Gabe Strauss

Film Connection Curriculum

Chapter Three: The Hero with a Thousand Faces

1. What lead to Joseph Campbell’s interest in comparative mythology?

As a child, he became fascinated with Native American culture and storytelling in general after a visit to the Museum of Natural History.

1. How did Joseph Campbell become the world’s most foremost scholar on mythology? How did the Great Depression benefit his education?

He spent the depression rigorously studying stories and mythology from all cultures every day for 9 hours for 5 years. After this period of time, he was one of the world’s best mythological scholars.

1. What is considered to be Joseph Campbell’s most important teaching?

“Follow your bliss”; if you do, you will continue on an already sort of preset path that has been waiting for you all along.

1. What is the primary factor that decides what types of stories a storyteller will choose to tell? What are storytellers “a product” of?

A story that resonates with the people in the time and culture that the storyteller themselves existed. They’re a product of their environment.

1. Describe why myths are important. What are “stories” as defined in the context of this chapter?

Myths are metaphors on how to live life as a morally ideal and wise human being that are timeless. In this chapter, stories are defined as the collective dreams of millions of timeless mythmakers, because they are deeply rooted into all of our psyches.

1. Explain how you will discover your own myths.

Study your genre and genre in all of its forms. Also, embrace the fact that some elements will be integrated into your story because of your own unique experiences and differences from everyone else, and that this is a good thing.

1. Why is it important to understand the history of your art?

To learn from: both good ideas (and scenes to draw inspiration from) as well as bad ideas that didn’t work so you don’t make the same mistakes.

1. Describe the difference between an antihero and an antiillain.

An antihero has the dark qualities of a villain but ultimately have humanizing qualities that make them heroes. Antivillains appear or even are more civilized/morally conscious than antiheros, but their actions prove them more evil than good.

1. 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”?

The monomyth is merely an outline or framework for a story. The story’s type and structure are completely malleable. The best way to stay unique are to use the monomyth as reference but to explore new ideas and territories.

1. Explain what you think is the best way to utilize the “hero’s journey” without it becoming stale and predictable.

Embrace different story structures and use original content that resonates personally.

1. 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?

Discipline. That is really all you need. Make the stories reality.