

Universal Story Patterns

Concept & Data Source <https://github.com/j-hagedorn/trilogy>

- Physical visualization of universal storytelling patterns across cultures
- Data source: Aarne-Thompson-Uther Tale Type Index
- Represents patterns within:
 - Five foundational folktales spanning 69-157 cultures
 - Direct connections between narrative elements
 - Recurring motifs that show universal human experiences
- Each pattern corresponds to specific sequences of motifs, revealing how stories connect across cultures

Physical Construction Display Assembly:

- 24" × 24" × 24" wooden cube frame with 1.5" base
- Open design for 360-degree viewing
- Suspended leaves with LED illumination
- Natural material interaction with light patterns
- Concealed electronics in base housing

Light System Hardware:

- WS2812B addressable LED strips (6.5ft segments)
- 160 LEDs per meter density
- Total of approximately 32 feet of LED strips
- Floral wire structural support
- Gauzy fabric diffusion layer

Electronics & Control Hardware:

- Arduino Uno microcontroller
- 12V power supply
- Data connections for LED control
- Pattern timing based on motif sequences
- LED pattern generation from tale sequences
- Connection visualization between stories
- Multiple modes showing different narrative relationships

Artistic Elements Material Symbolism:

- Natural leaves representing story elements

- Dandelion seeds diffusing light
- Gauzy fabric creating ethereal connections
- Light patterns showing story flow Visual Experience:
- Subtle emergence of narrative patterns
- Flowing connections between tales
- Organic interaction of materials
- Physical representation of cultural connections

About the Tale Data Selected tales with remarkable characteristics:

- The Clever Farmgirl (Tale 875): Most complex with 114 unique motifs, found in 103 cultures
- The Two Travelers (Tale 613): Universal appeal across 121 cultures
- Strong John (Tale 650A): Found in 148 cultures with 34 distinctive motifs
- The Clever Horse (Tale 531): Most widespread, appearing in 157 cultures
- The Faithless Mother (Tale 590): Intense emotional themes across 69 cultures

These five tales represent over 564,000 documented motif sequences, showing how similar narrative elements appear across vastly different cultures and times. The data reveals both the complexity of individual tales (ranging from 22 to 114 unique motifs) and their deep cultural penetration (appearing in up to 157 different cultural traditions). This visualization transforms abstract patterns of human connection into a tangible, living artwork that reveals how stories bind us together across time and space.