THE TRANSFORMATIVE FUNCTION OF STORY

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ABSTRACT

The Transformative Function of Story

By

Dara Marks

Jung defined individuation as "the process by which a person becomes a psychological 'in-dividual,'" (CW 9 i, 275; par. 490). The term process implies that this is a consistent pattern of humanity, which Jung termed archetypal. The production piece of this study is a book on screenwriting, called Inside Story, which illustrates that it is possible to use the archetypal pattern of individuation to map the progress of the protagonist in a dramatic structure. As a script analyst in the film industry, I have found that when stories integrate this interior line of structure, called the transformational arc, they not only express more authentic characterization, but they naturally expose both writer and audience to greater levels of personal and collective consciousness. This would indicate that story is not the passive experience it is often considered to be, but that it is an essential activator of psychological development. It may, in fact, be how the human mind comes to know itself.

The theoretical analysis of this dissertation examines how, from the first moment of conscious awareness, the human life is enstoried in what Paul Ricoeur has identified as the circle of triple mimesis in which humans constantly
make the move from action to story and back to action again. As a result, human existence is a quest to know its own story. People create story as a means of understanding who they are, why they are here, where life is taking them and how to cope with its uncertainties. But story also has an autonomous function, in that it seems to pull the individual and the culture toward its own pre-existing goals. These goals not only follow the human pattern of existence, but they also lead humanity to higher levels of conscious development. This dual movement of story reflects the status of the human drama and at the same time projects it onward toward greater potential.

As a result, it is possible to examine modern stories in light of what particular mythos has captured the culture’s imagination and where the culture lives within the myth itself. This study attempts to put aside literary bias and examine the modern story as an autonomous force that relentlessly seeks to unfold new life.
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Chapter 1
The Twice-Told Tale

_We are lonesome animals._
_We spend our lives trying to be less lonesome._
_One of our ancient methods is to tell a story_
_begging the listener to say—and to feel—_
_"Yes, that’s the way it is,_
_or at least that’s the way I feel it._
_You’re not as alone as you thought.”_
_—John Steinbeck (183)_

Introduction

A world without storytelling would be bleak. Beyond its entertainment value, storytelling plays a vital role in the growth and development of individuals and in the advancement of cultures and civilizations. From the profound: “Now is the winter of our discontent” (*Shakespeare, Richard III* 1.1), to the mundane: “Hi, honey, you wouldn’t believe the day I had…” —storytelling informs, confirms and helps shape the way reality is perceived. The understanding of emotions, the development of new ideas, and the evolution of values by which humans live and thrive are connected in some way to those who have gone before. Theoretical exposition and philosophical rhetoric can be dry, unyielding, and hence brittle containers in which to exclusively entrust the passage of such valuable cargo as knowledge and wisdom. Storytelling, on the other hand, is malleable and expansive; it allows people to interpret and explore the experiences and visions of others as a way to better understand their own
lives and the world in which they live.

Perhaps the deepest of all human yearnings is the desire to find connection, to be connected to and seen by the family, society or group within which one lives. There is also the yearning to be connected intimately to the environment and to others: mates, parents, children, and friends. Even more significant is the longing for a deeper connection to one's inner Self, which facilitates a deeper personal relationship to the spiritual and the divine realms as well.

Storytelling is a powerful medium for making these connections possible and even credible. At both the literal and metaphorical levels, stories communicate that no one is alone, that others have walked the same precarious path toward Self-hood. It is through stories that human beings are reminded to "stay the course," "watch out for the pitfalls," and that meaning can be made out of life's sufferings and disappointments.

In his book *On Story*, Richard Kearney refers to story as an "act of coordinating an existence which would otherwise be scattered over time" (4). To this he adds that stories are what make life worth living because they humanize us.

When someone asks you who you are, you tell your story. That is, you recount your present condition in the light of past memories and future anticipations. You interpret where you are now in terms of where you have come from and where you are going to.
And so doing you give a sense of yourself as a *narrative* identity that perdures and coheres over a lifetime. (4)

One of story’s dominant functions is to evoke images that teach the nature and meaning of life. In Aristotle’s *Poetics*, he makes the point that “the reason why men enjoy seeing a likeness [image] is that in contemplating it they find themselves learning or inferring, and saying perhaps, ‘Ah, that is he’ ” (4.5). But the ultimate morality and ethics of these images are not the purview of the ego but of the soul. Obviously, not all stories are well thought out, well-intentioned, or well-executed, but the psyche is only capable of producing what it knows, and *what it knows is its own nature*, even when it appears in a regressive or contrary form. The essence of the dramatic impulse, therefore, is to bring this knowledge of the Self into consciousness.

Jung refers to this process of coming to *Self-*realization as *individuation*: “The goal of the individuation process is the synthesis of the self” (*CW* 9i, 164; par. 278), which is a move toward psychological differentiation and wholeness. Viewed from this perspective, the move toward wholeness or individuation is the language of story. No matter how insignificant a story may seem, like the dream, its inherent purpose is to bring information about the Self from the inner world into consciousness. This indicates that on a fundamental level a story as mundane as *Gilligan’s Island* communicates the same thing as Homer’s *Odyssey*; which is how to live. (In point of fact, they both are stories about people trying
to get off an island and make their way home again.) The primary difference, of course, is that the Odyssey is concerned with a great deal more than just being rescued or building a raft. Odysseus's journey homeward is also a journey inward. But from the perspective of being able to better understand the human psyche and its relationship to the rest of the cosmos, neither story is irrelevant. The Odyssey did not simply arise one day out of the primal ooze fully formed. A lot of Gilligan stories had to have been told before they constellated into such a lucid and profound epic.

In the Epic Cosmos Louise Cowan makes the point that "epic is a phenomenon both more frequent and more diverse than recognized canon tends to indicate" (1). She maintains that instead of celebrating the triumph following a conquest, epic more often illustrates the heroic rise from defeat. As a result, epic incorporates "all possible instances of genre, however humble, since even minor examples contain keys to the larger image of human experience [. . .]" (2). In fact, if viewed out of context, many of the episodes incorporated in the Odyssey, like tricking the Cyclops, the men being turned into swine, and Odysseus disguising himself as an old man in order to fool his wife's suitors, could resemble the farcical elements found in the modern sitcom. However, when held in their proper framework, these instances are not only reasonable but even profound metaphorical reflections of the human experience. "It is the work
of deities, not mortals [...] to endow human action with epic stature. Seen in
that light, no event should be considered too humble, no “local row” too
unimportant—if gods choose to dignify it” (2). So, who knows what Gilligan may
become?

To this argument noted lecturer, author, and Jungian analyst, Robert
Johnson, explains:

Myths [like the *Odyssey*] are a special kind of literature not written
or created by a single individual, but produced by the imagination
and experience of an entire age and culture and can be seen as the
distillation of the dreams and experiences of a whole culture. (*We x*)

Looking at the stories that bombard today’s culture through the media of
film, television, and popular fiction, very few, if any, achieve the depth, scope,
and grandeur of the Homeric classic. But if given the choice between watching
the *Odyssey* and Gilligan’s Island, Fantasy Island, Survivor or the newest television
hit, *Lost*, in all probability the trials of Odysseus would come in a distant fifth in
the ratings. Conventional wisdom would likely attribute this to intellectual
laziness, cultural apathy, or just plain bad taste. While all of these reasons may
hold some truth, there are also important psychological implications, both
personally and collectively, that are too easily overlooked and dismissed
regarding popular, contemporary storytelling. Ultimately, if the public is paying
attention to these stories, then serious consideration must be given to the
possibility that there is something in their content that has value for the collective
psyche. Even if these types of stories are considered mere distractions, it may be relevant to question: “distractions from what?”

In the practice of modern psychology, any expression of psychic content is given value. It would be difficult to imagine a psychologist dismissing a client’s dream as being either too trivial or inappropriate. Jung believed that all psychic product has value:

If we start from the fact that a dream is a psychic product, we have not the least reason to suppose that its constitution and function obey laws and purposes other than those applicable to any other psychic product [including Gilligan’s Island]. [ . . . ] We know that every psychic structure [. . . ] is the result of antecedent psychic contents [. . . ] [and that it] has its own peculiar meaning and purpose in the actual psychic process. (Dreams 25-6)

Starting from the fact that stories, too, are psychic product, they must also have meaning and purpose in the psychic process. In this regard, Joseph Campbell writes in The Hero with a Thousand Faces that mythic stories are “the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation” (3). But it is important to note what he says about how these myths arose:

The wonder is that the characteristic efficacy to touch and inspire deep creative centers dwells in the smallest nursery fairy tale—as the flavor of the ocean is contained in a droplet or the whole mystery of life within the egg of a flea. For the symbols of mythology are not manufactured; they cannot be ordered, invented, or permanently suppressed. They are the spontaneous productions of the psyche, and each bears within it undamaged, the germ power of its source. (4)
Campbell’s concept of how myths are formed would indicate that Gilligan—in all his tedious, silly, trite, clichéd manifestations—is part of the germ power of the modern myth. It also indicates that Gilligan and his other pop culture compatriots like Freddy Krueger, Spiderman, Laverne and Shirley, and SpongeBob SquarePants have something significant to tell us about ourselves. They may not be as introspective as Hamlet or insightful as Oskar Schindler, but they are not irrelevant.

It is reasonable and natural for literary critics and the public at large to discriminate in their attitude toward what they watch and read. But especially in the fields of mythology and depth psychology, there needs to be an open-minded approach to popular storytelling that allows the inner voice of psyche to communicate in any form she so desires.

Mythologists and depth psychologists have become adept at interpreting and elucidating the complex meaning of myth, epic, legend, folk and fairy tales, and classic texts. But there are also many stories that exist today which are base, common, trite, underdeveloped, disorganized and crude, and they need just as much attention.

By the time a story has reached the classic level, it has undergone severe refinement. As Edward Edinger explains in his book, *The Eternal Drama*, “The psychological view is that they [classic dramas] emerge progressively from the
collective unconscious and gradually, by the collective endeavor of the race, are worked over and embodied in some durable form” (4). Classic stories, therefore, often contain elegant and eloquent representations of the archetypal structures of human psyche. In other words, they reveal what the psyche already knows about itself and is striving to make conscious.

By contrast, the unrefined modern story often delivers much more raw, unprocessed, fragmented, even chaotic information. Therefore, like the dream, these stories may reveal what the psyche is coming to know about itself. Also, like the dream, it must be approached with respect and compassion if it is going to give up its secrets and reveal its purpose.

The intention of this dissertation and the accompanying production piece, Inside Story, is to approach the modern story from this perspective: tending story as a means of better understanding and communicating with the personal and collective unconscious. In some instances this means seeing through the vulgarity, tedium, awkwardness, and banality of modern dramatic works that would otherwise be disregarded or dismissed. It also means taking a step back in order to gain a greater perspective on what repeated popular images in modern storytelling communicates about the internal status of the individual and the culture at large.

This work does not advocate the psychoanalysis of modern stories, but it
seeks instead to develop a relationship that will meet stories on their own ground and greet them in their native tongue. For Jung, the imperative for establishing this communication is to address the images that arise from the unconscious with the question of purpose:

What is the purpose [...]? What effect is it meant to have? [E]very organic structure consists of a complicated network of purposive functions, and each of these functions can be resolved into a series of individual facts with a purposive orientation. (*Dreams*, 29)

However, the question of purpose must be approached cautiously, because as James Hillman warns in *Re-Visioning Psychology*, "We sin against the imagination whenever we ask an image for its meaning, requiring that images be translated into concepts (39)." This is because it is usually the ego that does the asking, looking only for answers that confirms its view of itself. It would be like asking a condemned man why he committed a crime: he is too invested in defending his actions and keeping himself from the hangman's noose to look past his deeds and comprehend their meaning and purpose.

If the overall purpose of story is viewed as the move toward wholeness or individuation, then it becomes possible to see past the ego's defenses and examine story as a landscape in which the Self is struggling to emerge. Individuation is an archetypal process that patterns nearly every nuance of human existence. In *Answer to Job*, Jung explains that this move toward individuation is always operative within us, but if it remains unconscious, it
doesn’t amount to much more than “the acorn [becoming] an oak, the calf a cow, and the child an adult” (CW 11, 468; par. 755).

But if the individuation process is made conscious, consciousness must confront the unconscious and a balance between the opposites must be found. As this is not possible through logic, one is dependent on symbols which make the irrational union of opposites possible. (CW 11, 468; par. 755)

Story facilitates the process of individuation because it contains the same symbol-making properties as the dream or the fantasy. Stories are symbolic in that they are, as Jung describes, “expressions of [psychic] content not yet consciously recognized or conceptually formulated” (Dreams 104). Like the dream, stories are a delivery system that make unconscious content available for processing into consciousness. This study will, therefore, focus on the modern story and its role as a catalyst and mediator in the development of higher consciousness.

This study will also examine the impact of modern stories on contemporary culture and the impact that contemporary culture has on the stories that are told. It is relatively easy to see that humans create story as a means of understanding who they are, why they are here, where life is taking them and how to cope with its uncertainties. But story also has an autonomous function, in that it seems to pull the individual and the culture toward its own pre-existing goals. As Kearney explains:
Every human existence is a life in search of a narrative. This is not simply because it strives to discover a pattern to cope with the experience of chaos and confusion. It is also because each human life is always already an implicit story. Our very finitude constitutes us as beings who, to put it badly, are born at the beginning and die at the end. This gives a temporal structure to our lives which seek some kind of significance [. . .]. So that we might say that our lives are constantly interpreting themselves—pre-reflectively and pre-consciously. (129)

In *Time and Narrative*, Paul Ricoeur theorizes that mimesis has a threefold function which forms a *circle of triple mimesis* linking together “the act of narrating and temporal existence” (54). Story is first anticipated (*prefigured*) and sought as a need for self-definition, then it is created (*configured*) and told, and it is in the telling that temporal existence is redefined (*refigured*). Here Kearney adds “we return from narrative text to action” (133).

It is in this move from temporal existence to story and back again that reality shifts and something new is made of life. When story is regarded with only a critical or discerning eye toward literary prowess, it is possible to miss or dismiss how the refiguring function of narrative has re-formed or redefined the individual and the culture. The following three chapters of this study will attempt to put aside this literary bias and to examine the modern story as an autonomous force that relentlessly seeks to unfold new life.
Organization of the Study

Chapter 2: Mythopoiesis: A Mirror into the Soul. In Healing Fiction James

Hillman points out that wherever the word “plot” is found in English translations of Aristotle’s Poetics, the original Greek text used the word mythos:

Plots are myths. The basic answers to why in a story are to be discovered in myths. But a mythos is more than a theory and more than a plot. It is the tale of the interaction of humans and the divine. To be in a mythos is to be inescapably linked with divine powers, and moreover, to be in mimesis with them. [...] The poetic basis of mind suggests that the selective logic operating in the plots of our lives is the logic of mythos, mythology. (11)

Chapter 1 examines how modern stories inescapably reenact the archetypal dramas of myth. But it will also show that this is not simply because they must follow the human pattern of existence, but because they must also lead humanity to the next levels of development. Kearney explains that when “implicit mythos becomes explicit poiesis [...] [there is] a second patterning of our already patterned [...] experience” (132). It is this overlay of pattern within pattern that moves life forward:

Mimesis is ‘invention’ in the original sense of the term: invenire means both to discover and to create, that is, to disclose what is already there in the light of what is not yet (potentially). It is the power, in short, to re-create actual worlds as possible worlds. (132)

The modern story reflects the timeless quality of the human drama, but it also projects human consciousness into new realms of potentiality. Therefore, it is possible to examine modern stories in light of what particular mythos has
captured the culture’s imagination and where the culture lives within the myth itself. The primary example used in this chapter is the story of Rick Blaine in the classic film, *Casablanca*. This chapter will reveal that Rick not only reenacts or *follows* the mythic journey of Odysseus in his quest to make his way homeward (inward) to Penelope/Ilsa, but that the mythic pattern opens or *leads* the culture toward a new heroic perspective. Unlike the heroes of the past who strove to conquer new worlds in order to achieve independence and autonomy, the Odyssian/Rick/Bogart/Eastwood/Brando/Pacino/deNiro heroic of today is one that tends to strive for inner value, connection, and relatedness.

Chapter 3: A Comparative View of the Hero Myth and its Use in Cinematic Story Structure: This chapter focuses on the hero’s journey as the archetypal ground on which the protagonist moves through a story. Contrasts and comparisons will be made between Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung’s vision of the hero’s quest for wholeness (individuation). For Jung the hero is, “first and foremost a self-representation of the longing of the unconscious, of its unquenched and unquenchable desire for the light of consciousness” (Segal, *Jung* 148). On the other hand, Campbell’s essential requirements for a hero are that he must do what no one else is either willing to do or is capable of doing, and he must do it not just for himself, but as a “boon” for everyone else as well. Are these two views mutually exclusive, or are they differing perceptions of the same archetypal movement? How well do either or both of them serve as a model for modern dramatic structure? Can their constructs be applied to all stories, or are they inherently self-limiting?

Script consultant and film executive, Christopher Vogler, has adapted Campbell’s mythic model of the hero’s journey into a guide for structuring screenplays. He claims that, “All stories consist of a few common structural
elements found universally in myths, fairy tales, dreams and movies. They are
known collectively as the Hero’s Journey” (3). In effect, Vogler seems to have
reduced Campbell’s ideas to a one-size-fits-all formula that has captured the
imagination of Hollywood screenwriters. While some see this as a panacea,
others are concerned that it as a simplistic trap that continues to diminish the
quality of modern filmmaking.

This chapter will also consider the emerging influence of the feminine heroic.
Although the language in which Jung and Campbell define the heroic quest for
wholeness is almost exclusively given a masculine context, their work, especially
Jung’s, has paradoxically helped usher in a new age in which the internal feminine
values of relatedness and interconnectedness are becoming more consciously
sought after.

In her book, The Moon and the Virgin, Nor Hall describes how this need to
connect more deeply with one’s feminine nature is evolving into a new type of
heroic quest.

There is a void felt these days by women—and men—who suspect
that their feminine nature, like Persephone, has gone to hell.
Wherever there is such a void, such a gap or wound agape, healing
must be sought in the blood of the wound itself. It is another of the
old alchemical truths that ‘no solution should be made except in its
own blood.’ (The cure of an emotional wound is in the wound
itself.) So the female void cannot be cured by conjunction with the
male, but rather by an internal conjunction, by an integration of its
own parts [. . .]. (68)

Her insight does not mean that the feminine heroic journey represents a
need to stand apart from the masculine, but that in order to form a sacred union
(hieros gamos) the feminine seeks parity with her masculine counterpart. One of
the primary myths that exemplifies the contemporary feminine quest for
wholeness is the tale of “Eros and Psyche.” In this story Psyche is forced to grow
and mature in order to reconnect with her beloved Eros. This condition is a stark
contrast to the feminine role in most masculine hero myths where the feminine
influence tends to be much more passive, like the role of Penelope in *The Odyssey*,
who sits and waits for the hero’s return.

In Maureen Murdock’s book, *The Heroine’s Journey*, she also notes this
change in attitude toward the feminine heroic.

The women I know [... ] do not want to embody Penelope, waiting
patiently, endlessly weaving and unweaving. They do not want to
be handmaidens of the dominant male culture, giving service to the
gods. [... ] They need a new model that understands who and what
a woman is. (2)

The example of the *new model* used in this chapter is Princess Diana.
Because the feminine quest is different than the masculine quest, it may be
difficult (even for women) to recognize this new heroic dynamic when it is
encountered. A female hero is not necessarily a feminine hero. Women like Joan
of Arc, Madame Currie, and even Mother Theresa tended to be adventurers in
their own right who, like their male counterparts, conquered and tamed the
wilds of human nature. But it is the achievement in the inner realms of Psyche,
Persephone, and Innana that the feminine heroic is found. Therefore, it was not
Diana’s grit or physical prowess that gave her heroic stature, but her ability to
descend into the dark places and retrieve the essence of her feminine being, which was love. As Eric Neuman comments in *Amor and Psyche*:

So great is Psyche’s inner strength, so great is her power of integration, acquired through suffering and love, that she can stand up to the disintegrating power of the archetypes and confront them on equal footing. Yet all this does not occur in a Promethean-masculine opposition to the divine, but in a divine erotic seizure of love, which shows her to be even more deeply rooted in the center of the divine Aphrodite. (143)

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*Chapter 4: The Destroyer/Creator:* Robert Johnson introduces his book, *The Fisher King and the Handless Maiden*, by commenting that the greatest casualty of modern life is a loss or great woundedness in the *feeling function*. “Our wounded feeling function [is] probably the most common and painful wound which occurs in our Western world (3).” The feeling function is one of the four psychological functions defined by Jung in his essay on “Psychological Typology.” The others include *thinking*, *sensation*, and *intuition*. But it is only the feeling function that conveys personal and collective value (*CW* 6, 57; par. 83). Therefore, Johnson suggests that a loss in the feeling function means that there is a loss of value and self-worth in the culture: “Our feelings bring a sense of value and worth; indeed, this is its chief function. Without feeling there is no value judgment. To lose one’s feeling function is thus to lose one of the most precious human faculties, perhaps the one that makes us most human” (4).
This chapter examines the common perception that gratuitous violence and sexuality in the media is destroying the culture. But is this the message or the messenger? The dual movement in story, as mentioned in Chapter 1, that both reflects the status of the human drama and at the same time projects it onward toward new life, has an inherent dark side—as it must. While the ultimate goal of the psyche is to make progress toward wholeness through differentiation, Jung points out that progression is most often achieved through regression: "valuable seeds lie in the unconscious contents activated by regression" (CW 8, 35; par. 65).

Because the contents of an inferior function have been previously unconscious, when they arise in the form of regression, they are generally not well received. Instead, they feel like "incompatible contents and tendencies, partly immoral, partly unaesthetic, partly again of an irrational, imaginary nature" (CW 8, 34; par. 63). This does not mean that the "junk" dominating the media is somehow noble or secretly well-intentioned, but that it may be a regressive move by the collective unconscious to awaken the feeling function and restore balance to the "kingdom." Chapter 3 will, therefore, approach violent and anti-social images in the media from the position that,

What the regression brings to the surface certainly seems at first sight to be slime from the depths; but if one does not stop short at superficial evaluation and refrain from passing judgment on the basis of preconceived dogma, it will be found that this ‘slime’
contains not merely incompatible and rejected remnants of
everyday life, or inconvenient and objectionable animal tendencies,
but also germs of new life and vital possibilities for the future. (CW
8, 34; par. 63)

*Review of the Literature*

There are three distinct areas of research in which this study will
concentrate. The primary area is in Archetypal and Depth Psychology, focusing
on the process of individuation and how its elements inherently form the basis of
dramatic structure. Secondly, a comparison will be made between Jung and
Campbell on their theories of the hero archetype in order to examine the impact
their models have on modern storytelling. Thirdly, the study will utilize literary
sources that range from myths to modern movies as examples and models of the
heroic quest toward individuation.

1. *Archetypal and Depth Psychology*: The *Collected Works* of C. G. Jung are
indispensable for defining the individuation process and for understanding the
psychic impulses that inspire creativity. But James Hillman’s works, *Healing
Fiction* and *Re-Visioning Psychology* in particular, elevate the discussion of story to
the realm of soul-making and allow for a freer, more authentic relationship
between writer/creator and reader/observer. Specifically, Hillman believes that
"we must free the vision of the psyche from the narrow biases of modern
psychology, enabling the psyche to perceive itself—its relations, its realities, its
pathologies—altogether apart from psychology’s modern perspective” (3). Therefore, seeing into or through the images that the psyche provokes in a story is a more effective way of connecting with what the story is trying to reveal about itself.

In terms of tending these images and learning to enter their realm both as the observer and the observed, the writings of Edward Edinger (*The Eternal Drama, The Creation of Consciousness*), Thomas Moore (*Care of the Soul*), Marie-Louise von Franz (*Interpretation of Fairy Tales, Shadow and Evil in Fairy Tales*), Wolfgang Giegerich (*The Soul’s Logical Life*), and Helen Luke (*Dark Wood to White Rose*) are indispensable to the development of this thesis.

Because the individuation process inherently relies on a cycle of death and rebirth into greater consciousness, Freud’s theory on the death instinct, articulated in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, contributes significantly to this work as well. His overarching argument is that there are two instinctual drives: “those which seek to lead what is living to death, and [...] the sexual [procreative] instinct, which is perpetually attempting and achieving a renewal of life” (55). The tension between these two instincts is at the core of dramatic structure.

2. *The Hero Myth*: A comparison will be made between Joseph Campbell’s work on the hero myth in *A Hero with a Thousand Faces* and C. G. Jung’s depiction of the hero in his *Collected Works*, primarily volumes 5 and 7. To facilitate a richer
understanding of these ideas, Robert A. Segal has written two excellent books, *Encountering Jung: Jung on Mythology* and *Joseph Campbell: An Introduction*. In addition, there will be an examination and critique of the Christopher Vogier book, *the Writer’s Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers and Screenwriters*. In particular, it will be evaluated for its impact on the development of the modern screenplay.

3. *Classic and Contemporary Literature*: Although this study does not center on literary theory *per se*, Aristotle’s *Poetics* provides two essential elements to enhance the discourse: (1) his principles are grounded in the view that story *imitates* human action, and (2) his work establishes a universal vocabulary that is indispensable for any literary discussion. Two theorists, Richard Kearney (*On Stories*) and Paul Ricoeur (*Time and Narrative*), enhance our philosophical understanding of Aristotle’s original theory on the mimetic function and its relationship to personal and cultural development.

In this study it is necessary to use literary examples to support or critique dramatic structures. The primary mythic models used in this discourse are Homer’s *Odyssey*, Dante Alighieri’s *Commedia*, and the legend of the Holy Grail, (Emma Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz).

Quotations from several feature films will also be cited, including: *Casablanca*, written by Julius and Philip Epstein and Howard Koch, *It’s a
Wonderful Life, written by Frances Goodrich, Albert Hackett and Frank Capra;

The Fugitive, written by Jeb Stuart and David Twohy; Schindler's List, written by Steven Zaillian, and Breaking the Waves, written and directed by Lars von Trier.

Production Piece:

Book

INSIDE STORY: The Theory of the Transformational Arc: The Foundation of Great Screenwriting and Dramatic Storytelling

The ability to write deeper, more meaningful movies doesn’t arise from merely applying a bit of character development here and there amid the activity of a plot. Character development must be systemic or it will never fully integrate into a story. As the conflict of a plot grows in a well-told tale, it puts pressure on the protagonist to grow as well. When story structure is seen only through the singular lens of plot development, it cannot express much more than just the architectural shape of a story. The development of character becomes an add-on or an afterthought, not an intrinsic part of the form itself. Such a tendency creates shallow, one-dimensional stories that are likely to idealize rather than dramatize the human condition.

The conflicts and problems encountered in a person’s outer, physical world impact his or her internal reality. When problems of great magnitude arise, one’s own personal character is tested and often strengthened or
diminished by the experience. In story terminology, this challenge to grow and evolve is referred to as the *transformational arc of the character*. In the film industry this concept is widely used to indicate the need for interaction or interrelatedness between plot and character development. What the book, *Inside Story*, demonstrates is that the transformational arc has much greater significance. In effect, it is a second line of structure that runs concurrently, wrapping itself within the structural line of the plot itself. These two structural lines are symbiotic; each pushes the other forward, giving the story its true momentum.

*Inside Story* defines the transformational arc in a manner that gives writers a tangible tool with which to identify and integrate the authentic movement of character in a story. The book also illustrates that there is a central source from which all story structure naturally wants to evolve. This source is the writer's own thematic intentions. Once writers learn how to define these intentions, their story choices will cease to be random and arbitrary. Instead, they will become deliberately focused around values that the writer is attempting to express.

*Inside Story* is intended to assist writers in gaining insight into their stories and into their own process of creation. Acquiring even a small piece of insight into one's own work not only makes for better stories, but it makes the writing experience more successful and personally fulfilling.

Ultimately, it is the discovery of one's own personal truth that the writer
is searching for in the creative process. Art does imitate life; it holds up a mirror to expose life as it truly is. Film is a unique artistic medium because it shows images of life in motion. These images not only portray a sequence of events, but they can also communicate the artist’s perspective, observations, and feelings about the human condition. At this level of personal truth, cinema becomes truly potent. It not only engages audiences through action and activity, but the experience of the characters on the screen will become the audience’s experience as well. *Inside Story* is intended to help writers achieve this goal and in so doing help elevate their craftsmanship to the level of art.
Chapter 2
Mythopoeisis:
A Mirror into the Soul

Sing to me of the man, Muse,
The man of twists and turns
driven time and again off course,
one he had plundered
the hallowed heights of Troy
—Homer (1.1-3)

Here’s Looking at You, Kid...

Late in 1942, just three weeks after Dwight D. Eisenhower’s troops confronted the Axis powers in the Moroccan city of Casablanca, Warner Bros. Studios prematurely released a sentimental little film that was set in that same colorful locale. Hoping to garner free publicity from the Allied incursion into North Africa, the studio shrewdly changed the name of their picture from Everybody Comes to Rick’s, to the more exotic sounding Casablanca. This publicity ploy was effective; not only was the film widely attended, but it went on to be nominated for eight Academy Awards, winning three for Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Screenplay. More amazingly, in the sixty years since the film was released, it still holds the nearly singular distinction of having never fallen out of popularity with the public.

As film critic Roger Ebert of the Chicago Sun Times comments: “Casablanca is one of those rare films that actually improves with repeated viewings.” He adds that: “It is likely that people will be watching [it] centuries from now” (823).
What is it about this particular film that continues to hold so many viewers enthralled? Arguably, there have been better written, directed, and acted movies than *Casablanca*. In fact, by today’s fast-paced and sophisticated standards, this story could be considered downright corny and trite; instead, *Casablanca* has moved into the realm of the film *classic*. This means that to some degree, it has a timeless, memorable quality that people must find relevant or no one would be repeatedly drawn to it.

While everyone’s tastes differ widely, there are really only a handful of films, novels, and plays that seem to make it to the top of the classical hit parade. Out of all the stories that have ever been told, why are people repeatedly drawn to such a relative few? One of the reasons Aristotle gives for the attraction to a story in general is the *pleasure* felt toward “things imitated” (55). This means that to a greater or lesser degree, stories reflect human psychic reality. When that reality is strong, audiences seems to relate to it in such a way that they want or even need to connect with it repeatedly. When the reality is difficult to distinguish or comprehend, the connections made to the story tend to be insubstantial and are, therefore, highly dismissible.

These psychic realities are an aspect of what C. G. Jung refers to as *archetypes*: “The greatest and best thoughts of man shape themselves upon these primordial images as upon a blueprint [...] [They are the] deposits of the
constantly repeated experiences of humanity” (CW 7, 69; par. 109). Therefore, it could be said that the more often a story is told, the more deeply it is connected to these primordial images, or vice-versa: the more deeply humanity is connected to a primordial image, the more often the story will be told. At the highest end of this archetypal spectrum are the mythic stories that find their roots in the origin of human consciousness. That origin, says Jung, “is not [...] a question of inherited ideas but of inherited possibilities of ideas. Nor are they individual acquisitions but, in the main, common to all, as can be seen from [their] universal occurrence” (CW 9i, 66; par. 136).

In The Epic Cosmos, Louise Cowan expands on this argument by suggesting that the poet or writer traces “the ineluctable movement toward universal order implied in human events. [This] establishes the mundus imaginalis, wherein reside, as in Plato’s ideal realm, the universal qualities that make up the human condition” (5).

Her idea may indicate that our fascination, if not fixation, with a film like Casablanca is connected to something more meaningful and far more urgent than its mere entertainment value. The notion of being attracted to the “imitation” of action to which Aristotle refers is not an attraction to the mimicking of physical activity, but to, as Francis Fergusson describes in his introduction to Aristotle’s Poetics, the “representation of the countless forms which the life of the human
spirit may take," or what he calls a "movement-of-spirit" (4). This is the essential movement of life: the movement toward wholeness, which requires a transformation of consciousness.

What, then, is the movement-of-spirit in Casablanca to which audiences are so attracted? An excellent key to identifying the movement-of-spirit in any great story is to explore the obstacle that blocks the protagonist from achieving the goal of the plot. However, defining this obstacle can be trickier than it seems, because it is seldom what it first appears to be.

In Casablanca, for example, the protagonist, Rick Blaine, is called upon to help an intrepid freedom fighter, Victor Laszlo, escape German-occupied territory. On the surface it looks as though the Nazis are the great obstacle, but on deeper inspection it is Rick's own internal demons that are blocking the path of Laszlo's flight to freedom. Even though the Nazis are treacherous and extremely deadly, in this story their heartless nature is really just an external manifestation of what is internally destroying Rick's soul. Therefore, in order to outsmart the Nazis and move Laszlo safely out of Casablanca, Rick must first do battle with his own heart.

As the film opens, Rick sits alone at a table in his bar. He is an island in a sea of lively underworld activity, where drinking, gambling, raucous revelry, and an abundance of beautiful women vie for his attention. However, Rick is so
profoundly engulfed in a fog of melancholy that he engages in none of it.

Eventually, it is revealed that the source of his despondency is a lost love. This could indicate that Rick’s movement-of-spirit or move toward wholeness will bring him into reconciliation with that lost love, but that’s not quite what happens. Even though Rick does reencounter Ilsa, (“Of all the gin joints, in all the towns in all the world, she walks into mine”), and their passion for each other is rekindled, it is not resolved. Instead, her function in this story is to move Rick off of his island of hopelessness and back into the flow of life, where someday he will find love again. When Ilsa asks him, “What about us?” Rick replies:

    We’ll always have Paris [. . .] But I’ve got a job to do. Where I’m going you can’t follow. What I’ve got to do you can’t be any part of. Ilsa, I’m no good at being noble, but it doesn’t take much to see that the problems of three little people don’t amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world.

In effect, the external conflict, to help the woman he loves escape with another man, is really an internal opportunity to put Rick’s own ego needs aside and connect him with something greater than himself. As Laszlo confirms to Rick in the end: “Welcome back to the fight. This time I know our side will win.”

The attraction to this story of Rick’s transformation may be related to an internal need of our own—both personally and collectively—to connect with something greater as well. It also indicates that if the internal reality the story expresses has shaped itself upon recurring primordial images or archetypes, then
the need to connect with something greater than ourselves, as expressed in this story, has its origins in an even greater story.

*It's Always the Same Old Story*

Indeed, there is nothing new about the tragic figure of a despondent, miserable wretch isolated from the rest of life, languishing on an island of despair. Thousands of years ago, the poet Homer wrote of just such a man, Odysseus, who likewise found himself shipwrecked and abandoned of all hope of ever seeing his beloved wife, Penelope, again. Here it is the Goddess Athena, herself, who takes up the cause of this tortured mortal:

My heart breaks for Odysseus,  
[. . .] he suffers from torments  
on a wave washed island  
rising at the center of the seas,  
A dark wooded island, [. . .]  
He is a luckless man – despite his tears,  
forever trying to spellbind his heart with suave, seductive words  
and wipe all thought  
of Ithaca from his mind.  
But he, straining for no more than a glimpse  
of hearth-smoke drifting up from his own land,  
Odysseus longs to die. (1.53-71)

In the early 14th century, the story evolved again in the *Commedia*, written by Dante Alighieri, whose self-styled protagonist, The Pilgrim, finds himself in the same, dark (wooded) place of longing and despair. Like Odysseus and Rick, he is also guided by a feminine image, Beatrice, who leads him homeward
toward the center of his own soul:

My friend, who is no friend of Fortune’s, strays on a desert slope; so many obstacles have crossed his path, his fright has turned him back.

I fear he may have gone so far astray, from what report has come to me in Heaven, that I may have started to his aid too late. (2.64-70)

Odysseus, The Pilgrim, and Rick are all aspects of the same archetypal wanderer, who has lost his way at mid-life. Their stories are the same, but they have been constantly re-translated into new metaphorical language that as Jung describes: “Dream[s] the myth onwards and give[s] it a modern dress” (Jung and Kerényi, 79). In The Eternal Drama, Edward Edinger adds that “Myths are not simply tales of happenings in the remote past but eternal dramas that are living themselves out repeatedly in our own personal lives in what we see around us” (3).

Most people can identify with these stories because their own personal stories began exactly where the stories of Rick, Odysseus, and Pilgrim began: having “wandered from the straight path” they find themselves aimlessly swigging back scotch in a bar in Casablanca, mobbing around the shore of Calypso’s isle, or simply lost somewhere “in a dark wood” (Inferno, 67). In her book, Dark Wood to White Rose, Helen Luke describes this experience as:

[T]he moment when we awaken to know that we are lost—to realize, as Jung says, that the ego is not master in the house, that we are stumbling around in the dark, and that our complacent goals of power, success, respectability, rebellion, uplift, or a thousand others are empty and meaningless. (4)
But not all stories of displacement begin “Midway along the journey of our life” (67) or at midlife. From the moment a newborn leaves the warmth, safety, and security of the womb, he or she is forced to deal with an unpredictable, complicated and often cruel world. Although the child’s initial cries will get him or her swaddled in warmth and fed on demand, darkness still looms. Those feeders have property rights, and as years pass and puberty encroaches so does the darkening chasm of discontentment and disenfranchisement.

The crossings made at times like puberty and middle-age tend to be seminal, life-changing experiences. However, wandering from the straight path and facing a dark wood is a far more common experience that occurs in its microcosmic form every time an individual encounters experiences that engender feelings of fear, disappointment, loss, and suffering. The darkness is the inability to see past the pain, and the fear emanates from the real possibility of getting stuck in those “hellish” places.

The single common experience of all the souls who have been condemned to Dante’s Inferno is that they have each become stuck or fixed in an incessant, repetitive void of their own making and design. The lovers, Paolo and Francesca, (Inferno 5) are not ill-fated because of their lust, but because they never grew past selfish, adolescent desires in their ability to love and relate to the
“other.” The gluttons are damned to wallow in the rain-soaked filth (*Inferno* 6), not because of their extreme excesses, but because they indulged in everything but the feeding of their own soul. Mark Musa writes in his commentary on the *Inferno*, “Dante the Pilgrim is journeying through Hell as a man who must learn the true nature of sin” (120).

We walked across this marsh of shades beaten down by the rain, our feet pressing on their emptiness that looked like human form. (6.36)

The attraction of these lost souls to such a hideous existence is the false belief in the illusion that life itself is fixed: that it is possible to become rich enough, attractive enough, in love enough, smart enough, or well-connected enough to avoid life’s sharp edges. But as Helen Luke points out, this fixed position only leads to the inability to process the pain:

As long as we seek escape from our various ‘hells’ into freedom from pain, we remain irremediably bound; we can emerge from the pains of Hell in one way only—by accepting another kind of suffering, the suffering which is purging, instead of meaningless damnation. (49)

The process of individuation is hard work. In the slow, arduous movement toward wholeness, it is as important to give significant attention to each footfall as it is to honor the great leaps a person makes at the crossings into adulthood and midlife. For the former certainly informs the latter. The days when it feels impossible to get out of bed, the weeks and months of agonizing depression, and the years abiding broken dreams and failed relationships are as
essential to the process of individuation as the moments of courage and
determination because they give rise to what Jung sees as the most essential
ingredient for psychic development—change.

[T]his praiseworthy and apparently unavoidable battle with the
years leads to stagnation and desiccation of soul [...]. Everything
grows old, all beauty fades, all heat cools, all brightness dims, and
every truth becomes stale and trite. For all these things have taken
on shape, and all shapes are worn thin by the working of time; they
age, sicken, crumble to dust—unless they change. (CW5, 356; par.
553)

The stronger the forces that push against the ego’s will, the greater the
potential for change to occur by breaking through to new levels of consciousness.

This may be the reason a hero like Rick Blaine is so compelling. By isolating and
protecting himself from unwanted hurt and rejection, he has effectively shut
down his libido. This reflects the status of Western consciousness in its desire to
be exempt from the suffering and sacrifice that is necessary to be in the natural
energetic flow of life. But by reaching out to Ilsa (as anima) he is revitalized, thus
reflecting the potentiality in everyone for the growth of higher consciousness.

Rick’s character demonstrates that when just the smallest spark of
willingness is kindled, it becomes possible for the individual to move again and
return to the flow of life, even with pain and fear. Once it is possible to
introspectively ask, “What is my part in the making of my own problems?” there
is finally a space for new aspects of the Self to emerge. This is the opening
though which consciousness is born. Helen Luke adds: “[N]o one who is not prepared to be searchingly honest with himself can ever hope to begin on the way to individuation. The whole thing would be a lie and the pretender remains in his hell” (75).

The Need to Tell the Tale

The birthing of higher consciousness begins with surrender to something greater than one’s own ego needs. But that’s not the end of the story. In the myth of Odysseus, there is an imperative step that must be taken before he can make the final crossing homeward. Odysseus must tell his story. In his book On Story Richard Kearney explains why this is such an essential act:

Life can be properly understood only by being retold mimetically through stories. […] [T]he recounted life [pries] open perspectives inaccessible to ordinary perception. It marks a poetic extrapolation of possible worlds which supplement and refashion our referential relations to the life-world existing prior to the act of recounting. (132)

In the Epic Cosmos, Mary Lou Hoyle calls attention to the fact that: “[Odysseus’s] transformation occurs when Athena points him to Alkinoos’ palace, where he will tell the story of his wanderings and in so doing, come to understand their purpose” (60). Myths and stories live through us in many dimensions simultaneously to form what Kearney calls a “shareable world” (3). He adds that: “Without this transition from nature to narrative, from
suffered to time enacted and enunciated, it is debatable whether a merely biological life (Zoe) could ever be considered a truly human one (bios)” (3).

The real processing work in life is done in the reflective mode where repeated experiences coalesce to form internal images and narratives that express a subjective view of reality and the individual’s and/or the collective’s relationship to it. In *Time and Narrative* Paul Ricoeur writes: “[T]ime becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence ” (52).

All experiences that occur in the present are instantly transformed into memory. All past memory, by its very nature, becomes a subjective reflection of the experience, which is then projected onto our understanding of all future experiences. To know oneself, which is the basis of all psychological development, is therefore a reflective process, and to reflect is to make a story. This is how people come to know themselves. But to tell a story, or to hear one told, is how humans come to know each other, which is also how they come to understand their limitations and their potential. Without these boundary markers, there would be no reasonable frame of reference for the self-assessment process that is necessary for the transformation of consciousness.

James Hillman describes how it is only an illusion to believe that this transformation occurs through ego control or will power. Instead, he contends
that there must be a shift from “our conception of the base of consciousness [as] ego to anima archetype, from I to soul” (*A Blue Fire* 32).

Consciousness arising from anima would therefore look to myth, as it manifests in the mythologems of dreams and fantasies [stories] and the pattern of lives; whereas ego-consciousness takes its orientations from the literalisms of its perspectives, i.e., that fantasy it defines as “reality.” Because fantasy-images provide the basis of consciousness, we turn to them for basic understanding. *Becoming conscious* would now mean becoming aware of fantasies and the recognition of them everywhere and not merely in a “fantasy world” separate from “reality.” (33)

Hillman’s argument would therefore support the idea that stories are not merely the passive experience they are often considered to be. Instead, they are an essential activator of the development of higher consciousness. Stories reflect or mirror the way humans perceive life, and this perception is what the soul knows. Like dreams, stories can only mirror back psychic truth because the individual who has a dream or tells a story cannot possibly know anything else. Like dreams, stories can appear as chaotic fragments, distortions, and even perversions. But they do not lie, even when that is the conscious intention behind the story: “They [...] invariably seek to express something that the ego does not know and does not understand” (*CW* 17, 103; par. 189).

In *Healing Fiction*, Hillman writes that at “the root of human ontology, its truth, essence, and nature, one must move in the fictional mode and use poetic tools” (36). Dramatic structure revolves around the need to know ourselves and
to comprehend one’s relationship to the world-other-than-self. It is, therefore, the centerpiece of all reflective thought. To this end then perhaps dramatic structure is not just a thing that mimics life, but it may be a representation of the pattern around which all consciousness is formed, the archetypal ground upon which nature itself evolves.

This would explain why a modern film like *Casablanca* reflects the same archetypal images as the stories of the bereft Odysseus and the forlorn Pilgrim who are longing for home. They are longing, as is everyone, to make meaning out of their existence, to find a sense of wholeness.

*The purpose of playing [. . .] is to hold,*

*as ‘twere, the mirror up to nature;*

*to show virtue her own feature,*

*scorn her own image*

*and the very age and body of the time*

*his form and pressure.*

—Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

(3.2.20-24)
Chapter 3
A Comparative View of the Hero Myth
and its Use in Cinematic Story Structure

A hero is an ordinary individual who finds
the strength to persevere and endure in
spite of overwhelming obstacles.
—Christopher Reeve
a.k.a. Superman

The Myth of the Hero Myth

Arguably, the greatest symbol of the hero in western culture is the
character of Heracles (Hercules) from Greek and Roman mythology. In The
Eternal Drama, Edward Edinger refers to him as “the hero of heroes [. . .], his
name is almost synonymous with the hero function” (53). Through nursery
stories, cartoons, television series, feature films, and, of course, classic
mythology, his celebrated exploits remain ever-popular and awe-inspiring. He is
seen as the righter of wrongs, defender of the weak, and champion of the
oppressed, who makes women swoon and men tremble. However, what’s
obscured in the modern interpretation of this idyllic hero story is that in the
ancient Greek myths, Hercules is a much darker, more insufferable presence.

Even though he is unquestionably the strongest and the bravest, he is also
a bully who is prone to fits of rage during which he once murdered his own
children. What contemporary stories have lost track of altogether is the fact that
it was this loss of all instinctual control that forced him into the penance later
celebrated as the Twelve Labors of Hercules. "Deeply indeed did he grieve afterwards in bearing the burden of his own mad folly; but that cannot be taken back. But on me fate laid heavy tasks" (Hesiod ll. 78-94).

Because of this slight omission or "spin" that's been applied to the classic hero archetype, not only has the modern view of this icon been sanitized, it has also lost its complexity and relevance. Without the need for atonement, all of the trials and labors of Hercules seem merely exceptional and extraordinary instead of the reasonable cost of redemption for the wreckage he made of his life.

As a result of this perspective, modern storytelling tends to bestow the title of hero only on characters who achieve great, uncommon feats of valor, like scaling tall buildings in a single bound or saving the planet from an invasion of body snatchers. But if hero were to be defined the old-fashioned way, by people who earned it in the service of redeeming their self-worth and striving to reach greater levels of consciousness, then not just superheroes would get the accolades. Middle-aged women who struggle to raise themselves from the ashes of a failed marriage, teens who overcome dangerous addictions, and men who leave the security of high-paying, yet unfulfilling careers to pursue a more authentic calling would be considered heroic as well. In fact, any human being—young or old, weak or strong, timid or brave—would be a contender for this honor because when hero is defined as what Edinger calls "the personification of
the urge to individuation” (Eternal Drama 52), the potential to be heroic lies within everyone.

This truth would also indicate that the potential for failure to grow and mature exists within everyone as well. Herein can be found the essential internal dynamics of the human drama. Wanting to achieve the soulful qualities of redemption, self-acceptance, love, and honor are all worthy aspirations; but as Hercules himself discovers, it takes a lot of strenuous effort and uncompromising resolve to achieve these goals.

The Hero Goes Hollywood

For better or for worse, Hollywood filmmakers love formulas. The film industry is, after all, a money-making enterprise and any recipe for easily repeatable success is deliciously appealing. One of the hottest current trends in screenwriting promotes a blend of old-time mythology and new-age rhetoric in a formula called the Hero’s Journey.

In the late 1980’s Christopher Vogler, a story analyst for Disney Studios, compiled a brief inter-office memo outlining the mythic journey of the hero as defined by Joseph Campbell in his book, The Hero with a Thousand Faces. The memo was so popular that Vogler was soon persuaded to adapt it into a book, suitably titled: The Writer’s Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers and
Screenwriters. Following soon after the very popular PBS series, The Power of Myth, hosted by Bill Moyers, Vogler’s book easily found a home in Hollywood, where acclaimed filmmakers like George Lucas and Steven Spielberg were already much enchanted with the works of Joseph Campbell.

Due in no small part to Vogler’s interpretation of Campbell, Hollywood movies should now be better than ever, expressing deeper storylines and greater heroic themes. But are they? A quick scan of the great majority of unremarkable films that have come out of Hollywood over the last decade would seem to indicate otherwise. Realistically, no technique or theory can be any better than the writers who employ it. There is no real way to measure how widely the Campbell/Vogler system has been integrated into the studio system, or how well it is understood and practiced. But one does have to wonder how a filmmaker like George Lucas, who attributes at least part of the creative inspiration for his original Star Wars masterpiece to Campbell’s heroic structure, could produce sequels (a.k.a. prequels) that have been as critically repudiated as the new Star Wars trilogy.

Assuming Lucas attempted to recycle the successful formula of the hero’s journey to create his latest installments of the original Star Wars, did he then fail Campbell’s structure, or did Campbell’s structure fail Lucas? Or is this mythic pattern of the hero simply not as universally applicable as Vogler asserts: “All
stories consist of a few common structural elements found universally in myths. [.] They are known collectively as The Hero’s Journey” (3).

There is certainly clear evidence that this archetypal pattern of the hero can be found in some of the great modern stories, like the original Star Wars trilogy, Gandhi, The Lion King and The Wizard of Oz. But is it fair to writers and to the work of Joseph Campbell to say that this is the only pattern found in all stories? The work of C. G. Jung offers an alternate perspective on the hero archetype, and its use as a model for contemporary storytelling may be far more encompassing.

Comparing and Contrasting Campbell and Jung on the Hero Myth in Modern Storytelling

In The Hero With a Thousand Faces, Joseph Campbell describes his view of the Hero’s Journey:

[A] magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation-initiation-return [. . .]: A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man. (30)

Within each of the three primary movements of the hero—Separation, Initiation, and Return—Campbell has five or six specific and highly detailed tasks or encounters that form the scope of the “Adventure of the Hero.” In order to
depart he is *Called to Adventure, Refuses the Call*, receives *Supernatural Aid, Crosses the First Threshold*, and enters the *Belly of the Whale*. In the initiation phase, he encounters the *Road of Trials, Meets with the Goddess*, experiences the *Woman as Temptress*, and discovers the *Ultimate Boon*. In order to return, he at first *Refuses*, then takes *Magic Flight*, is *Rescued from Without*, *Crosses the Threshold of Return*, *Masters the Two Worlds*, and ultimately finds the *Freedom to Live* (*Hero* 36-37).

Although Campbell offers cogent and persuasive interpretations for each of these movements, it may be that the very specificity of such a detailed model is too complex to work with for the average storyteller. Vogler himself has even acknowledged that he had to amend and simplify Campbell’s work; he recommends that others do the same. “Every storyteller bends the mythic pattern to his own purpose or the needs of her culture [. . .] That’s why the hero has a thousand faces” (Vogler, 17). While this seems reasonable, at what point does the writer’s adaptation of this model cease to be Campbell’s or even archetypal?

More importantly, however, is the concern that this description of the hero is so vast, and yet its requirements are so specific, that the frame or context through which the hero is defined is extremely narrow. By contrast, C. G. Jung’s hero myth, though never broken down into such a specific list, seems to embrace a greater view of the heroic, which he bases largely on the pattern of human individuation. This may make its application a stronger working model for modern storytellers because
it simply demonstrates the hero's capacity to evolve into his or her more authentic self, and does not demand that the hero go where no human being has gone before. In fact, an archetypal movement, by its very definition, means that it is an inescapable pattern of the human condition.

It is important to note that although Campbell is often considered to be a Jungian, especially in his views on myth, Robert Segal points out in his book, *Joseph Campbell: An Introduction*, that Campbell was neither a Jungian analyst nor did he participate in Jungian analysis, although he did edit a book called *The Portable Jung*. Even though Campbell repeatedly cites Jung in *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, he has openly declared that he is not a Jungian. The distinctions between the two, Campbell and Jung, regarding the Hero’s Journey, are evident not just in the detail, but in three primary points.

The biggest distinction between the two may well have to do with the overall goal or actual purpose of the journey itself. Campbell’s entire third phase of the Hero’s Journey is devoted to the return to his home or place of origin. The hero will make this return for two essential reasons: (1) to discover a new world back home, and (2) to save others.

When the hero-quest has been accomplished, [...] the adventurer still must return with his life-transmuting trophy [...] back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, to the ten thousand worlds. (*Hero* 193)
From a Jungian perspective, this is problematic because Campbell's reason for the hero's return actually diminishes the rest of the world. As Segal points out: "If the hero's return is selfless, the everyday world to which he is returning is worthless [...] For Campbell, the mythic hero is a true savior, offering his people the knowledge that gives them salvation" (Campbell 63).

Jung's hero, on the other hand, is the one who is saved. Rather than returning with an elevated view of himself or of his accomplishments, Jung's hero, to the contrary, is truly humbled by the ordeal. In an essay titled "On the Psychology of the Unconscious," Jung writes that, "[A] heroism is needed that cannot be seen from the outside. It does not glitter, is not belauded, and it always seeks concealment in everyday attire" (CW 7, 48; par. 72).

An excellent example of this is illustrated in the film, It's a Wonderful Life. After nearly drowning in a botched suicide attempt, George Bailey, Frank Capra's selfless hero, returns home, not to bestow yet another boon on his fellow townsfolk but, for the first time, to receive help from them. Bailey has spent a lifetime deferring his own inner needs to the service of others. So it is not surprising that at the most critical moment, when the devious Mr. Potter is about to take over the town, that George has nothing left in him to give. He's used up, empty, ready to end it all. His courageous trek, therefore, is not an outward bound expedition, but a journey inward to review and renew his own life. With
the help of his angel, Clarence, he ultimately puts meaning and value back into his existence.

This does not fit Campbell's heroic model because George returns empty-handed and the boon comes to him, not from him. But for Jung, it is precisely George Bailey's empty-handedness that gives him heroic stature, for it represents "the attempt to free [...] ego-consciousness from the deadly grip of [...] unconsciousness" (CW 5, 348; par. 539). A reconnection to George's inner, true self has been made, and it means that he will never have to stand alone again.

This leads to the second distinctive point of departure between Campbell and Jung's heroic paradigms. Campbell's view is that the dissolution of the ego is the hero's supreme goal. He writes: "Having died to his personal ego, he arose again established in the Self" (Hero 58). This is not Jung's view of the Self and its relationship to the ego. Instead, Jung states emphatically, "[T]here can be no question on a total extinction of the ego for then the focus of consciousness would be destroyed" (CW 9ii, 44-45; par. 79). The ego is never to be "transcended," but rather brought into balance with the unconscious. Robert Segal explains in Joseph Campbell: An Introduction that, "For Jung, the loss of ego consciousness, let alone of the ego itself, would mean the hero's failure, not his success: it would mean his failure to break free of the unconscious" (58).

Ironically, according to Jung, it would also preclude the hero's need to
return home. If the hero is free of ego, what would be his motivation to return and deliver a boon to others—unless, of course, he is a saint or a god?

The third distinction between these two theorists is the very vision of the hero itself. Campbell's ultimate hero is a selfless, egoless, god-like, mythic character, capable of going where no man or woman has gone before. While this is an illustrious and viable archetypal figure that is no doubt found at the root of our interior associations with the likes of Christ, Buddha, and Mohammed, its very stature seems to limit its application to only the grandest of heroic ideals. Is it then a viable model for the entire cinematic venue? Certainly, it’s possible to see this archetypal pattern in “savior” epics such as Lord of the Rings and even in the Matrix series, but what about the other ninety percent of the films that are made?

In The Hero with a Thousand Faces Campbell states that: “The whole sense of the ubiquitous myth of the hero's passage is that it shall serve as a general pattern for men and women” (121). But if Campbell’s heroic structure were applied to all stories, would that pattern always fit? For example, it does not seem to translate to a film like Rocky, because even though the title character does find the courage and determination to go the distance, he does not take home the championship. It also does not seem to be an appropriate pattern for Ada’s character development in Jane Campion’s award winning film, The Piano. In this
story Ada does conquer her fears, overcome feelings of isolation and domination in a remote and hostile land, reconnect with love and regain the use of her voice. But because she also never returns home with a boon for all humanity or even just for her community, she would not qualify for Campbell’s heroic model either. However, Rocky, Ada, George Bailey, Forrest Gump, and almost any fully dimensional character in film would fulfill Jung’s view of the heroic, even if they ultimately fail in their heroic endeavor. His primary stipulation for the hero is “striving and accomplishment” (Segal, Jung 28) in the process of individuation. Jung maintains that “[heroes are] first and foremost a self-representation of the longing of the unconscious, of its unquenched and unquenchable desire for the light of consciousness” (CW 5, 205; par. 299).

It is extremely doubtful that either Campbell or Jung ever suggested that their theories on the hero myth were adaptable as a one-size-fits-all formula for the heroic model in cinematic storytelling. In fact, it is doubtful that they made any claims about how to write for the movies at all. It is Hollywood that has tried to turn their concepts into quick fixes and easy formulas, but perhaps none are meant to be found.

What Campbell and Jung offer is something far more insightful and far more valuable. Their perspectives can add depth and clarity to the understanding of the heroic quest for wholeness. Even if Campbell’s vision of
the hero’s journey is too complex and copious to fit all story formats, understanding its principles can help storytellers pay more attention to the archetypal elements that will arise naturally and spontaneously in their stories.

Jung’s heroic model, on the other hand, which is based on the archetypal pattern of human individuation, does open up more naturally as a guide for dramatic structures, because all stories—at their core—are about the human need to grow toward wholeness. But even this model holds no magic formula for a fill-in-the-blanks approach to story. Art is a process of self-discovery that can only occur at the far reaches of one’s known world. This is where the birthing of new consciousness takes place. Therefore, intuition, instinct, and sensitivity cannot be replaced with any “sure-fire” technique. But understanding the natural patterns of movement in the human quest for Self-fulfillment can offer greater insight into the nature of story. It can also serve as an organizing principle around which a creative vision has the opportunity to open to greater consciousness.

A New Hero Myth

In most of the language Campbell and Jung use to describe the hero, feminine pronouns are conspicuously absent. This may be partially due to the fact that gender political correctness in writing style was not even a concept in
the first half of the Twentieth Century when most of their theories were written. But it more likely has to do with the types of myths that have classically been defined as heroic.

Both Campbell and Jung describe the hero as one who conquers dragons, seeks the “treasure hard to attain,” and escapes the belly of the whale by cutting off its vital organ—which is, of course, a mytho-euphemism for cutting the cord to the Terrible Mother. The non-mother, feminine role in all of these quests is the anima-hard-to-attain: the long-suffering Penelope, the trouble-making Helen, the hard-to-hold Eurydice, and the don’t-screw-with-me Medea. Their feminine function in most of the heroic myths is to sit around and wait, stirring up a little trouble when they get bored or annoyed, while the men go off to tame dragons and seek treasures.

If taken literally, it appears that heroics are purely the domain of the male gender. But if approached allegorically, it’s the masculine side of human nature that is called to action. In The Eternal Drama Edward Edinger writes:

The hero can be thought of as a dynamism toward a certain kind of psychological achievement or service, more concretely as a personification of the urge to individuation [...] The myths about the hero figure depict a striving toward the realization of individual uniqueness. (54-55)

In these myths the masculine hero is that part of any individual, male or female, that strives outwardly toward psychological achievement, while the
feminine aspect of the story that sits and waits, is the soul center or psyche. Her job description seems to include using any means necessary to trick, cajole, lure, seduce, inspire, or in any way motivate the hero within to stay faithful and hurry home to her.

At least this is the way it has been. But recently the feminine seems to be taking a far more proactive role in storytelling. The hero myths growing in popularity these days, like Innana, Amor and Psyche, and Yeshe Tsogyal, which is of Buddhist origin, are inspiring the emergence of a new kind of hero. This hero or heroine, however, is not trying to tame the outer world; instead she fights her way out of the dark inner depths up into the light. Passive no more, she seems to be rising to meet her soul partner, Eros, halfway.

This time of mythic transition can best be seen reflectively in the mythopoetic experience. The masculine heroes in modern stories generally appear to be far more introverted then the heroes of the past. Legendary figures like Galahad, Lancelot, D’Artagnan, and Robin Hood were robust, uncompromising, and self-assured. But today, the cultural male heroes tend to be older, more reserved, less confident, and highly skeptical that there will ever be a happy ending. Like Rick in Casablanca, they are cast in the archetypal mold of Odysseus: despondent, disheartened, luckless, yearning for home, yearning to reconnect with Penelope (the feminine who sits and faithfully waits).
In the opening scenes of *Lethal Weapon*, Martin Riggs (Mel Gibson) is so despondent over the loss of his wife that he holds a gun to his mouth as tears streak down his face. In *It's a Wonderful Life*, George Bailey (Jimmy Stewart) is ready to throw himself off of a bridge, and in *Sea of Love*, Al Pacino is intent on drinking himself into oblivion. Other classic malcontents include: J. J. Gittes, (Jack Nicholson) the dame-weary P.I. in *Chinatown*, Paul (Marlon Brando), the life-weary ex-patriot in *Last Tango in Paris*, and Harry (Clint Eastwood), the street-weary cop in *Dirty Harry*. In fact, nearly every character Clint Eastwood has ever portrayed would fit into this archetypal pattern, and so would the characters played by Robert De Niro, Marlon Brando, Al Pacino, and Jack Nicholson.

Meanwhile, there is nothing passive or weepy about today’s modern female heroines. From Scarlett O’Hara and Eliza Doolittle to contemporary icons like Thelma and Louise, Erin Brockovich, Mrs. Robinson, and Princess Leia, these ladies are not shy about going after what they want and they are demanding attention and respect. Perhaps the best evidence of this newly evolving feminine heroic can be seen in a real life drama that played itself out on the world stage.

Just after midnight on August 31, 1997, Diana, Princess of Wales, died in a tragic car accident. As *Newsweek* later reported, "The news of the fatal crash touched off an avalanche of grief that started large and grew to epochal proportions. A funeral of dignity and beauty became an international rite of
passage" (87). Undoubtedly there are individuals indifferent toward Diana's life and untimely passing, but the magnitude of the world-wide response to her tragedy suggests that her story touched something important in the collective psyche.

Other great beauties, and even princesses such as Grace of Monaco, died just as tragically, but their passing made barely a ripple. Why then did Diana's death seem to emotionally shift the globe off its axis? This would hardly be the response to a mere icon of beauty and privilege. It seems instead that there was a quality about Diana's story to which people directly related, or in psychological terms, something upon which they projected a part of themselves. Jung says of the hero myth that it is, "[A]n unconscious drama seen only in projection [. . .]. The hero himself appears as a being of more than human stature" (CW 5, 258, par. 391).

Is Diana a hero? At nineteen, when she captured the eye of Prince Charles and became his bride, she certainly gained recognition and distinction as a fairytale-type princess, but this hardly rises to the level of hero status. Over the years, however, as her innocence publicly fell away, so did ours. Her story, expounded in excruciating detail in the daily press, came to symbolize the death of the myth that marriage, money, beauty and position will bring happiness "ever after." And while this shift of consciousness was very potent, had Diana's
story ended there it would have been merely tragic, not heroic.

However, the events of her life that ensued, culminating in an untimely death that gave rise to her to "more than human stature," may adequately fulfill Jung’s evaluation of a mythic hero, but with a twist. Whereas masculine heroes tend to strive for Self-knowledge (to know thyself), the feminine goal seems to one of relatedness. Both goals are necessary for achieving wholeness and as a result there is much about their heroic journeys that appears similar. Although the classic Jungian hero is male (Segal, Jung 29), Jung’s primary stipulation for the hero is "striving and accomplishment" (Segal 28). These are virtues that can unequivocally be attributed to Diana.

In “The Origin of the Hero” Jung explains that when a hero takes human form, he or she “chang[es] into a figure who passes from joy to sorrow, from sorrow to joy, and, like the sun, now stands at the zenith and now is plunged into darkest night, only to rise to new splendor” (CW 5, 171; par. 251).

From the pinnacle of marrying the richest and most influential Prince-who-would-be-king, to the depths of divorce and public humiliation, Diana astoundingly rose again on her own terms, into her own identity. This identity became "Princess of the People," and included a largess of spirit that literally brought her around the globe bestowing love, concern, and even physical assistance.
This is not to say that all in Diana was healed. Jung acknowledges that the "heroic deed has no lasting effects. Again and again the hero must renew the struggle" (Segal, Jung 160). Biographies of Diana, including Diana: Her True Story, by Andrew Morton, attest to the fact that she seemed to have struggled against her own darkness every day of her life, no matter how she grew in popularity. This insatiable quest for the light of consciousness, however, may be further evidence of her heroic status:

The heroes are usually wanderers, and wandering is a symbol of longing, of the restless urge which never finds its object [. . .] [S]he is first and foremost a self-representation of the longing of the unconscious, of its unquenched and unquenchable desire for the light of consciousness. (CW 5, 205; par. 299)

But unlike her masculine counterpart, the feminine hero does not fight to sever herself from the monsters of the dark; she struggles instead to reconcile with them. As Erich Neumann explains in Amor and Psyche: The Psychic Development of the Feminine:

Psyche's existence in the dark paradise of Eros is an interesting variant of the [masculine] hero's engulfment by the whale-dragon-monster. [. . .] The danger of engulfment is often distinguished by the lure of a (regressive) paradise which [. . .] conceals a devouring monster. [. . .] [I]n the masculine solar myth the hostile, killing action of the hero occupies the foreground [. . .]; it kills and "dismembers" its object, the dragon. In its feminine variant this need of knowing remains bound up with the greater need of loving. Even where the heroine Psyche is compelled to wound, she preserves her bond with her lover, whom she never ceases to conciliate and transform. (footnote, 74-5)
There can be little question but that Diana greatly transformed Prince Charles and the House of Windsor, making them more open and more accessible. In so doing, she greatly transformed herself as well into a more confident and self-possessed woman. "The knowing Psyche, who sees Eros in the full light and has broken the taboo of his invisibility, is no longer naïve and infantile in her attitude toward the masculine; [. . .] she is so completely changed in her new womanhood [. . .]" (Neumann 79).

But even as change occurs, Jung believes there is no guarantee that one will not be permanently pulled off course by longing for an all-consuming passion which can destroy everything. This longing is for the mother which is both "the supreme goal," and "the most frightful danger—the 'Terrible Mother'" (CW 5, 236; par. 352).

Although Diana does not literally fit the heroic model in that she was not born of miraculous origins and extraordinary circumstances, she does, however, exemplify Jung’s notion that the hero is born of two mothers: a birth and a rebirth: "One of the mothers is the real, human mother, the other is the symbolical mother: [. . .] distinguished as being divine, supernatural, or in some way extraordinary" (CW 5, 322; par. 495).

Having the Queen of England as a mother-in-law would certainly qualify as extraordinary. Just as Aphrodite stood as the jealous guardian of Psyche’s
reconnection to Eros, the "Queen Mother" stood stalwartly as the battlement through which Diana had to penetrate to find her own sense of identity in the world. Like Psyche, at the onset of all of her attendant labors demanded by the queen, Diana seriously contemplated suicide. Her ongoing battles with bulimia and anorexia further indicated her willingness to journey to the land of Persephone and "consciously look death in the face" (Neumann 115): "Now that Psyche is conscious of her goal; now that she has attained ego stability, she is no longer willing to follow the merely natural demands of her being, and is capable of seeing through the guile of hostile powers" (115).

The very fact that Diana stood up to the queen regarding how her children would be raised, and that she refused to submit to making a pretense out of her miserable marriage to the Prince for the sake of royal protocol, also adheres to the heroic standard: "The hero is a hero just because [s]he sees resistance to the forbidden goal in all life's difficulties and yet fights that resistance with the whole-hearted yearning that strives towards the treasure hard to attain [...]" (CW 5, 331; Par. 510).

That treasure was happiness; the real thing, not the illusion. Diana most profoundly came to symbolize this quality, especially for women. The fact that she is a female hero may be of epic significance in this regard, because at any other point in modern history her quest would perhaps have been completely
unattainable. Women, especially prominent women who behaved in any defiant manner, were at best considered mentally off-balanced and locked away, or they were proclaimed a severe danger to society and removed from the public or even killed. Only in the past fifty years or so have women been in a position to assert their own legitimate voice and make choices and take actions in their own best interest. Diana did not invent this, but she did achieve it in the most visible way.

Her defiance of the Royal family and their stodgy, insincere, meaningless existence brought her right into the belly of the whale: "[The hero] is swallowed [by the sea monster], struggles against being bitten and crushed to death, and having arrived inside the "whale dragon," seeks the vital organ, which [s]he proceeds to cut off or otherwise destroy" (CW 5, 347; par. 538).

Diana did just that. She "lit a fire" within the belly of the beast. Her motives may not always have been exemplary, but when she found herself cornered, exploited, and oppressed by a monolithic tyrant, she fought back as best she could to free herself. In the process her struggles helped bring to consciousness a greater awareness of what Johnson describes as "how much the masculine pursuit of power, production, prestige, and 'accomplishment' impoverishes us and drives the feminine values out of our lives" (We 21). As a result, her tomb became a womb that helped birth a new kind of heroism, one that fights for relatedness, struggles for connection, attempts to gain inner
wisdom, and above all strives to find love.

It can be tempting but dangerous to dismiss or trivialize the Diana phenomenon. Robert Johnson comments:

When a great psychological phenomenon suddenly appears in the life of an individual, it represents a tremendous unconscious potential that is rising to the level of consciousness. The same is true for a culture. At a certain point in the history of a people, a new possibility bursts out of the collective unconscious; it is a new idea, a new belief, a new value, or a new way of looking at the universe. (We xiii)

It is not just Freud, Jung, and Campbell who have associated the heroic myth with a masculine ideal. As a culture, there is an inclination in the west to judge female heroes by masculine standards of conquest and achievement. This includes heroines like Joan of Arc, Madame Curie, Susan B. Anthony, and even Mother Theresa. There can easily be a tendency not to take Diana seriously because most people have little or no criteria by which to judge the heroic feminine. However, what Jung himself helped to usher in is a new era in which Psyche is being re-birthed. Her myth offers a perspective on the heroic challenges of the feminine which indeed looks and feels different than the outward strivings of masculine heroes like Hercules, Jason, and Achilles. Therefore, the feminine heroes will be something other than "hero" as they are now perceived. But what is most crucial to note is that her goal is not the domination or conquest of the masculine; instead, she fights to reach him and
bring him in close. As Ginette Paris writes in *Pagan Meditations*: “The trials that Aphrodite caused Psyche to undergo transformed the ignorant and naïve girl into a woman who was aware of what love costs and who knew at last the true face of her husband” (100).
Chapter 4
The Destroyer/Creator

To get rid of the symptom
means to get rid of the chance
to gain what may one day be of greatest value,
Even if at first an unbearable irritant,
lowly, and disguised.
—James Hillman
(A Blue Fire 19)

As a medium through which the process of individuation is conveyed,
storytelling may be one of the most powerful means of creation in the human
psychological experience. Stories inseminate the psyche with the seeds of inner
growth which, like the human genome, contain a roadmap that serves as a guide
through the complex interior patterning of individual and collective
development.

But anything that has the power to create also holds the potential to
destroy. The pen can be far more lethal than the sword in its ability to tell lies,
insinuate threats, spread gossip and disseminate propaganda. There are also
very insidious forms of devastation that stories can wage against the human
psyche in the form of mind-dumbing mediocrity and desensitizing violence and
aggression.

Therefore, while stories have the ability to inspire and motivate, they can
also lead humanity down a very dark and deadly path. But, herein lies a
profound paradox: *that which destroys, also creates*. In Hindu mythology this
destroyer/creator (Shiva/Brahma) energy is considered essential for achieving
wholeness. Marion Woodman and Elinor Dickson explore this notion in their
book, *Dancing in the Flames*, by examining the “treasures and hidden riches” that
come out of the dark and deadly places:

The descent is undertaken voluntarily [...] or involuntarily, when
the abyss unexpectedly opens. The potential in either case comes
from the fact that ordinary ego perceptions are shattered; cracks
occur in the well-crafted persona. Through these cracks emerges
the possibility of something new. (37)

It can be a powerful and emotionally gratifying experience when a literary
work captures the radiance of the human condition and eloquently illuminates
the internal *movement of spirit* toward wholeness. But if story is only viable when
it reaches some arbitrary level of greatness, how then is the rest of story defined
and what purpose does it serve?

Even in its banal, brutish, regressive, and trivial forms, story cannot be
anything other than a conscious or unconscious product of the human psyche. In
this regard, Jung confirms that *all* psychic product “has its own peculiar meaning
and purpose in the actual psychic process” (*Dreams* 25-6). Therefore, the “junk”
end of the spectrum of the human story must have purpose and meaning as well.
although stories like *Friday the 13th* or *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* may seem
destructive, harmful, and damaging they may actually serve a very potent
(Shiva-like) function necessary to help “crack” things open in the death and renewal process of individuation. As repugnant as stories are that seem to contain nothing but gratuitous violence they may, in fact, serve the purpose of breaking through the tough layers of ego consciousness that the smooth functioning of more highly evolved stories cannot penetrate.

As described by Woodman and Dickson, sometimes the breakdown in the ego’s defenses occurs willingly. This can happen through ritual, inner work, creative expression, and therapeutic modes. But where there is great resistance, something fierce and obdurate is needed to crack open the protective outer veneer of the persona in order to allow new aspects of the Self to emerge.

When personal and social advancement stagnates, and a higher level of consciousness is required to revitalize the culture, all manner of disruptive upheaval is possible. Most social revolutions occur when volatile or capricious intrusions by unwanted forces push the status quo to the breaking point. The havoc and chaos necessary to dislodge a prevailing social order most often finds its way into a system through the weakest and most vulnerable points: the impoverished, the disenfranchised, the marginalized and the innocent. This list also describes the groups that are considered most vulnerable to the influence of today’s media. Violent movies, aggressive video games and hostile rock music are often characterized as poisoning the minds of the young and vulnerable in
the culture, and are thereby held responsible for antisocial and maladjusted
outbursts of behavior.

Because story is so often linked to the creative impulses of storytellers, it is
seldom perceived as an autonomous force. Instead, it is generally relegated only
to the realm of art and poetry, where it is considered a sweet companion that
makes "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" (Shakespeare, Hamlet 3:1)
in this world more bearable. As a result it can be difficult to look past (or
through) mediocre, banal, and crass storytelling to see that it can be both "bad"
and essential in terms of its generative function. As an instigator of psychic
development, a story's desirability may be merely a covert means of attracting
and holding our attention. The popularity of modern films that portray an
aberrant, distorted, and even psychotic vision of humanity may be a means by
which the collective unconscious is struggling to call attention to something in
the culture that is likewise aberrant and destructive and drastically in need of
change.
Entering the Wound

Where we have been marked is where
the soft spot of our being is,
where we are most finite;
but it is also where the hinge is located
that marks the pivot of our history and our destiny.
—Dennis Patrick Slattery
(The Wounded Body 15)

On April 20th, 1999, two teens casually walked into Columbine High School, located in an affluent suburb of Denver, and mercilessly opened fire on their classmates with an arsenal of assault weaponry. When the haze of gun smoke finally settled later that afternoon, fifteen people were dead and scores more were injured. Within days, if not actually hours, blame was assigned to many for the growing national tragedy of teen violence in every conceivable direction. Parents were accused of neglect; they in turn blamed teachers for indifference. Teachers decried community leaders and governmental agencies for their detachment and lack of leadership in what was perceived to be an intensifying disconnection of today's youth. But the greatest expression of public outrage was reserved for the National Rifle Association and the media. The former held firm to their credo that, guns don't kill people; people kill people, and their leader, Charleston Heston, wasted no time lambasting the media: "The dirty secret of this day and age is that political gain and media ratings all too often bloom upon fresh graves" (Flynn, A-1).
At this point, the media was left with no one else to blame, and as a result Congressional hearings on Media Violence began. Long repudiated as a beacon for decadent behavior and decaying moral values, politicians were quick to link teen aggression to the increased amount of violence exploited throughout all entertainment venues. Colorado’s Republican Governor, Bill Owens opened a teen summit on youth violence with remarks affirming the widely-held position that the lack of moral direction in this country’s young people is a direct result of increased violence in the media: “We gather together here as a society because we are afraid. We are afraid something has gone profoundly wrong in our state and in our nation […]” ("Teens Speak Out […]" A-8).

Rich, white, educated kids were machine-gunning other rich, white, educated kids. The violence had finally provoked an outcry. Finally people began to notice that "something has gone profoundly wrong." Was it collective neglect, indifference, detachment, and ambivalence? Or was it too many guns and too little censorship of the shocking, perverse and revolting media images that have infiltrated American lives?

Ultimately, it did not really matter where the blame fell; the something-that-has-gone-profoundly-wrong succeeded in capturing the nation’s attention. At last, its presence was recognized: a door opened that beckoned the community-at-large to enter into communication with this frightful force.
"As with all dangers," C. G. Jung cautions, "we can guard against the risk of psychic infection only when we know what is attacking us, and how, where and when the attack will come" (CW 10, 249; par. 493). Ironically, this may mean that the very purveyors of violence in the media have unwittingly opened a pathway to this country's psychic survival, because it is they who have opened direct access to the wound. In so doing, they unleashed the monsters from the deep, which is to say that they have given our darkest fears a voice.

Though this could be something to fear, Dennis Slattery points out in his book, The Wounded Body, "Our wounds have the capacity to advance our consciousness to new levels of awareness. [...] [They] may be the loci of place that put us in the most venerable and vulnerable contact with the world, with divinity, with one another, and with ourselves" (16). Fear, therefore, is only one option for dealing with this wound. Another would be to take up the heroic challenge and enter into communication with it.

In his book Inner Work, Robert Johnson offers guidance as to how to approach these frightful image-symbols of the unconscious:

The human mind is invested with a special power to convert the invisible realm into forms so that it can be seen in the mind and contemplated. Only our power to make images enables us to see it. When we make contact with these images, we also directly experience the inner parts of ourselves that are clothed in these images. (23)
As the external by-product of the inner domain, it is relevant to inquire: from where do these images of mass violence, carnage, and sexual degradation originate? Whose inner domain? As Jung asks, "Exactly who is the doer?" (CW 12, 31; Par. 36). If these images belong only to the demented fantasy realm of a handful of greedy Hollywood producers, then to what can their enormous worldwide appeal be attributed?

Humans have always engaged in storytelling as a primary means of self-definition. Story consciously and unconsciously links people to the common human experience. No story is unique to a single individual, except in the detail. In his book *Men and the Water of Life*, Michael Meade explains that, "Stories display the mythic backdrops and ideal images that are the psychic inheritance of people. The individual soul expects to be seen into and heard out while in these conditions" (152).

*Who is the doer?* If everyone shares the same story, then perhaps "the doer" can be found in everyone. Perhaps the horrifying, catastrophic, perverse images flooding out of Hollywood belong to all people in this culture as a kind of collective psychic nightmare. Jung believed that dreams in general are compensatory and that nightmarish dreams may be the psyche's way of shocking us to attention: "If we try to ignore the inner world, as most of us do, the unconscious will find its way into our lives through pathology: or
psychosomatic symptoms, compulsions, depressions, and neuroses” (Johnson, *Inner Work 11*).

The massive violence that continues to appear in all media forms may indicate that *something* in the shadowy depths of this culture is being ignored, and is, therefore, growing to grotesque proportions to get attention. Unfortunately, there is no way to know what this “something” is until we have the courage to enter into communication with it. However, one thing can be known for certain, the more it is avoided and disavowed, the stronger it will grow. This is the nature of shadow. “The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real” (*CW 6, 462; par. 794*).
Engaging the Shadow

Because symptoms lead to soul,
the cure of symptoms may also cure away soul,
get rid of just what is beginning to show,
at first tortured and crying for help,
comfort and love, but which is the soul
in the neurosis trying to make itself heard,
trying to impress the stupid and stubborn mind
—that impotent mule which insists
on going its unchanging obstinate way.
—James Hillman,
(A Blue Fire 18)

In fairy tales, children are pushed into ovens, have their hands chopped off, are forced to sleep in coal bins, and must contend with wolves who want to eat their grandmother. In myths there is rape, incest, all manner of gruesome bloodshed, child abandonment, and total debauchery as standard fare. More of the same occurs in biblical stories, heightened with dire predictions of terrors and abominations in an end of the world apocalypse that is more horrifying than the human imagination can even grasp. For the most part, these images of violence, promiscuity and human degradation can be explained away as symbolic manifestations of the shadow side of the human psyche—unconscious. This assertion is supported, in no small part, by the violent, erotic, and chaotic manifestations of the human psyche that can also occur in dreams.

As a culture, these literary forms seem to be widely accepted even though they contain this violent and apparently antisocial content. Parents lovingly read
their children to sleep with these images of forced drudgery, painful mutilations, and vengeful retribution. Teachers and preachers alike use these quasi-historical and metaphorical tales of aggression and hostility to inspire and enlighten. Little concern, if any, is proffered to the possibility that these classic stories will result in violent displays of antisocial mayhem. And, in fact, there is little evidence that this is true. For the most part, children seem to have a healthy relationship to these stories, in which the violence and sexuality does tend to help them integrate the shadow or unconscious aspects of their ego development.

In the introduction to his book, *The Uses of Enchantment*, Bruno Bettelheim explains this phenomenon:

> By dealing with universal human problems, particularly those which preoccupy the child’s mind, these stories speak to his budding ego and encourage its development, while at the same time relieving preconscious and unconscious pressures. As the stories unfold, they give conscious credence and body to id pressures and show ways to satisfy that these are in line with ego and superego requirements. (6)

If it is then stipulated that, to some degree, violence in folk, fairy tale, mythic and biblical traditions is a constructive and natural reflection of the psyche’s connection to the interior realms of the unconscious, why then are so many people in this culture adamantly convinced that violence and sexuality in modern film and television is destroying the morality of the nation’s youth. In a Senate report on “Children, Violence, and the Media,” Senator Orrin
Hatch of Utah summed it up for many Americans: "Hence, having fed our children death and horror as entertainment, we should not be surprised by the outcome" (5).

Story has been around since humans first began to grunt to each other, and it is difficult to imagine that even the most primitive mind did not have some degree of innate understanding of the metaphorical and allegorical qualities of story. Why then is it assumed that the adolescent American male, living in the 21st Century BCE, cannot make this mystical leap of judgment as well?

Richard Kearney’s book On Story echoes this view and would add a cautionary response to Senator Hatch’s report, warning “not to underestimate ordinary people’s intelligence, [or] grossly […] insult those who experience real violence in the real world” (152). He goes on to say:

People just know, and have known since the first Paleolithic caveman said ‘I’ll tell you a story […]’, that there is a difference between lived and recounted life. And the first civilization to erode that difference, or our awareness of it, is a civilization in dire straits. (Kearney 136)

Unquestionably, some cinematic images of brutality, savagery, and gore are disturbingly psychotic and totally gratuitous in their usage; but are they representative of something other than shadow? Or is it just that this shadow seems too overwhelming for parents, teachers, clergy and senators to manage?
Even considering the view of Jungian analyst, Marie-Louise von Franz that, "Not all dark impulses lend themselves to redemption; [...] [and we have to be careful not to] accept everything that comes up from the unconscious" (Interpretation of Fairy Tales 132); is it really violence in the media that is destroying this nation’s moral vision and corrupting its youth? Or are the violent images really just the messenger?

In Shadow and Evil in Fairy Tales, von Franz refers to a fairy tale called "Getting Angry," in which a youth inadvertently shoots his aunt with a rifle. Symbolically, she explains that, "In shooting, explosives are used. Here is a transformation of explosive rage" (220). Is it possible then that at least some of the violence exploding across American movie screens is symbolic of explosive rage as well? And, if that is the case, is the malady best cured by suppressing the symptom? In other words, can suppressed rage be healed by suppressing it even further? Jung firmly believed otherwise: "Mere suppression of the shadow is as little of a remedy as beheading would be for a headache" (CW 11, 77; par. 133).

Von Franz further states that as anger escalates it evolves into something even more menacing. "As soon as somebody gets emotional, it does not matter which side that person takes; the fire has taken hold [...]. [T]hen one is in danger of falling for the principle of evil" (Shadow and Evil 218).

This may be why violence in the media feels so dangerous. If it represents
suppressed, unconscious rage then, "like a suffocated fire burning and
smoldering all the time, this kind of repressed affect is highly infectious" (von
Franz, Shadow and Evil 218). The violent images may have a corruptive influence
on the well-being of the young and vulnerable. But the images may also be an
early warning symptom that the something-that-has-gone-profoundly-wrong is
lurking in the shadowy depths, ready to explode. Suppression, avoidance, and
intolerance cannot leach this poison out of the system; it will only drive it deeper
into the heart of the culture.

"The right reaction to a symptom," James Hillman advises, "may as well
be a welcoming rather than laments and demands for remedies, for the symptom
is the first herald of an awakening psyche which will not tolerate any more
abuse" (A Blue Fire 18). Whatever this symptom of violence is about, it is not
something other than, or outside of, our own humanity. What lies inside the
symptom is the wound itself and this is what must be healed if the violence is to
be truly mitigated.

In the Grail legend, the young knight Perceval gained entry to the holy
Castle of the Grail and even encountered the King. But when he awoke the next
morning all was gone because he failed to notice the King’s wound. If the real
wound goes unnoticed and no compassion is demonstrated toward it, isn’t this
culture also courting the loss of the entire kingdom?
[It] is the King’s sickness that causes the conflict to break out; the ruler is no longer able to hold the opposites together. From this originates the complete devastation of the land, the stagnation of psychic life. (Jung, Emma and von Franz 194)

Portraying the sickness as the inability to hold the opposites together is an essential clue in understanding any conflict, but it is especially relevant here. When anger has escalated to the point that it is perceived as evil, its opposite, good, must be dangerously out of balance as well.

In Shadow and Evil, von Franz relates the story of “Snow White and Rose Red” (225), two beautiful girls who were raised by their mother to always be kind and considerate of others. One day, as the girls venture into the forest to play, they encounter a dwarf whose beard is tangled in a tree. Because their mother had taught them to always be kind, they assist in the dwarf’s release by cutting off part of his beard. Once freed, the dwarf shows no gratitude, but furiously berates and belittles the girls for destroying his beard. This same scenario occurs two more times, and each time the girls “do the right thing” and free the dwarf, only to incur more wrath. When they come upon him a fourth time he is counting his gold and treasures. Just as he is shrieking threateningly at the girls, a bear comes out of the woods and kills the dwarf. The bear then turns into a handsome prince and reclaims his fortune that the dwarf had stolen and marries one of the girls (and his brother conveniently marries the other).

The important point obscured in this simple story, is that by holding only
to the value of “being good” and “doing the right thing,” the girls demonstrate no ability to distinguish good from evil, right from wrong, and even safety from danger. In fact, their naive simple-mindedness has rendered them defenseless and extremely vulnerable. But that is not what is generally noticed on the surface of this story. Instead, it may be easy for some to see these girls through a cultural lens that holds them as models of virtue. The fact that they might have ended up as dwarf stew had the bear not come along, does not enter into the equation, because in the collective fantasy, good is always supposed to conquer evil, one way or another.

However, here is precisely where the trap lies. As long as the pure light of “good” always conquers the darkness of “evil,” there remains a great imbalance between these two opposites. As Marion Woodman and Elinor Dickson explain in *Dancing in the Flames*, “The opposites are complementary, not contradictory. They are partners in the dance of life” (211).

*Breaking the Waves*, a 1996 Danish film, explores the same thematic territory as “Snow White and Rose Red,” but it exposes the idealization of “good” for its Self-destructive potential. In this story no prince in bear’s clothing comes to the rescue the good girl. Instead, as William Butler Yeats expresses in his poem, “The Second Coming,” “The blood-dimmed tide is loosed” and she is “destroyed in a ceremony of innocence” (89).
The story centers on Bess, a young woman, who has spent her entire existence on a secluded island, living in a very religious, emotionally repressed community. One day a man named Jan appears from the outside world and they fall in love and marry. Eventually, his job calls him back to the sea, where he has a terrible accident that leaves him paralyzed. Unable to make love to his wife, he implores her to go find another man and have sex, then return and tell him all the details. Bess is so in love and so conditioned to be a "good girl" and do what she is told that she obediently begins the nightmarish pursuit of sexual encounters with strange men. In childlike fashion, Bess truly believes that her acts of sacrifice will restore her husband's health. When her efforts fail and his condition worsens, she does not reevaluate her faith, but instead redoubles her efforts, which ultimately lead to her brutal rape and murder.

Ironically, Jan does recover, but not in time to save her. Unlike the prince in the bear skin, who shows up at just the right moment to serve and protect, Jan has no power over his availability. In fact, the whole point of his paralysis is that he, as the representation of the animus, is rendered completely powerless by this psychic imbalance.

In a closing scene of the film, a doctor desperately tries to explain this tragedy to a coroner's inquest, but he is at a loss for a medical explanation. "She died," he tells them solemnly, "from good."
If the magnitude of this doctor’s diagnosis can be truly understood, it may begin to shed an important light on the wound pulsating through this culture.

Bess did not die just from rape and torture; she died from neglect. Nobody was paying attention because no one understood how inauthentic and toxic the value system had become. Bess did not know the difference between good and evil, or right and wrong, because they were both at such extremes they had become indistinguishable.

Ultimately, this may indicate that there is less to fear from the carnage and violence in today’s films than from the insidious moral value of “good” dominating “evil” that is too often the theme of popular “blockbuster” movies. Unlike *Breaking the Waves*, most of these stories encourage the absolute domination of “good” over our darker impulses, thus deepening the psychic laceration between the materialized self and the inner realms of the psyche.

In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung amplifies the need for the Christian culture to reorient itself in its relationship to good and evil:

We must beware of thinking of good and evil as absolute opposites. The criterion of ethical action can no longer consist in the simple view that good has the force of a categorical imperative, while so-called evil can resolutely be shunned [. . .] We must, therefore, no longer succumb to anything at all, not even to good. A so-called good to which we succumb loses its ethical character [. . .] Every form of addiction is bad, no matter whether the narcotic be alcohol or morphine or idealism. (329)

When characters are idealized in a story, they devalue the complexity of
the human experience by reducing the quest for self-knowledge to a simplistic choice between right and wrong. In this regard, Jung argues that an *authentic* move toward wholeness has quite the opposite effect because it brings to consciousness the individual's utmost capacity for both good and evil. "Both are elements within his nature, and both are bound to come to light in him, should he wish—as he ought—to live without self-deception or self-delusion" (*Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 330).

In modern storytelling, especially in film and television, the hero is too often idealized in a way that offers victory only to those who already come fully equipped for it. They are the best, the brightest, the bravest, the cleverest, and the most supremely confident. This means that whether they are crusading for justice or saving the world from an errant meteor, no growth toward internal wholeness will occur because none is required.

Many modern love stories are also framed around plot contrivances that imply that achieving true love is simply a matter of luck and coincidence, rather than personal development. Good looks and a sharp wit are most often the only requirements for catching the best mate and living *happily ever after*. The story offers no information about what constitutes opening one's heart to love, because love is not internalized as an evolving state of consciousness, but as a commodity to acquire.
If the human psyche relates to story as a guide for achieving wholeness, what instruction is it receiving when heroism demands no move toward maturity? How can a person learn to place a value on their own suffering and sacrifices in the face of life’s daunting challenges when the models in their stories make it all appear effortless? When a culture idealizes the human drama, it marginalizes real human experience. If people aren’t succeeding at life with the ease of the heroes in their stories, then there must be something wrong with them. They are not strong enough, brave enough, smart enough, or pretty enough. And worse, when there is no growth component in a heroic model, it implies that heroes are born that way, and for those who lack that type of hero gene—there is nothing that can be done about it.

Although more subtle, it is likely that this idealized view of life marks the place in which the real media assault on today’s values is taking place. Reinforced by religious and political ideology that demands allegiance to the right or the left, to the secular or the non-secular, to the pro or the con, people are thus deemed moral or immoral, right or wrong, good or bad. When the heroic models in a culture fixate on what is perceived as the higher virtues of good, moral, or righteous, they no longer convey the transformative, life-evolving information about the individuation process that is essential for wholeness. With no real story to serve as a guide, individuals can become stuck and the culture
itself can also become stuck in a fixed, lifeless, unconscious void.

Can this be what all the explosive rage is really points to? Any living thing is either evolving or diminishing; to become stuck or fixed is a sure sign that growth has ceased and that decay and death are imminent—unless something changes. In his book *The Fisher King and the Handless Maiden*, Robert Johnson sees this "dark drama" in society as a wound in the *feeling function*. "No outer heroic action can restore meaning to a man’s life if his tender feminine feeling value is damaged" (66). He also adds that "[all] symptoms are healing, but only if we listen to them and respond. As with all stories and myths, the greatest value [...] is in its inner dimensions" (95).

*That Which Destroys Also Creates*

*Only birth can conquer death—the birth, not of the old thing again, but of something new. Within the soul, within the body social, there must be—if we are to experience long survival—a continuous ‘recurrence of birth’ to nullify the unremitting recurrences of death. For it is by means of our own victories, if we are not regenerated, that the work of Nemesis is wrought: doom breaks from the shell of our very virtue. Peace is a snare; war is a snare; change is a snare; permanence a snare. When our day is come for the victory of death, death closes in; there is nothing we can do, except be crucified—and resurrected; dismembered totally, and then reborn.  
—Joseph Campbell

*The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (16-17)

The very fact that modern stories tend to have so little development in the inner dimension communicates a great deal about the location of this culture’s
woundedness. In a speech before The Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture in 2003, Dennis Slattery addressed the subject of violence by questioning what “The Voice of Violence” is trying to communicate about this wound.

[When the wound enters the culture gratuitously, unexpectedly, then some boundaries of the cultural psyche, the soul of the time and the epoch, are loosened, undone somewhat and some toxin spills into the cultural soil which itself cannot contain it. The move is to contain under desperation so it seeks the form of gun control, blame, litigation, legislation, finger pointing to the responsible or the irresponsible parties involved and the litany of accusatory questions, ending with: “How could you allow this to happen?” What is not sought in the psychic or mythic ground behind such action—what James Hillman calls the ‘archetypal background’ from which the action or the images is to be imagined. How strange it is to our ears to think about the question: ‘How are we to imagine violence? Its voice? Its plea? And even harder: what is violence asking of us?

This is an extremely important question. The something-that-has-gone-profoundly-wrong casts a long, dark shadow over this culture and the more it is resisted, the bigger and heavier it grows. Instead of facing the pain and enduring the discomfort that leads to consciousness and growth, the solution to suffering in this mechanized age is to use technological advancements to soften the distress and distract from the emptiness. The parts of us that are not perfect are packed away in the basement to be avoided and guarded. Then little Tiffany is sent off to school with the gleam of Pepsodent lingering on her smile, only to be shot at on the playground by a sixth-grader who could not bear the ridicule he received over a recent outbreak of acne.
But the good news is: that which destroys also creates. Because all psychic product has purpose, the current trend in violent, life-less, inauthentic storytelling may, in fact, be just the destructive, regressive force necessary to rescue Tiffany and the rest of society from the life-less, inauthentic direction it seems to be taking. In Jung’s essay on “Psychic Energy” he explains that the flow of libido becomes stopped or blocked when the dominant conscious attitude fails in its ability to adapt to change. This activates the unconscious contents of the inferior function, which in this case is the feeling function, and unleashes the “slime from the depths” (CW 8, 35; par. 63): “The unconscious matter activated by regression will contain the missing feeling function, although still in embryonic form, archaic and undeveloped. (CW 8, 32; par. 43f)

Because this “slime” feels uncontainable and unmanageable, it should not be a surprise that the culture relates to it as if it were a deadly toxin, for, in fact, it is. But as Freud explains in his book, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, this may be exactly what the psyche wants.

Freud maintained that there is unquestionably an inclination toward self-destruction which he calls Thanatos or the death drive. What he observed was that progress in a living entity only seemed to be achieved as a direct result of external stimuli. A plant will not grow on its own; left in the dark, it will wither and die. It takes stimulus from the sun to provoke photosynthesis. But which
comes first? Freud contends that there are, in fact, two instincts at work concurrently. The ego-instincts exercise pressure "toward death," and the sexual or generative instincts exercise pressure "toward prolongation of life" (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 52):

> It may be difficult, too, for many of us, to abandon the belief that there is an instinct towards perfection at work in human beings, which has brought them to their present high level of intellectual achievement and ethical sublimation and which may be expected to watch over their development into supermen. I have no faith, however, in the evidence of any such internal instinct and I cannot see how this benevolent illusion can be preserved. (50)

What Freud indicates here is that growth actually occurs in *opposition* to perfection. The "benevolent illusion" that there is an instinct toward perfection creates a distorted sense of the internal perception humans have of themselves. And it is this distorted perception that actually attracts the external stimuli—the deadly toxins. In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud concludes: "The projection outwards of internal perceptions is a primitive mechanism, to which, for instance, our sense perceptions are subject, and which therefore normally plays a very large part in determining the form taken by our external world" (81).

What is perceived inward is projected outward. *So within, so without.*

*Cause and effect.* Is this God? It's an interesting question to ponder because from this perspective there is no moral judgment. Nothing in nature can thrive if it is
not in a state of growth, and growth means change. Life resists change, and its very resistance creates external stimuli that forces change to occur.

Those instincts are therefore bound to give a deceptive appearance of being forces tending towards change and progress, whilst in fact they are merely seeking to reach an ancient goal by paths alike old and new. Moreover it is possible to specify this final goal of all organic striving. It would be in contradiction to the conservative nature of the instincts if the goal of life were a state of things which had never yet been attained. (Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 45)

And so it is “by going down into the abyss that we recover the treasures of life” (Campbell, *Hero* 24) which cannot be attained by any but heroic means. The very stimulus or conflict that creates problems, strife and even suffering is always the pathway out. This is the heart of the heroic journey. So let the monsters come; by trying to break us, they will also make us.
Conclusion

It is astonishing how little attention critics have paid to Story considered in itself. Granted the story, the style in which it should be told, the order in which it should be disposed and (above all) the delineation of the characters have been abundantly discussed. But story itself, the series of imagined events, is nearly always passed over in silence, or else treated exclusively as affording opportunities for the delineation of character.
—C.S. Lewis
(On Stories 3)

It is astonishing how little attention is actually paid to Story. Movie-going audiences seem to be mesmerized by the quantity of activity that fills the silver screen. Literary critics and the book-reading public are either devoted to the quality of the prose, the expression of the human character, and/or how much activity can be packed into a best seller. Depth psychologists and mythologists pay astute attention to the archetypal elements of story found in myth, legend, folklore, and classic literature, and they are also keenly focused on the value of case history and dream narratives. But Story—its nature, its composite, and its function as an entity unto itself and understood separately from specific considerations of genre, literary standards, and application—tends to be hugely overlooked.

This oversight (or undersight) may be due to the fact that the scope of the nature of Story is so vast and its influence so ubiquitous that it may be impossible to fully comprehend. There is a Hindu parable in which six blind
men are asked to describe an elephant. But because they each touch different parts of the massive body, they all have very different perceptions of what an elephant actually looks like and what purpose it serves. More importantly, none of them has any awareness that the whole even exists. In this regard, story has become a word or a concept that is understood primarily as it fulfills either personal or cultural functions. For most people story is, therefore, defined as something that either entertains, educates, creates, identifies, stimulates the imagination, facilitates communication, generates and relates history, or forms common bonds. But none of these capabilities either individually or collectively truly expresses the full nature of story. It is so comprehensive that it may be possible to conclude that story is the sum of all human consciousness. In other words, it is a universe unto itself that includes everything the human mind can comprehend because it is how the human mind comprehends itself.

From the first moment of consciousness, the human life is enstoriied in what Paul Ricoeur has identified as the circle of triple mimesis in which humans constantly make the move from action to story and back to action again. As a result, Richard Kearney concludes that “Every life is in search of a narrative” (4); but it may be more accurate to say that every life is a search to know its narrative. In The Power of Myth, Joseph Campbell reflects on Schopenhauer’s view that from the vantage point of age, individuals can look back over their life and suddenly
recognize that all the pieces fit together as if it was part of an organized plan,

"composed by some novelist:"

Events that when they occurred had seemed accidental and of little moment turn out to have been indispensable factors in the composition of a consistent plot. So who composed the plot? Schopenhauer suggests that just as your dreams are composed by an aspect of yourself of which your consciousness is unaware, so, to, your whole life is composed by the will within you. [...] The whole thing gears together like one big symphony, with everything unconsciously structuring everything else. [...] It is even as though there were a single intention behind it all, which always makes some kind of sense, though none of us knows what the sense might be [...] (1)

Looking back at the organization of all historical phenomena can lead to the same conclusion: that life, as human consciousness perceives it, forms a grand plot. But not only is it difficult to comprehend the enormity of this immense story, it is also difficult to grasp the miniscule nature of the particles or fragments of the human experience of which it is composed. It is much like the vastness of outer space. The human eye is incapable of taking in the grandeur of the entire cosmos or the molecules of stardust from which it is formed.

Acknowledgement is directed instead to that which can be seen—the sun, the moon, and the stars; the rest is left to the astronomers.

Mythologists may, in fact, be the astronomers of the cosmos of human consciousness, for it is they who study the depth and breadth of the human story. What continues to be discovered as the layers are pulled back from every myth, legend, parable, anecdote and even the most trivial piece of rumor or
gossip, is that story constantly reveals more function, more meaning, and more purpose. The examination of the human story is inevitably moving toward Campbell’s inscrutable mystery: “who composed the plot?” But, like everything else, it is not the question, but the quest that makes this a story, too.

The quest of this study has been to look at story as an emerging map of the human cosmos in order to gain some insight into who we are, where we are, and where we are going. In this regard, the term map is not intended strictly as metaphor. Jung defined individuation as “the process by which a person becomes a psychological ‘in-dividual,’ that is a separate, indivisible unity or ‘whole’” (CW 9 i, 275; par. 490). The term process here implies that this is a consistent pattern or “constantly repeated experience[...] of humanity” (CW 7, 69; 109) which Jung called an archetype. The production piece, Inside Story, illustrates that it is possible to use this archetypal pattern to chart or map the progress of the protagonist in a dramatic structure. The thesis of this dissertation has been to demonstrate that this dramatic structure, known as story, is the locus of the human experience.

In Chapter 2, the film Casablanca is used to demonstrate how popular, contemporary storytelling consciously and unconsciously employs what Louise Cowan calls “the ineluctable movement toward universal order implied in human events” (5) to reveal the location of the individual and the culture on the
road to higher consciousness. Chapter 3 identifies the traveler in this universal story as the hero who Jung defines as “first and foremost a self-representation of the longing of the unconscious, of its unquenched and unquenchable desire for the light of consciousness” (CW 5, 205; par. 299). Chapter 4 examines what lies ahead for the intrepid hero. Inevitably, there will be obstacles that seem insurmountable. Foremost among them is the Underworld descent, which Marion Woodman and Elinor Dickson caution must be taken voluntarily or involuntarily, “when the abyss unexpectedly opens [. . .] ordinary ego perceptions are shattered; [and] cracks occur in the well-crafted persona. Through these cracks emerges the possibility of something new” (37). Though this is a journey without end, what is discovered along the well-worn route is that by “going down into the abyss we recover the treasures of life” (Campbell, Hero 24).

I cannot tell my story without reaching a long way back
If it were possible I would reach back further still—
into the very first years of my childhood,
and beyond them into the distant ancestral past.
[. . .] Every man is more than just himself;
he also represents the very special and always significant
and remarkable point at which the world’s phenomena intersect,
only once in this way and never again.
That is why every man’s story is important, eternal, sacred;
[. . .] Each of us—experiments of the depth—
strives toward his own destiny.
—Hermann Hesse
(Demian 3)
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