

Currently my research and project of choice which has been inspiring my work has been the study of deeper and more fulfilling communication.

I believe film and art in general comes from a need to communicate something, and to express our pains, sorrow, pleasures, desires, confusions, secrets and that which inspires us and somehow create something deep and meaningful out of it.

I found particularly in the stories I would tend to write, the themes would be inspired by that of old mythological tales, which I believe had a purpose of bringing to light that which was kept in the darkness. For me they have a purpose to generate a deeper understanding of our psycho physical nature and through use of symbolic language, strive to guide us to grow in our human experience.

I have been researching the work of Joseph Campbell, Carl Jung, Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Toko Ono, Maureen Murdock, Christopher Vogler and Jordan Peterson. They have been my main inspirations regarding understanding archetypal psychology and the use of understanding story from a psychological perspective.

I learnt how to, when following a story, become aware of the patterns, the repetitive themes and the deeper psychological meaning behind the story and what messages are being conveyed that may be giving a deeper understanding to who we are on this planet, and how personally I can learn something about myself. (*Martin Shaw, 2020*)

Stories have always fascinated me because it gives an invitation to journey into the unknown parts of our psyche, whether we are conscious of it or not.

As I'm learning about the use of story, I have been careful not to forget the true meaning of story. That story isn't made so we can gain money, recognition, fame and adoration, rather, the storyteller is somewhat like a Shaman of our times, as Christopher Vogler said "Our stories have the power to heal, to make the world new again, to give people metaphors, which they can better understand their own lives, when we writers apply the ancient tools of the archetypes and the Hero's Journey to modern stories, we stand on the shoulders of the mythmakers and shamans of old. When we try to heal our people with the wisdom of myth, we are the modern shamans. We ask the same age-less, childlike questions presented by the myths: Who am I? Where did I come from? What happens when I die? What does it mean? Where do I fit in? Where am I bound on my own Hero's Journey?" (*Christopher Vogler, 1992*)

This being said I believe a very important aspect of our human experience, is to learn how to communicate our own story, and understand who we are, and why we act the way we do.

Thus, recently I have been really inspired by not only mythology and story, but also learning how to tell your own, raw story, in a way, which can help one to progress and grow.

In ancient times, there was such a thing, where women would join together in circles and they would express their hearts and pains in a safe space. Their grief would be the grief of others, and their joys would be the joys of the community, thus, everything would be expressed and transparency allowed there to be harmony and understanding amongst each other. (*Amy Bammel Wilding, 2017*)

It is very rare we feel truly listened to and heard, and a lot of the time, who we are and what stage of life we are at can be fogged by the fast pace and confusion of life. In the fast paced landscape of our lives it is very difficult to grasp what life means and who we are, and why we react the way we do and what we want, what we need. These factors can be perceived as very secondary in our society, and primary only stands for our egoistic selfish needs which rapidly is resulting to the destruction of our souls. However, our society is faced with deep void of pain and emptiness, grasping that of quick sensations of pleasure and hoping that will help us forget about the deep dark well we hold inside of us.

Many have learnt and maybe experienced the pains and distresses of addiction and also that a huge part of recovery is regaining a sense of reconnection with yourself, your loved ones, your passions in life, with God, with society, with nature... (*Walters, G. D., 1996*) The lack of community and a sense of connection can cause us to long to fill the emptiness of an unmet need with numbing pains to distract one from the bigger issue. "The lack of healthy and true communication in our lives can cause great disharmony amongst each other, in families and in community. -

Communication leads to community, that is, to understand intimacy and mutual understanding".- (David Wolf, 2017).

So currently, I am trying to learn about the power of transformational communication which is a method which teaches us how to truly listen and also learn how to express our deeper needs and voice our true words.

In my own experience, when I've spoken, whether that be an idea or an expression of emotion, and that being met with advice, a dismissive response or change of topic it can leave me feeling unheard, uncared for and alone. My relationships which I don't feel like I can truly express my heart, tend to live on a more shallow plane, and the presence I feel I can give to others doesn't always feel like returned, thus creating a lack of true trust and comfortability in being myself. On the contrary, when I've been approached with empathetic listening, or I feel heard I can appreciate myself being more open with the other person and creating a more meaningful and deep relationship.

Giving space for others to hear what they're saying can help them unravel and notice their own stories, and also help you understand the other and have true compassion for the others situation. In the book, the 7 habits of highly effective people, it is spoken that people who we usually talk to don't truly wish to hear us but rather just respond to what we are saying. However, if we are speaking of a sad situation, it can be that how that situation is received when sharing rather than the actual situation itself (Jim Collins, 2004). So, it can be understood, that the experience of our life is not so much the problem, but rather, how we respond to that experience. Throughout our life we can see that many of our issues are 'shoved under the carpet' so to speak. It seems to be, that most of our life, we are trying to make a show that 'everything is fine', maybe by hiding behind expensive items, a big house, a beautiful front garden full of flowers, a relationship, a good Instagram profile, yet, internally there is a heavy amount of issues which are not addressed. This can lead to obvious mental issues, causing long term neurological damage. When emotions we feel are not processed in a conscious and proper way, and we are taught to suppress them, it can escalate to trivial issues which cause a lot of internal pain and suffering, more than there needs to be.

However, when we feel a certain way, and how we feel is met with true recognition and understanding, the ability to process and learn from an experience which may be emotionally challenging can help us move through how we feel and allow people to understand us better and for us to have understanding for ourselves and others.

In the film American Beauty (Sam Mendes, 1999) and the new film Encanto (Jared Bush 2021), we can see a good representative of how issues can be pushed away and hidden, covered over by a facade. Thus fatal destruction manifests through this suppression of issues. I believe film and art can really bring to light that which has been resting in the dark, and let's face it, in our modern society, there is a great lingering darkness, more than ever, which needs a little more than just art to bring back to balance. However, art still plays a great roll in slapping us back into the reality of our stupid situation. Our current society seems to be obsessed with this idea that everything has to look good to be good. However, in old traditions, there seemed to be an appreciation for the darker side of life. There was talk of death, of other worlds, of emptiness. In many cultures, there would be tribal rituals, which brought people together to talk about the deeper aspects of life, to hear stories, or to perform sacrifices. There is a prayer by Lucy H Pearce in her book called burning woman: "We dare not talk of the darkness for fear it will infect us. We dare not talk of the fire, for fear it will destroy us. And so we live in the half-light, Like our mothers before us. Come to the fire, Feel it warm your skin. Come to the fire, Feel it burn in your belly, Shine out through your eyes. Come dance in the fire, Let it fuel your prayers." (Lucy H. Pearce, 2016)

I personally find this a fascinating aspect to look at within our society and within ourselves. I think as artists, it's an important duty to keep a good balance within our society to bring out that which has been covered over- regardless of at what level of consciousness. I was listening to a ted talk by Elon Musks ex wife, and she gave an interesting definition on this aspect: "As creatives our job is to uncover what lies in the darkness, and give it new life, new identity There are people who learn how to interrogate that darkness Instead of being crushed by it And they use their art, their magic and their tech and their intellect, to not only show us who we are in a way we can understand and accept but also who we can be. They create new tribes and new worlds that call

their people home. The best stories are the ones that resurface from the dark.” (Justine Musk, 2017)

There is a quiet place within ourselves which is of the living unknown. That which is dark, that which we fear. This is usually represented in film in various ways. Gothic stories, are a lot more obvious in pointing out this aspect of our psyche. When we perceive mythology or any art with it being a representative of the collective consciousness we can better understand this point. Where there is this similarity of each other. Even though we are somehow different in quantity, we have a similar quality and we are experiencing a similar journey within our own psyche- That being, a dissemblance between the masculine and feminine energies. Mythology, dreams and art can be evidence for this fact. That, if you analyse the deeper meanings of stories which have travelled through the ages we can pick up on similar themes, and messages. (Jordan Peterson, 2017) This being said, a call to travel into the unknown darker aspect of our psyche is a common theme placed in many tales. An obvious example is quite clearly demonstrated in the song, into the unknown, in the film Frozen. The song is sang at the beginning of Elsa’s journey, when she is living in the mundane world, living a somewhat comfortable life, yet there is something calling her to venture into coming into wholeness. The risk of her coming into wholeness and seeking meaning, lays at the cost of her relationships and safety, yet, there is an innate need to venture into the part of herself. This demonstrates for the call for adventure, in the heroes journey structure, which, in our own life, can manifest as feeling an inner calling which can somewhat feel uncomfortable or even impossible. (Frozen 2, 2013)

I believe many people of our society, feel this dissatisfaction with their mundane life, not realising that they are not meant to feel comfortable. With this, rather than accepting the call for adventure, they, or those around them, diagnose themselves with depression or some kind of mental illness, so that they will feel okay and high enough to carry on living a very meaningless life.

Through stories, art, music, beauty, poetry, psychoanalysis, these messages are portrayed, yet, understanding that these messages are from this world of the collective unconscious must mean that within us all, we know what is true. However, due to the fast paced world we live in, people do not have that inner space to contemplate that, and rather look for quick fixes for their distress not truly understanding why.

So this practice of transformative communication gives us that much needed space to really contemplate and clearly see ourselves in the mirror of our mind. When we have the experience of being able to truly understand what is going on within our hearts through self actualisation, we are able to realise what we need, and where we are at- why we act the way we do, and how we wish to move forward. We learn to take responsibility for our actions and life and realise we have a choice, and we have so much more power than we think.

The theoretical understanding of just being ourselves, and knowing ourselves, doesn’t truly take a real picture of what is the actual fact and having the true realisation of this. The link between this world and the other is our willingness to venture into it. To have the humility to accept that there is much unknown to us, and to be willing and open to truly understand. “Rejection of the unknown is tantamount to “identification with the devil,” - (Jordan Peterson, 1999). Although I cannot fully elaborate on that statement, I can somewhat understand that rejecting the calling which awakens in your heart due to fear, takes you out of alignment with Gods will for you bringing you to more suffering.

In understanding this, I feel inspired by story, as it’s not merely an art of distraction and enjoyment, but truly in its essence, meant to bring us to a place of true understanding within ourselves. What truly inspires me in any form of art, is this deep need of self actualisation and expression. There is a deep longing for meaning and true deep recognition of the soul. I believe it’s magical how everyone has a story within them, yet I find it sad how not many take time to reveal it or share it with others. Through the deep journey of transformative communication one can be taken on a journey of understanding self, and understanding others. In my project I felt inspired to do an experiment. One of somewhat raw improvisation. One of telling a story in its raw form. Inspired

mostly by before sunrise and the book - relationships that work, I have planned a shooting which is simple, and easy for me to film as I don't so much like anything technical, however still deep and captivating.

The power of sharing story is truly a gift and the times I've experienced the profound effects of this has been in company of others who I can truly trust. There is a quote I really love my Megan Watterson- "In the company of women, it's easier for each of us to remember our own truth. We remember that our lives depend on our capacity to drop all facades and pretences. We remember the bliss of just accepting that we are here to be ourselves. And we remember, together, that the most powerful place for us to be, even if it's sometimes terrifying, is fully in our body, so that we can move with the vulnerability and compassion of a broken-open heart." This is expressing the experience of being in a sisterhood where one can truly express themselves with those they trust. Either a man or a woman, to share your story is a truly magical thing.

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