

Unravelling the Hero's Journey: New narrative modalities/paradigms for story, semantics & the psychology of experience

A Call for Contributions for an edited book by Alison Norrington (Story Central) & Dr Roy Hanney (Solent University)

Provocation

In his insightful article C.P Nield (2013) describes Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey as a Hollywood McMyth suggesting that rather than promoting cross-cultural plurality it has become a monolithic dogma that has drowned out other voices, other ways of telling stories. He goes on to argue that the monomyth is no more than a "cut-and-paste quest myth" thrown together from a mix of decontextualized fragments of mythology, sprinkled with Jung's theory of universal archetypes, and cross-cut with psychoanalytic renditions of dream experiences.

Campbell's eclectic methodology results in a cultural *entanglement* that reflects a colonial past, a hegemonic discourse in which the appropriation of the other's stories serves to justify the "provincialising" (Bangstad 2020) of European culture as a universal form against which all other cultural forms are judged. If museums and galleries are being asked to "return artefacts appropriated in the course of European Colonialism" (Bangstad 2020), shouldn't we include within this project the return of the story artefacts appropriated in the service of a cultural othering that sought to establish the universalism that is so rife in theories of story and of the monomyth in particular.

Research Question

At a time when the world is rethinking what it means by diversity and inclusion, how can we open up the concept of story to global voices, alternative visions, and new experiential approaches with a recognition that audiences collectively engage with story in culturally situated contexts?

Rationale

The epistemological underpinnings of knowledge in today's world were shaped during colonial times for purposes of social control. For the majority of people in the world, particularly those in the global South, what is learnt, understood, and how the world is viewed have been structured by coloniality emanating from the global North – itself a construction. However, Hollywood is no longer the behemoth it was, there are other sites of production, of circulation and distribution. There are newly emerging opportunities for a decentring of narrative production that might, if allowed, offer alternative ways of telling stories about the world that disrupt rather than reproduce theoretically old and obsolete tropes. The decolonisation of story will necessarily be an ongoing process that "develops by recovering the original meanings, by representing the origin communities, assuring the inclusion of their narratives and their active and equal participation" (Roque 2020).

What is called for is a "circulation between and co-imbrication of worlds" (Bangstad 2020) that celebrates a multi-perspective view that aims towards a *de-entanglement* of ideas that circulate around the notion of story. We should understand that a decolonised theory of story is one that celebrates "incompleteness as a universal characteristic, a dynamic and mobile subject discipline that facilitates encounters between different perspectives, ways of seeing and doing" (Nyamnjoh, 2021).

Themes

We invite contributions that respond to any related theme including but not limited to:

- Practical strategies for rethinking story in practice.
- Polyphony, multi-sequentially and interactivity.
- Political economy and/or the hegemony of story.
- Experience design and the psychology of story.
- Subverting linearity in story structure.
- Role of audience as active agent in constructing meaning.
- Experience, temporality, perception and subjectivity.
- The banality of universalised globalised narrative forms.
- De-commodification, disrupting reification and alienation of story forms.
- Remediation of mythologies and indigenous voices.
- Humanising story traditions, systems, forms and structures.
- Whose story to tell, metaphors of ownership, discourses of power.
- Giving voice, decolonisation and historicising narrative theory.
- Gender and sexuality as constitutive considerations of story.
- Narratological, cultural and ideological studies of story.
- Minority and postcolonial challenges to narrative theory.

Submission

Please send us the following as an indication of interest to roy.hanney@solent.ac.uk by 31st August 2021 at the very latest:

1. Chapter title
2. Authors titles, names & affiliations
3. Chapter abstract (200-300 words)
4. Chapter outline (bullet points)
5. Author biographies (100-200 words each author)
6. Links to previous publications (if you have them)

We plan to produce an edited collection which we hope to have published by Routledge as part of their [Routledge Advances in Transmedia Studies](#) book series, edited by Matthew Freeman (Bath Spa University). Successful authors will be invited to contribute to a planned symposium in the summer of 2022, and subsequently submit full chapters of 7,000 words, pending contract.

References

BANGSTAD, S., 2020. *Achille Mbembe's decolonization* [viewed Feb 28, 2021]. Available from: <https://africasacountry.com/2020/11/achille-mbembes-decolonization>

NYAMNJOH, F., Feb 24th 2021. "Decolonising the Curriculum: Inspiration from 'The Complete Gentleman' in Amos Tutuola's 'The Palm-Wine Drinkard'. *Decolonising the Curriculum? Which Curriculum? How? and by Whom?* University of Westminster: Communication and Media Research Institute, University of Westminster,

NIELD, C.P., 2013. *The Hero's Journey is Hollywood's McMyth* [viewed Apr 12, 2021]. Available from: <https://standpointmag.co.uk/features-october-13-the-heros-journey-is-hollywoods-mcmyth-c-p-nield-joseph-campbell-the-hero-with-a-thousand-faces/>

ROQUE, M.I., 2020. Decolonising the museum: exhibition and mediation of African collections in European museums. *Lusophone Journal of Cultural Studies*, 7(2), 53-71