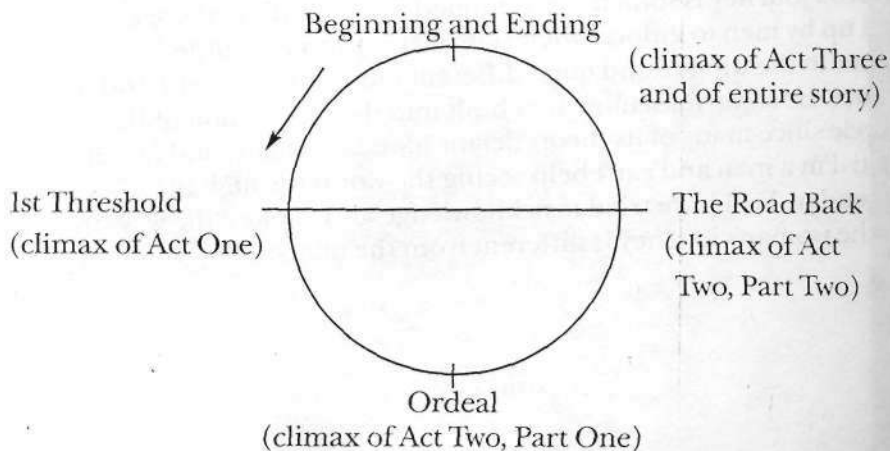


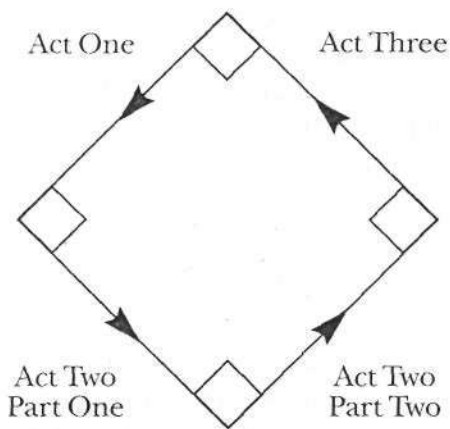
My understanding of the Shadow archetype, for example, continues to evolve. I have been impressed all over again by the power of this pattern, especially as it operates within the individual as a repository for unexpressed feelings and desires. It is a force that accumulates when you fail to honor your gifts, follow the call of your muses, or live up to your principles and ideals. It has great but subtle power, operating on deep levels to communicate with you, perhaps sabotaging your efforts, upsetting your balance until you realize the message these events bring — that you must express your creativity, your true nature, or die. A car accident a few years ago taught me the rebellious power of the Shadow, showed me that I was distracted, out of harmony, heading for even greater disasters if I didn't find a way to express my personal creative side.

Occasional puzzled looks on the faces of students taught me that I hadn't completely thought through some aspects of the pattern. Some people were confused by the various turning points and ordeals of the model, particularly by the distinction between the midpoint, which I call the Ordeal, and the climax of the second act, which I call The Road Back. Trying to explain this led me to a new realization. Each act is like a movement of a symphony, with its own beginning, middle, and end, and with its own climax (the highest point of tension) coming just before the ending of the act. These act climaxes are the major turning points on the circular diagram:



Letting in Rome, I came upon a further development of this idea, an alternate way of graphing the Hero's Journey: not as a circle, but as a diamond. I was explaining that each act sends the hero on a certain track with a specific aim or goal, and that the climaxes of each act change the hero's direction, assigning a new goal. The hero's first act goal, for instance, might be to seek treasure, but after meeting a potential lover at the first threshold crossing, the goal might change to pursuing that love. If the ordeal at the midpoint has the villain capturing the hero and lover, the goal in the next movement could become trying to escape. And if the villain kills the lover at The Road Back, the new goal of the final movement might be to get revenge. The original objective might be achieved as well, or there might be some overall goal (to learn self-reliance or come to terms with past failures, for example) that continues to be served in all movements as the hero pursues changing superficial goals.

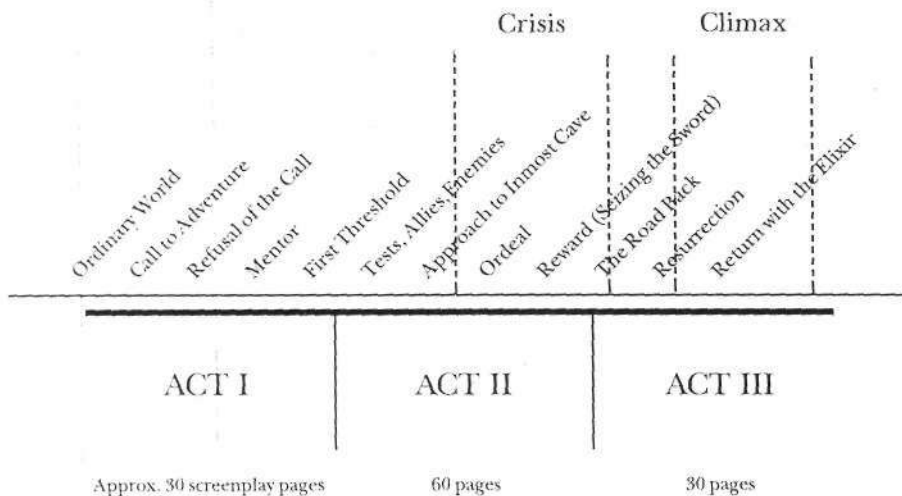
To illustrate this concept I drew the hero's goals in each movement as straight lines, vectors of intention, rather than curves. Straightening out the curves of the circle created sharp, 90 degree turns at the quarter points and revealed the drastic changes that may occur in the hero's objectives. Each straight line represents the hero's aim in that act – to escape the constraints of the ordinary world, to survive in a strange land, to win the boon and escape the strange land, to return home safely with something to share that revives the world.



THE STAGES OF THE HERO'S JOURNEY

1. Ordinary World
2. Call to Adventure
3. Refusal of the Call
4. Meeting with the Mentor
5. Crossing the First Threshold
6. Tests, Allies, Enemies
7. Approach to the Inmost Cave
8. Ordeal
9. Reward (Seizing the Sword)
10. The Road Back
11. Resurrection
12. Return with the Elixir

The Hero's Journey Model



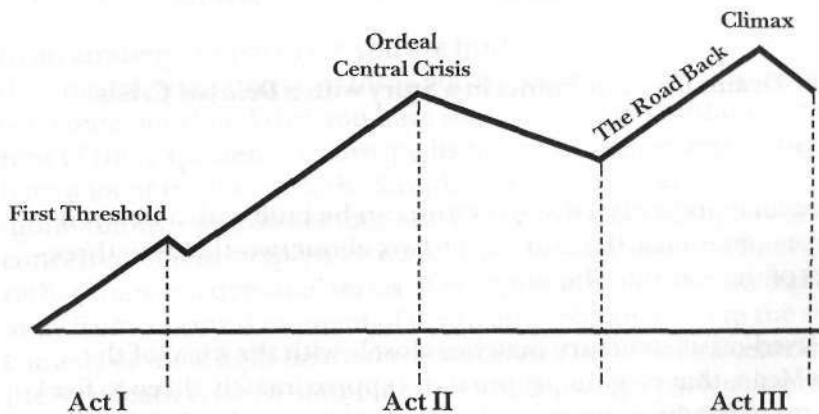
The Ordeal is usually the central event of the story, or the main event of the second act. Let's call it the **crisis** to differentiate it from the **climax** (the big moment of Act Three and the crowning event of the whole story).

A crisis is defined by *Webster's* as "the point in a story or drama at which hostile forces are in the tensest state of opposition." We also speak of a crisis in an illness: a point, perhaps a high spike of fever, after which the patient either gets worse or begins to recover. The message: Sometimes things have to get worse before they can get better. An Ordeal crisis, however frightening to the hero, is sometimes the only way to recovery or victory.

PLACEMENT OF THE ORDEAL

The placement of the crisis or Ordeal depends on the needs of the story and the tastes of the storyteller. The most common pattern is for the death-and-rebirth moment to come near the middle of the story, as shown in the Central Crisis diagram.

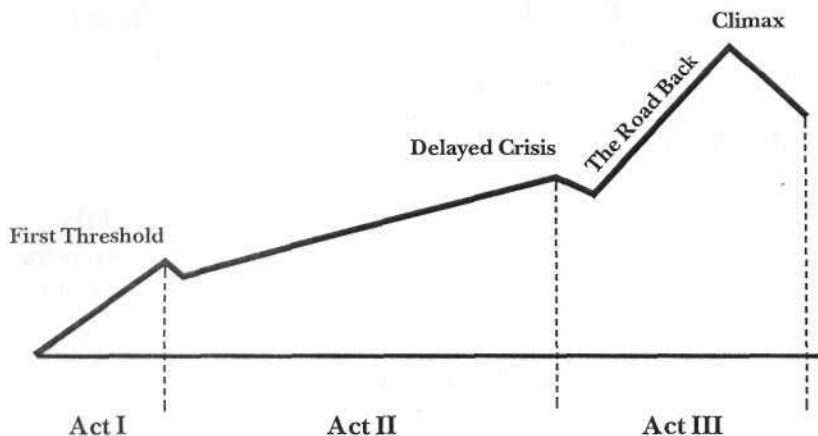
Central Crisis



Major Dramatic High Points in a Story with a *Central Crisis*

A **central crisis** has the advantage of symmetry, and leaves plenty of time for elaborate consequences to flow from the ordeal. Note that this structure allows for another critical moment or turning point at the end of Act Two.

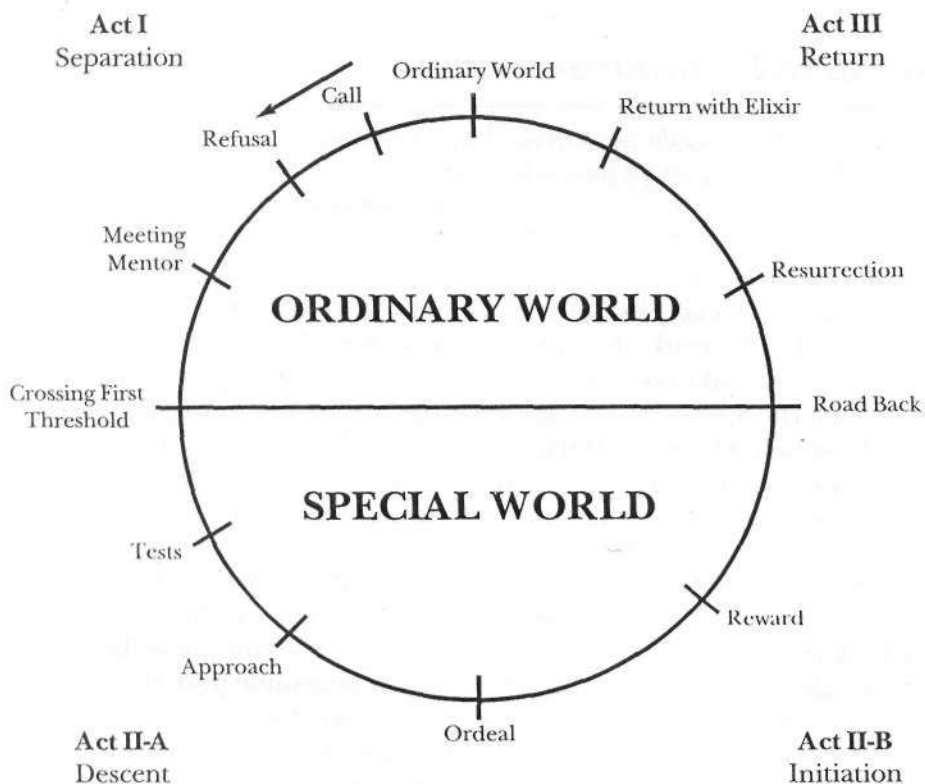
Delayed Crisis



Major Dramatic High Points in a Story with a *Delayed Crisis*

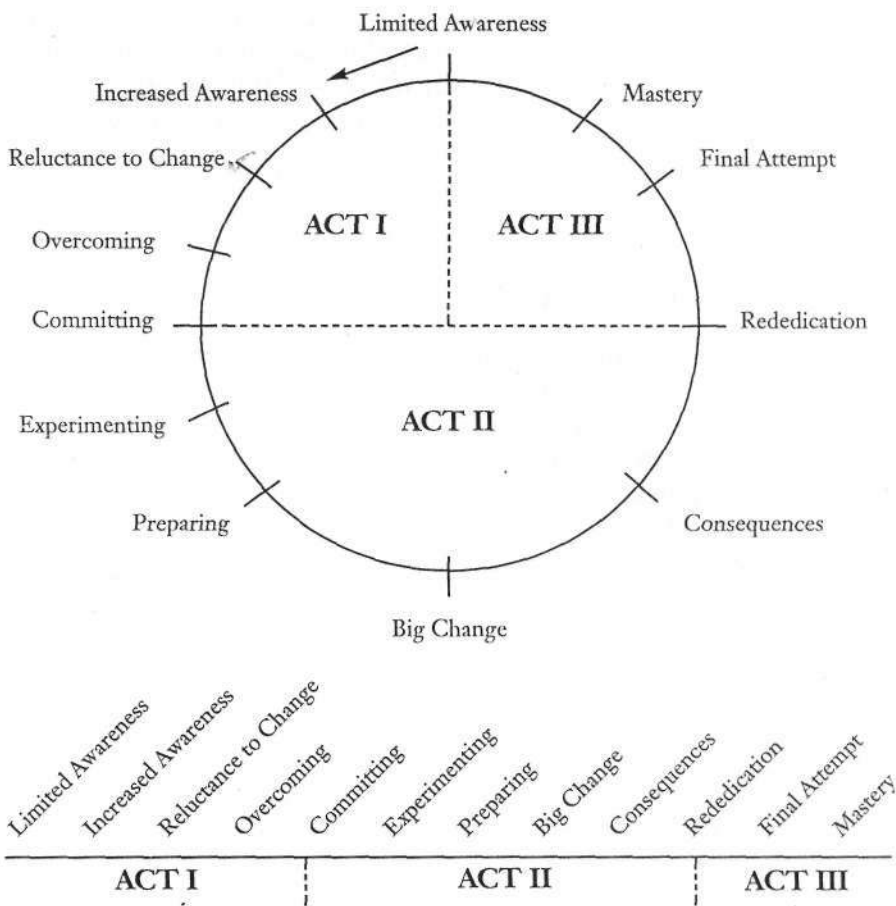
However, an equally effective structure can be built with a **delayed crisis** that comes near the end of Act Two, about two-thirds to three-quarters of the way into the story.

The delayed-crisis structure matches closely with the ideal of the Golden Mean, that elegant proportion (approximately three to five) that seems to produce the most pleasing artistic results. A delayed crisis leaves more room for preparation and Approach and allows a slow buildup to a big moment at the end of Act Two.



Wake up, Seekers! Shake off the effects of our feast and celebration and remember why we came out here in the first place! People back home are starving and it's urgent, now that we've recovered from the ordeal, to load up our backpacks with food and treasure and head for home. Besides, there's no telling what dangers still lurk on the edge of the hunting grounds. You pause at the edge of camp to look back. They'll never believe this back home. How to tell them? Something bright on the ground catches your eye. You bend to pick it up – a beautiful smooth stone with an inner glow. Suddenly a dark shape darts out at you, all fangs. Run! Run for your life!

The Character Arc



LAST CHANCE

The Resurrection is the hero's final attempt to make major change in attitude or behavior. A hero may backslide at this point, making those around think he's let them down. Hope for that character is