Jungian Archetypes, Binary Oppositions and Narrative Structure within Sidney Lumet's 12 Angry Men

by

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Submitted to the Faculty of Film, Art and Creative Technologies in candidacy for the BA (Honours) Degree in Film DL843

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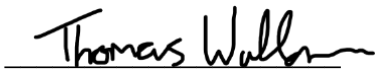
Submitted March 10th, 2025

Declaration of Originality

This dissertation is submitted by the undersigned to the Institute of Art Design & Technology, Dun Laoghaire in partial fulfilment of the examination for the BA (Honours) Film DL843. It is entirely the author's own work except where noted and has not been submitted for an award from this or any other educational institution.



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Acknowledgements

I would like to sincerely thank all those who contributed significantly to the research and writing of this thesis:

My fellow students for their support.

Tom Kennedy, my thesis supervisor.

Lara Rosello, for proofreading my thesis.

My family.

The IADT library staff.

Abstract

The film *12 Angry Men* (1957), directed by Sidney Lumet, constitutes an engaging and dramatic representation of the American judicial system. It examines how the prejudices of each of the twelve jurors impact their initial perspectives on a case of first-degree murder. The confined setting, distinct personalities, unique character dynamics, and heated arguments collectively culminate in a contemporary masterclass of filmmaking.

This thesis examines how each of the twelve jurors represents a specific archetype from the writings of author Carol S. Pearson, who expanded on the archetypal theories of psychologist Carl Jung. It also examines how these archetypes interact to create realistic dramatic conflict rooted in human nature. I investigate how the character roles within this narrative function as psychological profiles of each of the men and as structural components that shape the film's characterisation, conflict, and narrative structure.

Each juror represents a distinct archetype identified in psychology and narrative theory. Using the theory of binary oppositions proposed by Claude Lévi-Strauss, I will analyse how these archetypes collectively contribute to the film's dramatic conflict while simultaneously demonstrating the film's themes of order, prejudice, empathy, and compassion. By analysing how these archetypes conflict with each other and eventually come together to form a unanimous agreement, this thesis highlights how Lumet's direction and the screenplay written by Reginald Rose create a compelling psychological and social study.

I will also analyse the film's cinematography, lighting, blocking, and dialogue to illustrate how these cinematic techniques develop throughout the narrative beats to convey the progressively tense atmosphere leading up to the film's climax, using Tzvetan Todorov's narrative theory. This thesis will explore the interplay of archetypal and narrative theories which convey the film's primary themes.

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Introduction

12 Angry Men (1957) is a drama that delves into the American judicial system, highlighting how the personal biases of the jurors shaped their initial verdicts in the trial. Serving as a microcosm of society, the characters written by Reginald Rose offer a poignant exploration of individuality, prejudice, and justice that continues to resonate today. In the film, the twelve jurors remain unnamed; each is identified solely by their designated juror number.

Rose skilfully constructed the screenplay so that “every juryman’s character and personal history play a meaningful role in how they see and judge the case" (Torre, Gramaglia and Jona 532). Office workers, labourers, immigrants, and individuals from all backgrounds must collaborate to reach a unanimous conclusion. Despite the jury being entirely composed of white men, they find that they do not share as much in common as it initially seemed; “fault lines begin to appear—by age, by education, by national origin, by socioeconomic level, by values, and by temperament" (Rosenzweig 224). Narrative theories can illuminate the distinctions among the jurors and how these distinctions shape the narrative of this film.

In this thesis, I will examine how each juror’s archetype integrates within the narrative structure of *12 Angry Men* to propel dramatic conflict and how all these theories converge to underscore the film’s central themes of prejudice and compassion.

In Chapter One, I will discuss the theory of archetypes proposed by psychologist Carl Jung and how each juror’s personality can be correlated with one of Carol S. Pearson’s twelve archetypes, which was inspired by Jung’s work. I will also explore how the actors embody their character’s archetypes through their performances. In Chapter Two, I shall analyse Claude Lévi-Strauss’s theory of binary opposites, examining how key figures within the jury conflict with each other based on their archetypes and how these conflicts convey the film's themes. Finally, in Chapter Three, I will investigate the narrative structure of *12 Angry Men* through the lens of Tzvetan Todorov’s narrative theory, demonstrating how director Sidney Lumet utilised the camera, lighting, and blocking to highlight pivotal story beats in the narrative and how this affects the overall presentation of the final piece.

Chapter One: Jungian Archetypes and Characterisation

12 Angry Men opens after the courtroom deliberations, where an indifferent judge (Rudy Bond) finishes the proceedings by outlining the jurors' responsibilities. They must unanimously decide on the innocence or guilt of an 18-year-old boy (John Savoca) charged with the premeditated murder of his father. If they reach a guilty verdict, the boy faces the death penalty. The only time we see the defendant is when the jurors leave the courtroom; his fate now lies in the hands of twelve strangers. The rest of the film unfolds in the jury room as the men discuss the intricacies of the case. Juror 8 (Henry Fonda) serves as the film's protagonist, a man uncertain of the facts surrounding the murder, coming into conflict with Juror 3 (Lee J. Cobb), who is adamant about the boy's guilt. The premise of being set in a jury room provides the film's conflict with two clear sides: innocence and guilt. Juror 8, initially the sole holdout with a not guilty vote, persuades his peers by questioning the abundance of circumstantial evidence and gradually convinces them that there is reasonable doubt in the case.

Figure 1: The jurors listen as the judge (Rudy Bond) details their duty (Lumet, 12 Angry Men).

As with any social setting, there is a clear dynamic within the group. There are leaders such as Juror 8, individuals with strong opinions like Juror 10 (Ed Begley), those who are indifferent like Juror 7 (Jack Warden), and those who are uncertain of themselves like Juror 5 (Jack Klugman). “Individuals who interact in small groups often try to influence and change the attitudes, views and judgements of others in the

group in order to arrive at a consensus, group view or decision" (Pennington 115). Most of the film's dramatic conflict revolves around the jurors influencing change and how these very different personalities navigate the complex task of reaching a unanimous agreement.

Different jury members are drawn to one another based on their personalities and often clash with those who have opposing characteristics. "The jurors exhibit instances of affiliation and repulsion, seeking either to bond with an admirable character…or to reject an unpleasant person" (Rosenzweig 224). For example, Juror 6 (Edward Binns) defends the elderly Juror 9 (Joseph Sweeney) and stands up for him when others disrespect him, telling Juror 3, "If you say stuff like that to him again, I'm gonna lay you out" *(12 Angry Men* 00:43:49). Juror 3's attitude plays a crucial role in Juror 6 switching his vote to not guilty. When Juror 7 changes his vote to expedite the process, Juror 11 (George Voskovec) lashes out at him, as he values the democratic principles upon which America was founded—principles Juror 7 seems to take for granted. With so many diverse backgrounds and opinions debating a boy's life, the setting breeds drama, especially given each character's archetype.

The idea of archetypes is rooted in psychology and narrative theory. Psychologist Carl Jung and folklorist Vladimir Propp used archetypes to explain personalities and their function in social settings. According to Jung, there is a metaphysical link between all humans, which he called the collective unconscious. This collective unconscious "comprises universally shared associations and images called archetypes" (Indick 92). Author Carol S. Pearson expanded on Jung's theory and outlined 12 archetypes that represent human emotions, motivations, and behaviours: the Ruler, the Creator, the Sage, the Innocent, the Seeker, the Destroyer, the Orphan, the Magician, the Fool, the Warrior, the Lover, and the Caregiver[1]. Every archetype has a unique set of skills, beliefs and characteristics that all complement each other differently. When relating archetypes to group dynamics, "archetypal images may impact relationships at several levels: the individual; the individual and others; the collective unconscious" (Torre, Gramaglia and Jona 530). The archetypes found in

[1] Pearson, Carol S. *Awakening the Heroes Within: Twelve Archetypes to Help Us Find Ourselves and Transform Our World*. San Francisco, Harperone, 1991, p.7.

12 Angry Men influence the jurors' personal views, their arguments, and how they ultimately arrive at a unanimous verdict of not guilty.

When discussing archetypes in narrative theory, Vladimir Propp identified a set of eight spheres of action, or character roles, when he studied Russian folk tales. He labelled these as the Hero, the Villain, the Donor, the Helper, the Princess, the Father, the Dispatcher, and the False Hero.[2] These roles appear frequently throughout folk tales but are "not the same as the actual characters since one character can occupy several roles" (Branston and Stafford 44). Each of these roles served more as a tool than a personality, giving structure to the narrative. Jung's and Propp's theories on archetypes and character roles help us interpret characters within narratives as unique personalities and symbols of universal human experiences, allowing us to experience deeper emotional connections. "Archetypes in film are character types and themes that transcend the actors and plots that portray them. The archetypes are representations of psychological issues and figures that are universally resonant" (Indick 92).

The twelve jury members of *12 Angry Men* reflect the archetypes of Jung and Propp; each man has a different function in the narrative but, taken all together, comprises a collective whole. Although both Propp and Jung's theories can be applied, Jung goes beyond using archetypes just as a framework for character function to encapsulate better the psychological depth of each man and his internal conflicts, whereas "Propp reduced them to a simple typology based not on psychology but on the unity of the actions assigned to them by the narrative" (Barthes 79). Each of the twelve characters aligns with one of the twelve archetypes described by author Carol S. Pearson[3], who was significantly influenced by Jung's work on archetypes. The identification of these archetypes can be outlined as follows:

Juror 8 – The Orphan
Juror 3 – The Destroyer
Juror 9 – The Sage
The Foreman – The Ruler

[2] Branston and Stafford, *The Media Student's Book*. 5th. New York, Routledge, 2010, p.44.
[3] Pearson, Carol S. op.cit., p.14 - 15.

Juror 2 – The Innocent

Juror 6 – The Caregiver

Juror 7 – The Fool

Juror 12 – The Magician

Juror 4 – The Warrior

Juror 5 – The Seeker

Juror 10 – The Lover

Juror 11 – The Creator

The premise of a group of men arguing over the verdict of a murder case can be viewed as the conflict between the different facets of the Self, representing the integration of an individual's conscious and unconscious aspects that shape their psyche. "When the different parts encounter each other and integrate themselves into the Self, they complement one another and create balance where there was conflict" (Indick 109). This is indicative of the film's story, where, one by one, the men acknowledge the presence of reasonable doubt in the case and come together to form a jury that reaches a shared consensus, "a microcosm consisting of 12 very different people, who did not choose to be together but nonetheless share a task they have to accomplish…each character represents an embodiment or symbol of an individual's part and/or complex" (Torre, Gramaglia and Jona 531).

Figure 2: The twelve jurors (Lumet, 12 Angry Men).

Key characters within the narrative serve as protagonists and antagonists: Juror 8 and Juror 9 against Juror 3 and Juror 4 (E.G. Marshall), respectively. When considering these men through Propp's theory, Juror 8 embodies the Hero, a man of good morals who stands against the majority and ultimately saves the boy's life. Juror 9 is the Helper, a wise man who supports Juror 8, providing insight into the case that others overlook by noticing small details and understanding human behaviour. Juror 3 represents the Villain, a loud, vengeful man who criticises others and steadfastly refuses to compromise his view on the case, even declaring at one point that he is the boy's executioner. Juror 4 acts as the False Hero. He is logical and unbiased in discussing the case, using evidence and reasoning to support his views, just like Juror 8, but he holds flawed assumptions that lead him to change his vote when challenged by Juror 9. An intriguing detail from the film's blocking is that Juror 4 and Juror 9 sit to the right of Juror 3 and Juror 8, their literal right-hand men. There is a classic hero-villain dichotomy here, reflecting the conflict between logic and emotion on both sides.

Figure 3: Juror 8 (Henry Fonda) and Juror 9 (Joseph Sweeney) (Lumet, 12 Angry Men).

Figure 4: Juror 3 (Lee J. Cobb) and Juror 4 (E.G. Marshall) (Lumet, 12 Angry Men).

The long take that introduces the men when they first enter the room effectively showcases each of their characters.

> The irresponsible Juror 7 (a marmalade salesman) flicks his gum wrapper out the window…the insightful Juror 8 thoughtfully looks out the window, presumably already weighing the issues and gravity of the case (Munyan 29).

We can observe how easily some draw strong comparisons when comparing the other jury members to their archetypes. In contrast, other men are challenging to label owing to their fleshed-out personalities.

Juror 8 and Juror 3 embody the Orphan and Destroyer archetypes, reflecting the traits of their counterparts in Propp's theory, the Hero and the Villain. Juror 9 embodies the Sage, wise with insight from years of observation. In contrast, Juror 4 embodies the Warrior, relying on discipline and logic while emphasising evidence over intuition. Juror 4 maintains an unbiased stance and never raises his voice or succumbs to his emotions. He conflicts with Juror 9, who relies on intuition rather than logic.

The jury's Foreman (Martin Balsam) is the Ruler, who maintains order and civility, ensuring smooth discussions. He structures arguments, calls for votes, and decides

when to introduce evidence. The Foreman maintains order by diffusing tensions through interruption, “used to show his neutrality toward every juror, especially Juror Number Ten” (Jaya 213), whom he clashes with regarding his management of the jury, favouring procedure and structure over disorganised debates. These two jurors “are deeply involved in the interchange of ideas that formulates the plot of this film, yet their behaviour has a subtle influence on the behaviour of the other ten men” (Rose, *The Challenges of Screenwriting the 1957 Film Version* 41-42). Although he was granted a position of authority through designation, his effectiveness in leading the group is minimal, “with Juror 1 having fumbled away any chance to exercise power, others try to step into the vacuum” (Rosenzweig 227). He tries to remain neutral and very rarely imposes his personal opinions onto the group.

Juror 2 (John Fiedler) is the Innocent, a timid and mild-mannered man who often gets overlooked; the loud voices of Juror 3 and Juror 10 usually drown out his opinion. Idealistic and hesitant, Juror 2 perfectly encapsulates his archetype: eager to do the right thing but lacking confidence, he willingly follows the crowd to avoid conflict. Initially, he believes the boy is guilty, trusting what he heard in the trial. Although caring, he lacks the assertiveness of someone like Juror 6. He has an arc in the narrative, overcoming self-doubt and finding the strength to bring up a debate about the victim’s stab wound, thanks to Juror 8's encouragement and confronts Juror 3, exposing the flaws in his argument. “You said we could throw out all the other evidence” (*12 Angry Men* 01:29:10). Juror 2 grows from naivety to understanding the importance of self-advocacy.

Juror 5 is the Seeker, desiring freedom from the social stigma of being born in a slum, which has affected others' perception of him. His arc in the narrative goes from being sensitive to judgment and unwilling to share his opinion on the case to accepting his background and challenging those who hold prejudices against people from his socio-economic class. Juror 10 constantly talks about how all ‘slum kids’ are dangerous and makes bigoted remarks, which influences Juror 5 to switch his vote early on. His acceptance of his background ultimately supports the not guilty party; his knowledge of switchblades helps others understand how the father's murder was likely committed by someone unfamiliar with switchblades. Much like

the Seeker archetype suggests, he looks beyond what is initially presented to him, examining the case from angles that the other jurors might overlook and encouraging them to see the world from a different perspective owing to his unique insight.

Juror 6 is the Caregiver, defined by protectiveness. He cares for Juror 9 and will quickly come to his aid, “Binns approaches the men's room door to summon Sweeney, then helps him into his chair, treating the elder with the respect that he will show him throughout the film” (Cunningham 115). A painter by trade, he is hardworking and respectful of others but not the most intelligent. He does not strongly advocate for either side, never making an argument or contesting one. He listens and watches the others as he slowly makes up his mind. Embodying a quiet strength, he stands up to Juror 3 without fear and keeps this excitable man in check. Juror 6 can also be seen as a caregiver to the justice system, as the one time he does come up with an argument against Juror 8's case, it is likely the strongest one: “Supposing you talk us all out of this and the kid really did knife his father” (*12 Angry Men* 00:39:09).

Juror 7 fits the Fool / Trickster archetype. “When the trickster archetype appears in movies, it’s usually in the form of a comedian” (Indick 107). He does not take the case seriously, often cracking jokes and messing about while others discuss the evidence. He is more interested in attending a baseball game that evening, which frequently results in conflicts with the other jury members, especially Juror 11. Juror 7 views the entire proceedings as a waste of time, persistently distracting others with jokes, sarcastic remarks, and irritating games so that the discussion is in his interest. Apathetic and ultimately cowardly, Juror 7 embodies the worst traits of the Fool, illustrating a failure to take on responsibility.

Figure 5: Juror 7 (Jack Warden) entertains Juror 2 (John Fiedler) and Juror 12 (Robert Webber) with a coin trick (Lumet, 12 Angry Men).

Juror 10 embodies the negative shadow of the Lover[4]. He is a bigoted man who judges others based on race and background. This archetype is linked to intense emotional passions and suggests a desperate need for validation. He expects others to share his beliefs and desires for unity among the men, though rooted in racist ideals. His bias against the lower class and foreigners drives his eagerness to convict the defendant, prioritising passion over rationality. He argues with obsessive hatred and generalisations. His emotional conviction in the racist tirade shows a strong attachment to prejudiced beliefs. Only when the men turn away does he realise his isolation and withdraw into silence, revealing that his identity depends on validation. Both sides of the argument reject him for injecting his emotions into a debate that requires logic, with most of his arguments being undermined as they arise from beliefs, not facts.

Juror 11 is the Creator, noted for being precise, original, and valuing craftsmanship. Originally from Europe, he is a polite, reserved and respectable man. His profession as a watchmaker reflects his ability to pick apart the evidence and testimonies finely with careful analysis and methodical reasoning. He brings a unique perspective to the case with his background under an oppressive government, and this explains why he

[4] Pearson, Carol S. op.cit., p.151.

is so keen on the democratic process and justice, “whenever Voskovec speaks of democracy, he does so simply, out of the harsh experience of a man who has seen another political system up close and has found it wanting” (Cunningham 111). He frequently feels self-conscious about his origins and desires to integrate into American society by being overly polite. The archetype of the Creator wants to create something meaningful and lasting; in Juror 11’s case, that creation is justice. Viewing the trial as a moral obligation, he frequently comes into conflict with Juror 7 and Juror 10, arguing for truth and integrity.

Juror 12 (Robert Webber) embodies the Magician archetype as an advertising executive, a profession known for creating illusions. He is flashy and superficial, eager to discuss the murder case but possessing only a limited understanding of the trial's complexities. “This self-proclaimed liberal amuses himself during his debate with games of tic-tac-toe and polishing his sales pitch for his company's newest breakfast cereal” (Cunningham 117). He constantly draws sketches and pitches ideas to other jury members, “It seems to me that it is up to the group of us to convince this gentleman that he’s wrong and we’re right” (*12 Angry Men* 00:15:35). As in his career, those with more power sway him as he is the sole juror who continually changes his vote, showing he is susceptible to the strong opinions of others. This constant change fits the idea of transformation associated with the Magician’s archetype[5]. Distracted and indecisive, he lacks a strong moral stance and will follow the majority.

There are archetypes here that do not all neatly correspond with the men. For example, Juror 10 does not reflect all the ideals of the Lover archetype, whilst Juror 6 seems to be more of a Warrior than a Caregiver. However, the fluidity of these archetypes fits within Propp's idea that these character roles are spheres of action that share traits and blend to form variations.

> The stereotyping of the jurors is so nuanced that instead of twelve ‘specimens’, we have only six, each represented twice: two intellectuals, two labourers, two bigots, two smokers, two scrupulous types, two who are absolutely ‘proper’. Each character trades details with an almost identical counterpart” (Truffaut 42).

[5] Pearson, Carol S. op.cit., p.191.

The spheres of action overlap between all the jurymen, where characteristics and roles are reflected in multiple other archetypes, meaning they do not have to align precisely with anyone in particular, “In a sense, all principal characters are shapeshifters” (Indick 107). It is more important to the narrative that each character serves a narrative function, moving the story forward and creating drama.

Rose writes a brief sentence for each Juror in the script that encapsulates their personality, profession, physical attributes, and character mannerisms. Everything else is portrayed visually “since it is felt that what they are and who they are will be revealed in their dialogue and actions during the film” (Rose, *12 Angry Men* 1). Rose describes Juror 8, the Orphan archetype, as "a quiet, thoughtful, gentle man…who sees many sides to every question and constantly seeks the truth. A man of strength tempered with compassion" (Rose, *12 Angry Men* 1). His job as an architect reflects how he can construct logical arguments tailored to the personalities of each of the jurors.

> One of the jurors cares a lot about justice, so he frames the challenge before them as one of justice and equity to appeal to that individual. Another character happens to be a banker, and he understands that for him, it's all about numbers and probabilities; so, he frames his argument for that character in terms of 'expected value'. He does this for every single juror (Christensen).

Fonda plays the role with dignity and compassion; however, an underlying sense of self-doubt runs through the performance, humanising this idealistic protagonist.

Characters express themselves in distinct manners intimately tied to their personalities. Juror 7 frequently uses sporting terms. Juror 11 displays politeness that mirrors his upbringing and conceals his sensitivity as an immigrant. Juror 4 offers an analytical breakdown of his beliefs by meticulously listing his points as he would be analysing stocks. The distinctive dialogue allows each character to stand out and offers a realistic-sounding screenplay in which no two men present themselves similarly. Rose states that:

> The men of the play were easily recognisable as types, but I believe that whatever dimension they had as real people was achieved as much by the excellence of the performance as it was by the personal insights revealed in dialogue (Rose, *Creating The Original Story* 38).

We can see how each actor took Rose’s notes to enhance their performances.

More elusive characters, such as Juror 6, are fleshed out with the knowledge that he "finds it difficult to create positive opinions, but who must listen to and digest and accept these opinions offered by others which appeal to him most" *(*Rose, *12 Angry Men* 1). In his performance, Binns could interpret how that character would respond to the various ideas proposed around him, thus clarifying the change of his vote later. He observes others when they argue and only calls for a vote to announce that he has changed his mind. Details like this enrich the characters in the story and allow for nuanced portrayals of the men.

Figure 6: Juror 4 (E.G. Marshall), Juror 2 (John Fiedler), Juror 8 (Henry Fonda), Juror 10 (Ed Begley) and Juror 12 (Robert Webber) (Lumet, 12 Angry Men).

Every juror changed their stance on the case because of the protagonist's actions. Juror 8's behavioural style was "a firm, systematic, coherent and autonomous repetition of the same view or judgement" (Pennington 118). He was not seen by most as inflexible or overly strict and produced well-thought-out arguments with evidence to back up his claims. His "lack of ulterior motives, his consistency and self-confidence, and the way he withstands personal attacks from others" (Fried 4) garnered trust and respect among the men. Finally, he and his allies provided new information or presented information differently and were open to conceding valid arguments. His function as a hero in the narrative meant he could improve the other jurors, thanks to his compassionate and rational personality. In real-life scenarios where the minority can persuade the majority,

> the minority will put a lot of effort into understanding the arguments and views of the majority to see where there are weaknesses, lack of evidence and so on…the minority encourage the majority to think about arguments or explanations that the majority may not have thought about (Pennington 119).

This is precisely how Juror 8 achieved his goal. He challenges the men's lines of reasoning, not their characters, which allows him to debate freely without offending. This contrasts with Juror 3 (the Destroyer), who loses favour with every juror due to his weak arguments and tendency to be spiteful towards others, allowing for a satisfying turn of fortune by the film's resolution.

Archetypes influence all aspects of filmmaking. Screenwriters create well-developed and human characters, owing to each archetype's broad range of emotions and traits. Actors are often cast to "resemble perceptions of their character…they have roles to play for the sake of the story and often are perceived very quickly, if unconsciously, by audiences, in these roles" (Branston and Stafford 45). John Fiedler, who plays Juror 2, is an example of archetypal casting as he is the smallest of the men, which subconsciously tells us he is not an opposing figure.

Cinematographer Boris Kaufman considered the archetypes when planning how he was going to shoot the film, saying, "The camera had to reveal at the outset the basic character of each man, and his personality traits had to be elaborated upon later in the film to reveal the inner psychological reasons for his behaviour". (Kaufman 47) Sidney Lumet even considered each man's psychology when deciding what they would wear; "the characters dress in everyday business clothes suitable to their stations in life" (Munyan 29). The archetypes in *12 Angry Men* make each juror a distinct character and generate natural tensions among them, forming the most crucial aspect of the film: conflict.

Chapter Two: Binary Oppositions and Conflict

Claude Lévi-Strauss proposed a theory of binary oppositions essential to narrative conflict[6]. This theory suggests that all narratives encompass related concepts that are fundamentally opposite. Recurring themes in stories, such as the struggle between good and evil or rich versus poor, exemplify binary opposites. One side of the binary often prevails, which is the core belief the narrative wishes to convey. Strauss regarded these binary opposites as crucial to our comprehension of human society. He believed "an abiding structure of all meaning-making, not just narratives, was a dependence on binary oppositions…usually, one of these terms is much less valued than its opposite" (Branston and Stafford 49).

Conflict serves as the driving force for stories, compelling characters to evolve and face challenges. It typically stems from the conflicting views of the protagonist and antagonist, creating tension as to whether the protagonist will prevail in their struggle. Lévi-Strauss' theory ties narratives and sociology together as "one of the pleasures of narrative is that it puts in play and resolves contradictions and problems in our culture" (Bignell 195). *12 Angry Men* provides numerous binary oppositions, including logic versus emotion, order versus chaos, and guilt versus innocence. These oppositions not only enhance the dramatic conflict but also emphasise the thematic core of the story: compassion for one's fellow man in a society that remains perpetually divided.

The diverse archetypes embodied by the jurors inherently cultivate conflict, not only concerning their initial votes of guilt or innocence but also among specific jury members themselves, wherein opposing personalities argue over core beliefs. "Conflict can be physical (involving external action) or intellectual (involving internal emotional struggle) … it always becomes more intense as the story progresses towards the climax" (Block 174). As these archetypes interact, they establish binary oppositions and intellectual conflicts, increasing the film's dramatic tension.

> Archetypes have polarities…and both polarities can be found in each of us. When one of these is activated in the outer world, the other is activated in the inner one. When one becomes too consciously identified with one polarity, he/she is likely to deny the other one and to project it onto Others (Torre, Gramaglia and Jona 530).

[6] Branston and Stafford, op.cit., p.49.

We observe this concept of archetypal polarity with Juror 3, assuming the external role of an executioner towards the young defendant while denying his internal role of caring for his son. The archetypes assigned to the jurors have created internal and external conflicts for the characters through the contained setting, "as Jung describes, we boldly and candidly project onto our neighbours our personal psychology" (Torre, Gramaglia and Jona 533). The only way to exit the room is by achieving a unanimous conclusion. As a result, conflict arises.

Although it effectively explores discussions about race and justice, the film's scripted and staged nature presented challenges for Lumet regarding realism.

> Scenes portraying group behaviour in films typically differ from the experience of actual people in real groups: camera angles are used to show the facial expressions of multiple group members, group members typically do not speak simultaneously, events unfold relatively quickly, and characters' emotions are often exaggerated (Waller, Sohrab and Ma 449).

Instead of seeking to offer an objective, realistic portrayal of the group dynamic, Lumet utilises cinematic techniques such as blocking and framing to amplify the jurors' subjective perspectives within the narrative and their conflicts with each other. The men, most divided on various issues, are positioned at opposite ends of the table around which they are seated. From a directing perspective, this approach makes sense, as those characters who participate in the most debate must be distanced for the camera to frame them effectively. The deliberate blocking of the jurors emphasises the theory of binary opposites present.

A clear example of the binary opposition of order versus chaos is seen in the contrast between the Foreman and Juror 7. As a Ruler archetype, the Foreman enjoys preserving order, particularly after intense debates, whereas Juror 7 frequently disrupts proceedings. For example, the Foreman keeps Juror 12 in check when he begins to show off his sketches and is the one to get them to sit in order of their juror number. Directly opposite him is Juror 7, who represents the Fool archetype and

stands in stark contrast to the orderly Foreman. Early on, the Foreman prepares ballots for voting while Juror 7 attempts to hurry him, “Come on, Mr. Foreman, let’s go here…we can all get out of here pretty quick…I happen to have tickets to that ballgame tonight” (*12 Angry Men* 00:08:11). This marks the first minor conflict between them, with the Foreman preferring to wait until everyone is prepared before they begin.

Figure 7: The Foreman (Martin Balsam) and Juror 7 (Jack Warden) sit at opposite ends of the table (Lumet, 12 Angry Men).

When Juror 10 questions the Foreman about how he is managing the jury, it offends him, “Listen, just because I’m trying to keep this thing organised…you take it, you know, you take on the responsibility. I’ll just keep my mouth shut, that’s all” *(12 Angry Men* 00:23:27). This highlights his insecurity regarding his authority over the other men, who are more assertive in leading the discussions. Juror 7, conversely, shows little regard for others' opinions and frequently makes remarks that increasingly irritate the other jurors. Juror 7 is the first of the pair to change his vote, but only because he prioritises his time over the boy's life, resulting in both sides of the debate excluding him from that point onwards. The presence of these two character archetypes, the Ruler and the Fool, naturally fosters drama as their objectives directly conflict with one another.

Another clear example of a binary opposition exists between Juror 5 and Juror 10. Juror 5 was raised in a slum and feels out of place among these men who grew up in better circumstances. Opposite him sits Juror 10, a bigoted man who spews hate for anyone from a different culture or background. In this scenario, the binary opposition highlights class and bigotry—Juror 5 comes from a lower-class background and, as a result, understands the life the defendant led before his arrest. Juror 10, a middle-class garage owner, shows no sympathy for anyone but himself. In their first interaction before the trial discussion, his unpleasantness makes Juror 5 uncomfortable about never having served on a jury.

Juror 5 is written in the script as "a naïve, very frightened young man who takes his obligations in this case very seriously but who finds it difficult to speak up when his elders have the floor" (Rose, *12 Angry Men* 1). He refrains from explaining why he initially voted guilty, implying that he is either unsure of his reasoning or too intimidated to speak up. When Juror 4 and Juror 10 discuss how slums act as breeding grounds for criminals, Juror 5 interjects, clearly demonstrating his insecurity regarding this matter, "I've lived in a slum all my life…I've played in backyards that were filled with garbage. I mean, maybe you can still smell it on me" (*12 Angry Men* 00:22:36). Juror 11, also an outsider in the group, empathises with Juror 5, understanding his sensitivity. These characters are linked to the theme of prejudice, with the numerous arguments against bigotry targeting Jurors 3, 7, and 10, the strongest antagonists of the film.

During a secret vote, when a juror changes sides, Juror 3 quickly blames Juror 5, who steadfastly defends himself. Juror 5 loses goodwill with Juror 3, influencing his later vote change, as well as Juror 10's disparaging remarks. He then becomes one of Juror 8's strongest supporters, challenging Juror 10's arguments against them. Juror 5 embodies the archetype of the Seeker and, as such, detests the feeling of being confined, particularly by men as narrow-minded as Juror 3 and Juror 10. He feels sympathy for the young boy and acknowledges the privilege the men in the room possess, which he does not.

Contrastingly, Juror 10 is a man set in his ways, constantly bringing his prejudice into the discussion, even to the detriment of his arguments. When Juror 8 points out

that he will believe the testimony of a woman from the slums if it incriminates the boy, despite claiming they are all liars, it highlights his bias. As the Lover archetype, his passion is fuelled by hate, and he only comes to terms with his hatred after being denied ears to listen. Juror 5 walks away from his racist tirade, and one by one, the men follow, physically turning their backs on him. He is not even worth debating. The theme is clear: "Wherever you run into it, prejudice always obscures the truth" (*12 Angry Men* 01:20:33).

Figure 8: The jurors turn their backs on Juror 10 (Ed Begley) (Lumet, 12 Angry Men).

Two characters illustrate another prominent binary in the script: logic and emotion. On the side of logic is Juror 4, whose “only concern is with the facts in this case, and he is appalled with the behaviour of the others” (Rose, *12 Angry Men* 1). He views the case as something that can be analysed and dissected into a clear set of circumstances where all the evidence indicates the defendant's guilt. Unlike Jurors 3 or 10, he is not driven by intense passion or emotional outbursts. On the contrary, he remains composed and is arguably the best debater among the men, even exposing Juror 8 on the improbability that the stabbing was carried out by someone using the same knife as the defendant. He is a very down-to-earth individual who can rationalise without emotion clouding his judgment.

In contrast to him stands Juror 9, portrayed in the script as "a man who recognises himself for what he is and mourns the days when it would have been possible to be

courageous without shielding himself behind his many years" (Rose, *12 Angry Men* 2). He is the first to change his vote to not guilty, empathising with Juror 8's position of standing against the majority. From the very start, he is shown to be a man driven by feeling and empathy: “This gentleman has been standing alone against us...it’s not easy to stand alone against the ridicule of others…I respect his motives” (Rose, *12 Angry Men* 61).

Juror 4 and Juror 9 emerge as the most fervent supporters of their respective sides of the debate. Their discussions regarding the case present a stark contradiction. Juror 4 questions the boy's alibi and his failure to name any films watched on the night of the murder, focusing on facts while overlooking the emotional impact of his deceased father nearby. In contrast, Juror 9 highlights human behaviour and thought processes. He observes that the older man who testified in court appeared dishevelled, deducing that this was likely the only time he received attention. This may have led him to misremember details pertinent to the case. "I believe I know this man better than anyone here", (*12 Angry Men* 00:44:30). This reflects his feelings of insignificance as an older man. As the archetype of the Sage, Juror 9 perceives nuances that go unnoticed by the others, such as the dents on the woman's nose indicating her need for glasses. Juror 4, hindered in his understanding of emotional intelligence, finds himself persuaded by Juror 9 when confronted with an argument he cannot contest.

Figure 9: Juror 9 (Joseph Sweeney) challenges Juror 4 (E.G. Marshall) (Lumet, 12 Angry Men).

By the film's conclusion, the debate evolves into a confrontation between the most prominent binary opposites in the room, Jurors 8 and 3. From the outset, they adopt opposing positions on the case. Before the debate starts, Jurors 8 and 3 bond over being fathers. This connection heightens Juror 3's desire to convict the young defendant, particularly as the film uncovers his troubled relationship with his son. The conflict presented throughout the narrative embodies a classic hero-villain dichotomy: compassion versus cruelty.

"Juror 8 is a firm, highly likeable, rational, and generally confident dissenter; relatively impervious to the ordinary kinds of social influence that dampen minority positions" (Sunstein 447). He is a compassionate and understanding man, tending to be passive about his opinions, often agreeing with others rather than arguing, only becoming confrontational when the other men fail to take deliberations seriously.

> He works indirectly as well as directly, giving confidence to others, particularly to those who feel marginalised, and enabling them to contribute, knowing that the group will perform better when all can put forward their ideas (Rosenzweig 226-227).

Conversely, Juror 3 is a bully who lashes out when he does not get his way and challenges every argument against him, even if it ultimately backfires on him later. He speaks condescendingly to anyone who disagrees with him and often manipulates others, frequently depending on Juror 4 to support his position, aware that he is the more persuasive debater, much to Juror 4's annoyance. Meanwhile, Juror 8 and Juror 9 have mutual respect.

The contrasting ways the protagonist and antagonist treat others highlight their opposition. For instance, Juror 2 is a meek individual who maintains a positive attitude despite not being the brightest. "We observe displacement when Juror 3 takes his frustration out on the meekest member, Juror 2" (Rosenzweig 224). Juror 3 frequently belittles him, interrupting and putting him down, "Be quiet a second, will you?" (*12 Angry Men* 00:26:02). At the same time, Juror 8 treats Juror 2 with dignity and respect, even when Juror 2 interjects with a weak argument when trying to help. Juror 11 is accused of being a traitor by Juror 3 when he switches votes, whereas Juror 8 supports his reasoning. They treat the same men in opposite ways, affecting how they win or lose ground in the debate. Due to his cruel, somewhat sadistic

personality, Juror 3 loses favour with every man on the jury until he is alone. The hero defeats the villain by challenging his worldview, and even when the fight is over, he still shows compassion by giving Juror 3 his jacket from the coat rack. Juror 3 realises what Juror 8 has known from the outset: every life has value.

Figure 10: Juror 8 (Henry Fonda) helps Juror 3 (Lee J. Cobb) with his jacket (Lumet, 12 Angry Men).

The varied archetypes effectively flesh out the individual characters of the film, making them feel real and distinct. However, the binary opposition in the characters' personalities creates the story's conflict, providing it with meaning. The film stands out as the sole conflict arises from the characters disagreeing on one topic. It is not simply a matter of right and wrong; rude people can make good arguments, and kind people can make weak ones. Juror 7 may rightfully change his vote but for the wrong reasons. Similarly, the men are not entirely bad for initially voting guilty; they acted based on what they believed was right, informed by their own life experiences (except Jurors 3, 7, and 10, who knew they were indifferent to the boy). The jurors were vulnerable to peer pressure due to the moral ambiguity of the trial; “When a task is perceived as difficult, people are more likely to depend on the views of others since they would be uncertain about their own judgements” (Pennington 117-118). Those who were the last to raise their hands for guilty after the first vote (Jurors 5,

11, and 9) were the first to change after hearing Juror 8's arguments. Almost all the characters experience an arc of growth or realisation.

> The conversation at first dominated by jurors who appear to be the most confident and self-assured (Jurors 3, 4, 7, and 10), while little is said by those who are less confident or feel marginal (Jurors 2, 5, 9, and 11); as the deliberations progress, the marginal jurors gain in confidence and begin to take a more active role, while others recede (Rosenzweig 224).

The protagonists are those who listen and are open to changing their views, while the antagonists are rigid in their beliefs, seeking a guilty verdict before the trial ends. Characters like Juror 4 show how fragile the line between right and wrong can be. Like Juror 8, he is logical, calm and able to form an argument; however, he just arrived at a different conclusion based on the evidence presented. "This antagonist is not exactly a bad man, but he lacks the heart needed to be a good one" (Munyan 28).

The binary opposites within the characters highlight the strongest themes of the film: order, prejudice, logic and compassion. Only through dialogue and performance can these themes be shown to an audience, so the importance of archetypes and binary opposites cannot be understated in this film. Rose stated, "The job became one of pitting character against character in such a way that their natural reaction to conflict brings out the proper elements of the plot in proper order" *(*Rose, *The Challenges of Screenwriting the 1957 Film Version* 41). Having examined the characters and the conflicts that separate them, it is time to explore how the interplay of character and conflict generates the drama that drives the film's narrative from beginning to end.

Chapter Three: Narrative Structure

12 Angry Men stands out due to its setting in a single jury room, with only a brief view of the courthouse at the beginning and end. This confined setting, ripe for dramatic tension, greatly appealed to Lumet. “One of the most important dramatic elements for me was the sense of entrapment those men must have felt in that room.” (Lumet, *Making Movies* 81). This restriction greatly influenced every facet of the film's production, including cinematography, blocking, and lighting:

> Once a chair was lit, everything that took place in that chair was shot…we went around the room three times: once for normal light, a second time for the rain clouds gathering… and the third time when the overhead lights were turned on (Lumet, *Making Movies* 26).

Furthermore, the absence of varied locations means that for the film to resonate effectively, the audience must remain deeply engaged with the characters and story.

“Story is the set of sequenced actions in a film…and narrative is the term for the process by which the story is told” (Bignell 195). The narrative of *12 Angry Men* is told chronologically over a few hours and contains three acts: the exposition, the conflict and the resolution. Act One introduces the world and the storyline as we meet the jurors for the first time. Unlike other stories that establish many details about the characters early on, the film only sets up the central conflict regarding the men’s duty to decide the case's verdict. “If the audience is not given the facts they need (or think they need), they can never become involved in the story because they’re distracted trying to fill in the missing exposition” (Block 171). This film challenges that idea as exposition about the case and the men emerge throughout the film, but the information is still sparse. However, the crucial element established at this beginning stage is the personalities of the jury members and their baseline behaviours before the start of deliberations.

The inciting incident occurs during the initial vote, where only Juror 8 votes not guilty. From here, Act Two can be broken down into sequences that typically introduce new evidence, which leads to further discussions and debate. The narrative's progression is easily traced through several story beats depicting jurors voting, with each persuaded man leading us closer to the film's climax. It is important to note that this section does not follow a strictly linear format; each of the

men's moments of growth propels the narrative forward as they debate their understanding of the evidence and confront their biases when challenged.

Act Three leads to the film's climax, where Juror 8 and Juror 3 face off directly. Juror 3's emotional breakdown and vote change mark the climax, where Juror 8 has completed his journey. The men leave the courtroom having confronted who they are and their core beliefs. Some fought for what they believed was right and won, while others have significantly changed their views after being challenged directly.

A particularly fitting framework for analysing *12 Angry Men* is Tzvetan Todorov's narrative theory. Todorov's model delineates story structure into five distinct stages: equilibrium, disruption, recognition, resolution, and establishing a new equilibrium[7]. These stages signify the crucial transitions within the narrative beats while considering the intrinsic conflict essential to compelling storytelling. "Narrative often takes this circular shape, but the equilibrium of the film's final resolution is not the same as at the beginning, since the situation and/or hero is changed by the action in the story" (Bignell 195). Upon examining the structure of this film through the lens of Todorov's theory, we can identify each narrative stage based on the dialogue, blocking, lighting and cinematography.

The film begins with the main cast in equilibrium, assuming the court proceedings will conclude swiftly. The jurors display no genuine interest in what they deem a straightforward case, lacking emotional investment in the outcome and are perhaps uncomfortable with the gravity of the decision they must make, whether the boy lives or dies. "There are instances of avoidance behaviour, as several jurors seek to escape a difficult situation by finishing quickly, or by telling stories, or by playing games—anything but focusing on the task at hand" (Rosenzweig 224). This laidback demeanour of many jurors is visually conveyed through character blocking and the cinematography's framing and lens choices when they enter the jury room. The camera is set slightly above the table, providing a downward view of the jurors. "The shot lasts almost eight minutes. We meet all twelve jurors. The shot starts over the fan…and at one point or another moves into a medium shot of each person" (Lumet,

[7] Branston and Stafford, op.cit., p.46

Making Movies 123). Characters move freely, adapting to the new environment and resting after the trial, while the long shot connects the jurors and the narrative.

> During the long take as the men first enter the jury room…Lumet introduces the psychological characteristics of the jurors as they mill about the room and bump into one another. Revealing gestures (Fonda's meditative tapping of his fingers as he stands at the window) and casual comments (the frustrated Begley's cynical comments about the defendant, Warden's cliched talk about baseball) that seem irrelevant to the case presage the inner nature of the combatants, twelve men (Cunningham 119).

Figure 11: The jurors in Act One were shot using wide-angle lenses from above eye level (Lumet, 12 Angry Men).

The selection of wide lenses, ranging from 28mm to 40mm[8], enhances the perception of space within the room. This added space gives the viewers time to familiarise themselves with the room's geography. As the camera follows them, we can listen to the men's casual conversations. This allows viewers to feel as if they are also in the room, a deliberate choice made by Lumet that will become more prominent as the film continues. "This early situation does not represent a real agreement. It is instead a state of collectivism, no place for individual differentiation" (Torre, Gramaglia and Jona 532). Each archetype, however different, is united at this stage of the narrative structure as "there is nothing to agree upon when dialogue and confrontation are lacking" (Torre, Gramaglia and Jona 532). This state of equilibrium plays out until

[8] Lumet, Sidney. *Making Movies*. London, Bloomsbury, 1996, p. 81

the jurors decide to vote. When Juror 8 stands alone in his vote for not guilty, this sees the transition into a state of disruption. What appeared to be an easy decision has now become a problem that the characters must confront.

Juror 8 himself realises that the boy is likely guilty; he believes it is only fair that they spend some time discussing the facts before committing to a verdict. Unlike other stories where the hero faces disruption from outside their control, the protagonist disrupts the equilibrium in this narrative. Had he voted guilty like the other men, the defendant would have faced the death penalty, and they would have moved on with their lives having stayed the same. This attempt to quickly escape their civic duty can be seen as the collective denying a traditional call to action found in other narrative structures, such as Joseph Cambell's theory of the Hero's Journey[9].

In social psychology, normative influence occurs when group members conform to the majority norms within the group. In *12 Angry Men*, many of those who vote guilty initially were subject to normative influence, likely "because the pressure on dissenting individuals to conform to the views of others comes from not wanting to upset the group or cause conflict" (Pennington 115). We can see this after the preliminary vote:

> The foreman is immediately joined by five others: Jurors 3, 4, 7, 10, and 12. An instant later, Juror 2, who has been watching the others, raises his hand, and is joined a half- beat later by Jurors 5 and 6. A moment later Juror 11 lifts his arm, and finally Juror 9's hand goes up, slowly and hesitantly" (Rosenzweig 226).

Positioning the protagonist as the inciting incident of the story is a compelling choice. This approach places him in a role where he intentionally generates conflict, making victory appear unattainable and heightening the dramatic tension. By the end of this stage, the conflict and stakes are clearly established.

After this disruption, the men enter a stage of recognition. Everyone understands they can only return to their lives by reaching a unanimous agreement. Logically, the other jury members try to persuade Juror 8 that the boy is guilty. One by one, they express their thoughts on the case to illustrate why they believe he is guilty, with

[9] Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*. Novato: New World Library, 2008, p. 35

some being more certain than others. This process soon falls apart with interruptions, bickering amongst the men, and Juror 8's ability to defend his position by picking apart their interpretation of the facts. In this stage, we learn of Juror 3's problems with his son, an important setup for a later emotional climax.

Since their attempts to talk Juror 8 into changing his vote failed, the jurors now switch their approach, thus entering the stage of attempting to repair the damage. This is the film's most extended section, which covers most of Acts Two and Three. As there is no linear plot line throughout the discussion, this part of the narrative is broken into sections that discuss aspects of the case. The exposition we need to understand the case is not given to us all at once. Instead, it is brought up naturally through the flow of conversation and topics the jurors find important. We are only given a complete picture of the trial at the film's end. This choice is important as it means that we, the audience, learn through the conversations and are kept engaged by paying attention to the small details, trying to figure out what happened alongside the jurors.

The first segment revolves around the knife the boy allegedly used to stab his father. The jurors all debate over how likely it was for the boy's alibi of losing the knife to be possible. Between the sequences where they discuss the case are breaks in the form of recounts or moments of calm. The recounts gauge how close our protagonist is to achieving his goal. With each swayed vote is another small win for Juror 8, making the guilty side even more determined to prove him wrong. The moments without debate help control the film's pacing and ensure the audience is not overloaded with constant arguments. We gain deeper insights into the men's backgrounds through anecdotes and catch glimpses of their personalities when they are not debating each other.

After the first recount, Juror 8 gains the help of Juror 9, and his gamble of calling a vote from which he abstained has paid off. The story moves forward when the witness testimony is questioned. These sequences discussing each piece of evidence maintain the story's engagement, ensuring we consistently feel we are progressing towards an answer. Lumet intended to bring the audience into the room and have us relate to the claustrophobic and suffocating environment in which the characters find

themselves. “As the picture unfolded, I wanted the room to seem smaller and smaller” (Lumet, *Making Movies* 81). He achieves this feeling by switching the lenses from wide to longer ones, 50mm – 75mm[10]. “In addition, I shot the first third of the movie above eye level, and then, by lowering the camera, shot the second third at eye level, and the last third from below eye level” (Lumet, *Making Movies* 81).

Figure 12: The jurors in Act Two shot at eye level using 50 – 75mm lenses (Lumet, 12 Angry Men).

In doing this, the space at the sides of each frame is compressed, trapping the characters within the tighter frame. To maximise the efficiency of each shot, Lumet blocks the actors so that there is depth and movement within the frames, allowing them to use the three-dimensional space or deliver lines looking offscreen across the table. Boris Kaufman, the cinematographer, uses three lighting patterns for each act of the film “to emphasise changes in the mood of the story and in the interlocking themes of the plot” (Kaufman 48). In Act One, the bright lighting reflects the warm summer afternoon outside. In Act Two, when the conflict rises, the skies darken as storm clouds roll in. Finally, in Act Three, “the camera makes the most of the effect of the sight and sound of rain beating against windowpanes, raising the tension of the jurors to the highest point as the last of them finally admits there is room for doubt” (Kaufman 49). When the jury votes not guilty, the storm passes, and the skies clear.

[10] Lumet, Sidney. *Making Movies*. Op.cit., p.81

Juror 5 changes his vote, and Juror 11, who has yet to express his thoughts, decides to share his questions with the room. After his speech, another vote is called, and Juror 11 votes not guilty. When creating the characters for the script, Rose fitted them "into the story so that each would become a separate instrument for advancing it, yet would do so in terms of his own character" *(*Rose, *The Challenges of Screenwriting the 1957 Film Version* 41). The story's unique structure allows the characters to control the narrative entirely. No external forces compel them to vote in a particular way or to reach a decision by a specific time.

> The jurors have been given only the most general instructions, told to deliberate until they reach a unanimous verdict, with no time limit, no rules to follow, and no processes to observe…the jurors have been placed in an extremely stressful setting from which they cannot escape (Rosenzweig 223).

It is compelling storytelling as our hero relies on his intelligence and ability to construct arguments to prevail. It also reflects real-life social dynamics; "when people conform they usually publicly agree with the rest of the group, but privately do not agree with the predominant view, judgement and so on" (Pennington 115), showing how many of the men had their doubts but were too afraid to go against the consensus of the group. There are still stakes in this narrative should Juror 8 fail. A guilty consensus or a hung jury would result in the boy being sent to the electric chair, which would weigh heavily on Juror 8's conscience. The only obstacle between Juror 8 and his objective is the eleven other men confined to the room.

With the vote standing at 4 to 8 in favour of a guilty verdict, the group begins to examine the older man's testimony. Considering his limp, they question whether he could have reached the door to see the boy leave. At this point, many of the men are visibly agitated with one another, escalating the tension as the heat rises. A compelling way the film conveys this growing conflict is through the characters' remarks about the temperature. We see the men sweat through their shirts, forced to remove their jackets and open the windows. This directorial choice allows Lumet to keep the actors engaged with constant tasks, enabling them to move around and engage with props like coat hangers, the water cooler or the broken fan. Such movement creates dynamic shots that remain visually captivating, essential for a film centred on dialogue in a single room. It also allowed Lumet to reveal interesting

character details, “the little bank clerk sweats very little. That is in character. The broker, as the wealthy, superior sort of juror, sweats not at all…the weather cools and they all dry off except the messenger service chief” *(*Lumet, *The Challenges of Directing the 1957 Film Version* 45).

A significant conflict arises when Juror 8 accuses Juror 3 of being a sadist for his insistence on convicting the boy. This provocation causes Juror 3 to lash out and try to attack Juror 8 until others restrain him. This moment is one of the film's most intense and satisfying, as Juror 8 proves that our words do not always reflect our true intentions when Juror 3 exclaims that he will kill him. Following this altercation, the group takes a break to calm down. A storm breaks outside, symbolising the broken tension after this heated exchange. Moments of silence allow for subtle character moments, such as the Foreman helping Juror 8 close the window, which leads to them discussing the Foreman’s job as an assistant coach at a high school. These beats also allow the tension to settle before escalating again, reinforcing the weight of each vote.

The vote now stands at 6 to 6, marking what might be the conclusion of Act Two. We are nearing the climax as victory is within reach; however, those holding out for a guilty verdict are even more inflexible than previous jurors. Convincing each remaining juror poses a more significant challenge. As Jurors 7, 12, and the Foreman change their votes—either swayed by the belief that the stab wound could not have been inflicted by the boy or simply wanting an end to the deliberations—the remaining votes for guilty are left with Jurors 10, 4, and 3, the three who have staunchly opposed Juror 8 from the start. Juror 10's prejudiced outburst alienates him from everyone, leaving just two jurors opposing our protagonist. Juror 4 is swayed by Juror 9, who picks apart the woman's testimony after noticing she must wear glasses.

The cinematography again highlights the seriousness of the debate at this stage. The lenses used here are long 100mm lenses[11], separating the characters from the background in extreme close-ups. We look at their faces at an angle below eye level,

[11] Lumet, Sidney. *Making Movies*. Op.cit., p.81

now covered in shadows from the low-key lighting due to the storm raging outside. The tempo of the editing, which has slowly become faster during the film, rapidly increases, helping "enormously both in making the story more exciting and in raising the audience's awareness that the picture was compressing further in space and time" (Lumet, *Making Movies* 162).

Figure 13: Juror 3 (Lee J. Cobb) in Act Three, shot from below eye level on a 100mm long lens (Lumet, 12 Angry Men).

Now Juror 3 stands alone, a dramatic reversal of the situation Juror 8 found himself in the beginning. Unable to convince anyone of his flawed points, Juror 3 breaks down, and we realise that this was not about the case for him; it was about his remorse for ruining his relationship with his son. With his vote changed, the narrative goes into the final stage of Todorov's theory, the establishment of a new equilibrium. The men are free to leave the room, having unanimously decided on a not guilty verdict. Despite all the odds, the protagonist overcomes numerous challenges by persuading every man in the room that there is reasonable doubt in the case. Those eager to convict initially realise that they were not attentive to the details of the case; they were blinded by their own flawed beliefs, ignorance, or unwillingness to consider the world from a different perspective.

This is the shortest of the stages, as the resolution is clear: the boy is acquitted, and his life is spared, but the case is not what we are engaged with; it was the men we

have spent the last 96 minutes learning about. The most satisfying resolution is that we learn the names of our two heroes, Davis and McArdle, on the courthouse steps. They are back in society and freed of their obligation to the court case. To show this new equilibrium visually, Lumet "used a wide-angle lens…I also raised the camera to the highest above-eye-level position. The intention was to literally give us all air, to let us finally breathe, after two increasingly confined hours" (Lumet, *Making Movies* 81*).*

Figure 14: The jurors leave the courthouse (Lumet, 12 Angry Men).

Every man there changed, and the worldview they once held a few hours ago shifted except for Juror 8. His was fixed from the start. It was not that he was convinced the boy was innocent; he just understood the gravity of the decision he had to make and wanted to ensure that a fair trial was held. His archetype as the Hero meant he was "able to size up the different men and adapt his behaviour, sensing who needs support and encouragement (Jurors 2 and 9), who should be challenged on rational grounds (Juror 4), and who must be challenged on emotional grounds (Juror 3)" (Rosenzweig 227). Using his compassionate nature to empathise with the defendant and the other jurors, the justice system was upheld, and order was restored in their world.

Informational influence is used when group members change their minds when presented with new or different information. Juror 8 and his allies use informational influence in every sequence to support their ideas, whether timing how quickly a man with a limp can walk or demonstrating the impracticalities of stabbing downwards with a switchblade. “Both of these scenes have a dramatic purpose, injecting movement into what could otherwise be a static play, but are also effective as ways to challenge majority thinking” (Rosenzweig 227). This film accurately shows how normative and informational influence helped change the opinions of the jurymen and how, when standing alone, “minority influence is more likely to produce personal acceptance or agreement as a result of informational influence” (Pennington 119).

An interesting point about the jurors is that “the least competent jurors are the most certain that the defendant is guilty; the most competent are the most ambivalent” (Sunstein 447). Juror 8 can win over the most competent jurors with his reasoning, creating a strong coalition in favour of acquittal. We understand the reasons behind everyone’s initial voting choices and the factors contributing to altering their perspectives. Only Juror 4 changes his vote based on evidence. The rest of the men do so for personal reasons, whether to reject others who wronged them, follow along with the majority, or come to terms with their prejudices. The satisfying resolution to the narrative structure, wherein justice ultimately prevails, represents the culmination of the diverse archetypes of the jurors transcending binary opposing viewpoints to find common ground. It all serves the film’s theme of compassion.

Conclusion

12 Angry Men acts as a social commentary on how prejudice fundamentally undermines individuals and their behaviour, whether they are logical, emotional, or indifferent. The twelve jurors symbolise a society that, at the time of its filming, was plagued by injustices related to race, sexuality, and religious freedom.

By comparing the twelve characters to Carol S. Pearson's archetypes, we observe how each man embodies a different facet of human nature, from Juror 8's compassion and moral courage as the Orphan to Juror 3's self-destructive rage as the Destroyer. Each juror's character arc is shaped by their archetype, contributing to the narrative's dramatic conflict. The jury room serves as a microcosm of societal struggles between order and chaos, logic and emotion, compassion and cruelty.

Lumet's direction solidifies these themes through his use of blocking, tight framing, and lighting to accentuate the constantly shifting perspectives and dynamics of power. The camera's placement close to the jurors creates a claustrophobic and tense atmosphere, demonstrating the escalating moral and psychological tension as each man confronts his prejudices and assumptions about the trial. When examined through the narrative theories of Propp, Lévi-Strauss, and Todorov, it illustrates the power of critical thinking and the moral responsibility we all bear in society.

The film is regarded as one of the greatest in American cinema, attributed not only to its innovative direction and cinematography but also to the universal themes it explores through the lens of the 1950s American justice system. Its themes remain relevant today in a seemingly impatient world that is quick to judge others. The truth is found not in conformity but through questioning the opinions of those around you, challenging prejudice and speaking up when no one else will. In his book Making Movies, Lumet sums up what *12 Angry Men* is about in one word: "Listen"[12].

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