

Dynamics in Narrative Structures

Introduction

In this lecture we present an overview of some of the linguistics-related approaches to the study of folk narratives, starting with Vladimir Propp's 'Morphology of the Folktale' (1928) which gives a list of 31 "functions" that represent the core of the Russian fairy tales. Propp had founded the formal-structural study of folk tales while abandoning an earlier approach based on historical and comparative principles. This line was opened up in the late 50's by Claude Lévi-Strauss who however sought to focus on semantic and contextual perspectives in order to enrich and improve upon Propp's purely formal study. Later, A.-J. Greimas went on to embed the folk narrative research within a wider field of structural semantics that was meant to provide a rather deductive basis for a semiotics of discourse. This is often referred to as the semiotics of narrative, or the semio- narrative analysis. This approach has been further submitted to mathematical formalization/schematization based on catastrophe theory (**Lecture 2**), by Jean Petitot. We shall describe the main theoretical aspects of the above models. In the concluding part, we shall also suggest that it is possible to study the folk narratives in terms of the 'force dynamics' patterns identified by Len Talmy (**Lecture 4**) with respect to sentence-semantics, viz., exertion of force, resistance to force, overcoming of resistance, blockage, and removal of blockage, etc.

Morphology of the Folktale

Propp did not conceal his affinity to linguistics when he proposed that folktales should be studied in terms of an abstract grammar underlying the concrete manifestations of many particular tales. For Propp, the term 'morphology' meant the 'study of forms', i.e., 'structure' in the sense the term was used in Botany. Prior to Propp, attention was paid, as in Comparative and Historical Linguistics, to the typological and genealogical classifications of folktales. Thus in the nineteenth century, we obtain, e.g., V.F. Miller's description classifying folktales into : fairy tales, moral tales and animal tales, and that of Wilhelm Wundt — a psychologist with a keen interest in matters linguistic — whose classification included seven types, namely, mythological fables, fairy tales proper, biological tales and fables, pure animal fables, tales of "origin", joke tales and fables, and moral fables. While his historicist predecessors were content with giving a classification of tales and fables on the basis of their subject-matter, Propp noted that their parts can be substituted from one type to another irrespective of the themes. That is, just as across different languages, there are somewhat constant elements, or the parts of speech, there were elements constitutive of the folktale. In shifting the focus, la Saussure, from diachrony to synchrony, Propp's laid stress on studying the elements that constitute the invariant form/structure of the folktale. In his view, an understanding of structure was a prerequisite for any historical or comparative study: "as long as no correct morphological study exists, there can be no correct historical study. If we are incapable of breaking the tale into its components, we will not be able to make a correct comparison" (Propp, 1968 :15). The imperative, thus, was to discover the structural laws and not to present a superficial catalogue of the art of the folktale. Drawing an analogy with linguistics he asked: "Is it possible to speak about the life of a language without knowing anything about the parts of speech, i.e., about certain groups of words arranged according to the laws of their changes? A living language is a concrete fact — grammar is its abstract substratum. These substrata lie at the basis of a great many phenomena of life, and is

precisely to this that science turns its attention. Not a single concrete fact can be explained without the study of these abstract bases.” (ibid., p. 15)

Irrespective of their specific contents, the fairy tales contain constant elements. E.g., a person of authority or importance gives an object of value to another (deserving) person who is able to draw benefits from this object, such as spatial translocation that facilitates an encounter with the villain. Propp noticed that the statements constituting the tale can be reduced to a set of constants and certain variable values. While the characters themselves vary both in kind and in their names, the constants are the functions of the characters. He identified these functions of personages as the constitutive elements (the ‘parts of speech’) of the folktale. The functions are thus defined in terms of actions of the characters, i.e., what they do. However, functions are not actions occurring randomly, but are identified contextually. “An action cannot be defined apart from its place in the course of narration. The meaning which a given function has in the course of action must be considered...Function is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance in the unfolding of the intrigue of the story.” (ibid., p. 21)

Based on these observations Propp arrived at the following conclusions:

- the constant and permanent elements of the folktale are the functions of the personages, whatever be the personage, and whatever manner these functions are satisfied. The functions are the fundamental constitutive parts of the folktale.
- the number of functions that comprise the fairy tale is limited.
- the sequence of functions is always identical.

- all fairy tales belong to the same type as far as their structure is concerned.

The 31 functions identified by Propp are as follows:

(To begin with there is the initial situation which describes the members of the family, the setting, etc.)

- Absence – one member of the family is absent from the house.
- Interdiction – the hero is informed of an interdiction.
- Violation – the prohibition is violated.
- Interrogation – the villain/aggressor tries to obtain information.
- Information – the villain obtains information about his victim.
- Deception – the villain tries to cheat his victim in order to obtain her wealth.
- Submission/Complicity – the victim submits to the fraud and thus helps her enemy in spite of her.
- a. Villainy – the villain does harm to one of the members of the family.
(A)
b.lack – one of the family members experiences a lack; or, one of the family members desires to possess something.(a)
- Mediation – the news of the treachery or the misfortune is divulged, the hero is approached with a request or an order; he prepares to

leave. (B)

- Decision to counter-act – the hero-searcher agrees or decides to act. (C)
- Departure – the hero leaves home.
- First function of the donor/Assignment of the test – the hero is submitted to a test, or interrogation, or an attack, etc., which prepares him for the receipt of an object or magical agent. (D)
- Reaction of the hero – the hero reacts to the actions of the future donor. (E)
- Provision or receipt of the magical agent – the magical agent is made available to the hero. (F)
- Spatial translocation – the hero is transported, taken, or led to the place close to the object of search. (G)
- Struggle – the hero and the aggressor/villain face each other in a fight. (H)
- Marking – the hero receives a mark. (I)
- Victory – The aggressor is vanquished. (J)
- Liquidation of misfortune or lack – the initial misfortune or lack is liquidated (K)

- Return – the hero returns.
- Pursuit – the hero is pursued. (Pr.)
- Rescue – the hero is rescued. (Rs.)
- Incognito arrival – the hero arrives unrecognized in his house or in another country. (o)
- Unfounded claims – a false hero makes false claims. (L)
- Difficult task – the hero is proposed a difficult task (M).
- Accomplishment/Success – the task is accomplished. (N)
- Recognition – the hero is recognized.(Q)
- Exposure – the false hero or the aggressor or the traitor is exposed. (Ex.)
- Transfiguration – the hero receives a new appearance. (T)
- Punishment – the false hero is punished. (U)
- Wedding – the hero marries the princess, and is elevated to the throne. (W)

Propp had listed the above functions drawing examples (i.e., the variable elements) from a large number of Russian folktales. Some of these functions, he noticed could be grouped together on the basis of what he called the 'spheres of action.' These spheres are located around the *dramatis personae* who accomplish specific functions as given below:

- Sphere of action of the aggressor/villain: villainy, fight involving the hero, pursuit;
- Sphere of action of the donor (provider): the preparation for the transmission of the magical object; putting the magical object at the disposal of the hero;
- Sphere of action of the magical aid: translocation of the hero, liquidation of misfortune/reparation of lack, rescue during the chase, the accomplishment of the difficult task, transfiguration of the hero;
- Sphere of action of the princess and her father: of assignment of the difficult task, the imposition of a mark, exposure, recognition of the real hero, the punishment of the second villain, marriage;
- Sphere of action of the dispatcher: sending the hero;
- Sphere of action of the hero: leaving for the search, responses to the demands of the donor, wedding;
- Sphere of action of the false hero: leaving for the search; the responses to the demands of the donor — always negative, and a special function — false claims.

Apart from the 'functions' and the 'spheres of actions' of the personages, Propp had pointed out the possible coupling or assimilation of certain functions on the basis of a relation of consequence or implication between two functions. For example struggle (H) and victory (I) exist as a pair of functions. (We shall take this up later in our discussion of Greimas.)

Another observation was the incompatibility between two pairs of functions: the pairs H-I and M-N (difficult task – solution) are seldom found to occur in the same linear chaining of functions or 'move'. Propp proposes the

concept of a fundamental tale or the canonical formula with four moves with possibilities of different permutations and combinations:

Instructors

Course Outlines

Lectures H J I K

Pr – Rs

o L A B C D E F G

ffffffffffffffffffffffffffff

Q Ex T U W L M J N K

Pr – Rs

Four different types of tales can be composed in terms of the following combinations of ‘moves’:

- I + II + IV
- I + III + IV
- I + II + III + IV
- I + IV

Lévi-Strauss: Content and Context

Lévi-Strauss reviewed Propp's work from a strictly structuralist perspective, criticizing the formalist paradigm. In proposing his own method of analyzing myths and tales, he insisted on the semantic and contextual aspects which were mostly to be identified in the specific use of the vocabulary.

Here too, as in his analysis of kinship, Lévi-Strauss pointed out the usefulness of the theory of distinctive features based on the principle of binary oppositions, developed initially in the domain of phonology by the Prague school linguists, Roman Jakobson and Nikolai Trubetzkoy.

Lévi-Strauss suggests that instead of describing the structure of the folktale, Propp had reduced it to its bare formal framework. Structure, in his view, cannot be divorced from content: "Structure has no distinct content; it is content itself, apprehended in a logical organization as a property of the real." (Lévi-Strauss 1973: 115)

The tendency to view 'functions' alone as relevant (on the basis of their being constant) and the terms that support this function as arbitrary, is severely criticized. For Lévi-Strauss, it is the vocabulary that conveys specific structural content, both in relation to historical and ethnographic

information, and in terms of the relevant oppositions that are significant within the context of a given folktale. For formalism, Lévi-Strauss concludes, “form alone is intelligible, and content is only a residual, deprived of any significant value.” While for structuralism,... “there is not something abstract on one side and concrete on the other. Form and content are of the same nature, susceptible to the same analysis. Content draws its reality from its structure and what is called form is the ‘structural formation’ of the local structure forming the content.” (ibid., p. 131)

The terms that are part of a function cannot be considered ‘variable’, because they do have a value in the context where the tale occurs. The terms for the characters may have universal validity, but often they are relative to the social context. For example, a plum tree and an apple tree have different values, since the former is recognized for its ‘fecundity’ while the latter is known for the ‘strength and depth of its roots.’ As a consequence, instead of viewing the characters perform a function as arbitrary, they have to be seen in their specific value defined positively (e.g., ‘fecundity’ in the former) or negatively (e.g., ‘earth-sky transition’ in the latter). Plus, in this case both have the ‘vegetal’ feature in common. Thus, Lévi-Strauss notes, “a ‘universe of the tale’ will be progressively defined, analyzable in pairs of oppositions, diversely combined within each character — which far from constituting a single entity — is a bundle of differential elements, in the manner of the phoneme as conceived by Roman Jakobson” (ibid., p. 135). Lévi-Strauss employs in his analysis a set of binary opposites like nature vs. culture, life vs. death, endogamy vs. exogamy, male vs. female, high vs. low, earth vs. sky, day vs. night, animal vs. vegetal, etc.

Following the same principle of ‘differential oppositions’ or distinctive features, Lévi-Strauss suggests a systematic reduction in the number of Proppian functions. For instance, the functions of ‘violation’, ‘prohibition’

and 'injunction' can all be grouped together as one or the other transformation of the same function. Accordingly, 'violation' would be the reverse of 'prohibition' and the latter a negative transformation of the 'injunction'. Similarly, 'departure' of the hero and his 'return' could be considered as the same function of disjunction, positively or negatively defined. The 'search' by the hero would be the converse of his 'pursuit', etc. (ibid., p. 137).

Evidently, Lévi-Strauss finds it hard to accept Propp's conception of a grammar of the narrative which does not pay any attention to the specific use of vocabulary and their contextual signification. Even when drawing from a universal set of binary semantic features, the words possess culturally rooted connotations which it is the job of ethnographer to identify. It is this 'second power' of words (i.e., functioning as metaphors/metonyms) employed in the narrative that reveal the structural content of the myths and tales.

Greimas: Structural Semantics

Greimas's Structural Semantics (1966) attempts a grand formalization of the narrative content. The semiotics of narrative that he founded is too vast an enterprise for us to be able provide a complete account. Greimas proceeded from an 'immanent' semiotic analysis of the natural world, towards an examination and subsequent explanation of how the 'immanent' becomes 'manifest' as the content of discourses, including the narrative. His work owes greatly to the theoretical and methodological ideas put forward by two major structural linguists of the period, namely Louis Hjelmslev and Lucien Tesnière. From Hjelmslev, he borrows three key notions: 1. the opposition between 'system' and 'process' which were

partial modifications of Saussure's 'langue' and 'parole'; 2. the idea of form of content, according to which the content plane could be (autonomously) submitted to a pre-empirical analysis; and, 3. the application of semantic distinctive features, which was an extension of the feature theory into semantics. From Tesnière, Greimas adopts the notion of 'actant' which for the former was a unit of structural analysis of syntax, closely aligned with the notion of 'valency' which is useful in understanding the system of grammatical cases. (see Lecture 1) Greimas constructs his own 'actantial' model of narrative analysis by substituting Propp's list of seven 'spheres of action' by the six actants each of which has a place in the narrative utterance that constitutes a tale.

Greimas adopts Lévi-Strauss's idea that the narrative 'functions' can be understood as transformations one of the other. A later discovery of Greimas is the 'semiotic square' which while being a development of the concept of binary oppositions, is introduced to reveal the more complex articulations of a semic category in terms of relations of contrariness, contradiction and implication. Semiotic square is defined as the "visual representation of the logical articulation of any category" (Greimas and Courtés, 1979:29). The transformational model presented in Greimas (1966) was submitted to the formalism of the semiotic square.

From the outset, Greimas's work is oriented on the structural principle of difference which Saussure had introduced earlier and which was put to analytical use by the Prague phonologists and subsequently by Lévi-Strauss. His narrative semiotics is based on the understanding that the semantic distinctive features follow a system of combinatory rules in producing the surface semantic effects.

For Greimas, the semantic structure is necessarily phenomenological and is constituted by perceiving similarities and differences between at least

two terms apprehended simultaneously. Perceiving differences, further implies that two terms are being related in terms of conjunction and disjunction. There is conjunction when the two terms present similar features, and there is disjunction when they are dissimilar. (For example, between the terms 'State highway' and 'National highway', the word 'highway' indicates conjunction and the words 'state' and 'national' indicate disjunction.) Thus, one can identify the semantic axes of disjunctive terms on the basis of the differential elements, just as the latter are conceived in structural phonology. These binary oppositions are either of a privative kind when there is presence/absence of a feature (i.e., + or – any feature s, e.g. + or – 'voice' in phonology) or of a qualitative kind when the term while being different, has its own rightful existence (s vs. non-s, e.g., dental vs. bilabial in phonology, masculine vs. feminine in semantics). The elementary structure of signification — represented by the semiotic square — is constituted of the pairs of oppositions mentioned above, i.e., the privative and qualitative oppositions of a semic category.

The notion of 'actant' is central to the Greimasian approach to the narrative. The motivation for the introduction of the 'actant' is Georges Dumézil's description of mythologies as per which the gods in question are presented as actants having their own 'sphere' of activity. The technical use of 'actant' is derived from the syntactic model of Lucien Tesnière for whom "actants are beings or things which in some capacity and in whatever manner, even in the capacity of mere onlookers and in the most passive manner participate in a process" (Tesnière, 1959: 102). (See Lecture 1 for Tesnière's theatre-like, narrative analysis of the syntax-semantics of sentences). Greimas transforms Propp's 'morphology' into an actantial model of the narrative. He reduces the latter's seven spheres of action (involving the villain, donor, helper, sought for person and her father, sender, hero and false-hero) into a maximum of 6 actants arranged into three sets of binary actantial categories:

subject vs. object sender vs. receiver helper vs. opponent

Greimas formulates the reduction of narrative sequences as follows:

Narrative Utterance (NU) = Actant (A) + Process (P) + Modality (m) + Aspect (a)

Such narrative utterances are obtained after ‘normalizing’ the text with respect to the markers of person, time, and the deictics in the sequence. The ‘process’ may be in the form of ‘dynamic’ or ‘static’ predicates or may be functions and qualifications. The elementary narrative syntax involves an opposition between actants and predicates, the latter of which are further divided into Functions (F) and Qualifications (Q). Both functions and qualifications may contain Modality and Aspect as predicate operators. Thus the following syntactic formulae are possible:

F (m) /A/, Q (m) /A/, F (a) /A/ and Q (a) /A/

The Actants (A) may be any one member of the 3 binary pairs mentioned above.

The actantial category subject vs. object represents a performancial syntagm of the narrative grammar. It involves the performance of tasks, deeds, etc. It is articulated in relation to ‘desire’: the subject desires (to receive) the object. The actantial category sender vs. receiver represents the contractual syntagm of the narrative grammar. It directs the situation towards a certain end. It is articulated in relation to ‘communication’ or ‘knowledge’. The sender communicates an object or information to the receiver. And lastly, the actantial category helper vs. opponent represents the disjunctional syntagm which involves movement or displacement of various sorts. It is articulated in relation to power. The helper acts to

facilitate movement along the axes of desire or of communication, while the opponent prevents the realization of the desire or the communication of the object of value. Greimas remarks that the third actantial category must be seen as only Circumstants (*la Tesnière*) and not as true Actants.

In its simplest form, the actantial model shows a relationship between a subject and an object, where the object of value is desired by the subject, and where the object is communicated by the sender to the receiver, and the desire of the subject is partly modulated by the activity of the helper and the opponent.

This can be schematically shown as:

In terms of the Propp's seven 'spheres of action', this will be:

Greimas has pointed out that the above schema could be applied to non-narrative discourses such as the philosophical discourses which contain crypto-narratives. Thus, in Classical philosophy, God is the Sender and Man the receiver; the Philosopher is the Subject, Knowledge is the Object; Mind is the Helper and Matter is the Opponent. This view is consistent with the post-modernist argument concerning the intertwining of scientific and narrative modes of knowledge. (see for example, Lyotard, 1984: 26-28)

Now, as far as the functions were concerned Propp himself had suggested a reduced inventory of 20 on the basis of coupling or pairing of two

functions in certain cases. The pairing is based on a relation of consequence or implication between two functions. The paired 'functions' are the following:

- a. interdiction vs. violation
- b. inquiry vs. information
- c. deception vs. submission
- d. villainy vs. lack
- e. mandate vs. hero's decision
- f. assignment of a test vs. confrontation
- g. struggle vs. victory
- h. pursuit vs. rescue
- i. assignment of difficult task vs. success
- j. exposure of the traitor vs. recognition of the hero
- k. punishment vs. wedding

Greimas proposes a further reduction of these functions with the help of a more complex structural device, viz., is the semiotic square. Thus, what are otherwise four distinct functions, viz., mandate, acceptance, interdiction and violation, can be represented by means of the semiotic square as two sets of oppositions involving the semic category of contract.

Since the functions mandate and acceptance are involved in the establishment of a contract, the functions interdiction and violation are involved in the violation of the contract, we can have a four-cornered relations of one and the same semic category of contract.

Greimas observes that "...if interdiction is the negative form of mandate, and if violation is the negation of acceptance, we see that the four terms are only the manifestation of a semic system...." (Greimas, 1983: 226)

For a semic category s (in this case, contract, these relations may be represented as follows:

Greimas has proposed similar reductions around the categories of Test and Departure.

The semiotic square in its pure form accounts for 3 kinds of relations.

This model, according to Greimas, involves the use of the “undefined concepts of conjunction and disjunction necessary for interpreting the structure of relation and two types of disjunction, the disjunction of contraries and the disjunction of contradictories.” (Greimas, 1987: 49)

In the article “Elements of a Narrative Grammar” (1970/1987), Greimas sets up essentially three levels of narrative semiotics, viz., the fundamental semantics, the deep grammar and the surface narrative grammar. The general content values provided by the elementary structure of signification, and which can be transformed into a particular semiotic model constitutes the fundamental semantics. The deep grammar contains a narrative syntax that ‘transforms and manipulates’ the terms invested with content values by affirming or negating them, that is, by processes involving disjunction and conjunction.

Between the deep semantic and syntactic structures and the discursive structures proper, Greimas identifies an ‘intermediate’ semiotic level of ‘anthropomorphic’ representations which constitute the surface narrative grammar. Propp’s ‘functions’ and the actants are situated at this level. The

anthropomorphized actants are all performing some action, that is, some doing, be it enacted or communicated . In the enacted doing, there is invariably a subject, while in the communicated doing which involves a process of trans- mission, there is a sender and a receiver. The units of the surface grammar, or the basic narrative utterances are obtained by formal conversion of the syntactic operations of the deep grammar. The typology of narrative utterances that Greimas proposes is as follows:

- Descriptive utterance: John leaves – Modal utterance: John wants to leave (The idea is that internal to every descriptive utterance is a modality of ‘wanting’)
- Attributive utterance (a subclass of descriptive utterance which is of the order of having as opposed to an order of doing): eg. Peter wants an apple (hypotactic, since the object is external to the subject) Peter wants to be good (hyponymic: the object is internal to the subject)

As for the importance of the modality of ‘wanting’ Greimas notes that its introduction into the surface grammar “allows us to construct modal utterances that have two actants: the subject and the object. The axis of desire that joins them in turn allows us to interpret them semantically as a virtual performatory subject and an object that has been assigned value” (Greimas, 1987: 73). ‘Wanting’ is also the meta-psychological element that marks the intentionality of the subject in relation to the object.

We shall give below the schema of narrative utterances generated by the dynamo of desire (modality of wanting = Fr. ‘vouloir’):

Modal utterance (wanting)
(Subject of doing) (Object of value)

Descriptive utterance

Attributive utterance

hypotactic

hyponymic

Larger syntactic units are, in fact mediated by further modal values, such as knowing-how-to ('savoir'), and being-able-to ('pouvoir') setting up the possibility of a modal chain between wanting and having/being:

Wanting —> Knowing-how-to —> Being-able-to —> Doing:

Having/Being

The surface narrative grammar consists of syntagmatic chains involving Subject (S), Anti-Subject (S), Object of Value (O), processes of Disjunction and Conjunction, the modalities of wanting, knowing-how-to, and being-able-to and the meta-verbs of 'doing' and 'communicating'.

Petitot: Topologico-dynamic schematization

Jean Petitot's attempt has been to bring out the inherent topological potential of the semiotic square by applying René Thom's 'Catastrophe Theory' with a view to providing a schematization of Greimas's structures of elementary signification and a catastrophist interpretation of the actantial model. Here again, Thom's work in theoretical linguistics wherein he has proposed a set of (biologically- motivated and topologico-dynamically-based) "archetypal morphologies" (or "semantic archetypes" according to W. Wildgen) to form a deductive base for the Fillmorean type of case-grammar has remained the main orientation. Thom has maintained that

there exists an isomorphism between the genesis of linguistic /cognitive structures and the biological-physical interactional structures in the natural world. Thoms's topologico-dynamical analysis of syntax-semantics represents a synthesis between case-grammar, actantial syntax and the concept of morphogenesis derived from catastrophe theory. (See Lecture 2 for a discussion on catastrophe-theoretic semantics.)

The main philosophical import of Thom's theory is that it retains an essential continuity between the physical and the phenomenological modes of existence, something that the logicist approaches cannot do. (Such a position is similar to the one held in the area of Cognitive Linguistics by Ron Langacker, Len Talmy, Mark Johnson, etc.) In the present case, The appearance of phenomenological difference is preceded by a physical process of differentiation of an initially continuous state to yield discrete entities. Applying the theory on Greimas's model, Petitot suggests that the relations associated with the qualitative and privative oppositions of the semiotic square could be schematized by means of the catastrophe of Conflict of minimal complexity (the 'cusp') and that of Bifurcation of minimal complexity (the 'fold') respectively. This shift, he thinks is in tune with the topological potential of the square, and involves the abandonment of a logico-combinatory method which is not suitable for a properly structural method. The main merit claimed for the catastrophist model in narrative semiotics is that it can schematize the 'undefinable concepts' of the previous quasi-logicist framework. The 'morphogenesis' of the square can be modelled as a "procession" of elementary catastrophes. The entire 'canonical formula' is understood in terms of the schemas for two qualitative oppositions, represented by a 'double cusp.'

The formal conversion that gives rise to the actantial model from the syntactic operations on the content values is seen in terms of the actantial graphs associated with the elementary catastrophes. For example, the

conversion $S U O \rightarrow S O$ can be described by means of the actantial graph of 'Capture' (see Lecture 2). As regards the metapsychological dimension of 'desire' which defines the subject-object (i.e. intentionality) relationship of the interaction, Petitot reminds us that the archetypal morphologies are indeed actantial shematisms isomorphic with the biological structures of predation and sexuality.

Force Dynamics and Narrative Structures

We can see that Proppian narrative structures represent some kind of force-dynamics (see Lecture 4) articulations of the commonly sensed life experiences on a spatial substratum. It has been pointed out by several analysts (C. Bremond, R. Barthes and Greimas) that these dynamic patterns circulate along the three axes of desire, communication and power. For example, among the preparatory functions, there are 3 forms of forms-exertion, viz., interdiction, interrogation and deception, the responses to which are of decreasing degrees of force intensity: violation, information, and submission. The main plot begins with the result (villainy or lack) of a force-exertion. The hero is urged (sociodynamics) to mediate. The hero's 'decision to counteract' can be seen as a psychodynamics where a goal-oriented part of the self overcomes its repose-oriented part.

On his ('heroic') trajectory, the hero encounters a resistance to his forward movement which is overcome ('overcoming of resistance'), resulting in his obtaining a magical object whose 'force' or power allows him to spatially translocate himself to the place of the villain with ease. In the ensuing struggle with the villain, the hero's exertion of force results in his victory, and liquidation of the original lack. During the 'pursuit', the hero experiences exertion of force upon him, but is 'helped' by another agent.

Upon his return to his home / land he faces further resistance from a false-hero. At this juncture he is helped by the mark that had been forced on him during the fight with the villain. He overcomes this resistance and the 'blockage' to his marrying the princess and ascending the throne is removed.

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