the story of a man who wakes up as a bug, loses his job, gets locked in his room by his family, escapes, and then dies. There are other actions that occur, of course, but none of these can be seen as being ‘significant for the course of action’. In reducing *Metamorphosis* down to only its sequence of events much of the actual text itself is lost, primarily the internal workings of each character. In Propp this is much the same. In his 4th example, we do not learn why the princess gives Ivan the ring, nor what Ivan thinks about suddenly being spirited away by this horde of young men who appear out of it.

This facet of Propp's focus is nevertheless a limit, not a shortcoming. It does not seem to be viable nor desirable to find a theory that completely encompasses every aspect of a narrative. Propp's functions' focus on actions is not inherently problematic, and simply a logical consequence of the theory he puts forward. This is precisely why it is so striking that Propp seems aware of the discrepancy between his brief summary of events and the intricacies of the folktale as a whole, and seemingly attempts to reconcile this discrepancy by adding extraneous elements to his structure to explain these discrepancies.

In practice, these extraneous elements only serve to detract from Propp's overall structure and at times even directly contradict core components of his framework. The most egregious example of this is present in section C. of Chapter V, where Propp attempts to categorise Motivations and place them in direct, correlatory connection to his functions. He begins this by defining Motivations as "both the reasons and the aims of personages which cause them to commit various acts." (Propp 75). This definition is already a complete deviation from the initial basis of his structure, which, as established, is based around the characters of a tale being interchangeable entities. If a character is interchangeable, this would mean disregarding the motivations of said character entirely. According to Propp's own definition of a function it does not matter who is the one that gives Ivan the young men-producing ring, and thus it also does not matter why Ivan is given this ring. Attempting to further define a function such as Expulsion through the motivation behind it (Propp 75-76) is misguided, as by (its very) definition a function is independent of this motivation.

Also present in section C. is a recurring symptom in Propp's language that leads to a significant amount of confusion, namely the concept of morality and his use of the word "evil" in relation to the villain of the tale (Propp 76). Since the *dramatis personae* in Propp's tales are defined by their 'spheres of action'. In other words, the hero will always receive the magical agent and never give the magical agent. The moment a character presents another character with a magical agent, that character is part of the sphere of

action of the donor. In the same way that functions are defined by actions, so too are the dramatis personae defined by actions. Asserting morality unto dramatis personae is thus similarly self-defeating. The Hero achieving Victory does not mean said victory is just, or 'good'. Similarly, Liquidation of the villain is only good if the villain is assumed to be evil.

It may seem arbitrary to suggest such a distinction, as one would assume that the villain of a fairy tale is naturally evil. However, use of morality in relation to Propp's structure can demonstrably lead to confusion in attributing the spheres of action to characters. In a study by Rens Bod et al. in 2014, done on the possibility to use Proppian morphology as a general method of algorithmic tale analysis, the researchers made sure the participants had sufficient literacy in Propp's structure by giving them a presentation beforehand. During their analysis they observed participants mischaracterising the 'hero' in many of the tales. The researchers later found this was because during the presentation they had at some point referred to the hero as 'good'. This caused the participants to mistakenly determine the dramatis personae of the 'hero' not by its sphere of action, but rather by the perceived morality of their actions. What this would seem to indicate, is that attempting to characterise Propp's hero by anything other than their sphere of action could lead to a misattribution of the roles of dramatis personae in the tale.

Attempting to combine Propp's functions with some form of morality may not only lead to an inaccurate application of spheres of action, it also automatically constricts the analysis of a function by the values of the analyst. The only way to attribute morality in a Proppian framework is to attempt to glean morality either from the description of the function in Propp, the description of the action presented in the text, or both. Since there is no reference to moral judgements in Propp's descriptions of his functions, only in his descriptions of characters, the only way for an analyst to make such a moral judgement would be by basing it on their own values. A judgement of this nature incurs the problem that the moral judgement of a function where the chimney sweep is given a magical broom in order to proceed past the blocked chimney to his home, or of a function where said chimney sweep is given a magical broom in order to fly

off to the moon, may illicit varying moral responses, while being the same function. Two of the same functions potentially being analysed differently is the antithesis to the type of uniformity that Propp's structure seeks to achieve.

Morphological structuring as an exercise revolves around form. More specifically, it relies on patterns, ways to categorise elements as being part of a structured whole. Because of this, uninductive concepts like motivation and morality have no place in a morphological structure; They are non-morphological concepts. This is why I will not be using these concepts in my morphological analysis of *Whisper*.

However, of course, the limits of an action-oriented structure can not be ignored. Hence the necessity of narratology, to account for the limits that Propp's concepts of morality and motivation cannot account for.

However, as seen in the example of the study done by Bod et al., the inclusion of elements outside of the Proppian framework can lead to a faulty analysis. This is one of the main reasons why the morphological and narratological analyses are separated in this paper.

I will now address the two critiques of Propp that are fundamentally addressing the aim of this study, namely the use of his structure outside of the confines of its initial corpus and genre: The claim that Propp's structure is too universal, and thus its further applications have absolutely nothing to add by way of analysis, or that it is too specific, and confined by its own corpus, thus preventing its meaningful application elsewhere.

These two criticisms may seem disconnected. In fact, they stem from the same misunderstanding of the nature of Propp's theory. In criticising the use of Proppian morphology within film studies, James Bordwell (1988) actually uses both criticisms in tandem, providing an illustrative example of where the misunderstanding lies.

I will now address the previously mentioned paradoxical double criticism of Propp, to indicate how in fact this paradox is central to Propp's morphological approach, and is exactly what allows Propp's

framework to function as an identifier of narrative structure outside of its corpus. The criticism is formulated by Bordwell as such in his essay “Appropriations and Improprieties: Problems in the Morphology of Film Narrative” (1988):

*“Propp set out to differentiate, by necessary and sufficient conditions, a specific class of tales. To the extent that his conclusions are valid for other classes, the features he specifies cannot demarcate this class. If we make Propp successful in describing most or all narrative structures, then he fails to distinguish the wondertale as a genre. He cannot succeed in both.”* (Bordwell 12, italics inverted and taken from text)

Bordwell is right: Propp cannot succeed in producing a theory that both completely demarcates and completely assimilates different narrative works. The problem in Bordwell’s reasoning, and by extension with the double criticism of Propp, is that in defining ‘both’, Bordwell pits two extremes against each other: either Propp succeeds in completely alienating the folktale from other works, or he succeeds in creating a universal theory for all narrative. “He cannot succeed in both”.

However, most narrative theories do not operate in extremes. Propp, when explaining the aims of *Morphology of the Folktale*, refers back to morphology as used in botany, declaring it possible to *“make an examination of the forms of the tale which will be as exact as the morphology of organic formations.”* (Propp xxv). In a science such as botany, exactness in theories serves to alleviate doubt (i.e. If something is something is classified in a certain way, it could not possibly be classified any other way). Exactness in botany implies a certain exclusivity. However, in narrative study, this implication is not necessarily the case. As I have stated before, Propp’s work is by nature non-categorative. Though Propp invokes the discipline of science, he does not mention exclusivity, only exactness. The distinction between the two is crucial for the theorising of Propp’s morphological approach. Propp does not succeed in both of Bordwell’s extremes, nor does he succeed in one of them. Propp’s morphological succeeds in its aim

precisely because it *fails* in both of these extremes. If the aim of any narrative morphology was exclusion, the list of applicable works would stop at its corpus. As Robert Scholes puts it, Propp's morphological analysis produces "a grammar and syntax for a certain kind of narrative" (67, qtd. In Benson, Loc 328). Morphology does not seek to exclude, but to distinguish.

Propp's theory retains that ever-important layer of *interpretation* that helps distinguish the discipline of literary studies from any scientific discipline. Thus, there is no inherent logical discrepancy present when stating that Propp's theory both helps distinguish folktales and can be applied to other texts without being considered a 'perfect fit'.

#### Examination and Definition of the Limits of Bal's Framework

Conversely, Mieke Bal in her essay "The Point of Narratology" indicates that the discipline of narratology is not a "perfectly reliable model which 'fits' the texts." (Bal, "The Point of Narratology", 730). This statement immediately illustrates the intersection between narratology and morphology. It identifies narratology as a model which is not designed to fit, as is morphology, but also as a model which incorporates interpretative unreliability into how it is used.

Narratology as a discipline is composed of many disparate parts, all of which, when taken together, provide an understanding of a 'narrative context'. It is this understanding of a narrative context which compliments the understanding morphology provides for narrative structure, eventually allowing the excavation of a hidden story.

Before I begin to lay out how narratology identifies this narrative context, however, I must address that as with morphology, perhaps even more so, the results of any analysis done using a narratological framework are inevitably coloured by the biases the framework constructs around its execution. It is due

in part to this very fact that Mieke Bal's *Narratology: An Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* was chosen as a starting point for this project, as its nature as a broad array of narratological concepts leaves it relatively unbiased. Not that it is without criticism. Specifically Bal's usage of focalisation has been critiqued as being biased against the focalised, giving the focaliser more agency in determining the intricacies of the narrative (Bronzwaer 194). That being said, I will argue that the biases that do exist within the work actually contribute to the synergy with Propp's *Morphology*.

To elaborate more upon this, I will focus on three key areas of Mieke Bal's narratology:

Focalisation/Narration, Dimensional analysis, and Free Indirect Discourse (FID). There are of course other areas within narratology (such as the distinction between events and actions) which I will touch upon in the synthesis of the two theories, but theoretically, many of these areas follow from each other (e.g. the distinction between story and fabula is a direct result of the distinction between different degrees of focalisation and narration). As such, I do not think I am disregarding anything significant when deciding not to exhaustively enumerate these areas.

Focalisation and Narration are taken as one, not because they are similar in execution, but because they both contribute to the necessity of characters present in narratology. Focalisation is defined by Bal as "the relationship between the vision, the agent that sees and that which is seen." (Bal 135). Note how contrary to Propp, it is not the act of seeing (or the act of receiving in Propp's case) that is important, it is the relationship between the three things: the act, the actor, and the one acted upon. Because the individual identity of each of these components alters the analysed text drastically, it is necessary to account for what, or who exactly constitute these three factors of focalisation. Narration serves much a similar purpose. In discussing narration, Bal takes an example from Susan Rubin Suleiman's book *Budapest Diary* (1999) which deals with a case of the narrator shifting between two different instances of the same character, one older and one younger, and how this can be distinguished by their language. The text is now no longer speaking of actions, but of characters, creating a narrative context. It may be already clear,

but this is in direct opposition with Propp's ethos, and as such, Propp's functions and Bal's areas of focalisation/narration will be the principle objects of synthesis later.

The dimensional component also takes two areas under its wing, namely those of sequential ordering and of space. Sequential ordering in Bal is a broad area, but generally speaking it covers the reorganisation and moulding of events in a narrative for particular effect. Space is similar, the relocation and moulding of presence in a narrative for particular effect. These areas are very much related to each other, say, for example, the difference between a jump forward in time to the same place and a jump forward to a different place are palpable, and each produces different results. Thus in their interaction, sequential ordering and space create a dimensional structure, which runs in parallel to Propp's structure of action, but serves exactly as a compliment to it, creating a structure of context for the structure of action.

Free Indirect Discourse is related to Direct Discourse and Indirect Discourse, and places itself in the intersection between the two. Direct Discourse being the indication of a character talking (by virtue of the allowances of narration through different characters) and indirect discourse being a description of a character talking (by virtue of the allowances of focalisation), Free Indirect Discourse is:

*“a form of mixture or interference between narrator's text and actor's text. Signals of the personal language of the actor and of the (im)personal language situation of the narrator cross, without explicit reference to this.” (Bal 47)*

This constitutes a space where the boundaries between not only narrator and character become indistinct, but the boundaries between character and text, creating an analytical space where the distinctions made by the areas of focalisation and narration stop mattering, and the narrative itself provides no concrete way to repeal this, because in that moment it is both symptom and disease. This is an area where Propp's spheres of action could serve to provide some structural buffering, as Free Indirect Discourse unbinds characters

from being singular entities defined by their ‘character-effects’, and Propp’s spheres of action operate on the assumption of unbound characters, and restrict them by their actions.

One critical consequence of FID is that it causes narratological analyses as a whole to lack uniformity. Due to its ‘interfering’ nature, FID permeates any facet of a narratological analysis, as due to the interconnected nature of the theory’s structure, the resulting analysis will be heavily influenced by how the analyst interprets the instance of FID. A narratological analysis of the same text therefore has a high likelihood of being radically different, purely due to the areas of narratology. This is not inherently a ‘shortcoming’ (as with morphology), as it allows the theory to do its job, examine the “discursive mode” of narrative and how it affects the semiotic objects it contains (Bal “The Point of Narratology” 730). However, this does mean the theory becomes less suited to formal statements about narratives, and more suited, as indicated earlier, to statements surrounding narrative signs, or narrative context.

I have now identified how narrative structure and narrative context are constructed within Propp’s morphological framework and Bal’s narratological framework respectively, and how the various facets of each framework allow for the transmission between. What now follows is the example of the application of the two frameworks in conjunction with each other, the process of which is detailed in the Appendices. Each Appendix will have a few paragraphs concerning their particular use of the examined frameworks in the respective analyses.

As stated before, the morphological analysis will precede the narratological analysis. The purpose of the morphological analysis will be to extract the functions Propp identifies within his corpus out of *Whisper*, in order to produce the sequential ordering of functions. After this sequence has been identified, the narratological analysis will proceed to analyse the functions by their context within *Whisper*. The narratological analysis will then codify the functions by their contextual properties. The result of this

second analysis will be a completely contextualised transformation of *Whisper*'s narrative into a fairy tale.

## **Morphological Analysis of *Whisper* and Reflection**

As the aim of the analysis is merely to show that the theoretical basis of combining narratology and morphology is sound, the justifications for each extracted function are not presented in this paper. For these justifications, I refer the reader to Appendix A.

The eventual Morphological notation for *Whisper* is as follows:

$\alpha\beta^3(\gamma^2)\delta\varepsilon^2\zeta^2\eta^1\vartheta^1A^7B^4C\uparrow D^2E^2F^1G^1H^1(J^1)I^1K^4\downarrow W_i$ .

### Reflection

Several notable complications that occurred during the analysis are discussed in this section.

The first of these is a general observation about the feasibility of the extraction of narrative structure by way a morphological framework. Due to the more general nature of some of Propp's functions i.e.

Mediation, it is very easy to misattribute an action to a certain function. This analysis itself has been rewritten multiple times due to mistakes being made regarding the underlying structure of the film.

Moreover, during certain actions, it needs to be made explicitly clear which parts of the structure are the ones that motivate the attribution of the function to the action. Other external elements should be discarded if they do not play a role in the action. These elements should not be disregarded however, as their presence becomes vitally important for the codification of narrative context.

In light of these issues, it becomes evident that the analyst must have an extremely robust understanding of the text's structure and Proppian morphology, so as to be able to properly interpret and identify Propp's functions. This analysis can not be performed accurately by an analyst who is not somewhat well-versed in applying Propp.

There is the further question of what the analyst is to do when there are several narratives running in tandem to each other. In *Whisper* the only example of this is the development of the relationship between Sujimura, Yuko, and Shizuku. This could in itself be classified as a separate tale, yet the question remains whether it should even be included in the morphological analysis. My decision to remove it from the analysis was primarily based on its relevance. There are no functions whose connective element relies upon the development of this other narrative. As such, unless the other narrative has direct impact on the sequence of functions, then it should be regarded as separate. What this does mean, however, is that there can be multiple morphological notations for texts which contain several narratives.

Propp's theory also presents that a separate narrative can only exist if there is a secondary act of villainy. As such, in conforming to Propp's structure, the existence of a separate narrative would be indicated by a Move. As there is no second act of Villainy in *Whisper*, there is no necessity to include the separate narrative. It is merely excluded, as it falls outside of Propp's framework.

Towards the end of the analysis, I chose to argue that a certain occurrence in *Whisper* actually presents the inverse of a function, an inverse which Propp himself had not identified. I did this because, as I argued, it does not change the structure on a fundamental level. As stated earlier in discussing the nature of morphology itself, Propp's morphology possesses a layer of interpretation, of which the analyst should not be afraid to make use, as long as it can be argued convincingly that the addition does not alter Propp's structure significantly.

One final, yet unexpected observation was that Propp's application in this manner to a narrative text also serves to highlight particular narrative elements of the text. For instance, by categorising the societal structures Shizuku is surrounded by as the villain, the elements of this structure that demonstrably constrict Shizuku are highlighted, and the more positive influences it has on Shizuku's life are disregarded. This will become even more clear in the narratological codification of *Whisper's* functions.

### **Narratological Analysis and Subsequent Codification of *Whisper's* functions**

As with the morphological analysis, the analysis and codification of *Whisper's* Proppian functions are presented in full in Appendix B. What follows is the completely contextualised transformation of *Whisper's* narrative into a fairy tale. As noted in Appendix B, each paragraph corresponds to a function identified in Appendix A.

*The members of the hero's family are enumerated, during which it is made clear that this initial situation has existed for quite some time. The hero themselves is one of the younger members of the family. During the enumeration of the members of the family, it becomes clear that there is an element within the family that is critical of the hero. It is also made clear that the hero is interested in a certain actor, who remains unknown to the hero, yet possesses a single identifiable trait, which the hero does know. In addition, there are several other actors who are also present in the initial situation, all of which are known to the hero. Two of these additional actors will return in later functions: One to make the hero aware of the misfortune caused by Villainy, and the second is the actor that the hero is interested in. This actor is known to the hero, but their identifiable trait is hidden.*

*(The hero reluctantly accepts the order/suggestion to go to a familiar place and perform a task from the element of criticism within the family)*

*The hero rushedly absents themselves from home, and encounters an unfamiliar occurrence, by which they are intrigued.*

*This intrigue causes the hero to absent from or disregard the familiar place, and the hero travels to an unfamiliar place. The hero is further intrigued by the unfamiliar place, which causes them to be absent-minded. The hero discovers a particular element of intrigue within the unfamiliar place. The hero's absent-mindedness in turn causes a non-intentional violation of the interdiction. Upon realising they have violated the interdiction, the hero rushedly moves back towards the familiar place.*

*After moving back towards the familiar place, the hero becomes confused as a result of their previous absent-mindedness. This confusion causes them to engage or be engaged by the actor of interest, which prompts the hero to question the actor of interest.*

*The hero receives information that the actor of interest possesses some element related to the unfamiliar place, and by this assumes that the actor of interest is themselves related to the unfamiliar place.*

*The villain disguises themselves as the actor of interest, unknown (at the very least) to the hero. The hero returns to the unfamiliar place. The villain arrives at the unfamiliar place, and attempts to persuade the hero to venture with them into a part of the unfamiliar place unknown to the hero. The villain does this primarily by utilising the particular element of intrigue the hero discovered earlier.*

*The hero is persuaded by the villain and follows them further into the unfamiliar place. The hero is persuaded because of the assumption they made earlier that the actor of interest (now the disguised villain) was related in some way to the unfamiliar place. The villain then shows the hero the particular element of intrigue, and the hero is informed of the element having an owner.*

*The villain's disguise is revealed to the hero, and simultaneously the hero notices the identifiable trait of the actor of interest. The hero is unknowingly constricted by the villain, and is subsequently informed that the villain has caused the actor of interest to disappear to an external place<sup>7</sup>.*

*The hero engages or is engaged by an actor of the initial situation. The actor informs the hero of the constriction caused by the villain. The actor makes several attempts to free the hero from constriction, but fails. Through these attempts however, the hero understands the action they can perform to escape constriction and travel to the external place where the actor of interest has disappeared to. This action is directly related to a competent<sup>8</sup> quality the hero possesses.*

*The hero is uncertain whether they can perform this action, yet decides to attempt it regardless.*

*The hero begins to prepare for performing the action. The hero is completely focused on the preparation, while knowing they cannot begin to perform the action if they do not possess the agent, namely the particular element of intrigue.*

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<sup>7</sup> The difference between external place and unfamiliar place is perhaps slightly vague. Allow me to clarify: With unfamiliar is meant pertaining to the hero's direct surroundings but unknown to the hero. With external is meant unknown to the hero and completely removed from the hero's direct surroundings. This may not be a spatial difference, it is merely a difference in levels of detachment

<sup>8</sup> Competence is, of course, relative, and should be examined as such. If the hero is a giant in a world of giants, then if they uproot a tree this may not be an area of competence.

*The hero travels to the unfamiliar place and encounters the donor, who is the owner of the agent.*

*The donor greets the hero and asks if they wish to use the agent.*

*The hero responds politely, telling the donor they do wish to use the agent, but expressing their respect for the donor's ownership of the agent. The hero does not tell the donor why they wish to use the agent.*

*The donor permits the hero to use the agent and notes their appreciation for the hero's politeness.*

*The hero begins to perform the competent action with the help of the agent, initially escaping constriction. However, the villain still attempts to constrict the hero. In order to escape constriction, the hero must fly through the air. The hero is hesitant of doing this, but the agent assists them and the hero flies away, escaping constriction completely and traveling to the external place. After succeeding in this initially, the hero expresses their enjoyment at being in the external place.*

*The villain confronts the hero in the external place and they enter into direct struggle (If J<sup>1</sup> is part of the structure, the critical element of the family causes this.). The hero's resilience in continuing to perform the action in order to reach the actor of interest is tested.*

*(By the actions of the villain, the hero loses the critical element that was a part of their physicality.)*

*By virtue of the hero's resilience in continuing to perform the competent action the villain does not succeed in stopping the hero's activity. The hero is able to move past the villain to the location of the actor of interest.*

*The hero reaches the actor of interest. During this, the hero receives information about the possibility to travel further through the external place. The hero, due to their enjoyment expressed about being in the external place, wishes to travel further through it, yet realises they can not do so now, as they lack something which would enable them to.*

*The hero does not vanquish the villain, and returns from the external place together with the actor of interest. The hero attempts to use the villain's method of constriction to enable the hero's further exploration of the external place.*

*The hero and the actor of interest both make a decision to leave the familiar place someday, and further explore the external place together.*

## Reflection

An argument could be made against my usage of words such as 'interest' in this analysis, it being an extremely general term with a large degree of subjective interpretation, but I would argue this generality is part of the aim of my study

An argument against this general codification may be that the emotion of sympathy is too general, and it may be that this is the case, and later studies will find that sympathy needs to be reduced into subcategories. The aim of this study however, is to provide a general framework of the narrative structure

and narrative context of *Whisper*. In attempting to generalise while retaining a degree of specificity, this aim is conserved. I would rather this study be too general than risk constricting it by over-specificity.

Fortunately for this analysis, the focalisation within *Whisper*'s narrative was relatively consistent and self-evident. However, even within *Whisper* there were certainly moments of more complex narration and focalisation. While Bal's framework was able to account for these complications, future analysts who wish to use this paper's proposed method of excavation may benefit from considering an adapted method of Bal's structure, depending of course on the narrative text chosen. The possibility of the adaptation of Bal's framework to film has been researched rather extensively (Kuhn & Schmidt, 2014; Forceville et al., 2014; Deleyto, 1991; Bacon, 2013), so it should theoretically be possible to analyse narratives with more medium-based complexity.

A point where the combination of Bal's framework with Propp's fell somewhat short was in the divergence of spatial analysis. This was especially evident when the codification necessitated the establishment of a metaphorical 'external space'. While I do not think a metaphorical interpretation of the analysed text as a way to facilitate codification is flawed per se, it did mean that certain codifications were not as precise as they could perhaps have been. For instance, determining the rushed nature of Shizuku's Absentation was simply a matter of observing the nature of her absentation; Shizuku's Return, however, was not directly a spatial one, and thus the nature of the hero's return could not be codified to the extent that was possible with Absentation. Thus, in further research that may use this process of excavation, it would be useful to identify a method by which metaphorical interpretations could be codified more precisely when using Bal's framework.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this paper was to demonstrate, by way of a combined use of Proppian morphology and Bal's narratology, that the extraction of hidden stories from a text was possible. I believe that with the result of the second analysis, this possibility has been conclusively demonstrated. The very fact of this demonstration confirms not only the existence and determinability of these stories, but also the validity of the combined application of morphology and narratology to reliably excavate them.

For Propp's morphological framework especially, this validity offers various opportunities for further application. For one, it invites a whole new consideration of Propp's theory and its potential to identify structural elements of a fairy tale within other narratives. This would allow for a possible examination of the extent to which structurality determines the nature of a narrative text. Some work has also already been done on quantifying the ideological implications inherent in the structure Propp identifies (Mulvey 1975), and further explorations into this could perhaps identify the ideological effects certain narrative structures have upon a narrative text. Identifying these effects to any degree would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the ideological underpinnings of narrative texts.

In addition to expanding the use of Propp's theory, this paper also indicates a necessity for the expansion of Propp's general morphological approach. It would initially perhaps be a fruitful exercise to re-examine Propp's structure and attempt to iron out some of the kinks in its structuralist approach, to produce a more tight-knit, precisely constructed framework which is even more dependent on its corpus and thus can identify its structures with more accuracy. Following this, a revised version of Propp's morphological approach can then be fully co-opted for examinations of other corpi, producing new morphological frameworks, which in turn can be utilised to excavate other genres or types of stories from narrative texts.

Regarding the future use of the process of excavation, further study will be necessary to determine how useful Propp's current unrevised framework is to the excavation process. The successful excavation of the fairy tale in *Whisper* does not at all mean that continuing to use Propp's framework in such analyses is a fruitful exercise. It may be that few other texts besides *Whisper* contain substantial amounts of functions, in which case continuing to use Propp's framework may not be a productive theoretical avenue to pursue, and other morphological frameworks may need to be considered. However, encountering none or few functions within a text should not be deemed inherently unproductive; negative results actually provide the analyst with useful information, namely that the particular narrative text does not contain any elements of a fairy tale structure. For further study to establish how useful Propp's structure can be, it would perhaps be productive to analyse some other works of Studio Ghibli, to determine if extracting fairy tales from the Studio's narrative text in particular proves a fruitful endeavour. If this is shown to be the case, then the scope of study could be expanded to other animated films, or perhaps also to the works of Yasujiro Ozu, as the similarities of Ozu's work to *Whisper* have been previously identified (Lack 2014).

When considering the potential shortcomings of the process of excavation proposed in this paper, it is necessary to mention its relatively high risk of incurring false positives. Due to the nature of the proposed process, any function that is misattributed in the initial morphological analysis can be termed a false positive. As noted in the reflection for the morphological analysis of *Whisper*, this misattribution of functions constitutes a significant danger even when using Propp's framework. To prevent this misattribution, future morphological frameworks and analyses should be subjected to severe scrutiny, lest they be prone to producing or identifying false positives.

As mentioned in the reflection on the morphological analysis, the narrative of *Whisper* contains many actions which lie outside of Propp's framework. It seems very likely that these 'loose' actions may be a part of other morphological frameworks. The existence of these loose actions may thus indicate the

possibility of further story excavation, even within *Whisper* itself. The fact that there may be multiple stories to excavate within a single narrative text would also mean that the process of excavating these stories (i.e. via combining narratology and morphology) may be a reliable way to quantify the structural composition of a narrative text. The use of this process of excavation in this context would then enable historical analysis of a text which traced the history of its various composite parts. Or perhaps a cultural analysis could examine ways in which cultural change affects the compositions of texts and vice versa.

Other disciplines may also benefit from the use of the process proposed in this paper. Studies in the field of the Digital Humanities for example, in particular those centered around story generation, could make excellent use of this paper's theoretical process. The use of Propp's framework to generate the plot structure of fairy tales has already been discussed (Gervás, 2016). Therefore, as Propp's framework can be used in conjunction with Bal's narratological theory to excavate a fairy tale from narrative texts, it may be possible to construct a procedure, not only for the generation of fairy tales, but for the generation of an adaptation; that of a narrative text to a fairy tale. The more complex nature of the narratological analysis may require this analysis to be conducted separately, but once the codifications of the functions have been identified, they can feasibly be added as modifiers to the generative method proposed by Gervás.

If, as indicated above, the process of excavation proposed in this paper can be thought of as a process for facilitating the adaptation of a narrative text, the nature of this process may also provide insight into rethinking the nature of adaptation. In their article "On the Origin of Adaptations: Rethinking Fidelity Discourse and "Success" Biologically", Gary Bortolotti and Linda Hutcheon consider the possibility of rethinking literary adaptation in the framework of evolutionary adaptation, suggesting that the process of literary adaptation is a selective one; that some works may be more 'adaptable' than others, and that these works are the ones which will be selected for the process of adaptation (2007). If the process of the excavation of hidden stories proposed in this paper can also be considered a process of adaptation, it stands to reason that the degree of prevalence of certain hidden stories within a narrative text can be

considered a somewhat quantifiable indicator of that text's 'adaptability', lending further credence to Bortolotti and Hutcheon's consideration. This use of the process of excavation is of course highly speculative, but can be easily grounded in analytical work. One example of this work would be to attempt to excavate hidden stories within canonical texts which have displayed a high degree of 'survivability'. With such a study, the consideration of an evolutionary approach to literary adaptation could be discussed and developed further.

In conclusion, it would appear that this paper has produced a possibly substantial method for excavating hidden stories from narrative texts. Further application of this method and examinations of its results will doubtless serve to provide extensive insight into the ever-expanding landscape that is narrative.

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## Appendix A: Morphological Analysis of *Whisper*

What follows is the morphological analysis of *Whisper* according to the functions laid out by Propp. I will be attempting to find points of conformity within the structure of *Whisper*. I will discuss each function separately and the timestamp of when they take place. This is especially necessary for the subsequent narratological analysis, which will confine itself mostly to these timestamps.

It is also worth noting that this analysis operates under the assumption that the film itself has been viewed in full by the reader and may not be comprehensible otherwise.

While most of Propp's spheres of action can be encapsulated by one or two characters, in this analysis the sphere of the villain becomes inherently problematic, as there is *no physical antagonist present in Whisper's* narrative. This means that in order to determine the sphere of action of the villain it is necessary to closely examine the sequence of functions, in particular those which are part of the villain's sphere of action.

Because of this, I will not identify the villain now. I feel it is important to define the villain's functions before determining how the villain fits within them. Were I to put forward my identification of the villain now, before the analysis, it may seem as if my definitions of the functions are biased in favour of this interpretation of *Whisper's* narrative. I wish to show that my identification of the villain arises out of Propp's structure, rather than being placed upon it. I will present my interpretation regarding the villain when discussing Struggle (H), as it is the final function in the villain's sphere of action.

Before the sequence of functions occurs the initial situation  $\alpha$ . This is where the "members of a family are enumerated" (Propp 25). As such, the initial situation concludes in *Whisper* with the arrival of Shizuku's sister Shiho at 13:50, essentially the last member of Shizuku's 'family'. It is worth noting that in this time frame we also are presented with several other characters, most importantly her two long-time friends, Sujimura and Yuko, as well as her eventual romantic interest, Seiji Amasawa. It would in my opinion be safe to infer from this, that the initial situation of *Whisper* does not limit itself merely to the members of

Shizuku's family, but also includes members from her regular, everyday life, such as schoolmates. (Seiji's inclusion in this state will also be a necessary component in determining villainy). Hence the initial situation in *Whisper* is not a familial one but is instead a circumstantial one, i.e. Shizuku's normal everyday circumstances. It is necessary to establish this distinction at first before discussing Absentation, as will become evident<sup>9</sup>.

#### I: Absentation $\beta$

As discussed above, since the initial situation is Shizuku's everyday circumstances, Shizuku's Absentation is indicated in her leaving her house to deliver lunch to her father, an activity which falls outside of her everyday circumstances<sup>10</sup> (16:00). This is in accordance with the third set of examples given by Propp, "*members of the younger generation absent themselves*". (Propp 26, italics taken from original). Hereby the first function of *Whisper* is established as  $\beta^3$ .

#### II: Interdiction $\gamma$

Interdiction marks the first substantial deviation from Propp's structure, as it occurs when Shiho orders Shizuku to take her father's lunch to him at the library (15:37), an event which occurs before Absentation in *Whisper*, thus breaking the sequentiality of the order of functions. I include it here in the structure because Propp himself notes that "The tale usually mentions absentation at first... The sequence of events, of course, actually runs in reverse." (Propp 26). While the word 'usually' is technically a *carte blanche* from Propp to identify the occurrence of Interdiction before Absentation as valid, I feel this would be delving into an intertextual interpretation of Propp's theory, which is not the aim of this paper. Therefore the Interdiction will be noted down as such: ( $\gamma$ ) to indicate its presence but include it from the

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<sup>9</sup> A keen reader of Propp might perhaps object to this inference, stating that the distinction between circumstance and family is not mentioned at any point in Propp's description. I remind this reader that the aim of this analysis is to find elements within *Whisper* which corresponds with the structure Propp outlines, rather than with its source material. It would, for example, be unfruitful to scour within *Whisper*'s narrative for traces of draconic abductions.

<sup>10</sup> This is not shown in the film itself, but becomes evident by Shizuku's resistance to Shiho telling her to take lunch to her father at 15:38.

general structure. Additionally, the form of interdiction present is an inverted interdiction: “an order or a suggestion.” (Propp 27) making its notation ( $\gamma^2$ ).

### III: Violation $\delta$

This function is relatively self-evident, and occurs most clearly when Shizuku, standing in front of the library, opts to go after the cat Muta instead of delivering her father’s lunch, entering into an area which is cordoned off at 19:55. Thus the function occurs from 19:40-27:53.

### IV: Reconnaissance $\epsilon$

Reconnaissance occurs at 28:36 when Seiji delivers Shizuku her father’s lunch. Reconnaissance is a function performed by or upon the villain. Since there is no physical antagonist in *Whisper*, this function may seem impossible to identify. But, assuming for a moment that the villain must not be physically present, we are looking for a form of information-gathering which moves the action forward.<sup>11</sup>

In this case, Reconnaissance can be attributed to the question “How did you get this [my father’s lunch]?” which Shizuku asks Seiji. This is then an inverted interdiction, example number 2, and thus becomes  $\epsilon^2$ .

### V: Delivery $\zeta$

Delivery occurs when Shizuku’s question is answered at 28:38 with Seiji saying “Take a wild guess.” and Shizuku’s eyes falling on the cat Muta, who she had previously seen at the antique shop in which she left her father’s lunch. This leads her to assume Seiji is the grandson of Nishi, the old man who runs the shop. While not incorrect, this assumption leads directly into Trickery. With Reconnaissance being inverted, so too is Delivery making its notation  $\zeta^2$ .

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<sup>11</sup> This may seem too broad of a definition to actively determine the function. Indeed, if the analyst starts scouring this scene for any question in which information is transferred they will quickly come up with more than a few possibilities. However, as Propp makes clear, a function must also be significant for the course of action. In other words, since the course of action is laid out by functions, the function of Reconnaissance must in some way relate to later functions.

## VI: Trickery $\eta$

The Trickery in *Whisper* begins when Shizuku becomes convinced that Seiji's name is not Seiji Amasawa, but rather shares the last name of his grandfather, Nishi (39:00). Before this, Shizuku, has been reluctant to interact with Seiji when she believes he might be the Seiji Amasawa who has checked out every book she has read, for example, "That jerk better not be Dr. Amasawa's son." (34:59). This coincides with Propp's statement that "the villain assumes a disguise." (Propp 29), a prerequisite to Trickery. The function of Trickery itself occurs when Seiji invites Shizuku inside his grandfather's house at 48:50. This would coincide with Propp's first example: "persuasion", usually occurring via some 'suggestion or 'invitation' (Propp 29) and is notated as  $\eta^1$ .

## VII: Complicity $\vartheta$

Complicity then occurs when Shizuku accepts Seiji's invitation and follows him at 48:53. Propp's first example "The hero agrees to all the villain's persuasions." (Propp 30) follows directly from this. The function is notated as  $\vartheta^1$ .

## VIII: Villainy A

The function of Villainy is, according to Propp, that by which "the actual movement of the tale is created." (Propp 30). In order to determine where Villainy occurs, the functions that follow from it must be examined also. Since, as will become clear, all the later functions are defined by Shizuku's attempt to write a fairy tale, Villainy must be the action that sets this desire in motion. Not only this, but it must also follow directly from the other functions, as otherwise they would not have moved the action forward and would therefore be nullified.

Villainy thus occurs when Seiji tells Shizuku he is going to Cremona, and will be leaving. This is the occurrence that prompts Shizuku to go to Yuko, which in turn prompts her to begin writing. Not only this, but Seiji is telling Shizuku this information only because they discussed his dreams of going to Cremona earlier. This makes Villainy a direct consequence of Complicity, but also of Trickery. This corresponds

with Propp's seventh example, a "sudden disappearance" which is usually "the result of the application of bewitching or deceitful means." (Propp 32). The notation of Villainy is thus A<sup>7</sup>.

#### IX: Mediation B

(Seiji leaves, which Shizuku is impressed by, but it hammers home the point that he's unattainable)

Before determining the function of Mediation, the type of hero must be classified. Propp:

"If a young girl is kidnapped, and disappears from the horizon of her father, and if Ivan goes off in search of her, then the hero is Ivan and not the kidnapped girl. Heroes of this type may be termed *seekers*."

(Propp 36, italics present in original). As Villainy entails Seiji's disappearance and not Shizuku's, Shizuku is a *seeker* and thus only the first four of Propp's examples should apply.

Mediation occurs then, not in a specific instance, but during the meeting with Yuko, where Yuko helps Shizuku identify the misfortune that Seiji's departure caused her (1:09:41-1:11:19). Since the initiative for Departure comes from Shizuku and not an outside source (examples 3 and 4, Propp 37) and since Shizuku does not ask Yuko or her parents for permission, the only possibility left is example 4, where "Misfortune is announced" and "does not come from parents, but rather from various old women or persons casually encountered" (Propp 37). The encounter with Yuko is a casual one and announces the misfortune to Shizuku, thus the notation of Mediation is B<sup>4</sup>.

#### X: Beginning counteraction C

In tales in which there are seekers, of which *Whisper*'s tale is one, Beginning counteraction is often a volitional decision. Beginning counteraction then occurs when Shizuku states "That's what I'll do. I'll try being a writer" at 1:11:24. In case this element needs more confirmation, the instant those words are

uttered, the piece of *Whisper*'s soundtrack begins playing that is titled 'I've Decided! I Will Write A Story!'<sup>12</sup>.

#### XI: Departure ↑

Since Shizuku's Beginning counteraction is an indirect one, not a counteraction that will necessitate her to move, Departure occurs the moment she begins writing her story at 1:12:26. Propp mentions in his delineation of the function that in "certain tales, a spatial transference of the hero is absent. The entire action takes place in one location." (Propp 39). I stated earlier that I do not wish to use Propp loosely, and in theory I would be averse to connecting this statement to *Whisper* literally, however the fact that Seiji departs and Shizuku initially does not, should not be ignored, as that is a textual fact, not an interpretative one.

#### XII: The first function of the donor D

This function begins at 1:12:57, when Shizuku meets with Nishi. During this meeting Nishi asks her if she wants to write a story about the baron. Shizuku's polite request for his permission is the reason Nishi eventually gives her this permission. This corresponds to Propp's second example "*The donor greets and interrogates the hero.*" wherein the politeness of the hero's reaction (E) is the catalyst for Provision (Propp 40). Thus the notation of this function is D<sup>2</sup>.

#### XIII: The hero's reaction E

This function is present in Shizuku's polite response to Nishi's interrogation, requesting his permission before using the baron (1:13:00). This is a response to D<sup>2</sup> where Shizuku 'answers a greeting' (example 2, Propp 42). Thus the notation is E<sup>2</sup>.

#### XIV: Provision F

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<sup>12</sup> Might not include this, it would need to be sourced regardless.

Nishi then directly gives her permission to use baron in her story, thanking Shizuku for her politeness (1:13:09). Thus, Shizuku receives the magical agent, corresponding to the function, and does so via example 1, “*The agent is directly transferred.*” (Propp 44). This also corresponds to the only three examples that can follow D<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1, Propp 47). If the provision had been any other example, it would not have been included, as that would have been a direct break from Propp’s observed structure. The function is notated F<sup>1</sup>.

#### XV: Spatial transference between two kingdoms, guidance G

The function begins when Shizuku is transported by the statue of the baron to a fantastical place, which allows Shizuku to begin to imagine her story; the landscape of Tokyo morphs into a fantastical space of tall pillars and floating planetoids (1:15:48). In order for this story to fully begin to form, however, Shizuku must move forward, which she does by flying with the baron at 1:16:32. This concludes the function, coinciding with Propp’s first example “*The hero flies through the air*” (Propp 51). Therefore the function is notated G<sup>1</sup>.

#### XVI: Struggle H

Struggle is a function which implies direct confrontation with the villain. As before with Reconnaissance, I will assume the absence of a physical villain first, to help identify the function. After the function has been identified I will present my identification of the villain. Upon assuming the absence of a physical villain, the main facet of the function becomes some form of confrontation. The only form of confrontation Shizuku encounters during her journey (writing her story) begins when she has an argument with her sister about her grades at 1:25:18, leading to a confrontation with her parents about her academic (as well as general) attitude at 1:27:15. This sequence definitely constitutes a confrontation.

The question remains what exactly this is a confrontation between. It is now crucial to identify the villain, the ‘force’ that Shizuku is ultimately acting against in Beginning counteraction. To do this I will turn

towards the section of Jonathan R. Lack's Dissertation, *Seeing With Eyes Unclouded*, which discusses *Whisper*. Lack identifies this 'force' as

*“ an increasingly intrusive global culture, and an education system with lots of structure, many tests, and little room for personal expression – these are the ‘concrete roads’ of modern Japanese life Shizuku is subliminally bound by, the forces that work to render her creative impulses aimless, and which prevent her, at least initially, from feeling fully at home in her surroundings, or wholly actualized as an individual.”* (Lack 61).

Shizuku's struggle is ultimately one against structure, against the rigidity of the society she has been placed in. Against the *initial situation*. This corresponds with all functions previously determined: Shizuku does not want to engage with Seiji out of a fear that the only person who presents a departure from the initial situation may be a part of it. She wants a “fairy tale ending”, which a union with Seiji is not (58:23). This is how Trickery manifests itself. Shizuku assuming Seiji's name results in the ‘subliminal bonds’ becoming tighter, denying Shizuku the one escape she thought was possible. Reconnaissance and Delivery both aid Trickery directly, providing Shizuku with the information she needs to make the assumption. Villainy is Seiji's disappearance out of Shizuku's life, which is caused directly by his parents “only giving him one shot.” (1:05:34), as they are motivated by a desire for Seiji to stick to the structure. Shizuku's discussion with her own parents is where Shizuku enters into a direct confrontation with the elements of the structure she is acting against. She has to justify herself in the face of the values that her parents place on her.

Viewed in this context, Struggle in *Whisper* clearly corresponds to the first example Propp gives: “*They fight in an open field.*” (Propp 52, italics present in original). Though not literally an open field, it is a direct confrontation, and not an indirect one. Thus the function is notated H<sup>1</sup>.

XVII: The hero is branded J

This function is similar to Interdiction, in that it does not strictly conform to Propp's structure, but merits mentioning. Branding does not occur, as branding must occur as a direct result of Struggle, and there is no action that corresponds to this. However, it is notable that directly after Shizuku's conversation with her parents, Shiho moves out, which causes a physical change to Shizuku's direct environment, as Shiho gives her part of the room to Shizuku (1:30:11). I am adding this function merely to facilitate later deviating Proppian analyses of this film, should they be conducted. The action corresponds to the first example "*A brand is applied to the body.*" (Propp 52) and is thus notated as (J<sup>1</sup>).

#### XVIII: Victory I

Since 'open field' in Struggle was used in the context of a direct confrontation, the Victory would need to correspond with Propp's first example, "*The villain is beaten in open combat.*" (Propp 53). This indeed it does, as Shizuku attains Victory by finishing her story while remaining unconstricted. The first instance this is shown is at 1:32:06, where she goes directly to Nishi to let him know her story is finished. The function is thus notated as I<sup>1</sup>

#### XIX: Liquidation K

Liquidation of the initial misfortune occurs at 1:34:46, with Nishi's confirmation that Shizuku's story has the same qualities as Seiji's violinmaking. In Propp's structure, Liquidation and Villainy form a pair (Propp 53). Thus, Liquidation must occur in relation to Villainy. Villainy constituted Seiji's disappearance, but not per se his physical one. It constituted the unattainability of Seiji, or in Shizuku's words, the fact that she couldn't "catch up" to him (1:35:56). With Nishi acknowledging her similarities to Seiji, this misfortune is liquidated. Shizuku's earlier completion of the story in Victory leads directly into Liquidation. Therefore Shizuku's Liquidation is "*a direct result of the preceding actions.*" (Propp 54), Propp's fourth example, and is notated as K<sup>4</sup>.

#### XX: Return ↓

Shizuku's Departure is a non-spatial one, referring to her departure from a constricting structure to write her story. Her Return is thus present at 1:39:53, where she announces she will begin studying once again, thus returning back to this structure.

### XXXI: Wedding W

While a Wedding does not literally occur within *Whisper*, it is referenced extremely strongly and thus merits being included in the analysis. At 1:46:28, Seiji asks Shizuku, "Could you see us getting married someday?", to which Shizuku agrees. The closest example of Propp that comes close to this is 4, with the tale ending in "betrothal, or a promise of marriage." (Propp 64). But even then, Seiji's question does not exactly conform to it.

Lack, in discussing the ending of *Whisper*, and this aspect in particular, also notes the strangeness of the proposal:

*"Whisper of the Heart throws a bit of an abrupt curveball in its final seconds, with Seiji proposing marriage to Shizuku...It feels like an overly clean, inorganically convenient classical Hollywood-style ending, which is ironic, given how hard Shizuku has worked in the film to find identity amidst the repressions of global culture."* (Lack 74, italics reversed from original).

While Lack's reasoning here is correct, his assumption is perhaps faulty. The interpretation of the question "Could you see us getting married someday?" as a proposal of marriage is a logical leap that I do not think is warranted, especially given the themes leading towards *Whisper's* ending. I will explain briefly what I mean by this, as it is crucial to understanding the subsequent notation of the function.

*Whisper's* ending is primarily categorised by a rejection of conclusion. Shizuku expects to produce a complete, finished work and breaks down because she can not "I wanted so badly to do a good job" (1:35:44). In doing this she actively goes against the advice Nishi gives her earlier "You sound just like

all the other artists that I've met. No one should expect perfection when they're first starting out.”

(1:13:34), during which Nishi uses a geode for metaphorical explanation, saying that an artist must find their inner gems before they can begin to polish them. Shizuku has not accepted this when she first gives Nishi her story, as is clear by her reaction at 1:35:44. However, by 1:38:59 Shizuku has accepted the fact that she can not expect perfection, and must now begin the act of polishing, and thus Nishi gives her the geode “That geode suits you better than me...Promise me you'll polish your story well”.

All of these elements eventually produce a very specific idea of artistry. It is not a question of waking up and realising one is an artist, it is an act of polishing and refining one's craft, an act which, crucially, is never complete. Moments of uncertainty plague *Whisper's* overall narrative, with Seiji's statement “I know what I want to do, but I don't know if I'll get to do it” (1:00:03) being one of the most directly illustrative of them. At the end of *Whisper*, neither Seiji nor Shizuku know if they'll get to do what they want to do. They've both been told they're “not great yet” but they “could be” (1:43:12). With this comes an uncertainty. An uncertainty that they have embraced, but an uncertainty nonetheless.

And that is why it is so vitally important to *Whisper's* narrative that Seiji's “Could you see us getting married someday?” is not a direct proposal, but a notion to consider the possibility. It is not a coincidence that he book-ends this question with “I promise I'll be a professional violin-maker, and you can be a professional writer” (1:46:32). Neither of the two know that this will definitely happen, and they are not agreeing to its definitiveness. Seiji's question rejects closure, it places its uncertainty front and center, not putting a bow on anything and refusing to tie the knot.

Thus, in light of this, I would say that *Whisper's* ending actually engages directly with Propp's structure in a way that Propp does not delineate, but which can still place *Whisper* in the context of a fairy tale. The function of Wedding in *Whisper* is an inverted function, doing exactly the opposite of the traditional function of the Wedding. It is everything Wedding is not. Thus, I would argue, it is not vague enough to

fall outside the structure, as it is precisely defined as the *negation* of a function. It is implied in the structure by its exclusion.

Therefore, the notation for Wedding is  $W_i$ .

The eventual morphological notation for *Whisper* is as follows:

$\alpha\beta^3(\gamma^2)\delta\varepsilon^2\zeta^2\eta^1\theta^1A^7B^4C\uparrow D^2E^2F^1G^1H^1(J^1)I^1K^4\downarrow W_i$ .

Now to the spheres of action.

The sphere of action of the *villain* has already been somewhat established, and can be defined in the words of Lack as “*the ‘concrete roads’ of modern Japanese life Shizuku is subliminally bound by, the forces that work to render her creative impulses aimless*”. (Lack 61)

The sphere of action of the *donor* can be confined to the actions of Nishi, included in  $D^2$  and in  $E^2$ . It is worth noting that Nishi’s role as a ‘mentor’ to Shizuku falls outside of the spheres of action, in particular his eventual role in  $K^4$ . These later functions are those in which he essentially fulfills the role of a helper or magical agent, not that of a donor.

The sphere of action of the *helper* is split between the characters of Nishi and the baron, with the former being the primary actor, being present in  $G^1$  and in  $K^4$  while the latter is restricted to  $K^4$ .

The sphere of action of the *princess and her father* only comprises one function which is present in *Whisper*, namely  $W_i$ , and thus can be safely restricted to Seiji.

The sphere of action of the *dispatcher* can be confined to Yuko, or at least, the talk that was had with Yuko, as both her and Shizuku serve to make the misfortune known.

The sphere of action of the *hero* can be assuredly confined to Shizuku as an actor. As stated above, Shizuku as an actor also falls within the scope of the sphere of action of the dispatcher.

Since *Whisper*'s departure only consists of a single actor's departure, there is no sphere of action of the *false hero*.

## Appendix B: Narratological analysis of the functions extracted from *Whisper*'s narrative

What follows is the narratological analysis of *Whisper* as per Mieke Bal's framework. Before beginning the analysis, however, it is necessary to clearly define its aim, as well as its exact methods. The aim of this particular analysis is not to provide a comprehensive narratological examination of *Whisper*. As I have elaborated earlier, its aim is to provide the previously extracted Proppian functions with additional context, which the extracted functions lack due to their focus on the sequencing of actions. This additional context will come directly from *Whisper*, and will be identified via a narratological analysis of the specific actions from which the functions were extracted. By this I mean to say that there are but a select few parts of *Whisper* that will be subject to this analysis, each corresponding to a single function. After the additional context of these parts is determined by the analysis, they will subsequently be re-examined in the context of their function.

This procedure may seem slightly complex, however, in practice it is very straightforward. To illustrate the different steps of this procedure I will use an example which Propp provides, also mentioned earlier: "A princess gives Ivan (!) a ring." (Propp 19). I will pretend for a moment that this is a sentence appears in a novel from which I wish to extract the Proppian functions. This sentence can then be identified as the function "provision or receipt of a magical agent" (F) and would fall under example 1, direct transference (Propp 43-44, italics in original). The princess would then fall under the sphere of action of the donor, and Ivan (!) would fall under the sphere of action of the hero. Suppose then the sentence after this is a Direct Discourse which reads "*The princess returned to her quarters and spoke to her chambermaid: "Oh chambermaid! I wish I my father would not have told me to give Ivan (!) that ring! Ivan (!) is such an awful man, and his stench was so vile! I loathe every moment I spend in his presence."* Whether Ivan (!)'s stench is as vile as the princess deems it is not a pertinent question to consider. What is evident however, is that the princess was reluctant to engage in the action of giving Ivan the ring. As such, additional context can now be provided to the function of F, changing it to 'reluctant provision of a magical agent'.

As with any other observation, the princess's statement in itself may not be enough to form a complete picture of events. It may be that the princess has good reason to lie to her chambermaid. However, additional information such as this will only be used if it can clearly be constituted within the text as a frame of reference. As Bal puts it, as analysts we must "restrict our investigation to what is presented to us in the actual words of the text." (Bal 106). Note also that the princess mentions her father, yet I have made it so that this fact incurs no modification to the function. Information such as this should only be considered if it is mentioned directly and clearly in the text. If the exchange between the princess and her father is not directly related at any point, the analyst can only gain insight to the princess's father as he is described by her. As there is no reason to assume the reliance of the princess's narration and thus no reason to assume its veracity, her father cannot be considered when contextualising the function.

My aim is to use narratological analysis to determine the narrative context for Propp's functions, and thereby determine certain concrete elements that define these actions.

In this analysis I will be identifying a large number of contextual elements. To facilitate the reader's navigation of these contextual elements, I will be employing a method which I will call *codification*. I will begin my analysis of the context of each function by stating how it is codified (e.g. by Reluctance and Sympathy) and will subsequently motivate this codification with a narratological analysis of the relevant parts of *Whisper*. Following this I will present the codification of the function (e.g. The reluctant donor directly transfers the magical agent to the hero. The hero expresses their sympathy to the donor.).

I will first use the initial situation to establish some core narratological tenets of *Whisper*. After doing this I will analyse each of the functions extracted from *Whisper* and their codifications. The functions will be preceded by their symbol and the timestamp(s) at which they occur.

$\alpha$  (00:00-13:50): *Whisper*'s narrative is, for the most part, very consistent in its focalisation and narration, both of which are established in the initial situation. There is one function, Guidance (G), in which there is some complexity, and I will address this when analysing the function. Before analysing the function, I will explain how narration and focalisation are constructed within *Whisper*. For the rest of the analysis (besides G) these explanations will be assumed, as there is no formal evidence to suggest a deviation from the construction of narration and focalisation during the initial situation. As such, focalisation and narration will not be explicitly addressed during analysis of functions after this.

*Whisper* begins with a shot of the entire city of Tokyo, as the opening title appears, superimposed upon it. There is no voice-over to accompany this sequence, save for the vocals of Olivia Newton John in the opening track *Country Roads*. Gradually the camera travels inwards, towards the city, and begins to follow Shizuku as she makes her way home. Lack, in his dissertation, describes Shizuku's emergence as such:

*"One senses a story could be told about any of the people we are glimpsing, and yet, almost arbitrarily, this is the person we happen to follow, on her way home, away from the city's center, up into the hills overlooking the bustle below."* (Lack 53)

Crucially, Lack here presents the rest of the film as the story of Shizuku, the character the camera 'happens' to follow. Shizuku emerges out of a space where there is no inherent identity. The narrator can thus be inferred to be an omniscient, external narrator, who is focalising Shizuku. Besides one function, this assertion can be said to hold for the entire collective of functions. In addition to being able to assume focalisation and narration, as stated previously, examinations of the actions and statements within a function can be identified a priori as Direct Discourse.

While the initial situation is itself not a function, it can nevertheless be codified. The initial situation is codified by Familiarity, Critique, Interest, and Mystery.

Familiarity is indicated by a vast number of occurrences, a few of which I will identify. Shizuku offers casual greetings to various unnamed people on her way back from the shops (01:53, 02:02). The casual nature of these greetings indicates Shizuku already knows these people to some degree, implying the initial situation has existed for some time. Another example of familiarity is present in the following exchange between Shizuku and her mother: “You got a plastic bag for just one carton of milk?” “What, they just give it to you.”. Shizuku’s response and attitude towards the practice of giving bags out in the shop implies her familiarity with it. Lastly, Shizuku’s nonchalant dismissal of the loudly barking dog with “Hi Yappy. Can’t you bark any louder than that?” (05:55) indicates she has given the dog a name, implying she is at the very least familiar with the dog, and her lack of surprise or physical reaction at his barking also implies she has encountered this reaction a number of times.

After Shiho’s arrival at 13:50 she makes three statements which indicate some degree of critique towards Shizuku: “You need to clean up this room Shizuku...And you should’ve started dinner by now...Ugh! This kitchen is a disaster! Have you cleaned anything since I left?” (14:08-14:17). As in the example of the princess earlier, whether or not the kitchen is indeed a ‘disaster’ is irrelevant. What is relevant is that it can be identified that there is some element of critique of the hero within the members of the family.

Shizuku’s focus on the person who checked out all the books (Seiji) indicates the hero’s interest in a certain actor “Seiji Amasawa, huh? What kinda person are you?” (04:00). This object of interest being an actor is necessarily the case, as they will also be the target of the villain’s disguise in Trickery ( $\eta^1$ ).

Additionally, the actor of interest appears in the initial situation (Shizuku encounters Seiji at) However, Shizuku does not recognise Seiji as she does not know his name. The identity of the actor of interest is a mystery to the hero. However, Shizuku, and thus the hero, know a single identifiable trait of the actor of interest (for Seiji this is his name) (04:09-04:14).

Codification: The members of the hero’s family are enumerated, during which it is made clear that this initial situation has existed for quite some time and is familiar to the hero. The hero themselves is one of the younger members of the family. During the enumeration of the members of the family, an element

that is critical of the hero is enumerated. It is also made clear that the hero is interested in a certain actor, who remains unknown to the hero despite being present in the initial situation. The actor of interest possesses a single identifiable trait, which the hero does know.

( $\gamma^2$ ) (15:37): Codified by Reluctance, Familiarity, and Critique. The inclusion of this function has been thoroughly explored in the morphological analysis, and will not be repeated here. It will be up to later studies to determine whether in such a case or not  $\gamma^2$  should occur before or after  $\beta^3$  in the fully contextualised sequence of actions, or whether it should appear at all.

The Interdiction is posed to Shizuku as an order to bring her father's lunch to the library, one to which Shizuku initially responds with some reluctance, not only indicated by her reaction to the order itself ("Hey!") but also in the need for Shiho to convince her (15:38-15:57).

The order is posed directly by Shiho, the element of critique, a characteristic which she also exhibits during the scene "What do you mean, 'Hey!'" (15:41).

In addition to this, Shiho correctly surmises that Shizuku was planning to go to the library (15:43).

Combined with Shizuku's earlier informed conversation with her father about the library, the library can be identified as being a familiar place, and Shizuku traveling there can be identified as a familiar action.

The library being a familiar place also points toward another expansion of the initial function. It is now clear that the order itself is referring to an action that must be performed at a place that, while familiar to the hero, is external to the initial situation.

Codification: The hero reluctantly accepts the order/suggestion to go to a familiar place and perform a task from the element of criticism within the family

$\beta^3$  (16:00) : Codified by Rush, Critique, Unfamiliarity, and Intrigue.

Shizuku is rushed during her departure from her house at 16:00 (the moment of absentation). This can be most explicitly identified in the contrast between her eating speed from 15:36-15:47 and her eating speed from 15:53-15:57, which is significantly faster.

While traveling to the library, Shizuku has an unfamiliar encounter with the cat Muta, who is riding the train. Her initial reaction to seeing Muta is surprise, most clearly indicated by her open mouth and wide-eyed stare at 17:17. This reaction is almost an exact reversal of her nonchalant reaction to the dog earlier. The contrast between these scenes becomes even more evident when Shizuku greets Muta, “Hey there cat.” (17:27) as she does not refer to him by name, whereas “Hey Yappy” very clearly indicates familiarity. These contextual elements serve to identify Muta’s appearance as an element of unfamiliarity. This unfamiliarity is further strengthened by Shizuku’s later statement when she loses sight of Muta: “I finally thought I was gonna get a little adventure around here” (19:06), indicating the occurrence was something out of the ordinary.

Shizuku’s reaction of surprise at 17:17 is followed by a number of questions: “You all alone?...So where you headed?...See something interesting?” (17:26-17:39), indicating some degree of intrigue towards what Muta is doing. The fact that Shizuku runs after Muta when he exits the train also indicates this (15:13).

Codification: The hero rushedly absents themselves from home, and encounters an unfamiliar occurrence, by which they are intrigued.

$\delta$  (19:40-27:53): Codified by Intrigue, Familiarity, Unfamiliarity, Absent-mindedness and Rush.

Shizuku arrives at the library, the place of familiarity, but sees Muta, and her intrigue for where he is going causes her to follow him. This is clearly evident later on, when, after following Muta for a while, she directly asks him: “Where are you going you crazy cat?” (21:46). As such the cause for the action of

violation can be identified as the element of intrigue from  $\beta^3$ , and the place for the action of violation can be identified as the the familiar place from ( $\gamma^2$ ), or if ( $\gamma^2$ ) is not included, from  $\beta^3$  also.

In following Muta, Shizuku is led to a place that is unfamiliar to her: “What a gorgeous neighbourhood. I never knew there was a place like this up here.” (22:10). Thus the violation leads directly to Shizuku encountering an unfamiliar place.

A part of this unfamiliar place is Nishi’s antique shop; Shizuku expresses intrigue at various items in the shop. There is one item which particularly intrigues her, however: The statue of the baron (“You’re not the cat I was following, are you?” (24:26)). This intrigue can be more clearly identified later as well, when she returns to the antique shop and looks for the baron specifically (38:36-38:51).

Because of both her intrigue regarding the unfamiliar place and her intrigue regarding the baron, Shizuku is absent-minded and forgets to deliver her lunch to her father. This is indicated by Shizuku’s shock when she realises it is past lunchtime (27:36). This then also implies that the initial action resulting in violation is not done consciously, and is a result of absent-mindedness on the part of the hero. Additionally, Shizuku’s absent-mindedness causes her to forget her father’s lunch at Nishi’s shop, an event which is not directly shown, but is implied when Seiji delivers the lunch to her at 28:36.

Shizuku then leaves in a rush towards the library, as she is late to deliver her father’s lunch: “I’ve got to get to the library!” (27:44)

Codification: Due to the intrigue of  $\beta^3$  the hero absents from or disregards the familiar place from either ( $\gamma^2$ ) or  $\beta^3$ , and travels to an unfamiliar place. The hero is further intrigued by the unfamiliar place, which causes them to be absent-minded. The hero discovers a particular element of intrigue within the unfamiliar place. The hero’s absent-mindedness causes a non-intentional violation of the interdiction. Upon realising they have violated the interdiction, the hero rushedly moves back towards the familiar place.

$\varepsilon^2$  (28:36): Codified by Familiarity, Confusion, Absent-mindedness and Interest.

The function of reconnaissance occurs only after Shizuku returns to the familiar place of the library, at the moment when Shizuku asks Seiji how he got her father's lunch "But, how did you get this?"(28:36). This indicates some form of confusion as to how Seiji was able to obtain the lunch. Thus the function of reconnaissance is facilitated by confusion, which is a direct cause of Shizuku forgetting her father's lunch due to being absent-minded.

Furthermore, since Seiji is the actor of interest, the function of reconnaissance can be identified as a direct result of an engagement of the hero with the actor of interest.

Codification: After moving back towards the familiar place, the hero becomes confused as a result of their previous absent-mindedness. This confusion causes them to engage or be engaged by the actor of interest, which prompts the hero to question the actor of interest.

$\zeta^2$  (28:38): Codified by Unfamiliarity, Assumption and Interest.

Shizuku's question of how Seiji got her father's lunch is indirectly answered when Shizuku sees the cat Muta on the back of Seiji's bike. Muta is an element of unfamiliarity which she also relates to the antique shop, and thus unfamiliar place. This in itself is indicated by Shizuku asking Muta earlier if he lives around there (21:47), and her consideration of the connection between Muta and the statue of the baron (24:26).

Because of the received information that Seiji is connected to an element related to the unfamiliar place, Shizuku assumes that Seiji must himself be related to the unfamiliar place: "That man.. Do you know him? Is he your grandpa?" (28:42). Though it may seem as if these are mere questions with no confirmation, at 38:58 she operates under the assumption that Seiji and Nishi share a last name, making it evident that she has assumed Seiji's relation to Nishi.

Codification: The hero receives information that the actor of interest possesses some element related to the unfamiliar place, and by this assumes that the actor of interest is themselves related to the unfamiliar place.

$\eta^1$  (39:00-48:50): Codified by Assumption, Interest, Unfamiliarity, and Intrigue.

As discussed in the morphological analysis, the actor of Seiji is fulfilling the actions of the villain in this function. This, combined with the fact that the ‘disguise’ of the villain is assumed when Shizuku mistakenly assumes Seiji’s last name at 39:00, identifies the disguise of the villain as the actor of interest. Shizuku returns to the antique shop at 45:40, as does Seiji (now the villain for the purposes of codification) at 46:55, both of them preceding the function of Trickery. This identifies the place that Trickery occurs as the unfamiliar place.

When the function of Trickery occurs, Seiji attempts to persuade Shizuku to follow him into a part of the antique shop to which she hasn’t been to. This identifies the nature of persuasion as an attempt to persuade the hero go into a part of the unfamiliar place they do not know.

Furthermore, said persuasion can also be identified as being directly related to Shizuku’s earlier element of particular intrigue, as it is the reason Seiji invites her in: “Oh you mean that cat statue. Wanna see him? Come on.” (48:48).

Codification: The villain disguises themselves as the actor of interest, unknown (at the very least) to the hero. The hero returns to the unfamiliar place. The villain arrives at the unfamiliar place, and attempts to persuade the hero to venture with them into a part of the unfamiliar place unknown to the hero. The villain attempts this primarily by utilising the particular element of intrigue the hero discovered earlier.

$\vartheta^1$  (48:53): Codified by Unfamiliarity, Assumption, Interest, Intrigue, and Ownership.

The function of Complicity is a direct consequence of the function of Trickery. This has already been made clear in the morphological analysis. The morphological analysis additionally determined that Shizuku's assumption of Seiji's name constituted the disguise of the villain preceding trickery, and that this assumption formed the basis for Complicity. It can thus also be identified that the hero is persuaded to follow the villain into the part of the unfamiliar place because of the hero's earlier assumption of the actor of interest's relation to the unfamiliar place in  $\zeta^2$ .

After Shizuku enters the antique shop, Seiji shows Shizuku the baron (50:21). Thus it can be identified that the hero is shown the particular element of intrigue by the villain.

In addition to this, Seiji informs Shizuku that "Grandpa will never sell the baron." (51:06), indicating that the particular element of intrigue has an owner.

Codification: The hero is persuaded by the villain and follows them further into the unfamiliar place. The hero is persuaded because of the assumption they made earlier that the actor of interest (now the disguised villain) was related in some way to the unfamiliar place. The villain then shows the hero the particular element of intrigue, and the hero is informed of the element having an owner.

A<sup>7</sup> (1:04:32): Codified by Revelation, Interest, Externality, Reception and Constriction.

The identification is quite complex

The function of Villainy only occurs after Shizuku is made aware of Seiji's real name. This occurs at 58:06, but given the codification, Shizuku learning Seiji's name also coincides with the villain revealing their disguise. Thus it can be identified that at the same time that the villain's disguise is revealed, the hero also becomes aware of the identity of the actor of interest.

Seiji lets Shizuku know he is going to Cremona (1:04:32). The identification of this particular action is somewhat complex. The 'sudden disappearance' within the function, as mentioned in Appendix A, is not

referring to Seiji's physical disappearance. It does, however, refer to his unavailability to Shizuku.

Because of this, the object of sudden disappearance can be identified as the actor of interest.

However, a problem then arises, for how can Seiji be the one to tell Shizuku and simultaneously be the one who disappears? This can be resolved by the fact that the disappearance in *Whisper* is not a physical one, and thus Seiji informing Shizuku has nothing to do with the disappearance of the actor of interest.

Seiji informing Shizuku is external to his role as an actor of interest. Thus the informing of the hero can be identified as the hero receiving information about the disappearance of the actor of interest.

The morphological analysis facilitates another identification of the function of Villainy: Shizuku's constriction. Seiji's disappearance does not only affect him, it also affects Shizuku; Shizuku's 'subliminal bonds' become tighter, denying her the one escape she thought was possible (Appendix A). I will refer to the identification of this aspect of Villainy as 'constriction' from now. Additionally, as the strengthening of subliminal bonds already occurs when Shizuku learns Seiji's name, it can be identified that, the hero is constricted directly after the revelation of the Villain's disguise.

Furthermore, Shizuku does not identify the strengthening of subliminal bonds until her discussion with Yuko "No, he's so much better than me. We read the same books, but I never do anything with what I learn." (1:10:02). Due to this, it can be identified that the hero's constriction is unknown to the hero themselves when it first occurs.

The place of the sudden disappearance can also be identified. Seeing as Seiji's disappearance is rooted in his unavailability to Shizuku, due to her own constrictions (which are, as noted in Appendix A, determined by the initial situation), the actor of interest must disappear to some external place which the hero cannot access due to their constriction.

Codification: The villain's disguise is revealed to the hero, and simultaneously the hero notices the identifiable trait of the actor of interest. The hero is unknowingly constricted by the villain, and is subsequently informed that the villain has caused the actor of interest to disappear to an external place.

B<sup>4</sup> (1:09:43-1:11:24): Codified by Reception, Attempt, Constriction, Understanding, Escape, and Competence.

Shizuku's misfortune is made known to her during the conversation with Yuko, indicating that Misfortune is communicated to the hero via an engagement with an actor from the initial situation. The dispatcher can therefore also be identified as an actor from the initial situation.

Throughout the conversation, Yuko makes several attempts to relieve Shizuku of her misfortune: "But you're so lucky, the two of you sound like the perfect match, like soulmates!... You know what? Kinuya was in the same first-year class as Seiji. She said he was a little hard to approach, but he was a good student. And really handsome too!... No it's not, all that matters is he likes you! Didn't he say that?" (1:09:58-1:10:31). Shizuku's demeanour does not change as a result of any of these however, and she responds mostly negatively. As the hero's misfortune is identified as constriction, Yuko's efforts can be identified as several failed attempts by the actor from the initial situation to free the hero from constriction.

One of Yuko's attempts does lead Shizuku to an understanding of an action she can conduct to alleviate her misfortune (namely writing a story (1:11:24)). Yuko tell Shizuku that "Everyone in school thinks you're talented, you've read more books than anyone I know, and your lyrics are great." (1:11:00). Shizuku's understanding begins, however, when she responds with "I'm not close to being good enough." (1:11:12), which is a direct contradiction of what Yuko stated, but does, as stated, lead to Shizuku understanding she can write to alleviate escape constriction. It can therefore be identified that the reason for the hero's understanding of the action they can perform are the earlier failed attempts to free them from constriction.

In the case of *Whisper's* narrative, writing a story will serve to liquidate both Seiji's disappearance and Shizuku's constriction. However, in the codification these are separate misfortunes, indicating that the hero realises how to escape constriction and how to reach the actor of interest simultaneously.

Additionally, writing is something Shizuku has been shown to be competent at. This is indicated by compliments from Yuko “Your lyrics are great!” (1:11:04), Seiji “You’re a very talented writer.” (1:00:30), and her schoolmates “This [Shizuku’s lyrics] is so good Shizuku!...They [Shizuku’s lyrics once more] are wonderful!” (36:23- 36:52). The action the hero will eventually perform can thus be identified as being directly related to a competent quality of the hero.

Codification: The hero engages or is engaged by an actor of the initial situation. The actor informs the hero of the constriction caused by the villain. The actor makes several attempts to free the hero from constriction, but fails. Through these attempts however, the hero understands the action they can perform to escape constriction and travel to where the actor of interest has disappeared to. This action is directly related to a competent quality the hero possesses.

C (1:11:24): Codified by Competence and Uncertainty

Shizuku states her decision to perform the action related to competence as such: “That’s what I’ll do, I’ll try being a writer.” (1:11:24). Shizuku’s use of the verb ‘try’ is indicative that she is uncertain whether she will succeed in the action she has decided to perform. Thus it can be identified that the hero, when making the decision to begin the competent action, does not know whether they can perform it.

Codification: The hero is uncertain whether they can perform the competent action, yet decides to attempt it regardless.

↑ (1:12:26): Codified by Preparation, Competence, Intrigue, and Focus.

There are two occurrences in *Whisper*’s narrative which facilitate the identification of this function. The first is that after making the decision to begin writing, Shizuku says “I’ve already got a story!” (1:11:26), indicating she already knows what she will be writing about. While the subject of Shizuku’s writing is not

directly referenced in this statement, it is shown later during the second occurrence, when Shizuku asks Nishi if she can write a story about the baron (1:13:05). Shizuku's knowledge of the nature of the story she will write and her subsequent requesting of permission to use the baron in that story are of vital importance to identifying this function.

Firstly these two actions help identify the nature of the function's central action, that being the moment Shizuku returns from Yuko's and begins to write (1:12:26). Under other circumstances this would be identified as the start of the competent action. However, there is a strong contextual argument to be made against identifying Shizuku's writing as the beginning of the action. This argument involves the content of Shizuku's writing when she returns from Yuko's. The writing is directly shown on the page as she writes and makes no mention whatsoever of the baron. If, as has been made clear, Shizuku wishes to write a story about the baron, then she must use the baron to be able to write the story. However, she also indicates that she does not wish to use the baron without Nishi's permission. And since Shizuku does not in fact write about the baron before going to Nishi, it is safe to assume that she is not lying to him. Hence, it is implied that Shizuku will not use the baron until she has permission to do so. And it is also safe to say that Shizuku's story, however much she may have written before speaking to Nishi, *is not about the baron until the baron is used in it*. Because of this, Shizuku's writing at 1:12:26 can not be identified as the action of competence; and as such, it can be identified as an element of preparation for performing the competent action, with the knowledge that the element of particular intrigue is necessary in order to actually perform the competent action.

In addition, Shizuku's focus in this preparation can also be identified. A moment after Shizuku begins writing, her voice can be heard reading out the text she is writing (1:12:27). The voice's adherence to the text, Shizuku's closed eyes (1:12:32), as well as the absence of a strong divergence in visual coding, suggest that this voice is not indicative of a transition to Shizuku as a narrator, but rather a transition to a focalisation by the omniscient narrator of Shizuku's thoughts. This is the first time such a thing occurs, and it indicates Shizuku's mental focus on the act she is performing. Thus it can be identified that the hero is focused on preparation when they are performing it.

Codification: The hero begins to prepare for performing the action. The hero is completely focused on the preparation, while knowing they cannot begin to perform the action if they do not possess the agent, namely the particular element of intrigue.

D<sup>2</sup> (1:12:56): Codified by Unfamiliarity, Ownership, Questioning, and Intrigue.

There is a notable ellipsis at 1:12:56 following the last function. The baron is shown, followed by Nishi and Shizuku sitting in the antique shop.

Shizuku goes to Nishi, the owner of the baron, who asks her if she wants to use the baron in her story. She does not mention Seiji, nor why she wants to write her story. The last scene before the ellipsis showed Shizuku at night, having just come back from Yuko. Nishi and Shizuku are both well-lit, and as we see when Nishi stands up, the lights are not in the shop. It can be inferred that a significant span of time has passed. Furthermore, since *Whisper*'s narrative does not contain any methods of magical spatial transportation, it can be inferred that she travelled to the antique shop. It can thus be identified that the hero's encounter with the Donor is preceded by the hero traveling to the unfamiliar place.

Nishi asks Shizuku "So, you want to write a story about the baron?", as he is the owner of the baron (1:12:56). Thus it can be identified both that the donor is the owner of the object of particular intrigue, and that included in the donor's greetings is a question posed to the hero regarding whether the hero wishes to use the object of particular intrigue. Following from this, it can also be identified that the object of particular intrigue has taken on the role of magical agent or helper.

Codification: The hero travels to the unfamiliar place and encounters the donor, who is the owner of the agent. The donor greets the hero and asks if they wish to use the agent.

E<sup>2</sup> (1:13:02): Codified by Ownership and Reception.

The function of E<sup>2</sup> already implies politeness. Shizuku's politeness is present in the fact that she asks Nishi before using the baron at all, expressing her understanding of the statue's importance to him (1:13:02). This understanding indicates a level of respect towards Nishi's ownership of the baron. The hero's politeness can thus be identified as being because of the hero's respect for the donor's ownership of the agent.

Additionally, while Shizuku openly states that she will be using the baron to write a story, she does not state the reason why she is writing it (i.e. to escape constriction and catch up to Seiji). Because of this, it can be identified that the donor does not receive information regarding why the hero wishes to perform the competent action.

Codification: The hero responds politely, telling the donor they do wish to use the agent, but expressing their respect for the donor's ownership of the agent. The hero does not tell the donor why they wish to use the agent.

F<sup>1</sup> (1:13:11): Codified by Politeness and Permission.

After Shizuku expresses her understanding of the baron's importance to him, Nishi permits her to use the baron, after which Nishi thanks Shizuku for asking him first (1:13:11)

Codification: The donor permits the hero to use the agent and notes their appreciation for the hero's politeness.

G<sup>1</sup> (1:15:45-1:17:14): Codified by Competence, Escape, Constriction, Hesitance, Assistance, Externality, and Enjoyment.

After leaving Nishi's shop, Shizuku muses: "A raw gem... In a vein of Lapis Lazuli..." (1:15:45). The statue of the baron is shown briefly, before transforming from a statue into an animated entity, as a fantastical landscape appears behind him (1:15:48). It becomes clear what this transition signifies as the fantastical landscape morphs back into normal Tokyo, while Shizuku is shown running down the steps that lead from Nishi's house to the library (1:17:03). The transition occurs by way of the baron, who directly facilitates the movement into the fantastical landscape. It is implied that the transition is made possible by the baron. This transition also occurs directly after the transference of the baron to Shizuku by Nishi, the object she needed to begin her story. Thus, the transition can be identified as the moment the hero begins to perform the competent action.

I stated earlier I would address the complexities of focalisation in G. I will now proceed to do this. After the baron appears during the transition, an actor who looks almost identical to Shizuku is shown. The fact that this actor is in fact not Shizuku will become clear later. Since the transition indicates the beginning of Shizuku's story, it can be inferred that what occurs after the transition until a return to 'normalcy' at 1:17:03 are the contents of Shizuku's story, in the same way that the words spoken in Shizuku's voice in C were the contents of her story. During the transition, the baron speaks to the actor resembling Shizuku: "Look, be not fearful! On the day of the new moon space is warped!...Let us fly! We will rise on the updraft!...Ah, it just looks high! You'll see, once we get closer! (1:15:52-1:16:52). The baron's statements indicate some degree of knowledge about the fantastical place. The actor resembling Shizuku has but one statement, which indicates incredulity: "Are you kidding? That's so high!" (1:16:45), implying the actor does not possess the same degree of knowledge. When we see the 'normal' Shizuku after the transition back to normal Tokyo, however, she makes a statement which has seemingly nothing to do with normal Tokyo, and is a direct continuation of the topics of flight present in the fantastical place: "Let's go! When the afternoon air-currents mix, we can even touch the stars without fear!" (1:17:09). Not only that, but Shizuku is also speaking in a way which indicates knowledge of the fantastical place, something that the actor resembling Shizuku does not do. As such, we can infer that Shizuku is no longer only being focalised, she is now a focaliser, she is imagining her story, and since the transition shows the beginning

of her imagination, it becomes clear that everything until the morph back to normality at 1:17:03 is focalised through Shizuku. Thus, Shizuku is not only focalising both the actors of the baron and the actor resembling her, she is focalising the entirety of Tokyo.

This entirety of Tokyo is what essentially creates the structure by which Shizuku is constricted. Thus, the moment the transition begins and Shizuku is able to change Tokyo into a fantastical landscape, is the moment she escapes constriction. This indicates the escape from constriction and the competent action are both performed by the use of the agent, and that the escape from constriction is a direct result of the beginning of competent action

However, Shizuku simply beginning the writing of the story is not enough. She must continue to write and imagine, as the story must continue to move forward if she is to complete it. This sentiment is most evident at 1:16:24 when the baron warns: “But we must hurry! Quick, the planetoids are gathering!”. This is in itself a response to a moment of hesitation from the actor resembling Shizuku (1:16:18) to fly with the baron, indicating there is still some hesitation in continuing to perform the competent action.

However, the warning from the baron eventually causes the actor resembling Shizuku to fly out and move forwards (1:16:31). Thus it can be identified that after the hero’s initial escape from constriction, they must still begin to fly through the air to fully escape it. They are eventually able to do this by assistance from the agent.

As Shizuku’s flying indicates her full escape from constriction, she is now directly moving towards Seiji. Thus it can be identified that flying leads the hero towards the external place, where the actor of interest is located.

Additionally, There is an element of enjoyment which can be inferred from an earlier occurrence. When Shizuku exits the school at 37:21, she exclaims: “I love being a writer!”. There is a visible contrast to this and her statement during B<sup>4</sup>: “That’s what I’ll do. I’ll try being a writer.” (1:11:24), implying that Shizuku’s idea of what ‘being a writer’ is, has changed. However, as she has now begun to write her story, she is now conforming to her new idea of ‘being a writer’, and her wide smile as she runs down the stairs towards the library is a clear indication of her continued enjoyment of writing (1:17:09). Thus it can

be identified that the hero despite being hesitant, experience some degree of enjoyment in the competent action and the travel through the external place.

Codification: The hero begins to perform the competent action with the help of the agent, initially escaping constriction. However, the villain still attempts to constrict the hero. In order to escape constriction, the hero must fly through the air. The hero is hesitant of doing this, but the agent assists them and the hero flies away, escaping constriction completely and traveling to the external place. After succeeding in this, the hero expresses their enjoyment at being in the external place.

H<sup>1</sup> (1:25:18-1:28:42): Codified by Externality, (Critique), Resilience, and Competence.

While the confrontation with Shizuku's parents happens at their own home, it occurs while Shizuku is writing her story. Thus, the confrontation with the villain and the subsequent struggle can be identified as taking place in the external place.

(Since Shiho and Shizuku's argument is what prompts Shizuku's parents to confront her "All right, let's go to the kitchen and discuss this" (1:26:07), The confrontation with the villain can be seen as being caused by the element of critique within the family. The sudden inclusion of the element of critique does not mean it should be disregarded, but this codification is only of sequential importance if (J<sup>1</sup>) is included in the morphological notation, as will become clear when examining (J<sup>1</sup>).)

The nature of the hero's struggle with the villain can also be identified. During their conversation with Shizuku, Shizuku's parents constantly question Shizuku's motivations "You have something that you're doing that you think is more important than studying? Will you tell us what it is?...Can't you do whatever it is once your exams are over?...Good enough for what? Why do you need to prove yourself?" (1:27:14-1:27:43). Shizuku's belief in her reasons for continuing to write her story is not shaken, "I have to do it

now!” (1:27:30). This resilience is the eventual reason why her parents allow Shizuku to keep writing her story, as indicated by her father’s conceding statement: “You work so hard in the library, whatever you’re doing I know it’s important to you. And I truly respect that. Honey, why don’t we let Shizuku do what she thinks is best?” (1:28:06). This identifies the struggle with the villain as an action that tests the resilience of the hero to continue performing the competent action.

Codification: The villain confronts the hero in the external place and they enter into direct struggle (If J<sup>1</sup> is part of the structure, the critical element of the family causes this.). The hero’s resilience in continuing to perform the action in order to reach the actor of interest is tested.

(J<sup>1</sup>) (1:30:11): Codified by Physicality.

As the function itself states, the hero must be branded on their body (Propp 52 example 1). Since, if this branding occurs in *Whisper*, it occurs when Shiho leaves (as explained in Appendix A), then the branding can be identified by the disappearance of some physical element of the hero. Additionally, because it is Shiho who disappears, the physical element of the hero must be the critical element present in the family. Thus it can be inferred that if J<sup>1</sup> is included in the sequence of functions, then the element of criticism in the family must be a physical element of the hero.

Shiho’s disappearance is also caused by subliminal bonds, as is indicated in Shiho’s earlier conversation with Shizuku’s mother, where Shiho first mentions she wants to move out and try to support herself financially (1:23:42-1:24:25). Shiho’s disappearance being caused by constriction means Shiho’s disappearance can be identified as being directly related to the actions of the villain.

Codification: By the actions of the villain, the hero loses the critical element that was a part of their physicality.

I<sup>1</sup> (1:32:16): Codified by Resilience, Competence, Constriction, and Interest.

Due to Shizuku's earlier resilience, her parents allow her to continue to write her story, which she eventually completes at 1:32:16 when she hands it to Nishi. Her completion of the story is also the moment of Victory, which can thus be identified as being a result of the hero's previous resilience in H<sup>1</sup> allowing the hero to complete the competent action and fully escape constriction.

The only thing Shizuku still wishes to do is to catch up to Seiji (1:35:36), which is possible only because she has completed her story. Therefore it can be identified that the completion of the competent action makes it possible for the hero to reach the actor of interest.

Codification: By virtue of the hero's resilience in continuing to perform the competent action the villain does not succeed in stopping the hero's activity. The hero is able to move past the villain to the location of the actor of interest.

K<sup>4</sup> (1:34:47): Codified by Movement, Reception, Externality, Expansion, Lack, and Enjoyment.

As stated in Appendix A, Shizuku's misfortune is completely liquidated when Nishi equates her work to Seiji's work, as this indicates she has finally caught up to Seiji. Thus it can be identified that liquidation occurs when the hero reaches the location of the actor of interest.

After Nishi has read Shizuku's story, he tells her "You've dug inside your soul and found some real gems", indicating acknowledgement of her accomplishment, but he also reminds Shizuku that her goal is far from finished: "Next you'll need to polish it, which will also take a lot of work.", indicating to Shizuku that there is far more she can do with her abilities (1:34:55-1:35:05). This can be identified as the hero receiving information after reaching the location of the actor of interest, which indicates that the external place is far more expansive than they previously thought.

Following this reception of information, Shizuku states: “I wanted so badly to do a good job, but there’s so much that I don’t know about writing.” (1:35:44), this not only indicates Shizuku’s desire to become a better writer and explore her abilities further, but also her own admittance of her inability to do so due to her lack of knowledge. This can be identified as the hero, due to the information about the expansiveness of the external place, wanting to travel further through the external place, but acknowledging they lack something which would enable them to.

As catching up to Seiji is now no longer the primary motivator behind Shizuku’s actions, Shizuku’s statement also indicates that she now also wants to be a ‘good writer’, something that, as made clear in G<sup>1</sup>, she enjoys being. This identifies the desire of traveling further through the external place as being due to the hero’s previous enjoyment in G<sup>1</sup>.

Codification: The hero reaches the actor of interest. After this, the hero receives information that the external place is far more expansive than they thought. The hero, due to their enjoyment expressed about being in the external place, wishes to travel further through it, yet realises they can not do so now, as they lack something which would enable them to.

↓ (1:39:55): Codified by Externality, Familiarity, Constriction, and Lack

When Shizuku returns to her home, she announces that she wishes to attend high school, and will begin studying once again (1:39:55). This single action connotes many contextual codifications. It indicates that the function of Return is a spatial one also, as Shizuku is traveling from the external place back to the familiar place, which she departed when she began writing her story in ↑. Seiji too returns to familiarity in this way (1:43:15). This can be identified as a spatial return for both the hero and the actor of interest to the familiar place.

Furthermore, it indicates that the villain has not disappeared. Shizuku cannot return to the familiar place if there is no constriction, as a return implies her participation in the academic structure. Thus, the

constriction must still exist and, by extension, so too must the villain. However, Shizuku is engaging with the constriction differently now, as is evident by what she says to Seiji later: “I’m glad I pushed myself. I know myself a little bit better now. I realised I need a lot more schooling, so I don’t mind doing what it takes to get into a good high school.” (1:46:10). Rather than surrendering to the constriction, Shizuku’s statement indicates she is now attempting to use that which previously constricted her as a way to facilitate further exploration of her abilities. Thus the hero’s engagement with constriction can be identified as being an attempt to use the villain’s methods of constriction to enable the hero to explore the external place further.

Codification: The hero does not vanquish the villain, and returns from the external place together with the actor of interest. The hero attempts to use the villain’s method of constriction to enable the hero’s further exploration of the external place.

W<sub>i</sub> (1:46:29): Codified by Decision, Interest, Exploration, and Externality.

Both Seiji and Shizuku make decisions to return to familiarity (“I’ve decided that I want to attend high school.” (1:39:55), “I’ve decided to finish high school first.” (1:43:15)). However, their decisions aren’t just indicators of return. When Shizuku’s mother asks her if this means Shizuku is done with her project, to which Shizuku replies, “For the time being.” (1:40:02). So too it is with Seiji. His decision concludes with the statement: “then I’ll go back to Cremona.” (1:43:17). Both Seiji and Shizuku decide to not remain in the familiar place to which they returned, and indicate their intent to return to the external place someday. Thus it can be identified that upon returning to the familiar place, both the hero and the actor of interest decide to further explore the external space someday.

The final codification of *Whisper* is identifiable when Seiji's asks Shizuku if she could see them getting married someday, at a time when both of them are professionals in their respective fields (1:46:29). Thus the consideration of union is codified by both of their decisions to explore the external space; and thus their exploration of the external space can be identified as one they will perform together.

Codification: The hero and the actor of interest both make a decision to leave the familiar place someday, and further explore the external place together.

What follows is the total narrative codification produced by combining Proppian morphology with Mieke Bal's narratology. Each paragraph represents a separate function, though this has been done more for visual clarity than theoretical exactitude; There are times when a function transitions into another function in such a way that splitting it into a separate paragraph would result in repetition or half-formed sentences. In such cases, the demarcation between paragraphs should not be taken to be an exact indicator of functions. If there is any doubt as to whether an event belongs to a certain function, I advise the reader to refer back to the analysis above.

*The members of the hero's family are enumerated, during which it is made clear that this initial situation has existed for quite some time. The hero themselves is one of the younger members of the family. During the enumeration of the members of the family, it becomes clear that there is an element within the family that is critical of the hero. It is also made clear that the hero is interested in a certain actor, who remains unknown to the hero, yet possesses a single identifiable trait, which the hero does know. In addition, there are several other actors who are also present in the initial situation, all of which are known to the hero. Two of these additional actors will return in later functions: One to make the hero aware of the misfortune caused by Villainy, and the second is the actor that the hero is interested in. This actor is known to the hero, but their identifiable trait is hidden.*

*(The hero reluctantly accepts the order/suggestion to go to a familiar place and perform a task from the element of criticism within the family)*

*The hero rushedly absents themselves from home, and encounters an unfamiliar occurrence, by which they are intrigued.*

*This intrigue causes the hero to absent from or disregard the familiar place, and the hero travels to an unfamiliar place. The hero is further intrigued by the unfamiliar place, which causes them to be absent-minded. The hero discovers a particular element of intrigue within the unfamiliar place. The hero's absent-mindedness in turn causes a non-intentional violation of the interdiction. Upon realising they have violated the interdiction, the hero rushedly moves back towards the familiar place.*

*After moving back towards the familiar place, the hero becomes confused as a result of their previous absent-mindedness. This confusion causes them to engage or be engaged by the actor of interest, which prompts the hero to question the actor of interest.*

*The hero receives information that the actor of interest possesses some element related to the unfamiliar place, and by this assumes that the actor of interest is themselves related to the unfamiliar place.*

*The villain disguises themselves as the actor of interest, unknown (at the very least) to the hero.*

*The hero returns to the unfamiliar place. The villain arrives at the unfamiliar place, and attempts to persuade the hero to venture with them into a part of the unfamiliar place unknown to the hero.*

*The villain does this primarily by utilising the particular element of intrigue the hero discovered earlier.*

*The hero is persuaded by the villain and follows them further into the unfamiliar place. The hero is persuaded because of the assumption they made earlier that the actor of interest (now the disguised villain) was related in some way to the unfamiliar place. The villain then shows the hero the particular element of intrigue, and the hero is informed of the element having an owner.*

*The villain's disguise is revealed to the hero, and simultaneously the hero notices the identifiable trait of the actor of interest. The hero is unknowingly constricted by the villain, and is subsequently informed that the villain has caused the actor of interest to disappear to an external place.*

*The hero engages or is engaged by an actor of the initial situation. The actor informs the hero of the constriction caused by the villain. The actor makes several attempts to free the hero from constriction, but fails. Through these attempts however, the hero understands the action they can perform to escape constriction and travel to the external place where the actor of interest has disappeared to. This action is directly related to a competent quality the hero possesses.*

*The hero is uncertain whether they can perform this action, yet decides to attempt it regardless.*

*The hero begins to prepare for performing the action. The hero is completely focused on the preparation, while knowing they cannot begin to perform the action if they do not possess the agent, namely the particular element of intrigue.*

*The hero travels to the unfamiliar place and encounters the donor, who is the owner of the agent.*

*The donor greets the hero and asks if they wish to use the agent.*

*The hero responds politely, telling the donor they do wish to use the agent, but expressing their respect for the donor's ownership of the agent. The hero does not tell the donor why they wish to use the agent.*

*The donor permits the hero to use the agent and notes their appreciation for the hero's politeness.*

*The hero begins to perform the competent action with the help of the agent, initially escaping constriction. However, the villain still attempts to constrict the hero. In order to escape constriction, the hero must fly through the air. The hero is hesitant of doing this, but the agent assists them and the hero flies away, escaping constriction completely and traveling to the external place. After succeeding in this initially, the hero expresses their enjoyment at being in the external place.*

*The villain confronts the hero in the external place and they enter into direct struggle (If  $J^1$  is part of the structure, the critical element of the family causes this.). The hero's resilience in continuing to perform the action in order to reach the actor of interest is tested.*

*(By the actions of the villain, the hero loses the critical element that was a part of their physicality.)*

*By virtue of the hero's resilience in continuing to perform the competent action the villain does not succeed in stopping the hero's activity. The hero is able to move past the villain to the location of the actor of interest.*

*The hero reaches the actor of interest. During this, the hero receives information about the possibility to travel further through the external place. The hero, due to their enjoyment expressed about being in the external place, wishes to travel further through it, yet realises they can not do so now, as they lack something which would enable them to.*

*The hero does not vanquish the villain, and returns from the external place together with the actor of interest. The hero attempts to use the villain's method of constriction to enable the hero's further exploration of the external place.*

*The hero and the actor of interest both make a decision to leave the familiar place someday, and further explore the external place together.*