

The Hero Journey

Question:

What is a hero?



The Hero Journey

The Hero Journey is a paradigm. A paradigm is a *model* or *standard form* that governs our experience and sense of reality. The Hero Journey is both a physical as well as a psychological or emotional experience. The following paradigm is the most common paradigm in mythology.

Note: not all hero journeys will follow this paradigm *exactly*.

The Stages of the Hero's Journey

Stage 1:

THE ORDINARY WORLD

- **Get to know and identify with the Hero's drives, urges, and problems**
- **Identify the problem (outer or inner) which disrupts the Ordinary World**
- **This is the Hero's home, the safe haven from which he must leave and seek to return to**

The Stages of the Hero's Journey

Stage 2:

THE CALL TO ADVENTURE

- **Disrupts the comfort of the Hero's Ordinary World**
- **Often delivered by the Herald archetype**
- **May come in different forms (a message, an action, an arrival, etc.)**

The Stages of the Hero's Journey

Stage 3:

REFUSAL OF THE CALL

- **The Hero has fears or insecurities**
- **The Hero prefers the safe haven of the Ordinary World**
- **The refusal demonstrates the risks involved in the Journey**
- **Each call and refusal escalates the stakes until the Hero has no choice but to accept**

The Stages of the Hero's Journey

Stage 4:

MEETING THE MENTOR

- **The Mentor provides confidence, insight, advice, training, or magical gifts**
- **The Mentor may not be a person. It could be an object or an inner force such as a code**

The Stages of the Hero's Journey

Stage 5:

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD

- **Signifies that the Hero has finally committed to the journey**
- **The threshold separates the Ordinary World from the Special World**
- **There is no turning back**

The Stages of the Hero's Journey

Stage 6:

TESTS, ALLIES, ENEMIES

- **The Hero learns the rules of the Special World**
- **The Hero must learn who can be trusted**
- **The Hero needs this stage to test his skills and powers**

The Stages of the Hero's Journey

Stage 7:

APPROACH TO THE INMOST CAVE

- **The Inmost Cave leads to the journey's heart or central Ordeal**
- **The Hero has survived his descent into the Special World**
- **The Hero often takes a respite before facing the Ordeal**

The Stages of the Hero's Journey

Stage 8:

THE ORDEAL

- **The central life-or-death crisis or crises**
- **The Hero faces his greatest fear; experiences “death”**
- **Only through “death” can the Hero be reborn**
- **The resurrection grants greater powers or insight**

The Stages of the Hero's Journey

Stage 9:

REWARD

- **Having survived “death”, the Hero receives what he sought**
- **It comes in many forms (a magical sword, an elixir, knowledge, reconciliation)**
- **This allows the Hero to replenish himself and the audience to “catch its breath”**

The Stages of the Hero's Journey

Stage 10:

THE ROAD BACK

- **The Hero must accept the Road Back to Ordinary World**
- **Like crossing the threshold, the Hero needs an event that will push him back (a force to chase him out of the Special World)**

The Stages of the Hero's Journey

Stage 11:

THE RESURRECTION

- **The Hero's most dangerous meeting with death**
- **A cleansing or purification that must occur**
- **The Hero is reborn or transformed**
- **It may be a physical Ordeal with the entire world at stake**
- **Must prove he has reached Heroic Status and accept his sacrifice for the benefit of the Ordinary World**

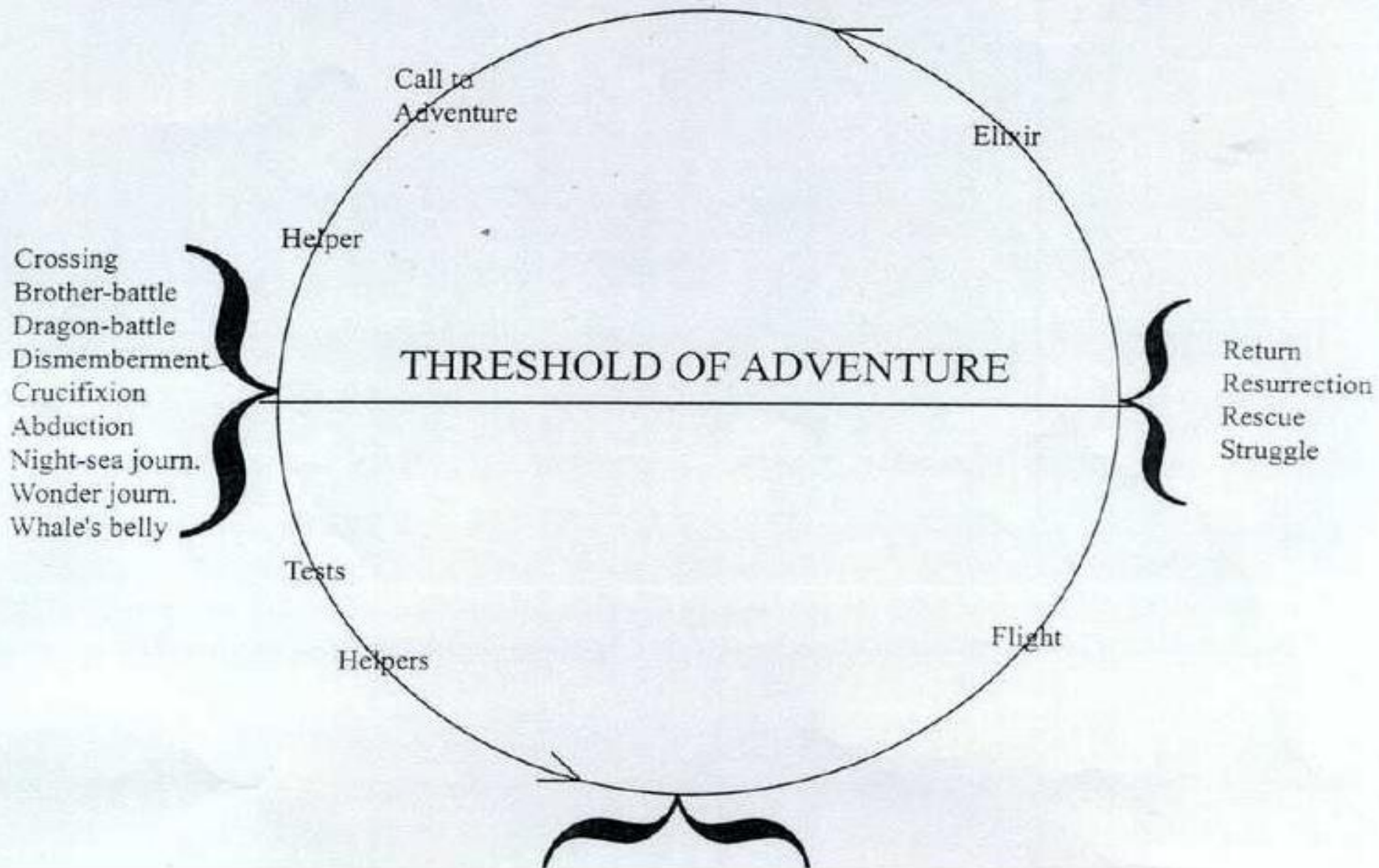
The Stages of the Hero's Journey

Stage 12:

RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR

- **The final Reward**
- **The Hero has been resurrected and purified and has earned the right to be accepted back into the Ordinary World**
- **The Hero shares the Elixir of the journey with others or heals a wounded land**
- **All celebrate the journey's end with revelry or marriage**
- **Harmony and balance are restored to the Ordinary World**

The Stages of the Hero's Journey



The Archetypes

Archetypes describe the function or role the characters play in a story. Think of an Archetype as a mask a character wears. In a story, characters may change masks with other characters from time to time. The following slides list the Archetypes that occur most frequently and their functions.

The Archetypes

The Hero (“to serve and sacrifice”)

- **His/her purpose is to separate and sacrifice self for the service of the Journey**
- **He/she does not have to be all good (antiheroes, outlaws, loner heroes)**
- **He/she grows or learns the most during the Journey**

The Archetypes

The Mentor (“to guide”)

- **The Mentor provides motivation, insight, training, guidance**
- **Has traveled the road before**
- **May provide the hero with magical gifts**
- **May be an Inner Mentor like a code of honor or justice**

The Archetypes

The Threshold Guardian (“to test”)

- **Protects the Special World and its secrets from the Hero**
- **Provides Tests which the Hero must pass to prove commitment and worth**
- **May be characters, objects, or forces**

The Archetypes

The Herald (“to warn and challenge”)

- **Issues challenges or announces the coming of significant change**
- **Often appears at the beginning of the Journey**

The Archetypes

The Shapeshifter (“to question and deceive”)

- **Misleads the Hero by hiding a character’s intentions and loyalties**
- **Presence causes doubts and questions in the Hero’s mind**
- **Creates suspense**

The Archetypes

The Shadow (“to destroy”)

- **Represents our darkest or rejected desires**
- **Symbolizes our greatest fears and phobias**
- **May not be all bad**
- **May be another character or something lurking within the Hero that must be accepted or purged**

The Archetypes

The Trickster (“to disrupt”)

- **Disrupts the “status quo”, turning the Ordinary World into chaos**
- **Uses laughter to help the Hero see the absurdity of a situation**
- **Often is the Hero’s sidekick**