

Spring 5-2013

The Search Continues: Modernizing the Quest for the Holy Grail in Film

Jody C. Balius
University of Southern Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: https://aquila.usm.edu/honors_theses



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Balius, Jody C., "The Search Continues: Modernizing the Quest for the Holy Grail in Film" (2013). *Honors Theses*. 145.

https://aquila.usm.edu/honors_theses/145

This Honors College Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College at The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

The University of Southern Mississippi

The Search Continues:
Modernizing the Quest for the Holy Grail in Film

by

Jody Balius

A Thesis
Submitted to the Honors College of
The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts
in the Department of English

May 2013

Approved by

Michael Salda
Associate Professor of English

Eric Tribunella, Chair
Department of English

David R. Davies, Dean
Honors College

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Chapter 1: Introduction | 5 |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review | 10 |
| Chapter 3: Discussions..... | 18 |
| <i>The Natural</i> | 18 |
| <i>Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade</i> | 24 |
| <i>The Fisher King</i> | 30 |
| Chapter 4: Conclusions | 38 |
| Appendix: Film Segmentations..... | 41 |
| <i>The Natural</i> | 41 |
| <i>Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade</i> | 49 |
| <i>The Fisher King</i> | 54 |
| Works Cited | 61 |

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Holy Grail symbolizes holiness, purity of spirit, and health. It is the name given to the object supposed to have been used by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper. It is often depicted as a chalice, but it has also been described as a dish or a bowl. More important than its physical representation, the Grail is a symbol of the divine, offering healing to those in pain and calling for the purity in all. In Arthurian literature, the quest for the Grail is of paramount importance. Only the purest of heart and mind are allowed to experience the Grail.

In the way that King Arthur's own archetypal saga has been remade and translated to appeal to a contemporary audience, the same has been done with the story of the Grail. It is a universal goal toward which anyone can work and can be made to mean whatever the storyteller wants. More recently, the Grail quest has been adapted and kept alive through the medium of cinema.

The first Arthurian film was a Grail quest. Thomas Edison made a film version of the opera *Parsifal* in 1904 (Harty, "Appendix" 185). Since then, according to Kevin Harty's appendix on film in *The Grail, the Quest, and the World of Arthur*, there have been twenty-eight movies total about the Grail. Most of the films are American productions, as are the three films examined here. The films in this study also fall chronologically in the middle of a cluster of twelve Grail movies that came out between the 1970s and the 1990s—something of a high water moment for the production of Grail films. Out of the twenty-eight total Grail films, twelve of them do not have medieval settings but modernized, and in some cases futurized, settings. In these Grail films set in

periods later than the Middle Ages, the seekers can be anyone from bank clerks to Texas Rangers, boy scouts, or environmentalists. The films for this study also center on characters who live in modern times: a baseball player, an archaeologist, a radio talk show host, and an insane homeless person. Likewise, the Grail can be modified to be anything the storyteller chooses. Many of the films focus on the concept of the Grail as an achievement of an ideal rather than a concrete object to be won.

The twelfth-century *Perceval* by Chrétien de Troyes is considered the first instance of the Grail motif in romance literature (Wood 170). Perceval is a youth whose father and brothers were both knights killed in battle before he could remember. His mother wants to keep him ignorant of the entire existence of knights so that she will not lose her last son. He meets knights in the woods one day and instantly wants to leave the homestead to become a knight. He goes to be knighted by King Arthur, defeats the Red Knight, and receives training from a wise man. In his travels he comes across a fisherman who turns out to be a king. The king has a wound that will not heal and leaves him in constant agony. While Perceval is at the Fisher King's castle, he witnesses a procession of certain relics: a lance, a trencher, a broken sword, and a grail. Perceval remains silent though he feels he is supposed to say something. The king then rebukes him for not asking an all-important question. If Perceval had only asked whom the Grail serves, he was pure and innocent enough to learn it. He missed his opportunity and must begin his search again.

Chrétien's *Perceval* was unfinished, so the Grail is never found. Even the last sentence was incomplete, possibly because Chrétien died during the writing of the tale (Chrétien *n* 495). There were, however, several overlapping *Continuations* of the story

written to add to the tale. The first focuses on Gawain; the second comes back to Perceval and ends right before the Fisher King explains the Grail Castle mysteries; and the third contains the King's explanation of the Grail mysteries, his healing, and Perceval eventually taking over the throne of the Fisher King (Chrétien *n* 495-98). Perceval stays alive through the help of the Grail but when he finally dies the Grail and the other relics are taken into heaven with him (Chrétien *n* 498). Many other versions of the rest of *Perceval* as well as entirely independent Grail stories have been written since Chrétien's tale. The term "holy grail" has infiltrated modern vocabulary as a description for any number of ultimate goals. The openness of the Grail legend has captured the imagination of storytellers of newer media, especially cinema.

I focus here on *The Natural* (1984), *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), and *The Fisher King* (1991). These three are clearly Grail-oriented stories that have different definitions of what the Grail truly is and means, but all have characters with internalized quests to find both greatness and peace within themselves. I used a literary approach to analyzing the films' plots, themes, and motifs. Being a narrative analysis, the study focuses on the plot, characters, and content. Certain visual aspects of the films are also important to these narrative components, but the visual will be discussed insofar as it supports each film's narrative dimensions. By analyzing the Grail in these ways in these films, the pervasiveness and the adaptability of the legend become apparent.

The films' source materials were not included in the analysis for two reasons. First, whatever source the original writer's vision or inspiration came from never makes it through the filmmaking process entirely intact. The collaborative nature of the filmmaking process makes it virtually impossible to pinpoint one or two definitive

sources of inspiration. Second, when the Grail legend is being retold, it is usually a conflation of several sources rather than a faithful representation of one source.

In *The Natural*, the Grail object is not as clear as in the other two films. It might be the Pennant that Pop Fisher (named in reference to the Fisher King of the Perceval story) seeks, or it could be Iris, the hero's romantic interest. Even Roy Hobbs, the main character in *The Natural*, seems confused about what he should really be striving for. He wants to be "the best there ever was," which earns him a silver bullet in his stomach for answering incorrectly. The woman who shoots him asks him earlier if there was not "a greater glory" than being the best baseball player in history, then immediately asks him if he has a girlfriend. It is clear she is trying to tempt him, but she is also implying that love is the greater glory.

In *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, the first instance of the Grail legend is introduced when Indiana's father is copying an illuminated manuscript into his Grail diary. He says, "May he who illuminated this illuminate me." The Grail becomes a source of illumination for the heroes, but what should have remained an inspiring spark consumes the villains with fiery greed. This imagery of guiding light versus consuming fire shows what the Grail quest has done to people in the past as well as those who are involved in this "Last Crusade."

In *The Fisher King*, Jack suffers from a psychological wound that he cannot get over. He finds his chance at redemption in Parry, a homeless, former professor of medieval studies. Parry believes that the Grail resides in a "castle" in New York City and that Jack was chosen to retrieve it.

Each film provides a definition of the Grail as a personal symbol of the individual's epitome of virtue. Marcus Brody in *Last Crusade* says, "The search for the Grail is the search for the divine in all of us." Parry's definition of the Grail is similar: "God's symbol of divine grace." And as Roy Hobbs comes to understand, that mark of the divine is finding "the best" within himself. Both Indiana Jones and Jack from *The Fisher King* dismiss the power of the Grail at first. Indiana calls it a "bedtime story" and an "old man's dream." Jack tries to recover the "Grail" when it seems to be the only hope for awakening Parry from his catatonia. Indiana is also thrown into the quest when someone else is in danger, namely his father. Both he and Jack become believers, however, when they witness first-hand the healing power of the Grail.

All three films have the essential elements of a Grail story. One of these elements is a Fisher King's wound. In Chrétien's *Perceval*, the Fisher King had a wound that would never heal unless he could receive the curative power of the Grail. In the films that I have chosen to analyze, there are characters with physical wounds that hark back to this element of the Grail legend, as well as more symbolic, psychological or spiritual wounds that must be healed. The healing experience is the culmination of these questers' journeys. The films also share complementary motifs of the benevolent illumination, both physical and spiritual, that the Grail bestows, and the fire that the enemy employs to cause pain and suffering. These common elements make the films easy to recognize as Grail quests even though the seekers in the movies are not knights on horseback. It is not just the motifs, however, but the spirit the films share of the search for healing, peace, and selflessness that makes them true Grail quests.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Modernizing the Grail

Janina Traxler writes about the updating of Arthurian legend in modern literature, but her ideas about the modernization can be applied to the adaptation of the legend in film as well:

The decision to set the Arthurian story in modern realistic form implies an interest in how our own world might treat the personal dilemmas and interpersonal problems that are the constants of human life but that also figure prominently in the fall of Arthur's world, especially the sabotage of a worthy ideal through the deception of a spouse or a friend. (97)

Traxler also says that two types of modernized Arthurian stories “deserve attention: 1) realistic fiction, and 2) fantasy or science fiction” (97). *The Natural* and *The Fisher King* lie in the first category. Though *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* could arguably be classified as historical fiction, its supernatural elements place it in the fantasy/science fiction category, or at least more so than the other two.

In “Grail Quest as Illumination,” Christine Brown and Lynne C. Boughton argue that “Each legend, composed in a different era and set of historical circumstances, provides access to the moral and spiritual dilemmas faced by people in particular settings” (59). Using the enduring and widely known framework of the Grail quest, storytellers are able to use these timeless themes to explore timely issues.

Norris Lacy states his approach to thinking about the updating of the Arthurian legend: “At best, they dramatize a Middle Ages ‘reinvented’ during the nineteenth century; at worst, they themselves simply reinvent” (75). Kevin Harty’s conclusion to his

overview of Arthurian films is much more optimistic about the translation of the Arthurian legend to more modern films: “They attest to the continuing viability of the Arthurian legend, especially in terms of its ability to heal. Arthur is indeed the once and future king who returns on the page, on the screen, or in other ways, when needed, in various guises to those in need of his help” (29). Speaking of the Arthurian legend in terms of its healing power is especially relevant to these Grail quests in which healing is exactly what the characters are seeking.

The significance of the continued modernizing of the Grail quest is explained by Joseph Campbell when he says, “Myths are so intimately bound to the culture, time and place that unless the symbols, the metaphors, are kept alive by constant recreation through the arts, the life just slips away from them” (quoted in Crowson 18). Rebecca and Samuel Umland also speculate on Hollywood’s interest in the Grail: “Perhaps once the story of the grail quest and the holy cup gained wide circulation, Hollywood filmmakers saw it as a vehicle through which to emphasize the individual’s search for meaning and the difficulty of attaining insight in a world that would seem to hold so many obstacles” (182).

Alan Lupack discusses the updating of Arthurian legend by American writers in his discussion of Bernard Malamud’s novel *The Natural*, on which the film is based. He says many novels “do not simply retell the Arthurian stories but rather reinterpret them and recast them, often in uniquely American ways, to reflect topical as well as timeless concerns. . . . The majority who treat Arthurian themes in their fiction focus on the stories of the Grail” (210). The continued interest in the mythology of the Grail shows the persistent universality of the legend.

Lupack also shows how the author of the novel *The Natural* crafts a Grail story melded with a tale of sports heroics familiar to Americans:

Malamud drew on events out of baseball lore and legend, including the 1949 hotel room shooting by a crazed female fan of Philadelphia Phillies infielder Eddie Waitkus (who came back the following year to lead the Phillies to their first pennant in forty years), the infamous Black Sox scandal of 1919, the many achievements of Babe Ruth, and the fate of “Casey at the Bat” (. . .), to create a familiar contemporary setting upon which he superimposed his medieval story of a heroic quest. (211)

Rather than using baseball to thinly veil the Arthurian framework, the roots of *The Natural*'s story run deep in both traditions. This interwoven format tells a more effective Grail story than a campy update where the traditional quest only dons the guise of modernity. The three films discussed here genuinely embed the Grail quest in their given settings. They completely avoid Lacy's objection to modernized Arthurian films that merely “reinvent.”

Defining the Grail

The three films examined here have their own definitions of the Grail. The characters within the films themselves even have different views of its nature. The films have very different representations of the Grail, whether it is a physical object, a symbolic one, or both. The choice between whether or not to depict the Grail physically in the film is an important one for Grail films, especially these modernized Grail quests

where the quest may not be for the physical Grail itself but for a symbolic or spiritual attainment of a personal Grail.

Brown and Boughton compare the decision to use *the Holy Grail* in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* to how the Grail is handled in other films:

Unlike *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1974) which satirized the nationalism implied in British versions of the grail legend, but also made fun of heroic quests and sacred objects, and also unlike *The Fisher King* (1991), which suggested that fulfillment was found in nature rather than in virtue or sanctity (...), *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* accepts the historical reality and religious importance of an object identified as having held Christ's blood. (54)

Last Crusade is the only film in this study that has the genuine, tangible Holy Grail as the object of the quest. The other two have more personal and internal versions of the Grail which are more like John Marino's idea of a "New Age" Grail. Marino says that New Age writers cannot accept the Grail as a religious symbol or the instrument used in the Mass by the Church, "But they cannot turn their backs on the Grail altogether because at the end of the twentieth century is a spiritual void that needs to be filled. They want desperately to believe in the Grail, so they must transform it to a spirituality outside any religious institution" (142). The spiritual void mentioned could be a reason for the surge in Grail films from the 1970s to the 1990s.

The Umlands' "The Arthurian Legend as Postmodern Quest" in *The Use of Arthurian Legend in Hollywood Film* focuses on four modernized Arthurian movies as examples of quests for a "postmodern" grail. The films analyzed are *The Natural*,

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, *Knightriders*, and *The Fisher King*. The Umlands define the postmodern quality of the films as an “epigonic” feeling of belatedness: “Despite the idiosyncracies each film displays, we believe that in their portrayal of isolated and anxiety-ridden questers in search of a redemptive grail (even if the reality of the quest is internal) they can be considered illustrations of the postmodern quest” (154). While the quests in these films often give way to an internal quest, I disagree that *Knightriders* is a Grail quest movie. While Billy in *Knightriders* has a shoulder injury that will not heal, reminiscent of a Fisher King’s wound, the film bears little other resemblance to the conventions of the Grail quest and shares much more in common with King Arthur’s story as a whole as it is told in Malory’s *Le Morte D’Arthur*.

In *The Natural*, Roy Hobbs is a rising baseball star who misinterprets what is most important in life. He believes the answer is being the greatest there ever was in baseball. His misguided answer draws parallels to Perceval’s failure to ask the all-important question that would have won him the Grail. Roy receives a wound that refuses to heal, and eventually he must choose between his life and the glory of doing the right thing.

Parry defines the Grail as “God’s symbol of divine grace” in *The Fisher King*. Brown and Boughton say that “The *Contes* [by Chrétien] suggests that even an ordinary person could, with God’s grace, defeat evil” (44). Both Parry and Jack have psychological wounds that need healing. Together, this Fisher King and Fool attempt to heal each other. Parry believes that the physical Grail lies in a fancy estate in New York City, but the film makes it clear that the story’s true Grail is whatever can allow the two men to put tragedy behind them and embrace life and love again. In this film there are

simultaneously a modernizing of the Grail quest and a medievalizing of the modern urban setting. Robert Blanch points to “New Age spiritualism, a fusion of the humanistic mythology of Joseph Campbell and the neo-Jungian theories of Robert A. Johnson, a popular psychologist” (124), as an influence on this interpretation of the Grail. He also calls Parry and Jack’s Grail quest “a quest for love, forgiveness, and spiritual renewal” (124).

The Grail of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* is different from that of the other two films because it is most certainly *the* Holy Grail. It is the actual cup of Christ which has healing powers and historical significance for the characters. Indiana’s father, Henry, says he finds “illumination” through his encounter with the Grail at the end. He says the quest is “more than archaeology. It’s a race against evil.” Harty compares *Last Crusade* and *Fisher King*, saying, “Spielberg’s approach to the Grail is less serious than Gilliam’s. For Spielberg, the quest for the Grail, which in the film does have the power to heal physically, is simply the impetus for an action-adventure yarn” (“Overview” 23). I disagree that the Grail is simply a plot-driving prop, but concede that the meaning of the Grail is certainly more downplayed in this film than in the others.

Wounds and Healing

Jessie Weston writes, “We have solid grounds for the belief that the story [of the Grail quest] postulates a close connection between the vitality of a certain King, and the prosperity of the kingdom; the forces of the ruler being weakened or destroyed, by wound, sickness, old age, or death, the land becomes Waste, and the task of the hero is that of restoration” (23). Characters in *The Natural* and *The Fisher King* assume both roles by being wounded and trying to be the restorer as well. Juliette Wood would agree

with Weston: “The grail itself is associated with sustenance, in particular the health of a wounded king” (176). In all three of the films, there are characters who have not only physical wounds but psychological or spiritual wounds that require healing. Traxler says, “In the realistic fiction that treats the legend in a modern setting, Arthur’s world falls because of personal weaknesses. . . . Nevertheless, such stories often include a grail quest because it fits nicely with the motif of personal failings and the search for a type of perfection or redemption” (97).

In *The Natural*, Roy Hobbs has to “nurse his broken ego and ruined reputation” as well as “the lingering stomach wound that almost killed him” (Traxler 97). In *The Fisher King*, Jack is “Unable to function because of his psychic wound” (Blanch 123) and receives his own physical wound when he gets a burn that matches Parry’s description of the Fisher King’s wound. Parry suffers extreme psychological trauma from seeing his wife murdered before his eyes. Henry Jones in *Last Crusade* is the only character out of these films who has a physical wound healed by the actual physical Grail. However, through their quest, the father and son’s relationship has been healed, and both Henry and Indiana have experienced the true power of the Grail spiritually.

Illumination and Fire

Bryan Crawson emphasizes Indiana Jones’s intellectual illumination in his description of the hero’s Grail encounter: “Indiana enters the underground temple, an abyss which represents the unconscious. There he finds the enlightenment of the Grail, which represents truth” (19). However, Indiana Jones’s antagonists trail flames and destruction wherever they go. As Raymond Thompson states, “In many of the modern Grail Quests, the heroes find themselves in competition with evil-doers who scheme to

wield the power of the Grail for their own destructive ends” (548). This competition is most clearly seen in *Last Crusade* as the Joneses must race to get the Grail before the Nazis.

Illumination comes from the honest and noble quest for the Grail, but a greedy or power-hungry pursuit is often accompanied by harsh, destructive fire in the films. In *The Fisher King*, “the Red Knight is clearly demonic and allied with the fire that destroyed Parry’s wife” (Hoffman 53). The greedy seekers’ lack of concern for the Grail’s spiritual and intellectual value causes them to wreak havoc with each step toward it. Indiana has to evade consumption by the fires the enemies’ greed set throughout the film as he escapes an ignited petroleum well, rescues his father from the flames in the castle where they were being held hostage, and saves his father’s lifetime of Grail research from the hands of the Nazis in a scene set quite suggestively at a book burning. A parallel exists between fire’s association in these films and its role in Alfred Lord Tennyson’s *The Holy Grail* from *The Idylls of the King*. “Tennyson intimates that pursuit of transcendence by those who have not attained true humility, or a willingness to reject wealth, illicit love, and glory, would not lead to the light of truth, symbolized by the grail, but only to ‘wandering fires’” (Brown and Boughton 57). Characters in all three of examined films are barred, even if only temporarily, from the Grail by their own selfish love of wealth, power, or glory. In *The Natural*, plenitude of light indicates goodness. By contrast, the villains are like the Judge who “prefers to sit in rooms so dark that they suggest his own spiritual state” (Lupack 217). The heroes must stay away from the dark and burning power of greed in order to achieve their goals.

Chapter 3: Discussions

The Natural

This film has the most muted Grail quest themes of the three. Unlike the other two films examined in this study, no physical cup represents the Grail. The Pennant that the Knights pursue could be a physical Grail stand-in, but the film never actually shows it. Also, though the Pennant might be a cup-like trophy, its physical appearance is never described either. It might not be a cup at all. The Pennant's absence suggests that the Grail is not a physical cup but something internal and even more glorious. The quest that Roy Hobbs undertakes becomes the search for the best in him. He mistakenly believes at first that he can achieve this state by becoming immortalized as the best baseball player of all time. He only truly achieves his Grail by abandoning his pursuit of self-glorification and instead tries the best that he can to be there for the people who need him, his team and his family.

The film begins with Roy Hobbs as a young boy with a great talent for baseball. Roy's father tells him that he cannot succeed, however, with talent alone and that he must work hard. His father dies of a heart attack, and soon after the tree that he died near is struck by lightning, blasting it apart. Young Roy makes a bat from the remnants of the tree and names it Wonderboy. As he becomes an adult, he falls in love with Iris and promises to come back for her after he gets to Chicago and becomes a part of the Cubs. On the way to Chicago, however, he is seduced by a mysterious woman in black named Harriet Bird who is concerned with his desire to be the best there ever was in baseball. In Chicago, she calls him to her room and shoots him in the stomach.

Sixteen years later, Roy shows up to play for Pop Fisher on a team called the Knights. They are on a severe losing streak. All Pop Fisher wants to do is to win the

Pennant and retire to live on a farm. If the Knights do not win the Pennant this season, Pop will lose the team to the Judge. At first he refuses to play Roy because he is old for a professional baseball player, but when he finally lets him play, he hits a home run and sets the Knights on their first winning streak. This winning streak only goes on until Roy begins to pursue Memo, another woman with an affinity for black. The Knights fall back into a slump until a fateful game that Iris attends. When Roy sees her in the stands, he suddenly regains his abilities and hits a home run, shattering the clock on the scoreboard. She comes to the next game and he continues to hit every pitch. Afterwards he reveals to her his long-guarded secret about the events involving Harriet Bird. Iris tells him that she has a son but says his father is in New York.

The Knights continue to win, and after one of their victories Roy attends a party held by Memo. At the party, a gambler named Gus tries to convince Roy to throw the next game, but Roy refuses to play less than his best. Memo gives Roy something to eat and soon after he becomes ill and collapses. He wakes up in the hospital after the Knights have lost three games without him. The doctor shows him a silver bullet they found when they pumped his stomach, saying that it had been inside him for years, eating away the lining of his stomach. If he plays in the championship game, he could overexert himself and cause his stomach to rupture and kill him. Memo asks him not to play--not just to save his life but also to get the bribe money Gus is offering for the Knights' loss. Iris, by contrast, tries to show Roy that he has already been such an inspiration to young boys. Sitting out the game would not make him a failure. He should be able to live with the satisfaction that he was inspirational even if he never becomes "the best there ever was." Roy announces his decision to play to Memo, Gus, and the Judge. Memo grabs a

gun and fires it, missing Roy, then crying “I hate you!” Roy plays in the game but struggles with his injury. One of the pitches destroys Wonderboy. Blood starts to seep through his jersey. Iris tells one of the security guards to get a message to Roy: that *his* son is at the game watching. Roy gets the message, and using the bat he helped the batboy make, he hits a home run into the stadium lighting. Sparks rain down onto the field and light bulbs burst like a fireworks display as he takes his lap around the bases. The film ends with Roy playing catch with his son in the same fields he played in with his own father, with Iris looking lovingly on the scene.

The most important Grail for this film, at least for its hero, is Iris. True love is the greatest thing to be achieved. Harriet Bird is baffled when Roy says the greatest achievement he can earn is being the best baseball player ever. She asks him, “Don’t you know? Isn’t there something more? More glorious? Do you have a girl?” Iris herself does not agree with Roy’s idea of the greatest glory. When he says he could have been the best baseball player, she replies “And?” implying that there was something more he could be striving for. Roy is slow to understand what Iris means when she says, “I believe we have two lives... The life we learn with and the life we live after that.”

Much as Perceval failed to ask the all-important question of the Fisher King, young Roy incorrectly answered Harriet’s question and lost his chance to play in his prime. Although Perceval takes his failure as a lesson and commits himself to do better, Roy believes he has failed at his goal and therefore has nothing left to pursue. At the beginning of the film, he tells Iris, “I promise to reach for the best in me,” and when he fails, he sees his defeat as final and uncontestable. He does not understand as Iris does that his failures and mistakes, though they are the cause of his suffering, are supposed to

help him realize what the true goal is. He starts to see the way to redemption when he stands up to the Judge and refuses to throw the game. He finally realizes what the real goal is when Iris gets the message to him that he has a son. He sees there could be more to his life than being “the best there ever was,” so in the end he finally receives healing and happiness with Iris and his son. The last shot of the film harks back to the opening with Roy playing catch with his son on the same boyhood farm in the golden fields and sunlight.

The visual indicators to show who is good or bad in this film are simple. When someone is good and has pure intentions, he or she is flooded by light, usually natural sunlight. When the character is being sinister, greedy, or selfish he or she is covered in shadows. Some characters are always one or the other, light or dark. Iris is always brightly lit, almost always by the sun. The scenes of Iris and Roy as kids show them playing in golden fields flooded with sunlight. This setting and lighting are repeated as the last shot of the movie when Roy has finally obtained glory by being a husband and father. The first time Roy sees Iris after he starts playing for the Knights, she stands up and the sun completely and angelically illuminates her. The backlight catches her hat in a way that makes it look like a halo. She also dresses in white or almost white to contrast with Harriet Bird who wears black and Memo who almost always wears black.

Harriet Bird first meets Roy on a shadowy train car at night. When she is in the light at the hotel room she still covers her face with a black veil to remain in the shadows. Memo and Roy meet each other in the dark and the shadows as well. She only wears white one time, where she mimics Iris to get Roy to like her more. She lies to Roy over the phone, telling him she is “In my room, sitting in a white slip, thinking of you.” She is

actually wearing black as usual while Gus watches her make the phone call. They are clearly conspirators trying to deceive Roy, but the lying about the color of her clothes makes the motive of deception even more apparent. Just as in that particular scene, the Judge and his minions always do their dealings in the dark, especially in his dimly lit office above the baseball field. The office has heavy blinds, so that even in the middle of the day the sunlight cannot reach that place.

Unfortunately, Roy does not spend all his time in the light. When he is in the sunlight, all is well. Iris is virtually always in the sunlight, because she is the greatest achievement that Roy can attain. When he is with Iris, he is also bathed in that light that indicates Iris as a good person. When he is tempted away from her, he strays into the shadows with the likes of Harriet Bird and Memo. These two women serve the same function in Roy's life, even though Harriet is significantly more sinister and mysterious. They both drag Roy away from being the best that he can be. Harriet tempts him to be unfaithful to Iris whom he promised to marry. Memo tries to get him to throw games for a profit, which would mean betraying his team. He does bring light of his own into the story, however. The Judge, the ultimate darkness dweller, has the light shone on him twice by Roy. The first time Roy enters the Judge's gloomy office, he tells the Judge it could use some light. At the end of this meeting, Roy upholds his integrity by refusing to throw the Pennant game and then defiantly turns the lights on as he exits. The Judge gets upset and scrambles to turn them back off and return his office to its shadowy state. Later on, when the Judge visits Roy in the hospital, it is nighttime and the Judge is content to remain in the dark. Roy turns on the lamp to shed light on the Judge and his intentions. Roy's feats of greatness are also marked by light, specifically lightning. His

bat, Wonderboy, was created when lightning struck the tree next to where his father died. When he hits impressive home runs or otherwise performs awe-inspiring acts of baseball, they are marked with a lightning strike, like a cosmic sign that this man is truly talented. After Wonderboy is destroyed by an incredibly fast pitch, Roy's winning hit at bat is marked with a different display of lights, the showering of sparks from all of the stadium's lights.

The film is full of Arthurian references, especially Grail legend references. The team name is the Knights. Harriet likens the contest between Roy and the Whammer to Camelot knights jousting. Pop Fisher is named for the Fisher King and has a thirst that cannot be quenched because the water fountain in the dugout is broken. Besides that thirst, he also has a figurative thirst to win the Pennant, something he seems cursed never to achieve, just as the Fisher King is cursed to have a wound that never heals. Pop also has a past that resembles Perceval's. He grumbles more than once, "You know my mother told me I ought to be a farmer." Pop left the farm to become a Knight and pursue the Pennant. Perceval's mother also did not want her son to leave the homestead and become a knight.

Roy has a more literal version of a Fisher King's wound because he has an actual physical wound that refuses to heal. When Harriet Bird shoots Roy, she uses a silver bullet that remains in his stomach for sixteen years, thinning the lining of his stomach. In the hospital, Roy tells Iris, "Some mistakes I guess we never stop paying for." The wound he received for trying to be the best there ever was never healed, possibly because he never stops reaching for that goal until nearly the end. Often when he goes to show off his talent, his wound ails him as a reminder of the price of trying to be the best.

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade

Indiana Jones embarks on a literal Grail quest. He searches for the actual cup of Christ. His journey begins as a search for his missing father but then becomes a race to reach the Holy Grail before the Nazis obtain it. The other, mostly villainous contenders for the Grail covet the power it will give, its legendary or historical value, or the immortality it promises. Their greed and lack of respect for the Grail's true purpose render them unworthy and ultimately lead to their downfall. The dialogue and screen time focus mostly on the action and humor, but the Grail is more than just a token trophy in the backdrop of a shoot-'em-up. As Marcus Brody says, "The search for the cup of Christ is the search for the divine in all of us"--a point the villains miss or ignore completely.

The first appearance of the Grail in the film is in a scene from Indiana's adolescence. Henry Jones, Indiana's father, copies an image of the Grail catching Jesus's blood at his Crucifixion. The present of the film is 1938, where Walter Donovan informs the adult Indiana that his father has gone missing while participating in a search for the Holy Grail. The gravity of the situation becomes apparent when Indiana realizes his father has mailed his Grail diary, the compilation of all his life's knowledge about the Grail, to him. He and his friend Marcus Brody go to Venice where Henry was last seen. There they meet the woman who was working with Henry when he went missing, Dr. Schneider. She takes them to the place Henry was last seen: a converted church turned into a library. Indiana realizes with the help of the Grail diary that the clue to the location of the Grail is in a tomb in the catacombs under the library.

He and Elsa descend into the catacombs and find the clue that will point them to the Grail. A group of men called the Brotherhood of the Cruciform Sword tries to kill Elsa and Indiana in order to protect the Holy Grail from those who seek it selfishly. Indiana tells Kazim, one of the Brotherhood, that he is only looking for his father, so Kazim reveals he is being held at the Castle Brunwald. Indiana almost rescues his father from the Nazis at Brunwald, but Elsa betrays him. They find out that both Elsa and Walter Donovan are working for the Nazis. Elsa and Donovan take the Grail diary from Indiana but find the map to the Grail is missing from it. Elsa realizes Indiana must have given the map to Marcus Brody, who is swiftly acquired by the Nazis. Henry and Indiana escape from the castle and reach a crossroads: towards Marcus and the map or Berlin and the diary. Henry insists that they retrieve the diary from Berlin as it will help them pass the obstacles set before the Grail to protect it. Indiana takes the diary from Elsa in Berlin at a book burning, and he and his father head for Alexandretta, the starting place of the journey to the Grail.

With the help of Sallah (introduced in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*), Henry and Indiana are able to rescue Marcus Brody from the Nazi caravan. They make their way to the temple in the Canyon of the Crescent Moon, the resting place of the Grail. They peek from a hiding place to watch Walter Donovan and Elsa oversee a group of Nazis trying to get to the Grail. One of the Nazis enters the cave, and only his head rolls back out into the passageway. The Joneses and friends are discovered by Nazis and brought before Donovan. He believes Henry and Indiana know how to get past the obstacles. Donovan shoots Henry, telling Indiana, "The healing power of the Grail is the only thing that can save your father now. It's time to ask yourself what you believe." Indiana must pass

through the three obstacles: The Breath of God, the Word of God, and the Path of God. Indiana makes it past spinning blades, a floor of letters where the only safe path is the name "Iehova," and a seemingly impossible leap of faith that turns out to be an optical illusion.

He enters the Grail Chamber where he finds an extremely old knight and a multitude of cups, most of them golden. The knight warns that choosing a false Grail means death to the drinker. Elsa chooses a jeweled golden cup for Donovan to drink from. When he drinks, he grabs Elsa and begins to age before her eyes until he becomes a corpse, then a skeleton, and finally dust. The knight says, flatly, "He chose poorly." Indiana chooses a cup made of wood, "The cup of a carpenter," and drinks from it. The knight says, "You chose wisely," and warns them not to take the Grail past the seal in the temple. Indiana helps his father drink from the Grail and pours water from it onto his wound. The wound is instantly healed. Henry stands up and all the Nazis run away in fear. In all the commotion, Elsa picks up the Grail and crosses the seal. The earth begins to quake and a chasm opens up in the floor. Elsa almost falls in but Indiana catches her. She sees the Grail on a ledge near her and tries to reach it. Even though her gloves are slipping off, she still reaches for the Grail until she finally slips through Indiana's fingers into the chasm. After another quake, Indiana falls in and his father catches his hands. Indiana also tries to reach for the Grail, but his father tells him to let it go. As they head out of the temple, they see the knight raise his hand to them. The Joneses, Marcus, and Sallah all make it safely outside. Henry says that the quest has brought him "illumination," and they all ride off into the sunset.

Kazim tells Indiana to ask himself this: “Why do you seek the cup of Christ? Is it for His glory or for yours?” Indiana’s own initial goal is not the Grail at all but the rescue of his father. He does not bother to wonder if the Grail exists until he realizes his father is missing and these Grail-hunters are serious. His goal does not change until he finally rescues his father. Henry asserts, “The quest for the Grail... It’s not archaeology. It’s a race against evil. If it is captured by the Nazis the armies of darkness will march all over the face of the Earth.” Indiana comes to share his father’s convictions about the Grail needing protection from the Nazis. When he retrieves his father’s Grail diary from Elsa he says, “You stood up to be counted with the enemy of everything the Grail stands for. Who gives a damn what you think?” His claim to know what the Grail stands for and desire to protect it reveal that Indiana has a deeper understanding and respect for something he earlier called a “bedtime story.” When they make it to the Grail temple, Indiana’s motivation to retrieve the Grail is once again to save his father though the danger is much more immediate than it was earlier in the film. Indiana must rely on his faith and his father’s knowledge of the mythology to see him through to the Grail chamber.

Henry’s specialization in medieval literature is an obvious source of motivation for finding the Grail, but his desire for it could have intensified with the death of his wife. He had a passion for Grail lore before she died (Indiana says, “This is an obsession. I never understood it. Neither did Mom.”). Henry laments, “She kept her illness from me. Then, all I could do was mourn her.” Indiana’s describes his relationship growing up with Henry as distant. While Henry claims to have been giving Indiana privacy and lessons in self-reliance, the scene from this period of their lives shows Henry delving so

deeply into the search for the Grail that he barely notices Indiana. This deepening obsession with the Grail could have arisen from a frustration in his inability to save his wife from death.

The knight-protector of the Grail asks them to answer an all-important question: Which cup is the true Grail? The false Grail causes Donovan to age hundreds of years and decompose into dust all in a matter of seconds. Not only did he drink from the wrong cup, but his motives for finding the Grail were also incompatible with the meaning of the Grail. He sought a false Grail by selfishly pursuing eternal life for himself. The possibility of immortality blinds him to the spiritual and symbolic significance of the Grail. Hitler and the Nazis make the same mistake they made in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* by attempting to master a relic meant for God's glory, not man's. They do not obtain their objective because they misunderstand the purpose of the power they seek. Elsa also seeks a false Grail. She covets the Grail as a historical and archaeological find of paramount significance. Henry says, "Elsa never really believed in the Grail. She thought she'd found a prize." Her greed so overwhelms her when she touches the Grail that she forgets the knight's warning and tries to remove it from the temple. She meets her end in the chasm (reminiscent of Monty Python's Gorge of Eternal Peril) when she values possession of the Grail over her own life. Indiana almost follows her to the same doom until he hears his father say, "Indiana, let it go." Hearing the man who has the most desire but also the most respect for the Grail say, "let it go" helps Indiana to understand why the others are wrong and why he should leave it behind.

The first time we almost see Henry Jones Sr., he is carefully copying an image of the Holy Grail into his Grail diary, saying, "May He who illuminated this, illuminate

me.” This line inspired the idea of focusing on illumination in these Grail films. At the end of the quest, illumination is exactly what Henry reports he has found. But where greed or selfish desires are motives for the Grail, fire replaces the illumination the Grail is supposed to grant. This idea of the greedy characters getting burned sounds similar to Parry’s telling of the Grail legend in *The Fisher King*, where the King reaches out to take the Grail for himself and is burned. As Indiana and Elsa discover Sir Richard’s tomb, a Brotherhood protector of the Grail drops a match into the petroleum well they are in, assuming that they seek the Grail for personal reasons. The blaze serves as a warning for what kind of end the unworthy Grail seeker will come to. The Nazi headquarters set up in Brunwald castle catches on fire as the Joneses try to escape. Also, the Nazis hold a book-burning in the film. The heroes use the metaphoric light of the Grail as a torch to lead them on their way, whereas the villains’ obsession literally burns down anything in their path. Their rapaciousness leads only to destruction, not the peace and healing the Grail represents.

The Grail gives bodily healing to Henry, though the quest itself healed the relationship between Indiana and his father. The scene from Indiana’s adolescence exemplifies the adult distance he complains about later in the film. He shows no respect for his father or his pursuits. He belittles Henry’s work, saying, “Grail lore’s his hobby,” and calls the whole legend a “bedtime story.” At first his bumbling father feels like a burden to him as Indiana has to fend off Nazis single-handedly. Though Henry is not an adept swashbuckler, he has an incredibly keen mind. When all means of fending off a Nazi fighter plane are exhausted, Henry suddenly unsheathes his umbrella from his briefcase as if it were a sword. He uses it to scare seagulls into the air, clogging the

plane's propellers and shattering the cockpit. He calmly walks toward Indiana with his umbrella open, saying, "I suddenly remembered my Charlemagne. 'Let my armies be the rocks and the trees... and the birds in the sky.'" Indiana gazes after his father with admiration that has been heretofore nonexistent. As he comes to respect his father he also comes to a better understanding of the Grail. It is ironic that Henry's Grail obsession kept his son from getting close to him when he was younger, but the quest for the Grail brings them together.

The Fisher King

This film pairs a man crippled by his own guilt with a less than sane homeless person who believes in little fat fairies and the Holy Grail. It is easy to get caught up in trying to place the two main characters into the roles of the Fisher King and Perceval. They both, however, have persistent psychological wounds, and both take turns saving each other.

Jack Lucas is the host of a radio show with a promising career in entertainment ahead of him. He tells one of his callers that the "yuppies" need to be stopped. That night, while practicing his catchphrase for his new sitcom, Jack sees on the news that the listener, Edward Malnick, shot several wealthy people and then killed himself at an upscale bar called Babbitt's. Jack realizes the man acted on his offhand comments and Jack is overcome with guilt.

Three years later, Jack lives with his girlfriend, Anne. Their apartment is over the Video Spot, a video rental store they run together. He is not the same confident man with a bold personality as he was at the beginning of the movie. One night he gets drunk and stumbles out into the street. He rips his coat and falls into the trash, so he is mistaken for

a homeless person. Suicidal, he puts cinderblocks on his feet and prepares to jump into the Hudson, but some young thugs with bats come and beat him for being a bum in their neighborhood. They pour kerosene on him and are about to light him on fire when Parry, an actual homeless person, saves him with acts of knightly heroics. Parry takes Jack to a gathering of homeless people where one man accidentally lights Jack's arm on fire. Jack scrambles to put out the fire and then passes out.

Jack wakes up in Parry's lair, the boiler room of an apartment complex. Parry calls Jack the chosen one who will retrieve the Holy Grail. Parry speaks of the fat fairies he sees who tell him what God wants him to do. He shows a photo from a magazine depicting the inside of Langdon Carmichael's mansion. A silver cup is in the background, Parry's "Grail." As Jack leaves the boiler room he runs into the landlord. The landlord yells down the stairs to Parry that he is not allowed to have guests. The landlord explains to Jack that Parry is allowed to stay down there because of "the tragedy." Parry's wife was one of the ones murdered at Babbitt's. Jack goes home and stares at a pile of newspaper clippings about him and the attack. Jack believes that Parry's situation is his fault. He tells Anne, "I really feel cursed." He goes back to the boiler room looking for Parry and the landlord finds him again. The landlord shows him Parry's old belongings. Jack learns that Parry is really Henry Sagan, a former professor at Hunter College. The landlord tells him that after his wife's murder Henry was catatonic for a year. When he finally spoke again, he was Parry. The institution sent Parry back to his old apartment when he was released, and the landlord lets Parry stay in the boiler room.

Jack begins to try to help Parry to lift the curse of his own guilt. He tries to give Parry money, but Parry just gives it away to another bum. If Jack really wants to help Parry, Parry says Jack must help him retrieve the Grail. Parry takes him to the “castle” that holds the Grail he seeks. Jack gets frustrated that Parry denies his past. Jack insists that Parry admit he remember being Henry Sagan, but Parry begins screaming in terror and pain as the Red Knight appears to him. Remembering the past triggers this horrifying encounter with the Red Knight. When Jack tries to comfort Parry, the Knight starts to retreat and Parry joyously chases it through Central Park.

While rejoicing over his victory over the Red Knight, Parry hears a cry for help and runs off to help. Jack reluctantly follows. They find a transvestite crying and injured in the path. Jack tries to get Parry to just leave the man. Parry insists on saving him, so they take him to a homeless shelter.

Meanwhile, we learn that Parry is in love with Lydia. Parry takes Jack to the subway station he knows Lydia will pass through. Though they have never met, Parry knows her schedule and watches her every day. Jack decides the best way to help Parry will be to get him a date with Lydia.

That night, Parry and Jack return to Central Park. They are lying in the grass when Parry tells Jack the story of the Fisher King. As a boy, the king was shown a fiery vision of the Holy Grail, but he reached out to snatch the Grail, desiring its power for himself. The Grail disappeared and the King was badly burned. Years passed and the wound never healed. The King became disgusted with life and humanity. “He had no faith in any man, not even himself. He couldn’t love or feel loved. He was sick with experience. He began to die.” A simpleminded fool wandered into the castle. “He didn’t

see a king. He only saw a man alone and in pain.” The King said he was thirsty, so the fool took the cup beside the bed and gave him water to drink. The King’s wounds were healed and he realized he held the Holy Grail in his hands. “He turned to the fool and said with amazement, ‘How could you find that which my brightest and bravest could not?’ The fool replied, ‘I don’t know. I only knew you were thirsty.’” Parry says he remembers the story from a lecture he heard at Hunter College--his lecture. He begins to have visions of the Red Knight again, but when Jack touches him, the Knight disappears.

Jack begins to work on setting up Parry and Lydia. He gets her to come to the Video Spot by offering her a free membership. She does not believe it when Jack tells her this over the phone, so he sends the transvestite to sing to her in her office. She is finally convinced and goes to the Video Spot. When she gets there, Parry is dressed up as a worker. Jack gets her to agree to go to dinner with Parry. Jack gives Parry his wallet so he can pay for Lydia’s dinner. Both couples go to the Chinese restaurant Lydia eats lunch at on Wednesday. Anne says, “I think they were made for each other. It’s scary, but true.” Jack and Anne laugh the whole way back to the apartment. Jack kisses her. Parry walks Lydia home and tells her how much he loves her. She agrees to see him again and goes inside her apartment building. As soon as she leaves, the Red Knight appears to Parry. He begs to have this one moment of happiness, but the Red Knight and visions of the night of the massacre continue to flash before him. He runs to the river where he first met Jack and the same kids attack him for being a bum. A boy brandishes a knife at him, but Parry sees the Red Knight with a sword. He smiles and says, “Thank you,” as he is slashed in the chest.

The next day, Jack is unaware that Parry has been attacked. He gets back in touch with his agent and makes arrangements to go back into his old career. He dumps Anne and then gets a call that his wallet has been found on a badly injured homeless person in the hospital, Parry. Jack and Anne go visit him, but he is catatonic. Parry is moved to an institution. Jack cannot enjoy the success he is now achieving in his reinvented career and finances because he feels so badly about Parry. He decides to go after the Grail in order to save Parry. While at the mansion, Jack hears the Red Knight's horse and imagines Malnick coming at him with a shotgun. When he finds the Grail, he hears a glass hit the floor in the other room and sees an older man slumped over and unresponsive. He thinks about leaving the way he came--through the upper window. He then notices the laser trigger for an alarm at the front door. He smiles as he deliberately opens the door and sets off the alarm so the old man will get help as Jack gets away.

He brings the Grail back to Parry, who wakes up and thanks him. The next day, Lydia comes to visit him but finds an empty bed. She hears people singing "How about You?" around the corner and discovers Parry is awake and conducting them. Lydia and Parry are reunited and kiss. Jack returns to Anne and tells her he loves her.

Parry's definition of the Grail as "God's symbol of divine grace" is lovely in its conciseness and simplicity, but Parry also believes the Grail resides in a wealthy New Yorker's "castle." Every time he tries to retrieve the Grail, a terrifying Red Knight astride a fire-breathing horse assails him. The Grail, for Parry, represents the happiness he had with his wife before the massacre. Parry's memories of his past life trigger visions of the Red Knight. Only compassion from Jack can make the Red Knight go away. Parry shows that he knows this when he is running from the Red Knight after his

date with Lydia. Overcome with terror, he goes back to the place he first met Jack and screams, “Where are you?”

Jack, like Indiana Jones, is a reluctant quester. His initial motive for helping Parry is to gain atonement for his part in the massacre at Babbitt’s. This action is not altruistic, however, because Jack is only helping out of the desire to make his own guilt subside and to return to his old lifestyle. The selfishness of his motives is apparent when he thinks he has achieved his goal. He does not need Anne anymore. Rather than love her more for sticking with him through his time of darkness, he dumps her to focus on his career and getting back to his old life. When the transvestite recognizes him going into a big corporate building to rebuild his career, Jack ignores him. He avoids Lydia when he goes to visit Parry at the institution. He does not understand that the inability to enjoy his regained life occurs because he still refuses to allow compassion to be a part of it. When he realizes the only thing that would truly make him happy would be to save Parry, he ventures to Langdon Carmichael’s mansion to try for the Grail. Jack does this not because he really believes the trophy in the mansion is the Grail but because he knows Parry believes it is.

True compassion, not aid empty of sincerity, is the only thing that can help Parry and Jack to heal. Parry’s first triumph over the Red Knight comes when Jack tries to comfort him. When Jack puts away his pride and brings the Grail to Parry he not only reemerges from a coma but also comes to terms with the loss of his wife. He asks Jack, “Can I miss her now?”

After Jack starts acting selflessly he gains the ability to love. Before Jack meets Parry, he has never told Anne that he loves her. He certainly needs her, but he cannot

pull himself out of his own misery far enough to love someone else. When he and Anne return from Parry's date with Lydia, their dynamic is visibly different. Jack is smiling and flirting. He actually initiates a kiss for the first time in the film and becomes playful, throwing her over his shoulder and carrying her up the stairs. He mistakenly thinks that now that he has done some good to outweigh the bad in his past, he does not need Anne anymore. When he thinks he has accomplished the goal he returns to his previous life devoid of compassion. After he retrieves the Grail, he understands that he does love Anne and goes to tell her. As Anne tells Jack earlier in the film, "Amor vincit omnia. . . . Love conquers all."

Parry calls Jack a fellow knight because he recognizes that they are both in need of healing. They are united in suffering from deep psychological wounds caused by the same tragedy. When Jack listens to the story of the Fisher King, he clearly recognizes the parallels in his own life. He is "sick with experience," unable to love or be loved. Jack, like the king, has the Grail within his reach. He just does not know it. He needs Parry to help him to that realization just like the Fisher King needed the help of the fool (Perceval) to finally obtain the Grail. Jack's burn matches the wound that Parry's Fisher King has from reaching into the fire to retrieve the Grail. Before Jack gets the Grail, one of the patients in the institution turns his head and shows that it is bleeding. This point in the story is when Jack's own internal wounds are open again. At the end in the scene where Parry leads a chorus of people recovering in the hospital ward, the man has a bandage on his head, so the bandaged man is healing physically the way that Jack and Parry are healed mentally now.

The quest itself, the struggle for internal peace and healing, is the central focus of this film. The plot revolves around Jack's and Parry's journeys toward emotional and psychological well-being. When looking through Henry Sagan's belongings, Jack finds a paper titled "The Fisher King: A Mythic Journey for Modern Man." The subtitle for the paper could easily have been the tagline for the film as well. *The Fisher King* is the journey of modern men trying to find what seems to exist only in myths: peace and healing.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

All three of these films have a common message: those who are seeking personal gain cannot obtain the peace, healing, and joy that the Grail offers. In *The Fisher King*, Parry tells the story of the Fisher King, a man cursed with an injury that will not heal for trying to take the Grail out of greed. Roy Hobbs is severely injured for overreaching, just like the Fisher King in Parry's tale. He is only able to live and be happy when he strives for what is right rather than what the evil characters want him to do. The Nazis of *Last Crusade* serve as memorable emblems of a Grail quest undertaken for all the wrong reasons.

The films agree that the quest for the Grail is the striving to become the best possible self. Marcus Brody says, "The search for the Grail is the search for the divine in all of us." Parry calls the Grail "God's symbol of divine grace." Roy Hobbs promises to "reach for the best in [him]." Roy initially believes that the best in him is his athletic abilities, but he is mistaken. He realizes in the end that it is his integrity that is the best in him and will win him a prize more glorious than achievements in baseball. Jack also seeks a redemptory Grail for the selfish purpose of relieving him from his guilt. Only when he acts out of true selflessness and compassion, however, does he truly receive the peace he has been seeking. In *Last Crusade*, Indiana Jones and his father need to heal long-standing emotional alienation and rediscover their love for one another.

In *The Natural*, the quest for the Grail is purely an internal one with an ideal mode of life rather than a physical object as the goal. It is also a solitary journey, for even though Roy receives help from Iris and ultimately joins her in the light, he takes the steps toward his own redemption alone. *Last Crusade* is a shared quest for the physical

object of the Holy Grail, though it leads to deeper internal achievements as well. *The Fisher King* is a hybrid of the internal and external quest for the Grail since in the end the search for peace and healing culminates in the retrieval of the Cup of Carmichael. The heroes of *Last Crusade* and *The Fisher King*, unlike Roy, do not have to undergo the quest alone. Indiana receives inspiration and unexpected aid from his father. Both Parry's and Jack's salvations are dependent on the others. Jack cannot forgive himself unless Parry's life turns around. Parry cannot defeat the Red Knight and cope with his past without Jack's help.

The issue of belief in the Grail is present in all three films. Roy Hobbs mistaken belief in what is "the best" in him leads him astray from true glory. Indiana Jones does not believe the Grail even exists at first. The gravity of the quest and his father's devotion to it help Indiana to believe. This belief leads to respect for the Grail, as well as his father, and the respect makes Indiana worthy to find the Grail. Parry believes in the Grail wholeheartedly, but Jack only begins to believe out of desperation when he sees no other way to save Parry as well as himself.

The Natural is the clear outlier of the three films because it has no explicit mention of the Grail, even though all the elements of the Grail quest are there. The other main difference in *The Natural* is that it strips the quest of the religious significance it has in the other films. The religious aspect is downplayed in *Last Crusade*, too, but it is certainly agreed upon by the characters that the Grail is the actual cup of Christ. On the other hand, Parry expresses his religious calling to be a chivalrous knight and to find the Grail. Though the significance of his connection to God can be trivialized by the fact that he is not entirely sane, he brings the religious foundation of the Grail legend to the film.

In fact, *The Natural* has no explicit religious content whatsoever. It focuses on the idea of personal moral development, of being the best person possible for oneself and others rather than for the glory of God. This latter view of the Grail is a secularized one and fits more with the modern connotation of “holy grail” than with the tradition of the legend.

In my opinion, *The Fisher King* is the best example of the modernized Grail quest because it embodies the essence of what the Grail means at its core. It offers a more satisfying Grail quest than the other two films because it is not only conscious of the role of Grail mythology but also as timeless as the quest itself. It does not take a completely religious view or a completely secular view of the Grail. This film also shows better than the other two the supreme type of healing that is characteristic of the wide-ranging redemptory powers of the Grail. The actual Grail healed Henry Jones of a bullet wound in *Last Crusade*, which makes for great cinema. But the healing in *The Fisher King* is even greater, though non-physical. In the end, Jack and Parry find healing and love--an almost impossible feat considering where they started.

These films serve the important purpose of keeping the legend of the Holy Grail alive. A mythology can only live as long as it continues to be relevant. To do this, the legend must be heard, adapted, and reimagined by as many generations as possible. The quest for the Grail represents a longing so universal that even over eight hundred years later it continues to be explored in modern modes of entertainment.

Appendix: Film Segmentations

The Natural

Director: Barry Levinson

1. Train Station
 - a. Roy Hobbs waits for train
 - b. Train arrives
 - c. On the train Roy gazes out the window and begins to have a flashback.
2. Flashback
 - a. Blond kid (young Roy) runs and finally dives through field of tall grass to catch baseball.
 - b. Dad teaches Roy how to pitch.
 - c. Dad tells Roy cannot depend on his gift for the game alone.
 - d. Iris gets called home.
 - e. Dad falls down from heart attack, Roy runs to him.
 - f. Nighttime, a storm rages outside Roy's room.
 - g. Baseball team banners are illuminated by lightning strikes.
 - h. Lightning splits the tree where his father died.
 - i. Next morning, Roy cuts the tree split by lightning
 - j. Shapes it into a bat
 - k. Names it Wonderboy and marks it with a lightning bolt with a wood burner.
 - l. Years later, an adult Roy throws rocks at Iris's window.
 - m. He tells her he has a trial for the Cubs.
 - n. He promises to reach for the best in him.
 - o. He wants her to marry him. He will send for her when he gets to Chicago.
3. Train Station
 - a. A Lady in Black waits for train. Roy spots her from the train car window.
 - b. Max Mercy and the Whammer speak about rising athletes being slain with silver bullets.
 - c. Woman in black takes a seat.
 - d. Agent speaks of Roy Hobbs as a prospective pitcher. Introduces him to the Whammer and Max Mercy.
4. Fair Grounds
 - a. Whammer hits home runs back-to-back for a crowd.
 - b. Woman asks if Whammer is the best. Agent replies that he's the best that ever was or ever will be.
 - c. Roy Hobbs strikes down milk jugs with baseballs. Proclaimed a natural by the bystander.
 - d. Roy chokes when crowd gathers to watch.
 - e. Bets are laid on whether or not Roy can strike out the Whammer.
5. Contest, on the Other Side of the Railroad Tracks
 - a. 60 ft 6 inches paced out to find pitcher's mound. Rules are laid down.
 - b. After the second strike, Whammer accuses Roy of foul play.
 - c. Slow motion strike 3. Roy wins! He is now "the best."

6. Train
 - a. Roy runs along departing train, jumps on. Boy asks for Roy's name. Roy tosses the boy a baseball.
 - b. The woman in black introduces herself to Roy as Harriet Bird.
 - c. A cartoon depicting Roy's triumph over the Whammer will be in 110 papers. Reporter wants more information on him.
 - d. Harriet says the contest was like watching Lancelot joust Turquine or Maldamor.
 - e. Roy says he will break every record in the book. And be the best that ever was.
 - f. Harriet asks if there is something more glorious to strive for.
 - g. She asks if he has a girl. He hesitates and the car wavers in and out of darkness as he starts to lean in for a kiss.
 - h. Harriet says goodnight before he can kiss her.
 - i. Roy asks her to watch him play.
 - j. Lights flicker again and she's gone.
7. Train Station
 - a. Roy is amazed by the sights and size of the station
8. Hotel
 - a. Phone rings, it's Harriet Bird.
 - b. Roy walks down the hall to meet her, walks into her room.
 - c. She's dressed all in black. Drops her veil over her face.
 - d. She asks if he will be the best there ever was in the game.
 - e. He answers "That's right."
 - f. She pulls out a gun and shoots him. He lies sprawled on the ground.
 - g. Last shot is of the white curtains swaying in the window breeze.
9. 16 Years Later - Knights Field, New York
 - a. Coach, Pop Fisher, says he should have been a farmer.
 - b. Recalls his mother begging him to get out of the game. "I meant to, but she died."
 - c. He complains about not being able to get a drink from the water fountain.
 - d. Roy walks through a dark tunnel toward the field.
 - e. He tells Fisher he was sent by Scotty Carson to play for the Knights.
 - f. Fisher and Roy argue about whether or not his signing was legal.
 - g. Red convinces Pop to let Roy play, who tells him to suit up.
10. Equipment Room
 - a. Roy chooses the number 9.
11. Dressing Room
 - a. Bump Bailey introduces himself to Roy.
 - b. So does Max Mercy.
 - c. Red tells him there's a room for him at the Hotel and that he wants to meet.
12. Hotel
 - a. Roy rides the elevator down. Blonde girl in a black dress gets on.
 - b. They meet Pop in the Lobby. She is Memo Paris, his niece.
 - c. Roy tells her he plays right field, which is currently Bump's position.

- d. Pop gets flustered and shuffles her out of the hotel.
 - e. Red meets Roy and they leave the hotel.
13. New York City Restaurant
- a. Roy says he was with the Oilers for two weeks.
 - b. Red heard Roy was a good hitter. Asks why he didn't play when he was younger.
 - c. Roy says his mind was always on the game even when he wasn't playing.
 - d. Red says "Pop gave his heart and soul to the game only to get it trampled on."
 - e. Roy promises to give "the best I've got."
14. Knights Field
- a. Complaints about the water from the team.
 - b. Pop tells Roy to sit out practice.
 - c. Pop will pay his contract but will not play Roy.
15. Montage of Bad Baseball Plays and Headlines of the Knights' Losses
- a. Some kind of psychology speaker talks about losing as a mental state that they can fix.
 - b. Compares losing to a contagious disease that attacks one member but affects them all.
 - c. Tells them to imagine themselves on a boat "gently rocking."
16. Knights Field
- a. Pop says he's sending Roy down to Class B Ball, the Great Lakes Association.
 - b. Roy says he was here to play ball, not to be hypnotized.
 - c. Pop tells him to come to batting practice tomorrow.
17. Batting Practice
- a. Red tells Roy to get in the batting cage.
 - b. All his swings go into the stands.
 - c. Pop asks to see his bat, Wonderboy. Roy tells the story of the bat's origin.
18. Game: Knights vs. Phillies
- a. Knights are losing, as usual, 4-3.
 - b. Pop sits Bump out of the game for playing so badly. Puts Roy in the game.
 - c. Storm clouds gather as Roy pulls out Wonderboy to go to bat.
 - d. He strikes the first ball.
 - e. Lightning strikes as Roy hits the second ball so hard the covering comes off. Home Run.
 - f. Rain starts to pour as Roy runs the bases.
19. Field Tunnel
- a. Press mobs Pop Fisher wanting to know more about Roy Hobbs.
20. Office Overlooking the Stadium
- a. A phone conversation between the Judge and Scotty Carson is overheard about Roy while workers cover the field from the rain.
 - b. Judge wants to find out more about Roy.
 - c. He is seen through a slit in the blinds. He puffs on his cigar then closes the blinds.

21. Locker Room
 - a. The bat boy asks if he will be able to make a bat like Wonderboy. Roy promises to help him.
22. Knights Stadium
 - a. Thunderstorm rages around the stadium
 - b. Max Mercy draws a cartoon of Roy Hobbs.
 - c. He intercepts Roy as he leaves the stadium.
 - d. Max thinks Roy looks familiar. Roy employs evasive tactics.
23. Chicago Restaurant
 - a. Iris is hanging out. Hears about Roy's triumph at the Phillies' game.
 - b. Looks at Max's cartoon.
24. Movietime News Sportscastr
 - a. Max Mercy accuses Roy of using a loaded bat.
 - b. Wonderboy is inspected and found to be within League specifications.
25. Dressing Room
 - a. Pop tells Bump that Roy will probably replace him if he does not prove himself.
26. Stadium
 - a. Bump plays extra hard to earn his spot on the team.
 - b. Runs after a fly ball and breaks through the stadium wall trying to catch it.
27. Movie News Reel
 - a. "FOND FAREWELL FOR BUMP BAILEY: FUNERAL AT KNIGHTS FIELD"
 - b. A biplane spreads Bump's ashes over the field.
 - c. Tombstone 1911-1939. He was 28 years old.
28. Stadium
 - a. Roy Hobbs at bat. Hits a homerun into the rafters.
 - b. Memo Paris is in the stands wearing a black dress, necklace, hat, and veil.
 - c. Max Mercy still cannot believe no one knows anything about Hobbs' past.
29. Dressing Room
 - a. Another player marvels at Wonderboy and how it doesn't have a mark on it.
 - b. The lightning bolt reminds the player of flying ace insignias.
30. Batting Practice
 - a. Olsen has a lightning patch on his jersey.
 - b. Everyone seems surprised that he's actually hitting the ball now.
31. Stadium
 - a. Players singing the National Anthem before a game
32. Winning Montage
 - a. Scenes of victory
 - b. Headlines to match
 - c. Stadium fills up more and more with each victory
 - d. Roy's picture gets printed on baseball cards
33. Press Box
 - a. Max Mercy remains baffled
34. Movie News Reel

- a. Depicts Roy as a great guy, signing autographs and giving advice to young players.
 - b. Iris watches the reel in a movie theater.
35. Shoe Shine
- a. Red explains Pop's belief in a curse.
 - b. The Knights must win the Pennant cup this season in order for Pop to keep the team.
36. Batting Practice
- a. Pop and Red play "Name That Tune" during practice.
 - b. Max Mercy watches practice.
 - c. As practice ends, one player asks Roy to pitch him one ball.
 - d. The guy strikes. The ball tears a hole in the net. Everyone is amazed.
 - e. Roy looks like his side hurts after the pitch.
37. Dressing Room
- a. Pop says the Judge wants to see Roy.
38. Judge's Office
- a. Judge is in the shadows. Roy notes the office could use a little more light.
 - b. Judge tries to bribe Roy to throw the Pennant.
 - c. Roy is above being bribed and wants to win the game for Pop.
 - d. Roy defiantly turns on the lights as he leaves the office, flustering the judge.
39. Outside the Office
- a. Max Mercy hands Roy the cartoon of Hobbs striking out the Whammer. He knows something about Roy's past.
 - b. Offers Roy \$5,000 for his side of the story.
40. Party
- a. Max Mercy takes Roy to meet Gus Sands, a bookie who was seen with the judge earlier. Memo Paris is there.
 - b. Roy loses a bet that Sands can guess within a dollar how much money is in his pocket.
 - c. Roy does a magic trick and pulls three coins from behind Memo's ear. Then asks her to dance.
 - d. Memo says she has a car, so they go to the beach.
41. Beach
- a. Memo feels almost like they've met before.
 - b. Memo says she is not waiting for true love.
 - c. They kiss.
42. Hotel
- a. Pop catches Roy and Memo checking in at the same time late at night
 - b. Pop believes Memo is bad luck. And bad luck is contagious, like losing.
43. Montage of losing headlines, scenes of loss, and romancing with Memo.
- a. She is in the dark
 - b. At the end, a light bulb burns out.
44. Nightmare
- a. Roy rides down an elevator, only to face Harriet Bird when the doors open.

- b. He wakes up. Memo says sorry because she touched his scar.
 - c. More losing montage.
45. Chicago
- a. Iris reads the paper to find the Knights are playing at Wrigley Field.
 - b. She attends the game, dressed all in white.
 - c. Roy continues to play badly until he sees Iris standing with a sunbeam shining on her.
 - d. He breaks the scoreboard clock with his hit.
 - e. Camera flashes are going off in his face, but he keeps trying to get to the real, pure light, that Iris is radiating.
 - f. Roy meets Iris at a restaurant. First question is "Are you married?"
46. Street Outside Restaurant
- a. Roy invites her to come to a game.
 - b. Stares longingly after her cab.
47. Hotel
- a. Roy answers a phone call from Memo
 - b. She is "In my room, sitting in a white slip, thinking of you." while wearing black and entertaining Gus.
 - c. Memo looks at a newspaper headline "The Knight and the Lady in White"
 - d. After she hangs up she asks Gus, "Smooth enough?"
48. Stadium
- a. Roy is on a roll, hitting every pitch.
 - b. After the game he sees Iris, wearing white again.
 - c. They go on a walk and he begins to tell the story of the woman he met on the train to Chicago and what happened between then and now.
49. Iris's House
- a. Roy learns she has not sold the farm.
 - b. He finds a baseball and glove that belongs to Iris's son.
 - c. The boy's father lives in New York.
 - d. She watches him walk out the
50. Headline Montage
- a. Knights are on a winning streak.
 - b. The team parties on the train
51. Gus's Office
- a. Gus, Memo, and others conspire in the dark room about how Roy is foiling their plans for the Knights to lose the Pennant.
52. Headline Montage Continues
- a. Photographers flash their cameras away at Hobbs sliding in at home plate.
 - b. The Knights are tied for the finish.
53. Locker Room
- a. Victory party is interrupted by Pop Fisher.
 - b. Roy tries to call Iris. No answer.
54. Mercer's office
- a. Mercer says he'll be right over to pick Roy up.
55. Victory Party at Memo's

- a. Memo comes over to Roy in a white dress. (obviously trying to look like Iris)
 - b. Gus tries to get Roy to throw the next game. Roy refuses.
 - c. Memo gives Roy something to eat. He soon after becomes ill.
 - d. Spinning headline: "Hobbs Rushed to the Hospital"
56. Tower Maternity Hospital
- a. The Knights have lost three games since Roy has been out. The playoff game is Monday.
 - b. The doctor shows Roy the silver bullet they found when they pumped his stomach.
 - c. He warns that his stomach could rupture if he tries to play baseball, in which case he would die instantly.
57. Iris's House
- a. Hears about Roy's injury on the radio while putting up dishes.
58. Tower Maternity Hospital
- a. Memo visits him in a black dress.
 - b. She heard Gus and Max say playing in the game could kill Roy.
 - c. Roy still wants to play.
 - d. She asks him not to play, saying Gus will give him money.
59. Stadium
- a. Nighttime. The field lights up.
 - b. Roy practices batting.
 - c. Max snaps a picture of Roy hitting. Roy hits a ball at the camera and breaks it.
 - d. Roy keeps hitting balls at Max until he collapses, clutching his side.
 - e. The judge has been watching from his dark office.
60. Tower Maternity Hospital
- a. The judge comes to Roy in the dark. Roy turns on the light to reveal him.
 - b. The judge will pay double what Gus offers for Roy to throw the game.
 - c. Judge blackmails Roy with information about his involvement with Harriet Bird.
 - d. Judge turns out the light when he leaves.
 - e. The next day, the team is gathered around Roy, cheering him up.
 - f. Iris comes to visit him.
 - g. Max spots her and asks her about the Harriet Bird. She ignores him.
 - h. Roy tells Iris he is supposed to quit baseball, "Some mistakes I guess we never stop paying for." His wound will not heal.
 - i. Roy laments never becoming the best there ever was in the game.
 - j. Iris tells him they will still remember him.
 - k. She will come to the championship game and bring her son.
61. Stadium
- a. Setting up for the big game.
 - b. Pop replaces Hobbs on the line up.
62. Judge's office
- a. Roy walks into the dim room where Judge, Gus, and Memo are all in shadows.

- b. Roy throws Judge's money back onto his desk. He refuses to sit out or throw the game.
- c. Judge threatens the blackmail again. He has a revolver in the same drawer as the blackmail photos
- d. Memo fires the revolver.
- e. She tells Roy, "I hate you."
- f. He takes the gun away from her. Says, "I have met you before."

63. Stadium

- a. Roy surprises Pop by showing up in the locker room.
- b. Roy suits up for the game.
- c. Nighttime game. The crowd goes crazy for Roy.
- d. Iris and her son are in the crowd. She is in white.
- e. Judge, Gus, and Memo, all in black, watch from their dim box.
- f. Roy strikes out at his first bat.
- g. Strikes out his second bat, falling to the ground on the last strike.
- h. Iris tries to get the security guard to let Roy know that his son is at the game.
- i. The guard gets the note passed to Roy.
- j. He gets up to see where they are. Cannot see them from the dugout.
- k. Knights are down two points and there are two on base as Roy goes for his third bat.
- l. The other team switches to a left-handed fastball pitcher.
- m. Roy's foul ball shatters the window of Max Mercy's press box.
- n. With two strikes and getting ready for the next pitch, lightning strikes outside the stadium.
- o. He hits another foul and Wonderboy splits in two.
- p. Bobby the ball boy brings the bat Roy helped him make.
- q. Before the pitch he has a fit of pain. Blood starts to seep through his jersey.
- r. He hits the ball and takes out one of the stadium lights. The other stadium lights begin to explode, showering sparks onto the field as he takes his home run.

64. Fast Forward

- a. A baseball flies across the darkness into a bright sunny day on a farm.
- b. Roy and his son are playing catch in a field while Iris watches.

65. The End

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade

Director: Steven Spielberg

1. Desert Landscape - 1916
 - a. Boy Scouts on horses trot through rocky terrain as credits roll
 - b. Boys dismount, explore the canyon.
2. Rocky Cave
 - a. Indiana and Herman wander into a cave, witness people stealing cross of Coronado.
 - b. Indy sends Herman to get the sheriff while he grabs the cross.
 - c. Treasure hunters notice cross is gone; chase Indy out of the cave.
3. Circus Train
 - a. Indy hops on a horse, bad guys chase in cars until he hops off the horse onto a moving circus train.
 - b. Chase continues on top of train and through cars. Indy falls into the snake pit.
 - c. Grapples with knife-wielding bad guy on top of the angry rhino's car. Rhino pierces the roof with its horn.
 - d. He gets away and falls into the lion's car. Uses the bull whip for the first time, cutting himself on the chin.
 - e. Treasure hunters pull him out of the lion car. He escapes into the "Magic Caboose." Disappears in a vanishing box. Escapes from the train.
4. The Jones Household
 - a. Henry Jones works in his Grail diary. Ignores Indiana.
 - b. "May He who illuminated this... illuminate me."
 - c. Herman arrives with the sheriff who takes the cross and gives it back to the treasure hunters.
 - d. One of the treasure hunters gives him the famous fedora.
5. Portuguese Coast - 1938
 - a. Indiana being beaten up on the same treasure hunter's boat. Still trying to take Coronado's cross.
 - b. He breaks free, takes the cross, boat blows up and sinks. White hat floats by to show that the treasure hunter died.
6. University Archaeology Class
 - a. The class is about fact. Not truth.
 - b. Indiana gives Coronado cross to Marcus Brody, the museum curator.
 - c. He escapes crowd of students through office window after picking up his mail. Is intercepted by men in black hats and coats.
7. Walter Donovan's House
 - a. Donovan is an avid antique collector. He gets Indiana to translate a partial Latin engraving related to the Grail legend.
 - b. They talk about the "Arthur legend" and how the cup will grant eternal life.
 - c. They discuss the story of the three brothers who ended up with the Grail.
 - d. He asks Indiana to go to Venice to work with Dr. Schneider on discovering the Grail's location.
 - e. He informs Indiana that his father went missing while working on the same project.

8. The Jones Household
 - a. Indiana and Marcus finds his father's house ransacked.
 - b. Indiana realizes his father mailed him the Grail diary with all his research in it.
 - c. Discusses the quest he's about to embark on with Marcus Brody
9. Airport
 - a. Dr. Schneider will meet them in Venice. Donovan says "Don't trust anyone."
 - b. Red lines on map trace their flight path
 - c. Arrival on Venice pier
10. Venice
 - a. Dr. Elsa Schneider recognizes Indiana, and tells him about her work with his father.
 - b. Indiana flirts with her.
11. Library
 - a. She takes them to the library where Henry Jones went missing.
 - b. Indiana puts clues together from the Grail diary to find catacombs under the library.
 - c. Elsa and Indy go down into the catacombs.
 - d. Marcus gets knocked out and dragged away by men in red fezzes.
 - e. Indy finds the entrance to the Christian tunnels, finds it's full of petroleum... and rats.
 - f. They find the knight's tomb. The inscription on the shield is the complete version of the one Indy read on the tablet back at Donovan's
 - g. One of the fez men lights a match and the petroleum well bursts into flames.
 - h. Indy finds a way out by swimming under the water. They emerge safely from a sewer hole outside the library.
12. Venice Docks
 - a. They jump in a boat and are pursued by more red-fez-wearing men.
 - b. He holds one of them down as the boat is being chewed by a ship's propeller. The man says they are attacking them because they seek the Grail. Indy brings him onto his boat.
 - c. The man, named Kazim, is part of the Brotherhood of the Cruciform Sword. They want to keep the Grail safe.
 - d. Kazim tells them Henry is being kept in Brunwald castle.
13. Venice Apartment
 - a. Marcus and Indy examine the roughing of the shield inscription. Alexandretta is the starting point for the Grail map Henry developed.
 - b. Both Indy and Elsa's rooms have been ransacked.
 - c. Indy reveals that he has the Grail diary.
 - d. Angry banter about trust and men and women. Indy kisses her. They keep arguing even as they keep kissing.
 - e. Indy says "Ah, Venice."
14. Brunwald Castle - Austrian-German border
 - a. Indiana poses as a Scottish lord to get let into the castle. Butler doesn't believe him so Indy knocks him out.
 - b. The castle is crawling with Nazis. Indiana finds where his father is being held. They are reunited.

- c. The Nazis barge in and demand the Grail diary. Indy wrestles a gun from one and shoots the rest so they can escape.
 - d. Nazi grabs Elsa and threatens to kill her. Indy surrenders despite his dad's advice.
 - e. Turns out Elsa and Donovan are working for the Nazis.
 - f. Also, it is revealed that Henry slept with Elsa, too. He knew she was a Nazi because she "talks in her sleep."
 - g. Elsa takes the Grail diary, but the map is missing. Indy sent it to Marcus.
15. Egypt
- a. Marcus is lost in Egypt, meets up with Sallah (from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*).
 - b. The Nazis find Marcus and kidnap him.
16. Brunwald Castle
- a. Indy and Henry are tied up. Accidentally set castle on fire while trying to escape.
 - b. Make it out of the castle and have a motorcycle chase sequence.
 - c. Reach a fork in the road. Berlin and the Grail Diary, or Venice towards Marcus and the map.
 - d. Henry explains that to find the Grail, you need more than just the map. Also, the quest for the Grail is a race against evil.
17. Book Burning in Berlin
- a. Indiana steals a Nazi uniform to sneak into the ceremony.
 - b. He takes the diary from Elsa.
 - c. On his way out he runs into Hitler, who thinks the diary is an autograph book. He signs it.
18. Blimp
- a. The Joneses are wanted men by the Nazis; their flyers are being passed out in the airport from which they are trying to depart.
 - b. The head Nazi from the castle discovers Henry on the blimp. Indiana throws him out of it.
 - c. The Joneses talk about their dysfunctional relationship, the challenges they will face in their quest for the Grail, and the fact that they slept with the same woman.
 - d. They realize the blimp is turning around, taking them back to Germany
19. Air Fight
- a. Indiana and Henry jump in the spare plane on the blimp. Nazi fighters shoot at them.
 - b. Indiana flies and Henry shoots. He accidentally shoots off the tail of the plane and they crash land in a goat farm by the beach.
 - c. The planes continue to fire, they grab a car and lose one plane in a tunnel.
 - d. They lose the car in a hole caused by the bomber chasing them.
 - e. Henry scares sea gulls with his umbrella, which he unsheathes from his briefcase like it's a sword. The birds get caught in the Nazi planes, causing them to crash.
 - f. Henry claims Charlemagne as his inspiration. Indiana grows some admiration for his father.
20. Egypt
- a. Donovan and the Nazis are bribing a royal for permission to search for and remove the Grail from his land.
 - b. He gives them military vehicles, camels, supplies, men, all in return for a brand new car.

- c. Elsa announces that the Joneses have escaped.
21. The Desert Road to the Grail
- a. Sallah has picked them up. He knows that Brody and the map are with the Nazis.
 - b. They scope out the situation. Nazis assume the Joneses are around and put Marcus in a tank.
 - c. The Brotherhood people open fire on the Nazis, and an all out battle ensues.
 - d. Henry sneaks into the tank where Brody is while Indy and Sallah look for horses. Henry gets caught in the tank as well.
 - e. Indy uses the Nazis' own weaponry against them trying to rescue his dad and Sallah.
 - f. He makes it onto the tank and fights hand to hand with several Nazis. During his fight with the General he manages to toss his dad a gun.
 - g. Henry grapples with a Nazi for the gun and ends up squirting him in the eye with an ink pen. "The pen is mightier than the sword."
 - h. Indiana continues fighting the general, while Marcus and Henry escape from the tank, which is now heading for a cliff.
 - i. The tank rolls down the canyon with the general inside. It explodes. Henry thinks Indiana is dead, but he soon reappears and the quest continues.
22. Canyon of the Crescent Moon
- a. They reach the sanctuary inside the canyon, where the Nazis are sending volunteers into the place, and getting heads rolled back to them.
 - b. The Nazis discover Sallah, Marcus, and the Joneses.
 - c. They force Indiana to go into the chamber by shooting his father. The Grail is the only thing that can save him.
23. First Obstacle
- a. The Breath of God - Only the Penitent Man Will Pass
 - b. A penitent man is humble and kneels before God, so Indy kneels before the spinning blades behead him.
24. Second Obstacle
- a. The Word of God - Only in the Footsteps of God Will He Proceed
 - b. Indiana must step on lettered tiles in the order that Jehovah is spelled. The catch is that this floor uses the Latin spelling.
25. Third Obstacle
- a. The Path of God - Only in a Leap from the Lion's Head Will He Prove His Worth
 - b. It appears to be a leap of faith, because there is no way a human could jump that canyon.
 - c. Indiana takes a deep breath and steps out, realizing that there is really a bridge which was concealed through optical illusion.
26. The Grail Chamber
- a. The room is full of chalices of all shapes, models, materials.
 - b. Indiana meets the last of the three brothers who swore to protect the Grail.
 - c. The knight is explaining how he has waited for another knight to take his place just as Donovan and Elsa walk in.
 - d. The knight warns that the true Grail brings life, but choosing a false one means death.

- e. Elsa chooses a bright golden cup for Donovan, which causes him to age and decompose all the way to dust in a matter of seconds. "He chose... poorly."
 - f. Indiana chooses a simple cup, "the cup of a carpenter" which is the true Grail.
 - g. The knight warns the Grail cannot pass the threshold of the castle before Indiana takes it to his father to heal him.
 - h. The remaining henchmen run away, and Elsa picks up the Grail in all the commotion. She takes it beyond the seal.
 - i. The earth quakes and splits. The Grail and Elsa both fall into a chasm but Indiana grabs Elsa. Instead of pulling herself up she tries to reach across the chasm for the Grail, but she slips and plummets into the abyss.
 - j. Indiana falls into the same position with his dad holding him up, but Henry tells him to "Let it go." They escape before the whole structure collapses.
27. Outside the Sanctuary
- a. Henry believes he found "illumination" from the quest.
 - b. We find out Indiana took his nickname from the family dog.
 - c. They all ride off into the sunset together.

The Fisher King
Director: Terry Gilliam

1. Radio Studio
 - a. Jack Lucas hosts his radio show.
 - b. He tells a caller named Edwin that the yuppies "Must be stopped before it's too late. It's us or them."
2. Streets of New York
 - a. Jack discusses a TV show offer called *On the Radio* in his limo.
 - b. A bum knocks on the window to ask for money. Jack refuses to give him any.
3. Jack's Apartment
 - a. He looks at himself in the mirror.
 - b. He talks to a girlfriend about the TV show and how it could be the start of something big for him.
 - c. He practices his lines in the bath. The catchphrase is "Forgive me."
 - d. The news reports that Edwin Malnick attacked high-class people at Babbitt's and then killed himself.
4. Three Years Later: Video Spot
 - a. Jack's new girlfriend, Anne, urges him to get to work.
 - b. A customer asks Jack to help her pick out a movie. He is clearly not handling interaction very well.
 - c. She asks for a movie with the actor from *On the Radio* who says, "Hey, forgive me."
 - d. He hands her a porno.
5. Jack's Apartment
 - a. Much more modest than his old apartment
 - b. They are watching *On the Radio*. Jack gets mad at Anne for laughing at it.
 - c. Anne is mad at him, he's been drinking.
 - d. He gets mad at the TV show and leaves the apartment.
6. New York Streets
 - a. He rips his coat on the way out and falls into the trashcans outside the store.
 - b. He can still hear the TV show outside.
 - c. He sees a bum ask a well dressed guy for a quarter who yells and chases the bum off.
 - d. The rich man's son calls Jack "Mr. Bum" and gives him his Pinocchio doll.
 - e. He talks to Pinocchio. Telling him that he is part of the "bungled and the botched."
 - f. He puts cement blocks on his feet with the Pinocchio doll attached to one.
 - g. He is about to jump off the bridge when some punk kids come to mess with bums.
 - h. They pour gasoline on him and are about to set him on fire when Parry comes to the rescue.
 - i. He shoots one punk with an arrow.
 - j. Parry's army of bum knights emerges and sings "How about You?"
 - k. Chases off the punks.
7. Bum Village
 - a. Parry takes Jack to where all the bums live.

- b. Someone lighting a cigarette accidentally sets Jack's arm on fire.
8. Boiler Room
- a. Jack wakes up to see Parry.
 - b. Parry starts talking to someone that's not there.
 - c. He says the little people talked to him and told him that Jack is the one.
 - d. He tries to repel the little people away from Jack by spraying air freshener.
 - e. Parry tells Jack that he is a knight on a quest who needs Jack's help.
 - f. The little people came to him about a year ago and told him he was on a mission from God to find the Holy Grail.
 - g. It is in an Architecture magazine, owned by Langdon Carmichael.
 - h. "It's God's symbol of Divine Grace."
 - i. Parry can't get the grail because the Red Knight is always out there.
 - j. As Jack leaves, a beam of light is shining on Parry.
9. Hallway
- a. The landlord tells Jack he lets Parry stay in the basement of this building because his wife was killed in Babbitt's by Edwin Malnick.
 - b. Jack realizes it is his fault Parry lives like this.
10. Video Spot
- a. Anne yells at him about her worrying about him.
 - b. He tells her he was attacked and burned by some kids.
11. The Apartment
- a. Jack asks if Anne knows what the Holy Grail is while staring at wine in his glass.
 - b. Anne says the Holy Grail "was like Jesus' juice glass."
 - c. She thinks man was made in the devil's image and women were created out of God, "'cause after all women can have babies, which is kind of like creating."
12. Boiler Room
- a. Jack comes back looking for Parry.
 - b. He looks through pictures of knights and a shrine to a woman. Presumably Blanche De Fleur.
 - c. The landlord finds Jack.
13. Upstairs
- a. Parry's real name is Henry Sagan. He used to teach medieval literature at Hunter College.
 - b. He was catatonic for a year and when he started talking he was Parry.
 - c. He and his wife used to live in the apartment complex. The landlord lets Parry stay in the boiler room out of pity.
14. Jack's Apartment
- a. He sifts through newspaper clippings about himself and the massacre that killed Parry's wife.
 - b. He tells Anne "I really feel cursed."
 - c. She consoles him as he weeps.
15. New York City
- a. Jack wanders around in search of Parry.
 - b. He finds him on top of a parked car waiting for noon to strike on a clock tower.
 - c. Parry watches as an awkward girl leaves the building. He follows her.

- d. She picks up a cheap romance novel, and then goes to lunch. Parry knows her schedule and stalks her.
 - e. She buys jawbreakers before going back into the building to work.
 - f. Jack pushes money onto Parry. He thanks him profusely.
 - g. Jack watches Parry give the money to another bum.
 - h. Jack gets angry saying he wanted to help Parry not the other bum.
16. The Red Keep - Langdon Carmichael's Mansion
- a. Parry wants Jack to retrieve the Holy Grail from the house.
 - b. Jack says there is no Grail.
 - c. Parry: "Ye of little faith. There has to be a grail."
 - d. Parry thinks it's sweet that Jack cares about him.
 - e. Jack says he is self-centered and weak.
 - f. He tries to get Parry to face reality.
 - g. Parry has a fit in the street.
 - h. Parry sees the Red Knight. The Knight turns away when Jack holds Parry.
 - i. Parry exclaims that the Knight is afraid of Jack and begins to chase the Knight into Central Park.
17. Central Park
- a. Parry is triumphant over having chased the Red Knight.
 - b. Jack jokingly yells at God to wants to make sure He knows that Jack gave Parry money. Parry asks who he's talking to.
 - c. They hear someone cry "Help me!" and Parry runs off to fulfill his knightly duties.
 - d. The cries are coming from a transvestite whose been beaten up.
 - e. Jack wants to leave him there saying someone else will help him. Parry convinces him to help.
18. Homeless Shelter
- a. The transvestite is still crying and does not want to be there. He wants to go to Venice and be Katharine Hepburn.
 - b. Parry tries to rally the people in the shelter into a chorus of "How about You?"
19. Subway Station
- a. Parry and Jack wait for the girl to come through the station.
 - b. Jack converses with a bum in a wheelchair
 - c. He says he is a moral traffic light that says "Red. Go no further."
 - d. Parry spots the girl in a group of nuns. Everyone around them pairs off and starts waltzing around the clock in the middle of the station.
 - e. As soon as he loses sight of reality returns and the people are bustling in the station as usual.
20. Jack's Apartment
- a. Anne yells at Jack's empty chair.
21. Central Park - Night
- a. Parry starts stripping. Says he is about to start cloud busting.
 - b. Parry's nudity is too much for Jack, he starts to leave.
 - c. They lie on their backs looking at the moon.
 - d. Jack imagines how the papers will report it if they are killed.
 - e. Parry tells the story of the Fisher King.

- f. He thinks he heard the story at a lecture at Hunter College, obviously he is remembering one of his own lectures.
 - g. Remembering the past causes another vision of the Red Knight.
 - h. As soon as Jack grabs him the Knight disappears.
 - i. Jack asks why Parry has not asked a girl on a date.
22. New York City - Outside Parry's Damsel's Workplace
- a. Jack waits for her to arrive.
 - b. He barely misses her going into the building and chases after her.
23. Anne's Apartment
- a. Jack frantically circles names in a phone book and dials on his phone.
 - b. His hand is still bandaged from the burn.
 - c. He calls the publishing company she works for and asks for Lydia.
 - d. Anne yells at Jack for calling another woman from her apartment.
 - e. He explains that he was calling Lydia for Parry. He thinks helping Parry will help his fortunes.
 - f. She dials Lydia back.
 - g. Jack calls and pretends Lydia has won a free membership to their video rental store.
24. Two Hearts Publishing Company
- a. Jack takes the transvestite to Lydia's workplace to give her a singing announcement that she has won the free membership to Video Spot.
 - b. He changes the lyrics to songs from *Gypsy*.
25. Video Spot
- a. Anne and Jack Put a Video Spot T-shirt on Parry to make it look like he works there.
 - b. Lydia arrives to claim her membership.
 - c. Parry tries to help her pick out a video.
 - d. She decides to leave because there are no Ethel Merman movies.
 - e. She likes Anne's nails, so Jack volunteers her to do Lydia's nails that night.
26. Anne's Apartment
- a. Parry eats at the table. Anne serves him more food.
 - b. Jack plans to get Lydia to eat dinner with Parry.
 - c. Parry exclaims that Anne is too beautiful to go to waste, and scares her by beginning to strip.
 - d. Later at night--Lydia shows up to get her nails done.
27. Boiler Room
- a. Jack gives Parry a mud facial.
28. Anne's Apartment
- a. Anne asks if there's anybody special in her life.
 - b. Lydia says she has never really dated.
29. Central Park
- a. Jack hems the suit pants that Parry borrowed with a stapler
30. Anne's Apartment
- a. Lydia talks about living with her mother.
 - b. She says she has trouble with dating because she does not make an impression on people.

31. Outside the Video Spot
 - a. Jack gives Parry his wallet so he can pay for dinner.
 - b. Parry is afraid "something awful is gonna happen."
32. Anne's Apartment
 - a. Jack unlocks the door (hand still bandaged) to find Anne and Lydia rolling around on the floor laughing. They have been drinking.
 - b. Jack and Anne have to talk Parry and Lydia into going through with dinner.
33. New York City Streets
 - a. Lydia tells Parry about her job at the publishing company.
 - b. Welding sparks shower behind Lydia and Parry as they walk and chat.
34. Chinese Restaurant
 - a. They eat at the restaurant where Lydia always eats lunch.
 - b. Anne notices, "I think they were made for each other. It's scary, but true."
 - c. Jack starts to show affection back to Anne for the first time in the film.
35. New York City Streets
 - a. Jack and Anne cannot breathe for laughter talking about Parry and Lydia.
 - b. Parry asks to know everything about Lydia.
36. Outside Video Spot
 - a. Anne thinks Lydia likes Parry. "Amor vincit omnia... Love conquers all."
 - b. Jack thanks Anne for being so great.
 - c. Jack kisses her. He then jokingly throws her over his shoulder and carries her up the stairs to the apartment.
37. New York City Streets
 - a. Lydia tells Parry her prediction that the night will turn into a one-night-stand.
 - b. She says it was nice to meet him and then runs.
 - c. He chases her and assures her that he does not want just one night because he is in love with her.
 - d. He tells her about how he knows her schedule.
 - e. They kiss and she goes into her apartment building.
 - f. As soon as she is out of sight he has flashbacks of his wife's murder at Babbitt's.
 - g. The Red Knight appears. Parry begs him to let him have this moment of happiness.
 - h. He runs through the streets from the knight while the night of the massacre replays in his head.
 - i. He runs back to the place he first met Jack and kneels. The same punks are there.
 - j. Instead of the punks, he sees the Red Knight wielding a sword.
 - k. He smiles as he gets slashed in the chest and says, "Thank you."
 - l. The punks beat him up.
38. Anne's Apartment
 - a. Jack feels great about the night before and is talking to his agent on the phone about going back to work.
 - b. He and Anne are happier and more intimate than before.
 - c. He tells Anne that he should be alone now and focus on his career.
 - d. In the middle of breaking up with Anne the phone rings. Someone has found Jack's wallet.
39. Hospital

- a. Jack and Anne rush to see Parry.
 - b. Parry is badly beaten and catatonic.
 - c. The doctor says Parry will have to go back to the same institution he was in after his wife was killed.
40. Radio Studio
- a. Jack is back to work on the radio.
 - b. He is living the same life he had before the massacre.
 - c. The transvestite recognizes Jack. Jack ignores him.
41. Office
- a. A TV comedy about the homeless called *Home Free* is being pitched to Jack.
 - b. Jack suddenly gets up and walks out of the pitch.
 - c. He goes outside looking for the transvestite and cannot find him.
42. Boiler Room
- a. He finds Parry's Grail books and clippings.
 - b. He remembers Parry telling him that he is "the one."
43. Institution
- a. Jack goes to visit Parry.
 - b. Lydia is there as well. Jack avoids her.
 - c. Jack gives Parry the Pinocchio doll from when they first met.
 - d. He tells Parry about all the good things that are happening to him that he cannot enjoy.
 - e. He refuses to get the Grail, but makes the provision that if he does go for it, it will be for Parry, not for how he feels.
44. The Red Keep
- a. Jack climbs up the wall on a rope. He is dressed much like Parry was at his first appearance.
 - b. When he reaches the roof he sees a Red Knight on the stained glass window and hears neighing.
 - c. He climbs up the rope from the first landing to the top of the tower.
 - d. He sneaks down the stairs and imagines Edwin Malnick coming up the stairs and firing a shotgun at him.
 - e. He finds Parry's Grail in the library with the engraving, "To Lannie Carmichael. Christmas, 1932."
 - f. Jack hears a grunt and a glass hitting the floor in the next room.
 - g. The owner is slumped over in a chair. Jack tries to wake him up but fails.
 - h. Jack intentionally sets off the alarm on the front door so that help could find the old man as he gets away.
45. Institution
- a. Jack puts the Grail into Parry's hands and waits for him to wake up.
 - b. Jack falls asleep waiting for that to happen.
 - c. Parry's hands start to caress the Grail. He wakes up to find Jack.
 - d. He said he had a dream he was married to a beautiful woman and that he really misses her.
 - e. Parry thanks Jack.
 - f. Later that morning--Headline reads, "Accidental Suicide Thwarted by Night Prowler."

- g. Lydia comes to visit Parry but his bed is empty except for the Pinocchio doll.
 - h. Parry strikes up a chorus of "How about You?" acting as the conductor. Jack tries to sing along.
 - i. Lydia cries tears of joy as she and Parry are reunited.
 - j. Jack takes over the conducting with the Grail as Parry and Lydia are embracing.
46. Video Spot
- a. Jack shows up in Anne's office.
 - b. She tells him if he came for his stuff the rest of it got burned "accidentally."
 - c. Jack tells Anne he loves her for the first time.
 - d. She slaps him then kisses him.
47. Central Park
- a. Jack and Parry both lie naked looking up at the stars with the Pinocchio doll between them.
 - b. Parry starts singing "How about You?" Jack joins in.
 - c. The Manhattan skyline lights up and fireworks begin to go off.
 - d. THE END

Works Cited

- Ansen, David. "The Holy Grail in the Unholy City." Rev. of *The Fisher King* dir. Terry Gilliam. *Newsweek*. 22 Sept. 1991: Web. 21 March 2012. <<http://thedailybeast.com/newsweek>>
- Blanch, Robert J. "The Fisher King in Gotham: New Age Spiritualism Meets the Grail Legend." *King Arthur on Film: New Essays on Arthurian Cinema*. Ed. Kevin J. Harty. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1999. 123-39. Print.
- Chrétien, William W. Kibler, and Carleton W. Carroll. "The Story of the Grail (Perceval)." *Arthurian Romances*. London, England New York, N.Y., USA: Penguin Books, 1991. Print.
- Crowson, Bryan. "'Power of Myth' Lives on in 'Indy.'" Rev. of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* dir. Steven Spielberg. *Quondam et Futurus*. 9.4 (Summer 1989): 18-20. Web. 19 April 2012. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27870065>>
- Gilliam, Terry, dir. *The Fisher King*. Columbia Pictures Corporation, 1991. Film.
- Grenier, Richard. "Hollywood's Holy Grail." Rev. of *The Fisher King* dir. Terry Gilliam *Commentary*. Nov. 1991. Web. 21 March 2012. <<http://commentarymagazine.com>>
- Harty, Kevin J. "Appendix: The Grail on Film." *The Grail, the Quest, and the World of Arthur*. Ed. Norris J. Lacy. Cambridge, England: D. S. Brewer, 2008. 185-206. E-Book.
- . "Cinema Arthuriana: An Overview." *Cinema Arthuriana*. Ed. Kevin J. Harty. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002. 7-33. Print.
- Hoffman, Donald L. "Re-framing Perceval." *Arthuriana*. 10.4 (Winter 2000): 45-56. Web. 19 April 2012. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27869588>>
- Lacy, Norris J. "Arthurian Film and the Tyranny of Tradition." *Arthurian Interpretations*. 4.1 (Fall 1989): 75-85. Web. 19 April 2012. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27868674>>
- Levinson, Barry, dir. *The Natural*. TriStar Pictures, 1984. Film.
- Lupack, Alan, and Barbara T. Lupack. *King Arthur in America*. Cambridge, England: D.S. Brewer, 1999. Print.
- Marino, John B. "Alternative Spirituality, Self-Realization and a Grail for the New Age." *The Grail Legend in Modern Literature*. Cambridge, Engand: D.S. Brewer. 2004. E-Book.
- Spielberg, Steven, dir. *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Paramount Pictures, 1989. Film.

Thompson, Raymond H. "The Grail in Modern Fiction: Sacred Symbol in a Secular Age." *The Grail: A Casebook*. Ed. Dhira B. Mahoney. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000. 545-560. Print.

Traxler, Janina P. "Once and Future Saxons: Nazis and Other Dark Forces in the Modern Arthurian Story." *Arthuriana*. 11.4 (Winter 2001): 96-107. Web. 19 April 2012. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27869687>>

Umland, Rebecca A., and Samuel J. Umland. "The Arthurian Legend as Postmodern Quest." *The Use of Arthurian Legend in Hollywood Film*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1996. 153-185. Print.

Weston, Jessie. *From Ritual to Romance*. Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1983. Print.

Wood, Juliette. "The Holy Grail: From Romance Motif to Modern Genre." *Folklore*. 111.2 (Oct., 2000): 169-190. Web. 19 April 2012. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1260602>>