



Cinematic Quests for Identity: The Hero's Encounter with the Beast

Maria Garcia

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Whether embodied in literature, theater, or film, an enduring theme of many artistic works has been the protagonist's search for identity. Such quests are typically psychological or spiritual journeys and depicted on the screen in a variety of manifestations—endeavors embarked upon to address an emotional trauma or to overcome an obstacle in the hero's life. Using Jean Cocteau's *La Belle et La Bête* as a leitmotif, these pursuits are discussed by author Maria Garcia as encounters with the "Beast." At the end of their quests, heroes are reborn into their new identities, while the Beast disappears, transforms, or dies.

In *Cinematic Quests for Identity: The Hero's Encounter with the Beast*, Garcia examines the cinematic conventions of the male and female search for individuation across several genres. After discussing *La Belle et La Bête*, the author looks at a number of films including three iconic male journeys—*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The Searchers*, and *The Deer Hunter*. Additional chapters focus on *The Silence of the Lambs*, *Bringing Up Baby*, *The Lady Eve*, *The Secret of Roan Inish*, *The Natural*, and *Moneyball*. The book concludes with a consideration of the three fairy tale films by Catherine Breillat—*Fat Girl*, *Bluebeard*, and *The Sleeping Beauty*—and the female characters in several Robert Bresson films, including *The Trial of Joan of Arc*.

Providing a unique and original perspective on films throughout the world, this provocative book draws upon Jungian thought, as well as several literary traditions including fairy tales, epic poetry, and Greek and Celtic mythology. Aimed at scholars of film and film theory, *Cinematic Quests for Identity* will also appeal to movie fans interested in a deeper understanding of films that explore a character's struggle to live a conscious life.

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