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## A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ALCOHOL STORIES IN TERMS OF A FRYEIAN FRAMEWORK

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If the marketing profession is outstanding at relying on or creating new myths in order to attain commercial goals then the question follows whether myths could also be used for social marketing campaigns. The aim of this article is to introduce what alcohol consumption means for today's university students and what their related stories are like. We argue that the motifs found in authentic texts can be used when designing and implementing social marketing actions. Consequently, the present research primarily draws on narrative analysis. 146 alcohol consumption stories and 134 alcohol advertisement narratives were analysed. The article presents a structural analysis of students' alcohol consumption stories, using Northrop Frye's taxonomy of mythoi to assign consumer narratives to four categories: comedy, romance, tragedy, and irony. Although we are in possession of a large amount of knowledge about how science and logical thinking works, we know little about how to construct good stories. In this article a didactic introduction of Frye's system will follow, whilst we will continue to look for 'good' stories. This study aims to provide the reader with a structured tool inventory (charts, stories), from which one will be free to choose, but at the same time one should take care to retain one's own creativity and produce credible stories.

**Keywords:** alcohol consumption of students, narrative analysis, myth, social marketing, advertising, comedy, romance, tragedy, irony

**Narrative Analyse von Alkoholgeschichten bei Studenten mit der Frye-Kategorisierung:** Wenn sich das Marketingfach dadurch auszeichnet, dass es zur Erreichung von geschäftlichen Zielen auf schon bestehende Mythen baut oder neue erschafft, dann stellt sich die Frage, ob sich Mythen auch für gesellschaftlich relevante Kampagnen eignen. Das Ziel der Untersuchung ist es, zu zeigen, was Alkoholkonsum für heutige Studenten bedeutet und welche Geschichten

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sich hieran knüpfen. Wir sind der Meinung, dass die in authentischen Geschichten in Erscheinung tretenden Motive für die Planung und Realisierung von gesellschaftlich relevanten Marketingaktionen geeignet sind. Dementsprechend basiert die Studie in erster Linie auf narrativen Analysen. Hierfür wurden 146 Geschichten über Alkoholkonsum und 134 über Werbung für Alkohol analysiert. Der Artikel stellt die strukturelle Analyse der Geschichten über Alkoholkonsum von Studenten dar. Bei der Analyse verwendeten wir die Kategorisierung von Mythen von Northrop Frye, derzufolge wir die Erzählungen in vier Kategorien einteilten: Komödie, Romanze, Tragödie und Satire. Obwohl wir über gute Kenntnisse darüber verfügen, wie die Wissenschaft und das logische Denken funktionieren, wissen wir nur wenig darüber, wie man gute Geschichten zuwege bringt. In vorliegendem Artikel wird die didaktische Verwendbarkeit der Kategorisierung von Frye dargestellt, während wir gleichzeitig nach „guten“ Geschichten suchen. Diese Untersuchung bietet eine Hilfestellung, indem sie eine strukturierte Materialsammlung darstellt, aus der man frei wählen kann, wobei aber darauf zu achten ist, dass all dies nicht die Kreativität und die Glaubwürdigkeit der Geschichte beeinträchtigt.

**Schlüsselbegriffe:** Alkoholkonsum bei Jugendlichen, narrative Analyse, Mythos, Sozialmarketing, Werbung, Komödie, Romanze, Tragödie, Satire

*Find the story in the product – then go telling it clearly and convincingly!*  
(Bill Bernbach)

## 1. Introduction

Bernbach realised that for success it is insufficient if the advertisement is solely about the product, and that people must not be treated as a passive audience but a conversation must be established with them (STEEL 2002, 31). The task is thus to come up with credible stories that link the product to the consumer. Good stories rely on consumers' ideas or their consumption behaviour motives. The marketing profession and particularly advertisers are often accused of being too knowledgeable about creating and sustaining myths (RANDAZZO 1993) or of relying on existing myths (LEVY 1981). The central cultural role of myth – defined as a narrative 'tale or story' and derived from the Greek *mythos* – stems from its function in explaining the nature of the world and the rationale for social conduct in a given culture (STERN 1995).

## 2. Research goal

If the marketing profession is outstanding at relying on or creating new myths in order to attain commercial goals then the question follows whether myths could be used for social marketing campaigns as well. Social marketers also strive to be customer-centred in their strategies and tactics. They are always expected to start with 'an understanding of the target audience's needs and wants, their values and their perceptions'

(ANDREASEN 1995, 14). It is out of place to persuade target audiences to do what the marketer believes they ought to do and accept the marketer's values and beliefs. A customer will only take action when he believes it to be in his interests (this is the reason why 'say no' type of campaigns remain ineffective). ANDREASEN (1995) argues that researchers ought to conduct more enquiries and studies in this area, from both an academic and a practical approach. We simply have no sufficient knowledge about the intricate behaviour mechanisms, neither can we grasp how knowledge obtained could be best exploited in the interest of effective social marketing campaigns. The present study aims at alleviating this problem. The goal is to introduce what alcohol consumption means for today's university students and what their related stories are like. We argue that the motifs found in authentic texts can be used when designing and implementing social marketing actions. Consequently, the present research primarily draws on narrative analysis.

### 3. Research method: The narrative analysis

*The story is ubiquitous in all times, all places, all societies.*

(BARTHES 1977, 79)

Owing to the natural ubiquity of narratives BRUNER (2001) regards narrative not only as a genre of communication but also of human thinking, distinguishing it from logical or paradigmatic thinking (*Table 1*). The paradigmatic and the logical-scientific way of thinking operates with abstract concepts, assumes truth by formal logical methods and drawing on empirical evidence and, at the same time, seeks causal relationships which lead to universal truth conditions. As opposed to that, the narrative way of thinking is more 'worldly', studies human intentions and actions and corresponding occurrences and consequences. It justifies itself by being life-like, realistic and aims at establishing truthfulness to life instead of truth (LÁSZLÓ & THOMKA 2001).

The narrative approach is one of the several approaches belonging to a category frequently called the constructivist or interpretative paradigm, which looks for ways and structures of constructing reality (instead of studying objective psychosocial reality as conceived in classical works of social sciences).

The interpretative view is that people are constantly interpreting the world they live in, so they are always trying to understand or to imbue it with meaning (GIBBS 2002, 2):

There exist multiple, socially constructed realities ungoverned by laws, natural or otherwise . . . those constructions are devised by individuals as they attempt to make sense of their experiences . . . constructions can be and usually are shared . . . this does not make them more real, but simply more commonly assented to. (GUBA & LINCOLN 1989, 86)

*Table 1*  
A comparison of the two ways of thinking

	<i>Paradigmatic (logical-scientific) way</i>	<i>Narrative way</i>
<i>Image of human</i>	Humans are basically rational beings	Humans are basically storytellers
<i>Image of world</i>	The world is a logical jigsaw puzzle	The world consists of stories
<i>Basis of judgement</i>	Scientific theories or logical deductions on the basis of their verifiability and testability	Stories on the basis of their realism or life-likeness
<i>Explanatory tool</i>	Mathematics, logic	Literature
<i>Preferred tool</i>	A hypothesis, if formulated well, is fragile	Interpretation of stories
<i>Discovering the world</i>	Through speculative models, indirect methods	Through stories, metaphors, tales
<i>Result</i>	Ever higher level of abstraction	Good stories, moving dramas, credible (not necessarily 'true') story reports

Source: on the basis of BRUNER (2001, 27–29), and FISHER (1984).

During scientific cognition we not just recognise, but also reconstitute the world (DERRIDA 1976). The meanings are always on the move, and we need narrative discourses for recognition. The core of Derrida's thinking is that every text contains multiple meanings, there is no fixed meaning. As BRUNER (2004, 114) claims: 'We cannot explain a story, all we can do is to relate some of its interpretations'.

Although the significance of the narrative approach has been highlighted by several marketing theorists (e.g. BUSH & BUSH 1994; HIRSCHMAN 1986; STERN 1990), the marketing profession in Hungary has been reluctant to adopt it so far.

'For all of us experience narratives throughout our lives and interpret our lives with the help of narratives, the narrative form is therefore suitable to understand others' actions' (MACINTYRE 1999, 284). WOLBURG (2001) states drinking makes for great stories and offers the best memories of college life. An extension of community function is the storytelling that occurs after drinking. In this sense, the benefits of drinking are not merely experienced at the moment, but the day after, the week after, and even years after. Drinking stories are usually told when sober and are a way of reliving the moment and bonding with others.

A collection of the stories took place in February 2005 at Corvinus University Budapest, with participants in their third year studying for a Marketing exam. The analysis was coded and analysed using the QSR NVivo program. Students could send either of the two tasks for 3 bonus points via the Internet:

*Alcohol consumption*

Describe your most memorable story in which alcohol consumption played a key role (you could have been either a participant or an observer of the process). Use the style and expressions you normally use when telling stories to your friends.

*Alcohol advertisement*

Think of an alcohol advertisement (from the television or the press) which has been the most memorable to you. Tell the story as you remember it (or what you remember about the newspaper advertisement) and comment on it, writing about your thoughts related to it, feel totally free to do so. Which important episode of your life does that advertisement evoke in you? Describe the episode in a few sentences.

146 students (70 men, 76 women) returned an alcohol consumption story and 134 students (48 men, 86 women) returned an alcohol advertisement narrative. University students' stories are particularly notable because they are free to tell those felt experiences of theirs that happened to them those days or earlier. It enables us to obtain vivid, highly varied narratives that are rich in experience. SARBIN (2001, 59) is of the view that '*the narrative has the same meaning as the story*, at least as the two terms are used by everyday speakers. A story is a symbolic account of human actions. A story is defined temporally; it has *a start, a climax and an ending*, or at least something that makes the reader feel it is the end of the story. A story is constructed by a pattern of actions, called the plot. The central feature of plot structure is that human difficulties are followed by the attempts to solve them.' LÁSZLÓ (1999) claims that the most apparent forms of narrative thinking are stories told by professional authors and the man in the street.

Throughout the analysis we wish to follow LEVY's (1981) and STERN's (1995) principles. LEVY (1981) suggests that consumer stories must be evaluated similarly to literary critics. STERN's aim (1995) is to identify a taxonomy of mythic patterns in consumer texts and to trace the way that those patterns are used. Closer study of mythic plots (STERN 1994), heroes, and values can contribute to a better understanding of consumer behaviour. LEVY's question (1981, 50): If consumer responses are stories (or at least partly are) how shall the stories be interpreted? By looking at the connection between myths in consumer stories and those in literary and other cultural texts, we can read consumption texts more knowledgeably (STERN 1995). In so doing, we can enrich our understanding of consumers, who reveal emotional reactions to experiences by means of the kinds of stories they tell. It is also relevant as 'for many personalities, a sense of identity crystallises at the hottest dramatic moments: a sweeping victory, facing the danger, the return of a lost lover are what may fill one with a sense of I the most vehemently' (GERGEN & GERGEN 2001, 87).

### 3.1. The analytical features of alcohol consumption stories

It is of notable importance to say that alcohol consumption is not primarily analysed from the alcohol disease's viewpoint but only as the consumption of any other product. Consequently, consumption will have a broader definition compared to a mere substance intake, for the act of obtaining alcohol and the sum of activities during its usage are also included (BAUER & BERÁCS 1998, 79; HOFMEISTER-TÓTH 2003). Respondents may be of several types of consumers, from those totally rejecting alcohol to binge drinkers.<sup>1</sup>

William JAMES suggests that 'when studying religion, one is to study the most religious person in his most religious moment' (cited by BRUNER 2001, 30). It certainly does not entail that texts worth introducing should be exclusively the ones where the amount of alcohol consumed is considerable. As there are several attitudes concerning it, we aimed at picking the most characteristic ones from the wide range which also seem interesting and credible at the same time. That is, such which could provide an integral part of social marketing concepts.

Some of the tougher drinkers formulated an answer to the question like this:

You know the thing is that if you're over a certain number of occasions, you don't really have one single memory. We shouldn't forget that one basic impact of alcohol is to crack your memory. Of course if searched very carefully, some memories do flash, good ones as well as bad ones, but rarely a complete story. The other thing is if it's a fairly calm party, then you don't drink a lot and chatting is in the focus of the story rather than alcohol. But if it's a tough drinking party then I've got my severe memory problems. (Tomi<sup>2</sup>)

But if there was no way to put the story together drawing on his own memories or others' then students chose to describe events they observed.

### 3.2. The analytical features of advertisement stories

According to the meaning-based model of advertising, consumers ascribe different meanings to advertisements, as a result of interpreting between personal interests and the cultural circumstances of advertisements. This approach emphasises the subjectivity of experiencing an advertisement which may be attributed to the symbolism and extending content of the ad, the 'life-stories' of consumers and their socio-cultural milieu (MICK & BUHL 1992). Consumers entertain highly varied outlooks on life, from which it follows that phenomena concerning them have to be studied in the way they live and experience life.

<sup>1</sup> After reciting the story, university students were asked some questions where one was about their alcohol consumption habits. On the basis of replies we classified students into the following categories: strong, mid-, mild and non-consumers.

<sup>2</sup> We marked the quotations with names that are unreal owing to personal rights' reasons. They serve to designate sex and which answer comes from the same person.

From semiotics and anthropology MICK & BUHL (1992) also maintain that advertising is a quasi-fictional, culturally constituted system of symbols in which products are strategically synchronised with scenes, props, people, and actions. Accordingly, consumers interpret ads as a principal way to understanding the world and themselves (MCCRACKEN 1986).

Postmodern marketing presupposes that the text of the ad is not stable and there are more than one possible interpretations, so readings of a text may well vary and it only depends on the interpreter of the text (BROWN et al. 1999). HIRSCHMAN & THOMPSON (1997) claim that informants use the advertising medium as a projective device to transfer meanings to themselves. The meanings then become intertwined with pre-existing self concepts to create ad experiences. PARKER's (1998) findings illustrate that people make connections between advertisements and the very core issues of their lives. PARKER (1998) also found evidence that advertisers are able to connect life themes and myths to their products and services.

#### 4. Frye's typology in terms of consumption and values

According to myth critics ancient myth formulas have evolved into modern genres (such as comedy or tragedy). Myth criticism reached its apex in Northrop FRYE's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1998), an integrative work that aimed at the comprehensive classification of all myth narratives into four great categories associated with nature's seasons and the human life cycle:<sup>3</sup> comedy/spring (birth), romance/summer (growth, gestation), tragedy/autumn (maturity), and irony/winter (death).

The area was well-researched in anthropology (FRAZER 2002; LEVI-STRAUSS 1963), and in psychology (CAMPBELL 1973; EHMANN 2002; FREUD 1995; JUNG 1990; LÁSZLÓ 1999; PÉLEY 2002). Since the 1960s, however, the scholars of several other disciplines have studied myths, including those doing consumer behaviour research (BELK et al. 1989; LEVY 1981; ROOK 1985; SHERRY 1987) and advertising research (BERMAN 1981; LEYMORE 1975; RANDAZZO 1993). In these disciplines, the term 'myth' is defined as it is in literature: a 'tale commonly told within a social group' (LEVY 1981, 51).

FRYE's taxonomy provides a framework for plot analysis. 'We thus have four narrative pregeneric elements of literature which I shall call *mythoi* or generic plots' (FRYE 1973, 162). Different mythic genres encode different values. In terms of ROKEACH's terminal values (1973) comedy ends in joy, and its correspondent value is happiness; romance ends in nostalgia, and its related value is ideal peace or beauty; tragedy ends in sorrow, with the value of wisdom; and irony ends in surprise, with its value of excitement (see *Table 2*).

FRYE's system was improved by GERGEN & GERGEN (2001), when they defined the main historical lines of each story type. In a tragedy we observe the sudden de-

<sup>3</sup> The author recommends *The Four Seasons* by Vivaldi to be listened to while reading the chapter.

cline of a person, previously being on the top, i.e. a progressive line is followed by a quick regressive narrative. In a comedy or a romance just the opposite is seen, i.e. a regressive phase is succeeded by a progressive one.

Table 2  
Values connected to Frye's typology

<i>Seasons</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>How it is finished</i>	<i>Rokeach goal values</i>	<i>Gergen &amp; Gergen's historical typology</i>	<i>Alcohol ad example</i>
<i>Spring</i>	Comedy	Joy	Happiness Pleasure Comfortable life	A regressive narrative followed by a progressive narrative	Heineken (New Year's Eve) Tuborg ('that's how they want to see you')
<i>Summer</i>	Romance	Nostalgia	Ideal peace Beauty	A regressive narrative followed by a progressive narrative	Jägermeister (hunting) Metaxa (swimming pool) Gösser
<i>Autumn</i>	Tragedy	Sadness	Wisdom Self-esteem Inner harmony	A progressive narrative is followed by a quick regressive narrative	Johnnie Walker (if you are shown the story of your life)
	Irony		Excitement Intellectual achievement	No data	Heineken (Jennifer Aniston)
<i>Winter</i>	Satire	Surprise	Social recognition Equality	No data	Budweiser (cover girl and the shy guy)

Source: Based on STERN (1995), and GERGEN & GERGEN (2001).

The value system of consumer society places an overall emphasis on immediate satisfaction and a full experience of things instead of long-term planning (BAUMAN 2001). Earlier puritanical values – economising, cautious planning for the future, sparing goods – are coming to be substituted by a hedonist outlook on life – spending, buying with loans, orientation to the present, quickly outdated goods and fast alternation of styles – (SIMÁNYI 2004). Studies conducted in Hungary found a prevailing hedonism and that consumption is in the focus among young people (e.g. PIKÓ 2000; PIKÓ & PICZIL 2003).

FOWLER (1982) expressed the relationship of mythoi to the seasons as a double wheel. It depicts a stationary outer ring of seasons encircling a movable inner ring of



mythoi that can make a quarter turn clockwise and anticlockwise. Thus, comedy (spring) may blend into romance (summer) or irony (winter), romance into tragedy or comedy . . . It is certainly implied that there are no clear stories, and that genre elements may be mixed.

An eternal problem is whether Frye's or anybody else's typology may be forced onto individual stories as we may think that the stories are more unique and diverse than previously defined categories. It is indeed so, but the analysts of Western culture state that 'some forms of stories are more widespread than others' (GERGEN & GERGEN 2001, 89). We have chosen Frye's approach because – though it certainly lacks a totally comprehensive explanation – it is a clear system in our opinion. On the other hand, as RICOEUR (1984) would explain it, narratives are based on our being concerned with human phenomena: stories have a sad, a comic or an absurd ending. Although we are in possession of a large amount of knowledge about how science and logical thinking works, we know little about how to construct good stories. Below a didactic introduction of Frye's system will follow, whilst we will be further looking for 'good' stories.

#### 4.1. The comic mythos: Happy endings

I think it's like spring<sup>4</sup> because the more you drink, the more the warmth permeates your body and you're becoming free, like in spring when you feel that winter is over, trees are coming out in buds, the sun begins to shine and school is also soon over. (Dia)

The movement of comedy is usually a movement from one kind of society to another. At the beginning . . . the obstructing characters are in charge of the play's society, and the audience recognises that they are usurpers. At the end . . . the device in the plot that brings hero and heroine together causes a new society to crystalise. . . . The appearance of this new society is frequently signalled by some kind of party or festive ritual.

(FRYE 1973, 163)

The comic mythos has four characteristics (STERN 1995):

- the temporal progression deals with the evolution of new societal institutions;
- the conflict poses a threat to rejuvenation, usually in the form of obstructing characters who represent the old order that must be overcome;
- the characters representing the new order are triumphant;
- and the happy ending is signified by a festive gathering.

The heroine below felt that old order symbolised by the state of her bedroom imposes an impediment to her self-actualisation. She found a parallel between this of her phase of life and the *Tuborg* advertisement:

My favourite ad is the *Tuborg* one in which there are several flashes about how various people would like to see the woman acting in it. The first shot is, 'This is how my father

<sup>4</sup> We also asked the university students to compare alcohol consumption to a season. We aim to start each genre's introduction with one such quotation.

wants to see me' and there appears a nun. The next one is, 'This is how my boyfriend wants to see me' and there appears a dancing woman in sexy underwear. Then, 'This is how my boss wants to see me', and we can see a diligent hard-working employee. And so on, perhaps five or six more flashes. Then we can see the heroine of the ad in a room, blissfully painting the wall in some stained clothes and is really happy. She's saying, 'And this is what *I* want to be' (or something like that, I can't really remember exactly). About the ad it crosses my mind when my bedroom was completely redecorated. Well, I wasn't painting it myself, but I designed everything: the colour of the walls, ornaments, the placement of furniture, harmonising the accessories and choosing the colours. So under the redecoration I was in fact actualising my-self and the bedroom now *reflects my personality*. And it makes me feel happy *and contented*. (Petra)

The life ideal of consumer society is an exciting, colourful life full of experiences, in which we are to try everything. Our everyday life is no longer of value: we are constantly striving to make it a festival, to make the best of each moment (BAUMAN 2001), as well as if it is about redecorating our house or about drinking beer. The following story is about the initial failure of the hero followed by an act of communion, a union with the audience at the end of the comedy (FRYE 1998). A happy outcome is embodied by a huge birthday party:

Before his birthday, the guy wrote to all his friends why we can't just go with him to have at least a beer on his birthday . . . when the celebrated one arrived at the flat with his girlfriend, everybody jumping out of the dark, me holding the cake in my hands, started to sing 'Happy Birthday'. Surprise, amazement, deep emotions, presents, etc. all you need, then we produced the booze and started to improve the otherwise high spirits . . . alcohol dwindled away till everyone had such a good time that we could set off for a club to dance. **We had the time of our life**, we danced till dawn. (Hedvig)

The plot's emphasis on renewal indicates its debt to the myth of spring, the beginning of the natural and human cycle. The communal festives celebrate the reunification of a group – often a family – in acceptance of a new social arrangement. The plot movement centres on the rejuvenation of outmoded social units by progressive characters who convert reactionary ones. Below there is a report on how the old order is overthrown due to the effect of alcohol and how a new set of friends emerges:

It was in the juniors' camp back in the summer of 2002 that St. Hubertus came the other night and arranged a 'Hubi night' for us . . . what it was all about that the representatives of Hubi organised various group competitions for us, for which they presented promotional glasses, T-shirts and during tasks we were meant to drink their booze – practically this was the essence of all tasks. Because my friends and I had had some preparatory rounds of beer and wine, group competitions started very pleasantly for us . . . People and groups were revved up and the Hubi reps overachieved in creating a fantastic atmosphere. Tasks one after the other, I felt better and better, I could feel we were absolutely free to play and party! . . . After the Hubi people were gone a night of extreme revelries followed. Girls were no problem, I don't think anybody'd retained any amount of inhibition or fear by that time, which couldn't have been said about us up to that night. That was when my girlfriend and I met, which had a lot to do with the slightly intoxicated state of

both of us . . . I made friends with people that night with whom we've still been good friends, that is, for years. (Norbi)

'What normally happens is that a young man wants a young woman, that his desire is resisted by some opposition, usually paternal, and that near the end of the play some twist in the plot enables the hero to have his will' (FRYE 1973, 163). While in the classical case the obstructing character is the father or a character substituting him, in alcohol consumption stories the obstructing factor is embodied by some intangible force like insecurity or inhibitions.

The last night we wanted to complete what we began, so we drank more than usual. Before going to the club we started to drink all sorts of alcohol (beer, wine, shorts). We found out we must make good use of our last day at Lake Balaton, so we decided to have a night swim. We already felt up while approaching the beach, singing away. On the beach we took our clothes off and waded into the water . . . we ran up and down in the shallow water, had a great time, took photos of our naked asses and so on . . . after the swim we went back to our lodgings and drank a bit more. Then we set off for the night by car, of course the driver didn't drink at all . . . We turned the volume up and music blared out from the car and we danced. We made a small party in the car park and drank the local wine we brought along with us got from the neighbour. At that time we were enjoying ourselves immensely, we were drunk, one could say. We danced, we had our flings! Personally *the night ended up well, for I hooked up with a girl* and we ended up on the back seat of the car! (Attila)

Gaining the young woman and the happy outcome are totally different if regarded through a New Year's Eve Heineken ad:

In this one, a couple of countries are celebrating the New Year, cheerfully drinking from *Heineken* bottles. As background music you have the 'We wish you the happiest, the happiest, yes the merriest New Year' song, which is a catchy tune. Then comes a witty ending: on the basis of exact accounts we are informed of how many thousands of litres of beer are wasted on every New Year's Eve due to spilt drops. Then a slogan follows, 'Careful with beer'.

My episode is that at one New Year's Eve party I just couldn't find my place amongst the people I was with, when I heard a tinkling voice singing this very song, giggling and trying to open a Heineken, with moderate success. So I went up to the lady, helped her open it, got one for myself and then we relaxed initial tension by recalling the ad and singing the song together. We've been together for 2 and a half years. (Elemér)

In this story winning the lady is the essence of the story. Domestic comedy is usually based on the Cinderella archetype, which happens when Pamela's virtue is rewarded, the incorporation of an individual very like the reader into the society aspired to by both, a society ushered in with a happy rustle of bridal gowns and banknotes (FRYE 1973, 44).

Many men dream about how they are eventually able to conquer their loved one, the tingling-voiced Cinderella. GERGEN & GERGEN's (2001) lines are easily traced here: the hero encounters a difficult situation ('can't find his place'), then tension increases (whether or not bottle opening succeeds) and then everything turns out to be

lucky and they live happily . . . Today's hero has to make do without a castle or a dragon, there is only a bottle to be opened . . .

One familiar source of conflict is the battle between the generations, for a perennial cyclical pattern is the younger generation's challenge to the older one. It is, however, not a predominant type of conflict, is only implied, with the fact that parties are placed somewhere far from the 'elder', into an isolated corner.

Thus the movement from *pistis* to *gnosis*, from a society controlled by habit, ritual bondage, arbitrary law and the older characters to a society controlled by youth and pragmatic freedom is fundamentally, as the Greek words suggest, a movement from illusion to reality. Illusion is whatever is fixed or definable, and reality is best understood as its negation: whatever reality is, it's not that. (FRYE 1973, 169–70)

By the time we got there, everyone was kind of having a high old time, and the huge house just looked incredible! It was as if it was only used for partying! Each room was devoted to something else, in one of them people were engaged in amorous play, smog and chatting in the kitchen, smoking a water pipe in the third one which was decorated to give an Indian atmosphere. There was loud music everywhere and there were many of us there. Eventually we found the most interesting room: UV active graffiti on the walls, pool in the middle, dancing people on it, brand drinks scattered everywhere, it was all really mystical. (Anikó)

Comic plots invariably end happily, however, this does not represent a moral judgement but a social one, for comedy deals with manners in society. In some comic stories, rejuvenation is expressed by means of redefining behaviour: being prohibited in everyday life, they become permissible at a feast.

It was a very sudden idea to swim in Lake Balaton naked. I'd never done anything like that before, but when you're drunk you do lots of such things! About 20 of us went for it, girls and boys mixed. We took off our clothes in two turns, then waded into it! It was in Földvár, the southern shore, which entailed about 500 metres of running, crawling, crouching to get water to cover you! *The white bottoms were extremely funny in the dark.* In the water we were singing, dabbling. On their way out of water, the boys missed the pier and as it was quite dark, they only realised it from about 20 metres from the shore that they were busy making their way to the German neighbours' private pier, stark naked, who were, what's more, out there fishing or doing I don't know what . . . This was my best experience related to alcohol, because our inhibitions completely disappeared and *everybody enjoyed themselves a lot!* (Anikó)

'In the movie, where darkness permits a more erotically oriented audience, the plot usually moves toward an act which, like death in Greek tragedy, takes place off-stage, and is symbolised by a closing embrace' (FRYE 1973, 164). It is a tendency of comedies to involve as many people in the final social structure as possible.

#### 4.2. The romance mythos: Nostalgic endings

Even alcohol consumption may be accompanied by a romantic experience! (Dóra, Hubertus)

Alcohol consumption for me is connected to feeling free, joy, fun, party and these feelings suggest summer the most. (Franciska)

To summer, obviously, because that's when you party the most, it's then when beer cools you, wine goes well with a romantic seaside dinner and cocktails accompany chats before parties. (Fanni)

The romance is nearest . . . to the wish-fulfilment dream, and for that reason it has socially a curiously paradoxical role. In every age the ruling social or intellectual class tends to project its ideals in some form of romance, where the virtuous heroes and beautiful heroines represent the ideals and the villains the threats to their ascendancy . . . The perennially childlike quality of romance is marked by its extraordinarily persistent nostalgia, its search for some kind of imaginative golden age in time or space. (FRYE 1973, 186)

Whereas comedy points forwards to a new social order, romance points backwards, leaving the real world of present experience to dwell in the remembered one of an idealised past. The romance mythos has four characteristics (STERN 1995):

- the plot progression features a central character who engages in an adventure;
- the conflict pits an idealised hero or heroine against a villain who blocks the success of the adventure;
- the central character overcomes the obstructive villain;
- and the story ends in nostalgic reification of the past as better and richer than the present.

Insofar as male-female union is essential for the continuation of the human race, the romance mythos portrays this relationship as ideal (romances end with the characters living happily ever after). Nostalgia is dominant, for the characters are frozen at a moment in time of supreme happiness.

We were dancing on the tables, waiters staring, I think there'd been no such big party there. Yet how meekly were we sitting there at the start . . . But it was very hot inside . . . Boys started to undress, everybody was dancing . . . We drank absolutely everything, boys enjoyed that everything was so cheap, were playing gentlemen, invited us for anything and paid for us. I was invited by the guy I found hot. I think *his eyes were twinkling when I looked deep into them*. . . The photos were really good, when I feel down *I always have a look at them. They always make me feel better*. Then I know that, alright, I'm working like horses now, but summer will come and I'll see him again . . . (Brigi)

Individual memories may take the shape of photos which can be preserved for a long while or when friends meet up time after time the stories can be recalled and re-lived. In advertisements, nostalgia functions as the means of recreating the past as imaginative utopia – a past better than it actually was (DAVIS 1979). The hero below seeing the Gösser advertisement looks back to his summer after a successful entrance exam to a university. The central character in this case was not to overcome a real 'villain' but the obstruction in front of him, i.e. the exam:

The most memorable advertisement for me is about a type of beer. The first picture is that of a beautiful mountain area with the sun shining. There is a river with rocks, lush flowery trees. A small river is followed downstream till there appears a waterfall, on which we can see the water fall down in torrents. In seconds the water turns out to be of a golden colour, as if it wasn't water in the riverbed but beer. I think it's not only good about this advertisement that it shows a gorgeous landscape that grabs you but the witty slogan at the end of it, it's most apt and funny. The slogan goes like, 'Gut, besser, Gösser.' If I see this ad (it's almost on all tv channels), I somehow feel 'good'. I used to think about it a lot why it makes me have that nice feeling and I concluded that nature has always been important to me and it recalls summer for me. When I watch the ad, I feel *as if I was part of it too, acting*, I was standing on the riverside looking at the waterfall from close range. This ad always makes me remember my secondary school final exams and *the consequent summer with a successful entrance exam to university on my mind. That was perhaps my best summer*. I had no responsibilities, I felt 'the world to be mine'. (Sanyi)

Romances derive from fertility myths, whose plots turn on the cyclical repetition of birth to bring fertility to the wasteland. The plot of romance encapsulates the seasonal myth of summer by capturing an ideal but evanescent moment in time – the sexual ripeness of youth. The various adventures of the original sin are in the focus of the following Metaxa advertisement and related memories. The tasting of the 'forbidden fruits' happens in stages, from smoking the first cigarette to sexual adventures:

It's a *Metaxa* ad which lingers in my memory and the one in which a highly decorative young woman swims through a swimming pool naked at a party for a bet and then sits down to sip a glass of Metaxa. The situation of the ad is very challenging and attractive, *I like to be part of such parties myself*. Alcohol goes well with such situations where people look for challenges, adventures or just survive one such situation and it is rarely missing from a party.

The ad makes me think about *the parties of my secondary school age*, when the whole class got together at somebody's place, we took loads of food and 'some' drinks, primarily vodka, gin and liquors but there was some beer, too of course. We had a great time all through the night. We got into similar *adventurous situations*, with either the experience of the *first cigarette*, or *drinking beer with a spoon*, or the *first encounters with the opposite sex*, initially only that 'we're going out together' and kissing secretly were the top hits, later we secretly went into one of the bedrooms and God knows what we're doing became more characteristic. Many of us *lost our virginity* at one such party. These were certainly no orgies, we mostly had fun only, with sometimes a little bit of this and that about which you could gossip till the next party. (Ilona)

Romance values celebrate ideal states – a world of beauty or of space marked by the absence of conflict. Special food, drink, and utensils become part of the repertoire of romantic heroism:

On my eighteenth birthday my boyfriend invited me to Margaret Island. . . . We stopped at the music fountain. He started to unpack his bag and I realised he'd prepared a nice picnic. Two little mats on the grass, orange vodka in a bottle. He poured it into two plastic glasses. To make the cocktails look better, he applied orange rings and cocktail sticks onto them (*I still have them* of course). Yeah, so we did get slightly drunk! When we'd drunk everything, we went for a walk, fed the ducks on the Danube bank and on getting back to

the fountains we heard a Wiener waltz from somewhere. Being *a bit giddy*, we started waltzing! *It all felt fantastic! As if we'd been flying!* (Timi)

Advertising can appeal to consumers' nostalgic longing for a recollected ideal past by positioning a product as a way to create instant nostalgia. Romance values of eternal youth, vigour, and handsomeness reappear in advertising's adoption of the mythic hero (STERN 1995).

For me a recent Jägermeister advertisement was really memorable among alcohol ads. It was on tv and had two main characters, a boy and a girl. The boy was a hunter, chasing after a deer in a dense forest who sometimes showed up among the trees and by the end of the ad turned into a beautiful girl. The trick of the ad was that it was the hunter chasing after the game all through the ad, but when it turned into a woman, it was the boy who became trapped and fell in love with the girl.

I liked it because it *led me into a fairy world* a bit. I love fairy tales, even if I'm 21, and all the wood, the deer, its transformation *reminded me of a fairyland*. The music of the ad was also very well-chosen, it was like when I wasn't actually in the room but the tv was on, I knew it because of the music that 'my ad' was on.

The advertisement, as I mentioned, *reminded me of a different world* and *made me think of my childhood*. We used to go hiking to the Matra mountains nearby with my parents, where we took long walks.

The part when the girl makes the boy fall in love with her, made me of course recall how I met my boyfriend, which is always very nice to remember. (Edit)

In romances (as opposed to comedies where the younger generation rebels against the older one) younger members of a family are happy to adopt the traditional rules of the older generation. In the story below class mates become spiritually united and various contradictory roles do not conflict each other any longer, moreover, the older generation unites with the younger one:

The other thing why it is a memorable experience is *how much the class was together*. We looked after each other. Not only the sober ones but also the ones who could drink a lot took care of the others and nursed them if necessary. The tough guys of the class comforted the crying girls. By getting drunk, *the roles fell off* and everybody became straightforward and normal. *Our class teacher was also very nice*. She never made a scene because of our behaviour. One night she took the drunken class outside the village and made us sing there till we became more sober. (Vera)

The essential element of plot in romance is adventure, which means that romance is naturally a sequential and processional form, hence we know it better from fiction than from drama. At its most naïve it is an endless form in which a central character, who never develops or ages, goes through one adventure after another until the author himself collapses. We see this form in comic strips, where the central characters persist for years in a state of refrigerated deathlessness. (FRYE 1973, 186)

### 4.3. The tragic mythos: Ambiguous endings

I'd compare alcohol consumption to autumn: the season starts very nicely (it's warm, trees have hundreds of different colours), but then it gets cooler, the vivid colours of the land disappear, trees are stripped bare of their leaves. Alcohol consumption is like that in the short as well as the long run: first it makes you feel good, brings apparent cheerfulness into the company but after a certain point it produces some negative effects: sickness, hangover. If looked at in the long run, then the negative impact is even more obvious: lasting and immoderate alcohol consumption may destroy lives and families. (Orsi)

Tragedy is not confined to actions that end in disaster. . . . The source of tragic effect must be sought, as Aristotle pointed out, in the tragic mythos or plot structure. . . . Tragedy is more concentrated on a single individual . . . the typical tragic hero is somewhere between the divine and the 'all too human' . . . the centre of the tragedy is in the hero's isolation, not in the villain's betrayal. (FRYE 1973, 207–08)

The hero's fate is to suffer, for tragedy shifts from the social world to the personal and/or moral one, where internal battles and self-confrontation prove more difficult than overcoming villains in the external world.

*It was summer, nice weather, exams over. I'm alone at home, expecting my girlfriend for dinner. She's of course late, but no problem, she's like that. So the bell goes. It's her! And my 6 other friends . . . candle-lit dinner skipped . . . The guys came to co-celebrate the successful exams. Parents abroad, we can party. There's vivid and happy conversation in the living room in minutes. 3 of my friends escape to the kitchen, they've brought along some soft drinks, some alcohol and some food, they're preparing them. When everybody is together, they each get a small glass with the chosen drink. Tomato juice is mine. (I'm strictly teetotal, 3 out of my 4 grandparents were alcoholics. . .) So it's a toast. Lifting my glass to my mouth. Something's stinking. Alcohol! Everybody acted like I'd gone mad and I'd had only pure tomato juice although I could taste vodka clearly (Detector is my nickname, I can recognise all types of alcohol by their smell). Then they slowly realised it wasn't fun for me. For then, perhaps the first time in my life, I thought of all my three grandparents I'd lost at the same time whom I really liked when I was little and couldn't get to know them really. It was such a depressing experience. The atmosphere was over, it was scatter. My girlfriend didn't really dare to stay, I became slightly depressed for two days. It's not just a temporal whim for me not to drink even a sip of alcohol. It's my principle. My father and his brother are very good at alcohol. Too good, in fact. I love them. But I'm cross when the two of them finish up a whole crate of beer at a family get-together. That's why I wouldn't like to drink: once you start and have the inclination, it's only a matter of chance if you become an alcoholic or not. That's what I think. That's what I've seen . . . My girlfriend drinks, not a little at parties (4 or 5 tequilas, rum, brandy and beer). As long as she's OK, I won't say anything. But I'm always keeping an eye on her, I'm scared. (Mihály)*

The tragic hero is typically on the highest point of the fate ring, where there is only one way out: down. GERGEN & GERGEN's (2001) lines are easily identified in Mihály's story. The short progressive narrative (successful exams, girlfriend, celebration) is followed by a swift decline, brought about by the vodka mixed into tomato juice. The introduction of the climax is relevant because that is how we can detect



how much the hero 'sinks', what the depth is he may sink to. 'When the hero has almost achieved his goals, found the love of his life, gained the crown, events turn out bad and drama is born' (GERGEN & GERGEN 2001, 88).

The central plot characteristics are those set forth in Aristotle's *Poetics*:

- the progression deals with serious events, often the character's internal battles;
- the conflict positions the protagonist in opposition to fate, the gods, or God;
- the protagonist is doomed by a fatal flaw;
- and the ending is gory or, at best, ambiguous.

The gory ending is illustrated by the following reminiscence:

The most memorable story concerning it is when in the series 'ER' a kid was brought in who'd drunk too much and later died in the operating theatre because he couldn't be resuscitated. The story was about making him drink a lot as a type of initiation by his friends, or to see how much he can take, etc. So, when he was helpless, his 'friends' wrote 'loser' on his forehead in red ink. After that they saw he was not at his best, his eyes were caught up and things, so they finally called an ambulance. When he died, the doctor in charge grabbed one of the mates of the kid and got him to wash the sign off from his forehead. (Nándi)

The plot emphasises death and catastrophe connected to the myth of autumn, reflecting the seasonal death of nature. Autumn, on the other hand, is associated with mature values such as the achievement of wisdom, self-esteem, and inner harmony (ROKEACH 1973). The inner fights and wisdom of the speaker is revealed by the following story:

Around Christmas we always get together with my secondary school class at my class teacher's. It was what happened in December 2004. Unfortunately that year's meeting was organised very late, so only 15 of us showed up. Surprisingly for me, everybody brought a bottle of alcoholic drink (apart from me), even if the person had come by car. So about 10 bottles of wine and 4 bottles of champagne arrived at the party. By the end of the 'party' all the wine and champagne disappeared. It was a *very shocking experience* for me, for out of the 16 people only 3 (me and the two drivers) remained sober. *The worst thing about the night was the sight of our teacher, who, up to that particular night, used to be a role model for me.* It was partly because of her that I had a degree in Mathematics at ELTE and then demonstrating my aptness started the University of Economics. *All my life I wanted to be like her!* She's such a good teacher and a good person. I seem to have formed the wrong idea about her throughout all these years. Unfortunately she further destroyed the situation by forgetting the next day about what she'd promised, so I again felt really awkward. I was really embarrassed that ominous night, too. I should have never seen her such drunk and helpless. I'm very sorry I was able to go to that meeting! (Kati)

There is the insecurity implied in the ending of the story, the image of a previously honoured model becoming completely ruined. In premodern plots, the tragic outcome was death or disaster, for violations of higher laws demanded revenge. The laws of the natural or supernatural world were perceived as indifferent, if not hostile, and heroes were punished for daring to defy them. As a more highly evolved secular and sacred law developed, the focal point shifted from divine power to moral power, and the endings began to express ambiguity (STERN 1995). Alcohol too, may emerge as a

force against which one may try to fight but whose consequences are unavoidable both in the short and in the long run.

From that point the earlier fantastic party began to turn into a nightmare. I saw two or three of everybody, the world was spinning and after a while I didn't know who was who and where I was. I spent half an hour in the toilet, throwing up and pissing at the same time. After that the others told me I was in for almost an hour long, because I locked the door and took the key out of the hole but wasn't able to put it back. I wasn't able to stand. I was unaware of what horizontal is and where the floor was. I put my head into the toilet basin and flushed it to regain some of my consciousness. And total blackout from there. (Henrik)

The hero could not avoid his fate in this case, either, and fights came along as a result of alcohol, it acted in the role of a god. In modern tragedies, especially the realistic ones dominant since World War II (e.g., Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*), the plots deal with middle- or lower-class antiheroes who violate moral laws. They are doomed by their own imperfections and by those of a corrupt society – it, too, is on the edge of disruption, chaos and failure. Even though the extant way of life no longer works, the central figures do not have sufficient energy to create a new one. Similarly, the following report is full of inertia:

*It's simply not my world. I can't bear the sight of how they're destroying themselves. I've seen several people collapse (ok, not only as a result of alcohol but mixing it with drugs was the problem . . .) All this led to me not being able to enjoy myself at parties. The average age is constantly decreasing, aged 20, I'm beginning to feel old among 13–14-year-olds and 70% of them are totally cooked. I last went to a party about 4 months ago. I made up my mind not to be distracted by the 'others' but anywhere I looked I could only see drunken people or kids, what's more. I frequently hear that for some, alcohol is essential for 'enjoying themselves' and 'relaxing'. Can't you just enjoy yourself by listening to music, without any substances, please? It seems a rare bird these days. (Nóra)*

It is important to point out that advertising deals less with heroic acceptance of tragedy than with prevention of tragedy. Apart from the *Johnnie Walker* advertisement, university students have not mentioned any ad whose story is marked by tragedy.

Earlier I only found it witty and objectively a good idea to choose but after an 'experience' I was able to identify with the essence of the story in a different way.

Woodmen working in the forest, moving huge chunks with machines, it's pouring down, and the men are working hard in the heavy rain. All this can only be seen from some flashes when a thick rope of one of the machines transporting the big chunks gets torn and the enormous chunk is let loose and starts rolling down the slope. One of the workmen is working at the bottom of the slope and when he looks up, the chunk is already a few inches from him. There's not even any time for horror to appear on his face, he only crouches a bit. The situation is clear: he's going to die in two seconds, and the movie of his life starts to be shown to him. His infancy, childhood pictures, love, parties, marriage, kids, *Johnnie Walker*. Suddenly it's pitch black, the man looks up and realises that the chunk bounced on a rock or another chunk just before him and it's only a matter of inches from hitting him. Then comes the slogan of the ad: 'Live in a way that when you're shown the movie of your life, it is worth watching.'

A significant event of my life is a severe motor-cycle accident and *after having seen this ad, I regarded it completely differently*. I wasn't really shown my life's movie *but what I'd leave behind, did flash through my mind*. It's a bad feeling at the moment, and *can only be fully understood by somebody with a similar experience*. (Ubul)

The advertisement makes me recall the (bad) memory when *I almost became a victim of a severe road accident*. There was this car driven fast by a madman at me, I could just get out of its way but another person died (the mad driver crashed another car from the opposite direction). Similarly to the ad, *the pictures of my memories appeared one by one which were significant in my life up to that point*: some of my childhood mischief, pictures of Dad and Mum, snapshots of my first love, the time spent at school and outside school in the summer with my best friends, etc. (Ervin)

Those people who have already had such a near-death experience will view this ad completely differently, they will relive and recall the tragic moments. Advertisements sometimes use a fear approach to enable the user to prevent an unhappy outcome. They first set up a problem and then teach the consumer problem-avoidance (STERN 1995). Or – as in the Johnnie Walker ad, where the product itself may be related to danger – they at least teach the consumer how to live an enjoyable and meaningful life. Consuming is evaluated positively in our culture, for it is the medication for unhappiness and advertisements seem more to promise the prevention of tragedy rather than the suffering of it. As opposed to that, consumers' stories unveil the presence of the tragic myth in numerous cases.

#### 4.4. The irony mythos: Surprise endings

I'd most relate it to winter, on the one hand because it functions as a 'fluid coat' and stops us from sensing the cold that much, on the other hand, in winter people are more prone to depression and alcohol is also good for that, for a while. (Jázmin)

We come now to . . . the attempts to give form to the shifting ambiguities and complexities of unidealised existence. . . . As structure, the central principle of ironic myth is . . . a parody of romance: the application of romantic mythical forms to a more realistic context which fits them in unexpected ways. (FRYE 1973, 223)

The ironic mythos is the most complex one because it conflates two forms (irony and satire), presenting patterns of experience in which the complexities of the real world (as distinct from the ideal world of its polar opposite, romance) reveal a tension between surface appearance and underlying truth. This tension reflects the seasonal one, for winter is a time that appears to be dead but it is in reality nurturing the underground life destined to be reborn in spring (STERN 1995). The derivation of the term irony clarifies its meaning: the term was originally used to refer to the Greek comic character called the *eirón*, a 'dissembler'. In modern times, ironic dissemblance hides truth. However, satire is not identical to irony, and FRYE distinguishes between the two as follows:

The chief distinction between irony and satire is that satire is militant irony: its moral norms are relatively clear. . . . Irony is consistent both with complete realism of content and with the suppression of attitude on the part of the author. . . . Satire demands at least a token fantasy, content which the reader recognises as grotesque, and at least an implicit moral standard, the latter being essential in a militant attitude to experience.

(FRYE 1973, 223–24)

To begin with satire, the following plot characteristics are predominant (STERN 1995):

- the progression presents actions that are grotesque parodies of a fantasy world (in the utopian sense, one too perfect to be real);
- the conflict sets fantasised wishes in opposition to clear moral standards;
- idealised characters or institutions are militantly attacked as ridiculous by the author;
- and the ending is derisive, often involving invective maliciously invoked to discomfort the target of ridicule.

. . . we previously planned to make Zoli suck a bit, but just out of a joke, Zoli's a good guy, only he's got a big mouth, that's all, about how much he can drink. A plan was to take some 80% booze, nicknamed 'horsefucker' by the guys, we'd have been stupid to drink that, we'll pour it down his neck. . . . Zoli went out somewhere, so the guys took the chance to pour a bit of the 80 percent neutral spirits into his beer, but it was smelling to high heaven, I could smell it from 3 metres, so it needed to be alleviated, so they poured some pear palinka into it and some peach palinka or I don't know what it was and then there was no way to deny the smell of spirits so as a last vain attempt (they were laughing their heads off) they spread some lemon on top of the beer can and that was it. By the time Zoli came back, he could feel from a distance that there was something funny about his beer, so his first sentence was, 'what have you poured into it?' . . . 'uhm, . . . nothing'. Of course he didn't take it, yet he drank it slowly. Right, after having created it, something tougher can come. Bence produced the neutral spirits, let's do it on the draw. They quickly agreed to drink water only, and that Zoli's going to drink the spirits. Well . . . they acted like they were dying, Zoli, however, was really drowning, it burnt him so much, the guys were laughing their heads off, I felt pity a bit, but what should I do. After that Zoli got into such high spirits that he started singing and dancing and all, and Bence was literally pouring the booze into him all night, and he never said no, which had its result in one or two hours, when Zoli began to be more and more aggressive and stupid, found fault with every tree and my car, started taking off the number plate and so forth. A little later he was lying on a bench and totally blind, so a bit of nursing and taking home followed. (Bea)

Satire parodies values as well, especially those of social recognition, equality of humankind, and a world of ideals (ROKEACH 1973). Ideals are especially enticing targets, for even when they are fantasies (too elevated to be practical in everyday life), they nonetheless command lip service because all members of a culture agree that they are worthwhile.

The essence of satire – humour based on parodied ideals and an object of derision. Derisive humour is ubiquitous in folklore and the classics. The female teller of the story reports on how the party face made himself ridiculous one night:

It turned out that Geri, one of my class-mates suddenly fell to the ground from the bed, and when he was trying to stand up, he started being sick. Upstairs there was only one person who was not that drunk and able to help Geri. She was called Marcsi, being large and 1,90 tall who seemed to be able to drink better than boys. She got him and towed Geri downstairs to the toilet and with another girl helped him to throw up, he not having the faintest idea of where he was. . . . Geri slept like a log till the following morning and of course didn't remember anything. At noon he was bragging about how tough he was partying the last night and how cool he was . . . *most people were only smiling* at it. Eventually, Marcsi, being like a metre taller than Geri, *enlightened him* . . . (Fruzzi)

It is the classic case of the idealised protagonist, he did not know what had happened to him, he did not perceive reality and then attempted to endow it with a positive air in himself. The truth was clear for everybody but him, and the girl got into a higher position (as far as strength was concerned) as opposed to him who – in a classical case – would have been her superior.

Two things, then are essential to satire; one is wit or humor founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd, the other is an object of attack. Attack without humor, or pure denunciation, forms one of the boundaries of satire. It is a very hazy boundary, because invective is one of the dullest. It is an established datum of literature that we like hearing people cursed and are bored with enough, this is followed by a reader with the kind of pleasure that soon breaks into a smile. (FRYE 1973, 224)

There is a big park in the centre of Eger with a fountain in the middle. The thought of it crossed the minds of the two cool guys while making their way home with the rest of the partying group of about 16-year-olds. So they thought of joking with one of the less cool guys . . . Of course everybody was slightly intoxicated at that point. So they turned to the boy saying, come and we'll initiate you. Of course it sounds a little stupid, what do they mean by initiating him? What do they want to initiate him into? They may have been referring to the fact that this was the first bigger drinking of the boy or that now he too belongs to the 'cool' guys. After having uttered '*initiate*', they grabbed him and *dipped him into the fountain with his head upside down*. . . . After they took him out of the fountain, he wasn't really aware of what happened. Only a little later did he realise the situation and he *started cursing* a bit. (Zita)

In satire (unlike romance), perfection is an unobtainable ideal, and norms are often violated. Although the situation has comic potential, satire does not end in the displacement of an outworn societal fantasy by a harmonious reconstructed one. Satiric stories revel in tense social situations as occasions for mockery (unlike tragic stories, where they may be occasions for death).

Another typical satiric plot ridicules not individuals, but more general societal values. Satires on values are cynical, condemning allegiance to ideals as silly or contemptible. One favourite target is the romantic fixation on sentimental feelings, usually judged as evidence of foolishness. In American popular culture, derision often takes the form of contempt for sentimental love objects (STERN 1995). A parody of romance heroes is Don Quixote who cannot quite distinguish between things in the real world and those of the imaginary world. A Don Quixote of the modern age is introduced by the following report:

And then came Csabi! He was quite high-spirited then, and greeted every security person with good evening. And because he really felt like it, he went on a hunt for a woman. *And see what happened*, he found one. I must admit it, she was a pretty lady, standing halfway between the first and the second floor on a BILLBOARD. It didn't really matter for him, neither to me, it *had been a long time since I laughed as much* as that night! (Csongor)

Satire shades into irony when the author avoids militant ridicule and name-calling and instead allows the audience to grasp a discrepancy between appearance and reality by itself. Ironic stories are characterised by the following elements (STERN 1995):

- the plot presents tensions between surface appearance and underlying reality;
- personal or social conflict enmeshes the hero in the tension;
- some main characters fail to understand the underlying reality, in contrast with audiences, who are 'in the know'; and
- surprise endings reveal the hidden truth as distinct from the appearance of truth.

The protagonist of the following story ironically reports how reality became apparent and how dimensions cleared up afterwards:

The aim of the party was to enjoy ourselves and get stoned. I opened a bottle of Jägermeister at about 4 pm with a very nice girl. There was no way back from there. We managed to finish up the whole bottle with several beers, whose traces were first displayed by the lady. That was the first time in my life that I helped somebody throw up and chased after a girl. After I managed to calm her down and there was nothing else to want to come out of her, we took up drinking beer again. Under that influence she came up with the idea that she wanted to learn to drive. She couldn't even stand, not to mention driving! . . . So, blind drunk, we went a few rounds with the Trabi, she steering, me pushing the pedals with my hands. It wasn't an easy situation. Then we went on with the beers, because of which (and the bottle of Jäger of course) I don't really remember how it continued. As it turned out later I seem to have drunk half a bottle of Vajdaság vodka and found myself sleeping *in the 'arms' of the house's guard, a malamute, apparently* the next morning. My friends *kept recalling the incident* for about two years and *joked about it*, particularly because it was a male dog. How much better would it have been to wake up on the lady's bosom! (Pali)

Here the related values are intellectual achievement (a sense of accomplishment) and excitement, for this is the most difficult plot to grasp insofar as it operates on a dual level, with the surface meaning and underlying meaning at odds. A story may be ironic if it turns traditional norms upside down, revealing hidden truth. It is illustrated by the following story where there is a fight for two invaluable chairs which could only be inherited when the ones occupying them made their way to the toilet:

Time passed, beers, wine, shots all disappeared one after the other . . . but the two guys did not intend to leave the room to do the obligatory thing. When each had something like 2 litres of some kind of liquid inside them, finally they uttered the secretly long-awaited sentence, 'I need to piss!' but something totally different followed from what we'd expected: the two kids looked at one another, burst out into laughter, then both (staying in their armchairs all through) took off their trousers. *We were surprised*. Each was wearing an extra large (one pink, the other blue) disposable nappy made for adults with incon-

tinence problems. Everybody was laughing after that. They had their round (only the small one), changed nappies then told us how they managed to mime to the elderly lady in the local pharmacy (who only spoke her own language) what they wanted . . . (Bence)

There should be numerous examples for ironic stories, with truth revealed the next day with the help of some photo or video:

We managed to kill the booze in a couple of hours and got done to quite roughly. My friend who had never got drunk before, was literally lying in what he'd thrown up, not to speak of ourselves who innocently lay down into his creation. *According to the video* I wasn't able to sit on a chair at around the end of the night. I was trying again and again till one leg of it got broken. My best friend *sang to an iron pillar* full of advertisements for like half an hour, while another one *wanted to run to and fro naked in the street* by all means. The girls had a hard job preventing him from doing it. (Albert)

It was curious the next day that I had no problems whatsoever, but the others had a strange look in their eyes at me and started to tell highly interesting stories of the previous night. I didn't really believe them but after I was shown the video, *I had got enough* . . . Among other things, I swallowed a whole Exit magazine, then started talking in German to everybody, strange thing is though that I don't speak the language . . . (Peti)

It is interesting to see how a Heineken advertisement gets interpreted by the representatives of the two sexes (*Table 3*).

*Table 3*  
Various interpretations of a Heineken advertisement of opposite sexes

	<i>Female interpretations</i>	<i>Male interpretations</i>
<i>Recounts of the advertisement</i>	For me the Heineken ad on tv was the most memorable. The one featuring Jennifer Aniston. She was meaning to take off two mini-barrels of Heineken in the supermarket from the top shelf but she wasn't tall enough. Then came <i>a nice tall young man</i> who was very much surprised at her being the actress. But <i>Miss Aniston</i> didn't as much impress him as to make him give her the two barrels which (to tell the truth) astonished the lady. But men are just like that!!!! (Orsi)	A guy is shopping in a supermarket. <i>He's young and nice</i> . He's pushing the trolley in front of him when he catches sight of <i>a pretty blonde</i> trying to reach towards the top shelf for something. The guy thinks he'll go there and help, why not, <i>the girl's a fine thing</i> . When he goes up to her, she turns round and there's Jennifer Aniston in front of him. He appears to be slightly embarrassed but to love it, too. Jennifer smiles at him and with her gestures asks him to take off two Heinekens (the last two ones) from the shelf. By the way, <i>there are best beers next to the Heineken on the shelf</i> . The guy takes off the two Heinekens, looks at Jennifer then the beers, turns round and leaves, holding the two beers in his hands. (Henrik)

- A story of its relevance*
- I frequently find that *for men, the match and the beer are more important than anything else*. For example, when they could spend some time with their girlfriend, but even then they aren't able to leave the sweet match-and-beer couple entirely behind. It's so annoying!!! Guys adore beer and can't detach themselves from it *even for a nice girl*. That's it. (Orsi)
- A story about smiles*
- The ad makes me think of my relationship with my boyfriend. I have found it on several occasions that *a smile is not always sufficient*. Mainly if it's about things men go crazy for: beer or football. (Zsófi)
- A story about shopping*
- Although like the actress I'm not tall, either, I wouldn't be able to reach for the articles on the top shelf, nothing like it has happened to me, but can happen any time. I haven't been part of exactly the same situation but *awkward, funny* ones resulting from a type like that (several times actually). When I start speaking about the quality of the chosen underwear to somebody standing next to me, being definitely not my friend. (Viki)
- It has occurred to me that I could have reached out for a nice girl at a party, but I thought 'why should I bother, *I'll just go back to my old friends and old beer*' (of course there's a good amount of male laziness in it). Often a good beer tastes better than *bothering with the best girl*. (Henrik)
- The ad doesn't recall a definite thing in me, it just makes me feel better overall. Sometimes it reminds me of a scene of the series, or getting sloshed the other day or a jolly story or a nice woman I saw that day resembling Jeniffer or something completely different. The good thing about the ad is just this, that *it makes me think about various things but they're always something good*, in contrast to the Borsodi ad for example where it's always the sloshed thing only with friends (of course that's also good). (Dávid)
- The advertisement makes me think of an old story from about 5 or 6 years ago. We went to a hypermarket with my class-mates to shop for the New Year's Eve party. As I didn't drink alcohol, I didn't want to get any. But the others loaded the trolley with it. There were all types in it, more than necessary. So we set off for the cash desks to queue. By this time the others had disappeared and I was standing there on my own with a trolley loaded with alcohol. People *were looking at me quite strangely* . . . (Béla)

Experiencing an advertisement takes place differently for each sex, the alternative viewpoints become clear as early as when recounting its story. Orsi describes the male protagonist as a nice tall young man and calls Aniston Miss. As opposed to that, Henrik classifies the female protagonist as a fine thing. The marked difference, however, is related to their respective felt experiences, for whilst ladies complain about the fact that in the preference system of 'blokes' a match and a beer comes in first even if there's a beautiful girl's smile in the competition, men stick to their already



tested beer and are not willing to make extra efforts. Male laziness, vanity or fear of failure – who knows what is there behind.

Both irony and satire present conflicts between appearance and reality and end with surprises (sometimes pleasant, but not always). The mythos of winter parodies the romantic mythos of summer, because idealised visions are overwhelmed by real-world experiences.

To go one step further, Frye thinks about advertising as grossly ironic:

We have here a type of irony which exactly corresponds to that of two other major arts of the ironic age, advertising and propaganda. These arts pretend to address themselves seriously to a subliminal audience of cretins, an audience that may not even exist, but which is assumed to be simple-minded enough to accept, at their face value, the statements made about the purity of a soap or a government's motives. The rest of us, realising that irony never says precisely what it means, take these arts ironically, or at least, regard them as a kind of ironic game. (FRYE 1973, 47)

## 5. Conclusion and implications for further usage in PSAs

Just as literary plots are comic, romantic, tragic, or ironic, so, too, are consumer plots. That consumers tell stories in accordance with culturally familiar patterns reflects the enduring and vital power of myths – they are as old as humanity, yet constantly renewed to fit contemporary life (STERN 1995). The categorisation of consumer plots into a four-cell taxonomy offers preliminary evidence that consumer ideology – ‘beliefs and doctrines about how a consumption event should be’ (WALLENDORF & ARNOULD 1991) – can be more richly interpreted by studying form as well as content (STERN 1995). In this way, analysis of plot provides a new perspective on the nature of felt experience, helping to answer LEVY's question (1981), ‘What are myths really about?’

Analysing myths through consumer stories and felt advertisement experiences (both everyday and deviant consumption) presents an excellent perspective in future. The original function of myths – explaining the natural and human world by means of stories about divinities (RANDAZZO 1993) – sustains their explanatory power in reference to desirable and undesirable behaviour. Insofar as it is considered ‘mythologising’ (RANDAZZO 1993), precise information about mythic plots, heroes, and values enables a better matching of myths and target markets. Often, this involves updating the mythic material to reflect cultural changes.

No matter who you are, what you are, whether you change, this product changes along with you and still stays the same, on which you can always rely. (Dia, about Absolut Vodka)

Frye's framework is thought to be productive for creative concepts that JOHAR et al. (2001) assigned the task to advertising experts in their research of producing advertisement ideas for a fictive product on the basis of Frye. We have completed JOHAR et al.'s three dimensions (heroic action, source of tension and outcome) with the alcohol consumption stories of the present study (see *Table 4*).

Table 4  
A summary chart of the stories

	<i>Comedy</i>	<i>Romance</i>	<i>Tragedy</i>	<i>Irony</i>
<i>Heroic action</i>	Happy pursuit of new order	Adventure or quest	Struggle with serious issues	Failure to understand reality
<i>Source of tension</i>	Seeking pleasure, fun, or comfort	Seeking peace, beauty, or something special	Heroic suffering and/or doom by fatal flaw	Appearance versus reality; surface versus substance
<i>Outcome</i>	Festive celebration	Retrospection to idealised past or nostalgia	Death, danger, or avoidance of harm	Epiphany, understanding, revelation, insight, unmasking, demystification
<i>Alcohol consumption stories</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Friends' reunion at a birthday party.</li> <li>* Juniors' camp being got going by Hubertus competition.</li> <li>* For the protagonist a Balaton swim and party ends with alcohol.</li> <li>* Naked swim creates a cheerful atmosphere.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Enthusiastic dance and romantic winks.</li> <li>* Couple picnic in romantic mood on the Danube bank.</li> <li>* Drunken class singing with the teacher.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The taste of alcohol makes the hero think of his deceased relatives.</li> <li>* For the protagonist the party becomes a nightmare due to his sickness.</li> <li>* The sight of a drunk teacher destroys her image in the heroine</li> <li>* Heroine embittered by her mates destroying themselves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Mates having their braggart friend on.</li> <li>* Party face gets drunk but brags about his heroic acts the next day.</li> <li>* Drunken friend courting a billboard lady.</li> <li>* Protagonist wakes up with a dog.</li> <li>* Protagonist astonished at his own behaviour watching a video of it.</li> </ul>
<i>Stories related to alcohol advertisements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Heroine redecorates her own room according to her personality (Tuborg)</li> <li>* Due to opening a bottle, hero finds the love of his life (Heineken)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Hero looks back to a summer followed by his successful exams (Gösser)</li> <li>* Heroine recalls the original sin-adventures of secondary school time parties (Metaxa)</li> <li>* Heroine recalls her childhood and how she met her boyfriend (Jägermeister)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Hero recalls his motorcycle accident (Johnnie Walker)</li> <li>*Hero recalls a severe accident in which he narrowly escaped death (Johnnie Walker)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Heroine feels sorry that for guys beer is more important than the woman (Heineken)</li> <li>* Hero chooses to go back to his beer instead of 'the trouble of chatting up a nice girl' (Heineken)</li> </ul>

Source: Based on JOHAR et al. (2001) and completed.

Once the framework was thought to be so productive then does it follow that you have to come up with ideas using this very scheme? JOHAR et al. (2001) conclude in their research that the team which was free to decide on the myth components and were not prescribed as to which genre characteristics the advertisement is to display, worked the most creatively. It entails that Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are not to be forced into one dominant genre. They are, therefore, not necessarily to end with a tragedy only because we feel that it has the most deterrent force. If we take a close look at commercial advertisements, one in which we can follow the story of a tragic hero is very rare to be found, they more seem to focus on how tragedy may be avoided. Public Service concepts, however, are frequently drowned into blood and useless threats ('if you drive drunk you'll die'). Glimpsing at *Table 4*, it is clear that the stories of categories of comedy, romance or irony are easily associated with advertisements popularising some alcoholic beverage. Commercial advertising seems to have claimed an absolute right for the most effective myths, leaving public service concepts with tragedy only as the card to be played out. In its effectiveness, however, it is well behind all the rest and may be convincing for a certain target segment only. PSAs are, therefore, to break through the old framework to be able to produce various approaches for the various consumers. This study aims to provide the reader with a structured tool inventory (charts, stories), from which one will be free to choose, but at the same time should take care to retain one's own creativity and production of credible stories. 'For a reader, outstanding story-telling is about available and astonishing human states. These must be told with the right personification, making them thus rewritable for the reader' (BRUNER 2001, 49). For the arbitrary combination of seasons we wish to present the message of a student as an act of closure, which illustrates how we can get from spring through summer and autumn to winter:

When you start drinking it's spring. You'll enjoy yourself more and more. If you go on drinking, summer comes. It's the top of the party. If you do it right, it may last long but when you cross that certain border autumn will follow. You'll get a bit sick, tired and no longer really feel like partying. And if you really miscounted something, then it will definitely be winter. You'll be sick and your life becomes full of (throwing) ups and downs and you'll swear to anything not to drink again. Of course sooner or later it's spring again. (Tomi)

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