

Story Grid PROBLEM FORMATION

“A problem well stated is a problem half solved.”

--Charles Kettering

What’s the Meta-Story Problem for the storyteller?

How do you construct a story that “sells?” Ideally, a story that sells “forever?”

To do that, we need to understand the three foundational qualities of what a Story is.

So, we have three sub-questions to explore to answer the big question.

What is the structure of a story?

In other words, what is it as a “whole?” To answer this question, we’ll need to analyze the origins of Story to figure out how it has evolved historically and see if those stories that have lasted the longest (sold the most cumulatively over time and consistently year to year) share any common patterns/features.

What is the function of Story?

What does it do for us?

What is the organization of Story?

In other words, what is it in “parts?”

To answer this question, we’ll need to break Story into different levels of analysis. What’s remarkable is that there are numerous ontologies we can use to do so, and they all have convergent sub-levels of study from which we can look at Story. An ontology is just a category of “a way of being,” meaning a specific kind of domain of inquiry. Psychology concerns the nature of the mind. Physiology examines the nature of the body. Etc.

The Whole

A fundamental breakdown of that whole into sub-categories

The breakdown of sub-categories into smaller categories

The smallest category’s breakdown into the smallest/unbreakable category (metabolizing chaos/adapting to context-dependent, unexpected, environmental, changes--Pheres.)

THE HJ2.0 CHEAT SHEET

The Heroic Journey 2.0 consists of five essential elements:

1. The Global Inciting Incident is a worldview destroying Invisible Phere Gorilla.
2. The Global Turning Point Progressive Complication arrives approximately halfway through the Story and is when the protagonist/s Worldview 1.0 shatters, sending them into utter chaotic confusion.
3. The Global Crisis of the Story emerges just after the protagonist/s has the revelation that all that they held to be true in their past is now lost (the “all is lost” moment), from which emerges the mother of all crises, “Should I keep going, keep trying to find the truth? Or should I quit and surrender to nothingness?”
4. The Global Climax of the Story is when the protagonist/s activate their crisis choice. They go on (a prescriptive heroic journey) or quit (a cautionary anti-heroic journey).
5. The Global Resolution of the Story is the result of the climactic choice. The prescriptive heroic journey pays off with meaning while the cautionary anti-heroic journey pays off with meaninglessness.