

## The Film Connection – Chapter Three

1. What led to Joseph Campbell's interest in comparative mythology?

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As a child, Joseph Campbell took an excursion to the Natural History Museum, where he developed a profound interest for Native American culture. He then became drawn to the Native American stories and myths, which led him to become passionate towards myths and storytelling.

2. How did Joseph Campbell become the world's foremost scholar on mythology? How did the Great Depression benefit his education?

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When Campbell entered graduate school, he had high aspirations to study Sanskrit and Medieval literature. But the school faculty unfortunately rejected him, so he dropped out. When the Great Depression hit, Campbell was unable to find work and was living in a shack in Woodstock, New York. During this dark time of unemployment, he delved himself in books from myriad cultures, devoting himself to reading 9 hours a day for 5 years. Therefore, what seemed like major setbacks at the time—rejection and the Great Depression—engaged him to redirect himself, and enabled him to become one of the most notable scholars in comparative mythology.

3. What is considered to be Joseph Campbell's most important teaching?

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Joseph Campbell's most valuable teaching was the essentiality of "following your bliss." In *The Power of Myth* (1987), he claimed that following your bliss would lead you to the right track, make your dreams reality, get you in touch with the right people, and open opportunities for you.

4. What is the primary factor that decides what types of stories a storyteller will decide to tell?

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A storyteller will likely choose to tell a story with the types of ideas, themes, and characteristics that he/she is very familiar with and interest him/her. These elements can be found from books, movies, and stories the storyteller enjoys and has been influenced by. In consequence, the primary factor that determines a storyteller's stories is his/her interests and familiarities.

5. What are storytellers "a product" of?
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Storytellers are a product of their own culture, familial upbringing, class, time period, and race. No two storytellers think alike because they are different amalgams of their own lives.

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6. Describe why myths are important. What are "stories", as defined in the context of this chapter?
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Myths are classical, timeless representations of cultures. They have been around for generations and have shaped the way people from our ethnicity have told stories and taught morals to their offspring. Joseph Campbell once quoted, "myths are public dreams, dreams are public myths." Therefore, stories are defined as a vast collection of the dreams of individuals who have shared their ideas with others.

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7. Explain how you will discover your own myths.
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The stories that come from me should be the ones only I can tell. Which means that I will have to search deep within myself and see how my experiences in life make me unique as a storyteller. For that reason, I have great aspirations to tell my stories of dealing with people who have been homeless, addicted to drugs, and abused as children. I grew up relating to these people, and I still relate to them even today.

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8. Why is it important to understand the history of your art?
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Understanding the history of your genre will give you more of a sense of direction, and your audience will be able to trust you as a filmmaker. If your audience can't trust you to tell your story effectively, and can see your confusion and uncertainty, your film will feel stagnant and will fail.

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9. Describe the difference between an antihero and an antivillain.
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An antihero is what you might call a "villainous hero". As the protagonist, he/she has questionable ways and motives, but you still root for them despite the fact that he/she does terrible things. In contrast, an antivillain is the antagonist who the audience sympathizes with, but doesn't necessarily root for. He/she may not want to attack the protagonist, but it may be his/her job to do so. The antivillain is always the antagonist and the antihero is always the

protagonist. However, they are both complex and three-dimensional, being both good and bad at the same time.

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10. As a storyteller, following countless other storytellers before you, how do you plan on keeping your stories FRESH and UNIQUE? How do you achieve freedom from the "monomyth?"
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The best option is to figure out the type of story you want to tell, and utilize the structure and style rather than the plot details and characters themselves. If I want to be a storyteller, I have to tell the types of stories that only I can tell, and reinvent the style and structure I'm following to fit my own ideas in. One way I could achieve that is to ask myself, "What do I want to see in a film?" and then set out to create that.

11. Explain what you think is the best way to utilize the "hero's journey" without it becoming stale and predictable.
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I need to look inside myself and see what my viewpoint of a hero is, without adopting the character or personality of some other heroes I admire. Is my vision of a hero the everyman or some supernatural being? Is he/she an antihero? Is there a type of character I've always wanted to see in film? If so, I need to set out to create that character.

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12. What separates real storytellers from those who just want to play storyteller? What is the most important trait you must possess to achieve your goals?
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To become a real storyteller, I have to possess creative discipline and be willing to work on my vision for hours a day, fleshing it out and detailing how I want my story to be. I cannot just sit back, form flighty ideas, and never work them out. If I want to tell a story, I will tell the story.

### **Chapter 3 - The Hero with a Thousand Faces - Essay**

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#### ***Mulholland Dr. (2001) and the archetypes:***

Betty Elms/Diane Selwyn – The innocent optimist (as Betty), and the miserable reject (as Diane).

Rita/Camilla Rhodes – The mysterious woman (as Rita), and the glamorous queen (as Camilla)

Adam Keshner – The powerless victim (in the dream) and the smooth charismatic man (in reality)

The Cowboy – The omnipresent phantom

Coco – The wise figure (in the dream) and the mother figure (in reality)

Irene and Irene's male companion – Seemingly kind but menacing elderly people

Joe Messing – The bumbling fool

Lorraine and Gene – The angry wife and her lover

Luigi Castiligliane/Vincenzo Castiligliane/Mr. Roque/Ray Hott – The mafia

Dan and Herb – The two casual friends

Detectives Neal Domgaard and Harry McKnight – The dimwitted cops

Bondar, the singer, and the blue-haired woman – The narrators

### **Herzog's "philosophy of film" essay:**

Werner Herzog's "philosophy of film", as demonstrated in *Burden of Dreams* (1982), displays his obsession, fearlessness, and in some ways eccentricity as a director and a person. His philosophy of film was that when it came to film, he would go to whatever lengths he had to take to have it made; even if it meant putting his own life and other's in jeopardy, and if there were multiple difficulties and setbacks, he saw no other alternatives but to complete the film and be satisfied with it, and he would live or die by a film. Therefore he saw his film as a work of art, a representation of his dream, and an expression of the endangered Amazon Indian tribes living there, since he employed many natives as cast and crew in his film, and captured examples of their ways of life. His film not only called for the utmost commitment his formal cast and crew, but the natives as well, being that they were involved as much as he and the cast and crew were. Though the film may not have appeared picturesque to many, the film was made in his own image and was a representation of his own blood, sweat, and tears and the bond he shared with the cast and crew, and his native "family".

Werner Herzog was fully committed to making his film, *Fitzcarraldo* (1982) in Iquitos, a small city in the Amazon Basin. Within months of filming, both of his lead actors were forced to drop out, and there were threats placed upon him since he was filming within the realm of the where the Amazon Indians lived. Even so, Herzog started over and continued the project, faced with more obstacles involving weather and lack of resources. One of the most discussed issues was the three boats he had; with the water being too low, the boats were impossible to move. The difficulties forced him to befriend some of the natives, and hire them as cast and crew. During filming, he and the natives were at times under attack from other hostile native tribes in the area. But as a guerilla filmmaker, he chose to work in tough environments in pursuit of his vision. Like many guerilla filmmakers, Herzog operated on a low budget, used natives as cast and crew (demonstrated when one native was shown holding a boom mic), and utilized mediocre props to show the rubber-making (as one of the crew members commented that the rubber looked unsightly). Herzog's ordeal is similar to another guerilla filmmaker, Francis Ford Coppola, with *Apocalypse Now* (1979). In *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse* (1991), which showed the making of *Apocalypse Now*, Coppola recounted having to work in hazardous conditions and having to employ natives as extras, and being driven to the point of hopelessness and depression at times. A common quality for guerilla filmmakers is the challenges they face with low budget conditions and unprofessional "actors" and "crew". However, with the difficulties come victories, as Herzog experienced with *Fitzcarraldo*. The film not only told the story of Brian Sweeny Fitzgerald, but it showed the native Amazon way of life, including a questionable method of fermenting yucca with saliva. Though many people such as Klaus Kinski might have thought as the act of eating yucca fermented with saliva as repulsive, Herzog now sees it as genuine and cultural. Herzog started with an art and dream, and it became rare footage of the Amazon tribespeople, who he became drawn to while working and living with them. "In this case, we will probably have one of the last feature films of authentic natives in it. They are fading away very quickly." Eventually, hundreds of tribesmen helped him to move his beached boat over the mountain to complete his film. Herzog knew that he owed a lot to the Amazon Indians who extended their kindness to him, despite the fact that they were losing their land to Westerners like himself.