

# Archetypal Approach and Narrative Techniques in Hernan Diaz's *In the Distance*

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**Abstract**—This study addresses the journey of Håkan, a young Swedish man who does not speak English, and the obstacles he encounters during his quest to locate his brother, Linus, in Hernan Diaz's *In the Distance*, (2017). Håkan becomes a legend in the eyes of the indigenous people and the immigrants who meet him in the landscape of the American West. However, he is lost in the wilderness of West America, unable to move forward to find his brother or travel back to his home. Through an archetypal approach, this study probes deeply into the impact of such archetypes as hero, journey, the American Dream, and others on Håkan's life, a life which becomes boring, routine, and repetitious. The study also traces the narrative techniques used by Diaz to make the readers live the experiences of the protagonist, which are marked by perplexity, stagnancy, and repetition. The focus is on the techniques relevant to aspects like style, plot, setting, and character, and how such techniques integrate with the archetypes to assist the readers in clearly understanding the story. The study finds many archetypes used by the author to manifest Håkan as a myth, a giant, sometimes a killer, and a villain accused of murdering indigenous people, as they claim. The use of the narrative techniques of language, spaces, repetition, and backstory are intertwined with the archetypes to show the stages of loss and stagnancy in Håkan's life during his quest for his brother in that large wilderness of West America.

**Index Terms**—archetypal, distance, legend, narrative, wilderness

## I. INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to trace Håkan's journey traveling east to find his brother, one in which, instead, he finds himself drifting with immigrants to the west. He mistakenly takes a ship to San Francisco, his lack of English not allowing him to recognize the destination. Through an archetypal approach, selected archetypes used in the novel are studied, ones that expose Håkan's journey and the hindrances he finds on his way to meet his brother. Other archetypes associated with the large landscape of West America are also investigated. This journey has taken Håkan's prime youth, and he finds himself driven back again and again because of his inability to navigate the strange landscape. Håkan is not familiar with the geography of the wilderness or the roundness of the earth, and it is very easy for him to be influenced by the other immigrants, who sometimes force him to accompany them on their journey, disregarding his itinerary that will lead him to his brother, Linus. He becomes an easy victim to plunderers, criminals, Indians, religious fanatics, and desperadoes on his journey to meet his brother.

The study also addresses the narrative techniques used in the novel that give more clarity to the plot. Diaz's *In the Distance* gives much emphasis to the distance between Håkan and his destination, the distance between him and his American dream, but rather one which will begin once the brothers are reunited. It is this distance which exposes Håkan to the many experiences that make him a legend in the eyes of the indigenous people, particularly when he slays an entire gang of attackers, and it is from this event that the legend of the Hawk emerges. Diaz stresses the transformations in Håkan's life that make his behavior sometimes more animalistic than human. That large landscape, the wilderness with its hard climate, different inhabitants, and immigrants who Håkan is required to deal with on this long, uninteresting journey, leaves him adrift and ungrounded. He remains circulating in a vacuum that leads him eventually to the same cities again and again, finding himself still in California.

The study deals with such transformations and how such transformations have been revealed through different archetypes and varied narrative techniques that uncover the protagonist, Håkan, on what seems to be an impossible mission. Diaz has used narrative techniques that show the hero's bewilderment and his drifting along with people who only care about their interests and go on to fulfill their planned goals. The novel covers many decades, taking Håkan from teenage years to the white hair of old age.

## II. HERNAN DIAZ'S DEBUT NOVEL

Hernan Diaz has written two novels; his debut novel, *In the Distance* (2017), was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. Diaz's *In the Distance* has gained a good reputation globally and has been translated into more than twenty languages. In addition, it has won many prizes and awards, including the New American Voices Award, the Cabell Award, the Saroyan International Prize, and was a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award. Diaz was born in Argentina, and he spent his childhood in Sweden, a fact which assisted him in twisting the narrative sometimes into the Swedish language. Living in America for a long time familiarized him with American history, allowing him to fictionalize its

events in his literary works. He has lived the experience of an immigrant, and the obstacles he has met on his journey, attempting to integrate into the community's way of life, have given him real sympathy with the struggles faced by those navigating a new country and culture. All such things have given Diaz the raw material to create the protagonist, Håkan, the Hawk, of *In the Distance*.

When Hernan Diaz's family made the decision to move back to Argentina, Diaz felt strange and foreign in his country of birth, sensing a disconnection with the place and the people. He decided to move to London, then to New York where he settled for more than twenty years. Recently, he works as a managing editor for RHM, an International periodical for Academic Research in Spain, and as associate director of the Hispanic Institute at Colombia University.

Undoubtedly, all nations have their own archetypal myths and patterns that may be introduced by ideas like ideologies, legends, symbols, and images. The images and the archetypes and their meanings, as well as the narrative techniques used in Diaz' story to show the journey of the protagonist, Håkan, are the focus of this study. Archetypal patterns and their meanings may differ from one culture to another, and they reflect the social and cultural contexts. The images that may be found in the text are water (sea, river), the sun (rising sun and setting sun), colors (red, green, blue, black and white), and landscape elements (trees, desert, gardens, mountains), and every one of these images has its meaning.

Håkan demonstrates this aspect of the hero motif with his quest to find his brother. Guerin et al. (2010) described it in this way: "The quest: 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" (p. 190). Another hero characteristic is Håkan's initiation: "The initiation most commonly consists of three distinct phases: (1) separation, (2) transformation, and (3) return. Like the quest, this is a variation of the death-and-rebirth archetype" (Guerin et al., p. 190). The return of Hakan to meet his brother is as rebirth to his dream which he hopes to achieve with his brother.

Jung (2017) discussed the contents of the unconscious and its significance as a storehouse of different types of knowledge, experiences, myths, and symbols: "The contents of the collective unconscious, on the other hand, are known as archetypes" (p. 4). The collective unconscious contains the archetypes, the experiences, and the myths that drive Håkan to pin his hopes on such experiences and myths.

Diaz's *In the Distance* has gone through many reviews from different institutions and scholars who are concerned with such a literary work. Such reviews have been collected in his website, <https://www.hernandiaz.net/in-the-distance>. These reviews highlight the positive aspects that caused this novel to be shortlisted for the Pulitzer Prize and other awards. "A gorgeously written novel that charts one man's growth from boyhood to mythic status as he journeys between continents and the extremes of the human condition" (Prize, 2017). *The New York Times* pointed out that "An affecting oddness is the great virtue of *In the Distance*, along with its wrenching evocations of its main character's loneliness and grief. And its ability to create lustrous mindscapes from wide-open spaces, from voids that are never empty" (2017).

The Whiting Award Selection Committee argued that:

Hernan Diaz explores two kinds of wilderness: the immensely taxing newness of the American West and the still-forming interiority of Håkan, a Swedish immigrant desperate to find a way back home. It's the second that makes the first feel new. He does this in language that can be plainspoken and wildly, even cosmically, evocative. Håkan's epic journey reminds us how the self is often hammered into existence by pain and longing. In the end the reader understands the country's twin potential for horror and hope.

And *The Paris Review Daily*, in its discussion, highlights other aspects of the novel that place it among distinctive literary works, notably its use of different archetypes and narrative techniques to stress the long journey and the obstacles that Håkan goes through along the way.

Perhaps most striking is Diaz's ability to describe the known as unknown, the all too familiar when it is yet unfamiliar. The nature of his protagonist, Håkan Söderström, a lost and wandering Swedish immigrant in the rough, largely uninhabited American territory, allows Diaz to write of what it is like to encounter the foreign or forgotten, such that the reader has a similarly enlightening experience, encountering it anew. (2017)

*Atticus Review* considered how Håkan goes through transformations that make him a different person, struggling in the wilderness of the American West to reach his destination. It is a sort of reinvention of the wilderness and the landscape of West America.

The breadth and deployment of Diaz's argot is simply astounding. His sentences are crisp, speckled with terms esoteric to an era yet idiomatically clear in their function. And more than any historical reimagining, Håkan's desperate, often desultory journey blurs the line between purpose and nihilism, hope and despair, swirling together the variegation of human agency and circumstance until we find ourselves staring at the ineffable being that has become of Håkan, a life so saturated with learning, love, and loss that we have no choice but to accept his final measure.

Other reviews highlighted the significance of the novel, which deals with American history in fiction. "A gritty, dreamy anti-Western Western. This book's unflinching exposure of our foundational American myths about individualism and violence is so well-executed that it feels nothing short of subversive" (Literary Hub, 2017).

### III. DIAZ'S *IN THE DISTANCE* AND ARCHETYPAL APPROACH

Read (1981) argued that Jung has connected his patients' psychological disorders with the philosophy, mythology, art, literature and religion they embraced. Thus, what they have in their unconscious will indicate their problems and become part of solving such problems: "Finally, it was through Jung's immense erudition that he was able to relate what he encountered in the dreams and fantasies of his patients to the art, literature, philosophy, mythology, and religion of the world" (p. 143). The archetypal approach and psychological care for human motives that underlie human behavior, however, deal with human psychological science; the archetypal tends to be more philosophical and cultural, and it discloses human fears, hopes, values, and aspirations. The study will probe deeply into some archetypes used in Diaz's *In the Distance*.

Mythology unravels the folktales, legends, and ideologies of indigenous people. The myth may take its concerns and its forms from motifs, themes, or the cultural and psychological background of the people. All images and myths are archetypes because they are universal symbols. They have their distinctive meanings embodied in the main character's behavior and actions or in the setting of the novel, as illustrated in the novel.

### IV. HÅKAN AND HERO ARCHETYPE

*In the Distance* presents the transformation in the life of the hero through the quest and how the hero becomes a savior. Håkan is the hero and the focus of Diaz's novel. He is in search of his brother, Linus who has always told Håkan adventurous stories, so as he is living one, he feels unconsciously connected to it. On his thorny journey looking for his brother, he passes through many obstacles that leave their influence upon his life. As well as navigating the challenges of his odyssey, Håkan encapsulates the hero archetype through his initiation: from ignorance and innocence to social and cultural adulthood. Håkan leaves home at the age of fourteen; he does not speak English. He needs to use it to communicate with people while searching for his brother on his path through America. However, he cannot communicate in English, which causes misunderstandings between him and those he meets. Mistakenly, he takes a ship that moves ahead to San Francisco. Håkan's initiation into the different world of West American wilderness consumes his energy and his efforts. This initiation includes three aspects: first, his separation from his mother land, the community and the culture he recognizes well. Second, his passing through a transformation on this long journey through a very spacious landscape, and third point, the influence of this landscape and the immigrants upon his life. He encounters naturalists, criminals, Indians, plunderers and many others who are more a cause of harm to Håkan than a benefit.

Håkan, the Hawk, appears more animalistic than humanistic. Nature has enormously changed the routine of his life. The wilderness teaches him to treat different animals as food in order to survive in such extraordinary circumstances. Diaz, in one of the interviews conducted at the Miami Fair Book (2018) with Gobe Habash, pointed out that, "Sometimes I ever thought of Håkan as a gentle animal." Håkan is lost in the remote parts of the American West. It is not easy for Håkan to extricate himself from the vast landscape, to free himself from it. Instead, he keeps drifting with the immigrants' tide. The narrative stresses Håkan's physical movements more than his spiritual ones. Finally, his return is a death and rebirth archetype. He ends without fulfilling his journey's goal, a journey on which he has endured many life-threatening difficulties.

Håkan is, in the eyes of the indigenous people, a legend, a lion, a giant, a beast, and a villain who may kill to satisfy his bloodthirsty instincts. The rumors fly about Håkan's adventures and his power: "The one where he clubbed those brethren to death? Or the one with the black bear in the Sierra?" "You mean the lion," a toothless man interjected. "It was a lion. Killed it with his bare hands." (p. 10). The indigenous people create many images and myths about Håkan. His story, being told by the indigenous people and the immigrants, gives him different hyperbolic attributes and mythic status: "He was betrayed by his gang and killed them all." "The tales multiplied, and soon there were several overlapping conversations, their volume increasing together with the boldness and oddity of the deeds narrated" (p. 10). Actually, Håkan is suffering from man's inhumanity and the cruelty he has faced. He struggles hard to keep going to his destination, but his efforts are in vain; he has to face many hindrances that consume the best of his years. And the reports continue to exaggerate the power of Håkan as a legend: "The giant who had strangled seven priests. The lion killer. The monster who had slain all those defenseless women and children. There was talk of a colossal reward" (p. 163). If he survives the dangers of the vast wilderness, he may not protect himself from the rumors of the indigenous people and their hyperbolic words.

### V. HÅKAN AND AMERICAN DREAM ARCHETYPE

The relationship between Håkan, the Hawk, and his brother, Linus, is strong, and Linus's regular conversations with his brother at home have rooted trust in and love for his sibling in Håkan's heart. Håkan looks at his brother as an example, and what his brother says will be taken as granted by Håkan. Linus's tales feed Håkan's unconscious, in which the American Dream now arises, giving Håkan an overwhelming desire to see the new world. "Linus told Håkan everything about the wonders that awaited them in America. They spoke no English, so the name of the city they were headed for was an abstract talisman to them: "Nujärk" (p. 16). Fired up by Linus' tales, Håkan is sure a beautiful future awaits them across the ocean.

The American Dream, in American history and culture, is intertwined with myths. Such history and culture reveal the indigenous myths through the peculiar nature of the American character introduced in American narrative. American writers stress the influence of the American Dream as an archetype upon the people, in both its positive and negative aspects. Håkan here has taken his brother's words seriously about the American Dream and the wonders that await them. Talking about 'the bright New World of the American continent,' Guerin et al. (2010) argue that:

From the time of its settlement by Europeans, America was seen as a land of boundless opportunity, a place where human beings, after centuries of poverty, misery, and corruption, could have a second chance to actually fulfill their mythic yearnings for a return to paradise. (p. 212)

Thus, the American Dream arises as a mirage in the lives of Håkan and his brother. Håkan has spent his best youth searching for his brother to achieve together their American Dream of prosperity and peace. He neither reaches his brother nor achieves his dream. On the contrary, he has wasted his efforts and energy in the landscape of West America to find himself a man with white hair. It symbolizes how a human may lose his prime youth in search of his dreams, forgetting to enjoy every stage of his journey. Håkan spends his journey struggling with the wilderness, stuck in a present which impedes him from moving forward to the future to achieve his goals.

## VI. HÅKAN AND THE GREAT MOTHER ARCHETYPE: NATURE AND WILDERNESS

In Diaz's *In the Distance*, the great mother emerges from the landscape of the American West, that vast wilderness, which swallows Håkan's dream of living a prosperous life with his brother in New York. It depletes Håkan's efforts as well as his youth. The landscape manifests the ancient vegetation myths, and Håkan attempts to benefit from this boundless landscape by learning from the naturalists how to make use of the herbs in nature to prepare medications for humans and animals. He becomes part of this nature; he digs a burrow and spends years in the tunnels.

Another archetype that emerges on Håkan's journey is immortality, which takes on two aspects in the narrative: the escape from time back to paradise, and the state of perfect and mystical submersion into cyclical time. Håkan does not feel the elapsing of time despite his passing through different seasons of the year. Furthermore, his ignorance about maps and the roundness of the earth leave him circulating in the same cities: "A few days passed. How many, Håkan could not tell—he was not even sure how long it had been since he had landed in San Francisco. In Sweden, back at the farm, they had neither calendars nor clocks, but work had both divided the days into regular segments and grouped them into constant cycles" (p. 29). Other archetypes within that landscape of the American West are the desert and the wilderness that symbolize destruction, desperation, and death. They also reflect spiritual emptiness.

So far, the American wilderness, with its lavish range of species thriving in extremely divergent conditions, had been unable to produce a bee. He had experienced every season in different climates. And these prairies were the same prairies he had been riding through for ages—at the very least, since first meeting the emigrants on the trail. (p. 132)

Under such dire circumstances, the terrible mother nature exposes the negative aspects of the wilderness: danger, darkness, fear, death and dismemberment. The sun rising revives the hope in a new day, while its setting brings death and hopelessness. Through Håkan's journey, the novel attempts to rediscover the American landscape. The narrative focuses on the distance between the immigrants and their goals. Many Landscape archetypes attract many people with their different interests: Brennan spends his time digging for gold, Lorimer is looking for herbs and their peerless value, others are searching how to plunder. This vast landscape swallows all their concerns.

Lorimer led his party farther into the glaring expanse. Just as James Brennan would stop at every turn to pick up a pebble or pan some dust in search of gold, Lorimer constantly paused to gather up crumbs of salt, inspect them carefully, and finally toss them away, growing more somber with each discarded sample. (p. 62)

Life in the wilderness has left marks on Håkan's body and drives him to adapt himself to his new conditions to survive. He eats as the animals do and feeds on the small animals to be able to pursue his path.

He crossed deserts and forded rivers, climbed mountains and traversed plains. He ate fish and prairie dogs, slept on moss and sand, skinned caribou and iguanas. His face became wrinkled by many summers and furrowed by many winters. His hands, burned and frost bitten year after year, were crossed and recrossed with lines and creases. (p. 176)

## VII. NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES AND ITS SYMBOLISM

Narrative techniques, in general, assist the reader in visualizing the situation and understanding the meticulous meaning of the literary elements.

**Diaz's style:** Each writer has his own style of writing and his unique concerns about how to place his ideas and words throughout the narrative and how to make the length of paragraphs fit his plan of writing. Writing is an art, and the author has his own method of his plot, theme, characters, setting, and the kind of perspective he desires to use in narration. Undoubtedly, the author decides his critical approach and the narrative techniques that he will use to expose the sequence of events. He has his own intent regarding the development of the narrative, the techniques and critical approaches he requires to make his literary work interesting, meticulous and unique compared to the other literary works.

In his novel, *In the Distance*, Diaz's uses a variety of techniques that serve the development of his narrative. For example, hyperbole, figurative language, similes, and metaphors are all used to make the image clearer in the minds of the readers. When he introduces the protagonist, Håkan, as a legend, a lion, a giant, the Hawk, or a villain, he relies on figurative language and hyperbole to make the narrative conspicuous: "Step right up, ladies and gentlemen! Just look! He must be five cubits tall, just like the Egyptian giant. And he is fierce, just like the lion in the snowy pit" (p. 149). Therefore, the reader may realize the intentions of the author and the interaction between the narrator and the reader develops the reader's understanding of the events, "Interaction: the ongoing communicative exchanges between implied author, narrator, and audience. These exchanges have significant effects on our developing responses to the characters and events as well as to our ongoing relationship with the narrator and implied author" (Richardson, p. 199).

**Diaz's Language in the narrative:** Diaz makes use of his command of the Swedish language to use it in some situations in which Håkan, the Hawk, cannot figure out the people or the place around him. Accordingly, the author tends to arouse this perplexity in the readers by changing the dialogue from English to Swedish. Thus, Diaz makes the readers and the listeners live the same experience of confusion. This perplexity dominates Håkan's life, and surrounds the listeners who cannot understand or say his name correctly: "What's your name?" "Håkan." "What?" "Håkan." "Hawk?" "Håkan." "Hawk can what?" "Håkan." "Can what?" Håkan remained silent. "Get in the coach, Hawk" (p. 31). The author tends to transfer the confusion to the readers and to Håkan's listeners through using a different language (Swedish), which Diaz has command of because he was raised in Sweden. Diaz wants his readers to feel as lost as Håkan. Håkan and his brother, Linus, spend their lives in an isolated place at home, growing up to take care of the land, for which the landlord comes to get the rent at the end of the month; they "had never even seen a picture of a city" (p. 16). Diaz wants his readers to feel as lost as Håkan.

**Narrative Repetition:** Diaz uses the technique of repetition to disclose the stagnancy and monotony of Håkan's life and how he is circulating in a vacuum, with nothing new in his daily life: "Hitherto, Håkan had been traveling away from the past but not into the future. He had remained in a constant present, leaving landscapes and people behind but never heading toward a more or less certain destination that he could foresee" (p. 159). Diaz shows, in such repetitions, the stagnancy of Håkan's life. "He lost track of time. It seemed to him that he had been walking for an eternity when a feverish delirium took hold of him. He started to hear voices and hooves and had to turn around continually to swat away the imagined sounds" (p. 50). This technique of repetition symbolizes how Håkan is unable to control the progress of his life, and such circumstances keep him drifting in the same circle. "Håkan could no longer tell in which direction he was going. He only hoped that he had not been taken, in an extended circle, back to Clangston" (p. 48). Diaz tends to use repetition several times in specific passages to show Håkan's recurrent actions and the monotony of his daily life. The following passage is repeated three times in different places. Only, Diaz tends to expose the readers to the same experience—repetition and emptiness—which the protagonist, Håkan, goes through on a regular basis.

Seasons went by and returned, and Håkan's occupations never changed. An abandoned ditch had to be filled. More glue had to be boiled down. A trench had fallen into disrepair. An extension to an old passageway was necessary. Traps had to be set. A gutter overflowed. Tiles had slid out of place. Drinking water was needed. The coat had to be mended. A roof could leak less. Some meat had to be jerked before it spoiled. A leather flue was too decayed. Firewood had to be gathered. A new tool had to be made. Cobblestones had come loose. Before one of these tasks had been completed, the next one demanded his attention, so that at all times he was engaged in one of these chores, which, together, over time, formed a circle or, rather, some sort of pattern that, though invisible to him, repeated itself, he was sure, at regular intervals. These recurrent duties made every day resemble the last, and within each day, from sunup to sundown, there were few markers to divide time. He did not even eat at regular hours. In fact, his diet had been reduced to the absolute, life-sustaining minimum. (p. 177, 180, 184)

**Spaces in the Narrative:** The author tends to use the technique of spaces, whether short or long, to bring into the readers' mind Håkan's unchangeable daily life and the vast landscape he has to go through. Zoran (1984) argued that "the term space is used here to mean specifically the special aspects of the reconstructed world...but the term can be applied to the literary text in various ways and is, itself, far from unambiguous" (p. 309). It becomes a regular routine for Håkan, to be practiced daily, and makes his life stagnant; he is unable to move forward, No matter how hard he scanned the horizon, all he could see were rippling mirages and the phosphorescent specks his exhausted eyes made pop in and out of the emptiness. He pictured himself out there, running, insect-like, in the distance. Even if he ever managed to escape and somehow outdistance his mounted pursuers, how would he make it all by himself through that vast barren expanse? All he knew was that New York lay east and that he, therefore, had to follow the sunrise. (p. 38)

This technique of spaces makes the reader imagine the seemingly endless landscape of the American West through which Håkan has to travel. It extends to cover a vast area, however, the landscape cannot provide Håkan with something new. The landscape is, in one way or another, a boring repetition: "The desert had become even drier. All plants and visible animal life had disappeared. The dirt was rock-hard, and the lack of dust gave the landscape a final stillness. There was something angular and sharp in that flatness" (p. 58). Diaz leaves spaces in different pages to disclose the void in Håkan's heart and the routines that overwhelm his life and to show the disconnects that hinder him in pursuing his journey.

The spaces are repeated on different pages between the paragraphs: p. 56, p. 65, 103, p. 226, 214; however, this literary technique is clear on page 176: “Years vanished under a weightless present...(space)... Through countless frosts and thaws, he walked in circles wider than nations...(space)... And then he stopped.” Later on, two whole pages are left completely blank for the same reason mentioned before. “Håkan, who had never seen a globe before, walked around it, trying to track his long journey and seeing how all those lands came together in a circle” (p. 214). Then pages 215 and 216 are blank. The story then continues, “A bleak glow was washing away the stars. The black sky and the white expanse hesitated for a moment before merging into one boundless gray space” (p. 217). Two other blank pages are left between the backstory in the prologue and the real beginning of the plot: p. 13, p. 14.

The author wants the readers to move through the genuine space as the characters do. The atmosphere of space that the wilderness Håkan is required to pass through gives does not provide him with security or peace. That boundless space does not grant the protagonist freedom or safety; on the contrary, it arouses his worries and fears. Here, wilderness becomes threatening and risky, imposing many restrictions on his journey. Space represents the landscape through which Håkan finds himself forced to walk almost barefoot and the spiritual void he feels during his thorny journey to search for his brother. It is a symbol of that gap between him and his goal, between him and his American Dream, between him and his destination and the time he needs to fulfill it. Furthermore, the space technique works by immersing the reader into the narrative world through visualization.

### VIII. NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES RELEVANT TO THE PLOT OF *IN THE DISTANCE*

Diaz uses a backstory technique in the prologue to prepare the reader for the story. It is set in the present, and here Håkan is seen in a different way, as a man rising up from a swimming hole in a frozen sea, moving from wilderness to a frozen land that mirrors the emptiness of both places. Both the wilderness and the sea manifest the void in his heart. The narrative then turns back to show the time when the two brothers left Sweden. Then, the storyline moves to chapter 1. The story is narrated using a third person omniscient point of view to capture the trust of the reader. Diaz also uses a cliffhanger technique—open-ended narrative, unresolved—to arouse the suspense of the reader, setting the stage for a possible second part of the novel. Simultaneously, this technique gives the reader an opportunity for speculation regarding the expected development of the novel. Both reasons remain a pulling mark for the reader. It is significant that the name of the author on the cover page is written in reverse, providing a clue to the progress of the novel. Ultimately, the backstory in the prologue is the end of the story.

Diaz’s narrative techniques are used in the novel to stress the length of Håkan’s journey and to expose different archetypes. Myths and symbols work together to reveal the reality of the landscape of the American West and the arduousness of Håkan’s journey in his search for his brother, which is, in fact, a pursuance of the American Dream embodied in his brother’s adventurous tales. Thus, the earlier he finds his brother, the earlier he lives this dream. Diaz uses many words and titles to describe the characters in the novel that reflect their connection with indigenous life and with the wilderness in which they live, such as the hawk, the lion, the giant, the dragoon, and prospectors. In addition, he uses figurative language, blended with hyperbolic descriptions and sound techniques, like alliteration, assonance, and consonance that make the readers visualize the images in their memory.

All these archetypes and techniques transfer the reader to the midst of the actions in such a way that they are living with the characters in that landscape. They make it easy for the reader to visualize the journey of Håkan and the other immigrants. The author brings to the landscape different categories of people with different goals, including naturalists, who attempt to benefit from herbs by using them as sedatives and medications, represented by Lorimer, and miners, who are looking for gold. Further, many emerge as dependents on the belongings of others and live on robbery and crime: the robbers, vandals, and desperadoes. With his literary techniques, Diaz ensures that the reader can feel the laborious and dangerous nature of the journey.

Håkan continues his journey and the novel is left open ended—unresolved—to give the readers a clue that Håkan could not fulfill his dream and is still circulating in a void. The myth continues, and the rumors about Håkan as a giant who end the lives of many indigenous people do not stop. Ultimately, he gains more enemies than allies in that barren place, however, Håkan will pursue his journey whatever the obstacles on his way, “The sky purpled behind plumes of snow blown up from the ground. He looked at his feet, then up again, and set off into the whiteness, toward the sinking sun” (p. 220).

### IX. CONCLUSION

Håkan’s thorny journey to search for his brother takes him through many obstacles and leads him to drift with immigrants heading to the American West. His wish to travel to New York in the east to look for his brother, Linus, where they can together achieve the American Dream gets thwarted. The journey consumes his efforts and his strength, and he is left past the prime of his youth in the wilderness of West America. Håkan becomes senseless of the passing of days and years. He started his journey at the age of fourteen and finds himself at the end of the day a man with white hair.

This study found that Håkan’s behavior on his long journey aligned closely with that of animals, feeding on what he found on his way. Rumors are spread about Håkan among the locals, that he is a lion, a giant, a legend, and sometimes a

beast, a villain and a killer. Håkan is not able to achieve his American Dream, a dream fed as a child by his brother's adventurous tales. Eventually, Håkan becomes a reflection of many different archetypes: hero, the American Dream, journey, and landscape (terrible mother earth).

Diaz has used different techniques relevant to the style, the plot, the main characters, and the perspective, which are in harmony with the setting of the story and the journey of the protagonist. Håkan attempts to adapt himself to the hard conditions of the wilderness, feeding from its plants and animals to survive. His long journey in the wilderness of the American West exposes Håkan to different categories of people: naturalists such as Lorimer, searchers of gold like James Brennan, as well as robbers, vandals, desperadoes, religious fanatics, indigenous people, prospectors, and others who make his life harder and hinder his progress towards his goal.

At the end, the novel remains open ended, unresolved, giving the reader a feeling of journey continuation and showing Håkan as a man who is stuck in a specific time, the present, and still lost in that wide wilderness of the American West. The narrative techniques used by the author to reflect such perplexity and confusion are connected with the switching of language, from English to Swedish, with spaces, and with repetitions. Furthermore, the use of different archetypes—a hero, the American Dream, a lion, a beast, a giant, a villain, landscape, journey—give the reader a clear image of the course of events.

This study recommends other topics to be argued by other scholars, for example, researching the landscape of the American West through an ecocriticism perspective or through a lens of immigration and its hindrances through a postcolonial approach, to help the readers understand more clearly the troubles connected with immigration, which sometimes consume the immigrant's efforts and energy as they stand helpless to achieve their dreams of prosperity.

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