英雄原型的主題與動機研究方法

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摘要

　　本文首先將界定原型在社會進程中歷年不衰的重要性，再對不同學術研究中所提及的英雄原型進行簡短的批判性回顧。隨後，我們也針對世界神話中對英雄原型的主題和動機進行比較分析，並為全球神話英雄的身份實質上相同的觀點提供實質性的佐證。

　　自 1902 年以來，在卡爾·古斯塔夫·榮格大師在 Zur Psychologie und Pathologie sogenannter occulter Phänomene. Eine psychiatrische Studie 作品中介紹了原型的概念後，許多人類學家和民俗學家便開始深入研究英雄的原型，原型相關研究也多次利用於支持政治利益以及特定意識形態。榮格受世界各種神話中重複的動機和主題的啟發而塑造了原型概念，因此，本研究將使用來自不同來源的神話英雄，這些元素則包含了譯者的英雄、穿透力的英雄、魔幻圈以及禮物，這些世界神話英雄的共同特徵的元素將能夠向我們提供相關數據。

關鍵詞： 英雄，原型，神話，穿透，禮物

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The archetype of the hero. An approach to themes and motifs

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Abstract[**]

This article will begin by delimiting the importance of the perennial concept of the archetype in the evolution of society, followed by a brief critical review of the archetype of the hero in different academic studies. Subsequently, a comparative analysis of themes and motifs of the hero archetype in different mythologies of the world will try to offer substantial proof, and reinforce the idea, in a qualitative manner, that the figure of the mythological hero is the same all around the globe.

On the other hand, since 1902, when Carl Gustav Jung introduced the concept of the archetype in his work entitled *Zur Psychologie und Pathologie sogenannter occulter Phänomene. Eine psychiatrische Studie*, the archetype of the hero has been thoroughly studied by many anthropologists and folklorists of great importance, and on several occasions, these studies have served concrete political interests, or have been created in the service of certain ideologies. In order to create his concept of archetype, Jung was inspired by the reiteration of motifs and themes in various mythologies of the world. Hence, the work we propose employs mythological heroes from the most diverse origins. Such elements will be the translator hero, the penetrating hero, the magical circle, and the gift, which shall disclose relevant data regarding to the common characteristics to many, if not all, mythological heroes of the world.

Key words: hero, archetype, myth, penetrating, gift

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The archetype of the hero.
An approach to themes and motifs

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The archetype of the hero, introduced by Carl Gustav Jung in his work entitle *Zur Psychologie und Pathologie sogenannter okkulter Phänomene. Eine psychiatrische Studie*, published in 1902, has been subjected to different approaches in comparative studies. This article comes to reinforce the idea that the mythological hero follows specific patterns, which are the same in almost every culture, and sometimes, they are shared by other types of heroes in literatures such as, Adventures, Fantasy and Science Fiction. However, this display only reminds us that the origins of those heroes can be found in Myths. The idea concerning the specific patterns will be argued by proposing a comparative analysis of themes and motifs of the hero's archetype in different mythologies of the world. Moreover, this work will offer a multicultural approach to the archetype of the hero in different academic studies. The present study will commence with the concept of Myth that will be taken onwards, exposing the undefined border lines between the closest genres of Oral Traditional Literature and Myths. Thereafter, it will be argue the need of this approach, as most of the previous attempts of classifications have been subjected to strong criticism by academics, finding them insufficient. Themes and motifs shall offer common ground for many approaches. During the second part, four concepts will be introduced and applied to the figure of the mythological hero. Following the tradition of prestigious academics like Mijail Bajtin, Mircea Eliade, George M. Foster, Wayland D. Hand, Claude Lévi-Strauss,

Marcel Mauss, José Manuel Pedrosa, and Victor Turner, among others, the translator hero, the penetrating hero, the magical circle, and the gift, find their importance in the development of this archetype.

1. Mythology

As a starting point, it should be said that the relationships between myth, legend, epic and folktale, on many occasions, are not well delimited. For instance, Alan Dundes ("Binary Opposition in Myth", 44-47) tells us that Claude Lévi-Strauss used in his volume of *Mythologiques* entitled *Le cru et le cuit*, several traditional oral tales as the basis of his study of the binary pairs in myths. Without diminishing value to this work, Dundes attributes to Lévi-Strauss the sin of falling into the error of using for his study folktales that he had so much criticised in Propp´s works, and which, according to Levi-Strauss, they are binary pairs of lesser force. Dundes ("Binary Opposition in Myth", 44-47) will highlight those three main stories that appear in the encyclopedia: 'Oedipus', 'Asdiwal', and 'The bird of the nest'.

The previous statement merely displays the close relationships that these genres possess. As early as 1933, Jan de Vries commented that "on the transition between myth and folktale, we try in the dark" (Harris 7). And the definition of myth by G. S. Kirk, in 1984, did not clarify precisely the question, since he defines myth as any traditional history, including tales and legends (Harris 14).

After analysing various attempts to offer the characteristics of myths, legends and folktales, the following proposal that I introduce seems to be satisfactory:

	MYTH	LEGEND	FOLKTALE
Time	Prehistorical	Historical to the community	Symbolic
Characters	Superhuman	Historical to the community	Symbolic
Set	Related to the community	Local	Fictitious
Connotation	Religious	Empirical credibility	Non believed

By reading the previous diagram, Myths are set in prehistorical times, usually related to the origins of the world and humankind, in a place related to the community where they belong, the characters are gods, demigods and superhuman heroes, and possess a religious connotation. Legends, on the other hand, present concerns close the community, because time, characters and set are almost perfectly located, and the existence of all components can be traced in history, although with additions of dramatic and/or superhuman characteristics. Lastly, folktales are never credible, and time, characters and sets always belong to the land of imagination. There are many meanings of the term 'myth' that have no place in this study. Since the Eighteenth Century at least, the word myth has been associated to a very negative meaning in certain contexts. Occasionally, the term has been used as an extended false belief, applicable to, for example, historical or contemporary characters, music bands, and elite sportsmen/sportswomen. Mircea Eliade may help to trace the origin of some of them, and how, sometimes, those meanings, were derived to derogatory and pejorative forms:

In the current language of the nineteenth century, myth meant the opposite

to reality. Like so many other clichés originated in the Enlightenment or

> Positivism, it was also of Christian structure and origins, because for primitive Christianity, everything that did not find its justification in one or other of the Testaments was false: it was a fable.[1] (Eliade 21)

And furthermore, if the 'primitive' and archaic societies are taken into consideration:

> The myth is considered to express absolute truth, that is, a *transhuman* revelation that took place at the dawn of time, in the sacred time of principles (*in illo tempore*). Being real and sacred, myth becomes exemplary, and therefore, repeatable, as it serves as a model, and at the same time, of justification of all human acts. In other words, a myth is a true story that happened at the beginning of time and serves as a model of human behaviour.[2] (Eliade 21-22)

By mid-Twentieth century, the assertion that the myth explains events and things impossible or unthinkable, started to be left aside. Carl Jung said that this break was due to the crisis of Christianity, and implied that the contemporary world –in crisis after its profound break with Christianity– was in search of a new myth, and that only that myth would allow us to rediscover a new spiritual source which would bring back the creative powers (Eliade 23).

Eliade states that myth, like symbols it employs, never disappears from the present world of the psyche, and it only changes its appearance, and camouflages its functions (26). Thus, the myth is transformed and adapted to the needs of the human being.

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[1] Translated from the following text in Spanish: En el lenguaje corriente del siglo XIX, mito significaba todo lo opuesto a "realidad" […] Como tantos otros clichés originados en la Ilustración o el positivismo, éste también era de estructura y orígenes cristianos, pues para el cristianismo primitivo, todo lo que no hallaba su justificación en uno u otro de los Testamentos era falso: era una "fábula".

[2] Translated from the following text in Spanish: Se considera que el mito expresa la *verdad absoluta*, es decir, una revelación transhumana que tuvo lugar en el alba de los tiempos, en el tiempo sagrado de los principios (*in illo tempore*). Siendo *real* y *sagrado*, el mito se convierte en *ejemplar*, y por ende, en *repetible*, pues sirve de modelo y a la vez de justificación de todos los actos humanos. En otros términos, un mito es una historia verdadera sucedida en el principio de los tiempos y que sirve como modelo de los comportamientos humanos.

Hence, and after all clarifications regarding the word myth, the definition of myth to be considered for this article will be the one that Pedrosa detailed:

> Belief expressed in oral or written narrative (of variable extent) that presents extraordinary events considered as possible or real by the narrator and by the recipient. Such facts are related to the age of origins or foundation of the world, or of the community to which it relates, or with which the narrative relates, and is carried out by gods, demigods, founding heroes or educators, and elements such as, cosmic, natural, monstrous…, animated or personified. The content of the myth is considered authentic and real by its transmitters, not exactly historical, but rather "protohistoric", and enjoys a certain magical-religious consideration within the community.[3] (Pedrosa, *Enciclopedia Universal*)

2. Themes and motifs of the mythological hero

One of the key concepts of Carl Gustav Jung is the 'collective unconscious', which is constituted by archetypes. In order to create this concept, Jung was inspired by the reiteration of motifs and themes in various mythologies from around the world, and elaborated a series of archetypes such as the hero, the beast, the mask, and the anima.

The archetype of the hero has been thoroughly studied by many anthropologists and folklorists of great importance. Robert A. Segal (vii) emphasises the studies of

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[3] Translated from the following text in Spanish: Creencia que se expresa en una narración oral o escrita (de extensión variable) que presenta hechos extraordinarios considerados como posibles o reales por el narrador y por el receptor. Tales hechos están relacionados con la edad de orígenes o fundación del mundo o de la comunidad a la que atañe o con la que se relaciona la narración, y protagonizados por dioses, semidioses, héroes fundadores o culturizadores, y elementos cósmicos, naturales, animales, monstruosos, etc. animados o personificados. El contenido del mito es considerado por sus transmisores auténtico y real, pero no exactamente histórico, sino más bien "protohistórico", y goza de una cierta consideración mágico-religiosa dentro de la comunidad.

Edward B. Tylor, who, with *Primitive Culture*, published in 1871, established a uniform system in the life of a hero: the hero and his birth, animals or humans which save him, and he grows and becomes a national hero. A few years later, in 1876, Johann Georg von Hahn laid out his system for the Aryan hero (Segal vii) in his book *Sagwissenschaftliche Studien*. And afterwards, in 1928, Vladimir Propp, in his *Morfológiya skazki*, proved that the heroes of his collection of Russian tales in his had common biographical patterns (Segal vii). It should be added here that to Segal, the three most influential works on the subject until the appearance of the studies of Alan Dundes, were written by the psychoanalyst Otto Rank in his *Myth of the Birth of the Hero*, dated to 1909; the folklorist Lord Raglan, with his *The Hero*, published in 1936; and the mythographer Joseph Campbell, with his work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, dated to 1949. While Rank, given his Freudian influence, focuses on the early years of the hero, Campbell, following the steps of his teacher, Carl Gustav Jung, emphasises the second part of the hero's life.

Dundes ("The Hero Pattern", 189-191) argues that Lord Raglan's model does not follow intercultural patterns, and like Johann Georg von Hahn, is inspired just by the Aryan hero. On the other hand, Otto Rank's model focuses exclusively on the hero's ascension period. Thus, it seems that the three models are incomplete. It should be noted that at this regard, the hero of heroes of Western cultures, Jesus Christ, only meets seventeen of the characteristics (Dundes, "The Hero Pattern", 191). Moreover, all three models follow biblical and Greek patterns, and Lord Reglan's uses folktales and legends of oral tradition to create their characteristics, such as Oedipus and Perseus; therefore, these models are not so much an attempt to define the patterns of the mythical hero, as of the hero of myths, legends and folktales alike. It is thus to think that our effort will be of great use in future studies on hero's patterns.

2.1. Translator hero

First of all, it must be said that all the concepts below are interrelated and cannot be understood in isolation, so that, the exposition of the facts will follow a continuous thread, and the separation in points becomes an attempt to clarify and facilitate the reading.

There are many examples of saints, heroes and heroines in mythic texts who have the ability to talk to animals, and to order them to do what these characters wish. There are also many examples of opponents who lack that ability, precisely because they are the opposite of the former. The hero understands the fauna and flora, and the anti-hero does not understand them, cannot translate them, and is rejected by them. This faculty can be found in mythic heroes such as Hunahpú and Ixbalanqué, who order the ants to bring flowers to the gardens of Hun-Camé y Vucub-Camé (*Popol Vuh*, 85). Later on, Ixbalanqué will call and instruct all animals, big and small, to assist him in the work of building a false head, similar to that of his brother Hunahpu and replace it instead the original, so he will be able to deceive the Lords of Xibalba (*Popol Vuh*, 89).

Sometimes the hero is the only real interlocutor with animals or monsters, like Odysseus with Polyphemus (Homer, *The Odyssey*, IX 240-630), and the sirens (Homer, *The Odyssey*, XII 166-217), when he is the only man on his ship who can withstand the singing of the monsters.

Another facet of the translator hero is his ability to translate dreams. The earliest example of this feature can be found in the epic *Gilgamesh*, where the other hero of the saga, Enkidu, translates the premonitory dreams of his beloved friend (*La epopeya de Gilgamesh*, 117), and interprets 5 dreams. On the other hand, if a hero loses this ability, and/or mistranslates the dreams, the misfortune comes upon him. Such is the case of Gilgamesh, who misrepresents Enkidu's dreams, dreams that warned him of the coming death of his friend, and for which, Gilgamesh is not going to be prepared (*La epopeya*

de Gilgamesh, 160-163). Whoever does understand the messages in the dreams is the hero Agamemnon, to whom the desire of Zeus is revealed through dreaming (Homer, *The Iliad*, II 1-17).

This ability to decipher dreams, or to cross the barriers of the animal communication, could be understood as another form of penetration in restricted spaces; living spaces of other beings, but employing a mental path instead.

2.2. Penetrating hero

Pedrosa has studied and formulated the idea of the symbolism of space and displacement, based on theoretical elements presented by Claude Lévi-Strauss in his comparative analysis of the "The Jealous Potter" folktale, and from several concepts elaborated by Mikhail Bajtin in his *Theory and Aesthetics of the Novel* (Pedrosa, "La lógica de lo heroico", 51). The author states that the hero penetrates and/or makes penetrate something or someone through closed or narrow spaces, "guarded, threatening, and dangerous, usually in the form of a tube" (Pedrosa, "La lógica de lo heroico", 50). The hero, enters and/or makes enter something or someone into open spaces, and vital spaces of other beings and things. Anthropologists Victor Turner and Wayland D. Hand, among many others, have theorised about what in many cultures means passing through a sacralised space (a hollow in some stone or tree, an underground tunnel, …) in ceremonies of passage, leading this path from one socio-cultural status to another (Pedrosa, "La lógica de lo heroico", 54), and it is related to a personal rebirth or regeneration, according to George Black and Mircea Eliade (Pedrosa, "La lógica de lo heroico", 54).

The narrow spaces through which the hero passes could be stairs, mazes, and doors, among others. The mythical hero can enter places that represent twin dynamics, that is, a dynamic that crushes between twin forces, that devours, kills or prevents the exit of

those who try to pass through it (Pedrosa, "La lógica de lo heroico", 50). This happens in the *Odyssey*, where the cunning Odysseus enters the Cyclops Cave (Homer, *The Odyssey*, IX 241-275), and crosses the Straits which contain the monsters Scylla and Charybdis (Homer, *The Odyssey*, XII 253-299). Another great mythical hero is Beowulf, who penetrates rocky streams, narrow roads (*Beowulf*, 1408-1413), dives into a lake, and arrives at the underwater cave of Grendel's mother (*Beowulf*, 1495-1514). In the Chinese culture, the hero Shun, who cannot refuse the will of his treacherous father, dares to enter in a well (Ke 70).

But the hero not only enters, he/she must leave, and never stay inside (Pedrosa, "La lógica de lo heroico", 52-53). Gilgamesh enters the forbidden Forest of the Ballukku Cedars and leaves alive (*La epopeya de Gilgamesh*, 130-142); the brothers Hunahpú and Ixbalanqué enter and leave the trap set up for them by the Lords of Xibalba in the House of the Tigers (*Popol Vuh*, 88); Odysseus escapes from the Cyclops cave (Homer, *The Odyssey*, IX 420-528); Beowulf comes out victorious of the lake, even when the Danes consider him dead (*Beowulf*, vv.1618-1628); and Shun escapes from the well, sand and rocks threw to him by his family, and flies away thanks to the help provided by his two wives, E Huang and Nu Ying, who make a set of clothes scaly like a dragon skin, and which transforms him into a golden dragon (Ke 70-71).

Heroes enter, just as they make others enter. Odysseus builds the wooden horse with which the Achaeans enter into Troy, and makes pass his sailors among the rocks guarded by the beast Scylla, and they also pierce the swirling Charybdis (Homer, *The Odyssey*, XII 241-299). However; in spite of his work as a helper, only the hero is assigned to cross those tubes more than once, because as we read in the *Odyssey*, the hero's comrades succumb on the second occasion, and he is the only survivor (Homer, *The Odyssey*, XII 460- 490).

On the other hand, the hero is also characterised by crossing open spaces that no one else dare cross. The wider the spaces crossed, the more the hero is claimed as hero. They must be the widest possible space conceivable (Pedrosa, "La lógica de lo heroico", 56). And the first example of this is Gilgamesh, whose poem begins by describing the hero's prowess and among which is counted to cross the immense sea as far as the sun rises (*La epopeya de Gilgamesh*, 73, 76). Throughout the poem, we can find how Gilgamesh crossed the Twin Mountains protected by Scorpion-men (*La epopeya de Gilgamesh*, 185-190), the one hundred and twenty kilometre gorge, which, in the middle of darkness, leads to the Garden of Trees with jewels (*La epopeya de Gilgamesh*, 190-191). After that, he crossed the Sea of Dead Water, whose waters only the Stone-Men can withstand (*La epopeya de Gilgamesh*, 199-207), and with his friend Enkidu, walked through the Forest of the Cedars and left alive (*La epopeya de Gilgamesh*, 274-275). Another Sumerian hero, Ninurta, rides on the eight winds (Lara Peinado 176), while another Mesopotamian hero, Lugalbanda, grabs the legs of the Thunderbird, – precedent of the Bird of Sinbad–, travels great distances and returns from where no one has ever been able to return (Lara Peinado 140-146). But the heroes of ancient Sumer and Babylon were not the only ones crossing large spaces, Odysseus crosses the territory of Poseidon, the sea, Siegfried also crosses a sea which leads him to the land that keeps his treasure, the land of the Nibelungen (*The Song of the Nibelungs*, VIII 484), and the hero Yi, the Archer, manages to pass the deep forest, crosses the impossible abysm, and climbs the also impossible mount Kunlun, in order to ask the god Xi Wang Mu the medicine that concedes eternal life (Ke 82), only to return home in possession of the medicinal elixir, to his wife, Chang E (Ke 83).

Another aspect is the penetration, both, from the violent point of view, and to sexual means, has a strong separating character of stages in human growth. In tribes such as the Masai, the passage from adolescence to maturity in men marks the moment

when they allow the aspirant to hunt a large piece by himself, making use of his javelin. The same phenomenon can be found in many current tribes of the Yucatan peninsula. In ancient traditions of Aryan India, a teenager came to be considered adult, when he had sexual intercourse with one of the priestesses of the religion of Brahma.

Thus, the hero who traverses the bodies of his enemies is much utilised in Myths all around the world. In the West, the oldest, perhaps the most explicit references are in the *Iliad*, where the heroes pierce their enemies with spear or sword. Famous is the scene of the death of Hector at the hands of the Pelion (Homer, *The Iliad*, XXII 320-330), and the subsequent penetration of the heels of Achilles (Homer, *The Iliad*, XXII 395-405). The Divine Odysseus, is not only content to throw the largest and widest disk farther than anyone else (Homer, *The Odyssey*, VIII 216-229), nor to be the only one who is able to tighten his bow, and throw an arrow through twelve axes (Homer, *The Odyssey*, XXI 451-470), but he kills all Penelope´s suitors with such bow, spears and with the help of his son Telemachus (Homer, *The Odyssey*, XXII 72-417). In the East, maybe the oldest example is Yi, the Archer, who penetrates with his bow Nine Suns (Ke 77-79), and every monster that threatens the life of the people around him (Ke 79-81).

Related to the previous idea is the theory of the closed bodies of heroes and the open bodies of antiheroes:

Mijail Bajtin, in *Popular Culture in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance*, used the simile of the open body in order to represent the transgressive dynamism of the carnival, and the closed body to symbolise the conservative statism of Lent. During the carnival, the upper body holes are opened in an exultant individual or collective catharsis –food is eaten that in other times were taboo, people criticise, insult, shout, sing–, and inferior holes –sexual promiscuity is exalted and practiced–, while during Lent it is just the opposite, because it is the time of fasting, silence and continence, that

is, the closing of the body and its orifices.[4] (Pedrosa, "La lógica de lo heroico", 58)

Therefore, the carnival would represent the antithesis of the mythological hero/heroine, as he/she is a closed body that is not carried away by excesses, and who defends verbal, moral and sexual continence.

In the case of the mythological works, we find sexually penetrating heroes such as Enmerkar, who maintains sexual intercourse with the goddess Innana, which, on the other hand, is the object and end of disputes between two city-states (Lara Peinado 126-133). This is also the case of Odysseus, who lies with Penelope (Homer, *The Odyssey*, XXIII 342-348). Still, the union between Enmerkar and Innana obeys patterns of the foundation of an empire, and the union of religion and state, it is, hence, a more metaphorical union than real. In ancient Greece, Odysseus opens his body with three women, Calypso, Circe, and Penelope, motif which shows that the influence of folktales on epic and mythology is able to break any standardised behavioural structures of mythological heroes.

It is normal that heroes contain themselves sexually and verbally, as it is shown by Gilgamesh, who rejects the favours of the goddess Ishtar (*La epopeya de Gilgamesh*, 143-149); Thor, who refuses to violate women as booty in a competitive commendation of exploits against the giant Hárbard (Sturluson, *The Elder Edda*, 127-130); also, the Quiche founding fathers do not want to open their bodies, specifically Tohil, who does not fall into the trap served to him in the form of two beautiful young women (*Popol*

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[4] Translated from the following text in Spanish: Mijail Bajtin, en *La cultura popular en la Edad Media y en el Renacimiento*, utilizaba el símil del cuerpo *abierto* para representar el dinamismo transgresor del carnaval y el del cuerpo *cerrado* para simbolizar el estatismo conservador de la cuaresma. Durante el carnaval se abren, en exultante catarsis individual o colectiva, los orificios corporales superiores (se comen alimentos que en otras épocas están tabuados, se critica, se insulta, se grita, se canta) e inferiores (se exalta y practica la promiscuidad sexual), mientras que durante la cuaresma sucede justamente al revés, porque se trata de la época del ayuno, del silencio y de la continencia, es decir, del *cierre* del cuerpo y de sus orificios. For more information see: Bajtin, Mijail. *La cultura popular en la Edad Media y en el Renacimiento*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2003 [1987]. Original text published in Russian, see: Бахтин, Михаил Михайлович. *Творчество Франсуа Рабле и народная культура средневековья и Ренессанса*, Москва: Редакционная литература, 1965.

Vuh, 132).

What is recurrent in this type of literature is the fact that the opponents are not contained, nor sexually, neither in word, nor in action. As an example, the giant Hrungnir (Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 103), and the god Locki (Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 110) boast constantly. More presumptuous self-praise examples can be found in other mythological works like the *Odyssey*, where by drinking, Penelope's suitors cannot contain their sexual appetites with the slaves, nor their bragging (Homer, *The Odyssey* XX 316-339). As for the sexual penetration, perhaps the most famous in the Western epic is the one favoured by Siegfried, by putting on the magic cloak that makes him invisible, and thus, helps Gunter to possess the warrior queen Brunhilda (*The Song of the Nibelungs*, X 666-677).

All this testifies that if the hero does not restrain himself, including favor sexual penetration, a fatal end awaits. This penetration, along with the arrogant assertions of Siegfried, and the diffusion of his weak point, are warnings of his future death at the hands of Hagen (*The Song of the Nibelungs*, XVI 976-981).

2.3. Magical circle

The magical circle is a subject derived from the penetrating hero and the translator hero. This is a space that only the main character can cross to enter and to leave. This phenomenon has already been studied previously in the folklore worldwide, and in fact, there are 10 sub-motifs that comprise this motif within the *The types of international folktales: a classification and bibliography, based on the system of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson* (Uther 2004).

Achilles and his invulnerability, Troy and its impregnable walls, are no more than repeated types throughout the world in the epics, myths, legends and folktales. The great Ilion fell after her circle was broken with the cleverness of the divine Odysseus,

and the inestimable help of the counsel of a goddess, Athena. However, the very fact of crossing the walls will later lead the Achaean heroes to endless suffering, since the "sacred" circle can never be pierced without harmful consequences.

Perhaps taking the invincible Achilles as an example, the Germanic hero Siegfried was bathed in dragon's blood, which gave him a sort of vital circle except for one point at his back, that no one could trespass (*The Song of the Nibelungs*, III 100). It is the blood of the dragon that concedes him that protection. In another adventure, Siegfried is able to enter and leave the cave guarded by a giant, and Alberich the dwarf (*The Song of the Nibelungs*, VIII 488-499), to whom, on another occasion, already defeated and ordered him to protect the place. The treasure of the Nibelungs is kept in that cave, and Siegfried will find himself in need of resorting to the treasure once more. These creatures, who are not properly animals, are subjected by the hero. From here, it can be drawn the idea that like the saints with animals, the heroes of epics, myths, legend and folktales are able to subdue, and attract, if given the case –as Siegfried and the giant and the dwarf of the cave– beings from other planes, from the world of the marvellous.

The oldest epopee is the oldest example, as Gilgamesh's text is more explicit and refers directly to the fact of the magic circle. When Enkidu creates magical circles (*La epopeya de Gilgamesh*, 115-116), performs the ritual enchantment six times in order to protect Gilgamesh and himself from attacks, so much that they could come from living beings, as from gods. In addition to hat, that magic circle transmits dreams to him of negative predictions that will be interpreted in a near future.

2.4. The Gift

Among several characteristics, the gift is perhaps the most important, as the hero is not complete and does not receive the approval of his people without it. Economic relations have marked the fate of humanity, and the most important people in history

have been remembered, both for what they have conquered, and for what they have given to their own. Based on the theory of limited good formulated by George M. Foster, it can be affirmed that the hero starts from a situation of limitation or lack of goods; however, he is capable of overcoming it, with effort, courage and alliance of its auxiliaries, in order to reach a situation of full satisfaction or no final limitation of goods (Pedrosa, "La lógica de lo heroico", 38). Because of this, the community will consider them strong, brave and capable characters. Also, the hero is able to renounce all or part of those goods and donates them altruistically to other persons and/or the community (Pedrosa, "La lógica de lo heroico", 38). Then, the hero will become a just and generous donor.

Jesus Christ stands out as the greatest donor of humanity, for not only did he grant material gifts, but also cultural and personal gifts. It can be traced a long list of heroes, who are recipients or facilitators of gifts that will facilitate the achievement of their objectives, both, personal, and for the sake of their own. This is the case of Gilgamesh, who built the great Uruk and excavated wells for his fellow citizens, protected his troops, and built and restored temples and shrines (*La epopeya de Gilgamesh*, 73-75). However, his abuses of power drove the gods to create him an equal who gave him some degree of humility: Enkidu (*La epopeya de Gilgamesh*, 79-80). His gifts were returned with the extension of life, although his original quest led him in search of immortality, and in the end, Utanapishtî tells him that the secret mystery of the Gods re-sides in a root that extends life (*La epopeya de Gilgamesh*, 236-237). Another Mesopotamian hero, Lugalbanda, takes extreme care to the breeding of the Thunderbird, and is compensated with different gifts (Lara Peinado 136): a sacred blessing, and the journey of reunion with his troops, riding on the back of the very Thunderbird (Lara Peinado 139-140).

These donor heroes are found all over the globe. In ancient Greece, Agamemnon offers gifts to the Pelida Achilles in order to put down his anger (Homer, *The Iliad*, IX

118-306). And during the Odyssey, both the father, Odysseus, and his son, Telemachus, constantly receive gifts: Athena offers a ship to Telemachus (Homer, *The Odyssey*, III 466-501), and Nestor of Gerenia a chariot with horses (Homer, *The Odyssey*, VII 353-376), Eolo Hipotada offers Odysseus an ox sack containing the winds (Homer, *The Odyssey*, X 1-31), Hermes the Argifonte the moly plant, which will protect him from Circe's brew (Homer, *The Odyssey*, X 310-340), who, at the end of his stay on her island, will disclose valuable advice on the route to take (Homer, *The Odyssey*, X 532-625, XII 40-121). Finally, the famous bow that only he could strain, was also a gift from Ifito Eurytida (Homer, *The Odyssey*, XXI 1-50), who in return, received from Odysseus a sword and a spear as an exchange of gifts.

In Germanic and Scandinavian mythologies the gifts are a multitude: in the Eddas, the god Frey falls in love with the most beautiful of all women, Gerd, and as payment to his servant Skirnir for going to ask the hand of such a beautiful lady, gives him his own sword, a weapon capable of fighting by itself (Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 62); also in the Eddas of Snorri Sturluson, the great hero Thor, after beating the giant Hrungnir, is caught by his leg when falling, and his three-night-old son, Magni, takes him up, so his father gives him the Gullfaxi Horse (Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 104-105). Later on, Thor will be given various facilitating gifts, such as the Belt of Strength and a pair of iron gauntlets (Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 107).

Another example can be found in the Germanic epic par excellence, Das Nibelungenlied, where Siegfried distributes his possessions in large measure –and those which are not his, but he is permitted to distribute–, and receives the same. The hard-working Siegfried employs one gift, the sword called Balmung, which belonged to the King of the Nibelungs, in order to kill with it twelve giants and subdue seven hundred warriors (*The Song of the Nibelungs*, III 91-95). Siegfried is not the only hero of this epic which distributes his gifts, Krimilda is either (*The Song of the Nibelungs*, XIX

1126-1128, XXII vv.1366-1367), who herself was also a gift granted to Siegfried by Gunter (*The Song of the Nibelungs*, VI vv.332-335). There are examples in Celtic ballads as well, where the hero Cormac gives sixty ounces of red gold to the Fianna, and fifty dogs, fifty packages of horns, fifty chess games in blue, and fifty horses to the son of Cumal (Sainero 35).

In ancient China, the hero Shun is given many presents by the king Yao, for instance, new clothes, and his two daughters taken as wives, E Huang, and Nu Ying (Ke 69), who themselves will offer him more gifts as well to ensure that their husband is alive after all the traps prepared by his own father, stepmother and stepbrother (Ke 70-72). Shun is also a just and very generous donor when he is given land, fishing and pottery knowledge, and he returns the favours in a form of more production and happiness to the communities.

As a final example, this feature is not only focused on continental Europe and Asia, but also appears as a characteristic feature of local heroes in the equator of Africa, where, by way of example, we are presented with hero donors like Eyegue Obama (Ndong 224-225), or depositaries of gifts, like Ntutum Eyga Engong, who receives gifts which come from the World of the Dead.

3. Conclusion

This study provides a brief overview of some of the most relevant studies on Traditional Oral Literature focused on studies of myths. Within the "mythical" studies, authors such as Mircea Eliade and Alan Dundes, among others, have been the ones who have channeled the academic field concerning the main hypothesis of this article.

By comparing themes and motifs of mythological origin concerning the archetype of the hero, this work, also, concurs with the idea asserted by Claude Lévi-Strauss, which states that the different cultures of human beings, their behaviours, their

linguistic schemes and their myths reveal the existence of patterns common to all human life. It is not, therefore, a question of selecting a pair of heroes and extrapolate them metaphorically into a folktale, legend or myth, but to employ a different language for the answers of the same questions they served to the creation of myths. So that, this article responds to the main hypothesis that this research has raised: that the mythological hero follows specific patterns –which are the same in many cultures around the world–, and can be partially validated by analysing the recurrent use of the translator and wise hero, the penetrating hero, the magical circle, and the generous donor hero. Needless to say that there is a long way to prove Lévi-Strauss' assertion; nevertheless, this article intends to help to reassure this idea.

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