

2013

## Scripting therapeutic screen stories : animating the healing potential of film narratives

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# **SCRIPTING THERAPEUTIC SCREEN STORIES: ANIMATING THE HEALING POTENTIAL OF FILM NARRATIVES**

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BA (Writing)

This thesis,  
consisting of a short feature film script and exegesis,  
is presented for the degree of  
Bachelor of Communications (Honours)

Faculty of Education and Arts  
Edith Cowan University

3 June 2013

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## **Abstract**

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Beyond entertainment, animated narratives can potentially induce psychological healing, termed “individuation.” Stories exist in many forms, like literature, film and conversation, as well as in the human mind, or “psyche.” These “self-narratives” use life experience to shape consciousness. Therefore, effective storytelling based on archetypal myths can restructure the psyche. Film narratives communicate meaning through symbols, termed “textual cues”, while screenwriters employ specific templates, which organise story information into familiar structures. These guide audiences towards predetermined meaning. Through bibliotherapy, which is the use of literature for therapeutic purposes, audiences project their unconscious content onto narrative components that resonate with it. Ego-consciousness can then integrate this material. Films, like dreams, incorporate raw unconscious material, labelled “archetypes”, and symbols, conscious interpretations of the archetypes, to affect unconscious reactions that facilitate psychological growth. When a narrative’s protagonist undertakes the “Hero’s Journey”, a quest’s twelve stages that enact change, they guide audiences through a metaphorical portrayal of individuation. Audiences can then mimic this path to prompt their own inner journey. Animation augments storytelling’s healing ability because its fantasised appearance transforms individuation’s threatening psychological information to reveal wisdom. Since screenwriters delve into the collective unconscious to create stories, they initiate audience healing. Thus, they represent modern society’s shamans. By creating a screenplay for an animated short feature film and discussing how screenwriters can induce psychological healing, I demonstrate the therapeutic potential of film narratives.





## **Declaration**

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I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

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- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or
- (iii) contain any defamatory material.

.....  
Andrew Levett

.....  
Date



## **Acknowledgements**

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The following people deserve a big thank you for helping me during this project.

**Tania Visosevic** for: her patience and commitment to my project; helping me see the forest through the trees; reinvigorating my interest in animation and the spiritual; her guidance, moral support, inspired ideas, the revised thesis title and structure; and her insight into the unconscious synchronicities within my script.

**Alistair McKay** for his continued advice, constructive criticism, friendship, and peer-reviewing the entire project.

**Donelle Gadenne** for her continued advice, constructive criticism, friendship, and prompt to refine the exegesis' language.

**Julissa Shrewsbury, Shamima Dindar, and Tracy Brett** for reviewing the script and for their friendship.

**Dr. George Karpathakis** for his guidance and moral support throughout the project.

**Dr. Ffion Murphy and Dr. Glen Spoors** for their feedback and guidance on the proposal.

**Liz Paull, my parents, sister, and my extended family and friends** for tolerating my preoccupation with the project.

**Edith Cowan University** for allowing me the opportunity to further my studies.

**The Australian government** for their financial support during my studies.



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## **Introduction**

### **The Nurturing Nature of Narratives**

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Beyond their entertainment and informative functions, narratives present opportunities for psychological healing. Stories appear in conversation, literature, and film. However, they also exist in the human mind where they convey meaning and construct and restructure psychological reality (Cunha, Goncalves, & Valsiner, 2011, p. 43). These “self-narratives” draw from life experience to create a constantly evolving personality. Paul Eakin (cited in Murphy & Neilsen, 2008, ¶ 40) concurs: a ‘narrative is not merely a literary form but a mode of phenomenological and cognitive self-experience.’ Stories, then, are important for psychological health. From a psychological perspective, sometimes ‘self-narratives may become dysfunctional and constrain personal adaption’ (Cunha, Goncalves, & Valsiner, 2011, p. 43). However, a psychotherapist can encourage patients to transform their dysfunctional self-narratives and create new, more flexible ones (Cunha, Goncalves, & Valsiner, 2011, p. 44). Self-narratives, then, are malleable concepts that create meaning from life experience. John Dirkx (2012, p. 116) observes that narrative engagement ‘involves the making and remaking of meaning [that produces] a dramatic shift in *how* we come to know and how we understand ourselves in relation to the broader world’ (emphasis in source). Daniel Taylor (1996, pp. 58-59) agrees:

Story is a vessel for carrying meaning...Story gives us a context for coming to terms with that which is otherwise unbearable. It allows us to name and reconcile with that which otherwise presents itself to us as misery, horror, absurdity, or chaos.

Since narratives structure psychological experience, they can potentially heal the mind.

Thus, I posit that externally presented narratives can heal self-narratives.

To understand how stories create psychological healing, I examine how audiences interpret narrative meaning. Roland Barthes (2008, p. 124) declares that ‘the birth of reader must be requited by the death of the author’, denoting that readers, rather than authors, create a text’s meaning. Thus, a story’s meaning is subjective. David Bordwell (1985, 1989) agrees that audiences create narrative meaning by interpreting textual cues; however, storytellers can employ specific templates to elicit a particular meaning (Bordwell, 1985, p. 38). Consequently, narratives can potentially be designed to elicit psychological healing.

Using stories for therapeutic purposes is termed “bibliotherapy”, which Zaccaria and Moses (1968, p. 8) define as a process of ‘dynamic interaction between the personality of a reader and the literature he reads – interaction that can be used for personality assessment, adjustment, and growth.’ When engaged with a narrative, audiences project their unconscious content on the characters, themes, and situations that resonate with it. This distance creates a different perspective, permitting the restructuring of psychological material. (Grainger, 1990; O’Shaughnessy & Stadler, 2002; Walsh, 2006; Jones, 2011). Therefore, narratives have therapeutic value.

Since animation’s fantasised appearance metaphorically represents reality, it possesses a unique ability to transform harsh truths that would otherwise be unacceptable to ego-consciousness (Wells, 1998; Napier, 2001). The narratives of Japanese animation, dubbed “anime” (Napier, 2001, p. 3), present serious psychological issues that help audiences cope with reality. Hayao Miyazaki’s anime in particular uses fantasy to depict characters overcoming common psychological problems (Napier, 2001; Yamanaka, 2008; Yoshida, 2008; Yoshioka, 2008). Thus, animation augments storytelling’s healing potential.



The components that create psychological and narrative realities are “archetypes”, raw universal psychological material (Jung, 1933, p. 5), and “symbols”, conscious interpretations of the archetypes (Jung, 1964, p. 20; Grainger, 1990, p. 30). In the “psyche”, which is the total human mind (Hockley, 2001, p. 23), these components communicate meaning from the “unconscious”, unknown part of the mind (Hockley, 2001, p. 24), to the “ego”, the conscious identity we are aware of (Jung, 1964, p. 23), through dreams. This creates psychic growth, termed “individuation”, which is the transformation and maturation of the psyche (Jung, 1933, p. 64-65). These psychological components function similarly when aligned with a film’s characters (O’Shaughnessy & Stadler, 2002, p. 184), advocating that film narratives can induce individuation.

Equally, the “Hero’s Journey” demarks a protagonist’s separation from current reality, the initiation into a new one, and returning wiser (Campbell, 1972, p. 30; Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 124; Vogler, 2007). Since audiences observe the protagonist’s insights, the Hero’s Journey guides protagonists and audiences alike to individuation (Campbell, 1972, p. 256; Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 150; Pearson, 1991, p. 3; Vogler, 2007, p. 5).

I present a screenplay for an animated short feature film, ‘The Essence Within’, which employs these theories to create a potentially healing narrative and then examine their effectiveness in the accompanying exegesis.

To conclude, I reflect on my creative process and its therapeutic benefits. In primitive cultures, shamans delved into the unconscious and returned with stories to heal their societies (Henderson, 1964, p. 151; Vogler, 2007, p. 46). Since screenwriters utilise similar archetypal and symbolic meaning, screenplays are blueprints for psychological healing, and screenwriters are modern shamans (Vogler, 2007, p. 295).

## **Chapter One**

### **Transformative Therapy in Animation**

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#### **Subjectivity, Spectatorship, and Triggering Meaning**

In *Encoding/Decoding* (1980), Stuart Hall (2008, p. 41) notes the lack of concrete meaning, or “perfectly transparent communication”, in the communication process. This occurs because communication involves an encoding and decoding stage, where the former is the construction of a message and its meaning, while the latter is the interpretation of that message’s meaning (Hall, 2008, pp. 235-236). David Bordwell (1989, p. 1) defines interpretation as ‘a kind of explanation inserted between one text or agent and another.’ It involves audiences inferring missing narrative information based on their knowledge of the presented situation (Bordwell, 1985, p. 34; 1989, p. 2). Hall (2008, p. 238) theorises that audiences interpret a text’s meaning on two levels: “denotation” ‘is widely equated with the literal meaning of a sign [while “c]onnotation”...is employed simply to refer to less fixed and therefore more conventionalized and changeable, associative meanings.’ Similarly, Bordwell (1989, pp. 8-9) suggests that audiences read meaning on four levels: “referential meaning” is the spectator-constructed story; “explicit meaning” is the film’s direct, literal, and intended meaning; “implicit meaning” is the story’s indirect or implied meaning; and “symptomatic meaning” is the film’s involuntarily expressed meaning. Since multiple levels of meaning can be derived from the same text, audiences create narrative meaning. Roland Barthes (2008, p. 124) concurs: a ‘text consists of multiple writings [and] the reader is the very space in which [meanings] are inscribed.’ Thus, narrative meaning is subjective.

When investigating how to create universal meaning, Bordwell (1985, pp. 31-38) observes that audiences recognise specific meaning within familiar societal codes. Hall (2008, p. 240) agrees, noting that the ‘different areas of social life appear to be mapped out

[and] hierarchically organized into *dominant or preferred meanings*' (emphasis in source). Preferred meanings originate from "prototype" and "template" schemata, 'those operational protocols which dynamically acquire and organize information' (Bordwell, 1985, p. 36). The 'most common template structure can be articulated as a "canonical" story format, something like this: introduction of setting and characters – explanation of a state of affairs – complicating actions – ensuing events – outcome – ending' (Bordwell, 1985, p. 35). Audiences infer missing narrative information around familiar templates and then refine them to fit the specific story (Bordwell, 1985, pp. 33-35). The narrative events confirm or deny the audience's inferences. If the audience's inferences are incorrect, they create new ones to replace them. Engaging with narratives, then, is 'not a passive absorption of stimuli. It is a constructive activity, involving very fast computations, stored concepts, and various purposes, expectations, and hypotheses' (Bordwell, 1985, p. 32). Thus, audiences create narrative meaning. However, Bordwell (1985, p. 38) claims that audiences create associative meanings because screenwriters 'coax us to anticipate and extrapolate.' By employing specific narrative templates, screenwriters set up audience expectation and guide them to predetermined meaning. Individual interpretations are still possible; however, a generalised meaning can be established. Therefore, screenwriters *and* audiences construct narrative meaning.

Given that audiences seek wisdom from stories (McKee, cited in McClean, 2007, p. 18), narrative meaning can potentially evoke psychological change.

### **Viewing Film as Bibliotherapy**

Since film viewing involves reading textual cues, I posit that film has therapeutic potential. Psychological change through storytelling is termed "bibliotherapy", which Rubin (cited in

Murphy & Neilson, 2008, ¶ 3) defines as ‘the intentional use of literature - of reading - for therapeutic purposes.’ According to Walsh (2006, p. 56),

the bibliotherapeutic process of identifying, empathizing and most importantly, recognizing, a character that shares the reader’s problems, disability or situation in life helps the reader to understand they are not the only one in the world with a particular problem. Thereby, the act of reading enables the reader to vicariously experience the character’s process of working through a problem.

In *More Annie Stories: Therapeutic Storytelling Techniques* (1992), Doris Brett presents children’s stories in which a protagonist, Annie, encounters and overcomes problems common to children. Brett (1992, pp. 4-8) posits that tailoring a story to a child’s particular problem prompts the child to identify with the character who suffers a similar problem. In their own time and manner, the child will use this information to resolve their problem, creating feelings of autonomy and self-empowerment. ‘Annie, in learning to deal with her problems, becomes a successful model, thus encouraging the child to imitate her success’ (Brett, 1992, p. 4). Therefore, bibliotherapeutic stories present solutions to problems that audiences can emulate.

Two types of bibliotherapy exist: cognitive and affective. According to Shechtman (cited in Jones, 2011, p. 117), in

cognitive bibliotherapy, the therapist suggests literary material for a patient, leaving clients to draw from it information, experience and solutions relevant to their needs. In affective bibliotherapy, clients reconnect with their own feelings and experiences through their identification with characters, the focus being on the enhancement of experiencing through the richness of human life, characters, situations, difficulties, and problems that the literature presents.

In other words, cognitive bibliotherapy employs therapeutic literature for intentional healing acts, while affective bibliotherapy concerns unconscious therapeutic benefits originating from literature engagement, particularly fiction. This thesis focuses on fiction’s

affective potential. Raya Jones (2011, p. 124) believes that ‘the emotional impact of a poetic image is not simply the case of an externally presented content taking roots in us, but of something already within us germinating under the favourable conditions of the presented material.’ This suggests that narrative symbolism triggers an awareness of inner wisdom. Jones (2011, p. 124) observes that we ‘can choose to make a cognitive judgement about something; but the emotional reaction occurs whether or not we want it.’ Thus, storytelling’s healing potential arises from the audience’s unconscious reaction to its symbolic content.

Fiction is effective for psychological healing because while ‘the fiction experience seems to be about external events...it actually allows us to go on an inward journey...to travel deep into the heart of ourselves, discovering our core beliefs, feelings, and desires’ (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2002, p. 170). When discussing the imagination’s importance for shaping reality in *Drama and Healing: The Roots of Drama Therapy* (1990), Roger Grainger recognises that fiction ‘is not fantasy because it concerns reality in the form of images and ideas relating directly to past experience and future action’ (1990, p. 34). In other words, fiction employs symbols to construct a metaphorical representation of reality (Grainger, 1990, p. 34). Fictional reality is important because, says Grainger (1990, p. 19), during narrative engagement the

audience is at one and the same time protected and exposed—protected by the fictional, or metaphorical, structure of the event, exposed to the hypnotic fascination of the theoretical image which is focused and intensified by the very things which set it apart from life and render it harmless.

Drawing on Aristotle’s theory of “catharsis”, which is an emotional purging (Moore, 1993), Grainger (1990, p. 23) reveals that narratives restore emotional balance by expressing real-world emotions. Usually we deny expressing negative emotions and turn them upon

ourselves (Grainger, 1990, pp. 23-24). However, during narrative engagement, ‘painful feelings are projected outwards onto the characters’ (Grainger, 1990, p. 24).

O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2002, p. 181) concur: ‘the characters with which we identify or to whom we relate are projections of certain aspects of ourselves.’ In other words, audiences project their psychological content onto narrative components. Stories, then, provide a safe space to confront troublesome psychological material. Appleyard (cited in Walsh, 2006, p. 58) summarises it thus: fiction ‘enables readers to project their anxieties onto fictional characters[,] look closely at them from a safe distance, own and disown what [they] will, and regain a sense of mastery and control over them.’ As Brett (1992, p. 11) says, one ‘of the most valuable features of communication through storytelling is that the [audience] who learns through this method is able to do so with a sense of autonomy...whatever learning she gains, she experiences as her own.’ Moreover, since audiences select stories based on their interests and needs (Taylor, 1996, p. 77), narratives function as self-directed, although unconscious, therapy.

## **Animation’s Healing Properties**

Animated film possesses unique healing properties because ‘animation can refine the everyday, subvert our accepted notions of “reality”, and challenge the orthodox understanding and acceptance of our existence’ (Wells, 1998, p. 11). Animation’s fantasised appearance can transform reality’s intimidating situations, present audiences with alternative, non-threatening perspectives, and reveal insights that encourage psychological healing and deeper self-understanding. These possibilities arise, says Hoffer (cited in Wells, 1998, p. 11), because ‘animated film is concerned with metaphysical reality – not how things look, but what they mean.’ Animation, then, augments storytelling’s healing ability.

Animated films, such as Disney's *Bambi* (1942) and *The Lion King* (1994), illustrate the importance of accepting death as a natural process. When a hunter kills Bambi's mother, and Mufasa kills Simba's father, respectively, these characters experience grief. Their struggles to grow beyond sorrow provide examples for children to mimic. When discussing the value of fairy tales, Bruno Bettelheim (1976, p. 25; p. 23) asserts that the

unrealistic nature of these tales...makes obvious that the fairy tales' concern is not useful information about the external world but the inner processes taking place in[side] an individual...[T]he imagery of fairy tales helps children better than anything else in their most difficult and yet most important and satisfying task: achieving a more mature consciousness to civilize the chaotic pressures of their unconscious.

Animation confronts similar issues; however, animation's fantasised appearance, whether presented as hand-drawn "cels", modelled characters and environments, or other forms, depicts a metaphoric version of reality. Consequently, it possesses transformative qualities. Wells (1998, p. 20) agrees: 'metamorphosis [i]s an important aspect of animation', as does Susan Napier (2001, p. 13): the 'privileging of change is at the heart of animation.' Thus, animation's ability to transform reality morphs confronting real-world situations and subject material into less-threatening depictions so audiences can more easily confront important psychological issues. Animation, then, is a powerful medium for inducing psychological growth.

Confronting serious psychological issues is a prominent feature of anime, notes Napier (2001, p. 4): anime 'texts entertain audiences around the world on the most basic level, but, equally importantly...also move and provoke viewers on other levels as well, stimulating audiences to work through certain contemporary issues in ways that older art forms cannot.' The worldwide popularity of box-office record-breaking anime, such as

*Princess Mononoke* (1997) and *Spirited Away* (2001) (Napier, 2001, p. 7; Johnson, 2005, ¶ 9; Yoshida, 2008, p. 100) from writer-director Hayao Miyazaki, suggests audiences want to confront these issues. Drawing on Tsugata Nobuyuki, Kaori Yoshida (2008, p. 76-77) recognises that anime presents ‘stories not simply of good vs evil, but of complicated human relationships and worldviews.’ Napier (2001, p. 8) observes that anime stories explore an ‘enormous breadth of subject material...offering an array of insights into...significant issues, dreams, and nightmares.’ For example, Hideaki Anno’s animated television and film series, *Neon Genesis: Evangelion* (1995-1996, 1997, 1997, 2007, 2009, 2012), explores children’s psychological issues, such as liberation from parental approval, locating inner strength, and recognising one’s purpose in life through its metaphoric setting: a post-apocalyptic future where children pilot Evangelions (giant robots) to defend Earth from antagonistic gods. Animation transforms this potentially unsettling psychological material, distances audiences from it, and permits the safe exploration of it.

Underneath the lush colours and sometimes-fanciful characters of Miyazaki’s anime lie serious psychological themes. Indeed, Miyazaki’s ‘works have given rise to a perception of animation as a mature art form’ (Yoshida, 2008, p. 100). For example, in *My Neighbour Totoro* (1988), Mei and Satsuki’s hospitalised mother and working father are often unavailable, leaving these child protagonists to experience the world alone. For instance, Mei explores the forest alone, she and Satsuki wait alone at the bus stop in the rain, and Satsuki loses Mei en route to the hospital. In each sequence, Miyazaki’s fantasy symbolism, such as the titular character’s cuddly-bear-like appearance in the forest and at the bus stop, and the flying cat bus arriving on the country roads, allows these characters to learn how to psychologically care for themselves in times of great stress and need. *My Neighbour Totoro* demonstrates that ‘Miyazaki’s approach to children’s media intends not



only to inspire his audience to face a brutal reality, but also to make them realize their potential and help them release it through the power of fantasy' (Yoshida, 2008, p. 107-108). *Kiki's Delivery Service* (1989) is another example. When stressed, Kiki loses her flying ability. Her journey to recover it teaches her that self-nurturance overcomes self doubt. Further, Kiki's developing magical powers symbolise her maturation from a child into a young woman. Puberty's physical changes can frighten children; however, Miyazaki's metaphorical representation of Kiki's development helps allay children's fears and expresses the process as a journey of self-discovery. 'Based on his philosophy of "realistic" fantasy, Miyazaki does not produce narratives that produce a predictable happy ending, but instead develops a protagonist who has to cope with reality' (Yoshida, 2008, p. 108). This teaches audiences to do the same. Indeed, *My Neighbour Totoro's* ending depicts Mei and Satsuki's new ability to cope with their continuing life, while *Kiki's Delivery Service* ends with Kiki accepting her changes and moving forward with her life.

Audiences readily identify with Miyazaki's stories because, says Shiro Yoshioka (2008, p. 269), 'Miyazaki blends the real world with the fantasy world in a way that makes it an extension of our reality.' In *Spirited Away*, Miyazaki frames the fantastic within the real when protagonist Chihiro enters a tunnel in modern Japan and emerges in a fantasised version of historical Japan. Accordingly, these two disparate worlds become contiguous. Napier (2001, p. 134) suggests that by 'balancing fantasy with the real, the film's message of empowerment becomes far more effective.' *My Neighbour Totoro's* real-world nature elements, like the forest, hide its supernatural world, implying that it exists but requires discovery. Miyazaki's "realistic" fantasy, then, symbolises the hidden potential within audiences. As Hiroshi Yamanaka (2008, p. 246) observes, 'Miyazaki's anime focus on their

heroes' ways of internally awaking an invisible power within themselves.' Thus, Miyazaki's anime communicate life-affirming qualities.

These life-affirming properties generate the universal appeal of Miyazaki's anime. As well as entertaining audiences, his narratives communicate important psychological issues that benefit children and adults alike. Miyazaki (cited in Yoshida, 2008, p. 108) encapsulates his storytelling ideology best: media 'products should have mass appeal but, simultaneously, they should intellectually stimulate the audience.' Animation's transformative ability enhances the power of Miyazaki's didacticism because its fantasised appearance softens the confronting psychological material presented. Holloway (cited in Wells, 1998, p. 10) states that "to animate" means 'to give life and soul to' something. The life-affirming qualities of Miyazaki's anime, then, give life to the wisdom within audiences.

## **Summary**

Thus far, I have established that narratives exist as psychological constructs to structure consciousness. Further, stories communicate meaning through textual cues and screenwriters guide audiences towards predetermined meaning by employing specific templates. Moreover, audiences project their unconscious contents onto narrative components that resonate with it so ego-consciousness can integrate it. Finally, animation augments storytelling's healing ability because it transforms threatening psychological material to reveal the unconscious' wisdom.

Chapter two explores the mental components involved in psychological healing, their use in storytelling, and the similarities between "individuation" and the "Hero's Journey." Analyses of two Miyazaki anime demonstrate these concepts in action.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Self, Spirit, and Symbolism: Rebirth of the Hero**

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#### **Individuation and the Archetypes of the Self**

Analytical psychology defines the “psyche” as the whole mind, ‘the totality of the self, in other words all that makes us human, whether this is conscious or unconscious’ (Hockley, 2001, p. 23). Carl Jung (1964, p. 23) believes the psyche is divided into two parts: the “ego”, or “conscious”, and the “unconscious.” The “ego” is the personality we identify with and are aware of, and, says Murray Stein (cited in Dirkx, 2012, p. 118), ‘refers to one’s experiencing of oneself as a centre of willing, desiring, reflecting, and acting.’ The “unconscious”, on the other hand, is a deeper level and larger, unknown part of the psyche that contains ‘a set of psychological structures that [eventually] find expression through consciousness’ (Hockley, 2001, p. 24) during dreams and individuation.

The psyche communicates through “archetypes” and “symbols.” For Jung (1933, p. 5), an archetype ‘designates only those psychic contents which have not yet been submitted to conscious elaboration and are therefore an immediate datum of psychic experience.’ Originating from the “collective unconscious”, a repository for psychological experience and development (Hockley, 2001, p. 29), archetypes express universal content through omnipresent figures, such as the hero, persona, shadow, and anima/animus. They appear in dreams where they convey messages to ego-consciousness (Jung, 1964; von Franz, 1964) and ‘try to restore our psychological balance by producing dream material that re-establishes, in a subtle way, the total psychic equilibrium’ (Jung, 1964, p. 50). By contrast, a symbol is a familiar object ‘that possesses specific connotations in addition to its conventional and obvious meaning. It implies something vague, unknown, or hidden from us’ (Jung, 1964, p. 20). Symbols originate in the “personal unconscious” (Freeman, 1964,

p. 12), an individual's repressed psychological material (Hockley, 2001, p. 29), and represent the ego-conscious' interpretations of archetypal material. Grainger (1990, p. 30) notes that a 'symbol is a mental presence which draws attention to an absence and serves in part to make up for it.' Archetypes and symbols, then, express psychological meaning.

This meaning is important for psychological growth, which Jung (1933, pp. 64-65) terms "individuation" and defines as the 'process of inner transformation and rebirth into...that larger and greater personality maturing within us': the "Self." During individuation, archetypes and symbols divulge unconscious knowledge to ego-consciousness, progressively merging the ego and unconscious to form a whole psyche. Archetypes are important in individuation because each represents a different stage of the process. As people experience predetermined stages of physical growth, such as infant, child, adolescent, and adult, Stein (1998, p. 172) articulates that 'each stage of life is undergirded and supported by a set of archetypal images that shape psychological attitudes, behavior [sic], and motivations.' The archetypes important to individuation are the ego (hero), the persona, the shadow, the anima/animus (syzygy), and the Self. Briefly, this involves becoming aware of oneself and the world (ego), differentiating between oneself and others (persona), neutralising one's projections onto the world (shadow), becoming more pragmatic and utilitarian (anima/animus), and merging the ego with the Self to reach one's full potential and true personality (Stein, 1998, pp. 179-186). In other words, the symbolic patterns of our dreams subtly direct the ego towards a more mature and effective personality (von Franz, 1964, p. 161). However, Marie-Louise von Franz (1964, p. 161) observes that 'this psychic growth cannot be brought about by a conscious effort of will power, but happens voluntarily and naturally' when the unconscious deems it appropriate. Not everyone undergoes all individuation stages because some people never overcome

particular archetypal patterns (Stein, 1998, pp. 184-185). Therefore, drawing on bibliotherapy, narratives are potentially therapeutic because they present opportunities to manage archetypal conflict and trigger individuation.

### **The Role of the Psyche and Archetypes in Storytelling**

Given that the psyche employs archetypes to resolve psychological conflict, narratives ‘built on resolving conflicts are an ideal ground for exploring these archetypes and their positive and shadow aspects’ (O’Shaughnessy & Stadler, 2002, p. 177). Understanding narrative-based psychological growth requires locating the psyche’s components in a story. According to O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2002, p. 184), in ‘Jungian psychology when we tell a [story] we consider that all the parts, all the characters in [it], are one single individual psyche.’ I posit that a narrative’s world represents the whole psyche and that the protagonist and antagonist characterise the ego, the side controlling the world, or the unconscious, the side that wants to evoke change. Moreover, O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2002, p. 179) observe that ‘Jungian analysis of...stories sees the characters acting out archetypal patterns of behaviour.’ Therefore, as archetypes create psychological growth, a narrative’s main characters represent archetypal figures that endeavour to produce world, or psychological, growth.

The following section establishes this concept in Miyazaki’s *Princess Mononoke* and outlines how the major archetypes prompt individuation within the story.

### **Attaining Individuation in *Princess Mononoke***

In *Princess Mononoke*, Iron Town represents ego-consciousness and its antagonist because destroying the forest to produce weaponry for the Emperor forces Iron Town’s will upon the forest’s inhabitants. Accordingly, the forest’s animal-gods embody the story’s

unconscious protagonist force because they attempt to remind Iron Town that respecting nature is important. For example, after the forest-spirit's last breath creates new forest growth, Iron Town villager Kohroku's comments, 'I didn't know the forest-spirit made the flowers grow' (Suzuki & Miyazaki, 1997), demonstrating Iron Town's ignorance. However, this recognition leads to a new world balance.

### **The Hero (Ego)**

According to Stevens (2002, p. 212), the hero archetype 'is orientated to collective values...strives for prestige within a social context [and] attains his goals...through courage, determination, aggression and the assertion of will.' Ashitaka represents *Princess Mononoke's* hero archetype because he tries to resolve the conflict between the animal-gods and Iron Town. For example, when Ashitaka learns that Iron Town leader, Lady Eboshi, plans to kill the forest-spirit, he tries persuading her not to. Further, when boar-god Lord Okoto rallies his boars to attack Iron Town, Ashitaka tries to convince him to avoid Iron Town's trap. Moreover, when the beheaded forest-spirit's essence spreads across the land killing everything, Ashitaka risks his life to retrieve the head and restore the world, demonstrating courage, determination, and the assertion of will for the collective good.

### **The Persona**

Jacobi (1964, p. 350) defines the persona as 'the protective cover or mask...that an individual presents to the world. It has two purposes: first, to make a specific impression on other people: second, to conceal the individual's inner self from their prying eyes.' Thus, the persona is the personality we present to other people. After his initial role as Ashitaka's mentor, Jigo conspires with Eboshi and the Emperor, presenting different personas to suit his situation. These actions reveal the persona's deceptive and protective natures.

## **The Shadow**

The shadow archetype represents ‘the hidden, repressed, and unfavourable (or nefarious) aspects of the personality’ (Henderson, 1964, p. 118). Lady Eboshi characterises *Princess Mononoke*’s shadow archetype because she creates unfavourable conditions for the animal-gods when she destroys their home. Further, when she beheads the forest-spirit many of her villagers die, demonstrating nefarious characteristics.

People naturally want to repress and deny their negative qualities, however, the ‘shadow usually contains values that are needed by consciousness, but that exist in a form that makes it difficult to integrate them into one’s life’ (von Franz, 1964, pp. 171-172). Ashitaka’s curse emerges when he least needs it, symbolising repression of the shadow archetype. During these hatred-filled moments, such as Eboshi’s opposition to respecting nature, Ashitaka’s normally dormant curse manifests as tendrils that threaten to consume him, as unconscious content appears threatening to the ego (von Franz, 1964, p. 161).

## **The Anima and Animus**

The anima and animus are the feminine and masculine aspects of the male and female psyche, respectively (von Franz, 1964, p. 177). The ‘anima is a personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man’s psyche, such as vague feelings and moods, prophetic hunches, receptiveness to the irrational, capacity for personal love, feeling for nature, and...his relation to the unconscious’ (von Franz, 1964, p. 177). San represents Ashitaka’s anima because she possesses unrestrained female qualities and has a close relationship to nature. For example, San’s familial affiliation with the animal-gods, or nature, permits the forest-spirit to heal Ashitaka’s bullet wound.

Samuels, Shorter, and Plant (cited in Hockley, 2001, p. 74) describe the animus as ‘focused consciousness, authority and respect for facts.’ Gonza represents the film’s animus archetype because he demands respect and acts authoritatively. For instance, when Ashitaka tells Eboshi that she should not attack the forest animals, Gonza withdraws his sword and demands Ashitaka respect Eboshi, demonstrating authority.

### **The Self**

According to von Franz (1964, p. 162), the Self is ‘an inner guiding factor...the regulating center that brings about a constant extension and maturing of the personality.’ It is a person’s genuine personality that slowly develops through individuation and is the goal of psychological development and a narrative’s protagonist. At the end of *Princess Mononoke*, Eboshi notices the destruction caused by beheading the forest-spirit and comments, ‘we’re going to start again. This time we’ll build a better town’ (Suzuki & Miyazaki, 1997). This realisation correlates with the importance of respect for nature that the animal-gods (the unconscious) tried to reveal all along. Thus, Eboshi and Iron Town successfully individuate because by acknowledging their destructive qualities and the necessity of respecting nature, they recognise the guiding wisdom of their Self. Moreover, this was Ashitaka’s goal.

### **Attaining Individuation**

Each of *Princess Mononoke*’s archetypes triggers individuation in different ways. Ashitaka’s assertion of heroic qualities initiates the reconciliation between the opposing forces (the ego and unconscious) to balance the world (psyche). Jigo’s varying personas reveal the world’s deceptive, and the psyche’s protective, nature. Eboshi’s destructive actions expose the ego’s secrets and the need to accept all aspects of the Self. Pairing Ashitaka’s logical masculine traits with San’s emotional feminine ones reveals the need to



equalise the psyche's diverse energies. Finally, Iron Town's realisation of nature's importance encourages authenticity.

Since *Princess Mononoke*'s archetypes generate individuation, this advocates that narratives can induce psychological growth because they utilise the psyche's natural healing mediums. Therefore, stories can induce individuation because they behave like dreams, communicating important unconscious content to ego-consciousness.

### **The Hero's Journey**

Similar to dream analysis, examining a story's archetypes and symbols demonstrates that protagonists undergo individuation. This psychological growth underpins a narrative construct labelled the "monomyth" or "Hero's Journey" by Joseph Campbell. It 'refers to the basic elements of myth, the archetypal qualities of all legends and heroes, that transcend individual cultures and specific periods of time' (Indick, 2004, ¶ 16). Through 'the rites of passage: *separation – initiation – return*' (Campbell, 1972, p. 30, emphasis in source), a hero enacts the 'basic motif of the universal Hero's Journey – leaving one condition and finding the source of life to bring you forth into a richer or mature condition' (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 124). The Hero's Journey, then, imparts wisdom that induces psychological growth in protagonists. Since audiences witness this journey, they can discover similar insights. Indeed, Campbell (1972, p. 256) believes that a myth's 'understood function is to serve as a powerful picture language for the communication of traditional wisdom.' Christopher Vogler (2007, p. 5; p. 7) agrees: the 'ideas embedded in mythology...can be applied to understanding almost any human problem. They are a great key to life [because in] any good story the hero grows and changes, making a journey from one way of being to next.' Therefore, storytelling helps maintain a healthy psyche.

The Hero's Journey, then, is comparable to individuation. Richard Underwood (1990, p. 21) acknowledges the similarities of Jung's and Campbell's work: 'Campbell's vision of the heroic journey is analogous with Jung's understanding of the process of individuation.' As the ego confronts unconscious material during individuation, the Hero's Journey depicts a hero leaving their familiar world and encountering a threat. Campbell and Moyers (1988, p. 146) describe it thusly:

In the first stage of this kind of adventure, the hero leaves the realm of the familiar, over which he has some measure of control, and comes to a threshold...where a monster of the abyss comes to meet him...The conscious personality...come[s] in touch with a charge of unconscious energy which it is unable to handle and must now suffer all the trials and revelations of a terrifying...journey, while learning to come to terms with this power of the dark and emerge, at last, to a new way of life.

Clearly, the hero embodies the ego's willpower, while the monster represents the unconscious' intimidating nature. Thus, the Hero's Journey communicates individuation's trials and benefits.

Like affective bibliotherapy, the Hero's Journey guides audiences to psychological growth. Campbell and Moyers (1988, p. 138) agree: if 'the story represents...an archetypal adventure...it would help to provide a model for handling this development.' However, rather than exact instructions, the Hero's Journey establishes a rough guide towards an audience's unique path. As Campbell and Moyers (1988, p. 150) state, a hero

doesn't show you the truth itself, he shows you the way to truth... But it's got to be your way, not his. The [hero] can't tell you exactly how to get rid of your particular fears, for example. Different teachers may suggest exercises, but they may not be the ones to work for you. All a teacher can do is suggest.

Therefore, storytelling's healing potential resides in its suggestibility. Narrative situations are metaphors for psychological conflict and a protagonist's actions propel audiences towards their own Hero's Journey of self-discovery expanding their ego's limitations.

## ***Laputa: Castle in the Sky's* Hero's Journey**

Campbell (1972, p. 30) describes the Hero's Journey thus:

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.

He then outlines seventeen stages divided into the three-part monomyth structure. In *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (2007), Vogler restructures these stages into a more succinct twelve, which the following progression outlines. (1) A protagonist begins in the "Ordinary World", (2) which a disturbance, labelled "the Call to Adventure", upsets. (3) The protagonist initially "Refuses the Call"; however, (4) a "Meeting with the Mentor" figure provides them with the gifts and knowledge necessary to accomplish their goal, spurring them forwards. (5) The protagonist then "Crosses the First Threshold", entering the "Special World", a world different from their own, where (6) they encounter many "Tests, Allies, and Enemies" that try their resolve. (7) The protagonist pauses as they "Approach the Inmost Cave", where the object of their quest hides, to prepare for (8) "The Ordeal", an encounter with their greatest fear, often a confrontation with death. (9) Having overcome the ordeal, the protagonist acquires "The Reward", the object of their quest, and (10) prepares to take "The Road Back" to the ordinary world. (11) However, the opposing force is "Resurrected" for the final time and the hero faces the consequences of the ordeal to prove their experience transformed them. (12) Afterwards, the protagonist "Returns with the Elixir", a token of power, change, or knowledge gained from their quest.

Exploring the Hero's Journey stages in *Laputa: Castle in the Sky* (1986; hereafter, *Laputa*), will demonstrate what the journey teaches the protagonist, Pazu, and audiences, and how this elicits individuation.

(1) *Laputa*'s "Ordinary World" establishes Pazu as a small town miner's assistant, who yearns to prove that legendary floating castle Laputa exists. (2) Pazu's "Call to Adventure" occurs when he rescues Sheeta, who plummets from the sky. (3) He "Refuses the Call" to adventure when he disguises and hides Sheeta from the pursuing Dola gang. (4) Pazu and Sheeta "Meet with the Mentor" when they encounter Uncle Pomme in the caves. Pomme reveals that Sheeta's amulet is Laputian. Pazu's dream to prove Laputa's existence and Sheeta's desire to discover her identity spur them towards locating Laputa. (5) When Pazu and Sheeta leave the caves to find Laputa, they "Cross the First Threshold" and enter the "Special World" (Muska's obsession with Laputa) after Muska captures them.

(6) Much of *Laputa*'s "Tests, Allies, and Enemies" stage tries Pazu's trust because the distinction between allies and enemies blurs. For example, Muska presents himself as an ally, yet obviously possesses an ulterior motive. Further, Pazu is heartbroken when Sheeta advises him to leave her with Muska. Moreover, when the Dola gang encounters Pazu at his home, he discovers that his perceived enemy is his ally. (7) Pazu "Approaches the Inmost Cave" when he joins the Dola gang to help rescue Sheeta. (8) Pazu faces his "Ordeal" when encountering Muska's forces. The loss of Sheeta's amulet symbolises his "death" since it could have protected him and Sheeta. (9) Pazu's "Reward" is rescuing Sheeta and his new home and mechanic role aboard the Dola gang's airship.

(10) Pazu undertakes the "Road Back" when he continues his search for Laputa. (11) Muska's reactivation of Laputa's technology with Sheeta's amulet signals the "Resurrection" of the city's destructive potential. Pazu struggles to retrieve the amulet, and when he does, he and Sheeta recite a spell that destroys Laputa's technology. (12) Pazu abandons Laputa to live with Sheeta, representing his "Return with the Elixir" because he discovers that friendship is more important than recognition for locating Laputa.

*Laputa's Hero's Journey* progresses from a desire-filled, means-lacking protagonist, to external forces spurring him unknowingly towards realising his goal. This advocates that sometimes we need a nudge from without to undertake the journey within. On another level, Pazu and Sheeta's abandonment of Laputa suggests that sometimes the goals we pursue yield unexpected results. Pazu and Sheeta expected Laputa to be a thriving society but discovered an abandoned city with destructive capabilities hidden within. The same is true of individuation: often the archetypes reveal information incongruent with the ego's perceptions; however, to reach the Self, one needs to accept all aspects of the personality. Pazu and Sheeta abandon Laputa because they overcome their disappointment and accept what the experience taught them: the value of friendship. *Laputa's Hero's Journey*, then, teaches audiences that our own journeys may produce unexpected outcomes that are equally important if we open ourselves to them. Further, this reveals that we are more than our ego. Therefore, through the Hero's Journey, a narrative's heroes guide audiences towards their own inner adventure.

## **Summary**

This chapter established that archetypes and symbols communicate meaning between the psyche's conscious and unconscious components to generate individuation, which is psychological maturation. Moreover, films utilise these elements to convey meaning, advocating that films can trigger individuation. Finally, a story's protagonist undertakes the Hero's Journey to produce change, which audiences can mimic to induce individuation.

Chapter three presents a screenplay for a short animated feature film, 'The Essence Within', written for children aged eight to twelve, which draws upon the above research to create a potentially healing narrative.

THE ESSENCE WITHIN

Written by  
Andrew Levett

Second Draft  
Eleventh Revision  
3 June 2013

1 EXT. REGINOLD'S HOUSE - DAY 1

A dilapidated double-story brick house stands amongst a forest of karri, marri, and tall weeds.

2 INT. REGINOLD'S HOUSE (STUDIO) - DAY 2

Amongst the messy, painting-filled studio, CHARLIE, a ten year-old blonde-haired boy, frowns at a rudimentary painting of a red dog. Reginold, a long-haired, elderly Englishman, stands behind him, examining it.

CHARLIE  
(shakes head)  
I can't paint.

REGINOLD  
You're a beginner, true, but you have talent.

Charlie grimaces.

REGINOLD  
Charlie, your family want you to learn to express yourself. But all I see in your paintings is compliance. Where's the passion I see in your eyes?

A sinister expression flashes across Charlie's face. He grabs a brush and swipes red paint across his painting.

REGINOLD  
There! I see anger. Paint that.

CHARLIE  
(horrified)  
Ah!

Charlie drops the brush and storms to the window. After a beat, Reginold joins him.

REGINOLD  
You have great potential, Charlie. Stop holding in your emotions. Let them flow freely through your work.

Charlie turns away.

REGINOLD  
Huah.  
(beat)  
How about some lemonade, then?

Charlie nods. Reginold exits.

Charlie stares out the window. SHADOW-CHARLIE, a younger, darkened Charlie, grinning maliciously, reflects back.

CHARLIE

Ah!

Green and yellow auras shine through the window obscuring the reflection.

Suddenly the room quakes. Art supplies fall from shelves and paintings fall from easels. Charlie grasps his head and collapses. Through his eyes, the room blurs into colours.

A shattering glass sounds nearby. A red aura appears behind Charlie.

REGINOLD (V.O.)

Quick! Under the door frame.

CHARLIE

(hesitating)

Reginold?

An arm-like appendage extends from the aura, wraps around his wrist and pulls him into the door frame.

A moment later, the quaking stops.

REGINOLD (V.O.)

Are you okay?

Charlie stares at the aura, perplexed.

CHARLIE

(hesitantly)

All I can see are colours. And...  
one's talking to me.

REGINOLD (V.O.)

Ha! I knew you were special. Listen to me, Charlie. Focus on the red aura in front of you. Visualise it subsiding, revealing me.

CHARLIE

You're kidding, right?

REGINOLD (V.O.)

Go on. Give it a try.

Hesitantly, Charlie squints at the aura. It flickers for a moment, then slowly fades, revealing Reginold. Charlie looks flabbergasted.

REGINOLD

I told you it would work.

CHARLIE

But how? What-?



Reginold drags Charlie to the window. Charlie pulls back, squinting at the bright green and yellow auras.

REGINOLD  
Bright, aren't they? You see, all living beings are made of energy. And that's what you're seeing now.

CHARLIE  
But... I've never seen them before.

REGINOLD  
You probably did as a toddler. Most people lose the ability by age two. Those that continue to see them are a rare few.

CHARLIE  
Why are there so many different colours?

REGINOLD  
Each represents a different life form. For example, red is the energy of animals and humans, while green-

The phone rings and Reginold answers it.

REGINOLD  
(into phone)  
Yes? ... We must do something about it. ... Okay, I'll contact everyone.  
(hangs up; to Charlie)  
I need to attend to something important. Will you be okay?

3 EXT. FOREST-TRAIL - DAY

3

Wide-eyed, Charlie passes dazzling tall green auras surrounded by a yellow one and shields his eyes.

A multitude of small red auras fly past. Charlie watches, amazed. He squints until the auras fade, revealing a flock of cockatoos. He smiles.

He bumps into a tall green aura and stares up at it. A yellow aura shines through fragmented green fronds.

CHARLIE  
Wow.

Gradually the green fades into a tree and the yellow into the sun's rays.

A mid-sized red aura approaches and barks. Charlie stares at it and slowly it turns into an aura-surrounded red-cloud kelpie.

CHARLIE

Ha!

Its aura darkens and the kelpie growls. Charlie flees as the kelpie chases him.

4 EXT. TUNNEL ENTRANCE - DAY

4

As all the auras fade, Charlie bumps into a boulder. The kelpie slowly approaches.

CHARLIE

What do you want?

It barks and motions to the mountain behind Charlie. Two tall rusted steel doors stand in its side. One is open a crack.

CHARLIE

You want me to go inside?

The kelpie barks. Cautiously, Charlie approaches and peers inside.

CHARLIE

But it's dark. What could-

AUREOLE (O.S.)

Charlie.

CHARLIE

Someone's inside.

(eyes widen)

They could be hurt.

He steps inside.

A moment later, MR GLAMOUR, a tall, slick-haired, suited man, followed by a group of hard-hat wearing WORKMEN lugging excavation equipment, approaches.

The kelpie barks at them.

MR GLAMOUR

Grr!

The kelpie whines, looks forlornly towards the tunnel, then flees, its tail between its legs.

5 INT. TUNNEL - DAY

5

Charlie scans the darkness and notices a distant pink aura.

CHARLIE

Is anyone in here?

His voice echoes for a beat.

AUREOLE (O.S.)  
(faint)  
Charlie.

Charlie creeps through the darkness, arms extended. He rubs against the wall and pushes himself away from it. He continues on. A moment later, fluttering sounds nearby and something brushes against him. He freezes.

CHARLIE  
Who's there?

After a moment, a pink aura materialises around AUREOLE, a tiny, blonde-haired, fairy-like Energy-Spirit flapping transparent wings.

CHARLIE  
Wow! A fairy.

A sinister grin flashes across his face and he reaches for her. She leaps back, then flies down the tunnel, her aura fading.

CHARLIE  
Hey! Come back!

He runs after her.

6 CHARLIE'S MIND-SPACE: EXT. SWAMP - NIGHT

6

Lightning flashes against a deep purple sky as a thickening fog moves in. Charlie trudges through deep mud. Thunder sounds and he jumps but one foot sticks.

CHARLIE  
C'mon!

As Charlie struggles to remove his foot, he notices Shadow-Charlie standing on the bank behind him.

CHARLIE  
Stay away from me!

Shadow-Charlie approaches. Charlie struggles against the mud and frees his foot. He rushes forwards, slips, then falls into the mud.

CHARLIE  
No!

7 INT. TUNNEL - DAY

7

Charlie trips and reaches for a jutting rock. He falls short, collapsing on his left arm. After a moment, he tries to pull himself up and falters.

CHARLIE

OW!

He collapses, clasp ing his arm and sobs.

Aureole's aura slowly reappears around her. She flies towards Charlie and cautiously hovers before him.

AUREOLE

You're him, aren't you?

CHARLIE

Who?

Charlie grits his teeth against pain. Aureole eyes him suspiciously, then flutters closer.

AUREOLE

What's the problem?

CHARLIE

My arm... hurts real bad.

AUREOLE

Surely one of your power can heal it.

CHARLIE

What are you talking about? I need to see a doctor.

AUREOLE

Haha. That's silly. The only person who can heal you is you.

CHARLIE

I don't understand. What's going on?

AUREOLE

(examines him momentarily)

Maybe your long journey has made you forget.

(points down tunnel)

Perhaps the Healing Tree can help you remember.

Charlie stares at her suspiciously, then, leaning heavily on his right side, slowly stands.

Aureole flies further down the tunnel as Charlie watches. She turns back and gestures down the tunnel.

AUREOLE  
Let me take you home.

CHARLIE  
(pointing to entrance)  
But-

She flies further down the tunnel. After a moment,  
Charlie follows.

She leads him to a stone wall blocking their path. She  
closes her eyes, then flies through it. It ripples.

CHARLIE  
Hey! Where'd you go?

Aureole flies back through the wall.

AUREOLE  
It's just an energy barrier to prevent  
the dishonest from entering. You'll be  
safe. Shut your eyes, believe you can,  
and walk through.

Charlie stares at her, bewildered.

AUREOLE  
Give it a try. You can do it.

Charlie touches the barrier's surface, which ripples.  
He takes a deep breath, then hesitantly steps through.

8 INT. SPERIAL - DAY

8

Charlie steps through and Aureole flies through a  
translucent barrier and emerge inside a huge cavern.

Tiny buildings populate a centralised lake's edge. Many  
Energy-Spirits flutter about. Charlie gazes wide-eyed.

Nearby, several Energy-Spirits laugh as they messily  
make fairy-floss and ice-cream. Some are dressed as  
clowns and joyfully juggle batons.

On the cavern's far side, Energy-Spirits sit in a  
circle outside a temple and meditate. Each glows with  
an aura, which they project into a single, big orb.

CHARLIE  
Wow! Where are we?

AUREOLE  
(looking concerned)  
This is Sperial, home of we Energy-  
Spirits. Come on.

Aureole flutters towards a giant tree rooted on an island in the lake. Its dying branches reach around the cavern, glowing dimly. Charlie follows Aureole.

9 INT. SPERIAL (HEALING TREE) - DAY

9

Aureole flies across to the island while Charlie takes a few steps through the lake to reach it.

Many Energy-Spirits gather around them, gaze wondrously at Charlie, and giggle. Many brush up against him, and he smiles. Aureole frowns.

PRISCILLA, a crowned, royally dressed Energy-Spirit, barges through them and glares at Charlie.

PRISCILLA

What's a human doing here?

The Energy-Spirits fall silent.

AUREOLE

(fluttering forwards)

I found him in the tunnel. He's hurt and can't remember who he is, so I brought him here to-

PRISCILLA

Who do you think this is?

AUREOLE

It's him, Priscilla. Our saviour.

Priscilla stares at Charlie, then frowns at Aureole.

PRISCILLA

Aureole, I know the recent signs have given you hope, but don't let that blind you.

AUREOLE

But the saplings... It happened just as the prophecy predicted.

PRISCILLA

You know humans can't be trusted. They are vulnerable to his manipulation. This could be our enemy in disguise.

AUREOLE

But he made it through the barrier.

PRISCILLA

Our magic is old, and our enemy clever. Have you forgotten our purpose?

Aureole frowns and shakes her head.

PRISCILLA

Then you know we must be cautious.

Aureole nods.

Silence fills the cavern.

CHARLIE

(steps forwards)

I don't want to cause any trouble.

I'll leave if you want.

PRISCILLA

(sizing him up)

Tell me, how did you find us?

CHARLIE

I followed a voice and an aura through doors in the mountain.

PRISCILLA

You can see energy-signatures?

CHARLIE

After the earthquake its all I could see. It's all new to me though.

Priscilla rubs her chin, deep in thought.

PRISCILLA

It seems your arrival may be fortuitous after all.

(to Aureole)

I must investigate the tunnel. Watch him closely while I'm gone.

Aureole nods.

Priscilla flies through the barrier and the Energy-Spirits disperse.

AUREOLE

I'm sorry. Priscilla's very strict.

CHARLIE

What's this prophecy you spoke of?

AUREOLE

You don't remember?

Charlie shakes his head.

AUREOLE

Legend says that the Healing Tree will signal the saviour's arrival and that he will defend us from the darkness. The Healing Tree has been dying for some time, but yesterday, I found these.

She points to saplings growing at the Healing Tree's trunk.

AUREOLE  
That's why I was searching for you.

CHARLIE  
(frowning)  
I'm not your saviour.

AUREOLE  
But-

CHARLIE  
I can't even save myself.

He storms to the island's edge, throws himself down and stares into the lake. It reflects Shadow-Charlie.

10 CHARLIE'S MIND-SPACE: EXT. GRASSY FIELD - NIGHT 10

Charlie trudges through tall grass surrounded by a thick fog. A rustling sounds behind him. He scans the grass but sees nothing.

CHARLIE  
Who's there?

There is no response.

After a moment, Shadow-Charlie emerges and grins.

CHARLIE  
Stay away from me!

Charlie sprints through the grass. After a moment, he spins around, but Shadow-Charlie is gone. Charlie turns back around, then trips over a rock and falls. He reaches for grass stems, pulling one out as he falls.

11 INT. SPERIAL (HEALING TREE) - DAY 11

CHARLIE  
No!

Charlie reaches out and picks a flower.

AUREOLE  
What have you done?!

She points to the flower head in Charlie's hands. He stares at it, wide-eyed. Its green aura fades.

CHARLIE  
Its energy-signature... what's happening?



AUREOLE

It's dying. You killed it.

She yanks it from him, flies to its stem, then twirls around, emitting a pink aura, which envelops the flower parts. They glow pink, then green. The aura slowly dissipates and the flower is whole again, emitting a bright green aura.

CHARLIE

That's amazing! How did you do that?

AUREOLE

I shared my life-force with the flower, which revitalised it.

CHARLIE

I wish I could do that.

AUREOLE

(shakes her head)

Life is not something to be toyed with, Charlie. Picking the flower shows that you disrespect life.

CHARLIE

I... I'm sorry, I... I promise not to use it to hurt other life-forms.

Aureole stares at him curiously.

CHARLIE

You said I'm your saviour, didn't you? Show me this so I might help you.

AUREOLE

(frowning)

This power requires great responsibility, Charlie. If I show you, you must promise only to use it to help others.

CHARLIE

I promise.

AUREOLE

(checks entrance)

Then you must understand that each life-form expresses it's energy through different colours.

(points to flower)

For example, green signifies plants,

(points to Charlie)

red is for humans,

(points to Energy-Spirits'

single energy orb)

and yellow represents energy sources.

The different tones represent that life-form's intent. Light denotes good, and dark, bad.

Charlie nods.

AUREOLE

Try with your arm first. Can you see its energy-signature?

Charlie slowly lifts his arm, grimacing. He stares at it and slowly a dark red aura envelops it.

CHARLIE

It's dark red.

AUREOLE

That's because it's injured. But you can change that by drawing on your inner self. Express your healing potential by visualising the tone lightening.

Charlie squints at his arm. Nothing happens. He grits his teeth. The aura remains dark.

CHARLIE

Argh! I can't do it.

He rips up some flowers and throws them into the lake.

AUREOLE

Charlie! I just told you to resp-

Slimy tendrils burst from the lake, wrap around Charlie, and pull him under.

AUREOLE

No!

Red and green auras whirl around the Healing Tree, morphing into shades of every colour. Aureole watches on, horrified.

12 CHARLIE'S MIND-SPACE: EXT. SEA-CLIFF - NIGHT

12

A wet Charlie emerges from tall grass onto a fog-surrounded cliff where a solitary, leafless birch tree stands on the edge. He grasps its branch and peers below, but the fog obscures his view.

Water drips from his fringe and the fog clears along its path as it falls into the ocean below where it creates a circular ripple.

A moment later, the CREATOR-ENERGY, a glowing white orb, hovers out and rises to face Charlie.

CHARLIE  
(stares, amazed)  
What... are you?

CREATOR-ENERGY (O.S.)  
I'm the originator of all that was,  
all that is, and all that will ever  
be.  
(beat)  
The Energy-Spirits call me the Creator-  
Energy. I need your help.

CHARLIE  
The creator of the universe needs my  
help?

CREATOR-ENERGY (O.S.)  
Indeed. If the darkness approaching  
Sperial finds me, it will absorb the  
universe's life-force and kill every  
living being.

CHARLIE  
But I'm just a boy. How can I help?

CREATOR-ENERGY (O.S.)  
Become Sperial's saviour. Protect me from  
the darkness.

Shadow-Charlie's head emerges from the tall grass. He  
watches on.

CHARLIE  
I'm no saviour. I have no powers.

CREATOR-ENERGY (O.S.)  
Of course you do.

CHARLIE  
What good is seeing a life-form's energy-  
signature?

CREATOR-ENERGY (O.S.)  
There's more to your power than that.  
But this is your journey and you have  
much to learn. All I can say is that  
before the end, you will have to face  
your greatest fear.

CHARLIE  
But-

Shadow-Charlie leaps out and rushes towards Charlie.

CHARLIE  
No!

The Creator-Energy flashes brightly, whitening out the screen.

13 INT. SPERIAL (HEALING TREE) - DAY

13

As Aureole finishes healing the flowers, the Healing Tree's auras fade. It is now completely green.

A hand emerges from the lake and clutches the island. Soaked, Charlie pulls himself up with his good arm. He stares into the lake and a droplet of water falls into it, creating a circular ripple. He smiles.

AUREOLE

Are you alright, Charlie?

CHARLIE

You won't believe who I encountered in-

Banging fills the cavern, drawing all of the Energy-Spirits to the Healing Tree. After a moment, Priscilla flies through the barrier and joins them.

AUREOLE

What's going on?

PRISCILLA

There are men in the tunnel. They're trying to break into Sperial.

(spins towards Charlie)

What's your agenda? Why did you lead them here?

CHARLIE

I didn't bring anyone here.

AUREOLE

He was alone when I found him.

CHARLIE

Look, the Creator-Energy asked me to help. Please, tell me what I can do.

PRISCILLA

(to Aureole)

You told him?

AUREOLE

I didn't say anything. But the Healing Tree...

Priscilla glances at the Healing Tree. Her jaw drops.

PRISCILLA

Maybe Aureole is right. If you can rejuvenate the Healing Tree after all this time, then perhaps you are-

Drilling sounds echo throughout the cave. All eyes turn to the barrier.

CHARLIE

If this darkness is the great evil,  
then why are you afraid of humans?

PRISCILLA

(to Energy-Spirits)

We don't have much time. Quickly! We  
must strengthen the barrier's magic.

(to Charlie)

I'll explain as we work.

14 FLASHBACK: EXT. SPACE - DAY

14

The Creator-Energy floats through dark space.

PRISCILLA (V.O.)

In the beginning, the Creator-Energy  
constructed the universe and  
everything in it.

Streams of energy flow from it. Some form bright balls,  
creating stars, suns, and planets, while some slowly  
morph into human beings before floating towards Earth.

PRISCILLA (V.O.)

Eons ago the darkness tried to consume  
it.

A dark mist shrouds the Creator-Energy. After a moment,  
the Creator-Energy bursts from it and speeds away. The  
mist pursues it.

PRISCILLA (V.O.)

In an attempt to save itself, the  
Creator-Energy sprouted us Energy-  
Spirits.

The Creator-Energy sprouts many tiny energy streams  
that morph into Energy-Spirits. Hundreds manifest, then  
drag the Creator-Energy towards Earth.

15 FLASHBACK: INT. SPERIAL - DAY

15

Energy-Spirits guide the Creator-Energy into the  
cavern. It settles into a crevice, which the Energy-  
Spirits cover with dirt.

PRISCILLA (V.O.)

We hid it in this cavern-

A sapling sprouts, rapidly growing into the Healing  
Tree.

PRISCILLA (V.O.)  
-and the Healing Tree grew from it.

16 FLASHBACK: EXT. TUNNEL ENTRANCE - DAY 16

Energy-Spirits seal the entrance with heavy iron doors  
and hide them behind a boulder.

PRISCILLA (V.O.)  
We have protected it ever since.

17 FLASHBACK: EXT. BUSH-LAND - DAY 17

PRIMITIVE MEN gather fruit from trees. Suddenly, the  
mist rushes into their bodies, causing them to jolt.

PRISCILLA (V.O.)  
But the darkness has hunted for the  
Creator-Energy ever since, possessing  
humans to find it.

A moment later, the mist clears and the men's eyes are  
dark. They glare at one another then attack each other.

18 FLASHBACK: INT. OFFICE - DAY 18

BUSINESS MEN stand over data sheets.

BUSINESS MAN  
There must be a way to take more of  
the consumer's money.

PRISCILLA (V.O.)  
It may have changed tact, but it's  
present in all human evil.

19 INT. SPERIAL - DAY 19

Charlie watches on as the Energy-Spirits sit in a  
circle, projecting their individual auras onto the  
translucent barrier, which glows brighter.

PRISCILLA  
Since men are trying to break in, then  
the darkness has located us. It means  
to devour the Creator-Energy.

CHARLIE  
But they're still human, right?

Priscilla nods.

CHARLIE

You think we humans are weak and dangerous, Priscilla, but we have positive qualities too. I think I can talk some sense into them.

PRISCILLA

That is noble, Charlie. But the darkness is strong and deceptive.

CHARLIE

I've encountered too much goodness here to let it be destroyed. I'll get these men to see sense and leave.

Aureole grins knowingly.

CHARLIE

(smiling at Aureole)

Thank you for believing in me.

She nods, then plants a kiss on his cheek. Charlie blushes. He bows, then steps through the barrier, which ripples. The Energy-Spirits stare after him, hopeful.

20 INT. TUNNEL - DAY

20

Two Workmen pace through the noisy tunnel examining beeping gauges as other Workmen drill into the walls.

WORKMAN #1

The scanners say the energy source is close.

WORKMAN #2

How soon before we can remove it?

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Removing it will destroy the universe.

Charlie emerges from the shadows.

WORKMAN #1

What the-? Hey, kid! Stop!

Workman #2 grabs Charlie and pulls him aside.

WORKMAN #2

You shouldn't wander around here, kid. This is a dangerous worksite.

CHARLIE

Worksite? This is a sacred cave. We must protect it.

WORKMAN #1

We don't have time for your games, kid.

CHARLIE

I'm not playing games. If you take the  
Creator-Energy you will destroy us all.

MR GLAMOUR (O.S.)

You've seen it have you, boy?

Mr Glamour steps out of the dark, startling Charlie.

CHARLIE

It introduced itself to me and made me  
Sperial's saviour.

The Workmen chuckle.

MR GLAMOUR

(glares at them)

Don't you two have work to do?

WORKMAN # 1 & 2

(saluting)

Yes sir, Mr Glamour.

They gather their gauge and hurriedly follow its  
beeping deeper into the tunnel.

MR GLAMOUR

(gets in Charlie's face)

Are you telling the truth, boy?

Charlie nods, then squints at Mr Glamour. A black aura  
surrounds him. Charlie's eyes widen.

CHARLIE

It's you, isn't it!

MR GLAMOUR

(grinning)

I see my reputation proceeds me.

(angrily)

Tell me everything you know about the  
Creator-Energy. It's here, isn't it?

CHARLIE

I'll never tell you.

MR GLAMOUR

(grabs Charlie by throat)

Tell me! Now!

WORKMAN #2

Hey! You can't treat a kid like that.

Mr Glamour grabs Charlie by the ear and drags him  
towards the entrance.



21 EXT. TUNNEL ENTRANCE - DAY

21

Workmen lug tools towards the open door. Mr Glamour drags Charlie out of the tunnel and pulls him close.

MR GLAMOUR

Your beloved Energy-Spirits haven't much time, boy. Even without your help I'll retrieve what they stole from me.

CHARLIE

You'll never get in. You need to be pure of heart.

MR GLAMOUR

We'll see about that. Now begone.

Mr Glamour pushes Charlie away. Charlie stumbles for a moment, then rushes towards the tunnel. Mr Glamour pulls the heavy doors shut with ease. Workmen gather around and stare at Charlie.

MR GLAMOUR

This is no place for children, boy. I'm sure you can play elsewhere.

Charlie frowns, noticing the Workmen's stares.

CHARLIE

Please, you mustn't do this. If this man... this darkness gets hold of the Creator-Energy, we'll all die.

The Workmen chuckle.

A tear falls from Charlie's eyes. He stares at the door, notices Mr Glamour and the grinning Workmen's auras darkening, then turns and flees.

22 EXT. FOREST-TRAIL - DAY

22

Feet pound gravel as Charlie runs, his eyes watery. Suddenly his face bunches up and he lets out a short cry. He skids to a stop and hunches over, sobbing.

CHARLIE

Why? Why let me see the energy-signature and not give me the ability to stop the darkness? What am I supposed to do?

He drops to his knees and continues to sob.

After a moment, voices waft towards him. He looks up and sees:

23 EXT. REGINOLD'S HOUSE (BACK YARD) - DAY

23

In a forested garden, Reginold addresses a group of ACTIVISTS of varying ages who listen attentively.

Charlie approaches, sniffing, then, when Feena, a middle-aged, dark-haired woman, turns in his direction, he hides behind a tree and listens.

REGINOLD

...and so this person believes he  
purchased the land containing Sperial.  
We must protect it from the darkness.

Charlie's eyes widen, amazed. He rushes towards Reginold.

CHARLIE

I tried, but I couldn't do it.

The Activists turn towards him.

FEENA

Hey! Who's this kid?

REGINOLD

It's alright, Feena. I know him.

Charlie reaches Reginold.

CHARLIE

(panicked)

You won't believe what I've seen.  
There were these Energy-Spirits in  
this cavern in the mountains, and one  
healed some flowers with her energy-  
signature powers. And I met the  
Creator-Energy. Then this man, who was  
really the darkness, was trying to  
break into Sperial and steal it.

(turns aside)

But I couldn't stop him.

REGINOLD

Slow down, Charlie.

(beat)

Energy-Spirits rarely reveal  
themselves to humans. That means they  
trust you. It means, we might be able  
to stop the darkness if we work  
together.

(to Activists)

This is just the opportunity we need  
to ensure the Creator-Energy's safety.

(to Charlie)

Will you help us?

24 EXT. TUNNEL ENTRANCE - DAY

24

Charlie, Reginold, and the Activists approach the tunnel as Workmen lug explosive equipment inside.

REGINOLD  
What's going on here?

The Workmen glance at him, then return to work.

REGINOLD  
We represent the international group who own this land. It's a protected site. You must leave before you damage it.

MR GLAMOUR  
(emerges from tunnel)  
I know of your group. But you no longer own this land.  
(removes parchment)  
I'm its new owner.

Charlie's eyes widen. He hides behind Feena.

REGINOLD  
(examines parchment)  
This land was never for sale. And this document is fake. I demand you leave immediately.

As Mr Glamour makes another excuse, Charlie slips away from the group and approaches the unguarded entrance. He moves to enter, then quickly dashes behind the boulder as Workmen exit.

Fluttering sounds nearby and Aureole appears.

CHARLIE  
Aureole? What are you doing here?

AUREOLE  
(smiling shyly)  
I... I came to help but-

MR GLAMOUR (O.S.)  
I should have known you were involved in this, boy.

Mr Glamour storms over, then spots Aureole.

MR GLAMOUR  
Listen to me, Energy-Spirit. I come in peace. I wish to study your people and your kingdom.

CHARLIE  
Don't believe him, Aureole. He's-

AUREOLE

Lying. Only one being possesses a  
black energy-signature.

MR GLAMOUR

Grr.

Mr Glamour lunges for her. She flies into the tunnel  
and Charlie blocks him.

CHARLIE

Leave her alone!

Mr Glamour pushes Charlie inside, slams the doors shut,  
and effortlessly pushes the boulder in front of them.

MR GLAMOUR

(to Workmen)

How much C4 have you set up?

WORKMAN #2

Enough to blow a hole in the back  
wall, sir.

MR GLAMOUR

Then hand me the detonation switch.

25 INT. TUNNEL - DAY

25

Charlie pushes at the doors but they won't budge.

CHARLIE

Damn! He locked us in.

AUREOLE (O.S.)

That's the least of our concerns.

Charlie rushes to the tunnel's end, where Aureole  
stares at the C4 lining the wall.

CHARLIE

Oh my gosh!

He reaches for a piece.

AUREOLE

Stop! It's energy-signature is  
unstable.

CHARLIE

I thought only living beings had energy-  
signatures.

AUREOLE

Anything that is an expression of energy  
has an energy-signature.

CHARLIE

If it blows a hole in the barrier, it will let that creep into Sperial. We have to get rid of it.

AUREOLE

Let me try something.

She stares intently at the C4. After a moment, one piece glows pink and then crumbles to sand.

CHARLIE

Alright! Way to go Aureole! Can you do that to all of them at once?

AUREOLE

(frowning)

That's what I just tried to do.

26 EXT. TUNNEL ENTRANCE - DAY

26

A thickening black aura envelops Mr Glamour as Workmen restrain him. He pulls against them.

MR GLAMOUR

You treacherous scum! You work for me.

WORKMAN #1

You can't murder that kid.

Reginold and the Activists sit meditating in a circle. One by one a red aura surrounds them, which they project into an centralised energy ball hovering in the circle's centre. This grows larger as each person adds their aura to it.

Once all have done so, they look to Reginold. He nods. As one, they project the energy ball onto Mr Glamour. It hits and envelops him, dulling his black aura. He stops struggling as his appearance flickers between human and a black mist.

MR GLAMOUR

(grinning)

You hippies have no idea who you're playing with.

He reaches out and projects a dark aura onto the Workmen. As it envelops them, they release him and stare blankly. Mr Glamour points at the Activists.

MR GLAMOUR

Stop them!

The Workmen rush at the Activists.

27 INT. TUNNEL - DAY

27

Aureole and Charlie stare up at the C4 lined wall, perplexed.

AUREOLE

We don't have time to remove them individually.

(her eyes widen in awe)

But you have enough power to manipulate all their energy-signatures in one go.

CHARLIE

(looks bewildered)

I don't know how to manipulate energy-signatures.

AUREOLE

You can see them, though. That should be enough. I'll guide you through it.

CHARLIE

But-

AUREOLE

Have I done anything to harm you?

Charlie shakes his head.

AUREOLE

(offers hand)

Then trust me.

Charlie reaches out and Aureole places her tiny hand around his little finger.

AUREOLE

Focus on the C4. See it's energy-signature.

Charlie squints at the C4. After a moment, an orange glow illuminates one stick, then fades. He grimaces.

AUREOLE

Try again. I know you can do this.

As Charlie stares at it, an orange glow envelops one stick.

AUREOLE

Good. Now expand your aura-sight.

Charlie grits his teeth. An orange aura envelops another stick, and then another, until it surrounds all of them.

CHARLIE

I did it! I can see all their energy-signatures.

AUREOLE

You're doing great, Charlie.

(squeezes his finger)

Now visualise each one crumbling to sand.

Charlie closes his eyes. After a moment, a shadow-aura envelops him. It draws the brightening orange aura towards him.

AUREOLE

(releases his finger)

No!

The aura flashes brightly, then fades. Charlie collapses.

AUREOLE

Charlie?

He doesn't respond.

28 EXT. TUNNEL ENTRANCE - DAY

28

The Workmen, enveloped by a black aura, charge at the Activists.

FEENA

Don't hurt them. They're possessed, not malicious.

The Activists dodge the punches, kicks, and bites of the swarming Workmen.

Reginold dashes towards Mr Glamour and blocks him from the detonation switch.

REGINOLD

You would murder innocents?

MR GLAMOUR

Everyone is expendable when it comes to possessing the Creator-Energy.

REGINOLD

You're the darkness, aren't you?

Mr Glamour swipes at Reginold, knocking him aside. He rushes towards the detonation switch.

29 INT. TUNNEL - DAY

29

Aureole hovers over Charlie, shaking him.

AUREOLE

Charlie!

He doesn't reply.

AUREOLE

What have I done? He's just human. I  
never should have-

CHARLIE

(coughing)

Ack! Ack! Ack!

AUREOLE

You're alright!

She kisses his cheek, then blushes.

CHARLIE

(hunches over)

There was a dark aura. It drew the  
C4's energy towards me and-

AUREOLE

You're lucky to be alive. That should  
have killed you.

(extends hand)

C'mon. We don't have much time.

CHARLIE

(pulls back)

No way. I'm not trying that again.

AUREOLE

What about saving Sperial and the  
Creator-Energy?

CHARLIE

What about me? I don't want to die.

AUREOLE

But you're our saviour, Charlie.  
Surviving the explosion proves that.

Beat.

AUREOLE

Look, you simply left yourself open to  
the darkness. But if you only draw energy  
from your inner self-

(pink aura glows inside her)

-it will always serve your true purpose.

Beat.



CHARLIE

Huah. Alright.

Charlie holds out his hand, and Aureole grabs his little finger.

AUREOLE

View the C4's energy-signature as separate from yourself. Project your energy at it, but don't draw it into you.

They stare at the C4. It glows brightly. Charlie projects his red aura onto it. Aureole does the same with her pink aura.

After a moment, one C4 block lights up, then crumbles to sand. After a beat, so does another and another.

30 EXT. TUNNEL ENTRANCE - DAY

30

As the remaining Activists avoid the attacking Workmen, Mr Glamour presses the detonation switch and grins.

Nothing happens.

MR GLAMOUR

(glaring at door)

What?! What happened?

He easily throws the boulder aside and opens the doors.

Charlie and Aureole emerge, surrounded by a red aura. It envelops the Workmen, who stop attacking the Activists and look confused. The aura spreads to the Workmen's tools and explosives, which crumble to sand, then dissipates.

CHARLIE

It's over, Glamour. Stop this or-

MR GLAMOUR

It's never over!

He closes his eyes and extends his arms. His black aura expands to envelop the Workmen and Activists, suspending them in mid-air. He draws their auras towards himself. The Workmen and Activists collapse, unconscious.

The auras swirl around Mr Glamour, creating a dark vortex. He sucks it into himself. His body bulges erratically and morphs into Malgamor: a giant, darkly transparent, gelatinous serpent-like creature with long arms and sharp talons enveloped by a dark mist.

Charlie and Aureole stare at him, horrified.

AUREOLE

We have to stop him!

Charlie gawks as Aureole projects her pink aura at Malgamor. The aura hits him and bounces off.

MALGAMOR

Ha! Pathetic.

Malgamor swats Aureole aside and approaches the tunnel. In one swift action he tears the doors from their hinges.

A throng of Energy-Spirits burst out, knocking Malgamor back. They swarm him and project pink auras onto him. This creates a vibrating pink aura around him.

MALGAMOR

Heehee. That tickles.

Priscilla emerges.

PRISCILLA

(to Aureole)

Seal the doors! Keep Malgamor out at all costs!

Aureole closes her eyes. A pink aura surrounds her and she projects it at the fallen doors, raising them slowly.

PRISCILLA

(approaching Malgamor)

That's far enough, Malgamor.

MALGAMOR

Long time no see, Priscilla.

PRISCILLA

Not long enough. Stop this violence.

MALGAMOR

I only want what's mine.

PRISCILLA

The Creator-Energy cannot be owned.

MALGAMOR

Says the Energy-Spirit protecting it. Let me devour it and I'll relieve you of your guardianship, Priscilla.

Enveloped by pink aura, the doors clunk into place. Aureole faces the boulder and projects her aura at it.

PRISCILLA

You're a fool, Malgamor. Consuming the Creator-Energy will destroy you along with all of existence.

MALGAMOR

Ha! Consuming it will give me enough  
power to create my own universe.

Sweat rolls down Aureole's face as she motions upwards.  
Her aura lifts the boulder. She guides it through the  
air to the doors, then releases it. It thuds on the  
ground.

MALGAMOR

(glaring at the entrance)

No!

He bats Priscilla aside. She barely dodges his claw.

As Malgamor lunges for the boulder, some of the Energy-  
Spirits rush at him.

MALGAMOR

Enough!

He swats at them, knocking them out, then lifts the  
boulder and throws it aside. He pries at the doors.

PRISCILLA

No!

(turns to Charlie)

You're the saviour. Stop him!

Charlie looks hurt. Aureole flies between them.

AUREOLE

We need to work together.

(grabs Charlie's finger)

Charlie, you possess the greatest  
power of us all but your skills are  
limited. Please, let us draw from your  
energy to stop him.

CHARLIE

Just show me what to do.

AUREOLE

(motions for him to sit)

Close your eyes and relax. It may feel  
strange at first, but open yourself to  
us.

Charlie sits. The remaining Energy-Spirits encircle him  
and hold hands. Individual streams of red energy flow  
from Charlie and into each of them. They project this  
into a intensely bright energy orb in front of Charlie.

AUREOLE

Open your eyes, Charlie. See the  
magnificence of your energy.

Charlie stares at the orb, amazed.

AUREOLE

Only you can harness the full  
potential of your energy. Take it in  
your hand, direct it at Malgamor.  
Visualise his destruction.

Charlie stands. He cautiously places his right hand  
around the orb, which sizzles with energy.

CHARLIE

(grinning)  
It tickles.

PRISCILLA

Now, Charlie. Fulfil your destiny.

Charlie grasps the orb and draws it back. A shadow-aura  
envelops him, darkening the orb. Charlie throws the orb  
at Malgamor, hitting him. Flames envelop Malgamor.

MALGAMOR

ARGH!

Slowly the flames melt into a dark red aura and  
Malgamor grows in size. He turns to them and grins.

PRISCILLA

No!

Malgamor throws black energy at them. Charlie leaps  
aside. It hits the Energy-Spirits, knocking them out.

MALGAMOR

HAHAHAHA!

Malgamor rips the doors from their hinges, throws them  
into the distance, then slithers into the tunnel. Charlie  
stares after him, horrified.

CHARLIE

What have I done?

He rushes to Aureole.

CHARLIE

Aureole? I need your help.

She doesn't respond.

He rushes to Reginold.

CHARLIE

Reginold? Please help me.

He doesn't respond.

He stares at the Energy-Spirits and Activists, fear  
spreading across his face.

CHARLIE

(teary-eyed)

What am I supposed to do? Won't somebody help me?!

CREATOR-ENERGY (V.O.)

This is your journey and you have much to learn. All I can say is that before the end, you will have to face your greatest fear.

MALGAMOR (O.S.)

Hahahaha! It's almost mine.

CHARLIE

(stares into tunnel)

Like facing this monster alone.

He clenches his fist, which glows with a bright red aura, then dashes inside.

31 INT. TUNNEL - DUSK

31

Loud bangs resonate throughout. Charlie cautiously approaches Malgamor, who bashes the rock wall.

MALGAMOR

(singing)

Oh, I once knew a happy boy, a happy boy indeed. He searched millennia for his prize, such a vital need. Stolen, it was hidden away, kept from him, for shame. Until the clever boy he was, found his rightful claim. And then that happy boy, oh my, consumed his precious flame.

CHARLIE

That's enough, Malgamor.

MALGAMOR

(spins to see Charlie)

Ha! A weakling like you could never stop me.

Malgamor returns to bashing the wall.

Charlie frowns. He approaches Malgamor and touches him with his bright red aura. It envelops Malgamor, dulling his black aura and shrinking him slightly.

Suddenly, a shadow-aura envelops Charlie. Malgamor's aura absorbs this and darkens, spreading to Charlie.

CHARLIE

No!

Charlie collapses. He struggles to move, but freezes in an awkward position.

CHARLIE  
What's going on?

MALGAMOR  
(grinning)  
Energy manipulation isn't a one way thing, boy, or didn't the Energy-Spirits tell you that?

Charlie watches on horrified as Malgamor bashes a hole in the wall. Sperial's bright light spills out. Malgamor stares hypnotically at it.

MALGAMOR  
Would you look at that beautiful light, boy. It's all mine.

Malgamor tears rocks aside. He moves towards the opening, then jolts as a translucent yellow aura shocks him and shoves him backwards.

MALGAMOR  
What's this trickery?  
(glances at Charlie)  
Hmmm. You're more useful than I figured, boy.

Malgamor motions his talons like a puppet-master. Charlie stands abruptly and walks towards the barrier.

CHARLIE  
What are you doing to me?

MALGAMOR  
Using you as the key you are.

He grasps Charlie's hand and draws red aura from him, enveloping himself in it. Charlie walks through the barrier, pulling Malgamor through behind him.

32 INT. SPERIAL - DUSK

32

Charlie pulls Malgamor through the barrier.

CHARLIE  
What have I done?

Malgamor releases Charlie's hand and gazes at the white aura surrounding the Healing Tree.

MALGAMOR  
It might be hiding, but I know that aura anywhere. It's beautiful.

Charlie dashes towards the Healing Tree. Malgamor points at him, enveloping him in a black aura. Charlie stops suddenly.

MALGAMOR

That's far enough, boy.

Malgamor slithers across the lake.

CHARLIE

No!

When Malgamor reaches onto the island, the Healing Tree glows brightly. Supple branches burst from it and wrap around his limbs, pushing him backwards.

MALGAMOR

What?

He struggles against the branches, slashing them with his talons. More branches shoot out and secure his limbs.

Charlie watches on horrified.

CHARLIE

I must protect the Creator-Energy. But how?

AUREOLE (V.O.)

If you only draw energy from your inner self, it will always serve your true purpose.

Charlie smiles. He closes his eyes and draws a breath. A red aura glows inside him. Struggling, he stiffly shunts forwards. He takes another step, then another, each one easier, until he breaks into a run and leaps across the lake and onto the island.

He stands between the Healing Tree and Malgamor, who pulls futilely at the branches.

CHARLIE

I can't let you do this.

He clenches his fist, which glows with a red aura, braces himself, then throws a punch at Malgamor.

Tendrils burst from the lake and wrap around Charlie's arms.

CHARLIE

What?

The tendrils pull him in.

Charlie grasps the birch tree's branch and stares into the fog below. A rustling sounds from behind. Charlie spins to face Shadow-Charlie standing at the grass' edge. He freezes.

CHARLIE

No!

Charlie rushes at him and knocks him over with a punch.

CHARLIE

Leave me alone!

He raises a fist to hit him again.

SHADOW CHARLIE

Wait!

CHARLIE

(hesitates, eyes widen)

You're me!

SHADOW-CHARLIE

The parts you've repressed at least.

CHARLIE

What are you talking about?

SHADOW-CHARLIE

We all have parts of ourselves we dislike and avoid. I'm yours.

CHARLIE

What? You haunt my dreams. In visions you attack me. What do you want?

SHADOW-CHARLIE

All I want is to be accepted as part of you.

CHARLIE

But you're not me.

SHADOW-CHARLIE

Although you might dislike what I represent, I'm still part of you, no matter how much you try to forget me. And-  
(manoeuvres arms like puppet master)  
-I can control you.

Horrified, Charlie walks backwards until one of his feet steps over the cliff's edge.

CHARLIE

It was you that tainted my powers!



SHADOW-CHARLIE

(grins)

Of course. And that's only a taste of my abilities. By ignoring your anger you gave me power.

CHARLIE

But won't accepting you give you more power over me?

SHADOW CHARLIE

That's the beauty of accepting your shadow. Together we move towards a greater potential.

(beat)

The other option is to continue ignoring me. Do so and you'll end up like him.

He points to the ocean. The fog clears enough to show a vision of Malgamor struggling against the Healing Tree's branches.

Beat.

CHARLIE

Huah. Fine. I accept you as part of me.

With a gesture of Shadow-Charlie's hands Charlie steps onto the grass. Charlie freely approaches Shadow-Charlie, who extends his palms. Charlie frowns, then presses his right hand against Shadow-Charlie's.

Cringing, he rises his left arm and presses it against Shadow-Charlie's. A dark red aura surrounds it, then suddenly it turns bright red and straightens.

CHARLIE

(amazed)

My arm! It's healed!

The fog clears revealing the rising sun.

Bright light envelops Charlie and Shadow-Charlie and expands. It flashes brightly, whitening out the screen.

34 INT. SPERIAL (HEALING TREE) - DUSK

34

As Malgamor struggles against the Healing Tree's branches, Charlie materialises in front of him, his eyes closed.

MALGAMOR

Where did you go, boy?

CHARLIE

I had to confront my own darkness  
before facing yours.

MALGAMOR

Bah! What makes you think you can do any  
better than before?

CHARLIE

(eyes spring open)  
Because now I'm whole.

Charlie's eyes fill with an intense red aura. It envelops him and flares around him. He makes a circular shape with his palms, then reaches out and touches Malgamor. Malgamor's eyes widen in horror as he begins to shrink.

MALGAMOR

What? No!

Malgamor breaks free of the branches and swings a claw towards Charlie. His talons hit the aura around him and bounce back.

MALGAMOR

NO!

As Malgamor shrinks, he grasps for the Healing Tree's trunk, which shrivels at his touch.

MALGAMOR

All I wanted was the Creator-Energy's  
power.

Malgamor shrinks until he is just a fading wisp of black energy.

CHARLIE

The only power you ever need exists  
inside you.

The Healing Tree draws the wisp into itself, then shrivels into a blackened stump.

CHARLIE

What's going on? I thought I was  
protecting you.

A white aura bursts from the stump. The stump shakes. On one side its roots dislodge from the soil and it topples over. The Creator-Energy emerges.

CREATOR-ENERGY

You did.

Charlie and the Creator-Energy exit the tunnel and approach the unconscious Energy-Spirits.

CREATOR-ENERGY

That wasn't me you encountered in your mind. We all have a core Self within us. This is our true Self.

CHARLIE

But why would it tell me it was you?

CREATOR-ENERGY

In some ways it is part of me. Like I created the universe, this energy created you. It is your essence, your inner wisdom. It told you what you needed to hear to spur you into action.

The Creator-Energy hovers above the Energy-Spirits, glows bright white and envelops them in this aura. As it fades, they slowly open their eyes and yawn.

PRISCILLA

Where's Malgamor?

CHARLIE

I did it! I stopped him.

AUREOLE

I knew you were the saviour.

CREATOR-ENERGY

I am forever grateful for your help, Charlie. How can I repay you?

Charlie thinks for a moment, then shrugs.

Holding a crown, Priscilla approaches Charlie.

PRISCILLA

For your act of bravery, I present you with Sperial's crown.

She hands it to Charlie. It's the size of a ring on him. He slides it over his little finger and smiles.

PRISCILLA

From this day forth, you shall be known as Malmanor, saviour of the universe.

CHARLIE

(bowing)

You honour me, your highness.

The Energy-Spirits return to the tunnel entrance and, using their combined auras, reattach the doors.

CHARLIE  
What's going on?

AUREOLE  
We must return to Sperial and keep the Creator-Energy safe.

CHARLIE  
But I vanquished Malgamor. You're safe.

CREATOR-ENERGY  
As you discovered yourself, light cannot exist without darkness. It's a part of all of us we have to accept.

CHARLIE  
So Malgamor will return?

CREATOR-ENERGY  
In time.

CHARLIE  
Then that's my wish.

They frown, not understanding.

CHARLIE  
I want to you to be free, to explore this vast universe you created. I want you to enjoy yourself. And if you encounter Malgamor again, then find a way to accept him.

PRISCILLA  
But Malgamor is very powerful. And stubborn.

CREATOR-ENERGY  
Charlie's right, Priscilla. We must shed our old ways and learn to accept our mistakes. That's a noble request, Charlie, and one I want to fulfil.

Charlie smiles then turns to Aureole.

CHARLIE  
I'm glad I ran into you, Aureole.

AUREOLE  
Me too.

She kisses his cheek. He wraps his little finger around her in a hug.

She joins the Energy-Spirits who swarm the Creator-Energy. They wave at Charlie. Suddenly the Creator-Energy shoots into the sky, the Energy-Spirits trailing behind it. Charlie watches on, smiling.

The Activists and Workmen rouse. Reginold stares into the sky, then smiles. He approaches Charlie and places an arm around him.

REGINOLD

You did good, Charlie. I told you you were special.

CHARLIE

(smiling)

It feels great to finally believe you.

They stare into the sky, watching the sparkling aura of the Creator-Energy and Energy-Spirits.

The kelpie emerges from the darkness and approaches Charlie. Charlie looks concerned at first, then smiles when the kelpie opens his jaws and pants. He hunches down and pats him.

REGINOLD

Do you know him?

CHARLIE

I guess he's my spiritual guide.

Reginold approaches the awakening Activists and Workmen, then turns back to Charlie.

REGINOLD

Come. Let's celebrate.

CHARLIE

On one condition. I could do a lot of good with these energy-signature powers. Do you think you can teach me how to better utilise them?

REGINOLD

(smiling)

Of course. But you don't need powers to save the world. You do that with your actions everyday.

Charlie smiles, then, with the kelpie in tow, follows Reginold and the Activists away.

Above, a white aura twinkles in the sky.

THE END

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Screenplay as a Film's Healing Blueprint**

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Through a screenplay, the previous chapter demonstrated the above theories in practice. This chapter examines how the elemental symbolism of 'The Essence Within' triggers specific meaning, locates the story's psychological components to establish individuation, determines how its Hero's Journey stages bibliotherapeutically affect audiences, and links the narrative's use of these theories to animation's transformative ability to establish that a film narrative's healing potential resides in the screenplay.

#### **Unearthing the Spiritual: Triggering Symbolic Meaning**

Bordwell (1985, p. 38) posits that screenwriters can trigger specific textual meaning by employing particular symbols congruent with their intended meaning. As a conscious interpretation of archetypes (Jung, 1964, p. 20; Grainger, 1990, p. 30), a symbol's meaning is subjective. However, as the different areas of society are organised into dominant or preferred meanings (Hall, 2008, p. 240), certain symbols, such as the four elements (earth, air, fire, and water) and the mandala, are common psychological manifestations that have generalised healing meanings. This section examines how their use in 'The Essence Within' triggers specific meaning.

#### **Earth**

For Chevalier and Gheerbrant (1994, p. 331), 'Earth symbolizes motherhood – Mother Earth – giving life and receiving it back.' Earth, then, is the source of life. Yet, while it creates life, it can also destroy and renew it. Chevalier and Gheerbrant (1994, p. 332) suggest that earthly burials symbolise 'curative or strengthening rituals.' To enter the earth, the womb of life, then, symbolises death, while re-emerging signifies rebirth.

Charlie first enters the tunnel as an emotionally troubled boy. Once inside, his frustration subsides when he encounters Aureole and enters Sperial. This symbolises his prior personality dying because when he re-emerges at the film's conclusion he is different. For example, he requests that the Creator-Energy explore the universe and wants to help others with his new powers, demonstrating a selflessness he did not possess before. This change, then, symbolises his rebirth. Earth's rebirth qualities advocate that self-renewal requires the existing personality to die before a new one can emerge.

### **Air**

According to St Martin (cited in Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1994, p. 10), air is 'a palpable symbol of invisible life, a universal driving force.' In other words, air symbolises the unseen life force permeating all living beings. The story's energy-signatures symbolise this life force. For example, when Charlie picks Sperial's flowers, their energy-signatures fade, demonstrating that the auras represent life force. Furthermore, the energy-signatures' tone changes according to that life form's temperament, as air can change from hot to cold, and still to gusty. This symbolic use of air indicates that life exists inside all creatures, that its intensity can change, and that it is precious.

### **Fire**

Cirlot (1962, p. 105) states that fire's aim is 'the purification and destruction of the forces of evil.' Fire, then, symbolises the spiritual because its consuming nature embodies 'purification through...enlightenment' (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1994, p. 382).

Manipulating energy-signatures in 'The Essence Within' produces purifying effects. For instance, the Activists, and later Charlie, project their energy-signatures onto Mr Glamour/Malgamor to purify the world of his darkness. Further, when Aureole projects her

aura onto Sperial's flowers to revive them, she purifies them of an unnecessary death.

Moreover, that Charlie's energy-signature projection fails until he has accepted Shadow-Charlie reveals that the spirit needs to be pure to function to its full potential. The story's fire symbolism, then, expresses that to purify something, one must be pure first.

## **Water**

From a psychological perspective, Cirlot (1962, p. 366) claims that water symbolises the unconscious, and 'is an expression of the vital potential of the psyche, of the struggles of the psychic depths to find a way of formulating a clear message comprehensible to the conscious.' Immersion in water, then, symbolises an encounter with wisdom. Cirlot (1962, p. 365) agrees: 'the abyss of water [is] regarded as a symbol of the unfathomable, impersonal Wisdom.' Thus, water symbolises the unconscious' rejuvenating nature.

Sperial's lake symbolises Charlie's unconscious because when he is pulled into it, he encounters his inner Creator Energy and Shadow-Charlie. The former represents the Self's inner wisdom, while the latter embodies the shadow archetype. Both encounters provide him with the wisdom to fulfil his goal: the first encourages him to face Mr Glamour, while merging with his shadow-self during the second confrontation allows him to defeat Malgamor. Therefore, water symbolises the healing potential within.

## **Mandala**

Individuating dreams commonly feature a circle, sphere, or, as Jung termed it, "mandala" (von Franz, 1964, p. 213). Drawing on von Franz, Jaffe (1964, p. 240) describes the mandala 'as a symbol of the Self. It expresses the totality of the psyche in all its aspects [and] always points to the single most vital aspect of life: its ultimate wholeness.' In stories, mandalas usually symbolise entities that are already whole, that are journeying towards



wholeness, or pertain to a hero's goal. Spherical in shape, the Creator-Energy represents an entity that is whole, and establishes the order that guides Charlie towards psychological unity. Further, the meditation circles the Energy-Spirits and Activists sit in when combining their energy-signatures represent unity. This mandala symbolism proposes that anything is possible when the disparate is unified.

Like individuation's archetypes, these symbols represent stages of psychological growth. Earth creates, destroys, and renews life (birth, death, rebirth), air symbolises life force (life), fire purifies life (spirit), water's depths revitalise (the unconscious), and the mandala represents centeredness (the Self).

Other symbolism in the script also portrays specific meaning. Briefly, Charlie breaking his left arm and leaning on his right to rise symbolises moving from a logical left-brained lifestyle into an imaginative, open-minded right-brained existence; the barrier's rippling signifies Charlie entering his unconscious; the leafless birch tree in Charlie's mind-space indicates his lack of inner wealth; and Charlie's circular hand gesture before destroying Malgamor represents drawing upon his inner potential. Many other symbols in 'The Essence Within' also convey specific meanings. This demonstrates that screenwriters can trigger specific meaning and that symbols can powerfully convey meaning.

### **Balancing the Psyche: Drawing on the Archetypes Within**

Aligning a narrative's protagonist and antagonist with the ego and the unconscious establishes the conflict that they, taking on archetypal roles, act to resolve, producing individuation. In 'The Essence Within', Charlie represents the protagonist since the story focuses on his efforts to restore world balance, while Malgamor's actions upset this balance, establishing him as the antagonist. However, as the ego endeavours to control the

psyche's conscious direction (Jung, 1964, 1997), Charlie, the Energy-Spirits, and the Creator-Energy represent the story's ego because they strive to control their lives by hiding from Shadow-Charlie and Malgamor. The latter characters represent the unconscious since they reveal the importance of accepting the psyche's shadow aspects. Having established the story's base psychological conflict, I will explore each character's archetypal roles.

Charlie characterises the story's hero archetype because his actions to save Sperial depict a character striving for beneficial community changes. For example, he attempts to convince the Workmen and Mr Glamour to leave the tunnel and later pursues Malgamor into the tunnel to save the Creator-Energy. Further, his struggle with Shadow-Charlie creates change not only within his psyche, but also for Sperial's inhabitants because he convinces the Creator-Energy to accept Malgamor as part of itself. Thus, Charlie's heroic role demonstrates that to individuate, one must create change within the psyche.

Charlie's bravado when first confronting the Workmen and Mr Glamour demonstrates the persona archetype's protection role because acting bravely during this moment hides his fear. Mr Glamour, Malgamor's human guise, represents the persona's deceiving facet because Malgamor initially hides behind him. These representations of the persona suggest that psychological growth requires recognising the psyche's hidden truths.

Malgamor embodies the story's shadow archetype because trying to steal the Creator-Energy and attacking and insulting Charlie, the Energy-Spirits, the Activists and the Healing Tree, demonstrates dark, shameful, and unknown characteristics. Furthermore, 'The Essence Within' reveals the effects of shadow repression. According to Jung (1997, p. 45), repressing the shadow negates the unconscious' compensatory function and causes ego dominance. Frequent repression causes unconscious content to break through 'into

consciousness, usually just at the moment when it is most important to maintain the conscious direction' (Jung, 1997, p. 45). Thus, the shadow compensates for the ego's one-sidedness. When Charlie refuses to paint his emotions, he represses Shadow-Charlie. Consequently, Shadow-Charlie expresses himself by sabotaging Charlie's attempts to destroy the C4, and preventing his energy-signature powers from destroying Malgamor. Moreover, Charlie only defeats Malgamor once he has accepted Shadow-Charlie, advocating that the psyche's seemingly antagonistic parts must be accepted to individuate.

Aureole represents Charlie's anima because her feminine qualities assist him. For example, she pronounces Charlie as Sperial's saviour before he acts in this capacity, signifying the anima's intuitive hunches. Further, she blushes when kissing Charlie, demonstrating the anima's capacity for love, and when becoming angry at Charlie for picking Sperial's flowers, she exhibits the anima's feelings for nature. Finally, that Aureole and Charlie must combine their powers to destroy the C4 reveals that integrating masculine and feminine energies resolves problems. To individuate, then, requires utilising the psyche's different energies.

According to Stein (1998, p. 153), the Self is 'a deep, largely unconscious pattern of psychological unity and wholeness.' Charlie's inner Creator-Energy embodies this archetype because it guides him towards unity with Shadow-Charlie. Like the mandala, the 'self's task seems to be to hold the psychic system together and to keep it in balance' (Stein, 1998, p. 159). Through this reunion, Charlie's inner Creator-Energy generates enough psychological balance so Charlie can defeat Malgamor. Thus, an inner guide exists to point the ego towards individuation.

These archetypes delineate Charlie's individuation path. From grasping his hero-ability, recognising the persona's hidden truths, and accepting the shadow's powerful nature, to uniting his feminine and masculine energies, and acknowledging the Self's guiding principles, each stage prompts Charlie to enact his potential. 'The Essence Within', then, reveals that although fraught with conflict, individuation creates a more mature, balanced psyche that is prepared for future struggles. Charlie beginning as a frustrated boy, then wanting to help others at the story's conclusion, indicates he has individuated. Moreover, Pearson (1991, p. 47) notes that we 'often know about what is going on within us by looking at our external world.' When Charlie resolves his inner problems he overcomes his external conflict, suggesting that external struggles are projections of one's psychological conflict.

### **The Divine Child**

Another archetype in 'The Essence Within' worth discussing is the divine child. Author Caroline Myss (2010, ¶ 76; ¶ 75) claims that it represents 'the power of imagination and the belief that everything is possible [and] also embodies qualities of wisdom and courage in the face of difficult circumstances.' Tamara Hilbert (n.d., ¶ 2) concurs: the 'child archetype is a pattern related to the hope and promise for new beginning.' Charlie's actions represent these qualities. When he enters the tunnel and Sperial, for example, he accepts the new life forms he encounters, demonstrating a belief in new possibilities. He also expresses courage to face difficulty when confronting Mr Glamour and the Workmen. Finally, he conveys wisdom and the promise of a new beginning when he encourages the Creator-Energy to abandon hiding and accept Malgamor as part of itself. Hilbert (n.d., ¶ 2) says that stories 'which channel the energy of the Child Archetype into our lives fill us with hope for the

future and give us strength to grow.’ Charlie’s individuation, then, reveals the possibility within us all to grow beyond our problems.

### **Channelling Charlie: A Bibliotherapeutic Journey**

In bibliotherapy, audiences project problematic psychological material onto a story’s characters, situations, and themes to create enough distance that forms a new perspective that restructures this material. Similarly, the Hero’s Journey maps a protagonist’s passage of change that audiences can mimic to overcome their own problems. Integrating these theories, I propose that projecting psychological material onto the story’s elements situates audiences in the hero’s role so that the protagonist’s actions are experienced as the audience’s own, guiding them through first-hand psychological healing. By mapping Charlie’s Hero’s Journey, I will reveal what bibliotherapeutic effects ‘The Essence Within’ guides audiences towards.

### **Separation**

Beginning a story in the “Ordinary World” creates ‘a vivid contrast with the strange new world [the hero] is about to enter’ (Vogler, 2007, p. 10). It is a static but unstable condition (Vogler, 2007, p. 99). Charlie’s “Ordinary World” depicts a frustrated young boy trying to express his emotions through Reginold’s art-therapy class. His emotional turmoil is the static but unstable condition that requires changing.

According to Vogler (2007, p. 10; p. 100), the “Call to Adventure” transpires when the protagonist ‘is presented with a problem, challenge or adventure to undertake [and] may simply be a stirring within the hero, a message from the unconscious, bearing news that it’s time for change.’ Charlie stirs to adventure when he learns to see energy-signatures. These communicate that his perception must change.

At this stage, the ‘hero has not yet fully committed to the journey and may still be thinking of turning back’ (Vogler, 2007, p. 11), denoting the “Refusal of the Call.” Charlie “Refuses the Call” when he flees from the kelpie and is reluctant to enter the tunnel.

During the “Meeting with the Mentor” stage ‘the hero gains the supplies, knowledge and confidence to overcome fear and commence the adventure’ (Vogler, 2007, p. 117). In other words, the hero connects with a source of wisdom. Charlie’s encounter with the kelpie represents a “Meeting with the Mentor” because it encourages Charlie to become courageous and enter the tunnel.

The adventure begins in earnest when the hero “Crosses the First Threshold”, ‘an act of will in which the hero commits wholeheartedly to the adventure’ (Vogler, 2007, p. 127). Charlie commits to the adventure when he enters the tunnel to help the calling voice.

### **Initiation**

Once they enter the “Special World”, the hero ‘naturally encounters new challenges and *Tests*, makes *Allies and Enemies*, and begins to learn the rules of the Special World’ (Vogler, 2007, p. 13, emphasis in source). Charlie enters the “Special World” once inside the tunnel. Here he encounters “Allies” in Aureole, Priscilla, the Energy-Spirits, and the Creator-Energy, “Enemies” in Mr Glamour, the Workmen, and Shadow-Charlie, and undergoes “Tests” when passing through Special’s barrier, learning how to use his energy-signature powers, gaining Priscilla’s trust, confronting the Workmen and Mr Glamour, and overcoming his self-doubt.

During The “Approach to the Inmost Cave”, heroes approach ‘a dangerous place...where the object of the quest is hidden (Vogler, 2007, p. 14). Here, heroes prepare

for the ordeal (Vogler, 2007, p. 143). Charlie “Approaches the Inmost Cave” when the Activists help him confront Mr Glamour, reinforcing his purpose.

The “Ordeal” sees the ‘fortunes of the hero hit bottom in a direct confrontation with his greatest fear. He faces the possibility of death and is brought to the brink of a battle with a hostile force’ (Vogler, 2007, p. 15). Charlie confronts his “Ordeal” when locked in the tunnel with the explosives. He dies when Shadow-Charlie draws the C4’s energy into him.

Afterwards, the hero takes ‘possession of the treasure she has come seeking’ (Vogler, 2007, p. 16), signifying the “Reward” stage. Charlie’s “Reward” for confronting death is his return to life and a new focus on drawing energy from his inner Self.

## **Return**

During “The Road Back”, ‘the hero begins to deal with the consequences of confronting the dark forces of the Ordeal [and] is pursued...by vengeful forces she has disturbed by Seizing the sword’ (Vogler, 2007, p. 17). Charlie commits to “The Road Back” when he draws on his inner powers to destroy the C4 and reconfronts Mr Glamour. The vengeful force that pursues him is Shadow-Charlie, who continues to disrupt his intentions.

The “Resurrection” stage ‘is the hero’s final exam, her chance to show what she has learned’ (Vogler, 2007, p. 212). Mr Glamour morphing into Malgamor incites the “Resurrection” stage. When Shadow-Charlie sabotages Charlie’s efforts, he reveals that he is the real enemy. Drawing on his experience, Charlie purges himself of Shadow-Charlie’s antagonism by consciously integrating him.

Afterwards, the hero “Returns with the Elixir.” During this stage, ‘heroes return to their starting place, go home, or continue the journey. But they always proceed with a sense

that they are commencing a new life, one that will be forever different because of the road just travelled' (Vogler, 2007, p. 215). When Charlie accepts his shadow-self he obtains wholeness. He uses this to stop Malgamor, convince the Creator-Energy to live without fear of the darkness, and wants to help others, demonstrating that the adventure changed him.

### **Lessons from Within**

Charlie's journey teaches him to be true to, and accept all parts of, himself. He learns that despite his shadow-self's initial antagonistic appearance, it is a powerful ally and essential for creating psychological wholeness. Thus, through the Hero's Journey, he overcomes his emotional problems and individuates.

From a bibliotherapeutic perspective, audiences who experience difficulty expressing themselves can identify with Charlie because his problem resembles their own. They can then project their correlating psychological material onto him, objectively observe how he resolves the issue, and then mimic his actions. By imitating Charlie's metaphoric journey, audiences autonomously initiate their own individuation.

Moreover, each stage of Charlie's journey guides audiences towards resolving general problems. For example, the "Call to Adventure" recognises that a problem exists, the "Meeting with the Mentor" promotes courage to confront it, the "Approach to the Inmost Cave" endorses preparation, the "Reward" encourages learning from failure, the "Resurrection" supports pursuing a final resolution, and the "Return with the Elixir" acknowledges that the experience was part of life's ongoing journey. After all, we 'may complete our journeys, be rewarded...but...the story goes on' (Pearson, 1986, p. 9). Therefore, the Hero's Journey is also a map for overcoming life's problems.



Given that everyone possesses shadow qualities and encounters emotional problems, audiences can use Charlie's example of archetypal integration to assimilate their shadow or resolve other problematic psychological material. Thus, Charlie's actions guide audiences towards individuation; however, each person's path to it differs. As Pearson (1991, p. 2) notes, each 'journey is unique, and each seeker charts a new path. But it is infinitely easier to do so having at least some knowledge about the experiences of those who have gone before.' In other words, stories provide audiences with experience to map their own inner Hero's Journeys.

### **Animating the Essence Within**

When united with animation's transformative abilities, symbolism, archetypes and the Hero's Journey possess a rich potential for producing therapeutic narratives. Animation's fantasised imagery softens the harsh truths these components reveal. Like Miyazaki's anime, 'The Essence Within' contains many metaphors for confronting psychological truths, particularly the necessity of facing and accepting all aspects of one's personality and its threatening facets. For example, Charlie's outburst at Reginold suggests his unconscious contains antagonistic contents. However, when Charlie enters the tunnel, a metaphor for his unconscious, he encounters kindness in Aureole. She leads him into Sperial, or deeper into his unconscious, where he meets more psychological virtues in the Energy-Spirits. While Charlie eventually encounters antagonism in Mr Glamour/Malgamor and Shadow-Charlie, the amiable elements convey that the unconscious is not entirely hostile. Further, depicting Shadow-Charlie as Charlie's mirror version helps audiences recognise that antagonistic unconscious elements are part of themselves. Additionally, when Charlie integrates Shadow-Charlie, he demonstrates that audiences can assimilate hostile material too. Moreover, Aureole teaching Charlie about life's value and how to use energy-signatures

portrays that the unconscious teaches wisdom. Thus, like Miyazaki's 'artistic vision carries with it a deeply spiritual message of self-renewal' (Yamanaka, 2008, p. 253), 'The Essence Within' uses metaphors to convey the life-affirming benefits of confronting unknown psychological material and encourages audiences to grow beyond their current personality. These metaphors are more powerful in animation because its fantasised appearance diminishes this psychological material's potentially threatening nature and presents it as something recognisable and bearable. Audiences can then familiarise themselves with it and more easily incorporate it in ego-consciousness.

## **Summary**

Finished films differ from screenplays because they require unique interpretations from many artisans of different disciplines (Corrigan & White, 2009, p. 22). However, since a script generates a film's components, it forms the skeleton from which to flesh out a final meaning. Dennis (2011, ¶ 7) concurs: a screen- 'play is a blueprint, a code for instructing [artisans] how to tell this particular story in a particular space.' Therefore, not only is a script a film's blueprint, but by employing symbols to trigger specific meaning, utilising archetypes and the Hero's Journey to induce individuation, and softening harsh truths through animation's fantasised appearance, they can also guide audiences towards psychological growth.

The conclusion reflects on my creative process and its potential therapeutic benefits, suggests that screenwriters are the modern shamans, and recommends further research.

## **Conclusion**

### **The Screenwriter as Shaman**

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According to Barbara Milech and Ann Shilo (2004, ¶ 30), ‘research is...formed and informed by a nexus between doing, making, writing, and reflecting.’ The script and exegesis above represent the doing, creating, and writing stages of my research. Reflecting on these processes, particularly the creative component, is important. Drawing on Schön, Murray and LaFrenz (2006, ¶ 6) observe that ‘reflective practice is the integration of theory and practice, a critical process in refining one’s artistry or craft in a specific discipline and bringing to the conscious level those practices that are implicit.’ This enables artisans to learn from experience (Beaty, cited in Murray and LaFrenz, 2006, ¶ 68). Reflecting on my creative practice, then, will help me better understand my research.

### **My Healing Journey**

My creative process began during a personal meditation in 2010. During the experience, I journeyed along a forested walk trail and into a mountain tunnel where I encountered an energy-being that led me deeper inside. Inspired by the experience, I wrote it down.

Tasked with preparing an honours project eighteen months later, the idea became an obvious choice for the project’s creative component given its spiritual qualities. During the project’s preparatory stage, I expanded the idea into a first-draft story. Once the project was approved, I transformed the draft into an eleven-page treatment, which is a prose summary of a story (Aaronson, 2001, p. 279). At this stage, the narrative contained two sub-stories: one depicting Charlie’s troublesome relationship with his aggressive, football-crazed father and brothers, and another portraying Charlie’s conflict with school bullies. Throughout the document’s six revisions, I encountered problems convincingly integrating these stories into the main narrative and creating a powerful ending.

I subsequently produced a sixteen-page scene-breakdown, which structured the story into chronological scenes (Drouyn, 1994, p. 103). During this document's three revisions, I removed Charlie's aggressive brothers, made Charlie's father distant, and introduced a third sub-story about Charlie's missing mother and her untimely death. Essentially, the sub-stories depicted a mommy's boy who, along with his father, was struggling to let go, while the main story's fantasy-based adventure produced scenarios that prompted Charlie to do this. However, these stories felt incongruent with each other, and it was difficult to convey the film's message in a credible, non-cliché manner.

During this stage of the project, a family crisis created much emotional turmoil for me and unconsciously I added these feelings to the story. In hindsight, this was an attempt to deal with my emotions. This thesis posits that stories possess therapeutic potential for audiences; however, many theorists claim that writing narratives can heal the writer. Stephen Lepore and Joshua Smyth (2000, p. 6) observe that 'in addition to drawing on traumatic life experiences as a source of inspiration, poets and novelists for centuries have viewed writing as a way of transforming trauma and healing themselves and others.' Indeed, James Pennebaker and Janel Seagal (1999, p. 1243) believe that

the act of constructing stories is a natural human process that helps individuals to understand their experiences and themselves. This process allows one to organize and remember events in a coherent fashion while integrating thoughts and feelings. In essence, this gives individuals a sense of predictability and control over their lives. Once an experience has structure and meaning, it would follow that the emotional effects of that experience are more manageable.

Retrospectively, this is what I was unconsciously trying to do with 'The Essence Within.'

Utilising this emotional depth, I wrote the script's first-draft. Although I changed the sub-stories over the next two revisions, which included adding a scene where Charlie's alcoholic father crashes the family car that kills his wife, there were still issues making

Charlie's emotional conflict believable. According to Ardent, (cited in Mattingly, 1998, p. 30) there is a 'need for temporal remove from the lived event in order to get at the deeper meaning of lived experience...It is only by looking back that the real meaning of the initial actions can be understood.' Therefore, I took a break from the script for two weeks before beginning the second draft. This distance allowed me to process my emotions and understand them. Consequently, I stripped out the sub-stories and focused on the main narrative, producing a better flowing story with more believable emotional conflict.

Each revision refined the concept and introduced potent symbolism to convey my meaning. Further, my supervisor and writing group provided feedback about much unconscious symbolism I had failed to properly utilise. For example, during the second scene, Charlie paints a dog and in the following scene encounters one. Drawing on symbolism research that dogs signify guardians of the soul (Sheridan, 2004, p. 79), I used the dog as Charlie's mentor. This instinctive symbolism's appearance reveals the potency of unconscious material for storytelling.

As I wrote the exegesis, analytical psychology's theories informed the script so that the story portrayed a journey about individuation and confronting the shadow archetype. While my initial implementation of this information was contrived and too didactic, the story now guided audiences towards individuation. Revisions made it more believable.

Overall, my creative practice was a personal healing journey that demonstrated storytelling's therapeutic potential for writers. Since personal experience inspired 'The Essence Within', Charlie represents my persona because this projection protected my ego from the unconscious material I symbolically present in the story, and it guided me towards individuation. Moreover, organising my experiences through scriptwriting and revision

clarified their intended meaning and produced personal psychological balance. Indeed, Murphy and Neilsen (2008, ¶ 1) argue that ‘writing may be most beneficial to health if it moves through developmental stages typical of writing designed for a readership.’

Therefore, my methodical writing process served as self-therapy.

## **The Screenwriter as Shaman**

Affective bibliotherapy and the Hero’s Journey theories propose that stories guide audiences towards individuation. Since Bordwell (1985, p. 38) posits that screenwriters coax audiences to anticipate predetermined narrative meaning, this positions screenwriters as the shamanistic force guiding audiences towards psychological healing. According to Vogler (2007, p. 46), shamans are ‘the healer, the medicine man or woman, of tribal cultures [who] guide their people through life. They travel to other worlds in dreams and visions and bring back stories to heal their tribes.’ Henderson (1964, p. 151) believes that shamans delve into the ‘realms of power that are invisible to our normal waking consciousness.’ Thus, shamans explore the unconscious to provide people with insights into life. Indeed, during their creative process, screenwriters travel into their imagination and return with metaphoric wisdom. Vogler (2007, p. 124) agrees:

Writers...are Mentors of a kind to their readers, shamans who travel to other worlds and bring back stories to heal their people. Like Mentors, they teach with their stories and give of their experience, passion, observations, and enthusiasm. Writers, like shamans and Mentors, provide metaphors by which people guide their lives.

Acting as shamans, then, screenwriters are the initiators of storytelling’s healing potential. Patmore (2003, p. 13) concurs: as ‘storytellers it is up to us to take these raw materials and create not only captivating, entertaining tales, but ones that teach and enlighten our audience. We have to give them...nourishment for the mind and the heart.’

Drawing from my research and reflective practice, then, storytelling possesses healing potential because writers draw unconscious archetypal information from their unconscious and their creative methodology organises this into a coherent story. Since this material is archetypal, audiences can easily understand it, thus it affects similar psychological material within them. Given that stories decipher raw unconscious data, the protagonist's actions present audiences with a rough map they can mimic to individuate. Animation's fantasised appearance and unique transformative ability softens this unconscious psychological information so ego-consciousness can integrate it.

Screenwriters are key components in this healing process because, like a shaman, they decode the unconscious' wisdom they encounter. Therefore, since storytelling 'is our most prolific art form' (McKee, 1999, p. 11) and a prominent method of communication, screenwriters are the shamans of the modern era. As Vogler (2007, p. 295) says, when 'we writers apply the ancient tools of the archetypes and the Hero's Journey to modern stories [and] try to heal our people with the wisdom of myth, we are the modern shamans.'

### **Further Research**

Many relevant fields were beyond the scope of this creative research. However, the foundation it establishes inspires further research. Surveying the healing effects of the script and/or an animated version on audiences would solidify my perspective. Further, my conclusions necessitate writing a manual for scripting therapeutic films as well as a curative symbols dictionary. Moreover, screenwriting represents a new form of art therapy, and analysing the specific healing effects of film narratives could generate an alternative treatment for some psychological illnesses. Undeniably, this research's healing nature possesses much potential.

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## Filmography

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