

Campbell's Stages of the Heroic Monomyth:

Joseph Campbell's Monomyth (*Hero With A Thousand Faces*)

The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation--initiation--return: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth.

Stages of the hero's journey:

1. Birth: Fabulous circumstances surrounding conception, birth, and childhood establish the hero's pedigree, and often constitute their own monomyth cycle.
2. Call to Adventure: The hero is called to adventure by some external event or messenger. The Hero may accept the call willingly or reluctantly.
3. Helpers/Amulet: During the early stages of the journey, the hero will often receive aid from a protective figure. This supernatural helper can take a wide variety of forms, such as a wizard, and old man, a dwarf, a crone, or a fairy godmother. The helper commonly gives the hero a protective amulet or weapon for the journey.
4. Crossing the Threshold: Upon reaching the threshold of adventure, the hero must undergo some sort of ordeal in order to pass from the everyday world into the world of adventure. This trial may be as painless as entering a dark cave or as violent as being swallowed up by a whale. The important feature is the contrast between the familiar world of light and the dark, unknown world of adventure.
5. Tests: The hero travels through the dream-like world of adventure where he must undergo a series of tests. These trials are often violent encounters with monsters, sorcerers, warriors, or forces of nature. Each successful test further proves the hero's ability and advances the journey toward its climax.
6. Helpers: The hero is often accompanied on the journey by a helper who assists in the series of tests and generally serves as a loyal companion. Alternately, the hero may encounter a supernatural helper in the world of adventure who fulfills this function.
7. Climax/The Final Battle: This is the critical moment in the hero's journey in which there is often a final battle with a monster, wizard, or warrior that facilitates the particular resolution of the adventure.
8. Flight: After accomplishing the mission, the hero must return to the threshold of adventure and prepare for a return to the everyday world. If the hero has angered the opposing forces by stealing the elixir or killing a powerful monster, the return may take the form of a hasty flight. If the hero has been given the elixir freely, the flight may be a benign stage of the journey.
9. Return: The hero again crosses the threshold of adventure and returns to the everyday world of daylight. The return usually takes the form of an awakening, rebirth, resurrection, or a simple

emergence from a cave or forest. Sometimes the hero is pulled out of the adventure world by a force from the daylight world.

10. Elixir: The object, knowledge, or blessing that the hero acquired during the adventure is now put to use in the everyday world. Often it has a restorative or healing function, but it also serves to define the hero's role in the society.

11. Home: The hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.

Notes from P. Apolinario:

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

- **A hero is a person.** 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.

- **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.

Joseph Campbell:

In the course of his studies, Campbell 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.

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 that 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 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

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.

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

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.

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 that 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.

*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*

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.

- Taken from: <http://pdfuri.com/the-heros-journey-2>