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The Influence of the Archetypal Journey in the
Development of the Narrative Structure in: Irving,
Hawthorne, Bierce, and London.

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ABSTRACT

The journey motif is one of the most frequently used themes in the history of literature as it is inherent to the human being. Although there are different types of journeys and each one has a different aim, all of them share the same structure, known as archetypal structure. The main aim of this paper is to demonstrate the influence of the Archetypal Journey as a basic element in North-American literature in narrative structures by analyzing four short stories written in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Keywords: Archetypal Journey, narrative structures, North-American literature, short stories

La temática del viaje es uno de los temas más recurrentes en la historia de la literatura debido a que se trata de un elemento inherente al ser humano. A pesar de que existen distintos tipos de viajes y cada uno tiene un objetivo diferente, todos comparten la misma estructura, conocida como estructura arquetípica. El objetivo principal de este trabajo es demostrar la influencia del viaje arquetípico como elemento básico de la literatura norteamericana en las estructuras narrativas a través del análisis de cuatro historias cortas escritas en los siglos XIX y XX.

Palabras clave: viaje arquetípico, estructuras narrativas, literatura norteamericana, historias cortas

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1. Introduction

The journey, in its broadest sense, constitutes a fundamental element in the essence of the human being. Therefore, it has consequences over every culture, religion, and race. The history of humankind is determined by the search for happiness, the meaning of life, a higher-quality lifestyle and so on and so forth, and this search is defined primarily by the journey. It is crucial for the human being to experience different journeys in order to find what they are looking for. Throughout history, the human being has been categorizing life and death as journeys in which there are trials that everyone has to pass with the purpose of successfully complete those journeys.

Although this aspect can be appreciated in every culture, it increases its importance in North America. The North-American culture is basically built around the concept of journey. The first citizens of North America as it is known nowadays were essentially men looking for a new life in a brand-new land. The desire for travelling was present in their DNA from the very beginning and the reasons that pushed them to move on could be multiple. Some journeys are taken in order to escape from the original place; others have as main aim the search for an object; and in other cases, the journey is the end itself. In this case, the reason that motivates the journey is not really important, but the journey itself. There are different types of journeys that lead to different stories within literature. However, their structure is always the same, which is known as archetypal structure.

In this paper, I will demonstrate that the structure of the Archetypal Journey, which is a basic element in the essence of the North-American literature, is present in four short stories that I have chosen. They are: *Rip van Winkle* (1820), by Washington Irving; *Young Goodman Brown* (1835), by Nathaniel Hawthorne; *Chickamauga* (1889), by Ambrose Bierce; and *To Build a Fire* (1908), by Jack London. They were all written all along the 19th century, except for the last one, which was written at the beginning of the 20th century. Although I have only analyzed four short stories, this narrative structure can be seen in many other works such as *Moby-Dick* (1851), by Herman Melville; *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1820), by Washington Irving; or *The Pit and the Pendulum* (1842), by Edgar Allan Poe.

2. State of the issue

The journey motif has been analyzed and commented constantly throughout history as it is inherent to the human being. The Archetypal Journey in particular establishes its principles mainly upon Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). In this work, Campbell explains that a multitude of myths of different cultures written all along history have the same structure, which he denominates monomyth. Therefore, he describes a number of stages present in the monomyth that the hero follows to complete his journey. The protagonist begins the journey in the ordinary world and receives the call to adventure. When the hero accepts the call, he meets his mentor and crosses the threshold that leads him to the special world. In the special world there are trials, tests, allies, and enemies that he has to overcome in order to move forward. If the hero survives, he will acquire a gift which can vary depending on the story, and sometimes there is death and rebirth of the main character. After that, he crosses the threshold again to return to the ordinary world. However, not every story presents all the stages, sometimes they all appear, but sometimes only a few can be identified. Archetypal Journeys can be framed in different types of journeys; there are rites of initiation, rites of passage, coming of age, and so on and so forth.

Moreover, Vladimir Propp created a corpus in his work *Morfología del cuento* (1974) based on folklore tales typical of different cultures throughout history and he set a pattern for their characters' actions. As it can be seen in Campbell's work, there are stories in which all the functions can be identified, but there are others in which only a few appear. Nevertheless, he demonstrates that most of the stories both written in the past and nowadays follow a stablished pattern.

Regarding narrative structures, it is remarkable Langdon Elsbree's book *Ritual Passages and Narrative Structures*. This work explains and analyzes the homology between rites of passage, especially in the liminal stage¹, and narrative structures. As Elsbree (37) states in his work, rites of passage and narrative structures are closely related as both value the importance of trials as a transforming mechanism for the hero, and both incorporate symbolism and knowledge acquirement as a basic element of the journey.

¹ Boundary or transitional point between the stages in a rite of passage

Moreover, both elements have its origins “in the activity of the brain and its interactions with its environment” (Elsbree 10).

Archetypal Journeys are normally based on different symbology systems. To analyze the short stories from this point view it can be used *Diccionario de símbolos* by Jean Chevalier Cooper (1986) which gathers a list of words similar to a dictionary. These words appear with their symbolical meaning in different cultures and from different points of view throughout history.

3. Analysis of the short stories and influence of the Archetypal Journey in the narrative structure

In this section, I will focus on the proper analysis of the short stories I have chosen. The tales are basically analyzed from the point of view of the Archetypal Journey's structure following Campbell and Propp's schemes. Although the main focus is on the structure, symbology is also analyzed mainly using Chevalier's *Diccionario de símbolos* as it is essential to carry out the interpretation of the stories.

3.1 Rip Van Winkle

The first short story is *Rip van Winkle*, published in 1820 by Washington Irving under the pseudonym Geoffrey Crayon. This story is set a few years before the American Revolutionary War. It begins describing the setting: the Kaatskill mountains. They are depicted as majestic and delightful, even their hues and shapes change every hour of the day. Although Washington Irving is not a Gothic or Romantic writer, in this description of the scene there are some hints of the Gothicism and Romanticism that were present at his time. Besides, these Romantic descriptions of the landscape can be observed throughout the whole story. It is also essential to take into account that although the tale is set in the United States, the European influence is really important as Irving makes references to the Dutch culture. For instance, he states that the little village where Rip lives was founded by Dutch colonists. Moreover, the ghostly figures he finds in the amphitheater followed the antique Dutch fashion.

As the title indicates, the main character is Rip van Winkle. The narrator describes him as "a simple good-natured man" (Irving 52). He is always willing to help everybody, and every neighbor knows him because of that reason. However, he is unable to do his own business at the family farm. As a consequence, his wife is constantly angry with him and is portrayed as a bitter and malicious woman. The only way for him to escape from their arguments is shrug his shoulders, shake his head, and go for a walk on his own.

Up to this point, the story provides an overview of the main characters to set the reader in the narrative. As Vladimir Propp states in his work *La morfología del cuento*, there are some patterns in the functions of the characters that are present in hundreds of

stories throughout history. Propp analyzes many stories that come from folklore, and their structures can be applied to the rest of the stories created after. The first function is “uno de los miembros de la familia se aleja de la casa” (Propp 37). This event coincides with the moment when Rip decides to enter into the woods with his gun because his wife is angry with him. At first sight, it seems to be insignificant, but it actually marks the beginning of the adventure. In this case, the family member that leaves his home corresponds to the hero of the story. Rip goes for a walk in the mountains next to the Hudson river, which is an important reference in the story.

Late in the afternoon, he decides to throw himself on a green knoll. In this exact moment is when the Dream Vision begins as the story says: “and at last losing itself in the blue highlands” (Irving 58), and there is a structure of a dream within a dream. However, the author does not explicitly say that Rip is already sleeping. When he is about to apparently descend from the mountains and come home, he hears a voice calling him. In this case, the voice is the Call to Adventure that Joseph Campbell defines as the beginning of the hero’s journey. When Rip starts to look for the origin of the mysterious voice, he can only see “a crow winging its solitary flight” (Irving 59). This detail, apparently irrelevant, gives a hint to the reader about who is calling Rip. If we look at *Diccionario de símbolos* by Jean Chevalier Cooper, the crow is a symbol of death, it is a bad omen; and as the reader discovers later, it is a dead man who is calling the protagonist. Rip tries to follow the voice until he finds a man in strange clothes. He finds himself in front of one of Henry Hudson’s crew members, who is going to be his guide in the journey. The guide is a basic figure in the structure of the Archetypal Journey, is the one that helps the hero to accomplish his mission. Besides, in this case there are again similarities with the functions portrayed by Propp. He states the following: “El héroe sufre una prueba, un cuestionario, un ataque, etc..., que le preparan para la recepción de un objeto o de un auxiliar mágico.” (Propp 50). In this case, the task he has to accomplish to continue is to help the man he has just found taking a keg up the mountain. In fact, within this function we can find several subfunctions and one of them specifies that it could be the case that a dead man asks the hero to do him a favor. After the guide asks for help, the hero has to react, and again we can see a function stated by Propp: “El héroe reacciona ante las acciones del future donante” (Propp 52). In this case, the hero’s reaction is to do the favor to the dead man.

They start walking together in silence, until they reach a hollow. At this point, the main character crosses the first threshold, which is the “small amphitheater, surrounded by perpendicular precipices...” (Irving 60). At this moment, there is a clear transformation of the story; from being a normal tale with realistic features, it becomes almost a fairytale in which it can be distinguished clear magical elements such as the ghostly figures.

As the story continues, Rip realizes that there are more individuals that look similar to the man he found before. They were playing at nine-pins, but as soon as they saw Rip, they stopped. Then, the first man he found threw the content of the keg into large flagons. As Propp claims in other function of his book: “El objeto mágico pasa a disposición del héroe” (Propp 53). In this case, the object has to be drunk. Rip was curious, so he himself tried the strange liquor and after several draughts, he fell asleep. Nonetheless, it is a dream within a dream, as he is already sleeping in the green knoll. The fairytale structure is linked to this idea of dream vision or dream allegory as this short story follows the common pattern of the fairytales but with little variations and adaptations.

Following the organization of the Archetypal Journey, the hero is supposed to undergo a transformation. However, Rip van Winkle just falls asleep and wakes up twenty years later. When he wakes up, he finds himself in the green knoll where he laid before. He looked for his gun and his loyal dog, however, he could not find none of them. He only found an old firelock and a rusty barrel. In this moment, he looks up to the sky and sees an eagle that is “wheeling aloft”. This is a relevant symbol in the story as the eagle represents the United States of America. It appears in its flag and represents also freedom. At first, Rip thinks that maybe the men he was with the day before were trying to rob him. Thus, he comes back to the amphitheater where the events happened. He could not find anybody, nor the men neither his dog. Moreover, he could not even find the amphitheater itself. There was only a huge wall now. Confused, he decided to come back to the village. A typical function present in any tale can be again identified: “El héroe regresa” (Propp 65). In this moment, Rip crosses the second threshold. In some way, he suffered a death and rebirth and now he is ready to come back home although he did not learn anything.

The story continues with another function present in Propp's work: "El héroe llega de incognito a su casa o a otra comarca" (Propp 68), in this case, Rip comes back home. When he gets to the village, he realizes that everything is different and that nobody recognizes him. After speaking with some of the citizens, he discovers that there has been a revolutionary war and that King George III of the United Kingdom was not their king anymore. From now on, he was a free citizen from the United States of America, but he did not even know the meaning of words such as "Federalists" and "Democrats". After these first moments of confusion, Rip finally is recognized. This is another Propp's function: "El héroe es reconocido" (Propp 70).

Still confused, he told his own story and what happened in the mountains. Every single person in the village knew what had happened to him, however, he could not transmit any type of knowledge. The Archetypal Journey that Rip experienced was a failure. The structure of exile and return can be clearly appreciated, even the crossing of the thresholds. Nevertheless, at his return he cannot communicate any type of knowledge as he did not learn anything. When he comes back he is exactly the same person, the only thing that changes in him is his physical aspect. Rip keeps worrying about the same issues, mainly the argument he is going to have with his wife when he gets home. Besides, while he is still thinking about his wife, the reader can infer that the situation in his environment is not the same as before he fell asleep.

Moreover, an evident symbolism can be appreciated in this short story as there are some characters that have an assigned role. First of all, Rip could be considered in some way the antithesis of being American. He has no ambition at all; he is a good man, but he is incapable of doing his own work and help his own family. He does not want to work to have a better life or a better position. In other words, he does not fit in the idea of the American Dream. He could be considered the first American antihero because he does not obey the traditional patterns. Nonetheless, it can be seen from another point of view: Dame van Winkle could be associated with England, whereas Rip van Winkle would represent America itself. Historically, America was experiencing a turbulent time. The American Revolutionary War was about to start, and they wanted to free themselves from the tyranny of England. This situation can be easily recognized in Rip's life: his wife is a tyrant in this case, and the only way for Rip to definitely get rid of her is to escape. At the end of the story, he feels pity about his wife, but he is also happy because he is now a

completely free man: “he had got his neck out of the yoke of matrimony, and could go in and out whenever he pleased” (Irving 73). Following this symbology, Rip van Winkle’s daughter would represent the new America, a land of freedom. When Rip comes back twenty years later, his daughter accepts him in his house just as the United States accepted everyone; she represents goodness and virtue.

To sum up, the structure of this Archetypal Journey is based on Rip’s exile mainly because of his wife behavior. In other words, the hero escapes because he feels alienated. After that, he receives the call to adventure and at the same time the reader can recognize the appearance of magical elements represented in the ghostly figures he sees. The transformation stage cannot be seen in this short story as Rip does not evolve or even change at all. As a consequence, the story goes straightforward to the return of the main character. The hero suffers a crisis of identity as he does not even know who he is when he returns. Besides, America itself also suffers a crisis during this period, although America evolves and changes. At the end, he communicates his own story, but he cannot transfer any type of knowledge to his neighbors and friends. The society has completely changed but Rip stays the same. Therefore, the Archetypal Journey is closed, but not perfect.

3.2 *Young Goodman Brown*

The next short story was first published in 1835 by Nathaniel Hawthorne and is called *Young Goodman Brown*. In this case, it is important to have a basic notion of the author’s life as it is clearly reflected in the tale. Nathaniel Hawthorne was born in Salem in 1804. His earliest American ancestor was William Hathorne (without W, as Hawthorne himself decided to add it to his surname), a law officer that sentenced a woman to public lashing. He was extremely Puritan and followed a simple way of life. Hawthorne wondered if the decline of his family’s situation was a retribution for what he did and for the role of William’s son as one of the three judges in the Salem witchcraft trials of 1692. Nathaniel’s father was a captain, but he died when Hawthorne was only four years old. These basic events will be openly showed in *Young Goodman Brown* as a representation of Hawthorne’s obsession with Puritanism and his ancestors.

Moving on to the short story, the first element that has to be highlighted is the title itself. As in *Rip van Winkle*, the title corresponds to the name of the main character. In this case, the name gives the reader some information about the character. First of all, the protagonist is a young man, which implies he does not have the same experiences as an old person. The second name is Goodman; as José Manuel Barrio explains in his article “*Young Goodman Brown*”: *un análisis simbólico-narrativo*, this second name has several meanings. This noun can be referred to the patriarch of the family, the husband, but it is also a name given to fair and reliable men (Barrio 59). Finally, Brown is a common surname in the Anglo-Saxon countries, specially among Protestant families.

As the first lines of the story show, this Archetypal Journey starts at sunset in Salem. These two details may seem irrelevant, but they are actually used on purpose. The fact that the story begins at sunset suggests that this will be a journey from light to darkness, as the action is moving towards the night. Moreover, it is set in Salem not only because it is Hawthorne’s birth place, but also because it is a well-known village that every reader will associate to the witchcraft trials of 1692. In other words, by using this location, the reader finds himself within a certain atmosphere that is not necessary to describe. Right after in the second line there is another remarkable element regarding the Archetypal Journey: the threshold. It literally mentions the threshold of the door, but it can also refer to the symbolical threshold that the hero has to cross in order to begin his adventure. The protagonist is with his wife, Faith. Once again, the name of the character represents the character itself. She is portrayed as innocent, and as it will be explained later on, she is also the main reason why Goodman Brown has doubts throughout the story. Her pink ribbons are mentioned several times in this very first page, which can be considered significant as they are the main Faith’s symbol. Moreover, as it can be seen in Chevalier’s *Diccionario de símbolos*, the pink color represents regeneration and initiation to mysteries. Pink is the combination of red (divine love) and white (divine knowledge), and together they mean love to divine knowledge; this is the reason why this color is related to Faith (Chevalier 892-893). Another element that gives the reader a clue about the setting is the moment in which Faith says to her husband: “Pray tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year” (Hawthorne 111). As José Manuel Barrio points out, this must be one of the most important nights for the Anglo-Saxon culture: Halloween, October 31 (Barrio 65). It is the most magical night; however, Goodman

Brown has to depart and start his journey. This first action in the story can also be analyzed from Propp's point of view: "Uno de los miembros de la familia se aleja de la casa" (37). This story presents a circular structure of exile and return, and the ceremony begins when the neophyte leaves his home and retreats himself to the woods. Two more functions can be seen at this point: "Recae sobre el protagonista una prohibición" (Propp 38) because Faith is asking Brown not to go that night; and "se transgrede la prohibición" (Propp 39) because Goodman Brown finally leaves his home.

Right after he leaves, he starts to think about what he is doing; Faith would be horrified if she knew his purpose. He describes her as an angel, and he thinks that after that night he will follow her to heaven. In this short paragraph of the story it can be seen how much he trusts her. He makes the reader think she is an innocent and simple character, but appearances can be deceiving. However, it is clearly seen that these condescending thoughts are only a mere excuse for him to feel better.

In this moment, the story starts to have gothic hues. Hawthorne uses words such as "evil purpose", "dreary", "darkened", "gloomiest", and "narrow path creep" in order to put the reader into an atmosphere of fear and anxiety. The hero is starting his journey towards darkness, and he has to do it by himself. Solitude is a really important element in the journey, the main character is the only one that has to pass the task and suffer the transformation although he receives some help. Suddenly, he beholds the figure of a man who happens to be the devil itself. The man in grave and decent attire reprimands young Goodman Brown for being late, which means it is not a casual encounter. In other words, "el agresor recibe informaciones sobre su víctima" (Propp 40). In this case, the devil will be the guide of the hero, a crucial character in the story. He will try to gain the confidence of Goodman Brown to push him to his duty that night. It can be represented by Propp's functions: "El agresor intenta engañar a su víctima" (Propp 41). The reader can easily observe that a feeling of proximity is built by comparing this strange man with Brown's father. He also has a staff that looked similar to a snake that twists and wriggles, which helps in the construction of the gothic setting. It can be appreciated at some moments that Brown doubts and decelerates, whereas the Devil encourages him to continue and he even lends Brown his own staff if he is already tired. This is another Propp's function: "El héroe sufre una prueba, un cuestionario, un ataque, etc., que le preparan para la recepción de un objeto o de un auxiliar mágico" (Propp 50). The reader can appreciate that the main

character is doubting about what he is going to do. Goodman Brown says to the strange man that he has scruples regarding the issue they have met for. However, the Devil tries to convince him again to continue walking. He actually achieves his purpose and it can be analyzed again from Propp's point of view: "La víctima se deja engañar" (41). This function can be linked to another one: "El héroe es transportado, conducido o llevado cerca del lugar donde se halla el objeto de su búsqueda" (60), as the Devil himself is trying to lead Goodman Brown to the clearing in the woods where the ceremony takes place. Then, it enters in the story Hawthorne's family story. The Devil explains Brown that he himself helped his grandfather when lashing a woman in Salem and his father when setting fire to an Indian village. By this little speech, the Devil tries again to gain the confidence of the main character. However, Brown states that he and his family are people of prayer not related to such wickedness. These two characters continue talking, but Goodman Brown doubts again as he thinks about Faith. Nonetheless, once again the strange man gives a sense of closeness by saying that she would not suffer any harm. As they are speaking, Brown recognizes a woman in the woods who is supposed to be very pious and exemplary along with the Deacon. It can be distinguished another Gothic element within the story; the old lady that Brown recognizes has a broomstick, so the reader can infer that she is a witch, and it can be related to the Salem's witchcraft hunt. There are also magical elements, for instance when the Devil touches little boughs from a maple and they start to wither. This type of events make the reader realize that this strange man is not a common mortal or even human. Moreover, after seeing these magical episodes, Brown apparently decides to not continue his journey. He feels deceived when he sees people that he thought were good going with the Devil itself. He suddenly starts to think about Faith again and how would be being with her at that moment, also being conscious and feeling guilty about the purpose that brought him to the woods. However, he hears familiar voices and decides to follow them. There is a battle in his mind, but he chooses to continue his journey. He listens to some of these holy men talking and one of them says that there is a "goodly young woman to be taken into communion" (Hawthorne 117). After all the events he had witnessed, young Goodman Brown starts to doubt about if there is really a heaven up in the sky and cries while he lifts his hands to pray claiming that he would stand against the devil only because of his Faith. Nonetheless, he begins to hear familiar voices again and one of them in particular, a female voice, disturbs him.

Both saints and sinners, as the story points out, encourage the female figure onward. Goodman Brown despairs and shouts his wife's name. There is a scream merged with far-off laughter and all of a sudden, a pink ribbon falls in the branch of a tree. The protagonist is so devastated and disoriented at this point that he claims: "My Faith is gone! There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil; for to thee is this world given" (Hawthorne 118).

He is completely lost without his Faith, he feels deceived because, as José Manuel Barrio points out, the neophytes attend to the rite voluntarily, they do not act under constraint. The uninitiated have to believe in God to invert the principles and make them surrender to Satan. However, this is a task the neophyte has to pass in order to initiate himself in the rite. He has to feel disoriented to prove his orientation capacity and that he can control himself and his emotions. After this event, there is another Propp's function as Brown takes the staff and it seems that he is flying instead of running or walking: "El objeto mágico pasa a disposición del héroe" (Propp 53). Right before Goodman Brown gets to the ceremony, there are again Gothic descriptions. Hawthorne uses words such as "wilder", "drearier", "heart of the dark wilderness", "frightful sounds", "howling of wild beasts", "the chief horror of the scene", and so on and so forth.

It is midnight when Brown arrives to the clearing in the woods, a significant ritual symbol, and the first perception of the rite is visual. He beholds a red light, a fire. Then, through the auditory sense he hears human voices singing what it seems to be a hymn, which is familiar to him. After that, he discovers an altar or pulpit made of stone surrounded by four blazing pines which constitute the four natural elements, as José Manuel Barrio Marco asserts, present in every rite: earth, water, air, and fire (Barrio 71). The protagonist also finds out that in this witchcraft meeting there are many Salem's neighbors, most of them famous for their especial sanctity. The rite is about to begin, so the converts move forward, and Brown approaches the congregation. The dark wizard begins the rite by welcoming the neophytes: "Welcome, my children to the communion of your race. Ye have found thus young your nature and your destiny. My children, look behind you!" (Hawthorne 121). These words represent the beginning of the rite. The neophytes' identity is unknown until this moment in which they can look at each other and accept themselves as worshippers. Then, the Devil himself continues with his speech and claims: "This night it shall be granted you to know their secret deeds" (Hawthorne

122). This means that the initiated worshippers will have the power to see and discern in the human soul, even the most obscure secrets, and use them to spread the evil. They will be able to discover how elders of the church have whispered horrible words to the young maids of their households; how a woman has given her husband a drink to become a widow; or how young offspring have made haste to inherit their fathers' wealth. After that, the master pronounces the acceptance conjure: "Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness" (Hawthorne 122). This is the epitome of the sect's philosophy. Thereupon, it takes place the mark of baptism, which can also be read in Propp's functions: "El héroe recibe una marca" (61). This mark is made upon the foreheads of the neophytes and represents their relation to sin. It is made with a liquid, but the reader does not really know which liquid is. This is one of the most distinctive features of Hawthorne's style: ambiguity. In the short story, it says that it can be blood, which is normally used for every rite; or just water reddened by the lurid light. According to Chevalier, there are two types of red: diurnal and nocturnal. In this case, it is nocturnal, and it is the color of the soul, of the esoteric knowledge prohibited to the non-initiated, it is also related to the symbolical death of the neophytes (Chevalier 444). The officiant of the ceremony proceeds to the baptismal anointing of the members through the mark: a pentacle, which is the symbol of the Devil. After the anointing, it takes place the transmission of abilities and powers: "They might be partakers of the mystery of sin, more conscious of the secret guilt of others, both in deed and thought, than they could now be of their own" (Hawthorne 123). Young Goodman Brown, desperate, asks Faith to look up to heaven and resist the wicked one.

At this point, Hawthorne plays again with ambiguity, he does not give more details about the initiation rite: "Whether Faith obeyed he knew not. Hardly had he spoken when he found himself amid calm night and solitude" (Hawthorne 123). This event can also be linked with Propp's functions: "El agresor es vencido, es expulsado inmediatamente" (Propp 62). The events that happened in the clearing in the woods are interpreted by the reader, as it is not clear by the story itself. As José Manuel Barrio (74) asserts, if any of the participants in the Sabbath mentions God's name, they rite would fade away in front of their eyes. In this case, the word "Heaven" pronounced by the protagonist, functions as a direct referent to God. When Brown finds himself next to the rock: "besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew" (Hawthorne 123) it is not only that the journey is coming to

an end because the appearance of dew represents the beginning of a new day, but it is also a powerful symbol within the story. As Chevalier points out, the dew is a symbol of regeneration and life, it is a heavenly blessing (Chevalier 887). It can be interpreted as a sign of repentance if the rock represents God and the dew represents God's grace, as Goodman Brown invokes Him in the last moment. Readers can make their own interpretations, but the protagonist of the story does not really know the meaning of these events.

The next morning Goodman Brown returns to Salem: "El héroe regresa" (Propp 65). He returns to a life of anxiety, sadness, emptiness, and disbelief. He avoids every neighbor he encounters in his way; they were apparently in a witch meeting some hours ago, but they are now again continuing with their saintly lives. This could be also explained through Propp's functions: "El héroe recibe una nueva apariencia" (Propp 71) as Goodman Brown changes psychologically. This change is reflected in his face and it also changes his visage. Moreover, Hawthorne impregnates the reader with ambiguity one more time: "Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest, and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting?" (Hawthorne 123). By saying this, Hawthorne makes the reader doubt if the events that happened in the forest were true or they were just a dream. Besides, if it was just a dream, it could be considered a dream allegory or dream vision, as in the case of *Rip Van Winkle*. However, there is lack of information regarding the moment when Brown would fall asleep. Hawthorne insists in the idea that everything that happened that night was just a dream: "It was a dream of evil omen for young Goodman Brown" (Hawthorne 123).

To conclude, this Archetypal Journey is also an initiation rite in which the theological theme is very present. It can be seen associations of Good and Evil, Faith and desperation, or Grace and guilt. In this story, the protagonist makes a journey from light (sunset) to darkness (midnight), in which he and his worldview completely change. It is projected the double perspective and double moral in relation to humankind, in which appearances are deceiving. Goodman Brown fights for his Faith in the forest, but at the end he loses it allegorically as he cannot trust nobody anymore. Therefore, the changes he experiments are all negative; it is a journey towards knowledge, but a negative one.

3.3 *Chickamauga*

The following short story, *Chickamauga*, was first published in 1889 by Ambrose Bierce. The title of the story refers to the Battle of Chickamauga, fought on September 1863 between the United States and the Confederate States in the American Civil War.

The protagonist of this story is a six-year-old child who has been educated in the art of war, as his father has been a soldier in the past and his ancestors have a long tradition of conquest and discovery deeds. As a consequence, the protagonist wants to explore the forest and live adventures as his ancestors did. He leaves his home and enters in the forest, which is associated with the first Propp's (38) function: "Uno de los miembros de la familia se aleja de la casa". Following Campbell's structure of the Archetypal Journey, this would be the call to adventure, and in this case, the destination is the forest. The child decides to make himself a wooden sword, which is going to be the magic object that will guide him in his expedition and will make him feel secure. He enters into the woods and after overcoming invisible foes, he reaches a brook, which is the first threshold in the Archetypal Journey. When he crosses it, he finds a rabbit, a new and more formidable enemy. The rabbit in some way scares the child, which makes him cry and run away without knowing in what direction. It represents an obstacle in the hero's journey that makes him doubt and going backwards. It is one of the difficulties the hero has to overcome in order to continue his adventure. The child gets lost in the forest and wanders for more than an hour until he is tired and lays down between two rocks to sleep. The child looks for protection because he is scared. Although sleeping makes him overcome fears and stages in his journey, it can also be considered a return, specifically an *ad uterum* return; in this case to mother Nature as he cannot find his biological mother. Besides, at this moment, another Propp's (46) function is included in the story: "Algo le falta a uno de los miembros de la familia". In this case, the mother is missing her child, but he is sleeping in the forest with his wooden sword, which is no longer a weapon, but a companion. When he wakes up, he returns to the brook. However, he finds another obstacle in his path: "A thin, ghostly mist rose along the water" (Bierce 49), which frightens him and makes him turn back to the dark woods. This event, together with the clash with the rabbit are represented in Propp's (50) functions as "El héroe sufre una prueba, un cuestionario, un ataque, etc., que le preparan para la recepción de un objeto o

de un auxiliar mágico”. The protagonist undergoes several trials that will make his journey to knowledge more difficult and challenging.

After overcoming these obstacles, he beholds the death itself. The child is now braver as he has progressed in his journey: “He stood still and as it came slowly on gained courage every moment” (Bierce 49). He has an encounter with soldiers, but as he is still an ignorant and has not finished his journey yet, his vision of reality is distorted. The soldiers are injured, and the descriptions during this passage are really harsh: “From the upper teeth to the throat was a great red gap fringed with hanging shreds of flesh and splinters of bone” (Bierce 51). The child compares these men to clowns in a circus; and as clowns, he decides to mount them to have fun as if they were horses, showing his absolute ignorance: “Not all of this did the child note; it is what would have been noted by an elder observer; he saw little but that these were men” (Bierce 50). Moreover, as the child was laughing at them, one of them shook his fist at him. The child runs away again and climbs to a tree. Once again, the child is only motivated by ignorance and fear. He has several obstacles in his path and he tries to avoid them by running away.

However, at this point the hero’s journey starts to change. He observes that there is a strange red light, a fire. Then, the child starts to follow the light, he starts to move towards knowledge. As Chevalier (513) points out, “el fuego es pues ante todo el motor de la regeneración periódica”. The fire will reveal the truth to the child and will illuminate him both literally and metaphorically, and it will also make him end his journey from ignorance to knowledge. As he returns home, he crosses the threshold again: the brook. It is now full of blood, which symbolizes death. However, the child is still an ignorant and only sees the blood as red dashes of red. At this point, another Propp’s (65) function can be identified: “El héroe regresa”. When the child returns, the change in him is manifested. He finishes his journey from darkness (ignorance) to light (knowledge) when he beholds his mother, who died because of the shelling. Once again, the description regarding the mother is very harsh: “The greater part of the forehead was torn away, and from the jagged hole the brain protruded, overflowing the temple, a frothy mass of gray, crowned with clusters of crimson bubbles” (Bierce 56). Another Propp’s (42) function can be identified in this passage: “El agresor daña a uno de los miembros de la familia o le causa perjuicios”. In this case, the injured character is the protagonist’s mother.

The whole story follows the naturalist tradition, characterized by degradation and destruction. Because of the child's condition and his heritage, he is pushed to a tragic ending. However, his misperceptions not only appear because of his inability to hear and speak, but also because of his allegorical blindness. He is an innocent and ignorant child, and the knowledge in this Archetypal Journey is acquired through a negative experience. He experiments different situations, such as the clash with the soldiers or seeing the blood in the water, that could make him stop being allegorically blind, but they did not. He acquires knowledge when he experiences himself the horror of war and death represented, in this case, in his mother. In other words, it is an exile-return Archetypal Journey presented in the form of a coming of age, a ritual passage that represents the transition from childhood to adolescence, as Elsbree (19) points out.

3.4 *To Build a Fire*

The last short story is *To Build a Fire*, written by Jack London. There are two versions of this story, one published in 1902 and other published in 1908. The one made public in 1902 is less known and, although it is similar, it does not have the same plot. The best-known version is the one published in 1908, and it is the one I have analyzed.

The story is an Archetypal Journey based on exploration and explained through different types of symbology systems. There is a combination of masonry, spiritualism, and esoterism. Moreover, it can also be interpreted superficially or from a deeper perspective. The superficial structure is related to adventure and the clash between man and nature in a harmful wilderness. The hero of this story represents individualism and arrogance, which makes him challenge nature itself. There are also Darwinist references as the strongest is at the end the one that survives. In this case, the strongest and better prepared is the dog that comes along with the man. Besides, the whole story follows the naturalist tradition, as in the case of *Chickamauga*, with realist hues. Taking into account the realist features, it can be highlighted that London (50) gives very specific details about the landscape, the geographic situation, even the cardinal orientation: "It led south 500 miles to the Chilcoot Pass, and salt water. It led north 75 miles to Dawson, and still farther on to the north a thousand miles to Nulato, and finally to St. Michael, on Bering Sea, a thousand miles and half a thousand more". These details make the story more realistic

and are subjected to the cause and effect phenomena. However, this realism is combined with a dose of ambiguity and symbolism. The landscape described in the story lacks life, there is nothing, it is simply white wilderness. Moreover, the reader does not know where exactly the journey starts, as London only mentions that the events happen in the Yukon region.

The tale can also be interpreted from a religious perspective. It could be associated to a parable because the protagonist is anonymous and his experiences can be extrapolated. The man would be associated to the fool and arrogant that challenges God, represented in the unstoppable nature. To illustrate this, London establishes the story following Propp's functions. First of all, the hero starts his journey with the call to adventure. There is a prohibition upon him, "recae sobre el protagonista una prohibición" (Propp 38), stated by the old man on Sulphur Creek: "no man should travel alone in that country after 50 below zero" (London 48). Although the protagonist is not allowed to travel on his own, decides to violate the prohibition because he thinks that "any man who was a man could travel alone" (London 48). Consequently, there is a clash between man and nature which culminates with "el agresor daña a uno de los miembros de la familia o le causa perjuicios" (Propp 42). In this case, the aggressor is nature, and the protagonist is not only damaged, but he even dies during his journey.

In this story, masonic elements can be identified as the whole tale represents a masonic initiation rite. The protagonist is associated to a newborn that will acquire his definitive identity at the end of the process. He is "a newcomer in the land" and this is "his first winter" (London 50). Therefore, he is associated with a masonic apprentice as Barrio (32) points out. He is still an ignorant, this is the reason why he starts his journey in the north part of the region. The North, as Chevalier (756) explains, is a misfortune place and it is associated with lack of knowledge. The man can be also associated with the symbolic figure of The Fool, present in the Tarot. This figure gathers many of the protagonist's characteristics. He is stubborn, ignorant, irresponsible, and unconscious about the danger (Chevalier 654-655). He appears in the Tarot with a long beard, similar to the one of the Hermit, and light of baggage. There is also a small dog with him that appears as if to communicate something; in this case, the dog would want to warn his companion about the imminent danger (Nichols 24). The Fool's characteristics can be seen all along the story in the protagonist. He is ignorant when he asserts that a little frost

is just slightly painful, but nothing serious. He is arrogant as he does not realize until the end that he cannot travel alone under such conditions. This can be summarized in his thoughts just before he dies: “His idea was that he had been acting like a fool” (London 65). As he is doing a journey from ignorance to knowledge, he goes from the North to the East. The sun rises from the East, it illuminates and it is associated to knowledge. In other words, the North is related to ignorance whereas the East is related to knowledge.

It is necessary to have at least one threshold in an Archetypal Journey and in this case, there are more than one. The first one is crossed at the very beginning of the story when the protagonist gets into the woods: “He climbed the high earth-bank where a little-traveled trail led east through the pine forest” (London 50). The second one is deeper, it is associated with the pure initiation of the apprentice and is represented by a crossroad: “At half-past twelve, on the minute, he arrived at the divide of the creek” (London 54).

This Archetypal Journey is also an initiation rite that implies a personal challenge for the protagonist. There are several obstacles and difficulties all along the path, and the man has to overcome them intuitively. At the beginning, he is arrogant and self-confident. He walks four miles per hour and overcomes the first obstacles without many problems, but the difficulties are at the end accumulated and they will be the cause of his death, an initiatic death. The obstacles are represented by natural elements: air, water, and fire. These elements are associated to purification. The first one that appears in the story is the air. The protagonist proves the destructive capacity of the air by spitting: “As he turned to go, he forced some water from his mouth as an experiment [...] before they could fall to the snow, the drops of water became ice that broke with a noise” (London 51). The main aim of this obstacle is to discourage the explorer and prove his strength in his journey. The second element is the water in which he sinks: “At a place where there were no signs, the man broke through. It was not deep. He was wet to the knees before he got out of the water to the firm snow” (London 56). The water is a symbol of purification and regeneration, as it can be seen in the Christian ritual of baptism. It is opposed to the fire and corresponds to the North and the winter solstice (Chevalier 52-56). Finally, the explorer makes a fire in order to survive. The fire, as Chevalier (511-514) points out, is a ritual symbol of purification and rebirth. However, it is different from water as the fire symbolizes “la purificación por la comprensión, hasta su forma más espiritual, por la luz y la verdad; el agua simboliza la purificación del deseo hasta su forma más sublime, la

bondad” (Chevalier 514). The man is purified through the fire by putting his hands in it: “As he so held it, he noticed some feeling in his hand. His flesh was burning. He could smell it. The feeling developed into pain” (London 61). Moreover, as Lavagnini (102) claims, the air corresponds in masonry to the speculative thought and reflection, the water to the emotions and feelings, and the fire to the willingness and imagination (Barrio 38).

In every initiation rite, as in *Young Goodman Brown*, the beginner has to prove his orientation capacity through his senses. In this case, the use of the senses appears after the protagonist starts to be frozen and needs desperately to make a fire. As Barrio (39) explains, firstly the sense of touch is substituted for the sight: “He followed the movement of his fingers with his eyes, using his sense of sight instead of that of touch” (London 60-61). Then, the sense of touch is substituted for the hearing sense: “He knew the bark was there, and, though he could not feel it with his fingers, he could hear its crisp rustling as he fumbled for it” (60). After that, the sense of touch is substituted for the sense of taste, as he still cannot feel his hands: “He carried it into his mouth, and scraped the bunch with his upper teeth in order to separate a match” (60). Finally, the sense of touch is also substituted by the sense of smell: “His flesh was burning. He could smell it” (61).

Another relevant aspect in this story is the numerology. The author gives several numeric references associated to miles, degrees, hours, and so on and so forth. First of all, the explorer starts his journey at 9am and plans on finishing it at 6pm; in other words, the journey lasts nine hours. This forecast is repeated several times all along the story, and it can be appreciated that the explorer gradually loses his hope to get to his destiny at the scheduled time. Besides, the scheduled time to get to the camp coincides with the time of his death. As Barrio (39-40) asserts, in masonry the number nine is associated to the material things whereas the number six is associated to the spiritual ones. Therefore, in this journey the explorer goes from the material to the spiritual. Then London uses the numbers fifty, fifty-five and sixty. Fifty and fifty-five refer to degrees, but to which scale they refer to is ambiguous. Consequently, these numbers themselves represent both the human materiality and ignorance, and the absolute knowledge.

A further important figure in the story and in the initiation rite is the guide, which in this case does not appear physically but gives the explorer the clues he needs to know in order to success in his journey. As the protagonist is associated to the Fool in the Tarot,

the man from Sulphur Creek is associated to the Hermit. This character represents wisdom. He appears with a staff that symbolizes his long pilgrimage, and it is also his weapon against injustice (Chevalier 452). The man from Sulphur Creek warns the explorer about not travelling alone in such conditions and the protagonist recalls this message several times; however, he does not acknowledge that the old man is right until he is almost dead: “The man on Sulphur Creek was right, he thought in the moment of controlled despair that followed” (London 61). He is driven by his own ignorance and arrogance.

Every rite represents a passage from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge and, in this case, from coldness to heat. This passage ends with the death and rebirth of the beginner. The explorer physically dies in *To Build a Fire*; however, just before he dies, he accepts the death and recognizes that he had been an ignorant during his journey and the old man of Sulphur Creek was right from the very beginning. Although the protagonist dies because of the freezing weather, he has the warmest thoughts and feelings at the end because he has achieved knowledge and wisdom. He dies knowing his mistakes and what he had done wrong.

The last character in this story is the dog that follows the explorer. This dog is a native husky well-prepared for the environment where the tale is developed. He is intelligent and possess an intuitive instinct, he perfectly knows the landscape and what he has to do in order to survive, he could be associated to God in this case. He does not need a watch, a thermometer or a compass. This wolf-dog symbolizes the knowledge about the hereafter but also about the terrenal world. He is the human’s guide and companion, and he is present even when the man is dying. Moreover, it has two identities as he is both wolf and dog. They are complementary as the wolf is associated to the West and irrationality, whereas the dog is associated to the East and to rationality and kindness. After the protagonist’s death, the dog howls and finds his way back to the camp.

Finally, from the spiritual point of view, the man appears to behold himself when he dies: “He did not belong with himself any more. Even then he was outside of himself, standing with the boys and looking at himself in the snow” (London 66). This follows the spiritualist believes; when the hero dies his soul comes out of his body and sees himself,

but ignoring the fact that he is dying as Barrio (46) points out. In this story, this can be associated to the spiritual rebirth that he experiments right after his symbolic death.

4. Conclusion

The four short stories I have analyzed are all different in style and plot, and they do not belong to the same literary movement. *Rip Van Winkle* (1820), which could be considered a Pre-Romantic story, clearly presents an exile and return structure framed in different historical moments: first, the precolonial situation represented by Captain Hudson; the colonial period marked by the English control over the colonies, in other words, the present moment within the story; and the postcolonial era represented in the Republic of the United States. Furthermore, there is a guide, several thresholds, and a Dream Vision and more specifically a dream within a dream. However, the protagonist does not acquire any type of knowledge at the end, neither positive nor negative. *Young Goodman Brown* (1835), a Romantic short story with Gothic characteristics, also presents a clear structure of exile and return, and the crossing of the thresholds is clearly marked in the story. Nevertheless, apart from being an Archetypal Journey, it also represents a rite of initiation to witchcraft. It is a perfect Archetypal Journey marked by the negative knowledge the protagonist acquires. This can also be seen in *Chickamauga* (1889), as the child also acquires knowledge through a negative experience, mainly because this story belongs to naturalist Realism. It also represents an exile and return journey; however, it is more specifically a coming of age, a rite of passage that depicts the transition from childhood to adolescence through a traumatic experience. Finally, *To Build a Fire* (1908), which is a pure naturalist story, does not represent an exile and return journey as such. The protagonist goes into exile, but he does not return as he dies before he ends his journey. However, he still completes the knowledge acquirement stage before he dies as there is a transcendence of his soul, but the only one that completes the journey is the dog because he has the instinct that helps him to survive. Moreover, in this story there are also masonic, spiritualist, and esoteric elements.

Nonetheless, these stories are based on the same narrative structure: the Archetypal Journey. There is a hero who starts a journey with a specific purpose. During this journey there are trials that the protagonist has to overcome on his own, although he receives some help. After these trials, the hero undergoes a transformation that varies depending on the type of journey and, at the end, there is a change in the main character in a positive or negative way. Moreover, all these stories also share common features and

events that are simplified in *Morfología del Cuento* by Vladimir Propp, as well as many folklore tales and contemporary stories.

As it is shown throughout the analysis of the four short stories, the Archetypal Journey structure affects the argumentative development of the narrative structure regardless the interpretations of the stories themselves. The Archetypal Journey affects the characters' spatio-temporal movements, the symbolism of the story itself, their development and progress throughout the story as well as their knowledge acquirement, except for the case of *Rip Van Winkle*. Furthermore, all of these short stories share a common element: nature, which is a fundamental element. The main characters react following the structure of the Archetypal Journey drawn using nature as a basic element.

It is evident that different authors such as Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ambrose Bierce, or Jack London, who belong to different periods coincide in the use of a narrative structure in which it can be clearly recognized the influence of the Archetypal Journey.

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