

THE MONOMYTH : JOURNEY OF THE HERO

Stage 1: Miraculous conception + Birth + Hiding of the Child

- A. A disguised god_father_creator force sires the hero.
- B. The mother (usually a mortal) remains a virgin during and after conception and/or birth.
- C The infant is immediately threatened by the forces of evil
- D. The child is often committed to Nature
- E. Or the defense is more active
- F. A protective cave or other hidden place is often involved
- G. The hero is adopted by beasts and/or menials

Stage 2: Childhood. Initiation. Divine Signs

- A. The hero proves himself and is thus initiated in some way .
- B. He fights a wild animal, monster or giant.
- C. He performs some ritualistic act .
- D. He exhibits great wisdom as a child.
- E. He receives a direct sign from the heavens.

Stage 3: Preparation. Meditation. Withdrawal

- A. The hero withdraws to a secluded place.
- B. There, through contemplation and various trials, he attempts to shed the illusion of the material world and to achieve a higher understanding.
- C. The hero often gains a great boon or special training during the seclusion.

Stage 4: Trial and Quest. Testing

- A. The quest/test period with struggles against impossible odds.
- B. Or the quest is for an unachievable end such as immortality .
- C. For each hero some kind of life renewal is involved.

Stage 5: Death and the Scapegoat

- A. The hero dies, usually by execution or dismemberment .
- B. Often the genitals are removed or lost.
- C. The death of the hero is usually associated with the seasons and human or plant abundance; Spring is very important.
- D. The fertility is sometimes spiritual rather than physical.
- E. The hero's burial is sometimes a kind of planting.
- F. The hero is closely associated with a woman.
- G. There is hope for resurrection after death. The death is but the beginning of a process leading to the Underworld or Rebirth.
- H. The hero is a year_spirit or fertility god.
- I. He dies for the good of all; he is a Scapegoat.

Stage 6: Descent to the Underworld

- A. The hero descends to the Underworld; retrieves a loved one.
- B. He does not always succeed.
- C. The descent is a Quest for information about the Underworld or the hero's destiny.
- D. Almost always involved is the sense of a struggle with and overcoming of the forces of death.

Stage 7: Resurrection and Rebirth

A. The hero can be reborn symbolically, actually, or by metamorphosis; or he can achieve resurrection from the dead — even from a state of dismemberment.

B. He is assisted or accompanied in his great miracle by women.

C. In most cases the story is directly associated with the death story and is a part of a fertility cycle — physical or spiritual fertility.

Stage 8: Ascension. Apotheosis. At-one-ment.

A. For many heroes apotheosis or atonement with the gods comes at the moment of death in some remarkable form.

B. The hero sometimes ascends to heaven by his own power.

C. Always there is a sense of a completed life and mission. The gods reclaim their own.