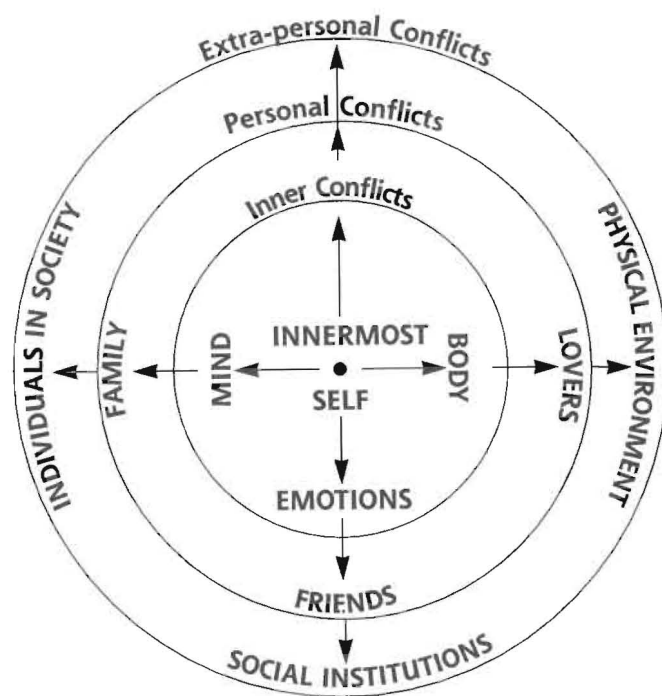


THE THREE LEVELS OF CONFLICT



The second circle inscribes personal relationships, unions of intimacy deeper than the social role. Social convention assigns the outer roles we play. At the moment, for example, we're playing teacher/student. Someday, however, our paths may cross and we may decide to change our professional relationship to friendship. In the same manner, parent/child begins as social roles that may or may not go deeper than that. Many of us go through life in parent/child relationships that never deepen beyond social definitions of authority and rebellion. Not until we set the conventional role aside do we find the true intimacy of family, friends, and lovers—who then do not react the way we expect and become the second level of personal conflict.

The third circle marks the level of extra-personal conflict—

all the sources of antagonism outside the personal: conflict with social institutions and individuals—government/citizen, church/worshipper; corporation/client; conflict with individuals—cop/criminal/victim, boss/worker, customer/waiter, doctor/patient; and conflict with both man-made and natural environments—time, space, and every object in it.

THE GAP

STORY is born in that place where the subjective and objective realms touch.

The protagonist seeks an object of desire beyond his reach. Consciously or unconsciously he chooses to take a particular action, motivated by the thought or feeling that this act will cause the world to react in a way that will be a positive step toward achieving his desire. From his subjective point of view the action he has chosen seems minimal, conservative, yet sufficient to effect the reaction he wants. But the moment he takes this action, the objective realm of his inner life, personal relationships, or extra-personal world, or a combination of these, react in a way that's more powerful or different than he expected.

