

## Examining a Myth

Choose a Greek myth to deconstruct. First, answer these general questions about the myth:

1. Who is the hero?
2. Who are the other characters?
3. What is the setting?
4. What is the main story line?
5. What is the challenge?
6. What obstacles does the hero face?
7. How does the hero overcome the challenges?

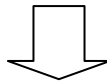
Now, take a look at the myth from the framework of the hero's journey (based on the book, *The Hero's Journey: A Guide to Literature and Life*, by Reg Harris and Susan Thompson, and adapted from the Web site [www.yourheroicjourney.com/Journey.shtml](http://www.yourheroicjourney.com/Journey.shtml)\*).

In Greek myths, the heroes undergo a journey that culminates in them becoming heroes. This transformation can be referred to as the *hero's journey*. Use the framework of the hero's journey to analyze a myth. The guiding questions will help you with this.

### SEPARATION (from the known)

**The Call:** This is when the hero is called to the adventure. The hero may be called in different ways. The hero may choose the adventure or be dragged into it.

- What causes the person to leave?
- What form does the call take?
  - o Something is taken from the character, the character's family, or the character's society, and the character seeks to get it back.
  - o The character senses something missing in life and wants to find what is missing.
  - o The character wants to save or restore honor to the character's country.
  - o The character seeks to win the rights of something not permitted in society.
- Is the call something hoped for or dreaded?



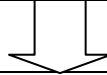
**The Threshold:** (with guardians, helpers, and mentor): This is the "jumping off point" for the adventure, from the known to the unknown, from security to challenge and danger. Sometimes when crossing the threshold, people, beings, or situations are encountered that block the passage. These "threshold guardians" may protect the character by keeping the character from journeys that the character is not prepared for, but when the character is ready, they step aside. Also at the threshold are helpers who provide assistance and direction, and may even provide a divine gift. These helpers may serve as guides who assist and help the hero stay focused.

- What special friends or helpers does the hero have?
- Does the hero receive magical help, advice, or a good luck charm from a helper?
- Does anyone help prepare the hero for the journey?
- Does the helper appear throughout the story?
- Who is guarding the threshold?
- What obstacles does the person face before being ready to begin the journey?

## INITIATION AND TRANSFORMATION

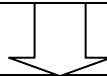
**The Challenges:** The journey into the unknown begins after passing the threshold. Along the journey, the hero faces many challenges. As the journey progresses, the challenges become more and more difficult. By facing these challenges and succeeding, the hero changes and grows. These challenges include differentiating real helpers from “tempters,” who try to steer the hero off the path with fear, doubt, or distraction. They may disguise themselves as friends or counselors. The hero needs to learn to recognize true helpers. The challenges faced by the hero always reflect the hero’s fears and weaknesses, and it is up to the hero to confront the challenge and conquer.

- What are the hero’s fears?
- What challenges does the hero face?
- How does the hero overcome the challenges?
- What assistance does the hero receive to overcome these trials?



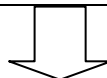
**The Abyss:** When the hero reaches the abyss, the hero faces the greatest fear and adventure. This is where the hero must “slay the dragon.” Sometimes the hero is defeated by the challenge.

- What is the greatest challenge that the hero faces?
- How does the hero face the challenge?
- What does the challenge mean for the hero?



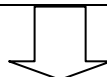
**The Transformation:** After the abyss is conquered, the hero has overcome fears and transformation is complete. As this happens, part of the hero dies and a new part is born. For example, fear dies and courage is born, or ignorance dies and enlightenment is born.

- What qualities does the hero develop as a result of the experience?
- What does the hero leave behind?



**The Revelation:** As transformation happens, the way the hero’s thinking suddenly changes. This change makes the hero a different person.

- How has the hero changed as a result of the experience?
- How is the hero a different person?



**The Atonement:** After the hero has been transformed, the hero achieves atonement, accepts a new self, and is fully reborn.

- How does the person accept the new powers?
- What has the person learned as a result of the journey?

## THE RETURN (to the known world)

**The Return:** (with a gift): Once transformation and atonement have been achieved, the hero must return to everyday life. When the hero returns, the hero discovers the gift which is given based on the hero's new level of skill and awareness. For example, the hero may become richer, stronger, a leader, or enlightened. After this gift is bestowed, the hero can contribute to society. This may mean saving or renewing a country or creating a city, for example. Sometimes, the hero's gift is not recognized, and the hero may be ostracized or even killed. At other times, the hero may choose to leave the community.

- What is the hero's gift?
- What does the hero do with the gift upon return?
- Does the hero share the experience and wisdom gained with others?
- How do others receive the hero upon the hero's return?
- Does the hero come back to everyday life?
- Does anything get in the way of a return to a normal life?