

## The Story of the Eldest Princess

Propp's morphology of a fairy tale: "measurement unit of an individual tale"  
(43)

- Dramatis personae: "the study of the tale *according to the functions of its dramatis personae*:" the details (who and how) can vary but functions (*what* the dp do) are constant and limited and the sequence is fixed (Propp)
- Lack
- The Hero: here a seeker
- Quest, for which to leave home
- Counteraction to the lack:
  - "travel along the **Road**
  - "through **the Forest** across **the Desert** and into **the Mountains**,
  - to fetch back the single silver bird and her nest of ash-branches"
- Objects for the Quest: a sword, an inexhaustible water-bottle from another Quest, and food
- Interdiction: "keep to the Road, and stray neither in the Forest, nor in the Desert, nor in the rocky paths, and always to be courteous."
- Hero is tested, interrogated, attacked etc. for him to receive magical agents or helpers (see Propp, Section XII-XIV): three creatures (and their perspectives)
- Villains (see Section XVI): the fowler, hunter, woodcutter? Or are they agents/helpers too (in different stories?)
- Liquidation of the lack (XIX): what happens to the sky?
- Hero Returns (X): our 'hero' does not

- Villain is punished:?
- Hero ascends the throne, marries etc. : second princess

Dramatis personae:

royalty (the king, queen) + officials (“chief ministers, the priests, and a representative sample of generals, witches and wizards”) + ‘the people’ of the kingdom

three princesses

three creatures: scorpion, toad, cockroach

three distractions/threats (or unfulfilled promises of different stories?): hunter, fowler, woodcutter

the old woman/women (another woman ahead, another woman behind)

(many animals)

The eldest princess:

A likely candidate for a quest?

What kind of story/function is given to her?

Character traits: “She was by nature a reading, not a travelling princess.”

““You are a born storyteller””

How does the eldest princess re-write/re-vise her story?

How are the above treated in **this** fairy story?

Think and compare in relation to the master-tropes of the fairy-tale

Form of the story:

Invitation to read as a fairy tale:

what are the obvious markers? the title, the opening, capital letters,  
the familiarity (patterns of three, animals that speak)

Structural markers (see above for comparison with a morphology)

a 'fairy story': not quite a 'fairy tale' but about fairy tales

How does it rewrite the fairy tale?

Tripartite structure: the stories of the second and the third  
princesses

Kind of the story it is:

A knowing story: self-referentiality (which is more than inter-textuality)

A story about stories and story-telling

Allegory of reading stories we have been cast in in life?

A fable? A parable? Can we change our stories?

Choosing stories

Telling stories that heal

Unit heading: re-reading (re-vision, re-writing)

"To read is to wander through an imposed system" – Michel de Certeau

"Re-vision – the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction – is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves. And this drive to self-knowledge, for woman, is more than a search for identity: it is part of her refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society."

--Adrienne Rich

The danger of a single story" – Adichie

"The truth about stories is that that's all we are. ... You have to be careful with the stories you tell. And you have to watch out for the stories that you are told."

– Thomas King in *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*