Stages of the monomyth in the step not taken

Archetypes are found in the mythology, religion, and stories of all cultures. They are patterns or prototypes that are used time and again. One of the dominant archetypal patterns in literature, film and even video game text is the story of a journey or quest. The pattern was recognized by Joseph Campbell, and is called the monomyth. In the short story " The Step Not Taken" by Paul D'Angelo, the use of this archetypal pattern is evident. The three stages found within the monomyth are separation, struggle or initiation, and return and reintegration. During the separation stage there is a call to adventure, in which the hero figure is usually unaware of the events to follow that will change their life. Once they are aware of the quest or journey the protagonist will refuse to go. In the story " The Step Not Taken" by Paul D'Angelo the protagonist refuses his call to help the bawling man in the elevator as seen when he says " I didn't know what to do. So I did nothing. " After his refusal, his unconscious mind forces him to feel guilt, evident when he states " And now he haunts me. Not with fear, of course, but with a sense of regret". After this sudden realization, the protagonist entails a willingness to change and be a better person, fully accepting the quest. In the second stage, the struggle or initiation, the hero figure explores his unconscious domain. He endures a test, in which he fails that in turn leads to his epiphany or sudden realization. " I now know what I should have done then. I should have thrown caution to the winds and done the right thing. Not the big-city thing. The right thing. The human thing. " This is the point in which the protagonist experiences rebirth of a new self into a new life. Even after others tell him that his decision was the right one, he still feels that he was wrong, and now knows better for the future. His epiphany is relevant to today's world because it shows the importance of sympathy

and helping those in need. The last stage of the monomyth, return and reintegration, the protagonist returns to reality as a wholesome, new person. The hero is able to resume his daily existence, and live with the choice he made. He is able to reach out to those in need and ask for forgiveness. This is evident when he states, " That I was wrong, dreadfully wrong, not to step forward in his time of need. That I'm sorry. " Although he may not have completed his journey because he did not save the crying man from his misery, he did learn a valuable lesson and gained new insight. The benevolent guide, which appears to be his subconscious mind does appear to help him through his quest by allowing him to experience guilt and regret, making him want to change. After reading " The Step Not Taken" by Paul D'Angelo, it is evident that the monomyth archetype is present. All three stages of separation, struggle or initiation, and reintegration are clear. This archetypal pattern or prototype of a journey or quest is dominant throughout literature, film and video game text. This pattern recognized by Joseph Campbell as a monomyth is one of many archetypes used time and again. All stories within cultures, religions and mythology contain archetypes.