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■ THE TOKEN HERO'S JOURNEY: RECONCEPTUALIZING THE LITERARY HERO

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Monomit Džozefa Kempbela poznat i pod imenom 'put heroja' je niz strukturalnih sastavnica koje vode ka statusu heroja. 'Put' predstavlja ideju odgode kako se manifestira u procesu sticanja statusa heroja. Status se pridodaje heroju od strane kolektivne svijesti odmah na početku 'puta', ali se odgađa na neodređeno od strane samog heroja. Heroj se odstranjuje od koncepta i pretvara u znak u momentu kada je obilježen istim. 'Put' je produkt herojevog nastojanja da konstruiše strukturalni šablon koji bi ga odveo do samog koncepta 'heroj'. Kolektivna svijest percipira heroja u vidu metonomske sekvence, dok sam heroj putuje metaforском osom. Heroj je označen od strane kolektivne svijesti koja ga zapravo smatra znakom. Ova vrsta konceptualne strukture stvara ograničen kontinuum 'heroizma'. Kako bi analizirali ovaj kontinuum autori su konstruisali alat koji se bazira na kronotopu Mihaila Bahtina. Osnovna forma kronotopa je adaptirana kako bi se mogli predstaviti mnogostruki slojevi unutar priče, te paralelni narativi. Kako bi testirali alat, autori predstavljaju probnu analizu 'Beskrajne priče' Mihael Endea. Rad postavlja niz zaključaka relevantnih ne samo za književni svijet, već i društvo u cjelini.

Ključne riječi: heroj, koncept, kronotop, putovanje, odgoda.

1. INTRODUCTION

As any avid movie-goer will know, in the past few years it has been virtually impossible to go to a cinema without a life-size cardboard cutout of a superhero towering above you at the entrance. The familiar firm stance makes the moviegoers arch their heads as they look up to the stern yet kind face of the man or woman who

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is destined to save the world – yet again. The heroes we watch possess superhuman strength or speed, they can wield powerful weapons or control the elements, they are also usually male (although the number of movie heroines has been on the rise), and all, if not most of them, are mortal. The most definitive trait of heroes, and the one that enables us to connect with them, is that their lives are also finite. Their other features serve to distinguish them from the common people, but their mortality differentiates them from gods. Only when set against the weight of possible death do such features as courage, beauty, cunning, and goodness carry any meaning. A hero's trials would mean little if he could leave them unscathed; his journey would be meaningless if it was not marked by an end. And this trait does not stem from 21st century cinema, but can be traced back to ancient Mesopotamia, more than 4 millennia ago.

One of the oldest known literary works tells the story of a hero. Written presumably in 2100 BC, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is the tale of a mighty mortal who is one-third god and therefore the strongest being on Earth. After his foe-turned-friend Enkidu dies, Gilgamesh goes in search for immortality. His search proves to be in vain as he learns that, much like mortals, he is also barred from immortality. And although Gilgamesh remains the first hero in literature, he certainly is not the last. Heroes are at heart of the great epics, and it is their stories we read in *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, in *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, and in *The Aeneid*.

Therefore, when we break box office records to see the latest and greatest superhero on the big screen, we do so because heroes have always been a part of who we are. The hero construct is so deeply imbedded in our thinking that it is evoked and administered to a variety of situations and individuals. When making what is bound to be a new summer blockbuster, moviemakers consciously or unconsciously appeal to one of the oldest human constructs in order to get us into theater seats. The concepts of 'heroism' and 'hero' cannot be tied down to a handful of representatives. These concepts proliferated through centuries, were given a variety of features, changed their signifiers, but they nevertheless retained that initial ideal of humankind – a superman.

2. THE HERO FROM NIETZSCHE TO DERRIDA

The idea of a superman has influenced some of the greatest minds in history. It was especially dominant in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche. The word *Übermensch*, which is nowadays almost synonymous with Nietzsche, was used by a number of writers before him, and in German "the word had already been used by Müller, Herder, Novalis, Heine, and most importantly by Goethe in relation to Faust". (Cybulska 2012: 1) Nevertheless, it was Nietzsche who popularized the term and the concept of the *Übermensch*. The concept itself was never fully explicated by Nietzsche, but the *overman* or *superman* – as it was translated in English – was a being who managed to surpass the constraints of the common man and unify the opposites raging within. The superman is utterly free, removed from mankind, but not a deity. For Nietzsche, the *Übermensch* is the ideal human, the autochthonous salvation: "I entreat you my brethren, remain true to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of supra-terrestrial hopes!" (Nietzsche 2009a) The superman is also a vision, a being yet to come, a concept not embodied

by anything in existence. The *Übermensch* can be considered a manifestation of Nietzsche's preoccupation with the past, and the inescapable prison of genealogy to which he is subject as well. For Nietzsche the *Übermensch* serves as means of escape from mortality. He "associates himself with the classic birth of the hero" (Strong 1981: 318), in as much as he tries to remove himself from his parentage and advertise the unique circumstances of his birth:

The good fortune of my existence (Daseins), perhaps its uniqueness, lies in its frailty: to express it in the form of a riddle, as my father I have already died, as my mother I still live and become old. This double descent, at once from the highest and the lowest rung on the ladder of life, at the same time decadent and beginning-this, if anything at all, explains the neutrality, that freedom from partiality in relation to the general problem (Gesamtpproblem) of life, that characterizes me. (Nietzsche 2009b)

It is interesting to consider what sort of conclusions would arise if one of Nietzsche's contemporaries had the chance to analyze his apparent obsession with the *Übermensch*. The Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist Carl Gustav Jung was one of the people deeply influenced by the philosophy of Nietzsche, so much so that in 1934 he held a seminar on Nietzsche's "Thus Spoke Zarathustra". Jung's work immensely influenced popular psychology and spirituality, but in terms of heroes, Jung's greatest contribution was the invention of archetypes – underlying patterns of character found in the collective unconscious. According to Jung, the hero archetype is one of the oldest archetypes found in the collective unconscious, and it represents the psyche's quest for individuation, for what makes it unique. Jung sees archetypes as "countless experiences of our ancestors [...] the psychic residue of numberless experiences of the same type." (as cited in Gordon 1968: 7) For Jung, the hero archetype is a construct which, much like Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, consoles opposites - in this case the ones between consciousness and unconsciousness. The hero's journey is then the road of individuation, paved by trials which serve to make the unconscious subservient to the conscious.

The most prominent theory dealing with the structure of that journey comes from Joseph Campbell. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) introduces the idea of the monomyth, or the hero's Journey, which through a number of steps follows the hero on his road to individuation. Campbell's work correlated with the literary theory de jour. A group of theorists, spearheaded by the likes of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roland Barthes, introduced structuralism into literary analysis. A stellar example of the theory in practice is Lévi-Strauss's 1955 analysis of the Oedipus myth, where he identified the key patterns, or gross constituent units, which can be found in a variety of interpretations of the myth. Similarly, Campbell's hero journey consists of three main sections and several subsections. The hero is defined as:

[T]he man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms. Such a one's visions, ideas, and inspirations come pristine from the primary springs of human

life and thought. Hence they are eloquent, not of the present, disintegrating society and psyche, but of the unquenched source through which society is reborn. His second solemn task and deed therefore ... is to return then to us, transfigured, and teach the lesson he has learned of life renewed (Campbell 2004: 19-20).

Campbell's monomyth divides the hero's journey into departure, initiation, and return. While this tripartition is constant, the seventeen subsections are subject to change and may or may not be present in a particular manifestation of the monomyth. The initial purpose of the monomyth was the creation of a pattern which is comprehensive and all-encompassing. The underpinnings of the monomyth certainly resemble the work of the structuralist scholars. The structural man, as Barthes states, "takes the real, decomposes it, then recomposes it" (Barthes 1972), the result being an entirely new creation, an overarching, governing concept. Structuralism aims to identify the mythemes inside a myth, the bundles of relation between individual constituent units. (Lévi-Strauss 1983) This is possible because a structuralist perceives myths as language. In the words of Lévi-Strauss: "Myth is language, functioning on an especially high level where meaning succeeds practically at 'taking off' from the linguistic ground on which it keeps rolling." (Lévi-Strauss 1983: 210) Here one has to have in mind the langue and parole axes, with meaning leaping in vertical jumps from linguistic ground of parole, which keeps on unfolding as in the first oral telling of the myth.

However, the main weakness of structuralism is that its aim of finding structures within text required the creation of hierarchies and groups of blanket terms which would account for a certain synchronic cross section of data. The foundation of structuralism in Saussurean linguistics based the identification of these synchronic cross sections in terms of negative knowledge, or differentiability. This entails that there is a negation of genesis, or cause, and in that, of a positive sign. The critique of this apparent contradiction is at the heart of a paper which proved detrimental for structuralism as such – Jacques Derrida's *Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences* (1967).

Derrida is considered one of the most controversial and influential figures of the 20th century, mainly as a result of his philosophy of Deconstruction. In Deconstruction, there must be a cause, a genesis of all the structures, and that genesis must be structured in itself. Therefore, a series of synchronic discrete units must have a diachronic unfolding. In deconstruction one might say that there is nothing but the diachronic unfolding, a signified following a signified ad infinitum, deferring the final meaning indefinitely. Derrida calls this uncertainty of meaning *différance*. For Derrida, the only governing unit was the center, which in itself was contradictory, and therefore indefinable. The concept of the center which is not a center is explained as follows:

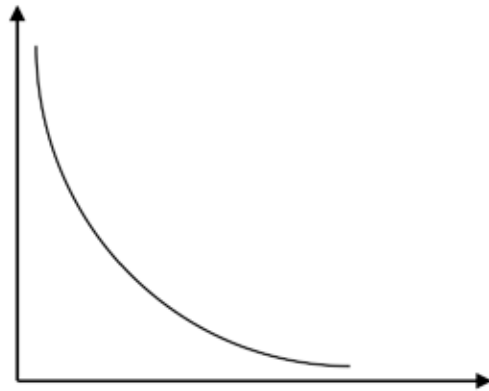
The center also closes off the free play it opens up and makes possible. Qua center, it is the point at which the substitution of contents, elements, or terms is no longer possible. At the center, the permutation or the transformation of elements (which may of course be structures enclosed within a structure) is forbidden. At least this permutation has always remained interdicted (I use this word deliberately). Thus it has always been thought that the center, which is by definition unique, constituted that very thing within a structure which governs the structure, while

escaping structurality. This is why classical thought concerning structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, within the structure and outside it. The center is at the center of the totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality), the totality has its center elsewhere. The center is not the center. The concept of centered structure—although it represents coherence itself, the condition of the epistémé as philosophy or science—is contradictorily coherent. And, as always, coherence in contradiction expresses the force of a desire. (Derrida 1967: 1)

In other words, the concept at the heart of the structure is never there. It exists as a governing force which limits free play, imposing a sort of circumference on the proliferation of the signified. This brings us back to Jung's archetype hero, and the concept of the hero itself. If the concept of hero, this essence of a whole structure of heroism, is not at the center of its structure, what does the hero's journey lead to? In order to answer this question and analyze the concept of a hero, we must analyze its contrasting concept as well, which we take to be the collective. At the heart of heroism then is the dichotomy between a hero and the collective and the constant back and forth in which they engage in.

3. CHRONOTOPE AND METAPHOR IN THE PLOTTING OF A MONOMYTH

To begin the analysis of this dichotomy, we must first establish a tool which will enable us to operate with both abstract and concrete elements, insofar as a literary work can be said to possess concreteness. The initial form of that tool would be a somewhat simple coordinate system, consisting of two axes. (Picture 3.1) When analyzing the monomyth the usage of the axes to plot the sequence seems almost obvious. There are a number of advantages to using this device, including its simplicity and a rather straightforward yet effective way of tracking the narrative. Nevertheless, the axes system is severely restricted



Picture 3.1
The horizontal and vertical axes system.

in that it is only effective if we operate in binaries. With the monomyth this seems to certainly be true. The Hero's journey is a series of discrete units which follow each other within a sequence of finite steps. The plotted units are representations of inner conflicts which the Hero has to resolve on his journey to individuation. The inner conflict would then be found within the vertical axis as a single unit of meaning. The essential elements

on the axis are then time containing meaning and the sequence of time events itself. The main issue then with the usage of axes would be that we are using a two-dimensional tool to represent multi-dimensional worlds. Therefore, we end up with an incomplete analysis of the narrative which omits a crucial factor in the journey of a Hero – space. In order to resolve this we will employ Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotope as the main tool for the analysis of the monomyth.

Defining the chronotope is not a simple task. Bakhtin himself was never particularly clear regarding its definition. Therefore our first task is to establish a working definition which will be treated as an axiom for the continuation of the analysis. Essentially, the chronotope is a tool for narrative analysis which employs the idea of space-time, a concept although analogous, not equal to space-time in physics. The chronotope seeks to find certain structures and forms which are fixed in human cognition:

Bakhtin's assessment of narrative genres, moreover, contributes to a theoretical tradition that underscores the cognitive functionality of literary genres; the belief, that is, that fixed poetic and narrative structures should be understood as means for storing and conveying forms of human experience and knowledge. (Bemong et al. 2010: 8)

A chronotope then is a cognitive concept as much as it is a narrative feature of the text. The chronotope represents the cognitive perception of space-time as they occur simultaneously and interdependently. The chronotope additionally has a link with the structuralist tradition, in that it serves as a tool of generalization and reduction. An analysis of the world can only begin to make sense if we begin "by reducing the number of its meanings – which are potentially infinite – to a restricted set". (Holquist 2002: 46) This restricted set then serves as a structure which can be augmented and built on. In essence, the chronotope is "an integral way of understanding experience, and a ground for visualizing and representing human life" (Morson & Emerson 1990: 375) as it is conceptualized and interpreted within a literary work.

The chronotope seems to share a great number of concepts and ideas with its predecessors. It obviously shares a strong tie with the Saussurean semiotic system, although it departs from its basic notions. The essence of the chronotope is the concept of dialogism which says that all language is dialogue. Just as signs in the Saussurean can only be known negatively, in differentiation with other signs, so can utterances only be recognized within a dialogue, triggered by previous utterances. An utterance can never exist on its own, and unlike the sign in the Saussurean system, it does not disband the idea of a cause, but in fact enforces diachronic sequencing as the genesis of dialogue. The utterance in language is an event in the chronotope, and similarly "an event is always a dialogic unit in so far as it is a correlation: something happens only when something else with which it can be compared reveals a change in time and space." (Holquist 2002: 116) This is as far as the similarities between Bakhtin's and Saussure's system go. The inner and the individual speech of the speaker, as contrasted with the greater abstract unit of language of the collective, was by Saussure labeled as an idiosyncrasy which did not fit the binary system. Bakhtin on the other hand treats the inner speech as a dialogue in itself.

The individual aspects of the “inner duality” that Saussure began with are quickly consigned to an unanalyzable chaos of idiosyncrasy, and it is the social aspect of the duality alone on which Saussure founds his science of language. As a thinker whose paradigm is still dialectic (and thus binary) rather than dialogic, he cannot entertain both possibilities simultaneously. Having recognized the duality and its attendant complexities, he quickly retreats into the conceptual safety of an either/ or opposition. In other words, Saussure abandons the self in the service of the other. (Holquist 2002: 44)

The dialogism of a chronotope allows us to analyze the work within a multidimensional system. Additionally, it allows us to question the conceptual networks built within the self, within the other, and the constructs that bind the two together. In the analysis of narrative, the chronotope has two functions:

[T]he founding or ‘indispensable’ assumptions of a genre (or indeed any utterance) which themselves may never be the objects of representation and yet shape the parameters of the way that spatial and temporal relationships are ‘artistically expressed’ in a given genre: and how these ‘appropriated aspects of reality’ are used to articulate the specific meaning of a ‘concrete artistic cognition’ or artifact... as a fundamental working assumption that shapes the genre’s way of seeing reality, it should provide an analytic framework for understanding how and why each genre ‘is adapted to conceptualizing some aspects of experience better than others’. (Branham 2002: 165-6)

The first function is the identification of those centers within a specific genre that seem to limit the free play, or the ‘parameter’ and are at the same time never within the object of representation. One naturally calls into mind Derrida’s *center which is not a center* at this point. The second function of the chronotope is more structuralist than post-structuralist, in that it seeks to find an analytic framework which would enable us to understand why a certain plotting fits certain genres. In other words, why are some structures better at representing parts of the real world than others? In the case of the monomyth we will use the teleological chronotope, arguing how the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic finality define the Hero throughout the journey. The teleological chronotope depends on finiteness; the finality of the journey whose main aim is the attainment of the equilibrium between all the parties involved in a number of dialogues:

Teleological – or monological – chronotopes characterize traditional narratives in which the entire plot moves towards the final moment (the “Eschaton”). Here, the curve of suspense is constructed as an alternation between chronotopes of equilibrium and conflict. Conflicts in these narratives are simply external obstacles in the course of the hero’s journey to a state of equilibrium. (Bemong et al. 2010: 7)

The point of interest here is what finiteness implies. The finality of the journey would presumably be the attainment of the equilibrium. However, this does not necessarily mean that finality has been reached. Mortality is the key difference between

a deus-like hero, and a deity, hence, finality can be interpreted as the death of the Hero. Therefore, a Hero's journey must not necessarily entail a completed action, but rather an interrupted process which was never meant to be finished. The unfolding of the narrative happens alongside a finite heroic continuum.

Finally, we reach the point concerning the other dimension of this analytic tool. Aside from the space-time system, the plotting of the narrative has to contain a semiotic level of analysis. If we imagine the chronotope as a horizontal plain, then points of meaning are the small delves carved in it, similar to a relief. Space-time exists as the ground on which meaning unfolds. As such it is shaped by and it shapes the constructed meanings. The chronotope, the space-time of the narrative is the footing on which a structure is built. To quote Bakhtin:

We [...] endow all phenomena with meaning, that is, we incorporate them not only into the sphere of spatial and temporal existence, but also into the semantic sphere [...] every entry into the sphere of meaning is accomplished only through the gates of the chronotope. (Bakhtin 1975: 406)

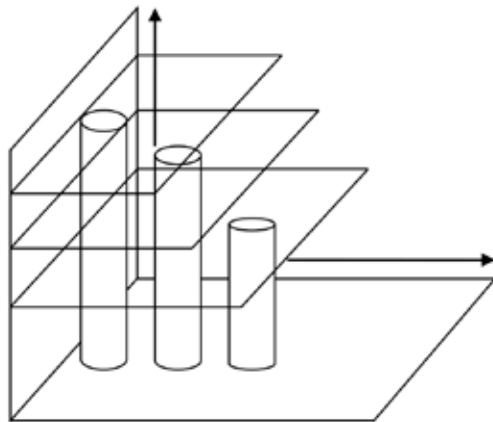
The meaning which manifests on the surface of the chronotope is only intelligible through an interpretation of the event which is a metaphorical unit. A good working definition of a metaphor defines the figure as "a unitary meaning arising out of (verbal) interaction of disparate conceptual units from different universes of discourse or semantic domains". (Suvin 1986: 2) If we observe metaphor as a cognitive organ on, then its main role seems to be the mediation in the interpretation of two semantic domains. Thus, metaphor would be analogous to dialogue itself – the abstract field in which meaning is negotiated. On how many levels the dialogue develops is determined by the plotting of the narrative. Additionally, the sign or the utterances which constitute the chronotope, in this case the Hero and the Collective, have to be observed as they manifest in certain splits of space-time-cum-meaning:

[T]here is no neat, one-line definition of the motivated sign as it plays a role in dialogism. Rather, we shall have to pursue the work of signification as it manifests itself at different points in the hierarchy of levels where utterance is shaped. (Holquist 2002: 46)

These points are the events in the chronotope. If we were to place the gross constituent units of the monomyth onto the surface of the chronotope, we would get a maximum seventeen distinct events, with the caveat that not all seventeen must necessarily occur. A myth can isolate only a few elements of the sequence and greatly enlarge them, thus making them the basis of the narrative. Other elements might be present to a lesser extent, or not at all. They unfold in a metonymical fashion, with the perpetual *and* (Derrida's *es/est* distinction) tying them into succession. Nevertheless, the events are roughly categorized in an interdependent sequence of departure, initiation, and return – a typical tripartite division of the narrative. The monomyth itself is best summarized by its creator:

The mythological hero, setting forth from his common-day hut or castle, is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds, to the threshold of adventure. There he encounters a shadow presence that guards the passage. The hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go alive into the kingdom of the dark (brother-battle, dragon-battle; offering, charm), or be slain by the opponent and descend in death (dismemberment, crucifixion). Beyond the threshold, then, the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, some of which severely threaten him (tests), some of which give magical aid (helpers). When he arrives at the nadir of the mythological round, he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward. The triumph may be represented as the hero's sexual union with the goddess-mother of the world (sacred marriage), his recognition by the father-creator (father atonement), his own divinization (apotheosis), or again — if the powers have remained unfriendly to him—his theft of the boon he came to gain (bride-theft, fire-theft); intrinsically it is an expansion of consciousness and therewith of being (illumination, transfiguration, freedom). The final work is that of the return. If the powers have blessed the hero, he now sets forth under their protection (emissary); if not, he flees and is pursued (transformation flight, obstacle flight). At the re- turn threshold the transcendental powers must remain behind; the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of dread (return, resurrection). The boon that he brings restores the world (elixir). (Campbell 2004: 227)

The units of the monomyth should be interpreted metaphorically. The myth of the Hero's journey is, after all, the road towards individuation. As such, each conflict the hero encounters is a reflection of the inner struggle. The metonymical and the metaphorical succession of events occur on different levels of cognition. Therefore, a linear, two-dimensional tool for narrative analysis would fail to capture the complex layering of the Hero's journey. A chronotope resolves this issue by providing us a three-dimensional surface on which events can be plotted on a number of strata. (Picture 1.2) This enables us to keep track of imbedded narratives and subplots as they develop within the frame chronotope. Additionally, it allows us to draw a sharp distinction between the events on the level of metaphor and metonymy, with metonymy being the very ground (space-time) on which a metaphor unfolds. The metaphor is the dialogic space, a medium between concepts and their manifestation on the surface of the chronotope.



Picture 3.2 A visual representation of a multi-layered chronotope.

The metaphor negotiates meaning between the semantic domains of the other, the self, and the self and itself. As such, the strata of the chronotope will be divided into levels of metaphorical interpretation.

4. THE HERO AND THE COLLECTIVE

After identifying the tool of analysis, and the basic structure of the event sequence, we turn our attention to the participants of the metaphorical dialogue. Obviously, one of them is the Hero. He or she, because gender only slightly affects the event development, is the constant participant in the dialogue; one around which the chronotope develops. The second participant of the dialogue we will name the collective. In addition to being a pragmatic solution to the issue of a multitude of minor characters, the concept of a collective implies an underpinning of Freudian and Jungian psychology. The collective is a general term which envelops not just individual characters, but also the entire population inhabiting space-time. It needs to be understood as the binary opposite of the Hero, an individual (we use this term cautiously) who is in constant dialogue with the collective, as well as with his or her own self.

It must be highlighted that by the time the Hero receives the call to adventure he is already established as a hero. The very act of receiving the call implies that the individual invited is a hero. A Hero's journey is therefore not a journey towards becoming a hero, but the journey of a Hero. What characteristics single out the individual from the collective are yet to be discussed. First of all, however, the two dialogues need to be examined in detail. The first dialogue is the one between the collective and the Hero which unfolds within the same semiotic sign system, meaning that:

The group as a collective and the individual members who comprise it all share the same language, which is whatever language (or more accurately, whatever assemblage of possible discourses) they use to communicate with each other in their day-to-day activity. (Holquist 2002: 53)

However, while they communicate with the same system, that does not necessarily mean they communicate on the same level. The collective in the dialogue has to be perceived as an element of the chronotope, if not the chronotope itself. The Bakhtinian condensation of time which created space could very well have also made the collective. The collective is a one-minded conception; it grows out of the chronotope as its animate extension. It is a metonymical product of perpetual additions, complementation, and growth. The Hero then is the product of a metaphor, a single unit of incomplete individuality which was not grown out of the chronotope and as such does not belong to it. The Hero is the synchronic unit, the standalone *I* which is in constant dialogue with the *self*, and with the *other*. The tension between the *I* and the other is essentially linguistic, in that:

Language is "charged with chronotopic energy", and the vitality of language "grows, in part, out of the tension between the 'centrifugal' chronotopic implications of

individual words and phrases, and the 'centripetal' forces [such as syntax] that subordinate these centrifugal energies to coherent overarching meanings. (Ladin, cited in Bemong et al. 2010: 6)

The I moves in a centrifugal fashion, away from the center. This is counter intuitive as the Hero's journey is perceived as the road to individuation. But the road to individuation is precisely in the direction away from the center. The center is never in the center. What is creating the centripetal whirlpool is the chronotope, the collective, which is itself a token center – a temporary object of the concept of structure. The Hero's journey is a journey away from the center of the chronotope – a journey upwards. The Hero moves alongside the vertical axis, resolving the conflicting dialogue. The collective moves alongside the metonymical axis, the chronotope itself, perpetuating the conflicting dialogue. The tension in the dialogue then is its bifurcated direction, which is, paradoxically, what also drives the dialogue in the first place. The utterance of the Hero is always a response to a previous utterance. In other words:

[A]ddressivity is expressivity; what we usually call life is not a mysterious vitalistic force, but an activity, the dialogue between events addressed to me in the particular place I occupy in existence, and my expression of a response to such events from that unique place. (Holquist 2002: 47)

The Hero's journey is the search away from the center for the 'center', in this case, the center of the concept 'hero'. The Hero moves through events which enable him to carve his or her own conceptual network. The events are successive and require completion in the form of the resolution of the dialogue between the I and the self.

First, each makes the non-intuitive assumption that the subject at the heart of identity, the agent of perception, is invisible to itself. And secondly, the only self that is visible to the individual subject – despite its defining task of bringing the manifold variety of the world into a meaningful unity – is not noumenal. It is a construction, moreover a construction that is itself not singular. (Holquist in Bemong et al. 2010: 30)

This inner dialogue unfolds simultaneously with the dialogue between the collective and the individual. What defines the Hero as a standalone unit is that his or her drive stems from resolutions of inner conflicts, between the self and the I, not the outer ones, between the self and the other. If the hero were to advance alongside the metonymical axis, and devote his journey to the resolution of conflicts with the collective, he would merge with it and become a part of the chronotope. Therefore, a Hero is considered as such only as long as he is in conflict with the collective. This conflict does not necessarily possess a violent nature. The dialogue is a field of conceptual discourse, where the Hero is urged to disregard the collective patterns. For the collective, the Hero is a type of the concept 'hero', the very personification of the ideal and the object of desire. If the Hero were to respond to this conceptual patterning, he or she would proclaim an apotheosis, effectively renouncing the finite hero status, and removing themselves from the

concept entirely. The Hero's journey towards the center of the concept is only possible as long as he or she is aware of their token status. In essence, the dialogue between the collective and the Hero is a succession of differentiability. The discourse is comprised of signs which build upon each other infinitely, not allowing final meaning to materialize. Therefore, the Hero's journey is a continuum of change:

Meaning comes about in both the individual psyche and in shared social experience through the medium of the sign, for in both spheres understanding comes about as a response to a sign with signs. Since, therefore, there is no sign in itself, every given sign is a link in the great chain comprising all other signs. (Holquist 2002: 48)

This brings us to the conclusion that the collective and the Hero exist in a reciprocal relationship. The conflict is sustained by the tension in the dialogue, which is only possible due to the dichotomized patterns of development. The conflict must not be resolved, since its core consists of the type-token misconstruction on the part of the collective. The Hero builds the ground of their conceptual pattern on the metonymical field, and their metaphorical discourse is only possible because of the restraints placed in the Hero by space-time. The Hero's journey is the search for freedom; for an identity purified of space-time constructs. It is the ultimate deconstruction of concepts.

5. A SAMPLE ANALYSIS OF MICHAEL ENDE'S "THE NEVERENDING STORY"

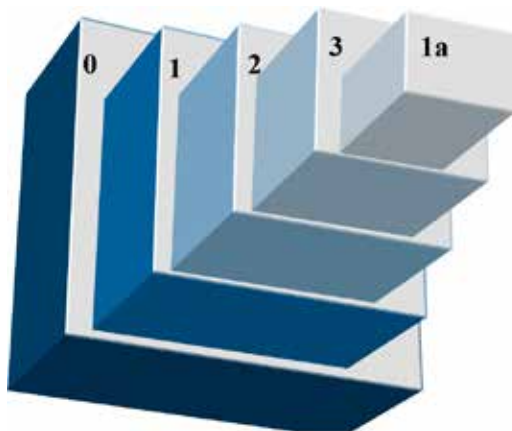
Michael Ende's "The Neverending Story" is one of the most famous children books written in German language. Published in 1976, the novel garnered international success, spanning numerous sequels, adaptations to film and series, as well as theater.

The story follows a day in the life of Bastian Balthazar Bux, a chubby child who is bullied by his peers and neglected by his father who is still mourning the loss of his wife. While fleeing from his schoolmates, Bastian stumbles upon an antique bookshop, where he discovers, and steals a book entitled *The Neverending Story*. The book tells the story of a land called Fantastica, where the Childlike Empress, the metaphorical deity of the world, is suffering from nothingness which is consuming the land. She entrusts the young boy Atreyu with finding the cure for her. With his adventures Atreyu slowly pulls Bastian into the story, which was the Childlike Empress' plan from the beginning. Her cure is a new name which only a child from the real world can give her. After doing this, Bastian becomes a part of the book, and bestowed with godlike powers in the form of the pendant AURYN, which is heavily charged with references to Rabelais's *Abbey of Thélème* with its "Do What Thou Wilt" inscription, he starts constructing the is new land of Fantastica. Slowly being consumed by power, he tries to proclaim himself as the new Emperor, but he is stopped by Atreyu, which effectively saves his life. Bastian returns to the real world after Atreyu takes up the burden of finishing the creation of Fantastica.

The Neverending Story is at its core, an extremely complex piece of writing. As it so often happens, children's books have a much deeper and profounder narrative than the superficial reading seems to suggest. The complexity of *The Neverending Story* stems

from Ende's layered plotting and the wide scope of referentiality in the text. The layered plotting progresses through a monomythical pattern which is driven by two characters. To further complicate the issue, the chronotope is constructed in stages, raising it at several points to the level of metatextuality. To begin with, we will address the layers of the plotting.

The initial layer, with which the novel opens, is the 'real' (1) world of Bastian Bux. It is an unnamed city, presumably in Germany, and it contains, as far as the reader is concerned, the antique bookstore, Bastian's school, and his home. The second layer is the world of the first *Fantastica* (2), which is being consumed by nothingness. The first *Fantastica* is Atreyu's chronotope, on which his monomyth unfolds. The third world comes into creation when the Childlike Empress interrupts the cycle of infinity, effectively bringing Bastian into the story. The second version of *Fantastica* (3) is constructed by Bastian, and its construction is metatextual in that Bastian is aware of himself creating



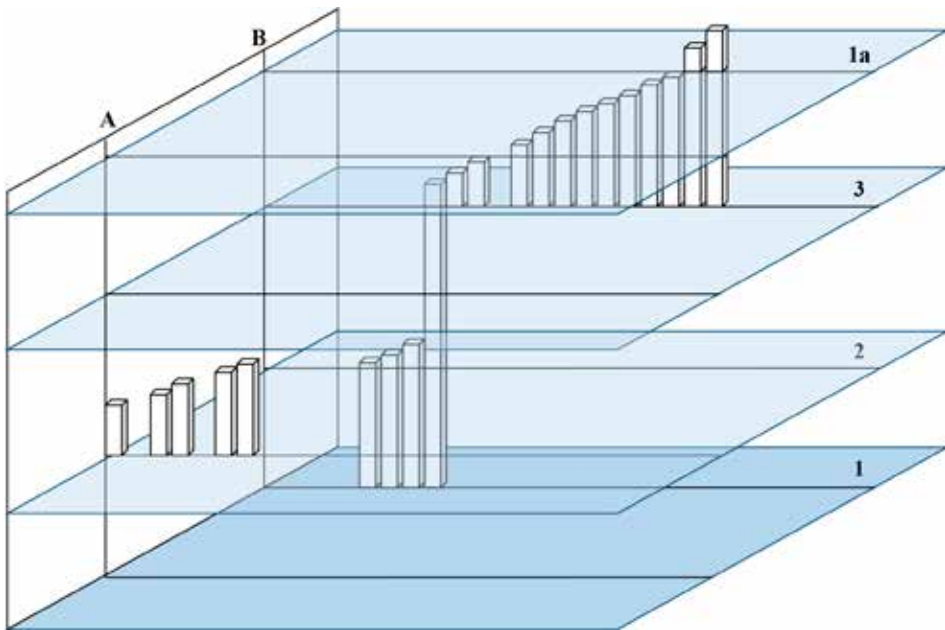
Picture 5.1
The layering of the chronotope.

the story. Finally, the point of return is the 'real' world (1a), which is now superimposed on the structure. However, this does not fully complete the layering. The metatextuality in the novel extends further. The Childlike Empress is aware that the land of *Fantastica* is a book, consisting of what meaning the reader gives to the text; Bastian is aware that the second version of *Fantastica* is a land he is creating; finally, the real life reader of the book is aware that the book they are reading is equally entitled *The Neverending Story*, implying that the real life reader (0) is the new layer of narration. This self-referentiality of a text which follows its own construction and deconstruction requires the reader to actively participate in the metatextual reading of the text, thus perpetuating the cycle of signification. In other words, the narrative is consciously interactive.

The individual layers are the manifestations of the Hero's journey. World 1 is Bastian's stage of departure, in which he refuses the call. The second stratum of the chronotope, which follows Atreyu's monomyth, is imbedded in the first one. The third stratum reconstructs the chronotope to follow Bastian's journey, while the intersection between 3 and 1a marks the Return stage. The stages of the monomyth, both Atreyu's and Bastian's, found in the narrative are plotted as presented in picture 5.2.

Based on the picture, the following can be deduced: Atreyu's monomyth (A) unfolds along a limited number of constituent units; Atreyu receives the call to adventure, and answers it without a refusal, proceeds to receive the supernatural aid in the form of the AURYN, crosses the threshold which leads to adventure, goes through a road of trials

and completes the journey by meeting the goddess, i.e. the Childlike Empress. Bastian's journey begins at this point, with the Empress giving him a call to adventure at the point where the first and the second stratum intersect, thus merging the seventh and the first event in the respective monomyths. Bastian, unlike Atreyu, refuses the call, effectively forcing the Empress to deconstruct *Fantastica* by ending the cycle of infinity and creating a new beginning with Bastian, who eventually accepts the call. He is then given the AURYN, and is asked to use it in whichever way he wishes. Bastian proceeds to cross the threshold from world 1 to world 3, creating a new *Fantastica*, and forming the chronotope anew. Bastian goes through a series of trials which he himself constructs as a part of his internal crisis of identity, which culminates in him proclaiming his own apotheosis after being tempted by a woman, the witch Xayide. Interestingly enough, Bastian's return begins with his wish to reunite with the Father, after which he is forced to find the Waters of Life, the Ultimate Boon in this case, which would heal him and his father upon return. Help from without comes from Atreyu, who takes over the responsibility of finishing the creation of *Fantastica*, after which Bastian returns to the 'real' world and becomes its master by reclaiming his own identity. Finally, the freedom to live is acquired after both Bastian and his father are released from the sorrow caused by the mother's death.



Picture 5.2 Plotting of the Monomyth in The Neverending Story.

After this summary, we turn our attention to the implications of individual units. The shortness of Atreyu's monomyth merits some attention first. Atreyu is the initial Hero of the narrative, but it is arguable whether he is indeed succeeded by Bastian. It seems to be rather a question of the narrative focal point being shifted, and the

attention of the plot being directed to the third stratum, effectively placing the second stratum into the background. Thus, Atreyu never stops being the Hero – he just stops being the center of the narrative and disperses into it. Atreyu remains the constant in the plotline, unfazed by the change in the chronotope. This implies that Atreyu operates on a metaphorical level, ascending towards the center by literally removing himself from it in the narrative.

However, it is Bastian's monomyth which is the center of the narrative, and which requires greater analysis. The most important event in Bastian's plotline is the acquisition of the AURYN. After the Childlike Empress dissolves the first world of *Fantastica* in an attempt to convince Bastian to accept the call, she bestows on him her own powers in the form of the amulet AURYN. There are several allusions in the text to the Empress' true identity, including her living in the Ivory Tower, the symbol of the Virgin Mary, or similarly being the Divine Mother reuniting with Death to interrupt the cycle of infinity. Her transference of powers to Bastian manifests in his ability to turn his words into reality. The true power of the AURYN is to give signification to objects, latching them to semantic centers of concepts. Bastian is able to use the power as long as he realizes that he is not the center of it, but that the power derives from the Empress. AURYN demands simultaneous selflessness and disinterestedness – the complete abnegation and acceptance of the outside world. In other words, it demands a Hero to wield it. The inscription on it, "Do, what thou wilt" is a further temptation. A true Hero, such as the Empress, or Atreyu, would never use the AURYN for their own will, as that would mean proclaiming possession and removing oneself from the object possessed. The amulet only guides the owner as long as the owner is in no need of guidance. In other words, the amulet and the owner should exist on two separate plains, the metaphorical, and the metonymical. By using the amulet, which is the source of the chronotope, to construct the chronotope, Bastian imprisons himself. His monomyth progresses alongside the metonymical axis, with the events being determined by the chronotope. The monomyth is shaped by space-time, and it is only towards the ending that Bastian regains the control of his own journey.

Bastian initially uses the AURYN to change his identity and his essential traits, wishing for concepts such as strength, wisdom, beauty, and courage. Since the center of the concept is never in the center, Bastian receives only the token forms of the concepts, which remove him from the center of his identity, to the point where Bastian is a mass of concepts without coherent structure in-between. Bastian's return is the journey back to his identity. The journey begins symbolically by him reuniting with the collective, immersing himself with the community of Yskalnari, people who do not possess the concept of I, and exist only as a collective. Through immersion with the collective Bastian again revives his True Will, and the need for a single identity. With this in mind he rejoins the Earth Mother, this time in the form of Lady Aiuola, who represents change and motherly love. Finally, Bastian feels the need to reunite with the Father, leaving the mother in the search for the Water of Life, the pure source of love which returns him his own identity after he bathes in it. In essence, Bastian's journey starts as the journey of a fallen Hero, who has joined the collective and has been stripped of the Hero status. It progresses towards penance, and a return to the journey in the form of ascension towards his true identity. As was initially stated, the Hero's journey

is the road towards individuation. Bastian's journey is the resolution of the conflicts in the dialogue between his own self and the I, which he initially neglected by trying to resolve the conflict between the I and the other.

Finally we focus on the dialogue between the I and the other. Bastian's case is additionally complicated by the fact that he is the originator of his own chronotope. He is the name giver, an allusion to Adam perpetuated by his fall from godly graces and his temptation by Eve (Xayide), and as such he is the source of deferred signification. Given that the interpretation of the chronotope is a matter of ideology, while its representation is a matter of text, it soon becomes apparent that Bastian's creation goes beyond his ken. The land expands infinitely, without his conscious contribution, and he eventually becomes a prisoner of his own ideology, abandoning the search for self by looking for it in the I which he perceives as the other. The chronotope is then a depiction of the conflict between the self and the I, where the I is the constructed based on traits Bastian perceives as favored by the other. The entire journey is the resolution of the self-I dichotomy, within a world guided by the other. When Bastian acquires the ability to conceptualize metaphorically, after perceiving his own differentiability, he is able to ascend from the metonymical succession of signification, to the resolution of an equation: I is self.

This is the true starting point of the Hero's journey. The realization that the self and the I need to be negotiated by their mutual standards, without interference from the other. The freedom to live is the severing of ties with space-time, and the ascension towards individuation of the being. The essence of the journey is a paradox, which insists that the Hero is only a hero to the collective as long as he is not a part of it, and as long as he does not attempt to embody the concept itself. The Hero's journey is the journey of constant change, which is only physically finite – bounded by mortality.

6. CONCLUSION

The Hero's journey is the road of self-deconstruction. It is the progression of stages which are meant to expose the underpinnings of the chronotope which is in essence the product of an ideology. This exposure leads to further deconstruction, where the Hero has the task to remove himself from the ideological concept and question its origin. Given that the concept is endlessly deferred, the hero negates the existence of a center, accepting the holistic infinity. This brings him closer to the concept itself, as he accepts all of its forms of manifestation. As such, the Hero is the being which exists above language, beyond concepts, in a metaphorical space and time which is constricted only by the physical reality. Nevertheless, constriction does not imply obedience. The Hero accepts his own space-time, but remains indifferent to it. His journey is internalized. Nevertheless, he coexists in a layered dialogue: between the self and I and the I and the other, where all three have a reciprocal relationship. The Hero's self must remain unaffected by the other. He must not succumb to the I as perceived by the other, otherwise he would be entirely removed from his own self. The Hero then is the personification of identity as it manifests purely, cleansed of the effects of the chronotope. The implications of this on the real world construction of identity and the questions raised by it are numerous. What does the collective in which an individual is

required to establish an identity see as a hero, and what sort of characteristic does the hero possess? Does the collective only possess token heroes? How does the concept of fame reflect on the concept of a false Hero? These are only some of the questions that transcend from literary theory into psychology and sociolinguistics.

Answers as such are only of speculative nature. Bakhtin's chronotope is a concept applicable to far more than plot and narrative interpretation. At its core is the relationship which defines the essence of society, and it is the exposition of this relationship which reveals the true structure of a society. The Hero's journey is an individual's journey, towards its own individuation, and the narrative is its struggle against the chains of ideology. The Heroes then are the members of the collective who reach the furthest point on their journey before they are interrupted by finiteness. Whether they have reached the furthest point metonymically, or metaphorically, defines along which axis they have traveled, and the ensuing result is only important to the individual. The core question at the end of the journey is, after all, moral and teleological.

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SUMMARY

THE TOKEN HERO'S JOURNEY: RECONCEPTUALIZING THE LITERARY HERO

Joseph Campbell's monomyth, or the Hero's Journey, is a series of gross constituent units which ultimately lead to the Hero status. The Journey introduced the idea of deferral in terms of attaining the Hero status. The status is bestowed on the Hero by the collective consciousness immediately upon his departure, but is deferred indefinitely by the Hero himself. The Hero is removed from the concept and turned into a token as soon as he is labeled with it. The Journey is the effort of the Hero to construct a pattern which would eventually lead to the fundamental concept of a "Hero". The collective consciousness perceives the Hero in terms of a metonymical sequence, while the Hero advances along the metaphorical axis. The token Hero is a token of the collective consciousness which has falsely labeled him a type. This sort of conceptual structuring creates a finite continuum of "heroism". In order to analyze the continuum of heroism, the authors constructed a tool of analysis based on Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotope. The basic form of the chronotope was adapted so that it can represent multiple layers of the story and parallel narratives. In order to test out the tool, the authors conducted an analysis of Michael Ende's epic fantasy *The Neverending Story*. The paper draws a number of implications from Bakhtin's chronotope relevant not just to the literary world, but society at large.

KEYWORDS: Hero, concept, chronotope, journey, deferral.

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