NOTES

1. In Finland, the criticism of Aarne’s folk tale typology sparked off emotional reactions. (Apo 1995 : 259).

2. ‘Structure’ has been defined by Elli Kongas Maranda and Pierre Maranda as “... the internal relationship through which constituent elements of a whole are organised. Structural analysis thus consists of the discovery of significant elements and their order” (1971 : 16). According to Heda Jason and Dimitri Segal, there are several levels of structural elements in oral literature, and at least four of them: the level of wording, the level of poetic texture, the level of narrative, and the level of meaning, can be studied by formal theories (1977 :3).

3. ‘Russian Formalism’ was a movement that began in Russia by the formalists at the beginning of the twentieth century to study the narrative structure of Russian oral literature, particularly the folktale. Rene’ Welleck writes, “Russian Formalism is so far much less known and much less accessible in the west. It arose around 1914 and was suppressed around 1930. Russian Formalism keeps the work of art itself in the centre of attention; it sharply emphasizes the difference between literature and life, it rejects the usual biographical, psychological and sociological explanations of literatures. It develops highly ingenious methods for analysing works of literature in its own term” (Rene’Welleck in Viktor Erlich, 1955 : VII). Viktor Erlich says, “It [Russian Formalism] is a school in Russian literary scholarship, which originated in 1915-16, had its heyday in the early twenties and was suppressed about 1930” (ibid: IX). A. J. Greimas and J.Courtes say, “Russian Formalism— which dominated the linguistic and particularly the literary research carried out in Russia
in the 'twenties'—well illustrates the term’s ambiguity. Accused of formalism, because not manifesting enough interest in the ideological content of literary works, this research was not formalistic in the neutral meaning of the term, for it aimed at circumscribing the significance of forms (in the almost Saussurian meaning of the word). It must be added that Russian formalism is but one particular manifestation of a European episteme common at the time, since one can speak just as well as of German formalism (research on the baroque, for example), or the French formalism (discovery and formulation of romanesque art by Faucillion and his collaborators). This tradition was taken up again after the war, with a different expression, by what is called French structuralism” (Greimas and Courtes’ 1982: 123).

‘Formalism’ has been defined by Greimas and Courtes’ as “Formalism— in the neutral, but often pejorative meaning—is understood to be a scientific attitude which seeks to formulate conceptual theories or to construct formal models to account for the data of experiences and, more particularly, which uses formal systems founded upon as axiomatic system” (idem).

According to Heda Jason, the basic ideas of the formalists were:

i) Two levels can be distinguished in oral literature: the concrete level of content and the abstract level of structure.

ii) The level of narrative structure has to be separated, for purposes of analysis, from the level of textural structure.

iii) On the level of narrative structure, two units can be conceptualized: the tale role and the action which the tale role performs. (Jason in Jason and Segal 1977: 101).

On the basis of these concepts, various formalist models to study oral literature have been devised.

The Russian formalists worked on the Russian fairy tales and developed the method of formal analysis and tried to find out their units of
composition. They worked on Russian fairy tales, because, "it [Russian fairy tale] is the most numerous and artistically the most elaborate of the Slavic folktales ...its structural and formal complexity has no equivalent in the fairy tales either of Western Europe or of the Eastern, non Slavic neighbors of Russia". (Jacobson in Propp 1968 : XIV). Moreover, the custom of tale-telling was practised among all the social classes. As a result, "...the artistic tools of the narrator became progressively sharpened; the demands of the listener became more and more refined; and the narrative codes of the fairy tale were step by step crystallized under the influence of this social censorship. The art of narration and dramatic presentation, together with a keen sense of the oral epic style, became a characteristic quality of the Russian people" (idem).

Some of the noted Russian formalist scholars are Shklovskij (1919), Skatymov (1924), Volkov (1924), Nikiforov (1927), and the famous of all, Propp (1928).

4. Analytical unit has been defined by Alan Dundes as, ""...(the) utilitarian logical constructs of measure, which though admittedly relativistic and arbitrary, permit greater facility in the examination and comparison of the materials studied in the natural and social sciences" (1975 : 62). He defines a minimal unit as "... the smallest unit useful for a given analysis with the implicit understanding that although a minimal unit could be sub-divided, it would serve no useful purpose to do so " (Idem). Elli Kongas Maranda and Pierre Maranda write that units are "...elements which can be manipulated and on which logical operations can be done (such as reductions, products, summations, transformations, etc.). (1971 :21). They have defined units as "units or elementary constituents are the parts, which can be isolated in a continuum, for example, a narrative, and which can not be analyzed into smaller forms within the adopted system of investigation" (Idem).

5. Vladimir Yakovlevic Propp, the guru of structural analysis, was
born on April 17(29), 1895, in St. Petersburg in Russia to a family of German extraction. He studied Russian and German Philology in the university of St. Petersburg and began his career as a school teacher. In 1932, he joined the faculty of Leningrad University and worked there until his death on August 2, 1970. Initially, he taught language along with linguistics, but after 1938, he concentrated on Folklore and chaired the department of Folklore in the university until folklore was incorporated to the Department of Russian literature.

In 1928, Propp's first published work *Morfologija Skazki* appeared in Leningrad. Three friendly reviews by R. Sor, D.K. Zelenin, and V.N. etc welcomed its appearance. Zelenin, in 1929 pronounced these eulogistic words "I have no doubt that his method has great future" (cited Liberman, 1984 : X). Unfortunately, this 'great future' came after thirty years (1958) with its English translation in U.S.A. Melville's remarks, "One wonders what its influence might have been upon a generation of non-Russian folklorists if it had been translated at e... Unfortunately, the 1958 translation is too late to render Propp a stimulating example of what can be done by his method" (cited by Liberman, 1984 : X). Propp's work failed to make a great stir in his n country. It was the 1960 review of Claude Levi Strauss and the adoption of his method by Alan Dundes (1964) and to apply it to a w body of material, that made Propp world famous.

After a series of critical articles, Propp published *Historical Roots of Wonder tale* in 1946, which was an adaptation of his doctoral thesis (*The Genesis of the Wondertale*; 1939). In this book, he attempted to trace the origin of wonder tales (Liberman, 1984 : XII).

Meanwhile, the political situation in the Soviet Union deteriorated rapidly, and both of Propp's books invited the wrath of the prevalent notion which considered everything from the Russian viewpoints. Even a passing reference to a non-Russian, particularly, western scholar or
work was considered unpatriotic. Propp, and even great scholar Aleksandr Veselovskij and linguist N.Ja Mar, became the victim of severe criticism. They were branded as ‘rootless cosmopolitans’, accused of sycophany or kowtowing the west for mentioning western references in their works (ibid : XIII).

Ultimately, on April 1, 1948, Propp tendered a long apology regarding his works in the meeting of the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR held at Leningrad University. In his apology among other things, Propp accepted the charges levelled against him, “...All the charges brought against me by comrade Dement’’ev are fair” (Propp cited by Liberman, 1984 : XV). This satisfied the Academic Council.

As a result of this incident, Propp lost his sense of dignity and faith on himself. His condition so deteriorated that, as O.M. Freudenberg recorded, one day in 1949, he fainted in the middle of his lecture and was taken to a hospital (idem). Lauri Honko has described the situation well, “This pressure of rather political than scientific nature is assumed to have subdued his voice as one of the very first epoch making structuralists and forced him to compromise his scholarly integrity by way of Marxist lip service to ideals and research topics to which he in his heart did not really subscribe” (Lauri Honko in Anna-Leena Siikala ed. 1989 :161).

Unable to use his morphological insights (‘formalism’) and works in foreign languages (‘cosmopolitan sycophany’), Propp concentrated on Russian bylinas, and brought out his third major book Russian Heroic Epic Poetry in 1955. He did not mention a single reference to western source in this book. In 1963, his Russian Agarian Festivals was published by Leningrad University. His last book Problems of Laughter and the Comic was published posthumously in 1976. Apart from these, he wrote many long articles, reviews, and critical notes. He was an indefatigable
editor, and together with M. Ju. Mel’c compiled five annual bibliographies of Russian folklore, and prepared ten books for publication including a reprint of Afanas’ eve’s tale collection (Liberman 1984: XVI-XVIII).

In spite of the fact that Propp concentrated on other aspects of folktale postponing his morphological research, his analysis of Morphology attracted new generation of researchers. It has already been mentioned that after Levi Strauss’ acknowledgement of Propp and the publication of Dundes’ book, a wave was created in Europe and USA. The later scholars were not only enthusiastic about his theory, but encountered it with necessary criticism and opened up new avenues of research.

6. Morphology of the Folktale was originally titled as Morphology of the Wondertale, but the editor of the book replaced the word ‘Wondertale’ with ‘folktale’. Much later, Propp recollected, “I called it Morphology of the Wondertale. To make the book more attractive, the editor replaced the word ‘Wondertale’ and in this way led everybody ... to believe that the book would concern itself with the general laws of the folktale .... But, my intention was not to study all the various and complex types of the folktale; I examined only one strikingly distinctive type, viz., the folk wondertale” (Propp in Libermann 1984: 70)

7. English translations are mine.

8. The Phakawas is a sort of epigram enshrining religious or ethical principles (Goswami, 1980: xiv).

9. Banhi is the sixth Assamese monthly magazine, edited by L. Bezbaroa and published from Calcutta in 1910. This magazine was published for long seventeen years and contributed a lot to the Assamese literature. Bezbaroa also edited the third Assamese monthly magazine ‘Jonaki’ for two years (in the third and the fourth year of its publication). This magazine introduced ‘Romanticism’ in Assamese literature.