The Story Mind

By Melanie Anne Phillips

What if your story had a mind of it's own, as if it were a character unto itself with its own personality, its own psychology?

Suppose your characters were seen as the conflicting drives of this "Story Mind," theme as its troubled value standards, plot as its efforts to resolve its problems, and genre as the Story Mind's overall personality?

More importantly, what if you could psychoanalyze your story's mind to learn who your characters should be, what thematic issues you should explore, how your plot should unfold, and what unique twists define your story's genre?

In this book you'll learn about all facets of the Story Mind. You'll find out how to create a personality profile for your story and to use it as a map to exactly what your story is about and what happens in it.

STRUCTURE vs. PASSION

The Story Mind approach to story is a structural approach. But no one reads a book or goes to a movie to enjoy a good structure. No author writes because he is driven to create a sound structure. Rather, audiences and authors come to opposite sides of a story because of their passions - the author driven to express his, and the audience hoping to ignite its own.

As an audience, what draws us to a story in the first place is our attraction to the subject matter and the style. We might be intrigued by the potential applications of a new discovery of science, the exploration of newly rediscovered ancient city, or the life of a celebrity. We might love a taut mystery, a fulfilling romance, or a chilling horror story.

As an author what brings us to write a story may also be a clever concept for an action story, a bit of dialog, a notion for a character, a setting, time period, or a clever twist of plot. Or, we might have a deep-seated need to express a childhood experience, work out an irrational fear, or make a public statement about a social injustice.

No matter what our attraction as audience or author, it is our passions that trigger our imaginations. So why should an author worry about structure? Because passion rides on structure, and if the structure is flawed or even broken, then the passionate expression from author to audience will fall.

When structure is done properly, it is invisible, serving only as the carrier wave that delivers the passion to the audience. But when structure is flawed, it adds static to the flow of emotion, breaking up and possibly scrambling the passion so badly that the audience gets nothing of what the author was sending.

Yet, the attempt to ensure a sound structure is an intellectual pursuit. Questions such as "Who is my Protagonist?" "Where should my story begin?" "What happens in Act Two?" or "What is my message?" force an author to turn away from his passion and embrace logistics instead.

As a result, an author often becomes mired in the nuts and bolts of storytelling, staring at a blank page not because of a lack of inspiration, but because he can't figure out how to make his passion make sense.

Worse, the re-writing process is often grueling and frustrating, forcing the author to accept unwanted changes in the flow of emotion for the sake of logic. So what is an author to do? Is there any way out of this dilemma?

In the pages that follow, you'll discover a new way of writing stories - a method that allows an author to retain his passion even while serving the demands of structure. This system can be used either before you write to know exactly where things will be going or after you write to find and refine the structure already hidden in your passion.

You won't be asked to discard any techniques or approaches you are currently using. Rather, you'll simply be adding to what you already know, to what you are already doing; extending your understanding of how stories really work and how to write them.

So join me on an expedition into new world of the Story Mind. The risks are low, the potential rewards are great, and all you need to carry with you is your own passion.

Introducing the "Story Mind"

This book is entitled, "The Story Mind." and as described above, the Story Mind is a way of looking at a story as if all the characters were facets of a larger personality, the mind of the Story itself.

To illustrate, imagine that you stepped back from your story far enough that you could no longer identify your characters as individuals. Instead, like a general on a hill watching a battle, you could only see each character by his function:

There's the guy leading the charge - that's the Protagonist. His opponent is the Antagonist. There's the strategist, working out the battle plan - he's the Reason archetype. One soldier is shouting at the pathos and carnage - he's the Emotion archetype.

The structure of stories deals with what makes sense in the big picture. But characters aren't aware of that overview. Just like us, they can only see what is around them and try to make the best decisions based on that limited view. And so characters must also be real people as well, with real drives and real concerns.

Characters, therefore, have two completely different jobs: They must act according to their own drives and desires and also play a part in the larger mosaic of the story as a whole. The trick is to create a story in which these two purposes work together, not against each other.

As individuals, each character must be fully developed as complete human beings. As cogs in the Great Machine, they must each fulfill a function. So, when we develop our characters we need to stand in their shoes, make them real people, and express ourselves passionately through each of their points of view. But when we develop our story's structure, we must ensure that each character fulfills his, her, or its dramatic purpose in the story at large.

It is that larger purpose that we call the Story Mind. As previously described, the Story Mind is like a Super Character that generates the personality of the overall story itself, as if it were a single, thinking, feeling, person. So, in addition to being complete people, each of our characters also represents a different aspect or facet of a greater character, the Story Mind.

For example, the Reason archetype represents the use of our intellect. The Emotion archetype illustrates the impact of our feelings. Individually as complete characters, they each employ both Reason and Emotion in regard to their own personal issues. But when it comes to the central

issue of the story - the *message issue* that is the essence of what the overall story is about - then one of these two Characters will attempt to deal with that issue solely from a position of Reason and the other solely from the position of Emotion.

This is why we, the audience, see characters simultaneously as real people and also by their dramatic functions, such as Protagonist and Antagonist. Regarding their own concerns, characters are well rounded. Regarding the overall concern of the story as a whole, they are single-minded. Collectively, they describe the conflicting motivations or drives of the Story Mind.

But characters are only part of the story. As we shall see, Plot, Theme, and Genre are represented in the Story Mind as well. For now, suffice it to say that the Story Mind is the character of the story itself.

Why a Story Mind?

Before asking any writer to invest his or her time in a concept as different as the Story Mind, it is only fair to provide an explanation of why such a thing should exist. To do this, let us look briefly into the nature of communication between an author and an audience.

Tales vs. Stories

When an author tells a tale, he simply describes a series of events that both makes sense and feels right. As long as there are no breaks in the logic and no mis-steps in the emotional progression, the structure of the tale is sound.

Now, from a structural standpoint, it really doesn't matter what the tale is about, who the characters are, or how it turns out. The tale is just a truthful or fictional journey that starts in one situation, travels a straight or twisting path, and ends in another situation.

The meaning of a tale amounts to a statement that if you start from "here," and take "this" path, you'll end up "there." The message of a tale is that a particular path is a good or bad one, depending on whether the ending point is better or worse than the point of departure and perhaps whether or not the result was worth the journey.

This structure is easily seen in the vast majority of familiar fairy "tales." Tales have been used since the first storytellers practiced their craft. in fact, many of the best selling novels and most popular motion pictures of our own time are simple tales, expertly told.

In a structural sense, tales have power in that they can encourage or discourage audience members from taking particular actions in real life. The drawback of a tale is that it speaks only in regard to that specific path.

But in fact, there are many paths that might be taken from a given point of departure. Suppose an author wants to address those as well, to cover all the alternatives. What if the author wants to say that rather than being just a good or bad path, a particular course of action is the best or worst path of all that might have been taken?

Now the author is no longer making a simple statement, but a "blanket" statement. Such a blanket statement provides no "proof" that the path in question is the best or worst, it simply says so. If the blanket statement reflects popular assumptions, it is likely to be accepted at face value. But, if the blanket statement flies in the face of conventional wisdom or expectation, an audience is not likely to be moved to accept such a bold claim, regardless of how well the tale is told. It will demand to be convinced; it will demand *proof*.

In the early days of storytelling, an author related his tale to his audience in person. Should he aspire to wield more power over his audience and elevate his tale to become a blanket statement

that conflicted with the norm, the audience would likely cry, "Foul!" and demand that he prove it on the spot.

Someone in the audience might bring up an alternative path that hadn't been included in the tale. The author might then counter that rebuttal to his blanket statement by describing how the path proposed by the audience was either not as strong as the path he did include. One by one, he could disperse any challenges to his tale until he either exhausted the opposition or was overcome by an alternative he couldn't dismiss.

But as soon as stories began to be recorded in media such as song ballads, epic poems, novels, stage plays, screenplays, teleplays, and so on, the author was no longer present to defend his blanket statements. If he were to convince his audience of his point of view he must anticipate all reasonable challenges that might arise to his blanket statement and incorporate them in his presentation in advance. In fulfilling this new requirement, authors pushed the *tale* format forward beyond the blanket statement until it became a new art form we call the *story*.

A story is a much more sophisticated form of communication than a tale, and is in fact a revolutionary leap forward in the ability of an author to make a point. Simply put, a tale is a statement, a story is an argument.

Now this puts a huge burden of proof on an author. Not only does he have to make his own point, but he has to prove (within reason) that all opposing points are less valid. Of course, this requires than an author anticipate any objections an audience might raise to his blanket statement. To do this, he must look at the situation described in his story and examine it from every angle anyone might likely take in regard to that issue.

By incorporating all reasonable (and valid emotional) points of view regarding the story's message in the structure of the story itself, the author has not only defended his argument, but has also included all the points of view the human mind would normally take in examining that central issue. In effect, the structure of the story now represents the whole range of considerations a person would make if fully exploring that issue.

As each of the points of view is explored and the argument is made, the structure of the story begins to resemble a map of the mind's problem solving processes, and (without any intent on the part of the author) has become a Story Mind. The more accurately the story's structure represents the Story Mind, the more powerful the story's argument.

And so, the Story Mind concept is not really all that radical. It is simply a short hand way of describing that all sides of a story must be explored to statisfy an audience. And, and if this is done, the structure of the story takes on the nature of a single character.

Armed with this information we are now prepared to examine the nature of the Story Mind, and to see how we might apply what we discover to meet the demands of a logical structure without sacrificing our passion.

What's In Your Story's Mind?

As with people, your story's mind has different aspects. These are represented in your Genre, Theme, Plot, and Characters. Genre is the overall personality of the Story Mind. Theme represents its troubled value standards. Plot describes the methods the Story Mind uses as it tries to work out it's problems. Characters are the conflicting drives of the Story Mind.

Genre

To an audience, every story has a distinct personality, as if it were a person rather than a work of fiction. When we first encounter a person or a story, we tend to classify it in broad categories. For stories, we call the category into which we place its overall personality its *Genre*.

These categories reflect whatever attrtibutes strike us as the most notable. With people this might be their profession, interests, attitudes, style, or manner of expression, for example. With stories this might be their setting, subject matter, point of view, atmosphere, or storytelling.

We might initially classify someone as a star-crossed lover, a cowboy, or a practical joker who likes to scare people. Similarly, we might categorieze a story as a Romance, a Western, or a Horror story.

As with the people we meet, some stories are memorable and others we forget as soon as they are gone. Some are the life of the party, but get stale rather quickly. Some initially strike us as dull, but become familiar to the point we look forward to seeing them again. This is all due to what someone has to say and how they go about saying it.

The more time we spend with specific stories or people the less we see them as generalized types and the more we see the traits that define them as individuals. So, although we might intially label a story as a particular Genre, we ultimately come to find that every story has its own unique personality that sets it apart from all others in that Genre, in at least a few notable respects.

In the Genre section of this book, we'll describe how to get a feel for the personality of the story you wish to tell, how to create a Genre map describing your story's primary attributes, and how to develop your story so that its unique qualities surface and reveal themselves.

Theme

Everyone has value standards, and the Story Mind has them as well. Some people are pigheaded and see issues as cut and dried. Others are wishy-washy and flip-flop on the issues. The most sophisticated people and stories see the pros and cons of both sides of a moral argument and present their conclusions in shades of gray, rather than in simple black & white. All these outlooks can be reflected in the Story Mind.

No matter what approach or which specific value is explored, the key structural point about value standards is that they are all comprised of two parts: the issues and one's attitude toward them. It is not enough to only have a subject (abortion, gay rights, or greed) for that says nothing about whether they are good, bad, or somewhere in between. Similarly, attitudes (I hate, I believe in, or I don't approve of) are meaningless until they are applied to something.

An attitude is essentially a point of view. The issue is the object under obersvation. When an author determines what he wants to look at it and from where he wants it to be seen, he creates *perspective*. It is this perspective that comprises a large part of the story's message.

Still, simply stating one's attitudes toward the issues does little to convince someone else to see things the same way. Unless the author's message is preaching to the audience's choir, he's going to need to convince them to share his attitude. To do this, he will need to make a *thematic argument* over the course of the story which will slowy dislodge the the audience from their previously held beliefs and reposition them so that they adopt the author's beliefs by the time the story is over.

In the Theme section of this book we'll outline how to discover your story's message and how to create a thematic argument that presents all sides of the issues. You'll find out how to make your point without hitting the audience over the head with binary statements of right and wrong, and how to lead the audience to your point of view.

Plot

Novice authors often assume the order in which events transpire in a story is the order in which they are revealed to the audience, but these are not necessarily the same. Through exposition, an author unfolds the story, dropping bits and pieces that the audience rearranges until the true meaning of the story becomes clear. This technique involves the audience as an active participant in the story rather than simply being a passive observer. It also reflects the way people go about solving their own problems.

When people try to work out ways of dealing with their problems they tend to identify and organize the pieces before they assemble them into a plan of action. So, they often jump around the timeline, filling in the different steps in their plan out of sequence as they gather additional information and draw new conclusions.

In the Story Mind, both of these attributes are represented as well. We refer to the internal logic of the story - the order in which the events in the problem solving approach actually occurred - as the Plot. The order in which the Story Mind deals with the events as it develops the plan is called the Storyweaving.

If an author blends these two aspects together, it is very easy miss holes in the internal logic because they are glossed over by smooth exposition. By separating them, an author gains complete control of the progression of the story as well as the audience's progressive experience. In the plot section of this book you will learn how to create a complete sequential treatment for your story and to develop an exposition plan that involves and captivates your audience.

Characters

If characters represent our conflicting drives yet they each have a personal point of view, where is out sense of self represented in the Story Mind? After all, every real person has a unique point of view that defines their own self-awareness.

In fact, there is one special character in a story that represents the Story Mind's identity. This character, the Main Character, functions as the audience position in the story. He, she or it is the eye of the story - the story's ego.

Earlier I described how we might look at characters by their dramatic function, as seen from the perspective of a General on a hill. But what if we zoomed down and stood in the shoes of just one of those characters, we would have a much more personal view of the story from the inside looking out.

But which character should be our Main Character? Most often authors select the Protagonist to represent the audience position in the story. This creates the stereotypical Hero who both drives the plot forward and also provides the personal view of the audience. There is nothing wrong with this arrangement but it limits the audience to always experiencing what the quarterback feels, never the linemen or the waterboy.

In real life we are more often one of the supporting characters in an endeavor than we are the leader of the effort. If you have always made your Protagonist the Main Character, you have been limiting your possibilities.

In the Character section of this book we will fully describe each of the Story Mind's drives, how to choose the right one as your Main Character, and how the Main Character needs to come into conflict not with the Antagonist but with an Obstacle Character who represents the opposite point of view.

Getting Our Mind Together

We've now established four key aspects of the Story Mind. Characters are the convlicting drives of the Story Mind, theme its reasessment of values, plot its problem solving techniques, and genre its overall personality. But how do these fit together in an integrated story?

When an audience sits down with a book, in a theater, or in front of a television, it is sitting down with a person to make conversation. In fact, it is a one-sided conversation. Your story must have a personality intriguing enough to hold the audience's interest until the show is over.

Is your story a good enough conversationalist, or does it need to go back to finishing school with another draft before it is ready for prime time? You have days, months, perhaps even years to prepare your story to exude enough charisma to sustain just one conversation. How disappointing is it to an audience when a story's personality is plain and simply dull?

As an author, thinking of your story as a person can actually help you write the story. All too often, authors get mired in the details of a story, trying to cram everything in and make all the pieces fit.

Characters are seen only as individuals, so they often unintentionally overlap each other's dramatic functions. The genre is depersonalized so that the author trying to write within a genre ends up fashioning a formula story and breaking no new ground. The plot becomes an exercise in logistics, and the theme emerges as a black and white pontification that hits the audience like a brick.

Now imagine that you are sitting down to dinner with your story. For convenience, we'll call your story "Joe." You know that Joe is something of an authority on a subject in which your are interested. You offer him an appetizer, and between bites of pate, he tells you of his adventures and experiences.

Over soup, he describes what was driving him at various points of his endeavors. These are your characters, and they must all be aspects of Joe's personality. There can be no characters that would not naturally co-exist in a single individual. You listen carefully to make sure Joe is not a split-personality, for such a story would seem fragmented as if it were of two or more minds.

While munching on a spinach salad, Joe describes his efforts to resolve the problems that grew out of his journey. This is your plot, and all reasonable efforts need to be covered. You note what he is saying, just an an audience will, to be sure there are no flaws in his logic. There can also be no missing approaches that obviously should have been tried, or Joe will sound like an idiot.

Over the main course of poached quail eggs and Cohoe salmon (on a bed of grilled seasonal greens), Joe illucidates the moral dilemmas he faced, how he considered what was good and bad, better or worse. This is your theme, and all sides of the issues must be explored. If Joe is one-sided in this regard, he will come off as bigoted or closed-minded. Rather than being swayed by his conclusions, you (and an audience) will find him boorish and will disregard his passionate prognositications.

Dessert is served and you make time, between spoonfuls of chocolate soufle (put in the oven before the first course to ready by the end of dinner) to consider your dinner guest. Was he entertaining? Did he make sense? Did he touch on topical issues with light-handed thoughtfulness? Did he seem centers, together, and focused? And most important, would you invite him to dinner again? If you can't answer yes to each of these questions, you need to send your story back to finishing school, for he is not ready to entertain an audience.

Your story is your child. You give birth to it, you nurture it, you have hopes for it. You try to instill your values, to give it the tools it needs to succeed and to point it in the right direction. But, like all

children, there comes a time where you have to let go of who you wanted it to be and to love and accept who it has become.

When your story entertains an audience, you will not be there to explain its faults or compensate for its shortcomings. You must be sure your child is prepared to stand alone, to do well for itself and to not embarassed you. If you are not sure, you must send it back to school.

Personifying a story allows an author to step back from the role of creator and to experience the story as an audience will. This is not to say that each and every detail in oot importat, but rather that the details are no more or less important than the overall impact of the story as a whole. This overview is one of the benefits of looking at a story as a Story Mind.

But what of the details? After all, the overview only gets one in touch with the big picture, yet every big picture is made through hundreds of brush strokes.

In the sections that follow, we'll begin to psychoanalyze the Story Mind to learn the specific details about its drives (characters), value standards (theme), problem solving techniques (plot), and overall personality (genre). As we identify the Elements of Story Structure, we will explore how to use them to construct complete blueprints for our own stories that are complete, sound, and provide form without formula.

The Elements of Character

In the Story Mind, characters represent different facets of the human psyche. Archetypal characters illustrate broad personality traits whereas more Complex characters illustrate combinations of specific human qualities.

When a story seeks to explore overall aspects of human nature, it is best populated with Archetypal characters. A story that delves into specific attributes requires the use of Complex characters.

Just as with the personality of a real individual, a single story is usually comprised of a mixture of both broad, Arthetypal traits and and complex attributes as well.

In fact, Archetypal and Complex characters are all made up from the same essential elements, just as real people all possess the same palette of emotions and componants of reason. It is the way we put the pieces together that determines our personalities as individuals, and the same is true for characters.

The Archetypal arrangement simply groups a whole family of similar traits into a single character, while Complex characters are composed of conglomerations of both similar and dissimilar elements.

Grouping elements together creates the particular chemistry for each character, much as the elements in physics combine to create chemical compounds. And, just as in chemistry, mixing certain elements will produce stable or unstable characters, and some elements may not mix at all, or at least not without a suitable dramatic catalyst.

So what are these elements of character? Since Complex arrangements of elements are almost infinite in their variety, it is easiest to begin with the Archetypes and then break them down into their componants to discover the "Periodic Table of Character Elements."

The Eight Archetypal Characters

For the moment, we shall propose that there are eight Archetypal characters. Later, when we have a better understanding of arhcetypes, we shall expand our list of archetypes to sixty-four!

(Note, the number of archetypes is not arbitrary, but reflects very specific qualities of the human mind, as represented by the Story Mind.)

The eight Archetyapl characters are:

Protagonist - Antagonist
Reason - Emotion
Guardian - Contagonist
Sidekick - Skeptic

Protagonist drives the plot forward.
Antagonist tries to stop him.

Reason looks at the practical side
Emotion reacts from the heart.

Guardian tries to keep things on the True Path.
Contagonist tries to lead things astray.

Sidekick is the faithful supporter
Skeptic is the doubting opposer

The archetypes provide a kind of short hand for an author. Rather than having to illustrate each and every element independently, one by one, the author can simply illustrate a whole family of similar elements at a time, thereby saving pages and/or screentime.

When an author identifies a character as an archetype, the audience assumes that however the character fairs reflects on all of the contained elements as a group. So, since each element represents a different path (attitude or approach) that might be taken to resolve the problem, valuable "media real estate" is saved for other issues the author wishes to explore.

For example, in an action movie, an author might use archetypes to save time for chases and pyrotechnics. In a deep thematic novel, and author might employ archetypes to simplify the characters so fine nuances of the moral issues can be explored without distraction.

Any story that does not at least explore these eight essential facets of the Story Mind is leaving out some of the ways human beings evaluate and grapple with problems. Such a story's argument would be incomplete, and to an audience this would feel as if there were holes in the story's structure.

Of course, some stories have fewer characters that eight. In such stories, all of the same underlying elements must be present, but they will not be combined in an archetypal manner. In other words, at least some of the characters will have more than eight elements, meaning that they will contain qualities from at least two different broad personality traits. As long as all the essential elements are accounted for, stories can have as few as one single character.

In contrast, a character might only have a single element and still be functional dramatically. A character with fewer elements than an archetype, even if they are all in the same family, is also called complex, because they must be described for the audience, element by element. So a character with onlyone element would, in fact, be considered Complex.

Archetypes work with an audience because they represent the eight basic human drives we all use when trying to resolve a problem or better our situation. As individuals, we all have a sense of initiative (Protagonist) and a tendency to maintain the status quo (Antagonist). We use our Intellect (Reason) and our feelings (Emotion). We are influenced by our Conscience (Guardian)

and by Temptation (Contagonist). We believe in ourselves (Sidekick) but may also be unsure of ourselves (Skeptic).

These eight qualities (Initiative, Reticency, Intellect, Feelings, Conscience, Temptation, Confidence, and Doubt) are the cornerstones of human thought, and the archetypes that represent them are the cornerstones of the Story Mind.

The first four of these archetypes (Protagonist, Antagonist, Reason, and Emotion) are called "Driver Characters" because they set the course and speed for the journey. The second four (Guardian, Contagonist, Sidekick, and Skeptic) are called "Passenger Characters" because they influence the Drivers, much like "back seat drivers."

Although the names and description of most of these archetypes are no doubt familiar to you, an exact definition of their functions in story structure may not be. In fact, if you ask any group of authors to define each of these characters by their role in a story, you are likely to get such a range of different descriptions that some are actually contradictory. In other words, most everyone has a "feel" for these archetypes, but few have an exact understanding of them.

Moreover, even if two authors agree on a definition, they often use a different name for that archetype. For example, the terms "Protagonist," "Main Character," "Central Character," and "Hero," are often used interchangeably, sometimes even by the same author, when in fact, each is a completely different dramatic attribute.

The Main Character represents the audience position in the story, from where it experiences the pathos first hand. In our own minds, the Main Character represents our sense of self - essentially, where we are coming from. Every Story Mind must also have a sense of self, otherwise, the audience only comes to the story from the outside looking in, as if it were something outside themselves, and therefore they never empathize with any of the characters in the story.

The Main Character provides the audience a place to stand on the inside. And, just as with our own minds, where we are coming from may change with the situation and/or with with issue in question. So, we may spend varying amounts of time looking through the eyes of any number of characters in our story.

Still, there is always one character that feels like the "Main" character.   What is it that makes this character feel speical? As we shall soon see with our archetypes, each of the elements of character represents a different kind of concern - a different area of consideration in a complete map of the mind. One of these issues is the "message issue" of the story, the human quality around which the story's moral revolves. The character who contains that element represents that issue. So when we look through that character's eyes, we are standing at ground zero of the story's argument. It is this outlook which is being questioned in the story, the one that the author is trying to prove is better (or worse) than all the other approaches to the problem. Simply, that is why the Main Character feels so important, even if we actually spend more time looking through the eyes of other characters.

The character through whose perspective is give the most time or attention in the story is the Central Character. Notice I wrote "time or attentian" rather than just "time." The impact of a character is not due solely to screen time in a movie or number of pages in a novel. It is also dependent upon how strongly that character is drawn. It is the combination of the amount of exposure to a character and the intensity with which the author describes the character that deteremine its overall impact on the audience.

This concept is well-known in psychology, and they even have a name for it: Temporal and Spatial Summation. Simply put, it means that your response to the world is partly built on a life-time of experience and partly on those fleeting but intense moments that will live forever in your memory. (In fact, even the neurons of the brain respond to the collective energy of repeated exposure to

the same information over and over again and to the sudden exposure to very intense momentary information.)

Just as the functioning of the brain's neurology is represented in the mind's psychology, so too is it represented in the characters (and in fact in all the dramatics) of the Story Mind.

So, the terms "Main Character" and "Central Character" do not mean the same thing at all. Still, the player in a story that stands on the crucial issue is often given the most "play" by an author, and is therefore the Central Character as well as being Main. I just doesn't necessarily have to be that way. One character could be the "message character" and another the one who is most intense.

It should also be noted that you might present all of your characters in an equally intense manner. Who then is Central? As it happens, the term "Central" is not really about a single character, but is the measurement of how impactful on the audience each character is compared to the others. It is not a wasted question to ask of each character in a first draft you have written, "How Central is he (or she)?" The answer can give you a good idea how your audience's attention and empathy will be distributed.

Just being Central does not mean you are Main, and vice versa. In the human mind, and therefore in the Story Mind as well, we sometimes adopt a point of view looking at things from that perspective. We also look internally at our own attributes without necessarily adopting that outlook . The most important character whose point of view we share (the one possessing the trait at the heart of the message) is Main. The most important character whome we observe (the one most strongly drawn by the author) is Central.

When you have a Main Character who is also the Central Character, you have the beginnings of the traditional "Hero," who we will continue to explore in a moment. But first, what of the Protagonist? The Protagonist is the character who drives the plot forward. Note that while the Main Character is dealing with the judgmental aspects of the story's message regarding a particular issue or quality of human nature, the Protagonist is dealing with the practical issues of trying to achieve the story's Goal.

As with Main and Central, the Protagonist represents an aspect of the mind: our initiative. Within each of us is a drive to shake up the status quo, to make things different (for good/benefit or for bad/detriment). It doesn't matter if that drive is benevolently or malevolently applied. It is just the drive itself that the Protagonist represents.

You'll note that in the list of eight archetypes above, they are arranged in pairs, each associated with its most antithetical match. Reason is most directly offset to Emotion, and so on. And, as expected, Protagonist is set against Antagonist.

The Antagonist represents that force within ourselves that seeks hold things back or prevent them from happening WHETHER GOOD OR BAD. Note that in a structural sense, neither Protagonist nor Antagonist (nor the other six archetypes) are absolutely associated with any moral imperative, with right or wrong, kind or mean, positive or negative intent. Protagonist and Antagonist represent only our drive to make something happen and our drive to keep things as they are.

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For example, suppose we have a character who is Main, Central, and Protagonist, but Bad to the bone. This character will stand at ground zero of the story's moral issue, because he is Main. He will also be the most strongly drawn and memorable character because he is Central. He will be the character who drives the plot forward as Protagonist. But, because he is Bad (moralistically) he will be an "Anti-Hero."

Or, a character might be Main, Central, and Good, but be an Antagonist. A well-known example of this is James Bond. It is the "Villian" of the story that has the agenda, instigates things, and tries to achieve a goal. Bond's function is to stop the Bad Guy, so, by definition, Bond is an Antagonist.

It is hard to disassociate the labels of Good and Bad from Protagonist and Antagonist, but doing so allows one to break out of formula ruts and to investigate a wealth of sound, new character types.

Returning to our list of eight archetypes,

In summary, if you have only been creating Heros and Villians, you
ve been severly limiting your storytelling opportunities.

Archetypal Characters in Star Wars

Describing archetypes conceptually has its place, but it is much easier to get a feel for them in an actual story. One of the best examples of archetypal characters can be found in the original Star Wars movie, "Episode IV - a New Hope." It should be noted that these arechetypes are NOT maintained in any of the sequals or sequals.

In Star Wars, Luke Skywalker is the Protagonist, for he is the one driven by initiative. Although it might appear at first that Darth Vader is the Antagonist, it is actually the Empire itself, in the form of the Gran Mof Tarkin (and all the Storm Troopers) that seeks to maintain the status quo (its own totalitarian hold on the galaxy).

The reason Darth seems to be the Antagonist is that he is the first of the "bad guys" we see. He enters with his flowing, black robes, and is clearly the leader of the evil minions. But, this is just the opening teaser of the story. Once the main plot gets going, Darth is relegated (in this first movie) to the role of glorified henchman.

Darh, in fact, is the Contagonist - the Temptation of the Dark Side of the Force - and the opposite of Obi Wan Kenobi's representation of Conscience.

Princess Leia is the cold force of Reason, the counterpart of the Emotional Chewbacca.

And finally, where the Droids are the faithful supporters or Sidekicks, the Skeptic is Han Solo (who doesn't believe in the Force, and verbally opposes every plan with which he is presented.

Again, the differences between the Droids' personalities and the bickering between them is part of a minor sub-plot. But, in the main plot, they function together as joint sidekicks.

In practice, very few stories use archetypal characters exclusively. A frequent method is to employ a mix of both archetypal and Complex characters. A good example of this technique can be seen in "The Wizard of Oz."

In the cast of Archetypal characters, Dorothy (like Luke) is the initiating Protagonist. Glinda, the good witch, fills Obi Wan's role as the helpful force of Conscience. Toto is the standard Sidekick, balanced by the Skeptical, doubting, Cowardly Lion.

The remaining principal characters (Scarecrow, Tin Man, Wicked Witch, and the Wizard himself) are close to being archetypes, but actually "swap" some elements among them that make them mmore complex. The remaining archetypes from which they will draw are Reason, Emotion, Antagonist, and Contagonist.

Although the Scarecrow (who always has a plan) might appear at first glance to be the equivalent of Leia's Reason archetype, he differs in that Leia is exceedingly controlled in her physical activities, whereas the Scarecrow is frenetic and uncontrolled (more like Chewbacca).

Similarly, though the Tin Man (who crys and rusts himself) seems to be the Emotion archetype like Chewbacca, externally, he is controlled like Leia.

It is almost as if the Scarecrow is internally like Leia, and externally like Chewbacca, whereas the Tin Man is just the reverse! In fact, we are on the verge of seeing how Archetypes are made up smaller elements of character which can be combined in different ways.

The Reason Archetype (as illustrated by Princess Leia) uses Logic internally, and is Contolled externally. The two elements work hand in hand as members of the same family, each a different spin on the same basic approach to problem solving. The Emotion Archteype (as illustrated by Chewbacca) is driven by Feelings internally, and is Uncontrolled externally.
Scarecrow takes the internal quality of Logic from the Reason archetype, but matches it with the exterenal trait of Uncontrolled from the Emotion archetype. In the same manner, the Tin Man posseses Emotion's internal quality of Feeling and pairs it with Reason's external Control.

This "swap" makes Scarecrow and Tin Man each half of one archetype and half of another. We note that each character still has one internal and one external characteristic, just like the archetypes, but "flipped." As it turns out, this is not the only way to split an archetype.

The Wicked Witch and the Wizard also swap elements from the Antagonist and Contagonist, but not in the same way. The Antagonist, externally, tries to Prevent the Protagonist from upsetting the status quo. It's internal equivalent is Non-Consideration (simply, don't even think about it!) The Contagonist, internally, represents Temptation and externally is the fly in the ointment or the Hinderer.

In The Wizard of Oz, the Wicked Witch gets both external elements and the Wizard takes both internal ones. So, the Witch tries to Prevent Dorothy (the Protagonist) from fulfilling her quest with the Ruby slippers, and also gums up the works whenever she can, just to make things more difficult and discouraging (i.e., the apple trees and scaring the travellers with fire).

In contrast, the fearsome Wizard presents the force of Non-Consideration (put it out of your mind), and also represents Temptation. The Wizard as Tempation? This is most clearly illustrated when tells Dorothy the only way to get her back to Kansas is if he takes her there himself in his balloon.

Clearly, if Dorothy returned by balloon, she would never learn the lesson that "There's no place like home" and that she had the power all along.

As we shall see, Archetypal characters are made up of more that just two elements, internal and external. The point of the moment is that Archetypal characters and Complex Characters share the same elements, just in different combinations.

For now, let's consider a complete breakdown of the internal and external elements of the eight archetypes:

Archetype	Internal	External
Protagonist	Consider	Pursue
Antagonist	Non_Consideration	Prevent
Reason	Logic	Controlled
Emotion	Feeling	Uncontrolled
Guardian	Conscience	Help
Contagonist	Temptation	Hinder
Sidekick	Faith	Support
Skeptic	Disbelief	Oppose

From this table it is easy to see why these characters are Archetypal. The internal and external elements of each archetype are equivalent, and between opposing archetypes are most nearly opposite. So, Archetypal Characters are consistent inside and out, and are equally in opposition to their chief opponent in both realms.

Returning to Star Wars, we can see the elements at work in each of the eight Archetypes:

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Let's get practical for a moment and build some characters using archetypes. Although the names and description of most of these archetypes are no doubt familiar to you, an exact definition of their functions in story structure may not be. In fact, if you ask any group of authors to define each of these characters by their role in a story, you are likely to get such a range of different descriptions that some are actually contradictory. In other words, most everyone has a "feel" for these archetypes, but few have an exact understanding of them.

Moreover, even if two authors agree on a definition, they often use a different name for that archetype. For example, the terms "Protagonist," "Main Character," "Central Character," and "Hero," are often used interchangeably, sometimes even by the same author, when in fact, each is a completely different dramatic attribute.

The Main Character represents the audience position in the story, from where they experience the pathos first hand. In our own minds, the Main Character represents our sense of self - essentially, where we are coming from. Every Story Mind must also have a sense of self, otherwise, the audience only comes to the story from the outside looking in, as if it were something outside themselves, and therefore they never empathize with any of the characters in the story.

The Main Character provides the audience a place to stand on the inside. And, just as with our own minds, where we are coming from may change with the situation and/or with with issue in question. So, we may spend varying amounts of time looking through the eyes of any number of characters in our story.

Still, there is always one character that feels like the "Main" character. What is it that makes this character feel speical? As we shall soon see with our archetypes, each of the elements of character represents a different kind of concern - a different area of consideration in a complete map of the mind. One of these issues is the "message issue" of the story, the human quality around which the story's moral revolves. The character who contains that element represents that issue. So when we look through that character's eyes, we are standing at ground zero of the story's argument. It is this outlook which is being questioned in the story, the one that the author is trying to prove is better (or worse) than all the other approaches to the problem. Simply, that is why the Main Character feels so important, even if we actually spend more time looking through the eyes of other characters.

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This concept is well-known in psychology, and they even have a name for it: Temporal and Spatial Summation. Simply put, it means that your response to the world is partly built on a life-time of experience and partly on those fleeting but intense moments that will live forever in your memory. (In fact, even the neurons of the brain respond to the collective energy of repeated exposure to the same information over and over again and to the sudden exposure to very intense momentary information.)

Just as the functioning of the brain's neurology is represented fractally in the mind's psychology, so too is it represented in the characters (and in fact in all the dramatics) of the Story Mind.

So, the terms "Main Character" and "Central Character" do not mean the same thing at all. Still, the player in a story that stands on the crucial issue is often given the most "play" by an author, and is therefore the Central Character as well as being Main. I just doesn't necessarily have to be that way. One character could be the "message character" and another the one who is most intense.

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POINTS OF VIEW

To examine the Story Mind, we need to know how to look at it. If audiences only looked AT stories, then there would only be one point of view from which to see the Story Mind. But the audience not only looks AT stories, but also becomes involved IN them. It follows that there must be more than one way to look at the structure of a story.

In fact, there are four principal points of view that are necessary to fully satisfy the mind of the audience, and each of these is represented in the Story Mind as well. We'll begin with the most obvious and then explore some points of view that many authors fail to include in their structure, leaving serious holes in their stories.

The first point of view is the easiest: the OBJECTIVE view. We've already encountered the Objective View when we described how we might look at a story as if we were a general on hill, watching a battle in the valley below.

From that perspective, we can't identify the characters by name as we are too far removed from the conflict. Instead, we see them by function - the fellow leading the charge or the strategist, to refer to the examples used earlier.

If we could stand outside ourselves and look at our thought processes objectively, we could take that dispassionate perspective and observe the various logistic and emotional forces at work within our minds. Of course, we cannot do this with ourselves. The closest we come is when we pass judgment on others, observing them outside of their own passionate experiences.

We often say things such as, "If I were you, I'd...." More often than not, such comments get an angry reaction because in taking the Objective view, we have completely ignored the personal experiences that we can't see from the outside looking in. That is why our Objective view is dispassionate. It is not that we don't care about the individual, just as a general cares about his troops. But no matter how intently we seek to understand another from the outside, we can never really know what they are experiencing - what they are truly going through.

When it comes to our own minds, it is the Objective view we can never truly see, for we can never truly stand aside from ourselves dispassionately. That, in fact, is one of the principal reasons audiences are attracted to stories (beyond the simple entertainment value). Stories, through their Story Mind structure, provide a projection of our own minds, in a book, on stage, or on the screen, where we can look into our own thought processes from the outside in, made tangible as characters, theme, plot, and genre.

The author is essentially saying, "I have some life experience or some special insight that I can share about the big picture, the larger meaning of life in which we struggle." It is the author's

argument that when this Objective view is taken into account, we can learn when we should go against what feels right personally, or when we should ignore the admonitions of others and go with our gut instincts.

So it is from this Objective view of the overall story that we see characters by their functions, such as Protagonist, Antagonist, Reason and Emotion. And each of these archetypal characters represents a broad quality of every human mind. We'll explore each of those characters of the mind soon. But first, what about that passionate internal view?

Returning to the general on the hill, suppose we zoomed down and stood in the shoes of one of the soldiers on the field. Naturally we lose our overview of the grand strategies and movements of the battle as a whole. But we are now intimately involved in the battle itself.

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

You have an idea for a story. In fact, you have lots of little bits and pieces of ideas. But how do you put them together into something that makes sense? Your enthusiasm can carry you so far, but at some point you're going to wonder how to fit everything in and how to figure out what happens next.

Here's how the Story Mind can help. First, ask yourself what your story is about. Don't describe the order of events at this point, just describe the set-up. For example, "My story is about people trapped in a space ship with a monster," or "My story is about a man who lacks compassion."

Like our minds, the Story Mind examines issues in it's environment and issues within itself. So, if your story is about something something like people trapped in a space ship, that's an external issue within the outside universe. But if your story is about a man who lacks compassion, that's an internal issue within a person's mind.

So ask yourself, "Is my story about something external (Universe) or something internal (Mind)?" Of course, every external situation will create and also be affected by people's attitudes. And, every internal attitude will be affected by and lead to various situations. So, every story will have both situations and attitudes which affect each other.

But how do YOU think about your story? Which is more important to you, the external situation or the internal attitudes? Answering this question is the first step in giving your Story Mind a personality. Is your story more concerned with a situation or with an attitude?

Stories that are more concerned with external situations include "The Posiedon Adventure," "The Matrix," and "The Edge."

Stories that are more concerned with internal attitudes include, "A Christmas Carol," "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?," and "Analyze This."

Outline

Introduction - Passion vs. Structure

Introducing the Story Mind

Why a Story Mind?

What's IN Your Story's Mind?

What's ON Your Story's Mind?

Grand Argument Story

Four Throughlines

Tale vs. Story

Structure vs. Storytelling

12 essential questions

structural chart

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What are Characters? Characters as Facets of the Story Mind

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Objective vs. Subjective characters & Points of View

The eight Archetypes

Archetypes in Star Wars & Oz

Complex Characters

Character Dimensions

Main & Obstacle Characters

12 Essential questions - character 4

Problems, Solutions, etc.

Character Arcs (Signposts & Journeys)

Character relationships

Character Storytelling

Creating Characters with Mix N' Match

Characters relating to plot, theme, and genre

Illustrating Character Elements

Illustrating Character Arc

Leap of Faith

Groups, crowds, mult-headed characters

Split personalities, one-person shows

Character background & backstory

How the problem came to be

Physical characteristics

Personality traits aside from structure

Relationships (family, friends, in groups)

Unfolding characters for the audience

Introductions, interactions, dimissals

The 28 Magic Character Scenes

Hand-offs, etc.

Masquerade - Wolves & Sheep in each others' clothing

Plot Structure

What is Plot? - Plot as Methods of the Story Mind

Static & Progressive Plot Points

8 Key Plot Points

Signposts & Journeys

12 essential questions - plot 4

Plot Storytelling

How plot relates to charcter, theme, and genre

Acts - Staying True - Weaving four throughlines

Point of attack

Set-up

Storyweaving techniques - red herring, non-causal, etc.

28 Magic Plot Scenes

Back Story

Rise and Fall, Rise Fall and Rise, cycles, etc.

Illustrating Plot Points (Dropping exposition)

Sub-Plots, Sub-stories, Parallel Plots

Multi-story structures (soaps)

Theme Structure

What is Theme? Theme as Values of the Story Mind

The Thematic Argument

Premise

Topic (Issue or Point)

Topic & Counter Point

Thematic Conclusion

Themes in 4 throughlines

12 essential questions - theme 4

Theme Storytelling

What is your story about?

How Theme relates to character, plot, and genre (thematic chart)

Positioning your audience

Emotional Argument

28 Magic Thematic Scenes

Illustrating Thematic Points

The moral argument

Your story's message

Genre Structure

Four Classes

Four Points of View

Four Domains

The Genre Chart

Genre Storytelling

What is Genre? Genre as the personality of the Story Mind

Traditional Genres - a mixed bag

Genre checklist

Tips for westerns

Horror/Thriller

Romance

Mystery

Sci-Fi

Action/Adventure

Comedies

Using the Genre Chart

Illustrating Genre

Developing Genre over time

Storyforming

Where are you coming from?

Where are you going to?

How to you want to get there?

Who are you writing for?

Why do you want to tell this story?

Structure and Style

Avoiding/Overcoming Writers' Block

How to start a story

Structure first or storytelling first?

Using Dramatica to structure a story

How to divine a structure

Storyencoding

Your subject matter

Illustrating story points

Multiple illustrations

Subtlety vs. the obvious

Finding the structure in your subject matter

Using encoding to cross-pollinate character, plot, theme, genre

Storyweaving

Unfolding your story

Your Expostion Plan

weaving the four throughlines

weaving character, plot, theme, and genre

28 Magic Scenes - complete!

Other scene/act arrangements

Techniques - red herrings, non-causal, etc.

Developing Acts, Sequences, Scenes, and Events

What's in a scene?

Multi-story works (sub plots)

Reception

Audience as Author

Who is your audience?

Buzz words

Ethnic groups and sub-cultures

Age groups

Men's and Women's stories

Reception of Character, Plot, Theme, and Genre

Audience expectations

Author's Intent (Manipulation/Propaganda)

Adaptations