

Mythical Heroism Manifested in *Venom*:
Structure, Characters, and Settings Compared.

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Abstract

This study focuses on the manifestations of ancient mythical heroism in *Venom* (2018), and will compare characteristics of the story's plot structure, character types, and settings to those of hero myths, mainly those from ancient Rome and Greece, using primary literature as well as approaches of other scholars to the same topic. While scholars have often looked at conventional 'good' heroes when considering these characteristics, the protagonist at the center of this study, *Venom*, is more unconventional as he is described better as an antihero, or even a villain. By comparing an unconventional hero to the ancient myths, a light can be shone on the degree to which characteristics typical to conventional and formulaic heroes can still be applied when the subject is an antihero. It is anticipated that even with a different kind of moral standard and with a less favorable public opinion of the hero, many of the characteristics will still fit the plot, although the characters and settings might be harder to compare to ancient myth. A study like this will hopefully open the door to more studies that center around unconventional hero types, and will help broaden the field of comparative studies.

Keywords: Mythical heroism, hero's journey, antihero, cinematic stereotypes, myth stereotypes, archetypes.

Table of Contents

Abstract	3
Introduction	5
I – <i>Venom</i> using Campbell’s Hero’s Journey	7
Stage one: Departure	8
Stage two: Initiation	10
Stage three: Return	14
II – Characters in Myth as Compared to <i>Venom</i>	16
The Protagonist	17
The Antagonist	18
The Supporting Cast	19
III – Story Setting as Predictor of Events	20
Inside the City	21
Outside the City	22
Origins	24
Conclusion	25
References	28

Mythical Heroism Manifested in *Venom*:
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Stories about heroes have captured the attention of scholars and theorists alike since their inception. The motifs of myths over the ages are very similar, despite the myths originating from different parts of the world and from different eras, and this has been a topic of discussion for many of the scholars of myth. In the past, the primary sources available for research on myth were mainly written, but nowadays there is a wide variety of movies available that give ample material for researching myths. Existing research in the field of mythical characteristics in movies has focused mainly on conventional heroes and the adaptations of myths into film directly. This study, however, will have a rather unconventional character as its focus.

Venom originated in the universe of Spiderman as an antagonist, a villain Spiderman had to take on.¹ In the 2018 movie this has been changed and the character is fit into more of a stereotypical hero role. But considering some of the character's morally questionable actions in the movie, and the ease with which he takes out whoever gets in his way, it is clear that this is not a conventional hero, but rather an antihero.² While movie heroes have been studied numerous times in relation to their ancient counterparts, it will be insightful to see how an antihero fits within the formula, and the hope is that this will open up a debate to see if perhaps the characteristics do not fit merely on stereotypical heroes, but also on unconventional heroes, and perhaps it could even be applied to the stories of villains and antagonists.

In order to find out to what extent the characteristics of ancient mythical heroism manifest in *Venom*, comparisons will be made between the movie and the primary sources of different hero myths,³ mainly from the ancient Greek and Roman mythologies,⁴ and reputable

¹ Note: *Venom* italicized refers to the movie, in normal script it refers to the symbiote of the same name.

² While the character discussed is an antihero, in order to make less confusing parallels to the theories on heroes, he will be referred to as a hero throughout the rest of the thesis.

³ Most of the research will be done by comparing primary sources, as these give a less muddled account of the myth and are often more reliable than secondary sources, that are often colored by the opinion of the writer already.

⁴ The ancient Greek and Roman mythologies were chosen as representative of the full array of mythologies because these are the stories that will likely be the most familiar to the readers, and because they are used in numerous theories as the main examples as well.

sources such as Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung will be used to compare the antihero's story to the norm that has been established as fitting for most hero myths.⁵

Previous research has focused largely on mainstream heroes such as Spiderman (Indick, 2004), or on movies where the structural elements of mythical heroism seem to have been laid next to the movie while it was in production, such as is the case with 2009's *Avatar* (Vugman, 2014). These studies have, unsurprisingly, found that there are many parallels to be drawn between ancient myth and contemporary movies. When looking at screenwriting manuals, it also becomes clear that many of these in fact rely on earlier studies that investigated the structure of mythical narratives (Field, 2005; Russin & Downs, 2012, p. 98-99; Segal, 2015, p. 92). Campbell's work on the hero's journey is a favorite to instructors of screenwriting in particular (2004), and is often used in comparisons of plot structures. A plethora of stock characters and stereotypes for movies are also discussed in sources on screenwriting, albeit mostly in a negative light (Russin & Downs, 2012, p. 87), and it is not hard to see that these stereotypes can be traced back to ancient myth.

One of the main scholars of myth in the last century was Carl Jung, who, from his background in psychology and psychiatry, wrote a theory on the universal unconscious, a part of the unconscious that instead of being personal is shared between all humans and that holds the source of the inspiration for the archetypes that are often found in myths (Jung, Hull, & Adler, 1969, p. 42). This work inspired Joseph Campbell, who was mainly interested in the plot structure of myths, to write one of his best known works on the hero's journey, which describes the idea that there is a universal structuring to hero stories (2004). These works combined provide a general map of what a hero myth should look like, and they have proven to be correct in many if not all of the cases they discussed.

Due to the prevalence of the hero's journey in scholarship on myth, this will be the first concept this essay will deal with. *Venom's* plot will be laid out neatly next to what Campbell found was the universal plot of a hero myth, in order to see if and how the two can be compared. The plot structure will be handled first because it is one of the most direct signs that one is dealing with a hero's journey and not any general tale. The structure also lays the foundation for the rest of the tale, and thus it is natural that it should come first in an analysis of the tale. While it is very likely that most if not all of the points of the hero's journey will

⁵ While there are many comics available that relate the story of the character of *Venom*, this study will only look at the 2018 movie, since movies reach a much wider audience than comic books nowadays and are more likely to be known by people than are the comics.

reveal themselves in *Venom*, there may still be points missing or dramatically altered for the storyline because of the hero being an antihero, a discovery that might help shine a new light on the studies of myths and heroes.

The second comparison between myth and the movie will be drawn on the basis of the characters in the movie and their specific roles. The protagonist is the hero in the tale, but what kind of hero he is, and whether he adheres to the rules laid out for heroes in the ancient myths can reveal a lot about the tale. Similarly, it will be interesting to see if it was only the hero character who was taken from ancient myth and put in a modern context, or if there are also other stereotypical characters incorporated into the movie, such as the hero's mentor, or an oracle.

Lastly, comparisons will be made between the settings in which events in the movie take place, and how these settings can influence and predict the outcome of encounters. This idea comes from the ancient idea that cities were more civilized than the plains, and therefore were more pure. The shifts between being internal and external to the city are sure to disclose information about the events that take place, and whether the same prejudices about civilization show themselves as still having a hold over modern society will reveal much about how society has evolved since the myths, and may strengthen the validity of the idea of the universal unconscious still further.

As mentioned before, the expectation of this study is that many of the characteristics of ancient mythical heroism are still present in *Venom*, even if it is not a conventional hero's tale, and the hope is that by showing that unconventional heroes, too, can be studied in this way, more possibilities for further research will be opened up and the field will be widened to more forms of media as well as more forms of heroes, perhaps even those that seem to have no connection to heroism whatsoever.

I - *Venom* using Campbell's *Hero's Journey*

Joseph Campbell's theory has been used by many on various different hero stories, and is one of the best known theories on plot structures and the universal hero myth. While the pattern and the names associated with the different points of the story suggests a male hero with human origins, Campbell himself is found to give female as well as male heroes and divine as well as human heroes as examples (Segal, 2015, p. 93). As this theory is well-known, it is natural that it should be used in this study as well, to compare the plot structure in *Venom* to that of other hero myths and see if the movie agrees with this idea of structure. It is

likely that the first two stages of the hero's journey, departure and initiation, will be identified easily within the plot of *Venom*. However, the final stage will be harder to link to events in the plot, since the movie covers only the first part of the hero's life. With the knowledge that there is at least one sequel planned to continue the story, it may be difficult to see identifiable evidence of the return of the hero in this first movie. It may still be possible to find parallels to the return in the events that occur in the last part of the movie, and interpret these as a light replaying of the return of the hero.

Identifying how much of the plot of *Venom* lines up with Campbell's universal structure will be useful in determining how much of the movie lines up with ancient hero myths. Considering the structure is a big part of a hero myth and holds many of the important motifs and settings within it that will be discussed in the two later chapters, this initial comparison of *Venom* with the hero's journey will provide a rough estimate of how many of the other characteristics of hero myths may be found.

Stage one: Departure

Campbell's universal plot structure is divided into three main stages, with further subdivision into a total of seventeen steps. The first stage, departure, encompasses five steps: the call to adventure, refusal of the call, supernatural aid, the crossing of the first threshold, and the belly of the whale (Campbell, 2004, p. vii). Each of these steps is accompanied by a host of symbols and possible signs to identify it by, such as particular surroundings or characters that may be involved. Although we will initially line up the hero's journey with Eddie Brock's story arc, doing the same with *Venom* might change the points slightly, and so we will explore that possibility after this first walkthrough of the plot structure.

Before the call to adventure, the hero's world is mundane, and the hero walks "the frequented paths of man" (Campbell, 2004, p. 54). This idea of a normal life is reflected when the viewer first meets *Venom*'s main protagonist Eddie Brock as he is waking up to a routine morning with his girlfriend Anne Weying (Arad, Tolmach, Pascal, & Fleischer, 2018, 00:04:45). A series of signs signal the call to adventure, each sign's intensity increasing until they can no longer be ignored (Campbell, 2004, p. 51). The first sign appears when Eddie is told to interview Carlton Drake, the crooked CEO of the Life Foundation (Arad et al., 2018, 00:07:20), this is a first hint at what is going to happen later on in the movie, especially with Eddie already establishing Drake as a crook. The second sign comes when he destroys his career and Anne's to confront Drake about wrongful death claims (Arad et al., 2018,

00:12:00), this creates a tension between him and Drake and demonstrates what powers that Drake has at his disposal. The final sign, completing the call to adventure, is the request of Doctor Skirth to help expose Drake's nefarious acts (Arad et al., 2018, 00:29:20). Campbell notes "that which has to be faced ... is somehow profoundly familiar to the unconscious" (2004, p. 51), and Eddie had previously made a career out of exposing malicious companies. The help Doctor Skirth requires of him is not unknown to him in the sense that he has on previous occasions taken down such corporations as the Life Foundation as well.

While thus familiar with the act, Eddie refuses to help because his earlier involvement with Drake ruined his career and love life. This refusal of the call to adventure is not uncommon, just as in real life people are more likely to stick with what is safe. The hero has become walled in in the mundane, and has lost "the power of significant affirmative action", his will is weakened instead (Campbell, 2004, p. 54). After his refusal, it is not long before Eddie accepts the call after all, driven by a desire for vengeance enforced after he finds his love moved on and sees Drake's thriving facility in the distance (Arad et al., 2018, 00:32:50), showing that while for him the interview was disastrous, it did not impact Drake, and Anne has not stayed mournful over losing him either. He is the only one who has remained stuck in the past and has not improved.

Doctor Skirth gladly accepts his help and in turn smuggles Eddie into Drake's facility (Arad et al., 2018, 00:33:20). She figures here in an instance of supernatural aid the hero receives to get to the threshold, ensuring that he enters the building safely and is not noticed on his way in because she has power in the facility and is a known figure, her status over him there is much higher being one of the main employees under Drake. This may be seen as supernatural in a way because she is more capable on this terrain than Eddie is. She is in this way personification of the protective figure the hero first encounters on his journey, and the token she here offers him is visualized in her handprint to unlock the lab and the identification she uses to get into the facility (Campbell, 2004, p. 63). While *Venom* also seems to aid Eddie by making them get away from the facility (Arad et al., 2018, 00:36:50), the helper is described as "the benign, protecting power of destiny" (2004, p. 66), and symbiotes at this point in the story are only shown as killing their hosts. *Venom*, as such, cannot be described as benign at this point, and does not fit the idea of the benign supernatural helper yet.

Venom represents the guardian of the threshold that comes after the supernatural aid. Only by successfully merging with the symbiote will Eddie be able to live on, otherwise he will die. He must pass through the guardian, beyond who is "darkness, the unknown, and

danger” (Campbell, 2004, p. 71), presented here by the possibility of dying after merging with the symbiote. While Eddie merged with Venom involuntarily, he can only advance by accepting the challenge of the guardian of the threshold, and thus by accepting his merge with Venom (Campbell, 2004, p. 75). The threshold is crossed when Eddie first fights together with Venom as a single unit, proving that they have achieved symbiosis and Eddie is no longer in mortal peril at the merge, instead sharing possession of Venom’s powers (Arad et al., 2018, 00:50:34). This is reinforced when in a fight Eddie makes Venom become his ‘mask’ and can command him not to bite off a police officer’s head (Arad et al., 2018, 01:05:40). The powers Eddie gains through his merge with Venom can only be attained through a successful meeting with the guardian, so the fact Eddie controls the powers too is confirmation that the threshold has been crossed (Campbell, 2004, p. 76).

During a pursuit through the streets of San Francisco, just after Venom reassures Eddie he is not going to die, a car crashes into their side and it seems for a moment as though Eddie will die from the collision (Arad et al., 2018, 00:58:18). This closely resembles the last step of the departure, the belly of the whale, where Campbell says that the hero “would appear to have died” (2004, p. 83), but is not truly dead. This near death is followed by Venom forming a suit around Eddie and healing him, an act that can be seen as the creation of a protective womb around Eddie as he is absorbed into the black mass and “swallowed into the unknown” (Campbell, 2004, p. 83). The symbolism of a womb is often seen in this step, the hero returning to the womb to transform and undergo a metamorphosis necessary to cross the threshold. The transformation is here also a literal one, as Eddie transforms into Venom’s full body.

Stage two: Initiation

With the threshold crossed, the hero enters into the second stage of his journey, initiation. The road of trials is the first step in this stage, and in *Venom* follows directly after the step of the belly of the whale. Eddie and Venom have to escape their pursuers again and come in contact with the police and other forces trying to stop them (Arad et al., 2018, 00:58:30). “Dragons have now to be slain and surprising barriers passed—again, again, and again.” (Campbell, 2004, p. 100). The men have to avoid death and encounter a variety of obstacles, they have to lose the same pursuers over and over, their manner of escape becoming increasingly elaborate and their enemy getting ever closer to dealing a deathblow. The hero is here supported by the helper, whose supernatural aid lasts throughout the trials (Campbell, 2004, p. 89). Venom helps Eddie by protecting him and allowing him to get away

quickly, but does not do so without harming those who are trying to hurt Eddie, such as the police squadron he beats up (Arad et al., 2018, 01:05:40). As often happens in old myths, the hero does not negotiate with the monsters or humans forming the obstacles, but takes vigilante action. An example of this from ancient myth can be found in the myths of Theseus. Although the punishments are symbolic, there is no trial and the hero serves as judge, jury, and executioner: "...Sinis was surnamed the Pine-bender ... he used to force, the passers-by to keep bending pine-trees ... being tossed up by the trees they perished miserably. In that way also Theseus killed Sinis" (Apollodorus, 1921b, p. 125). In a similar vein, Venom bites off the head of one of their attackers. Venom follows Eddie's commands and the two move as one, their strong link again confirming the success of the meeting with the guardian of the threshold and the crossing of it.

After the road of trials, or during it, Campbell finds there is often a meeting with the goddess, frequently symbolized through what he refers to as a "mystical marriage" (2004, p. 100), a union between hero and goddess that provides the hero with assistance. While to Campbell this goddess is "the incarnation of the promise of perfection" (2004, p. 101), another study by Indick found that in modern movies, the character symbolizing the meeting with the goddess does not have to be a marriage partner for the hero, nor does it have to be a perfect character, it can also be simply a wise female giving advice (2004, para. 11), and as Segal mentions, Campbell's theory and his own examples do not always match up either, suggesting that the theory is not set in stone and even large variations are entirely possible (2015, p. 93). In *Venom*, there is a distinct lack of named and significant female characters, and of the few characters that are available to discuss in the context of a meeting with the goddess, only two have a substantial role, those being Anne Weying and Dr. Dora Skirth (Donaldson, 2018). While the events in the hero's journey do not necessarily have to occur in the exact order they are written down, they usually do happen in a pattern very similar to this, which makes it necessary to look for them close to the analogies of the steps that precede and follow them. In *Venom*, finding the meeting with the goddess proves to be quite difficult. While there are several important interactions between the hero and the two main female characters, many of these either precede the stage of initiation by quite a ways, or occur at the end of the movie after the identifiable end of the initiation stage. The hero also, at the later points of the movie, already knows the characters well, and thus a meeting with them is harder to describe as an initial meeting with a new character as goddess. One moment seems to fit. In the last identifiable trial before the final battle, Eddie is taken into the woods to be

killed, only to be saved by Anne, who is in that moment in symbiosis with Venom, creating the new character She-Venom (Arad et al., 2018, 01:17:00). The mystical marriage could be represented by the kiss the two characters share, where they come together and the powerful She-Venom gives Eddie the assistance he needs to escape with his life. The character can perhaps be described as a goddess due to the immense power she holds.

Right after this exchange, the subsequent step of woman as a temptress takes place. Eddie is reluctant to leave Anne, while Venom, his helper, realizes that they cannot take her as it would be dangerous for her, “It’s going to get ugly” (Arad et al., 2018, 01:18:00). In Campbell’s words “the world, the body, and woman above all, become the symbols no longer of victory but of defeat.” (2004, p. 113). While moments ago it was She-Venom who saved Eddie, now there is only Anne left, no longer a powerful creature or goddess, but a mere human. Eddie and Venom cannot take on Riot if they bring Anne, she would be a distraction and would not be able to handle herself in the dangerous situation. Instead of furthering their cause, she would hinder them, and in order to achieve the final goal and receive the rewards of a successful journey, the hero must resist the temptation, or, as happens in this case, be aided in resisting it by his supernatural helper.

Next is the atonement with the father, a step Campbell describes as at-one-ment, and giving over to the father, having fate in his mercy (2004, p. 120). The step may be paired with a perilous trial, during which if the hero succeeds, the peace is made with the father and the hero and father become one, as it were (2004, p. 120-126). In a previous step, Campbell claims that through the mystical marriage with the mother goddess, the hero becomes the father by taking the mother-destroyer as his bride (2004, p. 100). Relating this to *Venom* would infer that the kiss between Eddie and Venom, if this is indeed the mystical marriage that Campbell spoke of, is the first initiation of the hero and the father becoming one (Arad et al., 2018, 01:17:55). The conflict between Eddie and Venom and the fight with Riot that follows can be seen as equivalent to the trials the father god may posit his hero son (Campbell, 2004, p. 120-125). The atonement, or at-one-ment, can occur in two similar moments, in which Eddie and Venom are separated and one of them nearly dies before the other can save him. The first time this happens, Venom is ripped off of Eddie by Riot and Drake, and Eddie saves Venom by reaching out to him in a manner reminiscent of the *Creazione di Adamo* (Arad et al., 2018, 01:23:00). The fact Eddie willingly reaches out to Venom to connect with him, shows the acceptance of his fate, and that in order to survive, they need each other, the hero and father are at peace. A moment later, when it is Eddie who

lays dying, Venom reaches out to him and connects, again through the fingertips, reviving Eddie (Arad et al., 2018, 01:25:00). Here it is the godlike Venom that connects with the mortal Eddie, saving them both. While this is the same motive, it is here not Eddie, the hero, accepting the father and his fate, but Venom, the father, accepting Eddie. Perhaps this scene would thus fit better in a narrative that posits Venom as the hero and Eddie as the godlike father figure.

The second scene does bear a resemblance to the step following atonement with the father: apotheosis. The hero transcends the bounds of his mortal life and passes through the afterlife before returning a renewed figure, released from “the last terrors of ignorance” and given new knowledge (Campbell, 2004, p. 139). The hero’s “death was not the end”, but merely a new beginning, a second birth through figure of the father (Campbell, 2003, p. 149). The meeting with the goddess and the atonement with the father, while at first seeming wholly opposite, are revealed to be reflections of the same theme, with the hero in both cases finding that which he seeks within himself (Campbell, 2004, p. 150). Eddie appears to die in his fight with Riot, but because he has previously made peace with the father, he is brought back from death. She-Venom was the goddess and Venom is now the god that the hero becomes at-one with, the hero is thus simultaneously the god and goddess and through his climactic death and rebirth has been elevated to a divine status: apotheosis.

This transcendence of the hero helps him achieve his goal, the final step of the initiation, where he receives the ultimate boon. As a reward he is often given indestructible existence, as well as a true gift that is of invaluable worth (Campbell, 2004, p. 159-178). In ancient myths, the gift or boon is often a kind of elixir, in Campbell’s words “the boon is simply a symbol of life energy stepped down to the requirements of a certain specific case” (2004, p. 175). It depends on the hero’s situation and inclinations what the boon will be. In the case of *Venom*, Eddie saves the world through his successful journey, killing the ogre Riot and Drake (Arad et al., 2018, 01:25:30). The salvation of the world could be seen as a reward, but this is not the case here. The boon Eddie receives is having his name cleared and his reputation being restored, something that becomes evident in his talk with Anne after the events of the final battle (Arad et al., 2018, 01:27:17). The restoration of his reputation is something important to Eddie, as his livelihood depends upon it. Earlier in the movie we see him struggle to be accepted for a new journalism job (Arad et al., 2018, 00:23:00), but he has now been asked to return for his show on the network and can even refuse because he has found a new job focusing on the written word. This is proof his reputation is back to what it

was before or perhaps even better, because he has enough job security to refuse his old job in favor of a new one. Given that he will now leave behind written articles as proof of his existence, this reward can be compared to indestructible existence, as the mark he will leave on the world with his article cannot be erased and thus his voice will live on forever. The “true gift of invaluable worth” spoken of earlier can perhaps be equated to Venom surviving the fire of the battle and continuing to live on inside Eddie, as proven through his voice in the conversation and his involvement in defeating a thug in Eddie’s regular shop (Arad et al., 2018, 01:30:40). Not only does Eddie have the power of Venom back and can use him to help those he loves, it also appears that Eddie is now the one in control as he gets to impose rules and Venom accepts this, where earlier on Venom was the one primarily controlling the body and took over almost entirely (Arad et al., 2018, 01:29:20).

Stage three: Return

After the hero’s successful journey through the new world, the time comes to return to the old world with the wisdom and powers gained in the travels, “the life-transmuting trophy” that was won after the trials the hero faced (Campbell, 2004, p. 179). This brings us to the third and last stage of the hero’s journey, the return. Due to *Venom* being the an open-ended film that has a sequel planned, it might be difficult to find similarities to this stage in the final scenes of the movie. Therefore, while an attempt will be made to connect the universal structure to *Venom*’s structure, it is possible that only few parallels can be drawn. It is also important to note that especially in the last stage of the hero’s journey, Campbell notes in numerous steps that these do not necessarily have to occur, suggesting that myths vary more widely in their endings than they do in their beginning and middle parts.

The hero sometimes refuses the return, an act that may end in misery, but can also be an understandable action depending on the hero’s reasoning and individual case (Campbell, 2004, p. 182). In *Venom* there is no real refusal of the return. What Eddie refuses is losing Venom in the fiery blast that kills Riot and Drake, screaming out his name as his friend sacrifices his life for him (Arad et al., 2018, 01:26:15). But as there is no on-screen refusal to return to the normal world and there seems to be nothing to indicate that such an event took place other than in the refusal to lose his friend, it is safe to assume that Eddie’s hero’s journey, as well as many others, does not include the step of refusal of the return.

The next step that may or may not occur in a hero’s journey is that of the magic flight. Whether this occurs or not depends on the supernatural helper’s opinion of the hero and

whether they support the hero going back to his own world or not, and is dependent on how the hero attained his trophy as well, whether this was with or without consent of the helper (Campbell, 2004, p. 182). As stated before, Eddie and Venom, the guardian of the threshold, have a good relationship, especially at the time that Eddie receives his boon and is coming back to his old world. This means there is no motif of a magic flight in *Venom*, since the supernatural helper, or god, is not angry with the departure of the hero, and there is no ogre chasing after the hero either. Eddie free-falls down into the water of the San Francisco bay and the next time we see him he is back in the city and has returned to his old world without the slightest hint of a flight on-screen (Arad et al., 2018, 01:26:30).

Following is the step of rescue from without, where “the world may have to come get [the hero]” (Campbell, 2004, p. 192). Considering that between Eddie falling into the water of the bay and him sitting with Anne inside the city, we have no on-screen information of how he got back, it is hard to say whether in Eddie’s hero’s journey this step is at all present or not. We may assume that he exited the water of his own accord, but he may also have been saved by the coast guard, considering the waters of the bay are quite treacherous due to the tides and currents. A movie often jumps in at the last possible moment in a scene and cuts off at the earliest possible moment, leaving out a lot of information, which can make it very difficult to decipher all that happened in between two scenes (Russin & Downs, 2012, p. 12). Generally, the information that is left out is not crucial to the plot and does not need to be added for the viewer. In this case, however, it does make it impossible to know whether or not Eddie was rescued from the bay or came out on his own, leaving it a mystery whether the step of rescue from without is present or not in this journey.

Due to the cut from the bay to the inner city, the step we miss the exact proceedings of is the crossing of the return threshold. The scene in the inner city where Eddie reveals he has a new job does make it undeniable that he has passed from the other world back into “the land we know” (Campbell, 2004, p. 201), this makes the crossing of the return threshold the first step of the stage of return that can be proved to occur in *Venom*, even without being explicitly shown.

After the crossing of the return threshold, the hero may prove his powers in the step of the master of the two worlds. Here it is through the “[f]reedom to pass back and forth across the world division ... not contaminating the principles of the one with those of the other” that the hero shows his mastery (Campbell, 2004, p. 212-213). At the end of the movie, Eddie and Venom are still connected, and their relationship has improved to such an extent that Eddie

now cooperates with Venom more and is not merely the symbiote's puppet. This is especially visible when the thug they are confronting in the store at the end asks them what they are and half of Venom's face retracts to reveal Eddie's face as well, and in unison the two say "we are Venom" (Arad et al., 2018, 01:30:50). This scene shows Eddie's ability to switch between his own body and that of Venom, reflecting his liberal passing back and forth into his human world and Venom's symbiote world.

The final step of the hero's journey is the freedom to live. The hero is released from the idea that he "lives on the death of another" (Campbell, 2004, p. 221). He no longer lives with guilt over his necessary actions and can accept his existence without having to justify it. One no longer has to feign ignorance over the guilt and, without being oblivious to it, is allowed to act freely upon his own desires. As Venom puts it: "The way I see it, we can do whatever we want" (Arad et al., 2018, 01:31:54).

II – Characters in Myth as Compared to *Venom*

As discussed above, almost all myths have the same or a similar plot structure. Due to the many similarities of the plot structure, myths also share a similar cast of characters. In most hero myths, for example, there is a prophetic character present, as well as a sort of mentor to the hero. The former gives vague advice concerning the future, that usually will not be fully understood until the events spoken of have come to pass, such as the oracle of Delphi, while the latter gives the hero instructions, whether that be in the form of spoken directions, or physical training, such as Chiron, mentor to a host of Greek heroes. This chapter will discuss in turn the protagonist, the antagonist, and the supporting cast, to see if there are any identifiable parallels between characters or character types from myths. The protagonist will likely have qualities in common with the heroes of myth, and the supporting cast will probably show parallels with myth as well, but it will be difficult to link the antagonist up with a particular type, as there are so many different kinds of enemies in myth.

After the hero's journey has been linked with the movie, some characters have already been identified and it is clear that there will be characters such as the female love interest and the helper present. However, identifying more characters that do not also occur in the hero's journey will help identify further how thorough the connection between *Venom* and ancient mythical heroism is. The extent to which the characters are included as well as the plot structure will reveal even more to what extent there is a connection between the two.

The Protagonist

In hero myths, there is a division between heroes who are extremely smart and heroes who have exquisite strength, but there are hardly any heroes who have both of the qualities combined. Odysseus, for example, is one of the heroes who uses wits and cunning to achieve his goals (Homer, 1919), while Heracles mainly applies brute force to finish his tasks (Apollodorus, 1921a, p. 185-237). *Venom*'s hero, Eddie, is an investigative journalist by trade, and is described as a "smart guy" by his boss (Arad et al., 2018, 00:13:46), and the corporations he has taken down in the past prove that he can rely on his brains to do his job. When he becomes one with Venom, however, it is no longer by wit and cunning that he has to escape his fate. As the hero, he has to act with violence, and strength is the power used against the obstacles he and Venom face in the road of trials. This would suggest that his hero type is that of the strong hero. In the final battle, however, it is not strength Venom uses to survive and win. He dodges as many strikes as he can and tries not to fight Riot head on when it is not necessary, and at the end of the battle it is because of wit that they win, destroying the fuel tank on the outside of the rocket to make it explode, without coming in direct contact with Riot again (Arad et al., 2018, 01:25:45). This final episode points to a hero who uses his wisdom rather than strength to overcome his obstacles. Where the heroes from myth that use strength often do not learn from their previous fights in such a way that they adapt their strategies, rather using the same trick over and over with all obstacles, this pattern shows that Venom and Eddie adapt their strategy as they go, and are not merely one type of hero, but both types. This may be a reference to their being two different creatures in one, with Venom representing the strong hero and Eddie representing the cunning hero, but may also show that as opposed to heroes in the ancient world, in the modern world heroes do adjust their course.

Apart from having a distinction between a strong and a smart hero, distinctions are also made for the manner in which a hero accomplishes his task, not in regards to his intelligence or strength, but rather in regards to the method. Three forms of this are known: the martial hero, who accomplishes his tasks through warfare or fighting, the tragic hero, who sacrifices himself for the sake of his people, and the romantic hero, who reaches his goal because women love him and help him. An example of a mostly martial hero can be found in Heracles, whose twelve labors mainly consist of hunting and killing monsters, thus making fighting the biggest part of his herohood (Apollodorus, 1921a, p. 185-237). He is also, not unsurprisingly, a hero who has excessive strength rather than wisdom. An example of the tragic hero is Oedipus, who makes his prophecy of killing his father and marrying his mother

come true by trying to avoid it, and brings many hardships to his family and his city that can not be ended until he realizes his faults and goes into voluntary exile (Sophocles, 1994, p. 325-483). The last example, of the romantic hero, is best seen in the story of Jason. He is sent to fetch the golden fleece, a task that is sure to kill him if he attempts it alone. However, he is not alone as Medea assists him throughout his trials because she fell in love with him and he promised to marry her (Apollonius, 2009). If he had not had her help, he would have surely perished in one of the trials.

In *Venom*, there seem to be two manners of heroism present. First off is the martial hero. Instead of approaching the trials with diplomacy or magic to solve them, Venom and Eddie fight themselves through their trials and obstacles, showing clearly their resemblance to the martial hero. The second type of heroism present in *Venom* is that of the romantic hero. Thanks to Anne's continuing love for Eddie, she still comes back time and time again to save him, despite having already committed to a new relationship. She has her new boyfriend bring him to the hospital after he interrupts their lunch date (Arad et al., 2018, 00:42:36), takes him to the hospital herself after his mad dash through the city (Arad et al., 2018, 01:08:00), and comes to save him both when he is almost being executed in the woods (Arad et al., 2018, 01:17:00), and when he is about to be dragged off to space by Riot and Drake (Arad et al., 2018, 01:24:00). Without her help and interference with Eddie's life, it is quite likely that he would not have survived hosting the symbiote, or would have been killed by the guards of Drake's corporation. Thus Eddie is both a martial and a romantic hero, although it is hard to say whether he is equal parts of both or is more martial or more romantic.

The Antagonist

Since there are two antagonists in *Venom*, just as there are two protagonists, it is important to note which of the two takes a leading role in the actions and reactions against the protagonist. In this case, while Eddie is the main protagonist of the movie, it is not his human counterpart Drake, but rather Riot who is the greater threat to the planet. Many of the characteristics of Riot and Venom are the same at the beginning of the movie, and they seem to be almost like two sides of the same coin, both still set on destroying Earth and bringing their fellow symbiotes to the planet. As symbiotes, they are forced to transport themselves inside human hosts to travel on Earth, as they cannot live by themselves in the oxygen-rich environment (Arad et al., 2018, 00:17:40). Riot makes use of this in an especially cruel way, body hopping into inconspicuous hosts in order to make his way to the Life Foundation and to Drake. He jumps into an old lady near the site of the crash (Arad et al., 2018, 00:17:20), and

then uses her body to get to an airport, where he exchanges her for a little girl (Arad et al., 2018, 00:41:50). With the body of the little girl he then manages to get to the Life Foundation, where he successfully fools Drake with his disguise (Arad et al., 2018, 01:10:40). This way of using disguises, a form of shape-shifting, to go unseen is reminiscent of the trickster figure in myth. The trickster figure uses his shape-shifting for “sly jokes and malicious pranks” and often is the simpleton character in myths (Jung, Hull, & Adler, 1969, p. 255). Venom’s ability to shape-shift can be equated with a trickster figure as well, but where Riot remains a malicious force, playing not just jokes but maiming and killing people with plans for genocide, Venom’s storyline corresponds with the later step of the trickster figure as well, where he is humanized and becomes a savior (Jung et al., 1969, p. 256). Towards the end of the movie, he starts listening to Eddie more and more and they become a team rather than having Eddie just be his host, and his friendship with Eddie persuades him to stay on Earth and not help his own species invade the planet, making him a savior of the planet.

This duality between the two symbiotes can be found in other mythic episodes as well, most notably in the idea Jung, Hull, and Adler describe of a good and evil wizard, one dressed in all black, the other in all white, their colors a reverse of their morality (1969, p. 35). Riot has a lighter color, a shade of silver, while Venom is black. The wizards of the story represent two forms of an archetype, that of the wise old man. While in the archetype good and evil are supposed to function together (Jung et al., 1969, p.36), in *Venom* there is a falling out between the two and instead of cooperation they strive for one another’s annihilation, good eventually winning the battle over evil.

The Supporting Cast

Apart from the two symbiotes resembling this instance of the wise old man, another character seems to fit this description. Mrs. Chen, the shopkeeper of the store Eddie frequents, seems to care for him and also gives him advice and wisdoms when he drops by, advising him on keeping his mind strong through meditation and lecturing him on life the way a teacher or a mother figure might do (Arad et al., 2018, 00:20:45). After this conversation, when Eddie is back in his apartment, he turns on a meditation CD and tries to meditate (Arad et al., 2018, 00:23:22), showing that he holds her advice in high enough esteem to try the meditation. This advice also forebodes the situation he will find himself in later, when he shares his mind and body with Venom. Keeping a strong mind and a strong will help Eddie not be fully controlled by Venom, whereas other human hosts, especially of the Riot symbiote, have no control over their body anymore, as can be seen with the old woman and the little girl, who do not seem to

be conscious at all with Riot inside of them, staring ahead with empty faces (Arad et al., 2018, 00:15:47; 00:41:39).

In ancient myths, the hero will sometimes visit an oracle to inquire about their future, or a prophesy will be given to them that foretells their future, such as with the prophesy saying Oedipus' death will be that which heals the land (Sophocles, 1994, p. 335). Although it is at that point not yet known, this prophecy foretells and seals Oedipus fate. Eddie's boss also attempts to give him advice concerning his future and what he should and should not do, especially regarding his job with the network (Arad et al., 2018, 00:07:20). Eddie, however, chooses to ignore the advice and makes a scene, causing him to lose his job. While his boss thus tries to keep him from making a bad decision by informing him about what may lie in his future if he does not obey the rules of the network, Eddie does not hold him on the same level of esteem as he does Mrs. Chen, who he does listen to. In the same way, he also ignores Anne's advice about the interview, showing that they are both not a mentor figure to him, but rather take the role of oracles, telling him what to avoid in his future, even though his stubbornness seals his fate. While these conversations are not the same as the ones a hero in ancient myth may have with an oracle, who gives out often cryptic or confusing information, they do feel as though they serve the same purpose, to warn Eddie of what his actions might do.

III - Story Setting as Predictor of Events

In ancient myth, the setting of a story often gives information about the characters that exist in that place and what the plot will be. If a hero has to travel outside city limits, for example, there is likely to be a monster waiting in the no man's land between cities, such as the Lernaean Hydra in the Hercules myth (Hesiod, 2018, p. 27-29), the Gorgons in the myth of Perseus (Hesiod, 2018, p. 25), and the Cretan Bull of Marathon in the Theseus myth (Apollodorus, 1921b, p. 133). According to Aristotle, man is "a being who reaches full potential only by living in a polis" (Powell, 2015, p. 31). Cities are often associated with good, while the land around them is seen as bad because it is less civilized. In *Venom*, there are several switches of scenery and some events take place inside the city, while others happen outside of it. To see how the setting here influences the plot and predicts it, several scenes and events will be analyzed. It is likely that many of the same customs concerning good and bad apply to *Venom* as they apply to ancient myth, but it will be interesting to see if there are instances where things do not happen in this way, where the setting does not predict the event. Events and scenes that occur within city limits will be considered first, and then

events and scenes that happen outside the city, after which a few general observations about the characters and their origins and surroundings will be made.

After comparing *Venom* to the hero's journey and identifying the characters of myth that can be found in the story, it is a step up to look at the settings of the events and how these influence the story. If the way the settings are used to convey meaning resonates with the way these were used in ancient myths, this gives *Venom* an even deeper connection to mythical heroism and shows that even when at first sight a story seems unlikely to have connections to stories written thousands of years ago, upon closer inspection these stories may be more alike than they seemed.

Inside the City

The viewer's meeting with Eddie occurs in the middle of the city, in the apartment of his girlfriend, Anne (Arad et al., 2018, 00:04:45). This scene is very light and cheerful, and the viewer will immediately be able to tell that this is a character that is to be sympathized with. When he drives through the city and a montage of The Brock Report is shown alongside him, these ideas are confirmed (Arad et al., 2018, 00:05:55). He is a social justice warrior and takes down malicious corporations by exposing the truth about them through investigative journalism. Almost all of the snapshots he is shown in take place in cities as well, signaling that this is what the viewer has to identify Eddie with. He here represents *nomos*, the law of custom, which is the law most associated with city dwellers in Greek and Roman mythology (Powell, 2015, p. 479). Its counterpart, *physis* (or *phusis*), is the law of nature, and is associated with those who are not from the city in question, whether this means they are visiting the city from another locale or are from the no man's land between cities, as well as being associated with the natural course of things and natural desires (Powell, 2015, p. 479).

Another first meeting that takes place in the city is Eddie's meeting with Doctor Dora Skirth. He meets her in the store he frequents in the heart of the city (Arad et al., 2018, 00:28:00). The viewer already knows what kind of work she is involved with, but to Eddie this is still unknown. The circumstances of the meeting already foreshadow what kind of interactions he will have with her, however. The fact she chose to leave Drake's facility and seek out Eddie in the city means she has turned to *nomos*, and has chosen to take the righteous path. She explains this change in opinion herself saying that she went along with Drake's ways because they were curing cancer, but now she does not want to because "this is different" (Arad et al., 2018, 00:29:00). This meeting taking place in the city shows she is

willing to trust Eddie and that he can trust her too, foreshadowing the help she will give him. That she chooses to enter the city does not take away that she comes from Drake's facility, outside the city, and is connected with *physis* as well. After questioning by Drake she still betrays Eddie, and this leads to her own demise (Arad et al., 2018, 00:49:00). This incident shows that even though she turned from *physis* to *nomos*, she still could not escape her fate; her crimes had already been committed and could not be washed away by her attempt at conversion.

Eddie also comes face to face with Venom for the first time in the city. Even though he got the symbiote at the Life Foundation, just outside the city, it is not until he returns to his apartment that he first sees Venom in the mirror (Arad et al., 2018, 00:40:00). Venom, being an alien species, is associated with *physis*, raw nature, but Eddie is still *nomos*, the law. Their meeting in the city suggests that even though he is at this point still *physis*, he will become *nomos*, a suggestion that is confirmed when after listening to Eddie more and more he finally allows his host to give him a set of rules at the end of the movie (Arad et al., 2018, 01:29:20). While the meeting in the city may seem a coincidence to viewers, since this is the first place where Eddie looks into a reflective surface long enough to see Venom, it is later revealed that symbiotes can also materialize as a head and communicate with their host like that, making the meeting in the apartment a conscious decision (Arad et al., 2018, 00:59:49).

Outside the City

As opposed to the first meeting with Venom, the first time the viewer sees Riot, the setting is a jungle in East Malaysia, not only far from the civilization of San Francisco, but far from any kind of civilization in general (Arad et al., 2018, 00:02:10). Not only this, but the first interactions we have with Riot are of a violent nature, unlike the much friendlier meeting with Venom. Riot, thus, is not only associated with *physis*, but even more so than his fellow symbiote Venom. The motif of a dark forest is also often used in tales to convey a sense of despair; the character will not come out of the forest unscathed. An example of this can be found in the story of Actaeon's encounter with the goddess Artemis in her forest, who is bathing naked in a grotto when he accidentally sees her, causing her to turn him into a stag and set his dogs on him to murder him (Ovid, 1916, 135-143). The motif of the dark forest is also common in many folktales, where the main character is confronted by monsters or other obstacles in the dark forest, perhaps the most well-known example of this being Little Red Riding Hood. This first view of Riot, in the woods far away from civilization, cements the fact he will be a malicious force throughout the movie. Even before we know that he has evil

intentions, the setting itself already makes it known that the symbiotes will not be a friendly force, otherwise they would have much more likely landed in broad daylight in a place more central to civilization.

The first meeting with Drake is partly during the first scene of the crash, where he is asking his employees when they can get their samples back, and shows only limited concern about the team of astronauts killed in the crash (Arad et al., 2018, 00:02:40). When Eddie meets him, it happens at the facility across the Golden Gate bridge. Before the camera enters the building, it pans over the bay, showing the locale outside the city, on a mountainous shore, hard to access, with clearly nothing else appearing close to the facility. The first we see in this scene of Drake, however, is him talking to a group of children and acting seemingly pleasant (Arad et al., 2018, 00:11:00). This behavior stands in stark contrast to what the viewer has seen of him earlier, and it is clear that he is only performing this part. It does, however, for a brief moment give one the impression that he is not as power and money hungry as he seems earlier. The children are being used to give the villain some depth and show that he is not all evil, since he otherwise would not be able to stand being near them. This technique is used in more movies to generate sympathy with the character, whether this is the protagonist or the antagonist (Russin & Downs, 2012, p. 88-89). When he is being interviewed by Eddie, his ego starts shining through again, and the idea that he is not the villain fades away, even though it is revealed he has done a lot to improve pharmaceuticals, including coming up with a gene therapy that triples the life expectancy of pancreatic cancer patients (Arad et al., 2018, 00:12:00). He tries his best throughout the interview to sound like a benevolent visionary, but as Eddie digs deeper into the pharmaceutical side of the Life Foundation, and the allegations over wrongful deaths, Drake sends him out of the building with security, and tells him to “have a nice life” (Arad et al., 2018, 00:13:42).

In a later scene the dark forest motif plays a part again. Eddie is taken to the forest after a pursuit through the city ends with him being captured in the hospital (Arad et al., 2018, 01:16:55). He is outnumbered, and it looks like he will certainly be taken out this time. All throughout the pursuit in the city he was able to narrowly escape with his life, but in the forest outside Drake’s grounds, outside the city limit, his fate seems to be getting much darker. Inside the city, the *polis*, he was on the terrain of *nomos*, his own terrain, where his rules apply and not those of the pursuers who came from Drake. But now that he has found himself outside the city limits, his laws no longer apply, he is in the terrain of *physis* and can not save himself. At least not without the help of Venom, who he is without. The switch between the

city and the outer regions signals that Eddie no longer has the upper hand the way he did before. Where earlier Drake wanted “his creature” alive with the symbiote inside of him (Arad et al., 2018, 00:53:00), Eddie is now a security breach that needs to be disposed of. The change of scenery here signals a big change of the character’s fate.

Origins

The two villains of the movie, Carlton Drake and Riot, spend all of their time outside the city. The former is shown solely at the Life Foundation’s terrain, the latter makes a trip from Malaysia to San Francisco and then stays at the Life Foundation’s headquarters as well. They both share a common vision of bringing all of the symbiotes, or at least as many as possible, to the planet. However, their goals could not be more different and although they are together the antagonist of the movie, their characters vary. One way in which they vary is in their origins. Carlton Drake, as Eddie states, was born to British parents, and is for that reason not fully an insider to San Francisco, but an outsider, associated with the *physis* (Arad et al., 2018, 00:12:00). Riot, too, is not from San Francisco. His home is much farther away, on a comet somewhere in an undisclosed quarter of the galaxy. The distance between his home and the *polis* of San Francisco is greater, making it even clearer he is a character of *physis*. However, there is another contrast between the two characters that makes it clear that Riot is the worse villain of the story. Drake grew up in a civilization like that one of San Francisco,⁶ while Riot grew up on the comet, where the civilization will have been much different from that of San Francisco. Drake, thus, still shares a connection to the *nomos* of San Francisco, and seems to obey the laws at least partially, while Riot is an entirely different creature. This difference between the degree to which they associate with Earth and with the *polis* is reflected in their respective plans. Whereas Drake wants to unite humans and symbiotes to make life in space possible for humans and save the Earth from overpopulation (Arad et al., 2018, 00:33:23), Riot’s plan is to take Drake’s rocket and bring down all the other symbiotes to Earth so they can feed on the planet’s population (Arad et al., 2018, 01:19:15). Compared to Riot, Drake seems almost good in this comparison. His connections to Earth and *nomos* are clearly stronger than those of Riot, in part due to the setting of his upbringing, showing once more the predictions and influences setting has on the plot of the movie.

⁶ Although it is not explicitly mentioned in the movie, this essay will assume that he grew up in Great Britain and moved to the United States later, although he could also have been born to British expats already living in the U.S.

Conclusion

Throughout this study, it has become increasingly clear that despite being an antihero, *Venom*'s hero, Eddie, still follows the path of the hero almost as much as a conventional hero.

In the comparison with the hero's journey, all of the steps from the first and second stage were present, and almost all of them were lined up in the order in which Campbell explains them. As expected, it was in the last stage of the journey that comparisons became harder to make and the first three steps, the refusal of the return, the magic flight, and the rescue from without, were not found within the movie. In the case of the refusal of the return and the magic flight, the storyline in no way hinted at the steps occurring, but in the case of the rescue from without, it is unclear whether this step may take place or not, because there is a cut from right after the battle of Eddie landing in the bay, followed by a cut of him sitting with Anne in front of her apartment, what happens in between is not disclosed to the viewer. Thus, if the full context of what happened between these two scenes were available, it would be possible to conclusively say whether the rescue from without occurs or not, but as it is now, the movie's necessary brevity prevents one from fully identifying the plot structure and the ideas behind the different events, that follow each other in a rapid succession at most points in the movie. Since most of the plot indeed corresponds with the steps in the hero's journey, there will be more overlap with the other two categories as well.

The identification of characters from *Venom* with character types from the mythologies proves that when there is a great overlap between the story arc and the hero's journey, this step is also made simpler. Not only does a correct identification with the hero's journey already identify certain archetypes in the story, it also makes it easier to identify further archetypes and stereotypical characters and scenes. Regarding the protagonist, the type of hero can be discussed on two fronts. First off there is the idea that a hero will either have strength or wit, but not both. In *Venom*, this holds true for the two individuals who make up *Venom*, but together they do have both. Eddie has the wit, and is described as smart, while *Venom* has the physical power. Together, they overcome most obstacles through fighting, making *Venom* a martial hero type. However, since Anne occasionally has to come and help Eddie as well, because she still loves him, *Venom* is also partly a romantic hero.

Regarding the antagonist, a clear parallel with the trickster motif can be seen. Just like the trickster, Riot can change appearances, going unseen, and just as the trickster, he commits malicious acts, although they are worse than the pranks the trickster is said to perform.

Venom is similarly comparable to a trickster, but between the two symbiotes, the difference is that Venom does undergo humanization and become a savior, while Riot stays evil and eventually dies. The contrast here can be compared to a contrast in the wise old man motif, where there is a duality between good and bad, black and white.

The wise old man comes to the fore as a character in the supporting cast in the form of Mrs. Chen as well, giving Eddie advice and wisdom, while Anne and Eddie's boss attempt to do the same but are more of the oracle, warning him and foretelling partly his future, even though his fate is already sealed and he will likely not change his ways.

There seem to be fewer characters of myth that can be identified in the cast of *Venom*, but one must take into account the characters that have already been found using the hero's journey. The fact there are more characters still recognizable outside the hero's journey shows that the connection of *Venom* to myth reaches deeper than just the plot structure and goes into the characters as well.

Lastly it is the setting that is discussed in regards to myth. In myth, the city, or *polis*, often stands for good things, and *nomos*, the law, while anything outside the city, and especially forests, stands for bad things, *physis*, raw nature. This seems to hold true in regards to *Venom* as well, with characters from outside the city portraying more *physis* characteristics than *nomos*, and the other way around. Where a character is first met influences what image is built up of them as well, and character's that choose to meet inside the city rather than outside are the characters that the hero can trust, while those outside the city are the villainous characters trying to destroy law and order and break the peace. Even though a few tactics are put in place to try and make it seem as though the Life Foundation's building is not dark and gloomy, for example by making it all white inside, the fact it is outside the city on an intimidating shore still betrays that what happens there is not good, just as a setting outside a city in ancient myth would foretell that there were bad things coming, possibly even death.

While there may seem to be only two options in regards to whether a character is good or evil in relation to their dwelling, there are certain subtleties in place as well. Riot and Drake both are not from San Francisco, but since Riot comes from a comet much farther away than the Great Britain Drake comes from, Riot's affinity for *physis* and disliking of *nomos* is much clearer than that of Drake, and where Drake has a plan that might actually benefit the planet, Riot is planning to annihilate Earth with an army of invaders, showing that even between these two evil characters, the degree to which they are malicious relates to their upbringing

and their home locations as well. They are both aliens in San Francisco, but one all the more than the other.

The fact that even in regards to the use of settings to influence the story there is still so much overlap with myth and with the ideas of *physis* and *nomos* reinforces the amount of myth that *Venom* has in it further. The extent to which ancient mythical characteristics are represented in the movie is clearly very great. Not only does the plot structure fit very well, a lot of the characters can also be traced back to mythical stereotypes, and the settings even mimic those of ancient myth, as well as the social constructs around them.

At first glance, *Venom* may seem like a movie devoid of much myth. It is not based on a myth directly and the story does not seem like the typical hero myth. Through taking it in better, however, it is clear that there are many influences and characteristics present, not only the ones that are already expected to be present, but also the ones that are much less likely to be adhered to in a sphere of filmmaking. The extent to which *Venom* is laced with characteristics of ancient mythical heroism proves to be much greater than it would seem, and gives credence to the idea that perhaps all stories are formed from the collective unconscious, making them all, not just myths, have similar storylines.

For future studies, it would be interesting to take movies or books that have even less of a connection to heroism and myth, and see how these do in a similar comparison. Perhaps it would be possible to extend the study further with more characteristics of myth as well, and look at other types of symbolism in the source material too apart from just mythical symbols.

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