THE HERO’S QUEST /
MONOMYTH

Readings in Folklore and Culture
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In a well-known quote from the introduction to *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell wrote:

- “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.”

- “The hero is the same, but the costume changes.”
Archetypes

- **Archetype:** Simply put, an archetype is a recurring pattern of character, symbol, or situation found in mythology, religion, and stories of all cultures.
- Humans didn’t “invent” them.
- Heroic Archetypes:
  - A generic, idealized model of a person, object, or concept; a prototype or model from which something is based.
The Hero’s Quest: Archetypes

◆ These characters appear in some form in every story according to Jung and Campbell

◆ Hero
  – The mythic hero is one who will endure separation and hardship for the sake of his clan/family/group.
  – The hero must pay a price to obtain his goal.

◆ Mentor
  – The mentor is a character who aids or trains the hero
  – The mentor teaches hero and gives hero tools needed for quest

◆ Threshold Guardian
  – The threshold guardian is the first obstacle to the hero in his journey
  – The gateway to the new world the hero must enter to change and grow
  – NOT the antagonist
The Hero’s Quest: Archetypes

◆ Herald
  - The role of the herald is to announce the challenge which begins the hero on his story journey.
  - The herald need not be a person. It can be an event or force: the start of a war, a drought or famine, or even an ad in a newspaper.

◆ Shapeshifter
  - The shapeshifter changes role or personality, often in significant ways, and is hard to understand because his or her alliances and loyalty are uncertain. This keeps the hero off guard.
  - The shapeshifter is often the hero's romantic interest or friend
The Hero’s quest: Archetypes

- **Shadow**
  - The Shadow archetype is a negative figure, representing things we don't like and would like to eliminate.
  - Often takes the form of the antagonist in a story. But not all antagonists are villains; sometimes the antagonist is a good guy whose goals disagree with the protagonist's.
  - If the antagonist is a villain, he's a shadow.

- **Trickster**
  - The Trickster is a clown, a mischief maker. He provides the comedy relief that a story often needs to offset heavy dramatic tension. The trickster keeps things in proportion.
  - The trickster can be an ally or companion of the hero, or may work for the villain.
Stages of the Monomyth

1. Birth
2. Call to Adventure
3. Helpers/Amulet
4. Crossing the Threshold
5. Tests
6. Helpers
7. Climax/Supreme Ordeal
8. Flight
9. Return
10. Elixir
11. Home
Birth/Beginning

- Fabulous circumstances surrounding conception, birth, and childhood establish the hero’s pedigree, and often constitute their own Monomyth cycle.
- Often the hero grows up UNAWARE of this special birth or is in some way separated from it at an early age.
Call to Adventure

- The hero is called to adventure by some external event or messenger.
- The hero may accept the call willingly or reluctantly.
- Accepting or denying the quest is part of the journey—often the Hero refuses or denies at first.
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.

- Supernatural does not always mean magical

The helper commonly gives the hero a protective amulet or weapon for the journey.
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 or just moving from one world to another.
- The important feature is the contrast between the familiar world to the unknown world of adventure.
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.
 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.
- Sometimes this helper comes from the mundane world and follows him to the next.
- Alternately, the hero may encounter a supernatural helper in the world of adventure who fulfills this function.
Climax/Supreme Ordeal

- This is the critical moment in the hero's journey in which there is often a final battle with a monster, wizard, or warrior which facilitates the particular resolution of the adventure.
- Without this battle, **the Quest cannot end.**
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.
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.
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.
The hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.

Usually, he becomes a leader/king/ruler, but just as often, he leads a quiet or solitary life (as an honored member of the community—he can sadly never be anonymous again, even if he wishes to be!)

In *Mythic Journeys*, they stated that if the Hero doesn’t return, the Quest is a failure.

We’ll return to these concepts when we watch *Harry Potter & the Sorcerer’s Stone* in a couple of weeks.
The Hero’s journey - Youtube

- 5 Stages: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGV1BvnyvGo
- In Disney Films: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4V7drZMyL5M
- The Hero’s Journey Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWKKRbw-e4U
- The Hero’s Journey Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVqT8s7bOTQ
- The Hero's Journey - Star Wars, Harry Potter & Wizard of Oz:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkhNBJUQRzI&src_vid=FqwJVJw2-No&feature=iv&annotation_id=annotation_836883407