

# Fairy tales in Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall On Your Knees*: Vladimir Propp's functions and a twentieth century novel

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## Abstract

Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale* identifies the major functions that characters perform in traditional fairy tales. In spite of the fact that it was first published in 1928, the relevance of the theory it presents is undeniable to such an extent that it cannot only be successfully applied to traditional fairy tales, but also to other kinds of nowadays works. In this paper, we are intending to demonstrate that Ann-Marie Macdonald's novel *Fall on your Knees* can

be counted among these. It is true that initially, its plot does not seem to mirror that of fairy tales; however, a closer look will demonstrate that its characters and the situations they are faced with perfectly fit in the functions proper of fairy tales according to Propp.

## Key words

Ann-Marie Macdonald, *Fall on your Knees*, Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folk Tales*, functions, fairy tales, metamorphoses

## Cuentos de hadas en *Fall On Your Knees* de Ann-Marie Macdonald: las funciones de Vladimir Propp y una novela del siglo xx

## Resumen

La morfología del cuento de Vladimir Propp identifica las principales funciones que tienen los personajes en los cuentos de hadas tradicionales. A pesar de que se publicó por primera vez en 1928, la vigencia de la teoría que presenta es innegable, hasta el punto de que no sólo se puede aplicar con

éxito a cuentos tradicionales, sino también a otros tipos de obras de hoy en día. En éste artículo, se intentará demostrar que la novela *Fall on your Knees* de Ann-Marie Macdonald, está entre éstas. Es cierto que, inicialmente, su argumento no parece reflejar el de un cuento de hadas; sin embargo, al estudiarlo con detenimiento se demuestra que sus personajes y las situaciones con

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las que se tienen que enfrentar se ajustan perfectamente a las funciones propias de cuentos de hadas según Propp.

## Palabras clave

Ann-Marie Macdonald, *Fall on your Knees*, Vladimir Propp, *Morfología del cuento*, funciones, cuentos de hadas, metamorfosis.

## Introduction

Fairy tales are characterised, among other things, by their openings, usually made up of fixed expressions, such as 'Once upon a time, in a far far away kingdom...'; used to distance the story in time and place, and typical presentations of the main characters and their backgrounds. This is a feature that helps us to recognise almost at once the books that belong to this genre, together with other elements, like, for instance, the characteristic tone they are normally imbedded in.

Bearing all these in mind, let us have a look at the following quotation:

A long time ago, before you were born, there lived a family called Piper on Cape Breton Island. The daddy, James Piper, managed to stay out of the coal mines most of his life, for it had been his mother's fear that he would grow up and enter the pit. She had taught him to read the classics, to play piano and to expect something finer in spite of everything. And that was what James wanted for his own children.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ann-Marie Macdonald, *Fall on your Knees*, London: Vintage, 1996, p. 7. From now on, references to this book will be incorporated into the text of the article with the number of the page they have been taken from.

We do find in this quotation an expression that distances the story in time ('A long time ago') and maybe also in place ('on Cape Breton Island') and a presentation of one of the main characters, James and his family. In addition, there is also the hint that, just as fairy tales, it is a story told to somebody ('before you were born'), that could be a child, because of the choice of some words, such as 'daddy'. Hence, when reading this paragraph, it seems that we are supposed to expect to be facing a fairy tale.

However, the previous quotation comes from the first pages of Ann-Marie MacDonald's novel *Fall on your Knees*; a book whose plot is not like that of a fairy tale at all. In fact, it deals with the three generations of a family, the Pipers, characterised by quite a convulse relationship among its members. It is the story of Maria and James who are the parents of three daughters Kathleen, Mercedes and Frances; Kathleen's twins, resulting from a relationship with her own father Lily and Ambrose, involuntarily killed as a baby by a very young Frances when intending to baptise him; and Frances' son Anthony.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that we are not going to meet any more 'fairy-tale-like' aspects in the rest of the book. In fact, as we read on, we can observe that James' father leaves 'One morning, the day before his fifteenth birthday' (7), another expression that sounds proper of fairy tales; it is the third day after Maria and James' secret wedding that two men seize James to take him to Mr Mahmoud (15,16), which is quite revealing, as the number three is a kind of magical number in fairy tales: many actions have to be repeated three times, there are, quite often, three elements (three bears, three brothers...); besides, there is a curse upon Maria's womb (17), like that upon the queen's womb in

'The Sleeping Beauty', and so on and so forth. Thanks to all this, it seems possible that we observe the story and its participants almost as if they were part of a fairy tale.

Taking into account what has been stated above, I would like to add, then, that in the following essay I am going to perform an analysis of the main characters of *Fall on your Knees* so that their links, and thus of the whole novel, to fairy tales are evidenced. In doing so, I am going to be making reference to the functions<sup>2</sup> that, as Vladimir Propp suggests in his *Morphology of the Fairy Tale*, appear in all fairy tales. I will finish by concentrating on the metamorphoses that most protagonists of MacDonald's novel suffer from, as a further support to my thesis, since it appears that metamorphoses are considered an essential part of fairy tales.

## James and Materia

As it has been mentioned above, the whole story begins pretty much like a fairy tale. Apart from what can be observed in the first quotation provided, there are other aspects that bring the outset of this book nearer to a fairy tale. First of all, according to Vladimir Propp,

Fairy tales usually begin with the presentation of the initial situation. The members of the family are enumerated; among them, there also is the future protagonist (...) who is

merely presented by providing his name or the description of his state. (Propp, 1981, 37)

which is more or less what we have in this page 7 of *Fall on your Knees*. In addition, there are also other peculiar aspects, such as the fact that James' father was a 'penniless shoemaker' — a very 'fairy-tale-like' occupation— who 'fell in love with James's mother while measuring her feet' (7), which might remind us to Cinderella's story, as it is the size of the feet what designates the prince's wife-to-be.

Moreover, the action that follows the presentation of James' family goes on, as in many fairy tales, with a journey. In fact, the first function Propp speaks about is 'the detachment', that is, one (or more) of the members of the family is detached (voluntary or involuntarily) from home (Propp, 1981, 38). This way it can be observed that, in James' story, we not only have one, but three detachments: James' parents leave —first the father goes away and the mother dies some time after—, and he feels forced to leave also '[t]o seek his fortune' (7).

Furthermore, James and Materia's love story has much of a fairy tale as well, starting with the fact that James sees himself as 'Aladdin in an orchard dripping diamonds' while he embraces Materia for the first time when she goes out of school (14). In addition, let us not forget that among Vladimir Propp's functions there are also 'the prohibition placed upon the protagonist' and 'the transgression of that prohibition' (Propp, 1981, 38, 39). Hence, when the Mahmouds discover that Materia is going out with James, they lock her up, as a wronged princess, and forbid her 'to have anything to do with the piano tuner' (14), which, of course, she does not follow.

<sup>2</sup> According to Vladimir Propp, 'we understand function as the action of a character defined according its meaning in the development of the plot' (33).

Since I have worked with the Spanish translation of Vladimir Propp's work *Morphology of the Fairy Tale* (*Morfología del cuento*), this one and all the subsequent quotations and paraphrases extracted from this text are my own translation.

It seems to be worth mentioning, as well, that it is at this point, after these two functions take place, that Propp maintains that the 'wicked character', the villain, the enemy of the hero/ine appears (Propp, 1981, 39). It should not be forgotten that the main role of this character is 'to disturb the peace of a happy family, to produce a disgrace, to hurt' (Propp, 1981, 39); in addition, the function that s/he performs now is that of trying 'to deceive the hero/ine to take hold of him/her or his/her possessions' (Propp, 1981, 41). Furthermore, this last function is unavoidably followed by the one in which 'the victim lets him/herself be deceived helping his enemy, thus' (Propp, 1981, 41). On the light of the events that follow in *Fall on your Knees* we might wonder then, who is the evil one and who is the hero/ine of this story: thinking logically, it appears that it is Materia the heroine and James the wrongdoer; but, from James' point of view, it could perfectly be the other way round. In any case, it appears that, from now onwards, the story changes quite a lot depending on whose point of view we stick to.

First of all, for Materia, who is a child herself when getting married, her rescuing 'prince'—by the way, this is how James' mother used to call him (7)—is quickly, metaphorically speaking, turned into a frog. In other words, soon after escaping from the confinement she suffered at her family's place, she is also locked up at home by her husband, who obliges her to stay at home firstly forbidding her to go to dances:

"Look, my dear," (...) [James] said, "here's a book that you might enjoy."  
"Let's go out."  
"Out where?"  
"To town. To a dance."  
"But sweetheart, we can entertain ourselves for free right here, and you'll see, it'll be more fun." (22)

and secondly, obliging her to do 'her job'—that is, cooking and cleaning— (25); two aspects that, almost unavoidably, make us link her to Cinderella. However, this Cinderella is not wronged by her stepmother, but by her 'prince'.

Moreover, and still focusing on Materia, let us make some comments on her role as a mother. Once we have a look at the following words by Andrea Dworkin, as quoted by Madonna Kolbenschlag, it is fairly probable that much of Materia's subsequent behaviour is made clearer to us:

Those mothers from fairy tales are female mythological figures. (...) When the mother is good, she dies quite early. In fact, when she is good, being alive, she is presented as such a passive character that death can only mean an extension of what characterised her life. (Kolbenschlag, 1994, 58)<sup>3</sup>

Hence, Materia is a good mother of a fairy tale, since, as it will be shown below, even if it is true that she does not die quite early in the story, she does behave as if she were dead from the moment in which her father states that '[s]he was dead to them all from that day forth' (18). To illustrate this, we can observe for instance that, by the third month of her pregnancy of Kathleen, she was 'crying all the time' and liked to play mixed tunes in the piano, just like a ghost (23, 24).

Pound, pound, pound on the piano keys in the middle of the night. No wit any more, however juvenile, no naughty ditties, just discords. Tantrums.

<sup>3</sup> Having worked with the Spanish translation of Madonna Kolbenschlag's *Kiss Sleeping Beauty Good-bye* (*Adiós Bella durmiente*), this one and all the subsequent quotations and paraphrases extracted from this text are my own translation.

Fine, let her exhaust herself. *Plank, splank, splunk* into the wee hours. (24)

In addition, she took the liking of sitting near the cliff's edge singing, even appearing out of nowhere, so that Mrs Luvovitz thinks that Materia is some kind of ghost (27). Furthermore, Materia herself even acknowledges, when talking to Mrs Luvovitz, that she is dead:

"So what are you saying, 'You haven't got a family'? You've got a family, they're your family."  
Materia shook her head. "I don't belong to them anymore."  
"Why not?"  
"I'm dead."  
"You're dead? You're not dead, what kind of crazy nonsense is that, 'I'm dead'?"  
"It's a custom —" (29)

On the other hand, James' perception of the events that follow is quite peculiar. In other words, suddenly it seems that his wife is a kind of 'Arabian Nights-like' wicked seducer who lured him into marriage:

How had he [James] been ensnared by a child? There was something not right about Materia. Normal children didn't run away with men. He knew from his reading that clinical simpletons necessarily had an overdeveloped animal nature. She had seduced him. That was why he hadn't noticed she was a child. Because she wasn't one. Not a real one. It was queer. Sick, even. Perhaps it was a racial flaw. He would read up on it. (34)

whereas his daughter could 'do no wrong' (35). Thus, it is now where his incestuous feelings for Kathleen start being forged:

A life and a warmth enter his body that he hasn't felt since — that he

has rarely felt. She will be safe with him, I'll keep you safe, my darling, oh how he loves this girl. He holds her close, no harm, never any harm. Her hair smells like the raw edge of spring, her skin is the silk of a thousand spinning-wheels, her breath so soft and fragrant, *milk and honey are beneath your tongue...* (61)

However, he will be able to overcome temptation twice. The fact that it is the third time and not the second or the fourth is quite revealing, since, as it has been mentioned above, number three has got a very important significance in fairy tales and, what is more, as Bruno Bettelheim claims, it is the number that in the subconscious is most closely linked to sex (Bettelheim, 1981, 283)<sup>4</sup>.

At first sight, incest might not seem a topic proper of fairy tales. However, as Marina Warner puts it in *From the Beast to the Blonde*, 'incest between father and daughter' is not only present in fairy tales, but it 'makes a strong showing' in them (Warner, 1995, 320). To illustrate this we have, also following Warner, tales such as, 'L'Orsa', compiled by Basile, or the much more known 'Donkeyskin' (Warner, 1995, 320, 321); besides, according to Bruno Bettelheim, there are many versions of 'Cinderella' in which she has to runaway because her father wants to marry her or it is the father who throws her out because she does not love him as he thinks she should (Bettelheim, 1981, 343). Bettelheim goes on by adding that in some of these 'Cinderellas', the cause of their disgraces is that exorbitant love of the father for his daughter (Bettelheim, 1981, 347). In

<sup>4</sup> Having worked with the Spanish translation of Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment (Psicoanálisis de los cuentos de hadas)* this one and all the subsequent quotations and paraphrases extracted from this text are my own translation.

*Fall on your Knees* this turns out also to be true, as, for instance, Kathleen dies after Lily and Ambrose's birth —and so does Materia.

## Kathleen

According to Vladimir Propp, a fairy tale may include several sequences of functions (Propp, 1981, 107); thus, it does not come as a surprise that Kathleen's story seems to mean the start of a further set of functions. In other words, first of all, Kathleen goes through the 'detachment', —both from her father when he goes to war and from her whole family when she goes to New York—; secondly, she disobeys her father's prohibition, —that is, even though James never tells her so, she is not supposed to have sex with anybody but James himself—; thirdly, a function we have not spoken about yet is introduced, 'the misdeed': 'the villain hurts one of the members of family or causes any type of damage to him/her' (Propp, 1981, 42). Namely, James sexually abuses of Kathleen, out of which she gets pregnant, he takes her away from New York and Rose and, eventually, she dies giving birth.

Nevertheless, Materia might be seen as not completely innocent in this story. It is true that she spends most of the time praying to try to avoid James from abusing from Kathleen, but, in the end, she is the one who takes the fatal decision of letting her die. It does not sound unlikely that Materia could feel jealous because of the close relationship between James and Kathleen —in fact, she does acknowledge that she does not love her (39)—, just as Snow White's stepmother. Were this to be the case, according to Bruno Bettelheim, it is fairly probable that this same jealousy would end up destroying both mother and daughter

(Bettelheim, 1981, 300), as it appears to be the case here.

However, there does not seem to be any evidence at any point of the story that demonstrates that Materia is jealous. In addition, there are some aspects that explain Materia's behaviour the day that Kathleen dies. First of all, Marina Warner points out that 'Christian moral philosophy laid down that the child came first —so that it could be saved by baptism' (Warner, 1995, 263)—; which justifies Materia's choice, being such a fervent believer as she is. Besides, there are also some other aspects that demonstrate that even if she does not act out of faith alone there is something else behind:

So why does Materia die a few days later of a guilty conscience? Because she did the right thing for the wrong reason. For a reason which was in itself a mortal sin. (...) It takes Materia forty-eight hours to face that what she did, although correct in the eyes of the Church, was murder in His all-seeing eyes: the real reason I let my daughter die is because I knew she was better off that way. I didn't know her well, but I knew she didn't want to live any more. She preferred to die and I allowed her to do so. (138)

And that 'thing' that is behind is revealed now, when she becomes aware that she eventually did love her daughter: 'And in this suspicion Materia discovers the chill comfort that, in the end, she managed to love her daughter after all.' (138).

To finish with Kathleen's story, it is worth commenting that there are several direct references to fairy tales in it. For instance, as a child, 'she looked like a princess' (38), to the point that James compares her and Materia with the tale 'The princess and the pea': 'Materia eats her own

supper, then she eats Kathleen's, sopping up the broth with bread. James avoids looking at her (...) Kathleen nibbles her cheese toast and leaves the crusts. The princess and the pea' (67). In addition, this linking to the world of fairy tales does not end when she grows old, as, when she is in New York, she acknowledges feeling like Snow White in her glass coffin, 'beautiful, yes, but dead' (473). Furthermore, even after her death there is a further reference in which Kathleen—or her recollection—makes James to think of a fairy tale, 'The Sleeping Beauty': "What's this [Kathleen's photo] doing here?" He asks Mercedes, softly. There are no pictures of Kathleen anywhere. Not a spinning wheel in the kingdom, so to speak, and then you prick your finger' (260).

## **Mercedes and Frances**

Mercedes' and Frances' stories go inextricably together, since, even though they have opposed characters — they are, according to James 'My good daughter. My bad daughter' (260)—, they complement each other, and so, they help and need one another. In fact, as Bruno Bettelheim claims, there are many fairy tales in which two brothers or sisters, like Mercedes and Frances do, collaborate to end up saving one another, for example, 'Hansel and Gretel' (Bettelheim, 1981, 233). In addition, Bettelheim also speaks about another group of fairy tales that deal with—usually—two brothers who 'represent apparently incompatible aspects of human personality' (Bettelheim, 1981, 129). In these tales, one of the protagonists goes away in search of adventures, whereas the other one stays home and, in the end, has to go to look for and help the other one because he is in danger (Bettelheim, 1981, 129). The basic plot of these fairy tales is very

similar to that of Mercedes and Frances' story. This way, Frances goes out once and again, while Mercedes stays home. However, in the very moment in which Mercedes senses that Frances might be in danger, sets off in search for her, the night in which she realises that their father had abused of Frances when Kathleen died and the same night that Frances spends in the French mine with Leo Taylor.

In this story we are going to have a new type of character, following Vladimir Propp's ideas, the 'searcher-hero/ine' (Propp, 1981, 47). Up to now, all the heroes we have had were 'victim-heroes', while, for the first time we have a 'searcher-heroine', Mercedes. The difference between these two types of heroes, as Propp puts it, is that the story focuses on those who are taken away leaving aside those who were left behind when the hero/ine is a 'victim-hero/ine'; on the other hand, when there is somebody who searches for the one that has been taken away, we have a 'searcher-hero/ine' (Propp, 1981, 47). Anyway, Mercedes and Frances' case is quite special, as there is both focus on the one who—apparently—is 'taken away', Frances, and on the other one, Mercedes. Hence we could say that in this story there are the two types of heroines.

Regarding Propp's functions, it could be said that Mercedes' and Frances' case is similar to that of Kathleen, in the sense that there is a new set of functions starting now, as well. As for Frances, it appears that she performs the functions of 'detachment', every night when she goes out to work; 'prohibition' and 'transgression of the prohibition', as she is almost all the time transgressing her father's will. In this case, it is fairly peculiar that, at this point, the villain is not outside, even Leo Taylor is a good man, but at home, James. Furthermore, it is also

quite striking that this villain is transformed by the end of his life and is able to become reconciled with himself and his daughter.

Concerning Mercedes' functions, they are different from those that we have been working with up to now, as she almost does not leave home, except when she goes to look for her sister the night of the French mine, which reinforces her role as 'searcher-heroine'. Function number 8a in Vladimir Propp's list is the 'lack': in other words, one of the members of the family feels the lack of something or somebody (Propp, 1981, 46):

"Mercedes?"  
"What are you doing up, Lily?"  
"Is Frances home yet?"  
"No."  
"Are you worried this time?"  
"Yes." (376)

Necessarily after this function, the hero voluntarily leaves home (48), just as Mercedes. Propp points out that, at this point, a new character is introduced, the 'donor' or 'provider', whose main purpose is that of providing the hero with a magical object that will help him/her to find what s/he is looking for (Propp, 1981, 49). It is true that in *Fall on your Knees* we do not find any magical object, but there are some mysterious and esoteric situations whose main protagonists are Lily and Ambrose. In addition, before Mercedes goes out to look for Frances, Lily says: "I know where she [Frances] is. Ambrose told me." (376). Hence, and since it is Lily who guides Mercedes to where Frances is, Lily could be the 'donor', being she herself, or Ambrose, the 'magical object' as well; this way, Mercedes performs another function, that of 'being taken to the place where the object of her search is' (60). It is worth mentioning that the second time that Mercedes' leaves home to help her sister takes place when Teresa

shoots at Frances and will have a similar structure.

Nevertheless, it could be said that there is a big problem in Mercedes and Frances' story: does Frances really need to be saved by her sister? From what happens after the night at the French mine, it seems that it is her pregnancy or even Teresa's bullet, what eventually saves her. In addition, Mercedes' behaviour during Frances pregnancy turns more and more selfish: she would not stand Frances and James getting on and, in general, Frances not being her little child anymore: 'Everyone seems to think that motherhood is the best thing that could possibly happen to her [Frances]. Everyone but Mercedes. For she knows that once Frances has a child, Frances will no longer need a mother' (437). All this appears to trigger Mercedes leaving Frances' baby in an orphanage apparently out of pure good will, but actually as a result of her own selfishness; which, will eventually lead to Frances dying as an eccentric drunkard.

## Lily

It could be said that there is another 'searcher-heroine' in *Fall on your Knees*, apart from Mercedes, and that is Lily. Lily will not set off in order to save anybody when she travels to New York —although, perhaps she does save Rose—; but the main aim of her journey is to find and rescue herself through her mother's memories. The 'lack' she feels is that of her own identity, her own past and that will eventually trigger her trip. Besides, her magical objects could be both her mother's diary, which leads her to reach for that lost identity, and the boots that James makes for her, which physically take her to New York; being, thus, both James and Frances the donors.



Some of the last functions that Propp speaks about deal with the defeat of the villain or the redressing of the damage s/he caused (Propp, 1981, 62). It sounds quite striking that the villain does not seem to be defeated or punished in none of the stories that take place in *Fall on your Knees*; namely, James, who could be considered the greatest villain here, 'died in peace', as Frances tells Mercedes (556). In addition, there does not seem to be redressing of the damage in all of the cases: for instance, Kathleen dies away from her lover as a result of the damage that James caused to her. However, Lily is successful in her search encountering Rose and, afterwards, Anthony; hence, it seems that almost all the damages that have occurred up to then are redressed in a way, as the mysteries and wrongdoings in the family get to an end.

## Metamorphoses

I would not like to finish this essay without adding some comments on the fairy tales in general that bring *Fall on your Knees* even nearer to this genre. When defining the fairy tales in the introduction to *From the Beast to the Blonde*, Marina Warner claims that 'most of all (...) metamorphosis defines the fairy tale' (Warner, 1995, xv). I find this idea quite revealing, as metamorphosis, —although not always physical—, is also almost constant in Ann-Marie MacDonald's novel. To illustrate this, let us have a brief look at each of the main characters that we have been speaking about above. First of all, it is quite remarkable that James suffers from more than one metamorphoses: firstly, he is transformed after marriage, at least on what regards his behaviour towards Materia; then, perhaps his greatest transformation takes place during the war, as, when coming back, he has only 'one thing in common

with the man who marched off to the wars three years before: their daughter Kathleen' (115); and, finally, he spends the last days of his life as a nice senile old man in peace who, again, had little of the violent man that he used to be. It strongly calls our attention as well that when James came back from war, he used to read fairy tales to Mercedes and Frances (129), but, after his first stroke it is Lily who reads him fairy tales —and Freud— until he loses interest 'in his old favourites' (421).

Regarding Materia, we have already commented on the fact that her change takes place after her marriage, when she starts behaving as if she were dead. Besides, her transformation is not only in her personality, but also physical; namely, the first time James and Materia meet he sees her as a slim girl with dark eyes 'wet with light' (12), whereas, some years later, when Teresa goes to the Piper's to give them the money for Kathleen trip to New York, is received by a 'big sad woman' who has 'the look of someone who's not all there' (120).

Concerning the girls, let us begin with Kathleen, whose metamorphosis takes place in New York, where, ironically, she 'is truly and utterly and completely Kathleen' (122), as if she had not been herself before. As for Mercedes, her transformation is gradual, from the 'good daughter', going through the obsessive devout who scares Lily and is selfish enough so as not to allow Frances to keep her baby, to a school teacher who does not even inspire affection, but fear from anybody (557). Frances' transformation, takes place with her pregnancy: 'This new Frances says thank you; is careful of her health, looks forward to being a mother.' (417); 'The new Frances is no longer a wayward child. Or even a scarlet woman. The new Frances is at home everywhere —especially in her

own growing body— and does not lack for friends' (437). This metamorphosis is not only similar to that of *Materia*, as it is also physical, but it brings Frances nearer to her mother, as well, since she starts dressing like her or cooking Arabian food. Finally, Lily's case is again special, since, she does not suffer any metamorphosis; it could even be said that she did not need that change, just as the rest of her family did:

Lily has never cut her hair. It hangs down to her knees, streaked with grey. There are lightweight aluminium braces available nowadays, but she never thought to buy one when they had the money. Her face is fallen but still sweet, her eyes the same. She is forty-five. (562)

## Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to add that as it has been shown in the previous

paragraphs, McDonald's *Fall on your Knees* is a novel which presents many features proper of fairy tales. In order to demonstrate this, I have gone through each of the main characters, showing in which sense they are connected to characters of fairy tales; for which I have mainly made use, among other things, of Vladimir Propp's theory of the functions of fairy tales. This way, I have tried to show that the structure of this novel may, in many situations be very similar to that of books belonging to that genre. I have finished by dealing with the topic of metamorphoses, which are recurrent both in fairy tales and in *Fall on your Knees*. Apart from all this, I would not like to end without commenting on the fact that it would be naive to deny that both structure and characters of MacDonal'd's novel present a complexity that cannot be easily found in any fairy tale, but it cannot be forgotten that it seems also impossible to negate all the similarities and connections that they share.

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