Hollywood Safari

A Dangerous Trip Through the Current World of Screenwriting Theory

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Thanks especially to Henry Mintzberg for creating such a great “safari” survey through business strategies. For showing that surveys are important. Especially in our age of division. Few have presented the field of screenwriting. There are few survey books out there. Building a brand is more important (and profitable) than spending time surveying the landscape. What brand could possibly attach itself to a survey or others. Rather than the promotion of oneself.

Thanks to the many screenwriters and teachers who reviewed and offered comments on this manuscript. Especial thanks to my film director, producer and screenwriter friend Heather Hale. The largest promoter of this manuscript. And cheerleader for me to finish it. And, to Jack Lechner, Chair of Film, Columbia University School of the Arts who took so much time to read and comment on an earlier version of the manuscript for this book.

To the “fair use” copyright laws of America. These allow me to publish the following methods, structures and idea of leading screenplay theory today.

Some comments on *Hollywood Safari …*

"So impressive! You've created a vastly clarifying assessment of theory and practice that not only screenwriters, but novelists and all other creators of dramatic narratives should welcome."

Richard Walter
Former Chairman
UCLA Graduate Screenwriting Program

"I think it's a great addition to a screenwriter's toolkit. Having one resource, with all the available screenwriting books listed and categorized, is a valuable resource for aspiring screenwriters."

Irving Belateche
Professor of Cinematic Arts
The John Wells Division of Writing for Screen and Television
School of Cinematic Arts
University of Southern California

"An interesting approach very useful for aspiring writers sorting out the many texts available to them and one I haven't seen before. The book would also prove a very useful resource to professors. "

Linda Venis, PhD
Director, Department of the Arts
Program Director, Writers' Program
UCLA

"I think the book is definitely useful for film schoolteachers and for serious aspiring writers who are trying to navigate the vast literature. I'm not aware of any such book."

Paul Gulino
Associate Professor
Dodge College of Film and Media Arts
Chapman University

"I think this is a very useful book, indeed."

Eric Edson
Coordinator, Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting Program
Department of Cinema and Television Arts
California State University, Northridge

"As I read through, I was forcefully struck (!) by the obvious use it would be to scriptwriters and students of the craft (and their teachers)."

Eric McLuhan
Director, Media Studies, Professor
The Harris Institute of the Arts
Toronto, Canada

"I found it very interesting. I had never thought of the whole school or method breakdown before and looking at each of the examples you used I did see the formula come into play."

Bill Boyle
Screenwriter and Script Consultant
Author, *The Visual Mindscape of the Screenplay*

"*Hollywood Safari* is enlightening especially because I have not paid enough attention to the significance of screenwriting and screen writers as storytellers. Thanks very much for opening my eyes!"

Jack Zipes
The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre
Professor Emeritus, University of Minnesota
German & Comparative Literature

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Introduction

> "Will you accept three hundred per week to work for Paramount Pictures? All expenses paid. The three hundred is peanuts. Millions are to be grabbed out here and your only competition is idiots. Don't let this get around."
>
> Herman Mankiewicz
> (1928 telegram to Ben Hecht in New York)

> "Stories are at the heart of humanity and are the repository of our diverse cultural heritage. They are told, retold and reinterpreted for new times by storytellers. Screenwriters are the storytellers of our time."
>
> *European Screenwriters Manifesto (*2006)

There's been a lot of change with screenwriters since they worked for studios and were considered "idiots" in the early part of the 20th century by screenwriters like Herman Mankiewicz to their revisioning in the 21st century as more than just "writers for the screen" but rather "storytellers of our time" noted in the above *European Screenwriting Manifesto*.

The change in the status of screenwriters coincides with a change in screenwriter's major literary creation: the screenplay. There are excellent books for those interested in the history of screenwriters such as Marc Norman's *What Happens Next* (2007), Miranda Banks' *The Writers* (2015), Steven Maras' *Screenwriting: History, Theory and Practice* (2009) and Steven Price's *A History of the Screenplay* (2013). The books which cover the early years of screenplays in their form as outlines, scenarios, continuity scripts to contemporary screenplays. However, these books are not covered in *Hollywood Safari*.

In *Hollywood Safari*, the focus in not on the history of screenwriters or screenplays but rather contemporary screenplay approaches. Originally, we viewed the category chapters of this book as "schools" of screenwriting, but "approaches" seems a more descriptive word of the categories. In a very general way, the chapters follow somewhat of a chronological development of screenwriting starting with the "Ancient" approach of *Aristotle's Poetics* to the "Future" of screenwriting.

Before one gets started, it might be a good idea to provide a short definition of screenplay. First, it is a written work for a film, television, or other media, expressing movement, actions, and dialogue of characters. Screenplays, or scripts, are the blueprint for single movie stories as well as for the new form of stories in series of stories from online, streaming tv programs. A screenplay is written in a specific format to distinguish between the key elements of scenes, characters, action and dialogue.

There is a plethora of people out there giving advice on how to write a screenplay. A search of Amazon for "Books on Screenwriting" in the beginning of November of 2022 brought back over 3,000 results. This list might be refined by searching Amazon for "Best-Sellers on Screenwriting" that shows 100 top sellers on Amazon. (Blake Snyder's *Save the Cat* is #1). But not included in this extensive list are the substantial number of webinars and seminars on screenwriting as well software-based screenwriting grids or templates.

* * *

This leaves little doubt that the screenwriting "how to" market has become a substantial "cottage" industry. As an industry, the books and the theories on screenwriting can be viewed as product "brands" within this industry. One of the major aspects of brands is differentiation from other brands to give them value to the consumer. In this sense, one can observes substantial segmentation in the screenwriting education market.

Market and brand segmentation is a major featuring of marketing analysis and is one of the most observable phenomena of the contemporary world. In effect, there are no longer have three major television networks but rather hundreds of cable channels. There is no longer one Model T car but hundreds of car models. There are no longer a few beer brands but hundreds of craft brands of beer. The upside of this segmentation is that consumers have more choice than ever before. But the downside is that this choice causes confusion with consumers.

This is certainly true within the screenwriting education industry. In this sense, the industry - with its plethora of methods, techniques, and structures is like brand segmentation and differentiation on steroids. Screenwriters have a large choice of techniques and methods in writing screenplays. It is one thing to have segmentation in brands of products today that provide too much choice at the supermarkets. However, it is another thing to have segmentation in the major techniques, methods and structures of modern storytelling ideas.

While there are many common elements screenwriting books address, there is little incentive for synthesis in the screenwriting education market as synthesis seldom leads to valuable new brands. The situation is somewhat like academic disciplines where disciplines and university departments become divided into smaller and smaller niches of specialists who know more and more about less and less. The increasing specialization in academia is rewarded more in the academic world than non-specialist interdisciplinary scholars who attempt to find commonalities between disciplines. The same is true within the discipline of screenwriting education.

In the end, one needs to ask if the growth of screenwriting books and theories have served to advance the discipline of screenwriting or simply make it more confusing with its different brands. In effect, do screenwriting "how to" books make screenwriters more knowledgeable about screenwriting or simply more confused?

Certainly, reading the best books on screenwriting is not the only way to learn the craft of screenwriting. Working in the industry, reading screenplays, and going to film school are other ways that come to mind. However, again, for many screenwriters' books on screenwriting offer their major education to the field.

* * *

This book specifically stays away from being another "how to" book on screenwriting. As we've observed, there's already far too many of them. Trying to read even a small percentage of these books can often result in more confusion than useful knowledge. (As well as more time spent reading than writing!). As an avid reader of books on screenwriting, this happened to me. In effect, this is a guide I wished I had during the years when I was trying to learn about screenwriting.

Rather, *Hollywood Safari* is meant to serve as a survey or reference guide to the best and most popular screenwriting books. A survey of the screenwriting landscape. The metaphor of "safari" is used to describe the reader travelling through this landscape and encountering all types of different ideas. In addition to being a survey, the book also attempts the creation of a typology or classification of screenwriting approaches. The approaches in the books come from all areas of the film business such as screenwriting professors, screenwriters, studio executives and story consultants.

* * *

While we attempt to be comprehensive on screenwriting books, there are a number of excellent books left out because they don't seem to represent approaches but rather sub-genres of the approaches in chapters of *Hollywood Safari*. These books fall into the following areas:

• Books focusing on one genre of screenwriting such as comedy. For example, the book *The Hidden Tools of Comedy* by Steve Kaplan is an excellent guide to writing comedy scripts but not appropriate to our purpose of focusing on main approaches of screenwriting. Or some aspect screenwriting such as Jeff Rush's *Alternative Screenwriting* or Claudia Hunter Johnson's *Crafting Short Screenplays That Connect*, 5th Edition.

• We also don't cover bibles of screenwriting such as the well-known David Trottier's *The Screenwriter's Bible* or Jurgen Wolff and Kerry Cox's *Successful Scriptwriting*.

• Not covered are also excellent books consisting of collections of articles on aspects of screenwriting such as the excellent book *Cut to the Chase* or *Inside the Room* edited by Linda Venis who taught at the UCLA Extension Writer's Program.

• Also left out of *Hollywood Safari* are famous books on film theory by such early theorists as Sergi Eisenstein or well-known American film theorist and historian David Bordwell who has written more than fifteen volumes on cinema including *Narration in the Fiction Film* (1985), *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema* (1988), *Making Meaning* (1989), and *On the History of Film Style* (1997). With his wife Kristin Thompson, Bordwell also wrote the textbooks *Film Art* (1979) and *Film History* (1994). *Film Art* is currently being published in its 12th edition and is still used as a seminal text in introductory film courses.

• There are excellent books on writing novels such as E. M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* or Donald Maass' *Writing the Breakout Novel* that offer excellent advice to novelists. Many have

application to screenwriting just as screenwriting has application to novelists. However, this large list of books for novelists are not included in *Hollywood Safari*.

• Although streaming tv series are becoming a large part of the writing market, books that cover this area are not found in *Hollywood Safari*. The growing number of books on creating a tv series for are not covered. For those interested in writing episodic tv, two of the best books are the short series veteran TV writer William Rabkin *Writing the Pilot* (2011) and *Writing the Plot: Creating the Series* (2017). Another excellent book on writing for television is *Writing the TV Drama Series: How to Succeed as a Professional Writer in TV* (2018) by Pamela Douglas, an award-winning writer with numerous credits in television drama. In addition, there are some excellent books about creating some of the popular series such as *A Writer's Guide to Breaking Bad: The 10 Commandments* (2021) by Tony Conniff. Certainly, one of the most successful streaming series in history is *Stranger Things* by the Duffer brothers. Looking at the pilot, bible and breakdown of episodes in *Stranger Things* is one of the best teaching sources possible and with this in mind, we publish a breakdown of Season One of *Stranger Things* in the Appendix I of *Hollywood Safari*. While this book is not meant to be about writing for series television, it is informative to compare how Season One and its 8 episodes have a close relationship to the three-act structure of screenplay.

* * *

Those familiar with the history of film will recall the "Golden Age of Cinema." But today, one would be hard-pressed to call our time a "golden age" of film. Recent ultra-costly films have seen some of the largest losses in the history of movies. A few reasons are offered in the pages of *The Hollywood Reporter* and *Variety*. Certainly, bad business decisions are sometimes the reason. Or simply being out of touch with the public. Or the failure to take risks and continue building sequels under "big tent" film franchises.

Yet it seems to me that one of the biggest failures of film comes from something few in Hollywood talk about. This is the failure of the screenwriting industry to arrive at a type of agreed-upon commonality for structure, technique, and method for screenwriting. In effect, the failure to call a truce between the various approaches covered in *Hollywood Safari*. As we noted above, books and theories continue to segment modern storytelling into smaller and smaller niches that battle each other in brand warfare. In all of this, the sense of story becomes lost in more and more techniques and methods.

Legendary screenwriter Robert Towne might have identified the real reason for the continuing deluge of bad and boring movies. In an essay called "On Moving Pictures" at the beginning of his book on his script for *Chinatown*, Towne observed:

> "I think it is true that narrative skill in screenwriting may be at an all-time low. There was an undeniably greater story sense evidenced by the preceding generation of filmmakers. It may have been due in part to the fact that (they) … began their careers in silent pictures. Without sound, they were obliged to think carefully about making the story and motivation clear. This obsession with story and with clarity never abandoned them when they abandoned silent film. They knew how much image could convey and they knew the

> corollary, how much and how many ways the images could confuse and mislead, just about 24 times a second."

The era of the silent pictures and the great natural storytellers is now far away. Since that time, the Hollywood storytelling industry has evolved much over the years and, as we suggest, has become another industry or discipline with the attendant segmentation this brings to all industries. Like modern academic disciplines, screenwriting seems to know more about less and less: more and more about methods and techniques and put into smaller and smaller story elements. As Robert Towne might suggest, more knowledge of technique and methods but less sense of story.

* * *

Presented in the following pages is the current "wilderness" of screenwriting with all its attendant techniques, methods, principles, and theories. In this "wilderness" it becomes evident some approaches have much in common with other schools. For example, there is a close connection between chapter approaches in *Hollywood Safari* like Psychology and Myth or Symbolism and Genre. Also, as a general matter, one might observe that Plot structures with a similar number of steps have much in common.

Some type of consolidation is in order. For instance, some screenwriting approaches use different words for similar ideas or techniques. Or perhaps there should be a commonality of plot structure so current screenwriting books don't have three or five acts or move from five steps to twenty-three steps. Sometimes one book or theory might express one element or principle of screenwriting better than another. For example, the section in Lajos Egri's *The Art of Dramatic Writing* on Premise contains perhaps the best explanation of story premise yet written although many books discuss premise.

The last chapter of *Hollywood Safari* titled "Future" offers some evolving approaches to screenwriting that might help with this consolidation. More than anything, it is hoped this survey will provide large picture of the overall landscape so that any consolidation might be made from this large picture rather than individual snapshots from individual books and approaches. With all the books on screenwriting out there, one might find themselves in some back-water of screenwriting without even knowing it. This is the situation that this book tries to eliminate.

In the end, one might say that this glut of different approaches to screenwriting is simply a Hollywood (or screenwriter's) problem. But it goes far beyond this if one views screenwriters as the true storytellers of our time. There are big, important stories to tell and screenwriters need tools to help them tell stories … rather than confuse them.

1. Ancient

Aristotle / *Poetics*
Michael Tierno / *Aristotle's Poetics for Screenwriters*
Julian Friedmann / *Tedx Talk*

Literary scholars note that Aristotle's *Poetics* (Circa 330 BC) was most likely preserved in the form of students' lecture notes. The work was lost to the Western world and often misrepresented for a long time. It was available through the Middle Ages and Renaissance Italy only through a Latin translation of an Arabic version written by the Muslim polymath Averroes (1126 - 1198 AD).

The brief text has had a profound impact on Western philosophy and artistic production. Critics have observed that *Poetics* is in part Aristotle's response to his teacher, Plato, who argues in *The Republic* that poetry is representation of mere appearances and is thus misleading and morally suspect. Aristotle's approach to the phenomenon of poetry is quite different from Plato's. Fascinated by the intellectual challenge of forming categories and organizing them into coherent systems, Aristotle approaches literary texts as a natural scientist, carefully accounting for the features of each "species" of text. Rather than concluding that poets should be banished from the perfect society, as does Plato, Aristotle attempts to describe the social function, and the ethical utility, of art.

In effect, the practical and formal concerns that occupy Aristotle in *Poetics* need to be understood in relation to a larger concern with the psychological and social purpose of literature. Criticism, according to Aristotle, should not be simply the application of unexamined aesthetic principles, but should pay careful attention to the overall function of a work of art in its context within the work, and should never lose sight of the function of the work of art in its social context.

* * *

Considered the earliest surviving work on dramatic theory, one might also suggest that *Poetics* is really the first book on screenwriting structure. As such, much of Aristotle's *Poetics* should sound familiar to modern students of drama because many of Aristotle's terms have been re-cycled and renamed through history but few of his ideas have been changed. The main part of the book consists of Aristotle's discussion of tragedy. This discussion consists of six parts beginning with what Aristotle considers the most important and proceeding to the least important. He identifies the six parts of drama as plot, character, thought, diction, melody, and spectacle.

Aristotle's elements of plot (mythos) contain elements familiar to modern dramatists such as reversals, recognitions, and suffering. He notes that the best plot should be "complex" involving

a change of fortune. It should imitate actions arousing fear and pity. Thus, it should proceed from good fortune to bad and involve a high degree of suffering for the protagonist, usually involving physical harm or death. As for plot or mythos, Aristotle says it should have three elements. In section 7 of *Poetics*, he observes:

> A beginning is that which is not itself necessarily after anything else, and which has naturally something else after it; an end is that which is naturally after something itself, either as its necessary or usual consequent, and with nothing else after it; and a middle, that which is by nature after one thing and has also another after it. A well-constructed Plot, therefore, cannot either begin or end at any point one likes; beginning and end in it must be of the forms just described. Again: to be beautiful, a living creature, and every whole made up of parts, must not only present a certain order in its arrangement of parts, but also be of a certain definite magnitude.

In his discussion of character (ethos) Aristotle says that it is better if a tragic accident happens to a hero because of a mistake he makes (hamartia) rather than things happening anyway. While this might sound unfamiliar, what Aristotle really is discussing here is the idea that the Hero of a dramatic work needs to have some need at the beginning and that there must be some igniting incident that sets the Hero on his/her way to recognition and fulfillment of this need. The Hero should possess the following characteristics: goodness (as opposed to the badness of the Villain), consistency and appropriateness.

Aristotle's "thought" and "diction" parts of tragedy can be re-named and categorized under "dialogue" in modern screenwriting terms. Thought (dianoia) involves dialogue that explains character while diction (lexis) involves the quality of dialogue. Finally, Aristotle observes that spectacle (opsis) refers to the visual part of the play, including set, costumes, and props. Basically, anything one sees in the play. In modern terms, Aristotle's spectacle translates into setting, costume, and props. Aristotle calls spectacle the "least artistic" element of tragedy, and the "least connected" with the work of the poet (playwright). For example, he observes if the play has "beautiful" costumes but "bad" acting story, there is "something wrong" with it. Even though that "beauty" may save the play it is "not a nice thing." However, one might question categorizing visual elements as the least important aspect of tragedy since this visual element has greatly increased in importance since the time of Aristotle.

* * *

Many screenwriting books and gurus claim that everything you need to know about how to write good drama is in Aristotle's *Poetics*. Yet few explain what this is. One book that attempts to explain this is Michael Tierno's *Aristotle's Poetics for Screenwriters* (2002).Tierno, a story analyst for Miramax when he wrote the book, attempts to show how Aristotle is relevant to the modern screenwriter. As a review in *Variety* observed, enlisting *Poetics* as a guide to dramatic writing is a well-worn tool for teachers, but Michael Tierno makes it his own by targeting the silver screen and giving examples of its application in films like *American Beauty*, *The Godfather* and *Rocky*.

Tierno puts a new spin on Aristotle as the Master of Philosophy, calling him not only the greatest mind in western civilization but also the "world's first movie story analyst." At the beginning of his book, he notes that the "criteria Hollywood executives use to evaluate screenplays are exactly those the legendary philosopher Aristotle thought were the nuts and bolts of ancient drama more than 2,000 years ago!"

In the book, Tierno pulls certain quotes of Aristotle out of the book that could be listed as basic elements of screenwriting. For example, some of Aristotle's wisdom mined by Tierno:

- The ability to plot, or create a powerful structure, is the most important aspect of writing. "Good writers serve their story" while "bad writers serve their own agendas."
- The story shouldn't be made to say what the writer wants to say, but what the story demands.
- Dramatic unity is achieved using a plot that represents one complete action.
- A plot should have its several incidents so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoin the whole.
- Talent for writing dialogue and character comes first.

The book also discusses Aristotle's three-act structure as it relates to screenwriting. As noted above, Aristotle observes in *Poetics* that a whole has a "beginning, a middle and end." However, Tierno observes that this quote from *Poetics* has led to a common misconception by many screenwriters that *Poetics* preaches a three-act structure as the key template for a story.

In this sense, Tierno notes that *Poetics* never stipulates a three-act structure but rather discusses two movements: the "complication" and the "denouement." Tierno quotes Aristotle's *Poetics*:

> Every tragedy (or "dramatic story" as Tierno translates Aristotle's concept of tragedy for the modern world) is part Complication and in part Denouement; the incidents before the opening scene, and … also of those within the play, forming the Complication; and the rest the Denouement. By Complication I mean all from the beginning of the story to the point just before the change in the hero's fortunes; by Denouement, all from the beginning of the change to the end.

Tierno is correct that *Poetics* discusses the two movements of "complication" and "denouement." However, it can be argued that there is a different way of viewing what Aristotle says in Poetics not from the point of actions of the story but rather emotions of the audience.

* * *

In *Poetics*, Aristotle argues drama is based more on the emotional reaction of the audience than the actions of complication and denouement. As he says, the true aim of tragedy is to bring about a "purification" of emotion. Aristotle claims that "one should not seek every pleasure from tragedy, but the one that is characteristic of it." The three emotions characteristic tragedy are pity, fear and purification. In effect, these are the emotions a tragedy should produce in those who read or view it.

This "purification," or production of fear and pity in the audience, is also known by the Greek word catharsis, and catharsis is evidence of the successful construction of a tragedy. Aristotle describes catharsis as the purging of the emotions of pity and fear that aroused in the viewer of a tragedy. Yet debate continues about what Aristotle means by catharsis.

In the book *Truth and Method* (1960) German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer what is actually involved in this catharsis (or purging) is not clear. It is not as simple as getting an object lesson in how to behave. The tragic event does not "teach us a lesson" as do certain public-information campaigns on drunk driving or drug abuse. Gadamer's attempt to describe catharsis in *Truth and Method* can serve both as a working definition and an introduction into the problem of establishing any determinate definition of this elusive concept:

> What is experienced in such an excess of tragic suffering is something truly common. The spectator recognizes himself (or herself) and his (or her) finiteness in the face of the power of fate. What happens to the great ones of the earth has exemplary significance ... To see that 'this is how it is' is a kind of self-knowledge for the spectator, who emerges with new insight from the illusions in which he (or she), like everyone else, lives.

London literary agent Julian Friedmann focuses on Aristotle's emotions of pity, fear and catharsis. As Friedmann notes in a 2012 TEDx Talk titled "The Mystery of Storytelling," pity serves as an emotion that needs to be formed at the beginning of a tragedy. As he says "You do that (create an emotion of pity in the audience) usually by making the character go through some undeserved misfortune. What that does enables the audience to emotionally connect with the character."

Friedmann observes that once the writer creates an emotional connection through developing pity for the Hero or victim, "the writer begins to have some control over the audience." The writer can then put "the character into a worse and worse situation. And, because of the emotional connection, the identification, the audience feels fear." Finally, when the writer releases "the character from the jeopardy or whatever the situation they're in, the audience experiences a catharsis."

Rather than the two-structure approach of *Poetics* that Tierno proposes in complication and denouement, Friedmann finds a three-act structure in pity, fear, catharsis. As Friedmann says, "Aristotle described the formula. He did that two and a half thousand years ago. Not only did it work then, but it also still works today. So, anyone who says there is no formula is wrong, there is."

***

The emotions of pity, fear and catharsis can be related to the three-act structure of screenplays popularized by Syd Field in his 1979 book *Screenplay* and discussed in the Plot chapter of *Hollywood Safari.* Although there are other plot structures for screenplays, the three-act structure is still the main structure for screenplays and storytelling.

With *Screenplay*, Field used three words to define the major actions in the three acts of a screenplay. In Act I this action was Set-Up. In Act II this action was Confrontation. And, in Act

III, this action was Resolution. One notes that they all relate to Aristotle's original suggest of plot as containing a Beginning (Act I), Middle (Act II) and Ending (Act III).

The three *emotions of Aristotle's Poetics correspond to the actions* in the three-act structure of screenplays. Aristotle focuses on the reaction of the audience while Field concentrates on actions of the screenwriter. It's an important distinction we'll discuss later in this book. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 1A below with Aristotle's three words placed in three-act screenplay structure.

Act I / Pity (Emotion of audience) = Set-Up (Action in screenplay)

> Aristotle's emotion of pity translates into the modern emotion of sympathy that is a key emotion to establish at the beginning of a screenplay. It is the most direct way to get an audience to engage with the Protagonist (Hero/Heroine) of a story. Make the character sympathetic.

Act II / Fear (Emotion of audience) = Confrontation (Action in screenplay)

> Once the emotion of pity or sympathy for the Protagonist is established, it is possible to create the emotion of fear as the Protagonist confronts situations that place the audience in fear for his/her future. The audience is uncomfortable and not sure of the outcome in the confrontation, conflict or struggle against great odds. Suspense and tension are created in the audience. The more fear the audience has, the more engaged they become.

Act III / Catharsis (Emotion of audience) = Resolution (Action in screenplay)

> Catharsis traces back to the Greek word "kathairein" meaning "to cleanse, purge." The purification or purgation of the emotions is a metaphor Aristotle uses in *Poetics* to describe the effects of true tragedy on the audience. In this final emotion, the Protagonist is released from jeopardy and the audience can release fear for Progaonist built up over the course of the story.

Figure 1A
Relationship of Aristotle's Audience Emotions to Screenplay Acts

The focus of the emotions of the audience watching a screenplay are more important than the emotions of the Protagonist in a screenplay. It's a belief not all that common in modern screenwriting theory where attention is on structural events in the screenplay rather than audience emotions through a screenplay. As Julian Friedmann observes, understanding storytelling is more about the audience than the writer results in better storytelling. As he says, "while audiences are undoubtedly more sophisticated these days … the basics of storytelling are pretty much the same … Pity, fear, catharsis. Sympathy, struggle, resolution."

* * *

The practical and formal concerns that occupy Aristotle in the Poetics need to be understood in relation to a larger concern with the psychological and social purpose of drama and literature. Criticism, according to Aristotle, should not be simply the application of unexamined aesthetic principles, but should pay careful attention to the overall function of a work of art in its context and should never lose sight of the function of the work of art in its social context.

For Aristotle, the function of drama in its social context relates first to the effect it has on the emotions of the audience watching the drama rather than the emotions the Protagonist goes through within the context of the dramatic work. The concern with the work in context rather than the content of the work.

This might be the real "hidden" message of *Poetics* rather than the well-known idea of structural division into three acts. After almost twenty-five hundred years, it is a message that remains hidden to most modern screenwriting gurus and their theories and books.

2. Myth

Joseph Campbell / *The Hero with A Thousand Faces*
Christopher Vogler / *The Writer's Journey*
Stuart Voytilla / *Myth and The Movies*
James Bonnet Stealing / *Fire from The Gods*
Jennifer Van Bergen / *Archetypes for Writers*

In the 2002 book *Joseph Campbell: A Fire in the Mind* by Stephen and Robin Larsen, George Lucas discusses his discovery of the work of the great mythologist Joseph Campbell. Lucas says that "it came to me that there really was no modern use of mythology … so that's when I started doing more strenuous research on fairy tales, folklore and mythology, and I started reading Joe's books. Before that I hadn't read any of Joe's books … It was very eerie because in reading *A Hero with a Thousand Faces*, I began to realize that my first draft of *Star Wars* was following classical motifs."

The classical motifs Campbell discovered was that the Hero in mythology goes through a common journey delineated by a particular sequence. Campbell was one of the greatest comparative mythologists of all time and found this sequence of the hero's journey was common to all cultures and all periods of time. The sequence involved three basic actions of departure, initiation, and return and a story structure based on seventeen steps shown in 2A below. The steps are also discussed in Chapter 9 on Plot.

Departure
- Call to Adventure
- Refusal of the Call
- Supernatural Aid
- Crossing First Threshold
- Belly of the Whale

Initiation
- Road of Trials
- Meeting With Goddess
- Woman as Temptress
- Atonement With Father
- Apotheosis
- Ultimate Boon

Return
- Refusal of Return
- Magic Flight
- Rescue From Without
- Crossing Return Threshold
- Master of Two Worlds
- Freedom to Live

2A / Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey

* * *

Veteran story consultant and teacher Christopher Vogler's *The Writer's Journey* explores the relationship between mythology and storytelling by translating Joseph Campbell's mythic structure into screenplay structure. The first part of Vogler's book describes eight major character archetypes of the Hero's journey in detail shown in Figure 2B below.

1. Hero: someone who is willing to sacrifice his own needs on behalf of others
2. Mentor: all the characters who teach and protect heroes and give them gifts
3. Threshold Guardian: a menacing face to the hero, but if understood, they can be overcome
4. Herald: a force that brings a new challenge to the hero
5. Shapeshifter: characters who change constantly from the hero's point of view
6. Shadow: character who represents the energy of the dark side
7. Ally: someone who travels with the hero through the journey, serving variety of functions
8. Trickster: embodies the energies of mischief and desire for change

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2B / Archetypes of Hero's Journey

The second part describes Vogler's translation of Campbell's seventeen steps into the twelve stages in his *The Writer's Journey* shown in Figure 2C below.

1. The Ordinary World: the hero is seen in their everyday life
2. The Call to Adventure: the initiating incident of the story
3. Refusal of the Call: the hero experiences some hesitation to answer the call
4. Meeting with the Mentor: the hero gains the supplies, knowledge, and confidence needed to commence the adventure
5. Crossing the First Threshold: the hero commits wholeheartedly to the adventure
6. Tests, Allies, and Enemies: the hero explores the special world, faces trial, and makes friends and enemies
7. Approach to the Innermost Cave: the hero nears the center of the story and the special world
8. The Ordeal: the hero faces the greatest challenge yet and experiences death and rebirth
9. Reward: the hero experiences the consequences of surviving death
10. The Road Back: the hero returns to the ordinary world or continues to an ultimate destination
11. The Resurrection: the hero experiences a final moment of death and rebirth so they are pure when they reenter the ordinary world
12. Return with the Elixir: the hero returns with something to improve the ordinary world

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Figure 2C / Stages of Vogler's Writers Journey

Note that Campbell's voyage of the Hero uses mythological characters and terms while Vogler translate these terms more to screenwriting events. In the process, the seventeen steps of Campbell become 12 steps in Vogler's system. Vogler wrote the outline for his famous book *The Writer's Journey* as a memo while a story consultant for Disney Studios in 1985. The memo was titled "A Practical Guide to Joseph Campbell's The Hero with a Thousand Faces" and was seven pages and presented to studio head Jeffry Katzenberg. As Vogler remembers, "He called me right away and put me to work with Disney's Feature Animation division, where I began doing research and development work on The Lion King and many other projects. When I arrived I found The Memo had preceded me, and the animators were already outlining their story boards with Hero's Journey stages."

Because of its importance the famous memo of twelve steps to screenplays, the twelve steps of Vogler's memo is reproduced below in Figure 2D. It provides excellent insight and Vogler's own examples of the stages with various movies. The memo eventually was first published in 1992 as the *The Writer's Journey*.

"A Practical Guide to Joseph Campbell's The Hero with a Thousand Faces"
Chris Vogler (1985)

1) The hero is introduced in his/her ORDINARY WORLD.

Most stories ultimately take us to a special world, a world that is new and alien to its hero. If you're going to tell a story about a fish out of his customary element, you first have to create a contrast by showing him in his mundane, ordinary world. In *Witness* you see both the Amish boy and the policeman in their ordinary worlds before they are thrust into alien worlds – the farm boy into the city, and the city cop into the unfamiliar countryside. In *Star Wars* you see Luke Skywalker being bored to death as a farm boy before he tackles the universe.

2) The CALL TO ADVENTURE.

The hero is presented with a problem, challenge or adventure. Maybe the land is dying, as in the King Arthur stories about the search for the Grail. In *Star Wars*, it's Princess Leia's holographic message to Obi Wan Kenobi, who then asks Luke to join the quest. In detective stories, it's the hero being offered a new case. In romantic comedies it could be the first sight of that special but annoying someone the hero or heroine will be pursuing/sparring with.

3) The hero is reluctant at first. (REFUSAL OF THE CALL.)

Often at this point the hero balks at the threshold of adventure. After all, he or she is facing the greatest of all fears – fear of the unknown. At this point Luke refuses Obi

Wan's call to adventure, and returns to his aunt and uncle's farmhouse, only to find they have been barbecued by the Emperor's stormtroopers. Suddenly Luke is no longer reluctant and is eager to undertake the adventure. He is motivated.

4) The hero is encouraged by the Wise Old Man or Woman. (MEETING WITH THE MENTOR)

By this time many stories will have introduced a Merlin-like character who is the hero's mentor. In Jaws it's the crusty Robert Shaw character who knows all about sharks; in the mythology of the *Mary Tyler Moore Show*, it's Lou Grant. The mentor gives advice and sometimes magical weapons. This is Obi Wan giving Luke his father's light saber.

The mentor can go so far with the hero. Eventually the hero must face the unknown by himself. Sometimes the Wise Old Man/Woman is required to give the hero a swift kick in the pants to get the adventure going.

5) The hero passes the first threshold. (CROSSING THE THRESHOLD.)

The hero fully enters the special world of the story for the first time. This is the moment at which the story takes off and the adventure gets going. The balloon goes up, the romance begins, the spaceship blasts off, the wagon train gets rolling. Dorothy sets out on the Yellow Brick Road. The hero is now committed to his/her journey and there's no turning back.

6) The hero encounters tests and helpers. (TESTS, ALLIES, ENEMIES.)

The hero is forced to make allies and enemies in the special world, and to pass certain tests and challenges that are part of his/her training. In Star Wars the cantina is the setting for the forging of an important alliance with Han Solo and the start of an important enmity with Jabba the Hutt. In *Casablanca* Rick's Café is the setting for the "alliances and enmities" phase and in many Westerns it's the saloon where these relationships are tested.

7) The hero reaches the innermost cave. (APPROACH TO THE INMOST CAVE.)

The hero comes at last to a dangerous place, often deep underground, where the object of the quest is hidden. In the Arthurian stories the Chapel Perilous is the dangerous chamber where the seeker finds the Grail. In many myths the hero has to descend into hell to retrieve a loved one, or into a cave to fight a dragon and gain a treasure. It's Theseus going to the Labyrinth to face the Minotaur. In Star Wars it's Luke and company being sucked into the Death Star where they will rescue Princess Leia. Sometimes it's just the hero going into his/her own dream world to confront fears and overcome them.

8) The hero endures the supreme ORDEAL.

This is the moment at which the hero touches bottom. He/she faces the possibility of death, brought to the brink in a fight with a mythical beast. For us, the audience standing outside the cave waiting for the victor to emerge, it's a black moment. In *Star Wars*, it's the harrowing moment in the bowels of the Death Star, where Luke, Leia and company are trapped in the giant trash-masher. Luke is pulled under by the tentacled monster that lives in the sewage and is held down so long that the audience begins to wonder if he's dead. In *E.T. The Extraterrestrial*, E. T. momentarily appears to die on the operating table.

This is a critical moment in any story, an ordeal in which the hero appears to die and be born again. It's a major source of the magic of the hero myth. What happens is that the audience has been led to identify with the hero. We are encouraged to experience the brink-of-death feeling with the hero. We are temporarily depressed, and then we are revived by the hero's return from death.

This is the magic of any well-designed amusement park thrill ride. Space Mountain or the Great Whiteknuckler make the passengers feel like they're going to die, and there's a great thrill that comes with surviving a moment like that. This is also the trick of rites of passage and rites of initiation into fraternities and secret societies. The initiate is forced to taste death and experience resurrection. You're never more alive than when you think you're going to die.

9) The hero seizes the sword. (SEIZING THE SWORD, REWARD)

Having survived death, beaten the dragon, slain the Minotaur, her hero now takes possession of the treasure he's come seeking. Sometimes it's a special weapon like a magic sword or it may be a token like the Grail or some elixir which can heal the wounded land.

The hero may settle a conflict with his father or with his shadowy nemesis. In *Return of the Jedi*, Luke is reconciled with both, as he discovers that the dying Darth Vader is his father, and not such a bad guy after all.

The hero may also be reconciled with a woman. Often, she is the treasure he's come to win or rescue, and there is often a love scene or sacred marriage at this point. Women in these stories (or men if the hero is female) tend to be shape-shifters. They appear to change in form or age, reflecting the confusing and constantly changing aspects of the opposite sex as seen from the hero's point of view. The hero's supreme ordeal may grant him a better understanding of women, leading to a reconciliation with the opposite sex.

10) THE ROAD BACK.

The hero's not out of the woods yet. Some of the best chase scenes come at this point, as the hero is pursued by the vengeful forces from whom he has stolen the elixir or the treasure. This is the chase as Luke and friends are escaping from the Death Star, with Princess Leia and the plans that will bring down Darth Vader.

If the hero has not yet managed to reconcile with his father or the gods, they may come raging after him at this point. This is the moonlight bicycle flight of Elliott and E. T. as they escape from "Keys" (Peter Coyote), a force representing governmental authority. By the end of the movie Keys and Elliott have been reconciled and it even looks like Keys will end up as Elliott's step-father.

11) RESURRECTION.

The hero emerges from the special world, transformed by his/her experience. There is often a replay here of the mock death-and-rebirth of Stage 8, as the hero once again faces death and survives. The *Star Wars* movies play with this theme constantly – all three of the films to date feature a final battle scene in which Luke is almost killed, appears to be dead for a moment, and then miraculously survives. He is transformed into a new being by his experience.

12) RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR

The hero comes back to the ordinary world, but the adventure would be meaningless unless he/she brought back the elixir, treasure, or some lesson from the special world. Sometimes it's just knowledge or experience, but unless he comes back with the elixir or some boon to mankind, he's doomed to repeat the adventure until he does. Many comedies use this ending, as a foolish character refuses to learn his lesson and embarks on the same folly that got him in trouble in the first place. Sometimes the boon is treasure won on the quest, or love, or just the knowledge that the special world exists and can be survived. Sometimes it's just coming home with a good story to tell.

Figure 2D / Detailed Stages of Vogler's Writers Journey

* * *

While Vogler mentions many films in his book, for the most part he mentions these in passing as the major focus of his book is on the structure of Campbell's *Hero with a Thousand Faces*. The exception Vogler makes is the inclusion of the *Star Wars* films since the Mythology School of screenwriting developed from these. In this way, Stuart Voytilla's book *Myth And The Movies* serves as a type of sequel to Vogler's book providing a detailed application of the Mythology School to fifty key films.

Breaking the journey of the Hero into stages, Voytilla shows its application in various film genres such as comedy, horror, romance, science fiction, western and action-adventure using film examples like *Casablanca*, *African Queen*, *Annie Hall*, *Silence of the Lambs* and *Seven Samurai*. In the book, Voytilla provides charts, maps, and consideration of various archetypal characters of Campbell (and Carl Jung) such as the shadow, trickster, herald and shapeshifter as well as milestones along the journey such elixir, threshold and road back.

* * *

James Bonnet's *Stealing Fire from The Gods* is a difficult book to place because of the wide-ranging areas it brings together such as world mythology, depth psychology and literature. In this sense, Bonnet and his approach contains aspects of the Psychology School as well as the Mythology School. Bonnet notes in his Foreword, "The knowledge contained in this book is a continuation of the work begun by Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell."

The book introduces readers to a new model of the human psyche Bonnet calls the Golden Paradigm. The model was discovered through investigation of patterns hidden in stories. As Bonnet notes, "These new patterns reveal all of the psychic dimensions, their structure, their hierarchy, their conflicts and their goals." The psychological models become story models when they are used to create new stories and reveal how the conscious and creative unconscious interact to form a "creative partnership."

Also introduced in the book is Bonnet's story wheel that brings the different types of stories together into one grand design. Bonnet observes "All great stories, ancient or modern, have a place on this wheel and when taken together in this way reveal their deeper, more amazing secrets." One of the secrets discovered are the life cycles experienced form birth to death. Bonnet notes, "The archetypes, patterns of action and cycles of transformation revealed in story are the same archetypes, patterns and cycles which run through every individual and every group … played out in life's important stages."

* * *

While Bonnet's *Stealing Fire* ranges over mythology and depth psychology, Jennifer Van Bergen's *Archetypes for Writers* offers a guide for accessing and enriching characters that already exist inside people. As Van Bergen writes: "This approach has little to do with how to 'create' characters or plot stories. Rather, it is more about how to find your character and story archetypes, or even how to have them find you. Underlying this approach is the premise that each person carries within them a given set of character and story archetypes."

Van Bergen, a trained Shakespearean actor, writer and teacher, calls the process of discovering inner archetypes "arkhelogy" or focusing on discovering an imprint embedded in a person observed. The imprint is the archetype. She points out that the work of finding character archetypes does not begin with identifying or naming archetypes, but rather with the application of a set of skills and activities.

3. Visual

Bill Boyle / *The Visual Mindscape of the Screenplay*
Margaret Mehring / *The Screenplay: A Blend of Film Form and Content*
Jennifer van Sijll / *Cinematic Storytelling*
Bruce Block / *The Visual Story*
Michell Albala / *The Landscape Painters Workbook*
Pamela Jaye Smith / *Symbols, Images, Codes*

> "The notion of writing moving pictures is absurd. One can't write a picture. One describes a picture. And one thing can be said about a really good screenplay: it reads like it's describing a movie already made."
>
> Robert Towne
> "On Moving Pictures"

Before sound, film was very much a visual medium. As Robert Towne observes in his essay "On Moving Pictures" early filmmakers were obliged to think carefully about making the story and motivation clear. "They knew," writes Towne, "how much the image could convey and they knew the corollary, how much and how many ways the images could confuse and mislead."

Alfred Hitchcock echoes the feelings of Towne. In the 1967 book Hitchcock by Francois Truffaut, Hitchcock is quoted as saying "In many films now being made, there is very little cinema: they are mostly what I call 'photographs of people talking.' When we tell a story in cinema, we should resort to dialog only when it's impossible to do otherwise."

Today, most textbooks and courses acknowledge that film is first and foremost a visual medium, but few offer any advice on how to write a screenplay that fully exploits the visual potential of the story. So much copy has been written on story and structure and theme and dialogue and character development that the most essential element of screenwriting is often glossed over, at best, or neglected at worst. With the emphasis on plot points and sequence of actions, screenwriters forget that what they are creating is a sequence of moving pictures rather than moving words.

Of all the leading screenwriting gurus, John Truby probably offers the greatest exploration of visual in screenwriting in his chapter "Symbol Web" from *The Anatomy of Story*. But Truby argues that images and symbols in films should be connected to structure and plot. Rather than view symbols as isolated elements in a screenplay, Truby views them as contained within a particular system or "web" within the screenplay. He asks the screenwriter to consider whether there is a particular symbol that expresses the premise or theme of the story. A screenwriter needs to determine the symbols for the characters within the screenplay. He talks about the need to create a web of symbolic objects in a screenplay. Symbols are interconnected with structure. But for Truby, plot structure dominates over visual structure.

Although Truby devotes a substantial part of his book to discussing visual elements of a screenplay in the form of a "symbol web" he does not give primary importance to visual imagery in structuring screenplays. For the most part, the early silent films placed more emphasis on symbols than the films with dialogue.

Legendary directors like Truffaut and Hitchcock realize the cinematic properties of film above all else. The silent era was close at hand to them. The directors and producers of these early silent years of film were idols to Hitchcock and Truffaut. Like the Beatles are idolized by the baby boom generation. The silent directors were idolized by directors who followed them like Hitchcock who believed in – as they did - the visual, cinematic storytelling of silent films more than the new wordy, dialogue and plot storytelling that had invaded storytelling with the coming of the talking pictures in 1927. Soon, the age of talking films will almost be ninety years old. It's a lot of time to grow into something new. Or grow away from something old. One needs to ask whether films have moved too far away from cinema and the visual and too far into dialogue and action. It's one of those "out of the box" questions they teach at weekend seminars I heard about somewhere.

* * *

One member of this new Visual School is Bill Boyle. In his book *The Visual Mindscape of the Screenplay* Boyle, a leading screenwriting consultant and teacher at the well-known UCLA Extension Writer's Program, observes that a fully realized screenplay reveals itself primarily through images, making use of what he calls the "Visual Mindscape" allowing the reader or viewer to "discover" elements of the story rather than being told about them. This discovery makes the reader or viewer an active participant in the unfolding of the story and the overall experience a more visceral and luminous experience.

As Boyle notes, when one thinks of their favorite film, the thing they most likely remember is an image because an emotional attachment has been established to it. For example, the shower scene in *Psycho*. Or the little alien riding a bike across the face of a full moon in *ET*. Or a baby alien bursting out of the chest of a crewmember in *Alien*.

Even if the screenwriter chooses to ignore it, Boyle says there is one absolute about a screenplay and this is that fact that every scene has an image attached to it. In Boyle's visual system, the locations of scenes in a screenplay are allegories symbolizing screenplay ideas and concepts.

Boyle believes that a fully realized screenplay exploits the visual potential of each scene making use of what he calls the "Visual Mindscape of the Screenplay." This is done by exploring:

- The visual composition of the story within the narrative
- The visual expression and interpretation of the character's inner journey
- The visual stimuli of the story to create a visceral experience within the reader

For example, Boyle offers the Rosebud image in *Citizen Kane*. At no point in the film are we told what "Rosebud" means but when we see the sled thrown into the furnace, we put the pieces together. We recognize the implications of his childhood and discover a certain surprising truth

about Charles Foster Kane. The important point here is that we discover this truth and thus we own it.

* * *

The Visual Mindscape of Boyle and the "symbol web" of Truby introduces symbols into scripts. Jennifer Van Sijll's *Cinematic Storytelling* translates the use of symbols to specific techniques of visual storytelling. In doing so she has created one of the most important books in the Visual approach screenwriting. While *Cinematic Storytelling* is a remarkable achievement, Van Sijll acknowledges her debt to two famous teachers she had at USC in the 80s: Les Novros and Margaret Mehring.

Les Novros (1909-2000) was one of the pioneers in the film business and teacher of a legendary course at USC called Filmatic Expression. As George Lucas once said, "The first time I truly understood the unique quality of film was when I took Les Novros' class." The comment of Lucas was contained in an introduction to an out-of-print textbook Novros fashioned from lectures in his Filmic Expression class taught at USC from 1941 to 1984.

Born in Passaic, New Jersey, Novros was many things in his life: an artist, animator, teacher, and inventor. Perhaps inventor more than anything else. He studied painting at the National Academy of Design in New York City and was an active member of the Art Students League of New York and even studied art at the prestigious Prado Museum in Madrid, Spain. His curiosity in the study of movement lead to an interest in motion pictures. In 1936 he was recruited by the Walk Disney Company to come to Hollywood to work on feature animation projects. Novros worked on the Disney classic *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and received a credit for art direction for the "Night on Bald Mountain" sequence of *Fantasia* (1940). Later in his career, his documentaries about space inspired a new director called Stanley Kubrick so much he was hired to help with special effects on Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

* * *

The other person who inspired Van Sijll was Margaret Mehring the USC professor and author of the classic screenwriting book, *Screenplay: A Blend of Film Form and Content*. Van Sijll did not have Mehring as a teacher at USC but was influenced by her book after she was a student there. Mehring was not only an academic innovator of the Filmic Writing Program at USC but was also a political activist. Through her efforts, USC created a monument dedicated to the First Amendment called "Blacklist" based on the Hollywood 10, blacklisted writers during the McCarthy era of the 1950s.

In many ways, Mehring's *The Screenplay* is a modern updating of earlier works on the visual aspects of film such as Sergei Eisenstein's famous books *Film Sense* (1942) and *Film Form* (1949). Eisenstein was a pioneer in a specific use of film editing called montage. One of the earliest film theorists, Eisenstein argued montage was the essence of the cinema and *Film Sense* and *Film Form* explain the significance of montage in cinema. Eisenstein believed editing could be used for more than expounding a scene through a "linkage" of related images creating a "collision" of shots. This "collision" of shots could be used to manipulate emotions of the

audience and create film metaphors. He believed that an idea should be derived from the juxtaposition of two independent shots, bringing an element of collage into film. He developed what he called "methods of montage." The work of Eisenstein was somewhat of a casualty to new cinema techniques when films changed from silent to talking but updated for modern filmmakers' by Mehring in *Screenplay*. The book taught screenwriters to think in terms of the unique visual and aural elements of film, create stories using these elements and communicate these stories in words. The information attempted to unite the emerging craft of screenwriting with the visual art of motion pictures.

* * *

In her 2005 book *Cinematic Storytelling*, Jennifer Van Sijll provides a modern interpretation of Novros, Mehring and Eisenstein while, at the same time, giving expression to many of the visual techniques of legendary filmmakers like Hitchcock and Truffaut. The sections of Van Sijll's book address topics like shape within the frame, composition of frames, camera position, lighting, color, props, wardrobes, and locations. Certainly, topics one is more likely to find in a book on cinematography than one for screenwriters and directors.

While the book offers a brilliant synthesis of the early visual bias of film, some would argue it doesn't belong in the ranks of screenwriting books but rather books directed at directors and especially cinematographers. Van Sijll argues modern filmmaking's increasing division into parts is one of its major problems and challenges. At the beginning of *Cinematic Storytelling,* she observes "In teaching filmmaking, story and film are often taught separately. Screenwriters are housed in one building, production people in another. Unintentionally, a divide is created where there should be a bond. Technical tools become separated from their end, which is story." The result is that "Story has taken a back seat to technical wizardry and style."

Books like *Cinematic Storytelling* that attempt to unite rather than divide exist outside the radar of many in the modern cinema and screenwriting industry. The largeness of its scope, the boldness of its goal, paradoxically make it relatively difficult to see in a culture that knows more and more about less and less. If modern film is to return to its visual roots, Van Sijll's book offers an essential guide.

* * *

If *Cinematic Storytelling* provides the elements of visual storytelling, the 2008 book *Visual Story* by Bruce Block puts these elements into a true visual grammar of modern cinema providing a relationship between story structure and visual structure. Block has the credentials to write a definitive guide with a long list of clients like the American Film Institute, PIXAR Studios, Walt Disney Animation, Dreamworks Animation, Nickelodeon Animation Studios, Industrial Light & Magic and a variety of film schools in Europe. Block's book divides the screen image into tangible sections like contrast and affinity, space, line and shape, tone, color, movement, and rhythm. The vocabulary as well as the insight is provided to purposefully control the given components to create the ultimate visual story. Some of his observations and admonitions and examples: a saturated yellow will always attract a viewer's eye first; avoid abrupt editing by mastering continuum of movement; a list of suggested films to watch to understand rhythmic

control.

While Block's *The Visual Story* compliments Van Sijll's *Cinematic Storytelling*, its heritage goes back to Eisenstein and Slavko Vorkapich, a Yugoslavian filmmaker who had been directing montages at MGM, RKO, and Warner Bros. In the 1950s, Vorkapich was briefly the chairman of the film department at USC and extended Eisenstein's ideas developing groundbreaking theories about movement and editing.

In 1955, Les Norvos begin teaching his classes at USC based around the ideas of Eisenstein and Vorkapich. When Norvos retired, Block took over his famous course. As Block notes in his book, "I decided to delve into his source material, including research in perception, psychology, the visual arts, theater and art history." This source material included works outside the scope of other works on film such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, Rudolph Arnheim's *Visual Thinking*, John Dewey's *Art as Experience* and EH Gombrich's *Art and Illusion*.

As Block writes in the Introduction to *The Visual Story*, "It was my goal to bring film theory into the present, make it practical, and link it with story structure. I wanted to remove the wall between theory and practice so that visual structure would be easy to understand and use." He succeeded brilliantly in this task providing modern cinema a way forward by showing it a way back.

* * *

A surprisingly useful book – much like Block's *The Visual Story*, comes from one of the leading plein air painters today, Mitchell Albala. His book is titled *The Landscape Painter's Workbook* (2021) and it provides theories and examples of shape composition and color. Written for painters, it provides writers with a visual form for seeing their internal paintings in written for. Surprisingly like the same elements and challenges of Bruce Block's leading book on cinematography today, *The Visual Story*.

To some, the connection between a cinematographer and painter might be stretching it. Yet when reading Albala's well-organized book one can see many of the same rules of cinematography applied. Cinematographers can learn from *The Landscape Painter's Workbook*. Painters can learn from Block's *The Visual Story*. And screenwriters can learn about the visual aspects of story from both excellent books.

* * *

4. Drama

Lajos Egri / *The Art of Dramatic Writing*
Will Dunne / *The Dramatic Writer's Companion*
Character, Scene, and Story
The Architecture of Story

Up until the advent of talking pictures in 1927, writers only had to script physical action and title cards. With the beginning of talking pictures, writers had to also write dialogue and Hollywood producers turned to experts to solve this problem. The experts they found were playwrights working on Broadway. This initial close relationship between playwrights and screenwriters gradually faded as screenwriting developed into its own genre.

However, a few books on playwriting continue to be utilized in Hollywood. The greatest book to survive the old affiliation is Lajos Egri's *The Art of Dramatic Writing* first published in 1946 and still a perennial favorite among screenwriters. The book is divided into a three major parts: premise, character, and conflict. One could consider these the building blocks of drama. There is a fourth part called "General" under which Egri puts additional elements of plays that will be familiar to screenwriters. There is very little in the book on the structural aspects of a play as the three-act or five-act structure of a play is a given and not subject to the structural debate in screenwriting.

The premise section is one of the best explanations of premise ever put on paper and gives examples of premise of some of the great plays of history such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *Ghost*s and *Othello*. While most screenwriting books offer sections on premise, the premise section of Egri's book is perhaps the most extensive. The fact that it relates to plays does not subtract from its value as a guide to premise for screenplays. For a quick outline of Egri's Premise section in *The Art of Dramatic Writing* see Appendix M.

The character section also offers a superb exploration of creating dramatic characters with an excellent summary of the aspects of character in the "Bone Structure" part of the section as well as discussion of techniques such as "The Dialectical Approach" and "The Unity of Opposites."

The conflict section again offers an excellent introduction to such topics as "Jumping," "Rising," and "Movement" while the final section called "General" covers several other elements such as such as "Exposition," "Dialogue" and "Obligatory Scene." To those who are familiar with screenwriting books, much of what Egri says will seem familiar. This is because much of *The Art of Dramatic Writing* has been utilized by screenwriters and screenwriting books.

In many ways, if Aristotle's *Poetics* serves as the original screenplay guide, Egri's book updates of Aristotle's theories for the 20th century playwriting and screenwriting. The book was one of the few present at the beginning of modern screenwriting and the elements and techniques it expresses have never been rejected but rather updated. We discuss Egri's three major elements of

premise, character and conflict in the Elements chapter of this book. Egri's book still offers some of the best descriptions of all of these from one of the foundational books of early screenwriting. In playwriting of course.

* * *

One of the best modern updating's of many of the principles and techniques expressed in Egri's *The Art of Dramatic Writing* are a series of books by playwright, teacher and workshop leader Will Dunne. He is a resident playwright at Chicago Dramatists, where he develops plays and teaches workshops. He also has led over fifteen hundred workshops through his San Francisco program.

His books are *The Dramatic Writer's Companion,* (2017), *Character, Scene and Story* (2017) and *The Architecture of Story* (2016) are directed mainly at playwrights but – as in the case with Egri's *The Art of Dramatic Writing* - there is much for screenwriters to learn from the drama approach to screenwriting. As Dunne notes, it provides tools to develop characters, cause scenes, and build stories.

While many screenwriting books argue the primacy of structure, Dunne's book starts with the principle that character is key to the story. As Dunne says, "The character is not something added to the scene or to the story. Rather the character is the scene. The character is story." It is a similar viewpoint of Egri in *The Art of Dramatic Writing* where Egri defines character as the "bone structure" of story noting "Character is the fundamental material we are forced to work with, so we must know character as thoroughly as possible."

Dunne blends dramatic theory with specific action steps tested in workshops he has conducted. Through these exercises writers can discover new actions for their characters and new directions for their stories. The exercises can be used by those just starting the writing process or by those who have scripts in development. Each exercise is rooted in real-life issues from Dunne's workshops.

His book *Character, Scene and Story* is a sequel to the second edition of *The Dramatic Writer' Companion* and features forty-two workshop-tested exercises allowing writers to dig deeper into their scripts by fleshing out images, exploring characters from an emotional perspective, tapping the power of color and sense memory to trigger ideas, and trying other visceral techniques. This book is fully aligned with the new edition of *The Dramatic Writer's Companion* with cross-references between related exercises so that writers have the option to explore a given topic in more depth. While both guides can stand alone, together they give writers more than one hundred tools to develop more vivid characters and craft stronger scripts. The guide also includes a troubleshooting section to help tackle problem scenes. Writers with scripts already in progress will find they can think deeper about their characters and stories. And those who are just beginning to write will find the guidance they need to discover their best starting point. The guide is filled with hundreds of examples, many of which have been developed as both plays and films.

In *The Architecture of Story*, Dunne turns his focus on plot rather than character. It helps writers master the building blocks of dramatic storytelling by analyzing a trio of award-winning contemporary American plays: *Doubt: A Parable* by John Patrick Shanley, *Topdog/Underdog* by Suzan-Lori Parks and *The Clean House* by Sarah Ruhl. Dismantling the stories and examining key components from a technical perspective enables writers to approach their own work with an informed understanding of dramatic architecture. And, examining the structure of plays rather than screenplays provides an enlightening additional perspective on dramatic structure. As Dunne notes, the guide is addressed to dramatic writers but may also be useful to directors, dramaturgs, theatrical designers, and actors, each of whom must understand a script thoroughly in order to bring their talents to it. In addition to theatre artists and technicians, the guide may be of interest to anyone who enjoys reading and thinking about dramatic stories.

Each self-contained chapter focuses on one storytelling component, ranging from "Title" and "Main Event" to "Emotional Environment" and "Crisis Decision." Dunne explores each component in detail, demonstrating how it has been successfully handled in each play and comparing and contrasting techniques. The chapters conclude with questions to help writers evaluate and improve their own scripts. The result is a nonlinear reference guide that lets writers work at their own pace and choose the topics that interest them as they develop new scripts. This flexible, interactive structure is designed to meet the needs of writers at all stages of writing and at all levels of experience.

The contents of Dunne's *The Architecture of Story* is divided into four major sections:

- Technical Considerations covers fundamental decisions that a writer makes about how to develop a story for the stage. Components for analysis include genre, style, dramatic focus, and other basic ingredients of dramatic storytelling.

- The Big Picture looks at the whole story and what it aims to accomplish. Components for analysis include the play's title, characters, plot, and theme, as well the dialogue and visual images woven throughout the script.

- World of the Characters explores the specific realm where the story takes place. Components for analysis include the physical, emotional, social, economic, political, and spiritual dimensions of this world as well as its backstory.

- Steps of the Journey focuses on the details of the main character's quest and how it unfolds from beginning to end. Components for analysis include the basic elements of dramatic action and the key events that comprise the dramatic journey.

The three books by Dunne offer somewhat of a Robert McKee version of storytelling for playwrights. As Art Borreca, Director of the Dramaturgy Program and co-head of The Playwrights Workshop at the University of Iowa, observes the series creates the "most thorough course in playwriting available in print, one that is both an in-depth study in character and its relation to dramatic form, and a practical dramaturgical resource for dramatists in search of the best form for their work."

5. Personal

William Goldman / *Adventures in the Screen Trade*
John Schimmel / *Screenwriting: Behind Enemy Lines*
John Gregory Dunne / *Monster*
John Irving / *My Movie Business*
Danny Rubin / *How to Write Groundhog Day*
Ron Shelton / *The Church of Baseball*
Spike Lee / *Mo Better Blues*
Lew Hunter / *Naked Screenwriting*

> "In terms of authority, screenwriters rank somewhere between the man who guards the gate and the man who runs the studio (this week)."
>
> William Goldman
> *Adventures in the Screen Trade*

Anyone who has written screenplays or reviewed them for studios has experienced a personal experience of the screenwriting process. Some well-known, successful screenwriters have written about their personal experiences with screenwriting. It seems appropriate to label this the Personal School of screenwriting theory.

Perhaps the best known is William Goldman and his book *Adventures in the Screen Trade* (1983) as well as its sequel, *Which Lie Did I Tell* (2000). Goldman has written classic screenplays like *Butch Cassidy* and *The Sundance Kid*, *All the President's Men* and *The Great Waldo Pepper* and a screenwriter for twenty years when the book was written, Goldman's book is a mixture of memoir and "field guide" to the world of screenwriting from someone in the "trenches" on the frontlines. The book is a combination of gossip, anecdotes, cynical wisdom, interviews, and some of the best advice on screenwriting ever put on paper. In addition to all of this, there is also a full version of the classic *Butch Cassidy* screenplay included in the book as well as parts of others Goldman has written. While Goldman does discuss some elements of screenwriting such as the beginnings, endings, and subtext of screenplays, these are given space in the book that is mostly concerned with providing the reader for a feeling of the screenwriting business.

There are several ways to learn the art and craft of screenwriting. Certainly, one is by reading the "how to" books on writing screenplays. Another is by reading the classic screenplays, such as *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. One of the best ways is by working in the industry and interacting with the other people who create films. For all who have never worked in the industry but want to get a feeling for the world of screenwriting, Goldman's book is as close as they can come.

As Goldman notes, "In terms of authority, screenwriters rank somewhere between the man who guards the gate and the man who runs the studio (this week)." The book brilliantly explores this "between" space better than any other book. Unfortunately, the book was written in the early 80s. If only there was a modern William Goldman to write a new "adventures" book for contemporary screenwriters that explores this "between" space.

* * *

As studio executive John Schimmel observes in Screenwriting Behind Enemy Lines "There are too many gurus peddling pure craft in lieu of giving equal emphasis to content and artistry." If truth were told, the greatest antagonists for screenwriters are not the ones they create on the page but the ones that exist off the page in the real world. These grand antagonists are the studios. For many screenwriters, studios are a type of "enemy" always at battle with the heroic efforts put forth in their screenplays. Screenwriting books tell screenwriters how to create antagonists on the page but hardly any of them discuss this form of enemy called the film studio. The reason is simple. Few authors of screenwriting books have ever worked for studios. Its operations remain secretive and subject to speculation.

John Schimmel used to work for the "enemy" but has never considered them the enemy. As John notes in an email to us, "It's hard to think of someone as an enemy once you know them." Or, once you were the enemy. He is that rare hybrid of studio development and production executive who writes about what studios are looking for in screenplays. His book *Screenwriting: Behind Enemy Lines* is based on over twenty years' experience with Warner Brothers, Paramount and Ascendant Pictures and gives readers an insider's view of the art, craft, and business of screenwriting.

The slim book is a gold mine of useful nuggets of information and tips on getting screenplays read by studios. One of these tips is that balance in a screenplay between commercialism and the inner truth a screenwriter brings to his or her story. He notes, "Too much consciousness of the commercial prospects of your project can be just as deadly as too little."

One of the most important things is that a script is seen as a movie in the minds of those who make decisions. There are several essential elements executives look for in determining whether they see a script as a movie:

- Characters who carry burdens we share or live fantasies we'd like to share
- A story with something at stake that's important to the audience
- Writers who value what they have to say and say it coherently
- Mastery over a subject
- Roles in script that are castable
- A screenplay pointed at a clear target audience

Perhaps the most important element being "a universally recognized dilemma and a character trapped inside it." What makes a great film is the same thing that makes a great story: a clearly defined journey taken by a character of clear humanity, and a clear point of view/attitude them,

placed in a context that defines the stakes and therefore the scale of the film and helps determine how relevant the film feels.

One of the most valuable sections in the book is one called "The Rhythm of Reverses." As Schimmel observes, "The flow of scenes, one to the next, is as important in screenwriting as the flow of notes is to composing. Here, the two words that need to be engraved over writing desks are "reverses" and "consequences." He mentions a talk by *South Park* writers Matt Stone and Trey Parker in which they explained that every scene in a storyline must be connected either by "But Then" or "Therefore." Translated by Schimmel, this means "every scene or sequence must either compel the one that follows or reverse the motion of its predecessor." Using this reasoning, Schimmel notes, scenes or sequences connected instead by "And Then" are death as there is not energy in the connection. He offers an excellent short example of how this plays out in his book.

Another valuable section is "Character Creation – A Quick Primer" where he discusses character dialect or tensions within the hero between outward wants and inward needs. "Many a film derives its energy from the journey the protagonist takes to realize that what he/she needs is not necessarily the same as what he/she wants." To whatever extent possible, screenwriters should construct a character that in certain keyways could not be less suited to the journey ahead.

A part of character creation close to the need/want dialect involves character contradiction. Schimmel provides the example of Richard Kimble in the film *The Fugitive* (which he was closely connected to). In the film, Richard Kimble tries to avoid the law but at the same time stops to give medical help when needed. Another example is the character Butch Cassidy who is an honorable man but an incorrigible thief. As Schimmel observes, "These contradictions between competing strands in our characters' personalities are enormously powerful tools to both drive your story and to establish your characters' humanity, the key to building close relationships with your readers and audience."

While most screenwriting books warn of the dangers of navigating that "mine field" called Act II of a screenplay, Schimmel places more emphasis on the importance of Act I noting, "If the screenplay loses steam in the second or third acts, more often than not it is because the script was not set up or thought out properly in Act One." And, if the first part is not working, there is almost no chance the script will work as a whole.

Throughout *Screenwriting: Behind Enemy Lines*, Schimmel provides readers with lessons learned from his work on The Fugitive, Batman and Face/Off. While structure is important to him, it does not dominate importance as it does in many other screenwriting books. "The rules of storytelling structure are vital to learn, but once absorbed, the way they are used is malleable and open to experimentation." He feels screenwriting education has become lopsided with too many gurus peddling pure craft without consideration of content and artistry. A balance is necessary. As he notes, "Your goal should be to sell something, but also to say something." Saying something that is true to the screenwriter. This is the most important. His closing advice is for writers to examine their writing for "the truth that is peeking through" and to "hang onto it for all you're worth."

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There are a number of other writers one might place into the Personal School of screenwriting. One is John Gregory Dunne and his book *Monster* is Dunne's account of the eight years it took to get the 1996 Robert Redford/Michelle Pfeiffer film *Up Close & Personal* made. A bestselling novelist married to the famous writer Joan Didion, Dunne writes about the absurdities and infighting in the film industry.

Another is popular novelist and screenwriter one might place in the Personal School of screenwriting is John Irving who writes about adapting his book *The Cider House Rules* to the screen in his 1999 memoir, *My Movie Business*. The process took Irving thirteen years in which he went through four different directors. Or, there is Danny Rubin screenwriter for the widely considered comedy classic, *Groundhog Day* in his *How to Write Groundhog Day* (2012). The book follows the screenplay's exciting journey through agents, directors, studios, stars and the writer's own confusion to emerge as one delightful and affecting comedies of all time. Included in the book is the original screenplay, notes, scene sketches, and a personal tour of the Hollywood writing process from the popular screenwriting teacher.

The Church of Baseball by Ron Shelton talks about the writing and making of the film *Bull Durham*. His screenplay for *Bull Durham* launched a writing and directing career that includes *White Men Can't Jump*, *Blaze*, *Cobb* and *Tin Cup* among other films. A former professional baseball player, Shelton's book offers a first-person account of how he conceived the characters and story and brought it to life and sold the script to a studio with him attached as a first-time film director. It relates the constant clashes with studio executives over all types of things. As critic John Maxymuk writes in his starred review from *Library Journal*, the book offers a "witty master class in screenwriting and film direction, much in the cheeky spirit of *Bull Durham*."

Filmmaker Spike Lee is a legend. Millions have seen his films like *She's Gotta Have It*, *School Daze*, and *Do the Right Thing* and read the companion books *Gotta Have It*, *Uplift the Race* and *Do the Right Thing*. Perhaps the best and most revealing of Lee's books about the screenwriting process is his book with co-author Lisa Jones, *Mo' Better Blues*. In the screenplay and film, Academy Award-winning Denzel Washington plays a musician torn between two beautiful women and his ambition to be a star. In the book, Lee speaks of the people and the events that created the film, including the thoughts and feelings of the musicians, actors, and crew. The book is illustrated with storyboards and 150 photographs that reveal the behind-the-scenes drama of making *Mo' Better Blues*.

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An interesting addition to the Personal approach is the book *Naked Screenwriting* (2021) by former UCLA screenwriting professor Lew Hunter. The author is an American screenwriter, author and educator and is chairman Emeritus and Professor of Screenwriting at the UCLA Department of Film and Television. Over half of the Oscar-winning scripts over the past twenty years have been written by students of Hunter. His former students and advocates include Adrienne Parks, Allison Anders, David Koepp, Mike Werb, Sacha Gervasi, Dan Pyne, David

Titcher, Diane Saltzberg, Michael Colleary, Don Mancini, Kathy Stumpe, Darren Star, Alexander Payne, and Tom Shadyac.

In *Naked Screenwriter*, Hunter collects interviews with 22 prize-winning screenwriters spanning his career as a UCLA professor, revealing each artist's art, soul, craft, and secrets. The book is made up of interviews with Francis Ford Coppola, Billy Wilder, Oliver Stone, Bruce Joel Rubin, William Goldman, Julius Epstein, Alexander Payne, Jim Taylor, Alfred Uhry, Tom Schulman, Ted Tally, Ruth Prawer Jabvola, Eric Roth, Jean-Claude Carriere, Frank Pierson, David Ward, Horton Foote, Ron Bass, Alan Ball, Callie Khouri, Robert Benton, Irving Ravetch and Harriet Frank Junior.

The screenwriters range across generations and move between anecdotal stories and the minutiae of a writer's process, with a healthy dose of insider information on the business side of Hollywood screenwriting. Among some of the tips is *The Godfather's* Francis Ford Coppola's recommendation to carry a notebook to jot down character sketches or Ruth Prawer Jhabvala (*Howard's End*) advice to write in longhand so she can include drawings.

6.Character

Scott Myers / *The Protagonist's Journey*
Jule Selbo / *Screenplay: Building Story Through Character*
Dara Marks / *Inside Story*
Linda Seger / *Creating Unforgettable Characters*
Robert McKee / *Character*

"Begin with character. End with character. Find the story in between."
Scott Myers

An old riddle has sparked many arguments through the ages: was it the chicken or the egg that came first? It's such a tricky question because you need a chicken to lay an egg, but *chickens come from eggs,* leaving us with an intractable circle of clucky, feathery life that apparently has no clear starting point. The same riddle has played itself out in the world of screenwriting with chicken and egg being replaced by character and plot with the rephrase of the old riddle: is it character or plot that comes first in creating a story.

Both sides have advocates in this approach. But advocates for plot are more numerous in Hollywood than advocates for character. This is evidenced by the fact the chapter in *Hollywood Safari* on Plot is by far the largest chapter. One of the reasons for this is that the plot approach has been around a lot longer in screenwriting circles than the character approach. For example, the first of the popular contemporary screenwriting books was *Screenplay* in 1979 by Syd Field which introduced ancient acts into modern storytelling. Another reason is that the plot approach has developed a more systematic approach to screenwriting while the character approach exists more on its own in individual books and theories. And too, the plot approach has the advantage of being more visual and easier to understand.

However, with an important new book called *The Protagonist's Journey*: *An Introduction to Character-Driven Screenwriting and Storytelling* (2022) by Scott Myers, a writer and one of the leading teachers and thinkers in the screenplay world, character has a powerful new advocate in the old riddle game of whether plot or character comes first in creating screenplays. Myers is a professor of screenwriting at DePaul University and well-known to Hollywood insiders and those who respect the Black List site he writes for. Outside Hollywood, though, Myers are not that well known. Particularly since his writing has on blogs.

With *The Protagonist's Journey*, character is provided with a powerful system for creating screenplays. As screenwriter and professor Keith Giglio at the S.I Newhouse School of Syracuse University says, "Too many books teach structure with the protagonist as an afterthought. *The Protagonist's Journey* is a must-have, must-read for all screenwriters, and a must-teach for all screenwriting professors." Not just pasting in characters after the plot has been created but rather building the plot around character. This marks a substantial change in creating screenplays and will be interesting to see how this will change the screenwriting industry over the next few years.

As Myers says, "*The Protagonist's Journey* is aimed at students of the craft who want to go beyond formulaic approaches which reduce story structure to plot. Plot is essential, but it is only half the story. For it is the world of characters and their inner lives which gives meaning to the events they experience. Indeed, it is by engaging characters, getting curious about them, and following their lead that plot comes to life. In the words of that age-old adage: Character equals plot."

One of the important aspects of *The Protagonist's Journey* is the introduction of the concepts of Carl Jung to screenwriting. As Jung said in *Aion* (1951), one of the major works of Jung's later years, "The psychological rule says that when an inner situation is not made conscious, it happens outside, as fate. That is to say, when the individual remains undivided and does not become conscious of his inner contradictions, the world must perforce act out the conflict."

Myers says, "This is a powerful idea when applied to storytelling. If a Protagonist does not engage their 'inner situation,' their 'inner contradictions,' if they remain 'undivided,' that conflict 'happens outside, as fate.' This means there is a direct connection between the Protagonist's specific state of disunity and the events which transpire in their ensuing journey: "the world must perforce act out the conflict." Thus, viewing the hero's journey through this "lens" provided by Jung, the call to adventure is not merely some random event which launches the plot into action, but rather it is intrinsically tied to the nature of the Protagonist's psyche: inner conflict manifested outside as fate. Indeed, one way to look at the Protagonist's journey is that every occurrence in the plot serves and supports this central character's metamorphosis."

This book is divided into three parts. Part I explores story as Narrative Imperative, how there is a profound connection between the psychological state of the Protagonist and the unfolding plot. The journey the Protagonist takes is the journey they need to take. In Part I, Myers explores key subjects of character in individual chapters: the protagonist's journey, character arc, the concepts of unity and disunity, deconstruction, reconstruction and the screenplay universe. Part II examines primary character archetypes in the Family of Characters seen with great frequency in movies and television series: Protagonist, Nemesis, Attractor, Mentor and Trickster. It explores how this assembly of a story's characters exists to support the Protagonist's physical and psychological journey. Part III shows how the protagonist's journey is placed into screenplay form.

* * *

Jule Selbo, former Professor of Screenwriting at California State University in Fullerton, spent nearly two decades in the film industry and is an award-winning screenwriter and producer with work in feature film, network and cable television, animated series and daytime dramas. She has worked with filmmakers such as George Lucas, Roland Joffe, Lauren Shuler-Donner, Michael Newell and Aaron Spelling. She was also co-editor of the *Journal of Screenwriting* and active in the International Screenwriters Research Network.

Her book *Screenplay: Building Story Through Character* (2015) is based on Selbo's unique 11-step structure for building story through characters. Using examples and analysis from classic and contemporary films across a range of genres, Selbo's *Screenplay* takes readers inside the scriptwriting process, providing a broad overview for both beginners and seasoned writers alike.

Selbo's structural model focuses on the main character's 'want' which creates much forward momentum in the story. In effect, the protagonist is always trying to get something and facing obstacles. In addition, a main character's goal can change. For instance, in *Double Indemnity*, Neff's goal switches from wanting to be with Phyllis, to wanting to destroy her and save himself. The character arc from "cocky ladies man" to "vulnerable, desperate dupe" is demonstrated in this character arc. Below in Figure 6A is a breakdown of Selbo's 11-step structure placed in the context of Act I, II and III

ACT I

1) Character's Overall Want
2) Character Logically Goes for his/her Want
3) Character is Denied
4) Character Gets a Second Opportunity to Achieve the Overall Want

ACT II

5) There are Conflicts About Going after the Second Opportunity
6) The Character Goes for it Anyway
7) All Goes Well
8) All Falls Apart
9) Crisis (Note, this step is always a DECISION made by the main character)

ACT III

10) Climax
11) The Truth Comes Out to Make Things Right

Figure 6A
Jule Selbo's Eleven Step Character Structure

Selbo's screenwriting colleague Pat Verducci shows how this structure works in the classic film noir *Double Indemnity* staring Fred MacMurray as Walter Neff and Barbara Stanwyck as Phyllis Dietrichson.

ACT I

1) Character's Overall Want: Walter Neff is a cocky insurance salesman. He meets Phyllis Dietrichson and falls in lust. He wants her.

2) Character Logically Goes for his/her want: He flirts with her and shows up at her house when he knows her husband won't be home.

3) Character is Denied: He discovers the reason she wants to buy life insurance is so she can kill her husband. Walter says, “You can’t get away with it.” Phyllis says, “I think you’re rotten.” He says, “I think you’re swell, as long as I’m not your husband.” He walks out.

4) Character Gets a Second Opportunity to Achieve the Overall Want: Phyllis comes to his apartment, complains that her husband is abusive. Walter is super attracted to her, and he’s always had this dream of pulling off the perfect insurance scam. He figures out a way to outwit his boss at the insurance company and be with her. He decides to help her kill her husband.

ACT II

5) There are Conflicts About Going after the Second Opportunity: They could get the death penalty.

6) The Character Goes for it Anyway: Neff tricks Mr. Dietrichson into signing the insurance policy.

7) All Goes Well: They plan the murder, and it goes off without a hitch (aside from a minor witness who tries to talk with Walter on the train.) They kill Mr. Dietrichson and leave his body on the tracks. Still, as they walk away from the body, Neff says in classic noir voiceover, “I couldn’t hear my own footsteps, I was a dead man.”

8) All Falls Apart: Walter’s boss, Keyes, gets a hinky feeling and decides there’s something fishy with the case. At first, he thought it was an accident, but now suspects it’s homicide. Walter tells Phyllis she should NOT file the claim. Being a femme fatale, she files anyway. Neff befriends Phyllis’s stepdaughter Lola and discovers that Phyllis probably killed Lola’s mother so she could marry Dietrichson. And to make things worse, Phyllis is sleeping with Nino Zachetti (Lola’s boyfriend.) Neff now knows that Phyllis is a total snake and will destroy him.

9) Crisis: (Note, this step is always a DECISION made by the main character) Neff decides to kill Phyllis.

ACT III

10) Climax: Neff goes to Phyllis’s house. She shoots him first. She’s about to finish him off, but realizes she really loves him and stops. He shoots and kills her. Neff tells Zachetti to go away, be with Lola (He redeems himself.)

11) The Truth Comes Out to Make Things Right: Neff has confessed everything on a tape recorder. Keyes discovers Walter, wounded, and says he’s all washed up. Neff’s going to the gas chamber.

* * *

Dora Marks' *Inside Story: The Power of the Transformational Arc*, has parts of other areas of screenwriting identified in *Hollywood Safari*. However, it seems most appropriate to categorize her book under the Character approach as the focus is what screenwriters term the "character arc" or the change the protagonist goes through from the beginning to the ending of the story. In other words, character change.

It offers techniques and methods to help writers identify and stay focused on the deeper thematic and emotional dimensions that are necessary to create a more natural or organic story structure and character arc. Marks sees the purpose of screenwriting as taking the screenwriter to new places. As she notes, stories at their best they take us to the space that lies just outside what we know about ourselves and introduce us to a new piece of personal knowledge that enhances our connection to others, to nature, and to the divine.

Most importantly, stories can transform our painful and even blissful life experiences into higher consciousness. This quest for wholeness, for connection to all the undiscovered parts of our true nature, which includes our relationship with nature itself, is the model around which this theory of the transformational arc is formed. It embraces the principle that any living thing that isn't growing and evolving can only be moving toward decay and death.

* * *

Well-known screenwriting guru Linda Seger's *Creating Unforgettable Characters* (1990) notes in the Preface of her book that "The concepts within this book relate to the creation of all fiction characters and are based on the principles I've discovered as a drama professor, a theater director, and script consultant." She says that she interviewed over thirty writers who have articulated and affirmed these concepts."

A type of "how-to" book about creating characters rather than a system like Myers puts forth in *The Protagonist's Journey*, it comprises ten chapters, each concluding with a case study on a well-known screenplays such as *Ordinary People*, *Gorillas in the Mist* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. The chapters also provide a detailed application checklist to guide the reader during the character-creation process. Some of the ten chapters are Researching the Character; Defining the Character: Consistencies and Paradoxes; Creating the Backstory; Understanding Character Psychology; Creating Character Relationships; Adding Supporting and Minor Characters; Writing Dialogue; Creating Nonrealistic Characters; Beyond Stereotyping and Solving Character Problems.

The chapter of Seger's that comes closest to ideas in Myer's book is Chapter 4 titled Understanding Character Psychology. In it, Seger quotes Barry Morrow, writer of Rain Man that "Half of writing is psychology. There's a consistent core, or a consistent unity to behavior" that makes "Every action have motivation and intention." The chapter also includes an insightful section on "how inner backstory defines character," with citations to theories of Freud and Jung.

Another interesting chapter is Chapter 7 titled Writing Dialogue. As Seger says, "Great dialogue has conflict, emotions, and attitudes. It also has another essential component: the subtext" or "what the character is saying beneath and between the lines." She uses as an example of subtext the film *Annie Hall* by by Woody Allen. Seger observes, "When Alvie and Annie first meet, they look each other over. Their dialogue is an intellectual discussion about photography, but their subtexts are written in subtitles on the screen." Subtextually, Annie "wonders if she's smart enough for him, he wonders if he's shallow; she wonders if he's a shmuck like other men she's dated, he wonders what she looks like naked. Both understand the subtext of their conversation."

* * *

Chapters and sections on character appear in many books on screenwriting. Particularly screenwriting all-in-one guides like David Trottier's *The Screenwriter's Bible*. But it is becoming more of a topic for entire screenwriting books like Scott Myers' The Protagonist's Journey. The evidence of its importance is the book *Character: The Art and Role of Cast Design for Page, Stage and Screen* (2021) by the leading screenwriting guru of our times, Robert McKee. The book offers one of the recent "call out" books from an important element in his legendary book *Story*. Other books in this series are *Dialogue* (2016), *Storynomics* (2018) and *Action* (2022).

The book *Character* has four parts but it is "Part Two: Building Character" where most of the book's important stuff is located. At the beginning of Part Two, McKee asks "What's the best angle on character creation? Outside in or inside out? Should a writer first create a setting and then populate it with a cast? Or, begin by imagining a cast and then building a world around them?" The next two chapters of the book examine these contrasting techniques.

The next chapters of Part Two discuss the difference between roles and characters. McKee notes that a role is not a character but simply assumes a generic position in a story's social order (Mother, Boss Artist) and then carries out that roles tasks. When a fully realized character enters the story, he first assumes a basic role but then fills it with his singular personality, executing the role's tasks in a unique manner. McKee discusses the Protagonist along with First, Second and Third Circle Characters, characters revolving around the protagonist in various proximities to the character.

A character's public and personal personae combine to form his characterization, or the outer façade of who he seems to be. But his private and hidden selves generate his true character, the inner person he is. McKee discusses motivations that drive complex characters. Other chapters of Part Two include chapters on Dimensional, Complex, Completed, Symbolic and Radical Characters.

* * *

Perhaps one of the key take-aways from McKee's *Character* is a restatement in longer form of the short Chapter 5 "Structure and Character" from his classic *Story*. The major point in this important chapter relates to the idea of character and characterization (or role) and how true character is revealed. The two McKee books are almost 25 years apart (with *Story* published in

1997 and *Character* in 2021) but the short section of *Story* stands up very well in the 25 years since it was written.

In *Story's* "Character vs. Characterization" section of Chapter 5, McKee observes a very important aspect of character noting that "True character is revealed in the choices a human being makes under pressure - the greater the pressure, the deeper the revelation, the truer the choice to the character's essential nature." In effect, beneath the surface of characterization, regardless of appearances, we ask who is this person? At the heart of his humanity, what will we find? The only way to know the truth is to witness the character make choices under pressure to take one action or another in the pursuit of his desire.

Pressure is essential in revealing true character. Choices made when nothing is at risk mean little. If a character chooses to tell the truth in a situation where telling a lie would gain him nothing, the choice is trivial and the moment expresses nothing. But if the same character insists on telling the truth when a lie would save his life, then we sense that honesty is at the core of his nature. The revelation of true character in contrast or contradiction to characterization is fundamental to all fine storytelling. Life teaches this grand principle: What seems is not what is. People are not what they appear to be. A hidden nature waits concealed behind a facade of traits.

This revelation of deep character in contrast or contradiction to his characterization is fundamental in major characters. Minor roles may or may not need hidden dimensions, but principals must be written in depth - they cannot be at heart what they seem to be at face. McKee writes about Character Arc noting that the finest writing not only reveals true character, but arcs or changes that inner nature, for better or worse, over the course of the telling.

McKee relates character to structure in *Story's* "Structure and Character Functions" of Chapter 5. The function of story structure, he notes, is to provide progressively building pressures that force characters into more and more difficult dilemmas where they must make more and more difficult risk-taking choices and actions, gradually revealing their true natures, even down to the unconscious self. In this sense, McKee notes that the function of character is to bring to the story the qualities of characterization necessary to convincingly act out choices. McKee says, "Put simply, a character must be credible: young enough or old enough, strong or weak, worldly or naive, educated or ignorant, generous or selfish, witty or dull, in the right proportions. Each must bring to the story the combination of qualities that allows an audience to believe that the character could and would do what he does."

Structure and character are interlocked McKee says. The event structure of a story is created out of the choices that characters make under pressure and the actions they choose to take, while characters are the creatures who are revealed and changed by how they choose to act under pressure. If you change one, you change the other. If you change event design, you have also changed character; if you change deep character, you must reinvent the structure to express the character's changed nature.

McKee says tor this reason the phrase "character-driven story" is redundant. All stories are "character-driven." Event design and character design mirror each other. Character cannot be expressed in depth except through the design of story. So what does "character-driven" really

mean? McKee notes that for too many writers, a "character-driven" story means "characterization driven," or a tissue-thin portraiture in which the mask may be well drawn but deep character is left underdeveloped and unexpressed.

McKee discusses the relationship of character and genre in the chapter from *Story*. The relative complexity of character must be adjusted to genre. Action/Adventure and Farce demand simplicity of character because complexity would distract us from the derring-do or pratfalls indispensable to those genres. Stories of personal and inner conflict, such as Education and Redemption Plots, demand complexity of character because simplicity would rob us of the insight into human nature requisite to those genres.

* * *

On a broadcast from Wisconsin Public Radio on July 10, 2021 around the publication of his book *Character*, McKee talked with host Doug Gordon about the importance of for storytelling both today and in the future. In the broadcast, McKee observes that today and in the rest of the century, "the demand on writers will be to explore human nature in greater depth and greater complexities than ever. And one of the reasons that that demand is being made is because writers are now given more time than ever to tell their story."

He was referring to the current vogue of series television. According to McKee, a three-dimensional character during our current era of prestige television is at best a supporting role, while compelling protagonists have many more dimensions. As an example, he uses the groundbreaking TV series *Mad Men* to illustrate how the show's creator and showrunner Matthew Weiner developed the main characters at three different levels of conflict: their work life, intimate life and secret life. McKee notes these three levels are equivalent to the social, personal and core self. He also adds a fourth self, the subconscious self, which pairs with each character's hidden. "You have a secret," McKee explained. "And Don Draper's secret was that he stole his identity from a dead lieutenant during the Korean War to escape the war. But his subconscious self finds life meaningless. He's a very successful ad executive and a star at the agency. He's got a beautiful wife, children, the whole perfect package, and he finds the whole thing pointless."

McKee's observation that in the future writers will need to explore human nature in greater depth bodes well for that important part of storytelling related to character. It also seems a logical new direction for screenwriting and storytelling. After all, most of the great books on screenplay principles such as McKee's own *Story* (discussed in the next chapter) have already been written and learned from and it is time to more on to other elements of storytelling.

And perhaps one day the old chicken and egg riddle about which comes first, character or plot, will meld together into a common metal. As McKee noted in the radio interview above, "They're both sides of the same coin."

7.Principles

Robert McKee / *Story*
David Howard and Edward Mabley / *The Tools of Screenwriting*
Lew Hunter / *Screenwriting 434*

> "No one needs yet another recipe book on how to reheat Hollywood leftovers. We need a rediscovery of the underlying tenets of our art, the guiding principles that liberate talent."
>
> Robert McKee
> *Story*

Screenwriting principles are fundamental truths or propositions about the art and craft of screenwriting. Robert McKee is one of the leading gurus in the screenwriting industry and commands a large part of the principles approach. McKee's seminal book *Story: Style, Structure, Substance, and the Principles of Screenwriting* (1997) as well as his popular seminars makes McKee have made McKee known to most screenwriters as someone who focuses on the "guiding principles" of screenwriting. Apart from screenwriters, producers, development executives and agents have read his famous book or attended his lecture series.

While many screenwriting books focus on rules and formulas, McKee focuses on key standards in the screenwriting world. The book begins by lamenting the fact that the overall quality of storytelling is eroding. The result, as he notes, forces flawed and false storytelling to substitute spectacle for substance, trickery for truth. "Weak stories," McKee observes, "desperate to hold audience attention, degenerate into multimillion-dollar razzle-dazzle demo reels. In Hollywood, imagery becomes more and more extravagant, in Europe more and more decorative. The behavior of actors becomes more and more histrionic, more and more lewd, more and more violent."

The problem goes wider than just stories written by screenwriters notes McKee but applies to all writers from the 70s through the late 90s when *Story* was published. As McKee writes, "The method of teaching creative writing in American universities has shifted from the intrinsic to the extrinsic. Trends in literary theory have drawn professors away from deep sources of story toward language, codes, text – story seen from the outside." The result is that the current generation of writers has been undereducated in the prime principles of story.

McKee's *Story* attempts to remedy this by dividing his book into major sections. Part 1 is titled "The Writer and the Art of Story." Part 2 is "The Elements of Story." Part 3 is "The Principles of Story Design" and Part 4 is "The Writer at Work." Part 2 "The Elements of Story" discusses story structure and its relationship to setting, genre, character and meaning. While McKee spends considerable time on story structure, he is not as concerned as presenting a particular formula as he is in providing tools and elements to make stories work. He wants the screenwriter to first study story elements before they focus their attention on structure. As McKee says, "A beautifully told story is a symphony unity in which structure, setting, character, genre, and idea

meld seamlessly. To find their harmony, the writer must study the elements of story as if they were instruments of an orchestra – first separately, then in concert."

Part 3 "Principles of Story Design" in Story provides a discussion on familiar topics to screenwriters such as the inciting incident, act and scene design, composition and crisis, climax and resolution. The principles provide a method that forces screenwriters to work within a framework. McKee quotes T.S. Eliot at the beginning of Part 3. "When forced to work within a strict framework the imagination is taxed to its utmost – and will produce its richest ideas. Given total freedom the work is likely to sprawl."

The book attempts to take a more conservative approach to the area of screenwriting than a liberal one of new formulas and anti-structure. As such, it espouses the tenets of what McKee calls Classical Design with the familiar three-act structure, strong protagonists, inciting incidents. Unlike some books that provide rules, McKee's focus is on providing the screenwriter with "looser-fitting" principles. Classical film structure and old story-telling methods will serve the screenwriter very well. If only he or she will again discover what these are.

Recent books by McKee since his famous *Story* have called out major elements of screenwriting such as dialogue, character and action. These books *Dialogue: The Art of Verbal Action for Page, Stage, and Screen* (2016), *Character: The Art of Role and Cast Design for Page, Stage, and Screen* (2021) and *Action: The Art of Excitement for Screen, Page, and Game* (2022).

* * *

There are other leading screenwriting books in the Principles approach of screenwriting books. Some of the best representatives of this area are David Howard and Edward Mabley's *The Tools of Screenwriting* (1995), Richard Walter's *Essentials of Screenwriting* (2010), Lew Hunter's *Screenwriting 434* (2004) and Carson Reeves' *ScriptShadow Secrets*. All these books offer helpful principles and tools of screenwriting.

Howard and Mabley's *The Tools of Screenwriting* is divided into sections on basic storytelling, screenwriting tools and a final section devoted to the analysis of a number of classic films like *North By Northwest*, *Some Like It Hot*, *Citizen Kane*, *Chinatown* and *The Godfather*. Under the tools section of their book, Howard and Mabley cover interesting tools of screenwriting not often discussed in other books such as dramatic irony, planting and payoff, elements of the future and advertising and plausibility.

The books by Lew Hunter and Richard Walter represent insight from two of the leading screenwriting professors at the UCLA Screenwriting Department. Lew Hunter's *Screenwriting 434* refers to Hunter's legendary screenwriting class at UCLA that educated many well-known industry veterans. Hunter has worked for Columbia, Lorimar, Paramount, Disney, NBC, ABC, and CBS as a writer, producer, and executive. Currently he formerly Chair Emeritus of the screenwriting department at UCLA. Hunter takes a conservative approach focusing on three-act structure more than new formulas of the Step School.

Richard Walter (now retired) was chairman of UCLA's graduate screenwriting program for almost 35 years. A novelist and screenwriter himself, he lectures and offers master classes in screenwriting throughout the nation and world. His *Essentials of Screenwriting* gives a big acknowledgement to his predecessor Lew Hunter. Walter's book is divided into the major sections of art, craft and business. Wise advice learned from his many years of teaching and writing in one of America's foremost screenwriting schools is provided in the book.

An interesting feature of Walter's book is the sprinkling of principles throughout. One of Walter's principles is that screenwriters should always write their own personal story and eschew current trends in the industry. Walter argues that writers always tell their own story anyway, whether they realize it or not. "Whatever the original concept," Walter notes, "however specific, however narrow, in all instances it is filtered through the peculiar sensibilities of the specific writer. In the end, despite himself, the writer will create a tale that is personal." Walter encourages the writer not to fight the telling of the personal story but rather surrender to it. "It is one battle in which defeat actually amounts to victory."

* * *

The era of blogging has brought screenwriting blogs into existence. One of the best of the screenwriting blogs is the *Scriptshadow Secrets* blog of Carson Reeves.

Author Carson Reeves began as a screenwriter himself but struggled to figure out the elusive formula for writing a successful screenplay. Several years ago, he started getting his hands on spec sale scripts and reading them. Within weeks, he learned more about screenwriting than he had since he first started studying it. He then turned his attention from writing to helping others write. This was the genesis behind the Scriptshadow website - a way to teach screenwriting through reading professional screenplays.

The site quickly grew but became controversial due to Reeves breaking down material Hollywood considered private. As such, the site became a "love it or hate it" fixture in Hollywood and the screenwriting community. Even so, the site has tens of thousands of aspiring screenwriters visiting it daily and making it the most popular screenwriting site on the web. The site's most popular feature, the "What I learned" section at the end of each review, was the main inspiration behind the book *Scriptshadow Secrets* as Reeves saw how positively writers responded to quick context-relevant tips.

The book is *Scriptshadow Secrets* provides 500 screenwriting hidden inside 50 well-known movies. As Reeves notes, the book was written as an answer to the glut of tired A-Z screenwriting books that have flooded the market over the years. Instead of another extensive how-to guide, *Scriptshadow Secrets* looks at 50 popular movies from the past six decades and offers approximately ten screenwriting tips from each. The idea in *Scriptshadow Secrets* is both teach screenwriters valuable lessons as well as to show how these lessons are incorporated into successful films. Writers learn by example this way. From *Aliens* to *Pirates of the Caribbean* to *The Hangover* to *The Empire Strikes Back*, the book of Reeves teaches screenwriting lessons from the greatest films of all time.

8. Elements

Lajos Egri / *The Art of Dramatic Writing*
John Truby / *The Anatomy of Story*

Element is defined as a basic part of a whole. There are many examples of elements such as the four basic elements of air, water, fire and earth. Or, a simple substance in chemistry that can't be broken down into smaller parts or changed into another substance. The basic part of an element is an atom containing protons, neutrons and electrons. Carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, gold, silver and iron are examples of elements. There are the 118 elements in the Periodic Table. A substance that cannot be broken down into simpler substances by chemical means.

The first box of Crayola Crayons was produced in 1903 as an 8-count box. It sold for a nickel and contained the color elements of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet, brown and black in its 8 crayons. With these crayons, one had all the elements needed for creating a color drawing. Is there a modern Crayola Crayon box of elements used to create and color a screenplay? How many elements might this box contain? What are the names of the elements in the box? And, what are the dynamics or movement of their interaction?

Elements were not identified in the early years of screenplays when a script simply consisted of what was called "scenarios." As script historian Michelle Donnelly notes in her article "The History of the Screenplay" as "early as the 1890s, when films were about a minute or two long, scenarios not only provided a summary, but also assisted with marketing and became helpful explanations for an audience not used to viewing pictures on film." The script for *The Trip to the Moon* (1902) by George Melies (included in Appendix H) is an example of this scenario style of script with no elements called out in it.

As film became a more viable form of entertainment, parts of scripts began to be identified as elements common to all scripts. The first book to really list the major elements of drama came not from the film world but rather from plays. In fact, the first major work about screenplay elements came from the Hungarian-American playwright and writing instructor Lajos Egri (1889-1967). Egri immigrated to the United States in 1906 and worked as a tailor in New York City while learning English and writing plays. His first plays produced in New York City - including *Rapid Transit* (1927), *Believe Me or Not* (1930), and *There Will Be No Performance* (1932) - were performed in the original Hungarian or translated for English-speaking audiences.

Beginning in 1935, Egri offered writing courses through one-day seminars and conferences as well as through the Egri School of Writing, based out of his home in Manhattan. In these courses, he provided commentary on students' works-in-progress and guided analysis of other dramatic works based on the principles set forth in his books. In 1942, Simon and Schuster published Egri's treatise created during his writing courses titled *How to Write a Play*. In it, he argued the importance of well-rounded characters and a central premise to drive plot in dramatic

works. The book was revised and reprinted in 1946 under its better-known title, *The Art of Dramatic Writing*.

Throughout his private teaching career, Egri continued writing plays, poetry, short fiction, and essays on the fundamentals of dramatic writing, publishing *The Art of Creative Writing* in 1965. He relocated to Los Angeles in the mid-1960s and continued teaching classes from his home until his death in 1967. Apart from playwrights, Egri worked with screenwriters, including Woody Allen who took Egri's course. Allen once told his biographer Eric Lax "I still think *The Art of Dramatic Writing* is the most stimulating and best book on the subject ever written, and I have them all."

* * *

Egri's *Art of Dramatic Writing* divides drama into three major elements: premise, character, and conflict. One could consider these the building blocks of drama. There is a fourth part called "General" under which Egri puts additional elements of plays. There is very little in the book on the structural aspects of a play as the three-act or five-act structure of a play is a given and not subject to the structural debate in screenwriting.
Central to Egri's argument is his claim the best stories follow the logical method of thesis, antithesis and synthesis or dialectic to prove what he calls a "premise" or thematic truth. In *The Art of Dramatic Writing* he offers many examples of a premise such as "stinginess leads to ruin." Having settled on this theme, the playwright can detect in the statement the suggestion of the story's beginning, middle, and end. For example, in the beginning one establishes the thesis of an obsessively stingy character. In the middle, there is the collision of that character's stinginess with inevitable opposition or antithesis. Finally, in the end there is the synthesis of the character's ruin. Egri also emphasizes what he sees as the ever-present role of change in all forms of life, forcing people to evolve and synthesize new philosophies in the face of one overwhelming obstacle after another.

Premise

The three parts of the premise and examples from Egri's book are shown below in Figure 8A. The premise is considered by Egri as the first element of a dramatic work that should be considered

Each good premise is composed of three parts:
- First part suggests character
- Second part suggests conflict
- Third part suggests the end of the story

Examples
- Bitterness leads to false gaiety.
- Foolish generosity leads to poverty.
- Honesty defeats duplicity.
- Heedlessness destroys friendship.
- Ill-temper leads to isolation.
- Materialism conquers mysticism.

Prudishness leads to frustration.
Bragging leads to humiliation.
Confusion leads to frustration.
Craftiness digs its own grave.
Dishonesty leads to exposure.
Dissipation leads to self-destruction.
Egotism leads to loss of friends.
Extravagance leads to destitution.
Fickleness leads to loss of self-esteem.

_____

Figure 8A
Egri's Three-Part Premise with Examples

Egri notes that missing from all the above is the author's conviction. Until the author takes sides, there is no play. Only when he or she champions one side of the issue does the premise spring to life.

Character

> "The only thing that one really knows about human nature is that it changes. Change is the one quality we can predicate of it. The systems that fail are those that rely on the permanency of human nature and not its growth and development."
>
> Oscar Wilde, *Soul of Man under Socialism*

Egri points out that despite the frequent quotations from Aristotle and his view in *Poetics*, as well as the work done by Freud on one of the three elements of a human being, "character has not been given the penetrating analysis which scientists give the atom or the cosmic ray." He observes that every great literary work grew from character, even if the author planned the action first. As soon as his characters were created, they took precedence, and the action had to be reshaped to suit them.

In effect, character comes before plot to Egri as he notes well defined characters will drive the plot themselves. The foundation of character is the essential germination of a well-crafted story. As he says, you can't force a character to make a decision before he or she is good and ready. If you try that, you will find that the action is superficial and trite and it will not reflect the real character. In this sense, he notes, there is really no such thing as weak character. The question is: did you catch your character at that particular moment when he or she was ready for conflict?

The element of character is discussed is what he terms the bone structure of character in the physiology, sociology, psychology. A character is the sum of his physical make-up and the influences his environment exerts upon him. He reminds our minds, no less than our bodies, respond to external influences. Early memories are so deep-rooted we are often unconscious of them. We can make determined efforts to rid ourselves of past influences, to escape from our

instincts, but we remain in their grip. Unconscious recollections color our judgment regardless of how fair we try to be.

* * *

He discusses “character growth” or what would be later called “character arc.” Egri observes that Socrates discovered truth in the dialectical approach to growth in the dynamic operation of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. A proposition is stated, a contradiction to it presented and it is corrected leading to a new synthesis starting the cycle over again. As Egri notes, this continues indefinitely. This “character growth” as Egri calls it, represents one of the first expressions of what would later be called the “character arc.”

As he mentions, regardless of the medium in which one is working, you must know your characters thoroughly. And you must know them not only as they are today but as they will be tomorrow or years from now. He notes, there is only one realm in which characters defy natural laws and remain the same - the realm of bad writing. And it is the fixed nature of the characters which makes the writing bad. If a character in a short story, novel, or play occupies the same position at the end as the one he did at the beginning, that story, novel or play is bad. Egri offers examples of character growth or change in famous works of drama.

> Macbeth starts with ambition, ends with murder.
> The Cherry Orchard starts with irresponsibility, ends with loss of property.
> Hamlet starts with suspicion, ends with murder.
> Death of a Salesman starts with illusions, ends in painful knowledge.
> Dead End starts with poverty, ends with crime.
> The Silver Cord starts with domination, ends in dissolution.
> Craig’s Wife starts with overscrupulousness, ends with loneliness.
> Waiting for Lefty starts with uncertainty, ends with conviction.
> Cat on a Hot Tin Roof starts with frustration, ends with hope.
> The Iceman Cometh starts with hopefulness, ends in despair.

He offers an example of the character change from the emotion of hatred to love as a progression of steps in a play as shown in Figure 8B below. The emotions listed as “before curtain” are the inner psychological emotions of the protagonist has before the play begins, The full spectrum of character growth goes in steps from insecurity to love. The character growth viewed by the audience of the play sees the lesser change in the onstage change from hatred to love.

Before curtain

1. Insecurity
2. Humiliation
3. Resentment
4. Fury

Curtain

5.Hatred
6. Causing injury
7. Satisfaction
8. Remorse
9. Humility
10. False generosity
11. Reevaluation
12. Real generosity
13. Sacrifice
14. Love

Figure 8B
Egri's Three-Part Premise with Examples

Egri talks about the strength or will in a character noting that a weak character cannot carry the burden of protracted conflict in a play. He cannot support a play. In the case of a weak character, he observes that we are forced to discard such a character as a protagonist. There is no sport if there is no competition; there is no play if there is no conflict. Without counterpoint there is no harmony. The dramatist needs not only characters who are willing to put up a fight for their convictions. He needs characters who have the strength, the stamina, to carry this fight to its logical conclusion.

As he says, you cannot force a character to decide before he is good and ready. If you try that, you will find that the action is superficial and trite—it will not reflect the real character. So as you see, there is really no such thing as weak character. The question is: did you catch your character at that moment when he was ready for conflict?

* * *

In *The Art of Dramatic Writing*, Egri discusses the Protagonist and Antagonist in a drama. The Protagonist is the "pivotal character" in a drama or the "one who takes the lead in any movement or cause.'' Anyone who opposes the Protagonist is an opponent or Antagonist. Without a pivotal character there is no play. The pivotal character is the one who creates conflict and makes the play move forward. The pivotal character knows what he wants. Without him the story flounders and in fact there is no story.

The Protagonist must not merely desire something but rather want it so badly they will destroy or be destroyed in the effort to attain this want. There must always be something a Protagonist wants more than anything else in life if the Protagonist is to be a good pivotal character. It should be something very vital at stake for the Protagonist such as revenge, honor, ambition, health, money, protection, vengeance, or a mighty passion

A pivotal character is a driving force, not because this character decided to be one. A character becomes a Protagonist by being forced by circumstances within and without to become what he

or she is. In other words, the Protagonist becomes what he or she is for the simple reason that some inner or outer necessity forces action. Something vital is at stake. there is something at stake for him, honor, health, money, protection, vengeance, or a mighty passion.

Egri talks about orchestration of characters in a drama. Good orchestration is one of the reasons for rising conflict in any play. He notes that when one is ready to select characters for a play, he or she must be careful to orchestrate them right. For instance, if all the characters are the same type – such as all bullies - it will be like an orchestra of nothing but drums. In King Lear, for example, Egri notes that Cordelia is gentle, loving and faithful while Goneril and Regan, the older daughters, are cold, heartless, and deceitful plotters and the King himself is rash, headstrong, and given to unreasoning anger.

Finally, in his section on the element of character in his book, Egri notes what he calls the "unity of opposites." This occurs when the Protagonist and Antagonist are so bound to each other any compromise is impossible. The unity between opposites must be so strong that the deadlock can be broken only if one of the adversaries or both are exhausted, beaten, or annihilated completely at the end. "The real unity of opposites can be broken only if a trait or dominant quality in one or more characters is fundamentally changed. In a real unity of opposites, compromise is impossible. He notes that this unity of opposites is important to discover at the very beginning of a drama. As he says, "After you have found your premise, you had better find out immediately - testing if necessary - whether the characters have the unity of opposites between them. If they do not have this strong, unbreakable bond between them, your conflict will never rise to a climax."

Conflict

The third major element in Egri's *The Art of Dramatic Writing* is conflict which Egri sees as the "origin of action." Egri notes tthere are four kinds of conflict: static, jumping, foreshadowing and slowly rising. A dramatist wants only rising and foreshadowing conflict as static and jumping do not form true conflict. As he notes, there is no action under the sun which is the origin and the result all in one. Everything results from something else. Action cannot come of itself. But action is not more important than the contributing factors which give rise to it.

He observes that a person can find conflict all around them in members of one's family, friends, relatives, acquaintances and business associates. Cold and heat create conflict: thunder and lightning. "Bring opposites face to face," he says, "and conflict is inevitable." He provides conflict scenarios in the below adjectives for people.

frugal—spendthrift
moral—immoral
dirty—immaculate
optimistic—pessimistic
gentle—ruthless
faithful—fickle
clever—stupid
calm—violent

cheerful—morbid
healthy—hypochondriac
humorous—humorless
sensitive—insensitive
dainty—vulgar
naive—worldly
brave—cowardly

He provides a large list of character traits that can be put into conflict such as affection, abusiveness, arrogance, avarice, accuracy, awkwardness, brazenness, bragging, craftiness, confusion, cunning, conceit, contemptuousness, cleverness, clumsiness, curiosity, cowardice, cruelty, dignity, dishonesty, dissipation, envy, eagerness, egotism, extravagance, fickleness, fidelity, frugality, gaiety, garrulity, gallantry, generosity, honesty, hesitance, hysteria, heedlessness, ill-temper, idealism, impulsiveness, indolence, impotence, impudence, kindness, loyalty, lucidity, morbidity, maliciousness, mysticism, modesty, obstinacy, prudishness, placidity, patience, pretentiousness, passion, restlessness, submission, sarcasm, simplicity, skepticism, savagery, solemnity, suspicion, stoicism, secretiveness, sensitivity, snobbery, treachery, tenderness, untidiness, versatility, vindictiveness, vulgarity, zealousness.
He discusses "static" characters or characters who cannot make a decision in a play are responsible for static conflict. One cannot expect a rising conflict from a person who wants nothing or does not know what he or she wants. While a play can have only one major premise, each character has his or her own premise which clashes with premises of others. Currents and undercurrents will cross and recross, but all of them must further the lifeline, the main premise of the play.

Egri gives an example. If, for instance, a woman perceives that her life is sterile, and cries her heart out, pacing her room, but does nothing about it, she is a static character. The dramatist may put the most haunting lines in her mouth, but she remains impotent and static. Grief is not enough to create conflict. We need a will which can consciously do something about the problem.

He provides an example of a character that begins as "virtuousness" and goes to "villainy" in the following progression of steps the character takes.

1. Virtuous (chaste, pure)
2. Thwarted (frustrated in her virtue)
3. Incorrect (faulty, unbecoming behavior)
4. Improper (she becomes indecorous, almost indecent)
5. Disorderly (unmanageable)
6. Immoral (licentious)
7. Villainous (depraved, wretched)

Importantly, Egri notes that the steps themselves are not enough to avoid a static character. In effect, if a character stops at the first or second step and lingers there too long before taking the next step, the play will become static. Such static usually occurs when the play lacks the driving force which is the premise.

In change of character, the dramatist must avoid what Egri calls "jumping" or when a character jumps too quickly to character changes. As he notes, "no honest man will become a thief overnight; no thief will become honest in the same period of time. No sane woman will leave her husband on the spur of the moment, without previous motivation. No burglar contemplates a robbery and carries it out at the same time." If one's character starts from "fidelity," and with a gargantuan leap arrives at "infidelity," omitting the intervening steps, it will be a jumping conflict, and one's play will suffer.
The final part of The Art of Dramatic Writing contains several elements that would later would become elements of screenwriting in his discussion of the obligatory scene, exposition and dialogue.

* * *

Over the years since *The Art of Dramatic Writing* was first published in 1942, variations of Egri's key elements of premise, character and conflict have appeared in many screenwriting books usually in the form of screenwriting "bibles" that attempt to cover all aspects of screenwriting. Many provide excellent definitions of these elements but few really improve on Egri's original *The Art of Dramatic Writing*. More than anything else, what Egri originally defined has simply been defined in different ways.

Perhaps the true successor of Lajos Egri for the modern screenplay is John Truby with his 2009 book *The Anatomy of Story*. Almost 70 years after Egri published *The Art of Dramatic Writing*, Truby refined and added elements in his book. The contents of *Anatomy of Story* list the major elements that Truby defines in a screenplay is listed below in 8C.

Premise

Premise is your story stated in one line. It is the simplest combination of character and plot and typically consists of some event that starts the action, some sense of the main character, and some sense of the outcome of the story. What one chooses to write about is far more important than how to write it.

Structure

1. Weakness and need
2. Desire
3. Opponent
4. Plan
5. Battle
6. Self-Revelation
7. New Equilibrium

Character

Create characters by drawing from the original idea and connecting and comparing them in a character web. Then, decide the function each is to perform in helping the hero develop.

Theme (Moral Argument)

The author's moral vision or how people should act in the world. Instead of making the characters a mouthpiece for a message, express the theme inherent in the story idea through story structure that surprises and moves the audience. The Hero must make a moral choice typically near end of story. To be a true choice, hero must either select one of two positive outcomes or avoid two negative ones.

Setting (Story World)

Create the world of the story as an outgrowth of the hero. It will help define the hero and show the audience a physical expression of his growth.

Symbol Web

Symbols are packets of highly compressed meaning. Determine a web of symbols that highlight and communicate different aspects of the characters, the story world and the plot.

Scene Sequence (Scene Weave)

Before writing scenes, develop a list of every scene in the story with all the plotlines and themes woven into the tapestry. Place in a sequence.

Scene Construction & Dialogue

Write the story, constructing each scene so that it furthers the development of the hero. Write dialogue that doesn't just push the plot but has a symphonic quality to it, blending many "instruments" and levels at one time.

Figure 8C
The Elements of John Truby's *Anatomy of Story*

One can see in the above that the elements listed by Egri of Premise, Character and Conflict are all present in Truby's elements. The conflict discussed by Egri plays out in the Structural element Truby lists in his seven-step model moving the Protagonist from weakness and need to a new equilibrium. Truby adds the additional elements of theme, setting, symbol web and scene sequence.

Truby provides some examples of Premise from some classic films. In *The Godfather*, the youngest son of a Mafia family takes revenge on the men who shot his father and becomes the new Godfather. In *Casablanca*, a tough American expatriate rediscovers an old flame only to give her up so that he can fight the Nazis. In *Star Wars*, when a princess falls into mortal danger, a young man uses his skills as a fighter to save her and defeat the evil forces of a galactic empire.

One key thing Truby adds as part of Premise if what he terms "The Designing Principle." This he says is the seed of the story consisting of an overall strategy for how you will tell your story. He notes that this helps you extend the premise into deep structure. It is the internal logic of the story, what makes the parts hang together organically so that the story becomes greater than the sum of its parts. It is what makes the story original. In effect, the premise is concrete and is what happens. The designing principle is abstract, the deeper process going on in the story.

Truby provides examples of the Premise and The Designing Principle in some well-known films.

The Godfather

Premise: The youngest son of a Mafia family takes revenge on the men who shot his father and becomes the new Godfather.
Designing Principle: Use the classic fairy-tale strategy of showing how the youngest of three sons becomes the new "king."

Tootsie.

Premise. When an actor can't get work, he disguises himself as a woman and gets a role in a TV series only to fall in love with a female member of the cast.
Designing principle. Force a male chauvinist to live as a woman.

Moses (Book of Exodus)

Premise. When an Egyptian prince discovers that he is a Hebrew, he leads his people out of slavery.
Designing principle. A man who does not know who he is struggles to lead his people to freedom and receives the new moral laws that will define him and his people.

Harry Potter Books

Premise. A boy discovers he has magical powers and attends a school for magicians.
Designing principle. A magician learns to be a man and a king by attending a boarding school for sorcerers over the course of seven school years.

Truby deals with character change by noting that after premise and designing principle, the most important thing is the fundamental character change of the story's hero. Character change is what the story hero experiences by going through his struggle. At its simplest level, it can be represented by a three-part equation.

Weakness x Action = Change
W x A = C

Truby advises to 1) Write premise line 2) Determine basic action of hero and 3) Opposites of this action for W and C. For example, consider that an uptight, henpecked man becomes involved with a gang of outlaws and gets a divorce. The formula works out like below.

W = uptight, henpecked man
A = involved with outlaws
C = gets a divorce

Truby combines his enlightening book on elements with a breakdown of plot into perhaps the greatest number of steps yet created in Hollywood at 22 steps. In this sense, the elements Truby mentions provides a macro-overview of screenwriting combined with micro plot steps. The long structure of Truby probably provides the most sophisticated plot system currently in Hollywood

Or, for that matter, for any writer approaching screenwriting from out there in the wilderness. The way Truby structures this is an education in itself.

One of the major changes that Truby brings to the elements of screenplays is his division of structure into specific states of the Protagonist from weakness and need to equilibrium. The seven-step structure is lengthened to a twenty-two-step structure, one of the longest structures in screenwriting. This long structure of Truby includes the first seven-steps of his short structure with the addition of fifteen steps to them.

1. Self-Revelation, Need, Desire
2. Ghost & Story world
3. Weakness & Need
4. Inciting Event
5. Desire
6. Ally or Allies
7. Opponent and/or Mystery
8. Fake-ally Opponent
9. First Revelation & Decision: Changed Desire & Motive
10. Plan
11. Opponent's Plan and Main Counterattack
12. Drive
13. Attack by Ally
14. Apparent Defeat
15. Second Revelation & Decision: Obsessive Drive, Changed Desire & Motive
16. Audience Revelation
17. Third Revelation & Decision
18. Gate, Gauntlet, Visit to Death
19. Battle
20. Self-Revelation
21. Moral Decision
22. New Equilibrium

Truby's long form structure with its many elements, remains probably the most sophisticated structure in screenwriting. The elements of stories Truby focused on in *Anatomy of Story* have developed into a focus on types of stories (or genres) in his new important new book *The Anatomy of Genres* (discussed in the Genre chapter). However, the key elements of his *Anatomy of Story* are present in all the various film genres.

Will there be new elements in screenplays of the future beyond those that Lajos Egri, John Truby and others define? Will they grow in number or be consolidated into fewer elements? Will their names change? Will the elements relate to each other in different ways? Are they perpetually present in storytelling, or do they change with the trends and cycles of time?

9. Plot

Early 20th-century English novelist E. M. Forster described plot as the cause-and-effect relationship between events in a story. As Forster observed, "The king died, and then the queen died, is a story, while the king died, and then the queen died of grief, is a plot." Plots, also known as storylines, include the most significant events of the story and how the characters and their problems change over time.

In effect, plot is the story's skeleton that defines the who, what, when and where of the story allowing characters and themes to develop. Typically, a story plot is made from five key elements:

1. Exposition: At the beginning of the story, characters, setting, and the main conflict are typically introduced.
2. Rising Action: The main character (Protagonist) is in crisis and events leading up to facing the conflict begin to unfold. The story becomes complicated.
3. Climax: At the peak of the story, a major event occurs in which the main character faces a major enemy, fear, challenge, or other source of conflict. The most action, drama, change, and excitement occurs here.
4. Falling Action: The story begins to slow down and work towards its end, tying up loose ends.
5. Resolution/Denouement Also known as the denouement, the resolution is like a concluding paragraph that resolves any remaining issues and ends the story.

While most screenwriting books and gurus agree on the elements above, the subject of Plot in screenplays has more disagreement and confusion than any other approach to screenwriting. This is because there is no commonly accepted plot structure, no common acceptance of the number of acts, sequences and steps in a screenplay. In fact, film genres (or types) have different plots depending on genres.

It is therefore not surprising that the Plot approach comes closest to a formulistic method of creating screenplays by proposing various plot structures. As such, it is the subject of many "How To" books on screenwriting. It creates the key element of differentiation and branding of screenplay theories discussed in our Introduction.

* * *

The idea for plot really began with Aristotle and his *Poetics* (Circa 335 B.C.) and his idea a plot has three elements: a beginning, middle and end. These ideas of Aristotle about drama are discussed in the Ancient chapter of this book. Discussed below in the "Modern Plot History" section are major plot theories of the last two hundred years based around the definition of various "dramatic situations" of playwright Carlo Gozzi in the 18th century, Georges Polti in the

19th century and William Cook's *Plotto* invention in the early decades of the 20th century. This early evolution is discussed in the A) section below. The modern evolution of plot in screenplays applies ideas of plot its division into screenplay Acts, Sequences and Steps discussed in the B), C) and D) sections below. In effect, this evolution has moved from the division of plot from its largest elements in Acts, through Sequences and to its smallest element of Steps.

It is interesting to observe in the below, an increasing number of divisions associated with Plot from the original three divisions of Acts to the twenty-three divisions of Steps. In a general sense, one can observe the large division of screenplays into Acts has more agreement than the smaller divisions into Steps. The three-act structure of plot originally proposed by Aristotle has never really been replaced because of its correspondence it to many key elements of culture, nature and human life from beginning, middle to end.

A. Modern Plot History

George Polti / *Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*
William Wallace Cook / *Plotto*
Tom Sawyer & Arthur David Weingarten / *Plots Unlimited*
Christopher Booker / *Seven Basic Plots*

> "He had likewise projected, but at what part of his life is not known, a work to show how small a quantity of real fiction there is in the world; and that the same images, with very little variation, have served all the authors who have ever written."
>
> Dr. Samuel Johnson
> *Boswell's Life of Johnson*

In 1894, the French critic Georges Polti (1867-1946) identified thirty-six plots he claimed all drama derived from. Polti's book *Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations* attempted to categorize every dramatic situation that might occur in a story or performance. To do this, Polti analyzed classical Greek texts and classical and contemporaneous French works. In addition, he analyzed a handful of non-French authors.

Of course, the title of the book makes a bold claim that has appealed to a particular group of writers who stay very close to these plot patterns suggested by Polti. Others think the book is difficult to understand and that no one can make the claim there are a certain number of basic plots. The reviews of the book on Amazon are mixed garnering three stars among 19 reviewers. Some categories are too close together. There is some unintelligible writing in the book such as the "In the second, by means of a contraction analogous to that which abbreviates a syllogism to an enthymeme, this undecided power is but an attribute of the persecutor himself."

One observer notes Polti heard there were 36 possible plots and set about creating a list of plots to match the 36. This is most likely a true story as Polti was familiar with an earlier work called by Carlos Grozzi observing that there were thirty-six dramatic situations. In the Introduction of his book, Polti claims to be continuing the work of Italian playwright Carlo Gozzi (1720 - 1806) who had first identified 36 dramatic situations. In effect, Polti took the thirty-six dramatic situations Grozzi proposed and packaged them into a modern context. His own brand in the story

industry so to speak. These thirty-six dramatic situations are reproduced in Appendix F.

* * *

Perhaps one of the great updating of the Polti book *Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations* is the massive book by Christopher Booker titled *The Seven Basic Plots*. It is a book that reviewers in literature as well as famous authors like Richard Adams creator of *Watership Down* as well as critics from the *London Times*, *Sunday Telegraph* and *Washington Post*. Many claim it a masterpiece. And of all the screenwriting books out there today, this little-known book might really be the true masterpiece that nobody has heard of in Hollywood. It is never mentioned in screenwriting books or classes or seminars. Simply no one has heard of this book published in 2004 by Continuum.

In Part One of *The Seven Basic Plots*, Booker presents these plot structures. The thirty-six situations of Gozzi and Polti have now been taken down to twelve combinations and combinations of these twelve create seven. Few have seen these but they are:

1. Overcoming the Monster
2. The Monster (II) and the Thrilling Escape from Death
3. Rages to Riches
4. The Quest
5. Voyage and Return
6. Comedy
7. Comedy (II) The Plot Disguised
8. Tragedy (I): The Five Stages
9. Tragedy (II): The Divided Self
10. Tragedy IIII): The Hero as Monster
11. Rebirth
12. The Dark Power: From Shadow into Light

In many ways, these categories define modern film genres as well as they have been defined. At least defined in a contemporary manner. There is little chance of any of the modern books on film genre ever equaling the power and magnitude of the early books on film genre.

There is fine emotional balance needed within a screenwriter (it seems from the perspective of basic plots) between writing formulistic screenplays and Personal School of screenplays. Of starting with a plot idea. Or the original dramatic musings and methods of Aristotle thousands of years ago. An artist needs some type of popular success and acceptance without, at the same time, selling out to the masses. It seems to present a delicate balance with culture's greatest artists. A battle between the inner forces of creation and the outward forces of expression.

From the high, broad perspective of story genres and basic plot types, one has truly large elements one might focus their attention towards. In other words, writers might be wise to focus on genres and well-known brands within these genres. Providing the leading seven genres of public attention, public entertainment, Booker has written one of the books for his time.

* * *

Booker's *The Seven Basic Plots* attempts to define and argue there are seven basic dramatic situations today. In many respects, it is more of a book for literary critics and academics than for general readers or screenwriters. It has received hardly any notice within the ranks of those who carry the "story" torch into the future. Screenwriters are certainly part of this group.

Everyone might do well to ponder the big questions that *The Seven Basic Plots* presents. Few, though, seem interested in pondering large questions in our era of the ten-second attention spans and the ten-second Tweets. But even thinking about the area of genres, major story areas, one wonders if twelve is the right number? Does each one of us have their own personal perspective on this number of plots" And what this personal perspective (plot) might be?

Plots of life might be the best way to define a particular school. Plots of life might be a better title than seven dramatic stories. A number of years ago, literary critic Northrup Frye expressed the four major literary archetypes in his brilliant book of literary criticism called *The Anatomy of Criticism*. One could call the areas of tragedy, comedy, romance, and satire all major genres hovering over much today. As the way we tell stories, continues to segment into more and more steps in a plot and perhaps smaller and smaller stories.

Perhaps we have moved too far away from the original purpose of the art-form of cinema and no longer understand its original purpose and reason for being. Endless plots follow endless plots. We hear the same plot told over and over each day in the popular media. The daily news. Everyone we talk to. There is the current "plot" of popular culture. The current "story" as to how everything moves. The Hero of culture. The current Villain of culture. Do we write the plot out there in culture we are attacked by each day? Or do we create and write our own plot?

Perhaps there are twelve plot areas. Or perhaps one makes their own list of plot types. The thinking is big picture thinking before one hunkers down within the genres of a particular story form. They enter the screenwriting world at a high point. It is a perspective that gives them a broad, overall view of that cottage industry called screenwriting.

A screenwriter could do not much better than choosing and understanding a particular film genre to work within almost exclusively. In many ways the question of what genre to work in should come before anything else. There are a few brilliant books on film genre, but this is beyond the scope of our current work at hand. The Seven Basic Plots is the modern book on story plots, or story genres or types. Hollywood will continue to push new films under past brand tents. New genres will come and go. However, in the end the number and type of genres in the film industry might mirror those in Booker's brilliant book.

* * *

"*Plotto*, an invention which reduces literature to an exact science."

Boston Globe
September 1928

Perhaps the original book in this area is William Wallace Cook's 1928 *Plotto: The Master Book of All Plots*. Cook (1867-1933) was a Canadian writer of hundreds of nickel and dime novels over his forty-four-year career from romances (*Little Vassar Girl*) to science fiction (*Jim Dexter*, *Cattleman*). Each production was always carefully molded into the same 40,000-word format of sixteen chapters.

As Cook said, "A writer is neither better nor worse than any other man who happens to be in trade. He is a manufacturer." The comparison of a writer to a manufacturer was an apt comparison at the time with the rise of high-speed presses and wide distribution through the emerging railroads, writing had become an industry and the masses wanted a written product that was cheap, potent, and satisfying. As Paul Collins notes in the Forward to Plotto, "Cook couldn't rely on anything so capricious as artistic inspiration. He needed to systematize fiction so that nearly anything within his grasp could be readily converted into narrative – including the system itself." So, as Cook eased into old age in the same Michigan home he had occupied for three decades, he decided his system of storytelling would become … another book.

Cook was familiar with Polti's *Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations* but went much further than Ploti. He created a system to mix-up the various thirty-six plots. The 1928 *Boston Globe* described the promise of this new system noting "It is possible to develop several million original works." Like those old carboard wheels you used to turn to put different features on a face. This is similar to the Plotto system. A type of dial in plot creation system. One of the greatest selling authors in history, Erle Stanley Gardner once said, "I secured data from it which has been worth a great deal to me." Gardner created his own plot system, a system he used over and over in creating his best-selling books. As creator of Perrry Mason, he sold more than 170 million books in American during his lifetime.

* * *

An updating of *Plotto* for the modern world is the *Plots Unlimited* by Tom Sawyer and Arthur David Weingarten. First published in 1994, the book updates Cook's *Plotto* for the modern world by making the information in *Plotto* more accessible and more systematic. The system they propose is a method of creating more than 200,000 possible plot combinations coming from the areas of Character Combinations, Story Types and Sub-Types and Master Plots or Themes.

As the authors say in the Introduction, "By combining these components and selecting plot turns from the myriad choices *Plots Unlimited* offers, you will generate outlines for a series of well-constructed, unified story segments which you can later combine, edit and use as the basis for your creative efforts."

While the outlines generated by *Plots Unlimited* can be immediately used by the screenwriter, the authors real intention is that the suggestions made in the book "spark your creativity and send

your imagination off in entirely new and unexpected directions." The authors also call it an invaluable reference work as well as a compendium of plot turns and twists that serves as a "sure-cure" for writer's block.

B. Acts

Aristotle / *Poetics*
Syd Field / *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*
Robert McKee / *Story*
John Yorke / *Into the Woods*

(1) Three Act Structure

In *Poetics*, Aristotle wrote, "A whole (story) is what has a beginning and middle and end." He articulated how these three parts fit together is as follows: "A beginning is that which is not itself necessarily after anything else, and which has naturally something else after it. An end is that which is naturally after something itself, either as its necessary or usual consequent, and with nothing else after it. And a middle, that which is by nature after one thing and has also another after it."

Aristotle's division of story into three parts has correspondence with the number 3 and its relationship to a number of elements in the world. In the popular screenwriting blog Go Into Story (www.Gointostory.com) of Hollywood's famous Black List, blog creator Scott Myers observes some of these expressions of three.

> There are three types of galaxies: elliptical, spirals and irregulars
> Three basic Earth divisions: Igneous- Metamorphic- Sedimentary
> Freud divided the psyche into three parts: Ego, Super-Ego and Id
> Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Ghost
> The three R's: Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic
> The three points of a triangle
> Three pitches in a music triad, the most basic form of a chord
> The innate cycles in the physical universe that reflecting three movements:
> Three parts of a 24-hour cycle: Sunrise, Day and Sunset
> Three parts of a journey: Departure, Journey and Return
> Three periods of life: Birth, Life and Death
> Hegel's dialectic: Thesis, Antithesis and Synthesis
> Classical music sonata form: Exposition, Development and Recapitulation

The correspondence of the symbolism of the number three to key aspects of life Myer's notes above is a major reason the modern form of film structure is based around three acts creating Aristotle's Beginning in Act I, Middle in Act II and Ending in Act III.

* * *

Aristotle's three parts were translated into three acts in 1974 by the little-known book called *The Screenwriter's Handbook* by Constance Nash and Virginia Oakley. But it wasn't until five years later in Syd Field's classic 1979 book *Screenplay*: *The Foundations of Screenwriting* that the three-act structure became the dominant film structure in Hollywood. In many ways, the book was at the forefront of modern screenwriting theory and is still used in most screenwriting programs and served as a guide many of the world's most prolific scriptwriters.

The three-act paradigm Field created was based on dividing up the running time of a common film at the time (1979) into two hours or 120 minutes. Each page of a screenplay equals roughly one minute on the screen. The first quarter of the film should be Act I (Set-Up) of approximately 30 pages or 30 minutes should set the film's plot. Then the protagonist experiences a plot point, providing the protagonist with a goal. Act II (Confrontation) should last approximately half the time of the film or about 60 minutes or 60 pages. About half of a movie's running time focuses on the protagonist's struggle to achieve this goal. Field refers to the midpoint, a turning point around the middle of the screenplay (such as on or around page 60 of a 120-page screenplay) often marked by a devastating reversal of the protagonist's fortune. Act III (Resolution) depicts the protagonist's struggle to achieve (or not achieve) his or her goal, as well as the aftermath. The structure, known well to almost all screenwriters is represented below in Figure 9A as well as in Appendix A.

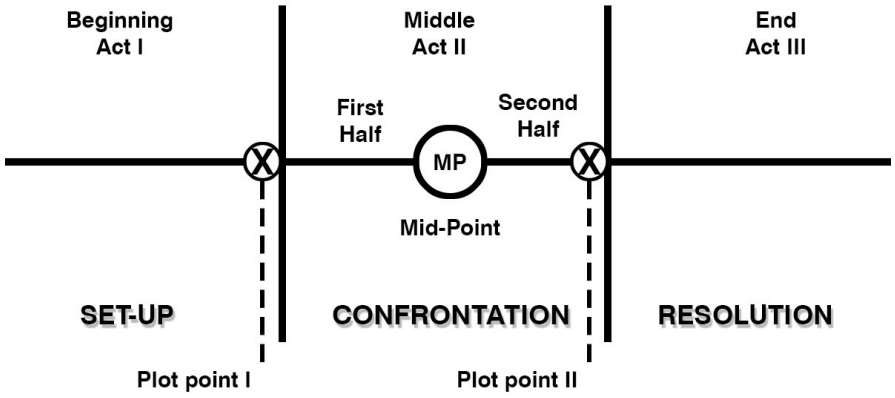


Figure 9A
Syd Field's Classic Three Act Structure with Two Plot Points

Much modern screenplay theory adheres to the large divisions of a screenplay into the original three-act structure. However, the three-act structure seemed something simply taken for granted in the early years of film rather than a technique documented and followed. For example, leading film historian David Bordwell notes Steven Price in his book *A History of the Screenplay* finds little direct evidence that screenwriters of the studio era consciously applied a three-act structure. Rather, in 1930s and 1940s screenwriters employed two formats: either the "master-scene" one or a format involving more explicit instructions about camerawork, lighting, and other aspects.

Importantly, Scott Myers observes in his "Go Into Story" blog that Field's major division of a screenplay into three acts applies to smaller parts of the screenplay in scenes, sequences and subplots.

Every scene should have a Beginning, Middle and End.

Every sequence should have a Beginning, Middle and End.
Every subplot should have a Beginning, Middle and End.

* * *

A broad perspective on three act structure is provided by Robert McKee in his well-known book *Story*. The three act structure is visualized in a pyramid structure based on the overall life perspectives screenwriters bring to screenwriting in classical design, minimalism/mini-plot and anti-structure. The pyramid is reproduced in Figure 9B below.

1. Classical Design and Archplot (Top of Pyramid)
Under this heading are causality. Closed Ending. Linear Time. External Conflict. Single Protagonist. Consistent Reality. Active Protagonist.

2.Minimalism and Mini Plot (Bottom left of Pyramid)
Under this heading Open Ending. Internal Conflict. Multi-Protagonists. Passive Protagonist.

3. Anti-Structure and Antiplot (Bottom right of Pyramid. Under this section are Coincidence. Nonlinear time. Inconsistent Realities.

McKee observes that a screenwriter writes the most powerful screenplays when they understand what perspective they bring to screenwriting and can figure ways to best write in this perspective. This can present an ethical challenge for many since he notes that the Classical Design approach is the one most film audiences understand and the most popular. Writing screenplays with this structure is not as much of a challenge for those who have a classical design perspective on life. However, writing screenplays with classical structure presents a far greater challenge to those who bring a minimalistic or anti-structure perspective to life.

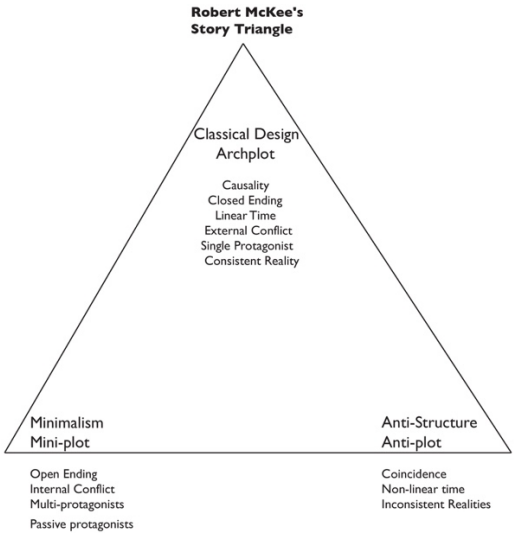


Figure 9B
McKee's Story Triangle

(2) Five Act Structure

In Roman times, Roman playwrights like Plautus and Seneca expanded Aristotle's original three-act structure to five acts and the five act structure dominated through the plays of Shakespeare. A similar five-part structure is also used in traditional Japanese Noh drama, particularly by Zeami Motokiyo in his work *The Three Paths* (Sando) that originally described a five-part (five-dan) Noh play as the ideal form. In the 18th Century, the five-act format (known as the "five-act play") was analyzed by Gustav Freytag in *Dramatic Techniques* (Die Technik des Dramas).

The book *Into the Woods: A Five-Act Journey into Story* by Londoner John Yorke sets out to wrap screenplays into a larger narrative context. Yorke has the credentials for this ambitious task as former head of BBC Drama Production and current Managing Director of Company Pictures in London. Over the years, he has championed some of the defining works of British television including Life on Mars, The Street, Shameless and Waterloo Road. In 2005, he created the BBC Writers Academy and is a Visiting Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Yorke's aim is not to supplant the works of screenwriting gurus such as McKee, Egri and Mamet but rather to extend examination of narrative into a historical, psychological and philosophical context. His major method of extending the examination of narrative is to consider it based on a five-act structure rather than the current three-act paradigm.

It is a revolutionary theory because most screenwriting theory is based around Field's basic three-act structure of Act I (set-up), Act II (confrontation) and Act III (resolution). While many screenwriting gurus suggest various "steps" in story narrative (John Truby has 22 steps, Blake Snyder 15 steps and Chris Vogler 17 steps) they all expand out from three-act structure. Consideration that the main structure of story narrative consists of five-act structure rather than three-act structure offers a huge paradigm shift.

* * *

Yorke acknowledges that there is good reason for the popularity of the three-act structure as its close relationship to the dialectic method of thesis (Act One), antithesis (Act Two) and synthesis (Act Three). Storytelling, Yorke notes, can be seen as a codification of the method by which we learn about the world expressed in a three-act shape. "The dialectic pattern – thesis, antithesis, synthesis – is at the heart of the way we perceive the world." We cannot accept chaos, Yorke says. Rather, we must order it. The three-act structure is our way of ordering the chaotic world.

However, Yorke asks, if the three-act form allows us to access the root structure of storytelling, why does so much theater prior to the twentieth century (particularly Shakespeare) use five acts? While tempting to see the five-act form as a historical idiosyncrasy, exploring how it evolved and underlying its structural traits, he feels it reveals itself as something far more important than that. It provides a clue as to how all narrative really works.

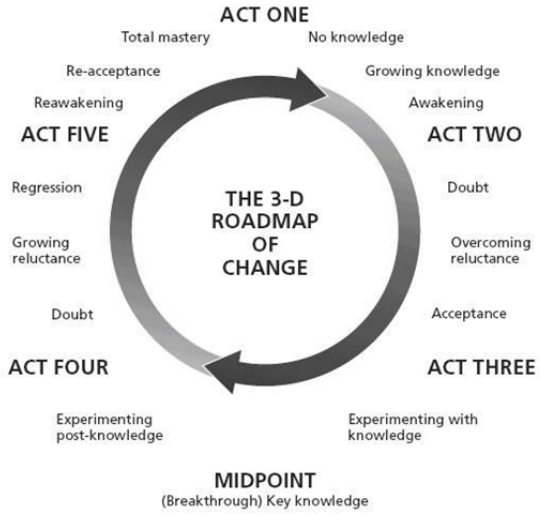


Figure 9C
John Yorke's Five Act Roadmap of Change

Yorke observes that it is important to note that five-act structure isn't different from three-act structure but rather a detailed refinement of it. "Simply put, five acts are generated by inserting two further act breaks in the second act of the traditional 'Hollywood' paradigm. The first and last acts remain identical in both forms."

The five-act structure offers a tool for analyzing successful films and screenplays of the past. In other words, Yorke argues that the deep structure many classic films can be better understood by viewing them as five acts rather than three acts. As he observes, "Hollywood movies aren't traditionally thought of as five-act pieces, so it's striking how beautifully films built on a three-act template fit the five-act form. Five acts help to illuminate not only how the second act in three-act dramas works, but in the process highlight the nature of dramatic structure itself. The mid-point shows us, in combination with the second and fourth act breaks, a very clear shape."

More than a tool for analysis, though, Yorke argues the five-act structure also offers a method for giving screenwriters more control over that constant "antagonist" to all screenwriters: the middle section of screenplays. As Yorke notes, writers who struggle with the Hollywood paradigm often find the five-act shape gives them control over their middle section they otherwise find hard to deliver. It does this, Yorke observes, by imposing a much stronger structure by creating more gripping turning points, increasing narrative tension.

* * *

In building his argument for five-act structure, Yorke brings forth a tremendous amount of supporting evidence in one of the more erudite books ever written on screenwriting. He uses many examples from classic films and television shows and shows how their underlying structure is better elucidated by looking at them through the lens of five-act structure rather than three-act structure. And the Notes and Bibliography section of his book is one of the largest of any screenwriting book ever published. His "Lightning Guide to Screenwriting Gurus" in

Appendix VII shows a clear understanding of structural systems of Hollywood's leading screenwriting gurus.

For screenwriters convinced by Yorke's five-act structure, or at least willing to experiment with it, there is much more to be done than simply dividing narrative into five major pieces. For one thing, they need to give much more importance to the "midpoint" of a narrative (occurring in the third act) than they have done in using a three-act structure. Yorke notes that understanding the true significance of mid-points "unlocks a door, behind which lies the reason stories are the shape they are." Ultimately, the "mid-point" serves as a type of "mirror" inserted into the narrative that reflects the opposite of the first part of the narrative. In effect, the protagonist's character created in the first half of the narrative is "reflected" back through its opposite character in the last half of the narrative.

One of the effects of this opposition is that it enlists audience involvement in creating the story rather than presenting it to them fully formed. A "thesis" is presented and then an "anti-thesis" is presented. It becomes the job of the audience to create a synthesis. Rather than reject this method, Yorke argues that this is exactly what audiences want.

One here is reminded of Marshall McLuhan's dichotomy between "cool" media requiring participation and "hot" media not requiring participation. In *Understanding Media*, McLuhan observes:

> "Francis Bacon never tired of contrasting hot and cool prose. Writing in 'methods' or complete packages, he contrasted with writing in aphorisms, or single observations such as 'Revenge is a kind of wild justice. The passive consumer wants packages, but those, he suggested, who are concerned in pursuing knowledge and in seeking causes will resort to aphorisms, just because they are incomplete and require participation in depth."

This is borne out by the structure behind one of the greatest narrative stories in modern times, HBO's *The Wire* created by David Simon. When pitching *The Wire* to HBO, Simon realized the extraordinary duality inherent in his idea. "Suddenly, the police bureaucracy is amoral, dysfunctional; and criminality, in the form of the drug culture, is just as suddenly a bureaucracy."

It is something that *The Wire* "shows" the audience rather than "tells" them by logical argument by the juxtaposition of the police bureaucracy against the bureaucracy of the drug culture. Simon elaborates on audience involvement piecing oppositions together noting:

> "(A viewer) loves being immersed in a new, confusing, and possibly dangerous world that he will never see. He likes not knowing every bit of vernacular or idiom. He likes being trusted to acquire information on his terms, to make connections, to take the journey with only his intelligence to guide him. Most smart people cannot watch most TV, because it has generally been a condescending medium, explaining everything immediately, offering no ambiguities, and using dialogue that simplifies and mitigates against the idiosyncratic ways in which people in different worlds actually communicate."

Similar to the dynamics of a story that asks for reader participation, Yorke does not hand everything to screenwriters on a silver platter. There is still work to do in putting together the pieces he gives us in his book. Like what David Simon says about *The Wire*, the reader needs to do some work and take his or her own journey into the "woods" to find the "elixir" offered by Yorke. The reader needs to become participant rather than just reader.

C. Sequence

Frank Daniel / USC School of Cinematic Arts
Paul Gulino / *The Hidden Structure of Successful Screenplays*
Eric Edson / *The Story Solution*

While a scene involves one setting, several settings that together possess a unity are called a film sequence. The Sequence School holds that screenplays are created from several sequences or collections of scenes. The major proponent of this school is the sequence structure popularized by Paul Galino in *The Hidden Structure of Successful Screenplays*.

The Sequence School originated in early Hollywood cinema when entire films could not be put on one reel. As Galino notes in his book, the beginning of movie projection in 1897 was characterized by projectors that could only hold one-reelers, or films no longer than one thousand feet. At the projection rate of 18 frames per second, the one-reeler films lasted only ten to fifteen minutes.

In 1910 for both artistic and economic reasons, films were extended beyond fifteen minutes and one reel. Because most theaters had only one projector, the projectionist was required to stop the projector, swap reels and start the show again. During this time, the audience had to wait in the darkened theater. Often there was live entertainment to pass the time until the next reel was projected.

Screenwriters of the time dealt with this time limit by dividing films into sequences that started and ended close around these fifteen-minute intervals. To do this they often created title cards announcing, "End of Act I" and "Start of Act II." These interruptions required that the narrative be adapted to conform to these restrictions. By the late 1920s, when the full-length feature film of 120 minutes came to dominate the cinema, most theaters had two-projectors where reels could end and begin almost seamlessly so stopping the reel was no longer a problem. Therefore, early adherence to writing films in fifteen-minute sequences for each reel was no longer a problem.

However, the structure of 120-minute feature films divided into fifteen-minute sequences persists to this day. The approach was revived and applied to modern screenplays in the 1990s by Frank Daniel of USC's School of Cinematic Arts who designed the program around the sequence approach and is recognized as formalizing the sequence approach. A short outline of the sequence approach is reproduced in Appendix F.

* * *

Paul Galino notes in *The Hidden Structure of Successful Screenplays*, "The persistence of this arrangement suggests that something deeper is at work than the somewhat accidental arrival of cinema with thousand-foot reels." What is this deeper something? Galino suggests it is tied to human physiology and the notion that live drama throughout history has been tied to an experience ranging from 1 ½ to 3 hours. Beyond this time limit, attention suffers. The division of two-hour feature films into ten-to-fifteen-minute sequences might also address the physiology of human attention in that the audience's a two-hour experience watching a film needs various levels of intensity (stories within the big story) or will become bored, with their attention fading.

While the Sequence School has similarities with other schools by its focus on a particular number of steps in screenplay structure, its major difference is that the eight sequences represent eight self-contained stories within themselves rather than steps in structure propounded in books like Truby's *The Anatomy of Story*, Edson's *The Story Solution* or Snyder's *Save the Cat!*

The major purpose of these smaller stories within the larger story is to hold the audience's attention over the period of a two-hour film by making them interested in what happens next. In this regard, Gulino quotes E.M. Forester who observed about drama "It has only one merit: that of making the audience want to know what happens next. And conversely it can only have one fault: that of making the audience not want to know what happens next."

To this end, Frank Daniel identified four main tools at the screenwriter's disposal to keep the audience asking what happens next. These tools are telegraphing, dangling cause, dramatic irony and dramatic tension.

- *Telegraphing* is explicitly telling the audience what will happen before it happens. (A related tool is false telegraphing which explicitly tells the audience something will happen which does not.)

- *A dangling cause* happens when the audience witnesses a causal scene but doesn't see the corresponding effect until later in the film.

- *Dramatic irony* occurs when the audience knows something important that the characters do not. A scene of dramatic irony is flanked by a scene in which the audience learns something, and a scene in which the characters finally learn what the audience has known. Dramatic irony can be enhanced when some of the characters are aware of what the audience knows, but other characters are unaware of it.

- *Dramatic tension* is described by Frank Daniel as occurring when "Someone wants something badly and is having trouble getting it." Daniel observed that dramatic tension plays itself out in two kinds of dramatic stories: chases and escapes that are two variations of dramatic tension. In the chase situation, someone wants something and is having trouble getting it. In the escape scenario, someone is trying to escape something and is having trouble doing so.

While the Sequence School offers some good arguments for eight structural steps that use Daniel's four devices, most of Galino's *The Hidden Structure of Screenplays* is devoted to giving

examples of this approach in several classic films like *Double Indemnity*, *North by Northwest*, *The Graduate* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. The application of the eight-act sequence approach in these films is meticulously demonstrated in these films to the point that it is often difficult to see their structure in any way other than the eight-step sequence approach.

* * *

A short observation from Eric Edson seems appropriate here. We place Edson's approach in *Story Solution* into both the Sequence approach above and the Step approach below. This is based on sharing an early draft of *Hollywood Safari* with Professor Edson. In a response to our email he wrote the following:

> "I believe there's a very big difference between a steps formula and Hero Goal Sequences. The real core and focus of my book is this new Hero Goal Sequences/Fresh News concept that can create a continuing, rising, hero-driven action line. These Hero Goal Sequences are conceptually true sequence thinking and advance, with great psychological and emotional accuracy, the flow of change required in a successful film way beyond the eight sequences that the great Frank Daniel proposed."

The Hero Goal Sequence is discussed more in the Steps section below and illustrated in Figure 8F where one can certainly see the repetition of sequences throughout the screenplay as the Hero repeats short sequences over and over. The number of these sequences equal the number of steps in his *Story Solution* method of from 20 to 23 steps. As he notes, "the flow of change required in a successful film way beyond the eight sequences that the great Frank Daniel proposed."

D. Steps

John Truby – *The Anatomy of Story* (7 steps story code)
Blake Snyder / *Save the Cat!* (15 steps)
Chris Vogler – *The Writer's Journey* (17 steps)
Eric Edson / Story Solution (23 steps)

Perhaps the best-known gurus of the step approach are John Truby, Blake Snyder, Chris Vogler an Eric Edson with their 7, 15, 17 and 23 step structures. Of the three, Truby also has an expanded 22-step structure in his *The Anatomy of Story*. (The short and longer of Truby are reproduced in Appendix B).

The Truby system, referred to as the "Story Code," is represented in Figure 9D below and moves from the protagonist's "weakness/need" at the beginning of the screenplay to a "new equilibrium" at the ending of the screenplay.

> 1.WEAKNESS-NEED: the hero is enslaved by habit of thought and action and suffers from a deep personal weakness that is destroying the quality of her life. The hero needs to overcome this flaw to grow.

2.DESIRE: the hero desires a goal outside of herself that she perceives as valuable and missing from her life.

3.OPPONENT: she confronts an opponent and an obstacle/challenge preventing her from reaching her goal. She will find at the end that the obstacle/challenge is herself.

4.PLAN: she concocts a plan, or strategy, that will allow her to defeat the opponent and achieve the goal.

5.BATTLE: she enters into a final conflict, or battle, with the opponent to determine once and for all who wins the goal.

6.SELF-REVELATION: at the end, the hero, if she grows at all, has a self-revelation about her true or better self, about how she has been wrong psychologically and morally. She then makes a decision about how to act and takes new action, proving what she has become.

7.NEW EQUILIBRIUM: with the system in a new equilibrium, the hero stands as a new version of herself, along with a new capacity for growing in the future.

Figure 9D
The Seven Steps of Truby's Story Code
The Anatomy of Story

A different approach to Truby's seven-step approach is the fifteen-step approach of Blake Snyder's *Save the Cat!* The basic steps of the system can be viewed below in 9E along with their positioning in a 110-minute film. The elements of the steps are elaborated in Appendix C.

Note the different labels of Snyder's steps compared to Truby's steps. For instance, Snyder starts with an "opening image" and closes with a "final image" and contains a "debate" and a "B" story step.

1. Opening Image (1):
2. Theme Stated (5):
3. Set-Up (1-10):
4. Catalyst (12):
5. Debate (12-25):
6. Break into Two (25)
7. B Story (30):
8. Fun and Games (30-55):
9. Midpoint (55):
10. Bad Guys Close In (55-75):
11. All Is Lost (75):
12. Dark Night of the Soul (75-85):
13. Break into Three (85):

14. Finale (85-110):
15. Final Image (110):

Figure 9E
The 15 Steps of Blake Snyder
Save the Cat!

Chris Vogler's seventeen steps approach in *The Writer's Journey* is based centers around Joseph Campbell's famous book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. As Campbell once said, "The latest incarnation of Oedipus, the continued romance of Beauty and the Beast, stand this afternoon on the corner of 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue, waiting for the traffic light to change." Since its release in 1949, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* has influenced millions of writers and readers by combining the insights of modern psychology with Joseph Campbell's revolutionary understanding of comparative mythology.

The major sections of Campbell's Hero and Vogler's Writer's Journey is *departure* (from the ordinary world), *initiation* into a new world and a *return* to the ordinary world. These three major actions and the seventeen steps are reproduced below in Figures 9F.

Departure
- Call to Adventure
- Refusal of the Call
- Supernatural Aid
- Crossing First Threshold
- Belly of the Whale

Initiation
- Road of Trials
- Meeting With Goddess
- Woman as Temptress
- Atonement With Father
- Apotheosis
- Ultimate Boon

Return
- Refusal of Return
- Magic Flight
- Rescue From Without
- Crossing Return Threshold
- Master of Two Worlds
- Freedom to Live

Figure 9F
The Seventeen Steps of Campbell & Vogler
Hero with a Thousand Faces & *The Writer's Journey*

The fourth of the major step approaches is Eric Edson's *Story Solution: 23 Actions All Great Heroes Must Take*. As Edson notes, "Every commercially successful one-hero American movie contains between 20 and 23 Hero Goal Sequences." Edson's 23 steps represents the largest number of steps by leading screenwriting gurus. (Truby's long step structure of 22 steps is the second longest).

This structure is built around what Edson terms Hero Goal Sequences (HGS) in which the Hero or Heroine pursue pursues a single physical, active short-term goal as an immediate step toward achieving the main plot objective that drives the story. The HGS ends when Hero or Heroine discovers Fresh News, or a form of new information that effectively ends the necessity to pursue the current goal and creates another physical active short-term goal launching the next HGS. Edson says a Hero or Heroine can learn many new things in a story, but Fresh News will only be those discoveries that change the Hero or Heroine's current active goal to a new one. The major elements of the Edson structure is represented in Figure 9G below.

> Act One ALWAYS contains 6 Hero Goal Sequences, and Stunning Surprise One ALWAYS takes place as FRESH NEWS in sequence #6.
>
> Act Two ALWAYS contains 12 more Hero Goal Sequences, and the Midpoint Sequence ALWAYS takes place during Hero Goal Sequence #12 while Stunning Surprise Two ALWAYS arrives as FRESH NEWS in Sequence #18.
>
> Act Three contains a minimum of 2 Hero Goal Sequences and a maximum of 5.

Figure 9G
The 23 Steps of Eric Edson
The Story Solution

While the repetition of sequences are important aspect of Edson's *Story Solution*, it is important to also see that each step has a particular goal that for the screenwriter to accomplish that Edson spells out in Part Four of *Story Solutions*. For each Hero Goal Sequence there are several goals the screenwriter should accomplish.

Edson posts several on-line examples of popular films placed into the Hero Goal Sequence form. One is *Back to the Future*. Below is Screenwriter's Goals for HGS #1 and #2 as well as how these fit into the screenplay.

SCREENWRITERS GOALS FOR HGS #1 (ALL FILMS)

a) Offer the audience some short glimpse of the Hero's current, everyday life
b) Give the audience reasons to like the Hero immediately, even if the character is an Anti-Hero in a script that explores the darker side of human nature
c) Give the audience a first glimpse of the Hero's emotional shield

d) Establish the Hero while he's in pursuit of a short-term goal, even just going to work, so we meet the Hero in motion where some Unfair Injury or danger can strike
e) Establish the Hero is not happy with the world as he finds it

HERO GOAL SEQUENCE #1 in *Back to the Future*
Practice guitar at Doc's place before school.
• The guitar is so amped up, playing one note breaks the speaker.
• Doc calls, tells Marty to meet him at the mall at 1:15 a.m. Doc made a breakthrough that has made all the clocks in his lab 25 minutes slow.
Fresh News: That means Marty is late for school! (4 min 27 sec of screen time)

SCREENWRITERS GOALS FOR HGS #2 (ALL FILMS)

a) The central conflict is introduced in a general way and story-driven action begins
b) The Inciting Incident most often occurs here, serving as the story catalyst event
c) The first hint of the Hero's specific emotional pain – permanent suffering resulting from past traumatic event – frequently appears here

HERO GOAL SEQUENCE #2 in *Back to the Future*
Get to school and audition with his band for the dance.
• As Marty skateboards to school, it is established that he has skateboard skills, and that Hill Valley is a run-down little town.
• Marty's girlfriend Jennifer is introduced.
• Principal Strickland berates him as a loser like all of Marty's family.
Fresh News: Marty and his band audition well, but they don't get the gig because they are "too loud." (UNFAIR INJURY – a sympathy tool.) (3 min of screen time).

* * *

This chapter has been about differences in the way plot is expressed by various screenwriting theories. Yet the goal in the future of screenwriting and storytelling should be the discovery of commonalities in the Acts, Sequences and Steps of all plots. In this sense, the "Opening Image" in Snyder's *Save the Cat!* method is similar to the "Weakness/Need" step in Truby's *Anatomy of Story* or the "Call to Adventure" in Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* or offering "a glimpse of the Hero's current life" in Edson's *Story Solution*. Similar to the worthy goal of finding commonality in life, finding commonalty in storytelling theories is also important. In fact, finding commonality in storytelling might precede finding commonality in life.

10. Genre

Thomas Schatz / *Hollywood Genres*
Blake Snyder / *Save the Cat Goes to the Movies*
Jule Selbo / *Film Genre for the Screenwriter*
John Truby / *The Anatomy of Genres*

"The storytelling business is all about buying and selling genres."
John Truby
The Anatomy of Genres

Genre comes from the French word meaning kind, category, or type. Film genres are various forms of identifiable types, categories, classifications, or groups of films with recurring, patterns, themes, and motifs. They provide a convenient way for screenwriters and filmmakers to produce, cast and structure their narratives within a well-defined framework. They also offer studios a more easily marketable product as well as give audiences satisfying and predictable choices. In effect, they are symbol systems.

Legendary Hollywood screenwriting teacher and author John Truby observes today's storytelling business is all about selling genres of forms of stories like Westerns, Horror, Romance and Science Fiction. It's a big statement but comes from big voice in the storytelling industry. Yet this is not the way it has always been in Hollywood during the early years of the film business in the silent era and studio years.

In some ways the growth of genres and their elevation has been caused by the segmentation of marketing and media through cable and television streaming programs. No longer is there the three large national television networks or the mass culture of the first half of the 20th century. Today's world is a mixed, segmented culture and it is reasonable to see a trend towards more and different forms of stories for different segments of the population.

The growth of genres is another example of the segmentation of storytelling theories and forms witnessed in the 21st century. One can be critical of this breakup of stories into more and more genres, arguing that stories become too niche-oriented and move away from the large issues, themes and emotions from the few genres old Hollywood produced. One might also view it somewhat cynically as attempts to create more brands of "how to" books for authors and teachers in the cottage industry of screenwriting.

But one can also see the growth and importance of genres in modern Hollywood as an evolution of storytelling and its relationship not just to Hollywood but our lives in the world. Many might blame Hollywood for forcing new genres on audiences. The reality is that genres have emerged through a type of natural process somewhat like Jungian archetypes that give voice to types of

stories that need to be told, forms of stories that people identify with, form of stories providing something essential to our culture and psychology.

As one critic observed, no studio executive decided to invent the Horror genre out of thin air. Rather, the genre (and now sub-genres) grew from our collective fear of death and the psyche's need for catharsis. Or consider the distinctly American Western genre of film. While Westerns are really about the rise and fall of civilization they particularly relate to the mythology of the American frontier where a new civilization really did rise and fall.

We go to the movies not only to celebrate the familiar, but to enforce fundamental beliefs. As our world evolves and audience perspectives change, genre movies adapt to reflect these cultural shifts. A western made during the can-do patriotism of World War II is likely to express its themes differently than one produced during the cynicism at the height of the Vietnam War.

* * *

In the early 80s, the study of film genres began moving into the modern age. Perhaps the most important book of this period was Thomas Schatz's *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking and the Studio System* (1981). Schatz was professor of communication at the University of Texas, Austin and his book explored the formal and aesthetic aspects of feature filmmaking but also explored various cultural aspects as well. Schatz noted that the genre approach treats movie production as a dynamic process of exchange between the film industry and its audience embodied by the Hollywood studio system. He argued that the system has been sustained primarily through genres and popular narrative formulas like the Western, Musical and Gangster films, which have dominated screen arts through the first half of the 20th century.

The central thesis of *Hollywood Genres* was that a genre approach provided the most effective means for understanding, analyzing and appreciating Hollywood cinema. But much has changed in the 40 years since Schatz's book on genres. The old classic film genres have multiplied into new genres and sub-genres and today film genres are not only something to help analyze and appreciate films but also an important element in creating films. In fact, some leading screenwriting gurus like John Truby argue they are the most important element.

* * *

Of all aspects of screenwriting and storytelling, genres have the closest connection to symbols and symbolism. In effect, using the defining words of genres above, one can observe genres are really "identifiable types, categories, classifications, or groups" of symbols containing "recurring, patterns, themes, and motifs." The congregation of symbols patterns and motifs create film genres. In Appendix N is a list from the American Film Institute of ten classic genres and the top ten movies in these genres. This should give the reader a better idea of how genres play out in the most popular examples of them.

However, there has been much growth of sub-genres of stories from the main genres. Perhaps one of the largest classifications of these sub-genres has been undertaken by film historian and archivist Tim Dirks on his popular www.Filmsite.Org site. This classification is included in

Appendix O and will most likely astonish readers at the number of sub-genres defined by Dirks. In many ways, sub-genres closely follow cultural and technological trends. For example, under the main Science Fiction genre in his chart, Dirk's lists sub-genres like Virtual Reality, Artificial Intelligence and Tech-Noir. Or, under the main genre of Western Dirks lists such sub-genres as Psychological, Revisionist, Revenge and Space Westerns.

* * *

The attachment of new genres to story forms began to take off in the early years of the 21st century. One of the earliest and best-known books on genre was Blake Snyder's 2007 *Save the Cat Goes to the Movies* based on his 2005 *Save the Cat*, one of the largest screenwriting franchises in Hollywood. His book *Save the Cat Goes to the Movies* applied the 15-step structure of *Save the Cat* to ten film genres labeled with creative names rather than the standard names they were previously known as.

One can see Snyder's interest in genres coming in Chapter 2 of his landmark book *Save the Cat* "Give Me the Same Thing … Only Different!" The chapter title comes directly from a quote from Sam Goldwyn to Snyder during a development meeting. Snyder mentions the screenwriter's daily conundrum of how to avoid cliché. The screenwriter can be near and almost embrace the cliché but at the last moment doesn't do so. In other words, the screenwriter gives a twist to something common.

As Snyder notes, a movie falls into a category which has rules. To avoid clichés, the movie must give us the same thing but only different. In *Save the Cat Goes to the Movies*, introduces 10 genres that distinguish how stories are structured. According to Snyder, standard genre type names like Romantic Comedy, Epic or Biography *do not say much about the story* but rather *about the type of movie* it is. Snyder's genres in the following Figure 10A with examples of this genre.

> 1. Monster in the House. Examples: Jaws, Exorcist, Panic Room, Jurassic Park, the Nightmare On Elm Street, Friday the 13th, and Scream series, Tremors and its sequels, and every haunted house and ghost story ever told. Films without supernatural elements, like Fatal Attraction (starring Glenn Close as the "Monster") also fall into this category.
>
> 2. Golden Fleece. Examples: Wizard Of Oz, Planes, Train and Automobiles, Star Wars, Road Trip, Back to the Future, The Dirty Dozen, and The Magnificent Seven and road movies and heist movies.
>
> 3. Out of the Bottle. Examples: Bruce Almighty, The Mask, The Love Bug, Love Potion #9, Flubber, Big, Aladdin, The Nutty Professor, Liar Liar, Field of Dreams, Blank check, Freaky Friday, All of Me, Groundhog Day.
>
> 4. Dude with a Problem. Examples: Die Hard, Titanic, Schindler's List, Terminator, Bourne Identity, Misery, 2012, or Apollo 13

5. Rites of Passage. Examples: Lost Weekend, Days of Wine and Roses, 28 Days starring Sandra Bullock, and When A Man Loves A Woman, Ordinary People, That's Life!, 10, and Days of Wine and Roses.

6. Buddy Love. Examples: Laurel and Hardy, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Wayne's World (both 1 & 2), Bringing Up Baby, Pat and Mike, Woman of the Year, Two Weeks' Notice, How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days Thelma & Louise, 48 hours, Dumb & Dumber, Rain Man, E.T., Lethal Weapon, buddy cop movies and love stories.

7. Whydunit. Examples: Chinatown, Citizen Kane, China Syndrome, All the President's Men, JFK, Mystic River.

8. The Fool Triumphant. Examples: Dave, Being There, Amadeus, Forrest Gump, and many of the movies of Steve Martin, Bill Murray, and Ben Stiller and going back to Chaplin, Keaton, and Lloyd.

9. Institutionalized. Examples: One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, American Beauty, M*A*S*H, The Godfather, Godfather 2, 9 to 5, Animal House

10. Superhero. Examples: Batman, Dracula, Gladiator, A Beautiful Mind.

_____

Figure 10A
Blake Snyder's 10 Genres With Examples

Snyder say that after reviewing this list of genres the reader will notice many movies are structurally identical to others. He notes that this happens because his 15-step story template can be applied to genres.

* * *

Well-known screenwriting professor Jule Selbo wrote the 2014 book *Film Genre for the Screenwriter*. Rather than define Snyder's 10 genres, Selbo identifies 30 genres and further divides many of them by character types or settings. The book is based on the popular course she taught on genres when she was a professor at California State University Fullerton.

Although written almost ten years ago, Selbo's book on genres offers another perspective on genres from other books. At the time it was written it was – and still is - one of the few screenwriting books devoted specifically to writing screenplays in genres. In her book, Selbo provides a much broader and more comprehensive guide on film genre by weaving a thread through the sixteen most popular, mainstream genres and analyzing and explaining each genre and how it affects a story's main character, the set-up of the specific world, and plot points that consider the fact that all films can be considered genre hybrids. The sixteen most popular genres she notes are in Figure 10B below.

Comedy
Drama
Dramedy
Romance
Action
Adventure
Coming-of-Age
Fish-out-of-Water
Horror
Thriller
Science-Fiction
Fantasy
Western
Disaster
War
Melodrama

Figure 10B
Jule Selbo's 16 Genres

Selbo's approach varies from others as she builds her genre arguments on disciplines outside the film industry such as cognitive science, mythology, classical and modern philosophy, psychology, semantics, film history, visual aesthetics, culture studies, literature theories, theatre, media theories as well as film theories.

She states that she does intend to rewrite genre theories but "to apply the existing explorations" directly to the practice of screenwriting. Selbo recognizes that genre is not only a body of work, classified and labelled, but also a specific system of audience's expectation and hypothesis that audiences bring with them to the cinema. Selbo explores genres by providing a brief, historical evolution of each genre and an in-depth critical analysis rooted in key films. She then strengthens her arguments further by applying Gilles Fauconnier's constructs of the 'mental space' and the 'idealized cognitive model" to the films' narratives. Selbo explains how these constructs could be beneficial to both the screenwriter in building a film narrative, and to the audience by drawing on the conventions of genre in their reception of film.

An interesting review of Selbo's book is by screenwriting professor Monika Maslowska from the University of Malta in Malta who notes that she uses Selbo's book extensively in her teaching, with her students benefitting enormously from it. In her review of the book, Maslowska observes that Selbo considers the philosophical construct of the mental space the screenwriter uses during the early stages of writing a screenplay, or the "ideation" stage as Selbo calls it. She says, Selbo strongly believes that a cognizant use of film genre theory, and an understanding of the conventions of specific genres, will contribute to making an idea stronger, more commercially valuable, and more identifiable for audiences.

One of the major things that Selbo offers, notes Maslowska, it a progression beyond the usual approach to genre in terms of structure, tone, and character. Selbo proposes another consideration based on the idea of the writer's mental space and the theory of "possible worlds" found in philosophy. In the Foreword to the second edition of Gilles Fauconnier's book *Mental Spaces* (1994), George Lakoff, Professor of Cognitive Science and Linguistics at UC Berkeley, argues these possible worlds are not exact but very close representations of the real world. Fauconnier notes the main difference between a mental space and a possible world is that a mental space need not contain a faithful representation of reality and can instead be an idealized cognitive model of a possible world.

Selbo explains the created, fictional world, is a neutral one, and, one that has Aristotelian meaning. It is a constructed cinematic world that corresponds to real life but is also fictional and structured to advance the story. Screenwriters create a "specific universe for specific characters" tailored to encourage distinctive fictional elements and thematic threads, while simultaneously discarding "real world" components that would distract an audience from comprehension of the core story. The screenwriter and the audience rely on a few key elements that aid in the pleasurable experience of a particular genre. The first is the schematic knowledge or content recognizable by both the screenwriter and the audience. The second is specific knowledge or content mediated through the individual screenwriter and audience member. Selbo adds a third component in her book as relevant knowledge or the sociological and the ideological environment of the audience that positions them in relation to what they see on the screen.

The Hidden Medium of Genres

After the beginning of laying a three-act structure in Syd Field's *Screenplay* (1979), the remainder of the 20th century was spent firming up structure, foundation and principles of screenwriting. The last decade of the 20th century saw key books on principles of screenwriting like Lew Hunter's *Screenwriting 434* (1993), David Trottier's *The Screenwriter's Bible* (1994) and John McKees *Story* (1997). This category of screenwriting books was like the Swiss Army knives version of screenwriting covering all aspects of screenwriting single volumes.

Perhaps the major change in screenwriting books since then has been the increasing segmentation of screenwriting books into various niches. There were books like Claudia Hunter Johnson's *Crafting Short Screenplays That Connect* (2000), Peter Dunne's *Emotional Structure* (2007) and Drew Yanno's *The Third Act* (2016).

One of the major niches to develop during the past fifteen years has been the approach to screenwriting created around what might be called the genre approach. First of all, one might define genre as a category of screenplay (or literary work) characterized by style, form or content. I visualize a story genre as a magnetized group of symbols pulled together into a story form based on key archetypes within the author's collective consciousness. At a particular time.

But then, that's just my way of viewing a genre of story. It's a very personal and unique thing. That is, the genre of one's own story they place themselves in. Or, the genre one wants to become in life. Or the genre one wants to escape from. Or, the genre our enemies usually come from. And, the genre our friends and lovers come from. There are so many questions about this

mysterious invisible story form forming the context of stories called genres. The greatest of these questions center on the relation of mythology, symbolism and archetypes to story genres. What is this force that attracts us to genres of stories throughout our lives? Is it related to what Jung would term universal internal motifs or archetypes expressed into the external world? When they are expressed outward, they bundle together in story forms with other story forms. All floating around it seems to me by some type of planets.

I'm sure everyone has their own idea or feeling about various genres of stories in life. But it's never something ever thinks about or can see since it is all around their unawareness of them. The genres of story types and its change is one of the most important aspects of the modern entertainment business. It exists in importance as Marshall McLuhan said in *Understanding Media* (1964), "The medium is the message." Much was in this quote when I first read it in the little paperback I carried around in my California high school of the 60s. In effect, the modern version of this "medium" McLuhan identified in the 60s is very much that unseen medium of story genre. Few have little knowledge about genre. Few have any sense of it. But it's a large topic. Much larger than the content of messages within McLuhan's quote "The medium is the message."

An important aspect of control in the modern world is not via direct command but by distraction. As the famous media ecologist Neil Postman so brilliantly summed up in the title of his famous book *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (1985). In effect, it is the distraction of the content of media in its constant waterfall of messages. These messages inside mediums. The mediums were the most important aspects of life. The grand context of life. But something that people were distracted from my media. This in effect, might be the real purpose of modern media. That is distraction of the populace from looking at the genres and grand stories of there lives. The stories they were living in and through and towards.

Why do we like genres of stories? Why do we consider ourselves in this genre? Do we know it? Suspect we're in a particular genre? What does one's story genre tell them about themselves? Whatever it tells them, genres seem their continued expansion into various forms of storytelling in modern culture. The number of genres continue to expand into sub-genres and then sub-genres of these sub-genres into smaller niches of genre story in the world.

* * *

As mass culture began to wane with the rise of the segmented culture in the 1960s and 70s, people got news and entertainment from various media outside the old mass media with the one-way broadcast model of communication. At this time, genres and story forms began to increase. The continued segmentation of mass communication was represented in the growth of cable television and niche channels. (The old quote from Bruce Springsteen about "57 channels and nothing on.") Really, all the niche channels developing followings for their programming to what micro-populations within culture wanted to hear in the way of storytelling or stories. Or their own genres. The relationship of the rise and fall of story genres tracks large swings in symbols more than anyone realizes. A good question is to ask if genres move in cyclic movement that continues to repeat over and over. Are the changes apparent in genre change in major streaming and Hollywood movies?

Of course, many in Hollywood know about genres today as the world of storytelling becomes divided into a particular number of story forms. In the early 80s, the study of film genres began moving into the modern age. Perhaps the most important book to move forward the study of modern film genres was Thomas Schatz's *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking and the Studio System* (1981). Schatz was professor of communication at the University of Texas, Austin and his book explored the formal and aesthetic aspects of feature filmmaking but also explored various cultural aspects as well. Schatz noted that the genre approach treats movie production as a dynamic process of exchange between the film industry and its audience embodied by the Hollywood studio system. He argued that the system has been sustained primarily through genres and popular narrative formulas like the Western, Musical and Gangster films, which have dominated screen arts through the first half of the 20th century.

The central thesis of *Hollywood Genres* was that a genre approach provided the most effective means for understanding, analyzing and appreciating Hollywood cinema. It was perhaps the first argument made to Hollywood to understand this medium of story types of genres that they were really operating in. Most of the time, having little sense of the dynamics of this genre system of story symbols. The great story genres of a particular time related to the collective, mostly unexpressed feelings of the general population of a culture.

* * *

But much has changed in the 45 years since Schatz's book on genres. The old classic film genres have multiplied into new genres and sub-genres and today film genres are not only something to help analyze and appreciate films but also an important element in creating films. In fact, some leading screenwriting gurus like John Truby argue they are the most important element.

During this time, some screenwriting teacher/gurus like Blake Snyder have started to focus on writing screenplays for various genres. Braking off from his *Save the Cat* (STC) brand there was *Save the Cat Goes to the Movies* with matched STC brand structure to story forms. While genre screenplays have the same general principles as all screenplays, there are distinct differences in writing stories for various genres.

The great book on story genre for our time has just been published. It represents the ideas of one of the most advanced thinkers I've ever encountered in all my reading of screenwriting books. One who make much sense but also one I have had a hard time applying. Since publishing his well-known *Anatomy of Story* in 2007, leading story guru John Truby has been moving more towards a focus on genre as the key aspect of screenwriting. In storytelling in fact. He has created software programs for various genres and lectures about them in his seminars. Since 2015, he has been working on what might well be his magnum opus about genres titled *The Anatomy of Genres*: *How Story Forms Explain the Way the World Works* (2022).

The title claims much for the book. But coming from one of the leading screenwriting gurus in the world, at over 700 pages and 5 years in the making, the book delivers something truly new and unique to the screenwriting industry. Not another screenplay structure book laying claim to a

particular number of steps in a story. As if telling stories was not already divided up enough already.

And maybe, even beyond the industry. The is, the topic of genre story-making and it has only increased with the segmentation and diversity of modern culture. In much of the 20th century, the populace was listening to the same news networks in the era of mass culture and media. Mass culture expressed itself in Hollywood's Golden Age of the 1930s and 40s when the key genres were Westerns, musicals, screwball comedies and film noir.

* * *

The book might very well begin a new period of screenplay writing where the old chicken or egg riddle is revised to ask "Which comes first the *gender plot* or *character*." In effect, straight plot without adequate consideration to genre might become a thing of the past. At least Truby argues this is so in his important book on story genre.

First identified in a major way in modern cinema history by Thomas Schatz and his *Hollywood Genres* of 1981. But now, the spirit of Schatz and his focus on story genres reinterpreted into the modern cinema word in John Truby's *The Anatomy of Genres*.

The book raises ideas for seeing the world in a different way. It offers various categories of stories in the various genres in his system. They have a set number and have an evolution about them. Perhaps more than anything else, the book offers one of the most philosophical reflections on modern storytelling ever written. It starts with the bold claim "Everything you need to know about life can be found in stories."

Truby says that the reason for this is that stories are not simply taken from life but rather "Stories define life. And the philosophies developed over the course of human history inform and respond to both. As a result, he says, understanding the anatomy of a story is about much more than writing. It's also about knowing how to live." Truby provides a few examples of popular story genres to illustrate what he means.

- Action is about being successful, not morally right.
- Myth represents a journey to understand oneself and gain immortality.
- Memoir is not about the past; it's about creating your future.
- Fantasy is about finding the magic in the world and in us to turn life into art.
- Detective fiction shows us how to think successfully by comparing different stories to learn what is true.
- Love stories reveal that happiness comes from mastering the moral act of loving another person.

He notes that as we struggle to make sense of our place in the world, "we think we have a clear grasp of the problems. But the problems we face today are based on how the world appears to work. Plato referred to these appearances as shadows. When we don't understand how the world truly is - its deep structure - how can we fit into it? The solution is to use stories as a model.

The idea sounds simple, yet it marks a radical shift in the way we see the world today. As Truby says, "Seeing the world through the prism of story marks a revolutionary change in how we look at the world, and it's the reverse of what we've been taught." For Truby, story is more than a certain structure or theme of a screenplay. Rather, "Story is a philosophy of life expressed through characters, plot, and emotion. It shows life as art." In effect, "Stories are maps of humanity."

Paraphrasing Truby in the following few sentences, most people think genres are simply categories on Netflix or Amazon that provide a helpful guide to making entertainment choices. Most people are wrong. Genre stories aren't just a small subset of the films, video games, TV shows, and books that people consume. They are the all-stars of the entertainment world, comprising most popular stories worldwide. That's why businesses - movie studios, production companies, video game studios, and publishing houses - buy and sell them. As Truby says, "Writers who want to succeed professionally must write the stories these businesses want to buy. Simply put, the storytelling game is won by mastering the structure of genres."

* * *

The 700-page book is divided into 14 chapters. Chapter One titled "The World as Story" offers an excellent introduction to Truby's revolutionary way of working with story genres. Each of the following chapters is based around one of the key genres in the book. In Chapter One Truby notes there are three unwritten "Rules of Play" for successful writers today and all relate to genres.

> Rule 1. The storytelling business is all about selling genres.
> Rule 2. Popular stories today combine 3-4 genres.
> Rule 3. To rise above the crowd, the writer must transcend the primary genre.

He notes three ways to transcend genres: 1) the screenwriter must twist the story beats by such things as changing their order 2) express the genre's life philosophy in the theme and 3) explore the story forms of life unique to the genre. Regarding this last way of transcending genre, Truby observes each major human activity such as morality, culture, business, sports, war, religion, politics, justice, society are some of the grand activities that make up human life. They are also complex works of art expressed through the emotional and dramatic form of story. At its best, each genre explores one or more of these story forms of life.

One of the most interesting things in Truby's book is the creation of an order of genres or what he calls a "genre ladder" illustrated in Figure 1. As he says, "For me, the most revelatory part of coming to understand genres was the realization that they exist in a hierarchy of their own, or what might be called a "ladder of enlightenment." He mentions the philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel here noting that "Hegel's greatest insight is that every step up the ladder of human enlightenment also reveals the flaw that holds someone back. Like sand in the oyster, that flaw is what creates the next step of growth."

> Horror: Religion
> Action: Success

Myth: Life Process
Memoir: Creating the Self
Coming of Age: Creating the Self
Science Fiction: Science, Society & Culture
Crime: Morality & Justice
Comedy: Manners & Morals
Western: Rise & Fall of Civilization
Gangster: Corruption of Business and Politics
Fantasy: Art of Living
Detective: Mind and the Truth
Thriller: Mind and the Truth
Love: Art of Happiness

Figure 1
Truby's Genre Ladder from The Anatomy of Genres

Truby notes the hierarchy in the genres in the "Genre Ladder" is based on three things: 1) the primary character flaw the hero must overcome; 2) the quality of the life philosophy the form expresses and 3) the major art/story form it explores. Viewed this way, he notes the first and most primitive genre is Horror, the story of escaping death in this life or the next. From there, the sequence moves from least to most enlightened, from Action to Fantasy, Detective and Love stories. At the end of each chapter of the book, Truby explains what is missing from each genre's life philosophy, or, the thing that leads us to take the next step up the ladder.

One of the three ways to transcend a genre laid out in Truby's unwritten "Rules of Play" above is by expressing the genre's life philosophy in the theme. As he says, "Hidden below the surface of these beats is a philosophy, an entire way of seeing and living in the world. This is expressed through the theme, which is the author's view of the best way to live. Truby calls this this life philosophy embedded in each genre as the "Mind-Action" story view. This refers to how the human mind sees the world and then acts accordingly.

He says, "Like the slides of a kaleidoscope, each genre has a different point of view about how the world fits together. Each offers a unique philosophy for how to live well. Expressing the genre's philosophy is the key to any story you write. This unique Mind-Action story view is what really hooks the reader. In turn, drama infuses the genre's lesson for how to live with tremendous emotional power. This is the story gold." Each genre's recipe for how to live well is based on its fundamental concern shown in Figure 2 below.

- Horror: Confront death and face your ghosts from the past.
- Action: 90 percent of success is acting.
- Myth: Seek immortality by finding your destiny in this life.
- Memoir: Examine your life to create your true self.
- Coming-of-Age: Examine your life to create your true self.
- Science Fiction: Make the right choices now to ensure a better future for all.
- Crime: Protect the weak and bring the guilty to justice.

• Comedy: Success comes when you strip away all facades and show others who you really are.
• Western: When you help others make a home, you create a civilization where everyone is free to live their best life.
• Gangster: Don't be enslaved by absolute power and money or you will pay the ultimate price.
• Fantasy: Discover the magic in yourself that makes life itself an art form.
• Detective: Look for the truth and assign guilt despite the danger.
• Thriller: Look for the truth and assign guilt despite the danger.
• Love: Learning how to love is the key to happiness.

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Figure 2
Mind Action View of How to Live Well

Truby breaks down several stories from novels, film, television, and theater that exemplify a particular genre using recent examples where appropriate. He notes his main criterion is always which one is best. "This is especially true when discussing transcendent genre stories," he says. "My choice is typically a classic that defines the form itself. The following best express the techniques needed to write a great story in each genre."

HORROR/Religion: Frankenstein, A Christmas Carol, Alien, Get Out, Psycho, Ex Machina, Westworld

ACTION/Success: Mad Max: Fury Road, Die Hard, Seven Samurai, the Iliad, The Thomas Crown Affair, Rocky, The Hustler

MYTH/The Life Process: Star Wars: A New Hope, The Lord of the Rings, The Wizard of Oz, Black Panther, Avatar, the Odyssey

MEMOIR AND COMING-OF-AGE STORY/Creating the Self: The Liars' Club, Into Thin Air, Moonlight, Cinema Paradiso, CODA, To Kill a Mockingbird

SCIENCE FICTION/Science, Society, and Culture: Arrival, The Matrix, Inception, Interstellar, 2001: A Space Odyssey

CRIME/Morality and Justice: Breaking Bad, The Dark Knight, The Usual Suspects, Crime and Punishment, In Bruges

COMEDY/Manners and Morals: Seinfeld, Little Miss Sunshine, Groundhog Day, Wedding Crashers

WESTERN/The Rise and Fall of Civilization: Shane, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, The Wild Bunch, McCabe & Mrs. Miller, Once Upon a Time in the West

GANGSTER/The Corruption of Business and Politics: The Godfather, Goodfellas, The Sopranos, The Great Gatsby, Mad Men, Network

FANTASY/The Art of Living: Harry Potter, Game of Thrones, Big, Pleasantville, Mary Poppins, It's a Wonderful Life, Alice in Wonderland

DETECTIVE AND THRILLER/The Mind and the Truth: 1) Detective: L.A. Confidential, The Collected Sherlock Holmes Short Stories, Vertigo, Knives Out, Murder on the Orient Express, Chinatown, Rashomon 2) Thriller: The Silence of the Lambs, Michael Clayton, The Sixth Sense, The Conversation, Shadow of a Doubt

LOVE/The Art of Happiness: Silver Linings Playbook, 500 Days of Summer, When Harry Met Sally, The Philadelphia Story, Sideways

Figure 3
Genre Examples in Novels, Film, Television and Theater

All of the above is just in Chapter One of Truby's groundbreaking new book. I just outlined one of the chapters in his book for a story genre I want to write in using Truby's genre forms presented in *The Anatomy of Genres*.

Any writer who reads this chapter should be very excited about learning how to apply all of this to individual genres in the following 13 chapters of the book. As Truby says at the end of Chapter One, "This combination of technique and thematic life philosophy provides tangible, advanced strategies that few other writers now possess. It will help you write powerful stories that achieve both critical and commercial success."

Truby has been quoted as saying Hollywood is all about buying and selling story genres. Truby certainly delivers on his promise in the remaining chapters of the book with a radical new interpretation of story genres few have ever seen before containing themes and beats for the particular genres as well as ways to transcend them and create something unique and different that will grab audiences in new ways.

But before opening the door into the magic world of story genre he has created, Truby again reminds of a larger purpose that has driven him over the years this book was in creation. "I believe there is a craving in everyone for deeper understanding in their lives. That's why the broader intention of this book is to give people more profound models of the world. By exploring philosophical issues and ideas, we can learn how to grapple with them in ways that will enrich us on our life's journey."

Before one turns the page to find new revelations about the Horror genre, the least "enlightened" of the genres, before one finds out its fundamental recipe of how to live in the world by the "confronting death and facing one's ghosts from the past" as in stories like *Frankenstein*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Alien*, *Get Out*, *Psycho*, *Ex Machina* and *Westworld*, before we turn the page

door to embark on an exciting journey into a new way of writing, Truby notes his concerns that spread far outside the film business.

As he says, "*The Anatomy of Genres* takes us from the poetics of storytelling to the poetics of life. Join me in exploring the multidimensional maps of humanity that help us navigate our lives." The exploration is one of the most enlightening journeys one can take.

* * *

More than anything else, Truby's book means opening a new dimension in entertainment knowledge. That is, the important symbols and symbolism related to leading story genres in culture at times.

If culture increasingly directs its gaze in the direction of genres, Truby's book is something that general readers should have. It identifies patterns and beats in the various genres. It classifies the genres in the evolutionary ladder above. All new ideas and thinking about story genres. However, in the movement towards genres one needs to be on the lookout for number of genres further dividing the world up into pieces. Never uniting it. Is there more money in division or in consolidation? It's not a bad question by itself.

In effect, is there a particular genre of story that might unite all the current genres into one? Use Truby's advice through *Anatomy* to create stories mixing at least three genres. The only slight problem one might have is trying to weld Truby's structure in his *Anatomy of Story* in 2007 with *Anatomy of Genre* in 2022. There is the short seven step Truby structure and the longer 22 steps he lays out in the great *Anatomy of Story*.

But I continue to monitor the world of story genres. A world in my thinking that John Truby pretty much owns right now. Buy Anatomy of Genre whether you're a screenwriter or not. What the heck. We're all really screenwriters.

In the genre medium out there, something that perhaps more might see themselves within, it is important to consider the number of mediums or genres out there. Planted by those in power? Defined by those in power? But so important to know the great stories are still possible to be lived in the world today. Huge, genre transcending and mixing genre stories (as Truby suggests) that create the DNA of our new genre form of storytelling.

* * *

This seems such way of stating things for me today about this topic. Within the movement to genre storytelling have we moved to niche storytelling with few attempts to connect with other story genres? Is there a market in differentiating brands built on story genres? Will the bold and brilliant genre approach to modern storytelling laid out in Truby's bible of modern writing in genres called *The Anatomy of Genres*. A very fitting bookend to his brilliant *The Anatomy of Story*.

A brilliant book. The symbolism and beats in the various major twelve genres today expressed with the precision of a scientist as Truby seems in some ways. Still, I'm holding back my comments about the number and structure Truby defines story genres today. How much connection to the past definers of genres does his *Anatomy of Genres* have?

Perhaps the grandest definer of genres during the 20th century was Northrop Frye and his *Anatomy of Criticism* of 1957. The book became one of the most influential critical works of the mid-20th century. He challenged the hegemony of the New Criticism by emphasizing the modes and genres of literary texts. Rather than analyze the language of individual works of literature, as the New Critics did, Frye stressed the larger or deeper imaginative patterns from which all literary works are constructed and the recurring importance of literature's underlying archetypes.

Frye's *The Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, is a work of literary criticism and generally considered the author's most important work. The greatest work from one of the 20th centuries greatest literary critics. In his introduction, Frye explains that his initial intention was to examine the poetry of Edmund Spenser. But this, he says, had given way in the process to a broader survey of the ordering principles of literary theory. The four essays in his book address these broader ordering principles of literary theory in modes, symbols, myths and genres.

* * *

All of these have a close connection to what Northrop Frye sees as the historical, ethical, archetypal, and rhetorical dimensions of literary expression. It is also something found by John Truby in *The Anatomy of Genres*. In many ways, the ideas of the two need acknowledgement at least. It's somewhat of a funny reunion between a screenwriting theorist and literary critic. But there seems to be one.

Again, the question is never necessarily within the content of steps on any ladder of steps. Rather it was always about one's identification of the number of steps on this ladder. This said more than they knew about views of storytelling.

Truby has written an important book and presented ideas about future story genres having a symbiotic relationship with the major archetypal genres in story forms. Frye has presented his own idea of four forms of stories. The relationship between the four of Frye and the twelve of Truby seems a relationship worth taking time to study a little. By some research group out there. Perhaps its already the topic of research? It would be naïve to think not.

A quote from French theorist Jean-François Lyotard comes to mind in all these considerations of genre and story. As Lyotard said, "The grand narratives that sustained whole societies … have lost their force. We are left with many mini narratives everywhere."

* * *

It's hard for me to disagree with Lyotard. There are mini narratives everywhere out there. Buzzing all around you like mosquitos at a summer picnic. But then we live in a mini culture all

the time and everywhere. Like water surrounding fish. There is no longer any grand narrative (as Lyotard says) that used to sustain whole societies.

In effect, the problem with genre and story today might not be that there are the wrong genres of story forms out there. But rather that there are simply too many genre forms out there. Like everything else, perhaps this genre theory is another disrupter of society, another divider of it into different stories. Different genres of stories.

Truby feels the new mix-up of genres is crucial to the future of storytelling. Will a new mixture of genres wield some new powerful story form or story genre? Are the current twelve genres that Truby has defined genres the story world will see for years to come? Or will the twelve genres evolve into more or less genres?

11. Psychology

William Indick / Psychology for Screenwriters
Peter Dunne / Emotional Structure
Pamela Jaye Smith / Inner Drives
Jason Lee / The Psychology of Screenwriting
Lisa Cron / Wired for Story & Story Genius
Will Storr / *The Science of Storytelling*
Ted Nannacelli / *Cognition, Emotion, and Aesthetics in Contemporary Serial Television*
Jeffrey Zacks / Flicker Your Brain on Movies
Paul Gulino and Connie Shears / The Science of Screenwriting

Psychology

The Psychology approach is one of the later approaches to screenwriting but certainly applies to key aspects of screenwriting such as the Character, Personal, Myth and Symbolism approaches discussed in this book. Under this approach we also include books about the neuro-science of or the brain science of screenwriting which admittedly might be included under a science approach. The psychology approach focuses mainly on the psychology of individuals in everyday life while neuro-science focuses on the reactions of the audience as they watch a film.

Perhaps one of the best attempts to translate psychology to the screen is the book *Psychology for Screenwriters* by William Indick. The book offers the theories of Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell, Alfred Adler and Rollo May as they relate to the human mind. Indick is a developmental psychologist, active screenwriter, screenwriting consultant and Assistant Professor of Psychology at Dowling College in Oakdale, New York. As Indick notes in the Introduction to his book, "A thorough understanding of the unconscious mind - the birthplace of fantasy, dreams, and imagination - is a fundamental point of departure for creating psychologically resonant scripts and films."

In elucidating a psychoanalytic approach to screenwriting, Indick notes that films "visceral appeal as a larger than life medium on both visual and auditory levels makes it an extremely powerful psychological force." Viewers become so emotionally connected to the characters and plot and that the illusion on the screen becomes intertwined with their own psychological lives. Indick notes this is achieved through the unconscious process of "identification" where the people in the audience become the characters they identify with in the film. This makes them experience vicariously the same psychological development and catharsis that the characters on the screen experience. By learning about the inner workings of the human mind, Indick observes that filmmakers and screenwriters bring more skill and depth to their craft and create more powerful and resonant films.

Like screenwriting, true psychoanalysis is not a science but an art. "In this sense," notes Indick, "psychoanalysis and screenwriting are two sides of the same coin." They are both creative arts aimed at the investigation and understanding of the human character, mind and soul. They are both intrinsically engaged in the personality and personal development of their subjects. They are both immersed in in the world of archetypal symbols and mythological figures. And they both are rooted firmly in the unconscious realm of human experience.

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The book *Emotional Structure: A Guide for Screenwriters* is by Emmy and Peabody Award-winning producer, writer, and teacher Peter Dunne. While Indick's *Psychology for Screenwriters* offers main theories from six leading psychologists, Dunne's book focuses on the psychology of emotion. Dunne observes that screenwriters often get the plot right at the expense of the story's real power. "The result," he notes, "is a script that is logical in every way, yet unmoving." Dunne notes that the missing piece needed will not be found by adding more action. You can't stir the soul with a car chase. And the problem will not be helped by a change of location. The only location that matters is deep inside the emotions of the protagonist.

When any scene is created, whether it's a police pursuit on the interstate or a heart-to-heart in the kitchen, the emotional reasoning behind the scene has to be evident. When a screenwriter develops the emotional current that sustains the action, they create a scene with heart and soul and both the screenwriter, and the reader are going to feel the passion. Much of Dunne's excellent book is concerned with showing the relationship of the three-act screen structure to emotional structure and connecting internal and external themes.

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Pamela Jaye Smith's *Inner Drives* is based on the Eight Classic Centers of Motivation. In Sanskrit, these centers are called the chakras, but other cultures have other names for them. An author, international consultant, speaker, and Producer/Director with over 30 years' experience in feature films and television, she has authored other books relating to inner drives for developing screen characters. Other books by Smith, extend the ideas of *Inner Drives* to creating powerful villains in The Power of the Dark Side or going beyond the myths not explored by Joseph Campbell's *Hero with a Thousand Faces* in her book *Beyond The Hero's Journey*. Her book *Symbols, Images & Codes* explores the secret language of meaning in media.

The book *Inner Drives* explores the core of human thoughts, feelings, and actions by looking closely at the energy centers or chakras so characters can be created from the inside out making them more authentic and easier for an audience to connect with. These energy centers are bundles of nerves in the body associated with an endocrine gland that affects individuals both physically and emotionally through hormones secreted by these glands. For example, the sex hormone comes from the sacral center. The stress hormone from the root center. Creative individuals (archetypes such as artists, detectives, intelligence officers, and writers) with active throat centers, often crave something for their mouth. A lover archetype, with an active sacral center, consumes food like oysters, chocolate, finger foods and champagne.

For each energy center, Smith covers a large array of things to use as references when creating characters such as kinds of clothing, speech, music, and physical actions. Many examples of characters in films are provided: Johnny Depp's Jack Sparrow in *Pirates of The Caribbean*; Jody Foster's Clarice Starling in *Silence of the Lambs*; Samuel L. Jackson's Jules Winnfield in *Pulp Fiction* and Susan Sarandon's Annie Savoy in *Bull Durham*.

* * *

The Psychology of Screenwriting: Theory and Practice by Jason Lee (2013) is perhaps the most philosophical of the books on the psychology of screenwriting. Lee is author/editor of 20 books examining the central issues of our time, from surveillance, digital cultures, indigenous cultures, child abuse, far-right extremism, and mental health. Professor of Film, Media, and Culture at De Montfort University, Lee is a chartered psychologist and currently a British Academy Innovation Fellow working with Jones Bamber Productions and Warner Brothers. Lee was previously Professor of Culture and Creative Writing.

Apart from a book on the theory and practice of screenwriting, it is also a philosophical analysis of predetermination and freewill in the context of writing and human life in our mediated world of technology. Drawing on humanism, existentialism, Buddhism, postmodernism and trans-humanism and diverse thinkers from Meister Eckhart to Friedrich Nietzsche, Theodor Adorno, Jacques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard and Gilles Deleuze, *The Psychology of Screenwriting* will be of use to screenwriters, film students, philosophers and all those interested in contemporary theory. This book combines in-depth critical and cultural analysis with an elaboration on practice in an innovative fashion.

It explores how people, such as those in the Dogme 95 Movement have tried to overcome traditional screenwriting by looking in detail at the psychology of writing and the practicalities of how to write well for the screen. The Dogme 95 Movement is a 1995 avant-garde filmmaking movement founded by the Danish directors Lars von Trier and Thomas Vintrberg, creators of the "Dogme 95 Manifesto." This is the first book to include high theory with screenwriting practice while incorporating the Enneagram for character development. Numerous filmmakers and writers, including David Lynch, Jim Jarmusch, David Cronenberg, Pedro Almodóvar, Darren Aronofsky, Sally Potter and Charlie Kaufman are explored in Lee's book.

Neuroscience

> "You've got to remember that the story is much more about the audience than it is about the characters or the plot. And it is much more about the audience than it is about the storyteller." Julian Friedmann, Blake Friedmann Literary Agency, London
>
> "Rich and seemingly boundless as the creative arts seem to be, each is filtered through the narrow biological channels of human cognition." Edward O. Wilson

There are a few general books on using neuroscience in writing novels. Lisa Cron's *Wired for Story: The Writer's Guide to Using Brain Science to Hook Readers from the Very First Sentence*

(2012) and her later *Story Genius: How to Use Brain Science to go Beyond Outlining* (2016) offer excellent discussions of cognitive science in the creation of stories. Another excellent discussion of cognitive science creating stories is Will Storr's *The Science of Storytelling: Why Stories Make Us Human and How to Tell Them Better* (2021).

An interesting book about cognition in television series is by Australian screenwriting professor Ted Nannacelli titled *Cognition, Emotion, and Aesthetics in Contemporary Serial Television* (2021). The book posits interconnections between ways in which contemporary television serials cue cognitive operations, solicit emotional responses and elicit aesthetic appreciation. The chapters explore several questions including: How do the particularities of form and style in contemporary serial television engage us cognitively, emotionally, and aesthetically? How do they foster cognitive and emotional effects such as feeling suspense, anticipation, surprise, satisfaction, and disappointment? Why and how do we value some serials while disliking others? What is it about the particularities of serial television form and style, in conjunction with our common cognitive, emotional, and aesthetic capacities, that accounts for serial television's cognitive, socio-political, and aesthetic value and its current ubiquity in popular culture?

* * *

Perhaps one of the most interesting books relating to cognitive science and individual film in *Flicker: Your Brain on Movies* (2014) by Jeffrey Zacks. As Zacks notes, the book aims to introduce a broad readership to the psychology and neuroscience that underlies experience in the movie theatre. The book's topics include emotional experience, adaptation from texts to films, memory and propaganda, movie violence, film editing and brain stimulation. Cutting across the specific topics are a few broad themes: the evolution of the brain and mind, the role of automatically evoked responses in film viewing, and the role of behavioral and neural plasticity in everyday experience.

Zacks certainly has the credentials to undertake this type of book. An avid film buff himself, he is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Washington University in St. Louis with a BA from Yale and a PhD from Stanford in Cognitive Psychology. In addition to his academic research he has worked in applied research at Bell Communications Research and Interval Research Corporation. He is the recipient of a Young Investigator Award in Experimental Psychology: Applied from the APA and the F.C. McGuigan Young Investigator Prize from the American Psychological Foundation, and is a fellow of the Association for Psychological Science and the Midwest Psychological Association.

As Zacks notes, this is an exciting time for those of us study how film works in the mind and the brain. In order to pursue these goals, The Society for the Cognitive Study of the Moving Image was founded in 1997 and re-launched in 2006, with an explicit aim of bringing together scientists and humanists working on film. To describe the emerging scientific study of the experience of film art, Art Shimamura coined the term "psychocinematics" and Uri Hasson coined the term "neurocinematics." Zacks notes that the emergence of psychocinematics and neurocinematics would not have been possible without foundational work in cognitive film theory by David Bordwell's 1989 "A Case for Cognitivism" in *Iris*, Joseph Anderson's *The Reality of Illusion: An*

Ecological Approach to Cognitive Film Theory (1996) and Torben Grodal's *Embodied Visions: Evolution, Culture, and Film* (2009).

In addition to the above, Zacks notes there has also been a rapid maturation of new methods for studying the way film and brains interact. He mentions two developments that have been particularly important: *naturalistic eye-tracking* and *event-related functional MRI*. As a result of all this, there has been an efflorescence of research and theory represented in journals and elsewhere. The community doing this research is an interdisciplinary one, spanning film and media studies, cognitive science, psychology, and neuroscience.

Zacks notes that it has drawn heavily on a broader literature in cognitive neuroscience and in turn has given back to that literature. One manifestation of this surge of activity is the excellent volume *Psychocinematics: Exploring Cognition at the Movies* (2013) edited by Arthur Shimamura, Professor of Psychology and Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute, University of California, Berkeley. In the opening chapter of the book, Shimamura writes:

> Even at its early beginnings, scholars have considered the nature of our movie experience and its impact on society and culture. Some film theorists have advocated a psychological or cognitive approach to movies as they are particularly interested in what goes on in the mind (and brain) of the moviegoer. Until recently, however, only a few scientists have considered our movie experience as a topic of empirical investigation.

The contributors to the Shimamura book include film theorists, philosophers, psychologists, and neuroscientists and they explore the viability of a scientific approach to the movie experience or what is called psychocinematics. This new field of study is grounded scientific analysis of the aesthetic response to movies. A primary goal of psychocinematics is to offer a scientific approach to the aesthetics of movies. In effect, it considers the psychological and biological underpinnings of our movie experience; addresses the aesthetic nature of movies from an empirical approach; develops movies for psychological research as a means of understanding cognitive processes as they unfold dynamically in time and encourages a multidisciplinary approach that includes psychology, cognitive science, neuroscience, philosophy, film studies, filmmaking, art history, sociology, and other related endeavors.

As Zacks says, "I wrote *Flicker* because I thought it was time to bring all of this together in a single voice. More importantly, I wanted to 'give away the science' (to steal a phrase from the late George Miller) to a broader audience. The book's explicit goal is to explain to interested readers what we know about how movies work in the mind and the brain; however, it also has a covert mission to teach a bit of psychology and neuroscience. In short, Flicker aims to bring this research to a wider audience."

* * *

The book *The Science of Screenwriting: The Neuroscience Behind Storytelling Strategies* (2018) by screenwriting professor Paul Gulino and cognitive scientist Connie Shears is one of the first books which attempts to apply neuroscience to screenwriting. Authors Gulino and Shears have a

similar attitude as *Hollywood Safari* to screenwriting books and theories. At the very beginning of the book the authors note, "The number of screenwriting books, courses, seminars, presentations, blogs, videos, and Facebook pages seems to be expanding faster than the universe. Advice is everywhere and often contradictory. There are monomyths, heroes' journeys, plot points, various theories on the number of steps, three acts, four acts, seven acts, and no acts. This book is an attempt to explore the question of whether there is a deeper level of understanding by which one might navigate this avalanche of information - the level of human physiology and psychology."

This deeper level of understanding is the purpose of *The Science of Screenwriting*. Gulino is an associate professor of screenwriting at Chapman University and author of the book *Screenwriting: The Sequence Approach* as well as a produced screenwriter and story analysist for Showtime Entertainment and Connie Shears is a noted Cognitive Psychologist. The authors build, chapter-by-chapter, an understanding of the human perceptual/cognitive processes as it relates to screenwriting and films, from the functions of our eyes and ears that bring real world information into our brains, to the intricate networks within our brains connecting our decisions and emotions.

With the combined expertise of the authors, *The Science of Screenwriting* marks one of the first interdisciplinary approaches to the study of screenplays. Just the idea to mix they areas should be commended as adding a new multi-disciplinary approach to the study of screenplays. The interdisciplinary approach offers a bold and important new way for the discipline of screenwriting to move forward in the digital era of streaming series, social media bubbles and a post pandemic world.

* * *

Authors Gulino and Shears draw on a variety of examples from film and television such as *The Social Network*, *Silver Linings Playbook* and *Breaking Bad* to show how the human perceptual process is reflected in the storytelling strategies of filmmakers. They conclude with a detailed analysis using cognitive psychology of *Star Wars* to discover the cognitive psychology behind the film's effect.

The book takes the reader step by step, delving deeper into each new layer of cognitive science with each chapter. Explored in the book's chapters is the science of information flow, connecting with the main character, contrast, exposition, cause and effect, shared attention, conflict, imagination, and structure. These topics are covered in many other screenwriting books but the difference here is that everything is backed up with Neuroscience and how and why to use these tools correctly. The specific aim is to uncover "the cognitive and perceptual processes going on in the brain of the reader or viewer when reading a script or watching a film."

UK filmmaker and writer Levi Dean has an insightful review of the book in the Irish *Alphaville Journal of Film and Screen Media* which includes his personal experience with the book. Although I've edited parts of the review, it's hard to improve on Dean's observations so much of it is mixed with my thoughts on the book. For example, Dean talks about viewing the 2019 Netflix series *When They See Us*. After the pilot episode Dean notes he "disengaged" with the series. The series depicts the true story of how five teenage boys were wrongly convicted of

raping a woman in New York's Central Park. The pilot episode pulls no punches in representing the brutal reality of how these underprivileged African American teenage boys endured police brutality and continuous unlawful treatment that goes beyond the imagination. While watching, Dean found himself disengaging resulting in an enormous sense of guilt. He searched his conscience, reminding himself of the many reasons why it was important to watch this series.

The analysis of the authors helped him reflect on why he disengaged. Reading Gulino and Shears, revealed that morality was secondary in his decision making. They instead pointed to the neurological processes of why narratives need to sequence a specific flow of positive and negative events to elicit and sustain audience engagement. The authors note "it is critical that a moment of high emotion be contrasted to a moment that is nonemotionally relevant." The book provided detailed scientific methods screenwriters can employ when scripting a sequence of emotionally negative material to help avoid audience disengagement.

* * *

Dean notes in his review, while there are some new insights, the book primarily expounds upon established screenwriting conventions. Secrets behind these screenwriting conventions are revealed by presenting them from the audience perspective. This subtly encourages the reader to perceive screenwriting techniques as a viewer. They believe that "a screenwriter who knows how to create and manipulate anticipation on the part of the viewer has a tremendous advantage in keeping the viewer's attention—and interest—for the entire screenplay."

Chapter 1 of the book titled "The Science of Information Flow" lays the foundation of cognitive science by describing the relevant functions of different parts of the brain. The authors explore two types of processing that occurs in our brains: bottom-up and top-down. Bottom-up processing denotes sensory information, such as what is being experienced within an environment through hearing or seeing. This is then fused with our own personal experiences in top-down processing. For example, a person may see a snarling dog (bottom-up processing), but because they previously had a positive experience with a dog which initially snarled at them (top-down processing), they were not afraid. This example demonstrates how human cognition relies heavily on shortcuts, based on past experiences, to make instantaneous decisions about specific stimuli.

The authors observe how these shortcuts evidence the importance of story schemas and why viewers engage with a narrative during its embryonic stages. Story schemas are understood as a narrative shortcut that spectators refer to when engaging with a familiar genre. For example, in considering the television anti-hero, a viewer may engage with him/her because of their previous viewing experience. They may be familiar with on-screen characters such as Tony Soprano (James Gandolfini in *The Sopranos*), Dexter Morgan (Michael Hall in *Dexter*) and Walter White (Bryan Cranston in *Breaking Bad*) and, as a result, decide relatively quickly that they feel allegiance towards this new anti-hero.

However, Dean notes, not all scholars agree upon the significance of story schemas. One in disagreement is screenplay scholar Margrethe Bruun Vaage, author of *The Antihero in American Television*. Gulino and Shears indirectly discredit Vaage's notion by building upon their research

into neural shortcuts, revealing that viewers' previous experiences with a genre will, in fact, influence their initial engagement (top-down processing).

The authors cement this assertion by pointing to specific expectations audiences have surrounding the sequencing of certain events within a genre. Writers who use narrative schemas can take advantage of these expectations to craft a screenplay that is intuitively familiar (top-down processing), but also to subvert narrative conventions to ensure audiences remain "on the edge of their seats." In short, Gulino and Shears assertion is more credible than Vaage's because, whilst the idea that viewers become fonder toward a character overtime is probable, it fails to explain why viewers engage with a narrative in its early stages. Vaage's belief also disregards scientific evidence that confirms humans intuitively rely on neurological shortcuts in their everyday life.

* * *

An additional area of interest to Gulino and Shears is the psychology of emotion. They build upon research conducted by leading scholars, such as Murray Smith's *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema* and Noël Carroll and William Seeley's *Cognitivism, Psychology, and Neuroscience: Movies as Attentional Engines*. The importance of having a focus on emotions is brilliantly articulated by Craig Batty, who states "if the audience does not connect with a character and feel his or her emotions, the narrative is merely a series of hollow actions."

The authors present the findings from neuroscientist Professor Donald W. Pfaff, to explicate why viewers are susceptible to feeling for the characters on screen. Pfaff maintains this is because "a human being, in certain circumstances, blurs the distinction between another individual's experiences and his or her own." This blurring is a direct result of "the brain structures called the anterior cingulate cortex and the insula" which "are involved in our attention to pain—not only our own, but also the pain of others." Chapter 6 focuses heavily on emotions in which the authors break down the cognitive processes of why audiences are more likely to be satisfied by a feature film instead of a short film. The longer duration of a feature film is noted to provide the audience with more reward for their emotional engagement.

The authors stray away from the lens of the audience in Chapter 8 to focus instead on the idea of the screenwriter as a mad genius. They propose that "dopamine may be the neurochemical of creativity." They apply ideas of the book in a chapter about George Lucas in a case study. The authors examine how *Star Wars* (1977) employed screenwriting functions explored throughout the book. However, he also broke several rules yet still achieved audience engagement.

The most obvious example being the information dump (exposition) presented at the beginning of *Star Wars*. Though rest assured if you are not a *Star Wars* fan. The book analysis ranges over a broad range of film and television shows such as *Toy Story* (John Lasseter, 1996), *Breaking Bad*, *Avatar* (James Cameron, 2009) *The Social Network* (David Fincher, 2010) *Gravity* (Alfonso Cuarón, 2013), *Silver Linings Playbook* (David O. Russell, 2013), *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* (Joe Russo, 2014) and *Still Alice* (Richard Glatzer and Wash Westmoreland, 2014).

Gulino and Shears also go back through the decades, analyzing classical genre films such as *Double Indemnity* (Billy Wilder, 1944), *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960), *Lawrence of Arabia* (David Lean, 1962) and *Goldfinger* (Guy Hamilton, 1964). In providing this range of films, the authors reveal how numerous popular films throughout cinematic history have successfully entertained audiences by exploiting the same cognitive processes.

* * *

The exploration of other disciplines closest to screenwriting - like cognitive psychology - seems a necessary and wise way forward for the discipline of screenwriting. Of course, there is the well-known collaboration between screenwriters and novelists as well as the relationship of screenwriting to mythology. Yet the time seems ripe for screenwriting to collaborate with emerging sciences such as cognitive psychology. Perhaps even AI. This book provides not only a guide but a call for the screenwriting discipline to reach outside Hollywood's current screenplay paradigms of linear structures and go non-linear and deeper into human psychology.

It is perhaps the first time, a leading screenwriting professor has teamed up with a leading cognitive psychologist to offer unique, new insights into screenplays. For too long, the area of screenwriting has been stuck within the structural school of screenplay branding where screenplay brands (or schools) tether themselves closely to screenplay structure or steps. For example, one of the leading screenplay brands has been Blake Snyder's 15-step structure discussed in his *Save the Cat* (STC) franchise. In fact, many screenwriters consider only the STC method, and fit their stories into this structure. Yet considering stories in linear steps often misses the non-linear elements such as cognitive psychology.

Importantly, *The Science of Screenwriting* does not attempt to "own" another brand or step in the screenwriting process. Instead, it attempts to introduce screenwriters to the area of cognitive psychology. As an introduction, there is likely more work to be done. It doesn't shout out a formula for writing blockbusters and telling screenwriters "Trust me, this works." It provides an exploration into a new form of screenplay more suited for the world today.

The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema (1986).

Less about film than about the psychology of the viewing experience. American Film

12. Symbolism

Carl Jung / *Man and His Symbols*
Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbols / *The Book of Symbols*
Leonard Lutwack / *The Role of Place in Literature*
John Truby / *"Symbol Web"* from *The Anatomy of Story*
Erich Neumann / *Origins of the History of Consciousness*
John Fraim / *Battle of Symbols, Symbolism of Place* & "Script Symbology"
Christian Metz / *Film Language*
Michael Tierno / *Semiotics for Screenwriters*

The study of symbolism has been a long interest of mine that has resulted in many published articles, two manuscripts published online, work as a symbolism consultant on a major film, a book published by Swiss publisher Daimon Verlag and a regular column in *Script* magazine. The manuscript that really laid a foundation for my ideas about symbolism was the online book *The Symbolism of Place: The Hidden Context of Communication* (1990). The next major publication of mine in symbolism was *Battle of Symbols: Global Dynamics of Advertising, Entertainment and Media* (2003) published by the Swiss publisher Daimon Verlag. Written right after 9/11, The book observed how duality symbols of the individual psyche corresponded to the duality symbols of Eastern and Western cultures.

Ten years after *Battle of Symbols*, I wrote a regular column in *Script Magazine* called "Script Symbology" arguing for the establishment of screenplay structure based on the duality of symbols and the sequence of the movement between dualities from beginning to ending of the screenplay. As I wrote at the beginning of the "Script Symbology" column:

> Script Symbology is about the study and application of symbols and symbolism to scripts. While there are so-called movie symbologists (Tom Hanks in *The Da Vinci Code* comes to mind) to my knowledge there exists no ongoing research, discussion or study of the application of symbols and symbolism to structuring modern scripts. Such study, discussion and application are long overdue. In much the way that the mythology theories of Joseph Campbell have found application to structuring screenwriting with spectacular results, the application of symbolism to structure screenplays might also provide spectacular results. But so far, this has not happened. Although Carl Jung's theory of archetypes is well known and used in script structure, ideas of symbol movement have yet to find application to scripts.

In the *Script* magazine column, I observed that symbols have played major parts of the story in films and books like the Rosebud sled in *Citizen Kane*; the birds in Hitchcock's film *The Birds* and the green light in *The Great Gatsby*. However, I noted that often, "powerful symbols in films make just one or two appearances in the film and are not part of any system of symbolism with little connection to overall narrative structure." I observed that it is relatively easy to place symbols in films but far more difficult to give them dynamic life and growth so they reveal character and personify theme. I also noted the connection of products with the

symbols of brands and the actions of product placement in films for little reason other than economics.

Symbolism is more than an esoteric philosophy but rather serves as a hidden context for much of life. In effect, a primary method for making sense of the world – as well as the story world - is by interpreting its symbols. Defined by *Webster's Dictionary*, a symbol is something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance. Examples of symbols are found in things like concepts, people, objects or events. Especially, it is a visible sign of something invisible. For example, a lion is a symbol of courage, strength and dominance. People decode meaning through images and, often without realizing it, are swayed by the power of their attendant associations. Most agree films are the most symbolic art form, making extensive use of symbols and symbolism. Yet few understand the definitions of symbols rather than the popular use of them. The deeper meanings are lost to most people.

Symbols have close relationships with many other approaches to screenwriting discussed in *Hollywood Safari*. Most evident is the relation to the visual, personal, psychological, mythological, character and genre approaches to screenwriting. Less evident and more hidden is their relationship to drama and plot which we will discuss.

While the importance of symbols is often acknowledged in screenwriting books and courses, this acknowledgement is no more than a passing reference to them with little mention of how they are applied in screenplays. A new understanding of symbolism and its application to screenplays remains a goal for future screenwriters but some parts of this understanding are beginning to become visible and apparent.

Symbol Content

A central proponent of the theory of symbols was iconic Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Gustaf Jung who studied them all his life and made an academic case for them in the now-classic *Man and His Symbols*, the last work undertaken by Jung before his death in 1961. First published in 1964, it is divided into five parts, four of which were written by associates of Jung: Marie-Louise von Franz, Joseph Henderson, Aniela Jaffe and Jolana Jacobi. The book, which contains numerous illustrations, seeks to provide a clear explanation of Jung's complex theories for a wide non-specialist readership.

Besides Jung's last final work on symbols, there are many reference works and dictionaries of symbols, some better than others. One of the best is Juan Eduardo Cirlot's *A Dictionary of Symbols* (1962). Cirlot (1916 - 1973) was a Spanish polymath who was a composer, art critic, hermeneutist and mythologist. He was a champion of modern art whose and his interest in surrealism brought him to the study of symbolism and people like Carl Jung, Mircea Eliade, René Guénon, Erich Fromm and Gaston Bachelard. All of this helped to shape his thinking in A Dictionary of Symbols which explores the space between the outside and inside world where, as Cirlot saw it, nothing was meaningless.

Perhaps the greatest work on symbolism ever assembled is the The Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism (ARAS). Beginning in the 1930s, followers of Jung had started collecting

mythological, ritualistic and symbolic imagery. In the following years, the ARAS archive grew to contain more than 17,000 images and 90,000 pages of cultural and psychological scholarly commentary on pictorial archetypes. All were digitized and loaded up to the ARAS site but could only be acessed through an annual membership fee to ARAS.

In 2010, the German luxury art book publisher Taschen published the ARAS symbol archive in its *Book of Symbols: Reflections on Archetypal Images*. Rather than merely categorize symbols, *The Book of Symbols* illuminated how one moves from the visual experience of a symbolic image in art, religion, life or dreams to the direct experience of its personal and psychological resonance. The book is divided into 5 major areas of symbols: Creation and Cosmos; Plant World; Animal World; Human World and Spirit World.

The major areas are further subdivided. For example, the Human World is further divided into 8 sections: Human Body, Movement and Expression, Fundamentals of Work and Society, Tools and Other Objects, House and Home, Buildings and Monuments, Color and Sound. Within these sections are individual entries on particular symbols, consisting of an essay and one or more images. Take for example the subdivision of The Human World titled "Tools and Other Objects" which consists of 32 entries here, among them discussions of Sword, Compass, Net/Web, Veil, Ring and Telephone. Most essays take a vivid and telling image as their point of departure, but then range more widely. Overall, the essays are provocative and richly suggestive, rather than exhaustive.

Symbol Context

> "The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut … (But to Marlow) the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze."
>
> Joseph Conrad
> *Heart of Darkness*

It is important to first have a familiarity with meanings symbols have acquired through history through incredible resources like Jung's Man and His Symbols, Cirlot's A Dictionary of Symbols and The Book of Symbols. Only through knowing what various things in the world stand for might one find attachment to them on an emotional and unconscious levels where their real power lies.

Yet symbols always appear as content wrapped in contexts. As Marshall McLuhan might suggest, as messages wrapped within mediums. The symbol might have a certain definition when appearing in a dictionary of symbols. But it has a different meaning when appearing in the context of a story. For example, consider the symbol of a lion (noted above) as a symbol for courage, strength and dominance. The roaring lion of the MGM studios represents this type of lion. But consider the cowardly lion in the context of MGM's great film, The Wizard of Oz. A totally different symbol of a lion. The same is true of those products and brands. An expensive brand means one thing when seen in the context of an upscale store but quite another when viewed in a discount store.

The popular perspective of symbols is that they are objects and not contexts. While they are certainly objects, they are also objects within contexts. And, it is these context from which they obtain their ultimate power and meaning. The context of symbols has a special place in stories and screenplays. For the most part, screenwriters have a basic understanding of the content of symbols in stories yet very little understanding of their context in films.

(a) Phenomenology of Place

One of the most import contexts of symbols in screenplays is in the context of scenes or places within the screenplay. The relatively obscure book *The Role of Place in Literature* (1984) by Leonard Lutwack offers an important and unique study exploring the use of metaphors and images of place in literature. Lutwack (1917-2008) takes a dynamic view of the relationship between place and the action or thought in a work. Drawing comparisons over a wide range of works, principally American and British literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, he illustrates how writers have charged different environments with symbolic and psychological meaning.

In effect, Lutwack helped create a foundation for a symbolism of the context of place. Translated into screenplays or novels, this symbolism becomes particular places and their order in screenplays. Scenes are - in fact - symbolic contexts. It is an observation and tool of screenwriting that has never received the importance it deserves. Expanding on the Lutwack's idea of place, one arrives at an area of study called the phenomenology of place indicating the dimensions of the natural world support and reflect dimensions of people's psychological, social, cultural and spiritual worlds. An important contribution to this area is Janet Donohoe's *Place and Phenomenology* (2017).

There are in effect, many key symbols congregated around the phenomenology of place. An investigation if undertook in my 1990 manuscript *Symbolism of Place* (published online at www.symbolism.org) discovered many of these symbols. For example, there are symbols connected to major natural places such as deserts, prairies, jungles, forests, oceans, mountains and polar regions. Or symbols based on places within natural places such as rivers, shores, bays, peninsulas, valleys, canyons and caves.

The book also identified symbols related to cultural places such as cities, streets, houses, farms, parks, gardens, roads, paths, trails, doors and gates. It found a relationship between place and linear time in that all story places are fixed in a past time, present or future time. Or a relationship between place and cyclical time in day, night, spring, summer, autumn and winter. There is also the space of place involving verticality, horizontality, centrality, inside and outside, above and below. And there is also a phenomena associated with place such as aspects of weather in clouds, rain, snow, wind, hurricanes and tornados, thunder and lightning, fog and shadow. Color is also associated with place in the major contrasts of light and dark as well as color properties and systems within place. Places also have relationships with the four elements of fire, water, air and earth.

(b) Symbol Web

Symbol context do not only find a connection to places in screenplays (and stories) but has a connection to other elements of the screenplay such as characters, theme, the story world, actions and the overall story symbol. John Truby recognized their use in the over context of the story seeing them put together in a type of web. As he notes in the "Symbol Web" chapter from *The Anatomy of Story*, "A lot of writers think of symbols as those pesky little things that were only important in lit class. Big mistake. If instead you think of symbols as jewels sewn into the story tapestry that have great emotional effect, you'll have some idea of the power of this set of story techniques." As he advises, "Always create a web of symbols in which each symbol helps define the others."

John Truby's "Symbol Web" chapter from *The Anatomy of Story* is perhaps the best explanation of using symbols in a screenplay. Symbols, like characters in a screenplay, must be seen within the story web. "The single biggest mistake in creating a symbol is to see it as a single object." As Truby advises, "Always create a web of symbols in which each symbol helps define the others." As Truby notes, "Symbols are packets of highly compressed meaning. Determine a web of symbols that highlight and communicate different aspects of the characters, the story world and the plot." Truby discusses symbols in sections of his "Symbol Web" chapter in Figure 12A below.

> Story Symbol is a single symbol that expresses the premise, key story twists, central theme, or overall structure of the story.
>
> Symbolic Characters need to fit into the entire character web of the screenplay and the entire web needs to be reviewed before creating a symbol for a single character. Key symbols involve the opposition between the Protagonist and Antagonist. Decide on a single aspect of a character or single emotion one wants the character to evoke in the audience. Consider applying a symbol opposition within the character. Repeat the symbol in association with the character many times over the course of the story. Each time you repeat the symbol, vary the detail in some way. Consider connecting one or more of characters to a character type, especially to gods, animals or machines.
>
> Symbol Change in Protagonist is a symbol that can be connected to the character change of the hero. Look at the scenes where the weaknesses and needs of the Protagonist are expressed at the beginning of the story and the Protagonist's self-revelation at the end of the story.
>
> Symbolic Theme. Look for a symbol that can encapsulate the main theme of the story. For a symbol to express theme, it must stand for a series of actions and moral effects. A more advanced thematic symbol is one that stands for two series of moral actions that are in conflict.
>
> Symbolic World involves the symbols attached to the various elements of the story world, including the natural settings, man-made spaces, technology and time.

Symbolic Actions are one or more specific actions that merit symbolic treatment. What actions
can be attached to these actions to make them stand out.

Symbolic Objects. Create a web of symbolic objects by first reviewing what Truby calls the "Designing Principle" of the story's premise. As he says, it is the seed of the story and an overall strategy for how the story is told. Make sure that each symbolic object created fits with this designing principle.

Symbolic Development charts how each symbol changes over the course of the story.

Figure 12A
Truby's Symbol Web

Truby provides excellent examples of the use of the symbol web in various films and novels and at the end of the "Symbol Web" chapter provides an enlightening analysis of their use in J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings. The approach to symbols by Truby is far more intense than other leading screenwriting gurus other like Robert McKee who in his book *Story* gives symbols far less importance relegating them to only a small section at the end of his book called "Image Systems."

Sequence

In looking at the Content and Context of symbols, there is still a major area of symbolism not covered above. This involves the movement of symbols through a story or screenplay. Truby suggests movement in the elements of the "Symbol Web" with a "Symbolic Development" chart or the "Symbolic Change in Protagonist." However, there is no screenplay approach that bases screenplay structure around symbol movement. Structure of screenplays are discussed in the Plot chapter of *Hollywood Safari* but none of the plot structures are based on the principles of symbolism. The movement of Content and Context symbols through a screenplay is an approach not used so far. This is a deficiency in screenplay structure, especially so when the Mythology approach of Joseph Campbell in Hero with a Thousand Faces is such a prominent structural tool in screenwriting.

The person who showed Jung that symbols move in stages, breathing a new life into Jungian psychology, was Erich Newmann in his *Origins of the History of Consciousness*. Published in 1954 by the Bollingen Foundation through Princeton University Press, the book is divided into Part I and Part II. Part I looks at the mythological stages in the development of consciousness in civilization. Part II looks at the stages in the development of the individual personality.

The book draws on a full range of world mythology to show how individual consciousness undergoes the same archetypal stages of development as consciousness through history. Erich Neumann was one of C. G. Jung's most creative students and a renowned practitioner of analytical psychology in his own right. The stages begin and end with the symbol of the Uroboros, the tail-eating serpent. The intermediate stages are projected in the universal myths of the World Creation, Great Mother, Separation of the World Parents, Birth of the Hero, Slaying of

the Dragon, Rescue of the Captive, and Transformation and Deification of the Hero. Throughout the sequence, the Hero is the evolving ego consciousness. The outline of this evolution in stages of myth and human consciousness are outlined below in Figure 12B.

Part I
The Mythological Stages In the Evolution of Consciousness

A. The Creation Myth
    1. The Uroboros
    2. The Great Mother
    3. The Separation of the World Parents: The Principle of Opposites
B. The Hero Myth
    1. The Birth of the Hero
    2. The Slaying of the Mother
    3. The Slaying of the Father
C. The Transformation Myth
    1. The Captive and the Treasure
    2. Transformation, or Osiris

Part II
Psychological Stages In The Development of Personality

A. The Original Unity
    1. Centroversion and Ego Formation
    2. The Ego Germ in the Original Uroboric Situation
    3. Development of the Ego out of the Uroboros
    4. Centroversion in Organisms on the Uroboric Level
    5. Centroversion, Ego and Consciousness
    6. Further Phases of Ego Development

B. The Separation of the Systems
    1. Centroversion and Differentiation
    2. The Fragmentation of Archetypes
    3. Exhaustion of Emotional Components: Rationalization
    4. Secondary Personalization
    5. The Transformation of Pleasure-Pain Components
    6. The Formation of Authorities Within the Personality
    7. The Synthetic Function of the Ego

C. The Balance and Crisis of Consciousness
    1. Compensation of the Separated Systems
    2. The Schism of the Systems: Culture in Crisis

D. Centroversion and the Stages of Life
    1. Prolongation of Childhood and Differentiation of Consciousness
    2. Activation of Collective Unconscious and Ego Changes

3. Self-Realization of Centroversion in the Second Half of Life

---

Figure 12B
The Myth & Psychological Stages

Jung offered great praise for the book in his Forward to it noting, "The author has placed the concepts of analytical psychology – which for so many people are so bewildering – on a firm evolutionary basis and erected upon this a comprehensive structure in which empirical forms of thought find their rightful place." When Jung wrote the Forward he was in his 80s. He notes that "It begins just where I, too, if I were granted a second lease of life, would start to gather up the disjecta membra of my own writings, to sift out all those 'beginnings without continuation' and knead them into a whole."

In Part II of the above - "Psychological Stages In The Development of Personality" – one can see a similarity with the main parts of Campbell's journey of the mythic Hero in Departure, Initiation and Return (see a detailed outline of the myth structure in Figure 2A in the Myth approach of this book) with Neumann's psychological stages of Figure 12B above in Unity, Separation and Balance.

The great mythologist Joseph Campbell created a sequence of movement of the Hero in myth. Campbell was a student of Jung and had great respect for him. With a major part of the Plot approach based on the movement the mythological Protagonist, the time is more than ready for a structure is based on the symbolic protagonist. In many ways, they represent two sides of the same coin.

Ancient Principles

Excuse us for going into the esoteric weeds a little further but the principles form an ancient text called *The Kybalion: A Study of the Hermetic Philosophy of Ancient Egypt and Greece* are relevant here if for no other reason, Jung was aware of them and used them in creating his theories. Published originally in 1908 by "Three Initiates" (often identified as the New Thought pioneer William Walker Atkinson who lived from 1862-1932) it purports to convey seven Hermetic principles which the entire Hermetic philosophy is based. The seven principles listed in *The Kybalion* are reproduced below in Figure 3A below.

1. The principle of mentalism "The All is Mind; the Universe is Mental."

2. The principle of correspondence "As above, so below; as below, so above." This principle embodies the truth that there is always a correspondence between the laws and phenomena of the various planes of being and life.

3. The principle of vibration "Nothing rests; everything moves; everything vibrates."

4. The principle of polarity "Everything is dual; everything has poles; everything has its pair of opposites; like and unlike are the same; opposites are identical in nature, but

different in degree; extremes meet; all truths are but half-truths; all paradoxes may be reconciled."

5. The principle of rhythm "Everything flows, out and in; everything has its tides; all things rise and fall; the pendulum-swing manifests in everything; the measure of the swing to the right is the measure of the swing to the left; rhythm compensates."

6. The principle of cause and effect "Every cause has its effect; every effect has its cause; everything happens according to law; chance is but a name for law not recognized; there are many planes of causation, but nothing escapes the law."

7. The principle of gender "Gender is in everything; everything has its masculine and feminine principles; gender manifests on all planes."

Figure 12C
Seven Principles of the Kybalion

Outside of New Age ideas, many of these principles seem familiar in our age of quantum physics and particle theory. For our use here in creating a screenplay structure using symbolism, three of these principles stand out: the principle of polarity, the principle of gender and the principle of correspondence.

Duality

The fourth and seventh principles are important in establishing the movement from symbols at the beginning to those at the ending of a screenplay. The fourth principle states that "Everything is dual; everything has poles; everything has its pair of opposites; like and unlike are the same; opposites are identical in nature, but different in degree; extremes meet; all truths are but half-truths; all paradoxes may be reconciled." The seventh principle states that "Gender is in everything; everything has its masculine and feminine principles; gender manifests on all planes."

A movement between dualities is one of the key concepts of character change in a dramatic work. It is also an idea the was prevalent in Jung's theories. As was Jung's notion of masculine and feminine archetypes as the two greatest dualities in the world because both symbols, through his ideas of *anima* and *animus*, are inside each person.

These two principles can be combined and placed within a screenplay structure based on duality in the following principle: screenplay structure is bookended at the beginning and ending by two opposition symbols of masculine and feminine archetypes. The greatest drama is achieved when the symbols of a screenplay move from the masculine archetype to the feminine archetype or from the feminine archetype to the masculine archetype.

The law of duality observes that symbols continually move in cycles between dualities or opposites. The story in a screenplay is a cycle composed of a beginning and an ending. The symbols at the beginning of the story cycle (Act I) are opposite the symbols at the end of the story (Act III). The law of duality involves a movement in linear time from the past to the future.

Correspondence

The second principle in *The Kybalion* is the principle of correspondence or "As above, so below; as below, so above." This principle embodies the truth that there is always correspondence between the laws and phenomena of the various planes of being and life." In effect, there is a correspondence (relationship) between masculine and feminine archetypes and what we note above as the content and context of symbols.

This term "correspondence" was coined by the 18th century theologian Emanuel Swedenborg in works such as *Arcana Coelestia* (1749-1756) and *Heaven and Hell* (1758) and is a basic principle of symbolism. Unlike the laws of duality creating the key conflict in a screenplay, the law of correspondence is not about oppositions but similarities. In other words, it is not about the differences between masculine and feminine but rather about the similarities in the world related to the masculine or feminine archetypes. Duality is about differences in the world related to these archetypes. The law of correspondence is not about linear-time but rather the non-linear moment in time.

Structuring Screenplays With Symbolism

The structure of screenplays based around symbolism involves the laws of duality, correspondence, and sequence. The law of duality involves the linear movement of symbols between oppositions at the beginning and end of the screenplay. The law of correspondence involves the non-linear connections between symbols at moments of time (scenes) within the screenplay. Finally, sequence involves the number, order, and subject of the steps between the beginning and ending dualities.

The symbolism of scripts is best visualized by the symbol of a cross with its horizontal and vertical lines representing linear and non-linear time. (In fact, the true symbolism of the cross might really be about the intersection of linear and non-linear time). The horizontal line represents the linear movement in time of the script from the beginning on the left to the end on the right. The vertical line moves along the horizontal line during a screenplay from left to right during the progress of a screenplay. The vertical line intersecting the horizontal line represents the correspondence of symbols at points in the sequence. This intersection involves symbols of context like place, space, time, and colors written in the scene descriptions and exposition which are above the horizontal line and symbols of content like action and objects that are below the horizontal line. This cross symbol in a screenplay is represented in its basic way by Illustration 12D below.

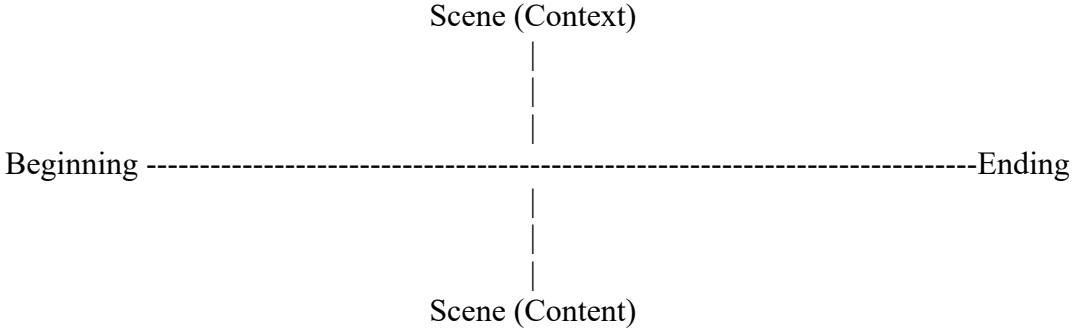


Illustration 12D
Basic Symbol Dualities at Beginning and Ending

This visualization of symbol structure in a script is represented in the below Symbol Structure in a Screenplays Chart 12E. Reading vertically in columns represents correspondence or similarities of elements of context and content. Reading horizontally in rows represents dualities and oppositions or differences in symbols. See a difference visualization of Chart 13B in Appendix L of this book.

Act I (Beginning Symbols. Opposite than Ending Context and Content Symbols)	Act II	Act III (Ending Symbols. Opposite than Beginning Context and Content Symbols)
Context Place Time Space	Context Place Time Space	Context Place Time Space
Content Objects Life Qualities Events	Content Objects Life Qualities Events	Content Objects Life Qualities Events

Chart 12E
Symbol Structure in a Screenplays
Columns = Symbol Correspondence / Rows = Symbol Dualities

The below Table 12F populates the basic elements of the above Chart 12E with real world examples of these elements related to the correspondence ideas of *Context and Content*. There is a constant interplay between horizontal and vertical symbols. Opposition symbols are represented horizontally in row at the beginning and ending of the story. Correspondence symbols are represented vertically in columns under story beginning and ending.

Context Symbols	Story Beginning	Story Ending
Place	Valley	Mountain
Space	Below	Above

Time	Night	Day

Table 12F
Basic Change in Symbol Context

In many ways, the drama and contrast between the beginning and ending symbols of a story is told in both horizontal linear time and its movement from past to future as well as vertical non-linear time and its non-movement in the present. Linear time is based on duality or differences while non-linear time based on correspondence or affinities.

Semiotics

A close cousin to symbolism is semiotics or the systematic study of sign processes or semiosis. One of the key differences in the two is that a symbol has multiple meanings, shifting with context while signs have a singular meaning. For example, symbols are encoding with information that means a number of things. A red rose is a symbol for love and romance but also a symbol for passion and fire. On the other hand, signs do not contain various meanings and usually mean exactly what they look like. They're used to describe things without using words. For instance, a wheelchair sign, used to depict wheelchair accessible areas, doesn't need to be paired with words before people understand. Once you have seen a wheelchair, one immediately knows what the sign represents. Common examples of semiotics include traffic signs, emojis and brand logos.

Many terms and concepts used by contemporary semioticians were introduced by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913). Saussure is widely considered one of the founders of linguistics. With Charles Sanders Peirce, he is considered one of the founders of semiotics. Saussure defined a sign as any motion, gesture, image, pattern, or event that conveys meaning. Unlike linguistics, semiotics studies non-linguistic sign systems that communicate feelings through any of the senses: visual, auditory, tactile, smell and taste.

Semiotics was introduced to film study by French film theorist Christian Metz (1931-1993). Metz is best known for creating the field of film semiotics or the application signification theories to cinema. He lectured at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences in Paris and his work had its greatest impact on film theory in the 1970s. As critic Constance Penley stated in *Camera Obscura* "Modern film theory begins with Metz."

His major books related to film theory were *Essays on the Signification of Cinema* (1968 and 1973), *Language and Cinema* (1971), *Semiotic Essays* (1977), *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* (1977), *Film Language* (1990) and his final work *Impersonal Enunciation* (1991). In *The Imaginary Signifier*, Metz applied Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis and Jacques Lacan's mirror theory to the cinema proposing the reason film is such a popular art form is its ability to offer both an imperfect reflection of reality as well as a method to delve into the unconscious dream state. Interestingly, Metz's *The Imaginary Signifier* of 1977 was really a

book ahead of its time in foreshadowing the emergence of cognitive science in analyzing screenplays. In effect, it was more about the response of the audience in viewing a film than about psychoanalysis of films.

* * *

Tied closely to the hot topics of semiotics and psychoanalysis in the 70s, interest in him passed with waning interest in those subjects to film theorists. Yet the ideas of complex ideas of Metz have never been explored outside the area of film theory such as its application to screenwriting.

One application might be in understanding the placement of objects in film scenes. With the greater understanding of semiotics, modern cinema might make greater use of signified elements in scenes items such as clothing, objects and colors to add greater symbolistic meaning and power to stories. Semiotics can engage the audience into a story by revealing more of the story in signified items. In fact, much of what we term content symbols (above) might be viewed as signs or signifiers and be placed in dramatic positions along the story line.

Yet, there might be a debate regarding the question of placement of semiotic signs in screenplay scenes or settings of films. Whose responsibility is this anyway? The screenwriter? The production designer? The cinematographer? The art director? The costume designer?

Some of these questions might be answered in with the publication of Michael Tierno's *Semiotics for Screenwriters* (September 2023). Information from publisher Bloomsbury Academic is that it will analyze 25 classic films showing the hidden universal language of plot, character and theme at work in them. Then, the book will show screenwriters how to employ semiotics in developing, writing and editing screenplays. The book's chapters will offer an introduction of semiotics for screenwriters in what Tierno terms "The Undiscovered System." It will also offer a summary of different screenwriting systems and an overview of semiotic tools. One of its major features will a breakdown of 50 popular films, long form episodic television and situation comedies using the semiotic tools. Also included is a chapter on Christian Metz. The final chapter will offer a demonstration of how to use semiotic tools to develop a screenplay.

13.Story Grid

Shawn Coyne created, developed, and expanded the story analysis and problem-solving methodology *The Story Grid* throughout his quarter-century-plus book publishing career. A seasoned story editor, book publisher and ghostwriter, Coyne has also co-authored The Ones Who Hit the Hardest: The Steelers, The Cowboys, the '70s and the Fight For America's Soul with Chad Millman and Cognitive Dominance: A Brain Surgeon's Quest to Out-Think Fear with Mark McLaughlin, M.D.

With his friend and editorial client Steven Pressfield, Coyne runs Black Irish Entertainment LLC, publisher of the cult classic book The War of Art. With his friend and editorial client Tim Grahl, Coyne oversees the Story Grid Universe, LLC, which includes Story Grid University and Story Grid Publishing.

* * *

The basic Story Grid can be written in what Coyne calls The Foolscaps Global Story Grid. The basics of the system is put on the lines of what looks like a long sheet of legal paper. At example is on p.150 in the Appendix section.

Screenwriters coming to the Grid will notice the basic 5-step sequence in the Story Grid as the familiar …

Inciting Incident
Complication
Crisis
Climax
Resolution

What is new though is the 5-step sequence is repeated over and over in each of the Acts. In most screenwriting structure, the steps are strung out in the various acts over the course of the story. With Internal and External changes of the main character over the course of the story.

The entire story pattern takes on a particular unseen yet powerfully felt rhythm. We are seeing Act I, Act II and Act III played out in greater depth with internal and external change as defining movement of the 5-step sequence within the Acts.

Almost like an incantation. Very appropriate for an Irish writer and the Irish culture. Are we being injected here with a sense of Irish literary theory? It wouldn't be a bad thing. Something that needs testing and examples looked at. Coyne does break down Silence of the Lambs using the Grid system. An interesting breakdown.

14.Future of Storytelling

Peter Brooks / *Seduced by Story*
John Truby / "The Future of Storytelling"
Jeffrey Zacks / *Flicker: Your Mind on Movies*
Paul Gulino & Connie Shears / *The Science of Screenwriting*
Christian Metz / *Film Language*
Michael Tierno / *Semiotics for Screenwriters*
Frank Rose / *The Sea We Swim In* & *The Art of Immersion*
Henry Jenkins / *Spreadable Media, Participatory Culture* & *Textual Poachers*
Annie Jamison / *Why Fanfiction is Taking Over the World*

> "The grand narratives that sustained whole societies … have lost their force. We are left with many mini narratives everywhere."
>
> Jean-François Lyotard

The Seduction of Story

Peter Brooks is one of the nation's leading literary critics and theorists. Brooks has been Sterling Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at Yale University and Mellon Scholar in the Department of Comparative Literature and Center for Human Values at Princeton University. An interdisciplinary scholar, his work cuts across French and English literature, law, and psychoanalysis.

His famous book *Reading for Plot* (1984) was dedicated to fellow Yale scholar Paul de Man and recorded his discovery of the crucial importance of narrative and storytelling and how it might be understood. His latest book is titled *Seduced by Story: The Use and Abused of Narrative* (2022). Brooks notes he observed in the book how our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative with the stories we tell and hear told and those we dream or imagine of would like to tell. All these stories are reworked in that story of our own lives that we narrate to ourselves in an episodic, sometimes semiconscious, but virtually uninterrupted monologue. He observed in the 1984 book, that we live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meaning of our past actions, anticipating the outcome of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed.

In his new book, *Seduced by Story* (2022), written almost forty years after *Reading for Plot*, the 85-year-old Brooks observes that "I want to record my somewhat disabused sense of what has happened to 'narrative' in our culture in the decades since that book (*Reading for Plot*). It's a curious story." His disenchantment with narrative relates to the fact that most "human affairs" in general have been "seduced" by narrative and story. Offering insights from his perspective of 85 years, there are few better qualified than Brooks to make this observation.

* * *

Brooks discusses the astonishing power and pervasiveness stories have over us today. We all have our own stories about this power. Some have political stories. Some have marketing stories of brands. Some have stories of stories told in speeches or pitches to investors. Or studio executives.

But apart from daily stories told, Brooks argues that there has been a new paradigm in writing about our disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, medicine, and economics. As he observes:

> Gradually we learned that we were part of a larger movement to understand the uses of the narratives that surround us, from the everyday to the transcendent. But we never envisaged nor hoped for the kind of narrative takeover of reality we appear to be witnessing in the early twenty-first century, where even public civic discourse supposedly dedicated to reasoned analysis seems to have been taken hostage. This narrative takeover—what it means, how to think about it, and how to provide a more intelligent account of what narrative is and does—motivates me here.

As Brooks writes, this is a major turn for narrative which was once under-studied but "is now the object of fine analytic discrimination. Meanwhile, the plethoric spread of narrative in public life has gone forward, taking no apparent account of the analysts, though one senses that the two developments cannot be unrelated in some large cultural sense."

Brooks notes that narratives and stories are everywhere. "I look at the package containing the cookies I just bought," he says, "and find it wants to tell me 'Our Story.' I go to order furniture online and I encounter a tab labeled, again, 'Our Story.' This story was rather interesting but long:

> Steve Conine and Niraj Shah met as high school students attending a summer program at Cornell University. They both went on to study engineering at Cornell and quickly struck up a friendship while they were freshmen living in the same dorm. During their final semester of college, Steve and Niraj both enrolled in a class on entrepreneurism which sparked a business plan that turned into their first company and, ultimately, became the foundation for founding and building several businesses in the technology sector." (Not clear why this story is supposed to foster confidence in the purchaser.)

There are stories of other familiar products:

> At Tom's of Maine, it's called "The Backstory:" or one about "Tom and Kate Chappell who moved to Maine from Philadelphia in 1968, looking for a healthier, simpler life for their growing family. They discovered the benefits of natural and unprocessed food and started looking for the same qualities in personal care products. But all they found were labels listing artificial flavors, fragrances, sweeteners, colors and preservatives. So they decided to create their own." J. Crew offers "Our Story" as well. Also Procter & Gamble. Johnson & Johnson has an elaborate and illustrated "Our Stories" in several chapters.

> Snapchat in 2015 introduced a feature called "Our Story" that aggregates individuals participating in a particular event.

Brooks mentions several interesting events in culture related to stories as they started their rise to prominence and power. For example, he notes former journalist David Gergen (as adviser to President Ronald Reagan) created the crucial notion of the "story of the day," which would be presented ready-made to the media to feed on, comment on and disseminate. Brooks notes "That continues, in more and more virulent form, as rulers judge that controlling the media narrative is what governing is all about." He reads in the *New York Times* "The nation needs a better story about the drivers of economic growth." Writing to the corporate world in *Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins*, he repeats author Annette Simmons claim: "The really important issues of this world are ultimately decided by the story that grabs the most attention and is repeated most often." This seems truer with every passing day says Brooks, as Twitter and the meme dominate the presentation of reality. Simmons goes on to say "every problem in the world can be addressed—solved, made bearable, even eliminated—with better storytelling."

* * *

Since his 1984 book *Reading for Plot*, Brook sees the power of narrative and storytelling continuing to grow through the 80s and 90s and into the first decades of the 21st century. Brooks notes the vast landscape of culture "seduced" by storytelling today:

> Every person has a story to tell, and the corporate person has understood, with a vengeance, that it must stake its identity, persuasion, and profits on telling a story, however bizarre or banal. Corporate reports have turned from the statistical to the narrative mode. And in the wake of the corporation are political candidates and parties, the military, the tourism industry, universities, hospitals, bakeries—even accounting firms. Salmon, the sociologist, has identified what he calls a "nouvel ordre narratif," or NON: a new narrative order that dominates in business and politics. He notes that such a corporation as Enron, which famously went bust in 2001, seems to have been built uniquely on stories—fictions, in fact—that had little to do with the company's balance sheet but rather with a kind of imaginary accounting that generated stories of impending great wealth. According to Salmon, the new attention to narrative in philosophy and ethics and literary theory and history writing came to affect corporate management, and then the military, which needed positive narratives to undergird the dubious wars it was made to wage.

There is Brooks' observation that our pervasive storytelling was under-written and preceded by a well-recognized "narrative turn" in key fields of thought such as history, philosophy, economics and psychology:

> History, which some decades back seemed to have set aside storytelling in favor of demographic and social analyses of selected moments and places, appears to have returned to full-throated storytelling. Philosophy, especially moral philosophy (though perhaps still dominated by logical and linguistic analysis), also found strong advocates for narrative, such as Paul Ricoeur, Richard Rorty, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Charles

> Taylor. They make implicit or explicit claims that human institutions and behaviors can be grasped only through stories. In economics, too, which might seem exempt from narrative thinking, the likes of D. N. McCloskey and the Nobel-winning Robert Shiller have argued for narrative as part of the discipline. In psychology, Jerome Bruner stressed that young children initially learn not though "scientific" experimentation.

Brooks notes a speech by Tyrion in the final episode of the incredibly popular television series *Game of Thrones* who says, "There's nothing in the world more powerful than a good story. Nothing can stop it. No enemy can defeat it." With the speech, he claims the throne for Bran the Broken. As Brooks notes, "Many viewers liked neither the choice of king nor its rationale. But the claim that story brings you to world dominance seems by now so banal that it's common wisdom. Narrative seems to have become accepted as the only form of knowledge and speech that regulates human affairs."

* * *

The "seduction of story" that has flooded the world today has entered the business world and screenwriting structure and elements have been applied to create a niche business for Don Miller with his book *Building a Story Brand: Clarify Your Message so Customers Will Listen* (2017). Associated with the book are seminars and a system used by many.

One of the key messages of Miller's system relates the word Hero to business narratives. In this sense, Miller notes that the Hero of the narrative is not the Brand but rather the Customer. The focus on Customer as Hero rather than Brand as Hero offers a shift from traditional thinking within the marketing, advertising, and business strategy worlds. The old goal of creating business strategy by management consulting firms is being replaced by the creation of a story strategy for a business.

In effect, the real strategy for many businesses today is to relate their story to customers. This means a new dynamic between a company's brand and the brand's consumers. The customer is no longer an observer of a story but rather a participant in this story. Miller offers several illustrations of screenplays applied to a business and its customers. His steps closely follow key steps in the Hero/Heroine's journey in screenplay structure.

One could say *Building a Story Brand* is based around allowing a brand to apply screenwriting structure and techniques to it by a seven step process based on the sentence "A customer has a problem and meets a guide who gives the customer a plan that sets the customer into action and helps the customer from avoiding failure and reaching success."

The above sentence translates into seven structural steps that are chapters in Miller's book and steps in his system. The seven steps in the system are:

1. A customer (Hero/Heroine)
2. Has a problem
3. Meets a guide (the brand)
4. Who provides a plan

5. That calls them to action
6. Helps avoid failure
7. Ends in success

The seven steps contain common elements found in almost all screenwriting structures. In effect, it offers a combination of screenwriting methods like Blake Snyder's Save the Cat, Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey and the traditional three-act story structure of Syd Field and ancient drama of beginning, middle and end.

Behind Miller's system of Story Brand is the message that storytelling is the new form of advertising and marketing. The movement towards storytelling in selling products is not a surprising one. Rather, it is more of an expected one in the modern digital world of two-way interactive communication on the Internet rather than the traditional one-way, non-interactive controlled, broadcast communication of mass communication, production and consumption of much of the 20th century. The new brand is no longer loud and noisy broadcasting a one-way message but rather more subtle and quiet. Its power is not from the story about the brand that used to be told but about the customer's experience in discovering a solution to a problem. The brand is the consumer's guide providing a plan for rather than a ready-made solution.

Story in the Post Advertising World

The application of screenwriting techniques and structure to business has not gone un-noticed in the screenwriting world with one of Hollywood's leading story gurus Robert McKee's *StoryNomics: Story-Driven Marketing in the Post-Advertising World* (2018). As McKee observes "An ongoing business, by its very nature, is a flow of events through time. Events are also the core components of story. A business, therefore, is a living story where meaning and emotion are constantly in play."

McKee and co-author Thomas Gerace suggest a fundamental shift has happened in the way brands connect with their customers. In the past, companies would "find stories people loved and then interrupt them with ads." Things have changed.

> … today consumers are ignoring, skipping, blocking or avoiding those ads at unprecedented rates. The net effect is that marketers are finding it harder and harder to reach customers. Leading CMOs recognize that storytelling is the future of marketing. They realize that to succeed in an increasingly ad-free world, marketers have to put story at the center of their strategies. Yet, there is still a misunderstanding about what story is and how to use it effectively.

The book essentially applies McKee's screenwriting methods from his famous *Story* (1997) to marketing. McKee notes the plot begins when an inciting incident throws the protagonist's life out of balance and to restore this balance, the Hero protagonist undertakes a quest for a desired object. A screenplay and the resulting movie depict this quest, carried on in the face of obstacles of increasing difficulty to obtain the desired object. The story ends with the fulfillment of the quest.

The book *StoryNo*mics shows how business executives might use this plot structure in business by applying storytelling structure. The authors use much of the book to argue why stories are important in business. As McKee stresses, businesses are in fact living stories. In this scenario, their are key uses. One use is bonding employers and employees by creating empathy and inspiring teamwork as well as an enhanced flow of information. Another use is to persuading (selling) customers by creating positive brand awareness and new markets. Another is allowing business leaders to envision the future by shaping knowledge and feeling into story form. McKee views new business leaders as implementors of story strategy in a similar way a great author guides the reader through a novel. As this McKee says "Executive genius is a kind of literary genius."

McKee offers several examples. One interesting is about The Boldt Company that builds mammoth construction projects such as power plants, hospitals and educational and industrial complexes. As he notes, "Before Boldt can build, it must win bids. In the past, Boldt's bid team, working in the time-honored way, pitted its numbers against its competitor's numbers resulting in a win rate of 10%. However, with some face-to-face coaching about storytelling, the bid team soon mastered the craft of turning data into drama creating a story-driven bid, entitled 'Boldt Builds.' This new pitch stars Boldt on a heroic quest for engineering excellence, fail-proof scheduling, transparent costings, sustainability, and worker safety. The Boldt quest climaxes with an on-time, on-budget, owner-ready facility that's lawsuit-free and aesthetically inspiring. Thanks to Boldt's new bid with-a-story strategy, the company's win rate jumped from 10% to 50%. In this year's ranking of America's top 100 construction companies, Boldt vaulted forward more than 20 places."

* * *

Miller and McKee's application of screenwriting to businesses and brands offers strong evidence that screenwriting and storytelling have entered the business world. While Miller places the customer as Hero, McKee maintains the company is the Hero. But both show that business today has been, to use Peter Brooks' words, "seduced by story."

It is another area besides the disciplines like economics, politics, psychology and philosophy that Brooks argues have also been seduced by story. As Brooks notes, "Narrative seems to have become accepted as the only form of knowledge and speech that regulates human affairs." Whether one finds themselves dismayed or not by this, whether they consider it a good or a bad thing, it is becoming a fact of modern life.

Therefore, screenwriters are not simply "writers for the screen" anymore but truly modern storytellers and why screenwriting is the best source for the structure, techniques and elements of creating stories. As *Hollywood Safari* has shown, these techniques and elements are scattered over a large landscape of various schools and theories. In all of this, perhaps needed more than anything else in our period of post, postmodernism, is the synthesis of the theories into something new and meaningful to people. A new form of story or narrative the doesn't come from current screenplay theory but perhaps from a mixture of screenwriting and another discipline or disciplines. Like cognitive psychology.

All Genres, All The Time

At the end of his book *The Anatomy of Genres*, John Truby offers some comments on his vision of the future of screenplays and story. He reminds that "We are surrounded by story and story is embedded in us. Every day is a video game. But the stakes aren't about a high score. They're about overcoming the challenges to have a great life. And to do that, we must become conscious of ourselves as storytellers."

He notes that three elements stand out about the future of stories: they must be immersive, interactive, and "all genres all the time." Truby says that this means mixing genres to a degree never seen before but the possibilities of combining more genres in new ways are endless.

Truby observes that storytellers today are striving to create the most immersive experience possible, engaging the senses and the mind in a 360-degree field of play. "Like the old Choose Your Own Adventure children's book series," he says, "the audience will interact with the story at every degree, from being totally passive to being the determining author every step of the way." He notes that this is already happening in novels, television, film, theater, theme parks, phones, and virtual reality (VR). "It will be the determining factor in mediums yet to be invented."

Truby says, "One of the most exciting new structures I see coming in the interactive world, whether in video games, theme parks, or even television, is a single story that has elements from all the major genres. The viewer will jump from one genre to another, from scene to scene, as theme or point of view demands. From one character's POV, the story is a Fantasy. From another's perspective, it's Detective. Every permutation is a different story experience with the potential to be as rich as life itself."

Regarding story content, Truby notes that emerging Myths will help us face the massive challenges of this world going forward. He says genres such as the Ecological, Rejuvenation, and Female Myths will lead worldwide stories in the coming decades.

* * *

Peter Brooks suggests the world has been "seduced" by the narrative form of story. Don Miller and Robert McKee show its growing use in the business world of marketing and branding. Once brands were represented by icons. Now, they are represented by stories. Truby suggests the future of storytelling will be about immersion and audience interaction where all story genres are mixed, all the time.

There are other ways of attempting to foresee the future of storytelling. In addition to Truby's mixing of genres in future storytelling, a good argument can be made that there will also be a mixing of various disciplines in the future of storytelling. In this sense, the discipline of screenwriting might become closer mixed with brain science with the application of neuroscience and cognitive psychology to storytelling and screenwriting. This view is suggested by Jeffrey Zacks in his book *Flicker* as well as by Paul Gulino and Connie Shears in *The Science of Screenwriting*.

One of the larger areas yet to be explored is the use of symbolism in screenplay structure in addition to its present use as attaching to screenplay characters. This potential use is discussed in the Symbolism approach in *Hollywood Safari* and discussed in a series of article I wrote for Script magazine titled "Script Symbology." In addition to the use of symbolism in creating creating screenplays, there might be a new application in screenplays of that close cousin of symbolism, semiotics. The study of semiotics in cinema starts with the French theorist Christian Metz (1931-1993) and his book *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema* (1990). The book represents essays from the early stages of Metz' attempt to create a *cinesemiotic*s.

Metz was a French film theorist and the application of semiotics to American screenwriting has never really been explored. This will change with the upcoming publication of Michael Tierno's *Semiotics for Screenwriters* (September 2023). Information from the publisher Bloomsbury Academic is that it will analyze 25 classic films showing the hidden universal language of plot, character and theme at work in them. Importantly, the book will help screenwriters apply semiotics to developing, writing and editing screenplays.

Digital Storytelling

Whatever direction the future of storytelling takes, there is little doubt that digital technology will play an important part. One of the leading academic institutions at the forefront of research in this area is The Columbia University School of the Arts' Digital Storytelling Lab (DSL). The DSL (https://www.digitalstorytellinglab.com) designs stories for the 21st Century using a diverse range of creative and research practices originating in fields from arts, humanities and technology.

The lab is run by Frank Rose author of landmark books on tech and narrative titled *The Sea We Swim In* (2021) and *The Art of Immersion: How the Digital Generation Is Remaking Hollywood, Madison Avenue, and the Way We Tell Stories* (2011). Rose, a former contributing editor at *Wired* and contributing writer at *Fortune*, teaches business executives as faculty director of Columbia University's Strategic Storytelling seminar and heads the Digital Dozen awards program at Columbia's Digital Storytelling Lab.

The site notes technology has always shaped the ways stories are found and told. For example, in the 21st century the mass democratization of creative tools such as code, data and algorithms have changed the relationship between creator and audience. The persuasion methods of sales and advertising has traditionally been based on rational argument. However, research in neuroscience and cognitive psychology have shown stories are more effective at changing people's minds than rational argument. This means that people need to view the world in narrative terms, not as a thesis to be argued or a pitch to be made but as a story to be told.

As Rose notes, "The digital world blurs everything we once kept separate – author and audience, marketing and content, even fiction and reality – while encouraging people to jump headlong into experiences of every sort." In effect, there is a growing desire of customers to tune out intrusive advertising messages and tune into the immersive experience of stories. In effect, our digital world persuades by immersion in experiences rather than advertising messages of old.

Participatory Stories

> "Francis Bacon never tired of contrasting hot and cool prose. Writing in 'methods' or complete packages, he contrasted with writing in aphorisms, or single observations such as 'Revenge is a kind of wild justice.' The passive consumer wants packages, but those, he suggested, who are concerned in pursuing knowledge and in seeking causes will resort to aphorisms, just because they are incomplete and require participation in depth."
>
> Marshall McLuhan
> *Understanding Media*

> "Fan fiction is a way of the culture repairing the damage done in a system where contemporary myths are owned by corporations instead of owned by the folk."
>
> Henry Jenkins

A trend close to the increase of digital technology in storytelling will be an increase in audience or reader participation in creating stories. In effect, we are living in a participatory culture. A participatory culture is a trend in today's digital culture standing in opposition to the traditional concept of a consumer culture. In participatory culture, individuals do not only act as consumers but also as producers or prosumers.

It is one of the major shifts from a one-way broadcast culture in most of the 20th century to the two-way interactive culture of today. The type of shift was identified in the 1960s by Canadian media scholar Marshall McLuhan in his book *Understanding Media* (1964) with his concept of a "cool" participatory medium and "hot" non-participatory mediums. For example, tv, radio and newspaper media of the early part of the 20th century were "hot" one-way "broadcast" media of non-participation. In contrast, are the cool, participatory social media of the Internet today.

The torch of cool participation has been carried forth more than anyone else by USC's Henry Jenkins, Provost Professor of Communication, Journalism, and Cinematic Arts, at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism as well as the USC School of Cinematic Arts. Previously, Jenkins was Professor of Humanities as well as co-founder and co-director of the Comparative Media Studies program at MIT. Participatory culture has been an encompassing concern of much of Jenkins' scholarly work which has focused on developing media theory and practice principles by which media users are primarily understood as active and creative participants rather than merely as passive consumers and simplistically receptive audiences. This participatory engagement is seen as increasingly important given the enhanced interactive and networked communication capabilities of digital and internet technologies. His two key works in this area are his books *Spreadable Media* (2013) and *Participatory Culture in a Networked Era* (2015).

Jenkins has defined participatory culture in a number of ways such as having relatively low barriers to entry for artistic expression and engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations with others, some form of an informal mentorship whereby what is known by the

most experienced is passed along to novices, with members who believe their contributions matter, where members feel some degree of social connection with one another, where not every member needs to contribute but believes they are free to contribute when ready and their contribution appropriately valued. Jenkins has also highlighted these key forms of participatory culture.

> Affiliations are memberships, formal and informal, in online communities centered around various forms of media (such as Facebook, message boards, metagaming, game clans, or MySpace).
>
> Expressions are producing new creative forms (such as digital sampling, skinning and modding, fan videomaking, fan fiction writing, zines, mash-ups).
>
> Collaborative Problem-Solving involves working together in formal and informal teams to complete tasks and develop new knowledge (such Wikipedia, alternative reality gaming and spoiling).
>
> Circulations shape the flow of media (such as podcasting, blogging)

These are social elements of affiliations, expressions, collaboration and circulation that "spread" ideas allowing and requiring participation of others in content creation.

* * *

Apart from his books *Spreadable Media* and *Participatory Culture*, Jenkins has been at the forefront of a publishing phenomenon knowns as "fan culture." His book Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture (1992) is regarded as a seminal and foundational work on fan culture. His research in *Textual Poachers* showed how fans construct their own culture by appropriating and remixing or "poaching" content from mass culture. Through this "poaching," fans carried out activities as rethinking personal identity issues, writing stories to shift focus onto a media "storyworld's" secondary characters; producing content to expand timelines of a storyworld and filling in missing scenes in a "storyworld's" official narratives order to satisfy the fan community.

One of the most interesting stories from participatory fan culture involves the creation of one of the best-selling books in the history of publishing by British author Erika Mitchell known by her pen name of E.L. James. In late 2008, James saw the movie *Twilight* and became intensely absorbed with the *Twilight* novels by Stephanie Meyers the movie was based on. She read the novels several times over in a period of a few days, and then, for the first time in her life, sat down to write a multi-part series of fan fiction called *Masters of the Universe* based on Meyer's *Twilight* novels. The *Masters of the Universe* series was published online between 2009 and 2011 in various venues, including fanfiction.net and James' own website.

In August of 2009, she discovered the phenomenon of Fan Fiction in which inspired her to publish her novels as Kindle books under the pen name "Snowqueens Icedragon" on the FanFiction.Net site (https://www.fanfiction.net). The automated site was founded in 1998 by LA computer programmer Xing Li and has over 12 million registered users, hosting stories in over 40 languages. Many readers on the Fanfiction site deemed James' stories too provocative for the

site however, and James was forced to remove some of them from the site. She told the *LA Times* she always wanted to write and felt she had a couple unpublished novels.

So, she wrote up her ideas and created the iconic characters, Christian Grey and Anastasia Steele, the two protagonists of her *Fifty Shades* trilogy of books: *Fifty Shades of Grey*, *Fifty Shades Darker* and *Fifty Shades Freed*. The protagonists are basically Edward Cullen and Bella Swan of the *Twilight* books by Stephanie Meyers. In *Fifty Shades*, Christian Grey is a mysterious, jaw-droppingly handsome CEO. In *Twilight*, Edward Cullen is a mysterious, jaw-droppingly handsome vampire. In both stories, the heroine is understated, "pretty" but not "beautiful," and intimidated by the men's wealth and good looks. Both Bella and Ana are clumsy and routinely question what their male counterpart sees in them.

James self-published *Fifty Shades of Grey* through a small former writer's community called The Writer's Coffee Shop in May 2011. One year later, she had sold roughly 30,000 copies in e-book downloads. Literary agents soon took notice of the book's rising online popularity. "There was already a buzz about the trilogy in early 2012, appreciation for the books had gone viral," James' literary agent Valerie Hoskins told *Vanity Fair* and all of the big NYC publishers were keen to make offers on it. In March 2012, James signed a 7-figure contract with Random House's Vintage Books.

The book sold 10 million copies in six weeks. By the end of 2012, sales hit 70 million copies worldwide. Since its mainstream release in 2012, *Fifty Shades* has sold over 125 million copies worldwide and launched an entire genre known as "mommy porn." It has been translated into 52 different languages. The film adaptation of *Fifty Shades of Grey* opened on Valentine's Day and raked in $94 million on its opening weekend.

* * *

Supporters of fan fiction have mixed feelings about the book's overwhelming success. Some feel fan fiction is not supposed to be profitable, and that James betrayed the community and its values by signing a book deal with such a major publisher. "It wasn't the first fan fiction to be published, by any means, but it was the first that was so big and so popular and got so much attention," notes professor Annie Jamison is associate professor of English at the University of Utah, where she teaches and writes about literature and culture from the 18th century to the present holding a PhD in Comparative Literature from Princeton. As Jamison notes, "It was one of tens of thousands, really hundreds of thousands, of stories written by this vast community of women who were inspired to write and share stories by *Twilight*."

Henry Jenkins sees the value of fan fiction which spawned *Fifty Shades of Grey*. As he says, "Fan fiction is a way of the culture repairing the damage done in a system where contemporary myths are owned by corporations instead of owned by the folk." The rise of fan fiction is explored in most comprehensive account written on the subject by Annie Jamison called *Fic: Why Fanfiction is Taking Over the World* (2013).

Ten years after Jamison's book in 2013, fan fiction has seen much evolution as well as the participatory culture and forms of "spreadable media" Jenkins studies.

Will participatory storytelling be a factor in the future of screenwriting and screenplays? It is an important question to ask.

A New Grand Narrative?

In *Seduced by Story*, Peter Brooks offers an observation of French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard that seems fitting at this point. Lyotard observed that we have become aware of our differences and are beginning to accept the reality of human diversity. The shift from modernity to postmodernity is a shift from metanarratives to micronarratives. As Lyotard noted, the "grand narratives that sustained whole societies … have lost their force. We are left with many mini narratives everywhere."

Perhaps this is the real problem. Not that stories have "seduced" the modern world but that these stories have become too small and segmented into various genres, structures, approaches and niches in our *Hollywood Safari*. A new, grand story or narrative is needed. In fact, it's overdue. A type of blockbuster story or "grand narrative" to *sustain* society rather than *seduce* it. A grand narrative created from all the mini-narratives that have overrun our world.

Appendix A
Key Screenwriting Structures
From John Yorke's *Into the Woods*

	Acts														
Linda Aronson	Normality	Disturbance	Protagonist	Plan	Surprise	Obstacle	Complication	Sub-stories	More Complications	And Obstacles	Climax	Resolution
John Truby	Need/desire	1st reversal	Plan		1st counter-attack	Drive	Seeming defeats	2nd reversal	Audience reveal by ally	3rd reversal	Battle	Moral decision	New equilibrium

	One				Two						Three				
Syd Field	Setup				Pinch Point		Confrontation		Pinch Point		Climax and Resolution				
Blake Snyder	Opening image Theme stated Inciting Incident	Setup Catalyst	Debate	Break into Act 2 B-story	Fun and games		Midpoint	Bad guys close in All is lost	Dark night of the soul	Break into Act 3	Finale		Final image		

	One			Two			Th:ee			Four			Five		
Joseph Campbell	Innocent Call to world of adventure Childhood separation		Refusal of the call		Supermatural help	Crossing the threshold	Atonement with father Midpoint	Apotheosis	Refusal of the return	Magic Flight	Rescue	Freedom to live	Master of 2 worlds		
Maureen Murdock	Separation from feminine Identification with masculine	Road of trials	2-headed dragon	Slaying the ogre		Illusory boon	Initiation and descent to goddess Midpoint Yearning to connect with feminine		Wild woman	Healing		Integrating the feminine Beyond duality			
Terence / Freytag	Setup and Call to Action Inciting Incident	Things go well	Initial goals achieved	Turning point		Antagonist forte strengthens. Things go wrong Midpoint			Things go worse, pushing to final confrontation Turning point, worst point		Overcoming flaw	Resolution			
Vogler	Ordinary World Call to adventure	Reluctance or refusal of call		Encouragement by mentor		Crossing 1st threshold Tests, allies, enemies	Supreme ordeal Midpoint	Reward	Pursuit on the road back	Death	3rd threshold	Resurrection	Return with elixir		
Christopher Booker	Call to Action		Dream			Frustration			Nightmare			Matters resolved			

	One		Two		Three		Four		Five		Six	
Michael Hauge	Setup	New situation		Progress		Complication & higher stakes		Final push		Aftermath		

	One		Two		Three		Four		Five		Six		Seven		Eight	
Frank Daniel	Status quo	The external want made explicit		Exploring the new world		1st big test overcome		Forces gathering		Hitting the wall		Desperate action		Success and aftermath		

Appendix B
John Truby's Step Sequences

7-Step Sequence

1. Weakness and need
2. Desire
3. Opponent
4. Plan
5. Battle
6. Self-Revelation
7. New Equilibrium

22-Step Sequence

1. Self-Revelation, Need, Desire
2. Ghost & Story world
3. Weakness & Need
4. Inciting Event
5. Desire
6. Ally or Allies
7. Opponent and/or Mystery
8. Fake-ally Opponent
9. First Revelation & Decision: Changed Desire & Motive
10. Plan
11. Opponent's Plan and Main
12. Counterattack
13. Drive
14. Attack by Ally
15. Apparent Defeat
16. Second Revelation & Decision: Obsessive Drive, Changed Desire & Motive
17. Audience Revelation
18. Third Revelation & Decision
19. Gate, Gauntlet, Visit to Death
20. Battle
21. Self-Revelation
22. Moral Decision
23. New Equilibrium

Appendix C

Blake Synder's 15-Step Sequence

Opening Image – A visual that represents the struggle & tone of the story. A snapshot of the main character's problem, before the adventure begins.

Set-up – Expand on the "before" snapshot. Present the main character's world as it is, and what is missing in their life.

Theme Stated (happens during the Set-up) – What your story is about; the message, the truth. Usually, it is spoken to the main character or in their presence, but they don't understand the truth…not until they have some personal experience and context to support it.

Catalyst – The moment where life as it is changes. It is the telegram, the act of catching your loved-one cheating, allowing a monster onboard the ship, meeting the true love of your life, etc. The "before" world is no more, change is underway.

Debate – But change is scary and for a moment, or a brief number of moments, the main character doubts the journey they must take. Can I face this challenge? Do I have what it takes? Should I go at all? It is the last chance for the hero to chicken out.

Break Into Two (Choosing Act Two) – The main character makes a choice and the journey begins. We leave the "Thesis" world and enter the upside-down, opposite world of Act Two.

B Story – This is when there's a discussion about the Theme – the nugget of truth. Usually, this discussion is between the main character and the love interest. So, the B Story is usually called the "love story".

The Promise of the Premise – This is the fun part of the story. This is when Craig Thompson's relationship with Raina blooms, when Indiana Jones tries to beat the Nazis to the Lost Ark, when the detective finds the most clues and dodges the most bullets. This is when the main character explores the new world and the audience is entertained by the premise they have been promised.

Midpoint – Dependent upon the story, this moment is when everything is "great" or everything is "awful". The main character either gets everything they think they want ("great") or doesn't get what they think they want at all ("awful"). But not everything we think we want is what we actually need in the end.

Bad Guys Close In – Doubt, jealousy, fear, foes both physical and emotional regroup to defeat the main character's goal, and the main character's "great"/"awful" situation disintegrates.

All is Lost – The opposite moment from the Midpoint: "awful"/"great". The moment that the main character realizes they've lost everything they gained, or everything they now have has no meaning. The initial goal now looks even more impossible than before. And here, something or someone dies. It can be physical or emotional, but the death of something old makes way for something new to be born.

Dark Night of the Soul – The main character hits bottom, and wallows in hopelessness. The Why hast thou forsaken me, Lord? moment. Mourning the loss of what has "died" – the dream, the goal, the mentor character, the love of your life, etc. But, you must fall completely before you can pick yourself back up and try again.

Break Into Three (Choosing Act Three) – Thanks to a fresh idea, new inspiration, or last-minute Thematic advice from the B Story (usually the love interest), the main character chooses to try again.

Finale – This time around, the main character incorporates the Theme – the nugget of truth that now makes sense to them – into their fight for the goal because they have experience from the A Story and context from the B Story. Act Three is about Synthesis!

Final Image – opposite of Opening Image, proving, visually, that a change has occurred within the character.

<u>Blake Snyder Sequence Beat Sheet</u>

1. Opening Image (1):
2. Theme Stated (5):
3. Set-Up (1-10):
4. Catalyst (12):
5. Debate (12-25):
6. Break into Two (25)
7. B Story (30):
8. Fun and Games (30-55):
9. Midpoint (55):
10. Bad Guys Close In (55-75):
11. All Is Lost (75):
12. Dark Night of the Soul (75-85):
13. Break into Three (85):
14. Finale (85-110):
15. Final Image (110):

Appendix D

Eric Edson Structure Steps

Act I (Story Set-Up)

- Inciting incident
  - Moment when story begins
- Stunning Surprise 1
  - Surprise event that ends Act I and begins Act II, putting Hero in new world

Act II (Rising Conflict)

- Midpoint
  - • Different from mood and style from rest of film and frequently has a transitional montage covered with music
  - • Scenes serve as an emotional or physical point of no return
  - • Hero's conflict with the adversary becomes personal
  - • Love stories or romantic comedies its often here that lovers kiss or make love or same-sex buddies work together as a true team for the first time
  - • Can include an unmasking that's either metaphorical or literal
  - • Midpoint scenes most often contain the second crucial step in character growth
  - • A ticking clock countdown often begins at the midpoint to increase suspense
  - • Often a literal or metaphorical death as a ritual rite of passage for the Hero
- Climax
  - Dramatic action rises to a crescendo and the Hero's expected victory appears to be near
- Stunning Surprise 2
  - Surprise dramatic reversal that ends Act II by destroying the Hero's plan for victory while launching Act III; often is Hero's darkest hour

Act III (Resolution)

- Obligatory scene
  - Final showdown between Hero and Adversary that resolves the main plot question once and for all
- Denouement
  - Wraps up all plot loose ends and relationships

Appendix E
USC Sequence Approach

1. First, a hook to excite the viewer's curiosity. Then, the exposition answering who, what, when, and where. Show a glimpse of the life of the protagonist before the story gets under way. This first sequence ends with the inciting incident.

2. Protagonist tries to reestablish the status quo disrupted by the inciting incident, fails, and is faced with a worse predicament. Gulino says that this sequence poses "the dramatic question that will shape the rest of the picture." This is the end of the first act.

3. The protagonist attempts to solve the problem presented at the end of the first act.

4. The solution from the last sequence is seen to fail, and the protagonist tries one or more desperate measures to restore the status quo. The end of this sequence is the midpoint/first culmination/crisis, which brings a major revelation or reversal. The audience should be tempted to guess the outcome of the story.

5. The protagonist deals with the ramifications of the first culmination. Sometimes new characters are introduced, or new opportunities discovered in the fifth segment. This segment may also deal heavily with subplots.

6. Last sequence of the second act, and the second culmination. The protagonist has exhausted all the easy courses of action, and directly addresses the central dramatic question. The audience should be tempted to guess the outcome of the story, although the obvious answer may often be a mirror opposite of how the film actually ends.

7. The apparent solution of the central dramatic question in sequence F shows its problems here. The stakes are raised. The effect of a long dangling cause may occur. The story is seen in a new light, and the protagonist might need to reverse his goals.

8. The tension created by the inciting incident is truly resolved. Consider this resolution in light of the hints from the first and second culminations. Any remaining subplots are resolved. There may be a brief epilogue. The last sequence may in some way (visually?) recall the first sequence.

Appendix F

The 36 Dramatic Situations of Georges Polti

Each situation is stated and then followed by the necessary elements for each situation as well as a brief description. Note the correspondences to the format of above screenplay theories or ideas.

Supplication

A Persecutor or suppliant: a Power in authority whose decision is doubtful. The Persecutor accuses the Supplicant of wrongdoing, and the Power makes a judgment against the Supplicant.

Deliverance

An Unfortunate; a Threatener: a Rescuer. The Unfortunate has caused a conflict, and the Threatener is to carry out justice, but the Rescuer saves the Unfortunate.

Crime Pursued By Vengeance.

A Criminal; an Avenger. The Criminal commits a crime that will not see justice, so the Avenger seeks justice by punishing the Criminal.

Vengeance Taken for Kin upon Kin

Guilty Kinsman; an Avenging Kinsman; remembrance of the Victim, a relative of both. Two entities, the Guilty and the Avenging Kinsmen, are put into conflict over wrongdoing to the Victim, who is allied to both.

Pursuit

Punishment: a Fugitive. The Fugitive flees Punishment for a misunderstood conflict.

Disaster

A Vanquished Power; a Victorious Enemy or a Messenger. The Power falls from their place after being defeated by the Victorious Enemy or being informed of such a defeat by the Messenger.

Falling prey to cruelty/misfortune

An Unfortunate; a Master or a Misfortune. The Unfortunate suffers from Misfortune and/or at the hands of the Master.

Revolt

A Tyrant or Conspirator. The Tyrant, a cruel power, is plotted against by the Conspirator.

Daring Enterprise

A Bold Leader; an Object; an Adversary. The Bold Leader takes the Object from the Adversary by overpowering the Adversary.

Abduction

An Abductor; the Abducted; a Guardian. The Abductor takes the Abducted from the Guardian.

The Enigma

A Problem an Interrogator, a Seeker. The Interrogator poses a Problem to the Seeker and gives a Seeker better ability to reach the Seeker's goals.

Obtaining

A Solicitor & an Adversary who is refusing or an Arbitrator & Opposing Parties. The

Solicitor is at odds with the Adversary who refuses to give the Solicitor what they Object in the possession of the Adversary, or an Arbitrator decides who gets the Object desired by Opposing Parties (the Solicitor and the Adversary).

Enmity of Kin

A Malevolent Kinsman; a Hated or a reciprocally-hating Kinsman. The Malevolent Kinsman and the Hated or a second Malevolent Kinsman conspire together.

Rivalry of kin

The Preferred Kinsman; the Rejected Kinsman; the Object of Rivalry. The Object of Rivalry chooses the Preferred Kinsman over the Rejected Kinsman.

Murderous Adultery

Two Adulterers; a Betrayed Spouse. Two Adulterers conspire to kill the Betrayed Spouse.

Maddness

A Madman; a Victim. The Madman goes insane and wrongs the Victim.

Fatal Imprudence

The Imprudent; a Victim or an Object Lost. The Imprudent, by neglect or ignorance, loses the Object Lost or wrongs the Victim.

Involuntary Crimes of Love

A Lover; a Beloved; a Revealer. The Revealer betrays the trust of either the Lover or the Beloved.

Slaying of Kin Unrecognized

The Slayer; an Unrecognized Victim. The Slayer kills the Unrecognized Victim.

Self-sacrifice for an Ideal

A Hero; an Ideal a Creditor or Person/Thing sacrificed. The Hero sacrifices the Person or Thing for their Ideal, which is then taken by the Creditor.

Self-sacrifice for Kin

A Hero; a Kinsman; a Creditor or a Person/Thing sacrificed. The Hero sacrifices a Person or Thing for their Kinsman, which is then taken by the Creditor.

All Sacrificed for Passion

A Lover; an Object of fatal Passion; the Person/Thing sacrificed. A Lover sacrifices a Person or Thing for the Object of their Passion, which is then lost forever.

Neccessity of Sacrificing Loved Ones

A Hero; a Beloved Victim; the Necessity for the Sacrifice. The Hero wrongs the Beloved Victim because of the Necessity for their Sacrifice.

Rivalry of Superior vs. Inferior

A Superior Rival; an Inferior Rival; the Object of Rivalry. A Superior Rival bests an Inferior Rival and wins the Object of Rivalry.

Adultery

Two Adulterers; a Deceived Spouse. Two Adulterers conspire against the Deceived Spouse.

Crimes of Love

A Lover; the Beloved. A Lover and the Beloved enter a conflict.

Discovery of the Dishonour of a Love One

A Discoverer; the Guilty One. The Discoverer discovers the wrongdoing committed by

the Guilty One.

Obstacles to love

Two Lovers; an Obstacle. Two Lovers face an Obstacle together.

An Enemy Loved

A Lover; the Beloved Enemy; the Hater. The allied Lover and Hater have diametrically opposed attitudes towards the Beloved Enemy.

Ambition

An Ambitious Person; a Thing Coveted; an Adversary. The Ambitious Person seeks the Thing Coveted and is opposed by the Adversary.

Conflict With God

A Mortal; an Immortal. The Mortal and the Immortal enter a conflict.

Mistaken Jealousy

A Jealous One; an Object of whose Possession He is Jealous; a Supposed Accomplice; a Cause or an Author of the Mistake. The Jealous One falls victim to the Cause or the Author of the Mistake and becomes jealous of the Object and becomes conflicted with the Supposed Accomplice.

Erroneous Judgment

A Mistaken One; a Victim of the Mistake; a Cause or Author of the Mistake; the Guilty One. The Mistaken One falls victim to the Cause of the Author of the Mistake and passes judgment against the Victim of the Mistake when it should be passed against the Guilty One instead.

Remorse

A Culprit; a Victim or the Sin; an Interrogator. The Culprit wrongs the Victim or commits the Sin, and is at odds with the Interrogator who seeks to understand the situation.

Recovery of a lost one

A Seeker; the One Found. The Seeker finds the One Found.

Loss of Loved Ones

A Kinsman Slain; a Kinsman Spectator; an Executioner. The killing of the Kinsman Slain by the Executioner is witnessed by the Kinsman Spectator.

Appendix G

Robert McKee's Three Types of Screenplay Structure

1. Classical Design and Archplot (Top of Pyramid)
Under this heading are causality. Closed Ending. Linear Time. External Conflict. Single Protagonist. Consistent Reality. Active Protagonist. Film examples: Chinatown, The Hustler, Men in Black, Thelma & Louise, Dr. Stanglelove.

2.Minimalism and Mini Plot (Bottom left of Pyramid)
Under this heading Open Ending. Internal Conflict. Multi-Protagonists. Passive Protagonist. Film examples: Five Easy Pieces, Blow Up, Tender Mercies, The Accidental Tourist.

3. Anti-Structure and Antiplot (Bottom right of Pyramid. Under this section are Coincidence. Nonlinear time. Inconsistent Realities. Film examples: Wayne's World, 8 ½, That Obscure Object of Desire, Weekend.

Formal Differences Within The Three

Closed Versus Open Endings

External Versus Internal Conflict

Single Versus Multiple Protagonists

Active Versus Passive Protagonists

Linear Versus Nonlinear Time

Causality Versus Coincidence

Consistent Versus Inconsistent Realities

Change Versus Stasis

Appendix H
Early Screenplays

The Trip to the Moon (1902) by George Melies
The Great Train Robbery (1903) by Scott Marble & Edwin Porter

Scripting had long been used for the stage and later writers most certainly borrowed techniques and ideology from those who wrote for the theater. As film became a more viable form of entertainment, what was called "scenarios" come into existence. As script historian Michelle Donnelly notes in her article "The History of the Screenplay" (on the site Script Lab site) as "early as the 1890s, when films were about a minute or two long, scenarios not only provided a summary, but also assisted with marketing and became helpful explanations for an audience not used to viewing pictures on film."

What is widely considered the earliest example of the modern script was written for George Melies' 1902 film, *A Trip to the Moon*. The silent film was groundbreaking for its originality and special effects but was also important for its transformative use of story. As Donnelly observes (about the script of the film below) "While 'loading the gun' and 'splashing into the open sea' were descriptors that provided simple information about each scene, the thirty lines also described the action and provided locations, making it the closest example of a modern screenplay."

Screenwriting historian Isabelle Raynauld notes in her article "Screenwriting" in *The Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (2005), "Motion pictures began as novelty, not narrative, but even some of the earliest filmmakers found scripting practices useful in the conception of their products. These early "scripts" were little more than brief synopses. Raynauld notes that "From 1896 to 1901, scenarios were written in synopsis form and rarely were longer than one paragraph. Many, in fact, were even shorter: they included a title and a one-line description of the action to be seen." She adds that these early protoscripts also served a marketing function. "For example, it was a common practice to print the screenplays in full (long mistakenly considered to be merely summaries) in company catalogues. In fact, early scripts were not only used as publicity material but also helped exhibitors explain the story to new, inexperienced spectators. For the first ten years or so, exhibitors would often hire a lecturer or bonimenteur (barker, sales pitchman) to comment on and clarify the story during the projection of the film."

Excerpts from the Edison Studios catalog offer examples of such synopses, such as 1897's "Pillow Fight" where "Four young ladies, in their nightgowns, are having a romp. One of the pillows gets torn, and the feathers fly all over the room." After 1901, as films grew in length and narrative concerns grew more prominent and the importance of scripting as a conceptual tool grew. Out of this need for narrative coherence, the scenario proper was born.

As film historian Béla Balázs notes in *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art (*1970) it was at this time that the film script was born. "The film had already developed into an

independent new art and it was no longer possible to improvise its new subtle visual effects in front of the camera; these had to be planned carefully in advance." Balázs notes these first scripts "were in fact mere technical aids, nothing but lists of the scenes and shots for the convenience of the director. They merely indicated what was to be in the picture, and in what order, but said nothing about how it was to be presented." Melies' sparse list of scenes below for *The Trip to the Moon* fits this description, bearing little resemblance to the contemporary screenplay form. At the same time, it succeeds in ordering the narrative of the silent motion picture.

Script for *The Trip to the Moon* (1902)

1. The Scientific Congress at the Astronomic Club.
2. Planning the Trip. Appointing the Explorers and Servants. Farewell.
3. The Workshops. Constructing the Projectile.
4. The Foundries. The Chimney-stack. The Casting of the Monster Gun/Cannon.
5. The Astronomers-Scientists Enter the Shell.
6. Loading the Gun.
7. The Monster Gun. March Past the Gunners. Fire!!! Saluting the Flag.
8. The Flight Through Space. Approaching the Moon.
9. Landing Right in the Moon's Eye!!!
10. Flight of the Rocket Shell into the Moon. Appearance of the Earth From the Moon.
11. The Plain of Craters. Volcanic Eruption.
12. The Dream of 'Stars' (the Bolies, the Great Bear, Phoebus, the Twin Stars, Saturn).
13. The Snowstorm.
14. 40 Degrees Below Zero. Descent Into a Lunar Crater.
15. In the Interior of the Moon. The Giant Mushroom Grotto.
16. Encounter and Fight with the Selenites.
17. Taken Prisoners!!
18. The Kingdom of the Moon. The Selenite Army.
19. The Flight or Escape.
20. Wild Pursuit.
21. The Astronomers Find the Shell Again. Departure from the Moon in the Rocket.
22. The Rocket's Vertical Drop into Space.
23. Splashing into the Open Sea.
24. Submerged At the Bottom of the Ocean.
25. The Rescue. Return to Port and Land.

26. Great Fetes and Celebrations.
27. Crowning and Decorating the Heroes of the Trip.
28. Procession of Marines and Fire Brigade. Triumphal March Past.
29. Erection of the Commemorative Statue by the Mayor and Council.
30. Public Rejoicings.

Script for *The Great Train Robbery* (1903)

Coming just a year after *The Trip to the Moon*, the script for *The Great Train Robbery* was taken from the 1896 stage melodrama by the same name written by Scott Marble. The film was produced and directed by Edwin Stanton Porter (April 21, 1870 - April 30, 1941) a film pioneer, working for the Edison Manufacturing Company and the Famous Players Company. The Edison Manufacturing Company was a company organized in 1889 by the inventor and entrepreneur Thomas Edison manufactured batteries, machinery and equipment and produced kinetoscope films. Its assets and operations were transferred to Thomas Edison in 1911.

One can notice a large structural change in the script from the list of scenes in The Trip to the Moon to a division into scenes with explanations, later called exposition in modern screenplays.

1 INTERIOR OF RAILROAD TELEGRAPH OFFICE

Two masked robbers enter and compel the operator to get the "signal block" to stop the approaching train, and make him write a fictitious order to the engineer to take water at this station, instead of "Red Lodge," the regular watering stop. The train comes to a standstill (seen through window of office); the conductor comes to the window, and the frightened operator delivers the order while the bandits crouch out of sight, at the same time keeping him covered with their revolvers. As soon as the conductor leaves, they fall upon the operator, bind and gag him, and hastily depart to catch the moving train.

2 RAILROAD WATER TOWER

The bandits are hiding behind the tank as the train, under the false order, stops to take water. Just before she pulls out they stealthily board the train between the express car and the tender.

3 INTERIOR OF EXPRESS CAR

Messenger is busily engaged. An unusual sound alarms him. He goes to the door, peeps through the keyhole, and discovers two men trying to break in. He starts back bewildered, but quickly recovering, he hastily locks the strong box containing the valuables and throws the key through the open side door.

Drawing his revolver, he crouches behind a desk. In the meantime, the two robbers have succeeded in breaking in the door and enter cautiously. The messenger opens fire, and a desperate pistol duel takes place in which the messenger is killed. One of the robbers stands watch while the other tries to open the treasure box. Finding it locked, he vainly searches the messenger for the key, and blows the safe open with dynamite. Securing the valuables and mail bags they leave the car.

4 THE TENDER AND INTERIOR OF THE LOCOMOTIVE CAB

This thrilling scene shows THE TENDER AND INTERIOR OF THE LOCOMOTIVE CAB, while the train is running forty miles an hour. While two of the bandits have been robbing the mail car, two others climb over the tender. One of them holds up the engineer while the other covers the fireman, who seizes a coal shovel and climbs up on the tender, where a desperate fight takes place. They struggle fiercely all over the tank and narrowly escape being hurled over the side of the tender.

Finally, they fall, with the robber on top. He seizes a lump of coal and strikes the fireman on the head until he becomes senseless. He then hurls the body from the swiftly moving train. The bandits then compel the engineer to bring the train to a stop.

5 SHOWS THE TRAIN COMING TO A STOP

Shows THE TRAIN coming to a stop. The engineer leaves the locomotive, uncouples it from the train, and pulls ahead about 100 feet while the robbers hold their pistols to his face.

6 EXTERIOR SCENE SHOWING TRAIN

The bandits compel the passengers to leave the coaches, “hands up,” and line up along the tracks. One of the robbers covers them with a revolver in each hand, while the others relieve the passengers of their valuables. A passenger attempts to escape and is instantly shot down. Securing everything of value, the band terrorize the passengers by firing their revolvers in the air, while they make their escape to the locomotive.

7 LOCOMOTIVE

The desperadoes board the locomotive with this booty, compel the engineer to start, and disappear in the distance.

8 (No title for #8)

The robbers bring the engine to a stop several miles from the scene of the “hold up,” and take to the mountains.

9 VALLEY

A beautiful scene in A VALLEY. The bandits come down the side of a hill, across a narrow stream, mounting their horses, and make for the wilderness.

10 INTERIOR OF TELEGRAPH OFFICE

The operator lies bound and gagged on the floor. After struggling to his feet, he leans on the table, and telegraphs for assistance by manipulating the key with his chin, and then faints from exhaustion. His little daughter enters with his dinner pail. She cuts the rope, throws a glass of water in his face, restores him to consciousness, and, recalling his thrilling experience, he rushes out to give the alarm.

11 INTERIOR OF A TYPICAL WESTERN DANCE HALL

Shows a number of men and women in a lively quadrille. A "tenderfoot" is quickly spotted and pushed to the center of the hall, and compelled to do a jig, while bystanders amuse themselves by shooting dangerously close to his feet. Suddenly the door opens and the half-dead telegraph operator staggers in. The dance breaks up in confusion. The men secure their rifles and hastily leave the room.

12 RUGGED HILL

Shows the mounted robbers dashing down A RUGGED HILL at a terrific pace, followed closely by a large posse, both parties firing as they ride. One of the desperadoes is shot and plunges headlong from his horse. Staggering to his feet, he fires at the nearest pursuer, only to be shot dead a moment later.

13 (No title for #13)

The three remaining bandits, thinking they have eluded the pursuers, have dismounted from their horses, and after carefully surveying their surroundings, they start to examine the contents of the mail pouches. They are so grossly engaged in their work that they do not realize the approaching danger until too late. The pursuers, having left their horses, steal noiselessly down upon them until they are completely surrounded. A desperate battle then takes place, and after a brave stand all the robbers and some of the posse bite the dust.

14 BARNES

A life-size (close-up) picture of Barnes, leader of the outlaw band, taking aim and firing point-blank at the audience. The resulting excitement is great. This scene can be used to begin or end the picture.

THE END

Appendix I
Stranger Things – Season One (7/15/16)
Eight Episodes in Three Acts

While Hollywood Safari does not focus on TV series writing, it is informative to see how closely the structure of Stranger Things mirrors screenwriting theory discussed in this book. For instance, the *Stranger Things Bible* discusses "Structure" after the "Story" section where the Duffer brothers note that the first season *of Stranger Things* "will be structured like a film. There will be a definite beginning, middle and end. There will be no loose ends after the finale, and all our lead characters will have complete arcs."

In this sense, Season One is divided into the most traditional screenplay structure division of three acts. "Act One (episodes 1-3) will depict the 'vanishing' of Will Byers and the resulting fallout in the community. "Act Two (episodes 4-6) will have the town of Montauk becoming increasingly 'haunted,' raising the stakes as out characters desperately attempt to uncover the mystery. And the final "Act Three (episodes 7-8) will climax with characters working together to outsmart the military, venture into this alternate dimension, save Will, and, hopefully, close this 'tear' in the world once and for all."

* * *

Premise: The first season begins in November 1983, when researchers at Hawkins National Laboratory open a rift to the "Upside Down," an alternate dimension. A monster from the Upside Down escapes and abducts a boy named Will Byers. His mother, Joyce, and the town's police chief, Jim Hopper, search for Will. At the same time, a young psychokinetic girl called Eleven escapes from the laboratory and assists Will's friends, Mike, Dustin, and Lucas, in their own efforts to find Will.

(Season One has 8 episodes broken into the major screenplay structure of Act I, II and III. We put the below episodes under these three acts as the Duffer brothers did in their Bible for *Stranger Things*.)

Act I – "The Vanishing of Will Byers"
Directed by the Duffer Brothers

In November 1983 in Hawkins, Indiana, a scientist is attacked by an unseen creature at a U.S. government laboratory. 12-year-old Will Byers encounters the creature and mysteriously vanishes while cycling home from a Dungeons & Dragons session with his friends Mike Wheeler, Dustin Henderson and Lucas Sinclair. Will's single mother Joyce Byers reports his disappearance to the police chief Jim Hopper, who starts a search and assures Joyce that almost all missing children are quickly found. The lab's director Dr. Martin Brenner investigates an organic substance oozing from the lab's basement, claiming that "the girl" cannot have gone far. A nervous young girl wearing a hospital gown wanders into a local diner. The owner, Benny, learns from a tattoo of "011" on her arm that her name is Eleven. Brenner, monitoring the phone

lines, sends agents to the diner after Benny calls social services. The agents kill Benny, but Eleven manages to escape using telekinetic abilities. Joyce's phone short circuits after receiving a mysterious phone call that she believes is from Will. While searching for Will in the woods, Mike, Dustin and Lucas come across Eleven.

2 – "The Weirdo on Maple Street"
Directed by The Duffer Brothers (TDB) / Written by TDB

The boys bring Eleven to Mike's house, where she sleeps in the basement. The next day, Mike nicknames her "El." She says that "bad people" are looking for her and refuses to meet Mike's parents. Scientists from the laboratory find a substance oozing from the walls of Joyce's home. At Mike's home, Eleven recognizes and points out Will in a photo. Dustin and Lucas want to inform Mike's parents about Eleven, but she uses psychokinesis to stop them. While searching for Will, Mr. Clarke, the boys' science teacher, discovers a scrap of a hospital gown outside the laboratory grounds. Nancy goes with her friend Barb to a party at her boyfriend Steve's house. Will's brother Jonathan investigates the woods where Will went missing. Hearing screaming, he runs to help but finds only Steve, Nancy, and their friends roughhousing around Steve's swimming pool. He secretly photographs them. Barb, left alone by the poolside, vanishes. Joyce receives another call from Will, hears music from his room, and sees something coming through the wall.

3 – "Holly, Jolly"
Directed by Shawn Levy / Written by Jessica Mecklenburg

Barb wakes up in an empty and decaying pool. She screams for Nancy and attempts to climb out but is dragged down by something unseen. Joyce strings Christmas lights around her home to talk to Will, who can turn them on and off. Hawkins Lab director Dr. Martin Brenner allows Hopper to view the lab's security camera footage. Hopper realizes it is fake. He and his deputies research Hawkins Lab, Brenner, and a woman named Terry Ives who claimed her daughter was taken by Brenner. Eleven has a flashback in which Brenner, whom she calls "Papa," has her put in solitary confinement for refusing to telekinetically harm a cat. Nancy worries about Barb, who is missing. Steve and his friends discover Jonathan's photographs. They destroy them and his camera. Nancy recovers a photo of Barb by the poolside and returns to Steve's house to search for her. Nancy finds Barb's car and sees the creature in the woods. Joyce establishes a code with Will using the lights, which he uses to tell her that he is alive but unsafe. He tells Joyce to run as a creature begins to climb through her wall. Will's apparent body is discovered in the water at a quarry.

Act II

4 – "The Body"
Directed by Shawn Levy / Written by Justin Doble

Eleven proves to the boys that Will is still alive by making contact through Mike's walkie-talkie. Joyce goes to the morgue to view the body and refuses to believe it is Will. The boys give Eleven a makeover so they can sneak her into school. Joyce hears Will in her living room wall. Tearing

away the wallpaper, she sees him behind a membrane. At school, Eleven uses Mr. Clarke's ham radio to channel Will talking to his mother. Joyce demolishes the wall with an axe but reveals only her front porch. Nancy discovers a figure behind Barb in Jonathan's photo. Jonathan realizes that the figure matches his mother's description of the creature: a humanoid figure with long arms and no face. Nancy tells the police about her missing friend and subsequently admits to her mother that she slept with Steve. When she tells Steve about the police, she is irritated that he cares only about not getting in trouble with his father. Hopper confronts the state trooper who found Will's body and beats him until he admits he was ordered to lie. Hopper goes to the morgue and finds that Will's supposed body is a dummy. He breaks into Hawkins laboratory.

5 – "The Flea and the Acrobat"
Directed by TDB / Written by Alison Tatlock

Will's father Lonnie assures Joyce that her experiences are hallucinations. The boys conclude that Will is trapped in an alternative dimension which Eleven calls the Upside Down. Hopper discovers a portal in the basement of the lab. He is knocked out by the lab's guards and wakes at home. He searches his house and finds a hidden microphone. After Will's funeral, the boys ask Mr. Clarke about other dimensions. He tells them that a high-energy spacetime tear could create a passage between dimensions. The deputies inform Hopper that Barb's car was found by the state; Hopper finds the state's involvement suspicious. Positing that a tear in spacetime would disrupt Earth's electromagnetic field, the boys follow their compasses. Eleven remembers being placed in a sensory-deprivation tank to telepathically eavesdrop on a man speaking Russian; while listening, she comes across the creature. Scared of encountering the creature again, Eleven redirects the compasses. Lucas notices the distortion and confronts her. Mike defends her, he and Lucas fight, and Eleven telekinetically flings Lucas off Mike. While Dustin and Mike tend to the unconscious Lucas, Eleven disappears. In the woods, Nancy and Jonathan find a wounded deer. The creature drags the deer away, and Nancy and Jonathan follow the trail of blood. Nancy crawls through a passage to the Upside Down and discovers the creature feasting upon the deer. She snaps a twig and draws the creature's attention.

6 – "The Monster"
Directed by TDB / Written by Jessie Nickson-Lopez

When she can't get out of the portal by herself, Jonathan pulls Nancy through and saves her from the monster. In her bedroom, she is afraid to be alone and asks Jonathan to stay. Steve sees them together through her bedroom window and assumes they are dating. The next day, Nancy and Jonathan resolve to kill the monster and purchase supplies from an army surplus store. During a fist fight with Steve, Jonathan inadvertently assaults a police officer and is arrested. Joyce and Hopper track down Terry Ives, who is catatonic and tended by her sister Becky. Becky explains that Terry underwent Project MK Ultra testing while unknowingly pregnant; she believed her daughter Jane was kidnapped by Brenner at birth. Joyce and Hopper conclude Eleven is likely Jane. Eleven recalls being asked to contact the monster and how her contact opened the portal to the Upside Down in the laboratory basement. While searching for Eleven, Mike and Dustin are ambushed by bullies Troy and James. Troy holds Dustin at knifepoint and demands that Mike make a suicidal jump into the lake where Will's body was discovered. Mike jumps but is

levitated to safety by Eleven, who dispatches the bullies. Lucas sees agents leaving the laboratory and realizes they are heading to Mike's house.

Act III

7 – "The Bathtub"
Directed by TDB / Written by Justin Doble

Lucas warns Mike via walkie-talkie that government agents are after them. Mike, Dustin, and Eleven flee the house. Eleven telekinetically flips a van that blocks their path, and the kids escape. Lucas reconciles with Mike and Eleven. Joyce and Hopper are called to the police station because of Jonathan's assault. Jonathan and Nancy reveal their knowledge of the monster to Joyce and Hopper. The group contacts Mike and his friends and they rendezvous. They ask Eleven to search for Will and Barb, but her earlier feats have left her too weak to find them. To amplify Eleven's powers, they break into the middle school and build a sensory-deprivation tank. Eleven finds Barb's corpse with a slug-like creature crawling out of her mouth. With Joyce's help, she finds Will alive, hiding in the Upside Down "Castle Byers," his backyard fort. Hopper and Joyce break into Hawkins Laboratory but are apprehended by security guards. Nancy and Jonathan resolve to kill the monster and steal their hunting gear back from the police station. In the Upside Down, the monster breaks into the fort where Will is hiding.

8 – "The Upside Down"
Directed by TDB / Story by Paul Dichter / Teleplay by TDB

Hopper gives up Eleven's location to Brenner in exchange for access to the portal. He and Joyce enter the Upside Down. Hopper recalls his daughter Sarah struggling to breathe before her cancer diagnosis. Nancy and Jonathan booby-trap the Byers' home, then cut their hands to attract the monster with their blood. Steve arrives, intending to apologize to Jonathan about their fight. The monster attacks but disappears before springing the trap. Steve gets in his car to leave but stays when he realizes the monster is returning. The monster springs the trap but escapes back to the Upside Down. Eleven and the boys hide in the middle school. Mike asks Eleven to a school dance called the Snow Ball and kisses her. Brenner and his agents arrive to get Eleven back. Eleven kills most of them but collapses of exhaustion. As Brenner cradles her, the monster appears. The boys carry Eleven to a classroom and hide as the monster slaughters Brenner and the agents. Hopper and Joyce find the monster's nest in the Upside-Downtown library. Will is there, unconscious with a tendril down his throat. At the middle school, the monster finds the children, but is pinned and disintegrated by Eleven, who vanishes. Hopper and Joyce perform CPR on Will and revive him. Will is hospitalized and reunited with his mother, brother, and friends. Hopper is reluctantly picked up by a black car. One month later, Nancy has gotten back together with Steve, and both are friends with Jonathan. Hopper leaves the other food in a box in the woods. Will coughs up a slug-like creature and has a vision of the world as the Upside Down, but he hides this from his family.

Appendix J
Foolscap Global Story Grid
From Shawn Coyne's *The Story Grid*

G S	Global Genre:		
L T	External Genre:		
O O	External Value at Stake:		
B R	Internal Genre:		
A Y	Internal Value at Stake:		
L	Obligatory Scenes & Conventions:		
	Point of View		
	Objects of Desire		
	Controlling Idea/Theme		
		External Charge	Internal Charge
B			
E	1.Inciting Incident		
G H	2.Complication		
I O	3.Crisis		
N O	4. Climax		
N K	5.Resolution		
I			
N			
G			
M B	1.Inciting Incident		
I U	2.Complication		
D I	3.Crisis		
D L	4. Climax		
L D	5.Resolution		
E			
E P	1.Inciting Incident		
N A	2.Complication		
D Y	3.Crisis		
I O	4. Climax		
N F	5.Resolution		
G F			

(Note the repetition of the five key elements repeatedly in all three acts)

Appendix K
The 15 Beats of John Yorke's 5 Act Structure

What does our hero learn? This is central to character change. Learn to overcome their flaw. Their unconscious flaw is brought to surface, exposed to a new world, acted upon; consequences of overcoming flaw explored, doubt and prevarication set in before, finally they resolve to conquer it and embrace their new selves.

Act I (Set up and call to action)

- No knowledge of flaw
- Growing knowledge of flaw
- Awakening about flaw

Act II (Things go well, initial objective achieved)

- Doubt
- Overcome reluctance
- Acceptance

Act III (Things start to go wrong as forces of antagonism gather strength)

- Experimenting with knowledge
- MIDPOINT KEY KNOWLEDGE
- Experimenting post-knowledge

Act IV (Things go really badly wrong, precipitating crisis)

- Doubt
- Growing reluctance
- Regression

Act V (Crisis and climax. Final battle with antagonist. Matters resolve for good or ill)

- Reawakening
- Re-acceptance
- Total mastery

Appendix L

Symbol Dualities, Correspondences & Sequence

SYMBOLS	FEMININE			MASCULINE
Functions	Intuition	Sensing	Feeling	Thinking
Attitudes	Introvert			Extrovert
States	Unconscious			Conscious
Political	Equality			Freedom
Drama Modes	Romance	Satire	Comedy	Tragedy
Elements	Water	Earth	Air	Fire
Place	Ocean	Forrest	Desert	Mountain
Numbers	One (Unity)	Two (Duality)	Three (Trinity)	Four (Quadrinity)
Philosophy	Monism	Dualism		Pluralism
Planetary	Aries	Pisces		Aquarius
Cultures	East			West
Seasons	Winter	Spring	Fall	Summer
Media	Sound			Sight
Senses	Ear			Eye
Space	Enclosed			Outside
Hero Journey	Departure	Initiation		Return
Knowledge	Religion			Science
Metals	Silver			Gold
Psycho History	Innovative	Depressive	Manic	War
Greek Tragedy	Agon	Pathos	Trenos	Theophany
Time (Human)	Childhood	Youth	Adulthood	Old Age
Day	Midnight	Evening	Morning	Noon
Shapes	Round	Square		Triangle
Material	Soft			Hard
Geography	Horizontal			Vertical
Animals	Fish	Reptiles	Mammals	Birds
Landscape	Lake	Valley		River
Motion	Passive			Active
Trivium	Grammar	Logic		Rhetoric
Trade	Import			Export
Media Types	Interactive			Broadcast
Technology	Electricity			Mechanical
Structures	Network			Pyramid
Genres	Horror	Romance	Science Fiction	Western
Body	Heart			Head
Colors	Blue			Red
Direction	East			West
Time	Past			Future
Light	Reflection			Radiation
Solar System	Moon			Sun
Position	Below			Above

Appendix M
Premise from Lajos Egri's *The Art of Dramatic Writing*

Each good premise is composed of three parts:

First part suggests character
Second part suggests conflict
Third part suggests the end of the story

Examples

Bitterness leads to false gaiety.
Foolish generosity leads to poverty.
Honesty defeats duplicity.
Heedlessness destroys friendship.
Ill-temper leads to isolation.
Materialism conquers mysticism.
Prudishness leads to frustration.
Bragging leads to humiliation.
Confusion leads to frustration.
Craftiness digs its own grave.
Dishonesty leads to exposure.
Dissipation leads to self-destruction.
Egotism leads to loss of friends.
Extravagance leads to destitution.
Fickleness leads to loss of self-esteem.

But missing from all above is the author's conviction. Until he takes sides, there is no play. Only when he champions one side of the issue does the premise spring to life.

Appendix N
American Film Institute
Ten Greatest Movies in Ten Genres

ANIMATION
AFI defines "animated" as a genre in which the film's images are primarily created by computer or hand and the characters are voiced by actors.
1. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)
2. Pinocchio (1940)
3. Bambi (1942)
4. The Lion King (1994)
5. Fantasia (1940)
6. Toy Story (1995)
7. Beauty and the Beast (1991)
8. Shrek (2001)
9. Cinderella (1950)
10. Finding Nemo (2003)

ROMANTIC COMEDY
AFI defines "romantic comedy" as a genre in which the development of a romance leads to comic situations.
1. City Lights (1931)
2. Annie Hall (1977)
3. It Happened One Night (1934)
4. Roman Holiday (1953)
5. The Philadelphia Story (1940)
6. When Harry Met Sally... (1989)
7. Adam's Rib (1949)
8. Moonstruck (1987)
9. Harold and Maude (1971)
10. Sleepless in Seattle (1993)

WESTERN
AFI defines "western" as a genre of films set in the American West that embodies the spirit, the struggle and the demise of the new frontier.

1. The Searchers (1956)
2. High Noon (1952)
3. Shane (1953)
4. Unforgiven (1992)
5. Red River (1948)
6. The Wild Bunch (1969)
7. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969)
8. McCabe & Mrs. Miller (1971)
9. Stagecoach (1939)
10. Cat Ballou (1965)

SPORTS
AFI defines "sports" as a genre of films with protagonists who play athletics or other games of competition
1. Raging Bull (1980)
2. Rocky (1976)
3. The Pride of the Yankees (1943)
4. Hoosiers (1986)
5. Bull Durham (1988)
6. The Hustler (1961)
7. Caddyshack (1980)
8. Breaking Away (1979)
9. National Velvet (1945)
10. Jerry Maguire (1996)

MYSTERY
AFI defines "mystery" as a genre that revolves around the solution of a crime.
1. Vertigo (1958)
2. Chinatown (1974)
3. Rear Window (1954)
4. Laura (1944)
5. The Third Man (1949)
6. The Maltese Falcon (1941)
7. North by Northwest (1959)
8. Blue Velvet (1986)
9. Dial M for Murder (1954)
10. The Usual Suspects (1995)

FANTASY
AFI defines "fantasy" as a genre where live-action characters inhabit imagined settings and/or experience situations that transcend the rules of the natural world.

1. The Wizard of Oz (1939)
2. The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2001)
3. It's a Wonderful Life (1946)
4. King Kong (1933)
5. Miracle on 34th Street (1947)
6. Field of Dreams (1989)
7. Harvey (1950)
8. Groundhog Day (1993)
9. The Thief of Bagdad (1924)
10. Big (1988)

SCI-FI
AFI defines "science fiction" as a genre that marries a scientific or technological premise with imaginative speculation.
1. 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)
2. Star Wars (1977)
3. E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial (1982)
4. A Clockwork Orange (1971)
5. The Day the Earth Stood Still (1951)
6. Blade Runner (1982)
7. Alien (1979)
8. Terminator 2: Judgment Day (1991)
9. Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)
10. Back to the Future (1985)

GANGSTER
AFI defines the "gangster film" as a genre that centers on organized crime or maverick criminals in a twentieth century setting.
1. The Godfather (1972)
2. Goodfellas (1990)
3. The Godfather Part II (1974)
4. White Heat (1949)
5. Bonnie and Clyde (1967)
6. Scarface (1932)
7. Pulp Fiction (1994)
8. The Public Enemy (1931)
9. Little Caesar (1931)
10. Scarface (1983)

COURTROOM DRAMA
AFI defines "courtroom drama" as a genre of film in which a system of justice plays a critical role in the film's narrative.

1. To Kill a Mockingbird (1962)
2. 12 Angry Men (1957)
3. Kramer vs. Kramer (1979)
4. The Verdict (1982)
5. A Few Good Men (1992)
6. Witness for the Prosecution (1958)
7. Anatomy of a Murder (1959)
8. In Cold Blood (1967)
9. A Cry in the Dark (1988)
10. Judgment at Nuremberg (1961)

EPIC
AFI defines “epic” as a genre of large-scale films set in a cinematic interpretation of the past.
1. Lawrence of Arabia (1962)
2. Ben-Hur (1959)
3. Schindler's List (1993)
4. Gone with the Wind (1939)
5. Spartacus (1960)
6. Titanic (1997)
7. All Quiet on the Western Front (1930)
8. Saving Private Ryan (1998)
9. Reds (1981)
10. The Ten Commandments (1956)

Appendix O
Extensive List of Main Film Genres and Sub-Genres
From Tim Dirks' Filmsite.Org

Main Genre	Sub-Genres	Sub-Genres
Action or Adventure	• Action or Adventure Comedy • Action/Adventure Drama • Alien Invasion • Animal • Biker • Blaxploitation • Blockbusters • Buddy • Buddy Cops (or Odd Couple) • Caper • Chase Films or Thrillers • Comic-Book Action • Confined Space Action • Conspiracy Thriller (Paranoid Thriller) • Cop Action • Costume Adventures • Crime Films • Desert Epics • Disaster or Doomsday • Epic Adventure Films • Erotic Thrillers • Escape • Espionage • Exploitation (ie Nunsploitation, Naziploitation • Family-oriented Adventure • Fantasy Adventure • Futuristic • Girls With Guns • Guy Films • Heist—Caper Films • Heroic Bloodshed Films • Historical Spectacles • Hong Kong • James Bond series • Jungle and Safari Epics	• Literature/Folklore Adventure Heroes • Martial Arts Action (Kung-Fu) • Man- or Woman-In-Peril • Man vs. Nature • Mountain • Period Action Films • Political Conspiracies, Thrillers • Poliziotteschi (Italian) • Prison • Psychological Thriller • Quest • Rape and Revenge Films • Road • Romantic Adventures • Sci-Fi Action/Adventure • Samurai • Sea Adventures • Searches/Expeditions for Lost Continents • Serialized films • Space Adventures • Sports—Action • Spy • Straight Action/Conflict • Super-Heroes • Surfing or Surf Films • Survival • Swashbuckler • Sword and Sorcery (or "Sword and Sandal") • (Action) Suspense Thrillers • Techno-Thrillers • Treasure Hunts • Undercover • Video Game Movies • War Adventure • Women in Prison

Comedy	• Absurd • Action Comedies • Anarchic Comedies • Animals • Black Comedies (Dark Humour) • British Humour • Buddy • Classic Comedies • Clown • Comedy Thrillers • Comic Criminals • Coming of Age • Conceptual • Crime/Caper Comedies • "Dumb" Comedies • Fairy Tale • Family Comedies • Farce • Fish-out-of-water Comedies • Gross-out Comedies • Horror Comedies • Lampoon • Mafia Comedies • "Meet-Cute" Screwball or Romantic Comedies • Military Comedies • Mock-umentary (Fake Documentary) • Musical Comedies	• Parenthood Comedies • Parody • Political Comedies • Populist • Pre-Teen Comedies • Remarriage Comedies • Road • Romantic Comedies ("Rom-Coms") • Satire • School Days • Screwball Comedies • Sex Comedies • Slacker • Slapstick • Social-Class Comedies • Sophisticated Comedies • Spoofs • Sports Comedies • Stand-Up • Stoner Comedies • Supernatural Comedies • Teen/Teen Sex Comedies • Urban Comedies • War Comedies • Western Comedies • Zombie Comedies
Crime and Gangster	• "Bad Girl" Movies • Blaxploitation • Buddy Cop • Caper Stories • Cops and Robbers • Courtroom Drama • Crime Comedy or Drama • Detective/Mysteries • Espionage • Femme Fatales • Film Noir • Gangs • Hard-boiled Detective • HeistHood Films • Juvenile Delinquency • Law and Order (Legal) • Lovers on the Run Road Films	• Mafia (Gangster), Organized Crime, Mob Films • Mysteries • Neo-Noir • Outlaw Biker Films • Police/Detective • Post-Noir • Procedurals • Prison • Private-Eye • Suspense Thrillers • Trial Films • True Crime • Vice Films • Victim • Who-dun-its • Women's Prison Films

Drama	• Adaptations, Based upon True Stories • Addiction and/or Alcoholism • Adventure Drama • Adult • African-American • Americana • Autobiographies/Biographies • Biopics (Biographical) • British Empire • Buddy Film • "Chick" Flicks or "Guy-Cry" Films • Childhood Dramas • Christmas Films • Coming-of-Age • Costume Dramas • Courtroom Dramas • Crime Dramas • Dance • Diary Films • Disease/Disability • Disaster • Docu-dramas • Ensemble • Erotic Drama • Espionage • Ethnic Family Saga • Euro-Spy Films • "Fallen" Women • Fantasy Drama • Feminist • Film a Clef • Gay and Lesbian • Generation Gap • Hagiographies (Religious Figures) • Heavenly Drama • High School • Holiday Film • Holocaust • Hood Films • Inspirational • Investigative Reporting • Legal/Courtroom • Life Story	• Literary Adaptation • Love • Marital Drama • Medical • Melodramas ("Women's Pictures", Tearjerkers or "Weepies") • Message Movie • Musical Drama • Newspaper • Nostalgia • Odd Couple • Period Film • Police Drama • POW Drama • Presidential Politics or Political Dramas • Prison Drama • Propaganda • Prostitution • Psychological Drama • Race Relations, Interracial Themes • Religious • Resistance • Reunion • Road Movie • Romantic Dramas • Rural Drama • Sexual/Erotic (Steamy Romantic Dramas) • Shakespearean • Showbiz Dramas • Slice of Life • Soap Opera • Social Problem Film, Social Commentaries • Small-town Life • Sports Dramas or Biopics • Supernatural Drama • Teen (or Youth) Films • Tragedy • True Crime Drama • Urban Drama • War-Military Dramas • Women's Friendship • Youth Culture

Epics or Historical	• Alternate History (What if ...?) • Biblical • British Empire • Dark Ages • Greek Myth • Hagiographies • Historical or Biographical Epics (Biopics) • Indian History • Literary Adaptation	• Medieval (Dark Ages) • "Period Pictures" • Religious • Roman Empire • Romantic Epic • Sword and Sandal • War or Westerns (Epic)
Horror	• B-Movie Horror • Cannibalism or Cannibal Films • Classic Horror • Costume Horror • Creature Features • Demons or Demonic Possession • Dracula • Erotic • "Found Footage" • Frankenstein, other Mad Scientists • Ghosts • Giallo (European, Italian specifically) • Gore • Gothic • Haunted House, other Hauntings • Halloween • Horror Comedy (Humorous) • HP Lovecraftian • Macabre • Man-Made Horrors • Monsters • Natural Horror • Occult	• Older-Woman-In-Peril Films ("Psycho-Biddy"/"Hag Horror"/"Hagsploitation") • Paranormal • Post-Apocalyptic (or Apocalyptic) Horror • Psychic Powers • Psychological Horror • Reincarnation • Sadistic Horror • Satanic Stories • Sci-Fi Horror • Serial Killers • Sex Horror • Slashers or "Splatter" Films • Supernatural Horror • Survival Horror • Teen Terror ("Teen Screams") • Terror • Vampires • Witchcraft • Wolves, Werewolves • Zombies
Musicals and Dance	• Animated • Backstage Musicals • Ballet • Beach Party Films • Musical Biographies • Broadway Show Musicals • Comedy Musicals	• Fantasy Musical • Film-Opera • Folk Musicals • Hip-Hop Films • Operettas • Rock-umentary • Romantic Musicals

	• Concert Films • Dance Films • Dramatic Musicals • Fairy Tale Musicals	• Show-Biz Comedy • Stage Musicals • Western Musicals

Science Fiction	• Action or Adventure Sci-Fi • Alien Invasion • Aliens, Extra-Terrestrial Encounters • Anime • AI (Artificial Intelligence) • Atomic Age • Classic Sci-Fi • Creature Films • Disaster • Dystopic or Dystopia • End of World • Exploration • Fairy Tales • Fantasy Films • 50's Sci-Fi • "First Contact" • Futuristic (or Future Noir) • Galactic Empire • Lost Worlds • Mad Scientists • Militaristic • Monsters and Mutants • Mythic Fables or Mythology • Natural Horror	• Near Future • Other Dimensions • Outer Space • Parallel (or Alternate) Universe • Post-Apocalyptic (or Apocalyptic) • Pre-historic • Psychological Sci-Fi • Pulp • Punk Sci-Fi (ie Steam Punk, Nano Punk, Atom Punk, Cyber Punk, and so on) • Religious or Theological • Robots, Cyborgs and Androids • Sci-Fi Comedies • Sci-Fi Horror • Sci-Fi Thrillers • Space Opera • Space or Sci-Fi Westerns • Speculative • Star Trek • Super-Hero Films (for example, Supermen and Others) • Supernatural • Tech-Noir • Time or Space Travel • Virtual Reality
War	• Action Combat • Aerial Combat, Aviation • Afghanistan-Iraq Conflict • Anti-War • Civil War • Combat • Escape • Gulf War • Historical • Korean War • Military • Military Comedy	• Prisoner of War (POW)/Escape • Propaganda • Resistance • Revolutionary War • War-Spy • Submarine • Vietnam War • War Adventure • War Epic • War Romance • World War I • World War II

Westerns	• Animal • B-Western • Biographies • Cattle Drive • Cavalry • Comedy Westerns • Epic Westerns • Euro-Westerns • Frontier • Gunfighters • Historical • Hybrid Westerns (with horror, noir, road movie, martial arts, and so on) • Indian War or Indian Westerns • Issue Western	• Marshal Westerns • Military • Modern Western • Musical Western • Outlaws • Psychological Westerns • Revenge Westerns • Revisionist • Road-Trail Journeys • Romantic Westerns • Science-Fiction Westerns • Shoot-outs • Space Westerns • "Spaghetti" Westerns • Spoof Westerns • Traditional

Appendix P
Master Class List of Major Genres and Sub-Genres
https://www.masterclass.com/articles/guide-to-movie-subgenres.

10 Comedy Subgenres
All comedy films involve humor, but they achieve it in wildly different ways.

1. Slapstick: Slapstick humor is based on physical comedy.
2. Farce: Farces involve absurd situations stacked precariously atop one another
3. Romantic comedy: Rom-coms follow a common structure and find humor in love and romance.
4. Black comedy: Dark comedies have bleak, sometimes nihilistic, viewpoints.
5. Comedic thrillers: This type of comedy borrows genre elements from thriller movies, blending suspenseful plots and humor.
6. Mockumentary: Thes fake, comedic documentary films are generally satirical.
7. Musical comedy: Musical comedies typically include dance numbers and scenes where characters break into song.
8. Parody: Parodies mock the genre elements of other film styles.
9. Buddy comedy: This type of comedy centers on an odd couple who makes an unlikely pair.
10. Sports comedy: Sports comedies play up absurdity within the world of sports.

7 Drama Subgenres
Dramatic films focus on human emotion, high-stakes situations, and highly compelling main characters.

1. Tragedy: A tragedy is a drama that centers on human suffering and generally has a sad ending.
2. Romantic drama: Romantic dramas are based on the highs and lows of love.
3. Biopic: A biopic is a film devoted to the life story of a real person.
4. War movie: Military dramas tell stories rooted in the machinations of war.
5. Costume drama: A costume drama is a period piece set during another era.
6. Crime drama: A crime drama is a film mining the dramatic story of a criminal or a detective who stops them.
7. Coming-of-age drama: This type of film includes the storyline of a young person growing into adulthood.

7 Science Fiction and Fantasy Subgenres
Sci-fi is now one of the most marketable film genre categories in Hollywood.

1. Disaster: Disaster movies include tales of natural disasters or human-caused atrocities.
2. Dystopian: Dystopian movies are set in a future society on the edge of collapse.
3. Space opera: Space operas are epic tales set in outer space.
4. Fantasy: Fantasy movies are set in mystical, supernatural worlds.
5. Time travel: Time travel stories feature characters who travel using a time machine.

6. Fairy tale: Fairy tail movies are generally for children, and they often include dragons, giants, fairies, and other mythological creatures.
7. Cyberpunk: Cyberpunk films often blend elements of dystopian and tech-centric film genres.

5 Crime Subgenres

Crime is one of the oldest movie genres, with several major subgenres.

1. Film noir: This type of crime movie typically features hardboiled detectives, femme fatales, and a cynical outlook on life.
2. Neo-noir: These contemporary crime films mimic the stylistic idiosyncrasies of classic film noirs.
3. Mafia: This type of crime movie delves into the world of organized crime.
4. Military thriller: Military thrillers are a cross between war films and police dramas.
5. Psychological thriller: Psychological thrillers are anchored around a conspiracy or lurking menace.

7 Horror Subgenres

Horror films come in a variety of subgenres, each with its own devoted audience.

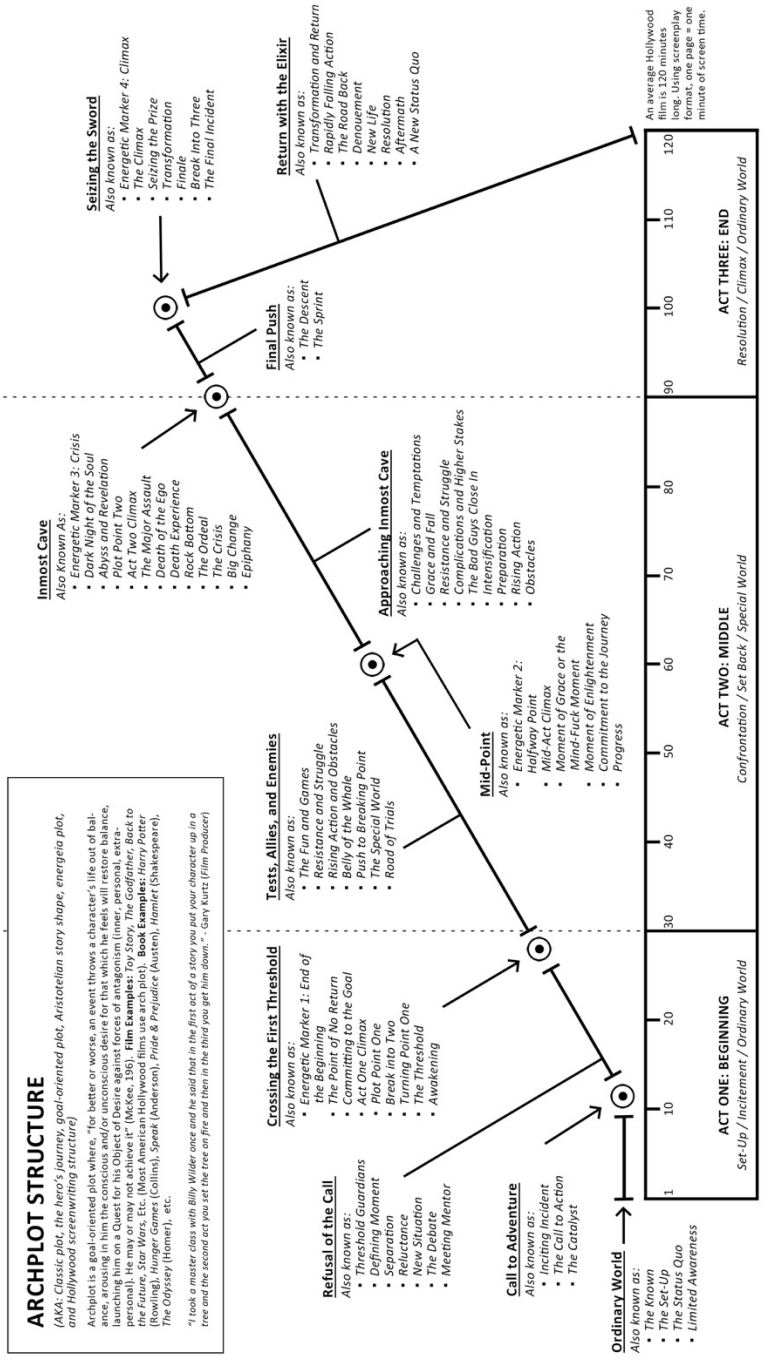
1. Slasher: Slashers involving a serial killer who typically leaves a gory trail.
2. Zombie: Zombie horror movies include an undead menace.
3. B-movie: B-movies originated as low-budget movies that were shown alongside feature films in theaters.
4. Vampire: Vampire movies center around the threat of vampires.
5. Monster: A monster movie generally stars an iconic monster like Godzilla or Frankenstein.
6. Found footage: A found-footage horror film purports to be real-life found footage from a terrifying event.
7. Paranormal film: Paranormal thrillers typically involve ghosts or humans with supernatural qualities.

6 Action-Adventure Subgenres

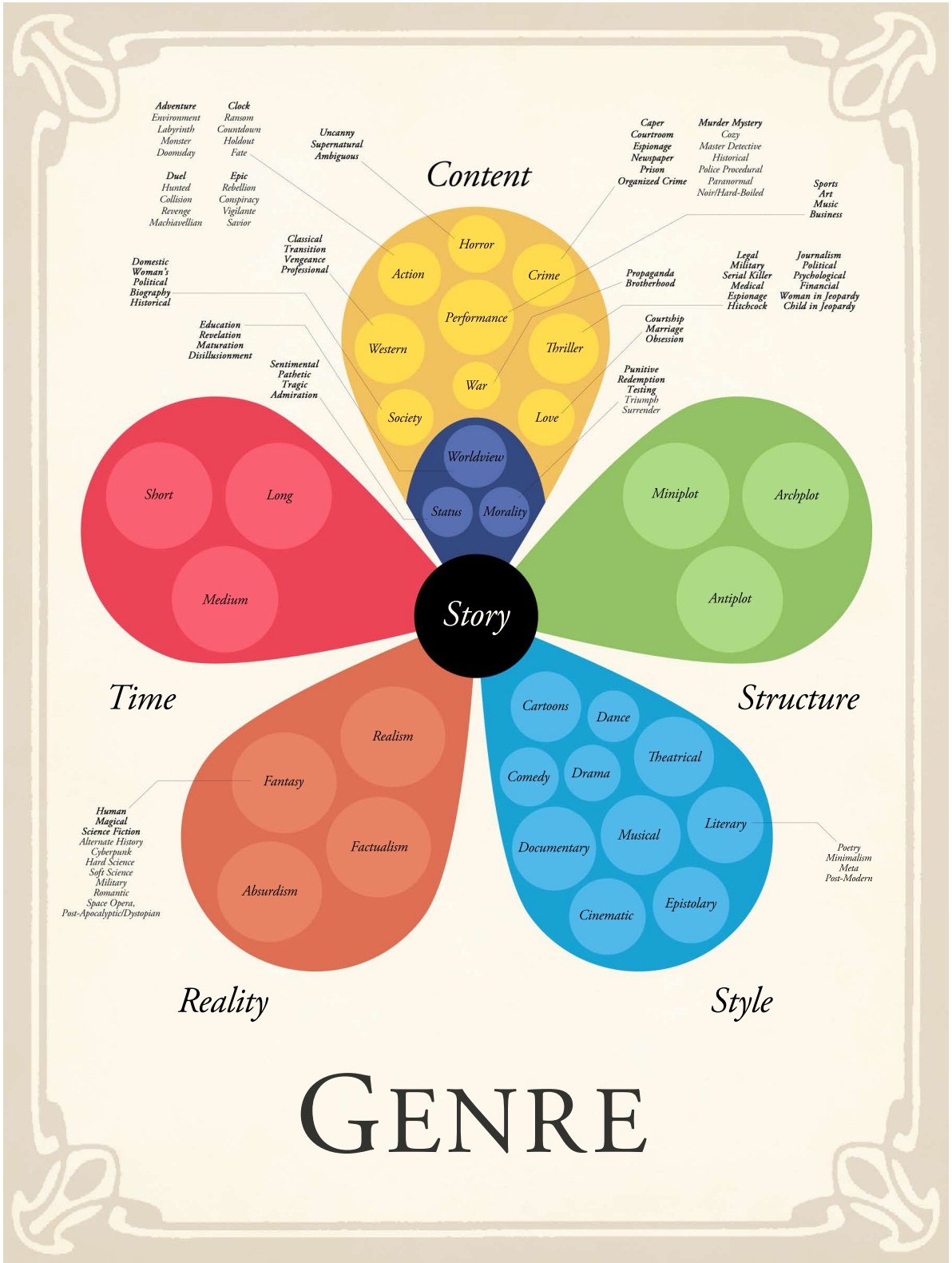
Action movies generally involve characters who have to fight their way out of dangerous situations.

1. Superhero: Starring an extraordinarily powerful hero, superhero movies are often sourced from comic books.
2. Martial arts: Martial arts movies are typically based in a martial arts tradition from Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, or Korea.
3. Adventure: This type of action movie involves a quest or journey.
4. Treasure hunt: Treasure hunt stories require protagonists to fetch valuable treasure or information.
5. War action-adventure: These war films play up action elements and daring stunts.
6. Action comedy: Action comedy films are high energy with high stakes, but many of the stunts are played for laughs.

Appendix Q
Archplot Structure
© Ingrid Sunberg 2013



Appendix R
StoryGrid Genre Clover



John Fraim

John was born in Los Angeles and has a BA (History) from UCLA and a JD from Loyola Law. He has worked in executive positions of companies in business analyst, marketing and advertising and was President of Pacific Marketing Strategy in San Francisco and Oakland for a number of years. He has written and been published in the areas of literary, jazz and film criticism, Jungian psychology, symbolism, and media. He was consultant for symbols on the *DaVinci Code* film and author of *Battle of Symbols: The Global Dynamics of Advertising, Entertainment and Media*. (Daimon Verlag, Zurich, 2003). He is author of *Spirit Catcher: The Life and Art of John Coltrane* (GreatHouse, 1996) which won the Best Biography Award from the Small Press Association in 1997.

He was a regular contributor to *Script Magazine* writing a column called "Script Symbology" about the application of symbolism to screenplays. He is Founder of the Desert Screenwriters Group, now called the Desert Screenwriters Guild. His screenplay *The Lost Mission* was an Award Winner in the Writer's Digest Writing Competition of 2019. He serves on the Editorial Advisory Board for the communications journal *New Explorations: Studies in Culture and Communication* and is a member of the Institute for General Semantics. He blogs regularly about a wide variety of topics on his Midnight Oil Studios website.

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