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# The Morphological and Archetypal Traces in the American Dream: Exploring the Potential of the Narrative Structure and Symbolism

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## Identifying the Narrative Functions of the American Dream

However stable the generic concept of the American Dream might be, it would be lost in the outskirts of folk wisdom if it would not have been brought to public discourse by politicians and social engineers at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The American Dream appears to be a conceptually well-defined belief that has reached the level of its full application, also known as 'the engineering of consent' (Bernays, 1955). According to Ghosh, more than two thirds of Americans in the time period 2005-2010 believed they have already lived the American Dream or that they were on a good path to achieving one (Ghosh, 2013: p. 2). The same author defines the American Dream with three constitutive elements: individualism, equal opportunity, and success (Ghosh, 2013: p. 33). This definition can be further expanded to the notion of a construct; it can be hypothesized that the American Dream, as a construct, imposes a particular version of prescribed reality, amplified and distributed by various media outlets which endorse specific cultural forms (being rhetorical, visual and most importantly, narrative) that subsequently circulate in the sphere of popular culture. The implementation of this construct and its relation to narrative theory and psychoanalytic findings is discussed in the last section of this paper. However, before any conclusions about the commercial potential of the American Dream can be reached, it is worth taking into account the narrative aspect of the examined concept.

As content-specific and persistently stable through time, the American Dream reflects a dominant system of beliefs. It can be argued that it has, ever since the rise of the industrial era, significantly shaped the ideology, and, consequently, the lifestyle of a western man. The ideal that nourishes the pursuit of happiness has surpassed the test of time, thus giving one a pertinent reason to understand it beyond the notion of a cultural construct. The next logical step in this examination would be to search for narrative elements that form the structure of the American Dream and identify any potential patterns that might occur. In this sense, the popular culture can be understood as an expressive platform, where the full ramification of the concept can be observed and analysed. In order to find parallels with basic plot components and pairs of function, the morphological analysis of the American Dream narrative will be implemented. This analysis will follow the narrative structure, as proposed by Propp in his seminal and widely discussed work *Morphology of the Folktale* (Propp, 1968). To be able to apply Propp's folktale morphology, 6 typical stories depicting the American Dream have been chosen; each story represents a well-known personality that made her success in the United States. All 6 personalities have been frequently depicted by lifestyle media as an epitome of the American Dream. The stories were captured from various online sources that matched the search query<sup>1</sup> and then cross-checked with more extensive biographical versions from other relevant sources.<sup>2</sup> In this fashion the maximum granularity of each biography was reached. All 6 stories were analysed according to Propp's enumeration of basic functions of the *dramatis personae* (Propp, 1968: p. 25).

### Applications and Results

As already known, Propp defined 31 narrative units or components that form a narrative. These basic narrative features were manually extracted from biographies of well-known personalities, whose life, according to lifestyle media<sup>3</sup>, epitomizes the concept of the American Dream. The purpose of the analysis was to: (i) search for typical narrative features that oc-

1 Many queries were used, however, the simplest one yielded best results.

2 There was a pertinent reason for using Wikipedia. As an open and free online encyclopedia it represents the collective perceptions of the concepts, ideas and, in this case, biographies. Since biographies on Wikipedia are not limited to one author, they more authentically represent the collective work of participants (including biases and misconceptions). These contributions can be perceived as a modern collective storytelling, where biases are inevitable. However, the crucial milestones in a person's life were verified through other sources, such as official biographies. For a detailed list of biographies, see the References.

3 'Lifestyle media' is defined as media content on any type of media (traditional media, new media) promoting various versions of lifestyles that largely correspond to dominant neoliberal system of beliefs.

cur in the media depiction of the American Dream; (ii) to identify typical elements, and (iii) to detect any particular order that they may follow. A detailed description of Propp's function of *dramatis personae* can be found in the Appendix. The results of the structural analysis from various online and offline sources can be seen in *Fig. 1*; the reader will be able to follow the major milestones (in each biography) that were identified in accordance with descriptions given by Propp. The narrative functions corresponding to major life events of each personality are specified in square brackets; the lower level orders of functions are specified in parentheses.

The first analysis begins with the personality of Oprah Winfrey. The multibillionaire talk show host and media proprietor was “born out of wedlock<sup>4</sup>” to teenage parents who separated [Absentation], leaving Oprah to be raised by her grandmother. Her childhood years were marked with running away and stealing [Violation of Interdiction], followed by hardships, like molestation and a strict upbringing. The period of her childhood can be attributed to the [First Function of the Donor, to D<sup>8</sup> in particular and to D<sup>1</sup>]<sup>5</sup> – her biography states, that her grandmother would hit her with a stick when she did not do the household chores.<sup>6</sup> In her early adulthood Oprah faced two deaths of her family members; her half-sister who died of drug addiction and her half-brother who died of AIDS-related causes. Both causes of death can be implicitly interpreted as a metaphor for [Villainy] or [Mediation — B<sup>+</sup>]. After years of abuse [The First Function of the Donor – D<sup>8</sup>], Oprah left home [The Hero's Reaction (E<sup>1</sup>)], followed by [Departure]. A year after, she faced another death, this time of her premature born son [Mediation, the Connective Incident – Misfortune B<sup>+</sup>]. The story about her misfortune was sold to the *National Enquirer* by one of her family members and Oprah later stated she felt betrayed [Delivery, a person betraying].<sup>7</sup> Her gradual success in the television talk show genre marked a long and laborious career path; these parts of her biography match with the elements of [Struggle] and [Difficult Task]. In addition, the numerous anecdotes that formed her years of persistent work on various television networks across the United States correspond to the function of [Difficult Task – (Test of Endurance)].<sup>8</sup> Her efforts and hard work [Solution] consequentially led her towards [Victory], which is evident in a series of achievements, such as “becoming the

4 <https://www.thestreet.com/story/11173382/3/10-people-living-the-american-dream.html>

5 Various forms of this function are specified in the Appendix.

6 See section Early life at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oprah\\_Winfrey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oprah_Winfrey)

7 Ibid.

8 See Appendix: XXV. Difficult task.

first black female news anchor before the age of 20”, launching widely accepted talk shows, etc. Victories, that can be labelled as success, eventually brought her [Recognition]; this function is epitomized in her devoted fan base, various film and media awards, and titles, such as “the richest African American of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,” “one of the most influential people from 2004 to 2011 by *TIME*” and other recognitions like the honorary doctorate degrees from Duke and Harvard.<sup>10</sup> These series of victories and recognitions were subsequently followed by [Transfiguration] – more precisely, the lower level order (T<sup>3</sup> – The hero builds a marvellous palace) that matches entirely with the following biographical fact: “Winfrey currently lives on “The Promised Land”, her 42-acre (17 ha) estate with ocean and mountain views in Montecito, California.”<sup>11</sup>

While Oprah’s story includes most of the functions proposed by Propp, their correlation is not sequential, meaning that the story does not follow the chronological – linear order. Some functions are randomly regrouped, while others follow the original Propp’s structure, for example: difficult childhood is followed by [Departure] and [Hero’s reaction] as these two functions are evidently causal and cannot be reversed. The same principle applies to other functions, for instance [Villainy] and [Departure] or [Mediation] and [Departure]; without the previous narrative elements that caused it, the Departure would naturally not be logical.

The following example of an American rapper and businessman Jay-Z exhibits a similar pattern. In the introduction of the book *Empire State of Mind: How Jay-Z Went From Street Corner To Corner Office*, the author outlines key features, universal to the concept of the American Dream:

The following pages will explain just how Jay Z propelled himself from the bleak streets of Brooklyn to the heights of the business world. In making that journey, he’s gone from peddling cocaine to running multi-million dollar companies, with worldwide stops and sold-out concerts along the way. Once Jay Z got going, it took him less than ten years to complete that voyage, thanks to innate talents honed through hustling. His story is the American dream in its purest form, a model for any entrepreneur looking to build a commercial empire.<sup>12</sup>

*The rapper is presented to the reader as an archetype of a hero, a 21<sup>st</sup> century prototype of a self-made man, who paved his own way to fame*

9 <http://www.businessinsider.com/rags-to-riches-story-of-oprah-winfrey-2015-5>

10 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oprah\\_Winfrey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oprah_Winfrey), see section Personal Wealth and Rankings.

11 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oprah\\_Winfrey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oprah_Winfrey), see section Personal Life.

12 Greenburg, O. Z., 2011: p. 1.

and fortune. The examination of significant biographical moments resonates with Propp's narrative functions: as a child, Jay-Z grew up without a father, who has abandoned the family [Absentation]. His teenage years were mainly marked with criminal offenses and poor performance at school [Interdiction], [Violation of Interdiction]. After the sudden loss of his close friend who died of murder [Villainy], the rapper experienced a tough and at the same time defining period [Meditation, The Connective Incident – Misfortune is announced B<sup>4</sup>]), followed by fan critics and battles with other rappers [Struggle]. During the time of personal confrontations – the death of his friend, harsh critics and the memories of a difficult upbringing [Struggle] – the rapper created a confessional album [Beginning Counteraction], [Difficult Task], which soon earned him platinum record selling status in the United States<sup>13</sup> [Recognition]. The first part of his life story might appear causal, but it is worth pointing out that later events unfold in rather a circular than a linear fashion: for example, certain periods of success [Victory] and acknowledgments [Recognition] overlap the open battles with other artists from the entertainment industry; for example, in 2005 the rapper literally entitled one of his concert “I declare war;”<sup>14</sup> this momentum can be attributed to the function of [Struggle (The hero and the villain join in direct combat)]. Nonetheless, the periods of commercial success [Victory] are intermingled with public disclosure episodes, in which the rapper was publicly exposing his opponents in his lyrics during the concert<sup>15</sup> [Exposure]. As already noted, the acknowledgments [Recognition] do not necessarily follow the previous functions, for instance [Solution]. The pairs of functions can be detected, but are, from the perspective of linear storytelling, interrupted by other functions or even pairs of functions. This means that the biography does not include only one typical example pair of functions ([Struggle]/[Victory]), but several functions that might reoccur over the course of his life. For example, in 2013 the rapper received 9 Grammy Award nominations [Recognition], a year later (2014) he experienced the intermediate episode of allegations that can be attributed to [Unfounded Claims], and in 2016 he won a 2-year long battle [Struggle] against copyright infringement allegations in a lawsuit against his opponent<sup>16</sup> [Victory]. In conclusion, one can follow the aspect of metaphorical transfiguration in the artist's lyrics and literal transfiguration in his socio-economic transition

13 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jay-Z#Early\\_life](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jay-Z#Early_life)

14 Ibid.

15 <https://web.archive.org/web/20080812040043/http://www.mirror.co.uk/celebs/latest/2008/06/29/jay-z-s-glastonbury-wonderwall-dig-at-noel-gallagher-98487-20625795/>

16 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jay-Z#Early\\_life](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jay-Z#Early_life)

from underground freestyle rapper to mainstream music mogul [Transfiguration]. This example points towards the notion of reoccurring functions that can be linked into causal chain, but do not rigorously follow the narrative structure, proposed by Propp. Functions, however, remain present in the story.

The next example is a life story of an American businessman and motivational speaker Chris Gardner. Like other characters, Chris also had a difficult childhood. Growing up without a father [Absention] he was forced to rely on his mother, who spent most of her time in state penitentiaries [Absention], so young Chris spent his childhood moving from one foster home to another [Departure].<sup>17</sup> In his early adolescence, he began to experiment with drugs [Violation of Interdiction]. His early adulthood was marked with a series of low-paid jobs that caused an existential crisis of his own family [Lack,  $\alpha^3$ ]. At the time, Chris had a crucial encounter with a wealthy man, who told him he accumulated wealth through stock broking and that he can do the same [Mediation, the Connective incident – The hero is dispatched directly by promises]. Chris later claimed on many occasions, that this situation presented a turning point in his life – it was that encounter that influenced his decision to become a stockbroker [Beginning counteraction]. The decision was followed by concrete action; he attended unpaid training programs to be able to master his trading skills [The first function of the Donor]. Soon after he got accepted to the program, his supervisor lost his position, which affected his training. The lost opportunity left him with a substantial debt and he had to spend several days in prison. In addition, his girlfriend moved out of the apartment, taking their son with her [Absention,  $\beta^3$ ]. Chris applied to another unpaid program [Difficult task – Task of endurance]. Soon afterwards, his girlfriend left their son with Chris, who took the full custody of the child [Difficult task – *Test of strength, adroitness, fortitude*]. Earning below the level of survival, Chris was forced to choose between shelter and food for his son [Difficult task – Ordeal of choice]. He chose food, so he spent months leaving from shelter to shelter with his son, literally struggling with destitution [Struggle]. To get them both out of despair, he relied on optimism and hard work [Liquidation –  $K^6$ ]. It is worth pointing out, that this part constitutes two core values of the American Dream: an enthusiasm and work ethic. Both values represented in this example can be aligned with the Proppian lower level order of the Liquidation function, namely the  $K^6$ ], described as “The use of a magical agent overcomes poverty” (Propp, 1968: p. 54). In this particular case, the magical agent

17 <http://www.chrisgardnermedia.com/chris-gardner-biography.html>

works as a metaphor for enthusiasm and work ethics. The story of Chris Gardner concludes with the successful completion of the training program; the hero overcomes the poverty [Solution]. Shortly afterwards he started his own business which eventually brought him a multi-million dollar success [Victory]. Consequently, various awards and honours followed soon after [Recognition].<sup>18</sup>

The fourth case also demonstrates a significant number of narrative functions, attributed to the biography of Arnold Schwarzenegger. As a child, growing up in a small Austrian village, Arnold experienced emotional withdrawal from his father, who had a preference over his older son; this feature can be implicitly linked to emotional [Absentation]. Arnold's relationship with his father was particularly difficult as he experienced physical and emotional abuse [Villainy]. This strained relationship later marked all aspects of Arnold's life. He remembers his childhood as a traumatic and at the same time defining period:

My hair was pulled. I was hit with belts. So was the kid next door. It was just the way it was. Many of the children I've seen were broken by their parents, which was the German-Austrian mentality. They didn't want to create an individual. It was all about conforming. I was one who did not conform, and whose will could not be broken. Therefore, I became a rebel. Every time I got hit, and every time someone said, 'You can't do this,' I said, 'This is not going to be for much longer, because I'm going to move out of here. I want to be rich. I want to be somebody.'<sup>19</sup>

His father insisted for Arnold to become a police officer and his mother wanted him to study trade finance<sup>20</sup> [Interdiction, an inverted form], but Arnold had plans to become a bodybuilder [Violation of Interdiction]. At the age of 15 he visited the gym in Graz, where he met a famous Austrian bodybuilder who invited him to train at the gym; the experience turned out to be a defining moment in his life [Mediation, the Connective incident – The hero is dispatched directly by promises]. Soon after, Arnold left for Munich [Departure], where he won his first contest [Recognition]. Early acknowledgements encouraged him to train intensely in order to shape and build his body. Consequently, at the age of 15 he experienced the first body transformation [Transfiguration]. One of the judges at the competition offered to coach him, and Arnold moved to London, where he lived with the coach's family. He was soon invited to the United States [Spatial Transference between two Kingdoms –The Hero

18 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris\\_Gardner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Gardner)

19 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnold\\_Schwarzenegger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnold_Schwarzenegger)

20 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnold\\_Schwarzenegger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnold_Schwarzenegger)

flies through the air (G<sup>1</sup>), to prove his abilities, but he lost his first competition. The States in this case represent the Donor [The First Function of the Donor – The Donor tests the Hero (D<sup>1</sup>)], and the lost competition can be applied to [The Hero's Reaction – The hero withstands (or does not withstand) a test (E<sup>1</sup>)]. Arnold then accepted another invitation to move to California, where he started training at the Gold's Gym – the body-building epicentre. This period of his life is marked with hard work at the gym, late night studies and painstaking adaptation to American culture. Once more, the United States in general and the Gold's Gym in particular, exemplify the Donor [The first Function of the Donor – (D<sup>1</sup>)]. During that period, Arnold was attending numerous competitions [Difficult task – Test of endurance]. Work ethic, combined with the use of steroids [Provision or Receipt of a Magical Agent – The agent is eaten or drunk, (F<sup>7</sup>)] brought Arnold a much desired recognition. Embarking on an acting career, which was Arnold's primary goal, brought him another set of difficulties. Agents saw his body as disproportional and his accent as too thick. Arnold was at the very beginning of conquering the movie industry, which at that point, was his enemy [Struggle].<sup>21</sup> He again used work ethics to overcome the obstacles and his first commercial success came with the movie *Conan the Barbarian* [Solution]. A series of other notable roles soon followed [Victory]. The use of steroids caused public disapproval in a form of a German doctor, who publicly predicted Arnold's early death [Unfounded Claims]. After a legal fight [Struggle] against the doctor, he won the lawsuit [Victory]. Championship wins and prominent film roles brought him numerous awards and honours [Recognition]. Not surprisingly, one can find Proppian functions in Schwarzenegger's political life as well. A detailed narrative analysis of his political career path would be beyond the scope of this paper, however, it is worth noting that it followed a similar pattern. As the results of the analysis suggest, the main motive behind Schwarzenegger's achievements can be detected in enthusiasm, will and work ethics. As already discussed, all three aspects form an ideological fabric of the American Dream.

The fifth exemplification of the American Dream is shown in a story about South-African actress Charlize Theron. Her teenage years were marked with traumatic event; as a 16-year old girl, Charlize witnessed the death of her father, being shot by her mother in a self-defense act [Mediation, the Connective Incident – Misfortune is announced (B<sup>+</sup>)]. The incident left Charlize in a single-parent family [Absentation]. With the help of her mother, Charlize soon won a contract with modeling agency [Beginning Counteraction], so she and her mother left South Africa

21 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnold\\_Schwarzenegger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnold_Schwarzenegger), see section Steroid use.



and moved to Milan [Departure]. The trip to New York followed soon afterwards [Spatial Transference between two Kingdoms – The Hero flies through the air (G<sup>1</sup>)], where Charlize lived in her friend's windowless basement apartment. Living in the city was hard for Charlize who worked several low paid jobs to make her ends meet, while attending much desired ballet classes. Again, one can see how the city plays a role of the Donor and how the heroine gets interrogated and tested by it. Theron continued working in the city, until the knee injury abruptly ended her career path<sup>22</sup> [The First Function of the Donor – The Donor tests the Hero (D<sup>1</sup>)]. After realizing her ballet career was over, Theron became severely depressed [Hero's Reaction / The Hero does not withstand the test (E<sup>1</sup>)]. She got visited by her mother, who flew from South Africa to help her. Her mother bought her a one-way ticket to Los Angeles [Provision or Receipt of a Magical Agent / Various characters place themselves at the disposal of the hero (F<sup>9</sup>)]. The turning point of her career occurred at the bank in Los Angeles, when the teller refused to cash the check sent to Charlize by her mother. Charlize went into an argument with the bank representative. This verbal fight episode with the bank (which represents a symbol of material existence) corresponds to the function of [Struggle]. The argument was witnessed by a talent agent standing behind her. Impressed by her character, he offered her several casting options. The function of an agent corresponds to [The First Function of the Donor]: Charlize had to prove her acting skills in the initial roles that were offered to her [The Hero's Reaction – The hero withstands (or does not withstand) a test (E<sup>1</sup>)]. After proving herself in minor roles, Theron took her chance by starring in more demanding roles that required extreme preparations and body transformations<sup>23</sup> [The Difficult Task – Test of strength, adroitness, fortitude]. The key element of the American Dream can be seen in overcoming the Difficult task, more precisely in a lower level function of the strength and fortitude that characteristically corresponds to the value of hard work. Strategically, the efforts and hard work also correspond to the function of [Solution]. Convincing performance of difficult roles brought Theron financial success in the movie industry [Victory], followed by high ranking awards and nominations (Academy Award for Best Actress, Golden Globe Award) which can be attributed to the function of [Recognition] and overall transformation – from South-African traumatized teenage girl to Oscar-winning Hollywood actress [Transfiguration]. This example demonstrates a very solid structure of narrative functions that

22 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlize\\_Theron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlize_Theron)

23 [http://www.etonline.com/news/164171\\_charlize\\_theron\\_on\\_shocking\\_film\\_transformations](http://www.etonline.com/news/164171_charlize_theron_on_shocking_film_transformations)

resonate with the ideal of American Dream in the following linear way: a desire, an endless hope, a land of opportunities where hard work will be rewarded, and the possibility that desired goals can be achieved.

The final biography example in this section deals with the story of Madonna. As transparently illustrated in her pop-song, titled *American Dream*,<sup>24</sup> Madonna epitomizes the idea of an opulent life that was paved with hard work and humble beginnings. Only significant milestones from Madonna's rather full and complex biography will be extracted and compared with other portraits analysed so far. Madonna lost her mother when she was 5 years old [Absentation – An intensified form of absentation is represented by the death of parents]. Her relationship with her stepmother was strict and she recalls her father as authoritarian. At elementary school, she was known for her high grades and unconventional behaviour. Her deviations from standard behavioural norms can be attributed to the function of [Violation of Interdiction]. At the age of 20, Madonna dropped out of college and moved to New York to pursue a career in dance [Departure]. In New York she was forced to take different low-paying jobs to be able to compensate for her living costs and extra dance classes. At one late night returning home, she was sexually abused. She later described the traumatic experience as haunting<sup>25</sup> and disturbing.<sup>26</sup> This episode can be implicitly correlated with [The First Function of the Donor / The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked, etc.], where the city of New York symbolizes the Donor. Despite the traumatic experience, Madonna continued with various attempts to get into the music business industry. She performed in various bands [The Hero's Reaction / The Hero withstands the Test]. Her first success soon followed (a series of music hits – [Victory]), but it came along with the public controversy, when *Playboy* and *Penthouse* magazines published nude photos from her early years [Delivery / Person Betraying]. This episode marked a turning point in Madonna's life as the public disclosure of her nudity symbolized the milestone that corresponds to the function of [Mediation, the Connective Incident]. As poignantly stated by her brother Christopher: "Any innocence she may have had is now gone. She has nothing to hide anymore /.../ from

24 Lyrics of the song *American Life*: [https://play.google.com/music/preview/Tvmzuxuy35n2bxtpd26fu7zkkve?lyrics=1&utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=search&utm\\_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics](https://play.google.com/music/preview/Tvmzuxuy35n2bxtpd26fu7zkkve?lyrics=1&utm_source=google&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics). Prevailing themes of the *American Life* album were fortune, fame, modern society, American Dream, materialism, American politics, Hollywood.

25 "[t]he episode was a taste of my weakness, it showed me that I still could not save myself in spite of all the strong-girl show. I could never forget it." [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madonna\\_\(entertainer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madonna_(entertainer))

26 <http://www.marieclaire.co.uk/entertainment/music/madonna-biography-119458>

now on, she will forever invade [her privacy] herself."<sup>27</sup> Madonna's reaction followed in a form of tactical controversy [Beginning Counteraction] which was systematically exhibited throughout her work: the imagery of kissing African-American actor in the role of Jesus Christ, several nude appearances in public, releasing the book titled *Sex*, blending sex and religion, etc. Various conflicts with critics and media [Struggle] brought her additional commercial success in music and movie industry [Victory].<sup>28</sup> Her path has been marked with a series of tasks, which mostly consisted of learning and acquiring new skills in acting, singing, managing, playing instruments, filming, directing and writing – in order to keep her prime position in the entertainment industry. These activities correspond to the function of [Difficult Tasks / Test of strength, adroitness, fortitude / Test of endurance]. She has resolved all tasks by hard work and constant willingness to learn and improve [Solution], which reflected in her overall success (Best-selling female recording artist of all time and the wealthiest woman in the music business, Golden Globe for Best Actress, etc. [Recognition]).<sup>29</sup> Her constant reinvention [Transfiguration], evidently embedded in her styles, is utilized in her media strategy – a constant reinvention of her appearance *de facto* perpetuates and strengthens her 35-years long presence in the entertainment industry. The following paragraph summarizes the major elements in Madonna's life story:

When the efforts of her more excitable chronicles, and especially those, who have focused on the sexual and the sensational, are added to her own early propaganda, it is easy to see how the myth of Madonna was born: the ghetto childhood; the schoolgirl rebel; the flirty young Lolita who became a sexual athlete; the mistreated Cinderella, complete with Wicked Stepmother; the misunderstood artist.<sup>30</sup>

The central theme of Transformation, where one can achieve prosperity by continuously changing and adapting, carries in itself an aspect of activity. Compared to other biographies examined so far, Madonna's story appears to be significantly more consistent with the concept of the American Dream: her biography explicitly suggest that determination, work ethics and irrepressible confidence formulate a cultural and material accomplishment.

27 <http://www.marieclaire.co.uk/entertainment/music/madonna-biography-119458>

28 <http://www.straitstimes.com/lifestyle/entertainment/madonna-milestones-over-the-years>

29 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madonna\\_\(entertainer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madonna_(entertainer))

30 Morton, A. 2001: Chapter 3 (unmarked pages): [https://books.google.hr/books?id=S\\_Q\\_B15k-hYC&printsec=frontcover&dq=morton+madonna&hl=sl&sa=X&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.hr/books?id=S_Q_B15k-hYC&printsec=frontcover&dq=morton+madonna&hl=sl&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false)

It is worth pointing out that each biographical narrative utilizes Propp's elements in different order. Regardless of the sequential nature of each story, *the pattern can be seen*: as shown in *Fig. 1*, most of the given examples of American Dream stories include the following narrative functions (not necessarily in that order): [Absentation], [Violation of Interdiction], [Mediation, The Connective Incident], [Beginning Counteraction], [Departure], [The First Function of the Donor], [Struggle], [Victory], [Difficult Task], [Solution], [Recognition], and [Transfiguration]. Given the examples in this discussion, it can be concluded that 12 out of 31 functions *form a stable morphology of the American Dream narrative*. The typical American Dream story is largely built on 12 narrative elements, which can be described as "key narrative functions" that form a distinguishable pattern of the examined concept. All examined biographies have in common the following elements: (i) Absentation of at least one parent (abandonment, death); (ii) Violation of certain cultural norms or rules (not fulfilling other people's expectations, for example leaving college, or freeing oneself from parental oppressions); (iii) Meditation, i.e. turning points in a personality's life, the decisive moments (meeting the billionaire, witnessing murder, being molested ...); (iv) Reaction or counteraction that can be interpreted as initial activities taken in order to achieve the goal (creating an album, signing a contract with a modelling agency), (v) Departure (typically as leaving hometown); (vi) The First function of the Donor: in the context of the American Dream, it can be explicit (a person) or implicit (a city – in the case of Madonna or Charlize Theron, it is the city that represents a challenge or even a threat. Once the challenge is passed, both heroines enjoy their city's 'magical' advantages that helped them on their quest, like for example the benefits of agent network in Hollywood); (vii) Struggle is the central theme in the American Dream narrative. It is usually depicted as open combat with the media, agents, movie critics, institutions and other opponents (artists from the entertainment industry); (viii) Difficult task in the American Dream is mostly referred to the efforts to achieve goals: as already emphasized, this element represents the unavoidable hard work, sacrifice and risk taking. All examples show that Solution (ix) is presented as a *set of moral rules*, which guide characters in their most difficult moments. This moral principle is related to the idea of determination, optimism and *work ethics*. Victory (x) is depicted as an upward class mobility, home ownership (personal wealth, estate) and owning one's own business (record labels, own production, own cloth-line). Recognition (xi) is related to cultural capital and social acknowledgement (Oscars, Grammys), and (xii) Transformation is typically associated with physical and psychological conversion ("from no one to someone").

In conclusion, 6 distinctive paired functions can be defined: as shown on the Fig. 1, the typical paired functions featured in American Dream stories are: (i) [Absentation] → [Violation of Interdiction]; (ii) [Mediation] → [Beginning Counteraction]; (iii) [Departure] → [First Function of the Donor]; (iv) [Struggle] → [Victory]; (v) [Difficult Task] → [Solution]; and (vi) [Victory] → [Recognition].

Fig. 1: The narrative functions and pairs of functions based on the biographical data of 6 well-known personalities. Each biography is represented by the media as a typical American Dream story.

	Oprah Winfrey	Jay-Z	Chris Gardner	Arnold Schwarzenegger	Charlize Theron	Madonna
1. ABSENTATION	*	*	*	*	*	*
2. INTERDICTION	*	*	*	*	*	*
3. VIOLATION of INTERDICTION	*	*	*	*	*	*
4. RECONNAISSANCE						
5. DELIVERY	*					*
6. TRICKERY						
7. COMPLICITY						
8. VILLAINY or LACKING	*	*	*	*		
9. MEDIATION, THE CONNECTIVE INCIDENT	*	*	*	*	*	*
10. BEGINNING COUNTERACTION	*	*	*	*	*	*
11. DEPARTURE	*	*	*	*	*	*
12. FIRST FUNCTION OF THE DONOR	*	*	*	*	*	*
13. HERO'S REACTION	*			*	*	*
14. PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT				*	*	
15. SPAT. TRANSFERENCE BTWN 2 KINGDOMS, GUIDANCE				*	*	
16. STRUGGLE	*	*	*	*	*	*
17. BRANDING	*	*	*	*	*	*
18. VICTORY	*	*	*	*	*	*
19. LIQUIDATION			*			
20. RETURN						
21. PURSUIT						
22. RESCUE						
23. UNRECOGNIZED ARRIVAL						
24. UNFOUNDED CLAIMS		*		*		
25. DIFFICULT TASK	*	*	*	*	*	*
26. SOLUTION	*	*	*	*	*	*
27. RECOGNITION	*	*	*	*	*	*
28. EXPOSURE		*				
29. TRANSFIGURATION	*	*	*	*	*	*
30. PUNISHMENT						
31. WEDDING						

## The Archetypal Structure

Another meaningful layer is to be considered in addition to the narrative structure, which is forming a solid fabric of the American Dream, as already shown in the examples above. The distinct features of each character imply that the American Dream is additionally governed by an archetypal structure of a hero. Key findings of Jungian deep analytical psychology can be used here to understand the power of symbolism and to revive the theory of archetypes in contemporary cultural contexts.

First, it is worth noting that Jung struggled with a precise definition of an archetype. There has been a lot of conceptual confusion around this notion, mainly due to its elusive nature (Jung, 1995: p. 75); an arche-

type cannot be attributed solely to personalities (hero, villain, mentor, wizard, shapeshifter, etc.), but also to typical life situations (divorce, marriage, love triangles, etc.). For the purpose of this discussion it will be sufficient to say, that: (i) an archetype always carries a positive and negative aspect and is thus paradoxical in its nature; (ii) archetypes are part of the synthetic process, defined as a process of individuation (*ibid.*); (iii) an archetype is defined as an innate universal prototype of behaviour or pattern of thought.

Despite the conceptual difficulties, it is possible to discern an archetypal structure in the American Dream. The attempt to find parallels between a particular archetype – that is, of the hero – and the main characters in the American Dream narratives can serve as a modest case study that could eventually be extended to the empirical domain by using modern computational methods (see Implications and Discussion).

As already mentioned, the double (binary) aspect of an archetype has been widely discussed in analytical psychology; this binary opposition is commonly known to be present in symbols, archetypes and, broadly speaking, myths. From the perspective of a myth, an American Dream is no exemption and it is worth noting that between the opposites, the symbol always emerges. For example: [Victory] as the most frequent and important narrative function is naturally related to *dramatis personae* category, which, in the case of the American Dream, is represented by the character of a Hero.<sup>31</sup> Looking from the perspective of archetypes and their intrinsic binary nature, the American dream represents two ‘parts’ of the same symbolic entity, where two distinct but mutually dependent oppositions can be identified: (i) the desire to achieve a certain goal; and (ii) the struggle (typically narrativised as an antagonistic and difficult path) that leads towards the satisfaction of that desire, known as the realization of the goal. In the context of psychoanalytic theory, this principle represents the mechanism of delayed gratification, which, to some extent, corresponds to the Freudian Pleasure and Reality Principle, and the structural model of the psyche, where the role of the Ego plays an important part in terms of balancing between the uncoordinated instinctual tendencies of the Id and morality-driven choices of the Superego (Freud, 2010). However, in the context of an archetype theory, the numinous Hero character always acts between binary oppositions, such as obstacles vs. goals. As Jung points out, the hero archetype has existed since the time of immemorial (Jung, 1988: p. 73). Jung writes: “The universal hero myth, for example, always refers to a powerful man or god-man who vanquishes evil

31 As part of the syntax it seems natural to conclude that Victory and Hero are causally connected.

in the form of dragons, serpents, monsters, demons, and so on, and who liberates his people from destruction and death” (Jung, 1988: p. 79). Jung argues that the myth of the hero is the most common myth in the world:

These hero myths vary enormously in detail, but the more closely one examines them the more one sees that structurally they are very similar. They have, that is to say, a universal pattern, even though they were developed by groups or individuals without any direct cultural contact with each other—by, for instance, tribes of Africans or North American Indians, or the Greeks, or the Incas of Peru. Over and over again one hears a tale describing a hero’s miraculous but humble birth, his early proof of superhuman strength, his rapid rise to prominence or power, his triumphant struggle with the forces of evil, his fallibility to the sin of pride (*kybris*), and his fall through betrayal or a “heroic” sacrifice that ends in his death.<sup>32</sup>

In that respect, the main character of the American Dream is a modern reinvention of an eternal symbol that functions in a similar syntax as ancient gods of Greek or any other mythology: in its plain version, the hero always starts poor, works hard, struggles, and wins the battle. This motive then leads to a more complex and fine-grained narrative of the hero, who, faced with many life challenges, works their way through difficulties, – even at their own existential risk – experiences symbolic death and eventually becomes an accomplished personality.<sup>33</sup> At this point it is worth identifying the main conceptual difference between the American Dream hero and the Jungian hero. The difference lies mainly in the complexity of a hero character: the Jungian hero enters various evolutionary stages, from the primitive childish phase and the reckless adolescent phase, to the self-sacrifice stage and the final stage of individuation (Jung, 1988: p. 116), while the American Dream hero demonstrates a simpler version of that archetype: a typical American Dream hero starts as a reckless child, but rapidly becomes extroverted, with their struggles being predominantly external. Nevertheless, the symbolic process of growing up is reflected in the hero’s struggle, while their internal dilemmas are being reduced to “bad moments” or “moments of weakness” (see examples in Madonna’s biography). Deep psychological emphasis on the period of transition (from initiation to maturity) is not as granular as in Jungian de-

32 Jung, 1988: p. 110.

33 The Jungian term of ‘self-actualization’ is to be intentionally avoided, as it is multidimensional in its meaning. It needs to be emphasized that the ideal of the American Dream recognizes personal accomplishment strictly through financial maturity and materialistic achievements.

scriptions; the transition in the American dream narrative serves only as a necessary step to achieve the final (material) goal and *it is not an independent process in which the hero becomes free of binary constraints*. Therefore American Dream stories typically depict a goal-oriented behaviour that is instantaneously focused on material achievement and social recognition, while the Jungian hero archetype follows the quest for wholeness (path of individuation), which by default leads to the process of integrating the conscious and the unconscious. To summarize: the Jungian archetype of a hero is continuously characterized by the psyche's pursuit for individuation (self-actualization). At the final stage, the Jungian hero is able to transcend the oppositions, given by an archetype. The American Dream hero, on the other hand, shares the basic features with their mythological version, except for the final feature of transcendence. Consequently, their existence is confined to the realm of binary oppositions, and within that realm, they strive for material accomplishment and social recognition. Both merits mark their endeavours, which resonate with an ideal of opulence and upward social mobility.

To conclude this section: the pursuit of the goal and the desire behind it forms an intriguing and dynamic couple that usually manifests in a situation like Difficult task or Struggle. Regardless of the political aspects of the American Dream that he studies, Ghosh shares a similar observation: "In the ideology of the Dream, the difficulty of achieving something is precisely what makes it attractive. The whole point is, after all, to overcome seemingly insurmountable odds (Ghosh, 2013: p. 8).

## Implications and Discussion

This paper examined Propp's syntagmatic approach in the context of a modern myth. The narrative functions were used as discrete categories, which did not necessarily follow the sequential order, as proposed by Propp. Regardless of the non-strict order of interrelations between the elements, the functions of the 6 biographical examples given in this paper were successfully identified and paired, as seen in *Fig. 1*. Moreover, the findings suggest that the abstract levels, extracted from each story, share the same and relatively fixed structure. This structure is defined by 12 functions that are present in all story examples. From 12 narrative functions, 6 distinctive function pairs that appear to be typical for the American Dream narrative, were identified.

The applications of narratives, based on the unconscious theory of desire and the pleasure principle (Freud, 2013) are a common practice in a mediated reality. Edward Bernays' seminal work on the manufacture of consent *The engineering of consent* (Bernays, 1955), demonstrates, how con-



cepts can be designed, implemented and collectively perceived with public relations techniques. It can be argued that a myth like the American Dream cannot exist independently; even if carefully structured, it needs to be imposed, forcibly promoted and advertised. It might be hypothesised that the American Dream surpassed the test of time for two reasons. Firstly, the narrative consists of a distinctive pattern – a solid structure that can be immediately recognized by the reader; secondly, the narrative has been vigorously maintained and promoted (produced, reproduced and distributed) by the pop culture industry.

Furthermore, in order for (any) myth to function, the internal mental structures of the human mind need to be aligned with the narrative structure of the myth. The narrative unconsciously draws human's attention and the external engineering of meanings and concepts is inevitably related to the deeper understanding of internal mental processes that follow the narrative as it unfolds. For instance, the core practice of effective public relations is based on the recognition of the hidden layers in storytelling that are closely related to the psychological processes of empathy and identification with the character. In addition to the narrative flow, the myths also possess a potent sentiment. For example, an emotional charge of the American Dream is based on a desire to become a better version of oneself. Desire – the basic emotion of every human being – also serves as a vehicle for external communication and commercialization: the regime of success and individual empowerment has been based on the notion of desire and it is safe to argue that all derivatives of the American Dreams are conditioned by it.

It is reasonable to conclude, that the American Dream has been actively and seamlessly implemented in public discourse; its omnipresence makes this ideal so persistent, that it has become nearly invisible. In other words, due to its permeability, it has become the way to perceive the world, without being aware of its existence, which is a trait, common to all cultural paradigms. However, the implications of the American Dream are manifold and can be identified and examined in various layers and forms of popular culture, such as the Hollywood movie industry,<sup>34</sup> celebrity culture industry, music industry, etc.

The concepts, along with the principled systems of understanding, change with a given culture. Here, it has been argued that the American Dream holds a relatively fixed narrative core that, along with the solid ar-

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34 A short list of examples: *The Great Gatsby* (2013), *The Social Network* (2010), *Rocky* (1976), *An American Tail* (1986), *The Pursuit of Happiness* (2006), *Mr. Smith goes to Washington* (1939), *Little Miss Sunshine* (2006), *Wall Street* (1987), *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps* (2010), *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), *American Beauty* (1999).

chotypical formation, can sustain the test of time. However, the post-structural findings point to the fact that discursive formations – and the American Dream concept cannot be an exemption – do change their course over time. The discussion herein presents a modest attempt to understand the potential of the narrative and archetypal structure of this concept. Nevertheless, further research should take into account two important aspects that are beyond the scope of this paper: firstly, the postmodern forms of the American Dream deserve further attention. As already demonstrated, the persistence of the American Dream lies in its ability to adapt to various media formats and trends. In this regard, the American Dream could be examined as a discursive formation (in strictly Foucauldian terms), where one could observe the social history of the concept, including its post-modern condition: for example, what elements of the American Dream are preserved in non-narrative media formats, such as celebrity reality shows, where material wealth has been intensely displayed?<sup>35</sup> With this approach, the visual cues of the American Dream could be examined through the lens of temporal analysis in order to detect external, i.e. visual changes that might have occurred from its inception to recent adaptations in various media representations. Secondly, the narrative structure as seen in the small sample presented here, already demonstrates traces, typical of the American Dream concept. In order to confirm such a claim and avoid the inevitable bias of a small sample, an analysis should be extended to a considerably larger data-set of biographies. The extraction of morphologies has already been transferring from laborious manual task to automated task, mainly in the field of computational linguistics (Finlayson, 2016: p. 55). Modern computational tools and advancements in machine learning have proved to be methodologically efficient in detecting function levels, embedded in stories, although implicit functions remain problematic (Finlayson, 2016: p. 57). However, the constantly emerging stories reveal a repetitive pattern of basic narrative functions and together with the prospects and advancements of data analytics and machine learning, the field of various popular culture forms can be further examined. At the time of writing this paper, the empirical validation on a large scale data set, related to the topic of the American Dream, still remains underexplored. The possibilities of a computational examination could be extended to studying the basic core of the American Dream narrative and its variable external elements, such as time, settings, etc. By examining the American Dream with temporal analysis, one could: (i) follow the modifications of the concept; (ii) define its fixed structure that sustained it through time;

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35 Here we refer to reality show formats, that depict (strictly in visual terms) the opulence of American Dream, but offer no grand-narratives for example *The Kardashians*.

and (iii) identify the variables of external elements. In a broader sense, a large scale data analysis, combined with in-depth knowledge of anthropology, linguistics and analytical psychology could provide researchers with a clear and comprehensive understanding of the concept and its dynamics over the course of time.

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## Appendix

Functions of dramatis personae according to Propp.<sup>36</sup>

### I. Absentation

The person absenting himself can be a member of the older generation.

(β')

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<sup>36</sup> Propp, V., 1968, 25–65.

An intensified form of absention is represented by the death of parents. ( $\beta^2$ )

Sometimes members of the younger generation absent themselves. ( $\beta^3$ )

## II. Interdiction

A forbidding edict or command is passed upon the hero ('don't go there', 'don't do this'). The hero is warned against some action. ( $\gamma^1$ )

An inverted form of interdiction is represented by an order or a suggestion. ( $\gamma^2$ )

## III. Violation of interdiction

The forms of violation correspond to the forms of interdiction. ( $\delta$ ) The villain enters the story.

Functions II and III form a *paired* element.

## IV. Reconnaissance

The reconnaissance has the aim of finding out the location of children, or sometimes of precious objects, etc. ( $\epsilon^1$ )

An inverted form of reconnaissance is evidenced when the intended victim questions the villain. ( $\epsilon^2$ )

In separate instances one encounters forms of reconnaissance by means of other personages. ( $\epsilon^3$ )

## V. Delivery

The villain receives information about his victim:

The villain directly receives an answer to his question. ( $\zeta^1$ )

An inverted or other form of information-gathering evokes a corresponding answer. ( $\zeta^{2-3}$ )

## VI. Trickery

The villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or of his belongings.

The villain uses persuasion. ( $\eta^1$ )

The villain proceeds to act by the direct application of magical means. ( $\eta^2$ )

## VII. Complicity

The victim submits to deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy:

The hero agrees to all of the villain's persuasions. ( $\theta^1$ )

The hero mechanically reacts to the employment of magical or other means. ( $\theta^2$ )

## VIII. Villainy

The villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family:

The villain abducts a person. ( $A^1$ )

The villain seizes or takes away a magical agent. ( $A^2$ )

The villain pillages or spoils the crops. ( $A^3$ )

The villain seizes the daylight. ( $A^4$ )

The villain plunders in other forms. ( $A^5$ )

- The villain causes bodily injury. (A<sup>6</sup>)  
 The villain causes a sudden disappearance. (A<sup>7</sup>)  
 The villain demands or entices his victim. (A<sup>8</sup>)  
 The villain expels someone. (A<sup>9</sup>)  
 The villain orders someone to be thrown into the sea. (A<sup>10</sup>)  
 The villain casts a spell upon someone or something. (A<sup>11</sup>)  
 The villain effects a substitution. (A<sup>12</sup>)  
 The villain orders a murder to be committed. (A<sup>13</sup>)  
 The villain commits murder. (A<sup>14</sup>)  
 The villain imprisons or detains someone. (A<sup>15</sup>)  
 The villain threatens forced matrimony. (A<sup>16</sup>)  
 The villain makes a threat of cannibalism. (A<sup>17</sup>)  
 The villain torments at night. (A<sup>18</sup>)  
 The villain declares war. (A<sup>19</sup>)

#### **VIII A: Lack**

One member of a family either lacks something or desires to have something:

- Lack of bride. (a<sup>1</sup>)  
 A magical agent is needed. (a<sup>2</sup>)  
*Wondrous* objects are lacking (without magical power). (a<sup>3</sup>)  
 A specific form /.../ is lacking. (a<sup>4</sup>)  
 Rationalized forms /.../ are lacking. (a<sup>5</sup>)  
 Various other forms. (a<sup>6</sup>)

#### **IX. Mediation, the Connective incident**

Misfortune or lack is made known; the hero is approached with a request or command; he is allowed to go or he is dispatched:

- A call for help is given, with the resultant dispatch. (B<sup>1</sup>)  
 The hero is dispatched directly. (B<sup>2</sup>)  
 The hero is allowed to depart from home. (B<sup>3</sup>)  
 Misfortune is announced. (B<sup>4</sup>)  
 The banished hero is transported away from home. (B<sup>5</sup>)  
 The hero condemned to death is secretly freed. (B<sup>5</sup>)  
 A lament is sung. (B<sup>6</sup>)

#### **X. Beginning counteraction**

The seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction. (C)  
 This moment is characteristic only of those tales in which the hero is a seeker. Banished, vanquished, bewitched, and substituted heroes demonstrate no volitional aspiration toward freedom, and in such cases this element is lacking.

#### **XI. Departure**

- The hero leaves home. (↑)

The sign (↑) designates the route of the hero, regardless of whether he is a seeker or not. In certain tales a spatial transference of the hero is absent.

## **XII. The first function of the donor**

The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked, etc., which prepares the way for his receiving either a magical agent or helper:

The donor tests the hero (D<sup>1</sup>)

The donor greets and interrogates the hero. (D<sup>2</sup>)

A dying or deceased person requests the rendering of a service. (D<sup>3</sup>)

A prisoner begs for his freedom. (D<sup>4</sup>)

The hero is approached with a request for mercy. (D<sup>5</sup>)

Disputants request a division of property. (D<sup>6</sup>)

Other requests. (D<sup>7</sup>)

A hostile creature attempts to destroy the hero. (D<sup>8</sup>)

A hostile creature engages the hero in combat. (D<sup>8</sup>)

The hero is shown a magical agent which is offered for exchange. (D<sup>10</sup>)

## **XIII. The hero's reaction**

The hero reacts to the actions of the future donor. /.../ In the majority of instances, the reaction is either positive or negative.

The hero withstands (or does not withstand) a test. (E<sup>1</sup>)

The hero answers (or does not answer) a greeting. (E<sup>2</sup>)

He renders (or does not render) a service to a dead person. (E<sup>3</sup>)

He frees a captive. (E<sup>4</sup>).

He shows mercy to a suppliant. (E<sup>5</sup>)

He completes an apportionment and reconciles the disputants. (E<sup>6</sup>)

The hero performs some other service. (E<sup>7</sup>)

The hero saves himself from an attempt on his life by employing the same tactics used by his adversary. (E<sup>8</sup>)

The hero vanquishes (or does not vanquish) his adversary. (E<sup>9</sup>)

The hero agrees to an exchange, but immediately employs the magic power of the object exchanged against the barterer. (E<sup>10</sup>)

## **XIV. Provision or receipt of a magical agent**

The hero acquires the use of a magical agent:

The agent is directly transferred. (F<sup>1</sup>)

The agent is pointed out. (F<sup>2</sup>)

The agent is prepared. (F<sup>3</sup>)

The agent is sold and purchased. (F<sup>4</sup>)

The agent falls into the hands of the hero by chance (is found by him). (F<sup>5</sup>)

The agent suddenly appears of its own accord. (F<sup>6</sup>)

The agent is eaten or drunk. (F<sup>7</sup>)

The agent is seized. (F<sup>8</sup>)

Various characters place themselves at the disposal of the hero. (F<sup>9</sup>)

### **XV. Spatial transference between two kingdoms, guidance**

The hero is transferred, delivered, or led to the whereabouts of an object of search:

The hero flies through the air. (G<sup>1</sup>)

He travels on the ground or on water. (G<sup>2</sup>)

He is led. (G<sup>3</sup>)

The route is shown to him. (G<sup>4</sup>)

He makes use of stationary means of communication. (G<sup>5</sup>)

He follows bloody tracks. (G<sup>6</sup>)

### **XVI. Struggle**

The hero and the villain join in direct combat.

This form needs to be distinguished from the struggle (fight) with a hostile donor. These two forms can be distinguished by their results. If the hero obtains an agent, for the purpose of further searching, as the result of an unfriendly encounter, this would be element D. If, on the other hand, the hero receives through victory the very object of his quest, we have situation H.

They fight in an open field. (H<sup>1</sup>)

They engage in a competition. (H<sup>2</sup>)

They play cards. (H<sup>3</sup>)

### **XVII. Branding, marking**

The hero is branded:

A brand is applied to the body. (J<sup>1</sup>)

The hero receives a ring or a towel. (J<sup>2</sup>)

### **XVIII. Victory**

The villain is defeated:

The villain is beaten in open combat. (I<sup>1</sup>)

He is defeated in a contest. (I<sup>2</sup>)

He loses at cards. (I<sup>3</sup>)

He loses on being weighed. (I<sup>4</sup>)

He is killed without a preliminary fight. (I<sup>5</sup>)

He is banished directly. (I<sup>6</sup>)

### **XIX. Liquidation**

The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated. /.../ the narrative reaches its peak in this function.

The object of a search is seized by the use of force or cleverness. (K<sup>1</sup>)

The object of search is obtained by several personages at once, through a rapid interchange of their actions. (K<sup>2</sup>)

The object of search is obtained with the help of enticements. (K<sup>3</sup>)



The object of a quest is obtained as the direct result of preceding actions. (K<sup>4</sup>)

The object of search is obtained instantly through the use of a magical agent. (K<sup>5</sup>)

The use of a magical agent overcomes poverty. (K<sup>6</sup>)

The object of search is caught. (K<sup>7</sup>)

The spell on a person is broken. (K<sup>8</sup>)

A slain person is revived. (K<sup>9</sup>)

A captive is freed. (K<sup>10</sup>)

## **XX. Return**

The hero returns. (↓)

## **XXI. Pursuit, chase**

The hero is pursued:

The pursuer flies after the hero. (Pr<sup>1</sup>)

He demands the guilty person. (Pr<sup>2</sup>)

He pursues the hero, rapidly transforming himself into various animals, etc. (Pr<sup>3</sup>)

Pursuers (dragons' wives, etc.) turn into alluring objects and place themselves in the path of the hero. (Pr<sup>4</sup>)

The pursuer tries to devour the hero. (Pr<sup>5</sup>)

The pursuer attempts to kill the hero. (Pr<sup>6</sup>)

He tries to gnaw through a tree in which the hero is taking refuge. (Pr<sup>7</sup>)

## **XXII. Rescue**

Rescue of the hero from pursuit:

He is carried away through the air. (Rs<sup>1</sup>)

The hero flees, placing obstacles in the path of his pursuer. (Rs<sup>2</sup>)

The hero, while in flight, changes into objects which make him unrecognizable. (Rs<sup>3</sup>)

The hero hides himself during his flight. (Rs<sup>4</sup>)

The hero is hidden by blacksmiths. (Rs<sup>5</sup>)

The hero saves himself while in flight by means of rapid transformations into animals, stones, etc. (Rs<sup>6</sup>)

He avoids the temptations of transformed she-dragons. (Rs<sup>7</sup>)

He does not allow himself to be devoured. (Rs<sup>8</sup>)

He is saved from an attempt on his life. (Rs<sup>9</sup>)

He jumps to another tree. (Rs<sup>10</sup>)

## **XXIII. Unrecognized arrival**

The hero, unrecognized, arrives home or in another country. (o)

## **XXIV. Unfounded claims**

A false hero presents unfounded claims. (L)

**XXV. Difficult task**

A difficult task is proposed to the hero. (M)

Ordeal by food and drink.

Ordeal by fire.

Riddle guessing and similar ordeals.

Ordeal of choice.

To kiss the princess in a window.

To jump up on top of the gates.

Test of strength, adroitness, fortitude.

Test of endurance.

Tasks of supply and manufacture.

Other tasks.

**XXVI. Solution**

The task is resolved. (N)

**XXVII. Recognition**

The hero is recognized (Q).

He is recognized by a mark, a brand (a wound, a star marking), or by a thing given to him (a ring, towel). In this case, recognition serves as a function corresponding to branding and marking. The hero is also recognized by his accomplishment of a difficult task (this is almost always preceded by an unrecognized arrival).

**XXVIII. Exposure**

The false hero or the villain is exposed. (Ex)

**XXIX. Transfiguration**

The hero is given a new appearance. (T)

A new appearance is directly effected by means of the magical action of a helper. (T<sup>1</sup>)

The hero builds a marvellous palace. (T<sup>2</sup>)

The hero puts on new garments. (T<sup>3</sup>)

Rationalized and humorous forms. (T<sup>4</sup>)

**XXX. Punishment**

The villain is punished. (U)

**XXXI. Wedding**

The hero is married and ascends the throne. (W)