SUFFERING FLESH ✧ SPECTACULAR BODIES

CONNECTING COSTUME AND CINEMA THROUGH AN ANALYSIS OF SYMBOLISM, MYTH AND RITUAL

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree, except as fully acknowledged within the text. I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Louise Fanning

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Louise Fanning, Sydney, March 2011

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Abstract

This thesis connects an understanding of the appearance of the hero in certain contemporary films to the field of costume theory, through an analysis of symbol, myth and ritual. The study has two underlying motivations. The first is that the narratives of many films, consciously or unconsciously, are informed by hero's journey myths, as described by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), a work that has been influential in Hollywood film scripting. The second is to understand certain observations made by myself during my work as a costume designer over twenty years. In Chapter 1, I discuss psychoanalyst C. G. Jung's approach to myth and symbol (mentioned by Campbell and often alluded to by film-makers), referring mainly to the appearance of Neo (Keanu Reeves) in the *Matrix* trilogy (1999, 2003) and that of Randy 'the Ram' Robinson (Mickey Rourke) in *The Wrestler* (2008), and drawing upon images from the myths of Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth (Sumerian, c. 2000 BCE) and Dionysus (Greek, c. 500 BCE). Chapter 2 extends Jane Gaines' theory of spectacular costume by arguing that the appearance of the hero in films includes certain attributes of culture typical of the ancient magician-king. Rather than simply being 'a sign' for the plot, the hero's often seemingly inexplicable appearance is intended to lift viewers beyond themselves into an experience of the numinous. Continuing with the motif of the hero as magician-king, Chapter 3 discusses the significance of the mask for costume theory. The mask was a motif of the god Dionysus in ancient Greek religious rituals and was used in the Greek tragic theatre of c. 500–400 BCE, performed to honour the god. I show how the closeness of the mask to the body creates a sense of distance or strangeness that has an ambiguous and uncanny representational power; it leads the viewer out of the literal experience of the body to an experience of other selves, felt as an emotional encounter with life. Finally, Chapter 4 further investigates transformation through symbolism of death, or more appropriately 'non-death', which in the hero's journey points towards rebirth. Images of the body in a state of dismemberment and stasis signal the emergence of a new symbol-set for the hero, and also the spectator, that points towards a more vibrant way of showing the effects of living.

Contents

Introduction

Fashion and the role of costume has for me always held ineffable power. I have worked as a costume designer in the film and television industries for more than twenty years. Previously I was a fashion designer in Sydney in the late 1970s and 1980s, after studying dress design at East Sydney Technical College. Throughout all these years of making images through the combination of clothes and bodies, I have been struck by the fact that although fashion changes and the needs of a particular character change, there were other important factors that seemed to remain fairly constant. It was the desire to understand these constants that drew me to university studies to try to cast light on what it was I had been observing in my professional roles.

For example, it has always fascinated me to observe the strongly emotional responses that occur around costume and clothes, and how varied those responses can be, even from those who are convinced of their practical or rational point of view, such as producers or advertising executives. A meeting to decide, among other things, the hero's clothes for a simple thirty-second commercial might be attended by a director, producer, production designer and costume designer from the film company, plus an art director, producer and account executive from the advertising agency, and from one to three people representing the client — say ten people in total. Although the brief for the hero might be a demographic, or type, say a 35-year-old aspirational North Shore mum, there will be as many ideas of what the outfit should be as there are people in the room, and some will be quite specific and forcefully expressed.

The dressing room was another place where emotional realities appeared. Strange things happen when an actor is changing into character. Maybe it is something about being close to the body, undressing the body or discussions about aspects of the body that creates ways into the inner person. People change the way they behave as they move into character and that seems to bring out different realities, not just relating to the character and sometimes not relating to anything in particular. The way that a fascination is created by an actor changing him- or herself into someone else is also intriguing. Almost always the character is more attractive (in all its complexity), and often this has

a very unsettling effect on the people around. It is strange how incredibly different the costumed body can be from the actor's body when he or she arrived. All these layers seem to create a 'shimmering' in the costumed body that is hard to explain.

I have also always been amazed at the effort people make to get dressed in a certain way. There are many examples, but, to take one, I was once dressing a TV presenter who told me that he could not stand clothes or the idea of being 'styled', and even that he never hung his suit up, only dropped it on the floor. He then went on to give me the most detailed brief of any that I have ever had for the look he wanted to achieve, including details such as how far the stitching had to be from the edge on the shirt placket and the size of the buttons on the cuffs. He had an idea of himself as rakish, and it took a lot to achieve that look for him. Despite his façade of carelessness, in practice he was obsessed with costume and what it portrayed and created.

I am fascinated by the way a costumed body becomes 'reality'. For an advertisement that I once worked on, we used a costume of Chewbacca from the *Star Wars* films, which was sent from Skywalker Ranch. In the long list of instructions in the contract was one that stated in no uncertain terms that the character must never be seen partly dressed, such as the actor walking to the set holding the head and putting it on when he got there. The actor must leave the wardrobe van dressed and remain fully costumed at all times in public. The effect worked for the other actors, observers and the actor alike. The wookiee became real just by pretending it was. On another occasion, I observed a street performer dressed in the costume of a small brown and white donkey in Pitt Street Mall and at Circular Quay in front of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney. His costume was quite simple and tatty, and he just stood there shaking his head, ringing a bell around his neck and doing other donkey-like movements. I watched the effect he had on passers-by, particularly on children. Mostly they were not too sure whether he was real or not. One little boy was quite disturbed by his presence and went up and hit him. One little girl stood looking at him for a long time and, as she left, turned around and blew him a kiss. It is especially this confusing and contradictory confluence of 'truth' in the artificial appearance that has intrigued me the most; it is a subtle, fascinating and constantly changing negotiation.

It is these strange feelings, experienced while observing the costumed body in the workplace and on the screen, that I am pursuing in this study. When I began to read dress and costume theory, I found that it did not reflect the observations that I had found important and wanted to investigate. Especially, it did not treat as primary the aspects of spontaneous fantasy, and the devotional and imaginative effort. I found that the theory was particularly estranged from valuing the emotional affect of costuming and dress embodied by the actor. It mostly analysed costume as a system of signs and, although that is important in costuming, this was not primarily the reality I was trying to identify. Costume is something to be looked at, but the looking *has* to have an emotional affect for the spectator. If there is no emotional affect, the costume has failed.

In my previous Master's in analytical psychology, I discovered that the psychology of C. G. Jung and his approach described a way of seeing that more closely fitted my experience with costume. This was especially so in the way it handled emotional components and also in the way it introduced, through the study of myths, strange figures and worlds whose effect was somehow not dissimilar to the strange effects of a costumed body that had resonated with me. Also, I had previously noticed that film-makers often reference a Jungian frame, because myths and legends deal with *images* in all their complexity and images work differently from words.

The primary problem is that the full expression of the costumed cinematic body cannot be fully understood through the modern meaning of the term 'symbol'. Of course there are theorists who feel similarly, and it is Jane Gaines's seminal essay 'Costume and Narrative: How Dress Tells the Woman's Story' (1990a) that I take as my stepping-off point. In this essay, Gaines explains narrative and 'spectacular' costume and how spectacular costume tells an emotional story (Gaines 1990a, pp 184, 186). At the end of the essay, she states that she in turn was influenced by Roland Barthes's discussion of an emotional affect that he had identified in his analysis of some cinematic images created by the film-maker Sergei Eisenstein and that did not fit in with a semiotic analysis (Gaines 1990a, p 211). In his essay 'The Imagination of the Sign' (Barthes 2000, pp 211–17), Barthes notices the loss of traditional symbolic consciousness, through which he suggests we might be able to better understand more complicated

emotional images. Barthes notes that when images are interpreted through a traditional symbolic model, there is less concern with narrative developments or 'the formal relation of signs' (Barthes 2000, p 214). It is through a traditional symbolic consciousness that Jung pursues his analysis of myth and this is why I decided to pursue my study of cinematic costume through a Jungian understanding. I look particularly at hero's journey myths because they underlie so many films and contribute to their effect and affect, and because the myths themselves are so evocative.

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OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

In **Chapter 1**, I expound the theory that underpins my study. Firstly I give the background of spectacular costume theory, as described by Gaines. I then explain how the symbol developed in relation to psychoanalysis and how the psychologist Jung based his study of myth on an understanding of symbol in the traditional sense. Jungian theory, however, has been neglected, and most film theory that uses psychoanalysis depends upon the work of Jacques Lacan, which, although interesting, is also inadequate to my task. I go on to show how the Jungian frame offers an opportunity to look at film in a way that opens up the field of theory through mythology. I end the chapter with an overview of the hero's journey mythic template.

In **Chapter 2**, 'Gods and Goddesses, Kings and Queens', I pick up on a point made by Sarah Street in her book *Costume and Cinema: Dress Codes in Popular Film* (2001). In her discussion of the spectacular appearance of Neo (Keanu Reeves) in *The Matrix* (1999), she maintains that the spectacular costume of the hero shows that the character is able to carry out his heroic destiny and escape the Matrix (Street 2001, p 98). In myth, heroes are often kings and queens, gods and goddesses, and sometime priests or shamans, and as such they carry attributes of culture and their deeds are symbolically restorative for the community. I discuss the development of kings and queens, and identify attributes that are common to history and the screen. I refer to the Sumerian myth of Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth (approximately 2000 BCE) to demonstrate that the hero embodies privileged knowledge that alludes to a

more vivid kind of reality and is indeed the kind of hero that can escape the Matrix.

Chapter 3, 'Transformative Bodies', takes up Sarah Gilligan's observation that costume is central to the transformation of Neo (Gilligan 2009, p 149). I also note that the motif of transformation is central to hero's journey myths. I continue by showing how the hero's body resonates with the kingly body. I move on to ancient Greece of 500 BCE and the mythology of Dionysus to investigate the significance of the mask, which was used both in religious ceremonies honouring the god and in Greek tragedy, the performance of which was also intended to honour the god.
I investigate the different kinds of transformation that are suggested by the iconography and mythology of Dionysus and Greek drama. This includes the way an actor changes into 'another self', as suggested by the classical scholar Erwin Rohde (1925, p 285). Finally, I look at the particular view of Attic theatre presented by Fredrick Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* (published in 1872) that identifies an aspect of the Dionysian as joyful transformational realisation through the body. Throughout the chapter I examine the *Matrix* trilogy and the hero Randy 'The Ram' Robinson in the Darren Aronofsky film *The Wrestler* (2008).

Finally, **Chapter 4**, 'The Body in Transition', discusses the rebirth motif that is prevalent in hero's journey myths. To experience a change of consciousness, the hero needs to make a sacrifice and that is felt as death. Because film is a visual medium, it is shown as death. I investigate various images of dying and death to see what death looks like and how those images function as a metaphor. I also examine transitions in rituals and myths through the images of penetration and dismemberment of the body and of stasis, as well as the role of the Orphic mask in representing a deathly holding still while a transfiguration is taking place behind it, and I then explore how that notion plays out on the bodies of Neo and Ram.

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THE MATRIX TRILOGY AND *THE WRESTLER*: PLOT SUMMARIES

I chose the Andy and Lana (formerly Larry) Wachowski's films *The Matrix* (1999), *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions* (2003) as the basis for my study because they made such a mark when they were released, especially with regard to the costuming; much has been written about it by costumers and cultural theorists alike. The films also follow a strict hero's journey mythic template structure. *The Wrestler* was also well received when it was released and uses parts of the mythic template, but in a different way, and also treats the image of the body in a different way. I will now briefly relate the plots of the movies to help the reader follow the discussion in the chapters that follow.

The Matrix opens with our hero Thomas Anderson (Keanu Reeves) working by day as a computer programmer and at night as a hacker who goes by the code name Neo. Neo is contacted by Morpheus (Laurence Fishburn) and Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss) and is told he is the One. The agents of the machines, led by Agent Smith (Hugo Weaving), discover Neo and try to stop him from finding out the truth about the Matrix. However, Morpheus makes Neo aware that the humans have been held prisoner within an artificial reality called the Matrix by a race of machines, which keep them alive in order to feed off them. Neo joins the rebel group in their efforts to free the humans. Neo is taken to see the Oracle (Gloria Foster), who tells him that the extent of his powers will have to be discovered by his own actions. We find Neo at the end of the first film having a spectacular fight with the agents. Having died and come back to life, he has taken on attributes of the magician and can stop bullets and fly.

The Matrix Reloaded opens with Neo, Morpheus and the rest of the group being informed by Niobe (Jada Pinkett Smith) that 250,000 machine sentinels are digging towards the underground hiding place of the rebel humans (which is called Zion) and will arrive and destroy them in seventy-two hours. Agent Smith (who was blown up at the end of the first film) has returned as a computer virus able to infect anyone and has his sights set on destroying Neo. Neo goes to see the Oracle again, and her prophecy is that Neo will prevent the destruction of Zion, end the war and restore peace. She also tells him he must go to the Source and that he will choose whether Trinity lives or dies. To get to the Source, Neo will need the Keymaker, an exile program currently held captive by the Merovingian (Lambert Wilson) and his wife Persephone (Monica

Bellucci), who are an old and dangerous program. In the Source is the architect of the Matrix (Helmut Bakaitis), who explains that, although Zion is about to be destroyed, if Neo stays he will survive. Morpheus's ship, the *Nebuchadnezzar*, is blown apart. Neo goes back, saves Trinity and stops the attack of the Sentinels, but collapses; the film ends with him in the sick bay of *Hammer*, a ship that has come to save them.

The third film, *The Matrix Revolutions*, opens as the Sentinels continue to head towards Zion; if they are not stopped within hours, the human rebels will become extinct. Neo finds himself held captive by the Merovingian at a train station, and Trinity and Morpheus try to save him. Agent Smith's power is growing and threatening not only the Matrix but also the Source, which provides power for the Matrix and everything else. Neo is saved by Morpheus and Trinity and must go to the machine mainframe and strike a bargain with the machines, personified by the Deus Ex Machina. Neo warns the machines that Smith (who has by now assimilated every human and program within the Matrix) is beyond the machines' control and will soon assault the Source. He offers to help to stop Smith in exchange for a ceasefire on Zion. This is agreed and in that effort both he and Agent Smith die. The film ends with the sun rising on the new world of the Matrix.

The Wrestler is a much simpler film than the *Matrix* trilogy. The wrestler Randy 'the Ram' Robinson (Mickey Rourke) is twenty years into a career that has left his body brutalised and his bank account as empty as his emotional life. A heart attack causes him to reassess his life and he gives up wrestling. He also tries to regain a connection with his estranged daughter and to develop a romantic relationship with Cassidy (Marissa Tomei), a lap dancer whom he sees regularly at a club. His attempts at the relationships fail; he finds himself back in the ring in a rematch with The Ayatollah (Ernest Miller) and he dies.

Chapter 1

The Theory

'*Theoria* shares a root in Greek with *Theatron*, a theatre, which means literally a place for seeing.'

Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (2008), p 124

'[F]ilm in some way articulates the modern myths that a culture finds relevant. This is a very savvy modern myth.'

Francis Flannery-Dailey, *Return to Source: Philosophy and* The Matrix, (2004)

FILM COSTUME THEORY

Two approaches

Since the early 1990s, there have been two primary academic approaches to cinematic costume theory, both of which are described by Jane Gaines in her seminal essay 'Costume and Narrative: How Dress Tells the Woman's Story' (1990a, pp 180–211). In this essay, Gaines identifies two ways of interpreting costume. One she calls 'narrative costume', which she explains is also the traditional approach, where the primary function of costuming in 'realist cinema' is that costume reinforces narrative ideas and where 'every element in the mise-en-scène … serves the higher purpose of the narrative' (ibid., p 181).[1] These images relay literal information to the viewer about the characters — for example, the period in which their story is set, occupational class and gender attributes. Gaines particularly discusses the costumes of the renowned designer of the sound era Adrian (1903–59), best known for *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) and his many costumes designed for Joan Crawford. To illustrate what she means

[1] *Mise-en-scène* literally means 'put into the scene' and refers to the material objects that we see in the design of the set.

by narrative costume, Gaines describes the Adrian-designed collar of Crawford's gown in *No More Ladies* (1935) as 'far beyond the function of characterisation', comparing it to the collar of the dress worn by Crawford's character in *Grand Hotel* (1932), which 'helps to create the characterisation' (ibid., p 192).

On the other hand, spectacular costume, Gaines argues, accesses 'the realm of emotion and compensates for the expressive deficiencies of the dialogue' (ibid., p 181). The spectacular costume plot

> 'organizes an idiolect with its own motifs, variations, surprises, anticipations, and resolutions which unfold in a temporality which does not correspond with narrative developments, whose climaxes occur in alternation with key dramatic scenes, in the undramatic moments'
> (ibid., p 205).

The key to her description of the spectacular is that it is 'startling and deviant' and bears no relation to the plot (ibid., p 206). The costuming has not been 'reined in', is excessive and incongruous, 'eludes meaning' and has its own story to tell (ibid., pp 203, 206).

In her development of the concept of spectacular costume, Gaines builds on Richard Dyer's important assertion that stars function as types (ibid., p 200). Gaines explains that when the hidden personality traits of the star are brought out, possibly by a costume designer, the 'uniqueness and individuation' that can occur direct our attention away from the way a star functions as a type (ibid., p 201). Dyer's type costuming belongs to the narrative style of costuming. Where costuming brings out an abundance of individuality, however, the excess fits the spectacular description of costume. Gaines also references Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* (1992) where he refers to '*reification*, which is exemplified by, among other things, the way a style of dress emerges from a film' (Gaines 1990a, p 11) as a way a costume can escape the narrative and be spectacular.

Gaines also develops her theory of the spectacular through the film genre of melodrama.[2] She refers to literary theorist Peter Brooks's description of

[2] The recent Italian film *I Am Love* (2009), directed by Luca Guadagnino, is a melodrama.

melodrama as 'rhetorical excess' (Gaines 1990a, p 204).[3] Melodramas keep 'one foot in everyday' life, but in other ways exceed the realism of class or history (ibid). The films to which she refers are major Hollywood studio films of the 1920s through to the 1950s. She cites iconic examples, such as *Now Voyager* (1942), *Dark Victory* (1939) and the majority of the Bette Davis films, because these films 'escape the strict realism of contemporary dress' (Gaines 1990a, p 204).

Gaines also sees her theory of the body and costume, which in her view are inextricably linked (Gaines 1990b, p 2), as a continuation of feminist film theory, in particular Laura Mulvey's discussion of the female body on screen, which 'freezes the flow of the narrative for the erotic contemplation of men' (Mulvey 1998, p 272), in a period more hospitable to a study of costume (Gaines 1990b, p 3). Mulvey drew on psychoanalysis, particularly on the ideas of socophilia (or voyeurism), feminism and cinephilia, to explain some images on screen that Gaines would possibly describe as spectacular (Mulvey 1998, p 272). Gaines also mentions the influence of Elizabeth Wilson, who voiced the notion that feminism was 'reductive and moralistic in its attitude toward the female body' (Gaines 1990b, p 6). According to Gaines, Elizabeth Wilson's *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (1985) heralded a change in attitude.

In the wake of Gaines and the spectacular

Other costume theorists have taken up and developed Gaines' idea and have responded to the idea of spectacular costume in their own way. Although Yvonne Tasker's book, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema*, does not refer specifically to Gaines, Tasker does give an account of the spectacularly excessive musculature of the male and female stars in action films of the 1980s in terms of a dominant disruptive discourse (1993, p 5).

In *Undressing Cinema*, Stella Bruzzi, uses the term 'iconic clothing' (1997, p 34), which in her view has the function of disrupting the narrative of a film 'to be admired and acknowledged in spite of the general trajectory of the film' (ibid.).

[3] Peter Brooks writes about plot narratives in novels. *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (1984) gives a great overview of narrative, including a psychoanalytical perspective. I presume Gaines is referring to *Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (Brooks 1995).

Like Gaines, Bruzzi recognises costume as a discourse that is not wholly dependent on the obvious structures of narrative and character for signification.

Patricia Calefato, in her essay 'Fashion and cinema' (Calefato 2004, pp 91–108), also develops the idea that visual expression through costume is not tied only to the written plot. She theorises that cinema and fashion are two great reservoirs of myth and cult (ibid., p 94). She goes on to state that what counts in the cinema is not so much the adhesion of the clothed body to a model established by the 'real' (a Lacanian term that I will discuss in more detail in the section on psychoanalysis), but the degree of 'verisimilitude contract' drawn up between the film and its viewers (ibid., p 92). She also refers to 'stimulating the viewer's imagination' as a semiotic activity that takes the viewer into 'other worlds' (ibid.).

***The Matrix* and 'spectacular' costume**

The release of the *Matrix* films in 1999 and 2003 generated extensive commentary and scholarly debate among costume and film theorists, often motivated by the films' costumes, with questions about their authenticity and 'reality' in the context of the plot trajectory that referenced Gaines' spectacular theory. In *Costume and Cinema: Dress Codes in Popular Film*, Sarah Street argues that the function of spectacular costume is to suggest to the audience visually that the characters are capable of undermining the Matrix (Street 2001, p 98). (It is this idea of Street's that I develop in Chapter 2.) The problem, however, is that because the search for 'the truth' in *The Matrix* is a central focus of the film's narrative, the costumes become a parody of the 'real' in the postmodern context (ibid., p 87). The costuming also shows that the postmodern fashioned appearance, with 'its obsession with surface, novelty and style for style's sake' (Wilson 1985, p 11), offers 'a range of signifiers that exceed their material existence' (Street 2001, p 99). This creative presentation has a destabilising effect that invites discussion around different themes. Street suggests fetishism and androgyny (ibid., p 88).

Pamela Church Gibson argues that the film shows costume as an 'element of the spectacular in its own right, working separately from the plot and character and evoking responses within the audiences, independent of their identification with character and situation' (Church Gibson 2005, p 115). She points out the contradictory relationship of the authentic with the 'real', and of the inauthentic

(or spectacular) with the 'unreal'. She goes a long way to unpack, as does Street, the moralistic expectation of relating costume to 'truth', an authentic aspect of self, when actually costuming may just as well relate to other aspects of self. She explains that with Neo, for example, the spectacular costuming is in stark contrast to the mythic 'collapsed on a pyre king-must-die mode' (ibid., p 124): that is, the 'spectacular' contains a seed of hope for the future that is more 'real' imaginatively than what could be called the realistic expectations of the plot.

Most recently, Sarah Gilligan has moved the discussion of costume beyond clothes and has identified a change in the representation of the masculine appearance in recent sci-fi and action films (Gilligan 2008, p 149). She observes and emphasises the appeal of Neo's 'fluid kineticism', which is both spectacular and erotic (ibid., p 150), and different from the previously popular film image of what she calls 'an hysterical phallocentric appropriation of muscularity' (ibid., p 149). This refers to the previously popular body shapes of heroes like those portrayed by Arnold Schwarzenegger in *The Terminator* (1984) and *Predator* (1987), and by Sylvester Stallone in *Rocky* (1976) and *First Blood* (1982). Also embodied in Neo's more androgynous and slick 'look' is the idea that 'the real' is held only in the spectacular surface appearance and, because of this, it can more easily transform. The spectacle that has previously exceeded the plot becomes central. It is Gilligan's view that a different set of cultural values has emerged and is embodied in the heroic image of Neo.

Roland Barthes and 'the third meaning'

Right at the end of Gaines's essay, she refers to an essay by Roland Barthes (1915–80), 'The third meaning' in *Image—Music—Text* (1977, pp 52–68). Through an analysis of some stills from the famous Sergei Eisenstein films *Ivan the Terrible,* parts I and II, (1944, 1958), Barthes explains that the 'third meaning' is not the 'obvious meaning' (ibid., p 55), which, he argues, is what the film-maker means by the images. The second meaning is what he calls the symbolic — in the modern meaning of the word, a 'this-means-that analogy' (Hillman 1983b, p 58). The 'third meaning' is what he calls 'the obtuse meaning', that is, something that is hard to grasp, that leads us out of the material image.[4] He

[4] I am not sure if Barthes knew of it but D. W. Winnicott (1896–1971) developed the term 'third area' to refer to a place between internal and external reality, which is in Winnicott's view the location for play, creativity and cultural activity. It is also the locus of potentially creative

says it carries emotion and has an extremely dense meaning. Gaines wonders if Barthes might be referring to the 'inexpressibility' and 'obtuseness' of the spectacular costume, which is what sparked her reflection in the first place (Gaines 1990, p 211).

In an earlier essay by Barthes entitled 'The imagination of the sign' (Barthes 2000), Barthes acknowledges that traditional symbolic consciousness in the modern day has crumbled. He also acknowledges the affective value of the traditional symbol, and admits its 'analytical consideration is not interested in the formal relation of signs' (ibid., p 214). Barthes description of 'the third meaning' is closer to the traditional meaning of symbolism, which, as he observes, is lost. I also take the position that the traditional meaning of symbolism has been lost and my study takes as its starting point Gaines's question whether the 'inexpressibility' and 'obtuseness' of the spectacular costume can be explained from the point of view of traditional symbolic consciousness. So what is symbolic consciousness and how did it develop into film and the study of costume?

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FREUD AND JUNG: MYTH AND SYMBOL

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), who trained as a neurologist, observed and described the theoretical value of treating dreams as a symptom or a paradigm for understanding the nature of neurosis and other psychical perceptions (Freud 1986a , p 101). This theory was published in 1900 in *Die Traumdeutung*, with the first English translation, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, published in 1913.[5] As part of his analysis of dreams, Freud drew on analogies and reflections from myth, particularly the legend of King Oedipus, to make clearer

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transformation. See particularly 'The Location of Cultural experience' in *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, (1966), 48, pp 368 – 372 in which Winnicott describes the term. In the paper Winnicott states he had been developing the idea since 1951 (p 368).

[5] Freud's publication received a 'muted but respectful reception' (Robertson 1999, p vii) from most of his colleagues and was not widely read for the first eight years. See Freud's preface to the second edition of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, vol. IV, p xxv, for Freud's description of the experience (Freud 1986a).

the inner experiences and patterns of behaviour that he observed in his patients. Freud observed that Sophocles' tragedies *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Colonus*[6] move the modern audience no less than they did the Greek contemporary audience. As he points out, 'As the poet brings Oedipus' guilt to light in the course of his investigation, he compels us to recognise our own inner life, where those impulses, though repressed, are still present' (Freud 1986a, p 262). It was from this beginning that Freud first began developing his theory of the Oedipus complex: 'It was perhaps ordained that we should all of us turn our first sexual impulses towards our mother, our first hatred and silent wishes against our father' (ibid., p 263). Overall, Freud drew the conclusion that the importance of myth, like dream, lies in how it gives voice to a feeling already within us, as strange as those images might seem in the contemporary world (ibid., pp 260–4). In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud demonstrated how the ancient myth of Oedipus continues to exist in the modern psyche and can offer explanations for images in modern dreams. [7]

The psychiatrist C. G. Jung (1875–1961) was strongly influenced by Freud's great discovery[8] and was particularly inspired to investigate myths. Myths, he said (and it is here that he agreed with Freud), 'demonstrate the far reaching analogy between the psychological structure of the historical products and those of modern individuals' (Jung 1970, p 5). Quite early in his relationship with Freud, Jung found that he could not agree entirely with Freud's way of interpreting the meanings of myth and symbol. In Jung's memoir, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, first published in 1963, he stated that, in general, he could not agree with Freud's 'concretistic terminology' (Jung 1983, p 175), 'the constricting atmosphere of Freudian psychology and its narrow outlook' (Jung 1970, p xxiii), and in particular that sexuality was 'the sole expression of psychic wholeness' (Jung 1983, p 192). Jung had also observed a curious emotional

[6] The two Oedipus tragedies by Sophocles (496–406 BCE) were performed at the Great Dionysia in Athens. Easterling states that *Oedipus Rex,* or *Tyrannus,* was undated and performed between 496-406 and *Oedipus at Colonus* in 401. (Easterling 2000, p 101).

[7] For further developments in Freud's discussion of myth see *Totem and Taboo* (1912-13) and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939).

[8] As were Otto Rank (1884-1939), including *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (first published in 1909) and to which I refer later, Geza Roheim (1981-1953), including *The Eternal Ones of the Dream: A psychoanalytic interpretation of Australian Myth and Ritual* (first published in 1945).

response in Freud (ibid., p 178) when Freud was exhorting a scientific approach towards his favourite themes, particularly sexuality.[9] Jung went on to write a complex and extensive study of myth called *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, published in 1912. Jung's book was translated into English as *Psychology of the Unconscious* in 1916, and the much-revised version, called *Symbols of Transformation*, was published in English in 1952.[10] Through an analysis of the letters of an anonymous Miss Miller, originally published by Théodore Flournoy in *Archives de psychologie* (1906), Jung's study drew 'symbolistic parallels' (Jung 1970, p xxv) and 'ethnological parallels' through an elaboration of 'historical material' to gain 'insight into the foundation of psychology' (ibid., pp 5, 6). What emerged from the study was an elaboration and description of the journey of the mythic hero, of which the Oedipus story was one example. The book cost Jung Freud's friendship.

In the study of ancient myths and images, contrary to Freud's idea that through the Oedipus story he would be able to create 'some kind of dogma' (Jung 1983, p 191), Jung found that another kind of thinking emerged:

> the activity of the early classical mind was in the highest degree artistic: the goal of its interest does not seem to have been how to understand the real world as objectively and accurately as possible, but how to adapt it aesthetically to subjective fantasies and expectations (ibid., p 21).

It was a world where 'Everything had its demon' or 'was conceived anthropomorphically or theriomorphically … even the sun's disc was given wings or little feet to illustrate its motion' (ibid). 'Thus there arose a picture of the universe which was completely removed from reality, but which corresponded exactly to man's subjective fantasies' (ibid). Jung refers to this kind of thinking as fantasy thinking or mythological thinking (ibid., pp 22–4). By comparison, directed thinking or scientific thinking — the rational and objective view of things (ibid., p 29) — is a modern idea, an intensive train of thought working itself out more or less in verbal form that is directed outwards

[9] Much has been written on how the personal life and history of Freud influenced his theories. For an overview, see 'The Problem of Freud's Character, *Noch Eimal*', in Ernest Becker's *The Denial of Death* (1973, pp 93–124).

[10] For more detail on the Freud/Jung conflict see *The Freud/Jung Letters* (1974).

to the world and to some extent is 'reality thinking' (ibid., p 11). The fantasy or mythological way of thinking equates with the traditional symbolic, in the sense Barthes longed for, and the directed or reality thinking to the sign.

The religious scholar Gerhart Ladner (1905–93) explains the historical change in our way of thinking about myth and symbol in his study of 'Medieval and Modern Understanding of Symbolism' (Ladner 1979). Like Jung, he says that in the ancient world the word 'symbol' meant 'something beyond the realm of sense experience' (ibid., p 224) or 'a collecting of visible forms for the demonstration of invisible things' (ibid., p 225). By the Middle Ages, he says, symbol had assumed two meanings: it could mean a sign, referring to such items as 'the so-called insignia, political or ecclesiastical signs of rulership or office such as royal or imperial crowns, sceptres, mantles etc' (ibid., p 225); and it also retained its metaphorical meaning. It is only in the last hundred years or so, he continues, that the meaning of symbolism has become problematic (ibid., p 228). He explains that semiotics, as developed by Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) and Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913),[11] and the structuralism of Saussure, as developed by anthropologist Claude Lévi–Strauss (1908–2009), described a different way of thinking about myth and symbol that had been evolving since the Middle Ages. In the structuralist interpretation of myth and symbol, the systems of god and man 'live together in groups formed by binary opposites' (ibid., p 229). These polarities are symbolic in the structuralist sense because they can be reduced to culture and nature and, ultimately, life and death (ibid.). Ladner goes on to state that, for the Christian of the Middle Ages, 'The universe was an exemplarist and anagogical as well as analogical, a hierarchical as well as gradualistic multiverse; it was in no way a structure of irreducible opposites' (ibid., p 230). As Jung had noted, to the ancients the mythical mode of thought was an indistinct mist of the fantastical, whereas by the late nineteenth century thinking had switched to the materialistic side (Jung 1970, p 20). According to the psychologist James Hillman (1926–), the modern symbol or sign has come to have a 'this-means-that' correspondence (Hillman 1983b, p 58), or a 'formal relationship of signs', as pointed out by Barthes (Barthes 2000, p 214). By comparison, the traditional symbol is an 'instrument of

[11] Saussure's influential work, *Course in General Linguistics*, was published in 1916.

participation' (Barthes 2000, p 214). It was the modern meaning of symbol that Freud used in his *Interpretation of Dreams*.[12]

The Jungian symbol

There are some basic differences between how the Freudian symbol (the modern interpretation) and the Jungian symbol (the traditional interpretation) work in the psyche, and it might be useful at this point to summarise them. The Freudian (modern) symbol, explains Jung, 'exhausts itself in stressing the importance of the cause' (Jung 1981, p 23). A reduction establishes itself as cause and end in itself and the amount of energy created cannot lead anywhere outside of an already established system of ideas, historical and social. In *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* (1981), Jung's description emphasises the *purpose* of the symbol. A symbol is the spontaneous emergence of an image 'whose value quantum exceeds that of the cause' (ibid., p 25), and the purpose of a symbol is that enough energy will be created to result in a development in the personality. When the libido[13] regresses to an intellectual concept and stays there, Jung gives the example of 'a mother fixation', which is given as the cause, and then the psyche becomes fixed. If instead we find the *imago* of the mother, that is the symbolic idea of the mother, then Jung explains we have 'memory associations' that lead us out of that fixed meaning (ibid., p 23). The symbol makes it possible to move towards an (unknown at the time) aim, possibly, Jung suggests, a more 'intellectual or spiritual system' (ibid.). 'What to the causal view is *fact* to the final view is *symbol*' (ibid., p 24). The energy system of the symbol 'leads to unlimited interchangeability' (ibid., p 22). Thus, finding new symbols is important both psychologically and socially. 'Unless facts are symbolically interpreted the causes remain immutable substances which go on operating continuously' (ibid., p 25). In *The Matrix*, there is reference to Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994), which is owned by Thomas

[12] Interestingly, Peter Brooks observes that since about the mid-eighteenth century there has been an increased need for plot, whether in fiction or the social sciences. His view is that it happened as history replaced theology as the key imaginative discourse (1984, p 6).

[13] In Jung's terminology 'life energy', in Freud's 'sexual energy' (Jung 1981, p 17). See *The Freud/Jung Letters* (1974), which elucidates the differences. Freud's letter 169 states 'First, your difficulty regarding "my" libido. In the first sentence of the *theory of Sexuality* there is a clear definition in which I see nothing to change: The analagon to hunger, for which in the sexual context, the German language has no word except the ambiguous "*Lust*." '

Anderson, our hero. In his book Baudrillard describes a world that is governed by known meanings, facts and signs, which leaves room 'only for the orbital recurrence of models' (Baudrillard 1994, p 3). From the reference to the book we can deduce that the Matrix is also a world that is immutable, and the journey taken by our hero will be to escape from the Matrix's limited way of living. He will need to find the energy to transform. Symbols act as transformers, that is they allow the personality to develop. As Jung states, 'We cannot say that psychical energy is transformed into life, only that its transformation is the expression of life' (Jung 1981, p 42). Emphasis on the modern meaning of symbol leads to a more or less exclusive concern with the known and material nature of experience through cultural conventions. It can be a fluid process, but is negotiated only within the social context. The problem with the modern symbol is not that it does not have an important function, but that its usefulness is questioned when it does not result in an effective change of energy, and it becomes meaningless when it is applied 'exclusively and schematically' (ibid., p 46).

Jung and many post-Jungians, in their varying ways, see the world of myth as this place of transformation, through imagination and fantasy. Psychologist and cultural commentator James Hillman is extensively involved with understanding the underlying purpose and make-up of myth, and emphasises that fantasy and myth are imaginary creations of our inner lives (Hillman 1992, p. 108). Hillman acknowledges his particular debt to Jung in terms of his explanation of the 'fantasy-image' and its relationship to myth (Hillman 1991, p 22).[14] Hillman's view of myth is that it is a fundamental function of the psyche to create images, symbols, that are a prime reality and are not only grounded in the 'bio-chemical, socio-historical and behavioural', but create intimacy with the *mytho-poetic*, that is, fantasy and imagination (Hillman 2006, p 153). Hillman proposes an analogical method — 'this is like …' — for the discussion of images (symbols) rather than the allegorical method — 'this means that' — as developed by Freud and his followers (Hillman 1983b, p 58). This understanding follows Jung's theory, in that the mythological image or motif can then point toward numberless interconnections. This approach keeps us

[14] Hillman was Director of Studies at the Jung Institute from 1960 until 1969 and went on to develop his own 'archetypal psychology'.

methodologically steeped in the image's paradoxical and complex nature, the reduction of which denies the image's symbolic nature, so that 'everything belongs — nothing is denied or excluded' (Hillman 1992, p 104).

It is a particular concern of Hillman's that 'the realm of sensate images' (Hillman 2006, p 152), the aesthetic display, has been disparaged, by the logical (ibid., p 153). This is the concern that Barthes also expressed. Hillman's view is that sensual images are important, in that they 'direct our longings towards ideals, a vision to contemplate' (ibid., p 152). He goes on to say that aesthetics is 'inherently related to the world and the primary way we take part in it' (ibid., p 153), and he considers this to be part of the mythical imagination.
As mentioned earlier, it is Calefato's view that cinema and fashion are two great reservoirs of myth and cult (Calefato 2004, p 94). Hillman also believes that cinema has a symbolic nature, that 'Every film, every character or body in a film, is carefully crafted to make visible, aesthetic possibilities', and that merely by drawing our attention to something it becomes alive (Hillman 2006, p 34). By being realised, the image is introduced into our imagination and becomes a psychic reality (ibid., p 33). Images announce themselves and bear witness to their presence by showing us what form they take. Hillman points out that the word 'entertainment' means 'holding between' ('enter', between; 'tain', holding), referring to something that happens between the reader and the writer (in our case, between the viewer and the screen). If a symbol such as a costumed body is correctly executed, it will identify the time and place as a fundamental function, but in such a way that it moves the observer to experience something more; what that is will be infinitely varied. The importance of drawing mythic parallels is that it opens up the specific context and shows how 'symbols appear to the imagination in general through the history of art, religion and folklore' (Hillman 1977, p 62). When the symbol carries out its metaphorical function, we find we are in a world that enlivens and invigorates our own experience. 'Entertainment', states Hillman, 'keeps that world of fantasy, of imagination and psyche alive and happy and well' (Hillman 1983b, p 7).

Jung and archetypes

Jung's theory of archetypes developed from his investigation into the patterns of myth.[15] It is this that is most commonly referred to when a Jungian method is mentioned in film theory. Jung's theory of archetypes offers a way out of the personal nature of experience (Campbell 1993, p 19). Jung explains that this is because archetypes are 'fantasy pictures of an impersonal nature which cannot be reduced to experiences in the individual's past' and like the morphological elements of the human body they are inherited (Jung and Kerenyi 1993, p 102): that is, we are born into a world where archetypes are provided for us by culture, art, the world itself and perhaps by biology. Jung called these 'pre-existent forms of apprehension' archetypes or primordial images. Hillman also states that the primary and irreducible language of these archetypal patterns is the metaphorical discourse of myths.

So it could be said that the traditional symbolic consciousness was picked up and theorised by Jung more than by Freud and indeed was in part the reason for Jung's withdrawal from his collaboration with Freud. Although Jung and Freud had their differences, Jung clearly states that, when Freud referred to the Oedipus myth in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, he made the important point that there is 'an identity of fundamental human conflicts that is independent of time and place' (Jung 1970, p 4). Mythologist Joseph Campbell points out that no matter what is thought of their specific interpretations, Freud and Jung showed that 'the logic, the heroes, and the deeds of myth' are alive in the modern mind (Campbell 1993, p 4).

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[15] To quote Campbell, 'As Dr Jung points out in *Psychology and Religion* the theory of the archetypes is by no means his own invention' (Campbell 1993, p 18). For a description of sources in the theory of archetypes, see Campbell 1993, pages 17–19 .

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND FILM STUDIES

Although psychoanalysis and film were both born at the end of the nineteenth century,[16] psychoanalysis did not enter film theory substantially until the 1970s (Creed 1998, p 77).[17] It was the rewriting of Freud by Jacques Lacan (1901–81) from a structuralist perspective in the postwar period in Paris and the uptake of Lacan's theory first by Jean-Louis Baudry and then by Christian Metz (1931–93) that gave psychoanalysis its strong position (Creed 1998, p 79; Hayward 2000, p 300).

Very briefly, the dominant stream of psychoanalytical interpretation of film can be summarised in the following way. Baudry and Metz initially took up Freud's libido drives and Lacan's idea of the 'mirror stage' (Hayward 2000, p 300), which Lacan defines as 'the sight in the mirror as the ego ideal' (Lacan 1964c, p 257). Metz also went on to refer to Lacan's 'imaginary', 'symbolic' and 'real' phases of child development (Metz 1985, p 6). Metz thought that Lacan's 'imaginary' phase found expression in the fact that spectators imagined themselves to be the characters on the screen (Metz 1985, p 57). Lacan's 'symbolic' phase is when the child moves into the laws of society, the laws of the father. This phase is described by film theorist Barbara Creed, interpreting Metz, as the child moving into 'awareness of sexual difference and of the self as fragmented' (Creed 1998, p 81). Metz identifies a narrative structure in films

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[16] The Lumière Brothers presented their first films, about a minute in length, in December 1895 in the Salon Indien of the Grand Café in Paris. Their best-known film was *L'Arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat* (Arrival of a train at La Ciotat, 1895) and looked so 'real' that people fled from the cinema. In America the first film of Thomas Edison to be shown publically was *Annabelle the Dancer*, 'featuring Annabelle Whitford Moore performing an energetic dance in a long flowing gown'. The film was hand-tinted and shown at Koster and Bial's Music Hall in New York City in 1896 (Dixon and Foster 2008). Surrealism and psychoanalysis was particularly influential in film-making in the 1920s and 1930s, for example, the films by Luis Buñel (1900–83), such as *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), and *La Souriante Mme Beudet* (1923) by Germaine Dulac (1882–1942) (see Barbara Creed 1998 and Susan Hayward 2000). In these films the interior life of the character was shown and filmic representation was given to the rationality and irrationality of the unconscious and dream states.

[17] See Lee Worth Bailey's essay 'Skull's lantern' (1986) for an interesting study of the development of the 'magic lantern', or the slide projector, and its development into the movie camera. Bailey draws analogies with the idea of psychic projection discussed by Freud.

that is based on the Oedipus myth (Metz 1985, p 33). He sees the hero as 'a male protagonist, who, after resolving a crisis and overcoming a "lack", then comes to identify with the law of the father, while successfully containing or controlling the female figure, demystifying her threat or achieving union with her' (Creed 1998, p 81). Metz theorises that the 'symbolic' when applied to the cinema contains Lacan's idea of loss and lack because the screen is not real. Creed states that, according to Metz, disavowal and fetishism also mark the Oedipal cycle narrative, because a film is 'purely' a symbolic–imaginary site, and therefore the 'real' in terms of the cinematic representation is a code of absence. In the realm of such absence, the image on the screen is fetishised so that it can be loved (Metz 1985, p 57). As mentioned earlier, Laura Mulvey picked up on the language of psychoanalysis, in particular the ideas of fetish and castration (Mulvey 2009, p xv), to express her ideas about the female body on screen. Her essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' was first published in 1975 and influenced not only film theory in general, but particularly the field of film costume theory, by introducing the theoretical possibility and concerns of a female spectator.

Jungian film studies

As I stated earlier, when a Jungian method is mentioned, it generally refers to Jung's description of the archetypes. According to Creed, writers interested in psychoanalysis rejected the Jungian theoretical perspective on film 'for what they perceived to be an underlying essentialism … that is, a tendency to explain subjectivity in unchanging universal terms' (Creed 1998, p 78). In my reading of Jungian theorists, my primary objective is to facilitate an understanding of the cinematic image in a field that has become, according to some, very narrow.[18]

[18] See, for example, Jackie Stacey's view that psychoanalytic theory has tended towards 'sameness and fixity' in its outlook and is 'a universal model of cinematic spectatorship which is unable to account for [cinema's] specific forms and located pleasures' (Stacey 1994, pp 133, 227). See also Steven Shaviro's *The Cinematic Body* (1993): in October 2008, he posted an essay called 'The Cinematic Body Redux', in which he states that in writing *The Cinematic Body* he tried to circumvent 'Psycho-analytical/Lacanian film theory' and 'image phobia' with a post-structuralist approach to the cinematic body (the spectator's body), using the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. He was particularly influenced, he states, by Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1983), a book that specifically tries to turn Freudian

In the introduction to their book, *Jung and Film* (2001), Christopher Hauke and Ian Alister claim that the aim of the post-Jungian project is to 'question styles of thinking that hierarchise "truths" ' and that it offers a fresh approach that highlights 'pluralism' (Hauke and Alister 2001, p 2). For the most part, but by no means always, this is attempted through addressing the meaning of symbol and sign. As early as 1979, Don Fredrickson, Associate Professor of Film at Cornell University, published his article 'Jung/Sign/Symbol/Film Part 1' (Frederickson 1979). He explains that his need to write the article arose from his growing inability to account for 'the felt *power* of certain images, films and filmmakers', as well as from an inability to 'satisfactorily articulate the meanings of some very meaningful works' that resulted from the growing conviction that the current points of reference were too narrow (ibid., p 167). Fredrickson describes 'the distinctions between sign and symbol and between a symbolic attitude and a semiotic one' and suggests that the symbolic attitude proposed by Jung overcomes some of those inabilities (ibid.). He goes on to give an extensive comparison of the models of thought in the theories of Freud, Lacan, Metz, Barthes and Jung, and the use of their approaches to symbol and sign in film analysis, which I have only been able to touch on in this chapter. He concludes that to deal with film images symbolically is not to reduce them to elementary factors but to engage with the film's own relatively unknown task (ibid., p 189) and to open up the images imaginatively. Archetypes may describe some commonly recognised larger patterns in a given textual context, like genres and types in film, but it is the meaning of symbols that opens up 'endless possibilities' of meaning for the spectator.

More recently, John Izod, Professor of Screen Analysis in the Department of Film and Media Studies at the University of Stirling, Scotland, has described the critical methodology of approaching the symbol through 'active imagination' in order to elucidate the traditional symbol in a way described by Jung, Hillman and Fredrickson, a method (as mentioned earlier) that Hillman describes as 'this is like …' (Hillman 1983, p 58). What Hillman advocates, in Izod's view, is to approach the image through a 'naked, emotionally unguarded self exposure to the symbol, which should be encountered and watched as if it were alive'

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thinking upside down, in that *sentio* precedes *cogito*, that is, perceiving or feeling precedes thinking (Shaviro 2008).

(Izod 2000, p 280). Izod suggests taking the images from films out of the story line and slowing down the forward movement of the plot (which fits in well with a study of spectacular costume). He says external amplification does not only include 'folkloric, mythological or religious material but commonly refers to metaphoric material in the same or other narrative genres or art forms' (ibid., p 282). It can happen that clusters of images share not only an emotional charge but also 'a schemata that allows the spectator to unlock meaning' (ibid., p 281). Izod's methodology recognises the function of the textural analyst's subjectivity, as well as looking towards the possibilities that resonate in other realms. Mythological images are particularly resonant, because it is myths that have refined the concerns of human history into fascinating yet recognisable stories and images, in either their grander patterns or their symbols. A comparative analogy 'enriches the significance of those texts that can sustain the comparison by setting them against the backdrop of legends and myths both ancient and modern' (Izod 2001, p 7). He adds that 'This is not done as an end in its own right, for myth has an important function in the understanding of human psychology', in that myth and its symbols form an imaginative response that connects us not only to our inner selves but to similar images in other times and places, and are the 'the ineradicable traces of dreams, reveries, desires, and fears that have touched many people' (ibid.). Izod also explains that when a film expresses an undercurrent of collective feeling that audiences accept (whether they verbalise it or not), it also contributes to 'shaping myths of our time' (ibid., p 8).

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HERO'S JOURNEY MYTHS

Many films, consciously or not,[19] are informed by 'the hero's journey', a mythic template that is described by Joseph Campbell (1904–87) in his seminal book of comparative mythology, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1993). Campbell's book, in turn, was informed by the investigations into myth and symbol by Freud and Jung, as described earlier, as well as by the work of other scholars of

[19] For example, listen to Australian director George Miller speak of being initially an 'unwitting servant' to these mythic patterns in the creation of his film *Mad Max* (1979) (Miller 2010).

mythology[20], ethnologists,[21] anthropologists[22] and literary figures.[23] Campbell identified a persistent pattern found in the myths of many countries throughout history and throughout the world, which, although different in cultural detail, are based on one structure, which he called 'the hero's journey'.

Christopher Vogler (1949–), an executive in the development departments of the Disney studios, Fox 2000 Pictures and Warner Bros,[24] picked up on Campbell's study of myth,[25] the analytical psychology of Jung and films that had already worked to this formula,[26] and detailed the pattern, particularly for screenwriters, in a book that has been used widely, called *The Writers Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (Vogler 2007). Through Vogler's book, Campbell's and Jung's works became more widely disseminated[27] among screenwriters[28]

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[20] For example, particularly the works of Campbell's mentor, the Indologist Heinrich Zimmer (1890–1943); Otto Rank's *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*, originally published in 1914; and the work of the ancient Roman mythologist Ovid, whose much-referenced work *Metamorphoses*, was completed in 8 CE.

[21] For example, Arnold van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage*, originally published in French in 1909 and published in English in 1960.

[22] For example, James George Frazer's monumental collection of works, *The Golden Bough*, originally published in 1890.

[23] Campbell ascribes his use of the term 'monomyth' to James Joyce in *Finnegan's Wake* (Campbell 1993, p 30).

[24] Vogler is also credited as a writer of additional story material for *The Lion King* (1994) and *P. S. Your Cat is Dead* (2002).

[25] As did other screenwriting theorists Linda Seger (*Making a Good Script Great*, 1989) and James Bonnet (*Stealing Fire From the Gods: a Dynamic New Story Model for Writers and Filmmakers*, 1999).

[26] Vogler particularly looked at the George Lucas film *Star Wars* (1977) and also the Steven Spielberg film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) (Vogler 2007, p xxviii). Campbell worked with George Lucas on the writing of *Star Wars* (1977). See Campbell's discussion of the film's development in Bill Moyers' interviews in the TV mini-series and book, *The Power of Myth* (Campbell 1991).

[27] The structure was used so widely that it became criticised for being a 'quick-bucks formula' and a 'cure-all' for lazy film executives who were 'stifling the creativity' of screenwriters by insisting on its use (Vogler 2007, p xxix).

[28] The well-respected screenwriter and theorist Linda Aronson, whose work includes the Paul Cox film *Kostas* (1979), the mini-series adaptation of *The Young Wife* (1984) and the play *Dinkum Assorted* (1988), calls Vogler's work compulsory reading for scriptwriters (Aronson 2000, p 28).

and film-makers.[29] Important points made by Campbell, Jung and other theorists concerned with the perspective of traditional symbolic consciousness and also emphasised by Vogler are that the hero's journey is an inner journey as well as an outer one[30] and that a really good story must affect the spectator emotionally (Vogler 2007, p x). As film is a visual medium, the hero will be required to 'show' that he or she has incorporated the 'lessons of the road as part of his body' (ibid., p 209) and the audience must be able to see inner changes in 'her dress, behaviour, attitude and actions' (ibid., p 210).); that is, the film needs to 'show the change in their characters by behaviour and appearance rather than just by talking about it' (ibid., p 197).

The hero's journey: a brief outline

This section outlines the hero's journey template and illustrates how it works by referring to the first film in the *Matrix* series and *The Wrestler*.

The mythic template of the hero myth is basically made up of three parts, as described by Campbell:

> A hero ventures forth from the world of the common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.
>
> (Campbell 1993, p 30)

Vogler fleshes out Campbell's scenario with details that are more specific to film: Vogler's stages are given in bold in the discussion that follows.

The Matrix

The Matrix begins, after a short preface, by showing Thomas Anderson in **the ordinary world** as a hacker at home at night. The ordinary world is established

[29] In films such as *Titanic* (1990), *The Lion King* (1994), *The Full Monty* (1997), *Spider Man* (2002), *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006), *The Dark Knight* (2008) and *Wolverine* (2009).

[30] 'The passage of the mythological hero is only overground incidentally; fundamentally, it is inward — into depths where obscure resistances are overcome and long-lost, forgotten powers are revivified, to be made available for the transfiguration of the world' (Campbell 1993, p 29).

first so that a change can be seen when the hero answers the **call to adventure**, when he leaves his everyday world for the 'region of supernatural wonder' (ibid., p 30). That call comes to Thomas Anderson through the computer: 'Wake up Neo' is a call from Morpheus who believes he is the One. Campbell explains that the hero may be 'heralded' or 'summonsed', possibly to take on a historical undertaking or maybe to mark the dawn of a religious illumination, or even just to die (ibid., p 51). Campbell states that, as understood by the mystic, the call to adventure is the awakening of the self (ibid). Jung discusses the call as the question 'How am I to be creative?' (Jung 1970, p 49). Jung mentions the example of Miss Miller travelling to another country (ibid., p 39), or the spectral raven in Edgar Allan Poe's poem, which taps nightly on the door and reminds the poet of something that has been lost (ibid., p 52).

Neo goes to work the next day in a software company. 'The time has come to make a choice', says his manager who is admonishing him for being late. Neo begins the journey in the everyday world looking and feeling dull and lacking style. At work he wears a grey suit and tie — much less stylish than the government agents or machines that come to arrest him. Neo and Agent Smith are one and the same person, and Neo's battle is really within himself, as are all heroic battles. Morpheus contacts Neo in the office and tells him to escape, as the agents are after him. Morpheus tells him to go out through the window onto some scaffolding that is many storeys high, but Neo cannot do it because he is afraid; he **refuses the call** and is captured by the agents. At this stage, states Vogler, 'the hero is facing the greatest of all fears, terror of the unknown' (Vogler 2007, p 11).

After being interrogated by the agents, he is picked up by Trinity and taken to **meet with the mentor**, Morpheus, who 'gives advice, guidance or magical equipment' (ibid., p 12) and guides him into his new life. It is at this point that Thomas Anderson 'agrees to face the consequences' (ibid., p 12) and makes the decision to take the red pill; in so doing, he **crosses his first threshold**. He is freed from the Matrix, goes through a rebirth (represented as a baby) and joins the rebel humans on the ship the *Nebuchadnezzar*.

Upon taking the red pill, Neo begins the middle part of his journey. On the *Nebuchadnezzar* he is trained by Morpheus in the arts of culture and war: he undergoes many **tests** of strength, belief and spirit; he finds out who are his

allies and who are his **enemies**; the Matrix is explained; he is taught to use equipment and weapons, and he learns jujitsu. When he goes into the Matrix to battle the agents as a human, Neo is dressed in the high fashion of the day. It is the stylish version of the everyday clothes that humans wear in the Matrix: the sort of clothes, according to advertising and fashion magazines in the late 1990s when the film was made,[31] that aspirational (as it was called in advertising), successful people would wear at the end of the twentieth century. Neo is taken to see the oracle. This is the **approach to the innermost cave**, which Campbell calls 'the meeting with the goddess'. The oracle tells Neo what qualities he has and what his future will be. This is where he actually finds his inner ability, which he will later be able to put to use. Morpheus is then abducted by the agents, and Neo and Trinity must go in to save him; they must show cleverness, strength and courage. In the ensuing battle, **the central ordeal**, when Cipher, a fellow rebel human on the *Nebuchadnezzar*, turns on them, Neo decides to use the skills he has learned and he comes through the battle as one reborn into a new life.

When Neo and Trinity go into the Matrix to save Morpheus, Vogler calls this phase the **reward** or **seizing the sword**. Neo brings to the situation all that Morpheus has shown him, plus the knowledge from the Oracle. Neo explains it is not because he believes he is the One, but 'because I believe in something', as a human and not as a god. Believing in something is what makes him god-like, and, indeed, when Neo and Trinity storm the office building, not only is the action a spectacular showdown of martial arts and military prowess, but they are also spectacularly costumed as those who have transcended the limitations of their human form. Neo is a fashion and military saviour in his 'triumphal final outfit' (Strick 1999) — a long, flared, black leather trench coat with silver-buckled black boots, slim black pants and T-shirt, and dark sunglasses. The trench hides a selection of guns and gadgets for battle. Trinity appears in a black semi-shiny PVC fitted singlet top, tight pants and boots, with a silver-buckled hip belt and a matching trench coat, also ankle length and flared, and

[31] See, for example, Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren, Donna Karen and Prada in *Esquire* (1998), pp 89–97; *Emporio Armani*, fall/winter catalogue, 98/99; *International Male* mail order catalogue, 1998, pp 7–14; Kenzo, Gucci, Yogi Yamamoto and John Paul Gaultier in *Studio for Men*, Spring Summer 98/99, pp 28–30.

sunglasses. Neo has certainly transcended the dreary image of himself at the beginning at the film. He has drawn on his inner resources, and by doing so he has shown himself to be the One. On the way back to the ship, **the road back**, Neo has a final confrontation with Agent Smith who shoots him, and Neo appears to die. He is declared dead in the Matrix and on the *Nebuchadnezzar*. Trinity tells him she loves him and he comes back to life, **resurrected**. He then finds that he has amazing powers in his own body, and he is indeed the One.

In Neo's final scene we see him bring back to the Matrix, to culture, what he has learned about himself to save the people. This is the **return with the elixir**. In a short epilogue at the end of the film, Neo explains that the elixir is offering the people 'a world without rules and controls, without borders and boundaries, a world where anything is possible'. It is the figure of the returned hero, as Campbell explains, that can be the master of the house and move between worlds uncontaminated (Campbell 1993, p 229). Campbell explains that the image of the returned hero is one of wholeness, a master of mystery, a figure who fully experiences the paradox of two worlds in one (ibid., p 230). Neo puts on his sunglasses and flies into the sky. The first film is a complete journey, and Neo ends it in his transformed state, ready to bring change to the humans and looking like a fashion icon with sunglasses. The next two films in the *Matrix* series also use the template of the hero's journey. When *Matrix Reloaded* begins Neo appears dressed as a priest, showing he has made another transition and has moved himself even farther from an everyday image.

The Wrestler

The Matrix is a classic hero's journey: it hits all of Vogler's marks and the costuming is theoretically spectacular. *The Wrestler*, on the other hand, takes just some parts of the hero's journey and tells a different story, a trajectory closer to a tragic model, which will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 3. The costuming is more consistent with the traditional theoretical interpretation.

After a short preface showing Randy 'The Ram' Robinson, played by Mickey Rourke, in his early career as a champion wrestler, *The Wrestler* opens with Ram in **the ordinary world** after a wrestling match that appears to have been held at

a local school. He then goes home but has been locked out of his caravan because he has not paid the rent. He is shown asking for more hours at his job at a supermarket and after another fight in another community hall, goes to see Cassidy, his regular lap dancer at a local club. Ram's **call to adventure** comes when, after a particularly brutal fight, he has a heart attack and almost dies. Ram finds he cannot **refuse the call**. The doctor who tells him he has to quit wrestling and the pain in his body are his only **mentors**, although Cassidy points him in the right direction to some degree. He quits wrestling and, in Campbell's words, when the hero 'submits to the conciliating power of the threshold' and into the belly of the whale, he 'would appear to have died' (Campbell 1993, p 90). As examples Campbell cites the stories of Little Red Riding Hood swallowed by a wolf, and the whole Greek pantheon of gods, with the exception of Zeus, swallowed by their father Kronos (ibid., p 91). Ram begins the film in his glamorous wrestling clothes, but when he is trying to live a life without wrestling he appears in everyday clothes of jeans and a black, puffy jacket or at the supermarket with his Ram-like locks held back under a protective cap.

In Ram's **approach to the innermost cave** he tries to reconnect with his estranged daughter and to connect in a more complex way with Cassidy. As Campbell explains, however, some goddesses are unattainable and the scene with Cassidy where Ram thinks they have a connection, but Cassidy angrily denies it, further cuts Ram off from his forward movement towards his new life. Cassidy cannot bear to be vulnerable and Ram leaves, having learned nothing about himself. **The central ordeal** is possibly that he has to turn up to an appointment with his daughter. When Ram misses the appointment, his daughter tells him that she hates him and that she will not ever see him again. It is then Ram goes back to wrestling and dies. Vogler says that if something of value is not brought back from the innermost cave, the journey is meaningless. What is brought back could be a great treasure, like the Holy Grail that magically heals the land, or a simple experience or knowledge that might be useful to the community some day (Vogler 2007, p 18). Ram, however, was not given anything of value and we find him in his wrestling clothes again. He could not find it within himself to die to his old life and be reborn into another. He seems to have got caught at the **approach to the innermost cave** or **the**

central ordeal. Also, he could not find a mentor, or any allies, or learn any new skills on his journey.

Criticism of the hero's journey template

The idea of 'the hero's journey' has been criticised for being presented as a singularly masculine experience, because of the use of the word 'hero' and the focus on what are seen as typically masculine interests, such as war and battles, that are portrayed in the films most commonly related to the template, for example, *Star Wars* and *The Matrix*. The term 'hero' describes the quest, not the gender.[32] Izod notes that where the woman is the hero she may take another route, but the process of separation still marks important stages of the journey (Izod 2001, p 106), which is still a quest for self and wholeness. In the context I am using here, the hero's journey follows from Jung's model of the psyche and is intended to be used symbolically, that is metaphorically, to describe an inner experience of persons, male and female, who courageously move out of their everyday lives to face often frightening and difficult events, which, when integrated into the everyday world, are life-changing. The minute it becomes impossible to read it equally well in two different senses, the formula loses its enigmatic character, and its ambiguity and symbolic nature dies. To take the term 'hero's journey' literally is to be overly influenced by a reductive position. In addition, there are plenty of examples of females experiencing the process: for example, in myth there are the stories of Inanna, Persephone and Psyche, and in film there are Maria in *The Sound of Music* (1965), Clarice Starling in *Silence of the Lambs* (1991), Maggie Fitzgerald in *Million Dollar Baby* (2004) and Ofelia in *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006).[33]

[32] See Hillman's *Anima: Anatomy of a Personified Notion* (1985), in which he argues that the archetypal pattern, that is the mythic template, at its core is gender neutral.

[33] For an investigation of the feminine hero's journey, see Maureen Murdock's *The Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholeness* (1990) and John Izod's chapter in *Myth, Mind and Screen: Understanding Heroes of our Time* (2001) called 'The Quest of the Female Hero: *The Silence of the Lambs*'.

CONCLUSION

To put it simply, then, myths are fantastical stories on a grand scale that have been developed and refined over thousands of years and are the 'constantly repeated experiences of humanity' (Jung 1970, p 69). Symbols are the motifs that flesh out the patterns of myths and are culturally grounded in a time and place. In a traditional symbolic consciousness, the symbols of myths connect with the more broad-based patterns of mythic stories and make visible and understandable underlying psychic realities. That is, myths are stories *of* the external world but they are not just *about* the external world. In this way myths and their symbols are a 'momentary unity of outer and inner, material reality and perception, culture and body, history and experience' (Jenson 2004, p 7).

A study of costume through hero's journey myths from the position of a traditional symbolic consciousness referred to so nostalgically by Barthes (and which was the motivation for Gaines's study of spectacular costume) would bring to the study of film costume, at the very least, a different view from the current position.[34] A study from this theoretical position also offers a way of engaging with the costumed cinematic body that treats as central the emotional participation and involvement that I have noticed in my work. It also engages with the strange and transgressive images created for film in a way that allows the images to tell us their concerns. An engagement with film symbols through myth emphasises their reality, the importance of which is shown by the appearance of the mythic template in so many popular films today. In particular, a study from this position gives the opportunity for the 'inexpressibility' and 'obtuseness' (Gaines 1990a, p 211) of the spectacular appearance of the costumed cinematic body to be viewed not as a problem but as an expression of its imaginative body, which is the focus of Chapter 2, 'Gods and Goddesses, Kings and Queens'.

[34] In an email communication with Peter McNeil in late 2008, the film scholar Stella Bruzzi said she was unaware of any costume studies taking this approach.

Chapter 2

Gods and Goddesses ✧ Kings and Queens

An analysis of the spectacular costume of the hero

'A king without his insignia, naked, is not a king.'

Stanley Smith, 'The Practise of Kingship
in Early Semitic Kingdoms' (1958, p 29)

'Wealth is the focus of religious awe.'

Louis Gernet, 'Value in Greek Myth' (1981b, p 123)

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the spectacular appearance of the costumed bodies in Andy and Larry Wachowski's well-known films, collectively referred to as the *Matrix* trilogy. The first film, *The Matrix*, was released in 1999, and *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions* were both released in 2003. Much has been argued by costume theorists about the film's 'spectacular' display; it has been considered to be excessive and incongruous, making the plot narrative more demanding and complicated. This chapter specifically picks up Street's idea that the nature of spectacular costume, as developed by Gaines (see chapter 1), suggests to the audience visually that the characters 'are capable of undermining the Matrix' (Street 2001, p 98). In this chapter I will argue, through an analysis of hero myths that informs the plot of *The Matrix* series, that the spectacular costuming is a reflection of the hero as the ancient magician-king.

PREMISE

In her essay, Sarah Street maintains that spectacular display has an important narrative function in that 'it empowers characters by making them visually appealing' (Street 2001, p 98). According to Jung, the 'life force', the libido,[35] personifies itself in the figure of the hero. The hero's journey is based on 'the idea of development' (Jung 1981, p 22), individuation, or the possibility of 'unlimited interchangeability' (ibid.) through the psychic energy of the human figure. This means that the psyche is not rooted in the 'same immutable substance' (ibid.) and that, given 'the obvious assumption of a difference in potential' (ibid.), the renewed energy gives the hero endless possibilities to create her or his own reality. The appearance of the characters in *The Matrix* shows the possibilities of the hero. As Street also points out, 'clothes not only distract but they also intrigue, impress and carry with them a range of signifiers which exceed their material existence' (ibid., p 99), while Hillman notes, 'merely by [its] creation something 'becomes alive when our attention is drawn to it' (Hillman 2006, p 34).

Heroes are kings and queens

In multiple myths, the heroes are kings and queens, nobles, or their descendants; they can also be magicians, gods, goddesses, shamans or priests. If the heroes or protagonists in films seem often to be dressed in a way that far exceeds the context of the time-and-place story, they might be embodying the ancient magician-king or god-king. This would indeed give the hero a 'spectacular' appearance that carries with it 'a range of signifiers which exceed their material existence' (Street 2001, p 99).

In this chapter, then, I will argue that the spectacular appearance of heroes or protagonists of contemporary films is to some degree influenced by the idea that they are, indeed, as Gernet puts it, avatars of the 'primitive king' (Gernet 1981a, p 363). I will firstly show that the heroes of myths are kings and queens,

[35] 'Life force' is Jung's interpretation of the meaning of libido. For Freud libido is sexual energy. For more on Freud's view, see, for example, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in Volume XVIII of *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (Freud 1986e, pp 50–4). Jung's life force is not a 'mystical' thing, but basically deals with a whole range of human interests, according to different needs, not just through sex.

or are of noble birth, children of gods or, in some cases, have become a god. Then I will offer an idea of how magicians and priests came to become kings of myth and history. Finally, I will identify a range of motifs in the spectacular appearance of the cinematic heroes from the *Matrix* trilogy: Neo, played by Keanu Reeves, and Trinity, played by Carrie Ann Moss. I will mainly look at the Sumerian myth of Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth, dating from 2000 BCE, because of its rich references to Inanna's talismans and regalia and the cultural uses made of them.

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THE HERO AS KING

The mythic template of the hero's journey underlies the narrative structure and imagery of many films, including the *Matrix* trilogy.[36] In *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*, published in 1914 in the wake of Freud's observation of the gripping power of *Oedipus Rex*, the great mythologist Otto Rank (1884–1939) states that in all prominent civilisations — 'Babylonians, Egyptians, Hebrews, and Hindoos [sic], the inhabitants of Iran and of Persia, the Greeks and the Romans as well as the Teutons and others' — majestic representations of the hero's task seem to be predominant (Rank 1970, p 1). A principle characteristic of the hero is that he is often 'the child of most distinguished parents, usually the son of a king' (ibid., p 61). Rank also notices that the hero may be the lost son of the king who does not know he is the king's son but through his 'noble' behaviour shows himself to be high born. Rank, as well as Jung and Campbell, mentions many examples, but I will cite just a few here, starting with Freud's favourite, Oedipus. It is through Aeschylus' four plays[37] (presented in 467 BCE)[38] and from Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* (429 BCE) that we know that Oedipus was the son of King Laios and Queen Jocasta of Thebes.[39]

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[36] See Chapter 1 for a description of the structure of the hero's journey.

[37] Tragedies were presented in four parts: the first three were the tragic stories and the third a satyr play.

[38] The only part of the group of plays that is extant is the third tragedy, called *Seven against Thebes*.

[39] We also know about Oedipus through the Greek historian and mythographer Apollodorus (born c. 180 BCE) and the Roman poet Statius (c. 45–96 CE), whose writings are extant. (I am

Many mythic heroes were demi-gods, the children of gods or goddesses. In the Greek pantheon, for example, Heracles (Hercules), who was sometimes described as the greatest of all the Greek heroes (Cotterell 2000, p 46), was the son of Zeus and the Theban queen Alcmene. The handsome hero Achilles, who was dressed as a girl in his childhood by his mother to try to prevent him from participating in the Trojan War, was the son of the nymph Thetis and King Peleus of Thessaly. Thetis tried to make Achilles immortal by dipping him into the River Styx. She held him by his heel and this was the one spot that was left vulnerable (ibid. p 10).

The god Dionysus, was the son of Zeus (in the form of a snake) and the goddess Persephone, the queen of the underworld. According to some sources he was slaughtered soon after birth by the Titans and reborn through Zeus and the mortal Semele, daughter of King Cadmus and Queen Harmonia of Thebes.[40]

Figure 2.1 Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Bull of Heaven. Cylinder seal, approx. seventh century BCE. (Schoyen Collection)

A favourite of Jung's was the story of the ancient Sumerian hero Gilgamesh (see Figure 2.1), who searched for the herb of eternal life. Gilgamesh was the fifth king of Uruk, in approximately 2500 BCE. His mother was Ninsun, a goddess. A favourite of Campbell's was the story of the hero Inanna, the Queen of Heaven and Earth. Inanna was Gilgamesh's sister. Enki, the god of wisdom, was the king and her father/grandfather. She had descended through Ningal, the moon goddess and Nanna, the moon god. Inanna's

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grateful to Jon Marshall for this reference; see also J. Marshall, 'Oedipus and Ecology: with a note on the Holy Grail', 2009, pp 125–36, for other known references to Oedipus.)

[40] See Chapters 2 and 3 for more on Dionysus.

mother/grandmother is Ningikuga (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, pp viii–ix, 12–27).

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THE KING AS MAGICIAN/PRIEST/GOD

In his *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, the social anthropologist J. G. Frazer (1905) postulates some tantalising images around his studies into the development and meaning of the institution of royalty in 'primitive' cultures.[41] Frazer's study offers a broad outline of his particular point of view, as he himself states (ibid., p 151), through many examples across many cultures and times.

Frazer firstly observes that 'the ancient king was often little more than the chief magician of his tribe' (1905, p 1). In ancient societies, the magician had many important jobs: to heal or prevent sickness (ibid., p 36), make it rain or stop rain (ibid., pp 93–101), ensure success in the hunt, and in general exert influence on things at a distance (ibid., p 57). Magic performed as a public function has a strong influence on the development of the society:

> For when the welfare of the tribe is supposed to depend on the performance of these magical rites, the magician becomes a personage of much influence and repute and may readily acquire the rank of chief or king.
>
> (Frazer 1905, p 82)

Frazer then argues that 'when once a special class of sorcerers has been segregated from the community and entrusted by it with the discharge of duties on which the public safety and welfare are believed to depend these men gradually rise to wealth and power until their leaders blossom out into sacred kings' (ibid., p 127). But, Frazer goes on to say, as the 'fallacy of magic became more and more apparent' (ibid., p 127) in the physical person of the magician, it was slowly displaced by religion. The magician gave way to the priest who, rather than having direct control over nature, attempted to control the processes of nature for the good of the community indirectly, by appealing

[41] Frazer was extremely influential in the early studies of mythology and comparative religion and was a strong influence on Joseph Campbell, but has lost favour in more recent years.

through prayer to 'the gods' to do it for him. This was also much less dangerous for the sorcerer/priest, because he could no longer be held responsible. 'The god' is then seen to be the magician, and power comes through the priest to those in the community who align themselves with the god through him. The priest prospered, as the community made offerings to ensure a clear and successful communication with a god — things of value such as cattle and gold, depending on what that society considered to be valuable. Frazer gives many examples from ancient Greece (ibid., p 137), German oracles (ibid., p 138), religious sects in general and particularly the systems of the east (ibid., pp 139–47).

Frazer explains that in some cultures kings eventually came to see themselves as actually having descended from a deity: hence the prevalence of the demi-god mentioned earlier. Frazer argues that Greek kings, especially, seem to have prided themselves on their divine origin; in Homer's epics, the typical epithet for a king is 'Zeus born' (ibid., p 170). Frazer argues that before the rise of 'the republican form of government the various tribes and cities were ruled by kings who probably enjoyed a sacred character as descendants of deities' (ibid., p 31). He cites the example of the two kings of Sparta who were believed to be descended from the supreme god, Zeus. He explains that, as Zeus' offspring, they offered all the state sacrifices, received a share of the victims and held the priesthood of Zeus (ibid., p 31). These king-gods are seen to partake in the divine spirit or to have the gods in constant attendance. Frazer further observes that ancient kings went on to think themselves 'not merely descendants of divinities, but themselves divine and invested with supernatural powers' (ibid., p 34).

It is just this idea that Ernst H. Kantorowicz investigates in his study of the 'body mortal' and the 'body mystical' in his book entitled *The King's Two Bodies: a Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (1997). He observes that in medieval England the king possessed a mortal body and an eternal, symbolic body. I'll make further reference to this study later in this chapter. Similarly, Rank explains that heroes are the descendants of humans and gods, while Campbell notes that a hero is 'a man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and historical limitations that are generally valid to the normal human form' (Campbell 1993, pp 19–20). The hero dies as mortal man 'but as eternal

man – perfected, unspecific, universal – he is reborn' (ibid., p 20). My question is how do we represent 'eternity in time and time in eternity' (ibid., p 218)?

Indeed, what are the motifs/qualities of the ancient magician/priest king that offer a different view of the 'spectacular' appearance of the contemporary hero? I will now examine four images that emerge from this work of Frazer's and one other that does not, yet is a popular image in contemporary film. These images are: the arts of civilisation, the king's two bodies, investiture and divestiture, flying and transcendence, and the king as deceiver.

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THE KING CARRIES THE ARTS OF CIVILISATION

Frazer draws the conclusion that the profession of king as magician or priest attracts 'the most ambitious of men' because the rewards of 'honour, wealth and power' are immense (Frazer 1905, p 119). 'The unbounded fear the magician inspires and the wealth he often amasses in the exercise of his profession have contributed to the effect of his promotion' (ibid., p 120). The more wealthy the king appears, the greater the proof of the success of his magic. He must have those signs of wealth, 'the arts of civilisation', appropriate for his culture — possess a splendid house, many cattle, land, expensive clothes and regalia; behave correctly; and conduct rituals on behalf of the community. The king surrounds himself with what is most valued in the community in order to gain the trust of the people and to maintain the confidence of the people that he will bring more prosperity to the community. That is why the community expects to see the signs of wealth.

Value and wealth

In his essay 'Value in Greek Myth', French anthropologist Louis Gernet describes what is valued by the members of ancient societies as 'the object of respect, even of religious fear, the focus of interest, loyalties or pride; the leitmotif of that "capacity for wonder" ' (Gernet 1981b, p 111). He goes on to add that value also denotes a 'psychological pitch'. The dominant image is one of wealth, even if the object has no particular material value, and that 'Wealth is the focus of religious awe' (ibid., p 123). Gernet states that 'power over the elements is one of the essential attributes familiar from Greek Mythology in

particular of magical kingship that is indicative of royal power' (ibid.) and he points out, as does Frazer, the importance of the possession of talismans as 'an indicator of beneficent and prosperous rule' (ibid., p 133) that is displayed in the ownership of the talismans. An image of wealth and power inspires awe and trust and is seen to be the material mark of that magical ability to control aspects of nature that are essentially uncontrollable and keep the community going in difficult times. I would suggest that we have the same feelings of awe for the wealthy and powerful today: kings, queens and film stars (that is, Hollywood royalty).[42]

Frazer discusses the links between wealth and regalia. He maintains that regalia can be regarded as wonder-working talismans, the possession of which carries with it the right to the throne; if the king loses the regalia, he forfeits the allegiance of his subjects. The derivation of the word 'regalia' gives us a clue. It comes from Latin *regalia,* meaning 'kingly arts', which in post-classical Latin also meant royal rights in general. Regalia act like a conjuring apparatus that calls forth the king (Frazer 1905, p 121). Frazer goes so far as to say that 'the regalia reign and the princes are merely their representatives' (ibid., p 122).

Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth

In the Sumerian myth of Inanna, the Queen of Heaven and Earth,[43] the acquisition and importance of these talismans, regalia or attributes of civilisation is described. Attributes of civilisation can be viewed as artistic representations that contain power, particularly those that are 'world creating, world sustaining' (Campbell 1993, p 317), for the ongoing benefit of the community.

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[42] As an aside, I note that they are only viewed in this way when they get it right according to the tabloid press. There is a high price to pay when they do not.

[43] The stories from Sumer, part of modern Iraq, are inscribed in cuneiform script on some of the approximately 5000 clay tablets and fragments that have been excavated in the last 100 years or so from around Baghdad. The tablets are dated to approximately 1700–2000 BCE and refer to the period up to 5000 BCE (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, p ix). Ninety-five per cent of the tablets and fragments are economic in content, but there are a small number ('no more than one per cent') of literary tablets that are inscribed with 'Sumerian epics and myths, hymns and lamentations, proverbs and "words of wisdom" ' (Kramer 1961, p 11).

In the story of Inanna and the God of Wisdom, Inanna goes to see Enki, her father/grandfather and king. The purpose of the visit is to steal the arts of civilisation, by stealth, if necessary. In Enki's court, Inanna and Enki get drunk, and Enki, in a generous mood, gives Inanna cultural gifts:

> In the name of my power! In the name of my holy shrine!
> To my daughter I shall give
> The high priesthood! Godship!
> The noble enduring crown! The throne of kingship!
> Inanna replied:
> 'I take them!' (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, p 14)

Enki also gives her such gifts as the gift of 'Truth', 'the giving of judgements! The making of decisions', 'the divine queen priestess', 'the art of lovemaking', 'the colourful garment', 'the art of the hero', 'the art of treachery' and 'the art of deceit'. She also receives the crafts, 'of the woodworker' and 'the leather maker'. All in all, Inanna receives 14 cultural gifts. These gifts are called *me*, or the holy *me*, the arts of civilisation (ibid., pp 14–19). In Betty de Shong Meador's description of the story, the holy *me* are 'principles of culture' (2000, p xv). The king becomes symbolic of the society, and hence everything the king does and his appearance, whatever its nature, are the epitome of all that is finest.

When Enki comes to his senses the next day, he realises what he has done and wants to get back the arts that 'arouse wonder' (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, p 25) and by which he ruled. Enki fears that the holy *me* will be lost to him. On Inanna's return to her home town, Uruk, she announces her arrival to the people of Sumer. As Enki had feared, the holy *me* inspire wonder and he has to acknowledge that he has lost his power. With the possession of the *me*, Inanna is seen to be striving towards being 'the one all powerful deity' (Meador 2000, p 17), 'thus bridging the gulf between man and god' (ibid., p 18).

Figure 2.2 Inanna on her throne. Cylinder seal, Mesopotamia, Akkad period, c. 2330–2150 BCE. (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, pp 52, 189)

The cylinder seal in Figure 2.2 shows Inanna seated on a throne, which denotes wholeness, on which are the images of two lions. She has weapons, the scimitar and mace, and faces the viewer. The attendants are depicted to the side. Inanna wears a crown and is clad in a one-shouldered gown, with her hair falling to her elbows. An attendant goddess holds a mitre and another female figure pours a libation into a vessel (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, pp 52, 189). In other similar images (ibid., p 57), Inanna also holds a ring.

In representations like this, 'kingship' is read through the presence of regalia and talismans. Images of talismans, or items that 'cause wonder', as Gernet states (Gernet 1981b, p 111), are often used to authenticate royalty and royalty's connection with god. According to Gernet, the reason talismans are fought over, or in Inanna's case taken, is that it is the talisman that grants its owner the right to be king, because its presence indicates a relationship with god that grants prosperity to the people.

Gaines's spectacular and wealth

Gaines's analysis (1990) centres primarily on Hollywood melodramas of the 1920s–1950s. She uses the examples of *Now Voyager* (1942) and *Dark Victory* (1939), both vehicles for Bette Davis. To take one film, *Now Voyager*, Charlotte Vale, the character played by Bette Davis, is the daughter of a very wealthy, iconic Boston family who transforms into an elegant, society woman, a

powerful beauty of her day. Gaines grounded her argument in the feminist theory prevalent in the 1970s that states that the female body on screen is understood as 'totally constructed by a patriarchial [sic] cinema' (Gaines 1990b, p 7). Laura Mulvey, from whom Gaines particularly derives some of her influences, states that 'The presence of woman is an indispensible element of spectacle in normal narrative film, yet her visual presence tends to work against the development of the story line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation' (Mulvey 1998, p 272). Gaines points out that other theorists (Monique Wittig, Mary Ann Doane) argue that the female body has had so many layers of sexual connotation that sexual connotation cannot be removed (Gaines 1990b, p 7). Charlotte is a very nervous person who hasn't been allowed to express herself and has grown into adulthood 'fat' and showing no style. Realistically, she would not have the ability, all of a sudden, to put herself together as stunningly as she does in the film when she emerges from a 'nervous breakdown'. She appears on a cruise looking slim, beautiful, calm and neat, her skin is smooth and clear, her hair done as if by a hairdresser, her clothes perfectly arranged, with perfectly applied lipstick. The clothes she wears, designed by the Australian designer Orry-Kelly (1897–1964), are superbly stylish and fit perfectly but, according to the story, are owned by someone else whose place Charlotte is taking on the cruise. So, although we are looking at a woman presented as erotically self-confident for the contemplation of men, to reference Mulvey, Charlotte is actually very nervous and unsure of herself. That is, states Gaines, the body as it is presented visually is not 'the same as the reality to which it refers' (Gaines 1990, p 1). This was a problem for 1970 feminists. Gaines notion of the spectacular moves costume theory forward from this position by theorising that that this apparently problematic presence is in the process of realising another reality, to which she refers as an escape from the reality of social truths (Gaines 1990a, p 184). Gaines suggests that 'spectacular' costumes are not meant to refer to everyday reality but are 'carriers of affect' (ibid., p 205), which would appear to be true in Charlotte's case. Charlotte's costumes are exquisite artistic talismans that show us Charlotte's queenly potential. Indeed, the clothes give Charlotte 'wings'[44] and

[44] A reference made to a beautiful cape she wears in the film that is decorated with beaded and sequined butterflies.

show us her magical, transformative possibilities. Her actual emotional body needs time to catch up to her queenly appearance. We know by the way she wears the clothes that this will happen and this gives us a sense of confidence in Charlotte as a character and the trajectory of the film.

Neo carrying the attributes of culture

As stated in the first chapter, the story of Neo in the *Matrix* series is built around the hero myth. We never get to hear about Neo's parents. He is an ordinary person who has been chosen to be the One by Morpheus, the dream. Neo moves from wearing a dowdy beige suit for his job as a computer programmer to appearing in ragged 'real' clothes when he becomes human after being reborn on the *Nebuchadnezzar*. In the battle at the end of the first film, Neo's appearance is, according to Sarah Gilligan, 'a spectacular, intensely erotic, haunting intervention' (Gilligan 2008, p 158). He is splendidly attired in a sharply tailored, flared trench coat over a tightly fitting T-shirt and pants and, according to Pamela Church Gibson, specially designed Airwalk boots (Church Gibson 2005, p 116), with 'Trinity beside him in her high-fashion faux-dominatrix outfit' (ibid.), and both of them are wearing designer sunglasses. But they are more than that. Both Neo and Trinity have an androgynous appearance, with very slight build and fine-boned bodies. Their faces are pale and smooth. Their lips are painted a matt gloss. Their hair is smooth and not messy. They don't smile. They are emotionally in control at all times, no matter what they go through. They don't get dusty, nor do they become unduly bloodied, considering how badly they get beaten up. They are fluid in their movements. They are shown to no longer be mere mortals; they move into the realm of the gods through their ownership of their cultural talismans and regalia, the display of which Gilligan finds expresses contemporary cultural values. Indeed, in this way they point our gaze beyond culture and film to a sense of greater freedom that one could say has been sought through the idea of immortality. This is the aim of using hero myth motifs in films.

Play Clip 1: *The Matrix* (1999), the spectacular fight on the roof. (1:36:57–1:47:15)

In her essay Gilligan says that Neo represents a change in 'masculine identities' (Gilligan 2008, p 149). What is valued now in culture, according to Gilligan, in the image of the masculine is not so much the hysterical Arnold Schwarzenegger in the *Terminator* films (1984, 1991, 2003), but 'a look that blurs

gender boundaries through the performance of identity and self-consciously offers the sexualised pleasures of costume as spectacle to the spectator' (ibid., p 149). This emphasis on surface values allows for seemingly effortless transformations (Gilligan 2008, p 149) and in this way 'effortless transformation' can be considered an art of our contemporary culture. Neo and Trinity's ability to confidently carry the arts of civilisation in this new way identified by Gilligan shows that they are in touch with what is valued in that particular community and have the confidence to express it. The symbolism of fashion used in the context of this film is that it places the characters centrally in the contemporary sense.[45]

✧

THE KING'S TWO BODIES

The motif of the magic immortality of the hero/king is repeated in myths and notions of kingship through history. In an essay on the wardrobe of the king's household in the late fifteenth century, Anne F. Sutton argues that liberal spending on the king's clothes was accepted because the king was expected to 'present himself well and thereby inspire respect for his government in both his own subjects and strangers' (Sutton 2009, p 57). Sumptuous clothes worn by the ordinary citizen was 'a reminder of mortality' (ibid.), but finery and display on the king showed his immortality. Sumptuary laws controlled the level of immortality one was able to achieve when part of the retinue of the king.

Ernst H. Kantorowicz's key work, *The King's Two Bodies: a Study in Political Theology* (1997), is a study of kingship in the Middle Ages in England. Kantorowicz describes the 'mystical fiction' of the king's twinned bodies: that is, the king has a 'body natural' that can die and a 'body politic', that is legally immortal, incapable of doing wrong, even of thinking wrong, and the body natural is the lesser (ibid., p 9). While Kantorowicz considers this idea to be fantastical, subtle and a challenge to investigate, he has to concede that the 'The state of superhuman "absolute perfection" is a kind of man-made irreality which finally became slave to its own fictions' (ibid., pp 3–5). The migration of

[45] A great deal could be said about the great phenomenon of centre symbolism, but that exceeds the bounds of this essay. See Mircea Eliade's *Images and Symbols Studies in Religious Symbolism* (1991) for a discussion of centre symbolism.

the soul — that is, the immortal part of kingship — is shown by the regalia and talismans that are passed down from king to king and that can also be passed on to people surrounding the king. Kantorowicz gives the funeral of Charles VII of France (1403–61) as an example, where the court justices did not wear mourning because, even though the king as an individual was dead, for them the 'representation' of justice was not dead, and so they wore their bright red robes. In the same way, Kantorowicz refers to the wearing of the crown as 'The visible and material diadem and the invisible and immaterial crown encompassing all the royal rights and privileges which were descended from god' (ibid., p 337). The notion of the two bodies of the king described by Kantorowicz can apply to the hero figure in contemporary film too, because it is a general idea, an archetype that does not reside in an individual body and can thus be located in many figures and films in different ways.

Mimesis

In her article 'Magic Fashion', Elizabeth Wilson argues that for many of us 'articles of clothing not only affect our mood and self-perception, but not infrequently acquire quasi-magical properties and meanings' (2004, p 378). Garments that have been worn by one person tend to retain the qualities of that person.[46] A garment can take us into the imaginative reality of the image that has been created or even point beyond it. Jung also talks about the effect on the mind of the 'magically affective object' (Jung 1981, p 46). The value of such an object is that it does not create anything concrete, but rather stimulates the imagination in such a way that interest will be maintained in the object and discoveries might be made that would have previously been missed.

For the audience in the Bette Davis films and the *Matrix* films, mimicking the costumes of the heroes, and even just enjoying them, became an indication that the wearer was in tune with the sense of the contemporary values they portrayed. In her recent essay 'Fashion and Film', Stella Bruzzi observes that in

[46] This is indicated by the prices often commanded by an item of clothing at auction. The sparkly white glove that Michael Jackson wore during a 1989 world tour sold after his death at a memorabilia auction for $US350,000. Its presale estimate was $US50,000. With commissions added, the final price was $US420,000. (See article at <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5AL02A20091123>, accessed November 2010.

this millennium since the *Matrix* series there has been a strong pattern of mimicry of fashion in film (Bruzzi 2009, p 502). She points out that there is an increasingly 'fluid and flexible' relationship between the clothes worn in films and the fans who imitate them (ibid., p 503). First the image of Neo extends the mystic body of fashion into film by appearing in his fashionable trench, and then fans of the look copied his look. Next, possibly more successfully, Neo appears in a Roman Catholic cassock as, borrowing a term used by Kantorowicz, a 'Priest of Justice' (Kantorowicz 1997, p 8). Both garments are long, flared and black. They are beautifully fitted and tailored. Both garments enhance Neo's movements. According to Frazer and Kantorowicz, the priest is a conduit of magical power. The effect of giving Neo the appearance of a Roman Catholic priest is to create an image of the magical power of 'god' coming through him to the people. Neo appears as an extension of the god–body of Christ, who in his own hero myth was the son of God, his father in heaven, and the mortal Mary. Seen in this light, Neo is a demi-god and king. By imitating Neo in this look and the way they pose (and many images of such imitations exist[47]), the fans are not channelling a priest or a king, they are channelling Neo.

Play Clip 2: *Matrix Reloaded* (2003), Neo appears for the first time as a priest. (9:21–10:24)

Joseph Campbell mentions that assuming the appearance of a priest is ideal for the hero who has returned to the world. The priest's appearance, explains Campbell, sets him apart and insulates him from the everyday world, the mortal world, so that he is not contaminated by its values. Figures who have supernormal power should maintain a separation from the world so that the power does not drain away. For example, Montezuma, the Aztec emperor of Mexico in the sixteenth century, was always carried on the shoulders of noblemen so that his feet did not touch the ground, while the king of Persia was seen only in chariots or on horseback (Campbell 1993, pp 224–225). If we look at the image of Inanna returning or returned from the underworld (see Figure 2.3, p 53), we see that she is standing on two goats. Campbell takes his cue from

[47] Google 'Neo costumes' and 750,000 images will appear. Some are images from the film, but most are of fans who have uploaded costumed images of themselves in their version of Neo's cassock.

Frazer, whose study shows that touching the ground would discharge the magical quality. The clothes are a talisman and act as a protection from the mortal world. The film *La Nuit de Varennes* (1983) illustrates the tragic effects of removing the talismans of regalia from the king. In the film we follow the story of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette of France as they try to escape from revolutionary Paris. For their coach journey, the king and queen are dressed in everyday clothes so that they will blend in with ordinary people and be allowed to pass. One of the ladies-in-waiting travels separately behind them, carrying the royal garments. In the end, when the revolutionary forces catch up with them at Varennes and they are taken back to Paris to meet their fate, the lady-in-waiting places the royal robes on mannequins and bows down to them. The robes on the mannequin hold the notion of royalty whereas without their robes the real king and queen have become vulnerable and lose power, both literally and symbolically. In *The Matrix*, in the guise of a priest Neo himself becomes a talisman of immortality, and this power is protected by keeping him separate from the others around him.

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THE SYMBOLISM OF INVESTITURE AND DIVESTITURE: INCARNATION

Frazer explains that in the development of kingship, it is the public magician, rather than the private individual, who may move on to assume a prestigious role (Frazer 1905, p 106). Upon investiture as a king, a person moves from being an individual, with individual concerns, to embodying community concerns. As Joseph Campbell states, 'a king was no longer a private person' (Campbell 1993, p 15). Through the rites of investiture, the individual is connected to the wider community.[48] He is incarnated, that is, brought into bodily form, in the

[48] I am reminded here of a nun I interviewed for my documentary *Getting Dressed*. She had been training for two years, living devotedly, but wearing her everyday clothes. After she was ordained, she shaved her head and wore the orange and maroon robes of the Gelug Pa Tibetan Buddhist tradition. She was astonished at how differently she was treated not only by strangers, which would be expected, but by people who knew her well. She said she was treated as if she knew something special or was a very good person, which she insists had not changed from the day before.

community. When the king gains ownership of ritual insignia, the individual, as king, becomes a symbol of wholeness because the image bridges 'the gulf between man and god' (Meador 2000, p 18). That is, as Gernet and Frazer both note, the regalia or the insignia contain the magical ability that is fused with mortal flesh. In her study of Inanna, Diane Wolkstein observes that with her crown on her head — obtained from a ritualised drinking bout, a test of stealth and nerve — the god assumes her role as Queen of the Land (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, pp 147–8).

Through the ceremony of investiture, when the talismans are handed to the individual, eternity moves symbolically into the realm of time. Clip 2.3 shows the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II of England on 2 June 1953.

Play Clip 3: The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II of England, 2 June 1953.

The church is referred to as a theatre and the table with the regalia is called an altar. The Marquis of Salisbury bears the Sword of State. St Edward's crown is borne by the Lord High Steward, Admiral of the Fleet. The Orb is carried on his right. Elizabeth's attendants are dressed like her. After she is anointed, her jewellery and crimson cape are removed and she is dressed in a simple linen dress, then in the Robe Royal with a gold girdle and then enthroned. She is also given a Bible to keep her mindful of God. 'Receive the royal sceptre, the ensign of kingly power and Justice', says the bishop. He then gives her the Rod. She is crowned with the crown of the faithful as a sign of royal majesty, and is also given rings, bracelets and many other sceptres and orbs. This film clip shows the vastly reduced insignia that were given to her. Elizabeth does not look unlike the image of Inanna in Figure 2.3 (see page 53).

NEO'S INVESTITURE INTO THE ARTS OF CIVILISATION

Neo experiences a similar event, or series of events that are similar to an investiture. In the first film, *The Matrix*, Neo is found by Morpheus and the crew in a pod, naked with no hair. He is taken onto the *Nebuchadnezzar* naked and spends some time on a gurney with a towel over him and many acupuncture needles reinvigorating his body. He awakes dressed in his 'human' clothes: a worn T-shirt, a jumper with runs and cotton-looking trousers. He is then initiated into the ways of the ship and the new world he inhabits. In the construct, the loading program, Morpheus, is dressed in his suit and Neo is still in the casual and formless youthful-style jacket and T-shirt he

wore in his previous life. He learns Kung Fu and how to jump from building to building. Then when he goes to visit the Oracle, he is wearing his grown-up, tailored suit with a black shirt. The look is very Armani, typical of men's fashion in the years previous to the release of the film. He is transformed and he carries his arts of civilisation.

DIVESTITURE AND NUDITY

A common mythological motif is being stripped naked for the ritualised crossing of thresholds.[49] Hence, Neo is naked for his journey to the *Nebuchadnezzar*. With the loss of the eternal aspect — the regalia, the insignia — one is cut off as a unit from the whole community (Campbell 1993, p 15). Nudity is often placed in opposition to the symbolism of the costumed body. This then leads to the idea that disrobing the king is an image of divestiture.

Another myth told about Inanna is the story of her descent into the underworld, when she goes to visit her sister, the Queen of the Underworld, Ereshkigal. To go into the underworld Inanna is dressed in her queenly robes and jewels — some of the *me*, the attributes of civilisation. The poem, translated from cuneiform by Kramer, describes how Inanna looks as she goes into the underworld:

> The shugurra, the crown of the plain, she has put upon her head,
> Radiance she has placed upon her countenance,
> The … rod of lapis lazuli she has gripped in (her) hand,
> Small lapis lazuli stones she has tied around her neck,
> Sparkling … stones she has fastened to her breast,
> A gold ring she has gripped in her hand,
> A … breastplate she has bound around her breast,
> All her garments of ladyship she has arranged about her body,
> … ointment she has put on her face.
>
> (Kramer 1961, p 91)

To go into the underworld, Inanna has to pass through seven gates. At each gate, the gatekeeper orders Inanna to remove one item of culture and tells the

[49] I examine nudity and the ritualised crossing of thresholds further in Chapter 4.

objecting Inanna, 'do not question the rites of the netherworld' (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, p 92). At the first gate, her crown is removed; at the second, a rod of lapis lazuli; at the third, the lapis lazuli stones from her neck; at the fourth, the 'sparkling stones of her breast' (Campbell 1993, p 107). At the fifth gate, a gold ring is taken from her hand; at the sixth, a breastplate; at the seventh, her garments. Then, naked, she is brought to the throne of her sister, Ereshkigal, where she is turned into a corpse and hung from a stake. Like the king and queen in *La Nuit de Varennes*, her power has drained away into the earth with the removal of her regalia.

With his 'attributes', the king is complete. Without his *me*, Enki lost his power and with them Inanna gained it. When Inanna goes into the underworld and loses all her regalia, Wolkstein's view is that she is split into many pieces (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, pp 158–9); she is no longer whole. In not-unrelated imagery in 'The Practise of Kingship in Early Semitic Kingdoms', the religious scholar Sydney Smith describes a ritual New Year Festival in ancient Babylon. In the story, a retinue of priests accompanied the king to the chamber of the supreme god, which he entered alone. Then the head priests entered, removed the royal insignia and apparel, and struck the king. If the king did not weep when he was struck, the omen was bad, that is, unfavourable to the naked man who had been king. In this way, kings were subject to the consent of the gods. The author goes on to say that 'A king without his insignia, naked, is not a king' (Smith 1958, p 29).

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'Magic Flight', transcendence and freedom

It is the mythologist Mircea Eliade (1907–1986) who states that apart from 'divergences due to varieties of culture and modifications imposed by history, the symbolisms and scenario of the Sovereign's ascension remained much the same for thousands of years' (Eliade 1977, p 99). The imagery of ascension or flying appears in China, Southeast Asia and Oceania, the Middle East and ancient Rome and is a feat performed not only by sovereigns but also magicians, sages and mystics of every kind (ibid., pp 99–100).

Flying is also a common cinematic event, a spectacular representation through the cinematic body. Using its technologies, the cinema can show the body doing

anything it is required to do, which, according to Eliade, provides 'absolute freedom' (ibid., p 106). In his discussion of *The Matrix*, Andrew Shail points out that the cinematic body moves in an environment of 'unending movements of matter' (Shail 2005 p 25); that is, on film there are no limitations of time and space. The cinematic body on screen reflects what Eliade says is common in myth and folklore, where 'space takes on quite a different aspect' (Eliade 1977, p 104). In terms of flight mythologies and the cinema, 'weight is abolished': that is, 'an ontological mutation occurs in the human being himself' (ibid.). As Michael Carter observes in his essay 'Superman's Costume', 'since these costumes [the ones worn by superheroes] are not required to obey the laws of "real clothes", it is conceivable they are more complete embodiments of … imaginative currents than are the actual clothes we wear' (2000, p 26). Transcending the image of 'mere man' (Jung 1970, p 177) is the cinema's imaginative project, and producing a magical human body has been a primary focus of those developing cinematic technologies and stories. Making reference to Kantorowicz, it is almost as though the body of the film actor is the 'body mortal' and the cinematic body that is created is the magical body, the body mystical (Kantorowicz 1997, pp 12–13). Certainly the image of the spectacular body according to Gaines is not a body that reflects nature but a body that moves beyond it (Gaines 1990, p 204).

Symbols of flight

The iconography of Inanna depicts a winged vision (Figure 2.3, below). In *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Enkidu describes his vision of the people of the *Kur*, the underworld: 'They are clothed like birds, with wings for garments' (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, p 159). After Inanna has been through her transforming experience in the underworld, she has developed, according to Figure 2.3, not only powerful-looking bird feet but wings that drop behind her. Eliade's investigation into images of flight reveals 'the plumage of birds as one of the symbols for "shamanic flight" ' (Eliade 1977, p 100).
In 'Übermen: Masculinity, Costume and Meaning in Comic Book Superheroes' (2009), Vicki Karaminas recognises the world of superheroes as being akin to that of 'shamanesque figures' (Karaminas 2009, p 180) — that is, figures that have gone through a special initiation and are now able to draw on special

powers. These figures draw on a collective imagination, or a mythic imagination, 'in order to transform and endow the wearer with spirit powers … to connect with their superhuman strength' (Karaminas 2009, p 180). The purpose of Inanna's stay in the house of death is to become renewed. The presence of the wings shows that indeed she has been renewed. According to Eliade, the plumage of shaman figures does not necessarily mean that the shaman is god; just that shamans participate 'in the condition of the "spirits" ' (Eliade 1977, p 101). They are 'Equal to the gods through the ability to die and come to life again', because flying is equivalent to a ritual death (ibid.).

Figure 2.3 Inanna transformed. Clay plaque, Mesopotamia, c. 2000–1600 BCE. (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, pp 6, 179)

In the iconography of Inanna, her wings fall behind her, like a cape — a cape similar to one with butterfly motifs that Charlotte Vale wears to dinner in *Now Voyager* as she begins her new life. The wings depicted as a cape and the cape as a sign of having gained one's wings are motifs that appear in many superhuman images in films. The image of a hero who has gained abilities beyond the range of the expected creates a feeling of heightened emotional excitement in an audience. Eliade summarises that an image of 'flight signifies intelligence, the understanding of secret things and metaphysical truths' (ibid., p 106). Eliade also explains that the image of flight becomes 'charged with these new meanings in the course of new awakenings of consciousness' (ibid.). I am grateful to Michael Carter for reminding me of that extraordinary reaction in the cinema when Superman flew for the first time in the first *Superman* film (1978). He said the audience were on their feet, cheering. I had a similar experience in the cinema when watching the Spielberg film *E. T.* (1982). When

E. T. was on the bike and it started flying up into the sky near the end of the film, the entire audience cheered. Batman, although he does not fly as freely as Superman, has a cape, as did his now defunct sidekick Robin. Batman got his wings by suffering an underground terror, as Inanna did, when he fell into a well as a child and was terrorised by bats.[50] Referring back to Vogler, when the film hero changes internally and resolves to adopt a different and more successful attitude to life, that change needs to be shown visually. This image cannot be in the form of 'a mere man' (Jung 1970, p 177), but needs to be a figure that is the totality of 'all those primordial images which express the extraordinarily potent, always and everywhere' (ibid.). What will be sought in visible human form, states Jung, is 'not man, but the superman, the hero or god, that *quasi-human* being who symbolizes the ideas, forms and forces which grip and mould the soul' (ibid., pp 177–178).

At the beginning of *The Matrix* series, fear of flying or fear of heights is a strong motif that seems to show us the limitations of the human body, physically and emotionally, pointing to the inability of Neo to transcend. Neo, wearing his dreary suit, is unable to take an escape route that Morpheus has offered him because he is afraid of falling from the high-rise office building where he works. Eliade recognises that fundamental to the imagery of flight is the idea of the hero's escape from the kingdom of death, 'pursued by a terrifying figure who personifies death itself' (Eliade 1977, p 104). Central to this idea is 'the desperate effort to *be rid* of a monstrous presence and to *free oneself*' (ibid.). The hero's story itself represents one of the processes of liberation, a process of moving beyond a fixed state of being, whether this is achieved by acknowledging behaviours held over from childhood (according to the Freudian model) or through movement into the second half of life where a person can achieve the highest goal of individuation (according to the Jungian model). Any confining pattern of existence is inferior. At the end of the film, Neo emerges from a phone box, now wearing his dark, flared, fashion trench with the dark shirt and

[50] This is what happens in the film *Batman Begins* (2005), but not in the comic book story. In 'The Batman Wars against the Dirigible of Doom', when he was a boy Bruce Wayne, born to a life of wealth, witnessed his father's killing by a thief called Joe Chill, after which his mother died of shock. Wayne decided to avenge the deaths of his parents by fighting crime and was inspired, when a bat flew into the room, to call himself The Batman (*Detective Comics,* 33, November 1939).

tie, presumably having just arrived from the *Nebuchadnezzar*, and announces to the viewer in voice-over, 'I'm going to show these people what you don't want them to see. I'm going to show them a world without you. A world without rules and controls, without borders or boundaries. A world where anything is possible.'

Interestingly, Neo's flying skills are used to win wars and gain freedom for the humans, and in the process he attains immortality for himself. He does not use his skills of flight to avoid fights. Indeed, Eliade confirms that in the myths and legends of flight, the space within which the hero flies 'remains that of man and of death' (ibid., p 104). Transcendence is achieved through the medium of the body, the imaginative body. Inanna gains her wings after going through her disintegration in the realm of death, and Neo also receives his flying ability after dying and coming back to life. Eliade summarises that symbols of flight all express a break from everyday experience into an imaginary universe, where 'both *transcendence* and, at the same time, *freedom* are to be obtained through the "flight" '(ibid., p 106). He goes on to claim that these desires 'rank[s] as one of the essential longings of man' (ibid.).

✧

THE KING AS DECEIVER

'It must be remembered that every claim put forward by a magician as such is false; not one of them can be maintained without deception, conscious or unconscious' (Frazer 1905, p 83). It is Frazer's opinion that those with superior ability for deception will win for themselves positions of the highest dignity and the most commanding authority. The pitfalls that threaten the path of the sorcerer are many, and it will need the coolest head and the sharpest wit to avoid them. Those with the ability to create an illusion that convinces will be the heroes who are successful.

As Kantorowicz points out, the kinds of powers and mysticism that are evoked by the image of the twinned king can easily 'appear poor and slightly foolish' out of the context of their time and place (1997, p 3). However, he then pursues a study that demonstrates (as mentioned earlier) that 'The state of superhuman "absolute perfection" is a kind of man-made irreality which finally became slave to its own fictions' (ibid., pp 3–5). Images like those of the 'twinned king',

as unlikely as they are, create powerful and imaginative fantasies that are valued not for their 'truth' but for their power to make visible something that would otherwise remain invisible (Lingis, cited in Vasseleu 1993, p 76), the ability to fascinate and allow life to delight in its own (ongoing) presence. The images would not succeed if they were not valued by culture.

Earlier, I mentioned Barthes' notion of 'the third meaning' of the word symbol, the ancient meaning of which he bemoans the loss. In the book, *Playing and Reality* (1999), the psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott is concerned with what determines an individual's capacity to live creatively.[51] Winnicott describes this 'third area' as the area of '*experiencing*, to which inner reality and external life both contribute' (Winnicott 1999, p 2), and as the location for play and creativity. It is also the locus of potentially creative transformation. Winnicott states it is a place of intense experiencing that belongs to the arts, religion, imaginative living and creative scientific work (ibid., p 14). He calls this space where we experience living or beauty or abstract human contrivance a 'potential space, the place of self realisation' (ibid., p 108), the place of illusion.[52] 'It is this space that develops the use of symbols that stand at one and the same time for external world phenomena and phenomena of the individual person who is being looked at' (ibid., p 109). It is the unique combination of the core of the individual personality mixed with culture that links the past, present and the future (ibid.). This description aligns with Jung's description of symbol or with the ancient meaning that Barthes realises is lost.

Winnicott summarises that being able to live creatively — that is, being able to shape external reality — is what makes life worth living (ibid., p 65). 'Contrasted with this is a relationship to external reality which is one of compliance' (ibid.). It is in this compliant relationship that we find Neo at the beginning of the *Matrix* films: wearing his beige suit, he is being reprimanded by his boss for being late. His transformation to wearing the spectacular trench and then the priest's cassock shows a creative interaction with the world that

[51] The original earlier studies from which the book was developed were published in 1953, and I am aware of a later essay published in 1967, ''The Location of Cultural Experience'', *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, vol. 48, pp 368–72.

[52] See Winnicott 1999, pp 10–14, for a more detailed account of how the place of illusion develops between the mother and child.

requires great skill and confidence. The image of the changed Neo is the image of a person who is able to read the contemporary zeitgeist well, as Gilligan points out, and that opens us, the viewer, to the inner world of the character and his place in culture. The hero cannot embody this kind of symbol in the form of 'a mere man' (Jung 1970, p 177), but must be a figure that is 'the totality of all those primordial images which express the "extraordinarily potent", always and everywhere. What we seek in visible human form', states Jung, 'is not man, but the superman, the hero or god, that *quasi-human* being who symbolizes the ideas, forms and forces which grip and mould the soul' (ibid., pp 177– 8). Through their material attributes, heroes hold a culture's imaginative possibility. Having a libido or energy for life that can create its own reality is a primary image carried by the king. The most successful hero-king will be not so much the best magician or priest but the one who is the most convincing. As Street pointed out, the spectacular costuming in *The Matrix* has an important narrative function in that it shows that the characters are 'capable' of undermining the Matrix (Street 2001, p 99).

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Conclusion

In *Symbols of Transformation*, Jung wrote that 'the finest of all symbols of the libido is the human figure conceived as a demon or hero' (1970, p 171). Gernet states that 'the hero perpetuates the memory of the divine king who dispenses prosperity to his people' (Gernet 1981a, p 7). This is possible because the magical spirit of king/magician/priest (all figures that embody the highest cultural values) is represented symbolically in the figure of the hero. The body that can gather the forces of the gods to his own ends is a powerful body indeed, and this, no matter what the body shape, is what the hero must do and must convince us he can do.

'The man armed with magical secrets and endowed with extraordinary powers is entitled to govern his peers' (Gernet 1981a, p 336) and embodies privileged knowledge that alludes to a more vivid kind of reality. By assuming the attributes of civilisation taught to him by Morpheus, Neo was able to become immortal — to slow down time and fly, and to avoid death. The ownership of rich regalia and talismans that 'arouse wonder' (Gernet 1981b, p 111) has long

been considered to signify the presence of the magical king. Eternality is in the regalia and the insignia because these are the things that are everlasting, not the mortal body beneath. Neo's fashion presence and then his appearance as a priest have certainly aroused wonder. By giving up his old symbol system and being able to take on a new one, Neo is represented mythologically as the hero, an archetypal image that transcends time and place and that is not merely related to movements of the plot.

Chapter 3

Transformative Bodies

Dionysus, the mask and transformation

> 'Now I am ready to tell how bodies are changed into different bodies.'
>
> Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, line 1 (Ovid 1997)

> 'PENTHEUS: You say you saw the god clearly. What was he like?
>
> DIONYSUS: Whatever he wanted. I had no control over it.'
>
> Euripides' *Bacchae,* lines 386–7 (Euripides 2000)

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will take as my starting point a comment made by Sarah Gilligan in her essay 'Becoming Neo: Costume and Transforming Masculinity in the *Matrix* films'. She points out that in recent films the transformations of the hero (represented in her essay primarily by Neo in the *Matrix* trilogy) are achieved through 'a spectacle of surfaces' — the clothes and gadgets worn — rather than through the excessive body musculature typical of film heroes of the 1980s: 'Through costume, the male hero is able to undergo a seemingly effortless transformation from the ordinary to the extraordinary' (Gilligan 2009 p 149). Indeed, transformation is central to hero's journey myths, just as it is in film. One of the aspects of the ancient Greek god Dionysus (approximately 500 BCE) was as god of appearances (Rohde 1925, p 258). The disappearance of the god into another world and his reappearance, 'this "Epiphany" of the god', as Rohde emphasises, was expressed by worshippers through an 'extreme pitch of excitement' and was peculiar to the religious festivals to honour the god, so much so that the god was thought to appear amongst them (ibid.). Rohde goes on to mention something that is important for this study:

> 'The violently induced exaltation of the senses had a religious purpose in that such enlargement and extension of his being was man's only way, as it seemed, of entering into union of the god and his spiritual attendants' (ibid.).

It is of particular significance to the study of costume that the mask was initially used to represent Dionysus in ancient Greek religious festivals and was later incorporated into the tragic and comic theatre of 500–400 BCE Greece, which was part of the Dionysia, a religious festival honouring the god (Easterling 2000, p 97). The question, then, that I ask in this chapter is: 'Who was Dionysus and why was the mask so important in the god's acknowledgment that it was brought into theatre?' I also suggest that the god's transformational aspects, as represented by the mask, are embodied in the appearance of the hero in contemporary films, and I develop further the idea that the hero is a substitute for the ancient magician-king. While I continue to refer to *The Matrix* films, I also look at the Darren Aronofsky film *The Wrestler*, released in 2008, as well as using other films as examples.

DIONYSUS AND THE MEANING OF THE WORD 'LIFE'

In the introduction to *Dionysos: Archetypal Image of Indestructible Life* (1976), the historian and mythologist Karl Kerenyi explains that much of what we understand about Dionysus involves the meaning of the Greek words for life. While the Romans had one word for life, *vita* (the root of the English 'vital'), the ancient Greeks used several words to denote different aspects of life: *physis* was plant life; *bios* was a specific kind of life, a characterised life (as in biography, not as in biology); *zoë* was life in general, without characterisation and limitation (Kerenyi 1976, pp xxxi–xxxvii). The concept of *zoë* does not include the notion of death'; death of the mortal body, *thanatos*, belongs to *bios*. Kerenyi also explains that, as Plotinus (c. 205–270 CE) described it, the way *zoë* exists is that in the course of rebirths it moves from one *bios* to another: '*Zoë* is the thread upon which every particular *bios* is strung' (ibid., p xxxv) and is endless. When speaking of the eternal life of a god, with births and rebirths, *zoë* is the appropriate term to use. Thus, through his multiple births and transformations, Dionysus is a figure who can be seen in the context of *zoë*. The significance of this in a study of cinematic costume is that immortality and transformation are strong themes in hero myths, and in the practical creation of an appearance on

film there is no better way to show that a character has changed into someone else than changing their costume (Bieber 1961, p 2).

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DIONYSUS

RELIGIOUS BEGINNINGS AND THE MASK

According to Louis Gernet (1981a), the mythologist Walter F. Otto (1965) and the classical scholar Erwin Rohde (1925), the oldest description of the Greek gods that still survives is found in Homer's epic poems.[53] Otto also concludes that because the Greek gods appear in Homer, the religion of Dionysus 'must have been indigenous to the Greek civilization towards the end of the second millennium [BCE] at least' (Otto 1965, p 58).[54]

According to Kerenyi, the mask's earliest appearance is on a stone seal from a tomb dating from the pre-archaic period (Kerenyi 1976, p 80) (see Figure 3.1, following page). Kerenyi dates the seal to approximately 1400–1300 BCE and describes the mask as 'a manifestation of the god, the goat is his substitute' (ibid.). Later the mask appears as 'wooden masks used in the Dionysian cult, either worn by dancers or hung on a pole or tree in the centre of the rite' (ibid.). As represented on many vase paintings, the mask was placed over a column in a sanctuary and below the mask was hung a garment, often two garments, around which women and men danced ecstatically (see Figure 3.2, following page).[55] Kerenyi explains that the mask is 'an appropriate symbol to the god

[53] The date of *Homeric Hymns* is debatable, but they are generally thought to date from the seventh and sixth centuries BCE. Their authorship is now regarded as being largely anonymous.

[54] In *Dionysos: Archetypal Image of Indestructible Life* (1976), Karl Kerenyi takes Dionysus back to ancient Crete.

[55] As I move into my discussion of mask and costume I find the terms naturally elide. Especially as the description of mask as a covering for part of the face becomes similar in meanings and symbolisms to the term costume used to describe a covering for the body.

Figure 3.1 Mask between two goats. Transcript of a stone seal from a tomb near Phaistos, Crete; Archaeological Museum, Heraklion, Crete. (Kerenyi 1976, plate 24)

Figure 3.2 Mask on a column. Cup, Makron, 490 BCE. Berlin Museum. (Bérard and Bron 1981, p 150)

during his absence beneath the earth' (ibid., p 282); yet somehow the mask allowed for an intense emotional presence. Kerenyi states that *zoë* appeared through the mask more immediately than through all other forms, 'and yet lifeless, as though removed from every living thing' (ibid., p 81).

THE TRANSITION FROM RELIGIOUS CULT TO GREEK TRAGEDY

Gernet notes that 'the transition from the vague … elements of folklore and religion to the tragedy of Aeschylus or even Thespis remains inexplicable' (1981, p 57). The tragic universe lies between two worlds: the myth belonging to a past age and the myth of the newly developing city state. The tensions of the age are emphasised by Jean-Pierre Vernant, who points out that the first necessity in a reading of tragedy is that in the action there is tension between a political psychology and a mythological one (Vernant 1990, p 29). The logic of tragedy is that it operates on both planes, shifting from one meaning to the other. According to Kerenyi, tragedy presupposes an awareness of the intersection of the Dionysian and heroic spheres, based on the myth of the subterranean Dionysus, of which the mask is a representation (1976, p 331). Similarly, in her *History of Greek and Roman Theatre*, Margarete Bieber observes that the mortal followers of Dionysus — the women called maenads and the men called satyrs — danced ecstatically in the mountains near Thebes in religious festivals, and it was these forms (the maenads and satyrs) that went on to be preserved in the theatre (Bieber 1961, p 2).

In his extensive historical study of the Attic theatre, the classical scholar A. E. Haigh states that the first competition was held in 535 BCE and that Thespis, who was by then an old man, took part (Haigh 1889, p 11).[56] Haigh goes on to say that these theatrical contests were flourishing by the end of the sixth century and by the time Aeschylus appeared in 499 BCE had assumed a regular form. Three poets, chosen by the state, took part and presented three tragedies

[56] There had been earlier performances, but these consisted only of a chorus singing and dancing a hymn in honour of Dionysus, called the dithyramb. For more detail about the development of tragedy, see A. E. Haigh, *The Attic Theatre: a Description of the Stage and Theatre of the Athenians, and of the Dramatic Performances at Athens* (1889), which particularly relates to the visual presentation; see also Margarete Bieber, *The History of Greek and Roman Theatre* (1961).

and one satyr drama over a period of five days or so, in the daytime, during the Greek spring between March and April (ibid., p 11).[57]

The largest festival showing the plays was held at the Great or City Dionysia. The festival was a city-wide event, with other ceremonies being held in various parts of Athens (Haigh 1889, p 11). It was a time when the city was full of visitors from all parts of Greece. The processions, sacrifices to the gods, the singing of dithyrambs, the song to Dionysus that had come from the religious ceremonies, and the performance of tragedies, satyr plays and comedies were all calculated to impress strangers with the wealth, public spirit and literary taste of the Athenians (Haigh 1889, p 12). The dramatic exhibition was a state-run affair that was attended by all citizens. The theatre could hold 30,000 people and the 'vocation of the dramatic writer was one of the very greatest importance' (Haigh 1889, p 3).

Tragic drama was created to provide an artificial environment whose images allowed Dionysian suffering into the everyday lives of the ancient spectators. As Jean-Pierre Vernant summarises in his essay *Tensions and Ambiguities in Greek Tragedy*:

> The essential feature that defines [Greek drama] is that the drama brought to the stage both at the level of everyday existence, in a human, opaque time made up of successive and limited present moments, and also beyond this earthly life, in a divine omnipresent time that at every instant encompasses the totality of events, sometimes to conceal them and sometimes to make them plain but always so that nothing escapes it or is lost in oblivion. Through this constant union and confrontation between the time of men and the time of gods, throughout the drama, the play startlingly reveals that the divine intervenes even in the course of human actions'.
>
> (Vernant 1990, pp 44-45)

The Greek audience could feel the emotions, as we still can today, and be transformed by proxy; in the ancient sense, this was called a religious experience. In their discussion of Greek theatre, Bérard and Bron comment that:

[57] Comedy came later than tragedy and is not the subject of this essay.

> Dionysus, with his thiasos [ecstatic retinue], is only admitted to the city of men by the stage door. In most Greek cities, the temple of the god adjoined the theatre, thus creating a zone shared by religion and spectacle, occupying a space unto itself'.
>
> (Bérard and Bron 1989, p 131)

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TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SACRIFICE

At the heart of the festival was an archaic religious experience that was still very much alive in the theatres of Athens. Kerenyi gives the etymology of the word tragedy: it comes from Old French *tragédie*, which derives from the Latin *tragoedia*, which in turn comes from the ancient Greek, *tragidi*, from *tragos* meaning *goat* and *aoid*, or *id*, meaning song: in other words 'the song of the goat'. Or as Kerenyi puts it, the dithyramb performed 'on the occasion of a he-goat' (Kerenyi 1976, p 320). The goat is the sacrifice made to the god and interestingly, Haigh points out, the prize received by Thespis for his first performance (Haigh 1889, p 7). The sacrifice of the goat originated in rural religious rites, in which a goat was torn apart after ecstatic dancers had performed their rituals (see Figure 3.3, following page).[58]

[58] Kerenyi quotes *Georgics* (II, 380) by the Roman poet Virgil (70–19 BCE): 'For no other crime is it that a goat is slain to Bacchus at every altar, and the olden plays enter on the stage; for this the sons of Theseus set up prizes for the wit in their villages and at the crossings, and gaily danced in the soft meadows on oiled goat skins' (Kerenyi 1976, p 322). Indeed an echo of these words can be seen today on the Greek island of Skyros, where there is a celebration just before Lent in which people wear goat masks and costumes and dance about the town. See <http://www.myspace.com/video/156988930/the-goat-dancers-of-skyros/8566173 > (accessed February 2011). Many thanks to Carol Natsis for telling me about this.

Figure 3.3 Ritual dismemberment of animals. Amphora, the Achilles painter, 450 BCE. (Bérard and Bron 1989, p 149)

To prevent the young goat, which represented Dionysus, from entering the vineyard, also a representation of Dionysus, and destroying the new life being formed, the goat was sacrificed. The tragedy, says Kerenyi, is that the sinner, the young goat, knows nothing of his sin and has not even committed it, and will be punished with his own death. This aroused feelings of compassion, pity and fear for the goat. Kerenyi explains that it was the presence of two other elements that turned this sacrificial event into the art form of tragedy: 'A myth and an attempt to explain it' (Kerenyi 1976, p 321). Tragedy was a drama in which a masked person took the place of the animal foe and the animal's fate was played out at a slight distance, that is, in an artificial way in order to tell a story. Telling the story of the sacrifice of the goat metaphorically by means of the tragic drama allowed the spectator to participate emotionally and the god was propitiated. Tragedy's presence was felt in the pity and fear for the goat — the tragic hero — but all at a slight distance. Tragic drama became the mask, the metaphor, for sacrifice. If we look at the etymology of the word 'theatre', we see

that it goes back to ancient Greek, *theatron*, a place for seeing, or to *theasthai*, to look at.[59] What we are looking at, what we can see through the mask, is the sacrifice of the goat, and thereby an emotional presence, the presence of the god. This sacrifice was at the centre of the religious rites of Dionysus, the aim of which was to propitiate the god and lead to a rebirth into a new and better way of living for the participants. Through tragedy, spectators could experience the disturbing and uncomfortable feeling of death, that when felt by proxy, can have a cathartic effect.

BIRTH AND REBIRTH

Central to tragedy, then, is the theme of transformation, as expressed mythically in the traumatic births and rebirths of Dionysus. The Greek epic poet Nonnus (approximately 400 CE) tells the story of the births of Dionysus as related in the *Homeric Hymns*. Firstly, Dionysus was the son of Zeus, who had taken on the 'deceiving shape of many coils', and 'Persephoneia, the consort of the blackrobed king of the underworld, Haides' (Nonnus 2010, 5.562). The Titans 'smeared their round faces with disguising chalk' and 'while the baby Dionysus contemplated his changeling countenance reflected in a mirror, they destroyed him with an infernal knife':

> the end of his life was the beginning of a new life as Dionysus. He appeared in another shape, and changed into many forms: now young like crafty Kronides [Zeus] shaking the aegis-cape, now as ancient Kronos heavy-kneed, pouring rain. Sometimes he was a curiously formed baby, sometimes like a mad youth with the flower of the first down marking his rounded chin with black. Again, a mimic lion he uttered a horrible roar in furious rage from a wild snarling throat, as he lifted a neck shadowed by a thick mane, marking his body on both sides with the self-striking whip of a tail which flickered about over his hairy back. Next, he left the shape of a lion's looks and let out a ringing neigh, now like an unbroken horse that lifts his neck on high to shake out the imperious tooth of the bit, and rubbing, whitened his cheek with hoary foam. Sometimes he poured out a whistling hiss from his mouth, a curling horned serpent

[59] First brought to my attention by Peter McNeil in Richard Sennett's book, *The Craftsman*.

> covered with scales, darting out his tongue from his gaping throat, and leaping upon the grim head of some Titan encircled his neck in snaky spiral coils. Then he left the shape of the restless crawler and became a tiger with gay stripes on his body; or again like a bull emitting a counterfeit roar from his mouth he butted the Titanes with sharp horn. So he fought for his life.'
>
> (ibid., 6.155).

The Titans cut Dionysus up and left only his beating heart. Zeus ate his heart and Dionysus was reborn through the mortal Semele, the daughter of King Kadmos. Semele asked Zeus, her celestial lover, to appear to her and, when he did, the sight of his celestial presence was too much for a mortal and she was incinerated. The baby Dionysus was then stitched into Zeus's thigh and reborn when the time was right. A horrendous sacrifice was made of the child, through which he was reborn. At each rebirth, he was put back together in a new way and assumed a higher form. These rebirths are consistent with the concept of *zoë*, mentioned earlier, and are central to the Dionysian religious rites. The hero is the person who can go through these horrendous processes and like Dionysus be reborn into a higher form. The mask is the myth or play that tells of the hero's physical destruction, and the mask also represents the hero while he is going through a transformation.

THE MASK IN TRAGIC DRAMA

Haigh explains that in tragedy the chorus, the lesser characters and the actor, or *hypokrites*, all wore masks (Haigh 1889, p 197).[60] As far as is known, the first actor, Thespis,[61] is said to have employed masks (Haigh 1961, p 199). Initially only one actor was on stage, but in later Greek drama up to three actors used masks to play different roles. The dialogue was the business of the actors and the chorus sang the odes and spoke in general terms (Haigh 1889, p 198). Aeschylus was the first playwright to introduce two actors and to increase the importance of dialogues, moving from a primarily lyrical presentation to a dramatic form (ibid.) — that is, a form that showed rather than simply narrated.

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[60] Haigh states that only the actor was on stage, along with some mute and lesser characters. The chorus was in the orchestra pit.

[61] The English word 'thespian', meaning actor, derives from this name.

Although the tragedies were mostly set in the time of Homer, there was never any attempt to make costumes historically accurate (Haigh 1889, p 216). The costumes were 'idealised' forms. From its beginnings, the Dionysiac religion was inclined to disguise individual personality in favour of transformation into a higher being (Bieber 1961, p 2): as Haigh comments, 'Anything common or familiar is banished from sight' (Haigh 1889, p 216). Stage costumes were flowing, dignified and brilliantly coloured. Actors wore thick wooden soles on their feet to give them height, and their bodies were padded out in proportion to the gained height. On the masks every feature was exaggerated, including the forehead, which was made very high 'to give superhuman dignity and terror to the expression' (Haigh 1889, p 217). Figure 3.4 shows a drawing of a ivory statuette of a Roman actor. Haigh points out that 'pictures of the tragic actor, whether found on Greek vases or Etruscan mosaics, or wall-paintings of Cyrene and Pompeii, … although have considerable difference in point of detail they portray the same general conception' (Haigh 1889, p 242).

Figure 3.4 Drawing of a statuette of a Roman actor. (Haigh 1889, p 243)

THE SACRIFICE OF IPHIGENEIA

Aristotle (384–32 BCE) argues that the main aim of tragedy is to evoke tragic emotions. In his *Poetics* (335 BCE), he says that through 'artistic imitation' (Chapter 3) the tragic emotions of fear and pity should be evoked in the audience. For maximum effect, the tragic incident should take place between people who are close to one another. Aristotle uses the example of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia from Aeschylus' last tetrology, *Oresteia*. The three plays —

Agamemnon, *The Libation Bearers* and *The Eumenides*, with the satyric drama *Proteus*, which is no longer extant — were originally presented at the Great Dionysia in Athens in 458 BCE. The sacrifice of Iphigeneia comes from the first play, *Agamemnon*.

In the play the sacrifice is not shown as an action on the stage, but is described and discussed by the chorus of old men with much horror and sadness. In their theatrical robes and masks, the old men relate how King Agamemnon is with his troops in Aulis, ready to leave for Troy, but the weather is against them and all might be lost. Calchas, the prophet of Apollo, calls on the king to sacrifice his daughter, Iphigeneia, so that the weather will change and the military campaign to Troy will be successful. The old men describe Agamemnon torn between two horrific choices, the loss of his daughter or that of the entire army. Nonetheless, Iphigeneia is gagged so that the sound of her death won't 'curse the house' and is slaughtered on the altar. The old men, who were present at the event, say that they couldn't bear to watch exactly what happened, but the weather did change; now the story is being told at the end of the ten-year war, with Agamemnon returning home a victor, only to face his furious wife, Clytaemnestra, who will kill him to avenge their daughter. The other plays go on to describe the murder of Clytaemnestra by her son, Orestes, who in the final play redeems the whole situation and is returned to his throne.

The archaic 'tragedy of the goat' — the birth and rebirth of Dionysus — was brought into the theatre as the never-ending story of many deaths and births, in which individuals die but the story goes on. In their analysis of *Oresteia*, Robert Fagles and W. B. Stanford comment that glory can eventually be gained out of the grief; that the sacrifice is the act that sets in motion other events, which, as ghastly as they continue to be, eventually lead to a resolution. Fagles and Stanford note Zeus's law, that 'We must suffer unto truth' and that our salvation resides simply in the fact that we must suffer to our mortal limits and know ourselves through it (Fagles and Stanford, 1977, p 25). In *Agamemnon*, the sacrifice leads to a whole series of transformations and changes that involve such intense human feeling, are so complicated and last for such a long time that the story would be impossible to relate except through 'artistic imitation'. In this sense, the mask is represented by the plays, by the presence of the actors and chorus in their exaggerated garments and gestures narrating what

happened. The mask can also be interpreted as the body of Iphigeneia, taking the place of the goat, that the old men couldn't even bear to see, and by Agamemnon, in that he knew he was doomed no matter which choice he made.

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TRANSFORMATION BY CHANGING SELF INTO ANOTHER SELF

Movement between forms was a primary motif in the representation of Dionysus through the mask. In his discussion of the Orphic Dionysus, Erwin Rohde points out that an essential feature of Dionysus was 'that strange power of transfusing self into another being' (1925, p 285). Similarly, Bieber comments that 'The Dionysian religion was from the beginning inclined to disguise individual personality in favour of transformation into a higher being' (Bieber 1961, p 2). She goes on to explain that the practice of representing someone other than oneself developed from the ecstatic religious rituals of followers of Dionysus, in the sense that the worshipper became a completely different person in that moment of passion or ecstatic abandon. The art of the actor is to put aside the personality he was born with and 'feel himself as one who has abandoned the limitation of his own personality … and become a changed being, a demon, a god or a hero' (Bieber 1961, p 9). Changing into another being creates a space where 'a connection can be made to a primitive and powerful emotion' (Rohde 1925, p 285). Dionysus' ability to change himself and others into other forms — human, animal, music, plants and substances like wine, together with its effects — is a major feature of his archetype in the literature and the iconography.

TRANSFORMATION OF DIONYSUS IN HOMER

Dionysus appears in the *Homeric Hymns* numbers 1, 7 and 26. Hymn 1 refers to the birth story related by Nonnus (see 'Birth and rebirth' earlier in this chapter), in which the baby Dionysus made many fantastical transformations as he tried to escape from the clutches of the Titans. It is in Hymn 7 that the Dionysus consciously uses his powers of transformation as an adult. He is found on the 'jutting headland of a fruitless sea' in the appearance of young manhood, with his 'rich dark hair waving about him and a purple cape draped over his strong shoulders' (*Homeric Hymns*, 7:1). He is abducted by pirates because they believe

him to be the son of 'heaven-nurtured kings' (ibid.) and that, as such, he would lead them to his own and his friends' wealth. He is tied up, but his bonds fall away from his hands and feet. Although the helmsman[62] recognises that the stranger 'looks not like mortal men' (ibid., 7:15) and fears the havoc that may be unleashed upon them, the captain dismisses the helmsman's concerns and urges the sailors to go on. 'But soon strange things were seen among them' (ibid., 7:32): wine flowed through the ship and a vine spread out along the top of the sail with grapes hanging down. The young man turned himself into 'a dreadful lion', which launched itself on the captain, and then a 'shaggy bear'. The terrified sailors leapt overboard and changed into dolphins. Only the helmsman was saved.

ACTOR 'TRANSFUSING' INTO CHARACTER

In the story from the *Homeric Hymns*, Dionysus turns himself into fantastical beings that the sailors cannot help but notice. This artistic imitation is what convinces them that this is indeed a god and not a benign and noble young man. Dionysus turns himself into a 'truth' by changing into many forms. He was not acknowledged as such in the original form. An actor experiences the Dionysian phenomenon by transforming him/herself into the character he/she is playing, like a mask, to get the audience's attention and tell the story that needs to be told in the most convincing way. The word that Rohde uses in his description of the transformations of Dionysus is 'transfuse' — 'that strange power of transfusing self into another being' (Rohde 1925, p 285) — and is interesting in this context. 'Transfuse' comes from the past participle *transfusus* of the Latin verb *transfundere*, to pour out (OED 2010): that is, to pour from one vessel into another. I will examine this aspect of the transformation of an actor into a character by referring to the Darren Aronofsky film *The Wrestler*, released in 2008.

In *The Wrestler*, the hero, Randy 'The Ram' Robertson and Rourke's performance as Ram are examples of transformation that emphasise the strange effect of transfusing. In the character Ram we have a tragic hero. His journey

[62] It is interesting that it was the helmsman who recognised Dionysus, because 'helmsman' was a term used for king, who guides the state just as the helmsman guides the boat. In hero myths, the hero does not always know he is a leader, but his actions show him to be one and in that way influence the trajectory of the story.

includes parts of the hero's mythic template but plays out in a very different way. Twenty years ago, Randy 'The Ram' Robinson had been at the top of his form as a professional wrestler; he was the 'king'. Since then, wrestling and lifestyle have taken their toll. The film opens with him broke, old (50 something) and wrestling at weekends in old community halls in an effort to survive. After a particularly brutal bout, he has a heart attack. The doctor warns him he must stop wrestling or he will die. In the hero's journey template, this is the point of leaving the everyday world and going into the strange new world. Randy tries; he gives up wrestling, makes contact with his estranged and bitter daughter and works on the deli counter in the supermarket where he is already a storeman and packer. He fails. Ram returns to the ring for a twenty-year anniversary re-match with a previous sparring partner, The Ayatollah.

At the beginning of the film we are introduced to Rourke as Randy. As Randy becomes Ram for a wrestling match, he makes the change from supermarket employee to god of the wrestling ring. In the changing room, the back room of a hall, Ram is surrounded by wrestlers who are also getting ready for a performance.

Play Clip 4: *The Wrestler* (2008), Ram getting changed for a bout. (8:55–12:00)

Ram and the other men change themselves into very exaggerated figures. Every part of them is altered. Not only are they putting on costumes for the show, but they have all also spent a lot of time before the day of the fight getting ready for the bout. They have made a big effort to develop very large muscles, they have had tattoos, and their hair and facial hair are styled. Their body hair has been waxed and their skin is clean, tanned and glowing. Their costumes tell a story: the men turn themselves into individual characters created especially for the show and this makes the main storyline more real.

THE BODY OF THE ACTOR IN REAL LIFE

Rourke was a gorgeous young actor who had a very successful early career, appearing in many highly acclaimed films, the most memorable being *Nine ½ Weeks* (1986), *Angel Heart* (1987) and *Barfly* (1987). Then, and in his own words, he started 'screwing up during the making of *Angel Heart*' (Sullivan 2009). He became addicted to heroin, beat up his wife and returned to the boxing he had been involved in as a child. He has had a lot of cosmetic surgery to mend the mess that boxing made of his face, and then to fix the bad surgery: five nose

operations and one for a smashed cheekbone. His body was also affected by excessive use of drugs, recreational and otherwise, and alcohol (ibid.). For the film, Rourke put on 16.5 kilos (36 lb) and trained for three months, and appears in very good shape. His hair consists of long blond extensions. They fall down over his shoulders for the bouts and relate to the image of the fluffy blond sheep that is his namesake. When he's Ram, he doesn't mind his hair being messy; otherwise the hair is tied back or under a protective cap. His skin is tanned. His lips are Restalyne- or collagen-enhanced. A primary aspect of the film is his body. The costume he wears for the bouts consists of green, sparkly lycra tights with rams' heads appliquéd onto the hips, and some pieces of sequinned fabric wrapped around his wrists. The tights set off the upper part of his body, which is not covered by clothes.

When we see Ram on screen, we can perceive many layers, many people that Rourke has changed into over the years: first the young actor, then the man who fell on hard times, and then the renewed Rourke. Layered on top of that, we are seeing Rourke playing the role of Ram, a wrestler who has fallen on hard times and has abused his body through wrestling and drugs. It is impossible to tell where the real-life body begins and ends. This similarity between the real-life person and the character creates an enigma that makes me want to look more closely. And the closer I look at the image on the screen, the more amorphous the image becomes. Looking at the face and body as a whole creates a different image from looking at each little bit that has been redone.

According to Bérard and Bron, in images of Dionysus highly artificial scenarios are shown (Bérard and Bron 1981, p 142). For example, they refer to a vase painting where there is a contrast between the maenad playing the flute, the realistic representation of the mask and the fantasy representation of the satyr (Figure 3.5). Bérard and Bron believe that this scenario shows that an irruption of the fantastical (also described in the context of Dionysus as the demonic)

Figure 3.5 Ostension of the wine by a priest/satyr. Vase painting, Stamnos, 440 BCE. Louvre, Paris. (Bérard and Bron 1981, p 142)

affects not the idol but those who serve it (ibid.). They then go on to say that the metamorphosis thus accomplished is the sign of the success of the religious rite: man has become satyr (ibid.). The mask, they insist, is the key instrument in this phenomenon. When Dionysus appears as a different aspect of himself in the other body, he is also shown as the movement in the space between himself and his representation. The image in Figure 3.5 shows what Bérard and Bron describe as an 'ostension'— that is, in a religious setting, it shows the sacrament on the altar in order that it may receive the adoration of the communicants, so that it can be made visible, that is seen, and materialised. What is shown cannot be represented by one figure; it appears as the tension between the body of the

actor, the external costume and the figures around. 'Mask' is its strange, still centre, not just the material mask at the centre of the image. This kind of representation opens up a discussion about the limits of the body: where one body ends and the other begins.

In Figure 3.6, an actor is depicted getting changed into the costume of a satyr. This image is showing the same religious transformation being shown in Figure 3.5, but in the context of the theatre. Bérard and Bron explain that the actor is wearing 'short pants of animal skin to which are affixed a fake tail and phallus' (ibid., p 142). In his left hand he carries the mask of a satyr. On the right side of the image, we have the image of a 'real' satyr. 'There we are not in the wings of the stage but in the divine sphere' (ibid.). Bérard and Bron go on to say that the right-hand side might be showing the actual performance: 'Accomplishing their full function, the elements of disguise would transform the wearer and would instantly lose their artificial character, becoming invisible' (ibid). The young actor would be believed to be a real satyr by the spectator. Bérard and Bron point out that it is crucial that in this image the mask is only shown not being worn; once the mask is on, the actor 'becomes that which he impersonates, the satyr' (ibid). The mask sets in motion the transformation.

Figure 3.6 Actor getting dressed backstage, painting on a krater (wine vessel). Pronomos painter, c. 410 BCE. Naples Museum. (Bérard and Bron 1981, p 143)

THE MASK, THE COSTUMED BODY AND HYPOCRISY

As mentioned earlier, the actor in ancient Greek drama was called 'hypokrites' (Haigh 1889, p 197). The etymology of hypocrite does indeed go back to the ancient Greek word *hypokritês*, one who plays a part, pretends, from *hypokrinein*, to feign (OED 2010). Mimicries and pretence, which can be seen as fake or hypocritical in contemporary culture, are all part of a performance that had become formalised by the time tragic drama began in ancient Greece. The Greek historian Plutarch (46–120 CE) tells how the Greek lawmaker Solon (638–558 BCE) went see Thespis, the first actor, in a play and was opposed to the new art of evocation because he saw it as telling lies.[63] He felt it would be disruptive to real life if acting became part of everyday business. The character an actor plays is a pretence and that is indeed meant to be disruptive. The costumed acting body has a strange effect. Costume is so close to the surface of the body and the life of the actor that it causes a strange tension or questioning in our perception around what is real and what is not. Costuming changes the surface, breaks into the surface of the body for the purpose of the show and, indeed, it is not real. Mostly, it is fake; certainly the circumstances are fake. The effect on the spectator is real and that response is a very precious one. When it is hard to tell the difference between what is real and what is not, a fascination is often created. We cannot see inside the actor, but through the actor and the actions we can see something. In the context of costume, 'hypocrisy' is a primary motif and effect, and this is the effect of the mask.

The interaction of truth and deceit was a major theme of Attic theatre identified by Friedrich Nietzsche in his emblematic study *The Birth of Tragedy*, first

[63] See Plutarch's *Life of Solon*: 'Thespis, at this time, beginning to act tragedies, and the thing, because it was new, taking very much with the multitude, though it was not yet made a matter of competition, Solon, being by nature fond of hearing and learning something new, and now, in his old age, living idly, and enjoying himself, indeed, with music and with wine, went to see Thespis himself, as the ancient custom was, act: and after the play was done, he addressed him, and asked him if he was not ashamed to tell so many lies before such a number of people; and Thespis replying that it was no harm to say or do so in play, Solon vehemently struck his staff against the ground: "Ah," said he, "if we honor and commend such play as this, we shall find it some day in our business." ' (Plutarch 2007)

published in 1872.[64] He finds that the illusory presence is a primary motif of tragic theatre and is described through the god Apollo, whom Nietzsche views as the opposite of the forces of Dionysus. Nietzsche sees the Apollonian qualities of the mask as the 'necessary results of a glance into the terrifying inner world of nature' (Nietzsche 2000, p 53). Indeed, his view is that the 'so called Greek serenity' can be achieved only by looking into the 'terrible darkness' (ibid.). It was to Apollo that Nietzsche gave the characteristics of individuation, of appearance and, in particular, the figure of the 'beautiful appearance' (ibid., p 21). According to Nietzsche, we can't view what is Dionysian directly; it is only through a myriad of disguises that 'we steal a glimpse into the essence of the Dionysian' (ibid., p 22). Dionysus, for Nietzsche, is the underlying sense of religious unity and all the sufferings that are associated with it. Nietzsche maintains that the Dionysian was brought into the marvellous and rhapsodic form of Attic tragedy through the satyr chorus. What comes through strongly in Nietzsche's argument is the joy of form-making, the joy and fun of playing with deception and disguise. Nietzsche had a disdain, expressed in many of his works, for those who would deny appearance through the body.[65] He saw Attic tragedy as a life-affirming artistic creation, where a 'sumptuous' and 'even triumphant existence' was created, 'an existence in which everything is deified, regardless of whether it is good or evil' (ibid., p 27). The primary movement in Nietzsche's exposition is towards life. Nietzsche interprets the singular idea of Dionysus and Apollo as the rapturous bursting forth into life in many disguises. He imagines the ancient audience 'standing in full consternation before this fantastic exuberance of life, wondering what magic potion these arrogant men took in order to have enjoyed life in such a way' (ibid.). But of course, he goes on to say, 'we stretch out our hand to this illusory image that nature appears to have created but it is not there'; it is a deceit (ibid.). 'The true goal is concealed by an hallucinatory image' (ibid., p 29), and, although behind the image is the Dionysian world of spirits, that world of

[64] The motif of deceit was a primary theme of Nietzsche's throughout his writing career: See D. Breazeale's *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks from the Early 1870s*; *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, first published in 1883; *The Gay Science*, originally published in 1882.

[65] See, for example, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, On the Despisers of the Body: 'the awakened, the enlightened man says: I am body entirely, and nothing beside; and soul is only a word for something about the body' (Nietzsche 1969, p 61).

suffering would be incomprehensible without the form-making that was realised in ancient Greece through theatre. Today, the created image attempts realisation by deceiving us into contemplating ourselves in the contemporary 'sphere of beauty' (ibid.). Nietzsche even goes so far as to say that it is the image of excess that reveals itself as truth, a blissful image born of the suffering that comes from contradicting nature (death).

In *The Wrestler*, Rourke brings all his sufferings, all Ram's sufferings, into the present moment of Ram, and, once there, the sufferings *are* Ram, as far as we can tell. The film exploits the ambiguity inherent in the Ram/Rourke presence. Sometimes when we look at Ram, we can see Rourke — for example, when he is sitting in the back of his van in the dark, locked out of his caravan because he has not paid the rent. We think it is Ram, but we see them both in that situation, which is presented in such a way as to make up the whole. Not only does the film move us into a liminal realm from which the hero gains reality and a sense of the numinous, but the actor is neither purely fictitious nor purely real, and hence gains from the ambiguity and exploitation of liminality.

NEO

The image of Neo in the *Matrix* films is almost the opposite of that of Ram, yet the same thing is happening. In the first film, *The Matrix*, he appeared dressed in fashion similar to that of the other 'humans', but at the beginning of the second film, *Matrix Reloaded,* he appears costumed like a Roman Catholic priest (as shown in Clip 2 in Chapter 2). Neo's is figure is slight; his skin is pale, smooth and matt; his lips are pale pink. The cassock is a matt woollen fabric. It is smooth and fitted from the neck right down to the ground and flared out with black trousers and shoes underneath. Sunglasses wrap close to his face so that the inner Neo is almost completely inaccessible. In this way he is the opposite of Ram, who appears almost completely accessible through the surface of his body and his eyes.

The sunglasses set up a peculiar tension in which you cannot really see the eyes, yet you want to see them. This is a mask, but presented in a different way from its presentation in Ram. We think we see everything about Ram because he appears to make himself available to us through his face and eyes and in the connections he has with the other wrestlers. The mask presented by Neo is smoothness, calm, being in control. I can't take my eyes off his face because I

can't see it. As Nietzsche would suggest, particularly in this instance, through the presentation of a radical image as much seems to be concealed as revealed (Nietzsche 2000, p 127). Looking at Neo moves us away from the mask to what? The clothes? To the real Reeves? The costume holds us to the outside of the body as well as expressing a supreme confidence in that. Reeves brings his real-life persona to the role of Neo as well. He is described in his IMDb biography as being 'inscrutable'.[66] The biography goes on to say that his role of 'totally rag dude Ted Logan' in *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* (1989) 'would forever confuse Reeves' real life persona with that of his doofy on-screen counterpart'. His dead-pan delivery style and a low profile have contributed to his on-screen persona in the *Matrix* and other films.

Neo's costume and his body are also close. The costumes are fitted and tailored perfectly to his body, so much so that, as Gilligan explains, we get a sense that he is making his transformations through his body as costume (Gilligan 2009, p 149). Neo's costume is not as close to his body as Ram's, however, whose costume consists partly of his muscles and partly of his tan, plus the years of fighting, as well as the tights. Ram's image fits much more into the muscly image of the older action heroes to whom Gilligan refers. Much of that costume is under the skin. Showing the body is a costume of emotional reality. Or does this make it appear more 'natural', more real, and so more trustworthy? In the sense that both appearances are artificial, the one is just as trustworthy as the other. But when one is perceived to be more 'real' than the other, in a cultural context, a whole different set of values are opened up. Neo's appearance, however, has an added strangeness. He is not actually a priest, and by being dressed like one he is setting up quite a distance between what we expect him to look like and what he actually looks like. This is very much part of the iconography of Dionysus: to change into many strange and unlikely images to stimulate and confuse the viewer. The image of Rourke, the actor, the character of Ram and the fakery of wrestling was ridiculous to some and heartbreaking to others, but it was fascinating for many to 'see' Rourke acting again. Neo, the fashionista and priest, was bizarre for many, but for Gilligan was so right that he appears as if out of her own imagination and the imagination of her peers as an ideal appearance of a particular cultural moment (Gilligan 2009, p 151).

[66] See IMDb: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000206/bio>.

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TRANSFORMATION DUE TO TECHNOLOGY

Nietzsche's 'beautiful appearance' in the contemporary sense is also influenced by the needs of technology. Much of what is shot for film is shot on blue screen or, as in the case of *The Matrix*, green screen, and much care must be taken with the presentation of the actor. There must be no stray hairs or floaty bits of fabric. There must be a solid line between the moving body and the background, so that when the background is 'dropped in' there is no blurring on the edge of the moving body and the actors look as though they are really where they are meant to be. There also can be no reflection in the fabric or on the skin. If the fabric shows any reflection of the blue screen, it too will disappear into background. This problem can be fixed by hand in postproduction, but it is part of the costumer's job to avoid reflection as much as possible. For this reason, the face is matt and the fabrics are matt. On seeing the film, the spectator likes the look of the actor and wants to look like him, and then that becomes a 'look' and, if the character is a 'king', this becomes what contemporary heroes or kings look like. This king looks like the character, but it is not how a real person looks; it is very difficult in real life to look like that. The actor's appearance is a technical requirement, and in this way the technical requirements become part of the presentation of the character. In *The Matrix*, a very large percentage of the film was shot on green screen, as can be seen in the discs accompanying the set.[67] Scenes are not shot in sequence, so if there are to be no problems with continuity in terms of the emotion shown on faces, it is easier if no emotion is shown, or the face is emotion-neutral. That then becomes part of the 'look'. No emotion is shown on the faces or in the clothes, and sunglasses cover up any emotion that might show through. Being unaffected by what is going on around him is the way Neo copes with all the huge events that are happening. That image then becomes part of the iconography of the modern hero/king.

[67] As far as I can tell there were no green- or blue-screen effects in *The Wrestler*, although the special effects and visual effects departments included twenty staff.

In the image of the long-reigning Hollywood icon Cher, we see self transfusing into another being according to the cultural appropriations of the time and place, in the same way as Rourke and Reeves do. Cher brings much of her private, particular self into a cinematic presence, and this is no less so in her latest film, *Burlesque* (2010), her first in ten years. Cher has been in show business for more than forty years. She received an Oscar for *Moonstruck* (1987), and Golden Globes for *The Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour* (1973), *Silkwood* (1983) and *Moonstruck* (1987). For the last three years she has been doing a ninety-minute show at the Colosseum in Caesars Palace, Las Vegas. She has reportedly been paid $US60 million a year for 200 performances (Smith 2010, p 219).
I mention this because she was born in 1946, which made her 61 years old when the contract was signed. *Burlesque* tells the story of Ali, played by Christina Aguilera, a young, small-town aspiring dancer/singer from Iowa who lands herself in town, on the run from a dreary history. She is given a job as a waitress by Tess, played by Cher, the owner of the Burlesque Lounge and previously a burlesque dancer herself. Ali goes on to wow Tess and the patrons of the Burlesque Lounge alike with her singing and performing ability and brings the club back to life. The Burlesque Lounge is way past its heyday, but Cher is not.

Play Clip 5: Tess performs at the Burlesque Lounge.

Cher has been transforming the way she looks from her early years and has become famous for her sensationally and increasingly youthful figure and face.[68] In a recent *Vanity Fair* interview, she relates how her first husband, Sonny Bono, told her that she was 'a butterfly, meant to be seen by all not to be kept by one' (Smith 2010, p 224), and it would appear that this idea has been a trope for her. In the *Vanity Fair* interview, Krista Smith comments that 'She [Cher] has openly admitted to having had work done on her nose, mouth and breasts, but, as she was once quoted as saying "if I want to put my tits on my back, its nobody's business but my own" ' (ibid., p 274). Smith goes on to say that Cher has always been unhappy about ageing. Cher says it is getting in her way; it is making her job harder. Bob Mackie, who designs Cher's gowns, remarks that when he met her forty years ago 'everyone thought she was so

[68] To see how Cher's appearance changed over the years, go to <http://www.ocregister.com/articles/cher-235905-medicine-freedomblogging.html?pic=1> and view a series of photos from the sixties until now.

strange, so weird, so big and gawky' (ibid., p 275), but he thought he could do something with the gawkiness. When asked why she has such a strenuous performance schedule, she says she is not broke but that she may as well be 'dying in my house or on stage' (ibid., p 275). In Nietzsche's discussion of the mask, he speaks of the impulse towards a beautiful appearance as a strong impulse for life.

The demands of the art of the contemporary female image require a lot of what Cher provides, whether her appearance is to your taste or not. The job that was previously done by corsetry and lead paint is now done by almost invisible corsetry: surgery, skin treatments, the airbrush. Cher insists for her it has been achieved by a very disciplined lifestyle and 'exercise' (ibid., p 274). Whatever is involved, the effort required to achieve the look of her body is enormous. Yet part of that achievement has to consist of making it look 'natural' and as though nothing much was done; that there was some effort but not an excessive amount, an 'effortless transformation' (Gilligan 2009, p 149). Much of plastic surgery is about achieving a natural look: the teardrop breast shape to give the look of a slightly dropped breast shape, implants in the cheeks to fill out the skin of the face and give a plumped-up look, rather than the skin being pulled back behind the ears. Film is about close-ups of the face mainly, so looking young and being young even in what the body is capable of doing is of primary importance for the contemporary goddesses of the screen, not so much for the ideal of being young but to show that the goddess can transcend time itself.

Many of the comments in blogs and announcements about Cher in her role in *Burlesque* mention that she looks like an alien because of all the surgery she has had done, her excessive make-up, the extravagant clothes and the way her face does not move. In other recent dance films, like *Chicago* (2002) and *Nine* (2009), which is based on an Italian play by Mario Fratti and on *8½* (1963) by Italian film director Federico Fellini, the bodies are made to move in the most extraordinary fashion: quickly, precisely and with no excess of flesh. The kind of artifice that is required today is right out there on the border of human. This seems to be the expectation in real life as well. It is an image that is just as strange as the masked appearance of the Greek actor would have been if seen on the streets of ancient Athens.

Modern cinematic technologies are in possession of the magic that allows magical transformations to be more precise, more extensive and more 'natural' looking. It is interesting that the aim is to make the artifice being portrayed look natural. Whether it is people flying, fighting in a boxing ring or flying in a spaceship with a Wookie, the image has to be believable, in the sense of being related to nature. In a similar way, the images of women have to be believable. The blogs on the internet and conversations with a particular actor on film or TV focus endlessly on whether surgery has happened or has 'gone too far'. Nonetheless, the image-makers continue to 'plunge longingly', as Nietzsche says, 'towards new forms' (Nietzsche 2000, p 100). In Nietzsche's view this image-making shows the complex formulation of the Dionysian and Apollonian that point towards pleasure in appearance as being redemption through appearance (ibid., p 69). What is aimed for is a perfection of states, whether wrestler or burlesque dancer, 'in contrast to the only partial comprehensibility of everyday reality' (Nietzsche 2000, p 21).

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TRANSFORMATION THROUGH FIGURES IN THE SAME SCENE

A particular aspect of the iconography and the literature of Dionysus is that he most often appears with his retinue, his group of worshippers. Dionysus is often depicted as a noble young man in rich but everyday clothes. His other anthropomorphic and theriomorphic images and the activities associated with him convey his other aspects and his psychological realities. In the ancient context, the retinue includes 'monsters, sirens, gorgons, centaurs (horse–men), pans (men–goats) and a separate category that is entirely Dionysian, that of sileni or satyrs (men–horses)' (Bérard and Bron 1989, p 132). Satyrs have short, muscular male bodies with horse's tails and ears, and often play a flute. Maenads are wildly dancing female followers, with their heads thrown back, apparently in ecstasy, and often hold snakes. The snakes are chthonian images of Dionysus and strongly symbolic of his regenerative possibilities. Sileni are bald and drunken older satyrs, with the wine also being representative of the god in the important sense of unity and oneness. These creatures are the imaginative aspects of the god, which take on fantastical forms that meant

something to the contemporary audience. They are always near him, around him, and in a still image are shown simultaneously. In film, the other characters carry out actions that for the most part would be inner responses, or an aspect of the personality, of the main character. In this way, a rather uncanny aspect of the Dionysian is that it is never to be found where it might logically be, but everywhere else. As Bérard and Bron point out in their explanation of the scenario in the vase painting in Figure 3.5, an irruption of the fantastical is shown not in the idol but in those who serve it (Bérard and Bron 1981, p 142). The strange feeling occurs in the blurred boundary between fantastical and real appearances, at once both male and female, animal and plant. As soon as Dionysus appears, the distinct categories and clear oppositions that give the world its coherence and rationality fade.

If we look back to Clip 4 of Ram in *The Wrestler*, getting changed for his bout with Tommy Rotten in the back room of a hall, Ram is surrounded by fighters who are all getting ready for a performance. Through them we see Ram as a younger man and also we see part of the journey he has taken to become the man he is now. It is in the other figures in the scene that the desires and the life journey of Ram are materialised. The figures around the antagonist, the hero, of a film give us a clearer image of the story being told. We understand this visually, without the need of a description in words.

The same thing happens in the *Matrix* films with Neo and Trinity. We are mostly unable to penetrate Neo's appearance, and much of his enigma derives from that impenetrability. Trinity is the one who gets bloodied in his stead and in the end dies, so that he can go on to carry out the final act. In *The Matrix Reloaded*, Trinity is struck in the heart by a bullet, which Neo removes. She dies and Neo brings her back to life. It could even be said that as Neo's powers become more and more heroic, Trinity is hurt more and more often, until in the last film she is pierced by giant girders and dies.

We can also see this happening in the Clint Eastwood film, *Million Dollar Baby* (2004). Frankie Dunn, played by Eastwood, reluctantly trains a female boxer, Maggie Fitzgerald, played by Hilary Swank. Maggie takes a blow and becomes paralysed. Frankie is compelled to look after her and protect her, a job he has failed to do with his own daughter, something that is eating away at him. Frankie's appearance does not change in the movie. His face and demeanour is

rigid and his clothes are pretty much the same throughout. Maggie, on the other hand, is determined and single-minded from the start of the film. Externally she changes from living a life of hopeless poverty to becoming a successful boxer who carries the colours of her trainer. Inwardly, she has the apparent sureness that Frankie displays outwardly. It is Maggie who experiences all the material signs of disintegration that Frankie cannot show; she loses a leg, then bites into her tongue and she almost bleeds to death. Eventually, at her request, Frankie smothers her. In the end she dies a physical death and we don't see her again, but he is reborn to a new life in the country running a pub.

Where does costume begin and the 'real' person end? The study of the image of the Greek actor tells us that the transformation is complete for the spectator, because we see multiple physical aspects that assume a singular appearance. Kerenyi makes the very important point that the mask was only seemingly empty, as 'behind it dwells the world of spirits which sends its inhabitants out onto the Dionysian stage' (1976, p 284). By moving from mask to mask, allowing for many different presences and holding them in one image, the transformations appear to be simultaneous for the spectator. It is this ability to hold all of the presences that makes the image 'real', in that it allows for something else to be present. In James Hillman's analysis of the psychic Dionysian presence, or the 'Dionysian hypothesis' that has been 'valuable for seeing the dream in another way' (1983a p 37), he explains that the Freudian position on dreams is that they are allegories (Hillman 1983b, p 58). The Jungian understanding is that they are symbolic in that a dream is 'the throwing together of two (or more) dissonants into a unique voice' (ibid., p 35). This is indeed the point I am making here. Through showing various aspects of the one complex presence that is constantly moving in its emphasis, something meaningful is apprehended by the spectator. This Hillman describes as being 'theatrical logic' (ibid., p 37). It is 'not a coded message … but a display' (ibid.). Hillman, a therapist, discusses this view in terms of the healing effect of seeing dreams, but it is also apposite for the viewer of a film. If we have only one identity, we have an identity crisis, but in film there are many identities we can choose from. Hillman argues that 'Authenticity is the perpetual dismemberment of being and not being a self, a being that is always in many parts' (ibid., p 39). He goes on to explain that 'we are purged of attachments to

literal destinies, find freedom in playing parts, partial, dismembered, Dionysian, never being whole but participating in the whole that is a play, remembered by it, as actor of it' (ibid., p 38).

Walter Otto, too, states that the mask is 'the symbol and the manifestation of that which is simultaneously there and not there: that which is excruciatingly near, that which is completely absent — both in one reality' (Otto 1965, p 91). The sense of absence or 'other', leads our minds out of what is being shown and into another space and for this we need the 'mask, which thus becomes the symbol of the duality and paradox' and is what is 'inherent in the epiphany' (ibid.). The word epiphany derives from the ancient Greek *epiphaneia*, 'manifestation', which comes from *epiphainesthai*, 'to appear'. For Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux, the enigmatic mask of Dionysus 'reveals to the eyes of all the epiphany of the god'(Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux 1990, p 202). In the sense that the god is perpetually appearing through the mask, Dionysus is described as 'stranger', 'other' and 'perpetually arriving' (ibid., p 201). There is constant movement and change in the way this otherness can be described and is experienced. Because of its constant changing, the image is always reaching our perception in a new way. Indeed, for most people who see a film, and particularly in respect of a character in a film, their perceptions are different. What the Dionysian mask introduces is the presence of the stranger in the most complex and disturbing of ways, in that it gives access to a world where 'the confining limitations of the human condition disappeared' (Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux 1990, p 205).

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OTHERNESS

As Gernet explains, masking, whether used in drama or cult, points us towards the impression of 'otherness' and imposes 'strange' identities on the wearer as well as on the observer (1981a, p 67). From the psychological viewpoint, Hillman's considers masking to be that 'which sees all things as mask in order to see through all things' (Hillman 1983a, p 39). He maintains that 'Dionysian logic is necessarily mystical and transformational because it takes events as masks, requiring the process of esotericism, of seeing through to the next insight' (ibid). Essential to the idea of transformation in the Dionysian

mythological realm is the idea of transcending boundaries and one image taking the place of another or becoming 'other', but through the experience of the body. Neo was dressed like a priest, but he was not a priest and he was not meant to be a priest. What was set up for the sake of the storytelling was a distance: the spectator was moved to a more distant viewing position. Tragedy took the place of the goat sacrifice perhaps because it evoked the same emotions but was less brutal or messy than the original event, which was also too complicated to relate. Nietzsche states that 'tragic myth' is not merely an imitation of the reality of nature but an 'artistic imitation of reality set alongside it for the purpose of overcoming it' (Nietzsche 2000, p 127); in this way, tragedy's intention is to transfigure.

When the actor transforms into a character or a role, the actor's entity is not entirely discarded in this change into another being. Even in ancient tragedy, where actors were almost completely covered, they became very important in themselves. As actors put on their costumes, they gradually become something else, but parts of the body are left available to the spectator. The costume is designed to fit the actor closely, and as each small part of it is put on there is a gradual move from the actor towards something else. The original figure of the actor is required to show that there has been move from one to the other. The first presence has not gone entirely; the second presence is what I can only describe as being 'slightly next to' the first, even if the character is very distant from the 'real' life of the actor.

In my work as a costumer I have experienced this opening up of the space between actors and roles as they change themselves into a character. Over and over again I have observed that in those moments private thoughts and difficult-to-express personal realities appear. As the actors, hairdressers, make-up artists and costumers are involved in that moment of transformation, the feeling in the room can be contradictory and confusing, but is always highly emotional and intimate. I realised after many years that this paradoxical and fluid interplay between inner intimacy and outer display is part of the process that moves the actor towards appearing more effectively as 'other'. The reality may have nothing to do with the actor or the role; it can be of an entirely different nature. The actor puts on a body that transforms her or him into something else. The actor has been taken apart and put together in a different

way. The costume makes the body move in a different way, changes the person's posture. We may surmise that as Rourke goes through the process of becoming Ram or Reeves becomes Neo, passing through this in-between state that contains both identities gives the actor access to a strange new reality that contains all the forms. Ram is the mask and Rourke is behind the mask, yet it is not Rourke's story that is being told; he is not really there. Ram is not really there either; he is just a pretence, and yet this representation of Ram makes both identities more 'real'.[69] The whole experience is one of being 'excruciatingly near' (Otto 1963,
p 91) to an unseen but intensely emotional reality.

THROUGH THE ARTIFICE, SO MUCH MORE AUTHENTIC

Through this study and my own experience I have observed that this 'other', which is so close, and never complete, and requires such an enormous effort to achieve, has a sense of being much more authentic. We think that, by wearing a mask — the artificial make-up and costume — the human imitator has been transformed into the image represented by the costume, no matter how fake that image is. That is, if the actor can 'act' in some way, and it might not be what the costume suggests, then he or she is redeemed in that they have brought forth an image, possibly a contradictory one and certainly one we do not know everything about.

What the mask actually conveys, according to Otto, due to its incompleteness, is the most 'compelling immediacy', which contains more than any complete image (Otto 1965, p 90). Otto's idea is that the mask serves as the representation of those spirits that it was necessary to bring into 'man's immediate proximity' (ibid.). In this sense, I think the effect of masking is more than otherness; it is proximity. The intensity brought about by the immediacy or proximity is so emotionally overpowering that it diverts the attention and is mistaken for authenticity of character. The disturbance that the immediacy creates in the spectator is an emotional response that is authentic and strong. It is the proximity of different selves in the costumed body of the actor, the juxtaposition of the 'artificial' mask and the 'real' body that creates a space,

[69] It has certainly made Rourke more "real". His acting career has undergone a huge revival.

even only slight, in which an intense emotion can be experienced. We cannot necessarily say what it is; only that it is an intense emotional response. If we over-rationalise what is expressed through the costumed body, by trying to hold on exactly to the real, the emotional response to the costumed body can disappear and the sense of awe accompanying this evocation of emotion through the body, which also gives a sense of being beyond the body, disappears.

Euripides' *Bacchae* illustrates what happens when we try to over-rationalise the Dionysian. *Bacchae* was presented posthumously at the Great Dionysia of 405 BCE and it won first prize (Franklin 2000, p vii). It tells the story of the god Dionysus in the form of a young man arriving in Thebes from Lydia (Persia) to avenge the death of his mother, Semele. The king, Pentheus, refuses to acknowledge the frenzied biennial event of the cult of Dionysus in which the female bacchants celebrate the return of the god from the underworld. Pentheus tries to imprison the stranger but, in order to escape, Dionysus makes Pentheus believe he has tied the stranger's hands while in reality he was tying the feet of a bull in the stable, which, in his state of rage, he does not realise. Since Dionysus does also appear to his followers in the form of the bull, he is being tied up and not tied up at the same time. He transforms into the 'other' to avoid being bound to having one form. Dionysus reduces Pentheus to a state of delusion; disguised in women's clothes, Pentheus joins the women in their revelry. Once attention is drawn to him, the women, led by his mother Agave, tear Pentheus apart from limb to limb in the place of the goat.

As stated earlier, the costumed body has not taken the place of the actor entirely. The individuality of the actor has been put aside, or parts have been put aside to be viewed separately and to be brought in when necessary. The more confusion that is caused, the better the viewer — and the actor — can be placed in a position where they can be open to a different way of being. 'Other', then, is not so much developed into a completely transformed state where the first presence is gone, as being a 'slightly next to' state, as though the original presence is still there. The costumed body is 'slightly next to' the real body of the actor, and indeed this is a necessity in order to transform oneself. The place of costume in this artifice is primary. Other art forms (location and props) are created around the body, but costume — including make-up, hairdressing and

especially surgery — is as close as you can get to the body. Surgery is noticeable and draws our attention to what lies beneath the skin, just as a dream reveals the inner life of the dreamer. What we see makes us wonder what is real and what is fake. This seems to be important when looking; we seem to want to get closer and closer to the body of the actor. The value is that we can go through disturbingly strange experiences at a distance.

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Conclusion

In this chapter, through a study of the myth of Dionysus and the beginnings of tragedy, I have shown the transformational ability and the ambiguous representational power of the mask and its importance in ancient theatre and contemporary film. The body is transformed into something fantastical, and what that is and what it means cannot be known clearly. In the discussion of costume, the mask's importance also lies in its representation of artifice and distance and yet its closest proximity to the body itself. Nietzsche observes that the audience in early tragedy found themselves surrounded by 'a crowd of ghosts, with which one knows oneself to be intimately at one' (Nietzsche 2000, p 50). The original dramatic phenomenon, he goes on to say is 'to see oneself transformed before one's very eyes and now to act as one had entered into another body and another character' (ibid.).

It is Nietzsche's argument about what is deceit and what is logical appearance that makes a major contribution to the discussion of the spectacular. In Nietzsche's view, the rapturous and constantly different appearance or disguise that captures the viewer's imagination is the image through which we are able to perceive the Dionysian religious experience, the purpose of the creation of ancient theatre. Indeed, in the sense that this magical appearance seems to be elevated above the real ground trodden by mortals (Nietzsche 2000, p 45), it is part of the iconography of the hero as king and queen. In the spectacular appearance of the costumed body, it would seem that we want at the same time to both view and tear away the veil and disclose the secret it hides, but the 'radiance held the eye in its spell and prevented it from penetrating more deeply' (Nietzsche 2000 p 127). Thus, for Gilligan, the mask of hero is that Neo's appearance is so much in tune with a particular cultural moment that he

appears as if out of her own imagination (Gilligan 2009 p 151). For those who liked *The Wrestler*, the image of Ram embodies the particular tragic story being told. Both Rourke/Ram and Reeves/Neo are neither purely fiction nor purely real, and hence they gain from their ambiguity and exploitation of liminality. The desire to transform the body, to extend it, is a signal that here is a scintillating and provocative gateway to the world and to the gods. The actor is a bridge and the costume by its exaggeration helps make that more so. Illusory and constantly changing images that are created by body-building, make-up, surgery, tight-fitting garments, sunglasses, flared and stylish religious garb, sequins, high heels and jewellery are not valued for their 'truth', but for their ability to fascinate and allow life to delight in its own presence. To quote Nietzsche from *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, life wants to 'create beyond itself. That is what it most wishes to do, that is its whole ardour' (Nietzsche 1969, p 63).

Chapter 4

The Body in Transition

An analysis of the death of the hero's body

> Nothing retains its own form; but nature, the great renewer, ever makes up forms from forms. Be sure there is nothing perishes in the whole universe; it does but vary and renew its form.
>
> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book XV, 239–58 (Ovid 2010)

> My only faith is in the broken bones and the bruises I display.
>
> From the title song of *The Wrestler* by Bruce Springsteen

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I examine the image of the death of the hero in film and show how its meaning can be understood through myth and ritual. According to Campbell, it is the task of the hero in hero's journey myths to effect a reconciliation of the individual consciousness with the universal will (Campbell 1993, p 238). It is in the last part of the hero's journey myth that the hero's quest has to be accomplished through a 'penetration to the source' (ibid., p 193). This symbolic[70] death or transformation is often shown as the death of the body,[71]

[70] Campbell uses the term in the sense I have been using it.

[71] This central transforming image is not always an image of death. Campbell talks of another familiar image of change in fairy tales and myths that is 'the bliss bestowing goal' (Campbell 1993, p 110). In a story from Ireland, after the journeying hero has passed by giants, monsters of the sea and land, and twelve chambers of beautiful sleeping women, he finds the Queen of Tubber Tiintye, the paragon of all paragons of beauty, asleep on a lounge couch of gold and he stays with her for six days (ibid., pp 172-–3). Campbell also names 'atonement with the father' (ibid., pp 126-–149) as another common image of transition (see, for example, the recent film

from which there is a physical and spiritual rebirth. It is considered to be a creative achievement:

> Everywhere, no matter what the sphere of interest … the really creative acts are represented as those deriving from some sort of dying to the world; and what happens in the interval of the hero's nonentity, so that he comes back as one reborn, made great and filled with creative power, mankind is also unanimous in declaring.
>
> (ibid., pp 35–6)

This is because rebirth is not related just to the individual's rebirth but to the creative reawakening of the entire community, an undertaking on the symbolic level of the hero-king. The representation of this change, death — that is the transition between the old body and the rebirth of the new — and its meanings are the subject of this chapter.

The motif of symbolic death and rebirth

Eternality and transformation achieved through symbolic death and rebirth comprise a common and varied theme in myth and ritual and form the central image of hero's journey myths. As I argued in Chapter 2, non-death, eternality, or somehow being outside of time is one of the motifs of the magician-king and the heroes of myths. Chapter 3 introduced the ancient Greek concept of life connected to rebirth that is conveyed by one of the words for life, *zoë*. This word describes life as ongoing or eternal and includes the idea of non-death, or birth and rebirth, a notion that is essential to the understanding of the myth of Dionysus.

The French ethnographer Arnold van Gennep points out that the motif of rebirth is repeated in rituals of separation from the old way of living and incorporation into the new way — or movement away from the profane into the sacred, or from one cultural group into another — and is common to many peoples (Gennep 1975, p 184). Gennep cites the example of the initiation of a boy into a totem group, where in some cases 'the novice is considered dead and remains dead for the duration of his novitiate' (ibid., p 75). The implication of this is that he comes back to life at the end of the period and that life has

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Inception (2010). In the Dionysian myths multiple transformations are a common image of transition (see Chapter 3, 'Transformation through sacrifice — Birth and rebirth).

continued in the representation of ‘death’. The psychologist and scholar of antiquities Linda Fierz-David mentions that in some mystery initiations the head is covered, which indicates the death of the initiate (Fierz-David 1988, p 73). The Orphic scholar M. L. West comments that ritual initiation into the adult community or into a secret society is a worldwide institution (West 1984, p 143). He goes on to explain that, although there are countless individual variations, typical elements include special dances of a warlike character, an animal sacrifice, physical mutilations and the introduction of a supernatural human being. ‘But after the requisite interval the initiate is restored to life and takes his place among those that have put him through these alarming experiences’ (ibid., p 143–4). Gennep explains that through this image, a weakening is intended that makes the novitiate lose the memory of his childhood existence. When a king dies, the mortal or individual body may weaken and perish but the king’s mystical body never dies (Kantorowicz 1997, p 13). The mystical body of the king lives on in the regalia and talismans (ibid., p 417).

The mythologist and religious scholar Mircea Eliade considers rituals of descent — that is, descending into the underworld, the place of death — to be expressions of the same idea and says that they follow a universal pattern not dissimilar to that of the hero’s journey. According to Eliade, the journey begins with separation from the family, and then continues with regression to the prenatal state, which he calls a state of transition. The third phase of death, dismemberment and suffering, is followed by rebirth and the killing of another (Eliade 1977, pp 200–4). Jung argues that the real purpose of mystery religions is to create symbols of death and rebirth, the rites of initiation being approximate to the voluntary death that leads to rebirth (Jung 1970, notes, p 415). In terms of psychic energy, Jung explains that this kind of death occurs when the individual finds it impossible to move forward with his life, and the energy that is required for symbol-making ‘sinks into its own depths, working down to the old intimation of the immortality of all that lives, to the old longing for rebirth’ (ibid., p 398). To experience rebirth, a change in consciousness needs to occur and a sacrifice must be made; it must be a voluntary choice and it will be felt as a death. Thus, the myths, rites and films have similar structures because they present a fundamental psychical motif of human experience that is

repeated on many levels.[72] Whether it is the young initiate moving into adulthood or the young princess moving into queenliness, as psychologist James Hillman states, 'as a symbol, death is the most profoundly radical way of expressing this shift in consciousness' (Hillman 1979, p 66).

Transition

The word 'transit' harks back to the Latin *transire* — *trans* 'across' and *ire* 'to go' (OED). 'Transition' is also related to 'transient', which refers to passing through a place without staying in it and also derives from *transire* (OED). In *Symbols of Transformation*, it is Jung's view that the words point towards a meaning that includes 'to make a passage or crossing, from the ending of one phase of life into the birthing of another' (Jung 1970, p 339). Jung maintains that 'The motif of containment signifies the latent state that precedes regeneration' (ibid., p 234). Gennep also identifies this period of stasis in rituals and explains that it indicates a time or a state of being outside ordinary life, calling it 'a transitional state' (Gennep 1975, p 185). Citing Hubert and Mauss, Gennep points out that 'the idea of momentary death is a general theme of magical as well as religious initiation' (ibid., p 110). In the Orphic rituals, according to West, what is contained in this period of stasis must point towards regeneration (West 1984, p 161). Death is then felt as a victory necessary for rebirth and the reinvigoration of the world (Campbell 1993, p 193).

This chapter will investigate the visual representation, through myth and ritual, of this transitional period as an image of the dead body. Is it an image of death or does the cinematic image act only as a guide to what is happening? I will continue to look at the *Matrix* films (1999–2003) and *The Wrestler* (2009), as well as at others. I will also revisit the myth of Dionysus through the Orphic stories, and the Sumerian myth of Inanna through her descent into the netherworld. I will also briefly examine the Christian image of the crucified Christ.

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[72] Jung states that the structure of dreams can be similar to a dramatic structure and also includes a precise moment of change. He describes this structure as firstly a statement of place and an exposition, and then secondly the development of the plot. The third phase he calls the culmination, or *peripeteia*. Here, states Jung, 'something decisive happens or something changes completely'. The final stage he calls the *lysis*, the solution (Jung 1981, p 295).

THE SCATTERING OF FLESH

Joseph Campbell comments that the hero who has cut his ties with ego, can then 'pass back and forth across the horizons of the world … as readily as a king through all the rooms of his house' (ibid., p 93). This is a freedom, Campbell goes on to say, 'that comes after the hero has made visible on their own bodies the great symbolic act of scattering the flesh … for the renovation of the world' (ibid.). In contemporary film, many transitions into rebirth are shown in this way, by the body being penetrated, shot, stabbed, cut into, opened up or exploded and by other common images of violence towards or on the body. Metaphorically or symbolically, what we are 'seeing' is the 'scattering of flesh' necessary to free the soul from the body. The transition period can be divided into two parts, the first being the breaking into or dissolution of the body and the second being the period of stasis, the time of ghosts. How are these images presented on film?

Neo's transition period

From the start of the first film of the *Matrix* trilogy Neo's heroic appearance is presented as smooth and fluid, and is completed by fashion sunglasses that cover the eyes completely. It is a slick, impenetrable surface that is rarely transgressed in any way. Indeed, as Sarah Gilligan has pointed out, it is that particular quality of Neo's heroic appearance that is restricted to the level of surfaces that sets him apart as a new contemporary hero (Gilligan 2009, p 149). After surviving the signature spectacular fight towards the end of the first film almost without a scratch, Neo is finally confronted by Agent Smith and shot many times up close. Neo looks innocent, incredulous and is wearing only his T-shirt and pants, and not the protective fashion coat or the sunglasses, so he appears more open, available and vulnerable. On the *Nebuchadnezzar*, his heart stops and in the Matrix he is pronounced dead by the agents. On the *Nebuchadnezzar*, Trinity declares her love for him and kisses him, and in a close-up we see him draw in the slightest breath. In the Matrix, he opens his eyes. The agents shoot at him again, but he has changed. Now he can stop the bullets to the sound of angels singing. He easily overcomes Agent Smith, enters his body and explodes him apart.

Play Clip 6: *The Matrix* (1999), Neo makes his final transition in the first film. (1:57:28–2:01:34)

In the last film of the *Matrix* series, *The Matrix Revolutions* (2003), Neo, as the magician-king, the One, must go knowingly into death, in order to effect the renewal of creative life for the community — that is, to achieve what the humans have been fighting so desperately for and to live in peace again. Neo finally does just that. He is plugged into the Matrix for his final showdown with Agents Smith. In the end, he uses the energy of the Matrix itself to explode all the Smiths and at the same time he sacrifices himself.

Play Clip 7: *The Matrix Revolutions* (2003), Neo explodes. (1:43:50–1:50:30)

For Neo, the image of his death is shown by his explosion into parts in the Matrix, the imaginary realm. In his own human body, although limp and lifeless he is perfectly intact. He is lowered onto the platform by the snakelike creatures that have plugged him into the Matrix, is taken into the ship and enters his time of ghosts (Fierz-David 1988, p 78), which I will discuss later. Neo's still fashionable and intact appearance to some degree contradicts the motif of a weakened body and is not a strong visual image in terms of the mythic template upon which the film is based. The much-emphasised feeling of sensuality in Neo's physical appearance is primary and maintained until the end. As Gilligan has argued, Neo 'escapes from the confines of his body' (Gilligan 2008, p 151) through his unbroken surface appearance rather than a bodily crisis (ibid., p 152). In this way, Neo is indeed a contemporary cultural hero.

The symbolism of dismemberment

The image of dismemberment and disintegration that points towards regeneration is central to the Orphic[73] story of Dionysus.[74] West states that Orpheus was, among other things, a shamanistic figure from the late sixth century BCE to the end of antiquity (West 1984, p 5), and the Orphic story of the dismemberment and renovation of Dionysus reflects the initiation of a shaman rather than the initiation of a young man into the ordinary adult world (ibid., p 6). In the myth, Dionysus is born to Zeus and Persephone. Zeus installs Dionysus on a throne and tells the other gods that Dionysus is their new king. The Titans lure him from the throne with a mirror (among other things) and cut him into seven pieces, which they cook and eat. The remnants of the body are interred by Apollo at Delphi, apart from the heart, from which the new Dionysus is made (ibid., p 140).

In his study of the myths and rituals of the Orphic Dionysus, West has found that in shamanistic initiations the dismantling of the physical body becomes a spiritual exercise, that is, it is a subjective religious experience and not a concrete ritual (ibid., p 145). The initiand is terrorised by various means, including loud drums and the appearance of spectral otherworldly figures (ibid., p 155); at the last minute, an animal may have been substituted for the sacrifice (ibid., 160). West interprets the division of Dionysus into many parts as symbolic in part of 'the plurality of the ethical and physical virtues … and the plurality of the phenomenal world' (ibid., p 164).

In Erwin Rohde's discussion of Dionysus, he comments that in a religious sense the point of contact in the image of dismemberment is the 'union with god, the

[73] The adjective Orphic is used to describe certain rites and religious practices and an ascetic way of life as consistent unifying factors. The Orphic poems were not written by Orpheus or a single practising Orphic sect (West 1983, p 3).

[74] The other story related to Dionysus that tells of this movement through death is that of Ariadne on Naxos and has generated much great imagery: the opera *Ariadne auf Naxos* by Richard Strauss (1864–1949), many Greek vase paintings, the frescoes on the walls of the Villa of Mysteries in Pompeii (approx. 73 CE) and, more recently, paintings by artists including Titian (1490–1576), Jacopo Tintoretto (1518–94), Annibale Carracci (1560–1609), John William Waterhouse (1849–1917) and Joseph Edward Southall (1861–1944).

extinction of the individual in the divine' (Rohde 1925, p 262). That is the moment that the human body, limited by time and place, meets with the force of non-existence, unlimited by time and place. In this way, Rohde sees the dismemberment as the body 'dispersed into a multiplicity of things in this world' (ibid., p 341).

Campbell also came to the conclusion that dismemberment indicates 'life in time' (1993, p 25). The primary meaning here is that, in the process of moving into another way of being, humans need to break out of the imprisonment of the body, as a contained and separate monad with one identity, and at that moment, just for a moment, they can 'see' the multiplicity of being. Campbell cites the example of the occasion when Jesus showed himself transfigured to three of his apostles and for a moment 'the flesh had dissolved before their eyes to reveal the world' (ibid., p 230).

Gennep, too, observes that cutting off, splitting or mutilating any part of the body for the modification of the individual personality is common in initiation rites in many cultures. He names circumcision, the first haircut, pulling out a tooth, cutting off the little finger, cutting off the ear lobe, tattooing and scarifying (1975, pp 71–2) as common initiation events. Through this intrusion into the body, the soul is freed and part of all things in the world. In that moment of intense horror for the physical life of a body that is too oriented to one solidly bound identity, the psyche is forced to formulate more useful ways of dealing with the death of our own bodies.

West explains that in rituals 'the Bacchic practice of tearing a live animal limb from limb commemorates what was done to Dionysus himself' (1884 p 160). If we look again at the vase painting in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.3), in which the maenads are pulling apart a goat, we have the Dionysian story being played out. In the ancient rituals, the followers of Dionysus ran through the forest in a mad, ecstatic frenzy, which culminated in ripping the goat apart . This bloody and strange biennial event that celebrated the return of Dionysus from the land of the dead allowed the women to effect a renewal of spirits that would serve them in their daily lives. The moment of dismemberment shown in the still vase image is literally the goat in pieces. The strange creature shown, the satyr, the male figure with horse's tail and ears, is a body that has been dismembered and has come back together in an imaginative and daemonic way — daemonic in

the sense that it is a body not of this world. The image of the ecstatic women is one that is repeated many times on vases. In this painting they seem to be exhausted and are holding large snakes, which gives the impression that they are out of control and not acting in a rational way. The idea that people can be influenced to do things that threaten the integrity of their bodies is in itself frightening and a common motif in Dionysian imagery.

In Aeschylus's trilogy of tragedies *The Oresteia,* the king, Agamemnon, is ordered by the seer Calchas to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia to the goddess Artemis so that the weather will improve and the army will be successful in the war against Troy. The old men of the chorus, who are relating the events to the audience, tell what happened ten years previously. Iphigenia was brought to the place of her death on the pretext that she would be married. She was hoisted on to the altar, with her yellow bridal robes wrapped around her, and gagged. What happened next the old men cannot tell, as they say they couldn't bear to watch, and the story returns almost immediately to the present. Imagine what the telling of the story looked like. According to Haigh, the chorus of old men would have been wearing masks and robed in bright colours (1889, pp 216–17). The sacrifice is not shown, only related, yet the old men are still unable to describe the horror in words. I suggest that even today the story as told by the chorus would have the same compelling horror as it did in the past; it certainly had this effect on me. In his book *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality*, Lewis Richard Farnell claims that, although it is not conclusive, it is possible that Artemis's cult was one where 'the goddess died a periodic death in ritual' (1970], p 58), and that originally a bear may have been slain in place of a human. The popular legend that saves us from a full description of the horror of human sacrifice is that an animal replaced Iphigenia, who at the last minute was pulled from the grizzly scene by Artemis, the goddess in whose name the sacrifice was being made. The effect of the narration of the story by the old men, their inability to describe the final horrible event, and the replacement of Iphigenia by an animal is that we are taken very close to the image of death but not overwhelmed by it, and this seems to be a formula that is strong enough to engender life anew. Rohde also concluded that the strangeness and extremeness of the Dionysian images somehow opens the borders of experience and allows a movement into being 'other' (Rohde 1925, p 285).

In his analysis of Dionysus, Walter Otto suggests that it is through the brutality of the image representing the moment when life stops that we tread onto a threshold where one more step might lead to our extinction and 'the wall which separates it [life] from death is momentarily destroyed' (Otto 1965, p 137). Psychotherapist and cultural commentator Raphael Lopez-Pedraza (1990, p 58) interprets the images of penetration, brutality and the body's suffering of death, and the expression of emotion they provoke (complaints, cries of grief and other physical expressions), as 'manifestations through which lives repressed by consensus and relegated to the social and geographical sidelines in their constant battle for survival make their attempts at self expression'. In this violent death imagery, Lopez-Pedraza sees the difficulty of revealing 'the incredible and the rejected' (ibid., p 57), the release of which becomes necessary if a way of life is too constrained. It is the image of agony that allows access to symbolic death (Lopez-Pedraza 2000, p 49). In a discussion of grotesque imagery of the body,[75] Russian philosopher and literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) stresses his theory that when the body moves into parts it is a body 'in the act of becoming' (1984, p 308). Bakhtin explains that the body transcending its own cultural and physical limits — that is, violating its integrity by moving into parts — is shown as a highly spiritual act for the purpose of presenting another 'newly conceived body' (ibid., pp 317–18). This body ignores its limits and 'the life of one body is born from the death of the preceding one' (ibid., p 318). The image of the body in its extremely grotesque aspect — that is, a body in parts and inside out — is, according to Bakhtin, 'a point of transition in a life eternally renewed' (ibid). In discussing imagery of death, Hillman's view is that, when we allow a part of ourselves to die, a different world view emerges and we are forced to see things differently (Hillman 1979, p 5). The sacrifice of a goat in the place of a human is an image of the death of that part of ourselves, an innocent part, that must die so that other, more useful parts of our psyche can move forward. Jung views the animal aspect as only part of the hero, who 'sacrifices only his animal attributes and thus symbolically gives up his instinctuality' (Jung 1970, p 427). Rebirth, comments Lopez-Pedraza, is inconceivable without the imagery that associates

[75] Which he examines for the purposes of analysing laughter and the comical in the medieval period.

us with death. That is why death is accompanied by moans, laments and the rending of garments (Lopez-Pedraza 2000, p 69).

Ram's transition

In *The Wrestler*, Randy Robinson, played by Mickey Rourke, adopts the notion of a ram for his wrestling persona and it is through this image that Randy is able make his transition to rebirth. Unlike Neo, Ram has no trouble with allowing his body to be broken into, broken up and made to bleed as an everyday event, or at least a weekend event. He puts drugs and various other things into his body via injections and pills, he lifts weights and makes parts of his body expand or exceed to some degree their limits. He is physically fit, not in order to hold off a beating but in order to take one. The fight that marks Ram's first transition (where in the hero's journey the hero moves away from the ordinary world into a strange world) is so violent and brutal that it brings on a heart attack and he almost dies. In the fight he is staple-gunned, cut, slapped repeatedly, pierced with forks, scraped with barbed wire, smashed with a chair, smashed with plate glass, and more.

Play Clip 8: *The Wrestler* (2008), Ram makes his first transition. (28:19–32:58)

In the hospital the doctor tells him he will have to give up wrestling and learn a whole new way of living. By being beaten up, Ram has most certainly been weakened and is ready to move into a rebirth, to remake himself in another way. Ram does make an attempt to change his lifestyle. He tries to reconnect with his daughter, from whom he has been estranged. He also tries to form a bond with Cassidy, played by Marissa Tomei, a stripper for whom he has romantic feelings and whom he sees regularly. Cassidy is a figure who, like Ram, is able to connect to the outer world only through her body. She is an ageing lap dancer who has pierced nipples, wears tight clothes that are fashionably ripped and revealing, and is mostly seen only in the subdued lighting of the strip club, with its loud music. She performs for Ram and he pays her afterwards. Unlike Ram, she does not want to be broken into. It is Cassidy who breaks Rams heart when, in a scene before the one shown in Clip 8, he opens himself up to her.

Play Clip 9: *The Wrestler* (2008), Cassidy and Ram. (19:25–21:56)

Once again Ram is broken into. Ram tells Cassidy about the fights he has been in and the injuries he has received. She is reminded of the hugely popular Mel Gibson film released in 2004, *The Passion of the Christ*, and quoted from the film: 'He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed, and by His wounds we are healed'. Cassidy admires Christ for His ability to take the abuse that was hurled at him: 'they throw everything at Him, whips, arrows, rocks'. Ram is disappointed that she does not see that he has exposed his inner self to her, opened himself up to her.

Jung argues that the counterpart of the figure of the divine hero 'in the West is Christ' (Jung 1970, p 413),[76] and the image of Christ is impossible to avoid in the *Matrix* films and *The Wrestler*. In *The Wrestler*, what Cassidy admires from *The Passion of the Christ* is an extremely violently broken, beaten, suffering body that has lost a vast amount of blood. Campbell's study of mythology revealed that blood is a 'god substance that pours into this field of space and time as a continuous act of self-creative self-giving' (Campbell 1985, p 391). Blood can be seen as a sign that that body has been broken into and opened up, or as evidence of symbolic death. Bakhtin refers to the spilling of blood as 'making the ground exceptionally fertile' (1984, p 327). Bakhtin mentions another story from the Bible, in which the spilling of Abel's blood by Cain, his brother, is a sign of renewal of the earth's fertility (ibid.). In addition, Jung suggests that the mythical imagery of blood is sometimes seen as a sacrificial offering to the powers of the underworld. The blood of the hero is the soul and the hero's sacrifice in the spilling of his blood is a symbol of the subsuming of the conscious life of the individual into the unconscious. This can result in a release of energy to help the individual move forward (Jung 1970, p 431). In *The Wrestler*, this is how it works for Ram. The bloody beating he receives leads to a near-death experience and he does have a chance at rejuvenation, similar to what happens to the Christ figure.

Ram's routine of body self-discipline is directed towards controlling his body so as to withstand repeated and more violent beatings. In Dionysian and Christian imagery, Lopez-Pedraza sees this kind of self-discipline as ascensional — that is, the self-control leads to feelings of satisfaction and achievement (Lopez-

[76] Jung points out that 'the connections between the Christian legend and that of Dionysus are unmistakable' (1970, p 401). Also see Rohde 1925, pp 282–347 and Farnell 1970, pp 373-402.

Pedraza 2000, p 32). The concept of ascension might be difficult to 'see' in images of Ram, but if it is applied to Neo when he is costumed like a priest in the second and third *Matrix* films, the image becomes quite potent. The priestly image suggests a way of living that is restricted to a large extent, and this notion is taken up by the unbroken surface textures of his cassock and the impenetrability of his clothes. Neo's presentation as a priest suggests to the spectator his connections to the figure of Christ and that he is capable of going through pain and death in the same way for the ritualistic purpose of connecting to an inner life, that is, eternal life.

Lopez-Pedraza mentions that a common mystic image is that of the mortification of the body through flagellation 'in order to deny or repress the desires of the flesh and the material world and attain a full spiritual life' (ibid.). Ram is restricted in the way he lives by his choice to continue wrestling and not earn enough money to pay the rent. He offers his body up to repeated beatings, putting himself through an agony that leads to his heart attack. We can view this as a kind of madness that is comparable to the 'madness' of self-control induced by the self-flagellation of the Christian mystic and the Dionysian neophyte. In Ram's case flagellation, or beating and piercing, has activated the unconscious emotional body and he has to try to live a different kind of life. In the denouement of *The Wrestler*, Ram decides he just cannot make the sacrifices that are necessary to move into a new life. At the last minute, Cassidy goes to the place where Ram is fighting and tries to get him to stop. He tells Cassidy that what he wants is the roar of the crowd; that is where he really feels loved. The rest, the relationships with his daughter and with Cassidy, is too hard and he does not want to get hurt.

Play Clip 10: *The Wrestler* (2008), Ram's last fight. (1:32:00–1:40:30)

As Ram takes his final leap off the ropes of the wrestling ring, his body forms into a cross simply by the way the human body is configured. As Neo explodes at the end of *The Matrix Revolutions* (see Clip 7), the image of the cross is held for a moment, a slow moment, as Neo's body disintegrates. Jung points out that an aspect of the symbolism of the cross is that of 'transitus', through which the Christ figure carries himself to his death (Jung 1970, p 339). Neo's transit leads to new life, but in Ram's case all we are left with is the empty ceiling of the venue.

Divestiture

Symbolism of the costumed body is commonly placed in opposition to nudity or the showing of skin, and a common mythological motif is that of being stripped naked for the purpose of change, moving into a new life or crossing thresholds. The mythologist Evans Lansing Smith, a colleague of Joseph Campbell, argues that the symbolism of disrobing relates to the revelation of the archetypal forms of the imagination associated with change. 'Divestiture', he states, 'offers a persistent image of spiritual, social and psychological transfiguration' (Smith 1999, p 9). In *The Image of Christ,* Gabriele Finaldi notes that in the Bible Christ appears naked only once 'when he was stripped of his garments to be crucified' (Finaldi 2000, p 169). I could not find a reference that said Christ was unclad in such a way, but the idea that he was naked on the cross is implied by comments in both Mark and John that his clothes were divided up and given away after the Crucifixion.[77]

Divestiture is also a primary motif in the Sumerian story of Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth (2000 BCE) and her visit to the netherworld. As the goddess of light, love and life, Inanna decides to visit the netherworld, the world of the dead. She sets off in her finest clothes and jewellery, all of which are symbolic of the extent of her queenliness, worldliness and her ability to lead her people.[78] The items of regalia are part of the *me*, or 'attributes of civilisation', which show what the Sumerian culture valued and was inspired by (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, p 147) (I discuss these attributes in more detail in Chapter 2). Kramer's translation from cuneiform of the ancient poem describes how Inanna looks as she goes into the underworld:

> The shugurra, the crown of the plain, she has put upon her head,
> Radiance she has placed upon her countenance,
> The … rod of lapis lazuli she has gripped in (her) hand,

[77] See John 19:23: 'Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam woven from the top throughout' (King James Version).

[78] This is made clear in the story of how Inanna acquired them by stealth, through a drinking bout with her father, the god, Enki. The tale, 'Inanna visits the God of Wisdom', as related by Diane Wolkstein and Samuel Noah Kramer (1983, pp 11–28) is described in more detail in Chapter 2.

> Small lapis lazuli stones she has tied around her neck,
> Sparkling … stones she has fastened to her breast,
> A gold ring she has gripped in her hand,
> A … breastplate she has bound around her breast,
> All her garments of ladyship she has arranged about her body,
> … ointment she has put on her face.
>
> (Kramer 1961, p 91)

To reach the underworld, Inanna has to pass through seven gates. At each of these, the gatekeeper orders her to remove one item of clothing and tells the objecting Inanna, 'do not question the rites of the netherworld' (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, p 92). She then is brought naked and on bended knees to her sister, Ereshkigal, who is the goddess of darkness, gloom and death, and who reigns in the underworld. Ereshkigal turns Inanna into a corpse and hangs her from a stake, where she rots for three days (Campbell 1993, p 215). During this time, she is in the middle phase of her process of transition — a stasis or a time when life has become ghostly (Fierz-David 1988, p 78). She has been completely broken into, she is still and her naked body is decomposing.

According to the American classicist Larissa Bonfante, whose particular interest is the appearance of the ancient body, although nakedness in Sumeria was not regarded as shameful, it was still considered to be something special; in ancient cultures, the sight of the naked body aroused deep and powerful emotions of pleasure, pain, shock or shame (Bonfante 1989, p 569). Through the ages the significance of the naked body has changed, but not its powerful affect; the sight of the naked body has always had a great magic power, and it still does today. When the naked body is revealed in an image, the viewer's imagination is stimulated, and to no lesser degree, it seems, when the body is dead and rotting. Consequently, the image of the naked body frequently occurs in story telling.

The word for seven in Akkadian means 'wholeness' (Wolkstein and Kramer, p 158), and based on this Wolkstein concludes that Inanna, clothed in her seven artefacts, is an image of wholeness and that the removal of her regalia and talismans is an image of Inanna 'splitting into parts' (ibid., p 158).[79] She comes

[79] It is interesting to remember that Dionysus was cut into seven pieces by the Titans.

back together to return to the world as a truly different creature, 'a demonic composite', according to Wolkstein, of bird and human (ibid.). The returned Inanna (see Figure 2.3) is depicted naked (her nakedness is now an image of godliness) with wings (a sign of transcendence, as discussed in chapter 2) and is standing on two horned animals, which I suggest indicates that she has transcended her animal nature. The crown is again on her head, a sign, according to Campbell, of realisation (Campbell 1990, p 389).

A favourite image of Stella Bruzzi's is a scene in the Jane Campion film, *The Piano* (1993). Baines, played by Harvey Keitel, is under the piano, which Ada, played by Holly Hunter, is playing. Baines puts his rough, dirty finger into a hole in Ada's black wool stocking. Bruzzi interprets the image as one of desire and sensuality through 'the multiple juxtapositions of colour and texture' (Bruzzi 1997, p xiii). She also goes on to offer that 'the idea duplicates the duality of the fetishist: it gives the costumes a narrative purpose and allows them to exist independently' (ibid.). I would argue that the image is a mythic one, showing a gentle beginning to the unravelling of Ada's hardened mental attitude that is to come and that indeed does lead to a new life. Parts of Ada that have been kept under her stockings and pale skin for a long time begin to be accessed and make their appearance in the world. In another film of Jane Campion's, *Holy Smoke* (1999), the image of nudity is also used in a similar way as an image of transition. Ruth, played by Kate Winslet, who had fallen under the influence of an Indian cult, is being debriefed in a halfway house in the Australian desert by American 'cult exiter' P. J. Waters, played by Harvey Keitel. In Ruth's moment of transition from being held emotionally captive by the cult to being free from it — the scene in which she finally breaks down — she appears out of the darkness, naked and urinating. At the end of the film, when P. J. must go through his own disintegration, he appears in a distressed state, madly staggering through the desert in a red dress. This is a poignant image of falling apart of the kind described earlier in this chapter, the kind of Dionysian madness that should lead to a regeneration, which in the plotline it does. When P. J. falls over in the dust, however, and the dress comes up to reveal the lower half of his body, he is wearing a pair of black men's undies. He is not shown to be shamed and humiliated, or even exposed, and so has not been 'split apart' enough to attain the rebirth that the plot allows him.

✧

THE TIME OF GHOSTS

When Inanna is in the underworld, rotting on a hook, when Dionysus's remains have been interred at Delphi and he becomes Lord of the Underworld (Kerenyi 1976, p 282), when Neo's lifeless body is taken aboard the *Nebuchadnezzar*, each of these is what Linda Fierz-David calls a time of the mask, of nothingness, (pp 71–2), the time of ghosts. It is this Dionysian spirit of death as an absence that begets and transforms (ibid.) and fulfils the mythology of Dionysus.

It is the mask, the manifestation of the god, that in his absence indicates that the limits of life are being surpassed (ibid., p 81). The mask brings into the world above ground, the world of light, all that is part of the world but that we cannot see — that is, death, the netherworld, the unconscious. Gennep describes some rites-of-passage ceremonies in which a mask or veil creates a separation, beyond which mysteries are revealed. He cites the Greek historian Plutarch (c. 46–20 CE), who asked why people veil their heads while worshipping the gods. Gennep explains that the veiling allows a separation from the profane world and an orientation to the sacred world (Gennep 1975, p 168). West reminds us that the faces of the Titans who dismembered Dionysus were whitened with gypsum to avoid being recognised but also to make those wearing it into spectral, otherworldly figures and fearsome ancestral spirits who come to take away the initiand and kill him (West 1984, p 155). West tells us the story of what happened to Dionysus when his still-beating heart was returned to Zeus after his other parts had been interred at Delphi. Zeus made an effigy of Dionysus out of gypsum and placed the heart in it. West then goes on to imagine a scenario where, in an ancient ritual, the gypsum-covered effigy containing the heart from the animal sacrifice is suddenly and magically replaced by the living initiate himself, also covered in gypsum. In this way the initiate is renewed and brought back into life, replacing the lifeless powdered effigy.

In his study of the mortal and mystical bodies of medieval kings, Kantorowicz also refers to the use of an effigy that is linked to the idea of stillness as a place of transition. An effigy was created of the English king Edward II after his death in 1327, possibly because the king was murdered and therefore

disfigured (just as Neo is disfigured when he explodes). Edward's effigy was made of wood or leather and covered in plaster. It was dressed in the coronation garments and later the parliamentary robe. 'The effigy also displayed the insignia of sovereignty: there was the crown, while the artificial hands held orb and sceptre' (Kantorowicz 1997, p 420). Kantorowicz goes on to comment that

> … enclosed in the coffin of lead, which itself was encased in a casket of wood, there rested the corpse of the king, his mortal and normally visible — though now invisible — body natural; whereas his normally invisible body politic was on this occasion visibly displayed by its effigy in its pompous regalia: a *persona ficta* — the effigy — impersonating a *persona ficta* — the *Dignitas*.
>
> (ibid., p 421)

In other words, the fictional body of the effigy impersonates the fictional body of *Dignitas*, which is a Latin word synonymous with dignity, meaning the quality of being worthy or honourable; worthiness, worth, nobleness, excellence (OED). During his time of transition, Neo is shown intact; this implies that to be shown disintegrating and broken into is demeaning, not noble and not worthy of the dignity of the king. As Bakhtin suggests, the image of the disintegrating body is one of renewal, but because the disintegrated body is grotesque a second double body is crafted to represent the renewed body (Bakhtin 1984, pp 317–18). Bakhtin observes that fashion is concerned with closing and restricting the body's external boundaries (ibid., notes, p 322), and this offers an interesting perspective on the image of Neo in this context. In *The Denial of Death*, anthropologist Ernest Becker believes that the imagined state that emerges from the natural body into the renewed or double body gives the hero symbolic ability (Becker 1973, p 26). To be bound to the finite body limits freedom, as Becker suggests (ibid., p 75), but the mask or costume, in its stillness and deathliness, initiates a movement towards freedom. The mask suggests the horror of what is going on and allows us to 'see' this by not viewing it directly, in such a way that the sense of the hero as king still survives.

The Joker

The body or face covered in gypsum or chalk is a strong representation in our culture of the ghostly or transition period — death where there is no death, a death that leads to rebirth.[80] The Joker in the Batman films is always seen with a white face and the horrific scarring he has endured as a child, or got from his wife, depending on which story he tells. In *The Dark Knight* (2008), the Joker was played by Heath Ledger, whose death from an accidental drug overdose after the film was finished but before its release makes the iconography doubly enigmatic. The Joker got his face either from his father, who put the knife in his mouth and cut it, or from his wife, who did it in an argument. Someone did it to him and either way it is a horrendous idea. In the film, it is said that the Joker wears make-up on the scars to scare people. Seeing him cut up into parts is too literal, and the make-up creates something even more hideous. The white make-up and the black eyes gives the idea that his face is spectral, the scars emphasise the natural body that was so brutalised.

Figure 4.1 Heath Ledger as the Joker in *The Dark Knight* (2008). (ninemsn 2007)

By painting his face, the Joker has turned himself into an effigy, a ghostly appearance. The whiteness suggests lightness or 'a body of subtle matter — when it can see and recognise earthly forms, … hear the sounds of the world, … pass through walls, rock masses, hills and mountains, traverse distances in a moment and assume a variety of shapes' (Campbell 1990, p 408). There is power for the joker in that state, certainly much more than the sad image of the little boy being cut up by his father. The body behind the mask becomes ephemeral. Campbell also says that the sights that are seen at that time, 'whether human, god, titan or brute', will be the life that is returned to. The

[80] Pale skin, through lack of sun or make-up is a regular image in subcultures, such as Goths; particularly in films, zombies, ghosts and vampires are popularly represented as pale. See Vicki Karaminas' essay 'The Vampire Dandy: reconceptualising Masculine Identities in Fashion, Cinema and Literature' for an explication of this phenomenon (Karaminas 2009).

Joker wants to be powerful and clever in this way. Rohde comments that 'The death of the body only frees it for a short while; for the soul must once more suffer imprisonment in the body. After leaving its old body, it flutters free in the wind, but a breath of air sends life into a new body again' (Rohde 1925, p 342). The Joker, like Heath Ledger, does not have a body he can bear to come back to. He is stuck in his transition and he cannot move forward in a natural state, but as a ghost he is all powerful because with the mask we can be freed from 'literal destinies' (Hillman 1983a, p 38) and 'a variety of shapes can be assumed' (Campbell 1990, p 408).[81]

The mask provides a moment when everything hangs in the balance (Fierz-David 1988, p 73), not just in the sense that any shape might be taken but also that by making something visible it becomes real and it is believed. If we look again at the image of the actor getting dressed in Chapter 2 (Figure 2.6), when the actor puts on the mask, according to Bérard and Bron the actor brings forth the strange image of the satyr as 'real' (1989, p 142). The symbolic death of the actor leads to the presence of another character, a new life. As a costumer I have experienced many times the process of the actor undressing and then getting dressed into the character in the wardrobe room. At this moment you do not look at the partially naked body of the actor, or you look at it in a way that does not encroach on the actor's person. Yet, I have found that not looking creates a space, a containment or a surface that somehow allows for intensely intimate and emotional realities to appear. The mask inside the wardrobe room — that is not looking, or at least not seeing — creates an image that suggests the presence of an idea or a developing, as yet unknown, emotion, so that it becomes possible to do the impossible, to be reborn as someone else or even just to indulge in behaviour that is outside of the everyday.

In his last film, *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), Stanley Kubrick investigated this theme and used the imagery of the mask to do so. A devoted couple, Dr Bill Harford

[81] Ledger's facial styling makes reference to Faye Dunaway's Joan Crawford character in the 1981 release film, *Mommie Dearest*. In the climactic scene of "No Wire Hangers" Dunnaway appears in the middle of the night in her ungrateful daughter's bedroom wearing white pasty makeup as a ghostly and vengeful spirit, which then leads into a scene of purification/erasure in a veritable snowstorm of alkaline bleach. I wish to thank Dr Juliette Peers for this important reference. Peers goes on to point out the connection of both images to anthropological images of indigenous Australians and Mud-Men of Papua New Guinea.

and Alice Harford, played by Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman,[82] are drawn into a maze of sexually provocative adventures that crack the morally solid boundary walls of their marriage. A central scene is one in which Bill goes to a salacious party at an extremely grand mansion, where the women are naked and the men wear capes, and all the activities, mostly provocative and sexual in nature, are carried on under the cover of masks. The mask acts as a sort of holder of a still space, a transitional space that is outside of time, while the behaviours that are indulged in are entirely different from those in the ordinary world and are shared more or less in secret. Through the mask anybody can play the role. The role is limitless, a deathly holding still, from which in the film a new understanding of life emerges in the protagonist.

The mask and stillness

While Inanna is in the underworld, the upper world waits and everything slows down. She has been rendered *prima materia* (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, p 158), that is, primal material or fundamental substance. Time is also held still by the little statue of gypsum that held Dionysus' beating heart until the acolyte reappeared. The same applies to the lifeless garments and the closed door of the inner sanctum that encased the naked king undergoing his New Year's test in ancient Babylon (see chapter 2).

In the final scenes of many films, the image of transition is simply an image that is slowed down. In the last film of the *Matrix* series, Neo explodes, but this is shown in very slow motion as Neo's body takes the form of a cross of light viewed from above. In *The Piano*, when Ada and Baines are leaving the beach, Baines pushes the piano off the boat at Ada's request. Ada deliberately allows herself to get caught up in the ropes, which take her into the ocean with the piano and drag her down. Her dress, a crinoline, balloons out and slowly, slowly she sinks down. Then she changes her mind and struggles to the surface. Later, in Nelson, New Zealand, where she and Baines have settled Ada speaks of the piano being in its grave. Jung calls the image of water a 'world essence'

[82] Who in real life were married at the time.

that is also chaos, implying that new life emerges from an immersion into chaos and that behind the mask is the chaos of life reforming (Jung 1970, p 191).[83]

Some images of transition have been slowed down completely. At the end of *Thelma and Louise* (1991), the women, played by Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon, drive off a cliff and the car is halted in mid-air. Realistically, they will die, but in this image they do not, which leaves us with the idea that something might happen to save them, or that their spirits are bigger than death and will live on, in our memories at least. Another film in which this happens is *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969). At the end of the film, Butch, played by Paul Newman, and Sundance, played by Robert Redford, are finally caught in a massive shootout in a small village in Bolivia. They are shot and bleeding badly but spend the last few minutes of the film talking about going to Australia before they run out into the barrage of bullets. The film stops and their image turns to sepia.

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REINVIGORATION OF THE WORLD

In a psychological analysis, Wolkstein suggests that Inanna comes back to the world in charge of the dark qualities that she had previously projected onto her sister, Ereshkigal, who is the rejected part of herself (Wolkstein and Kramer, 1983, p 159). In the time of stasis, then, while she is lifeless, the rejected parts of Inanna become part of her and then she brings them back into the everyday world. Wolkstein explains that it is this knowledge of death and rebirth that will make Inanna an ' "Honoured Counsellor" and a guide to the land' (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, p 156) as well as a guide to 'the uncontrollable, inexplicable, irrational mystery of death' (Kramer 1961, pp 118, 163).

Ram's return

The imagination comes to an end when the mortal life becomes primary. At the end of *The Wrestler* (see Clip 10), Ram goes to his bout with the Ayatollah feeling defeated and unable to move forward in his personal life. He cannot

[83] Dr Juliette Peers has told me that Nelson is also the home of WOW, the World of Wearable Art Museum which she considers to be "another manifestation of extreme/transformed popular cultural bodies."

accept the rejected parts of himself, and his opportunity to grapple in a symbolic way with death, to die in his previous life and create a better life for himself, is thwarted. He stays fixed in his primitive form and 'at the mercy of his affects' (Jung 1970, p 415). Rather than sacrificing a part of himself — the part that would have been appropriate, given the hero's journey references, would have been the ram, the animal part — he instead gives up his whole body. Ram's death is, in the end, a tragic image in that it appears as a resistance to life through his 'obstinate and purposeless cleaving to life in its old form' (ibid., p 438).

Neo's final image

In his final transformation at the end of the third film, *Matrix Revolutions*, Neo completes his classic hero's journey and is reborn as the sun. Neo has been through many transformations. Firstly, he went from being Thomas Anderson, unsure and unable do Morpheus' bidding and climb out of the window onto the scaffolding, to being Neo, a svelte and confident military fashionista who shows that he can move between worlds. He then appears dressed like a Roman Catholic priest, an image that connects him visually to his mythical mission of rebirth. Finally, he returns to his original context of a solar god, from which, as a mythological hero, he arose in ancient times.

Play Clip 11: *Matrix Revolutions* (2003), Neo returns as the sun. (1:53:06-1:55:10)

✧

CONCLUSION

Eternality and transformation achieved through symbolic death and rebirth comprise a common and varied theme in myth and ritual. This is a primary aim of the hero and forms the central image of hero's journey myths. The image of the death and rebirth of the body is a common one in films as well. Images of death in film are often very violent ,with the breaking into and tearing apart of the body quite common and highly emotive. To gain an understanding of these images in this chapter, I have examined symbols of dismemberment and

brutality, blood, ghostliness and stillness from which the hero emerges, or does not. To grapple with the horror of death through the brutality of dismemberment in its multiplicity of forms is fundamental to the experience of physical and psychical renewal.

The imagery of Dionysus as Lord of the Underworld brings an imagination to images of death that is disturbing and cathartic and is a major aspect of the mythology of Dionysus. The purpose of the Dionysian mask appears to be to create a deathly stillness, while the body that has been split into many parts reforms behind it. In the *Matrix* films, the body of Neo explodes into the cross of light and the limp and lifeless body is seen, not the totally dismembered body. Iphigenia's sacrificed body cannot be looked at, or maybe is replaced by a bear. Ram's dead body is replaced by the image of the ceiling of the venue. Costume, possibly because of its closeness to the body and the concerns of the body— maybe the body's concern with the dualities of death and life in particular — is ideally suited to tell the stories of rebirth and its symbolic meanings are rich and many.

Conclusion

This study was motivated by the need to explain some important factors that I had observed to be fairly constant in my work as a fashion and costume designer. Overall, the study has tried to extend the emotional story that costume tells as described by Gaines in her theorising of the spectacular. I decided on a study through hero's journey myths and a traditional understanding of the symbol, because that realm seemed to offer theories of images that most closely resonated with my observations concerning the primacy of emotion in the costumed cinematic body.

An understanding of traditional symbolic consciousness was presented in **Chapter 1**. What resulted from this overview of theory was inevitably a broad sweep of images and ideas: some myths and some of their symbols — particularly kingliness, transformation, and death and rebirth — were elucidated through the heroic cinematic figures of Neo and Ram.

In **Chapter 2**, 'Gods and Goddesses, Kings and Queens', I extended Street's statement that spectacular costume shows that the hero is capable of transcending his or her situation (Street 2001, p 98). I argued that the hero in myth and films can be seen as bearing a resemblance to the ancient magician-king, is often a shaman figure and, as such, possesses certain attributes that indeed make him or her extremely capable in the eyes of the community/audience. In particular, these attributes include the ownership of exceptional material artefacts that create an image of wealth and awe and in which kingliness resides. Regalia and talismans can also represent eternality, in that the body may die but kingliness and power live on in the artefacts. The audacity to create an illusion around himself/herself that holds the community in awe is a primary ability of the hero/magician/king, as are physical abilities that extend beyond the capability of the natural body, such as the ability to fly, which also shows that the hero has grappled with and won over the forces of death. I argued that these sometimes 'startling and deviant' illusions (Gaines 1990, p 206) shift the audience into the mythic realm and give the hero even more resonance — hence the importance of the hero's journey and its psychological functions. The hero represents the spectator's aspirations and

presents some kind of socially approved template for action, fantasy or psychological integration.

In **Chapter 3**, I went on to examine the motif of the transformation of the cinematic body through an analysis of the Greek myth of Dionysus and the god's representation through the mask. I argued that it is of significance to costume theory that the mask was a motif of the god in religious ceremonies and was also used in the ancient Greek drama of 500–400 BCE, which was performed in honour of the god. I found that the ambiguous and uncanny representational power of wearing a mask simultaneously creates a sense of distance and a sense of intimacy with self, other bodies, characters and other selves that are always changing, and that what it means cannot be clearly understood or fixed. In this way, the mask works as an inducer of liminality, of movement between worlds, something that takes us from the here and now and puts us into contact with worlds that are full of the suggestion of puissance and significance. Possibly more than anything else, and certainly in Greek tragedy, the mask offers a way to experience worlds of despair or resignation beyond the bounds of human endurance.

Death and rebirth is a primary motif of the hero in hero's journey myths and films. For the hero to be reborn, he or she must experience a change in consciousness and that change will be felt as a death. As Hillman states, 'as a symbol, death is the most profoundly radical way of expressing this shift in consciousness' (Hillman 1979, p 66). In **Chapter 4**, 'The Body in Transition', I discussed the symbolism of dismemberment, suffering and the breaking open of the body as a necessary representation of the transition into death, which is a period of stasis, a mask behind which a transfiguration is taking place. This movement into rebirth shifts the hero into the eternal and shows what it means to be human in the moment of ultimate change. The way one dies can bring a different way of experiencing life when reborn.

Overall, the major themes that have emerged in this study of myth as reflected in the world of film are the ways in which the costumed appearance of the hero establishes the fantasy of eternality, through artefacts, through the symbolism of death and rebirth, through creating an experience of the body beyond the body and putting the body together again in ways that transcend nature: often strange forms that are always changing and hard to comprehend. By going

beyond nature, the hero's body becomes natural in a cultural sense and internalised within the audience, impacting them in many ways and providing a template for life. In this study, I have shown how costume and myth play a role in our attempts to go beyond the narrow and mundane and that indeed costume is a significant indicator for what a hero can do. These excessive images are the images that Gaines pointed to and that I wished to open up for discussion and future study. Ultimately what I am left with at the end of this study is a sense of marvelling at the sheer audacity of the hero to pursue forms beyond the capability of the body. As Nietzsche expresses it so well, life wants to 'create beyond itself. That is what it most wishes to do, that is its whole ardour' (Nietzsche 1969, p 63).

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Filmography

2001: A Space Odyssey, 1968 (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer). Written and directed by Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke; directed by Stanley Kubrick.

The Abyss, 1989 (Twentieth Century Fox). Written and directed by James Cameron.

Alien, 1979 (Twentieth Century-Fox). Written by Dan O'Bannon and Ronald Shusett; directed by Ridley Scott.

American Psycho, 2000 (Universal Pictures). Written by Brett Easton Ellis and Mary Harron; directed by Mary Harron.

Billy Elliott, 2000 (BBC Films and Working Title Films). Written by Lee Hall; directed by Stephan Daldry.

Burlesque, 2010 (De Line Pictures). Written by Steve Antin; directed by Steve Antin.

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, 1969 (Campanile Productions). Written by William Goldman; directed by George Roy Hill.

Casa Blanca, 1942 (Warner Brothers Pictures). Written by Julius J. Epstein and Philip G. Epstein; directed by Michael Curtiz.

Citizen Kane, 1941 (RKO Pictures). Written by Herman J. Mankiewicz; directed by Orson Welles.

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, 2000 (Genki). Written by Hui–Ling, based on the book by Wang Du Lu; directed by Ang Lee.

The Dark Knight, 2008 (Warner Brothers). Written by Jonathon Nolan and Christopher Nolan; directed by Christopher Nolan.

Dark Victory, 1939 (Warner Bros. Pictures). Written by Casey Robinson; directed by Edmund Goulding.

Eyes Wide Shut, 1999 (Hobby Films, Pole Star and Stanley Kubrick Productions). Written by Stanley Kubrick from *Traumnovelle* (1926) by Arthur Schnitzler; directed by Stanley Kubrick.

Fight Club, 1999 (Fox 2000). Written by Jim Uhis, based on the novel by Chuck Palahnick; directed by David Fichner.

Gone With The Wind, 1939 (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in association with Selznick Pictures). Written by Sidney Howard, based on the novel by Margaret Mitchell; directed by Victor Flemming.

Hellboy II, The Golden Army, 2008 (Universal Pictures). Written and directed by Guillermo Del Toro.

Ivan the Terrible, parts I and II, 1944, 1958 (Mosfilm). Written and directed by Sergei Eisenstein.

Lagerfeld Confidential, 2006 (Pretty Pictures). Produced and directed by Rodolphe Marconi.

La Nuit de Varennes, 1982 (Gaumont, France 3 (FR 3), Opera Film Produzione). Written by Sergio Amidei based on the novel by Catherine Rihoit; directed by Ettore Scola.

The Lion King, 1994 (Walt Disney Pictures). Written by Irene Mecchi and Jonathon Roberts; directed by Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff.

The Leopard, 1963 (Titanus). Written by Suso Cecchi Amico, based on the novel by Guiseppe Tomas; directed by Luchino Visconti.

The Matrix, 1999 (Warner Brothers and Village Roadshow Pictures). Written and directed by Andy Wachowski and Larry Wachowski.

The Matrix Reloaded, 2003 (Warner Brothers and Village Roadshow Pictures). Written and directed by Andy Wachowski and Larry Wachowski.

The Matrix Revolutions, 2003 (Warner Brothers and Village Roadshow Pictures). Written and directed by Andy Wachowski and Larry Wachowski.

Million Dollar Baby, 2004 (Warner Bros. Pictures). Written by Paul Haggis; directed by Clint Eastwood.

Mumma Mia! 2008 (Universal Pictures). Written by Catherine Johnson; directed by Phillida Lloyd.

No Country for Old Men, 2007 (Paramount Vantage and Miramax Films). Written, directed and produced by Ethan Coen and Joel Coen.

Now Voyager, 1942 (Warner Bros. Pictures). Written by Casey Robinson; directed by Irving Rapper.

Pan's Labyrinth, 2006 (Tequila Gang). Written and directed by Guillermo del Toro.

The Passion of the Christ, 2004 (Icon Productions). Written by Benedict Fitzgerald, Mel Gibson; directed by Mel Gibson.

The Piano, 1993 (Australian Film Commission, CIBY 2000 and Jan Chapman Productions). Written and directed by Jane Campion.

Predator, 1987 (Amercent Films, American Entertainment Partners L. P., Davis Entertainment). Written by Jim Thomas, John Thomas; directed by John McTiernan.

Pride and Prejudice, 2005 (Universal Pictures). Written by Deborah Moggach, based on the novel by Jane Austen; directed by Sue Wright.

First Blood, 1982 (Anabasis N. V., Elcajo Productions). Written by Michael Kozoll based on the novel by David Morrell; directed by Ted Kotcheff.

Rocky, 1976 (Chartof-Winkler Productions). Written by Sylvester Stallone; directed by John G. Avildsen.

Silence of the Lambs, 1991 (Orion Pictures Corporation). Written by Ted Tally from the novel by Thomas Harris; directed by Jonathon Demme.

Singin' in the Rain, 1952 (Loew's Production). Written by Adolph Green and Betty Camden; directed by Stanley Doven and Gene Kelly.

Sound of Music, 1965 (Robert Wise Productions). Written by Ernest Lehman, based on the book by Maria von Trapp, *The Story of the von Trapp Family Singers*; directed by Robert Wise.

Star Wars, 1977 (Lucasfilm and Twentieth Century-Fox). Written and directed by George Lucas.

The Terminator, 1984 (Hemdale Films). Written by James Cameron and Gale Ann Hurd; directed by James Cameron.

Thelma and Louise, 1991 (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer). Written by Callie Khouri; directed by Ridley Scott.

Titanic, 1997 (Twentieth Century Fox). Written and directed by James Cameron.

The Wrestler, 2008 (Protozoa Pictures and Saturn Films). Written by Robert D. Siegel; directed by Darren Aronofsky.