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The Archetypal Approaches in *The Talisman* by Stephen King and Peter Straub

Bachelor's Diploma Thesis

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I declare that I have worked on this thesis independently,
using only the primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography.

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Author's signature

I would like to thank my supervisor, doc. Michael Matthew Kaylor, Ph.D., for his assistance and guidance throughout the writing process of this thesis.

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ENGLISH SUMMARY

CZECH SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Discovering archetypal structures and characters in the literature of the past is a fairly common occurrence. However, especially after the establishment of modernism and post-modernism, authors started to look for new ways to veil and twist the traditional archetypal mythology and come up with new and fresh approaches which would not rely on the traditional formulas as much. The aim of this thesis is to analyse a relatively recent book, *The Talisman* by Stephen King and Peter Straub, which embraces the traditional archetypal approaches in order to tell the story of a traditional majestic mythical quest situated in modern America.

The overall book setting is probably best summed by the opening lines in a review on *Kirkus Reviews* webpage: "The quasi-cosmic, picaresque journey of twelve-year-old Jack Sawyer--across America on foot, 'flipping' [=jumping] in and out of a parallel universe called the 'Territories'--in quest of a magical talisman that will save his widowed mother (a former B-movie star) from dying of cancer" (kirkusreviews.com). Although most of the story takes place in the America of the 80s, the Territories provide a completely different setting of a magical, almost medieval world, inhabited by so-called "twinners"—parallel universe alter-egos of the inhabitants of America. The main protagonist, Jack Sawyer, is an adolescent whose alter-ego has died, which gives him the unique ability to flip (teleport) between the worlds, unlike other characters who simply take the place of their alter-egos. This ability greatly helps Jack to travel across America faster—due to an inequality of distances in the Territories and America—and escape many dangerous situations he encounters on his way.

The book itself is based on a collaborative experiment. As King comments in his and Straub's interview for *People* magazine in 1985: "We wrote the beginning and ending together. Peter put on some jazz in his office, and I wrote for a while as he read

magazines. When I was done, he'd pick it up where I had left off. For the rest of the book we divided the work" (Small n.p.). The mythic foundation of the book and the inspirations from other famous authors have been numerously commented on. In *People* magazine, Straub admits: "Twain was on our minds at the start" (Small n.p.). Some reviews emphasize the connection and add more similarities—*Kirkus Reviews* compares to other books as well by commenting that "this grandiose, meandering saga--echoing Oz, Alice, and Huck Finn--is sure to reach a massive audience" (kirkusreviews.com). James Smyth wrote for *The Guardian*: "Here, though, the primary influence is *Huckleberry Finn*: that book's story of friendship is echoed strongly in Jack Sawyer's relationships with both Wolf and Richard Sloat" (Smythe n.p.).

As mentioned by Stephen King himself in an interview for the magazine *The Twilight Zone*: "It's a very mythic book. [...] also in terms of the effort to create large archetypes. We were interested in the concept of the hero in literature. We talked about the hero in terms of the quest, the mythicization of the hero, and the return of the hero to a lesser being when the quest is completed" (qtd. in talkstephenking.blogspot.com). Therefore the authors themselves invite the research into the archetypal approaches in the book. The facts that the book combines the settings of the world of fantasy and of modern day America, and is openly taking inspiration from literature of the past, create an interesting opportunity to analyse the possible use of archetypal approaches in a contemporary book. The thesis, therefore, analyses whether the known archetypal concepts are present in the book and whether *The Talisman* follows the literary tradition of mythic archetypes.

The analysis is executed by considering the main characters present in the story and the basic structure of the story, and by analysis of the relationships between the identified archetypes and characters themselves. Authors who have focused their careers

on archetypal themes—be it in literature, traditional myths, or cinematography—are consulted and cited throughout the thesis. The very first chapter establishes basic theoretical background, identifying phenomena essential for archetypal criticism postulated by Plato and Jung, and identifying some of the main sources by Joseph Campbell, Carol Pearson, Vladimir Propp and Wilfred L. Guerin, et al. The second chapter of the thesis focuses on analysis of the characters of the book, assigning archetypal roles to them and supporting the hypotheses by commenting on their role throughout the book. The third chapter of the thesis contextualizes the interactions and relationships of the characters in the book through the scope of the narrative pattern called monomyth, which is a basic narrative pattern established by Joseph Campbell.

1. THEORY

Before the analysis of the archetypal approaches in *The Talisman*, it is crucial to define archetypes and the relationship between tropes and archetypes. The word "archetype" itself is translated as "idea" or "form" as mentioned in *Ideas of the Great Philosophers: A Survey of Their Basic Teachings* in terms of Plato's concepts:

> These "ideas" or "forms" (Plato uses both words to describe them) were never created, but have existed from the very beginning in just perfect state in which they will always exist. They are independent of all things and are not influenced by the changes which take place in the world which we experience through our senses. These objects which we experience are reflections of these "eternal patterns". (Frost 11)

In *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, archetype is commented on further:

> The common meaning – 'the original pattern or model from which all other things of the same kind are made' – is somewhat broader than its meaning in literary criticism. C.G.Jung [...] postulates the existence of a 'collective unconscious' in men's minds, an inheritance in the human brain resulting from the typically recurring experiences of the life of our ancestors [...] These experiences manifest themselves in dreams, myths and literature. [...] Because (according to the theory) both writer and reader share unconscious memories, the tale an author tells, derived from this collective unconscious, may strangely move the reader, stirring his own unconscious. (Barnet, Berman, Burto 16-17)

As noted above, it was Carl Jung who proposed that archetypes, as universal symbols, originate in the collective unconscious of mankind, therefore in the common cultural experiences shared by mankind. Commenting on this, *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* explains:

> Jung is not merely a derivative or secondary figure; he is a major influence in the growth of myth criticism. For one thing, he provided some of the favorite terminology now current among myth critics. The term archetype itself, though not coined by Jung, enjoys its present widespread usage among the myth critics primarily because of his influence. (Guerin et al. 204)

The mentioned patterns or models are often presented or implied through figures of speech—also called "tropes"—or figurative language in general. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* comments that "Words have their literal meaning, but they can also be

used in such a way that something other than the literal meaning is implied" (Barnet, Berman, Burto 67). Simply put, tropes are tools and devices through which the author implies and therefore brings the archetypes out of the collective unconscious to the narrative, be it via manners of speaking such as metaphors and metonymies or certain familiar character types relative to the cultural background. However, for simplifying the explanations and for the purposes of this paper, the terms "trope" and "archetype" will be used interchangeably.

As Joseph Campbell explains, "The archetypes to be discovered and assimilated are precisely those that have inspired, throughout the annals of human culture, the basic images of ritual, mythology, and vision" (Campbell 17). In the case of characters, it could be said that tropes are a literary version of stereotypes, fixed ideas about types. This parallel explains the similarities and common features of certain archetypal characters present in a wide variety of fictional literature. Since archetypes come from our unconscious and inspire myths, rituals and stories, they are endlessly circulated through those stories and passed on to later generations in a never-ending cycle of the collective unconscious.

That is the reason why the archetypes that will be pointed out in *The Talisman*'s characters are as easily identifiable and comparable to other characters in other stories. Jung's ideas have been later revised, for example, by Carol Pearson in *The Hero Within: Six Archetypes We Live By,* where she describes prominent archetypal characters. Pearson's typology distinguishes archetypal characters mainly according to their motivations and approaches to their journeys, which also offers a different view on the matter than other authors, who often judge characters based only on their actions and interactions with the others. For example in *Morphology of the Folktale*, Vladimir Propp defines seven main archetypes; however only some of those are relevant to *The*

Talisman. Those are the Villain, the Helper and the Hero. Various scholars have identified different archetypes, there are, however, major overlaps between their typologies. In *The Talisman*, important additional archetypes are the Wise Old Man, the Trickster and the Good Mother, described in the chapter "Mythological and Archetypal Approaches" in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* by Wilfred L. Guerin, et al. Other important phenomena such as The Quest and The Other will be described as well. The various typologies and approaches by different authors can all be considered relevant.

2. BASIC ASSIGNED ARCHETYPE LIST

2.1. The Quest

As *A Handbook of Critical Approaches* summarizes: "…the hero (savior, deliverer) undertakes some long journey during which he or she must perform impossible tasks, battle with monsters, solve unanswerable riddles, and overcome insurmountable obstacles in order to save the kingdom" (Guerin et al. 190).

In *The Talisman*, Jack Sawyer goes on a quest to retrieve a magical talisman to cure his dying mother. As the story progresses, Jack realizes he also needs to save the "other world", the Territories, by saving his mother's alter-ego there. However, his main motivation throughout the story is saving his mother—Lily Cavanaugh. Jack's mother, by default, seemingly fits the Good Mother archetype, characterised in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* as "associated with the life principle, birth, warmth, nourishment, protection[...]" (Guerin et al. 187). Despite Jack presumably not being happy being dragged around the United States, it is clear throughout the story that he loves his mother and that she fulfils the mentioned features for him.

Nevertheless, seeing past Lily's biological role and focusing on her role in the narrative, she is mainly the engine that sets the timeframe, creates the ticking clock and hence sets the pace of the story. She is mostly a passive and inactive character, mainly serving the purpose of being a motivation for Jack to continue and finish his journey and hence she is the Quest—the aforementioned "kingdom" to be saved.

The quest of finding the Talisman is also the quest of Jack finding his alter-ego—Jason—in himself. There is a secondary quest of becoming both, in order to be worthy of taking the Talisman. This quest is strongly connected to keeping a strong commitment to the journey despite the trials along the way, consisting not only of situations dangerous to Jack but also his interactions with the characters he meets and

travels with along the way—this quest is further commented on later in the thesis in the section "The Road of Trials".

2.2. The Hero

Jack Sawyer—the main protagonist—starts his journey more or less as an Innocent, the very first stage of the Hero's development as identified by Carol Pearson. As characterised by Pearson, "The Innocent lives in an unfallen world, a green Eden where life is sweet and all one's needs are met in an atmosphere of care and love" (25), which is the state in which Jack starts his journey—living with his mother. The fact that he is an innocent adolescent is also a practical feature which helps the authors to get the story moving—he has freedom of mobility, he is not tied to his family or a daily job, and, in this case, due to being on the move with his mother, not even to going to school. And since Innocents are spontaneous and trusting (Pearson), believing in other worlds and accepting the existence of magic is much easier for Jack as well. The authors of *The Complete Stephen King Universe: A Guide to the Worlds of Stephen King* describe Jack's innocence:

> Even as a child, though, strange things happened around him. He registered them, but they didn't have any impact for some time. [...] in New Hampshire, Jack meets a man named Lester 'Speedy' Parker, who reveals to him (or, more accurately, reminds him of) the existence of a place called the Territories… (Golden, Wagner, Wiater 65)

The book also comments that "In essence, *The Talisman* is a book about youth, hope and innocence" (Golden, Wagner, Wiater 65).

As the story progresses and Jack travels through both America and the magical Territories, and as he encounters hostile environments and dangerous adversaries, he slowly morphs through a self-searching Wanderer (Pearson) into a Hero—a determined character, not as naïve anymore, more a Warrior who, according to Pearson's concepts,

is focused on achieving goals and overcoming obstacles. As pointed out in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches*:

> The symbolic loss of Edenic innocence and the painful initiation into an awareness of evil constitutes a second major pattern in American literature from the works of Hawthorne and Melville through Mark Twain and Henry James to Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner to Stephen King. (Guerin et al. 213)

Nevertheless, as Jack discovers along the way, Jack's Territories' alter-ego—Jason—had achieved a strong cult-like status in the other world. Jack's loss of innocence is inevitable because, in order to take the Talisman, Jack needs to connect with Jason in himself in order to be worthy. As much as he is considered a messiah in the Territories, he is not a Jesus-like sufferer but a saviour with Warrior-like (Pearson) determination. Neither is he driven to his journey by fate: his motivation is saving his mother. It is the Caregiver's goal to take care of others (Pearson). Jack undergoes a typical development, described by Pearson:

> The Innocent and the Orphan set the stage: The Innocent lives in the prefallen state of grace; the Orphan confronts the reality of the Fall. The next few stages are strategies for living in a fallen world: The Wanderer begins the task of finding oneself apart from others; the Warrior learns to fight to defend oneself and to change the world in one's own image; and the Martyr learns to give, to commit, and to sacrifice for others. The progression, then, is from suffering, to self-definition, to struggle, to love. (4)

However, in the end Jack undergoes a regressive de-evolution. His transformation from child to a Hero was not easy or natural, and the end of the book suggests the experienced needs to be suppressed so he could eventually get back to his former life—this is resolved in a climactic act of the Talisman towards him on the final page: "[...] the ordinary life of a thirteen-year-old boy [...] had been returned to him, he realized" (644). King himself describes the return as "[...] the return of the hero to a lesser being when the quest is completed" (qtd. in talkstephenking.blogspot.com).

2.3. The Helper

Speedy Parker—the mysterious African-American handyman Jack meets in the beginning of the book—is one of the more obviously archetypal figures. He is the Helper, the Mentor, the Wise Old Man, an archetype used by King in his other works such as *Pet Semetery* or *The Shining* as well. He is the traditional Mentor figure who not only explains all Jack needs to know and sets him on his journey but also gives him tokens, the essential means to be able to start the journey (the "magic juice", which allows Jack to flip into the Territories) and, later in the story, steps in, guiding Jack or helping him realize or remember the goal. The first encounter with Speedy is in the Arcadia Funworld amusement park, where Speedy is sweeping the floors. The first moment Jack sees him, he is in the middle of a "down to earth" physical engagement. Later Jack spends his time helping him out with manual repairs; in another encounter, Speedy is repairing a ride—all of those situations show Speedy as capable and experienced. The fact that Speedy used to be a travelling blues musician makes him a seasoned traveller, creating—along with his age—an impression of great experience and wisdom from the start.

Without Speedy, Jack would never be able to go on his adventure—as he would never learn how to flip into the other universe. Without Speedy's later appearance, disguised as another blues singer—Snowball—at the Buckeye Mall in chapter fifteen (209-222), Jack would not come to terms with the consequences of his flipping, in one case causing an earthquake and killing five innocent men, which is further analysed in the section "The Road of Trials". And without Speedy's appearance at the Black Hotel beach and his provision of the raft and hence a possibility to reach the Hotel through the back door, Jack would most probably not be able to reach the goal of the journey at all. In his book *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*, Christopher Vogler

describes the Mentor as an overseeing power, helping the Hero acquire useful skills or giving them advice, and also being able to assist the Hero at important moments when necessary. In the book *Morphology of the Folktale*, Vladimir Propp also comments very similarly that the Wise Old Man supports the Hero as a Helper figure and can appear at important moments providing support. Even Jung comments in his *Archetypes* that "The old man always appears when the hero is in a hopeless and desperate situation from which only profound reflection or a lucky idea [...] can extricate him" (qtd. in Guerin et.al. 188).

In a way, Speedy is also a Trickster figure:

> There's a very special property in the trickster: he always breaks in, just as the unconscious does, to trip up the rational situation. He's both a fool and someone who's beyond the system. And the trickster represents all those possibilities of life that your mind hasn't decided it wants to deal with. The mind structures a lifestyle, and the fool or trickster represents another whole range of possibilities [...] (Briggs, Maher 39)

Speedy Parker is a constant reminder of the other worlds, of the existence of magic and of everything beyond. That is why he appeared outside the mall as a different blues singer—but, at the same time, it was still Speedy Parker, there to remind Jack of the other universes, of the other realities and also of his quest. His occupation as the handyman at the Funworld amusement park is also a feature of a Trickster—he disguises himself as a simple, heavy vernacular-speaking, down-to-earth, blue-collar worker; but, at the same time, he is a figure strongly connected to the supernatural—a hidden magical character disguised in an everyman façade.

2.4. The Other

2.4.1. Wolf

Wolf is a complicated character. Because of his intentions, he could be considered the traditional Helper figure. His main advantages as a Helper are his supernatural strength, stamina and speed. Due to his former position as a shepherd, he is

also inherently a Caregiver archetype, taking care of Jack as if he was his guardian and behaving towards Jack as if he was a part of the herd, thus trying to protect Jack on the way. However, his role in the story clashes with the suggested Helper archetype.

His biggest weakness as a character is his noble savage personality coming from his animal-like behaviour. Despite his helpful intent and good-hearted nature, Wolf is a problematic character. Since he is a werewolf (identified by Vogler as Shapeshifter), due to his monthly cycle Jack constantly has to worry about losing control over the wilder and wilder Wolf, which forces Jack to travel through backwaters, avoid civilization and eventually deal with the situation by locking himself in a barn so Wolf could not hurt him. The Shapeshifter trope is one of the narrative tools which help steer the story in a non-linear manner and makes the story more interesting—as Vogler comments: "A polarized relationship naturally generates conflict as the characters at two contrasting extremes explore and challenge each other's boundaries, concepts of the world, and strategies for living. We find this endlessly fascinating" (318). The relationship is polarized by the fact that Wolf fits The Other archetype—he works in a contrasting way to Jack. This contrast lies mainly in the man/animal duality and in the fact that Wolf comes from the Territories. In this way, he emphasizes the differences between the Territories and our world—he is, literally, a piece of the other world brought into our world, unable to cope. For example, Wolf keeps on talking about the different smells he is experiencing in our world. Due to the overwhelming smell of vehicles, he is unable to ride those, which incredibly slows Jack down and creates unnecessary trouble.

The Trickster archetype is also true to Wolf; however, the Trickster in Wolf's case archetype is a little more complex than in Speedy's case as the archetype slightly varies from source to source and different features apply to both of them. Vogler

describes Trickster as an entertaining character who "serves as a comical relief" (77) and "When we are taking ourselves too seriously, the Trickster part of our personalities may pop up to bring back needed perspective" (77). Wolf fits Vogler's definition because despite his story ending up tragically, his misplacement from the Territories to our world sometimes leads to absurd and entertaining situations coming from Wolf not being able to deal with modern technology (e.g. when Jack takes him to see a movie in chapter eighteen) and different surroundings and principles (e.g. the paper-box packed Burger King meal Jack buys him, which he eats including the paper in chapter twenty).

As previously mentioned in connection to Speedy Parker, Joseph Campbell brings another aspect of Trickster to light which, again, applies:

> Almost all non-literate mythology has a trickster-hero of some kind. … And there's a very special property in the trickster: he always breaks in, just as the unconscious does, to trip up the rational situation. He's both a fool and someone who's beyond the system. And the trickster represents all those possibilities of life that your mind hasn't decided it wants to deal with. The mind structures a lifestyle, and the fool or trickster represents another whole range of possibilities. He doesn't respect the values that you've set up for yourself, and smashes them. [...] The fool is the breakthrough of the absolute into the field of controlled social orders. (Briggs, Maher 39)

Vogler also comments that "They are the natural enemies of status quo" (77). The descriptions mentioned fit the fact that Wolf is an intruder in our world. He is beyond our system, he is not rational by our standards, he does not share modern values and in his role in the story, he is the primitive and animal-like absolute breaking into controlled social order. And in connection to him being a werewolf, he even fits Jung's description of the Trickster: "He is a forerunner of the saviour, and, like him, God, man, and animal at once. He is both subhuman and superhuman, a bestial and divine being [...]" (qtd. in Guerin 188). Similarly to the Shapeshifter as a narrative tool, the Trickster can also work in such way, because, according to Vogler, "Above all, they bring about healthy change and transformation [...]" (77) and "Tricksters are often catalyst characters, who

affect the lives of others but are unchanged themselves" (79). He also brings change to Jack's life, who feels compelled to take care of him and adjust his journey according to his limitations. Wolf is both an entertaining and chaotic figure of the story (for example due to his frightful amazement when Jack takes him to see a movie), and he is quite clearly one of the "good" characters.

The sometimes mentioned Trickster as an "archetypal shadow figure" (Wheelwright 286) and the fact that wolves have often been mythological Shadow characters (Vogler 78) are still somehow present in the background because of Wolf's savage and deadly nature—a hidden nature of an otherwise giving character, which also supports the side of the Trickster which "breaks the status-quo" (Vogler). This darker side of Wolf is shown when he reaches the point in his monthly cycle when he changes into a savage monster—at first, Jack is even forced to hide and lock himself in a barn in order to be safe (269-277). The second time it happens, Wolf is locked up in solitary during their imprisonment in Sunlight Home (347-359). However, even in the times of aggression, Wolf is shown as Pearson's Caregiver, always taking care of Jack—even in his savage state, he attempts to bring Jack food to the barn (276) and later in Sunlight Home, he uses his aggression to save Jack from the Sunlight Home staff (367-371). Therefore, Wolf is not a force of evil in *The Talisman* despite his flaws.

2.4.2. Richard Sloat

Richard is Morgan Sloat's—the main antagonist's—son and Jack's early childhood friend. Jack turns to him after losing Wolf while running from Sunlight Home. Although it can be presumed Jack expected Richard to be another Helper, Richard turned out to be more of the archetypal Other figure. Others are contrasting figures to Heroes, sometimes they are evil and Shadow figures as well but they can as well be simply cowardly—which is one of the features Richard fills as an Other figure

as compared to heroic Jack. However, he is not only a coward but also an extreme realist, trying to rationalize all the strange situations he encounters with Jack. From this perspective, he is a contrast to Jack's childish naïvety which at first allowed Jack to accept the Quest and all the facts about it, but at the same time, he seems childish for his absurdly hard-headed negligence in which he contrasts with Jack's coming of age.

Richard is the voice of reason and of science, very reminiscent of Dr. Watson in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories about Sherlock Holmes. As described in *The Complete Stephen King Universe*: "He also saw strange things as a boy, but rather than pursue them, as Jack has, he closes his mind off to such things and becomes and ultra-realist, until Jack draws him into his adventures in the Territories" (Golden, Wagner, Wiater 67). Similarly to Wolf, Richard also works against the ticking clock and the pace that Jack's mother's illness sets, because as Jack brings him closer to the Talisman, Richard gets more and more sick and slows Jack down.

However, his existence is not entirely working against Jack, as Vogler mentions in *The Writer's Journey*: "Two lovers, friends, or allies may be attracted to one another because they complete one other, perhaps clashing at first because they possess contrasting qualities, but discovering that each needs something the other has" (318). Richard also makes Jack verbalize his quest and explain the realities of it—which similarly to Speedy makes Jack remind himself of the quest. The contrast is also a stylistic choice, because, as Vogler argues: "A polarized relationship naturally generates conflict as the characters at two contrasting extremes explore and challenge each other's boundaries, concepts of the world, and strategies for living. We find this endlessly fascinating" (318). The "otherness" does not mean that Richard is an evil character, the contrast is not absolute as in the case of the Shadow archetype. It is merely his character features which make him a contrasting character to Jack.

2.5. The Shadow

2.5.1. Morgan Sloat

Morgan is the main antagonist, fitting the description first identified by Jung as the "Shadow" archetype. The Shadow is the figure opposite to the Hero, the "darker side of our unconscious self" (qtd. in Guerin et al. 206). The Handbook of Critical Approaches further mentions that "The most common variant of this archetype, when projected, is the Devil, who, in Jung's words, represents the 'dangerous aspect of the unrecognized dark half of the personality'" (Guerin et al. 205).

Morgan Sloat is a multi-faceted character, sometimes smooth and manipulative (such as in the anecdote about the Chinese restaurant being manipulated by him into paying quadruple rent at page 68), sometimes unscrupulously pragmatic (not afraid to get rid of some people standing in his way) and greedy businessman in pursuit of power. The Interludes of the book are focusing on him, uncovering some of his past with Jack's father and generally offering a peak at situations connected to Morgan. One of the information that is uncovered in the first Interlude is that Morgan has always been the underdog of the group around Phillip Sawyer, Jack's father. Due to this, Morgan is portrayed as envious and hateful towards the rest of them (72).

His counterpart from the Territories, Morgan of Orris, is Morgan Sloat's darker, more primitive and blatantly evil side, a feared brutal psychopath, in pop culture shown as the often parodied "evil twin from another universe" trope. Together, they work in a mastermind-henchman relationship, Morgan of Orris is one of Morgan Sloat's channels to take care of his dirty work in a way best described as a deliberate Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde transformation. As described throughout the book, Jack's father was also murdered upon Morgan's request, which was also the case with one of Phillip Sawyer's friends, the lawyer Tommy Woodbine, who was one of

Sawyer's close friends and stood in Morgan's way to getting the rest of the business for himself. In one of the interludes, Orris himself thinks about their relationship:

> Sloat was able to plan murder, but it had been Orris, time and time again, who had Migrated [=flipped] to carry out the act himself. It had been Orris in Sloat's body who had attempted to smother the infant Jack Sawyer with a pillow while a wrestling announcer droned on and on in the background. Orris who had overseen the assassination of Phil Sawyer in Utah (just as he had overseen the assassination of Phil Sawyer's counterpart, the commoner Prince Philip Sawtelle, in the Territories). (430)

When Speedy tells Jack about the Territories, he talks about Morgans and their grudge felt towards Jack's mother and her alter-ego, Queen Laura as well: "Because maybe [Morgan Sloat] wouldn't mind so bad if your mother died. And his Twinner is sure hopin that Queen Laura dies" (44).

The book does not really clearly set motivations for Morgan to go against Jack in his pursuit. There is the first interlude where it is clearly stated that: "[...] Sloat came to a realization: if he learned, or even suspected, sometime in the next few days, that Jack Sawyer had discovered the existence of the Territories, he would kill him. There was such a thing as an unacceptable risk" (75). However, the only clear motivation we get presented with is his pursuit of wealth—in the very beginning, there is a phone-call between Morgan and Jack's mother Lily which Jacks overhears after not hanging up the phone when his mother picks up the other one in the hotel room:

> "We gotta make *arrangements*, Lily. You own half of the company I'm trying to run – and Jack gets your half after you're gone. I want to make sure Jack's taken care of … I get what's fair. I get what's coming to me. Your interest in Sawyer and Sloat – I worked my ass off for that company, and it ought to be mine. We could get the paperwork done in a morning, Lily, and then concentrate on getting you taken care of." (37)

Morgan feels entitled to own the whole company he built with Jack's father. Later in the book, it is uncovered that Morgan actually killed Jack's father after he did not want to follow Morgan's unscrupulous plans for bringing modern technology to the Territories

and exploiting it for profit. However, while killing him, Morgan most probably did not count on Lily getting her husband's part of the company, which gives him the reason to hate her. Apparently, Morgan's main and primary motivation for meddling with Lily and Jack are seemingly their assets he feels entitled to.

Throughout the book, his attempts do suggest he is a villain but his actions show that more than anything else, he is an incompetent failure. After all, he is a failed actor making his living managing actors. His discovery of the Territories (74) is described pretty much as a matter of chance: when Phil Sawyer told him about the Territories, he was "high on marijuana and whiskey" (74). Similarly—the tin key which changed into a magical lighting rod in the Territories (229) and which Sloat tried to kill Jack with throughout the book was bought with the toy soldier wound by the key—which was bought because of a mere compulsion and a feeling of the key "calling him" (229). Although he is on a quest for power, he does not seem to be willing to really get his hands dirty by killing Lily or Jack, and he does not seem to have the stomach to fully act like the villain his goals need him to become. When he has the chance (when Jack meets Wolf and their meeting is then interrupted my Morgan of Orris wielding the lightning rod and shooting lightning at Jack), he is unable to get rid of Jack despite carrying a very dangerous magical weapon. When he orders one of the lesser henchmen, Elroy, to go after Jack in Oatley Tap, a pub where Jack stops by for a few days as a hired help in order to make money, Elroy, again, fails, despite being a vicious and strong monster—and before he actually attacks Jack, he just lingers around. If Morgan really wanted Jack or his mother dead, he could have had them killed or kill them many times and be much more effective with it. But judging from the episodes in the book, it seems as if Morgan never wanted the unnecessary violence in the first place, as if he was only more pragmatic, trying to catch Jack and bring him back to New Hampshire or

simply scare him and make him return on his own. As remarked by Orris in one of the interludes: “Sloat had a taste for blood, but ultimately he was as allergic to it as Orris was to American food and American air. It was Morgan of Orris, once derided as Morgan Thudfoot, who had always done the deeds Sloat had planned” (430).

Theoretically, if Morgan knew that Jack wants the Talisman to save his mother, Morgan’s best chance to stop Jack from taking the Talisman was killing Jack’s mother. After all, he knew where she was since the beginning of the book. However, he does not do anything to her. This, again, weakens Morgan as the threatening villain. In the end, Morgan is not really dangerous to Jack and his cause—the danger that Morgan of Orris represents as the Territories’ feared tyrannous madman is almost not present at all since Jack continuously manages to escape dealing with him. Morgan is just another trial. The main adversary is still the time and the ticking clock of Jack’s mother’s imminent death.

It is completely possible all Morgan was trying to do throughout the book was to keep Jack away from the Territories or the Talisman, simply out of paranoid fear of Jack trying to stop him from exploiting the Territories, and not realizing Jack only wanted to save his mother—in other words, he is the main Shadow figure of the story by accident, only because of his paranoia and fear of Jack trying to meddle with his plan about which Jack apparently did not care. As was stated in “The Quest” segment, Jack’s primary and only goal was to save his mother. However, as Jack gets closer to the Talisman, Morgan Sloat seems to lose control and the boundaries of the mastermind and his henchman blur. Both Morgans blend into one villain, becoming more ruthless and generally more distinguishable as the Psychopath villain, which in the context of the final part of the book appears as an act of desperation coming from the failure of every plan to stop Jack.

2.5.2. Reverend Gardener

Gardener is a secondary Shadow figure, Morgan's henchman. He is only Morgan's servant, awaiting his orders how to deal with Jack. He is only another trial, controlled completely by Morgan and not really dangerous to Jack. The same absence as with Morgan applies—Gardener's dangerous and feared alter-ego from the Territories, Osmond, is also almost not present in the story since the moment when he flails Jack in the royal court in the first part of the book. Since then, the evil alter-ego is mentioned and is described as an insane psychopath. However, he simply does not have to be dealt with. The reader also gets to experience his presence only a few times, Osmond is mainly shown as another link in the chain of hierarchy, for example when Orris does not want to waste time on interrogation of the guardian of the train Jack and Richard take from Thayer school to California and so he passes it on to Osmond (431) in a similar way how Sloat passes the violence on to Orris.

In America, Jack meets Gardener in his correctional facility Sunlight Home. Here, Gardener is shown as a fanatical fundamentalist. Put into context by Tracy Nectoux' essay "'Never harm the herd': Social Criticism and Environmental Consciousness in Stephen King and Peter Straub's *The Talisman*":

> A demonstrable example of 80s American culture in *The Talisman* is the character of Reverend Sunlight Gardener, a frighteningly insane Christian fundamentalist, who is modelled on the likes of Jimmy Swaggart, Oral Roberts, Jerry Falwell, and Jim Bakker—four prominent television evangelists in the 1980s. (Nectoux n.p.)

He is a twisted character leading a sadistic and abusive establishment under the false flag of social aid and improvement. Gardener or any of his employees could have killed Jack at any given moment at the Sunlight Home. However, he decided to merely keep Jack imprisoned, again ineffectively, waiting for Morgan's arrival.

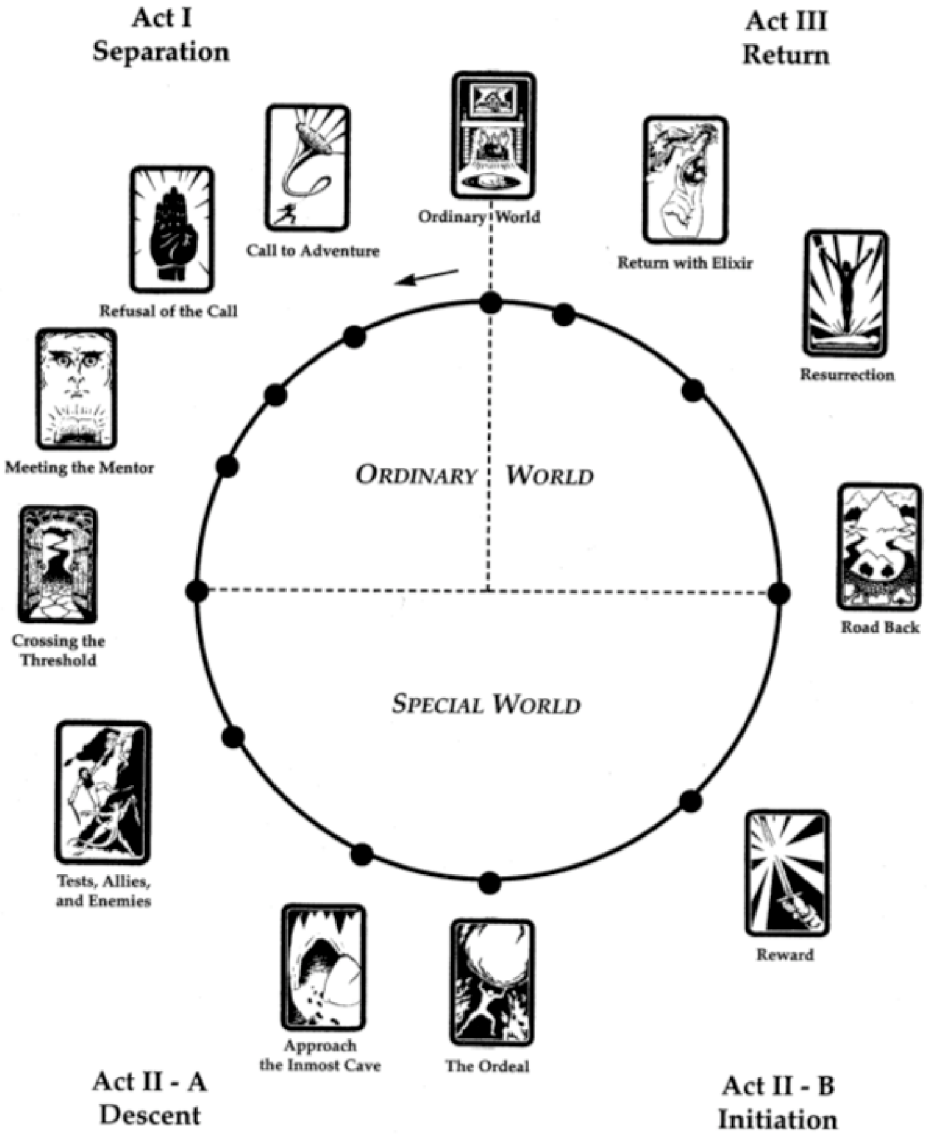
3. STORY STRUCTURE

As Joseph Campbell sums up: "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man" (Campbell 28).

Not only characters can be archetypal. In the book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell established a major archetypal story pattern called "monomyth" (inspired by a term coined by James Joyce in *Finnegans Wake*). Campbell characterizes the pattern as "The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation--initiation--return: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth" (Campbell 28).

Vogler comments on Campbell's writing (namely on his book *The Hero's Journey*) in the foreword of Stuart Voytilla's book, *Myth and the Movies: Discovering the Mythic Structure of 50 Unforgettable Films*: "*The Hero's Journey* was his all-embracing metaphor for the deep inner journey of transformation that heroes in every time and place seem to share, a path that leads them through great movements of separation, descent, ordeal, and return" (1).

Campbell originally describes seventeen stages of the monomyth; however, *The Talisman* does not contain all seventeen stages. The excerpts from Stuart Voytilla's book *Myth and the Movies* will be used for reference as well, since the stages described there come from Campbell's structure, but are more relevant for the needs of this thesis. In both cases, only the relevant stages will be explained and matched to the story. The following diagram comes from Voytilla's book, similar diagrams are also established by numerous other scholars.



3.1. Call to Adventure

As Campbell points out:

> This is an example of one of the ways in which the adventure can begin. A blunder—apparently the merest chance—reveals an unsuspected world, and the individual is drawn into a relationship with forces that are not rightly understood. …blunders are not the merest chance. They are the result of suppressed desires and conflicts. They are ripples on the surface of life, produced by unsuspected springs. (Campbell 46)

His description perfectly fits the very beginning of Jack's story and the peculiar incidents around the Alhambra hotel: the strange seagull (12-13, 49), or the talking

portal opening up in the sand (14-15). Appearances as these are described by Campbell as "the 'herald'; the crisis of his appearance is the 'call to adventure'" (Campbell 47), and finally—Speedy Parker telling Jack about the existence of Territories (43-47). Campbell's mention of "suppressed desires and conflicts" is also interesting—as the story slowly unveils throughout the book, Jack has known about the Territories since he was a little boy. He was almost smothered by Morgan as an infant (a mirror attempt to Morgan's alter-ego's murder of Jack's alter-ego, Jason, in the Territories) and was also almost kidnapped by strange non-human figures when he was a little boy (described on pages 33 through 35 as also the very first encounter with Speedy Parker, who was mysteriously there to save him). However, these experiences and pieces of information had been forgotten or suppressed until Speedy Parker and Jack's journey brought them back throughout the book. Campbell comments that: "That which has to be faced, and is somehow profoundly familiar to the unconscious—though unknown, surprising, and even frightening to the conscious personality—makes itself known" (Campbell 51).

3.2. Helpers/Amulet

Campbell continues to explain the monomyth structure as such: "For those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass" (Campbell 63). In the case of *The Talisman*, Jack receives the magical juice and a magical token in the form of Speedy's guitar pick. The pick marks Jack as a person who can be trusted, sent by Speedy to the royal palace. Without it, captain Ferren would not help Jack discover the alter-ego of his mother (86-87) and would not give him further instructions and a magical coin token, working as a proxy for the Helper figure (110-111). The pick is later also used as a weapon against the dark knights who guard the Talisman (566). The magical juice is a

much more interesting aid, since it does not do anything. It mainly serves as a stimulus to help Jack ease in to the transformation between the two worlds. However, later in the story, Jack discovers he is able to flip without it by remembering the feeling. This is closely connected to the fact that Speedy Parker used to be an artist, as he slowly helps Jack share the artistic "feeling" of the magic.

3.3. Crossing the Threshold

As Voytilla explains in the excerpts of his book, "Crossing the Threshold signifies that the Hero has finally committed to the Journey" (3). Campbell elaborates on the thought:

> The idea that the passage of the magical threshold is a transit into a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale. The hero, instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died. (Campbell 83)

Campbell's comment applies to *The Talisman* because when Jack flips, he disappears in the real world and appears in the Territories as first pointed out by Speedy after the first flip: "'You went,' Speedy said, and clapped his hands once, sharply, 'just like *that*'" (52).

The crossing is felt both in a physical way (Jack gets sick) and also accentuated by different sensual stimuli such as smells. The way it is described in the books it almost seems as if Jack was going from the spoiled world into the pure world. There are many instances of characters commenting on the phenomena—Speedy describes Territories as "Air like the best wine in a rich man's cellar. … I heard that if a man pulls a radish out of the ground, another man half a mile away will be able to smell that radish – the air so sweet and clear" (31). Jack himself experiences it when he crosses the threshold while leaving for the journey: "Long before Jack opened his eyes, he knew from the richness and clarity of the smells about him that he had flipped into the

Territories" (67). Similarly, when Jack brings Wolf from the Territories into our world, Wolf has hard time dealing with the terrible smells over here:

> They hadn't been over here four hours before Wolf began to call it the Country of Bad Smells. That first night Wolf had retched half a dozen times, at first throwing up muddy water from a stream which existed in another universe onto the Ohio ground, then simply dry-heaving. It was the smells, he explained miserably. He didn't know how Jack could stand them, how anyone could stand them.
>
> Jack Knew – Coming back from the Territories, you were bowled over by odors you barely noticed when you were living with them. Diesel fuel, car exhausts, industrial wastes, garbage, bad water, ripe chemicals. Then you got used to them again. Got used to them or just went numb. Only it wasn't happening to Wolf. He hated the cars, he hated the smells, he hated this world. (244)

It is important to mention that flipping between the universes is a very common occurrence in this book and the crossing of the threshold is usually a singular event. In *The Talisman*, the crossing is not the first flipping but the flipping after Jack says his goodbyes to his mother and Speedy. This crossing incidentally marks the end of the first part of the book. The second part is called "The Road of Trials"—the same as the part of the monomyth which follows.

3.4. The Road of Trials

Campbell comments that "Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials" (89). Voytilla, following Campbell's ideas, comments further:

> Having crossed the Threshold, the Hero faces Tests, encounters Allies, confronts Enemies, and learns the rules of the Special World. This Stage is important for Hero and Audience alike. Whether entering the imaginary world of a future society or the emotional realm of romantic love, the Test Stage is our first look at the Special World and how its conditions and inhabitants contrast with the Hero's Ordinary World. (4)

This comment perfectly describes the beginning of Jack's journey. Both Jack and the reader slowly uncover some of the principles of the Territories, such as the existence of magic (for example in the first encounter with the living trees on page 115) the alter-ego

characters and generally the change of setting and auxiliaries such as clothes, currency, language, etc.

Jack also meets one of his adversaries after he crosses the threshold and follows Speedy's instructions to find Captain Ferren. After Ferren shows Jack his mother's alter-ego, the queen of the Territories, upon his stealthy escape from the court him and Jack are intercepted by Osmond—Reverend Gardener's alter-ego, Morgan of Orris' henchman. This is the first real confrontation with one of the main Shadow figures, luckily for Jack, Osmond does not know who Jack really is. Still, Jack gets brutally flogged. This act of deliberate and unnecessary violence only because "all boys are bad, it's axiomatic" (99)—which is the exact sentence which Gardener uses later in the book when he imprisons Jack and Wolf in the Sunlight Home—introduces Osmond and, implicitly, Gardener as crazy, violent, and cruel Shadow characters.

When Jack comes back to America, he is, in the way Pearson describes Orphan to be, also confronted with the contrast of his rather comfortable life before he went on his journey and the reality of his life on the road, having to hitchhike with complete strangers and continue travelling in dirty clothes and without much money or food. Because of his situation, Jack decides to find a way to make some money. From that decision comes one of the first true, recognizable trials—Jack's trouble in Oatley Tap, a pub where Jack gets a job as a help for a few days. What at first seems as a good opportunity turns into a nightmare when the owner, Smokey Updike, turns out to be a dangerous abuser, keeping Jack on the premises for minimal wage and under constant threats of violence. But because he stops on his way, he is also an easy target for Morgan and his henchmen. At first, he only receives a mysterious phone call telling him to come back home and a visit from a mysterious man, who reminds him of a popular western movies star: "*Randolph Scott*, Jack thought at once, *that's just who he looks*

like. … This man looked both bored and somehow crazy" (153). The man arrives to Oatley Tap to make sure Jack goes back home: "Suddenly, shockingly, the cowboy mouthed these words: *Get your ass home*. And winked" (154). This is one of the manipulative but illogical acts by Morgan mentioned in his profile in the first part of the thesis. After some more time spent in Oatley, the mysterious man comes back again and when Jack finally tries to escape Oatley Tap, the man comes after Jack and attacks him: "The Elroy-thing snarled and came toward him, now unsteady and awkward on its rear feet, its clothes bulging in all the wrong places, its tongue swinging from its fanged mouth" (159). The monster refers to himself as "Elroy", described by King himself on his website as "A nasty pedophilic shape-changer with hooves". The paedophilia comes through in his threats: "Now I'm not just gonna ream you, little chicken. Now, I'm gonna kill you … *after*" (159). Jack manages to escape by flipping, rendering Elroy another Morgan's unsuccessful and ineffective attempt of Morgan to stop him on his journey.

After travelling through the Territories for a while and discovering more of the other world and its rules and differences, Jack sees Morgan of Orris' carriage in the distance and comes back to America to escape. However, as he goes between the worlds, for reasons unknown he triggers an earthquake in the nearby town of Angola. Jack feels incredible guilt for accidentally causing an earthquake which killed five people while he flipped from the Territories back to our world. Luckily for Jack, Speedy Parker appears again, disguised as another artist, a blues singer Snowball outside the Buckeye Mall in chapter fifteen. When Jack, absolutely sure that Snowball is, in fact Speedy, tries to tell him, Snowball reassures him: "Well, if yo friend Speedy was here, *whoever* he might be, or *whatever* he might be in this old world, he might tell you that you cain't carry the world on yo shoulders, son. … first it's gonna break yo back, and

then it's gonna break yo *sperrit*" (212). A few lines along, after Jack still continues to call him Speedy, he continues "Nothing speedy here…Cept maybe how speedy some folks are to put the blame on themselves for things others might have got started" (212). and then after a while continues with "Some things you cain't help. Sometimes people get killed because someone does something… but if somebody *didn't* do that something, a whole lot of more people would have gotten killed" (213). This section shows that the Helper figure—manifesting itself through a similar type of person in the Trickster way mentioned in the "Helper" section—reassures the Hero of his doing and makes him remember his goal and go on. As Campbell comments: "What such a figure represents is the benign, protecting power of destiny. The fantasy is a reassurance—a promise that the peace of Paradise, which was known first within the mother womb, is not to be lost [...]" (Campbell 66).

The earthquake event and Jack's misery coming from it mark a new, journey-long important trial connected to the world around him and his companions. At first, he is faced with the consequences of the earthquake. Shortly after, he almost gets caught by Morgan in America. Escaping to the Territories, he meets Wolf, a character profiled as one of the "Others" in the first part of the thesis. After confrontation with Morgan of Orris wielding a deadly lightning rod, Jack has no other choice than to escape to America again and bring Wolf with him.

Immediately, he is faced with Wolf's inability to process our world's differences to the Territories, especially the smells of people and engines, which render Wolf unable to ride a car. This puts Jack in an awkward position when instead of traveling quite fast, he is forced to slow down and travel on foot or riding Wolf through the backwaters of America. During these travels, he is also faced with the issue of Wolf's periodical monthly phase during which he changes into a savage wolf-like creature. And

after Jack deals with this issue, the two are arrested by the police and taken to Reverend Gardener's Sunlight Home.

In Sunlight Home, Jack meets Gardener, the second "half" of the Osmond/Gardener duo of Shadows and Morgan's henchman. Gardener is shown as a fanatical fundamentalist, based on famous American television evangelists of the 80s, as pointed out by Tracy Nectoux in her essay "'Never harm the herd': Social Criticism and Environmental Consciousness in Stephen King and Peter Straub's *The Talisman*". Under false intentions of helping, Gardener runs an abusive organization, quite similar to the orphanage from Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist, especially in the relationships between the older and the younger or freshly arrived prisoners (Golden, Wagner and Wiater 64).

Morgan's henchman—Gardener—keeps Jack locked up in one place for Morgan to arrive and deal with him. Wolf keeps Jack safe manifesting the Caregiver features established by Pearson and even in the most problematic situations showing his best side and acting almost as a Helper figure—before things escalate and Wolf in his savage state helps Jack run away (and expose the evil Sunlight Home for good) for the price of his own life—sacrificing his life for the greater good.

After Wolf's death, Jack tries to find his childhood friend, Richard Sloat (Morgan's son) in order to find safe haven and also some help on his quest. After they meet at the Thayer boarding school, which Richard attends, the two worlds start to melt together in a dream-like surreal scene in which the school is ridden with maggots, demons, huge demonic dogs, etc. This is another—again ineffective—attempt to slow Jack down and hold him in one place, because Morgan is headed to Thayer, anticipating Jack to seek out Richard. After Jack and Richard escape Thayer school by flipping into the Territories, they have to take the train across the dangerous Blasted Lands, the Territories' nuclear wasteland which parallels the vast Great Plains. At the end of the

tracks, they are faced with a dangerous shootout with Osmond's corrupted army of bad Wolves and Osmond's mutated son. With the help of the weapons brought by Morgan to the Territories which they find on the train and the magical coin given to Jack by captain Ferren, they win the battle and can continue to the final stage of the Road of Trials, reaching the ruinous town of Point Venuti with the Black Hotel standing on the beach. With the remaining Wolves and Osmond guarding the front entrance, Jack decides to cross the city and try to get inside from the beach. With Richard covered in rash and half-delirious, they cross the city infested with the aggressive trees from the Territories (showing Point Venuti as a transitional place between the two worlds) and get to the beach, where they encounter Speedy for one last time. Speedy is also plagued with the same disease as Richard, which is, supposedly, an allergy to the Black Hotel, being the transitional place half between this world and the Territories. The same allergy is described in one of the intermissions where Morgan of Orris gets to America and gets sick (427-428). Even in his weakened state, Speedy provides Jack with a plan to go to the Hotel through the back door, accessible from the sea and also provides him with a boat to reach it. Leaving Speedy on the beach, Jack departs towards the back entry with semi-unconscious Richard in the raft and when he enters the hotel, he is forced to leave passed out Richard on the table in the dining room.

The excerpts of Voytilla's book mention and explain "The Road of Trials" as such:

> The Hero must prepare himself for the greater Ordeals yet to come and needs this Stage to Test his skills and powers, or perhaps seek further training from the Mentor. This Initiation into the Special World also Tests the Hero's commitment to the Journey, and questions whether he can succeed. (4)

By the time Jack reaches the Black Hotel, his skills and powers have been thoroughly tested by escaping the Oatley Tap and dangerous Elroy, escaping Morgan Sloat by

flipping to Territories and then Morgan of Orris and his lightning rod by jumping back to America, escaping the Sunlight Home and then the dangerously transformed Thayer school, traversing the Blasted Lands and not only surviving but also winning the shootout at the end of the train tracks. At Buckeye mall, he seeks further training by the Mentor, Speedy Parker. From the point Jack finally reaches Richard in Thayer school, he is thrown into the magic reality of Jack's quest and since that moment acts in an extremely disbelieving way, attributing everything he experiences to dreaming or later being ill and having feverish visions. Jack is forced to explain everything and verbalize his quest. As they travel further towards the Talisman and Jack's goal, Richard starts to have fevers, rashes and the closer the two are to the black hotel, the more difficult it is to Richard to keep up with Jack—in the end, Jack is even forced to carry passed out Richard inside the hotel and then leave him in the dining room in the hotel.

Because of his weakness and sickness, Richard is not really helpful to Jack in any way and he mainly slows him down and makes him repeat why he's undergoing the quest. Similar problem is connected to Wolf—not only makes Wolf's presence Jack suspicious and much more prone to being checked by the police, eventually leading to their arrest. But once locked up in the Sunlight Home, Jack cannot simply run away, because he does not want to leave Wolf behind. Both Richard and Wolf are a nuisance to Jack; nevertheless, Jack does not abandon them and in taking care of them and continuing his quest despite them being difficult to work with, Jack not only confirms the quest is not more important than the people whom he met on the way, which greatly humanizes the quest and makes him more believable and relatable, he also confirms his commitment to the Journey and once again shows his development. In this respect he takes on the features of the accepting Martyr as described by Pearson. Similarly characterised in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, "The hero undergoes

a series of excruciating ordeals in passing from ignorance and immaturity to social and spiritual adulthood" (Guerin et al. 190). Going through the development is crucial for Jack to finish the secondary quest for becoming one with Jason and becoming worthy of the Talisman.

3.5. Approach of the Inmost Cave

In desperate need for a plan and help, Jack and Richard once again meet Speedy—the Helper—at the beach. Speedy acknowledges Jack's transformation into the Hero by saying "You the one, all right. The road laid its mark on you, I see. You the one. You gonna do it" (541), and then provides Jack with a plan to go to the Hotel through the back door, accessible from the sea and gives Jack an inflatable raft to reach it—as described by Jung: "[...] always appears when the hero is in a hopeless and desperate situation from which only profound reflection or a lucky idea [...] can extricate him" (qtd. in Guerin et.al. 188). With semi-unconscious Richard, Jack departs for the Black Hotel, where he leaves Richard in the dining room and then goes deeper into the hotel to find the Talisman.

3.6. The Ordeal

Given that the story follows the traditional arc of the heroic tale, the main ordeal, "the central life-or-death crisis, during which he faces his greatest fear, confronts this most difficult challenge, and experiences 'death'" (Voytilla 4) is Jack's journey through the Black Hotel towards the Talisman.

Inside the hotel, the reader is often faced with the main protagonist being referred to as both Jack and Jason and sometimes even watching the events happening in both America and the Territories:

> Jack swung toward
> *(Jason swung toward)*
> toward that opening door
> *(that rising drop-gate)*

> his hand plunging into
> *(the poke)*
> the pocket
> *(he wore on the belt of his jerkin)*
> of his jeans and closing around the guitar-pick Speedy had given him so long ago
> *(and closing around the shark's tooth)*
> he waited to see what would come out of the Heron Bar [...] (562)

When the thing behind the door makes its appearance as an armoured knight, frightened Jack tries to escape the danger by jumping to the Territories. However, with the Black Hotel being a transitional place, the two worlds correspond much more closely than it was usual before. Jack (now referred to as Jason) finds himself still facing the dark knight. Terrified and not-knowing what to do, Jack ends up in a tight and wounding grasp of the knight while, all of the sudden, in a moment of a life-or-death crisis, the Helper figure of Speedy once again comes to help the distressed Hero and reminds him to use the token he gave him in the very beginning, before Jack's departure—the guitar pick, which earlier on showed captain Ferren that Jack could be trusted:

> *It's really going to kill me and my mother will die, Richard will die, Sloat will win, going to kill me, going to*
> *(tear me apart rip me open with its teeth)*
> *freeze me solid-*
> *JACK!* Speedy's voice cried.
> (*JASON! Parkus's voice cried.*)
> *The pick, boy! Use the pick! Before it's too late! FOR JASON'S SAKE USE THE PICK BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!* (566)

In the moment of absolute connection, Jack becomes the mythical dual Jack/Jason. The death Voytilla mentions can be this very moment where the character we know as Jack "disappears" —or rather evolves into something bigger:

> "*In her name, you filthy, aborted thing!*" they shouted together – but it was one shout only: the shout of that single nature, Jack/Jason. "*Get you off the skin of this world! In the name of the Queen and in the name of her son, get you off the skin of this world!*" (567)

This amalgamation is commented on by Campbell, "This is the highest and ultimate crucifixion, not only of the hero, but of his god as well. Here the Son and the Father alike are annihilated—as personality-masks over the unnamed" (177).

The moment before Jack hears Speedy's voice is one of the life-or-death crises Voytilla mentions. The other moment comes when, after a few more knights destroyed by the pick, Jack meets the last knight and the pick dissolves, leaving the Hero apparently unarmed. Even though it is not explicitly said in the book, judging from the vernacular and the italics, there are a few more utterances by Speedy as Jack tries to dodge the knight's attacks: "*Jack, you didn't need no magic juice to git ovah, and you don't need no magic pick to pull the chain on this here coffee can, neither!*" (575) "*All the magic is in YOU, Jack! Don't you know that by now?*" (576) Jack again follows Speedy's advice in one final act of mastering his inner powers:

> He stood on his toes, reached up, and seized the black helmet on both hands. [...] "Get you off the skin of this world," he said in a voice that was low and calm, almost conversational. "In *her* name I command you." The red light in the helmet puffed out like the candle inside a carved pumpkin, and suddenly the weight of the helmet – fifteen pounds at least – was all in jack's hands, because there was nothing else supporting it; beneath the helmet, the suit of armor had collapsed. (576)

With the last knight vanished, with Jack fully connecting with his mythical alter-ego—Jason—and after proving numerously throughout the book that he is worthy, the passage to the Territories Ballroom where the Talisman had been stored is open and Jack is finally able to take the Talisman.

3.7. Reward

The reward is the Talisman. It is not explained in its entirety, but from the pieces of information and described effects on Jack, it seems not only to be a healing artefact, but also a key to omnipotence—when Jack finally picks it up in the Black Hotel, for a short while he sees the universes in their entirety:

> As it came down, worlds reeled about his head. He did not seem to be crashing through layers of reality now but seeking an entire cosmos of realities, all overlapping one another, linked like a shirt of
> *(reality)*
> Chain-mail.
> *You're reaching up to hold a universe of worlds, a cosmos of good, Jack* – this voice was his father's. *Don't drop it, son. For Jason's sake, don't drop it.*
>
> Worlds upon worlds upon worlds, some gorgeous, some hellish, all of them for a moment illumined in the warm white light of this star that was a crystal globe chased with fine engraved lines. It came slowly down through the air toward Jack Sawyer's trembling, outstretched fingers. (582)

Later, the experience is explained further:

> In one sense he was not in the Agincourt [the Black Hotel] at all, not in Point Venuti, not in Mendocino County, not in California, not in the American Territories, not in those other Territories; but he *was* in them, and in an infinite number of other worlds as well, and all at the same time. Nor was he simply in one place in all those worlds; he was in them everywhere because he was those worlds. The Talisman, it seemed, was much more than even his father had believed. It was not just the axle of all possible worlds, but the worlds themselves – the worlds, and the spaces between those worlds. (591)

After the moment of Jack touching the Talisman, a new chapter called "News from Everywhere" begins. In this chapter, the reader sees people connected to Jack and his journey and Jack's acts towards them and sudden connection with them through the power of the Talisman. A signal is sent to his mother: "'Jason?' she gasped, and then frowned; that was not her son's name. But in her dream from which she had just startled awake she had had a son by such name, and in that dream she had been someone else" (583). Jack also sends a signal to Buddy Parkins, a man who helped jack on his way and gave him his coat:

> He straightened up with a gasp and bonked his head on the henhouse beams hard enough to make his eyes water… but he was grinning crazily at the same. *Oh my God, that boy is THERE, he's THERE*, Buddy Parkins thought, and although he had no idea of where "there" was, he was suddenly overtaken by a sweet, violent feeling of absolute adventure… (588)

However, the moment led to Jack punishing the wrongdoers through the power of the Talisman as well:

> Smokey looked down at his calculator and saw a single word blinking on and off in the red window:
> TALISMAN-TALISMAN-TALISMAN-TALISMAN
> Then his eyes exploded.
> [...]
> A moment later the entire Oatley Tap blew sky-high, and before the fire-trucks could arrive from Dogtown and Elmira, most of downtown was in flames. (585)
>
> Judge Fairchild, who had sent Jack and Wolf to the Sunlight Home, was no longer a judge of any kind, and as soon as his final appeals ran out, he would be going to jail. … Suddenly he pulled the knife away from his thick nails, looked at it thoughtfully for a moment, and then inserted the tip of the blade into his right nostril. He held it there for a moment and then whispered 'Oh shit. Why not?" He jerked his fist upward, sending the six-inch blade on a short, lethal trip, skewering first his sinuses and then his brain. (584)
>
> As the first snow began to spit down from the leaden skies over Cayuga (and as Jack Sawyer was touching the Talisman some two thousand miles away), the LP tanks behind the kitchen exploded. [...] The Sunlight Home burned to the ground in almost no time at all. (589)

After the overwhelming omnipotence, Jack finally openly says the one and only motivation for his own journey, explicitly tying himself to Pearson's Caregiver archetype as well: "*No!* Jack screamed in terror. *No, I don't want to be God! Please! Please, I don't want to be god, I ONLY WANT TO SAVE MY MOTHER'S LIFE!*" (592) Campbell comments on the concept Jack experiences by becoming worthy and seeing the multitude of the universes:

> As he crosses threshold after threshold, conquering dragon after dragon, the stature of the divinity that he summons to his highest wish increases, until it subsumes the cosmos. Finally, the mind breaks the bounding sphere of the cosmos to a realization transcending all experiences of form—all symbolizations, all divinities: a realization of the ineluctable void. (176)

However—despite Jack finally finding the Talisman—he cannot simply go back to his mother. As pointed out by Voytilla:

> The Hero may have earned the Reward outright, or the Hero may have seen no option but to steal it. The Hero may rationalize the Elixir theft, having paid for it with the Tests and Ordeals thus far. But the consequences of the theft must be confronted as the Shadow forces race to reclaim the Elixir that must not see the light of the Ordinary World. (5)

From the Talisman's point of view, Jack has earned it, since the Talisman itself is calling Jack and inviting him to take it since Jack's arrival to Point Venuti. But from Morgan's point of view and the point of view of the magical fauna and flora brought from the Territories (the aggressive trees in the town, the talking spider in the hotel, etc.), Jack is a thief, hence the final battle on the beach is inevitable.

After Jack picks up the Talisman and experiences the multitude of worlds, he also triggers an earthquake at Point Venuti. The reader is shown the situation in the town with the earthquake disrupting the rest of Osmond's/Gardener's Wolf forces. In his traditional fashion, Morgan orders Gardener to shoot Jack if he survives the earthquake and gets out of the hotel. When Jack and Richard actually do get out of the hotel, the reader bears witness to Morgan's composure dissolving:

> Sloat really believed he had everything under control – the situation, of course, but more important, himself. He went right on believeing this until he saw his son [...] (600-601)
>
> Morgan felt a moment of swooning fear… and then his rage, his excitement, and the lunacy that he had been feeding on his increasingly grandiose dreams of overlordship – these things burst apart the webbing of his self-control.
> He raised his thumbs to his ears and slammed them deep inside, so deep it hurt. Then he stuck out his tongue and waggled his fingers at Mr. Jack Dirty Motherfuck and Soon-to-be-Dead Sawyer. (601)
>
> [...]
>
> Gardener's face was moony with fear. "They're out, he's got IT, Morgan…my Lord…. We ought to run, we *must* run-"
> "*SHOOT HIM!*" Morgan screamed into Gardener's face. Blood from his severed tongue flew in a fine spray. "*SHOOT HIM, YOU ETHIOPIAN JUG-FUCKER, HE KILLED YOUR BOY! SHOOT HIM AND SHOOT THE FUCKING TALISMAN! SHOOT RIGHT THROUGH HIS ARMS AND BREAK IT!*" (601)

When Gardener does shoot at Jack from a rifle, the Talisman protects Jack: "The sunlight flashed off the shooter's rifle-scope again. The ray of reflected light this time struck the Talisman. And the Talisman reflected it back directly at the shooter" (602). The effects almost kill Gardener:

> [...] then the scope was full of living fire. Its thick glass lenses shattered. Smoking, fused glass was driven backwards into Gardener's right eye. The shells of the Weatherbee's magazine exploded, tearing its midsection apart. One of the whickers of flying metal amputated most of Gardener's right cheek. [...] He cast his gun aside, and Sloat saw that all the fingers had been torn from Gard's left hand. (603)

Wounded Gardener comes after Jack with a knife while Sloat decides to go to where Speedy was hidden on the beach, presuming to intercept Jack there. The final fight with Gardener, while dramatic, easily ends with Jack killing Gardener by touching him with the Talisman. Afterwards, Jack goes to the beach to finally face Morgan—the mastermind and the great Shadow—in the final battle.

After every possibility of getting rid of Jack failing, with his henchman and his army dead, both Morgan Sloat and his murderous tool Morgan of Orris become one mad villain. In the final battle, Both Jack and mad Morgan flip back and forth, in the strange Point Venuti resulting in Morgan teleporting around (in a similar way Jack has throughout the book). The chaotic fight full of Morgan's arrogant comments and banter ends when the Talisman once again saves the situation by reflecting the lightning from Morgan's deadly key-turned-lightning-rod and killing Morgan, finally getting rid of the final adversary standing in the way of Jack's triumphant journey home with the Talisman.

3.8. The Road Back

As Campbell comments:

> If the hero in his triumph wins the blessing of the goddess or the god and is then explicitly commissioned to return to the world with some elixir

> for the restoration of society, the final stage of his adventure is supported by all the powers of his supernatural patron. (182)

After defeating Gardener and Morgan and healing Richard and Speedy, the three flip to the Territories, meeting Parker's alter-ego—a law-bringer Parkus, earlier in the book revealed to be Morgan's sworn enemy (577)—who instructs them further. With these last instructions, the Speedy/Parkus character has fulfilled his role as the Helper figure and disappears for the rest of the story.

Following the instructions, the boys rest and then head east until they arrive to a huge tree. Then they flip back to America and follow the Route 17 towards Mobil station in a little town Storeyville. Passing through the tunnel in the tree marks the threshold of adventure and the beginning of their return home.

Jack crosses the "threshold of adventure" (Campbell) back by passing through the tree and after meeting Wolf's brother at the Mobil station in Storeyville starts his way back to New Hampshire back to his mother and his life. He returns to New England with Richard, being driven back by one of Wolf's brother. This peaceful passage shows the backwards contrast between the world of adventure and the ordinary world, going back from the darkness of Point Venuti and the Black Hotel by a carefree road trip back home, listening to loud music and spending a fortune Speedy had left him (the last supporting act of the Helper, which can be considered the support of the Hero's supernatural patron Campbell mentions). The "inheritance" is another contrast of going from Jack's almost ascetic journey to a comfortable life of wealth.

3.9. Return with the Elixir

Voytilla remarks: "The Elixir may bring closure to the Journey and restore balance to the Ordinary World" (6). Jack finishes the circle of the journey by coming back to Arcadia beach and using the Talisman to heal his mother.

As previously mentioned, Campbell compares Hero's journey to an initiation ritual—leaving for journey, overcoming obstacles and coming back a changed man, or, leaving one condition (in this case being a child) and finding a new condition (in this case becoming a man, a Hero, a saviour). This gradual coming-of-age transformation is an archetypal heroic deed on its own—as commented on by Campbell: "This is the highest and ultimate crucifixion, not only of the hero, but of his god as well. Here the Son and the Father alike are annihilated—as personality-masks over the unnamed" (177). As Jack undergoes his book-long rite of passage, he performs a heroic act of sacrificing his childhood for the good of the others—be it his mother or the people of Territories—and the Innocent in him dies as he gets resurrected/transformed into the Hero.

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, Pearson similarly describes the development:

> The Innocent and the Orphan set the stage: The Innocent lives in the prefallen state of grace; the Orphan confronts the reality of the Fall. The next few stages are strategies for living in a fallen world: The Wanderer begins the task of finding oneself apart from others; the Warrior learns to fight to defend oneself and to change the world in one's own image; and the Martyr learns to give, to commit, and to sacrifice for others. (4)

In opposition to Pearson's gender separation of the Martyr and Warrior stages as female and male respectively (7-8), Jack goes through both of them. It is possible that the fact that Jack is a child and not an adult, and therefore is not confronted with the issues of mid-life crisis as man can be or the loss and regain of independent life as women can be (Pearson 8), he goes through both of them in various aspects of his journey. He starts innocent, living with his mother, but after crossing the threshold he is confronted with the reality of having to leave her and undergo the journey on his own. Since he often travels alone, he develops into a Wanderer, finding his strengths through the trials. And he has to learn to fight and accept and commit at the same time due to being faced with

both dangerous adversaries and the previously mentioned complications with Wolf and Richard.

However, it is mentioned that during his return home, Jack slowly starts to forget the whole journey, suggesting that his transformation and development from child to the Hero was not an easy and natural thing and that it needs to be completely suppressed so that he could finally get back to his life and back to the "ordinary world", which is the closing of the monomyth cycle, recognized by Campbell, Voytilla and other scholars. Stephen King himself also mentions the return, as mentioned in the introduction of the thesis, as "[...] the return of the hero to a lesser being when the quest is completed" (qtd. in talkstephenking.blogspot.com).

The last paragraph of *The Talisman* says "[...] the ordinary life of a thirteen-year-old boy [...] had been returned to him, he realized. The Talisman had done that for him, too" (644). After healing his mother the Talisman healed Jack as well, suggesting that Jack has also been somehow damaged or injured. The book's conclusion then belongs to a quote from Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer*, creating, along with the two Huckleberry Finn quotes in the preface of the book, the most blatant connection between *The Talisman* and Twain's works: "So endeth this chronicle. It being strictly the history of a *boy*, it must stop here; the story could not go much further without becoming the history of a *man*" (645). The reversal of Jack's transformation is its final effect before the Talisman disappears after filling its purpose, marking the very end of the book.

CONCLUSION

The concept of the book as a heavily mythic story, as described by the authors in their interview for The Twilight Zone in 1985, and the inspirations by the literary works of the past, either admitted by the authors or recognized by the reviewers, invite the archetypal analysis of *The Talisman*.

As described and exemplified throughout the thesis, the characters follow the established archetypes and although some of the characters are not clearly singular in their archetype, their roles in the story fit the archetypal concepts. The Quest of bringing the Talisman and saving Jack's mother is always clearly present throughout the story. The Hero—Jack Sawyer—undergoes the traditional monomyth journey and evolves through a typical development. The Helper—Speedy Parker—helps the Hero realize the journey, reminds him of it and maintains his determination to continue, and assists the Hero when it is necessary. The Shadow figures—Morgan Sloat and Reverend Gardener—work against the Hero. And the Others—Wolf and Richard Sloat—are present to contrast the Hero's determination, ability and courage, and to help the Hero to fulfil the spiritual part of the journey and become the Hero he needs to be in order to finish the physical journey itself. The Trickster features in Speedy Parker and Wolf always remind the reader and Jack of the existence of magical reality beyond what is clearly present and visible.

Therefore, *The Talisman*—despite being a contemporary novel and being situated in modern times—clearly continues the literary mythic archetypal tradition, which can be found throughout the history of literature and which is based in the collective unconscious of mankind as postulated by Carl Jung.

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ENGLISH SUMMARY

The aim of the thesis is to recognize and analyse the archetypal concepts in a contemporary novel *The Talisman* by Peter Straub and Stephen King and to discover whether the novel is a part of the mythic literary tradition.

In order to establish the general theoretical background and the essential term "archetype", literary dictionaries, Plato's philosophy and Carl Jung's theories of myth are consulted. The theoretical chapter also introduces the essential sources used for the further analysis.

The second part of the thesis analyses the main characters and assigns them common archetypes identified by Carl Jung, Vladimir Propp, Christopher Vogler, Carol Pearson and Joseph Campbell according to their roles and behaviour in the novel both in general and in the interactions with other main characters. The third part of the thesis then analyses the interactions of the characters and their development. This part also puts the analysis in the perspective of the traditional mythical story structure called "monomyth", established by Joseph Campbell. Stages of the structure are gradually introduced and the characters and the defining features of their archetypes are recognized throughout the story. This method eventually presents *The Talisman* as a contemporary novel which follows the mythic literary tradition.

CZECH SUMMARY

Cílem práce je v románu *The Talisman* autorů Petera Strauba a Stephena Kinga rozeznat archetypální koncepty, provést jejich rozbor a zjistit, zda-li román následuje tradiční mýtické postupy v literatuře.

Pro stanovení všeobecného teoretického základu a zásadního pojmu „archetyp" jsou konzultovány literární slovníky, Platónova filosofie a teorie mýtu Carla Junga. Teoretická kapitola také představuje základní zdroje použité pro následující analýzu.

Druhá část práce se věnuje analýze hlavních postav a přiřazuje jim obecně známé archetypy popsané Carlem Jungem, Vladimirem Proppem, Christopherem Voglerem, Carol Pearson a Josephem Campbellem v závislosti na jejich rolích a chování v románu jak všeobecně, tak vzhledem k ostatním hlavním postavám. Třetí část práce pak analyzuje interakce postav a jejich vývoj. Tato část také zasazuje analýzu do perspektivy tradiční mýtické struktury příběhu pojmenované „monomyth" a stanovené Josephem Campbellem. Stupně této struktury jsou postupně představeny a postavy a definující znaky jejich archetypů jsou rozpoznány v průběhu děje knihy. Tato metoda ve výsledku potvrzuje, že *The Talisman* je současným románem, který následuje tradiční mýtické postupy v literatuře.