Storymind

A theory of story development by Melanie Anne Phillips and Chris Huntley. Very structured approach to writing stories.   www.storymind.com

Storymind is the structure of a story
- Storytelling is the unfolding action
- Storyforming is the "Why", the excuse for having a story to tell
- A story has Genre (personality), Theme (issues and point of view), Plot (methods), and Characters (conflicting drives).

Objective vs Subjective story
- Objective story: dispassionate look at the story, the grand armies facing each other
- Objective story is the battle between the protagonist and antagonist
- Subjective story is the passionate look at the story from someone's point of view
- Subjective story is seen through eyes of main character being opposed by an obstacle character
- Four throughlines: Objective story, Subjective story, Main character throughline, Obstacle character throughline
- Example: *Star Wars*
    - Objective story is the civil war between the rebels and the evil Empire
    - Subjective story describes relationship between Luke and Obi Wan
    - Main character throughline: follows Luke's personal growth
    - Obstacle character throughline: Obi Wan's impact on Luke

Characters – 4 major ones as aspects of self
- Protagonist represents our Initiative - our desire to change the status quo.
- Antagonist represents our Reticence to change, the desire to keep things as they are or return them to the way they were.
- Main Character represents our sense of self (reader's position in the story)
- Obstacle character is that part of ourselves that plays "devil's advocate" when we are trying to determine if we want to change our minds about a particular issue.
    - If we do, the Main Character is convinced by the Obstacle Character's argument and **changes**.
    - If we don't, the Main Character sticks to the old view and remains **steadfast**.
- Usually the character in the Protagonist function is also the Main Character (hero)
- Similarly, the character in Antagonist function is often the Obstacle Character (villain)
- Example: Splitting all 4 characters: *To Kill A Mockingbird*
    - Protagonist (small town lawyer Atticus)
    - Antagonist is the father of the girl who was ostensibly raped.
    - Main character is Atticus's daughter Scout -- we see the story through the eyes of a child

- o The Obstacle character is Boo Radley (the monstrous "boogey man") Scout must change her mind about Boo.
  - o While we root for the virtuous Atticus, we are suckered into being prejudiced ourselves as we identify with Scout and accept her prejudices without any direct evidence or experience of our own. This is clearly a wonderful use of the technique of splitting all four characteristics.
- Example: 3 characters: Dramatic triangle
  - o Protagonist character is also the Main Character
  - o Obstacle Character is the Love Interest
  - o Antagonist is the rival.
  - o the logistics of the plot fought out between the Protagonist/Main Character and the Antagonist rival
  - o the passionate argument regarding changing one's nature is developed between the Protagonist/Main Character and the Obstacle Character Love Interest.
  - o Examples: *Working Girl* (Tess is Protagonist/Main Character; Katherine is Antagonist; Harrison Ford is Obstacle Character Love Interest)
  - o Different example: *Witness* (Rachel is Main Character Love Interest; Harrison Ford is Protagonist/Obstacle Character, corrupt captain is Antagonist)

Main Character Resolve
- By story <u>end</u>, has the Main Character "Changed" or remained "Steadfast"
- Character can change; a steadfast character can grow by growing in resolve
- Character can be flip/flopping through story
- Change can be conscious decision (Skywalker in *Star Wars*) or unintentional (Brody in *Jaws*)
- Change can be universal (Scrooge) or specific (Skywalker in *Star Wars*)
- Example: *The Fugitive*
  - o Dr. Richard Kimble is Main Character/Protagonist who is steadfast
  - o Sam Girard is Obstacle Character/Antagonist who changes