

INTRODUCTION

The Hero's Journey is a framework described by Joseph Campbell in his work 'The Hero With a Thousand Faces.' Campbell came to discover a common story structure, which he termed the 'monomyth', exhibited in legends and stories across all ages, cultures, geographies. Through his work as a professor and anthropologist, he found a common recurrence of phases, steps, devices, figures, and archetypes and other themes in all of primitive, ancient, pagan, classic Greek and Roman, medieval, fairy tale, modern, contemporary, secular, and religious traditions.

The hero's journey has three main phases and on the order of five steps in each phase, throughout which the hero travels a path to complete a physical, personal, and spiritual journey. This 'Cosmogenic Cycle', as Campbell terms it, results in the hero bringing a benefit of whatever form back to his society of whatever size - family, clan, tribe, kingdom, nation, society, or world.

Phases & Steps

At its core, the hero's journey has three parts – departure, initiation, and return. Correspondingly, the challenge of any hero is to begin, to persist, and complete the journey.

To begin is simple enough. It is essentially a decision and action to will one's self into an environment. More specifically, to enter into the unknown. That said, the mechanics of 'beginning' can certainly differ. The hero can enter the unknown via a folly of some sort, be swept up into the unknown by events transpiring around him, or can purposefully choose it out of naive overconfidence or, in rarer cases, an early, knowing self-confidence.

To persist is to rise to the challenges that follow within the journey. More specifically, to pass through a series of trials that progress through physical, mental, metaphysical, and even the beginning of still more transformative spiritual 'ways of being'. Challenges include traditional, straightforward physical challenges, of course. However, more significant are the trials involving certain figures and archetypes pointing the hero towards a 'dissolution of self'. That said, in being 'dissolved', he is not defeated. Rather, is merely no longer the same man he once was. The trials are for the purpose of his metamorphosis and 'becoming'. And, he becomes something more.

To return is to bring back a boon. More specifically, bring a boon back to the sphere from which he came, was subject to, or served, whether that sphere is a family, tribe, clan, nation, state, society, or world. Having persisted and weathered a road of trials, the hero experiences the peace or enrichment of having become, so to speak, a new man. Campbell refers to this state as 'apotheosis' and it implies a higher state of mind if not direct connection to the divine. The subsequent boon is a physical tool or ability (in simple stories) or a concept, possibility, opportunity, or way of being (in morality tales) that serves as a means of transformation for or of the world.

In the final phase, a number of contingencies for the hero remain. First, the hero may simply rest in apotheosis and enjoy the boon unto himself. Second, he may be unable to communicate what he offers or represents to the world in a manner he or it is received. Third, he may communicate and represent it well but it simply not be accepted. Fourth, he may represent the boon well but be attacked for what he offers or represents. And, as such, eventually stop attempting to 'return'. Fifth, he may simply be killed by those that oppose him. While these contingencies could be rather opaque, the hero is, in story, typically rather aware of them.

Nature of the Hero & Hero's Journey

With that in mind, to be a hero is, at its simplest, to choose the unknown, allow the resulting trials to challenge and build maturity, then offer if not deliver a benefit to, and transformative effect on, the world. Put in slightly longer exposition, the journey is to travel away from a known, encouraged setting, homestead, and set of fixed values or set of expectations or obligations. Then, to persist through a series of challenges, even embolden one's self through a series of trials. Yet the point is not the emboldening itself. Rather, it is to be atoned with central figures or archetypes common to every individual going through the human experience. Through this, mental, physical, and metaphysical reckoning, the hero reaches a point of special knowledge of self and the larger world. His former self is dissolved in order to become something better than what could have been previously imagined.

Even though now a 'bigger' person, benefit of an apotheosis, a hero he must return with a 'boon' or benefit to society. Here, again, he is and puts himself at risk. More specifically, in the attempt to return there is always the possibility that what he offers or represents may simply be held unto himself for his own enjoyment. In that case, he is simply out of action. Similarly, what he offers or represents may be ill communicated by the hero, may be communicated but not understood by an audience, isn't captivating such that it inspires them to action, or may be understood but marginalized as strange or unrealistic. In all these cases, he is rendered inert. Finally, what he offers may be actively, purposefully attacked as if to resist an idea or 'way of being' or he may be attacked and mortally injured or killed.

So, just as the nature of the hero is to begin, persist, and return, the nature of the hero is also to persist amid many challenges, the nature of the hero is also to persist amid his return; he can be 'rendered inert' via lack of action, passive or active rejection, and active attack even unto physical death. He may be attached rhetorically or, as is more common in story, physically chased, pursued, or attacked as the latter is both simple and more fully symbolic.

Significance of the Hero's Journey – Familiarity & Dissimilarity

The significance of The Hero's Journey, and the hero, is that he is at once familiar and uncommon.

The hero is familiar to us – even like us – in many regards. His persona and actions at the beginning of his journey are well understood. This is the case both in stories, myths, and legends where messages are implicit and illustrated as well as those explicit and explained. We recognize the safety and certainty of a known realm. We understand the trepidation of leaving. Further, we recognize the same whether that be a physical departure into the unknown or a departure from ideas or norms we have picked up from a formative environment. As such, the physical homestead is easily taken as symbolic of departure of a psychological sort. And, it is just as easily seen as the combined material, physical, and spiritual tension arising from change.

Correspondingly, we easily understand conflicts, triumphs, and the hero's growth of character. That is, even if we are either of an age or level of privilege that we have had limited trials in many regards. Or, of a background or age by which we have weathered or suffered much. The hero is like us, we understand him in a meaningful and complete manner, even if our own experience is a good deal easier and mundane or more challenging than his.

The hero is also not like us. He acts like and is being something that we might like to become but that is also counter to our nature. At its simplest he not so much 'is' but 'becomes' supernatural. That said, not divine, which is an important distinction to make. Rather, super-natural. As such, the hero's journey is suggesting there is nothing in the hero and nothing in what he becomes that is not available to every individual. Yet he becomes great in all manner of areas of life when we would normally attend to one, a

few, or none particularly strongly at all. To that end, the hero represents our desires, what we might believe is possible, even if we tend to experience it by proxy instead of bringing that possibility into life ourselves. The message of the monomyth, the hero's journey, and the hero is that what the hero is being and becoming is available to us, even if we do not pursue it or find it unattainable for whatever reason.

Therefore, the hero is not so much unlike us in that we do not recognize him. Rather, he is unlike us in that we somehow recognize what he is doing and becoming - bringing himself to full maturity and expression - even though we may have not or are not. Put more simply, the hero does and becomes what we might want to become, or sense may be possible, but often do not or cannot. With that in mind, the hero differentiates himself in four ways. First, he makes the choice to leave a familiar realm. Second, he makes the choice to continue along a challenging path. Third, he makes the choice and has presence of mind to use personal and physical challenge towards psychological and metaphysical maturation of character. Fourth, his character and spirit mature to the point of achieving oneness with a reality, supernatural realm, some sort of 'beyond', or deity he was previously imperfectly aware or entirely unaware of.

Therefore, the hero is simultaneously like us, unlike but familiar to us, and counter to our nature. Regarding decisions and choices, no reasonable mind would suggest that he should leave a certain and stable homestead then persist in certain moments let alone the whole way along his difficult path. Regarding nature, the hero's initial, let alone continual, choices towards uncertainty, difficulty, development, and an unseen realm over equilibrium, protection, and incremental gain is, strictly speaking, not reasonable. That is, it is separate from reason. It is not bounded by 'reasons' - constructed defensive measures - alone. It considers, and perhaps eventually largely dwells upon the 'fact' that uncertainty is a place for faith that will be proven out, nurtured, and even emboldened. Why? Because he is increasingly centered in the aforementioned but - as of yet - unenumerated source that provided the 'unreasonable' faith to begin with.

Though the hero's initiation and some of his departure are familiar to us and like us, the bulk of his departure and return are oddly familiar and available to us they are also largely unlike us. This again, helps underscore the significance of the hero's journey as a framework. That is, in a myth or story, no author need explain why an external event or challenge, or maturation of the hero's internality is significant to him. We experience it as significant on our own. And, it describes what choices might move or pull us forward towards greater personal development and towards an impact on our world.

Significance of the Hero's Journey - Mindset

With that in mind, the central difference between the hero and a 'normal' man is largely in mindset. That is, compared to our inherent nature, typical choices, and what is 'normed' in most social circles, the hero has a different mindset. Or, at least comes into a different mindset. In a physical sense in the beginning, in a psychological sense and regarding character in the middle, and in a metaphysical or spiritual sense in the end, the hero does not acquiesce to requiring less of himself.

In the beginning, during initiation, his mindset is uncovered in a decision (commitment made without consideration) or choice (commitment made after consideration) to enter the unknown. Whether he is accidentally pushed or purposefully pulled forward, there is some sense or faith that there is something more to be had in the 'void' beyond the known, whether that known be a particular homestead, general setting, or set of particular obligations and ethics.

In the middle, amid departure, the decision or choice to enter the unknown becomes clearer and harder. Whether he began by decision (therefore, somewhat naive) or by choice (comparatively purposeful) a mindset fixed on continuing is soon required and evident. However, it is not assured. The hero soon lives

in the duality of victories and failures both physical and psychological that are borne of, and perhaps alternating between, many distractions, dissolutions, deaths of a kind and corresponding development, resurgence, and rebirth along his path.

Here, the mindset of ‘not requiring less of himself’ is differentiating. His strength grows, not just to accumulate power and self-assurance, which does occur, but also is deepened. He becomes ever more aware that there might be and convinced of the fact that there is some kind of purpose in store for him. And, some benevolent force behind him that pulls him forward. Most important, the hero comes ever closer to the latter. Put more simply, the underlying mindset to persist is to not allow himself to be stopped, not to be made be made still, and to not decide or choose to stop. Meanwhile, to do so is based not only on one’s own determination or self-driven purpose but out of the sense one is drawing closer to an external enduring force that is bringing something about in the hero.

In the end, with his return, the hero continues an underlying mindset of not requiring less of himself by, in fact, returning what he has become to the world. More specifically, continuing to do so even though whatever world he serves is just as likely, if not more likely, to ignore or reject what he offers or represents rather than to recognize, value, and accept it. Here, the dialectic action of physical and mental challenge, growing character, and trust in purpose or force that pulls him forward in the ‘middle’ or ‘departure’ phase becomes a balance of maintaining action in the physical world (towards influence, manifestation of apotheosis in others, manifesting a boon in his world) and maintaining connection to the spiritual world (continuing to ‘be’ what he has ‘become’, avoiding the pitfall of self-righteous self-determination alone). More specifically, so his periodic ineffectiveness of returning or bestowing a boon does not result in a fall from grace or corruption of character at which point he would no longer embodies the new self (man, woman) that is transformed and the ethos that is transformative.

Significance of The Hero’s Journey - Levels

As a sequence or process – even one lasting much or all of a lifetime – the hero’s journey is fairly simple and linear. A framework with three parts and some fifteen steps, it is straightforward in that it provides the ability to see a particular set of decision points and understand certain figures or archetypes that are the most important. Even the framework’s considerably more qualitative and ethereal illustration that it is necessary or possible to adopt an underlying mindset, and that some sort of external purpose is the point of initiating, departing, and returning, is not particularly complex.

However, the hero’s journey is considerably more complex when considering it operates at a number of levels and often more than one, if not many, levels at the same time. Considering the monomyth, the hero’s journey, and hero a bit more philosophically, serves as a means of taking care to notice the requirements for following the path of a hero. That is, the hero’s journey is multidimensional and can be considered inherently metaphysical if not spiritual when pursued to its fullest extent.

As a brief summary, the myths, legends, and stories that Campbell use in his commentary illustrate the significance of the following levels. These levels include a wide, if not comprehensive, set of levels from atomic and hidden to global and systemic. Subconscious. Unseen influence, desire, trauma. -Dream. -Individual. Action, choice, obligation -Family. Freedom from, obligation to, empower/resist forward movement -Society. Approve/disapprove, sponsor/resist, engaged/ not engaged. -Faith. Proactive/heroic. Saved, stable, pursuing more & of service to more out of that sense. -Religion. Purpose. Saved, stable, responsible, growing, serving eternal end.

With that in mind, we can consider the hero’s journey as more than illustrative of a series of steps and decisions. Or, even set of devices, figures, and archetypes. The hero’s journey serves our understanding of all levels of the human experience. Not just through its overarching single arc or thread that carries

through the framework. Rather, also the meta narrative in and among the symbols and archetypes. Correspondingly, it illustrates that all levels of the human experience are important and can be understood. More specifically, whether we by nature, in any individual's typical awareness, in society's normal predilection, if allowing individuals' exploration is really typical or encouraged.

As such, many myths, and legends, and stories provide insight via a symbolic representation or meaning. This seems to be for two reasons. First, in some cases it is so that the reader can take on all the lessons and understanding of a multidimensional representation or lesson. Second, the lesson is neither easily conveyed in written word nor easily explained or verbalized by a reader or audience receiving the lesson or insight.

Naturally, exploring each of the levels at which the hero's journey and resulting framework in a manner that is mutually exclusive and completely exhaustive would be overwhelming. That is, to describe the applicability of each phase and step within the monomyth to each level of the human experience at which it operates would result in a written work too large to digest. It would also likely require a broader and deeper expertise across more schools of thought, sciences, and domains than one author could possibly offer. Indeed, illustrating the role of dream, individual choice, passive or active family influence, clan or tribe, and Gnostic faith or formal religion as an influence on or instruction regarding one's navigation of a hero's journey could likely all be separate dissertations. For the sake of introduction, we merely open up the aperture, so to speak, to provide a wide sense of applicability and provide the reader a range in which they may want to take it or use it. It certainly could be applied anywhere along the spectrum or between these two points; in one area of life (essentially constrained for the sake of comfort) or taken to consider all aspects of life (to pursue the full path).

So, keeping with the analogy, now that we've 'gone to hero church' a bit, it is time to 'pick a pew'. Given the fact that there is a good degree of linearity to the hero's journey, and a good deal of complexity and depth as well, it is now helpful to do two things. First, state the two general levels (internality and externality) we intend to confine our exploration to. Second, state the three main means of application (story structure, life path, spiritual development) we are suggesting.

Net Significance

The primary significance of the monomyth, the hero's journey, the figure of the hero, and the central focus of our analysis and application will twofold. First, on the individual's internality regarding each phase and step within the hero's journey. Second, the influence of external figures and forces roles in challenging or incrementally redeeming the hero towards his ultimate purpose. If there is a common meeting point between the two it is that both are sources of things such as protection, restraint, obligation, limitation, fear, danger, and the like. Similarly, to the extent any individual, clan, or family does – or does not – acknowledge these two levels serve as a function of how far along the path one can get. Further, it is a central finding and conviction of the author that the hero's journey framework suggests that we can and ought to think a good deal deeper and wider of these things than merely how life normally occurs to us.

Regarding our internality, the significance of The Hero's Journey is that helps us understand who we have 'become' – as opposed to who we 'are' – and what we might 'become'. Seeing a common pattern across such a scope of myths and stories indicates 'what is important to us'. That is, the framework does much to uncover an underlying psyche and ultimate purpose. More specifically, that that is desired and core to the human experience, even if we have difficulty asking for it, choosing it, and adopting the mindset required for it.

As a brief illustration, we all have hopes and dreams. But we don't all equally pursue and realize them. Much less consider who we might 'be' as opposed to what we might 'do' or attempt to get or 'have'. Put

in a religious, and somewhat autobiographical, context; if I truly believe and could take in the Bible and Apostle Paul's declaration in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," then what is it that is holding me back. More specifically, holding me back compared to giving myself over to becoming something anew and being used for something greater than self.

Regarding the external forces affecting us as individuals, the significance of the hero's journey is that even good things - individuals, archetypes, social orders - can have dual effect. First, potentially a positive effect that drives or pulls us forward. Second, a powerful limitation even if created by an apparently positive intent or tradition. Correspondingly, despite the complexity of the interaction with or the impact had - seen or unseen - by those key figures or institutions, the hero's journey is frighteningly straight forward regarding which figures or archetypes are most relevant in life. Dealing with those figures in a full and useful manner is less straightforward. At its simplest, 'good' things, people, and institutions can just as well trap or enslave us as protect and serve us. In some cases, merely 'fail to launch' by nature of tending to precedent and obligation. In other cases, coming to full atonement with the imperfect nature and influence of 'good' figures so that we can both be benefit of them and move beyond them. In most cases - in life, more than in story, we land somewhere in between.

Net Net Significance

With that in mind, the net significance of the hero's journey is five-fold. First, the fact that myths and legends show a pattern so consistently repeated across history, geography, tradition, and the like, suggests that pattern or framework is, in many regards, not a myth at all. We can consider the monomyth highly instructive. Second, the monomyth tells us what is likely to be required of us if we are to follow a heroic path, not the least of which is choosing it in the outset and remaining balanced in the physical and spiritual realm in its completion. Third, that the hero's journey is a path that can be chosen. It is real. It is possible. But a path that must be chosen. And, it is difficult. Fourth, what the real, full benefit of having done so really is. Fifth, though exhibited a great deal in story, such a path it is not in our nature, or typically exhibited and encouraged by society per se.

Applications: Story, Path, Purpose

Beyond the nature, choices, mindset, and significance of the monomyth, the hero's journey, and the hero we can be still more direct regarding what value we intend to or hope to deliver. There are three specific ways we will argue the monomyth framework can be applied. First, as a structure for storytelling. Second, as a map that might be used for considering or choosing a heroic path throughout life. Third, as a baseline for beginning spiritual formation and continuing spiritual development for the sake of having a meaningful impact on our world.

Story

Leveraging Campbell's Hero With a Thousand Faces to illustrate the hero's journey as a common framework in story has direct value in four ways. Naturally, some of these have referred to amid our discussion of the 'significance' the hero's journey framework above. However, a declarative list is helpful for focus, definition, and simplicity.

First, the monomyth is simply a framework that provides structure to story. Second, as an end-to-end framework, it provides a beginning, middle, and end - as specific as three phases with some five steps in each - for a particularly entertaining story that rather automatically resonates with an audience. Third, within and amid various steps, the framework provides some clarity regarding the use of specific devices, figures, and archetypes important for developing a central and supporting character and his or her internality, externality, and ensuring the right amount of seeking, challenge, twists, resolution, completion,

and reengagement. Fourth, with the latter point in mind, it can be used to tell an epic tale that is largely of universal appeal and a clear moral purpose to it. That is, it is both entertaining and redemptive.

Life Plan / Life Map

Beyond storytelling, Campbell's monomyth framework serves as a map that might be used for considering or choosing a heroic path throughout life. First, it gives a set of phases, series of steps, devices, figures, and archetypes that serve as waypoints for choosing our way. This is not just a code breaker. In many ways, it is *the* code breaker. The monomyth framework and hero's journey serves as a prism which more clearly separates the most salient influences and choices in life. Second, amid that separation between experience of and transition from and to sequential steps, it helps understand our underlying internal (limits, fears, desires, dreams) and external (environment, expectation, figures, archetypes) challenges. Third, the choice to, choice not to, and the successful or unsuccessful navigation of these steps and figures determines how far along we might go in life. Or, considered at the beginning would help form how far it is we want or intend to go.

Put more simply, five uses or benefits are apparent. First, there is some reason to use the framework for general life planning and personal discovery. Second, it can serve as a means of self-analysis – or more colloquially – self insight to see what events, archetypes, and the like propel or restrain you the most. More specifically, where constraints (what you 'must' do) and restraints (what you 'must not' do) have been put consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally in place. Third, it serves as a means to understand how one's personal setting (past), situation (present), or possibility (perception of future) most enliven you or, as the case may be, limit you. Fourth, what elements of family and social construct - that is, expectations, obligation, and or prohibitions that impact intent, vision, or duty - do or do not do the same. Fifth, if one was to make the 'right' choices in each phase of the framework or journey, it helps consider and illustrate might be possible through your life. That is, it suggests a precedent for what boon would be possible or one might try to bring about through your journey. Correspondingly, what you might have to offer and who you would have to become.

Sparing a full autobiographical account, it could help address a set of common questions. Am I interested in 'more in life'? Or just living life as it occurs? What particular things am I normally exerting on? Why? What is the source of a sense of limitation? Why can't we shake it? How might I live more 'authentically'? How might I discern the difference between ambition and calling? How can I communicate and act in an authentic manner such that it inspires people towards their own transformation and transformative effect? How prepared am I really for the host of negative reactions to a call for change? What am I to do or think when I fail or am 'stuck' along the way?

That is a rather grand claim from a mere story structure. As such, we can restate, in coming chapters, why suggesting that is a unique contribution and offer one caveat as well.

Story & Life Map – Precedent

To be clear, these points of value and means of usage three are, strictly speaking, not new. The monomyth has, again, of course, been exhibited in myths, legends, and stories for centuries. Most recently, it has been leveraged many times in contemporary popular culture as seen in film, novels, and, to a lesser degree, music, television, and video games. More specifically, there is one text - Christopher Vogler's *Twelve Stage Hero's Journey* – that summarizes and redefines Campbell's monomyth structure for the sake of commercial storytelling. Vogler's work is the template most consistently used in contemporary venues. As such, it has generated a good amount of inspiration in the entertainment industry and some personal lives. However, the best we could claim is that some modern stories, novels,

and films could be said to have inspired people to certain career, perhaps a few ‘ways of being’. The effect is largely general, indirect, and in an isolated manner.

So, what exactly would be the point of readdressing a summary of Campbell’s book, framework, and story structure? For the sake of telling a still better story. Though Vogler’s work has been leveraged in recent years, that summary, retitling, and repurposing represents a departure from a comparatively disciplined and direct reference to Campbell’s insights. Particularly in the latter ‘return’ phase. While Vogler’s work represents the best practical translation or template of the hero’s journey in recent times, we also have to consider that contemporary use of it rather severely truncates the monomyth framework. That is, with respect to our specific purposes.

There are some quasi-academic considerations of the monomyth and the hero’s journey. However, largely in the public domain; amateur analysis of contemporary film, which tends to be short, not particularly deep, and without direct reference to Campbell’s work. Similarly, academic works that both reference Campbell’s work directly and endeavors on deeper analysis do not appear to exist. At least not serious as academic work related to literature of various centuries, periods, or the study of ‘great books’ is. As such, reexamining the monomyth, the hero’s journey, and would-be heroic life likely provides value add to storytelling even though that might initially seem to be well-trodden ground.

There is little exposition of the monomyth framework based on direct reference to Campbell’s own original text. As far as the author can tell, this not been accomplished particularly closely; rather, analysis of stories and any application to life occurs via a proxy and simplified summary of Campbell’s work, not his work and writing directly. Therefore, even in cases where such exploration and reference has been made, analysis tends to focus on, and stop, at a definition and illustrating some utility of the devices, figures, and archetypes. That is, it falls short of explaining what comes of a character’s ‘apotheosis’ and what good is bestowed from his ‘return’. Further, a character’s return, particularly in film, is commonly a brief, tonal epilogue vice a kind and centered effort of continual transformation.

Finally, a caveat regarding this would-be life map. It is important to clarify we are exploring all this as more instructive than authoritative. It is intended as general application, regarding a whole life lived, and sense of where you are going, and to indicate the importance of certain figures and way points. It is not intended to suggest any degree of moral authority unto itself. That is, while we will find that the monomyth urges that a sort of Gnostic faith is central to who we are as humans and that the monomyth is perhaps only perfectly represented in stories of major religious tradition, this is not to suggest the monomyth or Campbell’s text itself is a moral authority.

Spiritual Development – Secular

Beyond story, understanding one’s path, understanding important way points and influences, and what one might become, the monomyth framework and hero’s journey helps provide a means for considering what one has done all that becoming for. That is, having become something anew, and possessing some device, mechanism, or insight to visit a redemptive effect on one’s society or world, it helps define what that looks like and what steps are typical or required for a personal transformation to be realized into a public transformation. Put in terms of physical sciences, having gathered a good degree of potential energy, what is the best manner in which kinetic energy might be realized in a functional and redeeming way.

Short of exploring the steps and distinctions within the ‘return’ phase, all have to do with a connection to not just something external to self but a transcendent ‘beyond’ of some kind. In some cases, a uniquely strong and centered presence of mind or wisdom. In some cases, a transcendental state that is perhaps on the spectrum of a gnostic faith. In religious stories or epics even an enumerated deity. Here, the

commonality among various myths, legends, and stories is two-fold. First, that the ultimate end towards moral purpose is rather obvious. More specifically, it is increasingly clear and often overt in the third phase of the hero's journey. Second, that a key underlying ability of the hero towards having a transformative effect in the world is maintaining a significant connection to a spiritual realm while also maintaining a connection to and ability to influence shape within the physical realm. That is, being neither wholly or overly resident in either.

These two criteria are particularly differentiating when exploring the monomyth framework and the hero's journey based on Campbell's text. First, the linkage of and balance between physical and spiritual worlds, that the central point of the hero's journey is spiritual development, that the latter is central to being able manifest any benefit in the world, is largely lost in other summaries. As an example, the most meaningful text often leveraged for the sake of storytelling as a commercial enterprise – again, Vogler's Twelve Stage – redefines the steps of the hero's journey in comparison to Campbell's findings and model, largely omitting the manner in which an underlying spiritual or metaphysical strength underpins influence on or within the physical world. Second, exclusions to that end include ending a story where the hero obtains 'the elixir'. Here, an object or ability alone is typically the discovery or mechanism a hero typically gains access to and serves as a tool to save or redeem his world. In such cases, as is commonly seen in contemporary film, what is set aside is the reality, actuality, and symbolism beyond the physical device, which serves primarily as a mechanism to move the plot forward. It also omits exploring the internality or significance of the spiritual development of the central character as the real source or epicenter of his strength and benefit to others.

To be fair, this omission or 'loss' in contemporary stories – film in particular – is not necessarily good or bad. It just is. Vogler has reformed or modified Campbell's work from its root form towards a particular purpose. There is no more harm in doing so that translating pure research into applied science and applied science into medical procedure that eases pain or restores life. More specifically, he has leveraged Campbell's work for the sake of mass appeal, for a contemporary market, and an effective economic model – film and television. To that end, even something of a truncation or abbreviation of the fuller hero's journey has been effective in helping creating compelling visual representations and what is useful for telling a compelling story. Indeed, it seems that closer approximation an epic film and novel series makes, the more enduring and successful it tends to be.

Spiritual Development - Religious

Naturally, to use the words spiritual development implies a link to, if not advocacy for, religion. In some cases, myths and legends take on a clearly religious tone akin to clear connection with what could be considered a conception of God. Not just mindfulness, as significant and universal as that might be. Not just a gnostic deity that is fairly certain yet also distant and indistinct. Further, a benevolent God that is a real, particular, interacting, positive, challenging, purposeful, and unitary force in pulling the hero forward. More specifically, both helping the hero 'be' what he needs to be to continue past his point of 'apotheosis' and, finally, to complete a 'return' so a boon is bestowed upon his people toward their own transformation and that of the world.

When centering on a direct exposition of Campbell's work this is all the more obvious. Campbell highlights several examples where religious tales are the very best embodiment of a 'collective unconscious' that he suggests has existed as long as man, oral, and written history has existed. This leads to not just the consideration of religion. Indeed – despite the periodic modern, enlightened, reluctance – serious consideration of formalized religion. More specifically still, the four major formalized world religions – Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. Given these different treatments of the means of spiritual development and breadth or specificity of the means to personal redemption remain some options and variability regarding how readers take from religious references.

The point here is that story relates to religion and religion to story. First, Campbell eventually characterizes one religion or religious figure as that which most fully and most profoundly embodies the hero, the hero's journey, and monomyth.

With that in mind, two things become apparent with a full understanding of the hero's journey. First, again, contemporary summaries and application of the hero's journey is considerably truncated, therefore, sacrificing a good amount of value by not fully exploring the full embodiment of the hero and having a full spiritual development underlying his impact on the world. Second, upon full exploration there is great value in a secular or gnostic consideration of even the most strident of religious passages – for example, Jesus' claim "I Am THE way, the truth, and the life" – in order to take significance from it if only via the story alone. That is, we are likely to find meaning regarding story, life path, and spiritual development given religious figures' fuller embodiment of what 'the hero' really 'is' and is 'being' even for those readers who passively or actively declining to participate in religion, assert religion and all its practices to be irrelevant, or are even altogether atheist.

Third, correspondingly, while tending towards literalism and belief in the inerrancy of scriptures, there is value for the even most religious and faithful in seeing still deeper application of religious text by understanding how religious texts and central religious figures also follow a structure similar to myths, legends, and stories. That is, even though the latter are by no party taken as literally true. While there is certainly natural human tendency to lean on rules and ritual – for the sake of both unseen individual protection and proactive intent towards sanctification – as the means to connect with the presence of God, seeing how the hand of God may have breathed itself into the underlying hearts of men and the stories they tell may be particularly instructive. For those who believe that a unitary creator is responsible for everything we see in life, and a central savior for the next life, it may be interesting to consider such a holy presence somehow took up or imbued his presence in the stories – a monomyth indeed – throughout history. Perhaps a ubiquitous and recurring pattern like planets' orbits. Or, something of a spiritual version of Hegel's 'zeitgeist' in his Reason in History or Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' in his Wealth of Nations.

With that in mind, it is worth addressing a potential objection of both secular and religious tradition as well.

Spiritual Development – Secular Objections

From a secular perspective, considering religious stories as a reflection of the monomyth is equally useful. First, considering the full extent and expression of personal development and purpose based on the richness and depth contained in religious text and stories is highly instructive. Even if taken as 'mere story'. Second, similarly, both the incisive depth of concepts and doctrine extending from and the multitude of stories contained within religious texts in many, if not most, cases are just as, if not more, instructive that classic myth, high legend, and the most popular contemporary 'morality' tales. Third, even when taken metaphorically, the central figure or figures contained in religious text are, individually and collectively, arguably the best and fullest embodiment of the best possible hero and an illustration of the various failings a would-be hero might succumb to or triumph over.

Considering a brief example in Christian tradition, Jesus' life, the ethos He exhibits, the mindset He teaches, and the source of real power He reflects and refers his apostles and followers to, is still extremely symbolically useful if we 'don't believe' we can only transformed by his salvation. If we only consider his statement "I am the way the truth and the life; nobody comes to The Father except through me" can have powerful meaning if taken as mere myth or as literal truth. A secular audience will understand more of the meaning of the monomyth framework for the purpose of story and of the hero's journey in charting a life path by taking such sacrosanct religious figures seriously for a moment, even if only for the consideration of a full expression of story and life.

Spiritual Development – Religious Objection

Peoples of faith could claim spiritual authority and ‘capital T’ truth based on, for example, the historicity of written scripture, particular practices borne out over centuries of tradition, sacraments regarding the same, and doctrine skillfully put in place over centuries and modern times. More specifically, based on the unitary power of salvation through the central figure from which all the aforementioned are borne. As such, then object to another text providing any additional insight based on external reference instead of primarily internal interpretation and cross-reference of various passages, despite the external reference’s apparent timelessness and instructiveness regarding the human psyche. Worse, though a weaker argument, object based on the sentiment that stories are a cheap approximation of spiritual text and, therefore, contrived myths to be avoided.

However, there are a couple counter points to that perspective. First, the previous assertion that myth provides a prism through which religious stories might be viewed, not to ‘add to scripture’, and not to replace religious text, applies. Second, major religious tradition and scriptures often to suggest and illustrate there is an underlying nature of man that must, somehow, be atoned for. And, that there is a path for the individual to persist through or submit to in order to accomplish that. So, it would be instructive to see how the structure and criteria associated with the monomyth (‘one central story’) parallels biblical and other religious themes and texts. Third, we may find that the progression of spiritual text in its totality, or the story of the central figures within religious narrative, might show some similarity to the structure and archetypes in myth. Fourth, we might provide some additional reflection regarding just how illustrative and authoritative those religious texts might be to the extent they explain an ethic we should adopt that is aligned with or counter to ‘the stories we tell ourselves’. That is, religious tales may contain a compelling overall arc similar to the monomyth. And, may also contain compelling – perhaps more direct – instruction regarding the mindset and character of a would-be hero that is attempting to choose, be, and live according to a calling.

Here, there is some precedent in both scripture and in Christian doctrine and tradition. As an example, Jeremiah 29:11 suggests a benevolent God intent on pulling not just an individual hero or the nation of Israel. Rather, very likely every past, current, and future following believer into a greater purpose if they would but step into it. “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” With that in mind, perhaps there is some holy requirement that we think well beyond traditional obligations. Or, at least be sensitive to a calling. Perhaps a purpose greater than would ever otherwise be imagined. Similarly, Proverbs 3:5-6 not so much suggests as declares what an underlying mindset at the beginning of a would-be hero’s journey and throughout it as challenges are met with is. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart / and lean not on your own understanding; / in all your ways submit to him, / and he will make your paths straight.” This suggests that the ‘balance’ of living in the physical realm but also present to and participating in the spiritual realm is not just some fanciful myth but a central part of every major religious tradition. Finally, consider Romans 7. Verse 6 suggests maturity rooted in spiritual development is key to an effect on the physical world. “But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.” The point of story is not just the story itself. Also, to ‘live out’ whatever story is yours to be.

Finally, if we find central religious figures to be among the strongest the strongest representations of the hero, the hero’s journey, and monomyth framework – or a singular figure to be the most representative - it would create a powerful narrative. Consider this briefly in context of a Christian tradition. First, the life of a central hero, and a messianic one at that, would be convincing corroboration of the monomyth framework and the hero’s journey were Christ himself to somehow embody or follow it. From a religious perspective, the fact that Christ’s first teachings, baptism, ministry, atonement, transfiguration,

crucifixion, rise, ascension and foretold return was emblematic of the monomyth might suggest the monomyth framework and story structure somehow also extended from a singular source. That is, as opposed to religious stories being just another, though highly emblematic, iteration of a framework seen over the ages. Put more simply, perhaps the monomyth exists in all times, geographies, and cultures because all creation and creativity came from the singular creator. That is, much the way scripture declares the earth and universe to have been created. And, further, by inference, all the physical systems such as physics and biology extend from.

Unintended Consequence – Apologetics

Though unintended, and largely not a focus of this text, this may eventually lead to a convincing apologetic argument. Evidence of the relevance and truth of religious claims is, in western traditions, often rooted in such factors as historicity of religious text, the number and recency of original manuscripts compared to comparable historical books, the consistency among those copies, confirmed fulfilment of prophecy, eyewitness accounts of events contained in religious text, and the like. This is a sort of deductive technique. If all the individual parts can provide evidence and all challenging questions answered, then the scriptures must be true. Or, at a minimum, can reasonably be believed to be true. Using a scientific, mathematical, statistical term, if failing to disprove the hypotheses that Christ, for example, is not really who He claimed to be, then He must be taken per His claim.

However, there is an alternative to a deductive argument. There is an inductive argument as well. If ‘story’ has existed throughout all of oral and written history, and those stories exhibit a ‘collective unconscious’ and similar desires and instruction towards complete fulfillment, then it could follow that the very best embodiments of this underlying-but-somewhat-hidden cadence are the very most instructive. Further, if one figure among the body of most important texts and stories within it is the best, fullest embodiment of the monomyth, the hero’s journey, and hero, then it would follow that that is the hero we ought both follow and be trying to be.

Therefore, both religion, religious text, the central figures within them, and perhaps one central figure in particular is relevant to storytelling. Further, if one most emblematic above all others, perhaps the one from which all stories of moral purpose have extended, not merely one mere story among others which, by implication, are all ultimately to be discarded as peripheral vice instructive or powerfully meaningful. Finally, if the explanation of all this then perhaps all other stories are similar to this and to Him because the ‘collective unconscious’ and the corresponding longings within it was created following the consciousness that was collectively created by Him. It is perhaps as if ‘the heavens shout his name’ because they were created by Him. All stories of moral significance echo Him because creation and creators can only stray so far. Or, those people created by the same cannot help but emulate and tell his story in some manner.

Perhaps all stories created for a moral purpose are similar because all stories in history are paralleling the author of history.

Amplification

Summarizing and analyzing Joseph Campbell’s *Hero With a Thousand Faces* has three main applications: story structure, life planning, and spiritual development.

First, it supplies story structure. Directly referencing Campbell’s work for the sake of fully understanding story phases, steps, devices, figures, and archetypes and the hero’s purpose and impact is highly useful. In addition to the aforementioned, Campbell helps understand the nature of and criteria for bringing the hero into full maturity towards fulfilling a purpose and having an impact on the world. Second, this adds a

good deal of value compared to contemporary references regarding story structure and heroic characters which tend to dilute later elements for the sake of simplicity or commercial appeal. With that in mind, such application answers the question: If you wanted to tell an epic, entertaining story that was also morally relevant, instructive, and encouraging, what would that look like?

There may be some debate regarding the ability to do so in a visual format that is entertaining, and economically productive let alone dynastic. Yet there is some precedent to suggest it is possible. The number of epic tales that have stretched over episodes, books, seasons, and films where the main character becomes a new person by benefit of initiation, departure, and return, complete with a sense of personal realization and benefit to society's purpose or needs, is relatively striking. Wherever we would fall on that debate we would first need the chalk line to describe in brief what the inherent story structure is. Similarly, what has been used, and what has been left on the table.

Third, it provides a life map. The phases, steps, figures, archetypes, and ideal end state of the hero and the hero's life rise out of a collective unconscious regarding what desires, limits, conditions, and aspirations speak to us. There is something strikingly relevant in this. Whether we live life merely as it occurs to us and it largely goes unexamined, whether we passively or proactively choose the status quo, whether we embark upon a journey, and what level of resolve we exhibit amid internal and external bludgeoning and refining towards maturity and purpose beyond self, the monomyth and the hero's journey explains what is required and what we 'get'. Correspondingly, if faltering or stopping at any point along the journey, it helps explain why. And, what we 'miss'. With that in mind, such application answers the question: If you wanted to become something, have a purpose in life, and be of service, what would that look like?

Third, it provides an understanding of spiritual development. For those who might object to the existence of a spiritual realm or prefer to subjectively define that portion of life on their own terms, the monomyth, hero's journey, and third phase regarding 'return' in particular, suggests such a denial to be on the spectrum of sophomoric to nonsense. Even from a secular perspective. The cadence, themes, purpose has simply repeated too often in too many ways to be anything other than centrally important. Even the most agnostic consideration of the hero's journey would still advocate a connection of physical and spiritual realms and a level of character development even short of informal faith or formalized religious tradition.

For those religious, the monomyth, hero's journey, and criteria of the truly heroic character gives some merit to understanding stories and figures in context of a timeless, recurring arc in addition to the literal truth believed to be contained in religious texts. To that end, compel religious mindset and activity rooted in authority, rules, ritual, and norming behavior towards more receptivity to centering on and receiving guidance from a holy presence. And objections regarding the same rather minimized by the realization that religious 'myth' is often the very best embodiment of an otherwise secular framework. Put simply, all truth is God's truth. For those already akin to such holy presence, it provides the understanding that that is the point of life – or at least of the hero's journey and a would-be hero – and that purpose is borne out, perhaps autonomically, in a great many myths, legends, and stories throughout all ages. With that in mind, such application answers the question: If I wanted a fully developed character and spirit for my own peace and towards impacting my world, what does that look like?

Conclusion

The Hero's Journey illustrates the nature of a hero. Following three phases with five to six steps each, most central is choosing and deciding to enter the unknown, face several kinds and levels of challenge, and to become better, whatever that may mean. With that in mind, the hero is both familiar and dissimilar to us. Familiar are his beginnings, circumstances, thoughts, and considerations while in a known setting. Dissimilar is his choice to leave 'the homestead' and, once away from it, persist amid challenge whether successful or not. That is, while the The Hero's Journey and the hero himself is an ideal, it is not

necessarily normal. As such, the psychological themes associated with choosing or refusing to answer a calling resonate strongly. Correspondingly, mindset represents a foundation to the hero who, again, must begin, persist, continue, and maintain balance to both get through and to maintain who he has become as a result of his journey.

The Hero's Journey travels along a linear line path while also operating on different levels. And, sometimes on several levels at once. These levels include subconscious, dream, individual, family, social, religion, and faith. Whatever level a myth or part of a myth plays out upon, there are four overarching areas of significance. First, the significance of individual internality. That is, how psyche, becoming, and being anew play out and play together. Second, the significance of key archetypes and how they serve as key influences. That is, any of the same can limit, drive forward, and even carry forward the hero. Similarly, they can represent or be a contrast to both general moral and specific social codes. Third, the significance of a consistent pattern. More specifically, the requirements needed to follow the path, what choices and decisions are involved, what the hero's experience of the journey and choices can be, and what the full benefit of having completed The Hero's Journey is. Fourth, the significance of the availability of the path. The Hero's Journey is simultaneously a possibility for everyone, available to all, and guaranteed for none. The Hero's Journey must be chosen as it is, again, not normal for anyone per se given human nature.

The Hero's Journey has unique implications and utility for story, life, and faith. Regarding story, the 'monomyth' indicates a clear end-to-end framework with the practicality of predictable phases and steps as well as considerable flexibility and variation among key influences and archetypes. At its simplest, it clarifies and illustrates how to tell an epic tale that is of both moral weight and universal appeal. Regarding life, the same structure is useful for consideration of what one may have been obligated to be, is currently being, or might intend to be or become in life. Correspondingly, understanding the influences and choices inevitably encountered, as well as one's own underlying desires and motivations, whether the same are seen or unseen, met or unmet, pursued or not pursued, is important for anyone's life. Regarding faith, the relevance of The Hero's Journey is just that. That story and life indicate that both extend beyond story and life itself. That is, The Hero's Journey indicates that transcendence, whether that concept is considered from a secular or spiritual perspective, is a very real thing. From a secular perspective, the monomyth uncovers a system of moral guidance that is otherwise not necessarily apparent or accepted in modern times. From a spiritual perspective, it helps deepen the understanding of stories well known in the spiritual texts of all major religions. That is, in addition to what believers deem to be authoritative truth and text indicating literal events, reflecting on the additional value and meaning in the metaphors and meta-narrative of otherwise 'material' text provides added richness to the stories in religious scripture.

Finally, while agreeing with the following is not necessary for taking wide and deep value from understanding and living The Hero's Journey, the consistent framework and pattern illustrated in the monomyth is perhaps not just a human creation that has been recently 'found' in and among great stories. Rather, it is easy to consider this framework, process, contingencies, and reactions among various 'forces' as a 'system' that is similar, if not identical to, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, or economics. That is, the 'monomyth', arising out of a 'collective unconscious', is a narrative 'system' that we could add to the other foundational, 'objective', repeatable, testable, definitions and descriptions of how our world 'works'. At a minimum, the The Hero's Journey is a system that reoccurs over and over again without any human force perpetuating it. At a maximum, it was created by the same central, benevolent being that created all the other systems even though the latter are more readily apparent, immediately observable, and measurable. With this supposition - 'monomyth' as God-breathed system - there is also some evidence to suggest that otherwise secular stories are, though in something of a dialectic manner, actually pointing to an authoritative and singular spiritual reality and source. More specifically, because the underlying structure of 'great' stories was perhaps imbued by the one who created us in His image. And, a means of drawing us to Him.

Again, we can agree or disagree with these latter suppositions and still take a great deal of value from understanding and living out a 'heroic' path. The more general point is that the framework or 'monomyth' is very deeply engrained in our psyche and societies. It provides an explanation 'why' we keep 'telling' stories 'like this'. For whatever reason, by whatever means, it is part of who we are.

INITIATION

Call to Adventure

Introduction

The call to adventure is the first step in the hero's journey. It involves hearing. It can occur in several ways. That is, the first step in the hero's initiation can be driven by or occur as a result of several starting mechanisms. First, he can hear a story. Second, he may be carried by an agent of some kind - benign or malignant - from point to point and, correspondingly, be carried out of either a stable or peerless existence. Third, the hero may blunder into a situation, scenario, or unseen portion of a known world that

he previously had not imagined. Fourth, as he matriculates through life, some sort of passing phenomenon may especially catch his or her eye.

Example – Fairy Tale

In the story of *The Princess and the Frog* we see several key tangible elements. This is an example of story beginning with a blunder. It also provides a sense of what those literal objects or devices symbolize. A ball, which is being pursued by a girl falls into a pond. Upon some casual investigation, the princess notices the pond to be a deep reservoir. As she is near the edge of the pond, a frog appears, begins to speak to her, and offers assistance. Here, the ball symbolizes something knowingly or unknowingly pursued. The pond represents an unknown realm, or a sudden awareness that there is a great deal more depth to a known realm. The frog serves as a herald indicating that a journey has or is about to begin.

Example - Dreams

In addition to various devices appearing in myth and stories, the same are common to dreams in daily life. Campbell periodically provides examples how the hero's journey - and associated steps, devices, and archetypes - are exhibited in our own psyche, not just in the stories a collective society creates and tells. As an example, during his dream, a man sees himself in an expanse of green pasture when eventually, on the way home, a woman points the way. Symbolically, and perhaps subconsciously, though currently in a bucolic setting which he knows well, a seemingly benevolent figure calls him forward to the unknown from his stable, known setting.

Symbols

Whatever the type of the call, the purpose and consequence is always the same. The purpose is rather singular; to begin to move forward. Regardless of the particular setting, circumstance, hero, stage of life, relative caste, historical age, geographic location, religious tradition involved, "the call rings up the curtain, always, on a mystery of transfiguration - a rite of moment, of spiritual passage, which when complete, amounts to a dying and a birth." (42-43). More specifically, there are some preliminary manifestations in the hero's life that are breaking into play and the same are, for the first time, to be considered by the hero.

Devices

The herald is the most central and key device. With the appearance of the merest crisis, the appearance of the herald marks the occurrence of a call. "Coming up as it were by miracle, can be termed the 'herald'; the crisis of his appearance is the 'call to adventure'." (42) As an aside, the herald is the first of many archetypes that will appear during *The Hero's Journey*. Serving as a symbol, "archetypal images are activated, symbolizing danger, reassurance, trial, passage, and the strange holiness of the mysteries of birth." (44) Other definitions of archetype are helpful as well. Webster's dictionary defines archetype as "the original pattern or model from which all things of the same kind are copied or on which they are based; a model, first form, or prototype." Similarly, in psychology, an archetype is termed "a collectively unconscious idea, pattern of thought, or image... universally present in the individual psyches."

A number of characteristics are common to heralds. First, they are very commonly veiled. Second, they may be dark, terrifying, and perhaps judged by the world. "The herald or announcer of the adventure, therefore, is often dark, loathly, or terrifying, judged evil by the world; yet if one could follow, the way would be opened through the walls of day into the dark where the jewels glow." (44) Naturally, this represents the unknown and the announcement of adventure. Third, the herald provides an obvious confirmation that the hero heard the calling. The fact that he did cannot now be denied. Fourth, the herald

is something to be feared. Or, perhaps indicates that there is something ahead to be feared, despite the fact that the hero is being drawn forward.

Significance

Regarding consequence, there is a degree of heightened awareness, sense of potential, and discomfort for the hero; “it marks what has been termed ‘the awakening of the self’,” like a whisper that is certainly heard but only softly so. (42) And, from a source which remains unknown. Despite the slowness of the moment of the call, the hero knows or notices something he previously had not. That often happens with a “blunder - apparently the merest chance - reveals an unsuspected world, and the individual is drawn into a relationship with forces that are not rightly understood.” Yet, despite an apparent blunder, there really is no blunder at all because the occurrence is “the result of repressed desires and conflicts. They are the ripples on the surface of life, produced by unsuspected springs. And these may be very deep - as deep as the soul itself.” (42)

Just as there is a duality to the hero’s transition - heightened awareness yet unfamiliarity, sense of discovery yet uncertainty - there is a duality in the nature of the herald as well. First, there is danger. That is, a general danger, in that he represents a constancy that is borne out of from having already come through danger. Similarly, in the way that the hero must enter the field of danger. Here, a ‘field’ of danger is apt word; the danger is indistinct. Second, the herald simultaneously gives – more than provides per se – a sense of reassurance. While there are trials approaching in the passage about to be pursued by the hero, whatever the danger – that of inner space, self-psychology, metaphysical, physical, spiritual development, religious – the danger is, strictly speaking, not quite yet here. Being forewarned gives at least some sense of preparedness.

Implications

With that in mind, the now-sensed unknown, from the hero’s perspective, and the herald, in serving a function and a symbol to a reader or audience are, again, representations of an unconscious deep. A “bottom that cannot be seen.” Further, and more optimistically stated, perhaps a glimpse of the holiness of a larger system. A foreshadow or inkling of movement from what must be rejected to move forward. That is, the hero must move away from his current state; whether in spite of or because of what is now known and towards what is unrecognized, unknown, or undeveloped.

While the aforementioned is the most common way the hero and herald interact or relate to each other, not every hero fears or is affected by the herald in the manner we have described above. In the case where a herald is not particularly threatening, where the moment associated with a call to adventure is unrecognized, or where the call to adventure is already spiritually familiar, the moment can become strangely emptied of value. In this case the hero returns to his normal environment. And, the environment the hero rejoins may be found to be more fruitful even when it was previously satisfying or rewarding. As such, some myths feature a hero that requires a series of signs that repeat the original call the hero before embarks upon a journey.

Another implication is that a hero’s ‘call’ may occur in different phases of life. An awakening of self typically occurs and, as is the case with fairy tales, is synonymous with adolescence. Other timings of awakening are religious and historical. “It may sound the call to some high historical undertaking. Or it may mark the dawn of religious illumination.” (42)

Amplification

Two quotes seem to capture the consistency of themes in the Call to Adventure and the variety of myths, tales, and stories in which the call is a first step. "Whether dream or myth, in these adventures there is an atmosphere of irresistible fascination about the figure that appears suddenly as a guide, marking a new period, a new stage, in the biography. That which has to be faced, and is somehow profoundly familiar to the unconscious - though unknown, surprising, and even frightening to the conscious personality - makes itself known." (46) As such, "The first stage of the mythological journey... signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown. This fateful region of both treasure and danger may be variously represented: as a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground, beneath the waves, or above the sky, a secret island, lofty mountain top, or profound dream state; but it is always a place of polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight."

Conclusion

The first step of The Hero's Journey, Call to Adventure, in the first phase, Initiation, sees the hero begin in familiar surroundings. In the 'homestead' he hears or senses, a call via some story, agent, event, or blunder. Here, the purpose is always the same - to move forward.

The key archetype is the 'herald', which appears at a crisis, even if the latter is merely a less dramatic, increased internal personal awareness for the hero. The herald is commonly veiled, judged, an outsider, or all of the same. Serving as an indication of the unknown and adventure, the herald confirms the hero has heard the call. Correspondingly, the significance of the herald is compelling the hero to center on his awakening, self awareness, and potential. Together, the hero and the herald symbolize the 'field' of danger - inner and outer - that is to come.

A number of implications of the Call to Adventure are apparent. First, the call itself represents the unconscious deep. More specifically, that the danger and uncertainty inherent in the field of danger to come is also neither ubiquitous nor prohibitive. Second, part of this system is its antagonizing of the hero to grow. More specifically, so that the hero can return to his previous environment with a benefit the latter would not otherwise have been benefit of. Third, some heroes do require multiple 'calls' to begin their journey. As such, the Call of Adventure can occur in different types of story and areas of life including, though not exclusively, adolescence, history, or religious illumination.

Refusal of the Call

Introduction

The second step in the hero's journey is the refusal of the call. It involves a pause. At this point, the call to adventure has occurred and cannot be denied. That is, the hero has heeded the call. However, that does not necessarily mean the call will be followed. As Campbell describes in the very first sentence of writing about this step, myth will often "encounter the dull case of the call unanswered, for it is always possible to turn to other interests." (49)

There are, again, various drivers of the pause or hesitation to respond to the call; it can be borne of "boredom, hard work, or 'culture'" that consumes the hero's effort. With that as a simple concept or

driver, the 'refusal' - as indicated by cases where culture serves as a restraint in some manner - can be rather existential or passive in nature. That is, a hero may not definitively or defiantly reject moving forward. Rather, he may be 'unable' to move forward out of conscious, known fear. Or, be a defacto environment of stability, and assumptions regarding the way things 'are'. Or, he may yet have engrained unconscious 'ways of being', that results in the hero 'failing' to move forward.

Example – Minos

The Greek myth of Minos is, at its simplest, about a king who refuses to sacrifice a bull to avoid what he perceives as a loss greater than the potential gain. In his refusal, and perhaps disobedience of a kind, he suffers his own guilt and punishment from a god, doomed to continuously navigate a maze. "Whatever house he builds, it will be a house of death: a labyrinth of cyclopean walls to hide him from his Minotaur. All he can do is create new problems for himself and await the gradual approach of his disintegration." (49)

Though the story itself is a secular myth, it has some religious connotation. Minos' self-imposed plight is a result of retaining, instead of sacrificing, a divine bull. "When the sacrifice would have signified submission to the will of the god of his society; for he preferred what he conceived to be his economic advantage." Thus he "failed to advance into the life-role" that he was to assume and "the will of God, the power that would destroy one's egocentric system, becomes a monster." (50) As a result, the hero is "harassed, both day and night, by the divine being that is the image of the living self within the locked labyrinth of one's own disoriented psyche." (50)

Example – Apollo

"In the Greek myth of Apollo, the latter is a deity pursuing a fleeing maiden, Daphne, for her benefit and would-be calling." Continually fleeing his pursuit, she eventually tires. The god figure, Apollo, slows his pursuit, and she transfigures into a tree with brown, unfruitful leaves. As a tree she eventually becomes fruitful enough that Apollo "named the laurel his favorite tree and ironically recommended it's leaves to the fashioners of victory wreaths." However, she had nonetheless "retreated to the image of her parent and there found protection." (52) Therefore, in comparison to a more complete calling, she lives short of her purpose. Like a tree, she now fixed in place.

Example - Psychology

Real-world examples in psychology and psychotherapy are apparent as well. Here, 'fixation' is also the central concept. What a fixation represents "is an impotence to put off the infantile ego, with its sphere of emotional relationships and ideals. One is bound by childhood; the father and mother stand as threshold guardians, and the timorous soul, fearful of some punishment, fails to make the passage through the door and come to birth in the world without." (52). Naturally, psychology is abundant with examples; we might become (unknowingly) or choose (knowingly) to fixate on any number of things that hold us back.

Devices

Upon a would-be hero's refusal, "the summons converts the would-be adventure into its negative" and "the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved." (49) In a lack of action, the hero experiences a corresponding feeling of meaninglessness; "His flowering world becomes a wasteland of dry stones, and his life feels meaningless."

Some stories also convey a degree of mocking from a character or voice near the hero to mark the latter's condition. As an example from one myth rooted in a religious tradition, a character observing the

would-be hero's refusal remarks, "Dread the passage of Jesus, for he does not return." Naturally, it is quite something to suggest that, for having failed to move forward, even a graceful Messiah would therefore somehow return less favor. Naturally, we are meaning this as an illustration of a device used in myth and story, not as a categorical doctrinal statement.

Significance

The symbolic or inner nature of refusal is somewhat intuitive at this point. "The myths and folktales of the whole world make clear that the refusal is essentially a refusal to give up what one takes to be one's own interest. The future is regarded not in terms of an unremitting series of deaths and births, but as though one's present system of ideals, virtues, goals, and advantages were to be fixed and made secure." (49)

The core of the refusal of the call is that the hero is bound, fearing punishment or loss in excess of the possible reward of moving forward and entering the unknown realm. Some brief examples are apparent in religious tradition as well. In general, the case of a son or daughter who refuses to marry an assigned suitor is a common image. In the Quran, the Persians were all enstoned after they refused the call of Allah. Similarly, in the Bible, Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt after looking back toward the homestead which she was called away from by God. Similarly, the Jewish nation - "a stiff-necked people" - were locked in nomadic travels in the desert despite God's favor in bringing them out of slavery through Moses' leadership.

Implications

Given the mention in the previous quote, it is worth understanding what role the 'homestead' (e.g. culture, father, mother) may play in a hero's refusal of the call. In short, any of these, or a combination of them, can and often do serve as limiting forces. A pervading culture can obligate the hero to, or prohibit the hero from mindsets or actions that would take them away from an established environment or ethos. With that in mind, fathers, mothers, and institutions can function, or leave an effect, in this regard. That said, those dynamics will be discussed later, as father and mother in particular play a seminal role the 'Departure' phase of The Hero's Journey.

At this point in his journey, it is sufficient to understand that the hero may contend with existing influences of his own accord and prefer them, the environment they represent, or some element of the same over responding to a call. That is, the hero may refuse the call out of relatively simple preference - understood or not. The hero's preference - or deference we might say - can be borne of an institution's passive limitation or an institution's overt obligation. In a case of perceived obligation, father, mother, or the hero himself might simply be restrained by nature of the inertia of a 'protective' cultural norm. That is, "its sphere of emotional relationships and ideals." (52) In an overt case, a parent or parents might provide direct constraint where "the father and mother stand as threshold guardians." (52)

Amplification

At its simplest, the 'refusal' can be a reflection that brings about a realization. "It cannot be described, quite, as an answer to any specific call. Rather, it is a deliberate, terrific refusal to respond to anything but the deepest, highest, richest answer to the as-yet-unknown demand of some wanting void within." That is, a temporary 'refusal', can be to advance, locate, or come to greater clarity.

Just as a refusal of the call can be due to preference, passive, or direct constraint, it can also be something of a proactive choice. Or, an obvious pro-active choice of the hero. While "some of the victims remain spellbound forever (at least, so far as we are told)," it is also the case that "others are destined to be saved." (53). Here, the point to be seen is, "Not all who hesitate are lost. The psyche has many secrets in

reserve.” (53) So, even in the case of “obstinate refusal” we see it can indeed serve a purpose. “Willed introversion, in fact, is one of the classic implements of creative genius and can be employed as a deliberate device.” In that case, the purpose and utility is to drive “psychic energies into depth and activate the lost continent of unconscious infantile and archetypal images.” The result is to serve as “a disintegration of consciousness more or less complete... and integrate the new forces [which] there will be experienced at an almost super-human degree of self-consciousness and masterful control.” (53).

Conclusion

The second step in the Initiation phase, Refusal of the Call, involves a pause. The call is normally heard and heeded. However, while some follow it immediately, or in a timely manner, others hesitate. Here, the main ‘causes’ for the hero’s ‘refusal’ - or his ‘reasons’ for refusing the call - seen or unseen, are culture or fear. Typically, the center of a hero’s refusal is a psychological fixation; by nature of the mother or father there is something the hero must or must not do.

The key archetype or device is less obvious in this step than in others. That said, the central point is that the summons of the call converts the would-be adventure into a negative. Or at least sees the hero be passive for the moment. To that end, the court jester’s inconsequential mocking and the devil’s active temptation of Jesus in the desert are medieval and religious examples, respectively, as a ‘voice’ that contributes to the hero stopping. The significance of the refusal is one’s own interest. More specifically, not yet being ready to give up an image of oneself, yet being present to the fear of punishment for leaving the homestead, or intrepidation regarding the uncertain future.

Several implications of the Refusal of the Call are apparent. First, the strong influence that the ‘homestead’ holds. Second, the formative influence of culture, ideas, and norms, particularly as they relate to creating and ensuring a stable reality. Third, the influence of mother and father in that they - as individuals and an institution - serve as powerful restraints, for better or worse. Fourth, the point is not that any of these influences or restraints are inherently completely good or bad. Rather, what the refusal and the institutions’ or figures’ influence more generally symbolize is the power of the dynamics of an established environment, ethos, or combination of the two, on the hero, his considerations, and actions. Fifth, that these may well be a passive consideration for the hero and very difficult indeed to uncover. Finally, key influences, constraints, and restraints may be known or unknown to him and may be protective, obligatory, or both.

Supernatural Aid

Introduction

In this step, the hero continues on his journey, finally not refusing. Here, the hero encounters a protective figure, who provides an amulet - an element, tool, magic formula, process, or saying - to assist his passage against forces that will be met with, challenge, or resist the hero on his journey.

Example – American Indian

The American Indian myth of the spider woman provides an example of a supernatural aid. A great mother, she calls forward smoke in her subterranean hold and welcomes children who are seeking their father. “Then she said: ‘Perhaps you would seek your father?’ ‘Yes’, they answered, ‘if we only knew the way to his dwelling.’ ‘Ah!’, said the woman, ‘it is a long and dangerous way to the house of your father, the sun’.” (58) Going on, the spider woman indicates what obstacles or challenges lie ahead. “You must

pass four places of danger - the rocks that crush the traveler, the reeds that cut him to pieces, the cane cactuses that tear him to pieces, and the boiling sands that overwhelm him.” (58) In addition to the conceptual clarity of what lies ahead, she also provides a tool to help navigate the challenges. “She gave to them a charm called ‘feather of the alien gods’” as well as a “magic formula,” a process involving placing hands, head, and feet in pollen in an assigned sequence.

Devices

A supernatural aid can be male or female. Female forms are commonly a fairy godmother, as in European-based myth, fairytales, or stories. A virgin figure is common in religious stories, particularly if rooted in Christianity, whether by cultural influence or if literally religious in nature. “The helpful crone and fairy godmother is a familiar feature of European fairy lore; in Christian saints’ legends the role is commonly played by the Virgin.” Examples of the latter include Dante’s character Beatrice and Goethe’s character of Gretchen, Helen of Troy. In nearly every case, the female aid is protective in nature. Not just in that she provides an amulet the hero can retain and take with him but, in addition, and in a more significant manner, offers some calming emotional or existential support and cannot herself be hurt. There is often a sort of peaceful impenetrability, the constancy of which is encouraging to the hero. That is, the female supernatural aid is, in a sense, sending the hero out further into the world, further away from dependency, similar to how a mother does at the time of birth.

Male figures have a wider range of characteristics. That said, there are still two general types – what we might call ‘simple’ types in ‘low’ culture tales and semi-religious types in comparatively ‘high’ culture. ‘Simple’ examples tend to occur in “fairy tale lore” where “it may be some little fellow of the wood, some wizard, hermit, shepherd, or smith, who appears, to supply the amulets and advice that the hero will require.” (59) Meanwhile, “higher mythologies develop the role in the great figure of the guide, the teacher, the ferryman, the conductor of souls to the afterworld.” (60) Brief examples include Hermes or Mercury in classic myth, Thoth the ibis god in Egyptology, and the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit in Christianity. The latter is often more complex, its benevolence comparatively opaque and, in some cases, rather menacing. “Not infrequently the dangerous aspect of the ‘mercurial’ figure is stressed; for he is the lurer of the innocent soul into realms of trial.” (60)

Significance & Implication

The supernatural aid occurs as two genders and two types in any particular story. The metaphor is, of course, the same. “What such a figure represents is the benign, protecting power of destiny. The fantasy is a reassurance - a promise that the peace of Paradise, which was known first in within the mother’s womb, is not to be lost.” That is, “it supports the present and stands in the future as well as in the past (is omega and alpha).” In the manner the hero is initiating and having left a familiar environment of whatever kind, the female aid symbolizes progressing from the womb, out of being lost to found, from present the future.

The sending matched with an amulet and reassurance calms and emboldens the hero. Though he “may seem to be endangered by the threshold passages and life awakenings, protecting power is always and ever present within the sanctuary of the heart and even immanent within, or just behind, the unfamiliar features of the world.” (59) Therefore, if the hero can merely trust in this sense as those challenges eventually manifest “One has only to know and trust, and the ageless guardians will appear. Having responded to his own call, and continuing to follow courageously as the consequences unfold, the hero finds all the forces of the unconscious at his side.” (59)

Amplification

As an archetype, the supernatural aid has a fairly obvious duality. Male and female instantiations serve the same purpose; to provide a greater awareness and confidence early, just prior to the next step in The Hero's Journey - Crossing the Threshold. In short, a male supernatural aid is "protective and dangerous, motherly and fatherly at the same time." That is he serves to illustrate to the audience and prompt the hero the "supernatural principle of guardianship and direction that unites in itself all the ambiguities of the unconscious - thus signifying the support of our conscious personality by that other, larger system, but also the inscrutability of the guide that we are following, to the peril of our rational ends." (60) We could say it does not make sense for the hero to move forward. He is aware of protection and danger, conscious and subconscious. Regardless, he continues on his journey.

Of course, there are a few key requirements in a hero's path, or in a story structured as such. First, the "hero to whom such a helper appears is typically one who has responded to the call. The call, in fact, was the first announcement of the approach of his initiatory priest." (61) That is, to receive aid, the hero must first have heard and, though temporarily, refused the call. And, just as the hero might have not progressed through those steps, it is possible that the hero 'fails' to move forward through this step too." "Even to those who apparently have hardened their hearts the supernatural guardian may appear; for, as we have seen; 'Well is Allah to save'." (61) That is, the supernatural aid – perhaps not unlike a terrestrial representation of the hegemonic deity that is the authoritative center of one's faith - has to be acknowledged and trusted for the hero to continue on his journey.

Conclusion

In the third step of the Initiation phase, Supernatural Aid, the hero encounters a protective figure who provides an 'amulet'. Though not immediately assisting his passage, the mere presence is encouraging as is the amulet for merely having received something. Further, the aid's explanation that the amulet may be used as whatever kind of tool, perhaps for some specific function or purpose in the future, provides the hero meaningful reassurance regarding his passage of the path that lies ahead. More specifically, even though the nature and specifics of the same are certainly yet unknown to him.

The key archetype, the supernatural aid itself, is extremely commonplace in myths of all kinds. Typically appearing as a fairy godmother, virgin, and the like a female figure is, more generally, a representation of the underlying characteristics of peacefulness and consistency. Correspondingly, moments of fantasy may accompany encountering the aid or amulet and are indicative of reassurance, peace, and promise the hero needs at the moment. Male examples, though less common, are apparent as well and show wider characteristics. 'Simple' figures occur in 'lower' cultures and folk tales appearing as a fellow of the wood, hermit, shepherd, and the like. In 'higher' culture, religious stories, or those with 'deeper' context, the aid appears as a teacher, ferryman, conductor of the underworld. For example, Hermes in Greek, Mercury in Roman, and the Holy Spirit in Christian 'myth' are notably more complex and have an element of darkness or conviction in comparison to 'simpler' culture and figures.

A number of implications of The Supernatural Aid are apparent. First, a supernatural aid is indeed present and benign. The hero is not alone even amid his departure. Second, the aid represents the protecting power of destiny. Third, the amulet represents some assurance of the hero's own agency. That is, that he will not be overcome by challenges that lie ahead. Seemingly an element of self protection or self determination, it is a symbol of a gift from an all- or, at least, more-knowing figure from which there is a sense a great adventure-challenging and life-bestowing path lies ahead.

With that in mind, this all more generally symbolizes that the innate, inner desire, for the all-encompassing, providing, protecting, and caring seminal experience of the mother's womb – whether literal or ideal – is not forever lost.

Crossing the First Threshold

Introduction

In this step the hero physically and psychologically progresses. It is about moving forward decisively. More specifically, if the previous step was about movement, here the hero makes the choice to continue, entering the unknown not just recognizing and considering it. Immediately prior to or as he enters the unknown, the hero is met, if not confronted, by a gatekeeper. “With the personifications of his destiny to guide and aid him, the hero goes forward in this adventure until he comes to the ‘threshold guardian’ at the entrance to the zone of magnified power.” (64)

The threshold guardian is even more central in comparison to the previous archetypes, necessary though they are. In particular, because he most obviously, clearly, and decisively marks the hero’s transition from his established environment (physical setting) and ethos (mindset) into the unknown. More specifically, the guardian marks the hero’s progression in two ways. First, in life so far. “The folk mythologies populate with deceitful and dangerous presences every desert place” as a distinction from “the normal

traffic of the village.” (64) Second, there is some indication of what lies ahead. “Such custodians bound the world in the four directions - also up and down - standing for the limits of the hero’s sphere, or life horizon. Beyond them is darkness, the unknown, and danger; just beyond the parental watch is danger to the infant and beyond the protection of his society danger to the member of the tribe.” (64)

Here, the hero is not necessarily so very special; his progression is naturally apparent in real life. First, any person could be said to be, in a sense, entering the unknown when separating from the womb at birth. Then, from mother after infancy. And, from parents in or at the conclusion of adolescence. Second, the threshold guardian also indicates the hero’s progression into the beyond. And, that the hero has stepped into it of his own choice. In this manner, the hero is indeed unique due to these two criteria because “The usual person is more than content, he is even proud, to remain within the indicated bounds, and popular belief gives him every reason to fear so much as the first step into the unexplored.” (64)

Example - Historical

This crossing and passage is illustrated in history and various folk tales. Christopher Columbus’ voyage to find a new trade route that culminated in discovery of a ‘new world’ is emblematic of The Hero’s Journey and this step, Crossing the Return Threshold. And, not in just departing his home country of Spain and venturing into an unknown realm. He was also “breaking the horizon of the medieval mind - sailing as they thought into the boundless ocean of immortal being that surrounds the cosmos.” Correspondingly, Columbus is emblematic of the hero since his sailors “had to be coaxed and urged on like children, because of the fear of the fabled leviathans, mermaids, dragon kings, and other monsters of the deep.” (64)

Example – South Africa

The Honentots - an indigenous peoples of South Africa - describe an ogre, normally hunting men in packs, whose eyes are on its instep. As such, the ogre is both necessarily “always looking up,” which is something of a symbol of positive or divine influence. (65) The ogre also represents a threat to the hero given its intent to stop or destroy him. Yet, when uniquely orienting his body, the ogre can see abnormally far distances, indicating a usefulness along the hero’s path in general and a specific help at this point towards crossing the threshold.

Devices

With that general function, purpose, and symbolism in mind, there are also two specific modes in which the threshold guardian may operate.

First, regarding physical attraction, union, and movement towards or into marriage. That is, more colorfully put, “libido and patricidal destrudo are thence reflected back against the individual and his society in forms suggesting threats of violence and fancied dangerous delight - not only as ogres but also as sirens of mysteriously seductive, nostalgic beauty.” (65) This is “to illustrate the libidinous association of the dangerous impish ogre with the principle of seduction.” (66) One example of this is the Russian folk tale of the Water Grandfather. An “adroit shape shifter,” he is in full command of the water domain, commonly coaxes women to him, and is known to “drown people who swim at midnight or at noon.” Yet, he is not strong ashore, is easily discovered there since water oozes from his cloak and, when “in a favorable temper,” brings warning of floods, conspicuously good fishing, and the possibility of romance with young fairies that congregate with him. (66)

Second, the threshold guardian may operate to initiate psychological readiness. Here, “The Arcadian god Pan is best known Classical example of this dangerous presence dwelling just beyond the protected zone of the village boundary.” (66) Pan was the inventor of a pipe “which he played for the dances of the nymphs” amid his male companions. Here, the etymology of Pan in the modern word panic is apt. That is pan-ic; of or pertaining to Pan. “The emotion that he instilled in human beings who by accident adventured into his domain was ‘panic’ fear: a sudden, groundless fright.” (66) That is, the slightest trigger would have a normal person attempting to escape his own wildly aroused unconscious. In contrast, a person who successfully navigates or pleases Pan would find themselves bestowed with great favor in their vocation (e.g. farmer, shepherd, fisherman), along with accompanying wisdom. As an aside, continuing in Classic myth, Pan even plays a role in Apollo’s favorable interaction with the Oracle at Delphi.

Symbols & Significance

With that in mind, the symbolic significance of the threshold guardian is now fairly intuitive. Its presentation in a myth or story and representation as a symbol “brings out the sense of the first, or protective, aspect of the threshold guardian.” “One had better not challenge the watcher of established bounds. And yet - it is only by advancing beyond those bounds, provoking the other, destructive aspect of the same power, that the individual passes, either alive or in death, into a new zone of experience.” (67) The hero is in a sense a dreamer. He is present to that in which he is rooted. Yet, he is pressing on to, well, something to be pressed on toward.

Here, at least one example of this in myth and a culture’s etymology is apparent. “In the language of the pigmies of the Andaman Islands, the word oko-jumu” means “dreamer, one who speaks from dreams.” The word “designates those highly respected and feared individuals who are distinguished from their fellows by the possession of supernatural talents, which can be acquired only by meeting with the spirits - directly in the jungle, through extraordinary dream, or by death and return.” Further, “The adventure is always and everywhere a passage beyond the veil of the known into the unknown.” (67)

Implications

The main implication of Crossing the Threshold is that a hero can come to this point and still fail. Myth and stories “illuminate the ambiguities of this perplexing pass and show how, though the terrors will recede before a genuine psychological readiness, the overbold adventurer beyond his depth may be shamelessly undone.” One oriental tale depicts an example of an ill-navigating hero’s demise. A caravan leader with a large and “richly loaded” series of carts encounters an ogre who convinces him that an approaching forest, which the leader can even see, is rife with available water. As such, the leader can and should lighten his load by dumping his mass of stored water to facilitate a smoother journey. Foolishly, he takes the suggestion. He later perishes in the desert along with his entire caravan and the ogre and his band steal all the leader and caravan’s possessions.

One of the most dramatic examples of success within the Crossing the First Threshold step illustrates third mode in which the threshold guardian can serve - in a spiritual and religious manner. Consider, the oriental story of Prince Five-Weapons. Having completed his military studies with a renowned teacher, the prince accepts five weapons. Starting on the road leading to the city of his father, he is warned of a massive ogre, Sticky-hair, in the forest ahead. As he comes upon the ogre, the prince displays a unique confidence, telling the ogre “I knew what I was about when I entered this forest.” (70) Multiple attacks ensue and the prince is eventually completely ensnared. “But for all that, he was unafraid, undaunted” and the ogre “thought: ‘this is some lion of a man, some man of noble birth - no mere man’.” (72) Though the prince’s expended all five of his weapons, he continues to fight.

The hero clarifies why. His real strength is from within and he knows it. "Ogre, why should I be afraid? For in one life one death is absolutely certain... I have in my belly a thunderbolt for a weapon... if you eat me... it will tear your insides to tatters... That's why I'm not afraid." Here, the religious and spiritual significance is made obvious; the lightning "was referring to the Weapon of Knowledge that was within him" and "this young hero was none other than the Future Buddha." So, "Sticky-hair was subdued only when the Future Buddha, no longer protected by the five weapons of his momentary name and physical character, resorted to the unnamed, invisible sixth: the divine thunderbolt of the knowledge of the transcendent principle, which is beyond the phenomenal realm of names and forms." (73)

With that in mind, the most significant expression of a hero's strength is often in religious stories, which commonly involve, faith, trust in self, trust in a power beyond self, and an initial transformation of a kind. Or, at least some manifested supernatural power upon the hero himself.

Conclusion

The fourth step in the Initiation phase, Crossing the First Threshold, is about decisive forward movement. More specifically, both a physical and psychological progression of the hero. Here, the purpose is to clearly mark the hero's progression, just beginning though it is, and that he is seeming fully engaged in pursuing his course. The hero has left home, is fully in the 'unknown' and has 'broken from' the 'homestead'.

The key archetype is a gatekeeper or threshold guardian, who the hero encounters just before making a mental consideration or physical passing into a region that is completely unknown to him. With that in mind, two groups of devices are most common - one physical, one psychological. Physical devices orient on woman, attraction, and movement toward marriage. Correspondingly, colorful familial or external resistance and chases can occur. This is symbolic of the fundamental underlying maturation and transformation of the internal psyche to be able to navigate and afford one's self such a relationship. Psychological devices play out via questioning, doubt, negotiation, and pursuit in order to test the hero's ability to continue. For example, the myth Pan, from which the word pan-ic comes, sees the hero being tested by a state of undirected, frenetic energy, rising out his fright of circumstance or consequence.

A number of implications of Crossing the Threshold are apparent. First, it is a clear indication that even a hero, and perhaps especially a hero, ought not venture too far without preparation. Second, this is because though challenge is a part of coming alive and 'becoming' something anew, death may also follow for the 'uninitiated'. Third, with that in mind, the story will have come to a point where the hero can fail. Fourth, the hero does normally pass, whether as a matter of course or by showing some early unique capability. That is, for the myth to serve some purpose to the culture or audience, the story must continue.

With that in mind, this all more generally symbolizes a set of archetypes or central figures serving a protective and instructive purpose to prepare the hero to present himself to purposeful difficulty. Correspondingly, whatever the setting, archetypes, devices, or outcome, the cumulative symbol and is the same. The manner in and depth to which the hero develops is a function of internal not external strength.

Belly of the Whale

Introduction

In this step, the environment he has crossed into consumes the hero. It is about 'dissolution of self'. After the hero crosses the first threshold, the hero is subsumed by his surroundings in some manner and, per the nomenclature for this step in The Hero's Journey, often swallowed by a large animal. The hero, "instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died." (74) While this is an obvious physical challenge, it also represents descent into an abyss of a kind; separating from his ego, further centering his character on or deepening his spiritual development. "The idea that the passage of the magical threshold is a transit into a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale." (74)

Examples - Brief

A number of examples illustrate the physical swallowing, imply dissolution, and though not seen in this step, perhaps rebirth. The Zulu people tell a story of a mother and two children who are swallowed by an elephant to find a world of "large forests and great rivers, and many high lands" inside. The Eskimo of the Bering Strait have a story of Raven, a trickster hero, who sees a whale cow close to shore and flies with "fire sticks under his arm," into a whale's mouth. (74) In Greek mythology, Herakles finds the city of Troy being harassed by a sea monster "sent against it by the sea-god Poseidon," which devours people if

they approach the coast. The king has even bound his daughter, Hesitone, to the rocks as a sacrifice. Eventually, as the monster breaks to the surface, Herakles “took a dive into the throat, cut his way out through the belly, and left the monster dead.” (75) Finn MacCool, an Irish hero, is “swallowed by a monster of indefinite form.” (74) Finally, Red Riding Hood is swallowed by a wolf in the German fairy tale of the same name.

Devices

Finally, like the whale and cathedral represent the dissolution of the self, there are examples in story, history, religion, and life where an individual literally severs a portion of themselves as a literal rite of passage for the individual or the symbolic passage of a figure remembered. In story, “the physical body of the hero may actually be slain, dismembered, and scattered” as a symbolic act. In Phrygia, a pine tree is cut down, brought to the sanctuary of a goddess, the believed resurrected savior Attis. A high priest and other clergy draw and render blood amid wild dancing. In Quilacare, a south Indian province, a king would ritually bathe, use sharp knives to sever nose, ears, and lips until faint and finally would cut his throat. More acceptable, less injurious, religious examples are apparent as well. In particular, the act of circumcision in the Old Testament of the Bible is a part of a covenant which previous oriented on animal sacrifice as a means of atoning for sins. Similarly, communion in the New Testament, and as a practice continued in the Christian church, represents Jesus, the Messiah’s, physical and symbolic death on the cross just as Jesus said some days before indicates “this is my body broken for you...”

Purpose of Myth

As an aside, we can also now state something that we have previously implied but was not fully apparent. The Hero’s Journey is useful in three ways; as a framework and map for story structure, a structure that can be used in life to reflect upon or follow, and as a path pointing towards the need and means of spiritual formation and development. Further, and because, it is embodied in the myths and stories of every age, geography, and religious tradition - from primitive, tribal, Classic myth, medieval, fairy tale, contemporary, and in the major religions of the West, East, and Middle East, it is a powerful force in our psyche. Regarding the latter in particular, even if we are unaware of the desire and have no material intent, metaphysical awareness, or religious faith to speak of.

While being physically swallowed by a beast is the primary story element it can be extended to several other physical acts and metaphors. In particular, whether being swallowed into the belly of a whale, being subsumed by environment, entering into a void physically or psychologically, entering into the open architecture of a temple or cathedral, all are a step towards greater spiritual awareness or development, and into a clearing of sorts for the sake of new possibility or ‘way of being’.

Naturally, we can legitimately consider these to be all separate devices, evolutions, and purposes. However, we can equally legitimately - and the point here is that myths and stories commonly do - conflate or combine them. That is, a myth can operate or be ‘taken’ on a single level at this moment or step. Similarly, story can focus on this step, dwelling on it for some time, as in the modern adventure, epic, or ‘chase’ sequence might. However, in The Hero’s Journey framework, and in great myths and stories in particular - which is to say those written for the sake of moral development - this step most commonly operates on all three ‘levels’ (physical, psychological, spiritual) at the same time.

Symbols & Significance

Campbell offers a number of quotes that help unpack this further. More specifically, the quotes occur in close proximity with each other, explaining the progressive symbolism in and similarities between both the simple, binary and the spiritual endeavor of entering the unknown. “The temple interior, the belly of

the whale, and the heavenly land beyond, above, and below the confines of the world, are one and the same.” (77) The whale and passage into a temple or cathedral are similar; both are the ‘hero’ in a ‘void’. “This popular motif gives emphasis to the lesson that that passage of the threshold is a form of self-annihilation... instead of passing outward, beyond the confines of the visible world, the hero goes inward, to be born again.” (77)

It is apparent the hero is, in a physical sense, overwhelmed and perhaps losing. There is an apparent crisis. However, when looking closely, the hero is merely entering an opening or clearing for which he does not yet know the exit. Or, perhaps if there will be an exit at all. “Allegorically, then the passage into a temple and the hero-dive through the jaws of the whale are identical adventures, both denoting, in the picture language, the life-centering, life-renewing act.” (77) The apparent losing is ultimately not for loss or a real loss. Rather, it is a gain in the form of a significant developmental step.

Further, the belly of the whale and the temple or cathedral are dangerous, or at least reasonable cause for trepidation, in that “they are the preliminary embodiments of the dangerous aspect of the presence corresponding to the mythological ogres that bound the conventional world.” (77) The ‘whale’ in story, as the ‘ogre’ before it, is representative of the risk and psychological tax involved with leaving the homestead. Or in part at least; leaving the restraining but not all characteristics of the ethos one has, knowingly or not, inherited. They also represent the notion of internal transformation being more important than, and a precursor for, external strength. “They illustrate the fact that the devotee at the moment of the entry into the temple undergoes a metamorphosis. His secular character remains without; he sheds it as a snake its slough. Once inside he may be said to have died to time and returned to the World Womb, the World Navel, the Earthly Paradise.” (77)

Implications

As the last quote implies, this being swallowed applies to and is seen in real life as well. It is necessary the hero to become more in story. And, the whale-temple analogy functions for us as well. Campbell relates of Ananda Coomaraswamy’s writings, “No creature can attain a higher grade of nature without ceasing to exist.” Bringing the spiritual tone back to a tangible, physical experience in life, Campbell remarks, “That is why the approaches of and the entrances to temples are flanked and defended by gargoyles: dragons, lions, devil slayers with drawn swords, resentful dwarves, winged bulls. These are the threshold guardians to ward away all incapable of encountering the higher silence within.”

As a hero in myth, or an individual in real life, enters the temple, cathedral, or place of worship, a “disappearance corresponds to the passing.” The hero or individual “is to be quickened by the recollection of who and what he is, namely dust and ashes unless immortal. The loss experienced is not physical, as in being eaten, but by a ‘loss’ of comparatively fragile ego.” (77) Further, for those that are particularly successful, the “hero whose attachment to the ego is already annihilate[ed] passes back and forth across the horizons of the world, in and out of the dragon, as readily as a king through all the rooms of his house... And therein lies his power to save; for his passing and returning demonstrate that through all the contraries of phenomenality the Uncreate-Imperishable remains, and there is nothing to fear.” (78)

Of course, it is always possible for a hero to fail to, or merely not successfully navigate, this step. “The mere fact that anyone can physically walk past the temple guardians does not invalidate their significance; for if the intruder is incapable of encompassing the sanctuary, he has effectually remained without. Anyone unable to understand a god sees it as a devil and is thus defended from the approach.” (77) If the hero does not dare, or does not come upon the opportunity, to be consumed in some manner, he is unlikely or necessarily unable to continue along a hero’s path.

Again, here myths, stories, primitive practices, and religious sacraments are showing that becoming 'less' of 'self' is the path of the hero. Rather than, as a 'reasonable' person might contend, to further one's own strength or power alone.

Conclusion

In the fifth and final step of the Initiation phase, Belly of the Whale, the environment consumes the hero even to the point of having appeared to have died. In particular, often falling into or being seemingly swallowed by a large animal, this moment appears to be a likely fatal demise. Plunging deeper into a void, the inner workings of the mind, or both as is often the case, this is an opportunity for and indication of the hero's spiritual passage.

There is not quite an archetype per se in The Belly of Whale though several devices correspond to the historical time, geography, or culture in which a story is occurring. Or, more specifically, which the myth is written for. Primitive examples center on a ceremony or process involving bloodletting or severing of a portion of the body. More common, and somewhat corresponding to classical and modern literature, is a creature large enough to consume a human with little difficulty or notice. For example, a whale, of course. Lastly, a cathedral where the cavernous space is less arresting or tumultuous, yet the large open, undefined space serves the same purpose. In each instance there is a loss of context and loss of self - literally or figuratively - as the 'void' creates a complete separation from internal and external worlds. Here the central significance is to compel, if resistant and unready, or allow the hero if more ready, to 'center' his life.

A number of implications of The Belly of the Whale are apparent. First, the self annihilation, decent, and void are one in the same. Actively or as a matter of circumstance, the hero is more deeply allowing, or being forced, to let go of his former self. Second, physically overwhelmed, in apparent crisis, and perhaps losing, the same realities or experiences become less trying when the hero becomes present to that fact that his exit is not impossible, merely not known. Third, while any myth or story relates the falling or descent as something that 'happens' to the hero, it is ultimately willingly done. Fourth, analogous to the active resistance of an ogre, a would-be defeat is overcome by the hero. More specifically, not by physical strength but by acknowledgment of the circumstance and his psychological strength. Fifth, correspondingly, if the hero goes into the void of the temple or cathedral for consideration by his own choice, the hero will still not have come out exactly the same.

With that in mind, this all more generally symbolizes that the physical event and experience of the hero is a metaphor for the psychological and metaphysical progression of the hero. That loss of context - therefore, descending into fearful experience - is required to realize or pursue a new way of being. With that in mind, the void itself is just an opening and nothing in particular. Here, a presence of mind eventually, or rather quickly, occurs to the hero. So, the hero is consumed, yes. However, also merely in a void and not necessarily in a worse state per se. This indicates to the hero and symbolizes that the former self must cease to exist in order to become anew. And, whatever dangers seem to surround or enclose the hero, he will get out.

DEPARTURE

The Road of Trials

Introduction

The 'difficult tasks' motif is seemingly ever present in myths, legends, and stories. This step is about miraculous tests and ordeals. That said, there is also some variation regarding how much the step or motif comprises of a given tale. In some stories, the road of trials receives rather cursory focus, giving more attention to one or a couple figures or archetypes. In others, the work may be dominated in good part by continuous, escalating, or cataclysmic physical challenges. The latter often suggest an internal or spiritual realization while also offering much briefer exposition and symbolism than those involving multiple or successively and all of the steps and major archetypes. Similarly, the series of trials can be overt or covert. That is, the influence of an archetype can be direct and observed. Or, it may be a comparatively opaque influence of sorts. That is, perhaps real and literal but not seen or merely an idea.

With that in mind, a series of quotes help illustrate how The Road of Trials as a step provides some perspective on the whole of the Departure phase. "Having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials." (81) In parallel, the hero is "covertly aided by the advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper whom he met before his entrance into this region of the unknown." (81) With the beginning of this new phase, initiation, the hero's descent is slower than the in the previous initiation phase and during the belly

of the whale encounter, the last step of the first phase. However, the descent is also deeper and more significant. As a part of the deepening of his character or purpose, the hero “discovers for the first time that here is a benign power everywhere supporting him in his supernatural passage.” (81)

As an aside, there are a number of key archetypes in the road of trials. Each is a would-be step in the initiation phase, each of which will be discussed further in following chapters. Though not all these key figures of archetypes appear in all myths – even religious texts which have a direct moral intent or significance – most appear in most myths.

Examples from classic literature, primitive legend, semi-religious tale, and real-life dreams are apparent.

Example – Greek Mythology

The myth of Psyche and Cupid represents an example of the road of trials in classic myth. “Psyche’s voyage to the underworld is but one of the innumerable such adventures undertaken by the heroes of fairy tales.” (81). It is also a reversal of the more common story arc in two ways. First, while stories are commonly of a lover seeking a bride, here, the bride is seeking her lover. Second, instead of a cruel father withholding a would-be bride from her pursuer, it is the mother Venus who attempts to hide her son, Cupid, from his bride, Psyche. Psyche pleads with Venus who commands her into three main trials. First, Venus angrily scatters many various kinds of seeds, ordering Psyche to sort them by morning. Second, she must gather wool from a dangerous sheep. Third, gather water from a frozen brook on a high rock guarded by dragons. Fourth, “bring from the abyss of the underworld a box full of supernatural beauty.” (82) In these trials, Psyche is aided by ants, a green reed, an eagle, and a high tower, respectively. Here, a series of difficult tasks, or road of trials, assisting figures, and an amulet are rather clear.

Example – Primitive Tribe

Primitive examples are seen among a host of northern tribal groups. A shaman-like ceremony of the Lapps centers on healing a sick person. Believing sickness to be a matter of the domain of the dead, friends and neighbors gather, after dark, with the flickering light of a fire, dimly lighting a young girl as they encircle her. Inside the circle, two women in ceremonial dress and a magician summon helping spirits. The magician dances wildly, shouts loudly, strikes an ax on his knees, and pulls burning logs from a fire while running around the three females. Eventually the shaman-like figure collapses of apparent exhaustion. His spirit has departed him, it is believed; now “he is viewing sacred mountains with their inhabiting gods.” (83) Receiving insight from the gods, the magician awakes to declare the young girls’ sickness and amount of time after which she will be healed.

Example – Religious

A religious example of the road of trials is seen in the Sumerian myth of the goddess Inanna. Adorned in royal clothing and decrees fastened to her belt, she asks her messenger to pray for her after three days, and begins descending into the netherworld. She is met by a gatekeeper who tells her to stay in place, confers with Ereshkigal, Inanna’s sister and ruler of the netherworld, who commands Inanna to remove a piece of clothing as she passes through a series of seven gates. Inanna arrives in front of the throne naked, is looked upon by seven judges with the eyes of death, and she passes away.

Example – Psychological

Modern examples in dreams are apparent as well. “The specific psychological difficulties of the dreamer frequently are revealed with touching simplicity and force.” (85). A young man dreams of climbing a

mountain and, after several natural and abnormal barriers, is out of breath. His malady is that of a stutterer. A girl dreams of being in front of a calm lake until a storm splashes water in her face. Her malady is blushing acutely under stress. An older man dreams of the malicious laughter of a brother to whom he discovers he is bound by chains. The old man is terminally ill. A man dreams of navigating endless corridors to eventually enter a small room with a pool, from which he emerges clean and steps through a door into open space. He has recently experienced a spiritual awakening.

Devices

In each of these examples it is easy to see that the ‘medicine man’ is a common archetype and a central device in the Road of Trials. There are many types – magician, messenger, clinical counselor – depending on era, culture, or creed. Yet all serve to assist the hero along the road of trials. As a particular figure in an individual story, and general archetype across the body of myths, the medicine man is both reflective and absorbing. In addition to material help, he is explicitly, or as a mere symbol “making both visible and public the systems of symbolic fantasy that are present in the psyche of every adult member of their society.” (84)

Campbell quotes Dr. Gerza Roheim to underscore the consistency of this archetype throughout history. “In every primitive tribe we find the medicine man in the center of society” and even in more modern myths “it is easy to show that the medicine man is either a neurotic or a psychotic or at least that his art is based on the same mechanisms as a neurosis or a psychosis.” (84) Given the medicine man’s central role there is a manner in which he serves the connection between group values. In particular, our progression from an “infantile situation,” to maturation, then grounded reality. In the way that an individual is subject to unseen parts of their nature and psychology amid that progression there are necessarily “unseen libidinal ties without which no human groups could exist.” (84) Correspondingly, also the purpose of the medicine man archetype, is to highlight that only upon maturation, do we have a right understanding of reality.

Significance

With that in mind, the implication to the hero as an individual and this step or place in the Hero’s Journey is clear. In normal life, the medicine man or shaman can serve as a means for individuals in the tribe or society to let their internality remain not fully known, or not fully expressed or explored. They or we might ‘project upon’ him as something of a defense mechanism. Or, simply as a continuation of being not particularly self-aware. We consciously or unconsciously want or allow him to serve as our proxy to metaphysical or divine forces of whatever kind.

The step and archetypes indicate that not only has navigating the unknown clearly begun but powerful forces are increasingly becoming apparent, even if imperfectly understood. As such, here is the main point of the phase and step. “If anyone – in whatever society – undertakes for himself the perilous journey into the darkness by descending, either intentionally or unintentionally, into the crooked lanes of his own spiritual labyrinth, he soon finds himself in a landscape of symbolical figures (any one of which may swallow him).” (84)

Symbol

This takes us to discussion of the purpose of the archetype. The medicine man archetype is the first illustration of a changing reality. The departure from the homestead, which is choosing to enter the unknown, is largely a physical step. The medicine man is an indication, that the hero is now not just progressing into a physical unknown realm but into a time of psychological challenge as well. Like

passing from an infantile state to maturity, the hero is not going to just depart. Rather, also persist. And, in the persisting, gain not only physical strength but uncover greater and deeper truths.

Interlude – The Hero's Journey and Religion

With the mention of a progression from physical to psychological, and already seeing some religious imagery, we can begin to see myth indicating that faith, religion, and an image of God are important. Naturally, these are different things. Nevertheless, "There can be no question; the psychological danger through which earlier generation were guided by are the symbols and spiritual exercises of their mythological and religious inheritance." (86)

With that in mind, a central problem to considering the utility of myth is our disposition to the relevance of faith and religion. That is, the utility of myth hinges on belief. At least belief in or consideration of the relevance of myth, faith, and religion, even if not yet fully committed to the elements and implications of one or all of the latter.

To that end, the main problem with the whole matter of the hero, the hero's journey, and its applicability, in modern time, is the tendency towards a default of unbelief. This is Nietzsche's point in his famous quote 'God is dead'. It is not so much intended to claim there is no God. Rather, "all the gods are dead" is more properly taken to mean that the gods have been made to be dead to us by us. By nature of focusing on – or living such that the only relevant things are – self, development, attainment, social impact, and the like, we lock ourselves within the limited perspective of 'materiality'. Not necessarily pure materialism but, perhaps worse, materiality. That is, a trust in primarily our own rationality; the here and now; in what can be seen, proven, measured, and rationalized.

There is a consequence for that. The consequence is not being able to surmise a clear or wise path. "We today, insofar as we are unbelievers, or, if believers, in so far as our inherited beliefs fail to represent the real problems of contemporary life, must face alone, or, at best, with only tentative, impromptu, and not often very effective guidance." (87)

Campbell amplifies that this 'unbelief' is not actually a 'modernization'. Rather, a more dystopian vacancy where there is a denial of any symbolic importance. Similarly, that there is a link between and reciprocation among symbol and religion, faith, or belief in that regard. To deny the relevance of myth is to minimize the significance of religion and the minimization of relevance of religion is to minimize or eliminate the serious consideration of myth and the symbols it uses to teach. Like there is danger for the hero of becoming stopped at any particular phase or step in the hero's journey, there is a similar stopping if refusing to consider myths, legends, and stories as important. In fact, deeply important. Further, ignoring or rationalizing away myth, ironically, ignores a persistent fact. That they are created in common form again and again.

Implications

With an understanding of symbols within, purpose and significance of the road of trials, and the danger in not believing myth to be relevant, we can highlight a number of benefits of the road of trails.

First, The Road of Trails poses a key question. "The ordeal is a deepening problem of the first threshold and the question is still in balance: Can the ego put itself to death?" As we have discussed above, it seems clear that we cannot expand merely by means of our own purposes. The deepest learning comes from trials of many kinds.

Second, it answers the same question. As such, encourages us to weather, maybe seek, a road of trials. “To hear and profit, however, one may have to submit somehow to purgation and surrender. And that is part of our problem: just how to do that. ‘Or ye think that ye shall enter the Garden of Bliss without such trials as came to those who passed away before you?’” (87) Because “many-headed is this surrounding Hydra; one head cut off, two more appear – unless the right caustic is applied to the mutilated stump.” (89)

Third, the Road of Trials indicates the potential and need for growth beyond physical and psychological strength. Particularly in modern times, we can be “‘enlightened’ individuals ‘for whom all gods and devils have been rationalize out of existence.’” (87) Nevertheless, “in the multitude of myths and legends that have been preserved to us, or collected from the ends of the earth, we may yet see delineated something of our still human course.” (87) The road of trials provides a personal parallel to the colloquialism ‘those who don’t know history are doomed to repeat it’.

Fourth, clarifies there will indeed be a number of different kinds of trials. “The original departure into the land of trials represented only the beginning of the long and perilous path of initiatory conquests and moments of illumination. Dragons have now to be slain and surprising barrier passed – again, again, and again.” Indeed, “there will be a multitude of preliminary victories, unretainable ecstasies, and momentary glimpses of the wonderful land.” (90)

Fifth, the purpose of the road of trials is not so much just character development but perhaps sanctification as well. That is, the complete loss of what, in early life, we understand to be our self. “In the language of the mystics this is the second stage of the Way; the ‘purification of the self’, when then senses are ‘cleansed and humbled’, and the energies and interests ‘concentrated upon transcendental things’.” Or in a vocabulary or more modern turn, “this is the process of dissolving, transcending, or transmuting the infantile images of our personal past.” (84)

Sixth, though explained a good deal more in future steps, the Road of Trials indicates the nature of our justification when the same is complete. More specifically, the “assimilation of opposites” represents a coming to terms with the altruism and avarice within one’s self. “Light and dark, respectively, together represent, according to the antique manner of symbolization, the one goddess in two aspects; and their confrontation epitomizes the whole sense of the difficult road of trails. The hero, whether god or goddess, man or woman, the figure in a myth or the dreamer of a dream, discovers and assimilates his opposite (his own unsuspected self) either by swallowing it or being swallowed. One by one resistances are broken. He must put his pride, his virtue, beauty, and life, and bow or submit to the absolutely intolerable. Then he finds that he and his opposite are not suffering species but one flesh.” (89)

Amplification

In summary, the hero entering the Road of Trials encounters a medicine man archetype which serves as an indicator of and facilitator of progression towards maturity. The archetype is both functionally useful in a story and symbolic of the powerful psychological challenges or realities involved in the same.

Correspondingly, the purpose of the road of trials is to show we cannot merely mature ourselves, depart a mindset of materiality alone, and teaches that many kinds of and a several number of trials is fruitful. Further, it indicates sanctification, dissolution of self, and assimilation of our opposites are party to yielding to gain strength in significance in the end. A hero isn’t merely about doing and triumphing but being and becoming.

Conclusion

The first step of the Departure phase, The Road of Trials, begins a series of challenges. Here, the difficult tasks motif with ordeals and miraculous outcomes is among the most common to myth of every kind. The

hero continues a descent, though both deeper and slower than in *The Belly of Whale*. The trials can be all encompassing, multilayered, and progressive. That said, all on the way to the hero's success as his many of all of his previous helpers and his amulet come to his assistance.

The 'medicine man' is a key archetype in *The Road of Trials*. The figure's appearance varies based on the ethos and creed in which the particular figure appears or which culture the story itself is serving. Common characteristics of the medicine man are being reflective and absorbing. Here, the purpose of the archetype is to make the hero's psyche visible and public. The medicine man is at the center of society. However, he is also typically neurotic or psychotic. Like a doctor, he is 'connected' to society, respected in large regard, and aware of whatever malady that may afflict the hero, tribe, clan, or society. That said, he is also 'outside' society in that he is beyond normal limitations for a comparably normal individual. Therefore, in manner and deed, the medicine man periodically operates outside social limits and values, and is permitted to do so.

The significance of the of the Road of Trials is that the hero is giving up of the 'infantile' understanding of the world for a more grounded reality. In that context, the medicine man serves as a shaman or priest of sorts as a conduit to the 'other', transcendent world. Correspondingly, as an embodiment the aforementioned outsider status and permission, society 'projects' their need to manage the unknown upon the medicine man. In parallel, the hero pursues or is pursued by the medicine man even though the former has an imperfect understanding of whatever lies ahead.

A number of implications of *The Road of Trials* is apparent. First, the relevance of belief and faith. Correspondingly, that the lack of either is not a 'modernization'. Second, a key question arises. That is, can the ego every entirely be put to death? The answer is yes, but only on the other side of bliss. Third, with that in mind, growth beyond physical and toward psychological strength is fundamentally something of gods, devils, and the transcendent. Fourth, any number of trials can arise. Any hero has any number of 'dragons' to slay and the whole purpose of the journey is for the purpose of character development and sanctification. Fifth, a key means by which this occurs is an 'assimilation of opposites' - in one's self as much or more than the world per se.

With that in mind, the more general symbol of *The Road of Trials* and the medicine man is a fuller indication that the hero has left the homestead, is progressing further into the unknown, and in both a physical and psychological sense. Further, the hero is at least aware of light and dark forces that supersede an otherwise 'material' experience and mindsets and actions rooted in resistance or resentment begin to be seen as 'infantile' versus mature states and ways of being.

The Meeting with the Goddess

Introduction

Having much-completed the road of trials, the hero is at the nadir and zenith of his journey. The nadir, as a formal definition, is the point of the celestial sphere that is directly opposite the zenith and vertically downward from the observer. Put more simply, the hero is now at the furthest physical point from his home or homestead. As a story element, this can be represented as the central point of the cosmos. Or, perhaps inside a tabernacle or temple. This great distance from the homestead corresponds to a mental sense of separation as well. That said, the mental separation is also merely just that; a distance of a kind, not a negative state as 'separation' might imply. He has psychologically come to understand the deepest darkness of one's own heart. And, that of others' as well.

By nature of these two realities the hero is also at his zenith. As a formal definition, a zenith is the point at which something is its most powerful. Or, has made the most significant realization. In that regard, the hero is at a high point regarding his 'becoming' in comparison to the path behind him. In having begun with 'initiation' and continued his 'departure' the distance, power, and realization, corresponding to this moment is one of relative quiet, having come out of the physical and psychic noise of the journey so far.

In this quiet, he meets a key archetype: the goddess, who is and represents the female form as a positive life-giving figure. When the hero has completed the "ultimate adventure, when all the barriers and ogres have been overcome," the resolution and joy from the same is "commonly represented as a mystical marriage of the triumphant hero-soul with the Queen Goddess of the World." (91)

Example - Ireland

Consider an example in the Irish tale of the Prince of Lonesome Isle. The prince is to bring water to a queen. With the advice of his aunt, who also happens to be a supernatural figure in this story, he proceeds with remarkable speed on horseback to the queen's castle. He crosses the river, representing a further departing from the known world and escapes the touch of poison trees, which represents the navigation of a road of trials. As he nears the castle, his speed is such that he must spring from his horse to successfully bound through a window. Inside the castle, he passes through twelve chambers each with a beautiful girl. "I have nothing to say to you," he exhorts to each and continues on. In the final chamber, there are twelve maidens around a pit of fire which encircle the queen, who sits in the middle. The prince pledges to stay and, having had the foresight to pass on 24 successively more beautiful women, he gains the favor of the queen and experiences such peace that he sleeps for six days.

Devices

Naturally, the particular characteristics of the 'goddess' figure can vary. However, the figure is also rather uniform – commonly a mother, sister, mistress, or bride. Whatever the form, what the figure represents as an archetype is the same; she is the "incarnation of the promise of perfection." Further, beyond the paradigm of beauty, bliss-bestowing figure, towards a more fundamental goal in life, she is the "souls assurance that, at the conclusion of its exile in a world of organized inadequacies the bliss that once was known, will be known again." Still more significant, also the assurance of the ability to progress out of insecurity and insignificance and that this desire can be quenched and known again. That is, as in a good and nurturing mother earlier in life. As a result, the hero now will have a sense of ease, as if to "sleep in timelessness," as is similarly depicted in the previous legend.

The goddess is commonly a benevolent figure. However, part of the significance of the archetype is that she is not only benign. In that regard, there are four main variations. First, an absent or neglecting figure can be used to indicate the hero's fantasies regarding completion rise from a counter aggression. Second, a hampering figure can create difficulty by forbidding or disapproving of the hero's pursuit. Third, a retaining figure may merely hold the hero to herself as if to prevent the growing child's attempt, and need, to push away. Fourth, an incestuous figure may allow the hero's pursuit but fully twist hero's more mature desire back towards herself. Naturally, these variations are all symbolic of the maturity that is to come from the road of trials. Correspondingly, not to navigate these more nefarious versions of the goddess archetype is a failure along the hero's journey; he would in effect not mature. That is, each image is significant in that it "persists in the hidden land of the adult's infant recollection and is sometimes even the greatest force. She is at the root of such unattainable great goddess figures." (92)

Example – Greek Myth

An example of a less-than-benign goddess figure is seen in the Greek myth of Acteon and Diana. The hero Acteon leaves his companion to restfully travel through the countryside with his dogs. Eventually, he begins running with no conscious purpose and inadvertently discovers himself to have entered a hidden vale. There he sees Diana who is, like her surrounding attendants, bathing in open view. Diana has a bitter response at the inadvertent disclosure, which causes antlers to grow on Acteon. He soon transforms fully into a stag, only to be chased by his own dogs.

Significance

With that in mind it is easy to understand the several levels on which the step Meeting with the Goddess and the archetype of goddess operates. First, of course, it is a step on a road of trials towards pursuing a figure of softness and beauty. Second, the connection with a more timeless nurturing influence, like between mother and child, but also to be able to move beyond dependence on the same. Third, the

possibility of and progression towards a foundational desire to achieve a state of bliss by connection to female form and feminine attributes. Fourth, as symbolized by the concept of universal mother, correct navigation of the same things can be, and are now, right and perfect in that moment. Fifth, that state can be perpetuated beyond the moment and that figure. Here, on the whole, we see both a deep human psychological lesson at work in myth and story; there is “close and obvious correspondence between the attitude of the young child and mother and that of adult towards the surrounding material world” (94)

Symbols

The goddess archetype – and, more so, idea of universal mother in particular – also symbolizes the “death of everything that dies.” There is the possibility with the goddess-mother that holds the potential for the hero to fall off his path, as articulated in the four types above. However, more significantly, considering the goddess as archetype, the deeper and more general theme is not just that there are four potential types of female influences but that all four types may be found in an otherwise nurturing and blissful figure at any given time. Therefore, more generally, this archetype and myth writ large suggest the lesson is that all things that appear to be separate, or even opposite, are not quite so. Rather, they are inherently related and connected. To that end, woman, goddess, universal mother is not just one (benevolent, bliss-bestowing) or the other (absent, forbidding, retaining, incestuous).

In this manner, she represents the reality that the “whole round of existence is accomplished in her sway.” Further, we can take the goddess as archetype to symbolize a “universal physical mother where two modes unite good and bad and birth and death.” Again, she is certainly a bliss bestowing figure but she is also “the death of everything that dies.” (95) Therefore, the significance regarding the hero is simple and rather expansive. The hero is “expected to contemplate the two with equanimity.” (95) He is purged from infantile concerns, retires from sentimentality, is open to existence and the present moment, and less centered on making the comparison of good and bad in everything. Rather, he is present to the duality in himself and the world as, again, the “law and image of the natural being.” (95)

Example – Religious / Universal

Here, a common religious image seen in many physical statues in temples of India illustrates two sides of the goddess-mother figure, both terrible and divine. A sitting figure has four arms symbolizing aspects of universal mother. The upper left holds up a saber, the lower left a severed human head, the upper right extending figures in a ‘fear not’ configuration, and lower right bestowing boons. “Harmonization of all the pairs of opposites, combining wonderfully the terror of absolute destruction with an impersonal yet motherly reassurance.” (95) The image is suggesting an understanding of opposites is a key to continuing along the hero’s path. “As change, the river of time, the fluidity of life, the goddess at core creates, preserves, and destroys... Her title: The Ferry across the Ocean of Existence.” (96)

With that in mind, “Woman, in the picture language of mythology represents the totality of what can be known.” The hero “is the one who comes to know as he progresses in the slow initiation which is life, the form of the goddess undergoes for him a series of transfigurations” just as life transfigures and he in it. Similarly, the benevolence of the goddess cannot go beyond the understanding of the hero at this point; “she can never be greater than himself, though she can always promise more than he is yet capable of comprehending.” (97) “She lures, she guides, she bids him burst his fetters. And if he can match her import, the two, the knower and the known, will be released from every limitation.”

Implications

Therefore, there are only two real possibilities for the hero. First, she can bless the soul and indicate a mastery of life. “Woman is the guide to the sublime acme of sensuous adventure.” Second, she can be a

pariah, indicating an infant-like inability to navigate life's challenges and callings. "By deficient eyes she is reduced to inferior states; by the evil eye of ignorance she is spellbound to banality and ugliness." Whether successful upon the first presentation of the goddess, or only eventually so, the hero is successful in continuing beyond this point when "she is redeemed by the eyes of understanding." That is, if he "can take her as she is, without undue commotion but with the kindness and assurance she requires," then he "is potentially the king, the incarnate god, of her created world." (97)

By that measure, the degree to and manner in which the hero is capable of handling the goddess is indicative of his ability to navigate and handle life. More specifically, navigate all parts of life from birth through adolescence to maturity and elder – from womb to tomb, what he sows and farrows and any given point. Indeed, only geniuses capable of the highest realization can support the full revelation of the sublimity of this goddess. "For lesser men she reduces her effulgence and permits herself to appear in forms concordant with the undeveloped powers. Fully to behold her would be a terrible accident for any person not spiritually prepared: as witness the unlucky case of the lusty young buck Actaeon. No saint was he, but a sportsman unprepared for the revelation of the form that must be beheld without the normal human (i.e. infantile) over- and undertones of desire, surprise, and fear." (97)

Example – Victorious Hero

A final story illustrates the case of hero who is successful, in comparison to others, at a surface level and in a still more significant regard as well. The hero does not just gain the favor and admiration of a figure of beauty and bliss in the meeting with the goddess but both exhibits growing character and 'way of being' in coping with or superseding a degree of dysfunction in the goddess as temptress. In doing so, navigates 'universal mother' in that his former self is now passed and has 'died', so to speak. Then, as the story concludes, into a "royal" position – into his father's place, which is to be king and representative of an office, not just position.

In the Irish story of Five Sons, a woman serves as sentry before a sole but abundant source of water. The first son approaches the woman, haggard and old, who offers water in exchange for a mere kiss. Due to the demand and her unpleasing appearance the young man refuses and returns home. The next three sons proceed nearly identically. However, the fifth exhibits a hero's heart. Upon hearing the conditions of exchange he responds "not just a kiss but a hug," embracing her greatly. As a result, she is transformed. "When he looked at her, in the whole world was not a young woman of gait more graceful, in universal semblance fairer than she." (98) Upon inquiring who she is really, she responds "'Royal Rule' am I" and proclaims him to be her companion and now King of Tara. Her fuller response is "And so at the first thou hast seen me ugly, brutish, loathly and, in the end, beautiful – even so is royal rule for without battles, without fierce conflict, it may not be won; but in the result, he that is king of no matter what shows comely and handsome forth." (98)

Example – Female Hero

Lastly, it is worth understanding what the hero looks like when the central hero is female. "And when the adventurer, in this context, is not a youth but a maid, she is the one who, by her qualities, her beauty, or her yearning, is fit to become the consort of an immortal." (99) In short, she passes this portion of the road of trails when fulfilling similar criteria but in her own way. That is, exhibiting qualities, beauty, and altruistic yearning such that she – like the male hero to a concealed queen – can be worthy of a king with similar character.

Sometimes this is in the form of entering into a hero's bed, though not for the sake of physical union primarily but as a symbol of having embodied grace to an initially brigand or prickly male exterior and into a place of rest and peace. In an Arapaho legend, a boy in the form of a porcupine lures a girl into his

magical realm. In a fairy tale, a frog eats with a princess in her chamber and, though she is fairly disgusted, the frog is invited to the warmth of her bed. In Christian tradition, the goddess figure is “used religiously to initiate into the world,” through feminine qualities as a protective and nourishing presence and ultimately, as a hero figure, in her assumption. She ascends in perfect form, to paradise, having taken to heart and helped fulfill the purpose of Jesus.

Amplification

In all three of our cases, and across all of myth, what is required of the hero is to “be endowed with what the troubadours and minnesingers termed ‘the gentle heart’. Not by the animal desire of an Acteon... can she be comprehended and rightly served” but only by only “gentle sympathy.” (99) “The meeting with the goddess (who is incarnate in every woman) is the final test of the talent of the hero to win the boon of love (charity: amor fati) which is life itself enjoyed as the encasement of eternity.” (99)

Conclusion

In the second step of the Departure phase, The Meeting with The Goddess, the hero is at both the highest and lowest point of the hero’s Journey. As a nadir, the hero is ‘furthest’ from the ‘homestead’. With that, this ‘low’ point is at the center of the cosmos so to speak. As a zenith, the hero’s separateness is at its ‘highest’ and most powerful by nature of his maturing mental state.

The key archetype in this step is the Goddess herself. She is the positive image of figures such as mother, sister, mistress, and bride and a life-giving figure suggesting the possibility of or state in which all ogres, barriers, and the like are overcome. While benevolent, the goddess is not only benign. Variations of the figure include those akin to the earlier limits of the homestead. More specifically, the negative personas of ‘mother’; absent nurturer, neglecting figure, hampering and holding to self, or incestuous. When this is the case, she serves as the means and symbol of the hero breaking from all the same. In either case - positive or negative - the significance of The Meeting With the Goddess is to illustrate the necessity of the hero being capable of the pursuit of a figure of softness and beauty. More specifically, engendering favor with a nurturing figure but without dependence upon it. This is progress to a foundational state of bliss by nature of the ability to rightly navigate varying personas, however good or bad, in an individual hero’s life.

A number of implications of The Meeting With the Goddess are apparent. First, the hero’s relationship to ‘universal mother’ is the ability to, successfully or not, navigate the whole world round. Second, while this might seem to be a pass-fail event, the reality is that relationship to the ‘goddess’ can be perfected beyond any particular moment. Third, goddess mother is in a sense the ‘death of all that dies’. She bestows bliss if moved forward with and death if held to too much.

With that in mind, the more general symbol of The Meeting With the Goddess and the goddess herself is that she holds the full sway of existence in her reach. The ability of the hero to handle both sides of the bliss-death contingencies is indicative of hero’s ability to manage, progress, and become anew in life. At the same time, this is not an ill-fated matter; the goddess represents the cumulative promise of perfection; significant and bliss bestowing enough that, despite all inadequacies, perfection will come again.

Woman as Temptress

While The Meeting with the Goddess progresses the hero in obtaining timeless beauty, reexperiencing a nurturing motherly love, and successfully encountering ‘universal mother’ as an archetype symbolic of the ability to manage life, Woman as Temptress is similar but deeper. That is, navigating woman as temptress involves managing all aspects of woman, which is to have managed all aspects of life. The “testings of the hero, which were preliminary” and now woman-temptress is “symbolic of those crises of realization by means of which his consciousness came to be amplified and made capable of enduring the full possession of the mother destroyer.” (101)

The key to the hero successfully navigating the meeting is a both strong and ‘gentle heart’ as a means to be in her presence. Correspondingly, acting and being in such a manner indicates three things: passing of tests, passing of that particular test, and mastery of life. That is, a building of personal capability, towards character, not just ability, which is to bear a challenge or challenges. Now, the key to Woman as Temptress is that the hero is tested regarding how to possess woman, on the surface, in terms of romantic pursuit.

In story, this is commonly represented by “the mystical marriage with the queen goddess of the world” and symbolizes “the hero’s total mastery of life; the woman is life, the hero it’s knower and master.” Further, more significantly, the hero is also progressing into the father’s role. By navigating all aspects of temptress-woman is, again, to have mastered not just life in general but all aspects of life. “With that he knows that he and the father are one: he is in the father’s place.” (101)

Example – Greek Myth

Two examples provide some illustration how and the level at which this this plays out.

A dramatic example of mishandling this step and the archetype in it is seen in the Greek myth of Oedipus. Naturally, this is a story we are commonly aware of out of the colloquial term ‘Oedipus complex’ where a son is inappropriately physically attracted to his mother. It is a good example of the hero’s progression, having won possession of woman. However, though successful in strength and gentleness to win her

admiration, the fact that the object was his mother shows he is fundamentally under- if not ill-developed. The “innocent delight of Oedipus in his first possession of the queen turns to agony of spirit when he learns who the woman is.” (102) He has taken his father’s place but not in the manner intended and “woman above all become[s] the symbol no longer of victory but of defeat.” (102) Further in his regret, guilt, or error he is present to “a monastic-puritanical, world-negating ethical system” that “then radically and immediately transfigures all the images of myth. No longer can the hero rest in innocence with the goddess of the flesh; for she is become the queen of sin.” (102)

This is the commonly known portion of the myth but it is not the whole story. All is not lost. Oedipus does actually correct himself upon his realization. He is “beset by the moral image of the father.” And, “he turns from the fair features of the world to search the darkness for a higher kingdom than this of the incest and adultery ridden, luxurious, and incorrigible mother.” Here, the suggestion is that the “seeker of the life beyond life must press beyond her, surpass the temptations of her call, and soar to the immaculate ether beyond.” (102)

Example – Christian

A more encouraging story and more successful hero is seen in the western Christian story of Saint Bernard. Having experienced repeated headaches, Bernard is visited by a series of women, implicitly at first, then directly and clearly, to tempt him. First, a young woman soothes his suffering with song. Though like an indignant child, he drives her away and is rewarded by God with healing for his zeal. In response, the devil begins to set traps against Bernard’s chastity. Second, as he stares at another woman sent to help him, he blushes, and he enters an icy pond until frozen to his bones, as if to control his desire. Third, a young girl comes naked to his bed. Nevertheless, he yields his portion of the bed and does not pursue her despite her attempts and she eventually flees in shame. Fourth, a wealthy woman came to assist and woo him but he shouts “Thief! Thief!” (104) His reasoning and heart are revealed when he declares “I had really to repel the attacks of a thief; for my hostess tried to rob me of a treasure, which, had I lost it, I should never have been able to regain.” (104) Though an innocent man, Saint Bernard joins a monastic order, therefore limiting any further presentation of Woman as Temptress, and not so much falling off but walking off the hero’s path.

Symbol

So, as an initial summary, woman, and this step along the hero’s journey is both instructive regarding handling woman as a figure present in anyone’s life and symbolic of the nature of managing and mastering life in a world full of challenges. First, the balance of strength and gentleness required in engendering her unto you as in the previous Meeting With the Goddess step. Second, the disciplined restraint against libidinous or selfish taking unto one’s self alone is key to navigating Woman as Temptress.

Significance

With that in mind, the “whole sense of the ubiquitous body of myth” and the recurring framework of the hero’s journey is that it serves as a general pattern for men and women to measure wherever they may stand along its scale. “In the broadest terms, the individual only has to discover his own position with reference to this general human formula, and let it then assist him past his restricting walls. Who are and where are his ogres? Those are the reflections of the unsolved enigmas of his own humanity. What are his ideals? Those are the symptoms of his grasp of life.” (101)

Implications

Managing Woman, Managing Life. When the details and types of dysfunction regarding woman-temptress are “phrased, in extremist terms, the problem may sound remote from the affairs of normal human creatures. Nevertheless, every failure to cope with a life situation must be laid, in the end, to a restriction of consciousness.” That is, any ‘failure’ – meaning like a worn or imperfect fuse in an electric system versus a permanent ‘judgment’ regarding moral quality – indicates a relative inability to cope with life. This can be seen in thinking and behavior periodically accepted as ‘reality’ or ‘normal’ is seen as ‘good’ or ‘best’. Similarly, we could consider a persistent temper actually indicative of ignorance to or lack of empathy for the ‘other’. Further, “wars and temper tantrums are the makeshifts of ignorance; regrets are illuminations come too late.” (102)

Value of Psychology. In psychoanalytical context, dreams – stories naturally recurring in subconscious – are insights that are betraying the depth of a current but not understood or partially understood ignorance. Correspondingly, the psychoanalyst or counselor is a guide to making the unknown known so that a choice can be made. The value here, of archetypes in story, archetypes in dreams, and practical value of counsel in the modern age is that our view is rarely equal to reality. “With the analyst in the role of the helper, the initiatory priest. And always, after the first thrills of getting under way, the adventure develops into a journey of darkness, horror, disgust, and phantasmagoric fears.” (101) Like the counselor is an insight looking into the would-be real life hero, the road of trials in story is similarly instructive in conveying that it is an amount of pressure of various kinds that allows the hero to see his own psychoses and be refined by forcing – or really releasing – them from him and renewing him.

‘Self’ Discovery. Both practically and deeply speaking, this type of piloting, challenge, and self-discovery is important precisely because it is counter to our nature. “The crux of the curious difficulty lies in the fact that our conscious views of what life ought to be seldom correspond to what life really is. Generally we refuse to admit within ourselves, or within our friends, the fullness of that pushing, self-protective, malodorous, carnivorous, lecherous fever which is the very nature of the organic cell.” (102) In psychological terms, it is quite common and easy to fail to have an accurate image of our self and an internal locus of control when we true up to a more accurate image. “Rather, we tend to perfume, whitewash, reinterpret; meanwhile imagining that all the flies in the ointment, all the hairs in the soup, are the faults of some unpleasant someone else.” (102) Therefore, transformation – and continuing upon the hero’s journey – is, in good part, that realization in relationship to perceived attacks by the world surrounding us.

Path to Peace. With that in mind, the resulting presence of mind is, again, a sensitivity to one’s own duality. Similarly, the challenge of being vice doing and having is ever present. “But when it suddenly dawns on us, or is forced to our attention, that everything we think or so is necessarily tainted with the odor of the flesh, then, not uncommonly, there is experienced a moment of revulsion: life, the acts of life, the organs of life, woman in particular as the great symbol of life, become intolerable to the pure, the pure, pure soul.” (102)

‘Woman’ as Test. Navigating the aspects of woman-temptress is a direct challenge, yes. It is also analogous to the multifaceted challenge of and challenges within life. That is, towards progression, expansion, and becoming, challenges are ever present. “We are poor travelers in a world which is as well the Devil’s field, as the Devils’ Gaol; a world in which every Nook whereof, the Devil is encamped with Bands of Robbers to pester all that have their faces looking Zionward.” Troubling to be sure. However, though “the wilderness through which we are passing to the Promised Land is all filled with fiery flying serpents.” We are also “blessed by God” and “none of them have hitherto so fastened upon us as to confound us utterly.” (105)

Amplification

Now we understand the characteristics, purpose, and significance of Woman as Temptress along The Road of Trials. First, navigating woman in general and four possible complicating types indicates the hero is the master of all aspects of his life. Second, there is a progression from previously navigating Woman as Goddess as a general mastery of life. Third, mastering these complications is important as they are a forcing-function towards a self-discovery – and self-dissolution – that is not necessarily natural or normal. Fourth, challenge of ‘woman’ is ever present, even in the absence of a particular woman. Fifth, indicative and symbolic of the fact that challenges of self and being are ever present in life. Sixth, this all, and the hero’s journey writ large contains themes, archetypes, and lessons serves as a means to measure where we sit along its scale wherever we ‘are’. Seventh, there is also hope and grace to be had amid the same. Merely discovering where we are ‘at’ in a particular moment or season is not condemnation. Rather, it serves as a means to move forward.

Conclusion

In the third step of the Departure phase, Woman as Temptress, the hero encounters the darker side of woman. Previously a largely nurturing, encouraging figure, this step is similar to but deeper than The Meeting With the Goddess. That is, more pertaining to internal challenge and crisis than the latter which, by comparison, tends to play out in action and behavior.

As an archetype, woman-temptress is symbolic of chaos, or lack of inherent order, in the world and cosmos. Success of the hero is the maturity and presence of mind to ‘have’ strength but to ‘exhibit’ a ‘gentle heart’. Particular devices that correspond to this include the hero’s disciplined restraint related to the attraction, physical desire, and libidinous temptation associated with the temptress.

A number of implications of Woman as Temptress are apparent. First, the hero’s having progressed this far in his journey shows the value of a psychological understanding of one’s own inner workings. Second, there is value in, lessons to hold to, and cause to move beyond certain aspects as well in both mother and father. Third, the need for self-discovery. That is, there is no end to ‘becoming’; there is always some insecurity that remains and a need for overcoming the same. Fourth, this step indicates woman will be as much a test as blessing.

With that in mind, the more general symbol of the step and the temptress herself is metaphor for the ‘world’ or ‘cosmos’. More specifically, landmines abound, the “devil’s gaol” is always a possible outcome if woman or world is misunderstood and successful passing indicates the hero’s increasing mastery of life. More specifically, exhibiting the ability to navigate her versus resist or attempt to change the figure before him.

Atonement with the Father

Introduction

The step of Atonement with the Father sees the hero coming to terms with the dual nature of the father and stepping into that role. This dual nature - justice and wrath along with mercy and grace - has come to be referred to the 'ogre' and 'redeeming' nature of the father. "In most mythologies, the images of mercy and grace are regarded as vividly as those of justice and wrath." (106) That said, "the heart is buoyed rather than scourged along the way" as well.

Whatever the era, setting, or circumstance, whether overt or symbolic, spoken or implied, primitive, high culture, or religious, the archetype and challenges that arise out of father are the same; to bring the hero finally, fully out of self-aggrandizement towards transformation. More specifically, into a new 'way of being'. That is, this step – like the whole journey – is a means of 'becoming' more and progressing into a new role. That is, to ready the hero to take his father's place. Ultimately, while the father, even as an archetype, indicates and symbolize the hero's relationship with his physical father it also mirrors his relationship with a spiritual Father.

Example - Primitive Ceremony

With that in mind, we can start our consideration of Atonement with the Father by going back to the earliest stories contained in primitive rituals and rites. In the most primitive examples, tribes use a blood ritual that proceeds even to the actual sacrifice of an elder. Similarly, other tribes forced ingestion of an elder's blood by a boy-man who is coming of age. Still others, cause blood loss, perhaps to the point of exhaustion, to serve as a rite of passage. In each case, there is a literal giving up of a kind to progress into manhood.

Example – Australian Tribe

More typical but still both physical and symbolic, the "archetypal nightmare of the ogre father is made actual in the ordeals of the Australian Murngin." (116) Again, still a ritual, not just a story, the tribe's

young men enter a ceremonial space with the whole tribe bearing witness. The Great Snake “is calling for their foreskins.” (116) Naturally, the young men are frightened. They run to their mothers, who serve as protectors. A horn is sounded, which is the call for the Great Father Snake, who emerges from his hole. The women grab their spears and shriek, as if to signify their lament that the boys will be eaten. In that moment, the fathers dance around the Great Father Snake. Throughout the evening, the fathers teach the boys various dances and myths which correspond to the tribe’s totems. Eventually the boys are sent off to visit neighboring tribes. “In this way ‘within’ the Great Father Snake as it were, they are introduced to an interesting new object world that compensates them for the loss of their mother; and the male phallus, instead of the female breast, is made the central point [the axis mundi] of the imagination.” (117)

This is all a sending away of a kind. The boys are separating from the homestead, experience the anticipation and fear of an unknown outside world, lose something of themselves – though figuratively – for the first time, and venture away from their known environment. “The culminating instruction of the long series of rites is the release of the boy’s own hero-penis from the protection of its foreskin, through the frightening and painful attack upon it of the circumciser.” (117)

In another tribe of the same region, the ritual progresses similarly though both more literally and briefly. “The operation” – circumcision – “is performed quickly” after which the young man-hero is “congratulated by the men.” “‘You have done well’, they say ‘You did not cry out’.” (118) The hero has separated from mother, entered the world, endured trial and pain, and experienced the ogre nature of father via an apparent assault. Yet he has also experienced the redeeming nature of the father since the latter is facilitating the boy moving forward.

Example - Navajo Twins

Similar to the primitive Australian ritual is a tribal Navajo story. However, now it is indeed a ‘story’ – a ritual physically acted out rather than a very or somewhat physically injurious ceremony. Two twin boys have departed their homestead and met with an assisting archetype, the Spider Woman. “With her advice and protective charms” make their way through “rocks that crush, the reeds that cut to pieces, and the cactus plants that tear to pieces, the across the boiling sands.”

As an aside, in the step of atonement with the father, it is not uncommon to repeat smaller instances or references to previous archetypes or include a series of final tasks or challenges imposed specifically by the father, in addition to the already-passed road of trials. In this case, there is a seeming reference to, or repetition of, the Meeting with the Goddess and The Road of Trials.

Continuing with the story, the twin boys “came at last to the house of the Sun, their father.” A pair of bears and serpents guard the entrance to the dwelling place of their father. The same “were readily appeased, however, with the words of the prayer.” (110) Inside, young men and women of different sorts were present, representing cardinal directions of north, south, east, and west. Noting the presence of the twin brothers, the father “turned to the older woman and demanded angrily: ‘Who were those two that entered here today’.” She did not answer. As a result, the (ogre) father questions and challenges the twin sons even though, as a story witness, we know they have already navigated a road of trials. The boys fell on the floor. “The bearer of the Sun took [a] bundle from the shelf, unrolled the four robes,” which represent dawn, sky, evening, and darkness. “Here, a new trial besets them at the hand of the father.” “Fiercely,” he “flung them at some sharp spikes of white shell that stood in the east.” Nevertheless, the boys clutched the feathers previously provided to them as amulets, overcoming the challenge. This type of action repeats at the hand of the father in each of the four cardinal directions.

Finally, after surviving an overheated sweat lodge via a protected retreat within it, the father finally seemingly relents. “Yes, these are my children” he says. However, the father also indicates this was “only

a ruse; for he was still planning to trick them.” (111) Only after the twin sons smoked a pipe provided by a caterpillar and were not overcome or harmed by it was the father “completely satisfied.” “‘Now my children’, he asked ‘what is it you want from me? Do you seek me?’ The Twin Heroes had won the full confidence of the Sun, their father.”

Example – Canon Religious Sermon

Religious sermons often provide a fuller and deeper illustration of need for and nature of atonement with the father. Though rather flowery, as it is from a puritan age, and an expository preaching format, the ogre and redeeming nature of the God the Father is illustrated in Johnathan Edwards’s famous sermon ‘Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God’. Here, Edwards “threatened the hearts of his New England congregation by disclosing to them, in unmitigated fashion, the ogre aspect of the father.” (105)

Central to the Father’s ogre nature is the “Wrath of God.” Man is sinful by nature, his works have shown that to be the case, and would-be justice or punishment by the Lord is warranted, though delayed. “‘Tis true that Judgment against your evil Works has not been executed hitherto,” yet “the Floods of God’s Vengeance have been withheld.” (105) As such, our debt and guilt “in the meantime is constantly increasing, and [we] are every day treasuring up more Wrath; the waters continually rising, and waxing more and more mighty.” (105). The apparent judgment and wrath is also precarious. “If God should only withdraw his Hand from the Flood-gate, neither we as devotees or the ‘sturdiest Devil in Hell’ would be able to ‘withstand or endure it’.” (106) Edwards continues with “an image of fire.” “God holds you over the Pit of Hell.” In total, “You have offended infinitely more than ever a stubborn Reel did his Prince; and yet tis’ nothing but his Hand that holds you from falling into the Fire every Moment... O Sinner! You hang by a slender Thread.” (106)

Naturally, such an image of God may be *the* primary image of God for those outside a community of faith. However, there is another side; an all-powerful redeeming Lord and protector. Not just by confession, accepting salvation, and being saved. Yes, those are an act, decision, and conduit for atonement with The Father. Further, the Almighty is actually drawing us towards Him. This grace and condition precedes our understanding of a need for it. Those that have “passed under a great Change of Heart, by the mighty Power of the Spirit of God upon your souls” are “made new Creatures, and raised from being dead in Sin, to a State of new, and before altogether unexperienced Light and Life.” (106) First, “By ‘God’s mere pleasure’ as is termed in the traditional vocabulary of Christianity God’s ‘mercy’.” Second, “‘the mighty power of the spirit of God,’ by which the heart is changed, that is God’s ‘grace’.” That is, He is not a mere cosmic killjoy finding fault as periodic modern exposition might exclaim. Or, at least lament. Rather, indeed, our redemption is His pleasure to provide.

Religious Scripture

With that in mind, we can turn to religious tales themselves. That is via direct scripture reference as opposed to sermon, a reasonably faithful representation though it may be. Both stories highlighted - Job and Christ - will illustrate two things. First, the dual ogre and redemptive nature of the father. Second, a progression from primitive ages’ rituals and rites to culminate in religious story, characters, and truth.

Job

In the biblical story of Job we see the ogre and redemptive nature of the father by nature of a man of excellence being acutely challenged. Job is “a simple and upright man, and fearing God, and avoiding evil.” Nevertheless, his family and servants are slain by an opposing military force. Everything tangible and intangible to him is suddenly swept away. His friends then arrive and, though claiming to be pious, they assume Job’s circumstances necessarily indicate his evil deeds in the mind of God. As Job asserts his

innocence, even amid continued physical and mental anguish, his friends insist both his circumstance and now downtrodden spirit indicate not an opportunity for their encouragement and assistance, but of both Job's heart condition and sin. One even accuses Job of blasphemy which, to the reader, is a major contradiction. One of the earliest passages in the biblical book of Job recounts Job's wife imploring him to curse God that Job might be released from his circumstance and pain. Job refuses even though he doesn't know the reason for or length of his trial.

There are, of course, larger forces at play. Job is literally at battle with forces of evil. That is, he has been allowed to suffer at the Hand of God himself. More specifically, not just for his own atonement but also in order to make a point to The Acuser, who is an agent of Satan. Yet "The Lord makes no attempt to justify in human or any other terms the ill pay meted out to his virtuous servant." That is, "There is no explanation, no mention of the dubious wager with Satan described in chapter one of the of the Book of Job; only a thunder and lightening demonstration of the fact of facts, namely that a man cannot measure the will of God, which arrives from a center beyond the range of human categories." (124) Even when choosing to directly address and answer Job's question-laments, "He makes no attempt to vindicate His work in ethical terms, but only magnifies His presence, bidding Job do likewise on earth in human emulation of the way of heaven." (125) Job's trial is akin to the ogre nature of the father, even The Heavenly Father.

However, this seemingly continues as God begins to 'encourage' Job towards more strength in order to finish and recover from his trial towards atonement. "Grid up thy loins now like a man," the Lord says. However, what is potentially taken as an ogre-father employment is ultimately out of redeeming-father characteristics. And, not just via release from pain and into peace. No. The Lord goes further still to call Job to actually exercise the authority of not just an earthly father, wealthy man, or ruler. Rather, to exercise the authority of the Heavenly Father; "I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me." Quite a redemption and reversal since, again, the whole tone of the experience from Job's perspective is obedience and acceptance of stark trial without justification and an inability to see when, or if, redemption will occur.

As such, we see the 'effect' of atonement on the hero and his psyche. "We cannot interpret his words of the last chapter as those of a man merely intimidated. They are the words of one who has seen something surpassing anything that has been said by way of justification. 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee'." After this level of plunge from wealth, into trial, testing by the Father, and coming to full understanding of – that is, 'seeing' – his Father, Job is restored to health and wealth beyond his previous height in all the land. The magnitude of the materiality of his restoration in economic terms is, even when taken as a literal, factual, and 'true' story, is indicative and symbolic of the deep soul satisfying 'wealth' of connection to, atonement with, and taking the 'office' of his Father.

Christ

Still more significant and, according to Campbell, the highest example of a hero, is the central figure of all the Bible, Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, the Christian cycle starts with an unnamed hero who is to complete a long cycle of prophetic history. With The Fall of Man and various covenants with Israel, the coming Messiah is the object of prophetic messages creating a narrative that illustrates the need for and the promise of the coming of the same. In the New Testament, the Christian cycle is completed by God now having sent part of Himself to come to earth as man. What was a representative or indeterminable approaching figure, 'the Messiah' is now a literal physical example. Jesus birth, baptism, ministry, sacrifice, death, resurrection, and assumption in the New Testament confirm the salvation and redemption available to those who believe in Him. Naturally, He is not just a physical figure, with relevant 'material' teachings, but also a spiritual example in both how he lives life and how complete his atonement is.

Christ is the height of hero, of myth, and of the hero's journey framework for a number of reasons. First, the depth of his departure (heaven to earth), initiation (from parents to ministry), and atonement with the father (chosen, crucifixion, resurrection) represents the grandest manner that any hero has filled his 'father's Will'. Second, Christ is not just a hero progressing into a role and teaching relevant instructions. He is also Himself a savior. Third, He is greater than all hero figures for having presented the possibility of saving all people in all times. Fourth, Jesus also offers redemption that follows even salvation. "But now at last the great resolving image of the second birth," we are not just remedied of a malady but also living anew; "born again, and made new Creatures, and raised from being dead in Sin, to a Start of new, and before altogether unexperienced Light and Life." (106)

Fifth, even when saved and redeemed the continuing increase provides the ability – with spiritual disciplines and assistance of His 'living Spirit' – to 'self' renewal. Put more simply, rebalancing when life compels us to waver. Redemption is not just an eventually taken state but "We are united to those immortal images of initiatory might, through the sacramental operation of which man, since the beginning of his day on earth, has dispelled the terrors of this phenomenality and won through the all-transfiguring vision of immortal being."

Here, Campbell makes a comparison across all eras and stories. "For if the bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifiest to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (120) "The forms that come and go – and of which your body is by one – are the flashes of my dancing limbs. Know Me in all, and of what shall you be afraid? The magic of the sacraments (made effective through the passion of Jesus Christ)" show "the protective power of primitive amulets and charms, and the supernatural helpers of the myths and fairy tales of the world are mankind's assurances that the arrow, the flames, and the flood are not as brutal that they seem."

Progression

Among the various ages 'myth' examples we can see a progression. Indeed, this is why we have chosen to illustrate more examples here than in previous steps. There is a progression from primitive, to tribal, to religious stories. Further, if we were to include eras of Greek, Roman, medieval, fairy tale, and even other religious genres, the progression would also be apparent. That said, likely a 'flatter curve' would begin, so to speak, at the point of tribal eras.

Whether primitive, religious, or some era in between those two bookends, the overarching significance is the same. Regarding commonality, "There can be no doubt that no matter how unilluminated the stark-naked Australian savages may seem to us their symbolic ceremonials represent a survival into modern times of an incredibly old system of spiritual instruction." Regarding geography, breadth, and scope, "far-flung evidences of which are to be found not only in all the lands and islands bordering the Indian Ocean, but also among our own very special brand of civilization." Regarding progression, at least implied, "It can be seen from a comparison of the figures of Australian ritual with those familiar to us from higher cultures, that the great themes, the ageless archetypes, and their operation upon them should remain the same." (119)

A more granular articulation of progression can be seen by categorizing types within each era. First, primitive 'myth' takes the form of ritual in which, at its most extreme, involves even patricide of a tribal elder. It is literally sacrificial and obviously violent. Second, still primitive but a progression within that era, a rite takes place that requires a blood sacrifice of some kind – perhaps blood lekking, blood shedding, or blood drinking. Here, there is clear physical injury and risk of life even if life is, normally, not lost. Third, a primitive-like but now ceremonial act involves some shedding of blood via the sacrifice

of a portion of the body. Though still painful it (circumcision) is more calculated. The primitive era, version of 'myth' is a literal physical sacrifice or loss of whatever severity.

The primitive era progressed to a tribal era. Fourth, tribal ceremony acted out characters and involved family archetypes resulting in an, at least temporary, 'loss' of mother, father, to 'leave' the nuclear family or tribe. Fifth, tribal rite in which there is no physical loss or departure from the tribe per se; rather pure 'myth' or 'story' is used, leveraging various symbols to 'mark' or familiarize the boy, adolescent, or hero into a new reality or way of being.

As we have alluded to before, we can also see an increased depth of significance of atonement with the father from age to age to age - from primitive physical ritual to tribal ceremony as a story-based initiation to religious truth. The link and similarity among the ages' embodiment of myth is that all are exhibiting some form of 'loss' as inherent to the hero moving forward in the hero's journey in general and in atonement with the father in particular.

Finally, there is not just a progression from primitive and tribal to and somewhat macabre to story-symbolic. In religious 'myth' we see not just progression in the depth of the hero but total escalation. "Categories, indeed, are totally shattered by the Almighty of the Book of Job and remain shattered to the last." (124) Old Testament characters that rightly encountered the Lord become atoned with the Father. With Christ as an example, story, parables, personal example, and implications for life occur at once and, ultimately, even claim truth embodied by the same. And, where previously an elder or the hero bore the weight of atonement, the Father here now offers *himself* as atonement. And, for all people in all times. Further, Jesus Himself does as the central figure of the New Testament and all the Bible, not just become but remains atoned with the Father throughout His life and ministry both experiences and illustrates the "soul satisfying sense" of atonement. That is, "He was a hero who, by his courage in the fiery furnace, his unreadiness to break down and grovel before a popular conception of this character of the All Highest, had proven himself capable of facing a greater revelation than the one that satisfied his friends." And here again is something of the peace following atonement.

Significance

Having seen primitive, tribal, and religious representations of 'myth' in the form of ritual, ceremony, story, and scripture and the dual ogre-redeemer nature of father amid the same, we can also see the significance of this step in the hero's journey on different levels.

Social. From a social perspective, the ritual or story is "shown to be, among other things, a dramatized expression of the Oedipal aggression of the older generation." (118) There is a degree of reluctance regarding the loss or diminishment on the part of the older generation. 'Aggression' is also brought by the older generation through a series of rites signifying loss of the mother, election of loss of phallus, and corresponding pain and separation, is in order for the young men to become, become one with, and come over upon the father. Correspondingly, there is also an impulse of the younger "rising group of males." (118)

Family. From a family perspective, elements of mother and father as two sides of the same whole become apparent. Further, to the reader of any given story, as well as the hero depicted in it. That is, this serves as a sort of meta narrative which is a means to come to an understanding of the dual nature of self, mother, and father. More specifically, that that realization is a core element of personal transformation. In ritual, rite, and ceremony, as in ordeal and trial, the hero derives hope from the mother or female figure in various regard. In particular, as life sustaining, nurturer, and encourager. However, 'mother' (and, it would seem, any female form) also exhibits a degree of dysfunction in the competition with, longing for, potential bitter holding on to, and need to release the hero.

Similarly, while there is a redemptive intent to and nature of the father's final trials, there is a degree of dysfunction in 'father' (and it would seem any mentor figure) in the angry power exhibited as the father is giving up and or losing his position or office. More specifically, even if moving on to a more referent, vice commanding, role as the son-hero takes his place. This all leaves the hero 'homeless', in a momentary 'void' if you will, as he has 'lost' or 'left' mother and father. As such, the greatest test is "to trust the terrifying father-face" realizing "one's faith must be centered elsewhere; and with that reliance for support, one endures the crisis." "In the end" the hero recognizes not just the dual nature of two individual parts but also "that the father and mother reflect each other and are in essence the same." (110)

Parenting. From a parenting perspective, the hero's realization that father and mother are not separate so much as different images of the same unit becomes clearer in tales where mother and father do not fill their roles well. This is most apparent in the cases of indulgent parenthood. What goes awry in those cases is more clearly recognizable than in general or successful parenthood alone (as discussed above). The "tale of the indulgent parent illustrates the antique idea that when roles of life are assumed by the improperly initiated, chaos supersedes." (115)

Relationship. From a relationship perspective, the father is initially in competition with the protective realm of the mother. Of course, the hero leaves that 'homestead' for "mastery of the universe," which is the realm of the father. "The traditional idea of initiation combines an introduction of the candidate into the techniques, duties, and prerogatives of his vocation with a radical readjustment of this emotional relationship to the parental images." (115) Further, "ideally the invested one has been divested of his mere humanity" and is now "represented of an impersonal cosmic force." "He is twice born: he has become himself the father. In particular, motives of self-aggrandizement, personal preference or resentment" are atoned with as well as a result of the father's final challenges, blessing, and empowerment. (116)

Office. From the perspective of an 'office', the 'self-giving' of father is clear in a number of ways. First, the handing off by literal or figurative or literal death of an elder. This is "the benign and self-giving aspect of the archetypal father." Second, the young men are compelled to navigate a certain obligatory course. In total, the father is culminating a "long period of symbolical instruction. Wherever the father falls on a spectrum of severity or symbolic, the hero is 'taken' from the mother, the boy undergoes a 'loss' in his coming of age, the father 'accepts into his court' the one who is to replace him in his 'office'. Perhaps to take over in maintaining the status quo. Perhaps in service to the tribe. Perhaps to allow or empower expansion. Perhaps to serve a larger ideal. Again, there is "the need for great care upon the part of the father admitting to his house only those who have been thoroughly tested." (111)

From an individual perspective, the dual nature of the father is indicative of the psyche of the hero himself; "the ogre aspect of the father is a reflex of the victim's own ego." (107) A good deal derived from infancy is left in place unless conquered by the road of trails and the archetypes' challenges. The "fixating idolatry of that pedagogical non-thing is itself the fault that keeps one steeped in a sense of sin," otherwise "sealing the potentially adult spirit from a better balanced, more realistic view of the father, and therewith of the world." (107)

Therefore, "atonement," with its syllables elongated – 'at-one-ment' – illustrates the hero's 'experience of' this moment. It "consists of no more than the abandonment of that self-generated monster." (108) Referencing Freud's framework, the importance for the progression of the hero along his journey is coming to the point where he is not thought to be as God (super ego), or thought to be sin alone (Id), but to be of sin-nature. That is, needing to, but ultimately capable of being absolved by nature of the father's grace. This is what is most difficult. It "requires an abandonment of the attachment to ego itself." (110) "One must have faith that the father is merciful, and then reliance on that mercy. Therewith, the center of belief is transferred outside of [God's] bedeviling tight scaly ring, and the dreadful ogres dissolve." (110)

At its simplest, it is time for the hero to grow up. To do so, “the problem of the hero going to meet the father is to open his soul beyond terror to such a degree that he will be ripe to understand how the sickening and insane tragedies of this vast and ruthless cosmos are completely validated in the majesty of Being.” (125)

Amplification

The point of the step of atonement with the father and the significance of father as archetype is that the hero “transcends life with its peculiar blind spot and for a moment rises to a glimpse of the source.” He beholds the face of the father, understands fully “and the two are atoned.” (125) While the full phase of initiation has preceded and, within this phase of departure, the steps of Woman as Goddess, Woman as Temptress, and Road of Trials have certainly occurred, the same can also reoccur in this individual step on a smaller scale.

In that context, the ogre and redeeming father offers a final rite of passage, challenge, or set of challenges to ensure two things at least. First, to ensure the hero is fully prepared to move into the realm or office of the father. Second, that the preparation is to the point of not just strength or maturity alone to ‘achieve’ but also something to ‘experience’ as “soul satisfying sense” so that all the hero’s ‘becoming’ leads to him ‘being’ transformed in all his future days and duties.

In terms of typical social institutions and relationships, atonement with the father operates on different levels of including society, parenthood, mother, father, father-son relationship, ‘office’, and individual. In terms of history, we can see a symbolic similarity of and progression among stories from the earliest eras to formalized religion – Christian, in particular. To that end, even if the latter is not actually taken as truth, figuratively or literally, the earthly father remains as reflexive, indicative, and symbolic of the spiritual relationship to an all-knowing God. The apparent ogre nature is in good part a mechanism for the hero’s testing and maturing. Therefore, indicates and is ultimately a part of the father’s redemptive nature.

From the hero’s point of view a number of things are occurring. First, he must open his soul further than ever before. In particular, open up to the terror inside the challenge of an ogre-redeeming force. Second, this is to ripen his soul. Third, he comes to understanding the magnitude of the “precariousness of the cosmos, which is in part a sickening realization.” Fourth, the forward-looking benefit is the majesty or joy in merely ‘being’, vice doing, accomplishing, or having. Fifth, the fact that ‘being’ itself transcends life as we commonly understand it in our focus on materiality or physicality. Sixth, that itself is the “particular and peculiar blind spot” akin to what it fundamentally means to be human. Seventh, it is those realizations, perspective, or maturation that the hero beholds the father (and the Father) as a person, as a role to become and embody. Therefore, be atoned. And, at one with.

Conclusion

In the fourth step of Departure phase, Atonement with the Father, the hero comes to terms with the dual nature of the father. The father is both ogre and redeemer; his challenges bring the hero out of self aggrandizement and into transformation and a new way of being.

The key archetype is the father himself, of course. So, various devices involved are more descriptive. Primitive devices commonly involve loss or ingestion of blood. Tribal devices commonly involve the image of a snake and the loss or giving up of part of a body. Native devices commonly orient on resisting or surviving one or several animal attacks. Religious devices commonly focus on God’s impending moral displeasure. Amid these devices, there is the interaction of mother and society who desire to protect the hero, even if they don’t particularly, and father who allows the loss to unfold. To that end, the father may

require the hero to complete another whole round of challenges to steel his preparation, literally or seemingly repeating the challenge of previous archetypes or even several elements of the Road of Trials.

A number of implications of Atonement With the Father are apparent. First, the most general and central implication is that there is a progression in myth from primitive to tribal, medieval, classic, and religious myth. Second, this indicates a means of instruction that has existed as long as has mankind itself. Third, this suggests myth's striking relevance in general. And, of religion and faith in particular. That is, even in, and perhaps especially in, modern times. Fourth, this step, the larger hero's journey, and the body of myth operate upon a number of levels. On a 'social' level, there is a degree of resistance against any individual hero and against any rising generation as they navigate adolescence to adulthood and maturity. On a 'family' level, there is duality to both mother and father - protective and preparatory - the hero must navigate. Correspondingly, mother and father that are seemingly two entities come to be seen as two parts of the same whole. On a 'father' level, considering him as an institution of sorts, the purposes of that 'office' are initially in competition with the mother. Correspondingly, there is a leaving and loss followed by an initiation and dialectic instruction for the hero to achieve mastery of his universe. On an 'individual' level, the result of all this preparation is atonement - an 'at one ment' - where the hero realizes he possesses, and must balance, the ogre and ego aspect of himself.

With that in mind, the more general symbol of Atonement With the Father is the loss of attachment to the homestead and the need to ensuring the hero moves forward. More specifically, move forward in a particularly prepared state - in body, mind, spirit, being, and action. As it is put in religious language, in the eventual and ultimate grace of the Father, He is pulling the hero toward Him and, with His Spirit upon the hero's soul, the hero is made a new creature. As such, the hero is 'twice born'; this is the means, and only means for the father give his 'office' and his 'self' over to the succeeding son.

Apotheosis

Introduction

Having atoned with his father, and correspondingly become more present to a Heavenly Father, the hero has achieved and is in a state of apotheosis. As a dictionary definition, apotheosis is “the highest point in the development of something; culmination or climax.” As a longer descriptive definition, apotheosis is also “divination or deification” and “is the glorification of a subject to divine level and, most commonly, the treatment of a human like a god. In theology, “apotheosis refers to the idea that an individual has been raised to godlike stature. In art, the term refers to the treatment of any subject (a figure, group, locale, motif, convention, or melody) in a particularly grand or exalted manner.”

Of course, apotheosis is not just an elevation of status but an elevation of the hero’s ‘way of being’. The hero is now very clearly “a pattern of the divine state” and he has “gone beyond the last terror of ignorance.” (128) Having become something new, “the envelopment consciousness has been annihilated, then he becomes free of all fear.” (128) Correspondingly, the central instruction of myth is that “this is the release potential [that exists] within us all, and which anyone can attain.” This is because “All beings are without self.” (128) Like the Bodhisattva, as a symbolic example, “the world is filled and illumined by, but does not hold” the hero. Rather, “it is he who holds the world” and “pain and pleasure do not enclose him, he encloses them - and with profound repose.” (128)

With that in mind, the now-colloquialized term ‘nirvana’ is an apt description of apotheosis. Out of the previous path and atonement with the father, there is an awareness and peace that leads to an internal vow of sorts resulting in a ‘way of being’ where the hero is unperturbed. “There lies a profound intuition, world-redeeming, world sustaining” state. As an aside, other religious traditions have equally clear and profound descriptions in scripture, whether or not those religious traditions are recognized as such. For example, in Christian tradition, scripture refers to a “peace that surpasses all understanding.”

In both a story and practical frame of mind, a good portion of apotheosis is being present to and comfortable within the ‘void’. Where a hero’s earliest experience was looking into the void, the hero could sense there was ‘something more’ beyond the homestead (outside a defined world) and perhaps (rather unconsciously) there was something ‘more’ that was ‘in’ himself. Here, we can remember our early reference to The Princess and the Frog where her ball enters a pond signifying the reader of her subconscious and a foreshadow of leaving her homestead, though she is fully present to neither. In contrast to that step and phase, the hero is now both conscious of and comfortable with the void - an undefined near reality, the possibility to create & influence - having ‘emptied self’. That is, he is now ‘void of’ the preconceived self, can be, and is fully present to The Father.

Short Examples

Before getting into various themes and devices, it is helpful to highlight a couple fairly straight forward examples in story. One ‘story’ is the ‘narrative art’ of Chinese and Japanese landscape painting, which are associated with Taoism. The “landscape paintings of China and Japan depict supremely the heavenly lines of this terrestrial state.” (142) Four benevolent mythical creatures of phoenix, unicorn, tortoise, and

dragon are commonly depicted as dwelling among various vegetation, mist covered mountains, and sages and spirits that populate the same.

Another ‘story’ is the form of the tradition and ritual associated with a Japanese tea room. It is again “conceived in the spirit of the Taoist earthly paradise.” (143) The tea room is called “the abode of fancy” and “is an ephemeral structure built to enclose a moment in poetic intuition.” (143) A guest approaches, passing along a garden path, and stoops through a low entrance, where they take notice of a simplicity that stands out with a mysterious beauty. Aside from an emitting kettle on the floor, there is but a single image or flower arrangement in the space.

That single “element of the unsymmetrical suggests movement.” With the flower arrangement as the object within this example, “the purposely unfinished leaves in a vacuum” is a point “into which the imagination of the beholder can pour.” (143) Silence holds “the secret of temporal existence” and “each guest is permitted to complete the experience in relation to himself then contemplate the universe in miniature, and become aware of the hidden fellowship with the immortals.” (144)

As a ritual continued from ancient to modern times, “the texture of Japanese life became so imbued with the significant formalization that attention to the slightest detail was a conscious expression of eternity, and the landscape itself a shrine.” (144) Correspondingly, this description of the real-world elements, experience, and symbolic ‘language’ of the Japanese tearoom is the same purpose and effect of the the shorter example of narrative paintings.

Devices - Color

‘Color’ is in some regard is the most obvious recurring story element. For example, as the Bodhisattva achieves apotheosis there is mention of various parts of his body - highlighting common elements such as color, light, and precious stones - adorned with a “garland of eight thousand rays” of all different colors also repeated among “eighty four thousand signet marks.” These elements are seen in similar fashion in biblical accounts in holy artifacts of the Old Testament and surrounding a returning Christ in the New Testament Book of Revelation.

With those short examples and single device in mind, it is helpful to note that apotheosis is better understood through the levels of significance and symbols that play out in this step. That is, in comparison to earlier steps where various archetypes and elements are something more of an object to focus our attention on and draw learning from. Similarly, there are fewer ‘examples’ of stories and heroes with which we can explain apotheosis. In particular, the best and most representative examples increasingly center on the few number of world religions. To that end, the two main symbolizing categories or set of criteria seen in myth are androgyny and pairing of opposites.

Devices - Androgyny

Androgyny is, of course, being neither male nor female. Or, as the case often is in myth and story, appearing as masculine and feminine at different points or places. “Male-female gods are not uncommon in the world of myth. They emerge always with a certain mystery.” More specifically, the point is to “conduct the mind beyond objective experience into a symbolic realm where duality is left behind.” (131)

An example of this is the myth underlying the commonly-known symbol of yin and yang. In the Chinese, Taoist story of a holy woman T’ai Yuan, the heroic character progresses to where “combined in her person” is “the masculine Yang and the feminine Yin.” (131) Here, Yin and Yang represented together “underlies the cosmos” and “inhabits every created thing.” (131) Other examples are apparent as well. Greek myth features Hermaphrodite (child of Hermès and Aphrodite) and Eros (god of love) “were in sex

both female and male.” (131) In Kabbalistic (medieval Jewish) and Gnostic Christian writings, Adam is presented first as androgynous before Eve is created from him into, and at which point he also becomes, a different form.

This is “the meaning of the Image of the bisexual god.” “He is the mystery of the Theme of initiation. Taken from mother, chewed up, assimilated into the world of trial, and the persona of an ogre. Then we are reborn and more than we were. Beyond this is not just a self but also the image of God, The Father, [but] as actual Lord of the universe.” Further, within this progression, it is the ethic and being that is correspondingly more important, “vice a sectarian ideal or thing to be defended.” Rather, someone to live in and live like for service and benefit to others. As such, “the childhood parent images and ideas of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ have been surpassed.” That said, not eliminated; the hero “no longer desire and fear; we ‘are’ what was desired and feared.” To that end the symbolism of an androgynous deity or figure is not the literal physicality. Rather, “the androgynous character of the presence” of a Heavenly Father now fully atoned with. (138)

Devices - Paired Opposites

In addition to androgyny, the presence and use of paired opposites is a common occurrence and theme to illustrate or symbolize apotheosis. This corresponds to apparently separate things or opposites coming together. For example, referring to The Hero’s Journey archetypes in the story structure itself, “two apparently opposite mythological adventures come together: the Meeting with the Goddess, and the Atonement with the Father.” These are, in a sense, ‘one’ given their combined role is to test and mature the hero in different and complementary ways.

Again, religious ‘myths’ provide the best examples of this. In a Hindu story of Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, male and female are “two halves of a split pea.” Separate, but important parts of a single whole. The Bible refers to this, of course, in reference to marriage where “two have become one.” Ephesians and similar New Testament passages speak of different but complementary duties of husband and wife under the benevolent authority of Christ to which they, interestingly enough, when spiritually mature, align to first, and more than each other.

Significance – Apotheosis & ‘Nirvana’

That said, it is the effect and state of having attained and being in apotheosis that is the more important point than the archetypes and symbols that illustrate it. Here, the concept of nirvana is a good one. However, it is more than the commonly conceived of peace or calm that is colloquialized. Beyond a “wonder” noted, again in the Bodhisattva myth, apotheosis is - and the point of the image paired opposites is - “the annihilation of the distinction between life and release-from-life.”

Here, “nirvana means ‘the Extinguishing of the Threefold Fire of Desire, Hostility, and Delusion.’” (138) There is a “supreme statement of the great paradox by which the wall of the pairs of opposites is shattered and the candidate [is] admitted to the vision of the God.” (146) Referencing Buddhist iconography, a male’s right hand holds a thunderbolt which is the counterpart of himself and in the right hand a bell, which is the counterpart of the woman. The same represent both the current and eternity while the bell is the illuminated mind, respectively. (147) This imagery is strikingly similar to the bell rung in Christian mass. The striking of the bell is “the moment when God, through the power of the words of the consecration, descends into the breads and wine - the word is made flesh.” At its simplest, the paired opposites point to the hero’s fusion and resting in a new state present to the deity or seemingly impossible force of some kind that has led him all along. As two brief references, this can be seen in the Hindu phrase “The Jewel is in the Lotus.” (147) and in the Christian account “in His own image He created them male and female.”

Significance – Messianic Christianity

To get a further sense, consider the Biblical account representing these elements. “The biblical version of a myth known to many... represents one of the basic ways of symbolizing the mystery of creation.” (131) First, there is the “devolvement of eternity into time.” The Lord manifests creation out of a void. Second, there is the “breaking of the one into the two and then the many.” Adam is a whole individual person then broken into two; man and woman. Third, there is “the generation of new life through the reconstruction of the two.” The “two become one” and in biblical and spiritual context both.

Naturally, the Biblical account continues. Campbell relates that the “image stands at the beginning of the cosmogenic cycle, and with equal propriety at the conclusion of the hero task.” (131) In particular, “at the moment when the wall of Paradise is dissolved, the divine form found and recollected, and wisdom regained.” Here, the “moment” Campbell is referring to is Eve having eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Regarding the relevance of this myth and story moment, Campbell’s insight regarding Adam and Eve as being at the beginning of the cosmogenic cycle is correct. As such, again as a story element, we could take it as an apt example of being ‘created in the image of God’, as Biblical text and Christian culture refers to man and woman. Therefore, Campbell takes it as a symbol of the realistic potential for there to be no separation at all between any individual and God. Indeed, the Bible bears out the connection Adam, then Adam and Eve, had individually and together been in with God.

However, by both Biblical account, and in long tradition of Christian theology, the account of Adam and Eve is not the “conclusion of a hero task” as Campbell claims. Adam and Eve are banished for having disobeyed God. As Campbell describes, the wall of Paradise is indeed dissolved. However, again, it is due to Adam and Eve’s sin, not because of a peace they achieved. As such, this story is not a tight, brief cycle of Adam’s oneness, separation into two, again becoming one (with Eve), and them becoming again (in, fact ‘staying’) ‘one’ with (in the presence) of The Lord. Rather, Campbell’s inference regarding meaning of the myth and story element is both incorrect and the actual meaning and significance of creation in general and Adam and Eve in particular is apt to Campbell’s more general arc of The Hero’s Journey and significance of apotheosis in particular.

Creation, and Adam and Eve, becomes broken in ways that are spiritual, physical and relational as a result of Adam and Eve’s choices and actions. Each in their own way, and together, they fail to navigate this moment of The Hero’s Journey well. They were in the presence of The Lord. Then, taking upon their own thinking and decision making, instead of resting and trusting in his ‘challenge’, ‘direction’, or selective prohibition, they failed to remain in the state of apotheosis which, interestingly enough, they actually began in, instead of were challenged towards attaining.

So, while Campbell’s characterization is clearly incorrect in comparison to direct reference of biblical account and Christian doctrine, the idea of ‘oneness’ as a central characteristic of apotheosis certainly holds. Similarly, the separation (from God), separateness (from each other), and the consequences (role conflict, enmity, difficulty of tending land, pained childbirth) serve as a literal and symbolic comparison of living in, or outside of, apotheosis.

Significance – Challenges

While the path that leads the hero to this point is apparent, there is a significant barrier in achieving this particular step. First, it is not just a ‘step’ but, as we have said, it is his achieving a ‘state’. Second it is, more than any other step, counter to human nature. This is because, any “totem, tribal, racial, and aggressively missionizing” organization, tends to “represent only partial solutions of the psychological problem of subduing hate by love.” That is they - an institution or organization - “only partially initiate”

to the 'state' of apotheosis as opposed to focus on and encourage the rites and symbols that are, ultimately, but a 'representation' of the 'being' that apotheosis represents, symbolically, in story, and in reality. That is, in living out ones life.

This occurs, or tends to manifest, in a couple compounding ways. First, when "ego is not annihilated," even when a system of authoritative teachings and values are fully imbued. Second, as such, the ego, rather, "is enlarged," though unintentionally. Third, "instead of thinking of only himself, the individual," as something that is in need of becoming and remaining transformed, the hero can often become "dedicated to the whole of *his* [italics emphasized] society." (133) Fourth, as a result "most of the world meanwhile (that is to say, by far the larger portion of mankind) is left outside the sphere." Fifth, most consequentially, the larger world is, further, "left outside the sphere of his sympathy and protection because [they are] outside the sphere of the protection of his god." (134)

The unfortunate result of this is the "dramatic divorce of the two principles of love and hate which the pages of history so bountifully illustrate." (134) As an example, "the laws of the City of God," a reference to one of the most respected Christian theologians, Saint Augustine, "are applied only to his in-group." That is, his tribe, church, nation, class, or whatever. The result of this - or, more specifically, the expression of it - is that "the fire of a perpetual holy war is hurled.. against whatever uncircumcised, barbarian, heathen, 'native', or alien people happens to occupy the position of neighbor." (134)

Here two clarifications are yet worth noting. First, the words 'holy war' is, of course, a historical reference and can be taken literally as an example of 'faith' misapplied. Or, applied too aggressively. That is, what is a spiritual system to be invited to instead takes form into physical forcibleness. Second, for our purposes, an understanding of the hero's journey, and the relevance of apotheosis as transition into a new 'way of being', can be taken as metaphor. However, as we have begun more centrally visiting religious myth more at this point, Campbell intends to illustrate it can be achieved quite literally as well. Naturally, this could be easily illustrated by the person of Christ, as both mythic story archetype and as a literal savior. Also in many other biblical accounts such as The Beattitudes and many references to the purpose and effect of the presence of The Holy Spirit in the Christian church and individuals lives both then and now.

For whatever reason, Campbell chooses the passage of the poet Saint Mlarepa, a Buddhist reference to illustrate this. In particular, highlighting a quote which occurred about the same time Pope Urban II "was preaching the first crusade." (136) The main factor in the challenge of attaining and maintaining apotheosis for the hero is "the sin and obscurtion born of evil works; therein the being follower has dictates of likes and dislikes, and finders n'er the time to know Equality." The saint continues, "avoid, O my son, likes and displaces. If ye realize the Emptiness of All Things, Compassion will arise within your hearts; If ye lose all differentiation between yourself and others, fit to serve others ye will be; and when in serving others use shall win success, then shall ye meet with me; And finding me, ye shall attain to Buddhahood."

Implication - Way of Being

So, now it should be clear that apotheosis is, at its core, a set of ideals that is arrived at, embodied, and becomes a way of being. Not just taken on as an embodiment of the ego. With that, a couple characteristics apply. First, values, tribe, religion, faith, and the like are not for the 'local' per se. "Once we have broken free of the prejudices of our own provincially limited ecclesiastical, tribal, or national rendition of the world archetypes, it becomes possible to understand that the supreme initiation is not that of the local motherly fathers, who then project aggression onto the neighbors for their own defense." (135) Second, though "the good news which the World Redeemer brings and which so many have been lead to hear," it is not for self-justification primarily. Rather, the hero is, "reluctant, apparently, to

demonstrate, that God is love.” And “that He can be, and is to be, loved and that without exception are his children.” (135)

Without this maturation or progression into a ‘way of being’ a faith, system, and purpose of myth “are merely pedantic snares.” That is, “unless kept ancillary to the major teaching.” Further, “indeed where not so kept, they have a regressive effect: they reduce the father image back again to the dimensions of the totem.” Here, Campbell asserts, though not necessarily unique to one system or religion alone, that this “of course, is what happened throughout the Christian world” at times, referencing such historical pursuits as the crusades and Puritan witch trials. In a modern sense, we might add the insistence on the application of biblical concepts and text into western political mechanisms. Or, the reverse. Naturally, we make that statement in context of apotheosis and the point of full personal transformation. That is, at its root, the Christian ethic centers on individual spiritual transformation and submission to what, as an example, Christ would have us ‘be’.

And that, in colloquial language, is precisely the point of apotheosis. It is more important to ‘be’ as a faith, system, or hero’s journey would have you ‘be’, as opposed to ‘do’, ‘say’, or ‘proclaim’ per se. For example, a great many would claim and believe Christianity and Christ to be capital-T true be prepared to advocate it as an internally consistent accepted system in which to live, even towards transformation. However, transformation is exactly the point. It is one thing to say you ‘are’ a Christian. Or, to ‘defend’ Christianity. This is not to deny the utility of studying theology. Similarly, we can acknowledge there is utility in being fully beholden to the faith in general and Christ in particular is important. That said, in terms of apotheosis and The Hero’s Journey as a series of steps and mechanisms to transformation, the more significant endeavor and ‘test’ is to become and be fully present to and ‘resting’ in The Lord,. Correspondingly, ‘being’ of service unto others, perhaps even suggesting that God ‘doesn’t need our help’ per se.

As an example, even the faiths own theology and scripture makes it clear that it is not our own knowledge, deeds, and convincing that bring new persons to faith but The Holy Spirit that draws people unto Christ and the Lord prior to human ‘witness’ being successful. To that end, while we have noted historical examples of Christianity institutionally manifesting counter to it’s core ethic and hero (Savior) figure, because Campbell highlights the same, he is ultimately complementary of the Christian ethic. “In comparison to ‘flags and totems’, The World’s Savior’s cross... is a vastly more democratic symbol than the local flag.” (135) As an aside, Campbell claims world religions proclivity for actually developing its congregants to apotheosis is imperfect elsewhere as well; this type of transformation or attitude is also a weakness of Islam and more easily seen in Buddhism.

So, these exceptions in religions are not only an error. Rather, also a proof of the relevance of the model, in which it is ‘being’ that is intended. While “the world is full of the resultant mutually contending bands: totem-, flag-, and party-worshippers” and “even so-called Christian nations - which are supposed to to following a ‘World’ Redeemer - are better known to history for their colonial barbarity and internecine strife” the best figures of the Bible, and certifiably Christ himself are both still a “practical display of that unconditional love, synonymous with the effective conquest of ego, ego’s world, and ego’s tribal god.” That is, even Campbell himself, though no longer a Christian, or practicing Catholic as he was in his younger years, still holds up Christ as worthy of embodying. “Taught by their professed supreme Lord: love your enemies, do good to them which hate you. Bless them... parlay for them... give to every man that a sketch of thee... Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful.”

Returning to the idea of hero now, as story element, and as a possibility of ‘becoming’ in real life, a number of characteristics are apparent. That is, as opposed to previously understanding the characteristics of apotheosis as a concept or state. First, compassion. “He is filled with compassion for the self terrorized beings who live in fright of their own nightmare.” Second, he can actual live ‘in service’ to ‘the other’

since all and none are now truly 'other' to him. "He rises, returns to them, and dwells with them as an egoless center, though whom the principles of emptiness is made manifest in its own simplicity." Third, this is the world of, in Buddhist terminology, 'nirvana' and, in Christian terminology, 'walking in the Spirit'. His "great compassionate act" is "revealed that in the understanding of one in whom the Threefold Fires of Desire, Hostility, and Delusion is dead."

Implications - Levels

Psyche / Individual. With the definition, representation, challenge, and implications of apotheosis, we can discuss how it plays out at different 'levels'. That is, what utility does understanding apotheosis provide in life.

At the level of our psyche, apotheosis is an indication of the 'choice' that a would-be hero makes having passed all the other steps. Consider the example of The Lotus Bearer, Avalokitesvara, from Buddhist tradition. Another name for the same is 'The Lord Looking Down in Pity', who is "so called because he regards with compassion all sentient creatures suffering the evils of existence." This pity is based on the knowledge of what is necessary for apotheosis. Transformation is a loss of self of a kind. "He shattered for himself the bounds of the last threshold, which [at that] moment opened to him the timelessness of the void beyond the frustrating mirage-enigmas of the named and bounded cosmos." (128) Here, the central point is "he made a vow that before entering the void he would bring all creatures without exception to enlightenment." A difficult 'task' to be certain; to pledge, even if out of a sense of fulfillment, to ever live in service of others. Yet, also the benefit of the 'power' of living in such rest and purpose. "Since then he has permeated the whole texture of existence with the divine grace of his assisting presence, so that the least prayer addressed to him... is graciously heard." (128)

Perhaps that illustration is still a bit more experiential, so here is the connection of story, myth, and religion to psychology and metaphysics. (139) "The vivid personifications" in whatever story, myth, and religion "prepare the intellect for the doctrine of the interdependence of the inner and outer worlds." (139) There is "a certain resemblance of this ancient mythological doctrine of the dynamics of the psyche." (139)

The Father. Progressing from the level of psyche and individual, the 'level' of father is a role and archetype corresponding to The Father as a spiritual figure and force. In parallel, the singular figure that has been drawing the hero forward all the while.

The following quotes illustrate how the father is 'operating' on the hero and through apotheosis. First, "boundless love includes, regards, and dwells within (without exception) every sentient being." Second, like the "perfection of the delicate wings of an insect, broken in the passage of time, he regards - and he himself is - both their perfection and their disintegration." (137) The hero is, again, certainly strengthened but not as a growth of the ego but transforming it towards 'being' anew. Third, the mechanism to this is that the hero, and any man, experiences "the perennial agony of man, self-torturing, deluded, being held in the net of this own tenuous delirium, frustrated." Fourth, in navigating the challenges of The Hero's Journey and what trial may again occur in Atonement with the Father and Apotheosis, the hero finally finds "within himself [as of yet] undiscovered, absolutely unutilized, the secret of release." (137)

Fifth, by the cumulative 'pulling forward' of The Father all this time, the hero becomes "serene above man." Even in comparison to "the angels, below man, the demons, [and] unhappy dead" the hero is become a superior being. In comparison to the hero stepping fully into the father's 'office', the aforementioned are 'all are drawn to the Lord less successfully.' Here 'Lord Who Looks Down in Pity' becomes what he, (and He) "has also meant the whole way along," we just didn't fully realize him as such. And, He is now "The Lord Who Is Seen Within." (137)

Path. The psychological, individual, and paternal levels apotheosis, of course, plays out within and contributes to the overall path of development. The path itself, the accumulation, and the culmination of these levels indicates that the 'hero' is an 'Everyman'. "Within us is that divine being." Specific to apotheosis, it is possible to, and the hero has now come to the point where he and "that protecting father are one." The journey overall, one's father, and The Father further point the hero to the reality, when in such a calm and focused restful state, that the "protecting father is every being we meet."

In coming to a dissolution of the 'self' - or the ego in particular - he and we are in service to the "ignorant, limited, self defending, suffering body [that] may regard itself as threatened by some other - the enemy - that one too is God." Therefore, in total the "ogre breaks us." And, "the hero, the fit candidate, undergoes the invitation 'like a man'." In contrast, the "dear protecting mother could not protect us" and we are "delivered into his frightening power." But it is all toward a spiritual transformation and new way of being. "But death is not the end. New life, new birth, new knowledge of existence... The father was himself the womb, the mother, of a second birth." (137-8)

While apotheosis and its indication of inner workings of our psyche and the relevance of religion are highlighted in the same thought, it is still fair to acknowledge the purpose of each is different. "Psychoanalysis is a technique to cure excessive suffering individuals of the unconsciously misdirected desires and hostility that that wave around their private webs of unreal terror and ambivalent attractions." A patient who is soothed and improved "finds himself able to participate with comparative satisfaction in the more realistic fears, hostility, erotic, and religious practices, business enterprises, wars, pastimes, and household tasks offered to him by his particular culture." (140) At it's simplest, psychoanalysis and psychological therapy help self-awareness, cope, become more effective. But the 'hero' has, in story or in life at this point, moved beyond the 'homestead' where coming into a more realistic and apt coping mechanism is only partly important. "Therefore the aim of the religious teaching is not to cure the individual back again to the general delusion, but to detach him from delusion altogether." (140)

Religion & Faith. Interestingly enough, this places religion - or, at least the full and right expression of it - both beyond and above psychology despite this age's increased respect for things such as mindfulness and science. "And so it may be said that the modern therapeutic goal of the cure back to life is attained through the ancient religious discipline after all." The hero, especially a central religious figure, or a religious individual seeking to emulate the same "is a large one." As such, "the departure from the world is regarded not as a fault, but as the first step into that noble path at the remotest turn of which illumination is to be won concerning the deep emptiness of the universal round."

Buddhism. For the Bodhisavatra this happens "in the legend of the Temptation under to Bo Tree." Here "the antagonist of the Future Buddha was Kama-Mara, literally 'Desire-Hostility,' or 'Love and Death,' the magician of Delusion." (139) In victory over the antagonist, Buddha "subdues himself to the critical point" where "the last projected fantasies of his primitive physical will to live like other human beings" as he is "assailed by the last fury of the disregarded flesh." (139) "This was the moment on which all depended; for from one coal could arise the whole conflagration." (139)

The hero does not just become stronger, become selfless, or die for others. He "does not abandon life," Rather, it is a new life of sorts, "turning his regard from the inner sphere of thought-transcending truth" towards what "can be described only as 'emptiness', since it surpasses speech." He can and does turn again "outward again to the phenomenal world" but now "he perceives without the same ocean of being ." He is not bothered by a former perceptual framework and corresponding triggers. Rather, "form is emptiness, emptiness indeed is form... and the same applies to perception, name, conception, and knowledge."

Christianity. Here, we can clarify what 'emptiness' is. It is like 'nothing'. However, in that, both terms are not to be taken as 'lacking value', 'worth', or being irrelevant. Rather, the hero is not so much detached or lost ego as he is no longer tied to what limits, defenses, and striving previously existed. He is 'free'.

'Emptiness' is not so much nothing in that is loss and a lack of value as if we were to say to someone, in modern context, "you are nothing" or "you are nothing to me." Rather, the emptiness can be considered a 'void' of open space where now something can be created and a new way of being manifested. Similarly, the emptiness is simply a lack of 'noise' which was previously being experienced, manifesting out of all manner of presuppositions and limitations.

To bring in Christian parlance we could say he 'is' actually as if "free in Christ," 'fully present' to the living Holy Spirit within him; 'walking in the Spirit' and being guided by the same. Similarly, not forming internal, mental, psychological - conscious or not - or terrestrial desires and intent and then seeking counsel. Instead, being guided by and in Him in the first place. "Having surpassed the decisions of his formerly self-assertive, self-defensive, self-concerned ego, he knows without and within the same repose."

As an aside, in some stories, there is a final moment in which the hero's attaining apotheosis also includes an apparently-separate decision to remain in apotheosis. One example of this highest height of apotheosis as a further additional critical moment operating on the soul is illustrated by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. We see this in modern story where a character comes down to single excruciating moment in which he or she must choose the dark or light, justice or revenge, their best self or their justifiable or reasonable wants. To that end, there is not necessarily a myriad of examples of this specifically in popular culture. So, this again rather corroborates the significance of religious 'myth', even if taken only as that, as opposed to both literal and truth.

Amplification

The key final understanding of apotheosis is becoming present to and acceptance of realities that are seemingly separate and opposites. However, similarly indicative of and embodying complementary parts. That is, suggesting related elements that are 'mutually exclusive and completely exhaustive. Examples abound but are not unlimited in number: void-world, eternity - time, truth - illusoriness, enlightenment - compassion, God - Goddess, enemy - friend, death - birth, thunderbolt - bell Jewel-Lotus, Yang - Yin.

That said, the point is not to make all things relative and equal. Doing so would rather overly modernize or liberalize what is actually operating or pointing our mind and spirit towards; doing the latter, Campbell might suggest, would be society's reducing an ethos down to its totem. Rather, all these images are represented by and pointing towards the seminal central yearning; that we all desire to, and the hero in the hero's journey successfully does, return to this 'center' of being.

Whatever, the story, myth, or particular device, the metaphor remains the same; apparently separate things or opposites coming together. For example, with archetypes in the hero's journey framework itself, "two apparently opposite mythological adventures come together: the Meeting with the Goddess, and the Atonement with the Father." That is in a sense 'one' in the archetypes role to test and mature the hero in complementary different ways. In a Hindu story of Brhadaranyaka Upanishad male and female are "two halves of a split pea." Separate, but important parts of a single whole.

The 'experience' of this is a state most commonly understood as what Buddhist tradition describes as nirvana. It is also easily seen in Christian context as walking in The Spirit'. There is a "wonder" where a large part of being is characterized by the "annihilation of the distinction between life and release-from-life." Here, again using Buddhist reference, "the Extinguishing of the Threefold Fire of

Desire, Hostility, and Delusion.” (138) The “untroubled pool of eternity, represents a realization that the distinction between eternity and time is only apparent - made perforce, by the rational mind, but dissolved in the perfect knowledge of the mind that has transcended the pair of opposites. What is understood is that time and eternity are two aspects of the same experience-whole.” (129-130) Less important than the building of self, being right or wrong, is just being. And, in a manner The Father would want.

As a Christian reference, the Bible refers to this, of course, in reference to marriage where “two have become one.” Even as Ephesians and similar New Testament passages speak of different but complementary duties of husband and wife under the benevolent authority of Christ, it is a ‘oneness’ that occurs and is apparent at full spiritual maturity out of first being individually aligned to Christ more and for the ‘other’ more than than for one’s self. Or even for ‘each other’ per se.

Conclusion

In the fifth step of the Departure phase, Apotheosis, the hero is fully resolved with his earthly and heavenly father. He is at the highest point of development and awareness of the point of godlike like stature or, at least, in a divine state. He has come to being ‘without self’. With that, he lives with increased power beyond traditional physical strength having matured, stepped into a new way of being, and experienced profound peace. He is comfortable being in and is, to a degree, ever in the ‘void’.

While there is not an archetype here per se, there are a number of devices that commonly appear. First, a wide spectrum of visible colors conveys and indicates wonder and enlightenment. Second, the appearance of an androgynous figure, and the hero’s own seeming androgyny in some cases, indicates the hero’s transcendence beyond mere masculine or feminine traits alone. That said, these devices don’t ignore or redefine identify altogether. Rather, reflect and illustrate a fulfillment and unity among parts as indicated by examples such as yin and yang, Adam and Eve, Christ and Holy Spirit. Third, the appearance of paired opposites is common. That is, things and aspects of self that, seemingly opposite and different, now exist together and serve a cohesive whole. Fourth, the occurrence of elongated time illustrates and indicates the hero’s superior presence of mind. The significance of all this is that the hero has eliminated the ability of the distractions of life from preying upon him. In that regard, he is free ‘from’ both too much external influence or limitation. Similarly, he has extinguished too much internal delusion, desire, or hostility, delusion. Here, there is a simultaneous physical and spiritual oneness.

A number of implications of Apotheosis are apparent. First, apotheosis is not just a ‘step’. Rather, it is as much as a ‘state’ the hero comes to live in. Second, institutionally, there is always a danger reducing any “core ethic” to a “totem.” That is, institutions only ever partially initiate individuals to the root way of being embodied by the best, ultimate representative that underpins the value system and called or inspired the organization to represent and become. Third, when the ‘ego’ is ‘annihilated’ and a hero is centered on ‘becoming’, there is a decreasing focus on rules and in-out behavior or evaluation and comparison; there is merely living ‘in service’ to the ‘other’. For example, the reality of Jesus having lived out all of the core ethic of what became Christianity has led to both deeply meaningful service to others and, in the hands of some nations’ self interest, holy wars. Fourth, apotheosis manifests in living in mind of being, having, then doing as opposed to the opposite sequence - doing, to have, then being - which is comparatively rooted in the unseen need to force an outcome. Fifth, while this would seem to be a ‘religious’ problem, it is absolutely not just that. It is more foundational to the human condition. And, rather naturally, plays out in any sphere or system - nation, flag, clan, group, or club.

With that in mind, the more generally symbolism of Apotheosis is that the hero is, and full maturity is defined by, becoming dead to delusion and hostility. Maturity, strength, and a gentle heart result being filled with compassion, living ‘in service’ to the ‘other’ and walking in the transcendent. Correspondingly, the levels of individual, psyche, psychology, and philosophy all play into the hero’s path

and becoming. On all those levels, the hero is stepping into a referent role as opposed to a position of power alone. In that regard, the Father draws near and has been drawing nearer the whole time.

The Ultimate Boon

Introduction

With that lengthy exposition regarding Apotheosis, *The Ultimate Boon* largely describes the state of the hero when living inside of apotheosis. “The ease with which the adventure is here accomplished signifies that there is a superior man... where the usual hero would have a test, the elect encounters no delaying obstacle and makes no mistake.” (148) This reality is significant because there is also the danger of the hero having a “descending consciousness” which then “submerges in dream, where the individual life is on the point of dissolving into undifferentiated energy: and it would be death to dissolve, yet death, also, to lack fire.” (149)

Example – Irish

Consider briefly the Irish folktale of the Prince of Lonely Island. The hero has navigated the previous initiation phase and departure steps, demonstrates a composure, and makes the decision to stay true to purpose with a centered spirit. In the story, the Prince has been on a couch, with the sleeping Queen of Tubber Tintye, for six nights and days, as its wheels and the couch itself go around in circles. When it comes time for him to leave, he fills three bottles with water from a flaming well and eats bread and mutton from a banquet table enough for a dozen men. Finally, he leaves a note relating these events under the Queen’s pillow, springs through a window, onto a horse, and leaves the castle and area.

In this example, “the well is the World Navel, its flaming water can symbolize an indestructible essence of existence, the bed going round being the World Axis.” (148) His success is in not being overly tempted by or indulging in the comfort of the castle, in his desire toward the queen, or gluttonous at his feast. The “sleeping castle is that ultimate abyss,” again, “into which the hero’s consciousness might descend and be submerged into dream.” The victory of the hero here is his ability to not just persist but to do so of right, self-aware, unselfish mind.

Devices

The first idea or motif in *The Ultimate Boon* is “the inexhaustible dish.” (149) This is “derived from an infantile fantasy” and symbolizes the “perpetual life-giving, form-building... of the universal source.” That is, the ‘banquet’ “is a fairy tale counterpart of the mythological image of the cornucopia banquet of the gods.” (149) In this example, and in general, there is the bringing together of goddess, fire, ‘theft’ of the same, and abundance. As an aside, the latter is also absent excess. This “reveals with simplicity and clarity the status of the anthropomorphic powers in the realm of myth.” (149)

A second device is the ‘medicine man’. “This nucleus of all primitive societies, ‘originates... on the basis of the infantile body-destruction fantasies, by means of a series of defense mechanisms’.” (149) In an Australian tale, the medicine man “substituted pebbles, quartz crystals, a quantity of rope, and sometimes also a little snake” to symbolize spirits they have put these items in place of, and have removed, his intestines. Now, “my inside is not something corruptible and full of feces, but incorruptible.” (149) Correspondingly, whoever is the subject of the medicine man’s ritual” is not a subject penetrated to shoot in diseases but to take out the sorcery that will “shoot disease substances into people.” (149) “I am not trying to destroy people’s insides, I am healing them.”

A third device is a “spiritual ‘double’.” (150) Common to folk tales, it is “an external soul not afflicted by the losses and injuries of the present body, but existing safely in some place removed.” (150) One example is a Hindu tale of a king’s daughter “who would marry only the man that found and awakened her double.” Similarly, Gnostic Christians “taught that when the souls of the blessed arrives in heaven it is met by saints and angels bearing its ‘vesture of light’, which has been preserved for it.” (150) Here, the

ultimate boon is the realization of the desire for the “Indestructible Body [which] is uninterrupted residence in the Paradise of the Milk That Never Fails.” (150)

While a gnostic example is generally Christian, we can also see specific scripture references which, considered in context of The Hero's Journey provide deeper meaning as well. The verse 2 Corinthians 5:17 explains that “We are now a new creation in Jesus” when accepting the gift of salvation. Further, when fully in relationship with Christ, and attuned to and ‘walking in’ The Holy Spirit. In this regard, by being redeemed, in more peaceful repose, and powerful way of being, the hero is now an indestructible body.

A fourth device is humor. This is a technique that is used and is impactful in at least two ways. First, such stories direct the audience or reader much more to metaphor and image as opposed to the literal. Second, as such, the use of humor softens the tone and lesson in comparison to religious stories. “Humor is the touchstone of the truly mythological as distinct from the more literal minded and sentimental theological mood.” (154)

A fifth device is the quest for some particular life-sustaining object or substance. There is a consistency of the desire of even modern man to achieve physical strength, dominance, or length of life towards immortality. Correspondingly, there is a tendency to build strength of the self vice to dissolve it. “To this very day, the possibility of physical immortality charms the heart of men.” (161) Examples include Ponce de Leon and his Fountain of Youth, the most well-known, as well as Bernard Shaw's Back to Methuselah and the story of King Ho and the King With No Clothes.

Significance

The significance in stories' imagery of the ultimate boon is threefold. First, the imagery is oddly simple. “This is helpful, for the mind feels at home with the images, and seems to be remembering something already known.” Even if the hearer or reader of a myth or story does not or cannot immediately correlate symbol and symbolized, the devices fall as known and familiar on the mind and psyche. Second, they relate clearly to the bookends of life. That is, the earliest and most basic, physical, dependent desires and the later desires towards spiritual development, becoming, and being of service. “It is obvious that the infantile fantasies which we all cherish still in the unconscious play continually into myth, fairy tale, and teachings of the church, as symbols of indestructible being.” (151)

Naturally, these devices and symbols are not the ends in and of themselves. While many steps have symbols and archetypes that can operate on any number of levels, here, the symbols in The Ultimate Boon are primarily psychological in nature. The realization, reaction, or composure of the hero is in contrast to and a triumph over comparably ‘natural’ stages of development. That is, the devices - inexhaustible dish, medicine man, spiritual double, humor, immortality-granting physical substance - indicate not what the hero is challenged by or struggling with but what he is now moving towards and living in. In psychological terms, since the hero's transformed psyche is indeed so important and apparent, he no longer has or orients on “body-destruction fantasies” like when “deprived of the mother breast.” There is no corresponding “temper tantrum” with which might come an instinct to “tear everything out of the mother's body.” There is no “fear of retaliation for these impulses” like in an infant.

It is fairly ‘normal’ for “fantasies of restitution, a alien, deep requirement for indestructible joy and protection against the ‘bad’ forces from within and without, [to] begin to direct the shaping psyche.” Further, “these remain as determining factors in the later neurotic, and even normal, life activities, spiritual efforts, religious beliefs, and ritual practices of the adult.” However, this is not the case for the successful hero at this point. The hero, having achieved Apotheosis, now living in and experiencing the

Ultimate Boon, is no longer overly concerned by his physical strength, physical growth, or even spiritual balance. This is his 'indestructibility'.

The building the self and focus on devices relating to physicality is, though normal or natural, misguided in context of The Hero's Journey. "The research for physical immortality proceeds from a misunderstanding of the traditional teaching." (161) Of course, the purpose of the journey is not so much to build one's self up but to continually persist such that circumstance and psyche are dissolved of self in order to take on the characteristics of the source, The Father, or whatever.

To that end, "the basic problem is: to enlarge the pupil of the eye, so that the body with its attendant personality will no longer obstruct the view." (161) "The irony, of course, lies in the fact that, whereas the hero who has won the favor of the god may beg for the boon of perfect illumination, what he generally seeks are longer years to live, weapons with which to slay his neighbor, or the health of this child." (163) To that end, and a Japanese reference, "The gods only laugh when men pray to them for wealth." Similarly, the boon bestowed on the worshiper is always scaled [only] to his stature and to the nature of his dominant desire." In this instance, the "boon is simply a symbol of life energy stepped down to the requirements of a certain specific case." (163)

Implications

Innate Desire. One implication is that the 'simple', natural desire of an infant for food, mother, comfort, and the like is, in the most basic sense, are the same as the more 'mature' or 'heroic' desire for connection to the 'source', The Father, or whatever. That is, there is a similar difficulty in 'detaching' from the mother as there is in pursuing or persisting to this point in The Hero's Journey to remain in such a peaceful, spiritual balance. In fact, examples in myth and life show people commonly getting stopped. Or, to keep with the mother-Father analogy, they have to be deliberately separated and challenged to be drawn beyond them, respectively. In particular, living within, out of, and from that spiritual presence. Campbell clarifies that even the "teaching of the church as symbols of indestructible being" is always difficult "for the feelings come to rest in the symbols and resist passionately every effort to go beyond."

Inherent Difficulty. Therefore, there is inherent difficulty in the hero's journey in general and this step in particular. While the choice is relatively easy in that there is no obvious external force resisting it, and existing or resting in the condition or state of the ultimate boon similarly slow, they are both in actuality, profoundly difficult. That is, precisely because choice, mindset, and being in that manner are fundamentally opposed to our nature. "But the circumstance is obstructive too, for the feelings come to resist passionately every effort to go beyond. The prodigious gulf between those childishly blissful multitudes who fill the world with piety and the truly free breaks open at the line where the symbols give way and are transcended." (151-152). For example, consider how many even strong Christians are prepared to 'defend' the faith for they 'believe' in Christ as opposed to are 'being' a Christian by emulating Him in service to others and leaving the remaining considerations - defending an otherwise latent belief - on the altar of His control instead of our own.

Choice and Persistence. Continuing on in Campbell's more general application, there is also a distinction between the hero who chooses and does as opposed to those who understand and, in the abstract, might value or desire apotheosis and an ultimate boon but do not, strictly speaking, persist for it in themselves. Again, this is not to judge. Rather, to present the difference between 'natural' or 'normal' versus intention, choice, integrity to design, and restoring integrity when required due an inevitable faltering. "Here is the line beyond which thinking does not go, beyond which all feeling is truly dead: like the last stop on a mountain railroad from which climbers step away, and to which they return, there to converse with those who love mountain air but cannot risk the heights." (152) Or, put another way, with something of a religious tone, the "ineffable teaching of the beatitude beyond imagination comes to us clothed,

necessarily, in figures reminiscent of the Imagine Beatitude of Infancy; hence the deceptive childishness of the tales. Hence, too, the inadequacy of any merely psychological reading. “ (152) To that end, we could reference the biblical listing of the “fruits of the spirit.” They are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. And, clearly the reality and rewards of having chosen to and maintained ‘being’ something as opposed to considering, believing, or striving for something per se.

Symbols vs Symbolized. Again - and, actually, a continuation of the thoughts regarding the device of humor - “The gods as icons are not ends in themselves. Their entertaining myths transport the mind and spirit, not up to, but past them, into the yonder void; from which perspective the more heavily frightened theological dogmas then appear to have been only pedagogical lures” similar in the manner in which rituals and practices in earlier steps can often be “reduced to a totem.” Taken in context of their full meaning, the ‘gods’ function is “to cart the unadroit intellect away from its concrete clutter of facts and events to a comparatively rarefied zone, where as a final boon, all existence – whether heavenly, earthly, or infernal – may at last be seen transmuted into the semblance of a lightly passing, recurrent, mere childhood dream of bliss and fright.”(154-155)

Relevance of Orthodoxy. From one perspective we can consider the gods real and from another can consider them not real. A Tibetan reference, “From one point of view all those divinities exist... from another they are not real.... All of these visualized deities are but symbols representing the various things that occur on the Path.” (155) This seems like a dramatic downplay of the significance or truth of religious stories. Or, further, major religions. However, that ends up not to be the case, really. “The gods and goddesses then are to be understood as embodiments and custodians of the Imperishable Being but not themselves the Ultimate in its primary state. What the hero seeks through his intercourse with them is therefore not finally themselves but their grace, i.e., the power of their sustaining substance. This miraculous energy-substance and this alone is the imperishable.” (155) Examples such as “the miraculous energy of the thunderbolts of Zeus, Yahweh, and the Supreme Buddha” naturally apply. (155) With those general examples, even Christianity, which claims its Savior to be “the way” and “the truth” still represents the same important distinction. The “same meta-theological insight seems to be what is suggested in Dante’s final verses, where the illuminated voyager at last is able to lift his courageous eyes beyond the beatific vision of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to the one Eternal Light.”

Purpose of Challenge. The purpose of all this, the path, previous steps, their sequence, and the current step is to fully prepare and mature the hero prior to and in order to bring him into the ultimate boon. For the “guardians dare release it only to the duly proven.” (155) We could call this the oversight of The Father. “The agony of breaking through personal limitations is the agony of spiritual growth. Art, literature, myth and cult, philosophy, and ascetic disciplines are instruments to help the individual past his limiting horizons into spheres of ever-expanding realization.” (163)

To that end, both successful and unsuccessful heroes are apparent, instructive, and center on living ‘against natural personality’. “This is the highest and ultimate crucifixion, not only of the hero, but of his god as well. Here the Son and the Father alike are annihilated.” At first this might seem sacrilegious or even heretical. Nevertheless, as a story, the point that even a singular Savior is taking him toward something, not solely on the deity Himself, if he is to be fully transformed and impactful on the world. In particular, without that, otherwise “personality-masks over the unnamed.” (165) In contrast, Midas, chooses the power to turn all he touches to gold and, even with would-be good intent to serve others, is now locked in a material world.

Amplification – Net Reality

At the end of this, there is a reality in which a now fully physically challenged and spiritually mature individual is now fully recreated and can be a creator himself. "For just as the figments of a dream derive from the life energy of one dreamer, representing only fluid splitting and complications of that single force, so do all the forms of all the worlds, whether terrestrial or divine, reflect the universal force of a single inscrutable mystery: the power that constructs the atom and controls the orbits of the stars." (164) This is reflective of, having now having had so much stripped, taken, or merely fallen away, he is 'reduced' to the awareness of having been created by The Creator.

The reality of this is a powerful one. Though a Buddhist example, we can see the freedom and extent to which the hero can now manifest himself. "With the sword of his mind he pierced the bubble of the universe – and it shattered into naught. The whole world of natural experience, as well as the continents, neavnes, and hells of traditional religious belief, exploded – together with their gods and demons. But the miracles of miracles was that though all exploded, all was nevertheless thereby renewed, revived, and made glorious with the effulgence of true being. Indeed, the gods of the redeemed heavens raised their voices in harmonious acclaim of the man-hero who had penetrated beyond them to the void that was their life and source." (164)

Conclusion

In the sixth and final step of the Departure phase, The Ultimate Boon, the hero is again in the state of apotheosis. He is a superior man and makes no mistakes. However, there is always a possibility of descending by making a mistake, and that is the point. While the hero lives in balance and is an effective example, a more general reality remains around him; it is death to misstep; it is also death to lack fire.

A number of devices are common to The Ultimate Boon. First, the image of the 'inexhaustible dish' appears as a banquet or bounty of some kind and represents abundance. Second, 'color' appears again, this time representing a mental state or vision of the hero. Third, the 'medicine man' archetype may return. Previously somewhat separate and appearing in order to take 'disease' out of the hero, here he shoots healing 'into' the hero or his people. Various forms of this can involve a spiritual death, out of body experience, or image of an ideal marriage, all indicating or symbolizing illumination or the indestructible body. Fourth, humor. Here, humor is not just comedic but illustrates or symbolizes a shift from the literal to symbolic mind in that the object of humor is, like life itself, reflecting back to not just transcendence but the source of life itself.

Several implications of The Ultimate Boon are apparent. First, the desire to mature and be complete is more obvious. Second, the difficulty of all the steps and trials to this point is the central part of having become able to stay in balance. Third, it remains a choice to persist even after 'achieving' or having afforded oneself apotheosis. And, a necessary choice if the hero is to continue. Fourth, the hero - and particularly the audience of a story - is aware of the distinction between symbol, the symbolized, and being oneself. Fifth, this might seem to draw attention away from orthodoxy and doctrine, which is often seen as merely an outgrowth of 'institution'. However, that is not the case as orthodoxy does indeed point to whatever impossible 'being' is available to us but often goes unseen or not pursued. Correspondingly, when we are being victorious, we are present to the reality that Lord God is the being that is beyond all.

With that in mind, the more general symbol of The Ultimate Boon that the hero has been moving increasingly into the unknown but is now moving more and more towards a new way of being that is now clearly known. Further, he does so with less sensitivity to duality and imperfection. His way of being is more more spiritual and dwelling less on 'materiality' or the material world. However, this is also not without effect on the world. Further, there is a central purpose and figure behind all this as well; "whatever guardians don't release the hero over to any further step but to the duly proven."

RETURN

Refusal of the Return

Having completed departure and initiation, the hero must now return. "When the hero-quest has been accomplished, through penetration of the source, or through the grace of some male or female, human or animal personification, the adventurer still must return with his life-transmuting trophy." (167) With a quest accomplished, significant spiritual development attained, and something to offer the world, he must indeed bring that back to his tribe, clan, or society at large. "The full round, the norm of the monomyth, requires that the hero shall now begin the labor of bringing the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may be redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds." (167) Unfortunately, this "responsibility has been frequently refused." (167)

Short Examples

A sort of shrinking from the moment is rather familiar in contemporary stories. That said, refusal is just as present in even religious stories, underscoring the universality of this step and theme. Even Christ Himself, in the Garden of Gethsemane, asks of The Father that His approaching persecution and crucifixion be removed from His path were they not compulsory for The Father's purpose. Similarly, after attaining nirvana, Buddha still "doubted whether the message of realization could be communicated." In particular, saints, who he may have considered to be contemporaries of a kind in the story at this moment, were "reported to have passed away while in the supernatural ecstasy. Numerous indeed are the heroes fabled to have taken up residence forever in the blessed Isle of the Goddess of Immortal Being." (167). In short, having completed great striving and obtained an inner peace, most heroes are tempted - or, it naturally occurs to them that they can choose to - simply retreat into peace and enjoy it unto themselves.

Central Example

Consider the tale of the Hindu warrior king, Muchukunda. Born from his father's side, literally a "motherless marvel," he became a "king among kings," saving the gods from their "perpetual contest with demons." (167) As a result, the gods "granted him the realization of his highest wish" which was "sleep without end and that any person chancing to arouse him should be burned to a crisp by the first glance of his eye." (168) So, King Muchukunda slept in a cavern deep inside a mountain "as eons of individuals, peoples, civilizations, world ages, came into being out of the voice and dropped back into it again while the old king, in his state of unconscious bliss endured." (168)

Later, Vishnu, "the Lord of the World" encountered Muchukunda after incarnating a beautiful youth, Krishna, who also saved India from demons. Awakened from his sleep, Muchukunda's "first glance that went forth struck the enemy king, who burst into a torch of flame and was reduced immediately to a smoking heap of ash." (168) However, on the second glance he "straightaway recognized" Krishna "as an incarnation of God" and "bowed before his savior" with a lengthy prayer. Further, he relates all manner of aspirations and affinities - "kingly power and earthly possessions, riches and might, friends, and sons, wife and followers, everything that lures the senses" - were, in reality, not the ultimate joy that was sought. Quite the contrary, "The moment anything [earthly] was in mind it changed its nature, and became a burning fire". (169)

Implication

The key implication of a hero's 'refusal' is that the hero has learned, and now sees again, the difference between material joys and a spiritual or eternal purpose. Corresponding, he wants to shrink from

delivering a would-be benefit. “My Lord God, deluded by your playful ruses, I too was a prey of the world, wandering in a labyrinth of error, netted in the meshes of ego consciousness.” That is, there is always the opportunity to ‘stop’ and merely enjoy whatever boon until one’s self. This is, from one perspective, a “freedom from it all,” which would be a good thing. However, in being ‘dedicated’ mainly “to the ascetic practices that should finally release him from his last attachment to the forms of being” the hero also becomes static and ‘rendered inert’ regarding having an impact on family, tribe, clan, or society. (169)

Naturally, this has an implication for modern life as well. It is as “timeless as the Freudian unconscious beneath” to consider merely staying in peace and rest after having achieved that peace following a road of trials and degree of spiritual maturity. In particular, with the “dramatic time world of our fluctuating ego experience” – that is, a reality of challenge, adversity – and, having transcended that, we might like to be “the old mountain man, the drinker of deep sleep” who merely “lived on and on.” (168)

Amplification

Many heroes stop at the beginning of their ‘return’ and final phase of The Hero’s Journey. That is, a hero may, temporarily or permanently, accept the grace and peace of apotheosis and boon as the end of their journey. In other words, instead of returning, a hero may choose to retreat one degree still further from the world. Yet this is not so much a criticism. Rather, a distinction and condition for a fully successful hero. For “who shall say that his decision was altogether without reason?” if the hero has indeed stopped. (169) As much as we may pursue both challenge and peace in life, it is ever in our nature to default to equilibrium. And, along all paths it is but the most intentional that fully completes a hero’s journey. It is, all things being equal, understandable, if not also acceptable. For, there are a great many ‘good’ things to tend to in place of a supernaturally inspired return.

Conclusion

In the first step of the Return phase, Refusal of the Return, the hero has penetrated and unified with the source and is ready to bring a boon back to his clan or society at large. The hero can temporarily or permanently choose to stay in bliss and, here, the hero ‘refuses’ the return. As examples, Rip van Winkle continued to sleep and even Christ asked that a ‘cup’ be taken from Him by the Father.

There is not quite an archetype or device at play in the Refusal of the Return. That said, device include the boon as wisdom in the form of insights, a way of being that is comparably more transcendent or transformational, or an elixir with some degree of physicality. If a elixir, it can signifying or symbolize one or both of the former.

A number of implications of Refusal of the Return are apparent. First, any religion - or doctrine, system, or symbol - can serve as a gateway to move forward or preventive barrier. Second, that is, the central symbol can bring the hero to focus on ‘living in’ or ‘living out’ the core ethic. Third, therefore restrained from fully moving forward in the new ‘way of being’. For example, ‘believing’ in Christ as opposed to also fully ‘walking in the spirit’, so to speak.

With that in mind, the more general symbol of the Refusal of the Return is that not ‘returning’ - whether immediately or ever - is not so much a negative as it is a condition or state in which the hero has seen, learned, and become centered in ‘spiritual’ as opposed to ‘material’ mindset and joys. However, the refusal and monk-like state does represent a new ‘attachment’ of a kind. Though not harmful in any

particular way, the hero is inert at the moment. Therefore, also inert in his influence and impact on the world should he forever not continue.

The Magic Flight

Introduction

At this point, the hero has both “triumphed” and won “the blessing of the goddess or the god.” Further, he is “explicitly commissioned to return to the world with some elixir for the restoration of society.” (170) During the magic flight, and throughout the remainder of the final phase of The Hero’s Journey, the hero’s adventure “is supported by all the powers of his supernatural patron.” Normally, that is. However, “if the trophy has been attained against the opposition of its guardian, or if the hero’s wish to return to the world has been resented by the gods or demons, then the last stage of the mythological round becomes a lively, often comical, pursuit.” (xxx)

The common theme for this step throughout all myths and stories is that the hero’s flight is “complicated by marvels of magical obstruction and evasion.” Naturally, there are a couple variations. First, “a popular variety of the magic flight is that in which objects are left behind to speak for the fugitive and thus delay pursuit.” (178) Second, cases “in which a number of delaying obstacles are tossed behind by the wildly fleeing hero.” (174) Third, similar events occur with the added element of the “return of a lover with his lost love from beyond the terrible threshold.” (178) As an aside, The Magic Flight is a “favorite episode of the folktale.” As such, our examples will fall in that genre. The sense of a sometimes elongated chase sequence is among the most familiar to a contemporary audience as well.

General Example – Welsh

Consider the Welsh story of the hero Gwain Bach. The hero encounters an ancient giant, Tegid the Bald, and his wife, Caridwen, at the bottom of a lake. The latter tends a kindled fire heating a cauldron of charmed liquid which, after three years, would produce just “three blessed drops” of “the grace of inspiration.” (171) Caridwen charges Gwain and a blind man to tend the cauldron’s fire for “a year and day” as she consults astronomers and gathers herbs. After many incantations, that small portion of “the charmed liquor flew out of the cauldron and fell upon the finger of Gwain Bach. And the instant he put those marvel working drops into his mouth he first saw everything that was to come, and perceive[s] that his chief care must be to guard against the wiles of Caridwen for vast was her skills.” (172) So, “in very great fear he fled towards his own land.” (172)

Of course, here begins his ‘magic flight’. The cauldron bursts, sickens several horses, poisons the nearby river, and Caridwen chases him. Throughout the chase each changes themselves to hare and greyhound, fish and otter, bird and hawk, a price of grain and black hen, respectively. Seemingly having caught her prey, the ‘hen’ eats the ‘grain’ and, after nine months, Caridwen gives birth to Gwain. Yet, “when she was delivered of him, she could not find it in her heart to kill him, by reason of his beauty.” (172) Rather, she “wrapped him in leathern bag, and cast him into the sea to the mercy of God.” (172)

Example of Delaying Obstacles Left Behind - Maori

In a New Zealand Maori tale, a fisherman comes home to his wife who has swallowed their two sons. Groaning, she claims to be ill and that the sons have gone away. Knowing she was lying, the fisherman uses magic to disgorge the sons and, afraid of his wife, again uses his magic to decrease the level of water so his wife must travel further to fetch water. This enables him and the sons escape in a canoe. Upon her return, the wife calls out only to receive a reply from a pit, houses, and trees. “When she began to pant and sob and then, at last, realized what had been done to her” she went to a hilltop where she now could see “the canoe was a mere speck on the horizon.”

Example of Delaying Obstacles Thrown Behind

Another example from the same culture illustrates the case in which “a number of delaying obstacles are tossed behind by the wildly fleeing hero.” A little brother and sister are playing and caught by a waterhag.

The hag forces the girl to spin “a tangle of filthy flax” and “fetch water in a bottomless tub” and the boy to “chop a tree with a blunt ax” both subsisting on only “stone-hard lumps of dough.” (175) Nevertheless, the children escape one Sunday while the hag is at church. Promptly pursuing them “the little girl throws back a hairbrush, which immediately turned into a big brush mountain with thousands and thousands of bristles over which the hag found it very difficult to climb.” The scenario repeats with the boy and a big comb. And, again, with the girl and a mirror which “turned into a mirror-mountain, which was so smooth that the hug was unable to get over. Thought she: I shall hurry back home and get my ax and chop the mirror mountain in two. But by the time she got back and demolished the glass, the children were long since far away.” Naturally, the latter example – a fleeing couple, of sorts – holds some similarities scenarios involving the return of, and fleeing with, a lost lover.

Symbols

There are two primary symbols of the magic flight. First, depending on the severity of fancifulness of the ‘chase’, it shows us “the toll required.” For a hero’s journey is “not always slight.” At it’s simplest, a hero becomes more and more victorious, in his or her ‘being’ in particular, yet it is rarely ‘easy’ per se. (176) Second, the maturity of the hero is evident. That is, “magic objects tossed behind by the panic-ridden hero” serve as symbols of “protective interpretations, principles, symbols, rationalizations” that are easily discarded now. And so the ability to “delay and absorb the power of the started Hound of Heaven” is facilitating “the adventurer to come back into his fold safe and with perhaps a boon.” (176)

Significance

Preparation, Not Taken Lightly. The first implication of the magic flight is not altogether different than how we termed it to symbolize the ‘toll’ of the journey. The significance of the magic flight, and the fact that forces still pursue the hero despite his or her willful return indicates the risk of being a hero, in continuing the hero’s journey, even having attained apotheosis and with a boon to offer. Myth and story is telling us that the “powers of the abyss are not to be challenged lightly.” (175) In oriental tradition, as an example, “a great point is made of the danger of undertaking the psychologically disturbing practices of, yoga without competent supervision.” In particular, “meditations of the postulant have to be adjusted to his progress, so that the imagination may be defended at every step by *devatas* (envisioned adequate deities) until the moment comes for the prepared spirit to step alone beyond.” (175) In Christian tradition, we see some similarity in Old Testament scripture where there is rather a good amount of intrepidation, care, process, and protection around, and even against, being directly in the presence of God.

Precariousness. While “hundreds of analogous tales throughout the world, suggest that the flight, redemption, reunion, and the like are a real possibility” there is also “always some little fault, some slight critical symptom off of human frailty, that makes impossible the open interrelationship between the worlds; so that one is tempted to believe, almost, but of the small, marring accident could be avoided, all would be well.” (178) That is, it is but a small accident of our own doing or character that may quickly end a long-pursued, long-supported path. To that end, the magic flight indicates the still precarious nature of the hero’s journey even after apotheosis and having a boon with which to return to society. Though myth and story does not necessarily indicate such ‘failure’ has to be permanent, particularly in the case of grace provided by Christ’s sacrifice, falling from being present to a selfless purpose, or to materially fall from being worth granting boon to others, is ever-present.

Implications

Psyche and Possibility Versus Feasibility. Given those two factors, the magic flight connects with the psyche that is ever present in human condition. We are familiar with failure. Modern psychology is clear

that the natural state of the human mind is more sensitive to relative loss than it is to possibility and abundance. Yet, we are not fully assumptive regarding failure. Most people's psyche is rather present to what might come with a combination of character, hard work, and faith.

So, here is the 'problem' with 'myth'. Or, at least our 'reaction' to them. "The myths of failure touch us with the tragedy of life, but those of success only with their own incredibility. And yet, if the monomyth is to fulfill its promise, not human failure or superhuman success but human success is what we shall have to be shown. That is the problem of the crisis of the threshold of the return. We shall first consider it in the superhuman symbols and then seek the practical teaching for historic man." (178) We may find myth and stories, in some regard, incredulous, impossible, or literally a fantasy. Yet something in us believes them. If only precisely because we keep telling them.

Gateway and Preventive Nature of Religion. This leads us again to consider faith and religion as something worth considering. Perhaps strikingly important in its own right.

"As Dr. Jung has very wisely observed:

The incomparably useful function of the dogmatic symbol is that it protects a person from a direct experience of God as long as he does not mischievously expose himself. But if... he leaves home and family, lives too long alone, and gazes too deeply into the dark mirror, then the awful event of the meeting may befall him. Yet even then the traditional symbol, come to full flower through the centuries, may operate like a healing draught and divert the fatal incursion of the living godhead into the hallowed spaces of the church." (175)

That is, there are a couple 'functions' we could suggest 'religion' has. It's culture, norms, devices, rituals, and the like serve to bring us toward the presence of God. In parallel, if focused on in and of themselves they are similarly restricting. For the sake of the discussion of the relevance and value of 'myth', we can consider this 'dual function' of sorts to be neither good nor bad. Rather, it just is. A device, practice or symbol can be a meaningful catalyst to, as a Christian example, to come into the presence of the Lord. Or, it can serve – by the limitation of a minimizing clergy or a casual or resistant congregant – as kind of protective barrier, which is never traveled beyond.

To that end, Campbell, Jung, and we are suggesting there is, indeed, something – some small measure at a minimum – both beyond and behind what may be referred to as 'dogma'. Myth, story, church, and its sacraments, traditions, and techniques do and *can* serve as means to direct connection with God. Which it ends up to be lies much more in the hands of the would-be hero than it does anywhere else.

Conclusion

In the second step of the Return phase, The Magic Flight, the hero is triumphant and carries a blessing to give and benefit his society or the world. That said, the return is sometimes only completed by the resistance of dark or being pursued by light forces. Similar to The Road of Trails, this 'flight' can extend on at length both as a story element and as a means to revisit several levels of development or maturity the hero has otherwise achieved via the same.

As opposed to archetypes and devices appearing, there are several ways The Magic Flight can play out. Here, the motif centers on whether the myth progresses by fleeing dark forces or being pursued by light forces. In the first case, the hero flees in courage and confidence yet also creating or leaving behind

delaying obstacles to stop or overcome the dark forces. In the second case, the light forces 'chase' parallels the depth of personal transformation occurring, the level of resistance the hero is yet giving counter to his return, or level of evil that needs to be overcome.

A number of implications of The Magic Flight are apparent. First, there is a precariousness in the return. No person's effect on clan, tribe, society, or ethic is ever easy exactly. Second, some elements or moments of frailty may result in failure. Nobody, even an hero, is ever perfect. Third, the 'fall' of the hero may merely manifest via the inability to bring home a boon to others. That is, if not everyone will 'receive' it, it also holds that none may receive it. Fourth, regarding any of the hero, society's, group's, or an individual's psychological disposition, it is always possible to 'see' a possibility but, nevertheless, deny feasibility.

With all that in mind, the more general symbolism of The Magic Flight is that the hero's understanding of the many archetypes, the purpose of the journey writ large, and living in balance of 'spiritual' and 'material' worlds is more fully internalized. Their purpose and benefit is to ensure his preparation is not to be taken lightly. Therefore, the flight or chase is not just a difficult return itself. Rather, in returning, the hero is now understand he is embarking upon taking on the powers - internal or external - that may resist - actively or passively - the benefit he brings, or represents, for all society.

Rescue from Without

Introduction

At this point in The Hero's Journey, the hero begins his return to the tribe, clan, nation, or society that he can be of benefit to. However, another step may yet be necessary. There are some cases in which the hero "may have to be brought back from his supernatural adventure by a system from without. That is to say, the world may have to come and get him." (178) The reason for this is clear enough. "For the bliss of the

deep abode is not lightly abandoned in favor of the self-scattering of the wakened state. 'Who having cast off the world', we read, 'would desire to return again?' He would only be there." (178)

Yet there is, nevertheless, a draw to complete what was started. And, to continuing to respond to the purpose, life force, God, or whatever that has been drawing him along all this time. "In so far as one is alive, life will call." (xxx) Similarly, somewhat a device seen in story and somewhat reality an story reading or viewing audience naturally feels, "society is jealous of those who remain away from it." So, at its simplest, this is the result of this step; "an apparent rescue is effected, and the adventurer returns." (179)

Example - Eskimo

Two cases of Return from Without are apparent. First, where the hero is rather accepting. Second, in cases "in which the rescued one is somewhat reluctant." (181)

In an Eskimo story, a raven "darted with five sticks into belly of a whale cow" where he found himself in a "handsome room" dry and clean with a beautiful girl and a lamp into which oil slowly dripped. "How did you get there; you are the first man to enter this place," the girl inquired. (179) After he explained, she prepared food and "he remained four days as guest of the Inca in the belly of the whale, and during the entire period was trying to ascertain what kind of tube that could be running along the ceiling." (180) Though forbidden to touch it, the raven tasted a drip of oil while the woman was away and, "it was so sweet that he repeated the act," which broke off a piece of the tube. This resulted in a rush of oil, tossing the room for four days. The raven had broken the whales artery and so it died and washed ashore.

As a result, the raven was a prisoner. Until, soon, two men cut a hole in the whale and villagers harvested its meat. Given the opportunity, "Raven stepped out unnoticed. But no sooner had he reached the ground than he remembered he had left his fire sticks within." (180) As he took off his coat and mask, the villagers "saw a small, black man, wrapped in a queer animal skin approaching them" and the Raven offered his help, amid which a villager eventually found the fire sticks. Raven exclaimed "that when fire sticks are found inside a whale that people have cut open, many of these people will die!" He flees, the villagers follow suit and, when Raven "doubled back, had, for a time, the whole feast to himself." (180)

Example - Japan

An example of the second type of rescue from without is the Japanese Shinto tale of Amaterasu "the beautiful sun goddess... during the critical first period of the world." (181) Her brother, the storm god Susanowo had "been behaving inexcusably" and "destroy[s] her rice fields." To pollute her institutions, he broke a hole in her weaving hall, through which a horse fell, "at sight of which all the ladies of the goddess... were so much alarmed that they died of fear." (181) Similarly terrified, Amaterasu locked herself behind a door, which would have meant "the permanent disappearance of the sun" (181) and "all the central land of reed plains became dark." (182)

However, "eight millions of gods assembled" to coax her out. They used a mirror, sword, and cloth offerings, liturgies, dancing, amusement, and laughter until the "sun goddess in the cave heard the lively uproar and was amazed." She inquired what the joy could be in her absence to which one of the eight million said "we rejoice and are glad because there is a deity more illustrious than Thine Augustness." (182) "While she was thus speaking, two of the divinities pushed forward the mirror and respectfully showed it to the sun-goddess... she, more and more astonished, gradually came forth from the door and gazed upon it. A power god took her August hand and drew her out" and claimed she "must not go back

further in than this.” Acquiescing, “the plains were again light.” (183) And though, “the sun may now retreat, for a time, every night” it is “prevented from disappearing permanently.” (183)

Devices

Common devices in this step are both multilayered and tend to focus on a god and light. In fewer cases, as in the examples we and Campbell have used, the feminine god is often present. “The motif of the sun as a goddess, instead of as a God, is a rare and precious survival from an archaic, apparently once wildly diffused, mythological context.” It is somewhat obvious from the mere title of the step “return,” that a deity is making a particular effort to pull the hero forward.

Significance

That said, with the words ‘wildly diffused’, Campbell is suggesting something nearly forgotten yet highly significant is being raised in story here. (183) First, regarding being nearly forgotten, “traces remain in many lands.” Some examples of this device include South Arabia whose maternal divinity is the feminine sun and German, Siberian, and North American references to the sun are feminine. “But only in Japan do we find the once great mythology still effective in civilization; for the Emperor is a direct descendant of a deity itself.” (183) Second, regarding significance, “In her adventures may be sensed a different world-feeling from that of the now better known of mythologies of the solar god: a certain tenderness toward the lovely gift of light, a gentle gratitude for things made visible – such as must have once have distinguish the religious mood of many peoples.” (183)

That is, in stories of whatever era - primitive, mythological, or religious and the like - the key figure to encourage return may be a benevolent force. This is specifically indicative of an authoritative and personal God. Further, that authoritative and personal God, having come to be more fully understood in written text in the last several thousand years is, we can suppose the singular source from which the other forms and stories are both echoing from and pointing towards.

Symbols

Normally, we would discuss symbols and symbolization that arise out of devices and events in a story or myth. Here, symbols are easier to understand having highlighted devices and significance first. This is because there is some simple linearity to device or figure and what they symbolize. And, there is a multifaceted nature or synchronicity among all myths - and faiths in particular - that is being symbolized.

First, “the mirror, the sword, and the tree we recognize” and are fairly simple, linear symbols. “The mirror, reflecting my goddess and drawing her forth from the august repose of her define nonmanifestation, is symbolic of the world, the field of the reflected image.” It is the beginning of the final “inducement to the act of manifestation or ‘creation’.” (183) The sword is equivalent to the thunderbolt and the tree, which “is the World Axis in its wish-fulfilling, fruitful aspect.” (183)

Second, there is a synchronicity we can see among myth, legend, tradition, and story. For example, the tree as a display of, again, “wish fulfilling, fruitful” aspect of life is, in pagan context, solely a reference to a natural cycle. And, the ‘continuation’ of that general ethic it is continued in Christian homes in a “joyous custom inherited from the Germanic paganism,” to acknowledge the same thankfulness to coming and passing of natural processes in life, but also in recognition of the birth of a coming, saving, Son.

We could go on with the interplay - for example with the traditions entomology around Sonne and Son - but, suffice it to say, the manner in which the world is “left tipsy-turvy by the withdrawal of the supreme divinity, but joyous of that coming renewal” - locked in a materiality of a kind - or professing a personal and authoritative Savior, the device, purpose, tone, and the like of myth, legend, story, religion, and faith are, metaphorically, similar.

Here, central devices of two central religious symbols – one eastern, one western – illustrate this point as well. In the east, “the shimenawa, the august rope of straw that was stretched behind the goddess as she reappeared, symbolizes the graciousness of the miracle of the light’s return” and “denotes the renovation of the world at the threshold of the return.” (184) In the west, the cross denotes the fixture upon which Christ died to save and redeem all people in all times, even for a lack of merit. So, in the most unifying sense, “the two represent the mystery of the boundary between each world - the existent nonexistent line.” (184)

Amplification

With those examples in mind, here is the common theme and reality. First, the continued progression of the hero is represented similarly across ages and types of myth. These “examples from widely separated culture areas... sufficiently illustrate the rescue from without.” (186) Second, they “show in the final stages of the adventure the continued operation of the supernatural assisting force that has been attending the elect through the whole course of his ordeal.” (186) Third, the hero is rather completely spiritually matured and in a state of being where ‘choice’, as opposed to success or failure, pervade. “His consciousness having succumbed, the unconscious nevertheless supplies its own balances, and he is born back into the world from which he came. Fourth, as a result, it is relatively straightforward for the hero to retain a focus on his purpose; returning with a boon to bestow on society. “Instead of holding to and saving his ego, as in the pattern of the magic flight, he loses it, and yet, through grace is returned.” (186)

That said, the hero is still yet to have ‘returned’. Rescue from Without “brings us to the final crisis of the round, to which the whole miraculous excursion has been but a prelude.” There is more to do. That is, to live out what the hero is capable of ‘being’. “Namely, the paradoxical, supremely difficult threshold-crossing of the hero’s return from the mystical realm into the land of the common day.” To have ‘achieved’ peace and purpose is not insignificant. However, without continuing, it is an eternal triumph but for a kingdom of one, so to speak. “Whether rescued from without, driven from within, or gently carried along by the guiding divinities, he has yet to re-enter with his boon the long-forgotten atmosphere where men who are fractions imagine themselves to be complete.” (186)

Two things remain. First, to “confront society with his ego-shattering, life-redeeming elixir.” Second, in so doing, “take the return blow of reasonable queries, hard resentment, and good people at a loss to comprehend.” (186)

Conclusion

In the third step of the Return phase, Rescue From Without, the hero begins the return to tribe, clan, nation, or society with his boon or benefit. Now, the boon is not just bliss held unto himself but he intends to bring it to others. What was started is to be drawn to completion; the hero has been being pulled forward by God or whatever force all along.

Common devices to Rescue From Without device center on holding, guarding, or impacting others by light. Particular objects include a cloud, mirror, thunderbolt, sword, or any number of the same. A number of implications are apparent as well. First, the hero's choice to continue is apparent and necessary. To not continue, as discussed previously, would be to enjoy boon or bliss unto himself, not pass it on to others. Second, supernatural assisting forces are always present and, now, more visible. Third, the hero's spiritual life, motivation, consciousness, and unconscious are all in balance. That is, after a refusal he has not 'lost' character or balance of spiritual and material worlds. He merely previously paused. Fourth, correspondingly, his relationship with the transcendent remains easy. Fifth, the hero understands a key challenge remains. The hero is yet to have returned. Therefore, he is yet to confront society and take blows of resistance of passive and active kinds.

With all that tin mind, the more general symbolization of Rescue From Without is that, whether from a benevolent person or God Himself, the fruit producing, wish fulfilling, transcendent reality beyond the physical, and even metaphysical, world is real. Further, the central foundation to the hero's continuing on the journey. The hero is able to navigate well the line between physical and spiritual, time and eternal.

Crossing the Return Threshold

Introduction

Until this point we have seen "The hero adventures out of the land we know into darkness; there accomplishes his adventure or again is simply lost to us, back out of that yonder zone. In this step, the return is begun in earnest, living in the reality, and showing to the audience of a myth or story that "Nevertheless... here is a great key to the understanding of myth and symbol - the two kingdoms are actually one." (188)

Correspondingly, the qualification of the hero is this. "As in the stories of the cannibal ogre, the fearfulness of" his "loss of personal individuation" is "the whole burden of the transcendental experience." (188) In comparison to "unqualified souls," "the hero soul goes boldly in - and discovers the

hags converted into goddesses and the dragons into the watchdogs of the gods.” (188) Whether “the exploration of that dimension” is done “willingly or unwillingly” it “is the whole sense of the deed of the hero” and “the values and distinctions that in normal life seem important disappear with the terrifying assimilation of the self into what formerly was only otherness.” (188)

This illuminates the core purpose and challenge in this step. The “hero’s ultimate difficult task” is “how to render back into light-world language the speech-defying pronouncements of the dark? How represent on a two-dimensional surface a three-dimensional form, or in a three-dimensional image a multi-dimensional meaning?” (188-9)

Example - Rip Van Winkle

The story of Rip Van Winkle illustrates how a hero can fail in this step. “The story of Rip van Winkle is an example of the delicate case of the returning hero” for this particular hero returns “with nothing to show for the experience.” (189) Falling into a slumber for a long time, he awakens to see all has aged; his rifle rusted, stock worm-eaten, and joints stiff. Going into town “he met a number of people, but none whom he knew” even though “he had thought himself acquainted with everyone from the county round.”

Rip and the people he saw were mutually perplexed “invariably stroking their chins,” as they “found his beard had grown a foot long.” (190) Eventually perceptions escalated such that he “attracted the attention of the tavern politicians” who “inquired on what side he voted.” (190) One old gentleman’s gaze even peered “into his very soul” and, though Rip was “at a loss to comprehend the question,” he “cried... I am a poor, quiet man, a native of the place, and a loyal subject to the King, God bless him!” The crowd of bystanders, having long since moved on from former affinity or loyalty to a monarch or monarchical system, objected strongly until the wise gentleman restored order.

Here, the ‘failure’ is that Rip has something to return to be of benefit or boon to his countrymen, yet he is rather completely unaware of the context in which he is acting. More specifically, unaware of the perspective of those he would benefit. As a result, the boon he might otherwise offer is neither really heard nor received.

Example - Ireland

In another example, Oisín, an Irish hero, is “more dispiriting than the fate of Rip” because he “had done better than poor Rip; he had his eyes open in the adventurous realm.” (190) After finishing a hunt with his men who went onward with the days kill, Oisín was alone in the wilderness and met a mysterious woman who was beautiful in every regard except that she bore the face of a pig. However, per her pledge, her face transformed upon their being married. After three hundred years - though he thought it was merely three - in his bride’s kingdom, Oisín wished to visit his men and father in their kingdom, Erin. For fear he would not return because he would at some point touch the ground and transform into an old man, Oisín’s now-wife prepared a white steed to carry him. Arriving in Erin, he overturned a broad flat stone underneath which “was the great horn of the Fenians... and it was the rule that when any of the Fenians of Erin blew the borabu,” a deep-sounding horn, “the others would assemble at once from whatever part of the county they might be in at the time.” (191) However, when a herdsman refused to hand it to him for the inability to lift it, Oisín “so eager was he to blow it” that he “slipped in reaching till one foot touched the earth.” And “in an instant the steed was gone, and Oisín lay on the ground a blind old man.”

“He had descended consciously (awake) into the kingdom of the unconscious (deep sleep) and had incorporated the values of the subliminal experience into his waking personality.” That is, a “transmutation had been effected. Unfortunately, and correspondingly, “precisely because of this highly

desirable circumstance, the dangers of his return were the greater. Since his entire personality had been brought into accord with the powers and forms and powers of time."

Example - China

Despite these two stories that highlight a hero's fall of a kind, at least one example shows a rather impressive victory. It is a Persian prince that "had the best luck of all." (194) As the prince Kamar al-Zaman slept in his tower, two Jinn transported a princess, Badur, and placed her asleep next to him. At this point, the prince and princess appeared as twins to the Jinn and they debated, and even wrestled regarding, which was fairer with a female spirit-goddess. After it was "suggested they should ask and impartial judge" the female spirit gave rise to a monster with various hideous features, who kissed the ground to acknowledge her when he was "instructed that he was to judge between the two young persons." Nevertheless, the monster found them of equal beauty but proposed they "wake each of them in turn, without the knowledge of the others, and whichever is the more enamored for the other shall be judged inferior in comeliness." (195)

So, the two youth were awoken in turn. First, Kamar al-Zaman was awoken and "discerned it was a young woman like a pearl or shining sun, like a dome seen from afar on a well-built wall" that was next to him. (195) He imagined that she was the woman his king father "wished him to marry" but "she never stirred." And, for fear of being watched, he made no advance, and "contented himself with taking the seal-ring from her little finger and slipping it on his own." (195) Second, "in contrast with Kamar al-Zaman," Badur "had no thought or fear of anyone watching," and "unable either to rouse him or to imagine what he had done to her, and ravaged with love, assailed by the open presence of his flesh, lost all control, and attained to a climax of helpless passion." (195) So, "ashamed of her own shamelessness" she only "plucked his seal-ring from his finger," and did not "leave any part of him unkissed." (195)

Of course, that would seem to be a failure of not just one but two would-be heroes. What is necessary for that story to be a victory is for there to be a reversal of fortune. "The returning hero, to complete his adventure, must survive the impact of the world." (194) And, he does. "Next morning: when the two young people awoke with the whole of Asia now between them but discovered no one at their side," they cried out to their entire households "and went entirely mad." (196) Kamar al-Zaman was so distraught that his father lay "weeping and mourning over him, and never leaving him, night or day." Badur, still worse, "had to be manacled; with a chain of iron about her neck, she was made fast to one of her palace windows." (196) However, this all eventually reverses to "the slow yet wonderful operation of a destiny that has been summoned into life." (196)

Devices

There are four particular devices that Campbell highlights in this step. More specifically, two sets of two that symbolize the same thing.

The first device is time. "The equating of a single year in Paradise to one hundred of earthly existence is a motif well known to myth. Similarly, a complete rotation, "the three hundred and sixty degrees of the circle signifies totality." Both of these, in their way, are "revealing ever the harmonious form of the total round so that when men see only change and deaths the blessed behold immutable form [and a] world without end." (192) Here, the point of the hero, to the audience, is a sense of completeness. And, unto the hero himself, his main requirement is to persist. More specifically, "now the problem is to maintain this cosmic standpoint in the face of an immediate earthly pain or joy. The tasted of the fruits of temporal knowledge dares the concentration of the spirit away from the center of the eon to the peripheral crisis of the moment." When, or if, the hero lets his spiritual awareness be too distracted by materiality or temporality, the "balance of perfection is lost, the spirit falters, and the hero falls." (192)

The second device is the horse. A horse ‘carries’ the hero, illustrating the need for insulation from a material world that might otherwise drain him as he is in constant contact with the ground. The horse is “to keep the hero out of immediate touch with the surrounding world, yet permit him to promenade among the peoples of the world.” In particular, “a precaution taken generally by the carriers of supernatural power.” (192) Similarly, carpets, served the same function for figures such as Montezuma and a King of Persia to protect against their being drained of blessing and power for having set foot where common man does.

Symbols

Destiny & Intention. This latter story is “typical of the sufferings of love,” which we can say is particularly equated to this step in The Hero’s Journey. That is, “when a heart insists on its destiny, resisting the general blandishments, then the agony is great; so too the danger.” Yet, here is the hope as well. “Forces, however, will have been set in motion beyond the reckoning of the senses. Sequences of events from the corners of the world will draw gradually together, and miracles of coincidence bring the inevitable to pass.” (196) Though ultimately drawn forward by a benevolent force, the hero himself also exhibits a clear mental motivation. The “souls encounter” will be what “betokens that the heart was there aware of what Rip Van Winkle missed.” That is, “a conviction of the waking mind that the reality of the deep is not belied by that of common day.” “This is the sign of the hero’s requirement, now, to knit together his two worlds.” (196)

Insulation. Illustrated above, we have seen that “over the whole earth the divine personage may not touch the ground with his foot.” (193) “Apparently, magical virtue, taboo, or whatever we may call that mysterious quality which is supposed to pervade sacred or tabooed persons, is conceived by the primitive philosopher as a physical substance or fluid” and “exactly as the electricity in a jar can be discharged by contact with a good conductor, so the holiness or magical virtue in the man can be discharged and drained away by contact with the earth.” So, “In electrical language he must be insulated, if he is not to be emptied of the precious substance or fluid with which he, as a vial, is filled to the brim.”

Precaution. The hero is now rather powerful. More specifically, powerful in being. And, by nature of what he may represent or assist others in becoming. Therefore, he is dangerous to a degree. So, all this latter insulation “recommended as a precaution not merely for his own sake but for the sake of others.” On a more significant and subconscious level, myth is showing us “the virtue of holiness is, so to say, a powerful explosive which the smallest touch may detonate.” So, the ‘protection’ of the deity, is also the protection of others. And, consciously or not a protection on what others may - again, overtly or covertly - fear of being drawn into ‘becoming’.

Implication

Real vs Not. The step of Crossing the Return Threshold implies a fundamental reframing for those of us normally, or perhaps adamantly, rooted in materiality. Or worse, in material things. As an aside, if it has not been clear until now, we can make a distinction between material and materiality. “The realm of the gods is a forgotten dimension of the world we know.” However, to say it is a forgotten dimension is not to suggest it is not real. Rather, merely to suggest that, despite the significance of the spiritual realm, and our own spiritual development, either can easily go unseen.

Separate Realms. Similarly, we commonly suppose that spiritual and material realms are separate. More specifically, particularly in a modern western age, that the material supersedes the spiritual. In the most common view of common day, “the two worlds, the divine and the human, can be pictured only as distinct from each other – different as life and death, as day and night.” (188) Yet, at this point, the latter is the

reality that the hero has chosen to not allow for himself. Rather, the hero's experience, and the teaching of the framework is that "Here is the great key to the understanding of the myth and symbol – the two kingdoms are actually one." (188)

Not Knowable. As such, the still progressing hero must be separate to a degree. More specifically, undergoes a degree of created separateness. On one hand he is quizzical or not fully knowable; "from the standpoint of normal waking consciousness, [there is] a certain baffling inconsistency between the wisdom brought forth from deep, and the prudence usually found to be effective in the light world." (188) Not aloof per se, the hero typically carries himself in a manner that conveys a degree of depth beyond what is common. "Hence the common divorce of opportunism from virtue and the resultant degeneration of human existence." (188)

Solitary. This 'unknowableness' often manifests in how people around the hero engage. Or, more specifically, construct an explanation of a kind about the hero's manner of being. "The boon brought from the transcendent deep becomes quickly rationalized into nonentity." This again suggests human nature is to maintain a degree of separation from an ideal if the ideal requires something from us. We should not be so bold as to fully give up to anything. Even those things we say we believe in. So, with that in mind, the hero's experience at this point can be quite solitary even as "the need becomes great for another hero to refresh the word."

Institutions. This 'rationalization into nonentity' on an individual or interpersonal level also helps give rise to, though ultimately indirectly, participating in the idea or value of a would-be heroic life via institutions. "Martyrdom is for saints, but the common people have their institutions, and these cannot be left to grow like lilies of the field; Peter keeps drawing his sword, as in the garden, to defend the creator and sustainer of the world." Particularly, institutions of high values. However, this remains a distinction from fully pursuing challenge and transformation of self. The hero is less able to be understood and emulated given the reality that understanding only comes from choosing and being on that path. This gives some indication of why even well-meaning people who might admire the heroic, whatever form that may take, stop there. And, preferring culture, rules, and ideals as opposed to the full dissolution of one's self for the benefit of a full personal peace and direct attempt to benefit society.

Difficulty. Not surprisingly, the difficulty of this, in story, and symbolically in life is illustrated by many heroes coming up short. "Many failures attest to the difficulties of this life affirmative threshold." So, this core challenge and acuity is twofold. "The first problem of the returning hero is to accept as real, after an experience of the soul-satisfying vision of fulfillment, the passing joys and sorrows, banalities, and noisy obscenities of life." (189) Second to, in advance, not get hung up on being recognized, needing to be right, or to become particularly discouraged when sharing his opportunity or boon. To be prepared to "discover themselves playing the idiot before a jury of sober eyes." (188) With that in mind, it would be "an easy thing is to commit the whole community to the devil and retire again into the heavenly rock-dwelling, close the door, and make it fast." (188) However, there is a greater and harder purpose. "But if some spiritual obstetrician has meanwhile drawn... across the retreat, then the work of representing eternity in time, and perceiving in time eternity, cannot be avoided." (188)

Psychological. As an aside, Campbell suggests a similarity between Rip Van Winkle's sleep in story and our in real life. Rip "moved unconsciously, into the adventurous realm, as we all do every night when we go to sleep. In deep sleep... the self is unified and blissful; therefore deep sleep is called the cognitional state. But though we are refreshed and sustained by these nightly visits with the source-darkness, our lives are not reformed by them; we return, like Rip, with nothing to show for the experience but our whiskers." (189)

Amplification

With all this progress and the choice to cross the return threshold, the core lesson regarding The Hero's Journey and the hero him or herself is this; "Not everyone has a destiny: only the hero who has plunged to touch it, and has come up again – with a ring." As such, "the returning hero, to complete his adventure, must survive the impact of the world." As an example, "Rip Van Winkle never knew what he had experienced; his return was a joke. Oisín knew, but he lost his centering in it and so collapsed. Kamar-al-Zaman had the best luck of all. He experienced awake the bliss of deep sleep, and returned to the light of day such a convincing talisman of his unbelievable adventure that he was able to retain his self-assurance in the face of every sobering disillusionment." (194)

With that core lesson, we see devices, symbols, and implications like any other step. Devices of time or a cycle illustrate completeness and those of a horse or carpet illustrate insulation as a protection of a kind for both the hero and individuals or society who may come in contact with him. Symbols point us toward the individual elements and interaction of destiny and intention, insulation, and precaution given what the hero now represents as a way of being and boon to offer. Correspondingly, implications are fairly wide-ranging. The spiritual realm is indeed real, is not separate from the material world as we might think or suppose, a hero at this level is not 'knowable' as much as the journey must be 'experienced'. As such, the hero's experience is rather solitary as common man generally leans on institutions for an affiliation with hero-ism as opposed to transformation towards it. And, if the hero's journey is to be pursued we ought be prepared to be thought of as unwise or an "idiot."

Finally, we can see how this plays out in real life as well. Though these could be included in our discussion of devices, a number of common representations are interesting given what we now know of the hero crossing to return. Both a representation of 'being' and a 'protection' by indicating separateness can be seen in various formalities; an "Englishman dressing for dinner, a "young artist wearing his whiskers," and the "Roman collar" for a "man of the pulpit." certainly a man and woman are distinguished together and alone by their rings. Even a military officer or garbage collector overtly and passively indicate to whatever audience they may be seen by that they can be expected to act differently than someone 'outside' of the more commonly accepted 'world' by nature of having chosen that role.

These are means to "explain his idiosyncrasy." For, myths "recount again and again the shocking transformations that take place when the insulation between a highly concentrated power center and the lower power field of the surrounding world is, without proper precautions, suddenly taken away." Or, as a protection against larger 'being', "it is necessary in the interest of general safety to keep it within narrow bounds, lest breaking it out should blast, blight, and destroy whatever it comes into contact with." (193)

Conclusion

In the fourth step of the Return phase, Crossing the Return Threshold, the hero begins his return in earnest. Whether passively or willingly he goes forward to return and ultimately has to be in action such that he can render a benefit back to society.

Common devices can be somewhat ethereal or entirely identifiable and clear. Ethereal devices include time - elongated time in particular - and movement representing a three hundred sixty degree revolution. Both symbolize completeness, revival, and balance of harmonious, form, and mind. Comparatively discrete devices include a horse and carpet. Both devices serve to separate the hero from the ground and easily move past peoples of the world. More specifically, show the hero's awareness of the need to separate himself to a degree so he is not drained of power by contact with the ground or world.

A number of implications of Crossing the Return Threshold are apparent. First, the previous and typical distinction between physical and spiritual falls away. They are not separate. Nor is one primary and the other secondary or subordinate. Rather, both are one. Second, this gives rise to the consideration

of focusing on the material world - and similarly 'matereality' - as shortsighted. Third, traveling so far down the hero's path creates a separateness of a kind, though he remains conscious enough to see inconsistencies in life, society, people, faults. Fourth, the same solitariness arises out of representing an ideal. That is, people maintain distance to some degree until need for redemption is duly recognized. Fifth, there is some duality in the hero because many come up short, either discouraged by the periodic banality of life or finding themselves attacked and simply 'failing' to convey a message. Sixth, there is a psychological effect of the hero continuing to live transcendently in the world. That is, there is always a tension between stopping at whatever point to avoid or navigate conflict while understanding that stopping altogether would mean likely facing irrelevance. Seventh, it is not ever so certain that one will have a destiny as it comes just those that choose it.

With that in mind, the more general symbolization of Crossing the Return Threshold is that the hero has come to a cosmic standpoint where he is aware of but not disturbed by temporal or material matters. Further, this 'way of being' is the central thing that serves the hero's destiny and intention. In parallel, some insulation or isolation is necessary and maintained to a degree. More specifically, as a means to avoid discharging his power to a person or people accidentally or too suddenly.

Master of Two Worlds

Introduction

The step of Master of Two Worlds is like a few others and, because it is so near the end of The Hero's Journey, more about the state the hero has achieved and who he is now being than about the mechanism of his passing. As the title suggests he has the "freedom to pass back and forth across the world division" - between spiritual and physical realms - and "from the perspective of the apparitions of time to that of the causal deep and back" - at whatever depth is required to maintain his balance and be effective in returning a boon to society.

The hero's freedom, function, and effectiveness in both realms is not so much based on his ability to 'navigate' both worlds per se. Rather, more specifically, it is rooted in the hero's ability to be present to the nature and value of the material and spiritual world, "Not contaminating the principles of the one with those of the other, yet permitting the mind to know the one by virtue of the other." This presence of mind "is the talent of the master." (196) Saying the same thing in a similar manner and more towards action or practicality, the hero is not content being on either side. "The Cosmic Dancer, declares Nietzsche, does not rest heavily in a single spot, but gaily, lightly, turns and leaps from one position to another. It is possible to speak from only on point at a time, but that does not invalidate the insights of the rest. " (196)

Regarding the manner in which this is illustrated in stories, “myths do not often display in a single image of mystery of the ready transit.” However, “where they do, the most is a precious symbol, full or import, to be treasured and contemplated.” As we are naturally at the completion of the hero’s journey, what is initially termed as a framework common across all eras, geographies, and cultures, we find distinctly religious imagery, language, and examples. While our primary aim is not to suppose an apologetic argument towards religion, faith, or any particular messianic figure we, nevertheless, again see the escalation of a kind towards the importance of faith – even an enduring, singular savior – within the larger body of myth. With that alone, as an individual, the progressing central figure is only now truly fully heroic.

Example - Christ

There is, even Campbell directly clarifies, a highest example of a hero who is the Master of Two Worlds. “Such a moment was that of the Transfiguration of the Christ.” (197) In the New Testament, Peter, James, and John - apostles of Christ - go to a mountain top and Jesus is transfigured before them, shining as a sun. One apostle says it is good to be here and, seeing Moses and Elijah appearing in a bright cloud, suggests that he make three tabernacles.

His seemingly reasonable response and physical intent underscores the more significant and true purpose of the moment as the Lord God speaks from the heavens; “This is my Son with whom I am well pleased.” The apostles are told to arise and be not afraid. As they did, they saw no man but Jesus who, still at the beginning of His ministry, directs them to tell no one. With that in mind, “Here is the whole myth in a moment: Jesus the guide, the way, the vision, and the companion of the return. The disciples are his initiates, not themselves masters of the mystery, yet introduced to the full experience of the paradox of the two worlds in one.” (197)

Example - Bhagavad Gita

An additional example helps understand “the tenor of the transfiguration” so that “it may be confronted on universal grounds, rather than sectarian.” The Hindu recounting of Krsna, who “is an incarnation of Vishnu, the Universal God, and Prince Arjuna, who is Krsna’s disciple and friend. Arjuna asks “if you think me able to hold it... reveal to me you Immutable Self.” (198) Vishnu reveals himself in many faces, eyes, and wondrous sights with any number of adornments and the “radiance of a thousand suns.” (198) Arjuna bows, marveling at his magnitude. “I behold Thee, infinite in form, on every side, but I see not Thy end not Thy middle nor Thy beginning, O Lord of the Universe, O Universal From!” (199)

As it turns out, Arjuna is having this vision just before a battle in which his armies “had been assembled against those of an uprising cousin.” (199) But “his spirit failed him” and, thinking of the greed slaying his kinsmen would represent, refuses to fight. Arjuna laments the forces of nature and man in comparison to Vishnu who, nevertheless, encourages Arjuna to yet fight; “Even without you, all these warriors standing arrayed in the opposing armies shall not live. Therefore, stand up and win glory; conquer your enemies and enjoy an opulent kingdom.” (200) Though praising Vishnu, Arjun is yet fearful and asks “Show me that other form of thine” so that he can be reassured. Finally, Krishna “assumed a graceful shape again and comforted the terrified” leader. (201)

Devices

While most steps show a number of devices and a good amount of variation, the hero normally appears in a particular form here. Certainly, in the form of an all-encompassing savior, as referent and understated at this point in the story or myth they may be. In parallel, the hero occurs in context of whatever culture the

story is about. Various examples of this include a hero appearing in Palestine as a Jew, as a German in Germany, a negro in Basuto, and Japanese in Japan. That said, the “race and stature of the figure symbolizing the immanent and transcendent Universal is of historical, not semantic, moment.” (202) As another example, regarding gender, the “Cosmic Woman, who appears in the iconography” is necessarily “as eloquent a symbol as the Cosmic Man.” (202)

Symbols

Of course, the particular criteria, details, or outward appearance and characteristics of the hero is less important than what they represent and have become. The overall abstraction universal symbol is that the hero “has been blessed with a vision transcending the scope of normal human destiny, and amounting to a glimpse of the essential nature of the cosmos. Not his personal fate, but the fate of mankind, of life as a whole, the atom and all the solar systems, has been opened to him; and this in terms of befitting his human understanding.” That is “in terms of anthropomorphic vision” he is “the Cosmic Man.” (201)

Implications

Superiority. While Campbell never intended his framework or arguments to be ‘apologetic’ in any manner - that is, providing a logical defense or advocacy for a particular religion or messianic figure - we do, again, see a progression of a kind within the body of myth towards religious stories as we get toward and into the latter steps of The Hero’s Journey framework. More specifically, we see, and Campbell claims some primacy and superiority of the person and story of Christ even among all others. “It should be observed that this eternal moment (of Christ) soars beyond Kamar al Zaman’s romantic realization of his individual destiny. This is the most masterly passage.” Similarly, the depth at which Christ operates is also distinctive. “Not only do we have here a masterly passage, back and forth” but also a “penetration of the depths.” (197)

Historicity. While we could suppose a sort of philosophical apologetic argument for religion or Christ in particular, the point of the The Hero’s Journey - and, for the purposes of this text - the significance and ‘truth’ of myth and story is not rooted in, and is more enduring and foundational than what ‘fact’ or literal occurrence may, or may not, confirm the stories are ‘true’. Rather, the consistency and widespread manner in which myth and stories occur across eras, geographies, and cultures, inherently confirms that they are important regardless of whether we recognized them to be so in the first place. “Of course, it may be dismissed. We may doubt whether such a scene ever actually took place.” However, that is not the primary purpose and value of myth and story; “that would not help us any; for we are concerned, at present, with problems of symbolism, not of historicity.”

That is, “We do not particularly care whether Rip van Winkle, Kamar al-Zahman, or Jesus Christ ever actually lived. Their *stories* are what concern us: and these stories are so widely distributed over the world – attached to various heroes in various lands – that the question of whether this or that local carrier of the universal theme may or may not have been a historical, living man can be of only secondary moment.” Real or not, the journey and the central figures are a means to live by. Or, to live a heroic life by, at least.

Psychological. In psychological terms, the insistence of rooting the relevance of myth, story, religion, and faith in historicity or materiality is, in good degree, not constructive. In particular, because “stressing of this historical element will lead to confusion.” Similar to an active or passive psychological defense, this mindset or effort oriented on the ‘materiality’ of a myth will “simply obfuscate the picture message.” Therefore, ‘justifying’ the myth as ‘real’ or ‘not real’ misses - perhaps worse, avoids - the point of the journey; in choosing it and completing it, the aim is not for the self but the dissolution of self.

So, 'independent of' - but not with total disregard for - the eternal, timeless, particular truth we may believe in, there is also a general truth. Myth and stories indicate and play out an operating system to which all social groups and individuals conform. Fundamentally, myth, story, religion - and turning or maturing from 'religion' to faith and transformation - are describing what we desperately want. More specifically, the "most freeing and powerful" answer to that 'want' is "the dissolution of self-governing, greater if not zeal so much as being." (198) The body of myth, and any particular great story oriented on a moral lesson, provides the very indication of the center of human experience; what we want on internal, individual, psyche, psychological, social, and spiritual development levels.

Totems. At the same time, as important as symbols are, they remain "only VEHICLES of communication." That is, they must not be mistaken for the final term, the TENOR of their reference." This is because regardless of "how attractive or impressive they may seem, they remain but convenient means, accommodated to the understanding" that is really being pointed at. (202) Here, there are perhaps a million examples, from religious to contemporary. For example, taking communion - even if we believe the device or vehicle of bread and wine are literally the consecrated body of the resurrected Christ - versus, in a comparatively 'heroic' manner, actually giving up our own will and life to fully follow him. Or, something overtly simulation and simulacra, 'experiencing Japan' by visiting EPCOT Center at Walt Disney World. At different acuties, both of these examples illustrate the difference between and spectrum among imitating something to a degree, meaningfully participating, and 'powerfully' - as opposed to 'forcefully' - living out a journey.

'Against' Religion. The distinction of symbol and symbolized might seem to provide some caution about or seemingly be against religion. Major world religions are full of traditions, practices, norms, expectations, and culture. A great many are, to the faithful, rooted in scripture and or have sound doctrine underpinning them. However, "No matter how attractive or impressive they may seem, they remain but convenient means, accommodated to the understanding." So, there should be some care regarding making the distinction between symbols and practices and, as an example, pursuit of The Lord.

Similarly, applicable to religion and faith as well as myth and story, we therefore realize that "the personality or personalities of God - whether represented in trinitarian, dualistic, or Unitarian terms, in polytheistic, monotheistic, or henotheistic terms, pictorially or verbally, as documented fact or as apocalyptic vision - no one should attempt to read or interpret as the final thing." Again, that is not to discount the place of religion and faith' we have already placed Christ on a pedestal, even as a story. Rather, "the problem of the theologian is to keep his symbol translucent, so that it may not block out the very light it is supposed to convey." "For then alone do we know God truly," writes Saint Thomas Aquinas. Because "It is when we believe that *He* is far above all that man can possibly think of God." (202)

Amplification

In the step of Master of Two Worlds, the key quality of the hero is that he is now 'present to' the two worlds. Further, having completed his transformation, he is able to navigate both worlds, effectively wield the nature and strengths of each to benefit the other, and understand the limits of each. This key quality and new or now-complete 'way of being' for the benefit of his tribe, clan, society or world. With that in mind, the key thing "to observe is that the," as an example, "transfiguration of Jesus was witnessed by devotees who had extinguished their personal wills." That is, Jesus and His apostles were "men who had long since liquidated 'life', 'personal fate', 'destiny', by complete self-abnegation in the Master." (202)

Krishna remarks on what this looks like. "May I be known in this form, realized truly, and entered into, He who does My work and regards Me as the Supreme Goal, who is devoted to Me and without hatred for

any creature – he comes to me.” That said, “Jesus makes the point more succinctly: ‘Whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it’.”

As such the universal objective is clear. Indeed, “it is the meaning of all religious practice.” “The individual, through prolonged psychological disciplines, gives up completely all attachment to his personal limitations, idiosyncrasies, hopes and fear, no longer resists the self-annihilation that is prerequisite to rebirth in the realization of truth.” As a result, he - but, again, only a hero - “becomes ripe, at last, for the great at-one-ment. His personal ambitions being totally dissolved, he no longer tries to live but willingly relaxes to whatever may come to pass in him; he becomes, that is to say, an anonymity.” (204) “The Law lives in him with his unreserved consent.” (204)

Conclusion

In the fifth step of the Return phase, Master of Two Worlds, we again see the hero in a state as much as taking a step forward. Just previously, he was able to balance spiritual and physical realms while, now, he also has the freedom to move between physical and spiritual worlds and shows effectiveness in each.

The key archetype in Master of Two Worlds is a savior. Naturally, the archetype and figure appears in a form relevant and recognizable to whatever culture the story or the culture the myth is for. Accompanying the savior is a virgin vision beyond normal life for the hero. Further, not a personal vision but one for mankind. A number of implications are apparent as well. First, among the body of myth, and within any particular myth, there is a progression towards faith and a literal savior. Second, the same contributes to some ‘proof’ of God. That is, as opposed to hero’s physical and metaphysical journey pointing only metaphorically to a limited or general sense of transcendence.

The more generally symbolization of Master of Two Worlds is to indicate the significance and depth of transcendence available to ‘everyman’. That is, even if the supposition that the body of myth is ‘proof’ of a unitary, benevolent, savior is false as a ‘literal’ truth, nevertheless, that idea is deeply important to us. That is, whether or not God exists, He is important to us and we consider Him rather intentionally. Correspondingly, always rooting whatever matter of life, thinking, and being in the literal, factual, and the like is considerably less freeing than we might suppose. Meanwhile, totems do remain. No people of a religion, faith, or ethic likely ever fully embodies the central ideal figure. Nevertheless, the core ethic itself, that central best figure, and largely the doctrine that follows remains not just something for consideration but that terribly important. More specifically, as a general means to dispel chaos and as a specific ethic to follow. As such, religion and text, systems, and narrative it provides - a definitive path to a savior, if not the Savior in particular - at least represents a clear path to living a transcendent life, even if we deny living for a Savior.

Freedom to Live

Introduction

Now we are at the end point of The Hero's Journey and the path taken by the hero. And, we can answer the final question of what this is all about. What it is all for. As Campbell writes, "What, now, is the result of the miraculous passage and return?" (205) At its simplest, the "goal of the myth is to dispel the need" for what could be called "life ignorance." In particular, through the challenge and redemption of each step "effecting a reconciliation of the individual consciousness with the universal will." (206)

Further, this reconciliation is "effected through a realization of the true relationship" between two things; "the passing phenomenon of time to the imperishable life that lives and dies in all." (206) To that end, "every person" - certainly a hero, metaphorically every man, "casts off worn-out clothes and puts on others that are new, so the embodied Self casts off worn-out bodies and enters into others that are new." (206) In the end, "weapons cut it not; fire burns it not; water wets it not; the wind does not wither it." Indeed, "this self cannot be cut nor burnt nor wetted nor withered. Eternal, all pervading, unchanging, immovable, the Self is the same forever." (206) That is, the new 'self' is continually 'becoming'; therefore, not so much unchanging in that he or she is 'fixed' and perfected but that the hero is sufficiently balanced in material and spiritual realms that he can continue to be effective in the former and rooted in the latter.

Example - Gwain Bach

Returning to the story of Gwain Bach, we can see how the ending of a story, which we also used as an example in a previous step, represents Freedom to Live as a step and the end of The Hero's Journey.

Prefacing the portion of the story that leads to the illustration of Freedom to Live, the hero has tasted tiny drops of poison from a long-brewed kettle, survives being eaten by a hag, is reborn, set to sea as an infant, and captured in the fish trap of the young son of a wealthy landowner whose horses were poisoned from the aforementioned kettle. The son takes the hero on horse to the boy's father king, explaining he has found a treasure greater than all fish ever caught at what happens to be the king's favorite fishing location. Speaking to the king, the baby claims, "I am better able to speak than you to question me" and breaks into a long philosophical song. Similarly, noblemen passing the young child in the king's castle are overcome by the baby's presence enough to need to clarify that they are "not from the strength of drink" exhibiting the "power of speech like drunken man" as the king supposes. Rather, "through the influence of the spirit that sits in the corner yonder in the form of a child."

The child goes on to continue his poem mentioning any manner of important historical figures that he, as "Taliesin," was alive to observe. Just some of the figures and events include the time of Lucifer, Alexander, Absalom, Eli, Enoch, the crucifixion of the son of God, Nimrod, Noah and The Ark, Sodom and Gomorrah, and Mary Magdalene. "And when the king and his nobles had heard the song, they wondered much, for they have never heard the like from a boy as young as he." (209) With that in mind, it is not just the magical moment, breadth of the poem within the story, or apparent spiritual presence of Talesin that is significant. The force that has been pulling the hero forward all this time is altogether clearly as present. "Nothing retains its won form; but Nature, the greater renewer, ever makes up forms from forms."

Significance

We can note in our example story, is that the recitation of a series of connected epic events is not so much meant to impress the audience with the grandeur of the hero. Rather, show the audience that the hero is profoundly reflective for what, and all, the hero has been brought through. Again, "The larger portion of the bard's song is devoted to the imperishable, which lives in him, only a brief stanza to the details of his personal biography." (209) By doing this, the hero allows, perhaps compels, the audience to see something of themselves. "Those listening or oriented to the imperishable in themselves, are then supplied incidentally with an item of information. Though he had feared the terrible hag, he had been swallowed and reborn. Having died to his personal ego, he rose again established in the self." (209)

Symbol

Of course, many times, if not most, we have highlighted that events, devices, or the hero himself is symbolizing something in life. Now at the end of the journey, that is certainly the case except that, the hero and the journey writ large is now primarily symbolizing life itself, as there is no further step to go for the hero within the myth or story.

With that in mind, we can tell what "the result of the miraculous passage and return" is. "The battlefield is symbolic of the field of life, where every creature lives on the death of another," and in that context, there are always a couple possible outcomes for a would-be hero. First, the hero may refuse to enter into or return from the journey. "A realization of the inevitable guilt of life may so sicken the heart that, like Hamlet or Arjuna, one may refuse to go on with it."

Second, “like most of the rest of us, one may invent a false, finally unjustified, image of oneself as an exceptional phenomenon in the world, not guilty as others are.” Perhaps further “justified in one’s inevitable sinning because one represents the good.” In this outcome, the individual remains fixed in a particular setting, mindset, or whatever, as opposed to being ‘in the arena’ - so to speak - in order to have an ‘effect’ on the world and, in so doing, one’s self also being transformed. As an aside, “such self-righteousness leads to a misunderstanding, not only of oneself but of the nature of both man and the cosmos.” (205)

Third, the hero is actually transformed and returns. In this case, “the hero is the champion of the things becoming.” That is, not just of the things he has become, “because he is.” (209)

Implications

Assertive & Unattached. A key practicality of the hero’s becoming is that he is well able to remain in action while also ultimately keeping his mind free of attachment to a particular outcome. That is, to do what is required of him, or to influence people to the benefit of the boon he has or represents without attachment. “Powerful in this insight, calm and free in action, elated that through his hand should flow the grace... the hero is the conscious vehicle of the terrible, wonderful Law, whether his work be that of butcher, jockey, or king.” (206) This is the tipping point and the cause for hero mode; the continuing of action, even towards grand purpose, and with clear hope or reasonable anticipation of an outcome but without entitlement. Rather, “resting” his actions “and their fruits on the knees of the loving God.” As a result, “he is Released by them as by a Sacrifice, from the bondages of the sea of death.” (206)

Continued Transformation. In his final state, the hero is present to being continually reborn. And, more easily so as his action-without-attachment and being continues. “He does not mistake apparent changelessness in time for the permanence of being, nor is he fearful of the next moment (or of the “other thing”), as destroying the permanent with its change. Nothing retains its own form; but nature, the greater renewer, ever makes up forms from forms.” In this manner, the “hero is the champion of the things becoming, not of things become, because he is.”

Two Worlds Are One. Seeing the symbolic communication via the completeness and completion of the hero, we now understand who he has become on a soul level. With that, it is clear that - like the hero acting in balance of the material and spiritual worlds - the worlds are one. “Not made in one but, rather, there is no real separation. So, the hero’s, and our, ability to act in only one of the worlds, or in both in the manner described, is rather simply, and perhaps starkly – though meant as a distinction and judgement not judgmental – a binary spectrum of maturity or infantilism. It is “not from the strength of drink, or of too much liquor, are we dumb, without power of speech like drunken men.” Rather, it is “through the influence of a spirit that sits in the corner yonder in the form of a child” that prevents us from becoming a hero. (209)

Amplification

There is both a common framework in myth, legend, story, fairy tale, religion, ritual and, within that framework, a good degree of variation in what archetypes, devices, settings may be used, and what steps are used, stressed, diminished, or even skipped. “The changes rung on the simple scale of the Monomyth defy description. Many tales isolate and greatly enlarge upon one or two of the typical elements of the full cycle (test motif, flight motif, abduction of the bride), others string a number of independent cycles into a single series (as in the Odyssey).” (245)

Amid the variation or selective use of steps within the framework of The Hero's Journey, the significance, symbol, and implication is rather more unitary. "Man in the world of action loses his centering in the principle of eternity if he is anxious for the outcome of his deeds but resting them and their fruits on the knees of the Living God he is released by them, as by a sacrifice, from the cordages of the sea of death." Therefore, a hero in myth and story, and a would-be hero in life, must and can "Do without attachment the work you have to do... surrendering all action to Me, with mind intent on the Self, freeing yourself from longing and selfishness, fight – unperturbed by grief." (206)

Conclusion

In the sixth step of the Return phase, Freedom to Live, the hero has discovered what the purpose of the journey was all along. In short, to dispel the need for life ignorance of any kind. He realizes the relationship between passing phenomenon and time. Similarly, that the center of everything that is considered self dies when moving fully through the journey. In short, The Hero's Journey about is becoming anew and continuing as such. Victory within the same lies in ensuring whatever terrible internal or external, insight or circumstance are, together, all well-handled.

There is no archetype or device needed or to be had now. There is just the hero himself. He is complete with a miraculous passage and has returned from the battlefield of life. And, he represents life itself.

A number of implications of Freedom to Live are apparent. First, a great deal of completing The Hero's Journey is being unattached. More specifically, persistently in meaningful balanced action, intentional towards having an effect, while also not being tied to an outcome. Second, in that regard the hero continues his transformation by maintaining it. That is, apparent characteristics and achieved ways of being are not necessarily all together permanent. Third, the hero is not fearful of 'form'. An outgrowth of the lack of 'attachment', he does not stay in one form for long. Becoming is on a soul level.

With all that in mind, the more general symbolization of Freedom to Live, and of the whole of The Hero's Journey, is that balancing physical and spiritual reality and realms is possible and necessary. We are not made in one realm and attempting to attend to the other. Nor do we need to throw one off for the other. Rather, there is no real separation. The hero is the one who is the champion of things becoming in that context. Because he has become a new. Finally, it is a calling and pulling forward of a benevolent Father that has brought him along all this time.