

THE MONOMYTH IN DESIGN: BRIDGING STORYTELLING AND DESIGN

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Abstract. This paper examines the transformative narratives undertaken by designers and the intersection of the hero's journey with the design process. Inspired by Joseph Campbell's monomyth, the study parallels the stages of the hero's journey with design methodologies. A total of sixty-three physical products from the compilation “100 Great Designs of Modern Times”, published by Fortune magazine in 2019, were analyzed using Python-based language analytics. These products were evaluated based on adaptability, social or environmental impact, user-friendliness, commercial success and the potential to redefine their categories. The analysis highlights the importance of storytelling in design. A comparative assessment based on the monomyth framework highlights the design narratives featured in Fortune and the associated creation stories, illustrating the essential role of storytelling in the evolution of design. The comparative study highlights the role of storytelling in this context, portraying designers as heroes who confront challenges, return with wisdom and shape products through narrative. This work accentuates the transformative power of storytelling in design, bridging the domains of myth and contemporary practice. It promotes a reflective consideration of storytelling's contribution to successful design, amalgamating myth and narrative to forge a compelling discourse. This study elucidates the symbiotic relationship between storytelling and design, revealing the profound connection among myth, narrative and innovation, while fostering a deeper reflection on the influence of storytelling in design. Consequently, the mythology surrounding designers, akin to traditional myths, mirrors monomythic patterns and situates the designer as the archetypal protagonist of this narrative, whether consciously recognized or not. When the designer's endeavor to convey a message through their products intersects with success stories and storytelling, myths emerge as distinctive resources from which significant insights can be gleaned.

Keywords: Design, hero's journey, design mythology, storytelling, design process.

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1. Introduction

In Herder's poem “*Das Kind der Sorge*” (Herder, 1990), which is inspired by the myth of Cura and a narrative by Hyginus, the goddess Sorge shapes slime on a riverbank and implores Jupiter to grant it life. A disagreement emerges regarding naming the creature among Tellus, who possesses the slime; Jupiter, who imbues it with spirit and Sorge, the creative force. Saturn intervenes and adjudicates in favor of Sorge, designating the creature as “*homo*” [Mensch]. Herder employs the German verb “*sinnen*”, which can signify the pursuit of a remedy, thereby portraying Sorge as anxious and unsettled. Conversely, Heidegger (2002) interprets Sorge as attentive and nurturing, which is fundamental to Dasein's existential condition.

In Herder's narrative, no explicit rationale exists for why Sorge, portrayed as a creative entity, forms a human being from clay. Within a Heideggerian framework, Sorge encounters pre-existing entities, manifests an engaged perspective that reveals these

existents and establishes their relationship through interest and anxiety. Sorge becomes aware of existents positioned about it, shaping them into an “at hand” form and “ready for use”. As the source of its creativity, anxiety transforms it for a purpose motivated by the desire to care for or compensate for a perceived deficiency, such as the naming of the creature.

As Tillich (1952) articulated, the anxiety that propels Sorge's creative impulse originates from an awareness of a being's potential nonexistence. This anxiety emerges from the prospect of existence; every individual grappling with the notion of existence must confront it. The fundamental source of this anxiety resides in Sorge's spiritual essence, thereby illustrating its role as a catalyst for creativity. According to May (1994), the avoidance of anxiety does not foster creativity. The authentic significance of anxiety lies in the external pressures that compel individuals to engage in creative endeavors. Similarly, from Kierkegaard's viewpoint (1994), confronting profound anxiety is intrinsically linked to internalizing freedom and responsibility in shaping one's existence. Individuals can forge a unique existence when creativity merges with the fortitude to confront anxiety.

Like Sorge, contemporary designers face a comparable fate when engaging in the creative process. Creation manifests as an impulse deeply rooted in an intrinsic anxiety derived from purposeful and conscious will. May (1994) accentuates creation as an impulse, representing a vital continuation of the process of becoming. Rank (1932) interprets this creative impulse as aligning with individual will, evolving into a conscious and productive force through selfless creativity. While Freudian discourses validate this impulse about psychosexual neurosis and sublimation, Storr (1972), from a Jungian standpoint, perceives creativity as an integrative impulse that fosters self-expression. Designers are captivated by the allure of the external world, entangled between an intrinsic anxiety and a compelling desire to engage in creative endeavors.

This study examines the integration of designers' product design processes with Joseph Campbell's (1949) concept of the “monomyth” or the archetypal hero's journey. The chapter addressing the Mythology of Design investigates the intricacies of the monomyth while establishing connections among various stages of the product design process that designers utilize. It underscores the importance of storytelling within design, illustrating how narratives empower designers to explore their products and processes more profoundly. The study highlights designers' creative processes through distinctive stories, emphasizing the transformative journeys they experience throughout their monomyth. Furthermore, it encapsulates their responses to the call, personal experiences, challenges encountered and beliefs surrounding the design process.

Following this exploration, the study elucidates the correlations between the stages in designers' narratives and the twelve stages of the monomyth. Concrete examples reveal similarities between specific design stages and their counterparts within the monomyth framework. The objective is to comprehensively understand how specific design stages correspond with the archetypal stages of the monomyth. The concluding section discusses the implications of these similarities within the narrative landscape of design. Additionally, it considers how designers can harness the monomyth concept as a transformative storytelling tool within design narratives.

2. The Mythology of Design

Every design inherently possesses a narrative, whether explicitly articulated or not. This narrative explores the process of its creation, thereby leading to the development of design mythology. As Eliade (1998) explains, myths encompass creation narratives that outline the genesis of existence. Design myths exhibit three fundamental characteristics: understanding the designer's metaphysical realm, the contemporary context and the heroic designer's response to these exigencies. These myths validate themselves and convey valuable lessons.

Design myths emerge from designers who function as storytellers embarked on a journey. They derive inspiration from their metaphysical realms, confront challenges and employ technical expertise to create myths about success and educational components. These narratives articulate the experiences of designers, engage with philosophical inquiries or communicate social messages. Through storytelling, designers disseminate their perspectives, rendering these myths a *modus operandi* (Randall, 2014). The designer occupies a significant role in a broader narrative that shapes and continues influencing their journey, generating new narratives that enrich this ongoing tale.

These narratives are communicated through interviews, biographies or corporate websites, recounting a journey marked by challenges and victories. Designers assume the role of conquerors who delve into their subconscious realms, thus achieving a heroic status. The existence of a narrative is contingent upon the successful realization of the product and the audience's intrigue regarding the story behind it. Design myths illustrate the journey of a designer in pursuit of their ambitions, embodying fundamental values such as discipline, determination, sacrifice, resilience and the ability to contend with setbacks. These components constitute a monomyth characterized by triumphs and accomplishments.

Jung's archetype theory is the foundational basis for Joseph Campbell's monomyth theory. Jung (1968) introduced the concept of the “archetype”, which exerts influence over the conscious and unconscious mind. Campbell's monomyth is characterized by a circular structure that emphasizes the central role of the hero in legends, myths and stories. The hero, regarded as the paramount archetype, serves others and engages in acts of sacrifice. The mentor archetype unveils the hero's intrinsic abilities, facilitates their training and bestows significant gifts (Vogler, 1992). In the design context, mentors may assume the roles of supportive partners, inspirational designers or supervisors. The threshold guardian archetype challenges the hero at the onset of their adventure, requiring either strength or intelligence to surmount various obstacles (Voytilla, 1999). In the design field, threshold guardians may be represented by boards of directors or colleagues. The herald archetype mobilizes the hero and guides them toward embarking on their quest, often appearing as a superior, coworker or catalyst (Vogler, 1992). The ally archetype offers psychological support, whereas the shape-shifter archetype seeks to divert the hero from their intended adventure, initially presenting as an ally but subsequently becoming an obstacle.

This research examines the concept of the monomyth through the compilation of the “100 Great Designs of Modern Times” list, published by Fortune magazine in 2019 (Bentley, 2020). Originally formulated in 1959 by Doblin, this list was generated through a survey among leading designers, architects and educators (Fortune, 1959). The 2019 version adhered to Doblin's methodology, seeking contributions from a diverse range of design stakeholders. Participants were invited to nominate up to ten exemplary designs

that they regarded as the pinnacle of modern design. From a total of 303 submissions, a thorough analysis was conducted using Python-based language analytics to assess products based on criteria such as adaptability, societal or environmental impact, user-friendliness, commercial success and potential for redefining their categories. Ultimately, 63 entries were identified as notable physical product designs.

The study underscores the importance of examining the creation narratives associated with these designs. Grey literature, which encompasses blog sites, industry journals, corporate websites, biographies and documentaries, offered a variety of information sources beyond traditional publishing channels. Content referencing the stages of the monomyth was identified for the majority of products, although some narratives presented challenges. The evaluation was extended beyond the Fortune 100 list to include creation stories, ensuring a diverse representation across the 12 stages of the monomyth (Vogler, 1992).

Design inherently possesses a narrative, with its mythology encompassing the designer's metaphysical insights, comprehension of contemporary context and heroic responses. Designers, as narrators, construct myths through their ventures, technical proficiency and creative impulses. This study correlates the product design process with Campbell's monomyth, illustrating how storytelling and narratives play a pivotal role in design and uncovering the transformative experiences of designers and the profound relationship between design stages and the monomyth.

3. The Journey of the Designer

Throughout human history, the narratives of heroic figures have been perpetuated across generations and cultures, playing a pivotal role in shaping societal identities. In parallel, each society, concept or professional domain has cultivated its pantheon of heroes, thereby shaping and delineating its unique identity through these revered figures. A hero exemplifies a profound willingness to sacrifice oneself for a cause greater than individual interests, transcending personal and historical constraints through relentless conflict (Campbell, 1949). They navigate the complexities of their journeys with a readiness to compromise (Vogler, 1992), fearlessly confronting danger while others may opt for safety (Fromm, 1976). In his autobiography, Loewy provides a candid critique of American products, recognizing the imperative for change and delineating his mission:

Competition would become fierce, good design would help sales, manufacturers could be convinced and I was the one to do the job, both the designing and the convincing... So, I decided to try and do something to put things right (Loewy, 1951).

Through this declaration, Loewy's apprehensions concerning the existing status quo are evident, as he enunciates a commendable objective to confront and amend it, undertaking the challenging journey toward achieving his aspirations.

The monomyth is derived from the hero archetype, representing a universal narrative framework encompassing mythological elements shared across diverse cultures (Campbell, 1949). The exploration of hero myths can be traced back to the anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor's (1871) identification of common plot patterns within monomyth narratives. Von Hahn's (1876) Biographical Model of the Aryan Hero, a pioneering structural approach, delineated 16 sub-similar patterns, including Birth, Youth, Return and Second Order Persons. Influenced by Freudian psychoanalytic theory, Rank (1909) formulated a hero model rooted in the myth of Oedipus. Drawing from Russian folk tales, Propp (1968) developed a seven-stage map of narrative structures. Raglan (1936)

developed a myth-ritualist Hero archetype comprising 22 characteristics, suggesting that the greater the presence of these traits in a hero, the more mythical they were considered to be. Expanding upon Carl Jung's insights into myth, Campbell propagated the concept of the monomyth. In Campbell's (1949) framework, which is characterized by separation, initiation and transformation, the hero embarks on a journey that involves leaving the ordinary realm, traversing into the extraordinary, overcoming challenges and returning with newfound wisdom and power. Authors such as Joseph Campbell (1949) and Christopher Vogler (1992) have furthered the popularity of the monomyth, particularly in cinematic, literary and dramatic contexts over the subsequent years. Unlike Rank's Raglan, Campbell's monomyth emphasizes symbolism and spirituality rather than familial or physical themes. Vogler (1992) adapted and streamlined Campbell's monomyth into the monomyth model, which comprises 12 stages, wherein the hero transitions between the ordinary and extraordinary worlds, undergoes trials and ultimately returns transformed (Figure 1).

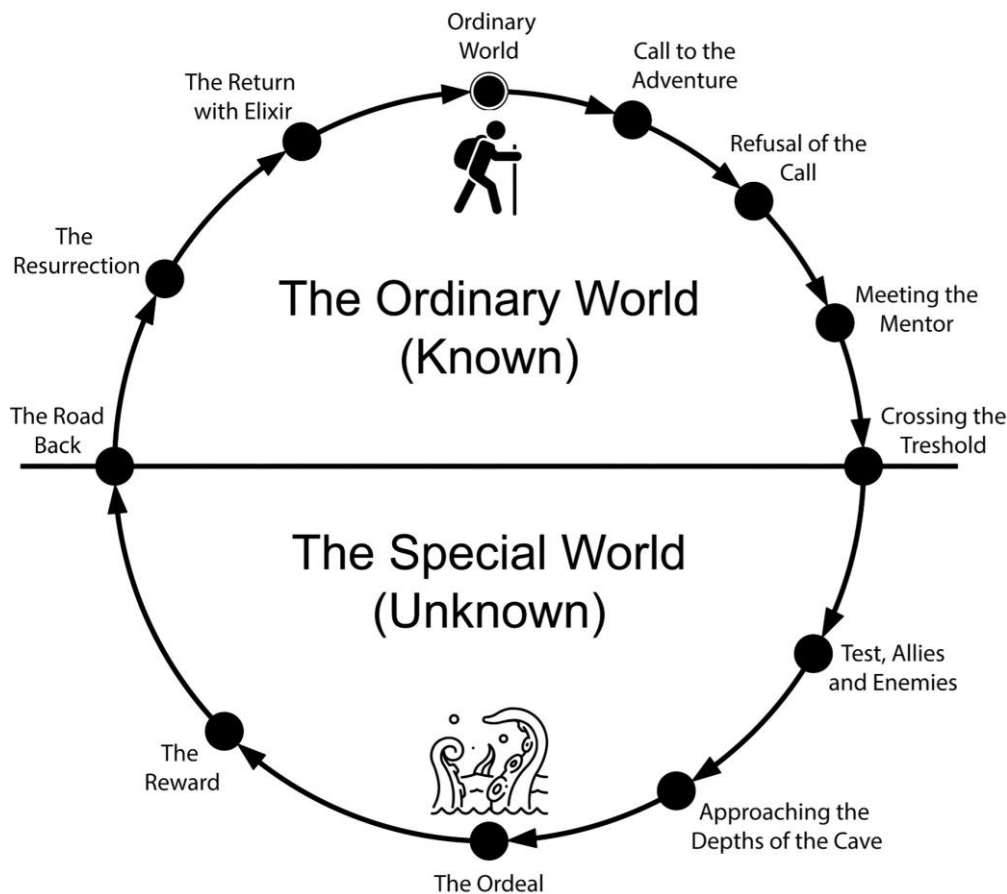


Figure 1. The journey of the designer

In the Ordinary World phase, preceding the hero's adventure, individuals reside in their familiar, everyday existence, uninfluenced by external factors. Philippe Starck leisurely awaits his order while overlooking the Amalfi coast (Watson-Smyth, 2010). Similarly, Sam Faber, the creator of OXO Good Grips, observes his wife baking at their vacation retreat (Wilson, 2018). Timothy S. Leatherman, the designer of the Pocket Survival Tool, embarks on a journey across Europe (Waller, 2018). Tony Fadell, the

designer of the Nest Learning Thermostat, dedicates his efforts to constructing his summer residence in Tahoe (Fadell, 2022). Ole Kirk Christiansen, the visionary behind Lego, confronts business failures and the aftermath of a workshop fire (Andersen, 2022). Franz von Holzhausen, the designer of the Tesla S, receives an unexpected communication from Elon Musk (Pettitt, 2022). Peter Opsvik observes his son, Tor, eating without eye contact (Opsvik, 2009). This stage provides valuable insights into the hero's life, desires, values, motivations and occasionally unveils traits that may influence their journey. Jonathan Ive spent his formative years disassembling and reassembling various possessions (Arlidge, 2014). James Dyson's childhood was marked by a strong aversion to dust and noisy vacuums (Davis, 2014). Hugo Alvar Henrik Aalto's early passion was drawing (Schildt, 2007). Ferdinand Porsche completed an apprenticeship in his father's metalworking shop (Ludvigsen, 2018). Dieter Rams refined his skills under the tutelage of his carpenter grandfather (Lovell, 2011). Naoto Fukasawa attained design insight at age 10 (Brammer, 2015). Karim Rashid recognized his design inclinations at age 5 (Freeman, 2016).

The Call to Adventure stage signifies introducing a challenge or an impending adventure, which may arise externally or from the hero's inner realm. This stage indicates the commencement of transformation for the hero, compelling them to abandon their ordinary and secure life to undertake a quest. In design narratives, particularly at the story's beginning, the hero is often depicted in their daily life, blissfully unaware of the impending adventure. This critical call to adventure reveals the issue or quest that entices the hero away from the familiar and into uncharted territories. For example, Starck's realization that the calamari he ordered arrived without lemon inspires his lemon squeezer concept, propelling him out of the comfort of routine and into a brief yet challenging creative endeavor (Watson-Smyth, 2010). Observing his arthritic wife, Betsy's struggle with conventional kitchen utensils catalyzes Faber, prompting him to engage in introspection and igniting the conception of a novel product (Wilson, 2018). Dyson's frustration culminates in the late 1970s when the powerful Hoover Junior vacuum cleaner loses its suction power. His reaction, which involves tearing open the bag to expose a fundamental flaw in the design, marks a significant turning point (Davis, 2014). Alfonso Bialetti's observation of women washing clothes in a large cauldron inspired the creation of the innovative Moka Express coffee machine, streamlining the coffee preparation process (Turner, 2015). Occasionally, the call to adventure arises from external sources. Florence Knoll's conversation with Eero Saarinen sparks the conception of the Womb Chair, driven by her dissatisfaction with existing lounge chairs (Knoll, 2023). Harold W. Sweatt's request for a new thermostat from Henry Dreyfuss leads to the development of a revolutionary design. Dreyfuss sketches a circle on a napkin, hands it to engineer Carl Kronmiller and states: "*Here. Go ahead and make something out of it*" (Lidwell & Manacsa, 2011). Similarly, Edwin Land's moment of clarity regarding instant photography, stimulated by his daughter's innocent question during a holiday in Santa Fe, paves the way for groundbreaking innovation (Ahlstrand *et al.*, 2005). IKEA's iconic Billy bookcase originates from a simple complaint by advertising manager Billy Liljedahl, prompting designer Gillis Lundgren to sketch the concept on a napkin (Langer, 2016). Graves draws inspiration for the Whistling Bird Tea Kettle from the disciplined routine of an Indiana rooster observed during visits to his cousin's farm (Michael Graves & Design, 2023).

In the Refusal of the Call stage, the hero hesitates to embark on the adventure for many reasons, opting instead to remain within their comfort zone and refraining from

engaging with the unknown. Despite the commencement of the adventure, the hero frequently contemplates retreat, not fully dedicating themselves to the journey ahead. Several factors may contribute to this rejection within the design field, including current workload, budget constraints, intellectual and industrial property rights concerns, conflicting ethical values or the designer's responsibilities. For example, at the onset of his career, Starck consciously refrained from collaborating with entities associated with arms, alcohol, tobacco, gambling, oil or religious organizations (Harvard Business Review, 2013). In response to the rising consumer culture of the early 1970s, Enzo Mari adopted a novel perspective regarding the design of everyday items. He refused to develop products subservient to industry, diverging from the traditional design objectives, which aimed to catalyze societal transformation (McGuirk, 2009).

During the mentorship phase of the meeting, the mentor assists the hero in overcoming fears and uncertainties, guiding them or imparting new skills, thereby facilitating complete immersion in the adventure. The mentor may not always be a person but can also take the form of an inspiring object, event or internal moral compass. In the design field, the mentor archetype typically represents a seasoned and sagacious designer, a business partner or an individual possessing exceptional expertise in their craft. Alvar Aalto's encounter with Otto Korhonen, a master carpenter skilled in the intricacies of Finnish birch wood, profoundly influenced Aalto's design journey (Schildt, 2007). Earl Tupper, the creator of the Wonderlier Bowl, finds guidance in Brownie Wise, who, under the tutelage of teacher Frank Stanley Beveridge, becomes a trailblazer in "home party sales" tactics (Kealing 2016). During a trip to Copenhagen, Ole Kirk Christiansen, the founder of the wooden toy manufacturer, discovers a plastic injection molding machine, which alters the course of his design process (Andersen, 2022). Dyson's design trajectory is pivotal when encountering an industrial cyclone in a sawmill, which inspires innovative solutions (Davis, 2014). Rashid's perception of good design is profoundly shaped by his mentor, Ettore Sottsass (Freeman, 2016). Describing Sam Farber's mentorship, Davin Stowell from Smart Design highlights Farber's keen understanding of design and business, fostering a fruitful partnership as follows: *"So, he had a lot of admiration and trust in designers, but he had the guidance that what we were doing would be a commercial success as well"* (Wilson, 2018).

At the Crossing the Threshold stage, our designer protagonist emerges prepared to confront the shadows that loom over everyday existence. Having triumphed over fears and acquired the requisite skills and tools for progression, the protagonist is positioned to step beyond the boundaries of their symbolic sanctuary. This moment calls for a confrontation and resolution of the prevailing problem. This stage propels our protagonist directly into the adventure, frequently encountering obstacles known as "threshold guardians", which necessitate various strategies for overcoming them. The protagonist must make deliberate decisions when faced with adversities and accept the consequences of these choices (Armstrong, 2006). This signifies the initiation of the design process and the actual commencement of the narrative. Throughout the 1990s, as cellular devices gradually decreased in size and cost while coverage expanded, Nokia lagged behind its competitors, perceiving engineering as its primary competency and recognizing an opportunity to challenge the prevailing norms. Entrepreneurial designer Frank Nuovo, motivated by a passion for simplicity, prioritized innovation in shape and form. Alastair Curtis, appointed by Nuovo to lead the visioning process, recounts a courageous approach characterized by a willingness for radical transformation: *"We were all kind of fearless; everything was up for change"* (Oremus, 2016). In response to Florence Knoll's

invitation, Saarinen initially considered utilizing molded plywood to surmount a significant threshold in his design. However, it became apparent that the dimensions exceeded the material's capabilities (Knoll, 2023). After three years of laboring in his brother-in-law's garage, Leatherman developed a prototype and obtained a patent. Nevertheless, despite sending 279 offer letters to manufacturers, he encountered rejection at every turn (Waller, 2018). Threshold guardians manifested in various forms, including the status quo, material constraints, production techniques, consumers or manufacturers.

During the Allies and Enemies phase, the protagonist encounters numerous obstacles on the path to their objective. After crossing the initial threshold, the protagonist gradually forges alliances and identifies adversaries, facing various challenges. At this juncture, the protagonist learns and adapts to the unique rules of the world, testing the limits of their capabilities. Leatherman's ping-pong associate, Steve Berliner, embraces the alliance, which leads to the establishment of a company together (Waller, 2018). Tupper negotiates a deal with Wise (Kealing, 2016). Aalto secures support from Otto Korhonen (Schildt, 2007). Steve Jobs articulates his partnership with Ive, underscoring their close collaboration spanning nearly 15 years (Douglas, 2022). Disagreements between the brothers intensify, culminating in Rudolf's departure to establish Puma on the opposite side of the city, while Adi continues with the Adidas brand (Smit, 2009). In early 1979, Masaru Ibuka, the legendary president of Sony and a music enthusiast, approached his deputy Norio Ohga, requesting the creation of a playback-only portable stereo device. Ohga responded to this request by producing a proto-Walkman and presenting it to the president. Impressed by the sound quality and portability of the device, Ibuka initiated the development of a marketable version despite facing objections within the company. In response to these objections, Ibuka advocated for the proposal of a stereo cassette player for music consumption. Concurrently, he inquired, *"Don't you think a stereo cassette player that you can listen to while walking around is a good idea?"* (Du Gay et al., 2013).

The stage of Approaching the Depths of the Cave represents a secondary threshold. It signifies the hero's approach toward a danger that has the potential to transform them. This danger could manifest as a tangible adversary or an uncovered internal conflict. However, the hero has yet to confront this danger or undergo the trial; they are merely preparing for it. Having grasped the nature of their adventure and the world, the hero reaches this second threshold, where they anticipate encountering significant peril and begin making final preparations before facing it. This metaphorical 'Cave' typically houses the hero's most formidable foe and the hero often must surmount various obstacles to gain entry. In design, the Cave analogy may symbolize the challenges encountered in environments such as the boardroom or among colleagues who respond with "yes, it's interesting, but..." For young designers, the primary adversary might be an authoritarian or dogmatic design director, a conservative manufacturer or a demanding client. The guards represent individuals who, despite showing interest, may offer hesitant support or present obstacles along the way. When the iPhone 3 allowed the public to develop their apps, Pei-Yin Chao, a young interaction designer at Philips, saw the potential for new design opportunities and business prospects. In his spare time, he and his colleague Tom Djajadiningrat created a prototype for the original Living Colors lamp-powered wheel, envisioning what would eventually become Philips Hue. They presented their project to the board of directors, receiving initial approval (Signify, 2014). Unsatisfied with plywood, Saarinen and Florence Knoll discovered that a commercial shipbuilder in New Jersey was exploring fiberglass and resin. Despite their courage and perhaps naivety, they

approached him for assistance. Initially, the shipbuilder failed to see the link between ship engineering and furniture, repeatedly rejecting their requests. However, he eventually warmed up to the young and enthusiastic duo. Florence Knoll (2023) describes their approach as persuasion: “*We just begged him*”. Despite its advanced conception, the SX-70 Polaroid Camera incorporated revolutionary optics and a complete set of photonic controls, some of which were yet to be invented. According to Wensberg (1987), the complexity of the SX-70 program stretched the boundaries of multiple technologies, making it challenging for those involved to maintain faith and optimism. Edwin Herbert Land was almost the sole individual in the company who comprehensively understood all the challenges and was willing to undertake the project, despite numerous obstacles. Nuovo and his team chose to eliminate the antenna obstructing portability in the Nokia 3210 by integrating it inside the phone, even at the expense of challenging the industry's fixation on subtlety and causing unease among engineers (Oremus, 2016). Sottsass and Olivetti had conflicting opinions regarding the Valentine typewriter. Sottsass preferred market competition and advocated for a simple and attractive design. At the same time, Olivetti insisted on using more expensive materials, such as color-impregnated, impact-resistant ABS plastic, incorporating upper- and lowercase characters and a right-side bell. After their disagreement, Sottsass left the project and Olivetti continued with their designers (Thorne, 2022). Enzo Mari characterizes the cave as a place that confines the designer's freedom:

They say, ‘You are totally free to do whatever you want’ and I say, ‘Can I fire the whole technical department of the company? Can I fire the commercial department, all the marketing, can I change the CEO? If I can do that, then I am free. Otherwise, you are just taking the piss out of me’ (McGuirk, 2009).

The Ordeal stage signifies the hero's lowest point, wherein they confront mortality and face death directly. This moment is characterized by adversaries unleashing their entire potential, intensifying their assaults. Through this ordeal, the hero undergoes a symbolic or literal death and subsequent resurrection, leading to a profound transformation. Narrative design necessitates these symbolic instances of peril, wherein designers or their causes encounter significant danger, face considerable rejections, make numerous sacrifices and challenge established norms and conventions. Dyson's journey involves the development of multiple prototypes while navigating financial challenges and persevering in the face of adversity (Davis, 2014). Faber and Stowell navigate the complexities associated with production arising from the thin blade structure, anxiously awaiting the decision from Japanese injection mold manufacturer Mr. So-and-So (Wilson, 2018). In the transition to the Model 500, Henry Dreyfuss and his team collaborated with Bell Laboratories, meticulously measuring over 2,000 human faces to address the ongoing issue with the Model 302's handset and to ascertain the average gap between the mouth and ear (Flinchum & Meyer, 2017). Peter Moore's Air Jordan 1 encounters difficulties due to its innovative design conflicting with NBA regulations. Nevertheless, the ban ultimately results in unprecedented sales, propelled by a rebellious trend among urban youth (Deboree, 2019).

In the Reward phase, the protagonist achieves their reward or objective. Having endured their trials, often emerging from the verge of failure, they transform and emerge as a new individual. Occasionally, there is cause for celebration, as their achievements merit acknowledgment. However, the adventure remains unfinished; this phase signifies the culmination of their initial ambition, with additional challenges likely to arise. In the spring of 1985, Alberto Alessi, accompanied by his delegation, visited the office of

Michael Graves, bearing a black velvet bag. Alessi unveiled the initial gleaming sample of the Whistling Bird Teakettle from his briefcase. Donald Strum, President of Michael Graves Design, was overcome with amazement, dropping to his knees and resting his chin on the desk. *“I was like a raccoon, mesmerized by this shiny object”*, Strum recounts, illustrating the enchanting moment of reward (Michael Graves Design, 2023). Leatherman successfully secures an order for 500 pieces following his 280th proposal (Waller, 2018). Dyson must cultivate interest from major manufacturers. Nevertheless, in the mid-1980s, he successfully produced and marketed his electric “G-Force” vacuum cleaner, characterized by its distinctive pink hue, through a modest licensing company in Japan, Apex Limited. Despite its elevated cost, the product evolved into a status symbol and was awarded the 1991 International Design Fair prize in Japan (Davis, 2014). Dr. Spencer Silver, a scientist at 3M, conducted extensive research on adhesives and made a remarkable discovery: an adhesive that lightly adheres to surfaces without a firm grip. Despite years of grappling with the challenge of finding an application for his invention, another scientist at 3M, Art Fry, recalled Silver's microspheres while attempting to mark pages in his hymnal. This recollection sparked a “eureka moment” and led Fry to collaborate with Silver in developing a product that resulted in the creation of Post-it® Notes (Nayak & Ketteringham, 1997).

Following the receipt of their accolade on the Road Backstage, the hero embarks upon the frontiers of a new realm, where challenges endure despite the commencement of the journey homeward. While obstacles may present themselves, the hero regains composure and resolves to fulfill the mission they initiated. In design, commercial success and constructive feedback are crucial in shaping the product's trajectory. Successful and unsuccessful products confront challenges during the return journey, becoming integral components of design history. Illustrative examples of this phenomenon include Polaroid's Polavision, Apple's Newton and Sony's Betamax, among others. Despite encountering setbacks, overcoming obstacles offers opportunities for transformation and shifts in perspective. Design revisions may extend the journey, while deficiencies pave the way for forthcoming ventures, imparting invaluable lessons for future pursuits. For instance, the air sofa, initially celebrated as innovative by IKEA, experienced a setback due to a design flaw, requiring a redesign to rectify issues related to melting and air leakage (IKEA Museum, 2023). Similarly, Tupper's innovation in plastic kitchenware faced resistance, which was successfully addressed through effective home-party sales strategies employed by Mrs. Wise (Kealing, 2016). Christensen and his son faced challenges with the LEGO brick system; however, they discovered inspiration to refine and reintroduce the product after receiving insightful feedback from a purchasing agent aboard a ferry, culminating in its success (Andersen, 2022).

In the Resurrection stage, the hero confronts death once more, but with a greater immediacy, signifying a pivotal moment. Rebirth mirrors the ordeal, testing whether the hero has internalized lessons from past trials, presenting a final challenge wherein all acquired knowledge must be applied. In the realm of design, these lessons learned pave the way for innovation. Having learned from past mistakes and trailing behind competitors PlayStation and Xbox in technology and performance, Nintendo embarked on a motion sensor-based value innovation (Hollensen, 2013). Similarly, IKEA Poäng underwent a significant transformation in 1992, evolving from a chair with a tubular steel frame to one constructed of wood, facilitating flat packaging and a price reduction (Budds, 2016). Following Steve Jobs' passing in 2011, Apple ventured into uncharted territory with the Apple Watch, drawing inspiration from the successes of its flagship

products. The design prioritized a delicate balance between simplicity and functionality in its user interface, aiming to counteract the intrusive nature of mobile phones as highlighted by the Apple Newton debacle (Pierce, 2015).

At the Return with Elixir stage, the hero returns to their ordinary world, bearing a potion, treasure, knowledge, experience or story acquired from the extraordinary realm. Upon completing their journey as heroes, having commenced as ordinary characters, the elixir they carry symbolizes transformation rather than a literal potion. This return signifies that the hero has navigated through the particular world. Joseph Campbell (1992) characterizes it as the hero's final test; success reflects their maturity and enables them to convey their newfound wisdom to others. Within the design domain, this elixir embodies the philosophy that the designer has meticulously cultivated and refined over years of experience. For instance, Dieter Rams returned with the ten principles learned from the design deities atop Mount Braun. Steve Jobs maintained that design is fundamentally centered around product functionality. Likewise, Charles Eames emphasized that superior functionality transcends mere aesthetics, as functionality is enduring. Naoto Fukasawa extols designs that manifest in behavior. Raymond Loewy asserted that design extends beyond the confines of designers alone. Luigi Colani's primary design philosophy emphasizes the eroticism of life. Ettore Sottsass advocated for sensual and stimulating design. Conversely, Enzo Mari articulated that design is devoid of life.

4. General Discussion

The “The Journey of the Designer” section elucidates how Vogler's 12-stage monomyth is manifested in the narratives surrounding successful design mythologies. The overarching plot remains consistent despite the differing names and triggers, as illustrated in Figure 2. Designers, who typically lead ordinary lives, respond to internal and external calls, occasionally with hesitation, embodying the archetype of the reluctant hero due to their inherent virtues. Driven by the desire to rectify imperfections, attain personal excellence and disseminate their message, they often experience a sense of restlessness, akin to Sorge. Their journeys are frequently rooted in childhood experiences that significantly shape their skill sets, marking the transition from a metaphysical realm to the realm of design, with childhood generally representing the initial point of this process. Designers seldom receive explicit confirmation of their selection; instead, they establish their sense of chosenness by daringly perceiving reality from a unique perspective, often under the guidance of mentors. The journey may conclude abruptly, similar to a sketch rendered on a napkin, as exemplified by figures such as Starck or Lundgren or it may extend over an entire lifetime, akin to the journeys of Dyson or Leatherman.

Stage	Designers Act	Archetypes
The Ordinary World	The designer, amidst the hustle and bustle of everyday life and work in their ordinary world, has, since youth, honed their skills and cultivated a particular worldview with the guidance of mentors, evolving into a designer of proficiency with potentials.	 Explorer Mentor
Call to the Adventure	In the designer's daily existence, an interaction with the realm of design occurs. This interaction may manifest as an internal impetus triggered by an uncommon observation, or it could arise from external stimuli such as a job opportunity or feedback from acquaintances.	 Herald
Refusal of the Call	Following the call, the designer declines the design proposal, driven by personal principles or insecurities, and is hesitant to embrace change, opting instead for the safety of familiarity. Occasionally, allies and gatekeepers at the threshold may voice concerns regarding the risks inherent in the process. This reluctance persists until circumstances compel the designer to acquiesce to the call.	 Allies Gatekeepers
Meeting the Mentor	The Designer rendezvouses with a Mentor to garner confidence, insight, counsel, training, or even supernatural capabilities, thereby surmounting concerns and confronting the threshold of adventure. Preferring not to plunge blindly into the Special World, the Designer instead seeks the experiential wisdom of individuals who have traversed similar paths before, such as colleagues, entrepreneurs, masters, or intimate confidants. The boon provided by the Mentor may manifest as advice, innovative concepts, recommendations for novel production techniques, or insights into alternative materials.	 Mentor
Crossing the Threshold	The designer embraces the role of the Hero and initiates the design process within their inner realm. Nonetheless, the designer have refrained from divulging their ideas to anyone thus far.	 Hero
Test, Allies and Enemies	The designer presents their preliminary concepts to key decision-makers, including the board of directors, employers, or manufacturers. These ideas may receive endorsement or rejection; however, rejection does not signify the conclusion. Through persistence, patience, and occasionally through forging new partnerships, the design project can advance.	 Allies Gatekeepers Enemies
Approaching the Depths of the Cave	The designer finds themselves in a moment of intense reflection preceding the monumental Ordeal they are about to confront. It represents the profound inhalation before the plunge. Frequently, it serves as the ultimate preparation for a significant presentation, involving the acknowledgment of shortcomings and the relinquishment of casual acquaintances in preparation for the uncertain design journey, leaving the designer feeling apprehensive and isolated. During this period, the designer may confront their own shadow, potentially straying from their principles or making compromises.	 Hero Shadow
The Ordeal	The designer arrives at the moment of the Ordeal, where the critical "hostile forces" present their most formidable opposition. Here, the designer bears witness to the project's fluctuations between existence and demise. Unexpected obstacles may arise, challenging preconceived notions and revealing unforeseen complexities. Tense boardroom discussions, financial constraints, production limitations, or sheer indifference serve as the midpoint that plunges the designer into the depths of despair.	 Allies Gatekeepers Enemies
The Reward	The Reward bestows upon the designer the supplementary support necessary to navigate through the climactic conflict they encounter at the pinnacle of their narrative, where they confront their most formidable challenges. This reward, essential for their triumphant emergence at journey's end, could manifest as partial approval from the board or employer, an augmented budget allocation, access to specialized team resources, a novel suggestion from an acquaintance, the presentation of an initial prototype by a manufacturer demonstrating the feasibility of the concept, or the proposal of a new material or a limited pre-order.	 Hero Mentor Allies
The Road Back	The Road Back signifies a transitional phase wherein the designer perceives a glimmer of hope at the conclusion of their journey, yet confronts another hurdle, this time fraught with heightened risks. Despite progress, the designer remains discontent and unfulfilled. While possessing a functional prototype or impressive samples, the product has not yet entered the market, and even upon doing so, success remains elusive. Costs are substantial, and product testing yields unsatisfactory results.	 Allies Gatekeepers Enemies
The Resurrection	Resurrection marks the pivotal moment when the designer confronts the ultimate demise of their dreams, hope, and self-esteem. Will the design elicit positive reactions and consumer interest? Critical challenges are surmounted through astute revisions and the application of final miraculous touches. In nearly every instance, the designer emerges victorious from this ordeal, owing to their talent, strength, courage, intelligence, nobility, heroism, or collaborative efforts — and perhaps most significantly, sacrifice. The trials are overcome, pre-sales demonstrate favorable outcomes, and celebrations ensue with the board of directors, employers, and heightened media attention.	 Allies Gatekeepers Enemies
The Return with Elixir	The Return with the Elixir represents the ultimate reward obtained in the designer's odyssey. Having emerged victorious, the designer is revitalized, purified, and deserving of reintegration into the Ordinary World, where they share the Elixir of the Journey — the mundus operandi they have acquired. They transcend their individual existence, disseminating hope, vitality, discourse, and purpose into the lives of ordinary individuals and fellow designers who were once lost amidst material pursuits. The elixir in this context symbolizes the wisdom attained through successful experiences and serves as a guiding light for others.	 Hero

Figure 2. 12-stage monomyth

Legendary and successful design endeavors adhere to four fundamental patterns concerning the duration of the journey. In the first pattern, the astute designer swiftly

identifies the optimal solution. Although challenges arise routinely, the designer's heightened awareness enables them to recognize what others may overlook. Analogous to Alexander the Great's effortless severance of the Gordian Knot, the solution becomes apparent, culminating in a singular and precise conclusion. The second pattern narrates a tale of initial rejections and setbacks, wherein the designer's full potential remains unrealized until a breakthrough is achieved, often manifesting as a partnership or technological innovation. Despite enduring prolonged trial-and-error phases, the designer perseveres with resolute determination. The third pattern entails minimal celestial assistance, as the designer receives a summons to undertake the task. Advancing strategically amidst allies and adversaries, the journey adheres to a principal strategy, defying conventional norms and culminating in success. In the final pattern, the Ordeal stage proves pivotal, with the designer initially apprehensive about mediocrity. The journey may extend over several years; nevertheless, a distinctive product emerges as the ultimate reward, compelling the designer to share it with the public, in contrast to Gollum. Despite confronting ancillary struggles, such as fluctuating monthly sales figures and critiques, the designer's narrative elevates the product beyond mere commodity status. Distilled from prior endeavors, the designer emerges as a hero, prepared to share their triumphant journey.

In examining grey literature, it becomes evident that esteemed designers typically grapple with three fundamental inquiries: What was the origin? What transpired? Furthermore, what are your current reflections? Their narratives concerning the genesis of their endeavors often penetrate the metaphysical domain, elucidating the circumstances and emotions that propelled them toward the design field. Progressing from the abstract to the tangible, they articulate the situations and inspirations that informed their creations, sometimes attributing them to divine or rational explanations. They chronicle the comprehensive design process, encompassing triumphs and challenges, culminating in the recognition phase. The accolades they receive are frequently described with a sense of the miraculous, reflecting on a journey distilled through years of expertise. Concerning their contemporary reflections, designers may return to the metaphysical, articulating profound transformations and alternative viewpoints. This expedition encourages the audience to engage with their inner selves, acknowledging the ongoing evolution inherent in designers and individuals.

5. Mythological Narrative in Design: Modernity, Meaning and User Experience

This study employs a mythological narrative framework to elucidate the connection with the user and demonstrates that the contemporary social structure is inextricably linked to mythology. In this context, myth and modernity should not be perceived as opposing concepts. Instead, it is imperative to meticulously examine the capacity of modernity to generate myths and the instrumentalization of these myths. Upon scrutinizing the discourses and practices of modernity, it becomes evident that the oppositional relationship between myth and modernity is anachronistic and insufficient. Mythology represents a timeless and profound narrative form that arises from the individual's creative and intuitive inner world. However, systematic, industrial and mass-produced structures significantly influence contemporary design culture, generating mythological forms. Within this framework, the individual's intrinsic drive to create myths, alongside society's structural necessity for such myths, establishes a suitable foundation for modernity to guarantee its continuity within the realm of discourse.

Theoretical approaches developed after the works of Roland Barthes provide a critical intellectual foundation for comprehending the myth-making framework of modernity. Barthes (1957) unequivocally delineated the role of various elements within contemporary society, such as fashion, sports, automobiles and design, as instruments of myth production. He posits that modern myths are not constrained by the limitations that characterize traditional mythological narratives, which frequently center around deities, heroes and supernatural occurrences. Conversely, he argues that modern myths may arise from various sources, including advertisements, media imagery, political discourse and consumption patterns. The efficacy of modernity is contingent upon the naturalization of its myths, framing cultural elements and ideologies as “natural”, “inevitable” and “unchangeable”.

The individual's requirement reciprocally engages in a communicative process between contemporary individuals and the narratives of modernity concerning mythic stories. In the chapter entitled “The New Citroën” from Barthes' *Mythologies* (1957), the design phenomenon is sanctified through technology. This chapter interprets the Citroën DS 19 model as a modern object of veneration, an indisputable icon of technology and a “deified vehicle”. The DS (*Different Spirits*) is distinctly related to the French term *déesse*, signifying “goddess”. The car's body, headlights and interior design all unambiguously evoke a temple of mechanical aesthetics. In this context, the design transcends a mere functional construct; it emerges as a significant sign.

Barthes' approach offers a robust theoretical framework for interpreting contemporary design icons, such as Dyson products, Philippe Starck's Juicy Salif and Steve Jobs' aesthetic-philosophical perspective. These objects transcend mere functionality; they embody cultural signifiers laden with ideological significance.

From a Barthesian perspective, Dyson products embody values such as superior engineering, technological intelligence, luxury living and design purity. The concept of “cleaning” emerges as a naturalized bourgeois value and serves as a cultural symbol of success. “Cleanliness” is associated with scientific achievement, personal control and aesthetic fulfillment, transcending the realm of simple, everyday actions. It endeavors to satisfy the mythical aspirations of the modern bourgeoisie for a minimalist lifestyle, independence and modernity. Starck's Juicy Salif, incapable of effectively squeezing a lemon, unveils its actual function through its imagined performance. The object is not intended to “squeeze lemons” but to signify modernity, elegance and intellectual taste. The product's success is not attributed to its functionality; instead, it transforms an ordinary kitchen utensil into a design fetish, stimulating the user's desire for cultural belonging. Apple's triad of technology, simplicity and aesthetics is harmonious and sublime, akin to the *Trinity* in Christian theology. Jobs' promotions possess ritualistic qualities, while the product packaging is presented with utmost care, resembling sacred objects. These items are perceived as a form of “revelation”. Jean Baudrillard (1970) posits that objects and design products have shifted from possessing a use value to embodying a sign value in modern societies. He asserts that the meanings of products are derived not from their functionalities but from their roles in status, identity construction and cultural representation. In contemporary society, objects transcend mere tools; they represent symbols within a system of signs and ideological images. Within this framework, while the fundamental functions of products do not entirely vanish, their symbolic meanings and imaginative powers frequently surpass their practical functions.

This transformation demonstrates that design objects transcend the role of mere tools; they emerge as symbols of social status, cultural identity and economic power.

Consider, for instance, an ordinary IKEA chair compared to a chair designed by Philippe Starck. While both fulfill the fundamental seating function, they communicate fundamentally different social meanings to their users and observers. The IKEA chair epitomizes simplicity, symbolizing everyday life by emphasizing mass production and accessibility. In contrast, Starck's chair signifies individual taste, aesthetic refinement and cultural capital.

The motivation behind purchasing a luxury SUV is not typically to engage in off-road activities or to navigate challenging road conditions. Instead, vehicles of this nature indicate one's status within urban environments. The concept of "off-road" merely represents a symbolic notion. The propagation of solely the imagery of an action that does not occur (such as going off-road) can be elucidated through Baudrillard's simulacrum theory. Simulacrum denotes a new layer of reality that replaces actual reality and functions autonomously. In this context, hyperreality signifies a condition wherein an individual perceives a simulated experience as if it were genuine. Authenticity diminishes behind the commodifiable image, supplanted by a more appealing and consumable replacement.

According to this theoretical framework, the design process necessitates that a product be both functional and narratively rich for success. The designer has transitioned from merely a producer of physical objects to becoming a storyteller who constructs narratives, shapes imagery and generates meaning. The narrative surrounding the product, its value proposition and the cultural resonance it elicits are as critical as the product itself. In this context, the mission of contemporary designers is unequivocal: to create products that embody a story, infused with mythic, symbolic and social contexts.

Umberto Eco examines design mythology in his seminal works, *Opera Aperta* (1971) and *A Theory of Semiotics* (1979), presenting it as a narrative imbued with meaning ascribed by the producer, while simultaneously functioning as a multifaceted sign system that invites active reinterpretation by the user. Eco's assertion that sign systems are polysemantic and polyphonic is fundamental to grasping how consumers can reinterpret design objects across various contexts. Consequently, this positions the buyer's interpretation as central to the process, thereby rendering design contingent not only upon the producer's intentions.

Umberto Eco's *opera aperta* concept is relatively straightforward: works that allow for ambiguity and multiple interpretations are influenced by dynamic and collective processes of meaning production, rather than confined to singular and fixed meanings. In this context, the design object transcends its role as merely a functional item or aesthetic form; it invites diverse contextual interpretations by users, being reinterpreted as a "design myth", an "icon", an "object of humor" or a "communication initiator".

For instance, Juicy Salif generates diverse cultural interpretations and symbolic values across user demographics despite its contested functionality. In parallel with Barthes's (1977) thesis of the *death of the author*, Starck's complete authority over the product diminishes and the significance of the product is no longer confined to the designer's predetermined intentions. In this context, the meaning is reconstructed based on the consumer's experiences with the product, their interpretations and the narratives they associate with it.

Contemporary consumers engage with products not merely on a functional level; they actively construct meaning, create narratives and at times, critically examine the ideological facets of the product through parody and critique. Various channels, including social media platforms, user comments and the generation of digital content, influence

this multifaceted production of meaning. It does not arise from the limited narrative that the brand or designer established through marketing texts. This illustrates that design mythology has become decentralized and is molded by user collectivity within the framework of community wisdom (Güneş, 2012).

At this juncture, it is imperative to confront a fundamental inquiry: Does the designer, who serves as the author of a design narrative framed within a singular protagonist narrative structure (monomyth), exert control over this narrative? Within the post-Barthes intellectual milieu, the most robust response to this inquiry is evident: while the designer establishes the foundational parameters, the creative contributions of consumers significantly influence the narrative's progression, resolution and subsequent reinterpretation.

In this context, the evaluation of success in contemporary design transcends mere comprehension of the designer's creative intentions by the audience (Güneş & Güneş, 2018); it also encompasses the resonance of these intentions with diverse user practices, their reproduction and their evolution across various contexts. The primary role of the designer is to initiate the narrative. This notion is based on poststructuralist theory, which perceives the designer as a “narrative trigger” rather than an authoritative source of meaning.

In this framework, James Dyson is not merely an engineer who designs a vacuum cleaner; he is a *platform builder* who initiates a narrative of “innovative living” for technology-savvy users, as Henry Jenkins (2006) emphasized in his theory of Participatory Culture. When the designer relinquishes control over the narrative, the significance of the product becomes multi-centered, culturally sensitive and adaptable to users. In alignment with Eco's perspective, the completion of the design object is associated not with the designer's intent but with the degree of participation exhibited by the receiver. In this context, the monomyth narrative is not completed in the traditional sense; instead of returning to his “ordinary world”, the designer observes the infinite transformation of the narrative.

Design discussions must incorporate the receiver and the user into the narrative. An additional crucial aspect is how storytelling is constructed within the context of mass production. In this framework, the designer's creative process requires re-evaluation. It transcends mere individual expression or the result of an aesthetic experience. It is also regarded as a “product” endowed with strategic value due to its placement within the contemporary production-consumption economy. Narrative construction has become essential to an individual's creative practice, corporate brand strategies, product identities and market positioning efforts.

The designer embarks on the creative process through personal observations, existential inquiries or individual crises. Nonetheless, this initial point is assimilated into multi-actor, interdisciplinary and institutionalized frameworks. This process interacts with engineering decisions, marketing strategies, supply chain planning and user experience testing. It transforms design practice from an individual art form into a multi-layered organization, aligning with institutional production systems. Storytelling is inextricably associated with critical elements such as “product positioning”, “brand identity” and “value proposition” in the contemporary design ecosystem.

The interaction between the designer and the producer determines the nature of corporate storytelling. The resulting brand narratives confer commercial advantages and establish emotional and semantic connections between users and products. In this context, a “brand” must be regarded not merely as the identity of a company or product

but as a multifaceted ecosystem that encompasses designers, users and other stakeholders who contribute to the cultural formation of that brand. Design mythology is operationalized in two ways. First, it serves as an individual expression of aesthetic creativity. Second, it is employed in constructing brand value, product positioning strategies and marketing communications.

As evidenced by the examples presented in this study, the individual success stories of designers frequently represent the collective and systemic accomplishments ingrained within a specific system of economic production. In other words, the creative processes of individuals evolve into collective mythologies that encapsulate both personal and structural significance, being situated within institutional narratives.

Brands are evolving from entities with static identities into dynamic narrative formations. This evolution leads to brands being characterized by intricate narratives that adapt, are reinterpreted and are influenced by diverse stakeholders. Brand narratives are now collaboratively constructed by corporate strategies, designers, consumers, producers and social media content creators.

In this context, the brand operates not solely as a commercial entity but also as a hero, a guide or a narrative figure within the collective imagination (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010). The theory of *Narrative Branding* distinctly illustrates that brands are frequently constructed around Jungian archetypes. The brand narrative of LEGO is primarily focused on the archetypes of “creator” and “explorer”. Throughout LEGO's historical and cultural journey, the significance of the brand is consistently reconstructed by the organization and designers, such as Christiansen, alongside the user community.

In this framework, the designer assumes the roles of a product developer and a carrier, transmitter and reproducer of the brand's collective narrative. Over time, the overarching corporate narrative may overshadow the individual narrative. The stories of individual creation must be restructured to align with the brand narrative. This transformation is essential for sustaining the narrative while necessitating reevaluating how individual creativity aligns with corporate strategies.

This is significant for the adaptability and sustainability of the narrative:

- The designer understands their monomyth within the overarching narrative of the brand.
- Certain influential and prominent designers possess the capacity to alter or redefine the trajectory of this corporate narrative.
- This reciprocal relationship elevates the designer from a passive practitioner to an active participant who imbues meaning into the brand's cultural capital.

The designer's role in the brand is intrinsically linked to the intricate relationships between the designer, the producer and the user. The designer transcends the role of mere object creator; they evolve into a narrative actor who guides the user experience, influences the production process and contributes to the brand's overarching narrative. The narrative identity of the brand is not static; it is participatory, multifaceted and extends across time. The designer should be perceived as both an individual navigating this framework and a subject capable of shaping it.

In the realm of contemporary design practice and the roles of designers, it is imperative to comprehend how design mythology can enhance both practical and theoretical knowledge. The parallels between the monomyth and the design process underscore the transformative power of storytelling. The monomyth framework redefines the designer's identity, positioning them as an actor engaged in generating technical solutions while simultaneously serving as a bearer of meaning and a cultural narrator.

The connection between the designer's intrinsic motivations and societal needs converts individual narratives into a collective mythology, thereby rendering design practice an existential pursuit. The influence of design mythology on user experience is evident, particularly in the emotional connections forged with the product. Storytelling elevates the product from a mere functional object to a significant experience. This approach cultivates brand loyalty and frames the product as a valuable “story”. Storytelling skills need to be central in design education. The monomyth framework represents a formidable pedagogical tool for design education. Structuring creative processes in a narrative format enables students to internalize critical concepts such as problem solving, motivation, resilience in the face of failure and self-awareness. This methodology permits a nuanced assessment of the creative journey, particularly within project-based learning environments.

6. Conclusion

The paper examines the intricate relationship between the monomyth archetype and the design field, demonstrating how designers embark on transformative quests akin to the mythical hero's journey. By analyzing the stages of the monomyth within the context of product design processes, this study emphasizes the profound significance of storytelling in the design domain. Through frank disclosures of personal experiences, encounters with obstacles and the development of deeply rooted convictions, designers traverse a narrative landscape imbued with parallels to the archetypal stages of the monomyth. The narrative aspect of design, as revealed through the creation stories of successful products, serves as a testament to the designers' proficiency in encapsulating the essence of their innovations. The study accentuates the importance of design mythology, depicting designers as archetypal heroes whose journeys inspire and resonate with their audiences. By aligning design narratives with the twelve stages of the monomyth, this paper illuminates the transformative potential of storytelling within the dynamic framework of design processes. In conclusion, the paper reconciles the relationship between mythological storytelling and design, highlighting the enduring power of narratives in shaping the design landscape. By recognizing the parallels between designers' journeys and the hero's quest, this study invites a more profound contemplation on the transformative nature of design processes and the narrative skill that underlies creative endeavors. Ultimately, the amalgamation of myth and design mythology presents a compelling framework for comprehending the significant impact of narratives in shaping the products and experiences that characterize our modern era.

Consequently, the establishment of design mythology and its cultivation by designers are recognized as integral components of design practice. Societies intrigued by the narratives behind successful products necessitate the cultivation of this mythology, serving as both a supplementary function of design and occasionally a marketing tool. Analogous to traditional myths, the mythology surrounding designers shares similarities with the patterns of the monomyth, positioning the designer as the archetypal hero of this narrative, whether consciously or not. When the designer's intent to convey a message intersects with success stories and storytelling, myths evolve into unique repositories from which profound lessons can be gleaned. These narratives, often disclosed within the realm of grey literature, are sometimes embellished and occasionally warrant verification, attaining the status of literature in their own right. The most significant

contribution of this mythology lies in its capacity to serve as a reference point for doctrine-based design processes.

This study additionally reveals that design, rather than being a purely functional or aesthetic endeavor, functions as a narrative practice intricately embedded in the myth-making processes of contemporary society. By drawing upon theoretical frameworks articulated by Barthes, Baudrillard and Eco, it becomes evident that modern design not only addresses user needs but also constructs ideological meanings, symbolic values and mythological narratives. Products such as the Citroën DS, Dyson vacuum cleaners, Starck's Juicy Salif and Apple's iconic devices exemplify how everyday objects surpass their utilitarian purposes, transforming into vehicles of cultural identity, status and collective imagination. In this context, designers are no longer merely creators of form, but instead storytellers whose works reside within polysemic interpretative networks, collaboratively shaped by both producers and consumers. This ongoing dialogue between object and observer affirms that modernity does not eradicate mythology but rather reconfigures it through semiotic systems and aesthetic strategies. Consequently, mythological narrative emerges as a crucial analytical lens through which to interpret the symbolic power of contemporary design and its lasting role in shaping human experience.

Future research may investigate the perception and utilization of design mythology across various cultural contexts. Furthermore, it could focus on integrating design mythology into industrial applications and evaluate its influence on product success. Such examinations may promote the dissemination of design mythology to a wider audience and enhance the overall value within the design domain. With the broader adoption of design mythology, the potential exists to infuse deeper meanings and narratives into emergent design trends. Additional research could assess how design mythology can inform product development processes and its effectiveness in cultivating more substantial connections with consumers.

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