

Good research proposal on the matrix and the fisher king: modern heros journeys

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The archetypal hero's journey has taken many forms throughout history; in contemporary film, it often requires the main characters to step outside their cynical, grounded physical worlds and enter new realms of imagination. In the case of two classic films from the 1990s, Terry Gilliam's *The Fisher King* and the Wachowski Brothers' *The Matrix*, three archetypes of the hero's journey (the hero, the mentor, and the monster) are found, contextualizing these modern science fiction and fantasy films as modern hero's journeys. In the proposed research paper, the three characters from each film that fit these archetypes will be explored in terms of how they are adapted for a modern story.

The hero of both stories is someone beaten down by modern society - Neo in *The Matrix* is a depressed office drone who finds no fulfillment in the industrial cityscape he finds himself in, while *The Fisher King*'s Jack is a radio jock whose earthly mistakes, leading to the suicide of a listener, haunt him and drive him to suicide. Over the course of the story, these two characters must go on their respective journeys to better themselves and conquer their corresponding demons - represented in *The Fisher King* by the imaginary Red Knight and in *The Matrix* by the computerized Agent Smith. Neo and Jack are helped along by the archetypal mentor - the person who knows the truth of the world around them. However, in these films they are also painted as unstable figures who are of dubious motives or sanity. Morpheus is shown to be a blind believer in the idea of the One, perhaps to a fault, while Parry in *The Fisher King* is a mentally unstable homeless man on a fool's errand for the Holy Grail. These three archetypes appropriately update the fantastical nature of the hero's journey for a more grounded real world, which

necessitates creating divides between the real world and the fantasy world and blurring the lines between them.

Works Cited

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