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Dynamic Story Creation - Part Two – The Invisible Layer

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The Big Question

What does this do for my story?

In everything you learn in this industry, always test it before you follow others blindly and change your entire manuscript. Even if something works for another writer, it doesn't mean it'll work for you. Remember, creativity is subjective. - DRAKE

“The writer who develops a beautiful style, but has nothing to say, represents a kind of arrested esthetic development; he is like a pianist who acquires a brilliant technique by playing finger-exercises, but never gives a concert.”

- Ayn Rand 1905 – 1982
(*Atlas Shrugged*)

The Essence of Story Creation

- 1) To create a story that people will appreciate, one that will be deemed a success, you must create a story that is nearly identical to every single story ever created over the past 5,000 years.
- 2) However, you must make that story, the one that is almost exactly like all other stories, feel as if it's 100% unique from all other stories ever created over the past 5,000 years.

What does the reader get?

Always keep in mind that a story is not a series of events – it's what you are trying to give to the reader. This may be a lesson, a moral, allowing them to experience something outside of what they are capable of, simply entertaining them, the list goes on.

To get technical, before you start writing is when you should start thinking about what themes, motifs, and symbolisms you plan on using. You will probably change/adjust/add to these as you write, but it's never too early to start thinking about these.

It's ALWAYS Emotional

Theme

The **theme** in a story is its underlying message, or its “big idea.” In other words, what critical belief/idea about life are you trying to convey to the reader? This belief/idea should transcend cultural barriers. It should be universal in nature so it touches on the human experience, regardless of race, language, etc. It is what your story means. And yes, a story can have more than one theme.

Two Purposes of a Theme

- 1) The theme is what fulfills a reader’s unknown expectations – i.e., a theme is what the reader walks away with.
 - 2) Themes help writers develop a tight, concise story that will not only hold a reader’s interest, but have them walk away fulfilled by the experience.
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A Theme is Fact in the Story

If you break the reality of your theme, you break your story.
Cop Shows.

A Theme is Universal

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Major and Minor Themes

You should limit yourself to one major theme.
Every minor theme you include should complement the major theme.

Themes are not Equal

Your theme choice is the number one factor in whether your story will be a success or not.
Transformers vs. Jurassic Park

A Theme is More than a Question

While it is true that a theme is a question... it is a question for the reader – not the writer.
As the writer, I find it helps to turn my theme question into two mutually exclusive answers.

The Matrix of a Story

As there are two layers of a story, there needs to be two layers of conflict for a story.
This breaks down into the two main ways for themes to be answered.

- 1) The question is raging inside the protagonist – *Star Wars – A New Hope*
 - 2) The question is raging inside the world – *V for Vendetta, Lord of the Flies*
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A Theme answered by POV

When the major theme is warring inside the POV character, this means that in the end, it will be the POV character who chooses which answer is true, and which is false.

- 1) You will have two layers of conflict
 - 1) The Physical Layer Conflict
 - 2) The Invisible Layer Conflict
 - 2) Both answers can have support from both sides.
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Allegories

Allegories get a bit more complex in the literary game. Especially when it comes to your major theme.

Allegories are extended Metaphors – things that are presented as one thing, but mean something different.

A Theme answered by the World

When the POV character is attempting to prove one side as true, and the antagonist is attempting to prove the other side as true, your characters become Allegories for some larger human element.

- 1) Both the Invisible and Physical Layer conflict line up.
- 2) More esoteric, and therefore less likely to capture the hearts of the mass audience

Symbolism

Symbolism is used in literature when one thing is meant to represent something else and can help create meaning and/or emotion in a story. **Metaphors** and **Allegory** are literary elements that help writers create symbolism.

Metaphors / Symbolism

Time is Money. Life is a rollercoaster.
White can be good/pure. Black can be evil/death.
John was boiling mad.

Motif

A **motif** is any element, subject, idea, or concept that is constantly present through your story that has symbolic significance. Through a motif's repetition, you can immerse the reader in narrative or literary aspects such as theme or mood.

Ridley Scott in Blade Runner used up-close images of character's eyes to call into question both the narrator's ability, as well as our own, to accurately perceive and understand reality.

Conflict - It's More than just a word

Every writer talks about conflict, but do you really understand what it means to the story? As we discussed, a "story" is fulfilling the unknown emotional needs of the reader. You do this through the process of Transformation.

Transformation - The UPS of Themes

For the theme to be consumed by the reader, something must be transformed.
State of Perfection – State of Imperfection

The 2 Questions

For the conflict to Transform the POV, you must know what your POV wants, and what internal beliefs, misconceptions, and fears will hinder their progress.

What do your Characters want?

What do your Characters need?

- 1) Driving Force of your character.
 - 2) Driving Force of the Story.
 - 3) Creates Transformation
 - 4) Dictates if story is a Tragedy or Happy ending.
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Reversals – The Backbone of Every Great Story

Reversals are your way of flipping who is winning in the story. This will build tension, keep the audience interested, and help you define the important moments in your story.

You can have as many small reversals as you want, and I try to have one every chapter, but you need to have at least eight to ten major ones to really drive a novel.

Thank you for your time and attention. I hope you found it informative. I have started a blog dedicated to the discussion of the craft of writing. If you have specific questions, please send them to me at author@maxadrake.com and I will include them on blog.maxwellalexanderdrake.com.

I am on Facebook /MaxwellAlexanderDrake, Twitter @MaxwellADrake, and Instagram /maxwellalexanderdrake. Please look me up.

If you would like to receive free writing advice from me via my newsletter, please sign up at www.DrakeU.com.

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