

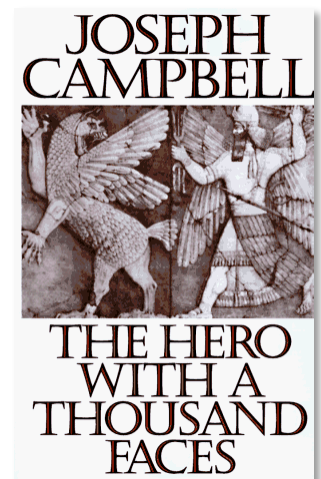
Plot Forms

Classical Theory

- Aristotle (*The Poetics*)
 - Every theater play/plot should have: **Beginning, Middle, End**
 - Three types of plays: **Tragedy, Comedy, & Satyr**
 - **Tragedy:** (in ancient Greek theatre) a play in which the protagonist, usually a person of importance and outstanding personal qualities, falls to disaster through the combination of a personal failing and circumstances with which he or she cannot deal [= *harmartia*] (Collins English Dictionary)
 - **Harmartia:** is commonly understood to refer to the protagonist's error that leads to a chain of actions which culminate in a reversal of events from felicity to disaster. What qualifies as the error or flaw varies, and can include an error resulting from ignorance, an error of judgment, an inherent flaw in the character, or a wrongdoing. [Wikipedia]
 - **Comedy:** a play which includes a representation of laughable people and involves some kind of blunder or ugliness which does not cause pain or disaster
 - **Satyr play,** genre of ancient Greek drama that preserves the structure and characters of tragedy while adopting a happy atmosphere and a rural background. The actors play mythical heroes engaged in action drawn from traditional mythical tales, but the chorus members are satyrs, guided by old Silenus. Satyrs are nature spirits who combine male human traits (beards, hairy bodies, flat noses, and an erect phallus) with the ears and tails of horses. The satyrs are contrasted with the main characters—who are more or less serious—by their dancing, their love of wine, and their diverting banter, often expressed in low language (Encyclopedia Britannica)
 - Plot (*mythos*), Character (*Ethos*), Thought (*Dianoia*), Style of Speech (*Lexis*), Song (*Melos*), and Spectacle (*Opsis*)
 - **In our age, we tend to emphasize plot and character. Plot focuses on the actual acts while character focuses upon the sort of person who does the acts.** Note, however, that Aristotle doesn't spend time analyzing themes or ideas, that is, he doesn't seek to interpret or find meaning in a play (Belfiore, 2000).

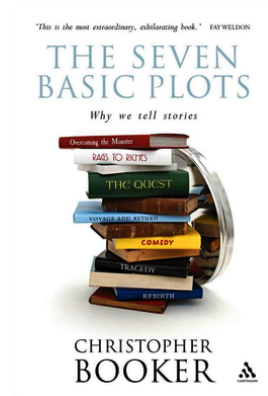
Joseph Campbell: *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1968/2008) [Jungian]

- “A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered, and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man” (p. 23)
 - Begins journey in an ordinary world, but receives a call to adventure. Crosses over into a supernatural world with the help of a mentor, and faces a series of trials. At some point the hero faces his/her greatest challenge and, rising to that challenge, receives his/her reward or “boon” (= a benefit or timely blessing). The hero returns to the ordinary world with this boon.
- Very influential in how George Lucas fashioned his *Star War* films as well as Stanley Kubrick & Arthur C Clarke (*2001: A Space Odyssey*).



Jungian: Booker, 2004 {summarized in Wikipedia}

- “**Overcoming the Monster**” in which the protagonist (main character) sets out to challenge and defeat an enemy which threatens (e.g., *Star Wars*)
- “**Rags to Riches**” in which the protagonist starts off life with few resources but gains riches (wealth, power, other treasured goods), loses them, and then gains them back, but this time the protagonist is a better person (e.g., *Cinderella*)
- “**The Quest**” in which the protagonist (alone or with others) sets out to acquire some important or valuable goal or arrive at an important place; during the journey the protagonist faces many obstacles (e.g., *The Odyssey*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Lord of the Rings*)
- “**Voyage and Return**” in which the protagonist goes to some place which is unusual or strange and returns with new knowledge because of the journey (e.g., *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Hobbit*)
- “**Comedy**” in which an ordinary or even humorous protagonist experiences triumph over difficulties and finds happiness at the end; most romance stories (e.g., *School of Rock*, *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*)
- “**Tragedy**” in which a protagonist is brought down because of a major character flaw or self-initiated bad action (e.g., *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Great Gatsby*)
- “**Rebirth**” in which a protagonist faces an event which forces his/her to change their way of acting and, in so doing, become a better person (e.g., *Beauty and the Beast*, *A Christmas Carol*)



Narrative Transportation Effect (Richard Gerrig, Marie-Laure Ryan)

- **Narrative transportation theory** proposes that when people lose themselves in a story, their attitudes and intentions change to reflect that story. The mental state of narrative transportation can explain the persuasive effect of stories on people, who may experience narrative transportation when certain contextual and personal preconditions are met” {Wikipedia, 20190130}
- “If we derive aesthetic pleasure from the tragic fates of literary characters such as Anna Karenina, Hamlet, or Madame Bovary, if we cry for them and fully enjoy our tears, it is because our participation in the plot is a compromise between identification with the character and distanced observation. We “simulate” mentally the inner life of each character, we transport ourselves in imagination into the mind of each, but we remain, at the same time, conscious of being external witnesses” (Ryan, 2002, p. 592)
- “Narrative representation consists of a world (setting) situated in time, populated by individuals (characters), who participate in actions and happenings (events, plot) and undergo change.” (Ryan, 2002)
- “The most prominent reason for acting in life is problem-solving. It is therefore the most fundamental narrative pattern.” (Ryan, 2002)

Modern/Contemporary Plotting and Characterization: Some Examples

- Episodes with Multiple Overlapping Story Arcs
 - *Hill Street Blues* (1981-87), *CSI* (2000-15), *NCIS* (2003-present)
- Long-form Narrative
 - Origin: Novels: “The novel’s focus on the individual in his or her social context animates the overarching narrative drive of these long-form literary works. These novels join the self to the world, the cosmos, or the nation-state; in short, they put the self in the world through an emphasis on both interiority and the larger social milieu.” (Tomasulo, 2018, p. 210)
 - Contemporary Media: *The Sopranos* (86 episodes; 1999-2007) and its portrayal of America as a corrupt capitalist culture (Tomasulo, 2018)
- Non-chronological presentation of plot/multiple plotlines
 - *Pulp Fiction*
 - *Memento*
- Complex Central Characters
 - *The Sopranos* (Tony Soprano as mobster, husband, son, neurotic)

Media: Communication Forms

- Episodic television & streaming media series
 - In traditional US television, there were usually between 22 and 26 episodes per year (in the UK, between 12 and 16)
 - In streaming media, series tend to involve about 6 episodes per year
- Fantasy: Future (*Star Wars*); Marvel Comic Series (*Batman*, *Avenger*, etc.)
- “*Digital storytelling* is a short form of digital media production that allows everyday people to share aspects of their story. The media used may include the digital equivalent of film techniques (full-motion video with sound), stills, audio only, or any of the other forms of non-physical media (material that exists only as electronic files as opposed to actual paintings or photographs on paper, sounds stored on tape or disc, movies stored on film) which individuals can use to tell a story or present an idea.” {Wikipedia, 20190130}
- Digital Media Platforms

Platform	Monthly active users*	Year founded
Facebook	2.9 billion	2004
YouTube	2.2 billion	2005
WhatsApp	2 billion	2009
Instagram	2 billion	2010
TikTok	1 billion	2016
SnapChat	538 million	2011
Pinterest	444 million	2005
Reddit	430 million	2010
LinkedIn	250 million	2006
Twitter (X)	217 million	2003

* May 2022 <https://www.searchenginejournal.com/social-media/biggest-social-media-sites/>

- Email
- Instagram
- Messaging: texting
- Podcasts
- SnapChat
- TikTok
- VideoGames

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