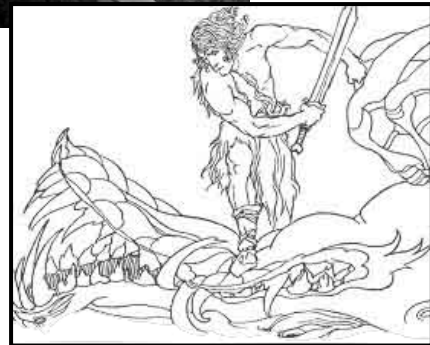
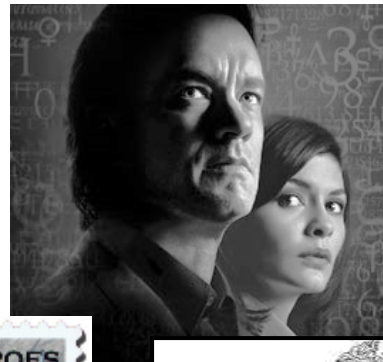
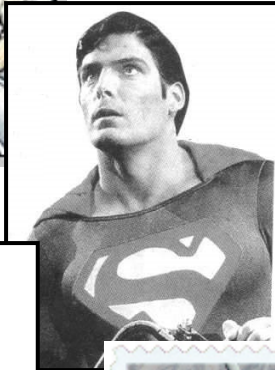




The Hero's Journey



A Junior level honors guide to the Joseph Campbell Monomyth



Junior Summer Preparation: A foreword by P. Apolinario

Well, here you are getting ready to take on the challenge of my British Literature class in order to graduate. You've probably heard rumors about the workload and the demands I place upon my students. Believe them or don't believe them it is entirely up to you. What you need to understand is that you only get out what you put into this class. So, I have prepared this short reading handout and a few worksheets for you to prepare for what will be a most exciting class.

My actual plan is to have you travel through time and space to join other human beings in the quest for a hero. The literature that we will read is filled with powerful, mystical, magical, intelligent people who perform extraordinary tasks. Some of the literature is more fiction than nonfiction, but the intent is the same: all of the authors more or less seek to define what it means to be a heroic individual. It is possible to write pages and pages in order to define the word "hero." In fact, we will be spending the entire semester formulating a definition of hero by examining literature written before 1600 CE (AD). But to give you a starting point, here is the core definition as I see it:

A hero is a person who displays traits necessary for a culture to thrive.

Let me elaborate a bit on some of the components of this definition.

- **A hero is a person.** Well, heroes are usually not just an average person. The hero is often a god-like human, such as [Aragorn](#) from Lord of the Rings; a god-human blend, such as [Herakles](#) from Greek mythology or Jesus from Christianity; a human-like god, like [Vishnu](#) from Hindu religion or even more rarely a god-animal blend like in Egyptian mythology; or human-animal blend, [Enkidu](#) in the Epic of Gilgamesh. As we move through the literature, you will see the heroes become less and less like gods and animals and more and more like humans.
- **A hero displays traits.** To elaborate, these traits could be listed as strengths, powers, or virtues, but some of the traits can also be weaknesses, disabilities, or even vices. Generally, heroes display positive traits, but to say that is true in every case is an oversimplification.
- **A hero is cultural.** By linking the definition of hero to its culture, this definition highlights the fact that heroes are a product of time and place. In one sense, heroes transcend time and space because we can compare heroes from pre-Columbian America to heroes from contemporary India and find similarities. In another sense, each hero is also anchored very specifically to a culture, which can be defined as a complicated interweaving of ethnic group(s), religion(s), history/ies, landscape(s), ritual(s), economy/ies, language(s), political system(s).
- **A hero saves others.** Stories about heroes often highlight some brave act that saves people from the brink of disaster, such as slaying a dragon that is threatening to destroy the local village. However, these acts of salvation from extraordinary events or creatures are really just dramatized versions of what a culture must do to survive everyday threats: death, disease, draught, conquest by warring neighbors, or even more metaphysical harm such as damnation. The most basic drive humans have is the quest for survival. Stories we tell each other about heroes dramatize the need to conquer the forces that threaten the survival of human beings and their culture. In other words, if villagers in a 13th century Anglo-Saxon village listened to stories about [St. George](#) killing a dragon in order to save a princess, these villagers had more faith in their ability to douse the fires that started when lightning struck their wheat fields. (Note: The legend of St. George is also a

- Christian allegory for saving the Christian church from Satan, but acts of metaphysical salvation are always connected to saving people from physical destruction as well.)
- **A hero helps cultures to thrive, not just survive.** People not only have the need to survive death, illness and destruction; they have the need to thrive or to continually strive for self-improvement. The hero can save people from physical death, but he or she can also help individuals and cultures move from the most basic level of need to the highest level of need.

Let me summarize Campbell's theory in a succinct (but oversimplified way): The human psyche strives to make a literal or figurative journey. That journey primarily involves traveling into darkness (death, chaos, evil, hell) in order to bring back an object that will save the hero and/or society.

Campbell posits the notion that all people in all times and all cultures possess the same psychological belief, the same monomyth (meaning the principal story that creates meaning for life). He believes that the same story, the journey of the hero, is told again and again in various manifestations, hence his book's title.

TAKING THE HERO'S JOURNEY: An Introduction



Everyone takes the Hero's Journey to some degree. Most of the time we aren't aware of it. On the following pages, you can consciously move through the stages of the Hero's Journey by following the stages.

Throughout this section, while describing each particular stage, I will try to enhance the experience with example quotes and scene

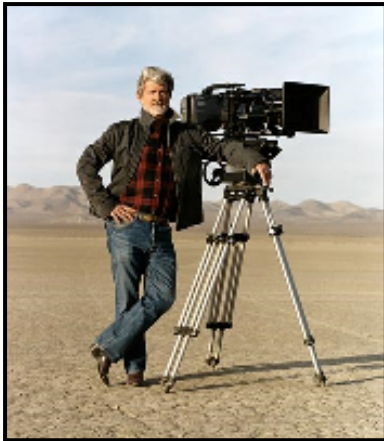
descriptions from popular stories. Most of the examples may stem from the film medium, since it is a popular, easily accessible, medium and often lends itself to quick analysis.

"If you go looking for Adventure, you usually find as much of it as you can manage. And it often happens that when you think it is ahead, it comes on you unexpectedly from behind."

- J.R.R. Tolkien

How does this Hero's Journey work for my class?

This thematic curriculum, which we will use to the pattern of the heroic journey, is a foundation for studying and understanding all the literature you read, the films you watch, and the experiences you encounter. Our focus will be on writing and collaborative learning through character analysis, short story writings, group presentations and a researched essay. The Hero's Journey is the pattern of human experience. It underlies virtually all literature and film, making it an ideal framework for learning British Literature. If you begin to understand the archetype and



learn to see literature and film as "modern myths," stories which both reflect and direct human experience, then with this Hero's Journey guide, I hope that you will find new meaning in literature and in life.

"I have a strong feeling about interesting people in space exploration...And the only way its going to happen is to have some kid fantasize about getting his ray gun, jumping into his spaceship, and flying into outer space."

George Lucas
CREATOR OF STAR WARS

So? Whom are we getting all this from?



Perhaps the best-known comparative mythologist of this age, Joseph Campbell was born March 26, 1904, in New York, to a middle class, Roman Catholic family. As a child he saw, and was enchanted with, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show; subsequently he developed, while still a youth, a keen interest in Native American cultures and mythologies. As he grew up and as his education continued, this early fascination with culture and myth expanded to include the myths of many cultures worldwide – it could well be said of him that he “followed his bliss,” something he would ultimately exhort his readers and students to do.

His education – he studied at Dartmouth, Columbia, and the Universities of Paris and Munich – was extensive, including linguistic, anthropological and literary studies. He was well-traveled, and had an open and inquisitive mind. In the course of his studies, he came to feel that there was a strong commonality linking the various myths and legends of disparate lands and cultures. Campbell believed that myth was universal, because it sprang from the common imagination of the collective unconscious. He went so far as to enumerate the particular themes and features that different myths shared, theorizing, in the case of these heroic myths, the standard storyline which he called the monomyth. In his seminal book *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, he mapped the universal Hero's Journey in detail, using as example myths from many cultures and traditions.

However, since Campbell uses some specialized technical terms that require going back to his examples in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* to find out what he's talking about, I've taken the liberty of amending his outline. After all every story-teller bends the myth to his own purpose.

What do we mean by Myth?

A myth is a sacred narrative explaining aspects of human life and the world we live in. Most cultures, for instance, from ancient times through the present, have creation stories which tell how the world came to be. These stories are sacred in more than one respect: they are sacred in that they frequently deal with deities and divine mysteries, and they are sacred in that they are worthy of reverence and respect.

In modern usage, the word myth has acquired an additional, negative meaning – we often hear the word used to denote falsehood, as in That's just a myth. This use of the word is ironic because myth – in the sense in which we are discussing it here, as a sacred narrative – is something that transcends any assessment of true/false. Myths speak to us in symbolic and metaphoric language. The stories are meaningful and poetic, rich in truths about human life.

The Monomyth of the Hero

In the course of analyzing the myths and lore of various world cultures, mythologist Joseph Campbell saw an underlying similarity throughout the stories, and in fact perceived and articulated a storyline-structure he believed to be universal for hero-myths. This storyline he called the monomyth.

Here is an outline of the basic structure of the universal hero's monomyth, as Campbell discussed it in his book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*: Not only does the monomythic structure apply to classical Hero mythology, it can often be applied to modern stories, also.

The hero symbolizes a man's unconscious self, and this manifests itself empirically as the sum total of all archetypes and therefore includes the archetype of the father and of the wise old man. To that extent the hero is his own father and his own begetter.

– C. G. Jung

I. Departure

- The Call to Adventure
- Refusal of the Call
- Supernatural Aid
- The Crossing of the First Threshold
- The Belly of the Whale

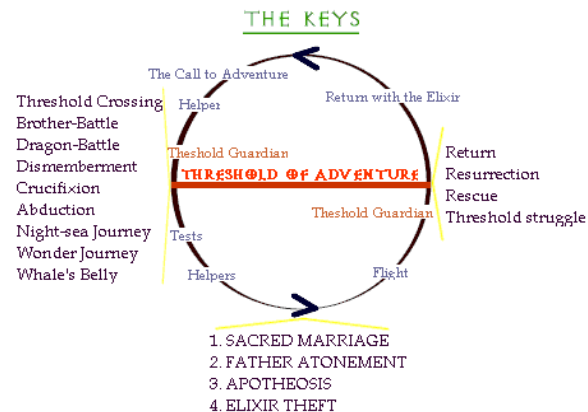
II. Initiation

- The Road of Trials
- The Meeting with the Goddess
- Woman as the Temptress
- Atonement with the Father
- Apotheosis
- The Ultimate Boon

III. Return

- Refusal of the Return
- The Magic Flight
- Rescue from Without
- The Crossing of the Return Threshold
- Master of the Two Worlds
- Freedom to Live

THE HERO'S JOURNEY



* FROM: THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES
BY: Joseph Campbell

<Details of each part is explained briefly in Worksheet 3>

How to Read a Myth: Joseph Campbell's Ten Commandments for Reading Mythology



1. Read myths with the eyes of wonder: the myths transparent to their universal meaning, their meaning transparent to its mysterious source.
2. Read myths in the present tense: Eternity is now.
3. Read myths in the first person plural: the Gods and Goddesses of ancient mythology still live within you.
4. Any myth worth its salt exerts a powerful magnetism. Notice the images and stories that you are drawn to and repelled by. Investigate the field of associated images and stories.
5. Look for patterns; don't get lost in the details. What is needed is not more specialized scholarship, but more interdisciplinary vision. Make connections; break old patterns of thought.
6. Resacralize the secular: even a dollar bill reveals the imprint of Eternity.
7. If God is everywhere, then myths can be generated anywhere, anytime, by anything. Don't let your Romantic aversion to science blind you to the Buddha in the computer chip.
8. Know your tribe! Myths never arise in a vacuum; they are the connective tissue of the social body which enjoys synergistic relations with dreams (private myths) and rituals (the enactment of a myth).
9. Expand your horizon! Any mythology worth remembering will be global in scope. The earth is our home and humankind is our family.
10. Read between the lines! Literalism kills; imagination quickens.

Digging Up A Hero

Many of the works that we will read this coming semester are what we call "English Literature," which means literature from the lands that speak English—most of which will come from the British Isles. Many of you, I hope, have had some experience with the great classics of literature, but even if you have never read any of these works, there is a good chance that you would find them familiar, as the themes, symbols, and narrative patterns of British Literature have become a part of our culture (assuming that you grew up in America or Western Europe) evident everywhere.

You may never have read Beowulf or read Shakespeare's greatest tragedies, but if you have ever seen Star Wars, Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings, The Da Vinci Code, Batman or Wolverine, you have seen the hero journey formula at work. Here, let's dig up two heroic references that I hope many of you are familiar with:

Superman: An American Hero



The character of Superman would probably be considered the "hero" of 20th century American culture. Superman isn't exactly a literary character--or, at least, there is no definitive *Book of Superman* that we can refer to. Rather, there are thousand of fragmented and contradictory texts, including comic books, comic strips, movies, TV series, Saturday morning cartoons. Hundreds of different writers have added their own adventures to the Superman story, but the basic elements are always the same: there is always a Krypton, always Kryptonite, always a Lois Lane, and always a Jimmy Olsen. yet, within these constricts, there are thousands of different--often contradictory stories.

On the surface, Superman is the great American hero because he represents the values that American's would like to be perceived as having: truth, justice, honesty, integrity. He is strong yet moral. He helps those in need. And he always wins--just like America, or so many Americans would like to think. But Superman also represents America on a deeper level. Consider the following facts:

- Superman is not actually an American. He is an immigrant from the planet Krypton. Yet he still manages to exemplify the American experience and adopt American values 100%.
- The only thing that can hurt Superman is a piece of his home world, in the form of Kryptonite.
- Read symbolically, the Superman myth can be seen as the personification of an important part of "The American Dream": the "melting pot," or the belief that immigrants can come to America from all over, adopt American values, and strengthen America with their unique talents and abilities--as long as they don't have too much contact with their own cultures in the process.

Imagine if, thousands of years in the future, a scholar of "America" found six Superman comic books, a cartoon, a novelization of the movie *Superman Returns* and a DVD containing three episodes of *Smallville*. After years of careful and painstaking reconstruction, the scholar managed to piece together all of these various texts into a single narrative, which he called *The Epic of Superman*. This narrative would be something very comparable to our first reading for the class: *The Epic of Beowulf*. Beowulf was kind of like the Superman of the Anglo Saxon people--there were hundreds of stories and songs about him doing all sorts of things, and, at several different points in time, scholars have taken a few of these stories from widely diverse sources and attempted to construct a single Epic, one that gives a pretty good introduction to this ancient hero but does not attempt to give an inclusive account of all of his adventures.



Now, imagine if, in the very near future, one of the most talented writers in the world read every single Superman comic book and watched every episode of every TV series and then set down to write the definitive novel of the Superman experience. This would be something not unlike what Homer did with *The Odyssey*. Odysseus was a very famous Greek hero who, like Gilgamesh, was the subject of thousands of stories and songs during the Mycean Age of Ancient Greece. Homer did not invent the story of the Odyssey, but he, as one of the greatest writers of all time, correlated the many original source materials of his culture into a single narrative, which has now become one of the great standards of Western--and World--Literature.

***Star Wars*, and the Hero Quest**



In the 1970's, a young film director named George Lucas became fascinated with Campbell's research and set out to recreate the hero journey as a science-fiction movie. The result was the movie *Star Wars*, which may very well be the most popular movie of all time. To a mythologist like Campbell, the popularity of *Star Wars* (and its sequels) owes less to its spectacular special effects than to its use of mythic symbols and archetypes that are hundreds of thousands of years old and are part of every human being's psychological makeup.

Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope follows the hero quest pattern quite closely. Consider the following chronology:

1. A young hero (Luke Skywalker) receives a call to adventure when, in cleaning a newly purchased droid (R2-D2) he discovers a distress call from a beautiful princess.
2. The hero encounters an older, wiser man (Obi-Wan Kenobi) to serve as his mentor/teacher as he prepares to cross into a world of adventure.
3. The hero and the mentor go to a holding place (Mos Eisley) in which they encounter all kinds of strange and wonderful creatures and make the final preparations for the adventure.
4. The hero travels to a land associated with death (the Death Star) and crosses into a world of adventure. Though the mentor accompanies him part of the way, they become separated and the hero must finish the journey alone.
5. While in the land of death, the hero rescues the Princess and, in the process, retrieves the sacred plans to the Death Star (the elixir) that will help his people with their mission (to destroy the battle station).
6. The hero returns with the elixir, but is pursued by the forces of evil.
7. When the hero finally returns to the culture, the elixir that he has brought with him (the secret plans) allow the people to destroy the Death Star (symbolically speaking, to overcome death).



In a very real sense, then, the movie *Star Wars* is the narrative grandchild of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. Joseph Campbell studied Beowulf, and thousands of other myths, and came up with a certain pattern for the hero quest. George Lucas read the works of Joseph Campbell and created the movie *Star Wars*. When you read Beowulf in the fall, and other British Literary works, this semester, just see if you don't recognize certain patterns, themes, and symbols that you recognize from the movies.

"To find your own way is to follow your own bliss. This involves analysis, watching yourself and seeing where the real deep bliss is -- not the quick little excitement, but the real, deep, life-filling bliss."

Joseph Campbell

The Hero's Journey

Life's Great Adventure

by Reg Harris

The Pattern of Human Experience

Most of us were introduced to the Heroic Journey through mythology. Mythological heroes take great journeys: to slay Medusa, to kill the minotaur, to find the golden fleece. But The Hero's Journey isn't just a pattern from myth. It's the pattern of life, growth and experience -- for all of us. We see it reflected everywhere, from a television comedy to the great works of literature to the experiences in our own lives.

(**Note:** We use the term "Hero" to refer to both male and female. The traditional feminine form, "Heroine," is just a diminutive form of "Hero" which we feel is demeaning and inappropriate.)

A Mirror of the Rite of Passage

The Hero's Journey duplicates the stages of the Rite of Passage. First the initiate faces separation from his own, familiar world. Once separated, he undergoes initiation and transformation, where the old ways of thinking and acting are altered or destroyed, opening the way to a new level of awareness, skill and freedom. After successfully meeting the challenges of the initiation, the initiate takes the journey's final step, the return to his world. When he does, he will find that he is more confident, perceptive, and capable, and he will discover that his community now treats him as an adult, with all of the respect, rights and privileges which that status implies.

A Map to Experience

Why study The Hero's Journey? Why learn a pattern that dates from before recorded history? The answer is simple: we should study it because it's the pattern of human experience, of our experience, and we will live it for the rest of our lives.

In a sense, every challenge or change we face in life is a Journey: every love found, every love lost, every birth or death, every move to a new job, school or city: every situation which confronts us with something new or which forces us to re-evaluate our thinking, behavior or perspective.

The journey is a process of self-discovery and self-integration, of maintaining balance and harmony in our lives. As with any process of growth and change, a journey can be confusing and painful, but it brings opportunities to develop confidence, perspective and understanding.

Understanding the Journey pattern can help us understand the literature we read, the movies we see, and the experiences which shape your life. By recognizing the Journey's stages and how they function, we will develop a sense of the flow of our own experience and be better able to make decisions and solve problems. More importantly, we will begin to recognize our own points of passage and respect the significance they have for us.

Eight-step transformation

We usually divide the Journey into eight steps, but you must remember that the journey is a single process and an individual adventure towards growth and transformation. As such, the sequence of elements and the duration of the experiences will vary from one person to another.

Separation (from the known)

The Call

The Threshold (with guardians, helpers, and mentor)

Initiation and Transformation

The Challenges

The Abyss

The Transformation

The Revelation

The Atonement

The Return (to the known world)

The Return (with a Gift)

Remember that the journey is a process of separation, transformation, and return. Each stage must be completed successfully if we are to become Heroic. To turn back is to reject our innate need to grow, and unless we set out again, we severely

The Separation

The Call

The Call invites we into the adventure, offers us the opportunity to face the unknown and gain something of physical or spiritual value. We may choose willingly to undertake the quest, or we may be dragged into it unwillingly.

The Call may come boldly as a "transformative crisis," a sudden, often traumatic change in our lives. Or it can sneak up on us gradually, with our first perception of it being a vague sense of discontent, imbalance or incongruity in our lives. Within this range the Call can take many forms:

- we have had something taken from us, our family, or our society; our quest is to reclaim it,
- we sense that there is something lacking in our life, and we must find what is missing,
- we want to save or restore honor Å our own, our family's, or our country's.
- we realize that something is not permitted to members of our society, and we must win these rights for our people.



On a psychological level, the call might be an awareness of a shift in our spiritual or emotional "center of gravity." We discover that we have outgrown the roles we are playing or the environment in which we live.

The Threshold

Once called to the adventure, we must pass over the Threshold. The Threshold is the "jumping off point" for the adventure. It is the interface between the known and the unknown. In the known world, we feel secure because we know the landscape and the rules. Once past the threshold, however, we enter the unknown, a world filled with challenges and dangers.

Often at the threshold, we encounter people, beings, or situations which block our passage. These "threshold guardians" have two functions. They protect us by keeping us from taking journeys for which we are unready or unprepared.

However, once we are ready to meet the challenge, they step aside and point the way. More importantly, to pass the guardian is to make a commitment, to say: "I'm ready. I can do this."

Early in our lives, our parents function as our threshold guardians. They try to keep us from doing things which would cause us harm. As we get older, our parents' job becomes more difficult. They must both protect and push, measuring our capabilities against the challenges we must face.

As adults, our threshold guardians are much more insidious. They are our fears, our doubts, our ineffective thought and behavior patterns. In fact, they may be the

"dragon in disguise," our greatest fear, the catalyst for the journey, taunting and threatening, daring us to face him in the abyss.

Also at the threshold (and very often later in the journey), we will encounter a helper (or helpers). Helpers provide assistance or direction. Often they bring us a divine gift, such as a talisman, which will help our through the ordeal ahead.

The most important of these helpers is the mentor or guide. The mentor keeps we focused on our goal and gives us stability, a psychological foundation for when the danger is greatest.

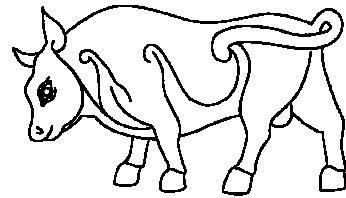
Helpers and guides may appear throughout the journey. Fortunately, they tend to appear at the most opportune moments. The Swiss psychologist called these "meaningful coincidences" synchronicity.

We need to understand, too, that the journey is ours. Our mentor and helpers can assist and point the way, but they cannot take take the journey for us. The challenge is ours, must be ours if we are to benefit from it and grow.

The Initiation

The Challenges

Once past the Threshold, we begin the journey into the unknown. The voyage can be outward into a physical unknown or inward to a psychological unknown. Whichever direction the voyage takes, our adventure puts us more and more at risk, emotionally and physically.



On our quest, we faces a series of challenges or temptations. The early challenges are relatively easy. By meeting them successfully, we build maturity, skill and confidence. As our journey progresses, the challenges become more and more difficult, testing us to the utmost, forcing us to change and grow.

One of our greatest tests on the journey is to differentiate real helpers from "tempters." Tempters try to pull us away from our path. They use fear, doubt or distraction. They may pretend to be a friend or counselor in an effort to divert our energy to their own needs, uses or beliefs. We must rely on our sense of purpose and judgment and the advise of our mentor to help us recognize true helpers.

Whatever the challenges we face, they always seem to strike our greatest weakness: our poorest skill, our shakiest knowledge, our most vulnerable emotions. Furthermore, the challenges always reflect needs and fears, for it is only by directly facing these weaknesses that we can acknowledge and and incorporate them, turn them from demons to gods. If we can't do this, the adventure ends and we must turn back.

Into the Abyss

When we reach the Abyss, we face the greatest challenge of the journey. The challenge is so great at this point that we must surrender ourselves completely to the adventure and become one with it. In the Abyss he must face our greatest fear, and we must face alone. Here is where he must "slay the dragon," which often takes the shape of something we dread, or have repressed or need to resolve.

There is always the possibility that, because we are unprepared or have a flaw in our character, the challenge beats us. Or perhaps we can't surrender ourselves to it and must retreat. In any case, unless we set off to try again, our life becomes a bitter shadow of what it could have been.

Transformation and Revelaton

As we conquer the Abyss and overcome our fears, our transformation becomes complete. The final step in the process is a moment of death and rebirth: a part of us dies so that a new part can be born. Fear must die to make way for courage. Ignorance must die for the birth of enlightenment. Dependency and irresponsibility must die so that independence and power can grow.

Part of the Transformation process is a Revelation, a sudden, dramatic change in the way we think or view life. This change in thinking is crucial because it makes us truly a different person. (The Revelation usually occurs during or after the Abyss, but sometimes it may actually lead us into the Abyss.)

The Atonement

After we have been transformed, we go on to achieve Atonement, that is we are "at-one" with our new self. We have incorporated the changes caused by the Journey and we are fully "reborn." In a spiritual sense, the Transformation has brought us into harmony with life and the world. The imbalance which sent us on the journey has been corrected -- until the next call.

The Return

After Transformation and Atonement, we face the final stage of our journey: our Return to everyday life. Upon our return, we discover our gift, which has been bestowed upon us based on our new level of skill and awareness. We may become richer or stronger, we may become a great leader, or we may become enlightened spiritually.

The essence of the return is to begin contributing to our society. In mythology, some heroes return to save or renew their community in some way. Other mythological heroes return to create a city, nation, or religion. Sometimes, however, things don't go smoothly. For example, we may return with a great spiritual message, but find that our message is rejected. We are ostracized

or even killed our for our ideal. We also run the risk of losing our new understanding, having it corrupted by putting ourselves back in the same situation or environment we left earlier.

In some cases, the hero discover that her new level of awareness and understanding is far greater than than the people around her. She may then become disillusioned or frustrated and leave society to be on her own. On the other hand, many great heroes such as Buddha and Jesus have sacrificed the bliss of enlightenment or heaven to remain in the world and teach others.

The Journey is a Map

While the story of the Journey first manifested itself in the ancient myths and legends, it is still around us today. It is the basis for almost all of the books and plays we read. We see it in television programs such as "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman", "The Adventures of Lois and Clark", and (believe it or not) in "The Simpsons." Even the movies we enjoy -- *Forrest, Gump, Groundhog Day, Labyrinth, Field of Dreams, Matrix, The Lion King* -- are fictional depiction's of the Hero's Journey.

The Journey gives you a means for understanding and benefiting from these fictional adventures. Even if the characters aren't real, the journeys they take and challenges they face are reflections of the real journeys and challenges we all face in life. As you watch them move through their quests, you can learn from their experiences.

Perhaps most importantly, though, the Journey is the pattern that we follow in our own lives as we face challenges and move from child to teenager, from teenager to adult, from adult to old age, and from old age into death.

The adventures we face will be challenging and exciting. They can open the doors to knowledge and understanding. If we understand the Journey pattern, we will be better able to face difficulties and use our experiences to become stronger and more capable. Understanding the pattern can help us achieve wisdom, growth, and independence, and taking our Journeys helps us become the people we want to be.

“ A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder; fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won; the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.”

Joseph Campbell

Why Study Myth?

Myths offer us a metaphorical map of human experience. The heroic quest belongs to each of us, just as it belongs to Taliesin, Inanna, Merlin, Gilgamesh. Our lives are a process, a journey consisting of challenges to be faced, trials to be endured, and adventures to be had.

*What's the good of a man
 Unless there's the glimpse of a god in him?
 And what's the good of a woman
 Unless she's a glimpse of a goddess of some sort?*

- D. H. Lawrence



The Monomyth: A comparison

Campbell	Star Wars	The Matrix
I: Departure		
The call to adventure	Princess Leia's message	"Follow the white rabbit"
Refusal of the call	Must help with the harvest	Neo won't climb out window
Supernatural aid	Obi-wan rescues Luke from sandpeople	Trinity extracts the "bug" from Neo
Crossing the first threshold	Escaping Tatooine	Agents capture Neo
The belly of the whale	Trash compactor	Torture room
II: Initiation		
The road of trials	Lightsaber practice	Sparring with Morpheus
The meeting with the goddess	Princess Leia	Trinity
Temptation away from the true path ¹	Luke is tempted by the Dark Side	Cypher (the failed messiah) is tempted by the world of comfortable illusions
Atonement with the Father	Darth and Luke reconcile	Neo rescues and comes to agree (that he's The One) with his father-figure, Morpheus
Apotheosis (becoming god-like)	Luke becomes a Jedi	Neo becomes The One
The ultimate boon	Death Star destroyed	Humanity's salvation now within reach

III: Return

Refusal of the return	"Luke, come on!" Luke wants to stay to avenge Obi-Wan	Neo fights agent instead of running
The magic flight	Millennium Falcon	"Jacking in"
Rescue from without	Han saves Luke from Darth	Trinity saves Neo from agents
Crossing the return threshold	Millennium Falcon destroys pursuing TIE fighters	Neo fights agent Smith
Master of the two worlds	Victory ceremony	Neo's declares victory over machines in final phone call
Freedom to live	Rebellion is victorious over Empire	Humans are victorious over machines

Common Mythic Elements

Two Worlds (mundane and special)	Planetside vs. The Death Star	Reality vs. The Matrix
The Mentor	Obi-Wan Kenobi	Morpheus
The Oracle	Yoda	The Oracle
The Prophecy	Luke will overthrow the Emperor	Morpheus will find (and Trinity will fall for) "The One"
Failed Hero	Biggs	In an early version of the script, Morpheus once believed that Cypher was "The One"
Wearing Enemy's Skin	Luke and Han wear stormtrooper outfits	Neo jumps into agent's skin
Shapeshifter (the Hero isn't sure if he can trust this character)	Han Solo	Cypher
Animal familiar	R2-D2, Chewbacca	N/A
Chasing a lone animal into the enchanted wood (and the animal gets away)	The Millennium Falcon follows a lone TIE fighter into range of the Death Star	Neo "follows the white rabbit" to the nightclub where he meets Trinity

"FOR OVER ONE HUNDRED YEARS, science fiction stories and films have stimulated the imaginations of many scientists in the forefront of discovery, encouraged young people to choose the sciences as a career, and shaped our visions and expectations of future space travel. Among all of these science fiction tales, the Star Wars trilogy has proven to be a very special inspiration."

STAR WARS IS ESPECIALLY MEMORABLE because its story of spacefaring pilots and their daring escapades is based on an ancient form of mythology--the "hero's journey."

Worksheet 2: Independent Film Viewing

MOVIE NAME: _____

View one or more films depicting a quest. Answer the following questions:

1. a. What qualities does the hero possess that make him heroic?

b. In what respect does he deviate from the classical definition of a hero?
2. Map the hero's journey, using **Worksheet 3: *The Heroic Journey*** as a guide.
3. Describe the villains or monsters that the hero must vanquish.
4. a. Describe the role of the outside intervention (e.g., the supernatural, a wise elder, witch) in allowing the hero to be successful in his quest.

b. Would the hero have been successful on his own?

Optional Questions for a Senior Advanced Audience

1. It has been said that a hero and his quest personify the dreams and desires of the society that spawned this hero. Given that premise, what values seem to be important to the society reflected in your film?

WORKSHEET 3: The Heroic Journey

Based on the assignment for Worksheet 2, track the hero's journey in the film you watched.

"A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself"
 -- Joseph Campbell

Joseph Campbell The Hero with a Thousand Faces: The Hero's Journey Chart	
Movie:	
Separation	
Call to Adventure: How does the character receive the call to adventure?	
Refusal of the Call: Does the character accept the call immediately?	
Answering the Call: What motivates the character to accept the call?	
Supernatural Aid	
Guide/Mentor: Is there a specific character who helps the hero understand the life situation or provides the hero with special training?	
Talisman: Is there a particular item that has special significance to the hero?	
Companions: Who is with the hero on his journey? How do these companions help the hero face the challenges?	
Crossing the Threshold: At what point in the story does the hero leave the familiar world and move into a new, unfamiliar circumstance?	
Threshold Guardians: Are there characters that try to prevent the hero from crossing over into the unfamiliar territory or circumstance?	
Initiation / Road of Trials: What specific challenges does the hero face?	
Brother Battle: Does the hero battle physically or mentally with someone who is a relative or close friend?	

<p>Meeting with the Goddess: Does the hero meet with a character with special beauty and power?</p>	
<p>Abduction: Is the character kidnapped, or is someone close to the hero kidnapped?</p>	
<p>Night or Sea Journey: Where do the hero's travels take him?</p>	
<p>Dragon Battle: Does the hero battle some kind of monster? Does the hero have to face some inner demon?</p>	
<p>Ritual Death or Dismemberment: Is the hero injured and thought to be dead? Does the hero mistakenly believe someone close to him is dead? Does the hero suffer an injury in which he loses a limb or use of some other body part?</p>	
<p>Sacred Marriage: Does the hero have a special emotional bond (it could literally be a marriage) with another character?</p>	
<p>Atonement ("at one with") with or Recognition by the Father: Is the hero reunited with his father in some way?</p>	
<p>Entering the Belly of the Whale: Is there some point in the story where the hero must face his deepest fear or the darkest evil in the story?</p>	
<p>Apotheosis (Deification): Is there a point in the story where the hero is held up as an ideal or where the hero is worshipped as a god?</p>	
<p>Ultimate Boon / Magic Elixir: Does the hero find some special solution to the problem he is attempting to resolve? This might be a magic potion or a key to something.</p>	

The Return	
Refusal of the Return: Does the hero initially refuse to return to the homeland or the place that he began the journey?	
Magic Flight / Pursuit: Is there some point (generally toward the end) where the hero is being chased or is otherwise trying to escape something?	
Rescue from Without: Is there so point in the movie, when all seems hopeless, when it looks like the hero is going to die, then suddenly he is rescued unexpectedly?	
Crossing the Return Threshold: Is there some point where the hero clearly returns "home"?	
Master of Two Worlds: Does it appear that the hero has conquered life in both the familiar and unfamiliar worlds?	
Freedom to Live: Since the hero typically begins the journey to resolve a problem, does it appear the problem is at last resolved so that all can live freely?	

NOTE:

THE STAR WARS TRILOGY ENDS WITH GOOD WINNING OUT. MUST GOOD WIN OVER EVIL ALL OF THE TIME? WHAT DOES THE VICTORY SAY ABOUT WHAT THE "BEOWULF" SCOP BELIEVED?

*THE RELEASE OF **EPISODES I-III** COMPLETES THE CYCLE. EPISODE III, **REVENGE OF THE SITH**, OF COURSE DRAMATIZES THE DARK SIDE OF THE FORCE, WITH DARTH VADER EMERGING FROM THE INNOCENCE OF THE ANGELIC ANAKIN SKYWALKER, BUT ON HER DEATHBED AFTER GIVING BIRTH TO LUKE AND LEIA, PADME NOTES THAT THERE IS YET SOME GOOD IN HER HUSBAND, AS LUKE WILL REMARK MUCH LATER.*

WORKSHEET 4: Making your own Heroic Journey

Ever wanted to be able to structure a best-selling story or novel around your character's hero / heroine?

"The Hero's Journey" is the way to do it. And here's a closely guarded secret - this age old principle *a/ways* works!

Assignment: Go to Read-Write-Think by the NCTE and work on creating your own hero's journey tale. This is your chance to display your understanding of the material

<<http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/herosjourney/>>

Hero Movie list: *I suggest that you have some familiarity with these movies. Check with your parents regarding the rating on some of them, but I have found them to be valuable post-modern visual accompaniments to the literary genre of the hero's journey.*

1. The Lion The Witch and the Wardrobe
2. Harry Potter I (II-VI are optional)
3. Lord of the Rings I-III
4. Star Wars Trilogy IV-VI
5. The Matrix I
6. National Treasure I
7. Shrek I
8. Superman I (Christopher Reeve)
9. Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.)
10. The Da Vinci Code

British Literary Book list: *I suggest that as you progress towards your collegiate aspirations, you have knowledge of the following books – works great for AP exams too. The point status allotted is based on the difficulty of the work: 1 pt = easy)*

1. *Chronicles of Narnia* by CS Lewis (1 pt each)
2. *Murder on the Orient Express* by Agatha Christie (1 pt)
3. *Pygmalion* by George B. Shaw (2 pt)
4. *The Hobbit* by Tolkien (1 pt)
5. *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by C Doyle (3 pt)
6. *Brave New World* by Aldus Huxley (3 pt)
7. *Scarlet Pimpernel* by Orczy (3 pt)
8. *Three Musketeers* by A Dumas (4 pt)
9. *Faust* by Goethe (5 pt)
10. *Emma* by Jane Austen (5 pt)
11. *Gulliver's Travels* by J. Swift (5 pt)
12. *Rob Roy* by W. Scott (5 pt)
13. *Fahrenheit 451* by Bradbury (3 pt)
14. *Dracula* by B Stoker (4 pt)
15. *Tarzan* by E Burroughs (4 pt)
16. *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles (4 pt)
17. *Pride and Prejudice* by J Austen (4 pt)
18. *Jane Eyre* by C Bronte (5 pt)