

# Script Symbology

## The Symbolism Of Scripts

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Part of the attraction of *The Lord of the Rings* is “due to the glimpses of a large history in the background: an attraction like that of viewing far off an unvisited island ... To go there is to destroy the magic, unless new unattainable vistas are again revealed.”

“I was from early days grieved by the poverty of my own beloved country: it had no stories of its own (bound up with its tongue and style) not of the quality I sought ... I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy story ... which I could dedicate simply: to England: to my country.”

J.R.R. Tolkien  
1951 Letter

“A dragon is no idle fancy. There are in any case many heroes but very few good dragons.”

J.R.R. Tolkien  
“Beowulf: The Monster and the Critics”  
Oxford University, 1936

## Contents

Introduction	5
Act I (Set Up)	
A. Script Symbology	
Script Symbology	8
B. Symbols	
Symbols	11
Symbol Systems	15
Archetypes	19
Greek Gods & Hollywood Stars	22
Contextual Symbols	24
Symbolism of Place	43
Symbolism of Light	48
The Da Vinci Code As A Symbol	49
Character Symbols in the DVC	53
The Hidden Séance Symbolism of <i>Contact</i>	56
C. Symbolism	
Symbolism	61
Paradox of Symbolism	65
Dualities, Correspondences & Sequence	67
Duality	69
Duality Symbols of Image & Word	70
Correspondence	73
The Seven Hermetic Principles	74
Synchronicity	80
The Synchronicity Of Classic Scripts	81
Sequence	85
Number of Steps in Sequence	88
Shape of Sequence	89
Seven Eras of Prime Time Television	94
Act II (Confrontation)	
Scripts	

The Once And Future Kingdom?	97
Sea of Zombies	
Script Applications	101
Contagious Symbols	102
Contagious In Hollywood	103
Social Currency In Hollywood	105
Participation & Popularity	107
Cool Devices	119
Cool As Beginning	120
Cool As Multiple	121
Cool As Pieces	123
Cool As Image	124
Cool As Theater	
Cool As Outline: Black Knight	123
Cool As Outline: Transcendent City	126
The New Politics of Participation	140

### Act III (Resolution) Application

Script Symbolology: Method & Application	144
Script: Late Night Radio Show	172

### Appendix

A. Glossary of Terms	174
B. Charts & Illustrations	175
Symbol Systems (Chart)	175
Symbol Technique (Chart)	176
Symbol Dualities, Correspondences & Sequence (Chart)	177
Using Symbolism To Create Script Structures (Chart)	178
Sequence & Symbol Cycles (Chart)	179
Scenes Are Like Brands (Chart)	179
Traditional & Contemporary Symbols (Chart)	180
Sequence of Contextual Symbols (Chart)	180
Cycles of American Television (Chart)	181
Cross Symbolism	182
Symbolism Dynamics	183
Symbolism Dynamics Into Scripts	184

Content & Context Symbols	185
Example	186
Example	187
C. Symbols	188
D. Script Symbology Outline	197

### Introduction

The following offers a collection of materials based around the study and application of symbols and symbolism to modern scripts. The columns appeared in the “Script Symbology” column for the online magazine *Script*, the largest online community for screenwriters.

While “how to” books on creating scripts has become a good-sized cottage industry, we are unaware of any systematic effort to apply symbols and symbolism to scripts. Mythology has found its way into modern scripts with the ideas of Joseph Campbell and their application in the blockbuster historic series *Star Wars*. Yet symbolism has never gained anything near such recognition in scripts.

In looking at what is evolving with “scripts” today, we utilize the theories of three unpublished manuscripts written by us over the years beginning with *Symbolism of Place* (1993), *The Symbolism of Popular Culture* (1995) and *Media Nations* (2004). For those interested, many any parts of these works are posted on our website on symbolism at [www.symbolism.org](http://www.symbolism.org). In addition to the three unpublished manuscripts on symbolism, there are also ideas from our latest published book *Battle of Symbols: Global Dynamic of Advertising, Entertainment and Media* (2005, Daimon Verlag, Zurich).

In addition to these larger works on symbolism, we have also drawn from our collection of over one hundred articles and essays on symbols and symbolism. Some of these articles appeared in publications like *AdBusters*, *Journal of Marketing*, *Business 2.0*, *The Industry Standard* and *Psychological Perspectives*. Some were published at various online sites such as the *Jung Page*, *East West Journal* and *First Monday*.

\* \* \*

The materials are organized as a type of overall script by creating the traditional three acts of a screenplay. In Act I, we discuss symbols, symbolism and this new effort to place symbols in scripts we call “Script Symboloby.” In Act II, we discuss the emergence of new scripts challenging the traditional Hollywood script of screenplay. Finally, Act III attempts to present a method and application of the theories discussed in Act I and Act II.

At the end we present an Appendix containing a glossary of terms as well as charts and illustrations and a list and classification of key traditional symbols.

In many ways, the materials presented attempt to offer an example of a new script form by employing some methods suggested throughout. For example, the materials are often incomplete, reaching no conclusions but offering speculations. The reader will encounter many quotes, outlines and notes throughout the following materials.

What type of script is being presented here? For one thing, it seems to be an incomplete script requiring assemblage of “evidence” presented by the author. At times, the reader seems to be peeking at notes for something else. But what is this something else? A new theory for screenwriting? A new theory for scripts in general?

The chapters start out in an order but then get mixed up into various topics. The reader must assemble them in his or her own manner to make sense of them. They are like pieces of evidence from some CSI scene on TV. (Perhaps this assembly participation is a large reason for the popularity of the CSI brand?) The mystery lurks always a few steps ahead of the steps of the hero or heroine of the symbolic script. It’s recipe we attempt to lay out in the following.

Some of the chapters only exist as a word or title and no more. Of course these chapters allow for the greatest participation by readers. Little paths seemingly to nowhere turn into major roads into plot points of the script while at the same time, big “freeways” of thought and ideas suddenly disappear like mirages when you get too close to them.

This disappearance might not be a bad thing. As J.R.R. Tolkien noted in a 1951 letter to a friend, part of the attraction of *The Lord of the Rings* is “due to the glimpses of a large history in the background: an attraction like that of viewing far off an unvisited island ... To go there is to destroy the magic, unless new unattainable vistas are again revealed.”

Act One

- A. Script Symbology
- B. Symbols
- C. Symbolism

## Script Symbolology

The upcoming column in *Script Magazine* called Script Symbolology is about the study and application of symbols and symbolism to scripts. While there are so-called movie symbolologists (Tom Hanks in *The Da Vinci Code* comes to mind) to our knowledge there exists no ongoing research, discussion or study of the application of symbols and symbolism to 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 screenwriting with spectacular results, symbolism theories might find application with similar results. But so far, this has not happened. Although Carl Jung's theory of archetypes is well known and used in script structure, his theories of symbols have yet to find systematic application to scripts.

Some leading screenplay gurus do make reference to symbols in their theories on screenplay method and structure. For example, John Truby in *The Anatomy of Story* has a chapter called "Symbol Web" that is probably one of the best discussions on the application of symbolism to screenplays by weaving them into the "web" of the story. However, Robert McKee in *Story* gives symbols far less importance in relegating them to a small section called "Image Systems" at the end of his book.

This is not to say that symbols and symbolism have not found application in some of the most successful scripts and films of history. A few famous film symbols come immediately to mind: the Rosebud sled in *Citizen Kane*; the birds in Hitchcock's *The Birds* and the green light in *The Great Gatsby*.

However, more often than not, 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. It is relatively easy to place symbols in films but far more difficult to give them dynamic life and growth through the narrative so they reveal character and illustrate theme as only great symbols can do. And finally, there is an increasing trend to point film symbols away from the demands of the script altogether and towards outside products in order to serve the economics of product placement more than story development.

Before we get too far along, it is important to clarify the subjects of our investigation by defining what is meant by symbols and symbolism. It is not an easy task as their definitions have changed through history.

### Symbols

The Webster Dictionary defines a symbol as “something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance.” The dictionary adds symbols are “especially a visible sign of something invisible.” For example, a lion stands for the invisible quality of courage. Or, the Rosebud sled (in *Citizen Kane*) stands for the lost innocence of childhood.

Still, finding a useful contemporary definition of symbols is not an easy task because - as Carl Jung observes – they vary with the spirit of the times. As Jung notes in *The Psychology of Transference* (1946) “The primordial images undergo ceaseless transformation and yet remain ever the same, but only in a new form can they be understood anew.”

In effect, the outward manifestation of symbols change just as human communication changes. For the ancients, symbols communicated original, natural things mankind observed in the world such as the changing cycles of life. For them, symbols represented the beginnings and endings of seasons, movement in the heavens and the various Gods and Goddesses that controlled life. Later in history, symbols moved away from natural phenomena and came to be associated with cultural creations like religions, politics and nation states. An example of some of the changes from ancient symbols into contemporary symbols is illustrated by Figure A below.

#### Ancient Symbols

Religious Icons  
Dreams  
Rituals & Rites  
Gods & Goddesses  
Natural Phenomena

#### Contemporary Symbols

Brands, Products  
Entertainment, Advertising, Media  
Media Events (Super Bowl)  
Celebrities, Stars, Leaders  
Cultural Things

Figure A  
Change From Ancient Symbols Into Contemporary Symbols

A large change took place in the modern world with the recognition that symbols do not have to find representation exclusively in the outward world of culture but can represent internal states. The internal migration of symbols was originally the province of artists in events like the French symbolist movement of the late nineteenth century. Yet the psychoanalytic movement of the twentieth century showed that symbols were not the exclusive province of art and artists but of everyone in their dreams and unconsciousness. The relationship of symbols to unconsciousness was certainly one of the leading discoveries of Freud and Jung.

Today, this connection of symbols between the inner and outer world has been obscured because the avalanche of external things have had the effect of burying the internal world under it. Like those hoarders we watch on the reality television show, modern cultural has become a hoarder of things and objects.

Of course these “hoarded” symbols appear in scripts and films most often as brands yanked into the story to ensure income from product placement. The days of meaningful symbols in films, represented largely by wartime propaganda films and early Russian, German and French filmmakers is for the most part a thing of the past. In rare instances, modern film symbols attempt to reestablish a connection to the inner world of characters through symbols. For the most part, modern film symbols are little more than objects representing products in the outside world rather than gateways to inside the inside world of characters. Symbols from Madison Avenue and Hollywood are less interested in representing internal characters states than inducing outward product purchases.

Is it possible to recapture the old inward direction of symbols as visible external signs of invisible psychic states and apply these symbols to films? And, if it is possible to do this, is it a worthwhile effort? In effect, will it help scriptwriters create more powerful stories?

We think it is possible to recover this old power of symbols and feel that once this is understood and applied, new types of scripts will be generated that possess power and influence far beyond the current offerings of Hollywood films that use symbols more as sales agents for products than psychic tools for exploring the depths of character.

### Symbolism

True symbols do not exist by themselves but rather as elements within a dynamic system possessing laws of movement and change. In this sense, symbols within this system might be seen as planets within a planetary system or elements - like characters, setting and scenes - within the system of a film script.

Understanding the system of symbols in scripts is one of the great challenges of this area we term script symbology. More often than not, scripts and their resulting films are filled with symbols that exist alone and simply come and go mainly for the benefit of product placement rather than story development. The result leads to scripts full of superficial symbols thrown together like passengers on a bus, coming and going without any overall plan. The final script might be filled with symbols yet possessed with little symbolism.

In future columns we will further explore what symbols are and their dynamics within scripts and show how they operate within the system of symbolism. The ancient form of storytelling called mythology has found expression in modern scriptwriting. It is time that the ancient language of images called symbolism also finds expression in modern storytelling.

(Note: The subject of symbols and symbolism is explored in greater length in our book *Symbolism of Place: The Hidden Context of Communication*. It can be found in the Books section on our symbolism site at [www.symbolism.org](http://www.symbolism.org).)

## Symbols

The simple definition of a symbol is something that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention, especially a material object used to represent something invisible. For example, a lion is a symbol for courage, a flag a symbol of patriotism.

But simple definitions have never served to adequately describe symbols. For instance, in consideration of their effect on the psyche, Joseph Campbell in *A Symbol Without Meaning* proposed symbols are energy evoking and directing agents. The Indian scholar Heinrich Zimmer provides a broad definition of symbols noting that “Concepts and words are symbols, just as rituals, and images are; so too are the manners and customs of daily life. Through all of these a transcendent reality is mirrored.”

Some even suggest symbols are beyond definition altogether. Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung proposed an alternate definition of symbols distinguishing them from “signs.” In Jung’s view, a sign stands for something known, as a word stands for a referent. In contrast, Jung observed that symbols stand for unknown things that cannot be made clear or precise. As an example, he offered Christ as a symbol for the archetype symbol of self.

Even if a definition of symbol can be obtained, this definition can vary with different periods of time and cultures. Jung states this well in *The Psychology of Transference* (1946) noting:

“Eternal truth needs a human language that varies with the spirit of the times. The primordial images undergo ceaseless transformation and yet remain ever the same, but only in a new form can they be understood anew. Always they require a new interpretation if, as each formulation becomes obsolete, they are not to lose their spellbinding power.”

And too, symbols are used as a means to express specific ideologies, social structures and represent characteristics of specific cultures. Thus, symbols carry different meaning depending upon one’s cultural background. The meaning of a symbol is not inherent in the symbol itself. Rather, it is culturally learned.

Whatever definition or meaning of symbols one arrives at, it is important to point out that they are much more than elements of an ancient, esoteric language but rather the basis for all human culture and knowledge. Rhetorical critic Kenneth Burke recognized this overwhelming power and importance of symbols on people’s thoughts and actions leading him to describe humans as “symbol-using animals.” In this way, people use symbols not only to make sense of the world around them, but also to identify and cooperate in society.

\* \* \*

The world is full of thousands of symbols and there are many dictionaries and lexicons that define individual symbols. A few of the best dictionaries are *A Dictionary of Symbols* by JE Cirlot, *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols* by JC Cooper and *The Complete Dictionary of Symbols* by Jack Tressider.

While one can learn much about symbols from reading definitions in dictionaries and lexicons, perhaps the best way to understand symbols so they might be applied (within scripts) is by organizing them in classifications, categories and systems.

### 1) Symbol Classifications

The greatest contemporary classification of symbols was undertaken by The Archive for Research In Archetypal Symbolism or ARAS (<http://aras.org/>). The ARAS database contains over 17,000 images and commentaries spanning human eras and cultures as well as the meaning of symbols in dreams. While the online site is a subscription only site, the ARAS materials have been published in *The Book of Symbols* by Taschen a book that should be in the library of every script symbolologist.

The ARAS archive organizes symbols under five major classifications: 1) creation & cosmos 2) plants 3) animals 4) humans and 5) spirit. A short outline of these classifications is represented below.

#### Creation & Cosmos

- Creation & Cosmos

- Water

- Air, Wind & Weather

- Fire, Light & Darkness

- Earth

#### Plant World

- Trees

- Magical Plants & Flowers

#### Animal World

- Primordial Creatures

- Water Creatures

- Arachnids & Insects

- Birds

- Wild Animals

- Domestic Animals

#### Human World

- Human Body

- Movement & Expression
- Fundamentals of Work & Society
- Tools & Other Objects
- House & Home
- Buildings & Monuments
- Color
- Sound
- Spirit World
  - Mythical Beings
  - Rituals & Sacred Systems
  - Sickness & Death
  - Soul & Psyche

A script symbologist doesn't necessarily have to understand all the ARAS symbols. Like most everything today, research into symbols is readily available and inexpensive. But it is important to at least be aware of these classifications and the major symbols within them.

## 2) Symbol Systems

Many symbols are members of symbol systems that are similar to genres in films in that members of symbol systems have common elements. Some examples of symbol systems are colors, numbers and astrology.

In general, symbol systems demonstrate a spectrum of symbols with symbols at the ends of the spectrum serving as opposition symbols with a sequence of symbols between the two. For instance, consider the symbol system of color and the color spectrum moving from violet at one end of the spectrum to blue, green, yellow, orange and red at the other end of the spectrum. Or consider the symbol system of numbers and the basic duality symbols of one and two.

Symbol systems can be used to show drama in scripts by presenting members of the system in a sequence from the beginning of the script to the end of the script. For example, a logical sequence might contain a dominance of violet objects at the beginning of a script and a dominance of red objects at the end of the script.

\* \* \*

Returning to the basic definition of a symbol as something visible representing something invisible, it is not difficult to see why film has become a leading symbolic medium. Unlike non-linear types of art like painting, films possess the unique quality of showing symbols in action as they present a sequence of visible things representing invisible things.

The major visible things a film has to work with is setting, object, action, character and dialogue. The major invisible things these visible things refer to is the invisible things of internal character states such as moods, feelings and states.

(Note: The subject of symbols is explored in greater length in our book *Symbolism of Place: The Hidden Context of Communication*. It can be found in the Books section on our symbolism site at [www.symbolism.org](http://www.symbolism.org).)

## Symbol Systems

We have observed that individual symbols exist in contexts and move within systems of symbolism. Symbols are also part of symbol systems that might be defined as categories of symbols. These symbol systems consist of familiar as well as esoteric categories of phenomena and things such as colors, numbers, genres, drama modes, the basic elements, astrology, divination, shapes and freemasonry.

It is impossible to adequately explore symbol systems here as entire libraries of books have been written about them. However, for purposes of script symbology, it is important that the script symbologist has a basic familiarity with them and their application within the symbolism of a script.

For example, numbers (or numerology) represent a symbol system that gives great symbolic significance (as well as correspondence) to numbers and especially the first ten numbers. The number one symbolizes such things as primordial unity, the sun or light and the origin of life. The number two symbolizes the duality born from the primordial unity, the light created from the original darkness, the Yin Yang symbol of masculine and feminine. The number three is often associated with the symbol of a triangle or the unity of the religious Trinity. It also symbolizes the three major stages of human existence in birth, life and death. (Interestingly enough, these stages of life have a symbolic correspondence to the major sections of traditional scripts in Act I, Act II and Act III).

The symbol system of color has a vast range of meaning and generalizations that specific colors have inherent and fixed meanings is difficult to sustain. However, the colors black and white are clearly related to duality and antithesis. In many traditions, black is the symbol of death and unconsciousness while white is the symbol of life and consciousness. Red, the color of blood, usually symbolizes the life principle and is linked to passion, the basic element of fire, activity and fertility. Blue has an association with the sky and water and often symbolizes the spiritual life in opposition to the red passion of the material life. Green is associated with the vibrant life of earth being the color of trees, plants, pastureland, grass and the countryside. The color gold has been linked almost universally to the sun while the color silver to the moon.

Esoteric symbol systems such as astrology, freemasonry and alchemy also have their particular symbol elements. Astrology contains symbol systems such as Zodiac Signs as well as Planetary Rulers. Alchemy consists of symbols associated with water, mercury, the moon, fire, sulphur and

the sun. Freemasonry consists of the symbols associated with the level, the square, the plumb rule and the Seal of Solomon.

\* \* \*

Interestingly enough, the various four major modes of drama as well as genres of films constitute symbol systems. Perhaps the one most responsible for placing the four key drama modes of romance, tragedy, comedy and satire into a system of archetypes was the literary critic Northrup Frye with his important *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). It suggested that when an author writes in one of the four particular modes of drama, he or she writes within a system of archetypes, and therefore, a particular language of symbolism. The four modes of drama have their own particular symbols and authors who understand these symbols can communicate with their audience better than those authors who do not understand these basic four archetype symbols in the modes of drama.

(Of course, under Jung's idea of the archetype, perhaps the major aspect of Jung's ideas and theories on symbolism that has made a slight dent into the script symbology business. As little this business is in the overall script creation market out there. The various gurus. The various theories. Your own ideas as perhaps a type of synthesis. Or perhaps something now striving for a new type of synthesis?)

It seems interesting that Jung's ideas came into script creation via that first link of Northrup Frye who brought Jung's ideas on archetypes into the world of stories. His overall ideas on symbols and symbolism (as we continue to argue in our Script Symbology column) have for the most part been completely blocked out in creation modern films via modern scripts based more on symbology than other elements currently stressed in the creation of films and scripts.

Starting with one of the grand symbols – operating under a system of contextual and contentual symbols moving from left to right across the horizontal line of the cross we discussed in our column titled Symbolism – the script hero moves across the pages from beginning to ending of the script. A group of symbols representing people and objects and actions and events of the story. Content symbols. And also a group of symbols representing settings and contexts and such as place, time and space.

A script based on a particular symbolism of place or context much more than one based solely around haphazard content and objects symbolizing products and things as most scripts are today. Symbols pointing outward into a material, cultural world rather than inside as they used to point for ancient mankind. Perhaps a symbolism of place context based around one of the four archetypes? This is not something foreign to the author but one of the four major emotions he has been experiencing all of his life. He knows the genres well. They are the author. The script symbologist. The artist creator. In the end, one of the four types of personalities and emotions are within each of us. It is up to us to know the particular emotion within the four dramatic modes that inspires the script. The basic emotion it fulfills.

So, before following that rabbit into LA and falling into that strange world of the Hollywood symbol system called genres, one needs to choose operation under one of the four grand symbols of historic drama. Pull yourself back into time if you're a true script symbologist rather than into the present of the world or future of the world. Put one into the past to remember and understand as ancient symbols of drama in Romance, Tragedy, Comedy or Satire. This is the psychic territory of the symbolic world open to the modern script symbologist.

\* \* \*

After one is encamped in LA (my hometown) and decides to work in that general area of script creation, one comes face-to-face with that grand system of Hollywood symbols known as story genres. Depending on who you ask, this genre system can contain anywhere from ten to thirty or so different symbolic languages created from the elements of story images, icons, settings, characters, themes.

The genre system of Hollywood carries aspects of the horror genre within it. For many, it is a strange, unmanageable and controlling force making scriptwriters work in foreign languages. It has the effect of jamming navigation systems pulling scriptwriters off course like mythological Sirens pulled ancient sailors off course. Or pulling many into perpetual orbits around various Hollywood story genres. Like the number of cable channels and smartphone Apps, the themes and subjects of these genres become smaller and smaller as their numbers increase. Rephrasing what Bruce Springsteen once observed about television channels, in Hollywood are “500 genres and nothing on.”

Once, when Hollywood was young and worked with larger symbols and fewer genres, film symbol systems had a much greater relationship to the four great archetype modes (Romance, Tragedy, Comedy and Satire) discussed by Northrup Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism*. And today, there still remains a close relationship between certain genres and the four historic dramatic modes. Film genres like the western genre seem to continually grow by a natural type of evolution rather than a cultural form of segmentation. The horror genre is continually updated and revised by young scriptwriters entering the field. And the fantasy and science fiction genres find new ways to explore magical things of the present or the technology of the future.

\* \* \*

There is always the hope and dream that everything can be solved by the right story. Or rather, the right genre of story. The right symbol system. After all, Los Angeles itself has always invented itself again and again through various genres of stories. And within LA, the belief by so many that they have a story to tell.

So what does one do if they want to create a western today using the tools of that symbol system known throughout the years as the western genre? Of course one of the first things to do is

follow the advice we have been giving in our Script Symbology column in *Script* magazine. But in addition, understand which great dramatic mode one labors under. Scriptwriters don't really chose these genres as much as these grand modes and genres chose them. The challenge becomes not finding the right genre to work in but rather in realizing what genre one has always been working in. Perhaps unknowingly.

Tonight, I write this on another warm evening in the desert after another day with mid-ninety degree heat. Very early for this time of year even in the desert. In front of me I have that grand collection of genre symbols contained in American westerns in that famous genre book of Hollywood called *Sixguns & Society: A Structural Study of the Western* by Bill Wright (University of California Press, 1975). Before scriptwriters set off creating scripts, they are well rewarded by spending time to understand the history and structure of the original genres a little better.

Apart from books focusing on particular genres like *Sixguns & Society*, there are studies of the overall genre system in Hollywood. One of the best studies of the original Hollywood genres is *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking, and The Studio System* by Thomas Schatz. The book is out of print now and difficult to obtain but one can find parts of it on the Internet and learn that genres were once effective symbol systems that provided successful formulas for creation of films in the Golden Age of Hollywood in the 30s and 40s.

\* \* \*

As we mentioned at the beginning of this column, the topic of symbol systems is vast and a worthy topic for years of study. It is enough for now that the Script Symbologist is simply aware of these symbol systems and the rule that any symbol has a context of other symbols and a system of symbols attached to it. No symbol ever exists alone. As part of a context and system of symbols, script symbols are in constant movement, changing throughout the narrative of the script.

Possessing an awareness of symbol systems is an important milestone on the road to becoming a Script Symbologist. It can be frustrating to learn that one needs to acknowledge and even work within traditional systems of symbols. Yet it can also be exhilarating that the path has been trodden by others who went before and discovered some useful symbols common to certain types of stories. The challenge is to see the broad outlines of the particular path without getting distracted away by smaller and smaller side paths leading to dead ends. The paths of smaller and smaller genre systems grow and take on the appearance of the Hydra Head of mythology. All of this creates a nightmare scene from a film in the horror genre that would make even Carl Jung cringe a little these days if he were a Hollywood scriptwriter.

NOTES-----According to John Truby, the major genres on which 99% of movies are based are the following: Action, Comedy, Crime, Detective, Fantasy, Horror, Love, Masterpiece, Myth, Science Fiction, Thriller and Mixed Genre.

Note: The subject of symbol systems is explored in greater length in the “Sequence” chapter of our book *Symbolism of Popular Culture*. It can be found in the Books section on our symbolism site at [www.symbolism.org](http://www.symbolism.org).)

## Archetypes

“All the most powerful ideas in history go back to archetypes...For it is the function of consciousness not only to recognize and assimilate the external world through the gateway of the senses, but to translate into visible reality the world within us.”

*The Structure And Dynamics of the Psyche*  
Carl Jung

Script Symbolology involves identifying the appropriate symbols to pull into scripts. Some symbols, though, are too large to pull into scripts. Rather, scripts are pulled into them. These symbols represent broad cultural, social and technological trends defining eras or periods of history that garner the “ism” suffix like capitalism, modernism, totalitarianism and postmodernism.

These grand “blockbuster” symbols are what Carl Jung terms archetypes, relating more to original patterns of the psyche rather than any specific content within it. For Jung, archetypes are how the structure of the psyche autonomously organizes experience. He found the existence of these archetypes in what he termed the “collective unconscious” or the unconscious mind of a culture and distinguished the collective unconscious from the personal unconscious. The personal unconscious is a personal reservoir of experience unique to each individual while the collective unconscious collects and organizes personal experiences in a similar way with each member of a particular species.

As Jung wrote in *The Archetypes of the Collective Unconsciousness* “In addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche (even if we tack on the personal unconscious as an appendix), there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents.”

In his work *Man And His Symbols*, Jung linked the collective unconscious to what Freud called “archaic remnants” or mental forms whose presence cannot be explained by anything in the individual’s own life and which seem to be aboriginal, innate, and inherited shapes of the human mind.”

Archetypes relate to the German word “zeitgeist” meaning “spirit of the times” or the intellectual, moral, technological and cultural essence of historical periods. In effect, the zeitgeist

symbols has the ubiquity and invisibility of encompassing mediums like air for humans and water to fish. They overlay their times like a general climate rather than particular weathers coming and going within it. Rather than a force causing an event they are rather an atmosphere influencing the perception of the event.

\* \* \*

These large archetype symbols might be identified as major trends in culture and political systems and philosophies. Like smaller symbols, these large cultural archetypes should demonstrate a cyclic movement between opposite symbols as well as a correspondence with other archetypal symbols.

For example, lets consider the archetype symbols of mass culture, political totalitarianism and philosophical monism and observe their movement and correspondence with each other in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A sequence of their movement through time might be visualized in Chart A below.

1900 – 1930s	1930s – 1970s	1970s – Present
Mass Culture	Bi-Lateralism	Segmented Culture
Totalitarianism	Communism	Terrorism
Monism	Dualism	Pluralism

Chart A  
Movement of Zeitgeist Symbols

In the above chart, we can see how the symbol of the mass culture of the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has moved to its opposition symbol of a segmented culture in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Additionally, we can see how the symbol of totalitarianism and its central control has moved into its opposite of a non-centralized terrorism that dominates so much political tactics and ideas today. Finally, we can observe how the philosophical symbol based around Monism and the idea of One has moved to its opposite in the symbol of Pluralism and the idea of Many.

Apart from the movement between opposites, the archetype symbols above also demonstrate the Law of Correspondence in their vertical similarities. For example, Mass Culture and its centralization certainly has a symbolic correspondence with Totalitarianism as well as Monism just as Bi-Lateralism has a correspondence with Communism and Dualism while today's Segmented Culture a correspondence with Terrorism and Pluralism.

-----NOTES -----

Mass trends = Archetypes

Mass fantasies of flying saucers & collective unconsciousness

From the perspective of scripts they can be used as guideposts for script subjects and themes. Script Symbolologists use them to get a big picture on the world at a time when the world gets chopped up into smaller and smaller pictures on smaller and smaller screens. Whether creating a new script or revising a completed one, the purpose is always comparing the individual script to this grand script of culture to discover symbolic correspondences and relationships between the large symbols of culture and the smaller symbols contained in a script from culture.

Media Nations

### Zeitgeist Symbols

Art movements

Philosophical systems

Communication types (how) --- Media

Dominant technology

Communication genres (what)

"All the most powerful ideas in history go back to archetypes...For it is the function of consciousness not only to recognize and assimilate the external world through the gateway of the senses, but to translate into visible reality the world within us."

*The Structure And Dynamics of the Psyche*  
Carl Jung

## Greek Gods & Hollywood Stars

A review of gods and goddesses throughout history and contained in studies of comparative mythology from scholars such as Bullfinch and Edith Hamilton suggests a commonality between gods from various ages and various cultures. Modern research into the relationship of Greek mythology to psychology in *The Eternal Drama: The Inner Meaning of Greek Mythology* by Edward Edinger suggests mythology can be understood as “the self-revelation of the archetypal psyche.”

In Edinger’s perspective, the Greek gods represent various parts of this psyche. This view is reinforced when one considers that the individual Greek Gods were associated with the key domains of sky or heaven, sea and earth. In other words, there is a strong symbolic correspondence between the Greek Gods and the basic elements of air, fire, earth and water.

The key Greek Gods involved seven Olympian Gods and six Olympian Goddesses. The fact that there are thirteen is because Demeter is not always present:

### Olympian Gods

- Zeus
- Poseidon
- Hades
- Apollo
- Hermes
- Ares
- Hephaestus

### Olympian Goddesses

- Hera
- Hestia
- Demeter
- Artemis
- Aphrodite
- Athena

Similar to the ways Greek Gods arose largely from inner psychological projections, the same may be the situation with celebrities such as movie stars, political leaders, television talk show hosts, business leaders and kings and queens. Modern celebrities may have this symbolic

correspondence to the ancient gods and goddesses which once populated the heavens and were as real to our ancestors as the stars and planets. Today, the “heavens” of the gods become the silver screen. But like the past, the "heavens" are still filled with “stars.”

Like the “constellation” of Greek gods, modern celebrities might also be viewed in a type of constellation with some holding the position of Zeus and others holding positions such as Apollo, Aphrodite and Athena. While there may be overall movement of the entire constellation, most of the positions within the constellation remain relatively fixed and stable.

There are certain key positions either occupied or empty in the present constellation. It is always in a constant state of change though as stars “fall” and new ones “rise” out of collective culture. There will never be another Princess Diana but there will emerge another world “princess” because this symbol is needed. One will emerge to fill the vacuum left with her passing. There is an empty space in a particular need area and an unstated but strong invitation by the collective unconscious for another celebrity to move in and fill this particular position.

Marketing and advertising (conscious actions) create celebrities to a certain extent. But the need already exists within the unconscious. The quick rise to stardom of a particular actor or actress is often related to the right marketing or the best film “vehicle.” The vehicle though is merely a contentual symbol within the overall contextual symbol of the times.

In the past, mega-celebrity status was usually tied to film box office appeal but in the post-modern world this is less frequently the case. Witness the incredible celebrity status of Princess Diana or the 80s celebrity status of Madonna who has now crossed over into films. Today, it flows into such areas as business (Bill Gates), science (Steven Hawking) and media (Rush Limbaugh, Larry King, Ophra Winfrey).

Celebrity status might also be conferred upon certain political leaders such as Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy. But as a general matter, political leaders need to be placed in a separate category and considered not as celebrities of the moment but rather as overall symbols for particular eras of history. It also needs to be remembered that the position of political power by itself confers a certain amount of celebrity on the individual.

Psychohistorians such as Lloyd deMause suggest that political leaders (really Presidents) are symbols of collective fantasies of the nation and serve as “containers” for projecting what is good and bad within the overall collective unconscious at the time.

## Contextual Symbols

"The meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside in the unseen, enveloping the tale which could only bring it out as a glow brings out a haze."

Joseph Conrad  
*Heart of Darkness*

Like a magic show, contentual symbols are the tricks on stage and within the spotlight which is the focus of the audience's attention. Contextual symbols are those subtle motions going on outside the immediate attention area of the audience. It is in these "offstage" areas that the real magic occurs.

One of the greatest investigators of contextual symbolism in the twentieth century, in fact one might even say the discoverer of it, was surprisingly Marshall McLuhan. His famous statement that the medium is the message was both a recognition of context in the first place and the overriding importance of context in the second place. In this sense, contentual symbols are the messages and contextual symbols are the medium which carry the messages. They might be termed the hidden context of communication.

In this sense, there is a symbolic correspondence between contentual symbols which appear in the form of products like films, television programs and books, and the contextual symbols which contain them such as space, time and place. It is a major part of the argument in this investigation that there is a simultaneous alignment in time between leading contextual symbols and contentual symbols. Dominate genres of media and entertainment in a particular time have correspondence to contextual symbols. For example, the horror genre of film would have correspondence to contextual symbolism in such time images as night, darkness; space images as under, below and inside and place images such as valleys, caves and forests.

As Conrad said in The Heart of Darkness, the meaning of an episode is not inside but outside. So too, the symbolic meaning of products of popular culture are not within their traditional "features" and "benefits" or in their immediate label "packaging" but rather outside in their context. The fact that one buys a product in a particular environment really defines the product. The environment is the modern symbolic "brand" umbrella. A great advertisement appearing in a second rate publication sends a different message than the same advertisement in

the context of a respected publication. The same is true of something purchased at a fine department store versus something purchased at a discount store.

The general correspondence between contentual and contextual symbols also exists within contentual and contextual symbols. For example within contentual symbols, a product such as a car may have a symbolic correspondence with an animal like a ram. Or a wedding ring have an association with a diamond. The same is true within contextual symbols such as place, space and time because all associations with one of them involve the others. It is impossible to be in a place without being in a particular space at a particular time. They are all simultaneous aspects of context and although we list them separately they need to be considered together in the overall context.

The challenge is to realize this context which contains. It is a difficult task, especially in western civilization and American culture where there is a trance on content.

### Context And The Character of Culture

Character, whether in Hollywood films, literature or in real life, is invisible. It is not a tangible object that can be dissected and examined under a microscope. Even so, it can be revealed or expressed in a number of ways.

One method of character expression is through words and speech. Another method is through actions. Another method is by objects that surround the character. All are important in understanding character and have formed much of the basis for major scientific schools. For example, much of psychoanalytic theory is based on the belief of revelation of character through words while much of behavioristic theory is based on the belief of revelation of character through actions. And, much of anthropology is based on the belief of revelation of character through objects.

Over the years there has been one method for revealing character which has escaped many. Or, if it hasn't escaped people, it has been applied almost unconsciously to defining character. We speak of context here and note that it is a type of "container" for the words, actions and objects of character—a type of media or environment which surrounds and engulfs the other elements of character.

Culture as a whole may operate as a giant background movie set for the collective character of culture at a particular point in time. In this sense, this collective character is expressed in ways similar to that of a character in a film through actions, words and objects or products. But as it is with character in film (and individual character in real life) the true yet hidden meaning is revealed through the context against which action, words and objects are placed in.

The image of a man on a horse wearing a white hat and a gun says may say a great deal. But a great deal more is said if the horse is placed in a wide open desert rather than the middle of downtown Manhattan. In a similar manner, contextual symbols (such as place, space, time and elements) which form the background setting for contentual products in culture may in fact tell us much more about the meaning of culture than all the noise and action coming from the products on center stage so to speak. The magic, mystery and ultimate meaning of the scenes

which are so confusing and data-filled is just a little off to the side, out of the limelight, the trance where our attention is always directed.

### Natural Places

Place is one of the most important yet least recognized symbols. It is the central aspect of contextual symbolism influencing perception and communication far more than we realize.

In effect, place is the natural world which have contained all of our personal and collective experiences. Over the course of cultural and individual history, memory makes associations with general types of places and the image of these places brings back the original experience.

### Earth And Heaven

Before we embark on a brief tour of the major symbolic places of earth, we need to recognize the deep symbolism associated with earth itself. It is almost an overpowering symbol, the subject of so much symbolism through history that it is difficult to know where to begin. Probably one of the best places to begin is with a recently published collection of brilliant essays by Erich Neumann called The Fear of the Feminine (Princeton University Press, 1994) and the essay "The Meaning of the Earth Archetype."

Neumann first reminds us that it is impossible to talk about any archetype without talking about its opposite. "It follows, He says, "that when we speak of the Earth archetype are always inevitably also referring to the archetype of Heaven and the relationship between the two." In this duality, Neumann observes that Heaven is "connected archetypally with the symbolism of what is above, light, bright, masculine, and active." Earth, on the other hand, is connected with "what is below, heavy, dark, feminine, and passive."

For humanity as a whole, Neumann notes that the symbols grouped around the Earth archetype include not only what is below, dark, feminine and passive but also what is of this world, corporeal, tangible, material, and static. The opposite symbolism of Heaven is connected with what is otherworldly, incorporeal, intangible, spiritual and dynamic. In many respects, one can see the duality as that between what we define as "context" and "content" with content below and context above.

### Ecosystems And Continents

While the world might be defined as consisting of any number of particular places, here we mean the major places which are defined by such aspects as weather and vegetation. Probably the best classification of place in this sense is the broad ecosystems of the world. These consist of the following:

- Deserts
- Prairies
- Jungles

- Forests
- Oceans
- Mountains
- Polar

Ecosystems have a close relationship with continents with southern continents possessing warmer temperatures and the wild growing vegetation of jungles while northern continents with colder temperatures containing forests.

Perhaps the major division of ecosystems is between those which possess the life or vegetation and those which are relatively devoid of life. On one extreme are the ecosystems of oceans, forest and jungles filled with life. On the other extreme, are the ecosystems of deserts, polar and mountains devoid of life.

The contrast between dead and alive places offers a key symbolic background to a number of contentual symbols. Not the least is the content within stories from film and literature. In his book The Role of Place in Literature, Leonard Lutwack notes the following:

"Vegetation has a most important influence on the quality of places. Vegetation is life, and its degree of density indicates the amount of life a place harbors. Places devoid of plant life are associated with deprivation and death, places of abundant vegetation are pleasant and erotic. Deserts and mountain tops present the terrifying aspects of lifeless matter whereas the forest is life in an active, wild state."

In this sense, placing a character against a desert background suggests a certain deadness while placing the same character against a forest background suggests life and growth.

There are many correspondences one can make between these ecosystems and other contextual and contentual symbols. One example is there is the strong correspondence between ecosystems and story genres of films, television and literature. The western genre film does not happen against a polar or ocean background but rather is set most often against prairies and deserts. The fairy tale seldom happens outside the context of a forest.

Another is the correspondence between masculine and feminine archetypes and consciousness and unconsciousness. For example, the ocean is considered perhaps the greatest symbol for the feminine, unconscious and undifferentiated state. It contains life that is below rather than above which symbolically parallels the symbolism of linear development moving from below to above. Also considered symbols of the feminine, unconscious original state are forests and jungles.

On the other hand, the desert and mountains are masculine symbols with their association with above space, fire and light.

#### Geography And Landscape

Within the broad context of ecosystems, there are smaller specific geographical aspects of the overall ecosystem such as rivers and lakes. Some of the key elements of landscape are of these places within ecosystems are:

- Rivers
- Bays
- Shore
- Lakes
- Valley
- Canyon
- Cave

Just as there are associations to the large ecosystem places of oceans and deserts, there are also associations to these smaller "islands" within the context of ecosystems. The ecosystem often is the overall "setting" for a film or novel while things such as rivers and canyons are "way stations" on the voyage of the hero through the story.

As with ecosystems, particular landscapes have close connection with story genres. Rivers traditionally represent the flow of time. However, it may important symbolically if the hero is going down a river or up a river. For example, Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn goes down the river away from something but Conrad's Marlowe goes up a river toward something. One goes away from the center while another goes towards the center.

While rivers represent water in its active state, lakes symbolize water in its passive state. Here, water does not move from higher to lower but is rather contained in a level area. Rivers suggest "roads" and boundaries but lakes suggest tranquillity and destinations.

Valleys, caves and canyons represent more of a feminine archetype than a masculine one in that they are all below spaces rather than above spaces. The association of valley and the feminine comes partly from a valley's long association with fertility, especially the Biblical Nile river valley.

### The Four Directions

The four directions of north, south, east and west have symbolic correspondence to a number of things such as cultures, continents and even cultural movement. While they represent directions they really are more places.

The place of north is associated with modern cultures and technology, industrialization and materialism while the south has more of an association with primitive culture and an economy based on farming. The north has an association with masculine, thinking and consciousness while the south has an association with feminine, feeling and unconsciousness. Traditional symbolism has associated the northern hemisphere with light and the positive principle of Yang while the southern hemisphere has been associated with darkness and Yin.

The directions of east and west are closely tied to the daily cycle of sunrise in the east and sunset in the west. The daily cycle relates to the cycle of birth and death with the east representing the birth of the day while the west represents the death of the day. Associated with the east are also such additional correspondences such as spring, hope and childhood. It is the direction to which worship is oriented, especially for the solar gods of ancient times. The east possesses a general symbolism of the past and the ancient world.

Associated with the west is the season of autumn, old age and death. In China, west symbolizes dryness and sorrow and element of metal, the color white and the White Tiger. In Egyptian mythology, the "western lands" are the territory the souls of the dead make a hazardous pilgrimage to in their quest for immortality. In opposition to the east's general symbolism of the past and the ancient world, the west has symbolism of the future and the modern world of advanced cultures. It has been the major direction of exploration of the world culminating with the final march west in the discovery of America.

The directions are given additional meaning by Jung in Psychology And Religion: West And East with the following observation:

"In the East, the inner man has always had such a firm hold on the outer man that the world had no chance of tearing him away from his inner roots; in the West, the outer man gained the ascendancy to such an extent that he was alienated from his innermost being."

Later in this book he speaks of the "extraverted tendency of the West and introverted tendency of the East." In another part of Jung uses contextual space symbolism in comparing the east and the west observing the "West is always seeking uplift, but the East seek a sinking or deepening." Jung notes that outer reality, with its bodiliness and weight, appears to make a much stronger impression on the European than it does on the Indian. "The European seeks to raise himself above this world, while the Indian likes to turn back into the maternal depths of Nature."

### Cultural Places

The distinction between natural places and cultural places may be obvious but it needs to be at least brought forward. Natural places are created by nature while cultural places are created by civilization. Both are contextual symbols providing mediumistic environments containing content.

While one could create a long list of cultural places, some of the key ones would include the following:

- Nations
- Cities
- Streets
- Houses
- Buildings
- Farms
- Parks
- Gardens
- Roads

This list is only a start and certainly not all inclusive. It simply offers a few examples of what we mean when we talk about cultural places so as to distinguish them from natural places.

## Nations

There is an obvious symbolism to the nations and great cities of the world. It is almost as if they represent essential components of the type of "constellation" we found with celebrities.

## Cities

Cities might be considered "islands" of consciousness within the "ocean" of unconscious nature. In fact the development of the city in history cannot be separated from the development of civilization. The two are really the same thing. Perhaps the greatest book ever written about the history (and really symbolism) of the city is Lewis Mumford's The City in History, one of the great works of modern scholarship. As Mumford writes, "This book opens with a city that was, symbolically, a world: it closes with a world that has become, in many practical aspects, a city."

More specifically, individual cities may serve the purpose of particular Greek Gods and Goddesses (or modern celebrities) in the psychological constellation of collective needs. In this sense, cities within nations such as Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, New Orleans and Las Vegas embody a strong identity and image because of the key psychological archetypes they represent as much as the circumstances of their geography, economy and history.

The same type of constellation archetype might also be true of cities on an international scale such as Paris, London, Vienna and Rome.

## City Places

For the most part, many cultural places within cities have strong correspondences to natural places. For example, skyscrapers and the upward reach of cities can be considered symbolic of the masculine place of mountains. On the other hand, subways running underground and through long tubes are related to the feminine.

As a city might be considered as a cultural island of consciousness within the sea of unconscious nature, parks within cities are like islands of unconsciousness in the urban sea of consciousness. Sigmund Freud for instance, compares parks with the mental realm of fantasy. In General Introduction To Psychoanalysis Freud notes:

"The creation of the mental domain of fantasy has a complete counterpart in the establishment of 'reservations' and 'nature-parks' in places where the inroads of agriculture, traffic, or industry threaten to change...the earth rapidly into something unrecognizable. The 'reservation' is to maintain the old condition of things which has been regretfully sacrificed to necessity everywhere else; there everything may grow and spread as it pleases, including what is useless and even what is harmful."

Freud concludes that, "The mental realm of fantasy is also such a reservation reclaimed from the encroaches of the reality principle."

## Symbolic Duality Between Natural And Cultural Place

An interesting perspective on place symbolism is offered in the Spring 1998 issue of the Wilson Quarterly. The cover topic is titled "America's Rural Revival" and articles in the journal document a growing trend in the 90s to move from urban areas to the country. In an article titled "The Landscape of Disturbance" by Professor Frederick Turner views the trend from a strong symbolic perspective noting:

"We are undergoing a major transition in our basic cultural model of the human relationship with the rest of nature. To sum it up in one sentence, it is a transition from a heroic, linear, industrial, power-based, entropic-thermodynamic, goal-oriented model, to a tragicomic, nonlinear, horticultural, influence-based, synergetic, evolutionary-emergentist, process-oriented model. The heroic model postulates a human struggle with nature culminating in human victory, while the tragicomic model postulates an ongoing engagement with nature...The industrial model requires a burning; the horticultural model requires a growing."

Within the space of a paragraph, Turner manages to encompass a sizable number of symbolic images such as heroic, linear, nature, burning (fire), industrial and horticulture.

The duality dynamics of symbolism are present in Turner's observation with urban life symbolizing the linear, masculinity of culture against the nonlinear, feminine of nature in the country. Turner is suggesting that the rural migration trend is a movement towards the feminine archetype within culture. Whether he is right or not is less important for our purposes than in the symbolic context of place he wraps around his argument.

### Space

Pre-Copernican - center  
Post Copernican - peripheral  
Tyler Volk – Megapatterns / Boundary

### Time

"To speak of the morning and spring, of the evening and autumn of life is not mere sentimental jargon. We thus give expression to psychological truths, and even more to physiological facts."

The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche

Jung

"We do not understand that everything of psychic origin has a double face. One face looks forward, the other back. It is ambivalent and therefore symbolic, like all living reality."

Civilization in Transition

Jung

Linear (Sequence)  
Past

Present  
Future  
Paradox: always various sequences being played out  
Cyclical (Repetition of sequence)(Duality)  
Day  
    Major division into day and night  
    Light and darkness  
Week  
Month  
Season  
Year  
  
Generations  
    Like celebrity constellations, could be three always in the universe of the world. *Rocking the Ages: The Yankelovich Report on Generational Marketing*.

### Phenomenon

Weather symbolism in general  
    The symbolism of El Nino

Earth  
    Earthquakes

Fire  
    Fires  
    Vocanoes

Water  
    Tidal waves  
    Flood  
    Hurricane

Wind  
    Tornadoes  
    Hurricane

*The Divine Tempest: The Hurricane As Psychic Phenomena* by David Schoen (1998-Inner City)

The Hurricane is a universal symbol of the Self in its most primordial form. The human response to hurricanes spans a continuum from fascination to terror. Though we recognize the need to protect ourselves, we are yet drawn to witness its awesome power.

The greatest artists of our period have likened the zeitgeist to the fickleness of the wind. Bob Dylan reminded us that the "answers" were blowing in this wind. And asked by Playboy magazine interviewer David Sheff as to what moved the Beatles, John Lennon said "Whatever wind was blowing at the time moved the Beatles. I'm not saying we weren't flags on the top of a ship; but the whole ship was moving. Maybe the Beatles were in the crow's nest, shouting, 'Land ho,' or something like that, but we were all in the same damn boat." Interestingly enough, Lennon never sees the Beatles as creating the message of the time but rather being types of mediums for this message. As he tells Sheff in the interview, "We tuned in to the message."

### Basic Elements

#### Earth

#### Fire

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." I  
Corinthians 3:13

#### Water

#### Air

#### Active & Passive

Jung made the distinction between active and passive elements. For example, water might be seen as passive and active, inanimate and animate. It is inanimate when it is the form of a pond or lake. It is animate in the form of a waterfall or river. The same might be said of air that is still and air full of life such as a hurricane or tornado. There is life to water when it is flowing, to the earth when it is moving such as an earthquake, a fire when it is burning and air when it is blowing.

### Symbol Systems

Numbers (numerology)

Jungian Archetypes by Robin Robertson. Particularly the chapter titled "Number As Archetype"

Astrology

Picture writing

Shapes

Shapes are a key component of symbolic context. We maintain that shape is subject to the dynamics of the laws of symbolism. In this sense, dominant shapes in popular culture may embody the context of products and show movement from contexts such as square shapes to circular shapes.

The greatest resource for symbolic images and shapes is contained in the work of the Swedish symbol researcher Carl Liungman. His key books are Dictionary of Symbols and Thought Signs. For research purposes there is a CD and an interactive database research website at [www.symbols.com](http://www.symbols.com). This site represents the world's largest online encyclopedia of graphic symbols.

Interestingly, on this website words can be linked to symbols. Symbol researchers are encouraged to visit this incredible resource. It contains more than 2,500 Western signs, arranged into 54 groups according to their graphic characteristics. In 1,600 articles their histories, uses, and meanings are thoroughly discussed. The signs range from ideograms carved in mammoth teeth by Cro-Magnon men, to hobo signs and subway graffiti. The Graphic Index of the site can be used to search for the meaning or history of a sign. An ideogram with a certain meaning can be searched by use of the Word Index on the site.

#### Patterns & Textures

#### Color (light)

Color is one of the key contextual elements of symbolism. The internet has some key resources for color symbolism research. One of the top sites for this is the Color Matters website at the following address:

<http://www.lava.net/~colorcom>

#### Goethe - Theory of Color

Presence of light is necessary for color

Centers around duality of black and white

Darkness and light

Night and day

Color systems in the world (E.O.Wilson?)

#### Primary Colors

Red

Blue

Yellow

#### Secondary

Green

Orange

Purple  
Tertiary (result from mixing two secondary colors)  
Brown  
Olive  
Orange-Brown  
Primary Colors (Additive)  
Red  
Green  
Blue

Color Spectrum  
Red-Orange-Yellow-Green-Blue-Indigo-Violet

### Alchemy

The medieval process of alchemy was concerned with the discovery of the primary matter (*prima materia*) and its transformation through chemical procedures into the Philosopher's Stone. The ultimate existence of the Philosopher's Stone though has less importance than the symbolism of the process.

It was one of Jung's greatest discoveries, made in the twilight years of his life, that this alchemical process symbolized the psychic growth of an individual. In this sense, it provided a unique external visual representation of an internal psychic process. In *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, one of Jung's last books, he writes that "the entire alchemical procedure...could just as well represent the individuation process of a single individual, though with the not unimportant difference that no single individual ever attains to the richness and scope of the alchemical symbolism."

The method whereby psychic contents were placed into matter was through the psychic process of projection. As Jung notes in *Psychology and Alchemy*, "The real nature of matter was unknown to the alchemist; he knew it only in hints. Inasmuch as he tried to explore it he projected the unconscious into the darkness of matter in order to illuminate it." While performing his experiments, the alchemist therefore had certain psychic experiences. Jung notes that this appeared to him as "the particular behavior of the chemical process. Since it was a question of projection, he was naturally unconscious of the fact that the experience had nothing to do with the matter itself. He experienced his projection as a property of matter; but he was in reality experiencing his own unconscious."

In alchemy, Jung found a type of historical confirmation for his analytical psychology. As he notes in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, "I had very soon seen that analytical psychology coincided in a most curious way with alchemy. The experiences of the alchemists, were, in a sense, my experiences, and their world was my world." Jung continues that, "I had stumbled upon the historical counterpart of my psychology of the unconscious...I now began to understand what these psychic contents mean when seen in historical perspective." Seen in this historical

perspective, Jung saw how the procedures in alchemy related to core images from myth, religion and folklore.

One of the best introductions and clearest explanations of the relationship between alchemy and the psyche is Edward Edinger's Anatomy of the Psyche: Alchemical Symbolism in Psychotherapy. Edinger chooses seven operations as the major ones making up alchemical transformation. These are calcinatio, solutio, coagulatio, sublimatio, mortificatio, separatio and coniunctio. As Edinger notes, "Each of these operations is found to be the center of an elaborate symbol system. These central symbols of transformation make up the major content of culture-products."

The first four of the alchemical procedures have a close symbolic correspondence to the basic elements of fire, water, earth and air. In fact, they were concerned with the chemical processes that turned materials to these basic elements. But it needs to be kept in mind that these processes also represent basic psychic processes of change.

### 1) Calcinatio (Fire)

Most alchemical operations begin with calcinatio. The process involves an intense heating of a solid to drive off water and all constituents that will volatilize. The result is a remaining fine, dry powder. The effect is one of purification.

### 2) Solutio (Water)

This is the process whereby a solid is turned into a liquid, water form. Water symbolizes the original matter (prima materia) out of which the world was created. It symbolizes the womb and solutio is a return to the womb for rebirth. For the alchemist, this meant the return of differentiated matter to its original prima materia or undifferentiated state. It represented a release from the concrete particulars (of solid form) and a realization of the universal (in liquid form).

Jung equated the liquid solution with knowledge when he commented in Mysterium Coniunctionis that "As bodies are dissolved by solution, so the doubts of philosophers are resolved by knowledge." In many respects, solutio is the core process of alchemy. John Read in Prelude to Chemistry (1937) observed "Until all be made water, perform no operation." And Bonus of Ferrara in The New Pearl of Great Price (1546) noted that "Solutio is the root of alchemy." Edinger quotes an old alchemical dictum of "dissolve the matter in its own water."

In Anatomy of the Psyche, Edinger notes that it is "Basically the ego's confrontation with the unconsciousness that brings about solutio." The various aspects of the solutio form core symbols in such areas as religion, mythology and literature. Some of these aspects are 1) a return to the womb or primal state 2) dissolution, dispersal, dismemberment 3) containment of a lesser thing by a greater one 4) rebirth, rejuvenation, immersion in the creative flow 5) purification ordeal 6) solution of problems and 7) a melting or softening process.

### 3) Coagulatio (Earth)

As calcinatio is based around the element of fire and solutio around the element of water, coagulatio is based around the element of earth. It is the process that turns something to earth, or heavy and permanent and of fixed position and shape. The psychic process is the attachment to an ego.

#### 4) Sublimatio (Air)

This is the alchemical associated with the element of air whereby material is turned into air by volatilizing and elevating it. It is associated with an ascending movement whereby a solid when heated passes into a gaseous state and ascends to the top. It involves the process of distillation.

mortificatio, separatio and coniunctio.

Freemasonry  
Divination  
Heraldic Emblems  
International Signs  
Symbolic Gestures  
Psychological Types

#### Genre

Genre is a symbolic system that has commonality with all storytelling forms of popular culture. When a narrative structure is involved, genre offers one of the key methods for defining the contextual symbolism involved. It has importance to symbolism because it offers a common method for categorizing symbols from various media of popular culture such as films, television and literature. It also has a long history going back to basic forms of Greek drama in comedy, tragedy, romance and satire.

Symbolic correspondences have been found between genre and cycles and genre and sequence. While genre is one of the key contextual symbols of story-based entertainment products, it may also provide one of the keys to creating common categories for other current popular product symbols in the sense that many popular products outside of strictly narrative ones in fact tell stories.

A few examples using genre for symbolic contextual analysis might help to clarify this important area and demonstrate its use symbolically. One example involves a dominant genre in American popular culture in the late 1990s. The other involves the dominant genre in American popular culture in the second half of the 19th century.

#### 1) Dominance of the Gothic Genre

One excellent investigation using symbolic genre analysis of popular culture is Mark Edmunson's Nightmare On Main Street: Angels, Sadomasochism, And The Culture of Gothic (Harvard U. Press, Cambridge, 1997). The gothic genre comes from a type of terror fiction that took off in England during the 1790s when the French Revolution was in progress. Types of gothic are terror gothic which was initiated by Ann Radcliffe and Monk Lewis in the 1790s; Mary Shelley's type of gothic who gave us Frankenstein and the apocalyptic gothic and no less than Freud who gave us internalized gothic and the haunted psyche from 1900 to 1939.

Mark Edmunson in Nightmare On Main Street suggests the gothic genre as a broad organizing paradigm for overall culture in the 90s and final years of the twentieth century. Going beyond products, Edmunson sees gothic in all forms of culture remarking that:

"Gothic conventions have slipped over into ostensibly nonfictional realms. Gothic is alive not just in Stephen King's novels and Quentin Tarantino's films, but in media renderings of the O.J. Simpson case, in our political discourse, in our modes of therapy, on TV news, on talk shows like Oprah, in our discussions of AIDS and of the environment. American culture at large has become suffused with Gothic assumptions, with Gothic characters and plots."

Edmunson also sees the symbolic duality of the gothic genre when he notes that, "Rather than seeing ours as a culture of chaos, as many now do, I see it as shot through with a significant dialectical pattern, the play of Gothic and facile transcendence."

Edmunson provides a contextual scenario for the rise of the gothic genre. Around 1975, he notes, slasher films began proliferating in America with Texas Chain Saw Massacre, Halloween, Nightmare On Elm Street and Friday The Thirteenth. These original manifestations of the emergence of the gothic genre were fringe products though. As Edmunson notes, "But these were down and dirty productions, shot on shoestring budgets and patronized by adolescents looking for quasi-sexual shivers, and by the sorts of middle-aged men who have trouble keeping eye contact."

The gothic genre moved from the fringe towards the mainstream of popular culture in the 90s. As Edmunson writes, "But then suddenly, at the onset of the '90s, an expensively produced slasher film was at the center of mainstream American culture." The film was Silence of the Lambs. "Horror," notes Edmunson, "had reached prime time."

The 90s have seen a boom in horror fiction and film. After Silence, Coppola directed Dracula, Kenneth Branagh was in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and Jack Nicholson was The Wolf Man. The novels of Ann Rice have risen to the top of the bestseller lists and of course Stephen King has beaten sales of all gothic novelists with 250 million books in print. King's commercial supremacy in the 90s has been challenged only R.L. Stine author of such adolescent fright novels as The Scarecrow Walks At Midnight, Haunted, and Cheerleaders: The First Evil. Terror has never been so hot and lucrative.

As Edmunson notes, "The influence of Alfred Hitchcock, major Gothic artist that he is, remains omnipresent in American film. Quentin Tarantino, David Lynch, The Coen Brothers, and Brian de Palma, to name just a few, are Hitchcock's lineal descendants, but there is hardly a suspense or horror picture made in America that doesn't owe a debt to the Master."

Whether one buys into Edmunson's theory that the 90s are dominated by the gothic genre is less important than seeing that genre analysis can provide a powerful tool to characterizing the symbolism of popular culture.

## 2) Dominance of the Children Story Genre

In the slim yet important The Medium is the Massage (1967), Marshall McLuhan makes an interesting observation with broad implications for a symbolism of popular culture. "When faced with a totally new situation," he notes, "we tend always to attach ourselves to the objects, to the flavor of the most recent past." Conversely, one might say that when secure in a familiar situation, one tends to venture out, away from objects and into the future.

An interesting speculation centers around genres which are past oriented and future oriented. For instance, the children's story genre can be considered a romantic, past oriented genre centered around a nostalgia for the past while the science fiction genre is a future oriented genre centered around a rejection of the past and consciousness movement towards the future. Does the children's genre dominant popular culture at times when culture is surrounded with, as McLuhan puts it, a "totally new situation"? Does the science fiction genre dominant when mass culture feels secure in the present and willing to venture into the future?

The answers to these questions could provide a good amount of insight into the dynamics of the symbolism of popular culture. While the theory remains to be tested in a number of situations, it seems to be true in relation to one period of American history which has been defined as the golden age of children's literature. In a brilliant study of American children's literature called The Classic American Children's Story, literature professor Jerry Griswold finds an obsession with and dominance of children's literature during the period from 1850 to 1914. During this period twelve key works of children's literature such as The Wizard of Oz, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Secret Garden, Tarzan of the Apes and Little Women were created.

Much of the reason for the dominance of children's literature during the second half of the nineteenth century is related directly to Marshall McLuhan's concept of attachment to the past within totally new situations. As Griswold notes, "The second half of the nineteenth century was dramatically different from the first half, when American Rip Van Winkles slumbered in a long Jeffersonian dream of pastoral tranquility and agrarian self-sufficiency." Griswold rightly observes that the "horrors" of the Civil War changed all that as Americans awoke (did Rip Van Winkle symbolically foreshadow the mass awakening of America?) from their slumber to find America being reshaped by the forces of change in the form of rapid industrialization and urbanization.

Feeling displaced by the rapid growth and change, many writers and readers, notes Griswold, longed to "recapture the past" and did so along the lines of the English Romantic poets in their celebration of childhood. "Following such horrors as Antietam and Gettysburg," writes Griswold, "Americans wished to recall the prewar bliss of their own agrarian childhoods. This may explain why the children's books of the period had such wide appeal, and why so many are memoirs...or in large part autobiographical...and have settings that are essentially rural or pastoral."

## Gender

The genders of masculine and feminine represent key contextual dualities in the world. Virtually all contextual symbols have correspondence to one of these symbols. For example, some important feminine places are oceans and valleys while important masculine places are mountains and deserts. The feminine gender relates to the space of below or inside while the masculine gender relates to above and outside.

Through Jung's concept of anima and animus, the masculine and feminine gender is given psychological meaning in addition to its biological meaning. Jung noted that males possess certain feminine aspects (anima) while females possess certain masculine aspects (animus). In his contribution to Hermann Keyserling's The Book of Marriage (1926) Jung remarked that:

"every man bears in his heart the image of woman, not the image of this particular woman, but of one particular woman. This image is in reality an unconscious primeval inheritance, engraved on the living system, a 'type' (archetype) of every ancestral experience of woman, the residue of all impressions left by women, a hereditary psychic system of adaptation. If there were no women, this unconscious image would make it possible to describe what a woman spiritually would be."

The "image of woman" in man is the anima just as the image of man in woman in man is the animus.

It can be argued that gender is in fact the organizing force behind all symbols and perhaps the greatest of all symbolic dualities. Each day the forces of masculine and feminine do battle with the cyclic movement between day and night. And, the very duality between consciousness (masculine) and unconsciousness (feminine) is at the core of much symbolism.

Apart from the duality between the two, the evolution of both individuals and culture shows a linear movement from the feminine state of unconsciousness, unity and darkness to the masculine state of consciousness, segmentation and light. This evolution is mirrored in the movement from the dominance of matriarch society to the patriarch society.

The power of gender is so great that one could construct a symbolism of popular culture around gender. This is just what Bram Dijkstra has done in two brilliant books, Idols of Perversity and Evil Sisters. In these groundbreaking works of popular culture, the author shows how images of women as demons and vampires are deeply embedded in popular culture. The image of women as a seductress destroyer of men was a view surprisingly shared across a large part of culture during the first quarter of the twentieth century and played a key role in the rise of Nazi Germany.

## Media (Medium)

Symbolism in popular culture is both influenced and carried by media and it is difficult to determine which plays the dominant role. As McLuhan said, the media is the message and so it is that messages of culture are changed by the media they come through.

The relationship of media to the zeitgeist and contextual cycles is a crucial area for future investigation. In the exploration, one does not start alone thanks to pioneering work by media theorists such as Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan and Joshua Meyrowitz.

A large part of the legacy left by Innis and McLuhan is in the possibility of rewriting history from a media perspective and viewing the core of historical periods not from a political, economic, social or cultural perspective but rather from a media perspective. The foundation for this was laid in books like Innis' *The Bias of Communication* and *Empire and Communication* and McLuhan's *Understanding Media*. It has been carried forth into the modern electronic age by Joshua Meyrowitz in his groundbreaking book *No Sense of Place*.

Meyrowitz admits that "social change is always too complex to attribute to a single cause and too diverse to reduce to a single process." Yet the theory proposed in *No Sense of Place* does seem to suggest a common theme that "connects many recent and seemingly diverse phenomena" in American culture. The common theme of Meyrowitz is the loss of a sense of place brought about by electronic media, particularly television. The effect has been altering the balance between public and private spaces, blurring and merging gender, age and authority distinctions. In the age of electronic media Meyrowitz shows how experiences and behaviors are no longer shaped by *where* we are or who is "with" us. The electronic media forms the new cultural environment.

Many Americans, notes Meyrowitz, "may no longer seem to 'know their place' because the traditionally interlocking components of 'place' have been split apart by electronic media. Wherever one is now-at home, at work, or in the car-one may be in touch and tuned-in." Meyrowitz suggests that this sense of placelessness may be the key element to the confusion of modern man. "Our world may suddenly seem senseless to many people because, for the first time in modern history, it is relatively placeless."

### Moral Qualities

Overriding qualities associated with context such as beauty, ugliness, truth and falseness have may have strong associations with moral values such as good and evil, right and wrong.

The association of beauty with goodness and ugliness with evil has been a key theme in popular culture. The association holds whether it is a beautiful place, object or person. In this respect, a barren land in fairytales often represents the evil kingdom before the arrival of the hero while a beautiful, lush, verdant garden represents the a kingdom ruled by a good king or queen.

This same association holds true with people. In *Freak Show*, Robert Bogdan shows how the development of American entertainment was closely tied to freak shows where deformed people were displayed for profit. While the key period of these freak shows was from 1840 to 1940, the symbolic association of disability and evilness has become a dominant contextual symbol in American popular culture. It is one of the silent but ever present symbolic contexts all disabled people are placed within.

As Bogdan observes, in a film a large part of being bad is looking bad. One is reminded of the villains from Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. Or, the way in which the Disney company constantly reinforces this symbolism to great effect. For instance, the beautiful queen in *Snow*

*White* had to be transformed into a wart-nosed hunchback before she could set about to accomplish her hideous task.

Interestingly, supermodels of the late twentieth century are not as gorgeous and drop-dead beautiful as they were in the 80s and early 90s. The look is for more of the common person, the slice of life, the testimonial. Perhaps in our modern culture of information glut, tabloid television and loud hyperbole, the qualities of hardness (ugliness) have more selling appeal than those of beauty and innocence.

### Technology

"The machine no longer fabricates only material products; it also makes minds. Millions of people live by the stereotypes of mass art, the most virulent form of abstractness, and their capacity for any kind of human reality is fast disappearing. If here and there in the lonely crowd...a face is lit by a human gleam, it quickly goes vacant in the hypnotized stare at the TV screen... We have fabricated for our time a new kind of abstractness on a mass scale; through our extraordinary mastery of technique we provide a ready-made reflection in place of the real."

William Barrett

### Irrational Man

### World View

Discovery of the Unconsciousness - Freud and Jung                      themselves as symbols

### The Psychology Of Context

The correspondence between place and story genres suggests a broader correspondence between place and psychological states. We have briefly touched on this in discussing dramatic movement in films suggesting that certain places symbolize psychological states.

It needs to be pointed out, though, that place has importance as a background for all products of popular culture. In fact, the true symbolism of products of popular culture can be arrived at more by examining *where* they are than *what* they are. In this sense, contextual symbolism for a particular period of cultural history might be dominated by such contextual aspects as a specific place, space, time and element.

## Symbolism of Place

As we have observed in previous columns, symbols possess two key characteristics of opposition and alignment. Placed in the context of script symbology symbols in Act I (at the beginning of a script) need to be opposite from those in Act III (the end of the script) in order for the script to possess the greatest drama. This linear movement between opposition symbols we related to the horizontal line of the cross symbol.

Within the dramatic movement of symbols in script narratives are non-linear points in time where symbols are aligned and similar (rather than opposite). This alignment of symbols at particular moments in time is part of a key law of symbolism called The Law of Correspondence which finds similarity between the outside world and the inside world.

Recognizing place as an important symbol in scripts, we can locate the symbol of place into a symbolism of place. In this way, we can note the movement of place in scripts between opposition places at the beginning and at the ending of scripts as well as the alignment of external place with internal character states.

The close correspondence between natural place of the outside world and the internal world of mankind was perhaps the main appropriation of symbols for ancient man. But today symbols have little alignment with internal states and seem directed almost exclusively towards an outside world full of products.

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Recognizing a new direction in script symbolism does not jettison all content from scripts but simply attempts to suggest that symbols within scripts might consist of a procession of various places or contexts between two opposite symbols at the beginning and end of the script. This procession of these contexts when related in time to the development of the hero of the script might lead to a powerful new type of script.

If one was going to organize a script using some of these ideas they might first envision two places in the script as opposition symbols to each other. These symbols are the dominating symbol at the beginning of the script and the dominating symbol at the end of the script. Associated with the two grand bookend symbols, are others that have a correspondence, relationship and similarity with them. There is a correspondence of similar symbols that move

between the opposition symbols and manifest themselves at particular points in the script called scenes.

Current screenwriting theory has it that the core force of scenes is drama of movement within the scene. But we disagree. It is not appropriating a miniature battle within a script between two symbols like most screenwriting gurus recommend. Rather, it is creating more of an alignment between the outside world and the inside world. A tight connection between the inner and outer in scenes, faithfully moved through the script from beginning to end, matching the outside world to the inside world of the hero, is the key to creating the power of the two opposition symbols at the beginning and ending of the script.

The direction of new script theory needs to become vertical and directed downward, like a type of modern cultural anthropologist, rather than outward into the self-reflective universe of our ubiquitous culture.

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### Symbolism of Place

"The meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside in the unseen, enveloping the tale which could only bring it out as a glow brings out a haze."

Joseph Conrad  
*Heart of Darkness*

The popular conception of a symbol is an object. The object of a diamond ring symbolizes love. The object of a flag symbolizes patriotism. While objects are certainly symbols, it should be pointed out all objects exist within a context or place. No object exists alone but rather in a place. Therefore, while objects are symbols, the places holding objects are also symbols. In fact, these places often play a large part in defining the symbols within them.

Media theorist Marshall McLuhan stated this theory in the 60s in his book *Understanding Media* with the short theorem "The medium is the message" meaning that messages are defined by the mediums they are communicated in. In a similar way, one can say that objects are defined by their containers. Or, object symbols are defined by their contextual symbols.

For example, consider a cowboy on a horse in the western desert. Now, consider the same cowboy and horse in a city rather than a desert. (The television show *McCloud* of the 70s

actually placed a cowboy on a horse in the streets of Manhattan). Here, the same symbols are presented in different contexts and are symbols.

Or, consider advertising and the creation of products and brands. More often than not, a product is defined more by its brand (in its surrounding context) than by its internal features and benefits. For instance, a diamond purchased at Tiffany has more perceived value than a diamond purchased at a diamond store in a shopping mall. Television commercials are masters of enveloping products in context.

In ancient times, symbols represented these contexts more than the objects within them as mankind had much greater awareness of his natural surroundings. But the modern world has lost the ancient understanding of contextual symbols in a world where the context of nature is buried under the objects of culture.

The understanding of symbols as objects is largely caused by the growth of culture and technology and the increasing distance of modern mankind from nature. But it also makes sense from an economic point of view. Symbols as objects relate to symbols as products and product symbols have far greater economic value than contexts as symbols.

Symbols in scripts demonstrate their allegiance to objects more than the places of objects. More often than not, script symbols are like icing on an already baked cake than an important ingredient in the cake recipe. Their purpose is more often than not to simply garner additional money for a film through the vehicle of product placement. This is so because cultural things symbols represent are usually products and brands.

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A new form of powerful script is possible when symbols are understood in their ancient, original way and directed away from their sticky attachment to objects and towards their surrounding place. In script terms, this surrounding place is that familiar element of script construction called Setting. Within the relatively simple designation of Setting exists a world of unexplored symbols that can serve to add great power to scripts.

What are these contextual symbols of place? They are the familiar, ubiquitous things that surround everyday life that are so pervasive they are almost invisible to us. The analogy to the surrounding context of water for fish is appropriate here. Someone once noted “Although we’re not sure who discovered water, we’re pretty sure it wasn’t fish.”

These surrounding contexts might be grouped around a number of familiar phenomena such as place, time, space, elements, light and weather that act as powerful mediums influencing the “messages” within them or the way characters, objects, actions and events are perceived in scripts. In this sense, they are far more than simply backgrounds for characters and their actions.

We will later go into detail on these contextual symbols but for now we might briefly categorize some major contextual symbols like place, time and space. Within the contextual symbol of place we can classify the major types of places on earth as natural places and cultural places. Natural places might be divided into the major Ecosystems or Biomes of the world such as deserts, jungles, forests, oceans, mountains, polar, tundra, grasslands and savannahs. Within the major Ecosystems, exist smaller natural places such as rivers, lakes, valleys, canyons, caves and shorelines. Cultural places might be said to contain such major divisions as cities, towns, villages and farms where people live. And, within the major cultural places exist smaller places like homes, buildings, streets, roads, parks and gardens. Inside the contextual symbol of place might also be added the four great directions or areas of the world in west, east, north and south.

Within the contextual symbol of time we can create categories of linear, cyclical and non-linear time. Areas of linear time would be those two major tenses of past and future. Cyclic time would involve daily cycles (night and day), monthly cycles and yearly cycles (summer, fall, winter and spring). Non-linear time involves that moment in time known as the present.

Finally, the contextual symbol of space involves various phenomena of space such as outside space (EXT in scripts), inside space (INT in scripts) as well as above space, below space, center space and peripheral space.

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Current screenwriting theory has it that the core force of scenes is the drama of movement within the scene. Yet viewing scenes as miniature battlefields of drama within the overall drama of the entire script loses sight of the important aspect of scenes as offering visual points of alignment between the context (place) of a scene and the content (characters, objects, actions and dialogue) of a scene.

Rather, it is creating more of an alignment between the outside world and the inside world. A tight connection between the inner and outer in scenes, faithfully moved through the script from beginning to end, matching the outside world to the inside world of the hero, is the key to creating the power of the two opposition symbols at the beginning and ending of the script.

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## The Symbolism of Light

“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.”

*Genesis 3, 4, 5*

The Bible begins with the creation of light and its division into light and darkness. The division is accomplished through the creation of day and night. As told in Genesis, “God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.”

Throughout history, light and darkness have been the key duality symbols of Christianity. In this capacity they have served as “bookend” symbols, attracting corresponding symbols and acting as cornerstone symbols around which lesser symbols have congregated.

Yet as powerful as the symbols of light and darkness are in Christian history, missing from this history has been the symbolism associated with day and night. When God *divided* light from darkness, God also *created* day and night. In creating day and night, the traditional interpretation is that God divided light from darkness. But hidden within this interpretation is another one. While God divided light from darkness, God also created two forms of light: the light of the sun and the light of the moon, sunlight and moonlight.

Expressed another way, God created the *radiated* light of the day and the *reflected* light of the night. The key difference in these two types of light is that radiated light is always an originating source of light while reflected light always comes from a source of light.

In this way, one arrives at very different duality symbols present at the beginning of the Bible. Rather than the symbols of light and darkness, one comes to the symbols of radiated and reflected light, the source of light and a reflection of the source of light. It is possible that hidden within the directive of God’s words “Let there be light” is the other meaning “Let there be a source of light and a reflection of a source of light.” Or, “Let there be Source and Reflection.” In this sense, the first part of Genesis might have been an *admonition to distinguish* source from reflection rather than a *narrative of creation*.

New and powerful insight becomes possible when history is reconsidered by replacing the traditional original duality symbols of light and darkness with the duality symbols of radiated and reflected light. They offer a key to unlocking many mysteries of the past and present. It is a

key that has so ubiquitously surrounded us all these years that it has become almost completely invisible.

### The Da Vinci Code As A Symbol

“Why should the fantasy exist?”  
CG Jung

Late in his life, when he was 83, Carl Jung wrote a book called *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Sky*. Published by the Bollingen Foundation, it is one of Jung’s last works and represents a rare application of the Jungian method to modern phenomena. In this book Jung notes that the worldwide “rumor” about flying saucers presents a problem that challenges the psychologist for many reasons.

For Jung, the primary question was whether the UFO phenomena was real or fantasy. If a product of fantasy, Jung asked “Why should the rumor (fantasy) exist?”

In *Flying Saucers*, Jung explored the fantasy aspect of flying saucers and speculated that there must be a desire in the general population to believe in them. This belief was helped along by the media and Jung observed from personal experience that “news affirming the existence of UFOs is welcome, but that skepticism seems to be undesirable ... to believe that UFOs are real suits the general population, whereas disbelief is to be discouraged.” Jung then asked his most incisive question: “Why should it be more desirable for saucers to exist than not?”

In essence, Jung felt that one gets closer to the truth of a situation by asking “why” rather than “what” or “how.” Jung was not concerned with what UFOs were or if they were real. The belief itself created the reality for Jung, not necessarily the phenomena the belief attached itself to. Rather, Jung was concerned with why many people believed in flying saucers.

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The “phenomenon” of *The Da Vinci Code* (TDVC) in 2004 is similar in important ways to the phenomenon of flying saucers and a perspective towards *The Da Vinci Code* similar to Jung’s perspective towards flying saucers yields new insights.

In effect, one needs to first separate the symbolism of *The Da Vinci Code* from the symbols in *The Da Vinci Code*. Many have written books and articles critical of the symbols in the book. However, few have looked at the book as a symbol in itself. From this perspective, the issue is not about the truth of the symbols in the novel. Rather the issue is about why the book became such a popular symbol at a particular point in time.

Why the great popularity of this symbol?

Why the popularity of this symbol at this point in time?

When we shift our focus from the truth of the symbols in *The Da Vinci Code* to the symbolism of *The Da Vinci Code*, that is, to consideration of the book itself as a symbol, much insight into the zeitgeist of contemporary culture suddenly becomes accessible to us. The question is not whether the symbols in the book are true but why so many millions of people believe the symbols in the book to be true.

Current debates about the truth or fiction of the symbols in *The Da Vinci Code* serve more the purpose of distraction than illumination. The real prey, as usual lurking in the shadows just a little outside our immediate view, is the context of the book rather than the content of the book.

Why did so many people read the book? Why did it become one of the greatest bestsellers in history? And why all of this in the early years of the new millennium. Is it significant it was the first big blockbuster after the events of 9/11? As a Jungian analyst might ask, what is in the collective unconscious of culture that made *The Da Vinci Code* such a popular book in 2004?

Authors are seldom privy to the answers to these questions. And, if one takes the time to read or view many of *The Da Vinci Code* author Dan Brown's interviews, this point is repeatedly brought home. Even authors who build excellent plots around exciting themes are often little more than manifestations or expressions of a symbol at a point in time. In effect, like other huge popular stories, something beyond the creativity of the author alone seems to be pushing into expression. When this happens, the author of a work becomes more of a medium of expression than an originator of expression. John Lennon has expressed this phenomenon well when he said in a Playboy interview:

Whatever wind was blowing at the time moved the Beatles. I'm not saying we weren't flags on the top of a ship; but the whole ship was moving. Maybe the Beatles were in the crow's nest, shouting, 'Land ho,' or something like that, but we were all in the same damn boat ... We tuned in to the message.

In effect, the symbolism of the novel *The Da Vinci Code* (as well as a film adaptation of it) needs to be viewed as an important pervasive ecology, again, the expression of a symbol in itself rather than a creative work about symbols. When viewed this way we can begin to move towards understanding the symbols in the book.

The symbolism of the book revolves around certain historical symbolic and mythological motifs that find wide acceptance in the current zeitgeist of popular culture. We will list a few of the more important of these.

#### A. The Search for Secret Treasurer

In many ways, *The Da Vinci Code* continues both the ancient (and Hollywood) tradition of a story about the search for a secret treasure. Tales of the search for treasure comprise one of the most persistent myths of all time. Psychiatrist Selma Fraiberg throws an interesting light on this topic in “Tales of the Discovery of the Secret Treasurer” in *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* (International University Press, 1954) observing:

“It is striking that the essential characteristics of this myth have remained unchanged throughout the ages ... The time of treasure hunting is childhood, and these stories of buried treasure are among the favorite tales of children. But they are not the exclusive property of children; they belong to all ages and all times.”

The book *Da Vinci Code* can be viewed as a story about the search for a treasure. With the theme of this story, childhood memories are called back for the reader. Adult readers of the novel can become children again. This needs to happen with the film adaptation of the book. While on its outward surface it might be a sophisticated historical detective mystery, on its basic subliminal level, the story is really a children’s story about the search for lost treasure.

#### B. The Greatest Secret Treasure Is Visible

One of the more interesting and subliminal aspects of *The Da Vinci Code* is the proposition that some of the great secret treasures of history are not necessarily hidden but rather are available for all to attempt to decode. However, this proposition goes against the traditional doctrine of the Christian church that proclaims only a few have access to viewing these secret symbols.

In *The Gnostic Gospels*, Elaine Pagels observes that from the second century AD, the doctrine of resurrection has served to validate apostolic secession of Bishops. Religious debates in the first few centuries of Christianity were very political.

Basically, the politics of the early church were maintained by suggesting that the resurrection had an outward manifestation in the real world. In effect, it was “seen” by a select few who saw it or were addressed by Jesus after the resurrection. The church fought against the idea that the resurrection could have an inward manifestation. If it possessed this inward manifestation, the church lost control because the symbol or secret of treasure was no longer a matter of those few who saw it.

#### C. Two Great Duality Symbols: The Gospels of John & Thomas

Once we consider that the story of *The Da Vinci Code* might be the expression of a modern symbol or myth itself, consideration of symbols within *The Da Vinci Code* become more accessible.

Discoveries in 1945 in Egypt opened up a modern duality symbolism for the traditional canonical interpretation of the Bible. One of the key areas opened to observation in 1945 was the *Gospel of Thomas*. In many ways, from the perspective of symbols and symbolism, this gospel served as an opposition symbol to the *Gospel of John*.

The *Gospel of John* was based on Jesus as God the Father. In effect, it was based on a male dominated system of theology. However, the *Gospel of Thomas* suggested a very different view of Jesus, not as God the Father, but rather as a divine light in all people. In the *Thomas Gospel*, God was both mother and father, female and male. The *Thomas Gospel* was a secret, revealed teaching.

## Character Symbols In DaVinci Code

### Sophie Neveu

Sophia means wisdom in Greek. Various commentators have suggested that Neveu is the word for “new” in French, might also mean “new eve” in reference to the biblical Eve. Her character might symbolize Eve and her appearance in the DVC symbolic of the second coming of Eve, the rebirth of the sacred feminine, the female goddess of wisdom.

“Sophia, as a mystical consort of Christ, is found in the Nag Hammadi book considered as scripture by the Gnostics. It is called Sophia (wisdom) of Jesus Christ. In this document, Sophia is the female half of the androgynous Christ, and known as “First Begetress Sophia, Mother of the Universe. Some call her ‘Love.’”

Dan Burstein, Secrets of the Code

“Sophie Neveu could herself be considered a Holy Grail under the definitions of The Da Vinci Code, as the vessel carrying the bloodline of Christ. At different times the book seems to lean strongly in the direction of suggesting that Sophie, as well as her brother in Scotland, are actually descended from the union of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. But then there is some fairly explicit prose suggesting that is not the case, just for balance. Like many other things, it’s a mystery.”

Dan Burstein, Secrets of the Code

### Sophie As Symbols for the New Mary (Connection to the Sacred Feminine of the Past)

Sophie is the only woman in The Da Vinci Code and Dan Brown hints at her being considered the symbol for the Holy Grail, carrying the bloodline of Christ. This is left ambiguous in DVC and offers a powerful mystery working below the action and plot of the story on a subliminal level. This open ambiguity forces the reader (or film viewer) to participate in the story and work to form their own answers.

Her expertise in cryptology is almost as if she has been prepared to decode her family history which is hidden.

In her work decoding this cryptology she in effect represents many women as they decode official text of the church discovering the power of the ancient feminine. While all women are obviously not connected to the sacred bloodline to the original Mary, they can find connection to the original sacred feminine that has been buried by the church. For them, Sophie is their heroine.

### Sophie as the Symbol for Eve (Connection to the emerging symbol of a New Eve)

Various commentators have suggested that Neveu is the word for “new” in French. It might also mean “new eve” in reference to the biblical Eve. Therefore, Sophie’s character might symbolize Eve and her appearance in the DVC symbolic of the second-coming of Eve, the rebirth of the sacred feminine, the female goddess of wisdom.

This offers a powerful and surprising twist to official church doctrine and the belief in the second-coming of Christ. It is a powerful subtext that works against current beliefs.

Therefore, Sophie carries the ultimate ambiguity and offers great potential for reader (viewer) participation in resolving this ambiguity. In effect, is she the modern symbol for the sacred feminine past? Or, is she the emerging symbol for a new feminine future?

Like all great works of popular appeal (and many great classical works), DVC ends more with a question than an answer. Is Sophie a modern symbol for the ancient sacred feminine of the past? Or, is she a symbol for the emerging feminine of the future? Or, is she both at the same time?

Whatever conclusion the reader (or viewer) reaches, it is obvious that the DVC offers more of a trip of self-discovery than historical discovery for Sophie.

This ambiguity is never resolved in the DVC. Traditional drama is based on climax in the last act but here, the climax exists in a future time outside the end of the story. Like the end of Joyce’s Finnegan’s Wake, the end of the DVC offers only the beginning of another story. When we reach the last page of the DVC, there is a subtextual feeling that the real story might just be starting. And all of us, especially women, can participate in the creation of this story.

### Sophie and Words (Connection to the power of the church)

Sophie is a leading cryptologist or word detective. The word cryptology comes from the Greek kryptos, “hidden,” and logos, “word.”

Importantly, it is the words of the Bible or formal doctrine of the church (contained in the New Testament and the four Gospels) that have led to the suppression of the sacred female in history. But the words suggesting this sacred power have never been lost, only hidden. These words were discovered in the Gnostic Gospels at Nag Hammadi in the 1940s. They are also present in The Dead Sea Scrolls. Sophie is the right detective to discover hidden words suggesting the importance of feminine in early church history.

## Robert Langdon

Sophie, as the only woman character in *DVC*, as we suggest might symbolize the sacred feminine of the past or the emerging new feminine of the future. Although her symbolism is ambiguous it is easier to discern than the symbolism of the numerous male figures in the book.

In ways, it seems the desire of the *DVC* is to lessen the symbolic power of the male characters in the book so as not to distract from the symbol of Sophie and to make this symbol a powerful one. For example, although Robert Langdon is the character who brings Sophie into the story, he seems to serve the function more of a vehicle to move Sophie through the story, getting her in front of clues and people like Teabing, prodding and suggesting clues to her which she then works out.

And also, the *DVC* seems to put a damper on any romantic relationship between Sophie and Langdon. First of all, a romantic relationship would distract from the high-paced action of the story and be pretty unbelievable in short time (24 hours) the *DVC* plays out. The story is basically a detective and mystery story and a romance would weaken this genre.

Secondly, author Dan Brown suggests that Robert Langdon might be in love with the character Vittoria Vetra from his previous novel *Angels & Demons*. In the *DVC*, Langdon still remembers her scent and kiss before he meets Sophie a little over a year later. In the *DVC*, Langdon recalls that he and Vera had promised to meet every six months but it has been a year now since they last saw each other.

Third, the reason for putting a damper on a romantic relationship is to create suspense. The reader (viewer) continues to wait for this, is accustomed to finding this somewhere in a story with an attractive man and woman. The wait for the two to end up in bed acts like a type of plot-line carrot that continues to dangle in front of the reader or viewer.

Finally, perhaps the reason that the damper is put on sex and romance between Sophie and Langdon in *DVC* is that Sophie might symbolize something sacred and sex would simply demean this sacredness.

## The Hidden Séance Symbolism of *Contact*

The 1997 movie *Contact* did not set box office records and many reviewers panned it as a candy-coated piece of moralizing mishmash. *Time* magazine film critic Richard Schickel noted over the internet the movie "is something like one of those mysterious asteroids that get the astronomers all worked up: a large body of gaseous matter surrounding a relatively small core of solid substance. You would not, however, characterize it as 'hurtling' through space to that theater near you. It proceeds very slowly through many banal deliberations about cosmic enigmas to a comfortably reassuring conclusion in which scientific humanism and vaguely uplifting religiosity are squishily reconciled."

But still many who saw the film found something in it they couldn't quite put their finger on. It was outwardly about one thing but inwardly about something else. This "small core" of solid substance, as Richard Schickel called this inner aspect of *Contact*, was difficult to define but many in the audience felt it was there.

The film is taken from the book *Contact* written in 1985 by Carl Sagan. It tells the story of a young girl who watches the stars as a child with her father and then suddenly loses him. The young girl grows up to become Jodie Foster and one of the world's leading astronomers in the specialized area of the search for extraterrestrial life. It is about her struggle to maintain funding for an exotic program at a time when financing from the government is beginning to dry up.

Just at the last minute, when her team is ready to break-up, she is helped by a billionaire financier. The project continues and soon a strange noise is heard from the huge radio telescope "ears" trained at the universe. The sound message is decoded and it provides instructions on how to build a spaceship to take someone to the source of the radio signals on the nearby star Vega.

A spaceship is built and Jodie Foster ends up traveling on it. Her destination and greeting party is a surprise. Waiting for her on a ride wilder than anything at Cedar Point is not a welcoming party composed of little green men but rather her long departed father.

On the most apparent level, the film is a type of space science fiction adventure film not unlike a number we've seen before. But what makes it fuzzy and difficult to hold onto with the audience is that *Contact* tricks one into thinking it is science fiction while its real message is slipped in. Much like that magic show we have alluded to throughout this book. The audience is focused on the stage and looking at a science fiction genre film when another, subliminal story is really

being told. This other story is very symbolic and goes to the heart of much of the symbolism in the late 90s. This is the real reason the film lingers with many.

As we have shown throughout this book, genre is a contextual symbol system and one of the major methods a film uses to communicate outside its contentual symbols of dialogue and action. Place becomes a major definer of genre as well as objects within place. A white hat in a cowboy (western genre) film symbolizes "good" without so much as a word being said about the cowboy wearing it being good. The audience knows from the past experience of seeing a white hat on good cowboys in other films. And also, white traditionally symbolizes good while black symbolizes bad.

For the most part, films attempt to stay within their particular genres. It makes sense from both a marketing and communication perspective. It is hard enough communicating messages in our message intense world and actors and the films they are in need all the help they can get. Putting a tried and true symbolic system on your side makes the job a lot easier, and usually, the message a lot clearer. The audience gets its cues from the genre and they feel in a familiar territory they have been to before. They are not lost as they would be without any symbolic genre cues.

However, the fact is that many of the greatest films in Hollywood history have been mixed genre films. That white cowboy hat might end up on some old lady that looks like the wicked witch of the West in *The Wizard of Oz*. And the old lady wearing it might not be riding a horse across the western frontier but might be an ugly mermaid riding a dolphin through a strange yellowish sea.

Steven Spielberg is one of the great practitioners of the mixed genre mode. His *Poltergeist* mixes the traditional genre symbols of the horror movie with a background set out of a modern *Leave It To Beaver*. In doing this, the place and time of the setting are changed from the usual (and familiar) genre symbolism of an isolated old mansion in the country at night to a busy family home in a modern suburb of Los Angeles during the day.

Spielberg also created a superb genre mixer with *ET*. The film is a juxtaposition of the science fiction and fantasy genres with a children's film. Before *ET*, aliens were locked into the genre symbolism of science fiction films as being ugly and bad. But *ET* was, well ugly, but good. Before *ET*, aliens were mean villains from the adult world but with *ET* aliens became children.

\* \* \*

It is here on this genre mixing level that *Contact* moves into its subliminal and symbolic levels. While it is a science fiction film mixed with a type of techno-thriller genre, it is really an occult film about the search of a girl for her departed father. It is this search that provides the powerful character motivation throughout the film and ties the entire film together. In the process, new types of symbolism are suggested.

The initial occult theme is really stated at the very beginning by the long pan out from the earth and through space and then finally into the eye of the little girl looking out at the universe. One

of the major messages of symbolism is the connection between the outside and the inside and this opening sequence superbly illustrates this symbolism. It reminds one of the scene from Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* when Nick Carraway is in New York City in the apartment where Tom Buchanan woos Myrtle Wilson. Everyone has had a lot to drink and Nick speculates about watching everything from outside through the eyes of an omnipotent observer:

“I wanted to get out and walk eastward toward the park through the soft twilight, but each time I tried to go I became entangled in some wild, strident argument which pulled me back, as if with ropes, into my chair. Yet high over the city our line of yellow windows must have contributed their share of human secrecy to the casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I was him too, looking up and wondering. I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life.”

The occult theme is restated strongly during the funeral reception at the young girl's home when she steals away from the mourners in the downstairs living room and goes up to her room and turns on her ham radio and begins broadcasting a message to her father into the radio's microphone. The little girl believes that her father is not buried *down* in the earth, but is rather *up* and *out there* in the universe.

In this way, religious symbolism is modified from the duality symbolism of "down" and "up" with "out there" in the universe replacing the traditional "up" of heaven.

The search is not a search for extraterrestrial life but rather the search for a father. And the giant radio telescopes in the desert are really like modern Ouija boards. The astronomer in effect, involves a number of people in a modern séance. When one thinks about it, this type of contact has much greater interest than contacting little green men you've never met before.

The interesting, and unique idea is posited that the spirits of the dead are out in space and that we might use modern technology to contact them. This theme is certainly suggested by the images of the World War II era that is transmitted back from outer space. The film is suggesting that our past still lives in outer space.

The meeting with her father at last (after a birth type experience of moving through a long tube) shows that the séance was a success.

\* \* \*

Underlying the occult theme of the search for a departed father, the heroine and the film gain additional contextual symbolic power by being a nostalgic lament to a past time in American history. It is a lament to the last years of mass America from the postmodern segmented America of the late 90s. In a symbolic sense, it is almost like a collective séance from our entire culture back to that America of the 50s and 60s.

The time was the beginning years of the space program and it was a magic time when big Saturn rockets soared out towards the heavens and John Kennedy was President. It is one of the great ironies of our times that these great rockets which were going to free mankind from earthbound ties now sit in touristy graveyards rusting away. In the summer of 1997 there was a television documentary on the history of the NASA Space Program and a scene in the documentary of excited children passing by these rusting Saturn rockets. There were interviews with Doctor Werner von Braun and other key players in the space program. It is interesting to see the childish enthusiasm of those in Mission Control when the great rockets took off or landed. In effect, the men of those years seem like the school children of today on their tour past the rusting rockets.

Jodie Foster is really like a modern John Kennedy or Werner von Braun with her idealism, fighting, like von Braun did, to keep her program alive in the face of constant threats of cut-off from the skeptical government. Interestingly enough, Jodie Foster provides a tour to some school children at the end of *Contact*. This time, though, they are not touring past the old rusting Saturn rocket engines but a sea of huge, powerful radio telescopes actively listening to the universe above and around. They are not going through a museum holding a dead and forgotten past but rather a modern type of science (seance?) lab actively searching for a new beginning.

Now, as the Age of Pisces fades into the Age of Aquarius, we have all grown up from the era of Saturn rockets and are so much wiser. We have the internet now and our great inner exploration into the strange ether of cyberspace rather than the Milky Way mistiness of outer space. In these cynical times, the idealism of space exploration seems as dated as the old black and white episodes of *Leave It To Beaver*. The demise only emphasized by the failed MIR mission.

The spirit of the times changes from a masculine, extroverted reaching out attitude of the 50s and 60s to an introverted, feminine receiving attitude of the 90s. We are no longer reaching out to contact others (on our planet and collectively into outer space) but are now passively waiting for contact. Witness the growing UFO mythology around the Roswell incident, the popularity of *X-Files* and *Millennium* and the resurgence of alien abduction episodes.

*Contact* works on symbolic levels because it goes against the grain of this introverted collective attitude and suggests an extroverted attitude. Again, by an interesting juxtaposition of traditional symbolic expectations, it is a female who is the new messenger of this masculine attitude rather than a male. *Contact* is really about the symbolism of trying to make contact with the zeitgeist or context of the world, the collective unconsciousness, that has preoccupied cultural man since the dawn of history. In this sense, its symbolism is similar to the 1890s when books like Theodore Flournoy's *From India To Planet Mars* was the rage. Mediums used to use boards and dim candlelight rooms. Now, *Contact* suggests, they use acres of radio telescopes spread across the southwestern desert.

The extroverted attitude symbolically suggests that our past is not buried here on earth, that it is not *under*. Rather our past is *above* and *out there* in the universe. In this way, we are not alone in the universe. For it might be populated, not by strange unknown cultures and creatures, but by

our ancestors, our collective past. This is truly a cause for celebration, and something that stays long after the taste of the movie popcorn.

The power of *Contact* on the symbolic level really speaks to all children who have lost their parents and are searching for them. In these segmented postmodern times, this really might be all of us.

## Symbolism

“The essential problem is to know what is revealed to us not by any particular version of a symbol, but by the whole of symbolism.”

Mercea Eliade  
*The Rites and Symbols of Initiation*

Symbolism is the art or practice of using symbols especially by investing things with a symbolic meaning or expressing the invisible or intangible by means of visible or sensuous representations. In effect, symbolism is like a grammar containing the “words” of symbols. In terms of scripts, symbolism creates rules and principles for the movement and alignment of symbols.

Mercea Eliade well states the challenge of working in the language of symbols when he notes the real challenge is not only understanding a particular symbol but rather the whole of symbolism. As we have mentioned in a previous column, no symbol exists alone but rather within both a context and a system. The context defines how the individual symbol is perceived and in fact can be seen to form a symbol itself we have referred to as a contextual symbol. We noted some examples of contextual symbols such as place, time and space.

But apart from always being contained in particular contexts, symbols also possess movement in time and alignment in time. This movement and alignment might best be visualized by the symbol of a cross. (Figure A) In this sense, the horizontal line of the cross can be seen as representing linear movement of symbols through a script from beginning of the script (Act I on the left side of the line) to the end of the script (Act III on the right side of the line). The vertical line, on the other hand, can be seen as representing the non-linear alignment of symbols at particular points in time (or scenes) during the script.

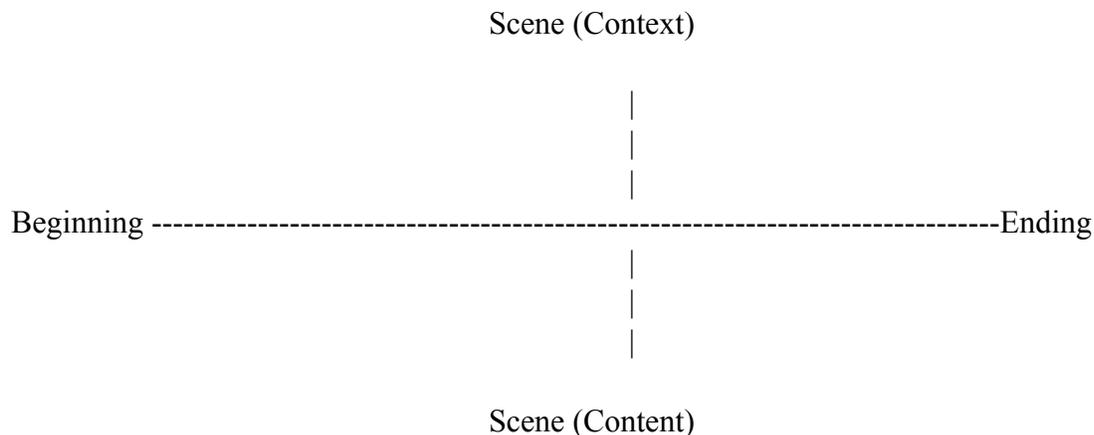


Figure A  
Movement & Alignment

Symbols move in cycles between opposition symbols. The symbols at the beginning of cycles change through the course of their movement and are opposite symbols at the end of cycles. Day becomes night. Night becomes day. Summer becomes winter. Winter becomes summer. This natural movement of symbols needs to be part of scripts also for the greatest drama is created through the movement between oppositions at the beginning and ending of narratives. Besides movement in linear time between symbols oppositions, symbols demonstrate an alignment or similarity in the non-linear time of particular scenes within the narrative.

These two characteristics of symbols represent two of the great laws of symbolism: the law of duality or opposition and the law of correspondence. The law of correspondence relates to the old hermetic principle of that below equals that above or that on the inside equals that on the outside. For example, the outward symbol of night and the moon has a correspondence with the inner world of unconsciousness while the outward symbol of the day and sun with the inner world of consciousness. Carl Jung investigated this phenomenon of alignment through various experiments using tools such as the ancient Chinese iChing labeling the alignments he found as creating “meaningful coincidences” he termed Synchronicity.

\* \* \*

Scriptwriters today are hardly aware of one of these principles. The use of both of them operating in a cross-like system is almost non-existent. A new script symbology needs to take both of these laws into account when creating scripts and it needs to take them into account at the same time rather than design for one and then the other.

In effect, from the perspective of symbolism, a script can be viewed as a cross with the vertical line in movement across the horizontal line from left (at the beginning in Act I) to the right (at the ending in Act III). The vertical line of the cross can be viewed as representing the movement of the hero along the horizontal timeline of the script. The part of the vertical line above the horizontal line can be viewed as the contextual symbols like place, time and space while the vertical line below the horizontal line can be viewed as the content symbols of character, dialogue, action, objects and events.

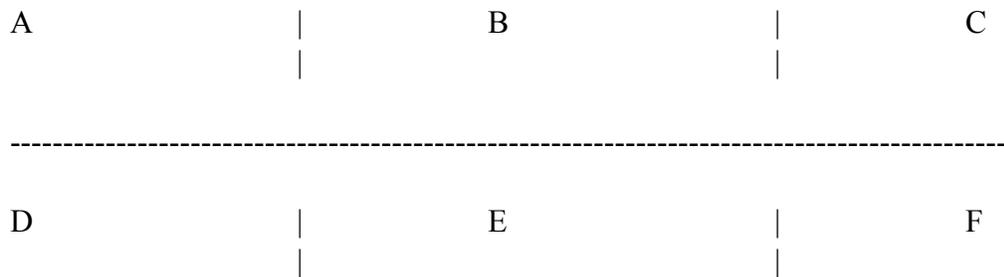
As we have noted, the greatest drama involves the greatest opposition between symbols at the beginning of a script and symbols at the end of a script. The symbol of a rich man becoming richer has far less drama and opposition than the symbol of a poor man becoming rich. The symbol of a strong woman becoming stronger much less drama and opposition than a weak woman becoming strong.

And, from the perspective of symbolism, the most powerful scenes in a drama are those when the outer world is aligned or has a correspondence with the inner world. In this way, the objects and settings in scripts serve a much greater purpose than platforms for product placements. They point not outside towards things but rather inside towards emotions and feelings.

One can get a basic understanding of the system of script symbology by adding an additional vertical line to the cross shown above therefore creating 6 separate sections. (Figure B) The three upper sections can be labeled A, B and C and the three lower sections labeled D, E and F. Section A on the upper left contains the contextual symbols for Act I (Set-Up) of the script such as scene settings in place, time and space. Section D directly below Section A contains the content symbols for Act I such as characters, action, objects and events.

The upper middle Section B contains the contextual symbols for Act II (Confrontation) of the script such as scene settings in place, time and space while Section E directly below Section B contains the content symbols for Act II such as characters, action, objects and events.

Finally, Section C in the upper right contains the contextual symbols for Act III (Resolution) of the script such as scene settings in place, time and space while Section F directly below Section C contains the content symbols for Act III such as characters, action, objects and events.



**Figure B**  
Basic Script Symbolism Structure

Our three horizontal divisions contains the traditional three act screenplay structure propounded by Syd Field but other structures like John Truby's seven step structure can be substituted creating 14 sections rather than 6 sections.

In order to structure a script fully utilizing symbolism, two things must happen within the sections we have created. First of all, we must create opposite symbols in the context and content symbols of Act I (Sections A and D above) from the context and content symbols of Act III (Sections C and F above). Second, we must make sure that context symbols in the top Sections A, B and C are aligned with (similar to) the content symbols in Sections D, E and F directly below them.

(Note: The subject of the two dynamics of symbolism is explored in greater length in our book *Symbolism of Place: The Hidden Context of Communication*. It can be found in the Books section on our symbolism site at [www.symbolism.org](http://www.symbolism.org).)

## The Paradox of Symbolism

The real symbolism of the cross?

Paradox of life and death.

Quote about play between birth and death.

Equality (vertical, similar) vs. Freedom (horizontal, different)

The dynamics of Script Symbology plays against this paradoxical dynamics and it is this paradox which has given America so much power and promises to give Script Symbologists this power also.

### Paradox of America's Founding Symbols

American symbolism is fairly well known. For example, its been proven that America's founding fathers were involved in symbol societies like the Masons. One of the results of their interest in symbolism are all the symbols surrounding the early years of the new nation.

But the real founding symbols were not the marks from the Masons on things like dollar bills but the two great opposition symbols of life in feminine and masculine: the feminine equality of the beginning of life; the masculine freedom and the later years of life. America was founded at the paradoxical intersection of equality and freedom. Americans believed in both of the opposition symbols at the same point in time. This paradox was present at the birth of the nation and its two symbols have battled it out throughout American history.

The two great symbols have been incorporated into politics. Or perhaps it is better to say that the symbols have incorporated politics into them? The Democratic Party and their belief in equality represent the feminine equality of youth. The Republican Party and its belief in freedom represent the masculine freedom of old age.

In a general sense, we can say the life moves from equality to freedom and then back to equality. In effect, life involves the production of more and more symbols and things in life. The few, large symbols of youth and the early years are replaced by more and more of the smaller symbols brought about by growth and age.

The greatest drama is about the movement from the equality of birth and youth to the freedom and separateness of growth and then back again to the equality of old age. Not that a drama can't start in the reverse order with freedom at the beginning of the narrative and equality at the end.

----- NOTES -----

Freud suggested a basis for this original cultural duality in the basic drives of Libido and Thanatos – life and death. But it was most eloquently expressed by Freud's pupil Otto Rank in *Will Therapy* where the two symbols are seen as fears in perpetual battle throughout the life of an individual.

“The fear in birth, which we have designated as fear of life, seems to me actually the fear of having to live as an isolated individual, and not the reverse, the fear of loss of individuality (death fear). That would mean, however, that primary fear corresponds to a fear of separation from the whole, therefore a fear of individuation, on account of which I would like to call it fear of life, although it may appear later as fear of the loss of this dearly bought individuality as fear of death, of being dissolved again into the whole. Between these two fear possibilities, these poles of fear, the individual is thrown back and forth all his life.”

\* \* \*

"On their evidence a class tells, and supremely well, a tale with a sharp point to it that it meanwhile also implicitly rejects. Its sharp point and matching, muted counterpoint shape it overall: thence its felt unity. The polarity is never resolved between the two rival morals of the classic tale, the one express and the other tacit, the one outspoken and the other whispered, the one affirmed and other insinuated: thence its ambiguity, its felt depth, its enduring vitality. Overtheme and undertheme are cross-fertile contraries, like a male and female principle that play off each other until they climax together."

Rudolph Binion, *Sounding the Classics* (Praeger, 1997, Westport, CT.)

The horizontal linear contextual duality in narratives (and cycles) between beginning and end, may be also (simultaneously) a vertical, synchronic duality between text and subtext. Perhaps outward events do not mirror inward ones but rather form the opposite of these. Is this horizontal and verticality the true symbolism of the cross?

## Duality, Correspondence & Sequence

Understanding Script Symbology is understanding symbol dualities, correspondences and sequences. Their interactions all at the same time in a single narrative script. It is as simple and as complicated as this. Before we consider symbol correspondences and sequences it is first necessary to identify establish the opposition symbols within the script.

This might best be visualized by creating two vertical columns of words standing for symbols at the beginning of the script (in the left column) and those at the end of the script (in the right column). The symbols in the left column should be opposite the symbols in the right column. Opposition symbols lead to drama within the narrative.

For example, Figure A below provides a list of corresponding words (symbols) in the left column with a list of corresponding words (symbols) in the right column with the two sequences we mentioned above filled in.

Feminine					Masculine
Intuition					Thinking
Introversion					Extraversion
Equality					Freedom
Water					Fire
Ocean					Mountain
One					Two
Aries					Aquarius
Eastern					Western
Winter			Spring		Summer
Violet	Blue	Green	Yellow	Orange	Red
Sound					Sight
Inside					Outside
Forrest					Desert
Soft					Hard
Round					Square
Night					Day
Moon					Sun
Horror Genre					Adventure Genre

Figure A

## Symbol Duality, Correspondence & Sequence

After the bookend left and right columns are created, words representing the transition or sequence between the opposite left and right symbols can be filled in. This sequence represents the cycle or movement of symbols on the left beginning of a script to the right end of the script. In effect, this sequence has an alignment or correspondence to the major structural divisions (acts, plot points) of a script.

For example, if one puts the word (symbol) Winter in the left column and the word (symbol) Summer in the right column, then the sequence word would be Spring as it is a step in the cycle from Winter to Summer. As another example, assume one puts the color symbol Violet in the left column and Red in the right column representing the opposite colors on the color spectrum. The sequence from Violet should be Blue, Green, Yellow and Orange to represent the sequence of colors on the color spectrum between the colors Violet and Red.

\* \* \*

The two vertical columns offer an excellent way to visualize the challenges of the script from the perspective of a script symbology. The duality symbols, the correspondences, the sequences of symbols, can all be seen at one place, at one time. And seeing all of this at once is an important tool of Script Symbology.

Before the script is written, the grand bookend opposition symbols have claimed their territory in the script. Like the important pieces on a chess set, they stand at beginning and ending of the script and define the end point symbols of the story.

During the course of the script narrative, the symbols in the left column move across the horizontal timeline of the script towards their opposite symbols in the right column. Their movement has the internal sequence of symbol movement between oppositions. However, this sequence needs to align to individual scenes and the steps of story structure whatever structure one follows such as the three-act structure of Syd Field or the seven-step structure of John Truby.

The alignment of symbols in a script with scenes and plot structure is one of great failures (a well as challenges) in scriptwriting. By aligning symbols of context (like place, time and space) in scenes with symbols of content (character, action, objects, events) a Script Symbologist uses the principles of symbolism to provide a powerful sub-textual language to the script. The qualities of the Protagonist and Antagonist as well as other characters are revealed in far greater depth when symbols are aligned in scenes.

(Note: The topics in this column are explored in greater length in our books *Symbolism of Place* and *Symbolism of Popular Culture*. They can be found in the Books section on our symbolism site at [www.symbolism.org](http://www.symbolism.org).)

Duality  
John Fraim

Symbolism is based around the ideas of duality and correspondence, of oppositions and similarities through the life we are living as well as the life passed down to us from our personal and collective relatives. Our mother. Our father. Our ancestors. Our historical past as a species. As part of the West or the East. As our national past. Our cultural past. The key symbols or these past lives consciously or more often unconsciously passed onto us somewhat similar to pieces of our DNA. Or symbols being in our DNA itself. Our DNA of symbols.

If one accepts (or at least considers) that all of possess a vast treasure trove of symbols, (larger even than the Utah UBA facility) then one must consider how these symbols are called forth throughout our lives for so many functions of building and maintaining a culture away from nature and the natural of the world. Of really making all of us human.

The true keys are recognizing the existence of our ancient, early symbols. These have maintained such a great power over our lives through their various manifestations (reincarnations) through time. Having these symbols in our past is not the same as having these symbols (applying them, bringing them forth) in the present. As Carl Jung observed, the ancient symbols always remain the same but take on various shapes to fit the language of the day. True symbols are those ancient ones called forward from their ancient storage chests in dim little libraries of the world or reference books or the world of art.

Many call forth symbols from the past. Or attempt to call them forth. Some are better intentioned in calling them forth than others. But do symbols operate by any particular morality? Or is their only morality subject only to the continuous, eternal laws, rhythms, cycles of nature herself? Controlled by the morality of their two paradoxical laws: that of duality and that of similarity.

The duality of beginning and ending symbols in a script between two duality symbols. The similarity of scenes or parts of the script when similar symbols appear at one time in a great correspondence of symbols. If the beginning and ending of life is about duality, the moments, the scenes, the days of our lives, is about the other law of symbolism called correspondence or similarity (or equally) is to be found. Perhaps the real symbolism behind the symbolism of the cross? Perhaps the cross stands for a linear time which forms a horizontal line, intersected by a vertical line representing this perfect matching of symbols with the moment in time that they are called forth. Back into battle from often distant places and times.

The greatest duality symbols have always been those that due battle more than anything else each day of our lives. The constant battle between feminine and masculine symbols of the particular time. The two great duality symbols of life. The great duality symbols having a

correspondence of similarity with so many of our other symbols throughout life. How life itself corresponds to the great dualities between the great feminine and masculine symbols that cast their constant duality battle throughout history. And how the two psychological aspects of their character have played themselves out as throughout history. The duality between youth and age. One and two and then many. Night and day. Unconsciousness and consciousness. Through the dynamics of that battle through the life of each person between the symbol of life and the symbol of death. And made such a part of modern history and the history of America in its founding under the paradoxical symbols of the feminine symbol of equality and the masculine symbol of freedom. The first real attempt at combining the duality symbols of the world at one time rather than letting them battle it out as opposition symbols.

Such is the great duality at work today between the symbol of equality in the Democrats and Liberals and the symbol of freedom in the Republicans and the Conservatives and a lot of Libertarians. Toss in a good number of anarchists.

And such is the playing field, the one that one needs to be prepared to play on (until further notice). The method of control throughout much of history was the manufacture and perpetuation of the image of these two opposition symbols throughout culture. Only at times like the Renaissance were the two symbols able to work out a conciliation or alignment so that control was no longer maintained by placing them into perpetual opposition.

The new scriptwriters of the future will understand these two paradoxical laws of symbolism. And as such, also understand that life itself is paradoxical. Their scripts will reflect this dynamic quality of symbolism. These new image-makers will render a new control as never before. The battle truly is between equality and freedom in American. The collective of society and the uniqueness of the individual. As this dichotomy has been throughout history.

America has been such a unique experiment in the history of symbolism for these reasons. The masculine and feminine founding symbols of America, two symbols in paradox, in conflict against the easy “founding” of other nations under an undisputed sole symbol.

And so her writing and her scripts need to always be cognizant of this history. Not too praiseworthy but on the other hand, not too disrespectful either.

## Duality Symbols of Image & Word

“Literacy has promoted the subjugation of women by men throughout all but the very recent history of the West. Misogyny and patriarchy rise and fall with the fortunes of the alphabetic written word.”

Leonard Shlain  
*The Alphabet Versus the Goddess*

The communication media of images and words can be seen as two grand archetypal symbols or what we term zeitgeist symbols that define entire eras of human history. Not only are they archetype symbols but they are also opposition symbols with images relating to the feminine archetype and words relating to the masculine archetype. Life opposition symbols within a script, there is a movement from the feminine image of the ancients to the masculine word of contemporary culture.

This grand movement of symbols is the topic of *The Alphabet Versus the Goddess* by Leonard Shlain. The book is about the change from the matriarchal world of image where the Goddess was dominant to the patriarchal world of word (alphabet) where the God is dominant. Shlain finds a symbolic correspondence between the feminine archetype and images (symbols) as well as the brain's right hemisphere of holistic, non-linear, visual thought. At the same time, he locates a correspondence between the masculine archetype and words (alphabet) as well as the brain's left hemisphere of linear, abstract thought.

If you accept the idea linear abstraction is a masculine trait and holistic visualization a feminine trait, the rest of his theory follows. As visual orientation returns to prominence within society (through film, television and cyberspace) the status of women will increase and soon return to the equilibrium of the earliest human cultures.

In *The Alphabet Versus the Goddess*, Leonard Shlain proposes that the invention of writing, particularly alphabetic writing, rewired the human brain, causing profound cultural changes in history, religion, and gender relations. While the advent of literacy brought innumerable benefits to society, the switch to left-brain thinking upset the balance between men and women. For instance, he asks if it is sheer coincidence that the European witch hunts quickly followed the invention of the printing press?

## Digital Culture of Electricity Return to the Feminine

Media theorist Marshall McLuhan also sees the return of the dominance of the feminine archetype in culture using a paradigm based human senses and media technology rather than image and alphabet. For McLuhan, ancient culture in villages was based on oral (ear) communication in the present. This offered a continuous, unified, non-linear, intuitive acoustic environment as sound came from all directions.

From the standpoint of symbolism, one could label this encompassing environment as a symbol of the feminine archetype. The printing press and the production of words and books for non-present audiences marked the rise of the visual (eye) in culture and with it the rise of linear, rational thought and the breakup of total environments into pieces.

The recent rise of the digital culture of electricity (its embodiment by the Internet and cyberspace) as a dominant technology has the potential of returning the oral sense (and the feminine perspective) to the world and making the world a “global village” somewhat similar to the oral villages of ancient humanity.

For McLuhan, the ear (which hears simultaneously) relates to the feminine and the eye (which divides and differentiates) to the masculine.

### Word & Image Symbolism In *The Da Vinci Code*

An example of the conflict of word and image within the context of a script is in the film *The Da Vinci Code*. Langdon and Sophie offer a powerful detective team: Sophie is a cryptologist (or one who understands hidden codes in words) and Langdon a symbolgoist (or one who understands images in paintings).

In a sense, *DVC* can be seen as a battle between the duality symbols of image and word. From this perspective, the argument from history is that original cultures were dominated by female matriarchies, goddesses and images while modern cultures are dominated by the masculine patriarchal words.

As we have suggested, much of the symbolism in the *DVC* has to do with the symbolism of the masculine word and the feminine image. If the two lead characters in *DVC* were to symbolize masculine word and feminine images then Langdon would represent words and Sophie images.

However, their symbolism is reversed in the *DVC* as Sophie works with words while Langdon works with images and symbols. It is Sophie who understands the male code of words while Langdon understands the female code of images. This creates an interesting situation. Masculine words have hidden the sacred feminine in history. Feminine images (paintings) have offered clues to the sacred feminine throughout history.

----- Notes -----

“In this groundbreaking book, Leonard Shlain, author of the bestselling *Art & Physics*, proposes that the process of learning alphabetic literacy rewired the human brain, with profound consequences for culture. Making remarkable connections across a wide range of subjects including brain function, anthropology, history, and religion, Shlain argues that literacy reinforced the brain's linear, abstract, predominantly masculine left hemisphere at the expense of the holistic, iconic feminine right one. This shift upset the balance between men and women initiating the disappearance of goddesses, the abhorrence of images, and, in literacy's early stages, the decline of women's political status. Patriarchy and misogyny followed.

Shlain contrasts the feminine right-brained oral teachings of Socrates, Buddha, and Jesus with the masculine creeds that evolved when their spoken words were committed to writing. The first book written in an alphabet was the Old Testament and its most important passage was the Ten Commandments. The first two reject of any goddess influence and ban any form of representative art.

The love of Mary, Chivalry, and courtly love arose during the illiterate Dark Ages and plummeted after the invention of the printing press in the Renaissance. The Protestant attack on holy images and Mary followed, as did ferocious religious wars and neurotic witch-hunts. The benefits of literacy are obvious; this gripping narrative explores its dark side, tallying previously unrecognized costs.

Shlain goes on to describe the colossal shift he calls the Iconic Revolution, that began in the 19th century. The invention of photography and the discovery of electromagnetism combined to bring us film, television, computers, and graphic advertising; all of which are based on images. Shlain foresees that increasing reliance on right brain pattern recognition instead of left brain linear sequence will move culture toward equilibrium between the two hemispheres, between masculine and feminine, between word and image. A provocative, disturbing, yet inspiring read, this book is filled with startling historical anecdotes and compelling ideas. It is a paradigm shattering work that will transform your view of history and mind.”

## Correspondence

### -----NOTES -----

The principle of correspondence is one of the seven hermetic principles.

\* \* \*

These words circulate throughout occult and magical circles. They are recorded in Hermetic texts, although they originated in the *Vedas*.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

The actual text of that *maxim*, as translated by Dennis W. Hauck from *The Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus*, is: "That which is Below corresponds to that which is Above, and that which is Above corresponds to that which is Below, to accomplish the miracle of the One Thing."<sup>[30]</sup> Thus, whatever happens on any level of reality (physical, emotional, or mental) also happens on every other level.

This principle, however, is more often used in the sense of the *microcosm and the macrocosm*. The microcosm is oneself, and the macrocosm is the universe. The macrocosm is as the microcosm and vice versa; within each lies the other, and through understanding one (usually the microcosm) a man may understand the other.<sup>[31]</sup>

\* \* \*

The term “correspondence” was coined by the 18th century theologian *Emanuel Swedenborg* in his *Arcana Coelestia* (1749–1756), *Heaven and Hell* (1758) and other works.

In the terminology of Swedenborg’s revelation, “correspondence” is a basic relationship found between two levels of existence.

<b>Correspondences</b>	
Spiritual Plane of the Mind	Natural Plane of the Mind
God Creator	World Created

Mind/Spirit	Body
Spiritual Sense of the Word	Literal Sense of the Word
Intention	Action

Thus, for instance, light corresponds to wisdom because wisdom enlightens the mind as light enlightens the eye. [6] Warmth corresponds to love because love warms the mind as heat does the body. [7] Swedenborg says that the Word ([Bible](#)) was written by God entirely according to correspondences so that within its natural laws and histories every detail describes the spiritual realities relating to God and man, these being the true subject of the Word. Swedenborg's 12-volume [Arcana Coelestia](#) provides verse-by-verse details of the inner meaning of [Genesis](#) and part of [Exodus](#); the work *Apocalypse Revealed*[8] does the same for the book of [Revelation](#). The [Arcana Coelestia](#), for example, explains how the creation and development of the human mind corresponds to the seven days of creation in Genesis.[9]

[Antoine Faivre](#) posits four fundamental elements, necessary conditions for a document, group, or movement to be eligible for consideration by scholars as esoteric. The first one is Correspondence:

Symbolic and real correspondences (there is no room for abstractions here!) are said to exist among all parts of the universe, both seen and unseen....These correspondences, considered more or less veiled at first sight, are, therefore, intended to be read and deciphered....The principles of noncontradiction and excluded middle of linear causality are replaced here by those of the included middle and synchronicity. We can distinguish two kinds of correspondences. First, those that exist in nature, seen and unseen, e.g. between the seven metals and the seven planets, between the planets and parts of the human body or character (or of society). This is the basis of astrology - correspondence between the natural world and the invisible departments of the celestial and supercelestial world, etc.Next there are correspondences between nature (the cosmos) or even history, and revealed texts. Here we find the Kabbalah, whether Jewish or Christian, and varieties of 'physica sacra'... Ultimately the world stage is a linguistic phenomena." [28][29]

According to Riffard,

The doctrine of analogy and correspondence, present in all esoteric schools of thinking, upholds that the Whole is One and that its different levels (realms, worlds) are equivalent systems, whose parts are in strict correspondence. So much so that a part in a realm symbolically reflects and interacts with the corresponding part in another realm. For instance, the Sun in the mineral realm is the counterpart of the Lion in the animal realm. The relation between A and B is similar to the relation between C and D. The microcosm and macrocosm are analogous, that is, equivalent, similar in their structures, even though they are outwardly dissimilar. The parts are in strict correspondence, closely knit together and closely interacting : thus feet/pisces, veins/ rivers. According to [Robert Fludd](#) (*Utriusque Cosmic Historia*, II), "Man is a whole world of its own, called microcosm for it displays a miniature pattern of all the parts of the universe. Thus the head

is related to the Empyrean, the chest to the ethereal heaven and the belly to the elementary substance.[\[30\]](#)

## The Seven Hermetic Principles

Just as no symbol exists alone but always within a context, it is also true for disciplines and fields of knowledge like symbolism. Not only do fields of knowledge exist in these contexts but these contexts might possess correspondence or similarity with other contexts of knowledge.

This observation is brought home by a comparison of our theories on symbolism with the ancient system of knowledge called Hermetics. For example, consider the relationship between the laws of symbolism we have discussed and *The Seven Hermetic Principles* listed below. The similarities are startling and especially so when one considers we were unaware of the seven principles when conducting research and formulating our theories on symbolism and Script Symbology.

In effect, the study of symbols and symbolism in scripts we term Script Symbology might be far from some new invention by this author but rather the contemporary (narrative system) for an ancient knowledge.

These seven principles are presented in brief form below. Readers who have followed our columns in *Script Magazine* so far. You be the judge. These principles are the following: 1) The Principle of Mentalism.

2) The Principle of Correspondence 3) The Principle of Vibration 4) The Principle of Polarity 5) The Principle of Rhythm 6) The Principle of Cause and Effect 7) The Principle of Gender.

### 1. The Principle of Mentalism

“The All is mind. The Universe is Mental”

This Principle embodies the truth that “All is Mind.” It explains that THE ALL (which is the Substantial Reality underlying all the outward manifestations and appearances which we know under the terms of "The Material Universe"; the "Phenomena of Life"; "Matter"; "Energy"; and, in short, all that is apparent to our material senses) is SPIRIT which in itself is UNKNOWABLE and UNDEFINABLE, but which may be considered and thought of as AN UNIVERSAL, INFINITE, LIVING MIND. It also explains that all the phenomenal world or universe is simply a Mental Creation of THE ALL, subject to the Laws of Created Things, and that the universe, as a whole, and in its parts or units, has its existence in the Mind of THE ALL, in which Mind we "live and move and have our being." This Principle, by establishing the Mental Nature of the Universe, easily explains all of the varied mental and psychic phenomena that occupy such a

large portion of the public attention, and which, without such explanation, are non-understandable and defy scientific treatment. An understanding of this great Hermetic Principle of Mentalism enables the individual to readily grasp the laws of the Mental Universe, and to apply the same to his well-being and advancement. The Hermetic Student is enabled to apply intelligently the great Mental Laws, instead of using them in a haphazard manner. With the Master-Key in his possession, the student may unlock the many doors of the mental and psychic temple of knowledge, and enter the same freely and intelligently. This Principle explains the true nature of "Energy," "Power," and "Matter," and why and how all these are subordinate to the Mastery of Mind. One of the old Hermetic Masters wrote, long ages ago: "He who grasps the truth of the Mental Nature of the Universe is well advanced on The Path to Mastery." And these words are as true today as at the time they were first written. Without this Master-Key, Mastery is impossible, and the student knocks in vain at the many doors of The Temple.

## 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. The old Hermetic axiom ran in these words: "As above, so below; as below, so above." And the grasping of this Principle gives one the means of solving many a dark paradox, and hidden secret of Nature. There are planes beyond our knowing, but when we apply the Principle of Correspondence to them we are able to understand much that would otherwise be unknowable to us. This Principle is of universal application and manifestation, on the various planes of the material, mental, and spiritual universe--it is a Universal Law. The ancient Hermetists considered this Principle as one of the most important mental instruments by which man was able to pry aside the obstacles which hid from view the Unknown. Its use even tore aside the Veil of Isis to the extent that a glimpse of the face of the goddess might be caught. Just as a knowledge of the Principles of Geometry enables man to measure distant suns and their movements, while seated in his observatory, so a knowledge of the Principle of Correspondence enables Man to reason intelligently from the Known to the Unknown. Studying the monad, he understands the archangel.

## 3. The Principle of Vibration

“Nothing rests; everything moves; everything vibrates.”

This Principle embodies the truth that "everything is in motion"; "everything vibrates"; "nothing is at rest"; facts which Modern Science endorses, and which each new scientific discovery tends to verify. And yet this Hermetic Principle was enunciated thousands of years ago, by the Masters of Ancient Egypt. This Principle explains that the differences between different manifestations of Matter, Energy, Mind, and even Spirit, result largely from varying rates of Vibration. From THE ALL, which is Pure Spirit, down to the grossest form of Matter, all is in vibration--the higher the vibration, the higher the position in the scale. The vibration of Spirit is at such an infinite rate of intensity and rapidity that it is practically at rest--just as a rapidly moving wheel seems to be

motionless. And at the other end of the scale, there are gross forms of matter whose vibrations are so low as to seem at rest. Between these poles, there are millions upon millions of varying degrees of vibration. From corpuscle and electron, atom and molecule, to worlds and universes, everything is in vibratory motion. This is also true on the planes of energy and force (which are but varying degrees of vibration); and also on the mental planes (whose states depend upon vibrations); and even on to the spiritual planes. An understanding of this Principle, with the appropriate formulas, enables Hermetic students to control their own mental vibrations as well as those of others. The Masters also apply this Principle to the conquering of Natural phenomena, in various ways. "He who understands the Principle of Vibration, has grasped the scepter of power," says one of the old writers.

#### 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.”

This Principle embodies the truth that "everything is dual"; "everything has two poles"; "everything has its pair of opposites," all of which were old Hermetic axioms. It explains the old paradoxes, that have perplexed so many, which have been stated as follows: "Thesis and antithesis are identical in nature, but different in degree"; "opposites are the same, differing only in degree"; "the pairs of opposites may be reconciled"; "extremes meet"; "everything is and isn't, at the same time"; "all truths are but half-truths"; "every truth is half-false"; "there are two sides to everything," etc., etc., etc. It explains that in everything there are two poles, or opposite aspects, and that "opposites" are really only the two extremes of the same thing, with many varying degrees between them. To illustrate: Heat and Cold, although "opposites," are really the same thing, the differences consisting merely of degrees of the same thing. Look at your thermometer and see if you can discover where "heat" terminates and "cold" begins! There is no such thing as "absolute heat" or "absolute cold"--the two terms "heat" and "cold" simply indicate varying degrees of the same thing, and that "same thing" which manifests as "heat" and "cold" is merely a form, variety, and rate of Vibration. So "heat" and "cold" are simply the "two poles" of that which we call "Heat"--and the phenomena attendant thereupon are manifestations of the Principle of Polarity. The same Principle manifests in the case of "Light and Darkness," which are the same thing, the difference consisting of varying degrees between the two poles of the phenomena. Where does "darkness" leave off, and "light" begin? What is the difference between "Large and Small"? Between "Hard and Soft"? Between "Black and White"? Between "Sharp and Dull"? Between "Noise and Quiet"? Between "High and Low"? Between "Positive and Negative"? The Principle of Polarity explains these paradoxes, and no other Principle can supersede it. The same Principle operates on the Mental Plane. Let us take a radical and extreme example--that of "Love and Hate," two mental states apparently totally different. And yet there are degrees of Hate and degrees of Love, and a middle point in which we use the terms "Like or Dislike," which shade into each other so gradually that sometimes we are at a loss to know whether we "like" or "dislike" or "neither." And all are simply degrees of the same thing, as you

will see if you will but think a moment. And, more than this (and considered of more importance by the Hermetists), it is possible to change the vibrations of Hate to the vibrations of Love, in one's own mind, and in the minds of others. Many of you, who read these lines, have had personal experiences of the involuntary rapid transition from Love to Hate, and the reverse, in your own case and that of others. And you will therefore realize the possibility of this being accomplished by the use of the Will, by means of the Hermetic formulas. "Good and Evil" are but the poles of the same thing, and the Hermetist understands the art of transmuting Evil into Good, by means of an application of the Principle of Polarity. In short, the "Art of Polarization" becomes a phase of "Mental Alchemy" known and practiced by the ancient and modern Hermetic Masters. An understanding of the Principle will enable one to change his own Polarity, as well as that of others, if he will devote the time and study necessary to master the art.

## 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.”

This Principle embodies the truth that in everything there is manifested a measured motion, to and fro; a flow and inflow; a swing backward and forward; a pendulum-like movement; a tide-like ebb and flow; a high-tide and low-tide; between the two poles which exist in accordance with the Principle of Polarity described a moment ago. There is always an action and a reaction; an advance and a retreat; a rising and a sinking. This is in the affairs of the Universe, suns, worlds, men, animals, mind, energy, and matter. This law is manifest in the creation and destruction of worlds; in the rise and fall of nations; in the life of all things; and finally in the mental states of Man (and it is with this latter that the Hermetists find the understanding of the Principle most important). The Hermetists have grasped this Principle, finding its universal application, and have also discovered certain means to overcome its effects in themselves by the use of the appropriate formulas and methods. They apply the Mental Law of Neutralization. They cannot annul the Principle, or cause it to cease its operation, but they have learned how to escape its effects upon themselves to a certain degree depending upon the Mastery of the Principle. They have learned how to USE it, instead of being USED BY it. In this and similar methods, consist the Art of the Hermetists. The Master of Hermetics polarizes himself at the point at which he desires to rest, and then neutralizes the Rhythmic swing of the pendulum which would tend to carry him to the other pole. All individuals who have attained any degree of Self-Mastery do this to a certain degree, more or less unconsciously, but the Master does this consciously, and by the use of his Will, and attains a degree of Poise and Mental Firmness almost impossible of belief on the part of the masses who are swung backward and forward like a pendulum. This Principle and that of Polarity have been closely studied by the Hermetists, and the methods of counteracting, neutralizing, and USING them form an important part of the Hermetic Mental Alchemy.

## 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.”

This Principle embodies the fact that there is a Cause for every Effect; an Effect from every Cause. It explains that: "Everything Happens according to Law"; that nothing ever "merely happens"; that there is no such thing as Chance; that while there are various planes of Cause and Effect, the higher dominating the lower planes, still nothing ever entirely escapes the Law. The Hermetists understand the art and methods of rising above the ordinary plane of Cause and Effect, to a certain degree, and by mentally rising to a higher plane they become Causers instead of Effects. The masses of people are carried along, obedient to environment; the wills and desires of others stronger than themselves; heredity; suggestion; and other outward causes moving them about like pawns on the Chessboard of Life. But the Masters, rising to the plane above, dominate their moods, characters, qualities, and powers, as well as the environment surrounding them, and become Movers instead of pawns. They help to PLAY THE GAME OF LIFE, instead of being played and moved about by other wills and environment. They USE the Principle instead of being its tools. The Masters obey the Causation of the higher planes, but they help to RULE on their own plane. In this statement there is condensed a wealth of Hermetic knowledge--let him read who can.

## 7. The Principle of Gender

“Gender is in everything. Everything has its Masculine and Feminine Principles. Gender manifests on all planes.”

This Principle embodies the truth that there is GENDER manifested in everything--the Masculine and Feminine Principles ever at work. This is true not only of the Physical Plane, but of the Mental and even the Spiritual Planes. On the Physical Plane, the Principle manifests as SEX, on the higher planes it takes higher forms, but the Principle is ever the same. No creation, physical, mental or spiritual, is possible without this Principle. An understanding of its laws will throw light on many a subject that has perplexed the minds of men. The Principle of Gender works ever in the direction of generation, regeneration, and creation. Everything, and every person, contains the two Elements or Principles, or this great Principle, within it, him or her. Every Male thing has the Female Element also; every Female contains also the Male Principle. If you would understand the philosophy of Mental and Spiritual Creation, Generation, and Regeneration, you must understand and study this Hermetic Principle. It contains the solution of many mysteries of Life. We caution you that this Principle has no reference to the many base, pernicious and degrading lustful theories, teachings and practices, which are taught under

fanciful titles, and which are a prostitution of the great natural principle of Gender. Such base revivals of the ancient infamous forms of Phallicism tend to ruin mind, body and soul, and the Hermetic Philosophy has ever sounded the warning note against these degraded teachings which tend toward lust, licentiousness, and perversion of Nature's principles. If you seek such teachings, you must go elsewhere for them--Hermeticism contains nothing for you along these lines. To the pure, all things are pure; to the base, all things are base.

----- NOTES -----

The **Hermetica** are [Egyptian-Greek wisdom texts](#) from the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE,[1] which are mostly presented as [dialogues](#) in which a teacher, generally identified as [Hermes Trismegistus](#) ("thrice-greatest [Hermes](#)"), [enlightens](#) a disciple. The texts form the basis of [Hermeticism](#). They discuss the [divine](#), the [cosmos](#), [mind](#), and [nature](#). Some touch upon [alchemy](#), [astrology](#), and related concepts.

## Synchronicity

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**Synchronicity** is the **experience** of two or more **events** that are apparently **causally unrelated** or unlikely to occur together by chance, yet are experienced as occurring together in a **meaningful** manner. The concept of synchronicity was first described in this terminology by **Carl Gustav Jung**, a Swiss psychologist, in the 1920s.[1]

The concept does not question, or compete with, the notion of **causality**. Instead, it maintains that just as events may be grouped by cause, they may also be grouped by meaning. A grouping of events by meaning need not have an explanation in terms of cause and effect.

In addition to Jung, **Arthur Koestler** wrote extensively on synchronicity in *The Roots of Coincidence*. [2]

The idea of synchronicity is that the conceptual relationship of minds, defined as the **relationship** between ideas, is intricately structured in its own **logical** way and gives rise to relationships that are not causal in nature. These relationships can manifest themselves as simultaneous occurrences that are meaningfully related.

Diagram illustrating concept of synchronicity by CG Jung

Synchronistic events reveal an underlying pattern, a conceptual framework that encompasses, but is larger than, any of the systems that display the synchronicity. The suggestion of a larger framework is essential to satisfy the definition of synchronicity as originally developed by **Carl Gustav Jung**. [3]

\* \* \*

In his book *Synchronicity* (1952), Jung tells the following story as an example of a synchronistic event:

A young woman I was treating had, at a critical moment, a dream in which she was given a golden scarab. While she was telling me this dream, I sat with my back to the closed window. Suddenly I heard a noise behind me, like a gentle tapping. I turned round and saw a flying insect knocking against the window-pane from the outside. I opened the window and caught the

creature in the air as it flew in. It was the nearest analogy to a golden scarab one finds in our latitudes, a scarabaeid beetle, the common rose-chafer (*Cetonia aurata*), which, contrary to its usual habits had evidently felt the urge to get into a dark room at this particular moment. I must admit that nothing like it ever happened to me before or since.[15]

## The Synchronicity Of Classic Scripts

"Bogey would invite me into his dressing-room with his usual 'relax and have a drink.' We would talk and sometimes a genie popped out of the whiskey bottle and off I'd go to develop the idea into a scene."

Howard Koch  
(Co-Screenwriter, Casablanca)

"They are laying bets over on the RKO lot that the Orson Welles deal will end up without Orson ever doing a picture there. The whole thing seems to be so mixed up no one can unravel it."

The Hollywood Reporter (January 1940)

Sometimes, you don't find symbols for scripts. Rather they find you. All of this relates to that atmosphere hanging over all great art that might be termed part of the symbolism of chance and synchronicity in life and art.

It is times like these when greatest scripts are often created in the shortest amounts of time. While some of this creation might be conscious, most of it during the production of the following seemed more unconscious, feminine. Something breaking out from in all directions from inside rather than some masculine arrow shot high up into the outside world.

One method for finding the presence of synchronicity in scripts is to select those classic scripts that have been written in the shorted amount of time. These were scripts where the symbols of alignment and opposition fell in place with their own internal power somehow.

Of course many products are created quickly - often too quickly - with a consequent fate of being forgotten just as quickly. But what if some famous products show a quick creation time? What if a pattern is found in a number of them?

Consider the interesting stories around three of the most famous products of twentieth century art - the films *Casablanca* and *Citizen Kane* and the novel *Heart of Darkness*. All were created in extremely short time periods. In fact, one could say they were created almost by chance, on types of "detours" from their original destinations. Was the "zeitgeist" of their times the real "author" at work behind the scenes?

*Casablanca*  
The Race Between Pencil And Camera

Since its original release date, *Casablanca* has played more revival dates than any other film in history. In the Introduction to *Casablanca:Script And Legend* (1973) critic Ralph Gleason writes "Casablanca summed up the morality of its time better, I think, than any other film ever has. Everybody saw *Casablanca*. Everybody knew the story, knew the characters, and knew the context...Casablanca was how we thought we were, all right, a pure explication of the mood in which we entered World War II."

Howard Koch, one of the main creators of *Casablanca* is truly surprised at the success of the film. Koch writes in the above book that, "none of us involved in its production could have foretold that *Casablanca* was to have an illustrious future-or, in fact, any future at all. Conceived in sin and born in travail, it survived its precarious origin by some fortuitous combination of circumstances to become the hardiest of Hollywood perennials, as tough and durable as its antihero, Humphrey Bogart."

Interestingly enough, there never was a planned script. It began when Warners Brothers purchased the rights to a play called *Everybody Goes to Ricks* but this script fell by the wayside before it reached Broadway. Jack Warner wanted a new female lead and chose an unknown female actress named Ingrid Bergman under contract to David Selznick. To pry her away from Selznick, the Epstein brothers pitched Selznick on an idea for a movie that would advance her career and her value to Selznick. They were good enough to have Selznick loan them Miss Bergman.

As Koch notes, the troubles began at this time. "The Epsteins confessed to Hal Wallis that the story with which they entertained Mr.Selznick was actually a feat of verbal hocus-pocus without any real substance to provide a basis for a picture." The scheduled shooting was only six weeks away.

Two weeks from the scheduled shooting date, Koch had about forty pages or a quarter of the eventual screenplay. "Fortunately," notes Koch, "I had the help and encouragement of Humphrey Bogart ... Bogey would invite me into his dressing-room with his usual 'relax and have a drink.' We would talk and sometimes a genie popped out of the whiskey bottle and off I'd go to develop the idea into a scene."

By the day shooting commenced, Koch had roughly the first half completed. "But a vast unknown territory lay ahead," Koch notes, "with only signposts here and there to guide me. The race was between my pencil and the camera. I began to think of the camera as a monster devouring my pages faster than I could write them. About two-thirds of the way through the production, it was a dead heat."

Koch remembers that the final weeks were a nightmare "of which I remember only fragments. When I went down to the set the last scene and wrote 'The End' on the screenplay, I felt like a weary traveler who had arrived at a destination but with only the foggiest notion where he was or how he had got there."

But somehow the film made a connection to the symbolic archetype of its time. And Koch suggests this saying, "As I look back at the film's chaotic genesis ... I like to think it achieved its real identity by some affinity with this new searching generation."

Was there symbolic synchronicity at work in the creation of *Casablanca*? The reader should be the judge. In a review attached to *Casablanca: Script And Legend*, film critic Richard Corliss notes that there are two theories about the film. "The first is that *Casablanca* is a political allegory, with Rick as President Roosevelt." Corliss notes that "casa blanca" is Spanish for "white house." In this scenario, a man gambles on the odds of going to war until circumstances and his own submerged nobility force him to close his casino. Corliss notes that this is read partisan politics. He commits himself first by financing the side of right and then by fighting for it. The time of the film's action in December 1941 adds credence to this view, as does the fact that two months after *Casablanca* opened, Roosevelt, or Rick, and Prime Minister Winston Churchill, or Laslo, met for a war conference in Casablanca.

### *Citizen Kane* An Atmosphere Of Extreme Urgency

While *Casablanca* was created in a fury of writing mixed with whiskey, *Citizen Kane* was born out of another project altogether. In the book *The Making of Citizen Kane* (1996), Robert Carringer notes that Orson Welles was lured to Hollywood by RKO studio head George Schaefer with a contract that guaranteed him a degree of artistic control unheard of in the industry. Welles was engaged to produce, direct, write and act in two feature length films. His Mercury Theater operation had been shut down since the flop of *Danton's Death*.

By prearrangement in his contract, Welles's first film was to be an adaptation of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* which Welles' Mercury Theater had done as a radio show. But budget skyrocketed on the film and Schaefer and Welles came to a new agreement to do another film before *Heart of Darkness* and use this film as collateral to finance *Heart of Darkness*. The film was *Smiler With the Knife*. But the project died and rather than continue work on *Heart of Darkness*, Welles let it die also.

By this time, Welles had been in Hollywood for five months with nothing to show for it. The January 1940 *Hollywood Reporter* writes, "They are laying bets over on the RKO lot that the Orson Welles deal will end up without Orson ever doing a picture there. The whole thing seems to be so mixed up no one can unravel it."

As Carringer notes, "It was in this atmosphere of extreme urgency that the idea for *Citizen Kane* came into being." Welles found Herman Mankiewicz who was between jobs and recovering from

an auto accident. Mankiewicz went out to the desert to a guest ranch in Victorville with John Houseman and a secretary. Actually, Mankiewicz was sent out to the ranch to keep him out of the way because of his drinking problem.

It was at the ranch, during March, April and May of 1940, that the first installments of *Citizen Kane* were completed. The material that Mankiewicz and Houseman sent from Victorville was 250 pages long and called *American*. It was about a publishing tycoon. The shooting script was finished on July 16.

*Heart Of Darkness*  
A Sudden Flurry Of Activity

The two years before Joseph Conrad wrote *The Heart of Darkness*, one of the masterpieces of English literature, were filled with very little production. Yet an incredible flurry of activity possessed him when he began writing *Heart of Darkness* and the entire novel was finished in a little over a month.

This is an incredible feat of almost spontaneous creativity. In *The Last Twelve Years of Joseph Conrad* (1928) Richard Curle remarks, "I remember Conrad telling me it's 40,000 words occupied only about a month of writing. When we consider the painful, slow labor with which he usually composed, we can perceive how intensely vivid his memories of his experience must have been...and how intensely actual."

And, critic Ian Watt adds in *Conrad In The Nineteenth Century* (1979) that "after nearly two unproductive years, in little more than two months, and in the midst of several further anxieties, Conrad had managed to write, revise, proofread, be more than paid for, and even see beginning in print what was to prove one of the earliest and greatest works in the tradition of modern literature."

This type of speed in composition it leaves little room for conscious contemplation and consideration of the intricacies of novel plotting and character development. More than Conrad writing his great novel it is more likely that it was writing him. The unconsciousness was coming through and expressing itself in symbolic terms. The result was that archetype of Conrad's age was approached. It may never have happened if the book was written and revised and rewritten. For a few months of time, Conrad was a captive (one again) of the muses of the symbolism, art, chance and synchronicity.

## The Faces of Sequence

John Fraim

The endless cycle of idea and action,  
Endless invention, endless experiment,  
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;  
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;  
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.

T.S.Eliot  
*The Rock*

As we have observed, symbols move between their opposites in a system of symbolism. The entire movement completes a cycle and is made up of steps or sequences within this cycle. The sequential movement of symbols has a strong correspondence with dramatic movement of the hero symbol through a script.

The major cycle for all forms of life is the life cycle moving from birth to death. For humans, this life cycle sequence has been postulated by Erik Erikson in *Identity and the Life Cycle* and *Life Cycle Completed* as consisting of nine stages. On the other hand, Sigmund Freud proposed five “psycho-sexual” life stages in the oral, anal, phallic, latent and genital.

Sequence steps in other cycles vary from the steps the human sequence. For example, the yearly cycle consists of the four-step sequence based around the seasons with the movement from summer, fall, winter to spring. The daily cycle consists of a definite dual cycle between sun and moon and arguably a six step sequence in the movement from sunrise to morning, noon, afternoon, sunset and evening with the two opposition symbols of night and day stationed at midnight (the apex of night) and noon (the apex of day). A few of the various “faces” of sequence are on exhibit below.

## Generational Cycles as Sequence

Innovative research into cultural cycles is being done by William Strauss and Neil Howe. Their books *Generations: A History of America's Future* and *The Fourth Turning* apply the symbolism of cycles specifically to American culture. The possibility of creating a symbolism of popular culture is brought much closer to reality with their work. In some respects, this is what they have already done with their books. The symbols for them are not products so much as entire

generations. The generations might be the products. It is within generations that Strauss and Howe look to discover the major archetypes of the times.

Generations are approximately twenty years each and contained in a "saeculum" which is a seasonal cycle of history. A saeculum is roughly the length of a long human life or around 80 years. The beginning of each saeculum is marked by a "high" followed by an "awakening" while the end of each saeculum is marked by a "crisis." As Strauss and Howe note, saeculums explain the periodic recurrence of "awakenings" and "crisis" throughout modern history. Therefore, the key symbolic duality is between "high" and "crisis."

Strauss and Howe trace the Anglo-American Saeculum back to the medieval period providing seven major saeculums in this period of history. In the process, they provide a new type of structure for organizing history.

- Late Medieval (1435-1487)
- Reformation (1487-1594)
- New World (1594-1704)
- Revolutionary (1704-1794)
- Civil War (1794-1865)
- Great Power (1865-1946)
- Millennial (1946-2026)

Traditionally, the structure has been based around centuries. One needs to ask whether history has been organized to fit into century periods without looking at the reality of cultural (and generational) symbolism.

The above organization of the past five hundred years of western history, the saeculums cross over century markers in five of the seven saeculums. Only Late Medieval and Revolutionary saeculums do not cross century boundaries. And Late Medieval does not even encompass an entire century. The closest to the traditional century organization is Revolutionary (1704-1794) but even this comes out ten years shy of the standard one hundred years.

Most scriptwriters are in agreement as to the key elements of a script identifying these as premise, theme, characters, plot and scenes. However, there is still much debate on the major steps or sequences within script structure. For example, the classic structure of Syd Field locates three major steps in scripts and identifies these as (1) set-up of Act I (2) confrontation in Act II and (3) resolution in Act III. On the other hand, John Truby locates seven major steps in scripts identifying these as (1) Weakness and need (2) desire (3) opponent (4) plan (5) battle ((7) new equilibrium. Another structure of sequence began at the USC Film School uses an eight-step approach.

#### Number of Steps in Sequence

As script creators rush to create new content for scripts, important aspects of structure are often forgotten or relegated to secondary roles. One of the greatest unresolved questions regarding script structure is the number of key movements in the sequence of movement between the duality symbols at the beginning and endings of scripts.

Syd Field in his famous book on screenwriting titled simply *Screenplay* proposed the current 3-step (act) paradigm involving set-up in Act I, confrontation in Act II and resolution in Act III. While Plot Points might offer additional sequence points, the basic structure adheres to the three acts. The basic structure of Joseph Campbell's *Hero With A Thousand Faces* follows roughly the three-part structure with the Hero's 1) departure 2) initiation and 3) return.

However, John Truby in *The Anatomy of Story* proposes a basic 7-step sequence structure that he expands to 22 steps. He avoids as much as possible using the Field structure of Act I, II and III. In the structure below, screenwriting professor Paul Joseph Gulino in *Screenwriting: The Sequence Approach* proposes an 8-step structure in what has become known as the USC structure.

And, in famous books on drama such as Lajos Egri's *The Art of Dramatic Writing*, the issue of the number of steps in drama is hardly even touched upon. In Robert McKee's well-known *Story*, numbers of sequences is discussed very little.

Will there ever emerge a sequence division of steps that all can agree upon?

Before this happens, it seems important to see what narrative sequence really represents outside the structure of the popular screenplay script form. In this sense, the sequence needs to be viewed as steps within a cycle running from a beginning and end, from a birth to death or a death to birth. In other words, what does script sequence find symbolic correspondence with in life and nature?

Does script sequence find its greatest correspondence to the human life cycle? Or the cycle of seasons? Is there a relation to the sequence of actions in the operation of old symbol systems like alchemy? Or the phases in the life of Christ?

### The Shape of Sequence

An interesting illustration of this is its application to stages in the development of children. In the book *What Kids Buy* by Dan Acuff, one of the world's foremost experts on the psychology of marketing to children and key consultant to many of the nation's largest toy companies. Acuff notes five major stages of which relate to sensory and emotional needs of children:

- Birth to 2 (Dependency/Exploratory)
- 3 to 7 (Emerging Autonomy)
- 8 to 12 (Rule/Role)
- 13 to 15 (Early Adolescence)
- 16 to 19 (Late Adolescence)

Is there a relationship to the sequential stages above with the hero's journey in books like Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, Jung's *Symbols of Transformation* and Neumann's *The Origin And History of Consciousness*? Is there a relationship between the above stages of children's development and contextual and contentual symbolism?

In *What Kids Buy*, Acuff shows that there are many correspondences between the stages and products. For example, Acuff suggests that certain characters and shapes have a strong relationship to the stage the child is in. During the first stage from birth to two years old, feature films like *Beauty and the Beast* and television shows like *Sesame Street*, *Barney & Friends* and *Mickey Mouse* hold children's attention.

He notes that the key elements in film and television programming for this age group (dependency and exploratory) center around animals, safe characters and slow pacing of presentation. All of these products feature caricaturized or cartoonized animals such as birds, dog-like Muppets, friendly dinosaurs and mice. In fact, Acuff notes that some research has shown that as much as 80 percent of children's dream content is of animals up to the age of about six. He notes that, "It appears through animal dreams children work on the resolution of a variety of issues and fears that they are dealing with in their young lives."

The primary needs in this first stage are for nurturance and safety and these needs are expressed in the type of characters which interest children. A key contentual symbol showing safety and nurturance is a round shape. Big Bird and Barney are designed with this in mind. Acuff makes some very interesting observations about roundness:

"Regarding roundness, research has proven that as early as 18 months of age, children identify crooked, jagged lines as 'bad guys' or things that could hurt you, and round, curving lines as being 'good guys' or safe. It's no accident that most of Disney characters, for example, are quite rounded in their design. Mickey himself, for example, has a very round head; it's also larger in proportion to his body, like an infant's head. Mickey also has round ears, rounded arms and legs, and roundish feet/shoes."

Acuff points out that as children mature, they demand more “edge” from their characters and with edge, more potential threat from the character. The character becomes challenging rather than nurturing. He notes the comparison between Warner Brothers’ Tasmanian Devil, often showing a ferocious mouthful of teeth, with the very round and toothless Big Bird of *Sesame Street*. The roundness that appeals to younger children causes older children to turn away in disinterest. “The above-7-year old,” he notes, “is more often than not, going to gravitate toward the emotional stimulation present in more edgy characters such as Tasmanian Devil, Garfield, Ren and Stimpy, the X-Men, and even Bugs Bunny with his cutting wit.”

The relationship of contentual symbols such as animals and round shapes to particular stages in children’s development and their appearance in products to meet the needs of these young consumers may tell us a great deal about the symbolism of products in the adult world. Might it be that products cluster around a generic roundness of shape in the early parts of cyclic sequences, moving towards roughness and jagged edges as the sequence progresses? Is roundness related to the security of beginning the heroic “voyage” of life out of the unconsciousness while jaggedness (and the squareness of sharp angles) related to consciousness and masculinity towards the end of cycles?

Might the symbols within scripts possess by nature the key symbols of birth and youth that move in some manner towards their opposition symbols of age and death? Symbols that appear as a system of symbolic shapes in the script. And a character that changes within the symbolism of these shapes.

All “faces” of that fascinating part of symbolism related to sequence in evolution and in life. Is there a sequence of events all life goes through? Not just what is sequence but what is this key number of sequences? If there is one.

## Act I

### Sequence 1(A)

The first 15 minutes of a film answer the questions of who, what, where, when and under what conditions the film will take place. This is the exposition. But before the exposition, audience must be “hooked” to get them to watch further. Most common way is via use of curiosity such as posing a puzzle to the audience that raises questions and promises answers.

Audience is introduced to the protagonist and given a glimpse of the flow of his life before the story begins. (What the protagonist’s life would have been like if the story hadn’t interfered). The stronger the sense of flow of life at the beginning, the bigger the impact of the destabilizing events.

Usually at the end of the first sequence, there arises a moment called the point of attack, or inciting incident. It is the first intrusion of instability that forces the protagonist to respond in some way.

### Sequence 2 (B)

Sets up the main tension, or poses the dramatic question that will shape the rest of the picture. The protagonist spends the second sequence attempting to grapple with the destabilizing element introduced into his or her life during Sequence A.

The protagonist might have every expectation that the problem will be solved and the story finished. But life has other plans. Whatever solutions the protagonist attempts during the second sequence only leads to a bigger problem or predicament that marks the end of Act I and sets up the main tension.

## Act II

### Sequence 3 (C)

Allows the protagonist a first attempt at solving the problem posed at the end of the first act. The easy solution is sought and perhaps solved. Yet, there are larger problems.

#### Sequence 4 (D)

Finds the first attempt at resolution failing, and sees the protagonist try one or more desperate measures to return his or her life to stability.

The end of Sequence D often leads to the first culmination or midpoint culmination of the film. May be a revelation or reversal of fortune that makes the protagonist's task more difficult. Often give the audience a very clear glimpse of an answer to the dramatic question. It is a hope that the protagonist will actually succeed only to have circumstances turn the other way.

#### Sequence 5 (E)

The protagonist works on whatever new complications arose in the first culmination or Sequence D above. Successful scripts can give a glimpse of apparent success or failure. Sometimes, new characters are introduced here and new opportunities present themselves. Occupied by subplots if any.

#### Sequence 6 (F)

During the last sequence of Act II, the hero has eliminated all the easy solutions to the problems. The going gets difficult now and hero works at the resolution of the main tension. The dramatic question is answered. The second culmination is here giving the audience another glimpse of a possible outcome of the picture. This reframes the main tension or resolves it in some way. Seeing it as a "low point" cuts off a writer from a great many story possibilities.

### Act III

#### Sequence 7 (G)

The apparent resolution in Sequence F is not the final word, though. Unexpected consequences of that resolution can come forth and other story lines and dangling causes

previously established bring forth new and even more difficult problems. Sometimes this forces the character to work against his or her previous objectives.

In effect, the story is sometimes turned upside down. We glimpse it from a new angle. Higher stakes and a more frenzied pace. Resolution often characterized by a major twist.

### Sequence 8 (H)

The instability started at the point of attack is finally resolved. Having been given glimpses of the resolution at the first and second culminations and (to a lesser extent) at the end of the sequences, tension is finally resolved.

Almost invariably contains an epilogue or code that ties up loose ends and closes off dangling causes and subplots.

The Seven Eras of Prime Time TV

In these seven eras, one can notice the general swing between reality shows in the early “Vaudeo” era of prime time television programming to the fantasy of the “Adult Westerns” and “Idiot Sitcom” era. Then, back to reality and relevance programming in the late 60s to mid-70s with a swing to fantasy in the mid-to-late 70s. Then, back to the reality shows of the 80s where the reality trends continued into the 90s. As prime-time soap operas faded in the late 1980s, all three networks turned to reality in forms as diverse as America’s Funniest Home Videos, Unsolved Mysteries and Cops. In the early years of the new century, shows like Survivor, American Idol and Joe Millionaire continue the relatively long run of the reality cycle. When will culture (and its TV audience) retreat from the reality cycle and let the fantasy cycle return?

Eras	Years	Leading TV Shows
Vaudeo (Reality)	1948-1957)	Godfreys Talent Scouts, \$64,000 Question, Ed Sullivan
Adult Westerns (Fantasy)	1957-Early 60s	Gunsmoke, Wagon Train, Bonanza, Rifleman, Have Gun Will Travel
Idiot Sitcom (Fantasy)	Early-Late 60s	Bewitched, Beverly Hillbillies, Andy Griffith, Dick Van Dyke, Green Acres, Gomer Pyle
Relevance (Reality)	Late 60s-1975	All in the Family, Marcus Welby, MASH, Rowan & Martin Laugh In, Family Affair
Fantasy (Fantasy)	1975-1980	Happy Days, Laverne & Shirley, Mork & Mindy, Charlie’s Angels
Soap Operas & Real People (Reality)	1980s	Dallas, Dynasty, Falcon Crest, Hill Street Blues, Real People, That’s Incredible, 20/20
Choice (Reality)	1990s & early 2000s	America’s Funniest Home Videos, Unsolved Mysteries, Rescue 911, Cops, Joe Millionaire, The Bachelor

“The Seven Eras of Prime Time Television”  
The Complete Directory of Prime Time and Cable TV Shows

Reality TV Programming

The seven eras of prime time television might also be termed the seven cycles of prime time television. These cycles might be applied to predict future cycles and the dominant genres of these cycles.

For example, consider the success of reality programming. Might it foreshadow a major change in cycles of the entertainment industry? But beyond changes in Hollywood, what is the larger social and cultural meaning of the interest in reality programming? Does interest in reality TV tell us anything about the current American zeitgeist?

One way of looking beyond Hollywood at the phenomenon of reality programming is to consider that interest in reality programming might come and go in cycles. In effect, popular culture (and its current expression in the TV audience) might be viewed as moving back and forth between interest in reality and fantasy.

The relatively short history of American television strongly evidences the cyclic swing of these duality symbols. One of the first popular expressions of the reality symbol occurred in August 1948 when a kindly-faced man named Allen Funt posed as a waiter and insisted to customers that his restaurant served only liver. Over the next years there would be many other tricks on Funt's reality-based television show Candid Camera.

Through the brief half-century history of American television since its early years in the 1950s, there have been constant swings of interest between reality shows like Candid Camera and fantasy programming. These swings have evidenced sustained long-term cycles as other genre fads and styles of television programming have come and gone.

Just as collective preoccupation with fantasy gives way to a preoccupation with reality, the interest in reality fades to give way for an interest in fantasy. This back-and-forth swing is evident in the 50 years of American television and the seven eras of prime time television.

Act II  
Scripts

## The Once And Future Kingdom

“In 2012, moving images are absolutely everywhere – movies, TV, video games, YouTube, streaming services, taxi cabs, subway ads, electronic billboards, and so on. For someone of my generation, the most astonishing aspect of this development is that many of these images were created by nonprofessionals, shot with smartphones and cameras of all shapes, sizes and levels of expense.”

Martin Scorsese  
Forward to *The Age of Image*

Once upon a time, there was a kingdom called Hollywood that produced magic stories called films from just words on paper called screenplays. These screenplays had three acts and 120 pages and were two hours long. The stories were told around great “campfires” called silver screens located in grand palaces. The palaces were crowded with loyal subjects of the kingdom who sat spellbound watching the stories.

One day, the kingdom came under siege from stories created in other forms told on screens outside the kingdom. The kingdom of Hollywood was no longer the only place where stories came. Now stories came from places like Madison Avenue, Silicon Valley and Washington DC. When this happened, the kingdom of Hollywood lost its loyal subjects and the grand palaces became vacant.

But even after this happened, the kingdom of Hollywood was still filled with the old craftsmen called screenwriters who still believed in the kingdom and the old ways of creating stories. They continued making two-hour stories that were 120 pages long. They used new things in their stories like special effects and spectacular images. They made worlds collide and armies clash on blue screen battlefields. They invented new story genres. They copied old ones. They brought back comic book heroes and cartoon characters.

They explored all types of new stories. But they never explored new forms for telling stories.

\* \* \*

Hollywood has experienced many ups and downs through its history. During Hollywood’s Golden Age in the 1930s it actually possessed the characteristics of the kingdom described above. As film historian Otto Friedrich observes in *City of Nets*, in 1939 Hollywood produced 530 feature films and 50 million Americans went to the movies each week. The films were not minor films that came and went but classic films like *Gone With the Wind*, *Wuthering Heights* and *The Wizard of Oz*. Studio head Louis B. Mayer was the highest paid man in the country. Yet only a decade (and 5,000 movies later) the studios were tottering, Ingrid Bergman and Charlie

Chaplin were exiled, the Hollywood Ten went to prison and millions were watching Milton Berle at home on a small screen called television that was quickly replacing the silver screen.

The kingdom of Hollywood survived the decline of the studio system and it survived attacks from network and cable television as well as new media like DVDs. But it never came under such attack as that caused by the invasion of the Internet in the 1990s and the influx of other story-telling screens on computers, smartphones and tablets or the flood of other forms of entertainment and distractions like social media, video games, apps, blogging and YouTube.

The challenge is real and Hollywood leaders like Steven Spielberg and George Lucas warn that a huge change is coming. At an event at USC in June 2013 (reported in the 6/12/13 *The Hollywood Reporter*) Spielberg predicted an “implosion” in the film industry is inevitable leading to change in the current system of film distribution. Both Lucas and Spielberg told USC film students that they are learning about the industry at an extraordinary time of upheaval where even proven talents find it difficult to get movies into theaters. And, *The Hollywood Reporter* notes. Lucas lamented the high cost of marketing movies resulting in an urge to make them for the masses while ignoring niche audiences observing that television is much more adventurous than film nowadays. Lucas notes the interesting stuff will end up on the Internet or television so scriptwriters need to adjust to this.

So far, much of Hollywood’s current response has been to create more animated fantasy stories (for mass audiences) from old franchise comic book characters containing spectacular action and special effects. For example, some of the top grossing Hollywood films for 2012 were *The Avengers*, *The Dark Knight Rises*, *The Hunger Games*, *The Hobbit*, *Twilight: Breaking Dawn* and *The Amazing Spider-Man*.

Yet if Hollywood is to remain relevant as a place that creates stories for culture, it needs to acknowledge and try to understand some of the broad trends happening in this culture. These trends challenge not the stories being told by Hollywood but the form that stories are told in. The present form called screenplays has not changed much over the history of Hollywood and still calls for two-hour stories with generally three acts created in scripts that are 120 pages long. In all of this, stars and genres have come and gone yet the old form has remained.

While the particular shape of a new story form is difficult to make out in the dust of the current story battle going on in culture, a few general trends can be discerned by a few of Americas leading media theorists and communication scholars.

### 1) Collapse of Narrative

New technologies created by the Internet certainly create one of the greatest challenges to the screenplay form. Yet the real challenge is not the Internet technologies themselves but rather the effect of these technologies on culture. One of the greatest changes in culture is (not surprisingly) shortened attention spans and the decline of linear narratives. In this sense, it is not just

Hollywood stories that are under attack but rather the entire linear endeavor of story creation whether from Madison Avenue or Hollywood.

At a time when many praise the story form, some see it under attack. In *Present Shock* (2013) leading media theorist Douglas Rushkoff observes we live in a continuous “now” enabled by Twitter, email, texting and other real-time technologies. Yet this “now” is an elusive goal that can never be reached creating a dissonance between our digital selves and our physical bodies. The dissonance has thrown us into a state of anxiety Rushkoff calls “present shock.”

This new anxiety caused by “present shock” is not receptive to watching three-act stories unfold on large screens in two-hour movies. Attention spans are much more fitted to the average five-minute YouTube video or the 140 characters of a Tweet.

All of this is contributing to what Rushkoff sees as a “narrative collapse” within culture. The collapse is evident in shorter types of communication but it is also evident in the non-linear, reality type of television genre dominant today with shows like *Duck Dynasty*, *America Idol*, *Pawn Stars*, *Ice Road Truckers*, *Lost* and *American Restoration*. Rushkoff also sees the non-linear form evident in leading animated shows like *Family Guy*, *Southpark* and *The Simpsons*.

## 2) Participatory Culture

Concomitant with the decline of narrative is the rise of participation in culture. In effect, the traditional distinctions between producer and consumer, author and readers, screenwriter and audience, are becoming blurred. No longer are stories being “broadcast” out from a few places like Hollywood and Madison Avenue. Rather, they are coming from anyone who is Tweeting or blogging or posting videos to YouTube.

The participatory culture includes participation in the creation of scripts. Many are familiar with the French Auteur Theory suggesting the director (not the screenwriter) is the real “author” of a film. The emerging participatory culture is pushing the Auteur concept into scripts where the “author” of a script might not just be the original scriptwriter but other scriptwriters who participate in its creation. And not simply co-screenwriters who set out at the beginning to create scripts. Rather co-authors who enter the story process sometime after it has started.

The new role of participatory culture in both creating and spreading new narratives is brilliantly discussed in *Spreadable Media* (2013) by Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford and Joshua Green. Rather than some fad on the outskirts of popular culture, the new participatory culture is a growing trend at the center of culture. The trend is evidenced by that growing form of participatory creation called Fan Fiction and the emergence of widely popular narratives like *Wool* and *Fifty Shades of Gray*.

While much of this is new, participation in media is not a new phenomenon. For example, Marshall McLuhan in *Understanding Media* discussed what he called “hot” and “cool” media

observing hot media (like print) that are high definition demanding little participation by its audience than cool media (like comic books) that are low definition demanding more participation. The distinction between “hot” and “cool” media goes back further than McLuhan with his reference to Sir Francis who 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.”

Perhaps the new script forms will become a new cool media that need to be written with cool prose. And perhaps they will need to be “incomplete” so that they will call forth the need for the participation of co-authors?

In a book on new script forms called *The Age of Image*, author Stephen Apkon observes “The vocabulary of Hollywood is becoming the vocabulary of Main Street.” Once upon a time, there was a kingdom called Hollywood that produced magic stories. But today the kingdom is under the greatest siege in its history. Will it disappear like a slow fade out? Or will fade in again (as it has done in the past) and become the once and future kingdom?

## Sea of Zombies

John Fraim

Hollywood seems to have placed a heavy bet on the table with its mega budget zombie, vampire and super-hero comic-book films in the summer of 2013. Somewhere north of a billion dollars was spent creating various alternative worlds surrounding the films *Man of Steel*, *Lone Ranger*, *World War Z* and *White House Down*. But so far, in July of 2013, the bet has not paid off and industry commentators report one great flop after another in the mega budget films. The disasters at the box office more than matching the disasters created in these films. A quick review of Rotten Tomatoes on July 3 garners the below data of critics combined ratings for the films and money gained back so far on them.

*Lone Ranger* = 23% Rotten Tomatoes  
*White House Down* = 47% (24 million)  
*Man of Steel* = 56% (20 million)  
*World War Z* = 68% (29 million)

One wonders if these mega-disasters might offer a “final nail” in the coffin of a “zombified” Hollywood as a new paradigm replaces the old one.

This new paradigm was predicted a few months ago by no less than Steven Spielberg and George Lucas during an event at the USC School of Cinematic Arts and reported in the 6/12/13 *Hollywood Reporter*. At the event, Lucas and Spielberg tell film students they are learning about the industry at an extraordinary time of upheaval where even proven talents find it difficult to get movies into theaters. Even the creator of the *Star Wars* brand laments the high cost of marketing movies resulting in an urge to make them for the masses while ignoring niche audiences observing that television is much more adventurous than film nowadays. Lucas notes the interesting stuff will end up on the Internet or television.

One of the results predicted by Spielberg and Lucas is that big budget mega-movies might be forced to operate under a different economic model than regular Hollywood films. In effect, they would open more like special sporting events with audiences charged premium admissions. In fact Spielberg goes as far as predicting an “implosion” in the film industry set-off by a number of mega-disasters at the box office. Disasters like the mega-budget films of the summer of 2013 were shaping up to be?

\* \* \*

If this implosion is coming as Spielberg and Lucas predict, it will not only lead to new types of films and distribution methods but also new types of screenplays. The form of these new scripts is still shaping up and the screenwriting world still seems to be in Act I of this developing story of change. Some preliminary observations are possible, though, and we'll make them in other columns.

For now though, although providing little insight into the new types of screenplays needed by a new Hollywood, the summer group of mega-films say a lot about Hollywood's perception of the outside world. Or its perception of what Hollywood thinks is the perception of the world today within their target audience. One might suggest a particular symbolism of place within the contemporary world is offered in these films more than any type of moral theme or advice as to act within this place.

In essence, the great summer disasters at the box office say more about what Carl Jung called the surrounding context or "collective unconscious" of culture than the content within this culture. It reminds one of Carl Jung's remarkable book *Flying Saucers* written when he was 83 years old at the end of his life. In *Flying Saucers* Jung noted that the worldwide "rumor" about flying saucers presented a problem that challenged psychologists for a number of reasons. Unlike most in culture who centered around the question of whether flying saucers were real or not, Jung considered the fantasy aspect of flying saucers and the reason for the existence of this mass fantasy at this time.

\* \* \*

So too Hollywood's 2013 summer blockbusters might also be examined for the mass version of American popular culture in 2013 they project. Perhaps the greatest symbol of this new fantasy is suggested using the metaphor of zombie vampires in Brad Pitt's *World War Z*. It is a world where those great paradoxical symbols of America are founding – equality and freedom – are locked in perpetual battle. The former UN troubleshooter hero Brad Pitt and his family still maintain their freedom in a world of the "infected" equality of zombies.

In this new world, the hero's battle is not against the traditional sole villain, no matter how powerful this villain might be, but rather against the concept of equality itself symbolized by the growing "infected" population of humanity. As the hero moves to protect his family in this threatening new world, it is significant that they find a temporary place of safety on that iron island in the ocean called a Navy ship. The ship still has the safety that islands have traditionally provided civilization, the vast, surrounding waters of the ocean cutting off the little island from the rest of humanity.

These zombies are infecting all parts of culture. But who are they and what is really the symbolism behind them? Do they represent an increasingly dumbed down popular culture full of reality shows and "Bridezillas" who demand (in one episode) for more "embezzlement" on wedding dresses. Are they the "low information" voters that conservative commentators see

invading the political system? Are they that great mass of illegal aliens that might become American citizens? Are they “infected” with the type of cultural “otherness” that Edward Said observed in his brilliant book *Orientalism*? Are they the fanatic music and sports fans, the zombies in front of mindless evening television programs or video games or popular mind-numbing diversions like iPhone, iPads. Are they simply the regular “demographic” of modern American culture where 70% are now on prescription drugs?

\* \* \*

But just as important as what the zombies in *World War Z* symbolize is the symbolism associated with their origin. While *World War Z* provides a nod back to the 1950s classic *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (certainly one of the original Hollywood zombie films) it is essentially different in that the villain “infection” in *Invasion* was delivered by a space capsule and is extraterrestrial in origin the villain in *World War Z* is worldly in origin from genetic mutations gone out of control like a growing cancer spreading across the face of the earth.

In this strange new world, freedom is maintained not through a fight with the infected “zombies” but rather through avoidance or by the use of a type of “camouflage” that makes the non-infected of the world invisible to the infected zombies of the world. Hero Pitt has propounded a theory to save the world that the infected zombies do not bite people who are seriously injured or already terminally ill since these people would be unsuitable as hosts for viral reproduction. Pitt volunteers to inject himself with a terminal but curable pathogen at a facility of the World Health Organization in Cardiff, Wales.

When Pitt does not die, a “vaccine” derived from deadly pathogens is developed that can act as camouflage for the troops battling the infected and for fleeing civilians. Hero Pitt and his family are relocated to an isolated spot in Nova Scotia. As the human offensive against the zombies begins, humanity now has hope. But Pitt’s character Gerry warns, “This isn’t the end, not even close.”

So Act III of one film really turns into Act I of another film as the non-infected begin to wage an epic battle with the infected of the world. The ending seems adequate and perhaps plays into Pitt’s intent to leave things open for a sequel to this first *World War Z*? Whatever the case, the seems to offer up a pretty good symbolism surrounding the current cultural malaise in America and Hollywood offering up two sides of the great battle today between the forces of non-infected freedom of those few living in isolation and the infected equality of the popular masses out there.

Ironically, Hollywood both sources of the infected zombies as well as a type of last stronghold against them. It both manufactures them as well as seems to want to protect itself from them. In the end, these infected zombies of popular culture have been asked to buy into the great mega-disaster films of the summer of 2013. Aliens from Superman’s planet that have come to destroy earth. The White House under attack from a paramilitary group. Zombies from a mutant virus overriding the planet. This audience might be zombies of popular culture but so far Hollywood

hasn't been able to make the zombies buy enough tickets to prevent that coming implosion of the old Hollywood paradigm predicted by Spielberg and Lucas.

### Script Applications

“The power of storytelling is also central to my work as a business executive and entrepreneur. Over the years, I've learned that the ability to articulate your story or that of your company is crucial in almost every phase of enterprise management. It works all along the business food chain: A great salesperson knows how to tell a story in which the product is the hero. A successful line manager can rally the team to extraordinary efforts through a story that shows how short-term sacrifice leads to long-term success. An effective CEO uses an emotional narrative about the company's mission to attract investors and partners, to set lofty goals, and to inspire employees.”

Peter Guber  
Entertainment Executive  
*Harvard Business Review* (12/1/07)

Scripts and the stories they structure have application far beyond the entertainment industry in the creation of films. While film entertainment is the obvious use for scripts, there are applications for scripts outside the entertainment industry and ultimately perhaps more important.

For example, scripts have great use in the persuasion professions of advertising, public relations, sales and politics the field of education as a powerful teaching tool. They also have an important place in corporate communications in communications to employees, managers and outside investors.

Perhaps one of the most obvious (but little used) applications for scripts is in the creation of novels. While novels are often adapted into films and sometimes films appear as novels, there has been little merger of the two forms of writing into a new form of script or novel for that matter.

Art forms such as film and literature evolve over time by creating and combining genres within the art forms. This *evolutionary* growth is shown above by the horizontal arrows. However, art forms can create revolutionary changes by merging with other art forms. This *revolutionary* change is shown by the vertical arrow. For example, evolutionary growth in screenwriting (films) and novel writing (literature) involves writing for genres within the art form. On the other hand,

revolutionary growth involves combining the art form of screenwriting with that of novel writing.

## Contagious Symbols

One of the bottom line questions regarding the discipline of Script Symbology we have been discussing is whether or not scripts written using methods of Script Symbology are more likely to find greater “social currency” and more “spreadability” than ones written with traditional script methods of Hollywood?

Before the question can be answered, we need to define what we mean by the word “script” in these times when communication forms are in a state of continual evolution.

Webster’s Dictionary defines script as “the written text of a stage play, screenplay, or broadcast; *specifically* : the one used in production or performance.”

## Contagious In Hollywood

No, this is not some sequel to *Sleepless in Seattle* but rather a discussion of the application of one of the most popular books on contemporary marketing to the screenwriting and film community.

The book is *Contagious: Why Things Catch On* (Simon & Schuster, 2013) by Wharton School Marketing Professor Jonah Berger and it lists six key elements that cause things to be talked about, shared and imitated. Professor Berger lists these elements under the acronym of STEPPS which stand for 1) Social Currency 2) Triggers 3) Emotion 4) Public 5) Practical Value and 6) Stories. While all the principles might be present in some contagious things, not all are needed and often one or two of them is enough to make something contagious.

These six STEPPS principles come with a “tip of the hat” to traditional aspects of marketing such as product quality, price and advertising. But while they often contribute to a product’s success, they don’t explain the whole story.

Apart from these traditional marketing elements, the major component of Berger’s STEPPS is what the author calls “social transmission” or word of mouth. As he notes, “People love to share stories, news, and information with those around them.” And, as a result, things that others tell us, e-mail us and text us have a significant impact on what we think, read, buy, and do.

\* \* \*

While the principles of *Contagious* are meant to apply to all ideas and products, one cannot help but think that there might be specific “twists” or fine-tuning of these principles into various industries or activities such as contagious blogs, IPOs and travel destinations. Certainly, a natural area for application of Berger’s *Contagious* are film ideas. The six STEPPS making things contagious in general find a natural home in the land of film ideas.

Are there specific “take-aways” for Hollywood? For example, can the six principles of contagious be applied to various aspects of the film business such as story treatments, film pitches, film investment partnerships and screenplays themselves? Movies are full of product placements. Might screenplays be embedded with contagious elements to increase their social currency and word of mouth buzz?

I asked professor Berger about the application of *Contagious* principles to Hollywood. He answered there are “Definitely some specific take-aways for Hollywood, both for pitching films and bolstering consumer reception. Think about someone who gets pitched dozens of films every week. They not only have to like a pitch, they have to spread that enthusiasm to get other investors, supporters, etc. What’s going to make them talk about one film in particular? How can

someone make a pitch so contagious that listeners just have to spread the word?" Berger continues saying, "It's all about those 6 key STEPPS. The more talking about a film makes a potential producer look good (*Social Currency*), the more likely they will be to share it. The more they are *Triggered* to think about it, even outside the office, the more they'll bring it up. The more it makes them excited, angry, or inspires awe (all high arousal Emotions), the more they'll spread the word for *Public, Practical Value* and *Stories*."

Berger notes the same applies to the consumer side with the marketing of films. "Advertising is expensive and not very efficient. Many big budget films are duds. How can film cut through the clutter by building a movement and by engaging consumers and getting them to tell their friends? The same 6 STEPPS apply."

\* \* \*

While the book could have a huge effect on how ideas are spread in Hollywood, whether it will is another question largely because it goes against a few of the great prevailing myths that dominate Hollywood.

One myth it challenges is that generating word of mouth and success in Hollywood is all about finding the right people. It is the notion that certain special individuals are more influential than others. In fact, Hollywood (more than any other place) seems full of these "special individuals." The notion of "special individuals" to create buzz was made popular in Malcolm Gladwell's best-selling *Tipping Point* arguing social epidemics are driven "by the efforts of a handful of exceptional people" called mavens, connectors, and salesmen.

However, Professor Berger suggests this "conventional wisdom" in Hollywood is wrong. Answering my question to him about the application of *Contagious* ideas to Hollywood he writes, "It's more than just a good story or gatekeepers. You have to get people (whether producers, investors, or even consumers) to spread the word." The specialness of a few gatekeeper mavens "doesn't make them any more influential in spreading information or making things go viral." Furthermore, Berger observes "by focusing on the messenger, we've neglected a much more obvious driver of sharing: the message."

Another Hollywood myth challenged by Berger's *Contagious* is that stories alone generate contagious film ideas. While Story is one of Berger's 6 STEPPS for contagious ideas, it is only one of the elements. Yet the importance of stories has garnered important buzz in the current marketing community with books such as Jonah Sachs *Winning The Story Wars* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2012). And, certainly in Hollywood, great stories are often contagious. Yet focusing on stories alone can make one less aware of the other elements of social transmission and word of mouth that might also be at work. In effect, there are different ways of looking at how ideas become "contagious" in Hollywood than good stories placed in front of the influential gatekeepers in Hollywood.

## Social Currency In Hollywood

In 1999, a film was made with an inexpensive handheld camera for \$35,000. It told the story of three student filmmakers who hiked into the mountains of Maryland to film a documentary about a local legend called the Blair Witch. The filmmakers supposedly disappeared and viewers were told the film was pieced together from “rediscovered” amateur footage shot on their hike. No one was sure if this was true.

Wharton marketing professor Jonah Berger mentions this film *The Blair Witch Project* in his book *Contagious* and asks readers “What do we do when confronted with a controversial mystery like this? Naturally, we ask others to help us sort out the answer.” This is exactly what happened. The film garnered a huge buzz simply from people wondering whether it depicted real events or not. The buzz drove the movie to become a blockbuster and grossed more than \$248 million worldwide.

The film demonstrates the power of “social currency” one of the most powerful of the six elements making products “contagious” or spreadable by social transmission and word of mouth. The six elements are 1) Social Currency 2) Triggers 3) Emotion 4) Public 5) Practical Value and 6) Stories. As Berger notes, all the elements might be present in some contagious things but not all are needed and often one or two of them is enough to make something contagious.

While all the elements might be present or just one of the elements to make things contagious, one is hard-pressed to find something that is contagious without the key element of social currency. In many ways, the other elements are wrapped around this one key element and simply give more power to social currency.

What is social currency? In a large sense it is the word of mouth value a particular idea of product contains. Not necessarily the intrinsic value or traditional market value based on supply and demand. Rather it is a different type of value that makes some things more socially transmittable than other things.

Social currency arises not from traditional internal product elements taught by marketing classes in business schools, elements like product benefits and features they possess or needs they satisfy. Rather social currency arises from the need to share our experiences. As Berger notes, “Self-sharing follows us through out lives. We tell our friends about our new clothing purchases and show family members the op-ed piece we’re sending to the local newspaper. The desire to share our thoughts, opinions, and experiences is one reason social media and online social

networks have become so popular. In fact, today's social-network-addicted people can't seem to stop sharing what they think, like and want with everyone all the time. “

Berger notes that research finds that more than 40 percent of what people talk about is their personal relationships. Yet all of this is more than just vanity. As Berger observes, “We're actually wired to find it pleasurable.”

One of the key things talked about - providing great social currency - are what Berger notes are “remarkable” things or those things defined as “unusual, extraordinary, or worthy of notice or attention.” Berger notes that something can be remarkable because it is novel, surprising, extreme, or just plain interesting. “But the most important aspect of remarkable things is that they are *worthy of remark*. Worthy of attention.” As Berger says, “These remarkable things provide social currency because they make the people who talk about them seem, well, more remarkable.”

We return to the phenomenon of *The Blair Witch Project*. Certainly the movie didn't become a blockbuster because of traditional Hollywood reasons like big star power, incredible special effects or a great screenplay. It had none of these. But what it did have in abundance was that key contagious element called social currency. People discussed the film long after the final credits rolled in the theater. They debated what happened to the film crew. They questioned whether the story was true. The film has remarkable social currency and those that talked about it possessed a small piece of this remarkability. They became remarkable themselves.

(Next: Elements of Hollywood Social Currency)

## Participation & Popularity

“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*

## Chasing Down McLuhan

The media theorist Marshall McLuhan suffers the fate of many cultural icons. In the process of annointment and placement of their biographies into the hallowed museums of popular culture for the common people to view, their insides are gutted of the complexities and paradoxes that marked their lives. The result is a type of “Idiot’s Guide” of their life and theories is the final product on display. While it is essentially a cartoon version of their real life, it also fits the needs of a “dumbed down” culture with an attention span not much longer than the length of surfing channels on cable TV.

For most cultural icons this simplification process is no big deal, and too, not much of a loss. Their value is little more than the fading values of the fashions of the moment. But with Marshall McLuhan this is not the case. The result of the cultural icon process has hidden much of McLuhan’s key insights, making them inaccessible for study.

While the cultural police play a large part in hiding much of McLuhan’s message from view, a part of this inaccessibility can be attributed to McLuhan. The media guru possessed many traits similar to that mythological trickster character. During the height of his fame in the 60s the trickster aspect of this character was most evident. He seemed amused with the constant posse of public attention that perpetually chased after him. At the same time he wanted to make sure this posse wasn’t able to track him all the way to his hideout. His writings and talks during this period of his greatest popularity often demonstrate subtle efforts to throw the public posse off his trail. Many of his most important insights were wrapped like fortune cookies in ironies and paradoxes that acted like mirrors reflecting against other mirrors.

It is somewhat ironic that much of the challenge associated with finding the hidden messages of McLuhan relates to a disregard of one of his central dictum “The medium is the message.” In effect, many have focused their attention on the “medium” when the real secret has existed more in the technique of his “messages.”

A particular “medium” of McLuhan that threw the public posse of attention away from McLuhan’s secret “messages” was his neat division of media into “hot” and “cool” types. While many became involved with efforts to define various types of media mediums with the designations of “hot” or “cool,” the possibility that “hot” or “cool” technique might exist in “messages” escaped notice.

### The Cool Professor

It is important to understand that McLuhan came to media not from communication and journalism programs (like many current media scholars) but rather from the rather arcane area of literary criticism. The resulting mixture of literary theory with media ideas was something that is unlikely to be created again in our contemporary world of segmented knowledge.

Perhaps one of the main things forgotten by the cultural police is that McLuhan was incredibly well-versed in the history and methods of literary technique. In the Medium and the Light, Eric McLuhan recalls the years his father spent at Cambridge University. It was the 1930s and the world was in the middle of a great depression. McLuhan was at Cambridge working on his Ph.D thesis centered around the rather obscure Elizabethan pamphleteer Thomas Nashe. He was a well qualified candidate to write a thesis having acquired B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Manitoba and Cambridge.

The subject of McLuhan’s thesis, Thomas Nashe, was involved in a raging literary controversy against the poet Gabriel Harvey and his brother Richard Harvey. Both were extremely critical of the writings of Nashe and his friend Robert Greene. The bulk of Nashe's work consisted of satires against Harvey, as well as protests against the public’s neglect of worthy writers (like himself of course).

McLuhan originally intended to write about the differences between Thomas Nashe and Gabriel Harvey. But researching the spirited satirist meant digging into the background of the quarrels he engaged in. Soon, McLuhan realized it would take more than a brief note to explain the differences between Nashe and Harvey.

As Eric McLuhan notes in The Medium and the Light, his father came to see Nashe and Harvey as symbols for something much greater than the petty battles they were engaged in during their time. As Eric McLuhan recalls, they were seen by his father as “the latest combatants in a struggle that had been going on, by then, for over 1500 years and which for hundreds of years more showed no signs of abating.”

McLuhan located the struggle in the famous Trivium of the Western intellectual tradition. The Trivium compressed all knowledge into three streams: rhetoric (communication), dialectic (philosophy and logic), and grammar (literature). While knowledge of the Trivium’s existence

has faded in the contemporary world, its three branches serve as a foundation for traditional elementary school educational process based around teaching grammar in grades K-6 and ages 4-11, logic in grades 7-9 and ages 12-14 and rhetoric in grades 10-12 and ages 15-18.

McLuhan's studies of the Trivium began with the Greek and Roman educational systems, went through the Middle Ages and ended with James Joyce in the twentieth century. In effect, it began with Cicero in Augustan Rome and ran to Nashe in Elizabethan England. It concerned itself with the key debates between great universities such as Cambridge, Oxford and Paris.

While many others had undertaken the study of philosophy and literature, it was McLuhan's unique insight to place this study into a type of triumvirate context by considering the relationships between the three disciplines of the Trivium. As Eric McLuhan observes, his father saw the Trivium "as a set of Siamese triplets."

Considered from this viewpoint, the overall perspective of the Trivium changed enormously as well as the developments within each of its three branches. Thomas Nashe fit into the Trivium scheme because he represented the age-old claims of grammar (allied with rhetoric) for dominance of the Trivium. Against this claim, was the rival claim of dominance by dialectical reformers represented by Gabriel Harvey.

The eventual Cambridge Ph.D thesis of McLuhan on Nashe and the Trivium was one of the most learned thesis that Cambridge had ever seen. It also served as an original context for McLuhan's invention of media theory.

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After Cambridge, McLuhan moved around in various academic positions for almost two decades. The early 1950s found McLuhan at the University of Toronto. These years are recalled in the book The Virtual McLuhan by McLuhan's first graduate student Donald Theall.

In the summer of 1950, Theall arrived at the University of Toronto as a graduate student. The director of Graduate Studies of the English Department attempted to warn him against doing a doctoral degree with an avant-garde, unorthodox professor at the University named Marshall McLuhan.

But Theall was not persuaded and decided to stay in Toronto to study under the iconoclastic professor rather than return to Yale. Theall writes "I felt that between the historically oriented University of Toronto Department of English and the avant-garde McLuhan I was obtaining a badly needed awareness of the study of literature in its historical context as well as within a new, broadly interdisciplinary context."

As Theall notes, McLuhan embedded his teaching in literary history but also in the history of grammar, logic, rhetoric, and early theories of education. It was a history of inter-relationships between literature, the arts, and the everyday culture. Certainly a rare combination at the time and one that threatened the rather insular perspective of the English Department at the University of Toronto.

When he arrived, McLuhan was the only lay member of the English Department. The department primarily consisted of a handful of priests and three nuns.

## The Medium is the Message

A decade after his arrival in Toronto, McLuhan's theories of communication in literature – the great theories of the Greeks and the Trivium - had evolved into theories of communication in media.

During the turbulent 60s his maxim "The medium is the message" became a household word to many in the Boomer generation. It seemed a welcome change from the wildly politicized environment of the times. Its appealing invitation was to consider the *context* - rather than the *content* - of the thousands of political and consumer "messages" that invaded the Boomer generation like angry bees at a Sunday picnic.

Over the years, the attention McLuhan directed away from the content of media to its context has served his legacy well. There is little doubt that it has been a beacon for many students of media.

At the same time, though, it also directed attention away from what one might define as media *technique* contained within media messages. Many might say that McLuhan had little interest in media technique. They would challenge anyone suggesting this to identify places in his works where he spoke of media technique. And, to an extent, they would be right. For all his work on media, McLuhan didn't spend much time discussing media technique.

However, he did something far more important as well as relevant to a McLuhanesque view on the world: he practiced media technique in his writings. In effect, the hidden part of McLuhan's theories was contained between the lines of his words, in the style of his prose expression.

Of course few were able to see this - especially the cultural police and the curators of the museum of popular cultural icons. The posse of public attention avidly pursued McLuhan studying the "mediums" of communication and the ideas in his books, never suspecting the style of writing was the real "medium" for his "messages."

## Hot And Cool Media

Another key factor that threw the public posse off the real insights of McLuhan was his dichotomy of media into "hot" and "cool" types. Like the phrase "The medium is the message," the idea of "hot" and "cool" also fit the temperature of the times for the 60s generation.

McLuhan stated the dualities between "hot" and "cool" media in his famous book *Understanding Media*. He considered media "hot" if it provided much information to a single sense, like sight. On the other hand, "cool" media provided less information. As he noted:

There is a basic principle that distinguishes a hot medium like radio from a cool one like the telephone, or a hot medium like the movie from a cool one like TV. A hot medium is one that extends one single sense in 'high definition.' High definition is the state of being well filled with data. A photograph is, visually, 'high definition.' A cartoon is 'low definition,' simply because very little visual information is provided. The ear is given a meager amount of information. Telephone is a cool medium, or one of low definition, because the ear is given a meager amount of information. And speech is a cool medium of low definition, because so little is given and so much has to be filled in by the listener. On the other hand, hot media do not leave so much to be filled in or completed by the audience.

Concepts like degrees of definition and information are perhaps better understood by their relationship to user participation. As McLuhan noted, "Hot media are, therefore, low in participation, and cool media are high in participation or completion by the audience."<sup>1</sup> To McLuhan, "hot" media was filled with so much information it was non-participatory for the user. On the other hand, "cool" media offered less information and therefore allowed more participation by the user.

### Hot and Cool Elements Within Media

McLuhan's theory of "hot" and "cool" media was a provocative section in Understanding Media. Yet, as interesting as it was, its ultimate place in the McLuhan canon was a rather solitary one never finding a real correspondence with the rest of his work and theories.

For example, one question worth asking is the relationship of "hot" and "cool" media theory to other key theories relating to visual and auditory media and senses. In general, McLuhan felt that visual media (such as writing and the alphabet) was usually "hot" media providing more information. Conversely, auditory media (like speech) was usually "cool" media providing less information.

Yet, as the quote above from Understanding Media demonstrates, this was not always the case. Certain visual media like TV was considered "cool" while other visual media, like film, was considered "hot." And too, certain oral media, like radio, was considered "hot" while other oral media like the telephone was considered "cool" media.

The "hot" and "cool" distinction within similar media (like TV and film, radio and telephones) suggests there might be other distinctions within similar media. Therefore, if McLuhan's "hot" and "cool" categories do not come symbiotically attached to major types of media, they might co-exist within the same media.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

The most obvious example of this co-existence of “hot” and “cool” elements within a particular media is television. While McLuhan considered television a cool media for the amount of information it provided the viewer, this view certainly goes against the grain of numerous media critics who view television more as a “hot” involving little audience participation. In fact, the lack of participation in the television viewing experience is one of the major critiques of television.

Or, consider the telephone, one of the leading “cool” media. Certainly there is little question that telephones involve much “cool” participation. For example, consider a telephone conversation between two friends. This probably involves the greatest amount of “cool” participatory media with each person using the media as a “peer” of the other. In fact, it might be said to represent the speech component of what is termed peer-to-peer communication on the Internet.

But there are also elements within the media of telephones that involve less participation than other elements. Consider variations of telephone conversations other than “peer-to-peer” conversations between friends. For example, consider a telephone conversation between an employee and his or her boss. Usually, there is far less participation by the employee than in a conversation with a friend. Or, consider an even lower amount of participation in a telephone conversation between a telemarketer and a consumer. And finally, consider perhaps the lowest form of telephone participation in recorded telephone calls placed by automatic call centers. Here, there is hardly any chance for participation. The telephone in effect becomes the epitome of McLuhan’s “hot” media and an interactive “cool” media becomes the speech version of print’s junk mail.

Perhaps the contemporary “poster child” for interactive participatory “cool” media is the Internet. Similar to telephones, it contains large elements of participatory “cool” media. For example, emails between friends are much like phone calls between friends.

At the same time, like telephones, the Internet increasingly contains many “hot” areas allowing little participation. As an example, consider the increasing number of spam email messages on the Internet. Like automatic telephone calls or junk mail, they allow little participation.

### Inside The Outer-Belts of Media

Since McLuhan’s time, the world has experienced an increasing segmentation of media types which has made his early “hot” and “cool” media dichotomies more difficult to discern. A telephone is no longer just a telephone and a television is often much more than the television of McLuhan’s time.

Telephones, for example, have become wireless Dick Tracy type of devices able to show pictures, stock quotes, email messages and web sites. Wireless communication has made

telephones more “cool” while, at the same time, the growing onslaught of telemarketers and call centers with their low participation, have made telephones more “hot.”

Or, consider television that has gained a new aspect of interactive coolness with devices like the remote control and TiVo technology. In many respects, the growing TV programming genre called reality television provides a new audience access to television, making the subtle suggestion that television content, rather than just television technology, has a “cool” participation factor.

In all of this evolution, the designation of “hot” and “cool” media still has great importance as a basic navigational beacon for many students of media in the stormy sea of media flooding the modern world. However, the media it once defined under the labels of “hot” or “cool” has grown from media with relatively distinct boundaries to vast media “cities” with constantly expanding boundaries. For example, consider the growth of Internet sites from the early days of a few pages and links to grand Internet cities like AOL full of different virtual “suburbs” and communities.

While the theories of McLuhan and his ideas about “hot” and “cool” media might take us to the “outer-belts” of these new grand media cities, they offer less help in exploring the suburbs and various populations inside them and their techniques of communication.

### Hot And Cool Technique

After these brief “off-road” excursions of key McLuhan maxims, its time to gather the posse together again and get back on McLuhan’s trail, attempting to track down his elusive media insights. We might be gaining on him - not too far ahead we can see a dust cloud. It might be his.

As we have observed, the dualities of McLuhan’s media types help in understanding the basic “user friendliness” of media. Yet they have less value in venturing inside the “outerbelts” of diversified modern media like the Internet, telephones, television, radio and online video games. A key observation about McLuhan’s “hot” and “cool” media that needs emphasis, again, is that they are based on media *type* rather than media *use* or *technique*. While there is little doubt that much insight into media was originally opened up by McLuhan with his distinction between “hot” and “cool” media type, much more (with greater contemporary relevance) is opened up by consideration of “hot” and “cool” media technique.

Although McLuhan, never really explored the question of whether “hot” or “cool” might be contained within the same media - in effect be media technique as well as media type - he certainly was not oblivious to this question and possibility. In fact, in Understanding Media he provided the basis of a bridge between his “hot” and “cool” type and a “hot” and “cool” technique with the suggestion that a “hot” form or media (such as the alphabet and its expression in writing) might contain a “cool” technique.

To illustrate his point, he tapped into his vast knowledge of literary history and brought forth the theories of Francis Bacon with a startling observation:

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 observation is one of the more interesting ones McLuhan ever made. In effect, it suggested the possibility that there might be both participatory and non-participatory aspects within the same media.

Like his “hot” and “cool” theories of media types, his ideas about “hot” and “cool” technique never received the elaboration they deserved. Yet, as we have observed, technique was constantly on display in the writing technique and style of McLuhan’s prose, or perhaps more accurately, McLuhan’s anti-prose.

In effect, when one takes a broad overview of McLuhan’s work it becomes apparent that much of his writing is in the form of aphorisms. This leads to an interesting speculation: the real magic of McLuhan’s popularity and fame might not have been so much in the revolutionary *content* of his ideas but rather in the “cool” *contextual* technique that presented these ideas.

In effect, the Boomer generation of the 60s might have been drawn by all the publicity to McLuhan’s works but it was the style that allowed them a new type of participation in these ideas. It was a new type of participation not allowed by an environment increasingly filled with the “hot” messages of advertising and politics. They might have come to the McLuhan edifice for phrases like “The medium is the message” and divisions like “hot” and “cool” media.

Yet it was the technique of expression that really pulled the Boomer generation into the McLuhan edifice and made them linger within it longer than they linger in other works of literature. In their bold aphoristic phrasings and attempt to avoid the simplicity of “Idiots Guide” packaging, a packaging that Bacon identified as “hot” media a few hundred years before McLuhan, his words invited the cool participation they talked about. They really represented the “cool” media of the 60s.

### Cool Prose

Certainly one of the more important contemporary media traits is the ability to pull “cool” technique from “hot” media. This “cool” technique becomes more important in our contemporary world increasingly dominated by “hot” broadcast, non-participatory type of media.

As the world increasingly becomes more one of “hot” non-participatory media, the ability to create “cool” participatory technique takes on greater importance.

It is useful to pursue the various definitions of the word “aphorism” Francis Bacon and McLuhan allude to. Interestingly, the definition of aphorism brings together a number of famous literary methods, techniques and forms such as adages, proverbs and precepts. In The American Heritage College Dictionary, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition and The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, one finds the following paraphrased definitions:

Aphorism – A terse statement of a truth or opinion; an adage; a brief statement of a principle. Wisdom condensed in a few words. Examples: “Give a man a mask and he will tell you the truth.” (Wilde) “The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.” (Blake) Aphorisms often take the form of a definition: “Hypocrisy is a homage paid by vice to virtue.” (La Rochefoucauld).’

Adage – A traditional saying, a proverb.

Proverb – A short pithy saying of unknown authorship in frequent and widespread use that expresses a basic truth or practical precept. Examples: “Too many cooks spoil the broth.”

Pithy – Precisely meaningful; forceful and brief.

Precept – A rule or principle prescribing a particular course of action or conduct.

A few very observations can be made from the above words surrounding the definition of aphorisms.

The first observation relates to the *quantity of content*. In effect, all of the types of prose relating to aphorisms involve few words. They are short, possessing brevity.

The second observation relates to the *quality of content*. All of these types of prose involve an expression of a basic truth. Whether this truth is believable or not matters less than the fact that a basic truth or principle is expressed. There is no room for relativity with aphorisms. The world of aphorisms believes in an absolute world. (Perhaps in the same way that the alphabet and writing turn the oral world of relativity into more of an absolute one of definition?).

The third observation relates to the *correspondences of aphorisms to popular language*. An aphorism is like an adage or a “traditional saying, a proverb.” Like a proverb, it is in “frequent and widespread use.”

## Cool Correspondences

Apart from aphorisms and proverbs, there are other literary techniques through the ages that can be defined as cool or participatory for the reader. These are allegory, analogy, metaphor, satire and symbol. A brief definition of each of these is in order.

### (1) Allegory

The representation of abstract ideas or principles by characters, figures, or events in narrative, dramatic or pictorial form. A story, picture, or play employing such representation.

### (2) Analogy

Similarity in some respects between things that are otherwise dissimilar. Comparison based on such similarity. A form or instance of logical inference, based on the assumption that if two things are alike in some respects, they must be alike in other respects.

### (3) Metaphor

A figure of speech in which a word or phrase that designates one thing is applied to another in an implicit comparison, as in "All the world's a stage." One thing conceived as representing another; a symbol.

### (4) Satire

### (5) Symbol

One that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention, especially a material object representing something invisible.

## Cool Technique in Literary History

Within this brief history of McLuhan's early years in academia, one can see that he was much more of a literary scholar than a media scholar. Of course, most of this is a relatively

unknown period of his biography. After all, literary stuff is not the stuff cultural icons are made from.

One of the things that begins to stand out in this period is the incredible connection of McLuhan with the history of literary tradition and technique. It is a connection that easily wandered back into the leading ideas of the ancient Greek's about communication.

Perhaps the most important thing McLuhan learned from the ancient Greeks related to their theories about involving the audience, the reader, the listener in a participatory dialogue. Later McLuhan would define this involvement as "cool." Many saw it as relating to types of media. But McLuhan always knew it related to techniques within media.

It is interesting to note how techniques like aphorisms, proverbs, precepts and adages find such great relationship to many of the greatest, most important and popular books of history.

For example, aphorisms have been employed throughout history in many literary contexts. One of the most famous modern applications of aphorisms to literary technique is in the work of Nietzsche. (More)

For example, the technique of proverbs is employed to great effect in The Bible. As many are aware, Hebrew scriptures includes a book of Proverbs. In addition, many poets, notably Chaucer, incorporate proverbs into their works.

Consider also famous works such as 1001 Nights as well as the writings of the mystical Middle Eastern Sufis.

Consider also the technique of The Koran.

### The Hot World

One of the greatest tragedies of our time is the "hot" non-participatory aspects of the modern world. This non-participatory aspect is probably most notable in media. One can "view" or "listen to" but cannot participate or interact with.

The French philosopher Guy Debord notes this modern condition in his book The Society of the Spectacle observing that modern man is increasingly a "spectator" rather than an "actor" in the world. And, the French anthropologist Marcel Mauss in his landmark book The Gift observes the historic need for this "cool" participatory type of interaction noting, "The unreciprocated gift still makes the person who has accepted it inferior, particularly when it has been accepted with no thought of returning it ... We must give back more than we have received."

For the most part, modern communication is far too occupied with bringing new technologies of communication online to compete for the attention of mass culture than investigating the techniques behind these technologies. The focus of communication, whether those in the universities, Hollywood, Madison Avenue or Washington DC, is on new *types* of communication rather than new *techniques* of communication.

In the middle of modern communication, we have the Internet, that island of the masculine alphabet of words in the feminine sea of electric cyberspace. If only McLuhan was around to provide some of his satire and aphorisms to the whole thing. Would he see the Internet as the real showdown between “medium” and “message?” Would he consider it the battleground for the senses of orality against those of visualness?

And what would he make of all those elementary kids playing Sims or Animal Crossing? Or all those young boys playing Madden Football? Or what about the increasing numbers of young men that spend their leisure time playing Lineage or Grand Theft Auto? Or what would he think of all the beeping and ringing of our modern culture, of cell phones going off in movies and drivers zooming around the outer-belts of cities with cell phones glued to their ears?

More than likely, McLuhan would be participating with this media and perhaps lecturing and writing about it. But, like before, it is unlikely that popular culture would really understand the importance of his words. Like the Boomer generation that went before them, the new Millennium and Xer generations are aware of this Oracle called McLuhan but things don't go much further than a basic awareness.

If only the new generation could understand McLuhan ... in a new way. It's probably too much to ask. But now more than ever is the time for a focus on communication technique, that hidden core of the McLuhan heritage to modern communication. For attention to McLuhan brings with it so much more than attention to the avant-garde media theorist from Toronto. It also summons back into the present the past world of the great artists and art works of communication technique.

## Cool Devices

Scripts written using (1) literary forms and devices suggested in *Participation & Popularity* (2) stages of scripts such as beginning, outline, multiple and pieces.

### -----NOTES-----

Hot & Cool Media of Law (see my paper)

Greater discretion – Constitutional law (Democrats) – Cool Media

Less discretion – Federal Codes (Republicans) – Hot Media

The Art of Bullshit Essay (Senior Thesis at Webb)

Peer to peer communication in early 2000s

Open source programming and code as perhaps the real basis for the freedom of the Internet today.

Closed source code. and closed source. Perhaps the real two opposition symbols that fought each other in that unseen context (subtext?) of culture. That surrounding medium to us that surrounds us – unseen, unfelt - like water surrounds a fish. It is this medium that the new type of cool, participatory script should move towards.

## Cool As Beginning

As McLuhan might say, a completed script is a hot, non-participatory media today while an incomplete script is a participatory medium and cool. Incomplete can arise from words and particular literary forms and stages of scripts whether given only beginning of a script, an outline, multiple scripts (script referring outside script) or delivered in pieces.

It is cool to begin writing weekly or monthly columns or blogs.

Perhaps more. The point is to create a blog market and that might qualify as “spreadable media” or media that becomes quickly passed through culture.

-----Notes -----

## Cool As Multiple

A script that refers to other scripts outside the script.

See *Abandoned Ship* in the Notes section

## Cool As Piece

Creating sections of this cool media perhaps originally via a regular column in another ongoing script like an online magazine.

Scripts such as novels and screenplays are published suggest in pieces through ongoing columns and blogs rather than completed products.

All methods employed in Script Symbology document which comes via bi-monthly columns in an online magazine for screenwriters.

Participation through publishing a series of related pieces as columns or blogs. Rather than a whole product.

## Cool As Image

Most of our notes on participation are based on writing, words and scripts. However, might there also be a type of cool or participation rating for various images? We are not talking about collections of images put into films or videos but rather individual images by themselves.

In other words, like literary forms such as Bacon's aphorisms, might there also be incomplete images that demand participation to complete them from the audience?

Original meaning of symbol from symbolein where one half of something matched with its other half.

Images in general are "hot" allowing less participation while words in general are "cool" allowing more participation.

Behind the great classics of literature is this cool quality of participation.

But might there be a grammar of participatory images allowing for greater participation?

If so, might this grammar be based on images that are incomplete and demand completion from the viewer of the image?

Bacon quote on aphorisms.

Might certain images act like cool literary devices such as aphorisms demanding completion?

Might some images be intrinsically cooler than other images?

Might there be a grammar or context of images that allow this participation?

Might the grammar be based on the duality and correspondence laws of symbolism?

### Images

Color

Black and white

Noise

Shape

Context

## Cool As Theater

Immersive theater mixes food, drink and environmental staging  
to lure audiences that eschew Broadway

Gordon Cox

Variety

4/23/13

Call it experiential; call it immersive; call it event theater. It's usually a snarl of logistical challenges. There's no set financial model for making it viable. The work itself is often impossible to describe.

And a growing number of legiters think it's the next big thing.

Often staged in unorthodox locations and already commonplace overseas, the shows typically feature long runs, lower margins, purpose-built venues and added revenue streams — such as food and drink.

“It's really on the cutting edge of what people want theater to become,” says producer Howard Kagan of his upcoming commercial transfer of “Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812,” a rock opera that improbably mixes Tolstoy, contempo musical idioms and an environmental staging in a Russian supper-club setting that serves pierogis and vodka. “It becomes relevant and desirable and fun for a huge array of demographics that don't necessarily think they'll turn out for a Broadway show.”

Adds La Jolla Playhouse a.d. Christopher Ashley, “I think this kind of work is the next huge wave of growth in the American theater.”

\* \* \*

### Other event theater

“Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812”

One part environmental staging in a Russian supper club, one part modern-day music and one part the story (taken from a small seg of “War and Peace”) of a young Moscow woman who's seduced by a devious Casanova while waiting for her husband to return from the front lines.

WHERE: Kazino, a specially constructed and designed space on a lot in Manhattan's Meatpacking District.

“Sleep No More”

Punchdrunk's genre-bending, noirish dance-theater retelling of "Macbeth," staged over five floors in a meticulously set-dressed venue in which masked auds roam at will while the performers enact the tale all around them. In addition to the bar where theatergoers start the show, there's also a rooftop watering hole and restaurant. WHERE: The McKittrick Hotel, not actually a hotel but the show's custom-renovated space in a former nightclub in west Chelsea, Manhattan.

\* \* \*

*Then She Fell*  
Immersive Theater  
Opens March 9, closes July 28, 2013  
The Kingsland Ward at St. John's  
195 Maujer St., Brooklyn, N.Y.

*Then She Fell* is a fully immersive, multi-sensory experience in which only 15 audience members per performance explore a dreamscape where every alcove, corner, and corridor has been transformed into lushly designed world. Inspired by the life and writings of Lewis Carroll, it offers an Alice-like experience for audience members as they explore the rooms, often by themselves, in order to discover hidden scenes; encounter performers one-on-one; unearth clues that illuminate a shrouded history; use skeleton keys to gain access to guarded secrets; and imbibe elixirs custom designed by one of NYC's foremost mixologists.

Performances begin promptly, and there is absolutely no late admittance. There are no refunds. Admittance is strictly limited to audience members 21 years of age and over; all audience members must bring valid government-issued photo IDs. The performance lasts roughly 2 hours without intermission. Because of the immersive nature of this piece, audiences may be standing for several minutes at a time over the course of the performance. Audiences are encouraged to wear comfortable shoes. This performance is not recommended for audience members who are not comfortable standing, walking, or being alone.

\* \* \*

The New Yorker  
Goings On About Town

Third Rail Projects recently moved its wildly imaginative multimedia theatre-dance piece from a single-level hospital to a creaky three-story school building, now dressed to be a mental ward in Wonderland. There are even more nooks and crannies to snoop around in, skeleton key in hand,

looking for clues about the nature of the relationship between Lewis Carroll and his young muse Alice Liddell. Fifteen audience members per show are led through a maze of cockeyed spaces and left in small rooms with actors playing the White Rabbit or the Mad Hatter or the Red Queen, who might wordlessly offer a tiny, yummy alcoholic drink poured from a vial and then orchestrate an anxiety-provoking but exciting theatrical encounter: silently eat a tangerine with Alice; lie down in a little bed while the White Queen nestles beside you, telling a haunting bedtime story. Lucky theatregoers get to join the tea party, where chocolate is served and spoons fly. Wonderfully written, directed, and choreographed by Zach Morris, Tom Pearson, and Jennine Willett, in collaboration with the company.

Cool As Outline  
The Black Knight

One can argue the need for a new type of script in Hollywood and theorize about what this script might be. Will it be a matter of a new time for telling the story? A new structure for the story form? A new participation in the creation of this script. And we are not talking about co-screenwriters here as much as collaborators at various stages in the creation of the whole story and production and marketing in media.

Perhaps the world should be divided into those who write the original treatments for scripts. Have the big idea scrawled on napkins during all hours of the night. Or perhaps outlines for scripts? The concept is to allow as much participation as possible in the creation of a story. Perhaps just laying out some basic facts and putting them in a chronological order is a good method to invite participation in the creation of a narrative.

We offer this outline at the end of this column with a project titled *The Black Knight*. Here we simply provide a chronology of events in lives around William Boyd who played (invented really) Hopalong Cassidy. Boyd was a handsome matinee idol of the 20s silent movie era discovered by CB deMille. However, in 1931 his career was close to washed up when he was falsely identified with another actor named William Boyd who was arrested on morals charges. The event made all the LA papers and circulated through the Hollywood community. Boyd began drinking, boozing, partying, going through one unsuccessful marriage after and sinking deeper into debt. Unable to get any parts he felt his career was over.

Then in 1935 he was offered the role of cowboy Buck Peters in old west stories acquired by director Harry Sherman from the famous western writer Clarence Mulford's Bar 20 adventures started in 1906. Boyd accepted the offer, but he didn't want to play Buck Peters but rather Mulford's character Hopalong Cassidy. He liked the name and thought kids would too. Since Boyd still had name recognition value, Sherman agreed to let him play the part of the Bar 20 foreman.

Somewhat like the Clark "Superman" Kent who magically transformed himself when he changed into his Superman costume, Boyd too became a different person when he changed into the black costume of Hopalong Cassidy rode atop a great Arabian white horse named Topper. No longer was he a Hollywood party animal but now he was a type of "black knight" for goodness and morality on the rugged western American frontier.

The “Hoppy” westerns became the most popular film series in the emerging Hollywood film genre called westerns and over the next ten years Boyd’s “Hoppy” became the icon of morality and honesty for American boys. The film career of William Boyd began to get back on track. And so did Boyd’s personal life. In 1937, after four previous failed marriages, he met 23 year-old Grace Bradley (20 years his junior) who had fallen in love with him ten years before when she first saw him in one of deMille’s movies. A friend set up the meeting and when she first saw him she ran into his arms and the two were married a few weeks later. Hollywood is filled with romantic stories but few are more romantic than the story of William and Grace Boyd who remained his wife for the rest of his life.

\* \* \*

All of this is told in the following outline of the outline for *The Black Knight: The Story of Hopalong Cassidy*. My interest in this entire story of Hopalong Cassidy came from a side angle as I had been working on a history of the town of Palm Desert that served as the winter home for Hoppy and Grace after Boyd hung up his black Hoppy suit in the 50s. I created an outline for writing a history of Palm Desert putting all events in the outline in a yearly chronology.

A few months ago I pulled out some events from this outline about Randall Henderson, the founder of the legendary *Desert Magazine*, and wrote the article “The Birth of Desert Magazine” in the mid-30s. The outline *The Black Knight* was also pulled out from the Palm Desert history outline. It was a story that seemed even greater than the story created by Boyd’s Hoppy.

Grace Boyd once said in her later years, he was her prince on a white horse. While this is true, she was also the princess he had been searching for through booze and four wives. My interest was first sparked when I read the obituary of Grace Bradley in the *Los Angeles Times*. It was a true love story. No getting around this arc that always defined her life. I thought of building some history around this simple story. It was a Palm Desert story after all. And I felt that artists needed to create locally. Like the buy local movement for food I felt that writers needed to buy local for their story materials.

Artists in local product, talk about their environment they lived in each day seemed a good thing. A new and different way of looking at the world these days. Artists focusing inward on where they live, where they are. This is somewhat of a subliminal constant buzz suggestion in the outline I think, Here a local resident has created a history in outline form about where he lives. Here (as you’ll see below in the attached) the resident has identified a smaller story from the overall history and has pulled the basic outline of this story out of the large story outline. It is the below *The Black Knight* outline. What is the function of the outline form today? As compared to other participatory type of creative media. In the process of becoming some narrative that you, the reader, have a major part in creating. For it seems my task to simply provide you with an outline of events and let you arrange them the way you want to. Pull from this set of events in yearly order. Pull what you need. Make your own outline from our *Black Knight* outline pulled from our *Palm Desert* outline.

The *LA Times* article inspired me to again believe love stories are still possible in modern scripts. Whatever these scripts are. Whatever they are becoming. (See our *Script* column titled “The Once And Future Kingdom.”) But perhaps more than love stories. Perhaps narratives are possible again, that assembling a string of events into some story might still have an interest and usefulness in our increasingly non-narrative period of history. Even in the media surfing, short attention span era we live in. I started building an outline of Palm Desert around this short love story.

And always wanted to return to it, Pull it out, Expand on it by pulling in a number of facts, Yet not making comment on the facts, But of course the comment I make is selecting them to bring into the outline in the first place, This perspective presents the facts of the story for a modern script writer in the same way the perspective of a historian selects events. Given this somewhat subjective criterion for selecting events for inclusion into the outline, this is basically what everyone out there has to work with in creating a story.

Of course I think the outline suggests such a great love story. And perhaps even more. It seems to me that the essential events are included in the few days I pulled things into the project like some great gravitational force over the Internet. Its amazing the information one can get quickly and assemble into some outline as I did here. Only a few days and the outline below was complete, But one evening I did work through the night on it I admit.

Anyway, here it is. One particular form of participation, A cool medium as McLuhan would say. Something requiring completion or participation in the creation of some final narrative, Here, unlike a written history, we are not provided a narrative but rather the facts that one is free to construct a narrative. A script narrative employing ideas of symbols and symbolism we’ve written about in previous columns. We discuss other forms of participatory media in other columns of ours to *Script*.

Anyway, venture back to 1895 in Ohio where the outline of a story begins.

Cool As Outline  
Transcendent City

The script *Palm Desert: Outline for a Participatory History* offers a number of events placed into a chronology surrounding the beginning of Palm Desert, California. There is no attempt to connect the various events in the outline and no stated criterion for selecting event to go into the outline. Therefore, the reader needs to make his or her own connections as well as define what they feel is the subject of the history other than the founding of the desert town.

## The New Politics of Participation

**Sociology Quarterly**  
**Permanent Revolution: Occupying Democracy**  
Douglas Rushkoff\*  
Article first published online: 27 MAR 2013

“Unlike the innovations of the industrial age, which fostered production, accumulation, central authority, and empire, those of the digital era are biased toward replication and self-modification. Robotics, genomics, nanomachines, and digital programming do not render completed technologies but self-replicating, iterative systems. We program them now, but they continue themselves, learning from experience, iterating new versions, and carrying on the intentions of their original creators in novel ways.”

To parse the impact of the digital environment is a bit more difficult because we are currently living within its effects. I have identified four of the most pronounced conceptual shifts accompanying digitality in order to demonstrate the ways that the Occupy movement has utilized them as central operating principles for its new approach to activism and democratic participation.

**The first is the notion of feedback.** Traditionally, what we think of as feedback is simply the latent results of particular causes. Farmers plant in one season and get feedback months later in the yield of crop. Plant seeds too close together, and the crop competes for resources. These data are then incorporated into the next year's planting. Likewise, businesses send a product to market and then wait for sales reports to determine if the design and marketing were appropriate or could be improved upon. Each new iteration of planting or product design was based on the feedback from the one before.

In the dawn of the digital era, Cyberneticist Norbert Wiener ([1965](#)) saw in feedback a way of developing robots that could instantaneously “feel” and respond to changing conditions in the real world. Just as a thermostat senses the temperature in order to turn a heater on or off and an elevator “feels” for indicators at each floor instead of attempting to measure the distance between one floor and another, robots could be taught to rely no more on their programming than to the things around them. Each piece of feedback could be iterated into the next action.

With the help of systems theorists aided by computers (Miller and Page [2007](#)), much more

complex systems could be analyzed in terms of feedback and iteration. The screech one hears when placing a microphone too close to an amplified speaker—what we call feedback—is really just the cyclical loop of uncontrolled feedback, iterating back to the microphone and again to the speaker. It is analogous to any of the many chaotic systems from the weather to the stock market that evade the analysis of our normal faculties.

Computers give us a way to see such systems in terms of their feedback and iteration. Fractals—the paisley graphics churned out by computers—are really just visualizations of the feedback and iteration of nonlinear equations. Their power is in their ability to render previously incomprehensible systems in graphics that make sense to the human viewer. As a result, we become more ready to understand feedback as an ongoing phenomenon rather than some occasional event.

In politics, for example, feedback used to occur primarily in four-year cycles. The populace would vote for a president, that president would go about his job, and then four years later he would get feedback in the form of being granted another term or kicked out of office. Pollsters arose to obtain feedback at tighter intervals so that a politician could adjust policy (or even just his communication about policy) during his term. Digital technology—from live Twitter feeds to real-time peplemeter results—now allows for instantaneous feedback. In a digital environment, feedback and iteration fold into one another.

**Second and similarly, in a digital environment, narratives no longer work quite like they used to.** Thanks to the remote control, the digital video recorder, the joystick, and the mouse, traditional stories are deconstructed, channel surfed, and fast forwarded (Rushkoff [1995](#)). Aristotle was likely the first to identify the way that audiences are carried through a story through their identification with a character. This identification allows the audience to go up into tension as the tragic hero makes a series of decisions that put him into jeopardy. If the audience could make any decisions on its own, they might have a way out other than to continue along with the character into peril, where they will ultimately have to accept the playwright's choice of how things end up.

Likewise, anthropologist Joseph Campbell spent a career analyzing what he called “the hero's journey,” a shape he believed was common to most mythology. This journey into peril for later redemption again required a captive audience, incapable of making its own decisions. These narrative techniques, as well as audience captivity, were eventually exploited by broadcast advertisers who learned to enact them in just 30 seconds, all for the benefit of a product. As audiences attained interactivity, however, the captivity required for this sort of propaganda—as well as the rest of traditional storytelling—became threatened. With escape as close as the push of a button, audiences of all kinds become intolerant of the anxiety associated with the rising tension of a story.

In the deconstructed, cut-and-paste mashup of digital media, the messianic, ends-justify-the-

means values of traditional journeys no longer find an environment consonant with their value systems. This is the realm of ongoing fantasy role-playing, not tragically terminal heroes. The digital environment is not a place for extended struggles, charismatic leaders followed by masses, or winner-takes-all campaigns. The structure of digital entertainment and problem solving is less like agonistic play with victors and vanquished than it is like James Carse's (1997) “infinite game”—one played for the sake of play. The object of the game is to keep the game going as long as possible.

**This sensibility extends to the third characteristic of the digital media environment, its emphasis on prototyping over product.** The shareware culture of the Internet led to what are known as “public betas”—the release of unfinished software to the public for testing and improvement. As Media Lab director Joichi Ito has explained (Ito 2011), there is no point testing a product in-house when there is a willing population of users out there ready to bang on one's programs. Besides, there is no time (see feedback and iteration above) to finish a product before seeing how people are going to react to it. Better to incorporate feedback into one's software in an ongoing fashion.

**Fourth and finally, the digital environment blurs the boundary between users and programmers.** In a computing environment (unless a program is intentionally and artificially encrypted and protected) one's level of participation is only limited by his willingness to learn more and dig deeper. One can play music through iTunes, or become a disc jockey whose selections are listened to by others. He can go deeper and use Garage Band to make new music, or another program to create new instruments for Garage Band. Or he can learn to program a new kind of music sequencer altogether.

Or, as Julian Kücklich (2004) and I (Rushkoff 2012) have explored separately, one's level of participation in any system can now be understood through the lens of a programmer or player. One can play a computer game out of the box; one can learn the “cheat” codes to play the game on a new level; one can learn to “mod” his own level of the game; or one can become a programmer and develop his own game. In a digital society people participate on all these levels, and their limitations are either voluntary or visibly imposed.

Act III  
Methods & Applications

Script Symbology  
Method & Application

Part of the attraction of *The Lord of the Rings* is “due to the glimpses of a large history in the background: an attraction like that of viewing far off an unvisited island ... To go there is to destroy the magic, unless new unattainable vistas are again revealed.”

“I was from early days grieved by the poverty of my own beloved country: it had no stories of its own (bound up with its tongue and style) not of the quality I sought ... I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy story ... which I could dedicate simply: to England: to my country.”

J.R.R. Tolkien  
1951 Letter

“A dragon is no idle fancy. There are in any case many heroes but very few good dragons.”

J.R.R. Tolkien  
“Beowulf: The Monster and the Critics”  
Oxford University, 1936

Introduction

The following is taken from a series of columns called “Script Symbology” written for the online screenwriting magazine *Script*. As we note at the beginning of the columns, “Script Symbology” is about the study and application of symbols and symbolism to scripts. To our knowledge there exists no ongoing research, discussion or study of the application of symbols and symbolism to modern scripts.

The columns allowed us to update and apply our ideas on symbols and symbolism to the “script” industry whatever that evolving word means these days. For now let’s just call it the screenwriter industry. Many of these ideas first came from our unpublished manuscripts *Symbolism of Place* (1993) and *Symbolism of Popular Culture* (1995) and our more recent *Battle of Symbols* (Daimon Verlag, Zurich, 2003).

The following materials are taken from the end of the series of “Script Symbology” columns where we suggest a method and application of our theories on symbolism to modern screenwriting form and elements.

In a sense, the entire collection of columns might be viewed as one “script” in itself containing the classic drama divisions of Act I, Act II and Act III. Viewed this way the first columns defining the area of study and discussing symbols and symbolism might be defined as the classic “set-up” of Act I of this particular script. Act II discusses the changing nature of scripts and suggests that the traditional Hollywood “screenplay” script is overdue for substantial revision in our era of short attention spans and participatory culture. The “battle” fought in ACT II is really between traditional screenplay forms and emerging ideas of scripts. The following materials offer a tentative resolution in Act III to the battle by presenting a method and application for the creation of modern scripts using symbols and symbolism.

The following Act III materials is divided itself into three sections. **Section One** *Screenwriting Form & Elements* is a short summary outline of essential ingredients of screenplays from John Truby’s leading screenwriting book *The Anatomy of Story*.

**Section Two** *Evolution of the Cross* offers a visual exploration of the relationship between cross symbolism, screenplay structure and the dynamics of symbolism. The relationship is shown by an on-going overlay of symbol elements over screenwriting structure and accompanied by no text except diagram titles.

The final **Section Three** titled *Participation* is a series of notes and quotes based around the theme of participation in culture. Partly it is an outline. It’s a topic that’s been on my mind for a number of years now, at least since writing my essay *Participation & Popularity* a number of years ago. I started really with the ideas of Marshall McLuhan in his distinction between cool and hot media and re-visioning these concepts around the idea of participation expressed in the groundbreaking media text *Spreadable Media* by Henry Jenkins. In effect, participation and non-participation are viewed as duality symbols containing great correspondence with many cultural phenomena.

In effect, **Section One** and **Section Two** provide a *context* for application of symbolism to scripts while **Section Three** provides notes relating to the *content* of this script. The overall goal of all sections is to utilize some techniques of participation discussed in our “Script Symbology” columns for *Script* magazine.

In this sense, the attempt has been made to create what Marshall McLuhan might term a “cool” script inviting participation and completion by readers. The fact that a conclusion is not reached in the enclosed allows for reader speculation and participation. Not only does the following material lack an overriding conclusion but it also appears as pieces of “evidence” (parts of a scene in a CSI episode) that need some type of participant assemblage. There are quotes, diagrams, outlines, lists, categories.

What form of text are we looking at in the first place? Is it some outline for a larger work? Is a particular script suggested in all of this? Is it defined by its Act III relationship to the larger

“mother ship” of columns for *Script* magazine? Could one create a script using participation and non-participation in culture as bookend symbols? Perhaps a hero or heroine that moves from non-participation to participation or from participation to non-participation? Yet isn't this really what all scripts are really about? The first defining a *romance* and the second defining a *tragedy*?

What will the author make from all of this? But more importantly, what will the reader make from all of this? Only if something is made from this will the reader become more than a reader and a participant. Only if something is made from this will the consumer also become the producer. Only if something is made from films will the audience become the entertainer. Only if something is made will fans become creators and therefore fans of their own creations.

### 1. Screenwriting Form & Elements

(From John Truby *The Anatomy of Story*)

#### Premise

The story idea stated in a single sentence. Suggests the essence of the story.

#### Seven Key Structure Steps

The seven key story structure steps are the major stages of the story's development and of the dramatic code hidden under its surface. They are:

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.

### 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.

### Plot

From characters, the right story form is discovered. The plot grows from the unique characters. Use of 22-step structure (the 7 steps plus 15 more) a plot is designed in which all the events are connected under the surface and build to a surprising but logically necessary ending.

Self-Revelation, Need, Desire  
Ghost & Story world  
Weakness & Need  
Inciting Event  
Desire  
Ally or Allies  
Opponent and/or Mystery  
Fake-ally Opponent  
First Revelation & Decision: Changed Desire & Motive  
Plan  
Opponent's Plan and Main Counterattack  
Drive  
Attack by Ally  
Apparent Defeat  
Second Revelation & Decision: Obsessive Drive, Changed Desire & Motive  
Audience Revelation  
Third Revelation & Decision  
Gate, Gauntlet, Visit to Death  
Battle  
Self-Revelation  
Moral Decision

## New Equilibrium

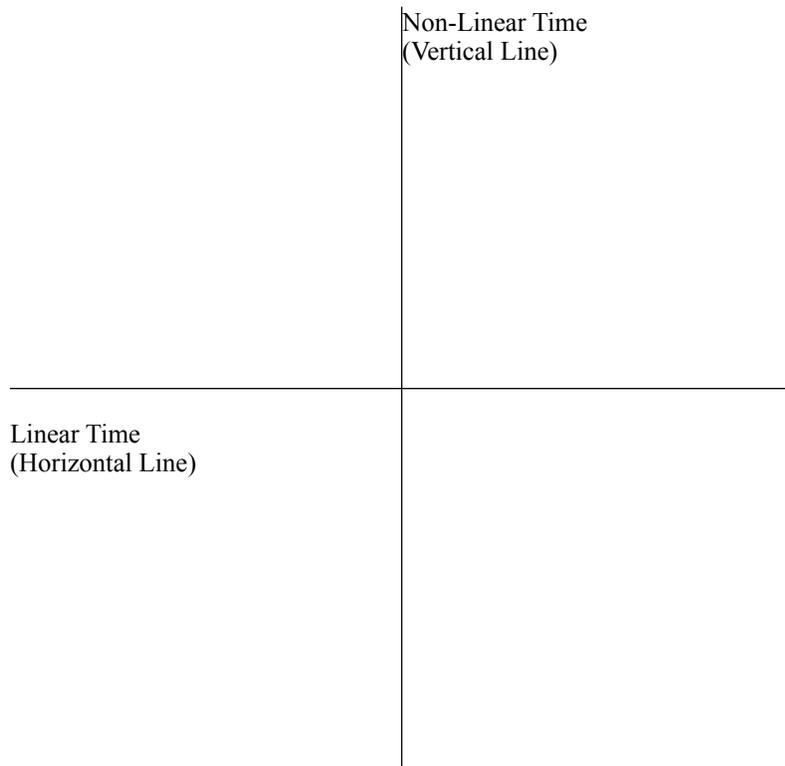
### Scene Sequence (Scene Weave)

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.

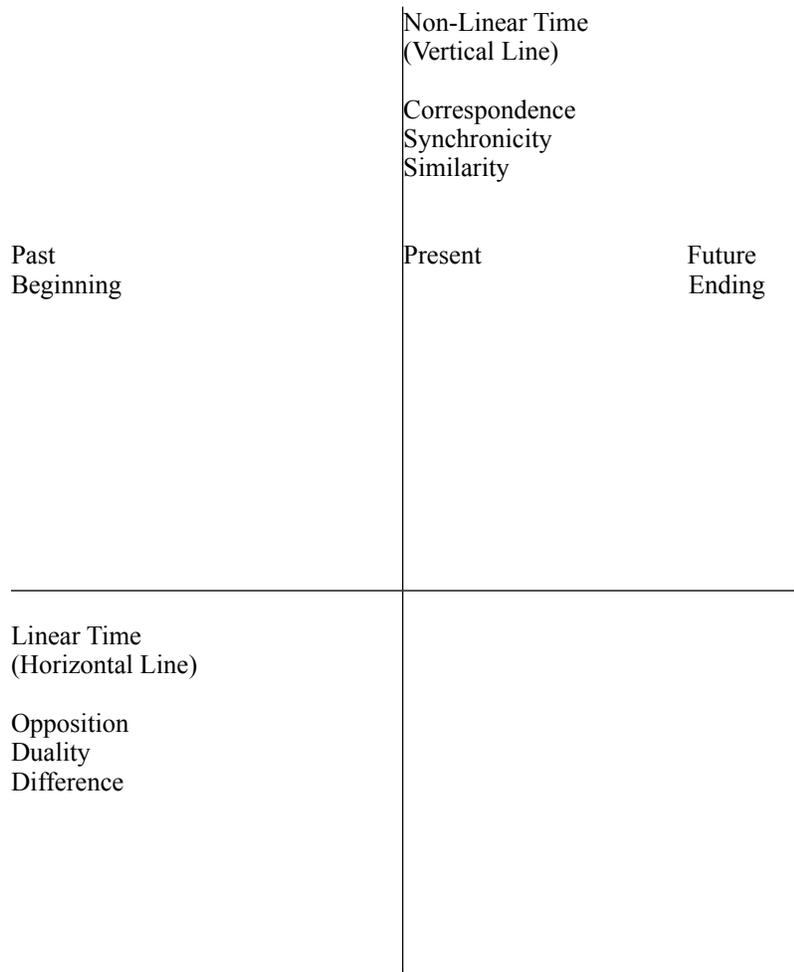
### Scene Construction & Dialogue

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.

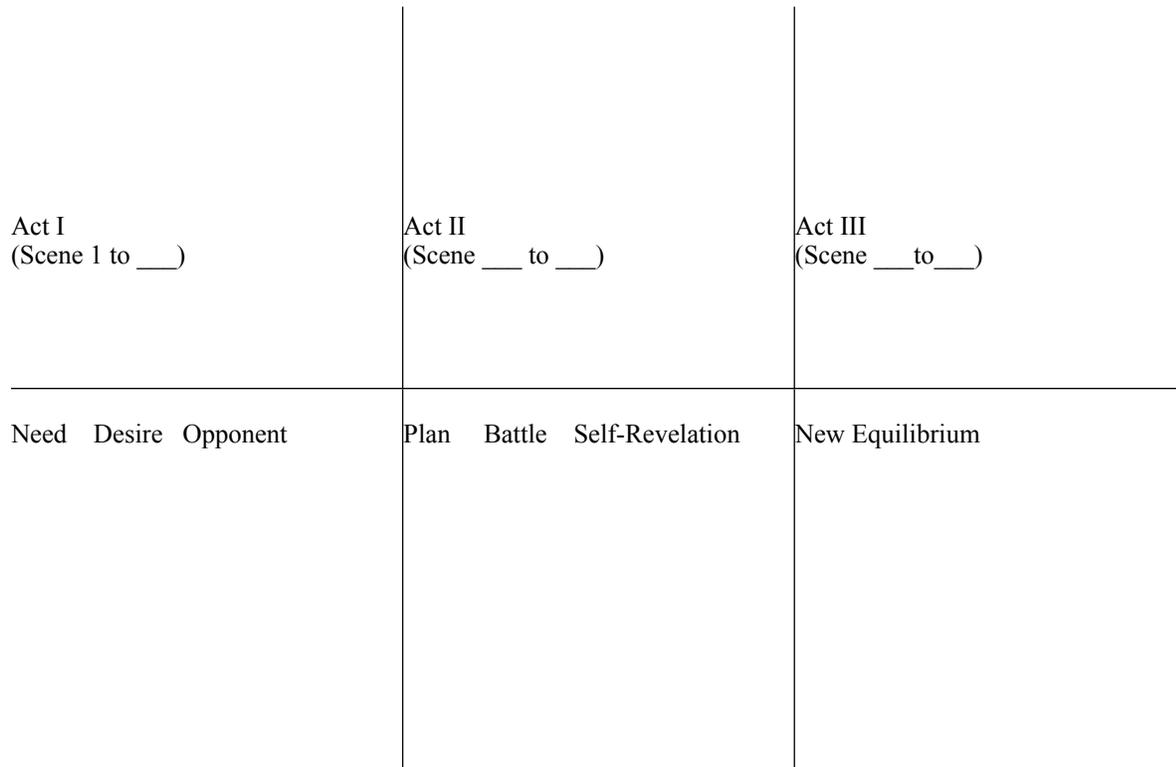
## 2. Evolution of the Cross



### A. Cross Symbolism Intersection of Linear & Non-Linear Time



B. Symbolism Dynamics  
Opposition, Duality & Difference in Linear Time  
Correspondence, Synchronicity & Similarity in Non-Linear Time



C. Symbolism Dynamics Into Scripts  
 Vertical Line Divided into Acts & Scenes  
 Screenplay Script Plot Sequence Placed within Acts

CONTEXT Place Time Space	CONTEXT Place Time Space	CONTEXT Place Time Space
Act I	Act II	Act III
Need Desire Opponent	Plan Battle Self-Revelation	New Equilibrium
CONTENT Objects Events Qualities Words	CONTENT Objects Events Qualities Words	CONTENT Objects Events Qualities Words

D. Content & Context Symbols  
Placed Within Plot Structure

CONTEXT Valley Midnight Inside/Under  Act I	CONTEXT Prairie Morning Level  Act II	CONTEXT Mountain Noon Outside/Over  Act III
Need Desire Opponent  CONTENT Soft Blue Introvert	Plan Battle Self-Revelation  CONTENT Soft vs. Hard (Battle) Blue vs. Yellow (Battle) = Green Introvert vs. Extrovert (Battle)	New Equilibrium  CONTENT Hard Yellow Extrovert

E. Example  
Content & Context Symbols  
Identified Specifically & Placed Within Plot Structure

CONTEXT Valley Midnight Inside/Under  Act I	CONTEXT Prairie Morning Level  Act II	CONTEXT Mountain Noon Outside/Over  Act III
Need Desire Opponent  CONTENT Soft Blue Introvert Female Protagonist (Heroine)	Plan Battle Self-Revelation  CONTENT Soft vs. Hard (Battle) Blue vs. Yellow (Battle) = Green Introvert vs. Extrovert (Battle) Male Antagonist (Villain)	New Equilibrium  CONTENT Hard Yellow Extrovert Female finds new strength she was unaware of

### E. Example

#### Key Characters Placed Into System

Duality Symbols – Female Protagonist in Act I and Act III

Correspondence Symbols – Female Protagonist in Acts I, II and III.

(Alignment of Content and Context Symbols With Protagonist State of Mind, Emotions Throughout the Course of the Script or Narrative). The same correspondence principles applied to the Villain throughout the script.



Genres	Horror		Science Fiction	Western
Body	Heart			Head
Colors				
Direction	East			West
Time	Past			Future
Light	Reflection			Radiation
Solar Syst.	Moon			Sun
Position	Below			Above
Gen. Cycles	High	Awakening	Unraveling	Crisis

## F. Symbol Opposition & Correspondence

### 3. Participation

#### Scripts & Popularity in History

Perhaps the most important media quality of the ancient Greeks related to their theories about involving the audience (the reader, listener) in a participatory dialogue. Is it any wonder that democracy originated in Greece?

Participation and non-participation have been defining elements of political systems since the Greeks. In fact, it might be argued that a new perspective on culture might be viewed through the lens of participation.

A key factor influencing participation or non-participation in culture has been language and its elements of words and the assemblage of words in texts and scripts. Some languages, some words, some scripts and texts allow greater participation by the audience (the reader, listener, viewer, game player, etc.) while other texts and scripts limit participation.

One interesting question for scholars and students of literature is whether participation is a common element in the great classics of literature throughout the ages. Certainly one of the greatest classics of literature is the *Bible*. Are participatory literary techniques behind much of its vast popularity? As we shall see later, it employs many participatory techniques in its content such as content chopped into short sections and the use of devices such as Proverbs and Parables.

#### Scripts & Popularity In Modern World

## Hot & Cool Media of Marshall McLuhan

“There is a basic principle that distinguishes a hot medium like radio from a cool one like the telephone, or a hot medium like the movie from a cool one like TV. A hot medium is one that extends one single sense in ‘high definition.’ High definition is the state of being well filled with data. A photograph is, visually, ‘high definition.’ A cartoon is ‘low definition,’ simply because very little visual information is provided. The ear is given a meager amount of information. Telephone is a cool medium, or one of low definition, because the ear is given a meager amount of information. And speech is a cool medium of low definition, because so little is given and so much has to be filled in by the listener. On the other hand, hot media do not leave so much to be filled in or completed by the audience.”

Marshall McLuhan  
*Understanding Media*

### Broadcast & Interactive

*Media Nations* - Fraim

### Peer to Peer Communication (late 90s)

Napster

Television

Radio

Books

Newspapers

Comic Books

Video Games

### Screenplay Scripts

Filmmaking as one of the most participative arts. But distinction needs to be made between two endeavors:

Creation of screenplays

Co-Writers

Advertisers

Sponsors

Popular culture (little)

Might there be an “audience” for script creation?

Creation of films (from screenplays)

Allow for great participation.

Auteur theory – Director as creator of film

More participation = more digital tracks

More targeting by commercial and political interests

Less privacy

Participation in non-commercial popular culture creates larger footprint in mass culture for targeting.

Genders

Feminine as Cool

Masculine as Hot

Texts

Script = Cool (Blueprint for performance)

Text = Hot (Final, No performance anticipated)

Theories of Communication

This misunderstanding of communication derives from two competing ideas of communication. James Carey, one of the leading communications scholars, talks about these two ideas in his important book *Communication and Culture*. In the article "A Cultural Approach to Communications," Carey points out that there have been two major alternative conceptions of communications in American culture since the term first entered discourse in the nineteenth century. He terms these views as the *transmission* view and the *ritual* view.

The transmission view is defined by terms such as "imparting," "transmitting," "sending," or "giving information to others." The ritual view is defined by terms such as "sharing," "participation," "association," "fellowship" and the possession of a common faith. The transmission view centers around the metaphors of geography and transportation with an ancient heritage derived from the dream of increasing the speed and effect of messages through space. As Carey notes, the center of this idea is "the transmission of signals or messages over distances for the purpose of control." He remarks, "From the time upper and lower Egypt were unified under the First Dynasty down through the invention of the telegraph, transportation and communication were inseparably linked."

#### Dominance Of Transmission

The ancient transmission metaphor was brought into the modern world during the nineteenth century with the western expansion of the American railroads when "movement of people and information were seen as the same thing." While the arrival of the telegraph ended the identity Carey argues that it did not destroy the metaphor. He

concludes that today our basic orientation to communication remains grounded in the idea of transmission.

It is an orientation with strong religious and moral connotations. This was so because movement in space became a highly redemptive act for Americans. More than merely the transmittal of information, movement in space became an attempt to establish and extend the kingdom of God. It is a belief, notes Carey, that has never quite escaped from Americans. "The moral meaning of transportation," he writes, "was the establishment and extension of God's kingdom on earth. The moral meaning of communication was the same."

Carey suggests that as the forces of science and secularization gained ground, the religious metaphors fell away. The technology of communication moved to the center of thought. But the religious and moral understanding of communication has never left the "zeitgeist" or context against which communications in America is understood. As Carey says, from the telegraph to the computer the same sense of profound possibility for moral improvement is present whenever the machines are invoked." In effect, the transmission view has become a type of paradigm which defines the "playing field" before the "game" even starts.

#### Ancient Heritage Of Ritual

As a result, the ritual view has played only a minor part in America's conception of communication. Even so, Carey argues that the ritual view is by far the older view and is based identity and common roots of the terms "commonness," "communion," "community," and "communication." Carey makes an important and critical point when he concludes that "A ritual view of communication is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs." If the archetype of the transmission view is the extension of messages across geography to control, the archetype of the ritual view is the sacred ceremony that draws together in fellowship and commonality.

While the transmission view has moral and religious underpinnings, the "indebtedness of the ritual view of communication to religion is apparent in the name chosen to label it." Moreover, Carey points out that it derives from a view of religion that downplays the role of the sermon, the instruction and admonition, in order to highlight the role of prayer, chant and ceremony. In this sense, "It sees the original or highest manifestation of communication not in the transmission of intelligent information but in the construction and maintenance of an ordered, meaningful cultural world that can serve as a control container for human action."

The ritual view of communication therefore sees popular culture as providing *confirmation* of belief rather *transmission* of information. Its purpose is not to alter

attitudes or change minds "but to represent an underlying order of things, not to perform functions but to manifest an ongoing and fragile social process."

But the ritual view has been far from the dominant motif of American communications scholarship that has been entranced with the transmission view. Carey suggests that this is in large part a result of Americans obsessive individualism, "from our Puritanism which disdains activity not practical and work oriented and from the separation of culture and science."

Similar to communication, the ancient idea of symbolism and symbols was based on ritual and communion rather than transmission. This symbolic communion involved a ritual coming together centered around a broken slate of clay. The word "symbol" is derived from the Greek word symbolon. In ancient Greece it was a custom to break a slate of burned clay into several pieces and distribute them within the group. When the group reunited the pieces were fitted together (Greek symbollein). This confirmed the members belonging to the group.

## Languages

Hot languages = Less participation

Cool languages = More participation

The language of the Third Reich helped to create the culture. "It isn't only Nazi actions that have to vanish, but also the Nazi cast of mind, the typical Nazi way of thinking, and its breeding ground: the language of Nazism."

*The Language of the Third Reich*  
Victor Klemperer

"New demands led the language of the Third Reich to stimulate an increase in the use of the dissociating prefix *ent* (*de*) though in each case it remains open to question whether we are dealing with completely new creations or the adoption by the common language of terms already familiar in specialist circles. Windows had to be blacked out (*verdunkelt*) because of enemy planes, which in turn led to the daily task of lifting the blackout (*des Entdunkelns*). In the event of roof fires, the lofts had to be free of clutter that might get in the way of the firefighters – they were therefore de-cattered (*entrumpelt*). New sources of nourishment had to be tapped: the bitter horse-chestnut was de-bittered (*entbittert*)."

## Technologies

Mechanical = Hot

Digital = Cool

## Senses

Eye (seeing) = Hot (distinctions, boundaries)  
Ear (sound, hearing) = Cool (surrounding, no boundaries)  
Nose (smell) = Cool (surrounding)  
Taste (mouth) =

## Life Cycle

Birth = Participatory (Community)  
Youth = Participatory  
Age = Non-Participatory (Freedom)

## Sketch

Sketch as script for a painting

## Containers

Cool = Context (medium)  
Hot = Content (message)

## American Culture

Mass Culture = Hot  
Commodity Culture  
Segmented Culture = Cool  
Gift Culture  
Marcel Maas – Gift culture

## World Culture

East = Cool  
West = Hot

## Disciplines

Sciences = Hot  
Humanities = Cool  
Psychology = Cool

## Content (Scripts, Text) Within Media

## Producerly Texts

“If the cultural commodities or texts do not contain resources out of which the people can make their own meaning of their social relations and identities, they will be rejected and will fail in the marketplace. They will not be made popular.”

John Fiske  
*Reading the Popular*

Producerly text “offers itself up to popular production ... It has loose ends that escape its control. Its meanings exceed its own power to discipline them – it is, in a very real sense, beyond its own control.”

John Fiske  
*Understanding Popular Culture*

“Material which fills in every blank limites audience interpretations. Propaganda, for instance, is less producerly because it sets rigid limits on potential meanings.”

Henry Jenkins  
*Spreadable Media*

## Aspects of Texts

Openness (Loose ends, gaps)

Shared Fantasies

Commodity culture (commercial culture of capitalism) does not allow for shared fantasies and stress alienation, freedom and alones. Upscale mobility, new possibilities, escapist. Deep history in advertising history and theory. Desire is transformation.

Gift cultures (non-commercial cultures) does allow for shared fantasies. The fantasy here is not transformation of the individual but sharing with others, strengthening social ties, acceptance of mutual obligations. Reciprocity.

Fan created works often center on themes of romance, friendship and community and contribute to the fan community. Jenkins.

Nostalgia as shared fantasy.

Humor

Parody

Unfinished Content

Mystery

Rumor

Avatar Activism (and other Civic Media)

Timely & Controversial (although more under context of text)

Beginning (Act I) – Frain

The beginning of any script is always more participatory. As facts are given, more information is filled in for the viewer or reader and less change for participation. Narratives move from more participation at beginning to less participation at the end.

Multiple – Frain

Pieces – Frain

Outline – Frain

Non-Linear – Frain

The story line or narrative, the cause and effects are not given in order but need to be assembled by the audience.

Types of Texts

Book

Article

Blog

Tweet

Posting

Folklore

Fairy tale

## Prophecy

Nostradamus

Bible

## Proverb

A short pithy saying of unknown authorship in frequent and widespread use that expresses a basic truth or practical precept. Examples: “Too many cooks spoil the broth.”

## Gospel

## Parable

A usually short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle. Examples: He told the children a *parable* about the importance of forgiveness. The *parable* of the Good Samaritan  
Middle English, from Anglo-French, from Late Latin *parabola*, from Greek *parabolē* comparison, from *paraballein* to compare, from *para-* + *ballein* to throw. First known use was in the 14th century.

## Allegory

The representation of abstract ideas or principles by characters, figures, or events in narrative, dramatic or pictorial form. A story, picture, or play employing such representation.

## Poems

## Maps

## Manifestos & Declarations

“The time of the manifesto is the present (and immediate future); the ‘now’ time (Benjamin’s *Jetztzeit*) of decision. The manifesto has no interest in the past except as part of the problem to be solved. The manifesto, as Derrida reminds us in *Specters of Marx*, typically tells us that ‘the time is out of joint,’ that it is ‘high time’ we set things right, then proposes a course of action or a change of heart in order to move on to better times in the future. Derrida also notes that the paradigm of the modern manifesto is to be found in the ancient (biblical) forms of

prophecy, on the one hand, and the gospel (*evangelion*), on the other. The former, of course, promises punishment for those who, bound by the Covenant, violate its terms; it tends towards the revolutionary. The modern political manifesto may combine the two modes, mixing fire and brimstone and love and light in equal measure. The artistic manifesto – think of those of the Futurists and Surrealists – combines threat and promise in a simulacrum of revelation. The scientific manifesto – think of Bacon, Galileo, Darwin – is a different breed; cool, calm and collected, because the scientific manifestor, having a certain knowledge in hand, knows that time is on his or her side; like Galileo censored, s/he can afford to wait: ‘*Eppure, si muove.*’ “

Hayden White  
*Manifestos for History*

*Fama Fraternitatis* (1614)  
Founding Document of the Rosicrucian’s

*Common Sense* (1776)  
Most Incendiary & Popular Pamphlet of Revolutionary Era

*Declaration of Independence* (1776)  
Founding Document of America

“What do we mean by the Revolution? The war? That was no part of the Revolution; it was only an effect and consequence of it. The Revolution was in the minds of the people, and this was effected, from 1760 to 1775, in the course of fifteen years before a drop of blood was shed at Lexington. The records of thirteen legislatures, the pamphlets, newspapers in all colonies, ought to be consulted during that period to ascertain the steps by which the public opinion was enlightened and informed concerning the authority of Parliament over the colonies.”

John Adams to Thomas Jefferson  
1815

*Communist Manifesto* (1848)  
Key Document of Communism  
Symbolism  
Ghost in “specter” haunting Europe

*Futurist Manifesto* (1909)  
Launched Art Movement of Futurism

*Surrealist Manifesto* (1924)  
Key Document of Surrealism

*Port Huron Statement* (1962)  
Founding Document of the SDS

*Milestones* (1964)  
Founding Document of Modern Islamic Radicalism  
Symbolism  
Space – Below, buried  
Movement – Signposts along the way

*Society of Spectacle* (1967)  
Key Document of French Situationists

*Rules for Radicals* (1971)  
Handbook for Community Organizing

*Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace* (1996)  
Applicability of government on the Internet

*Cluetrain Manifesto* (1999)  
Impact of Internet on Markets & Consumers

*The Coming Insurrection* (2009)  
Call to Arms in France and Europe

Pamphlet

White Paper

Speeches

Gettysburg Address  
Kennedy “Ask Not”

Devices Within Texts

## Aphorisms

“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*

Adage – A traditional saying, a proverb.

Pithy – Precisely meaningful; forceful and brief.

Thesis

Antithesis

Synthesis

Premise

The story idea stated in a single sentence. Suggests the essence of the story.

Narrative Voice

1<sup>st</sup> Person

2<sup>nd</sup> Person

3<sup>rd</sup> Person

1<sup>st</sup> Person telling 3<sup>rd</sup> Person Story

Narrator telling a story

*Heart of Darkness*

*Great Gatsby*

Unclear Narrator

*To The Lighthouse*

Precept

A rule or principle prescribing a particular course of action or conduct.

The first observation relates to the *quantity of content*.

In effect, all of the types of prose relating to aphorisms involve few words.

They are short, possessing brevity.

The second observation relates to the *quality of content*. All of these types of prose involve an expression of a basic truth. Whether this truth is believable or not matters less than the fact that a basic truth or principle is expressed. There is no room for relativity with aphorisms. The world of aphorisms believes in an absolute world. (Perhaps in the same way that the alphabet and writing turn the oral world of relativity into more of an absolute one of definition?).

The third observation relates to the *correspondences of aphorisms to popular language*. An aphorism is like an adage or a “traditional saying, a proverb.” Like a proverb, it is in “frequent and widespread use.”

## Paradox

A statement that is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense and yet is perhaps true. A self-contradictory statement that at first seems true.

"On their evidence a classic tells, and supremely well, a tale with a sharp point to it that it meanwhile also implicitly rejects. Its sharp point and matching, muted counterpoint shape it overall: thence its felt unity. The polarity is never resolved between the two rival morals of the classic tale, the one express and the other tacit, the one outspoken and the other whispered, the one affirmed and other insinuated: thence its ambiguity, its felt depth, its enduring vitality. Overtheme and undertheme are cross-fertile contraries, like a male and female principle that play off each other until they climax together."

Rudolph Binion  
*Sounding the Classics*  
(Praeger, 1997, Westport, CT.)

“The horizontal linear contextual duality in narratives (and cycles) between beginning and end, may be also (simultaneously) a vertical,

synchronic duality between text and subtext. Perhaps outward events do not mirror inward ones but rather form the opposite of these. Is this horizontal and verticality the true symbolism of the cross?"

John Fraim  
*Symbolism of Popular Culture*  
Unpublished Manuscript (1995)

Ambiguity

Analogy

Similarity in some respects between things that are otherwise dissimilar. Comparison based on such similarity. A form or instance of logical inference, based on the assumption that if two things are alike in some respects, they must be alike in other respects.

Metaphor

A figure of speech in which a word or phrase that designates one thing is applied to another in an implicit comparison, as in "All the world's a stage." One thing conceived as representing another; a symbol.

Satire

Symbol

One that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention, especially a material object representing something invisible.

Archetypes

"All the most powerful ideas in history go back to archetypes...For it is the function of consciousness not only to recognize and assimilate the external world through the gateway of the senses, but to translate into visible reality the world within us."

*The Structure And Dynamics of the Psyche*  
Carl Jung

Time

Linear Time = Oppositions, differentiation  
Darwin's evolution & differentiation of species

Non-Linear Time = Correspondence, similarity

#### Political Systems

Totalitarianism = Hot

Socialism

Democracy = Cool

Capitalism

#### Founding Ideals of America

Equality = Cool

Freedom = Hot

#### Elements of Contemporary Culture

Talking Points = Hot (little participation)

Marketing & Brands = Hot

“Traditional branding theory has valued controlling meaning rather than inspiring circulation.”

Henry Jenkins  
*Spreadable Media*

“Companies hold onto the idea that a brand may carry a highly restricted range of meanings, defined and articulated by brand stewards. They avoid creating producerly texts because making material that is open to interpretation leaves the control of meaning out of their hands. But, in doing so, companies limit the spreadability of their messages and constraint the value of the brand as a vehicle for social and personal expression.”

Henry Jenkins  
*Spreadable Media*

“Perhaps the only way to retain complete control over the meaning of a text is never to share it with anyone.”

Henry Jenkins  
*Spreadable Media*

Social media is broadly defined to include technology that supports communication among individuals, organizations, or communities.

Fan Fiction = Cool, Participatory  
Blogging = Cool  
Twitter = Cool  
FaceBook = Cool  
Wikis  
LinkedIn  
Instant messaging  
Skype  
Internet meetings  
Collaborative games

#### Law

Constitutional Law = Cool  
Federal Regulations = Hot  
Case Law = Cool  
Codes = Hot

#### Symbolism

Hot = Duality, Opposition  
Cool = Correspondence, Synchronicity

#### Computer Programming

Open source programming and code as perhaps the real basis for the freedom of the Internet today.

Closed source code. Perhaps the real two opposition symbols that fought each other in that unseen context (subtext?) of culture.

#### Hot & Cool Context (Outside text content)

##### Social Currency

The book is *Contagious: Why Things Catch On* (Simon & Schuster, 2013) by Wharton School Marketing Professor Jonah Berger and it lists six key elements that cause things to be talked about, shared and imitated. Professor Berger lists these elements under the acronym of STEPPS which stand for 1) Social Currency 2) Triggers 3) Emotion 4) Public 5) Practical Value and 6) Stories. While all the

principles might be present in some contagious things, not all are needed and often one or two of them is enough to make something contagious.

In 1999, a film was made with an inexpensive handheld camera for \$35,000. It told the story of three student filmmakers who hiked into the mountains of Maryland to film a documentary about a local legend called the Blair Witch. The filmmakers supposedly disappeared and viewers were told the film was pieced together from “rediscovered” amateur footage shot on their hike. No one was sure if this was true.

Wharton marketing professor Jonah Berger mentions this film *The Blair Witch Project* in his book *Contagious* and asks readers “What do we do when confronted with a controversial mystery like this? Naturally, we ask others to help us sort out the answer.” This is exactly what happened. The film garnered a huge buzz simply from people wondering whether it depicted real events or not. The buzz drove the movie to become a blockbuster and grossed more than \$248 million worldwide.

What is social currency? In a large sense it is the word of mouth value a particular idea of product contains. Not necessarily the intrinsic value or traditional market value based on supply and demand. Rather it is a different type of value that makes some things more socially transmittable than other things.

Social currency arises not from traditional internal product elements taught by marketing classes in business schools, elements like product benefits and features they possess or needs they satisfy. Rather social currency arises from the need to share our experiences. As Berger notes, “Self-sharing follows us through out lives. We tell our friends about our new clothing purchases and show family members the op-ed piece we’re sending to the local newspaper. The desire to share our thoughts, opinions, and experiences is one reason social media and online social networks have become so popular. In fact, today’s social-network-addicted people can’t seem to stop sharing what they think, like and want with everyone all the time. “

Berger notes that research finds that more than 40 percent of what people talk about is their personal relationships. Yet all of this is more than just vanity. As Berger observes, “We’re actually wired to find it pleasurable.”

One of the key things talked about - providing great social currency - are what Berger notes are “remarkable” things or those things defined as “unusual, extraordinary, or worthy of notice or attention.” Berger notes that something can be remarkable because it is novel, surprising, extreme, or just plain interesting. “But the most important aspect of remarkable things is that they are *worthy of*

*remark. Worthy of attention.*” As Berger says, “These remarkable things provide social currency because they make the people who talk about them seem, well, more remarkable.”

Available  
Portable  
Reuseable  
Relevant (to multiple audiences)  
Steady Stream (blogging)

“Context spreads when it acts as fodder for conversations that audiences are already having.”

Henry Jenkins  
*Spreadable Media*

“Content is just a medium for interaction between people.”

Douglas Ruskoff

## Modern Uses for Scripts

Scripts and the stories they structure have application far beyond the entertainment industry in the creation of films. While film entertainment is the obvious use for scripts, there are applications for scripts outside the entertainment industry and ultimately perhaps more important.

For example, scripts have great use in the persuasion professions of advertising, public relations, sales and politics the field of education as a powerful teaching tool. They also have an important place in corporate communications in communications to employees, managers and outside investors.

Script of a Late Night Radio Show  
On A Super Station like Coast-To-Coast

A magical evening in this particular script that created a very real community very quickly over the radio one night. How the script of a radio show spreads out to listeners of the radio program. How it creates an instant but powerful magical community of people at one point in time. The topic of synchronicity is creation of scripts is tossed out as a possible topic to the audience of the radio show.

The topic brings in an amazing number of listeners that night that somehow just happened to be listening to the station. The program comes on at twelve midnight on most of its 500 or so stations around the nation. The station is a leader in that relatively recent trend in radio of streaming live material over the Internet. The station is broadcast out of the California desert (or Colorado Desert). It wasn't located near the band of population that went east from Palm Springs to Indio, But rather far away in the vast desert of Anza Borrega State Park where old Pegleg Smith and Marshal South lived lives that have become legends.

It reaches them in the real time it reaches its audience. All at once for those listening to the particular radio program. How are stories built from this show? How do people in the particular communities at the time participate in the construction of this community? After the persons hear the radio program we follow them as they take some particular actions other than simply listening to a radio program. What are these actions?

Some type of new political movement somehow seems in progress. Gathering momentum as members of the instant community connect with the radio show and spread this connection to others. The first part ends with the possibility for something new in the air for a group of young people. The first part lingers, hovering in the air somewhat like a Cheshire Cat beyond its needed time. It gives its audience enough time to assemble together beneath the grand symbol.

## Appendix

## A. Glossary Of Terms

Archetype

Colors

Correspondence

Duality

Numbers

Paradox

Script

Symbol

Symbol Systems

Symbolism

Synchronicity

## B. Charts & Illustrations

### Symbol Systems John Fraim

A symbol system refers to a system of interconnected symbolic meanings. There are many symbol systems such as color, shapes, numbers, astrology

Symbol Systems						
Color Spectrum	Violet	Blue	Green	Yellow	Orange	Red
Primary Colors	Blue	Yellow	Red			
Numbers	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six
Genres	Horror	Fantasy	Mystery	War	Western	SciFi
Drama Modes	Romance	Tragedy	Comedy	Satire		
Shapes	Circle	Triangle	Square	Hexagram	Pentagon	
Freemasonry	Level	Square	Plumb Rule	Seal of Solomon		
Alchemy	Water	Mercury	Moon	Fire	Sulphur	Sun
Divination	Tarot	I Ching	Stone Runes			
Heraldic Emblems	Flags	Coat of Arms	Status Symbols			
Astrology	Signs of Zodiac	Planet Rulers				

### Symbol Systems

Many symbols are part of symbol systems. In the left column are some of the better known symbols systems with examples in the columns to the right of the left column. Symbol systems

possess complete communication systems within them with much correspondence to other symbols.

Symbol Techniques  
John Fraim

Actions	Illustrations
<u>Identify</u> Symbols	<pre>       . . . .      . . .     .           . . .           </pre>
<u>Define</u> Dualities	<pre>       .                               .      . &lt;-----     &gt; .                               .           </pre>
<u>Position</u> Symbols	<pre>       . . . .      -----&gt;           </pre>
<u>Align</u> Correspondences	<pre>       . . . .      . . . .     . . . .      -----&gt;           </pre>

Symbolism Techniques

Symbolism technique involves four basic steps. First, one must identify the key contentual and contextual symbols they are working with. Second, one needs to define the dualities or opposites in these key symbols. Third, one needs to place the symbols in a cyclic and sequential time line. Fourth, one needs to find correspondences with the symbols one has placed in the time line. The first step involves identifying the context of content. The second and third steps involve positioning within a linear (horizontal) time structure. The fourth step involves aligning with corresponding symbols within a non-linear (vertical) time structure.

Symbol Dualities, Correspondences & Sequence  
John Fraim

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 (Trin.)	Four (Quat.)
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
PsychHistory	Innovative	Depressive	Manic	War
Gk 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	Sci Fi	Western
Body	Heart			Head
Colors	Blue			Red
Direction	East			West

Time	Past			Future
Light	Reflection			Radiation
Solar Syst.	Moon			Sun
Position	Below			Above

### Symbol Dualities, Correspondences & Sequence

Symbols possess dualities, correspondences and sequences. The horizontal rows represent dualities and sequences. The vertical columns represent similarities or correspondences. One of the key dualities is that between feminine and masculine. On the chart above, categories of symbols are listed in the left column. Then, in the next column are listed feminine manifestations of this symbol and in the far right column are listed masculine manifestations of this symbol. Between the dualities are suggested sequential stages the symbols pass through on their way to emerging as a duality.

Using Symbolism To Create Script Structures  
John Frain

Act I	Act II	Act III
Content Objects Life Qualities Events	Content Objects Life Qualities Events	Content Objects Life Qualities Events
Context Place Time Space	Context Place Time Space	Context Place Time Space

### Example

Act I	Act II	Act III
-------	--------	---------

Content Soft Introvert Blue Wedding	Content Flexible Triangle Green Graduation	Content Hard Extrovert Yellow Funeral
Context Valley MidNight Under Inside	Context Plane Morning Level	Context Mountain Noon Over Outside

### Using Symbolism To Create Narrative Stories

## Sequence of Symbol Cycles

### Beginning Cycles

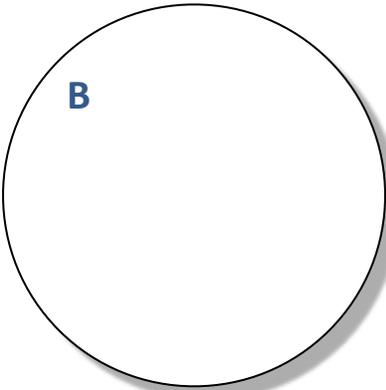
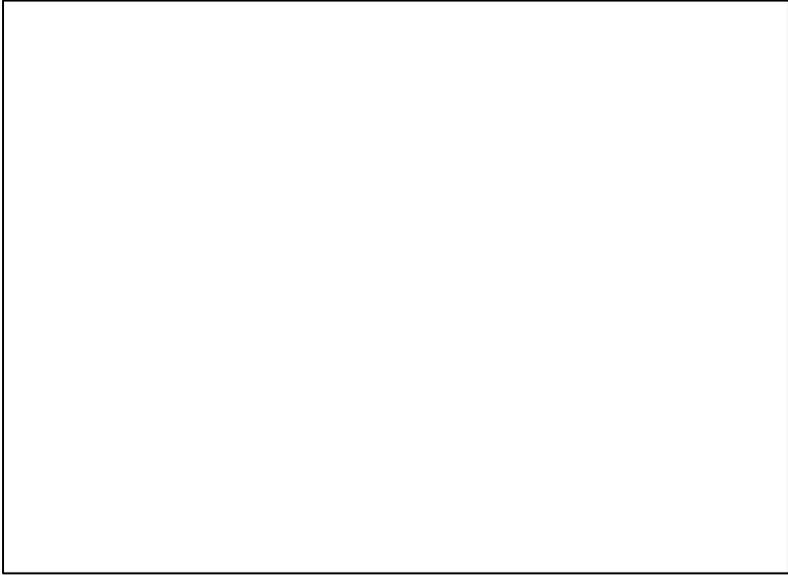
### Middle Sequences

### Ending Cycles

Christian Aeon	Pisces-Fish	Content to Context	Aquarius-Water Carrier
Christ Life	Annunciation/Nativity	Baptism/Crucifixion	Resurrection/Ascension
Campbell	Departure/Virgin Birth	Initiation/Transform	Return/Dissolution
Alchemy	Emergence of Opposites	Descent into Bath	Reunion of soul & body
Drama/Film	Set-Up (Act I)	Conflict (Act II)	Resolution (Act III)
Neumann	Creation/Unity	Hero/Separation	Transformation/Balance
U.S. History	High	Awakening/Unraveling	Crisis
God Images	Animism - Matriarchy	Polytheism	Monotheism-God duality
Pre-Birth	Primal Union-Mother	Antagonism-Mother	Separation-Mother
Jung	Origins of the Hero	Battle For Deliverance	The Sacrifice
Psychohistory	Innovative	Depressed/Manic	War
McLuhan (Media)	Oral	Literate	Electronic

## Sequence of Symbol Cycles

### Scenes Are Like Brands



## Brands

Brands really consist of contentual and contextual symbols. The core product is a contentual symbol and occupies the A position. The brand meaning or packaging around the product occupies the B space around the A product. This might include advertising media for the product or retail store environment. One sees more worth in an ad for a diamond ring appearing in Vogue than the National Enquirer, even though it is the same diamond ring. In a similar manner, one feels that a diamond ring bought at a Tiffany store is more valuable than one purchased at a chain jewelry store in a shopping mall.

## Traditional & Contemporary Symbols

Traditional Symbols (Past)	Contemporary Symbols (Present)
Religious Icons	Brands, Products
Dreams	Entertainment, Advertising, Media
Rituals (Rites of Spring)	Media Events (Superbowl, Rose Bowl)
Gods	Celebrities, Stars
Nature	Culture

## Traditional And Contemporary Symbols

## Sequence of Contextual Symbols

1900 –1930s	1930s – 1970s	1970s - 2000
Mass Culture	Bi-Lateralism	Segmented Culture
Totalitarian	Communism	Capitalism
Monism	Dualism	Pluralism

## Sequence of Contextual Symbols 20<sup>th</sup> Century American History

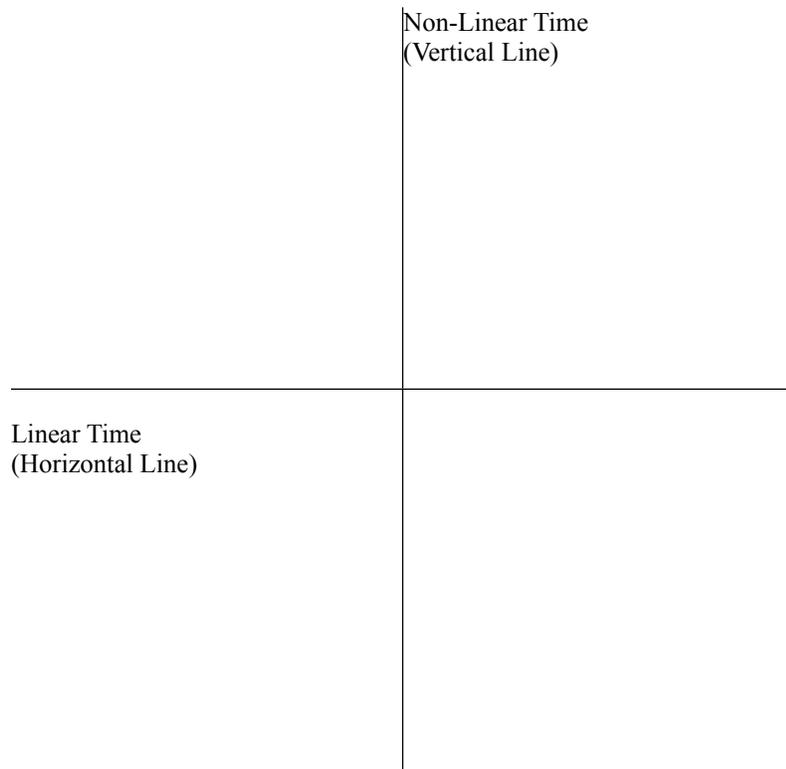
## Cycles In American Prime Time Television

Eras	Years	Leading TV Shows
Vaudeo (Reality)	1948-1957)	Godfreys Talent Scouts, \$64,000 Question, Ed Sullivan
Adult Westerns (Fantasy)	1957-Early 60s	Gunsmoke, Wagon Train, Bonanza, Rifleman, Have Gun Will Travel
Idiot Sitcom (Fantasy)	Early-Late 60s	Bewitched, Beverly Hillbillies, Andy Griffith, Dick Van Dyke, Green Acres, Gomer Pyle
Relevance (Reality)	Late 60s-1975	All in the Family, Marcus Welby, MASH, Rowan & Martin Laugh In, Family Affair
Fantasy (Fantasy)	1975-1980	Happy Days, Laverne & Shirley, Mork & Mindy, Charlie's Angels
Soap Operas & Real People (Reality)	1980s	Dallas, Dynasty, Falcon Crest, Hill Street Blues, Real People, That's Incredible, 20/20
Choice (Reality)	1990s & early 2000s	America's Funniest Home Videos, Unsolved Mysteries, Rescue 911, Cops, Joe Millionaire, The Bachelor

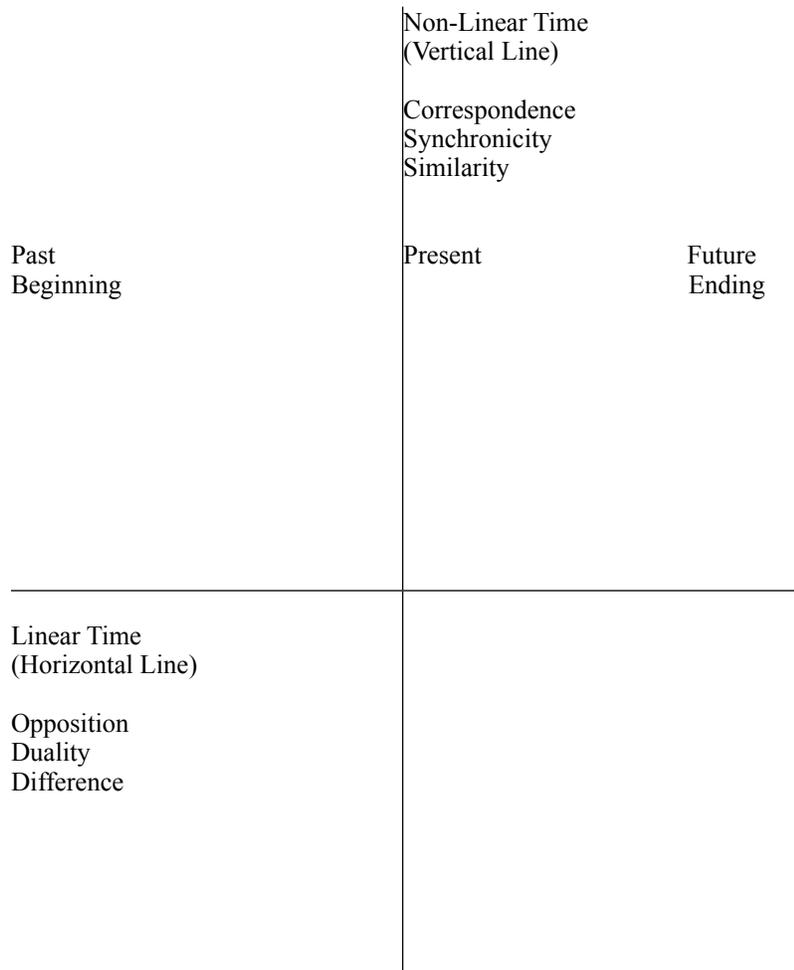
## Symbol Cycles In American Television

*In the definitive reference book on leading television programs, The Complete Directory of Prime Time and Cable TV Shows, the authors locate seven eras of prime time television from the 1950s through the 1990s.*

## Evolution of the Cross



A. Cross Symbolism  
Intersection of Linear & Non-Linear Time



B. Symbolism Dynamics  
Opposition, Duality & Difference in Linear Time  
Correspondence, Synchronicity & Similarity in Non-Linear Time

Act I (Scene 1 to ___)	Act II (Scene ___ to ___)	Act III (Scene ___ to ___)
Need   Desire   Opponent	Plan   Battle   Self-Revelation	New Equilibrium

C. Symbolism Dynamics Into Scripts  
 Vertical Line Divided into Acts & Scenes  
 Screenplay Script Plot Sequence Placed within Acts

CONTEXT	CONTEXT	CONTEXT
Place Time Space	Place Time Space	Place Time Space
Act I	Act II	Act III
Need Desire Opponent	Plan Battle Self-Revelation	New Equilibrium
CONTENT Objects Events Qualities Words	CONTENT Objects Events Qualities Words	CONTENT Objects Events Qualities Words

D. Content & Context Symbols  
Placed Within Plot Structure

CONTEXT Valley Midnight Inside/Under	CONTEXT Prairie Morning Level	CONTEXT Mountain Noon Outside/Over
Act I	Act II	Act III
Need Desire Opponent	Plan Battle Self-Revelation	New Equilibrium
CONTENT Soft Blue Introvert	CONTENT Soft vs. Hard (Battle) Blue vs. Yellow (Battle) = Green Introvert vs. Extrovert (Battle)	CONTENT Hard Yellow Extrovert

E. Example  
Content & Context Symbols  
Identified Specifically & Placed Within Plot Structure

CONTEXT Valley Midnight Inside/Under	CONTEXT Prairie Morning Level	CONTEXT Mountain Noon Outside/Over
Act I	Act II	Act III
Need Desire Opponent	Plan Battle Self-Revelation	New Equilibrium
CONTENT Soft Blue Introvert  Female Protagonist (Heroine)	CONTENT Soft vs. Hard (Battle) Blue vs. Yellow (Battle) = Green Introvert vs. Extrovert (Battle)  Male Antagonist (Villain)	CONTENT Hard Yellow Extrovert  Female finds a new strength within her she was unaware of

### F. Example

#### Key Characters Placed Into System

Duality Symbols – Female Protagonist in Act I and Act III

Correspondence Symbols – Female Protagonist in Acts I, II and III.

(Alignment of Content and Context Symbols With Protagonist State of Mind, Emotions Throughout the Course of the Script or Narrative). The same correspondence principles applied to the Villain throughout the script.

## C. Symbols

### ARAS Symbols Short Outline

#### Creation & Cosmos

Creation & Cosmos

Water

Air, Wind & Weather

Fire, Light & Darkness

Earth

#### Plant World

Trees

Magical Plants & Flowers

#### Animal World

Primordial Creatures

Water Creatures

Arachnids & Insects

Birds

Wild Animals

Domestic Animals

#### Human World

Human Body

Movement & Expression

Fundamentals of Work & Society

Tools & Other Objects

House & Home

Buildings & Monuments

Color

Sound

#### Spirit World

Mythical Beings

Rituals & Sacred Systems

Sickness & Death

Soul & Psyche

ARAS Symbols  
Full Outline

Creation & Cosmos

Creation & Cosmos

Egg  
Breath  
Star  
Sun  
Moon  
Crescent  
Eclipse  
Comet

Water

Ocean  
River  
Lake  
Whirlpool  
Waterfall  
Flood  
Bubble

Air, Wind & Weather

Air  
Sky  
Cloud  
Wind  
Rain  
Storm  
Thunder  
Lightning  
Rainbow  
Dew  
Fog  
Snow

Fire, Light & Darkness

Fire  
Spark  
Dawn  
Sunrise  
Solstice

Dusk  
Sunset  
Night  
Darkness

Earth

Stone  
Mountain  
Valley  
Cave  
Salt  
Desert  
Forest/Jungle  
Marsh  
Beach  
Island

Plant World

Trees

Tree  
Oak Tree  
Olive Tree  
Pine Tree  
Palm Tree  
Roots  
Kabalistic Tree  
Yakshi

Magical Plants & Flowers

Garden  
Flower  
Iris  
Lily  
Lotus  
Rose  
Thistle  
Apple  
Peach  
Grape  
Pomegranate  
Mushroom  
Mandrake

Animal World

Primordial Creatures

Snail  
Worm

Toad  
Frog  
Turtle  
Snake  
Cobra  
Crocodile

Water Creatures

Fish  
Whale  
Dolphin  
Octopus  
Crab  
Shell  
Clam

Arachnids & Insects

Scorpion  
Spider  
Cockroach  
Ant  
Honeybee  
Fly/Mosquito  
Butterfly/Moth  
Scarab

Birds

Bird  
Feather  
Dove  
Crow/Raven  
Falcon  
Owl  
Eagle  
Peacock

Wild Animals

Ape/Monkey  
Elephant  
Great Cats  
Bear  
Wolf  
Coyote  
Fox  
Kangaroo  
Deer  
Rabbit

Rat/Mouse  
Bat  
Domestic Animals  
Dog  
Cat  
Cow  
Bull  
Horse  
Donkey  
Goat  
Sheep  
Pig  
Hen  
Human World  
Human Body  
Bone  
Spine  
Skin  
Head  
Brain  
Hair  
Baldness  
Eye  
Ear  
Tears  
Ear  
Nose  
Mouth  
Beard  
Teeth  
Tongue  
Kiss  
Neck  
Arm  
Hand  
Finger  
Claw  
Breast  
Heart  
Blood  
Liver  
Womb  
Menstruation

Vulva  
Phallus  
Sperm  
Masturbation  
Sexual Union  
Incest  
Leg  
Thigh  
Knee  
Foot  
Urine  
Excrement

Movement & Expression

Ascent  
Descent  
Falling  
Play  
Swimming  
Bicycle  
Car  
Train  
Subway  
Airplane  
Boat  
Shipwreck  
Path/Road

Fundamentals of Work & Society

Weaving/Spinning  
Sewing  
Hunting  
Sowing  
Mining  
Potter  
King/Queen  
War/Warrior  
Prostitute  
Beggar  
Cripple  
Thief/Robber  
Gossip  
Orphan  
Stranger

Tools & Other Objects

Ax  
Knife  
Sword  
Spear  
Bow & Arrow  
Gun  
Hammer  
Plow  
Wheel  
Calendar  
Compass  
Scale  
Chain  
Thread  
Net/Web  
Basket  
Purse  
Money  
Comb  
Scissors  
Veil  
Helmet  
Hat  
Wreath  
Crown  
Necklace  
Earring  
Ring  
Apron  
Shoe  
Umbrella  
Telephone  
House & Home  
House/Home  
Gate  
Door  
Lock  
Key  
Window  
Stairway  
Ladder  
Attic  
Basement

Kitchen  
Hearth  
Lamp/Candle  
Oven  
Table  
Chair  
Glass  
Mirror  
Carpet  
Broom  
Bed  
Cradle  
Toilet  
Bath/Bathing  
Pool  
Fountain  
Well

Buildings & Monuments

Castle  
City  
Temple  
Niche  
Cloister  
Tower  
Pillar  
Bridge  
Tunnel  
Street  
School  
Prison

Color

Red  
Orange  
Yellow  
Green  
Blue  
Purple  
Brown  
Black  
White  
Gray

Sound

Flute

Trumpet/Horn  
Harp/Lyre  
Bell  
Drum  
Silence

Spirit World

Mythical Beings

Angel  
Ganesha  
Dakini  
Quetzalcoatl  
Siren  
Furies  
Mermaid  
Unicorn  
Cyclops/Giant  
Vampire  
Witch  
Dragon

Rituals & Sacred Systems

Dot/Bindu  
Zero  
One  
Mandala  
Labyrinth  
Crossroads  
Spiral  
Mask  
Incense  
Ashes  
Blessing

Sickness & Death

Disease  
Wound  
Vomit  
Medicine  
Poison  
Drowning  
Crucifixion  
Hanging  
Murder/Slaying  
Suicide  
Burial

Coffin  
Cremation  
Mummy  
Decomposition  
Dismemberment  
Soul & Psyche  
Shape-Shifting  
Metamorphosis  
Transformation  
Chakras  
Crack  
Pearl  
Ghost  
Ancestor

## Script Symbology Outline

### I. Script Symbology

#### Script Symbology

Study & application of symbols and symbolism to scripts

#### NOTES

Mythology applied to scripts but not symbolism

#### Symbols

##### Content

##### Objects

##### Creation & Cosmos

##### Elements

Water

Earth

Air

Fire

##### Plants

Trees

Plants

##### Animals

Primordial Creatures

Water Creatures

Arachnids & Insects

Birds

Wild Animals

Domestic Animals

##### Humans

Human Body

Movement & Expression

Fundamentals of Work & Society

Tools & Other Objects

House & Home

Buildings & Monuments

Color

Sound

##### Spirit World

Mythical Beings

Rituals & Sacred Systems

Sickness & Death  
Soul & Psyche

Events

NOTES

Traditional symbols are the familiar symbols  
The ones defined in reference works

Examples

Green light in *Gatsby*

Birds in movie *The Birds*

Maltese Falcon

Films as symbols

*DaVinci Code*

*Contact*

Context

Place

Natural

Mountains

Ocean

Desert

Forest

Jungle

Prairie

Arctic

Cultural

City

Home

Space

Inside

Outside

Above

Below

Time

Cyclic Time

Yearly

Months

Seasons

Summer

Fall

Winter

Spring

Daily

Day

Sunrise  
Morning  
Noon  
Afternoon  
Night  
Sunset  
Evening  
Midnight

Sequence

Steps in cycles  
Example

Seven Eras of Prime Time Television

Linear Time

Past

Future

Non-Linear Time

Present

## NOTES

Context in films determined by

Screenwriter

Director

Set designer

Art director

Cinematographer

Location scout

Systems

Colors

Red

Orange

Yellow

Green

Blue

Purple

Brown

Black

White

Gray

Numbers

1

2

3

4  
 5  
 6  
 7  
 8  
 9  
 10  
 Shapes  
     Circle  
     Square  
     Triangle  
 Astrology  
 Mythology  
 Archetypes  
 Symbolism  
     Duality  
         Opposition  
         Difference  
         Linear  
     Correspondence  
         Similarity  
         Non-Linear  
             Synchronicity  
                 Correspondence of inner world and outer events

## NOTES

Classification of symbols based on nature and culture  
     Content symbols = Culture  
     Context symbols = Nature  
 Drama involves movement between duality symbols  
     Movement constitutes a cycle  
     Movement has steps or sequence  
 Correspondence of symbolism to other systems  
     Hermetics  
 Correspondence of script symbology to other industries  
     Advertising  
     Politics  
     Classic scripts & synchronicity  
         *Casablanca*  
         *Citizen Kane*  
         *Heart of Darkness*

## Definition

Something written. A text. Original or principal instrument or document. Written text of stage play, screenplay or broadcast. A plan of action.

## Types

### Political

- Talking points

### Performance

- Screenplays

  - Creation

    - Advertiser/Sponsor participation

    - Co-Writer

  - Production

  - Stage Plays

  - Radio/Broadcast

### Corporate

- PR

- Marketing plan

  - Brands

  - Corporate strategy

### Literary

- Genres

  - Speculative

  - Mystery

  - Suspense

- Forms

  - Fairy Tale

  - Proverb

  - Parable

  - Folklore

  - Myth

  - Gospel

  - Poem

  - Manifestos

  - Declarations

  - Speech

### Computer programs

- Closed source code

- Open source code

## Trends

- “The Once and Future Kingdom”

  - The symbolism of popular culture

Culture as script

Rise of participation

Social currency and need to share

*Contagious* by Jonah Berger

1) Social Currency

2) Triggers

3) Emotion

4) Public

5) Practical Value

6) Stories

Aspects

Available

Portable

Reuseable

Relevant (to multiple audiences)

Steady Stream (blogging)

Decline of linear

Fan Fiction

Techniques

Literary

Adage

Allegory

Ambiguity

Analogy

Aphorism

Metaphor

Narrative Voice

Paradox

Precepts

Thesis

Anti-thesis

Synthesis

Non-Literary

Maps

Sketches

“Hopper Drawing which opened at the Whitney on 5/20/13 exhibit. By the time he completed his famous painting “New York Movie” he had drawn 54 studies for it. “You could focus on the way he got to his great oil paintings through drawing.” Carter Foster, Curator, Whitney Museum of American Art. “Foster considers the drawings the ‘connective tissue’ between reality, which Hopper called ‘the

fact,’ and the artist’s interpretation or ‘improvisation’ of what he saw.” Barbara Isenberg, *LA Times*, 5/26/13.

For the famous painting “Nighthawks” there were 19 studies in sketches. “You see his artistic process through the drawings,” observes Judith Barter, chair and curator of American art at the Art Institute. “For example, in one drawing for ‘Nighthawks,’ the fellow with his back to us was in a belted policeman’s uniform, while in another drawing closer to the final painting, he was in a business suit. He was nondescript and not an authority figure anymore.”

The cinematic nature of “Nighthawks” that is known to have inspired Ridley Scott’s “Blade Runner” and other films.

“In some of the drawing, you feel like you’re moving through a succession of spatial representations that seem like snapshots or film stills. Hopper went to a lot of movies, and I’m sure there was influence both ways.” Carter Foster

Drawings are somewhat underplayed generally, and they shouldn’t be says artist Ruth Weisberg former dean of USC’s Roski School of Fine Arts. “For many artists, drawing is both a medium in itself and one that allows you to explore and learn what you want to do in another medium. They are so direct, revealing the artist’s hand, the artist’s thinking and the process of developing a work of art.”

#### Form

Beginning

Open

Outline

*Black Knight*

*Transcendent City*

Piece (Multiple)

Non-Linear

### III. Application

Text

You have been reading.. Context for a story?

Application

Structure

Current Screenplay Structure

+  
Symbolism Overlay of Context  
+  
Participative Content