**Humanities Summer Reading- DUE AUGUST 1st to your English Teacher**

**Directions: Read the following two sections of Joseph Campbell’s *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*: “The Hero and the God” and “The World Navel”. Annotate as you go, and then respond with a 300 word minimum critical response to Campbell’s ideas and post your response to your blog. (Remember, you may continue to use your English blog that you created as a freshman.)**

**Standards:**

**ELAGSE9-10W2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

b. Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts. d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.

e. Establish and maintain an appropriate style and objective tone.

f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

**ELAGSE9-10W4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**ELAGSE9-10W6:** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

**The Hero and the God**

The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation—initiation—return: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth."



A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.

Prometheus ascended to the heavens, stole fire from the gods, and descended. Jason sailed through the Clashing Rocks into a sea of marvels, circumvented the dragon that guarded the Golden fleece, and returned with the fleece and the power to wrest his rightful throne from a usurper. Aeneas went down into the underworld, crossed the dreadful river of the dead, threw a sop to the three-headed watchdog Cerberus, and conversed, at last, with the shade of his dead father. All things were unfolded to him: the destiny of souls, the destiny of Rome, which he was about to found, "and in what wise he might avoid or endure every burden. He returned through the ivory gate to his work in the world.

A majestic representation of the difficulties of the hero-task, and of its sublime import when it is profoundly conceived and solemnly undertaken, is presented in the traditional legend of the Great Struggle of the Buddha. The young prince Gautama Sakyamuni set forth secretly from his father's palace on the princely steed Kanthaka, passed miraculously through the guarded gate, rode through the night attended by the torches of four times sixty thousand divinities, lightly hurdled a majestic river eleven hundred and twenty-eight cubits wide, and then with a single sword-stroke sheared his own royal locks—whereupon the remaining hair, two finger-breadths in length, curled to the right and lay close to his head. Assuming the garments of a monk, he moved as a beggar through the world, and during these years of apparently aimless wandering acquired and transcended the eight stages of meditation. He retired to a hermitage, bent his powers six more years to the great struggle, carried austerity to the uttermost, and collapsed in seeming death, but presently recovered. Then he returned to the less rigorous life of the ascetic wanderer.

One day he sat beneath a tree, contemplating the eastern quarter of the world, and the tree was illuminated with his radiance. A young girl named Sujata came and presented milk-rice to him in a golden bowl, and when he tossed the empty bowl into a river it floated upstream. This was the signal that the moment of his triumph was at hand. He arose and proceeded along a road which the gods had decked and which was eleven hundred and twenty-eight cubits wide. The snakes and birds and the divinities of the woods and fields did him homage with flowers and celestial perfumes, heavenly choirs poured forth music, the ten thousand worlds were filled with perfumes, garlands, harmonies, and shouts of acclaim; for he was on his way to the great Tree of Enlightenment, the Bo Tree, under which he was to redeem the universe. He placed himself, with a firm resolve, beneath the Bo Tree, on the Immovable Spot, and straightway was approached by Kama-Mara, the god of love and death.

The dangerous god appeared mounted on an elephant and carrying weapons in his thousand hands. He was surrounded by his army, which extended twelve leagues before him, twelve to the right, twelve to the left, and in the rear as far as to the confines of the world; it was nine leagues high. The protecting deities of the universe took flight, but the Future Buddha remained unmoved beneath the Tree. And the god then assailed him, seeking to break his concentration.

Whirlwind, rocks, thunder and flame, smoking weapons with keen edges, burning coals, hot ashes, boiling mud, blistering sands and fourfold darkness, the Antagonist hurled against the Savior, but the missiles were all transformed into celestial flowers and ointments by the power of Gautama's ten perfections. Mara then deployed his daughters, Desire, Pining, and Lust, surrounded by voluptuous attendants, but the mind of the Great Being was not distracted. The god finally challenged his right to be sitting on the Immovable Spot, flung his razor-sharp discus angrily, and bid the towering host of the army to let fly at him with mountain crags. But the Future Buddha only moved his hand to touch the ground with his fingertips, and thus bid the goddess Earth bear witness to his right to be sitting where he was. She did so with a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand roars, so that the elephant of the Antagonist fell upon its knees in obeisance to the Future Buddha. The army was immediately dispersed, and the gods of all the worlds scattered garlands.

Having won that preliminary victory before sunset, the conqueror acquired in the first watch of the night knowledge of his previous existences, in the second watch the divine eye of omniscient vision, and in the last watch understanding of the chain of causation. He experienced perfect enlightenment at the break of day.

Then for seven days Gautama—now the Buddha, the Enlightened—sat motionless in bliss; for seven days he stood apart and regarded the spot on which he had received enlightenment; for seven days he paced between the place of the sitting and the place of the standing; for seven days he abode in a pavilion furnished by the gods and reviewed the whole doctrine of causality and release; for seven days he sat beneath the tree where the girl Sujata had brought him milk-rice in a golden bowl, and there meditated on the doctrine of the sweetness of Nirvana; he removed to another tree and a great storm raged for seven days, but the King of Serpents emerged from the roots and protected the Buddha with his expanded hood; finally, the Buddha sat for seven days beneath a fourth tree enjoying still the sweetness of liberation. Then he doubted whether his message could be communicated, and he thought to retain the wisdom for himself; but the god Brahma descended from the zenith to implore that he should become the teacher of gods and men. The Buddha was thus persuaded to proclaim the path.3a And he went back into the cities of men where he moved among the citizens of the world, bestowing the inestimable boon of the knowledge of the Way.

The Old Testament records a comparable deed in its legend of Moses, who, in the third month of the departure of Israel out of the land of Egypt, came with his people into the wilderness of Sinai; and there Israel pitched their tents over against the mountain. And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called unto him from the mountain. The Lord gave to him the Tables of the Law and commanded Moses to return with these to Israel, the people of the Lord.

Jewish folk legend declares that during the day of the revelation diverse rumblings sounded from Mount Sinai, "flashes of lightning, accompanied by an ever swelling peal of horns, moved the people with mighty fear and trembling. God bent the heavens, moved the earth, and shook the bounds of the world, so that the depths trembled, and the heavens grew frightened. His splendor passed through the four portals of fire, earthquake, storm, and hail. The kings of the earth trembled in their palaces. The earth herself thought the resurrection of the dead was about to take place, and that she would have to account for the blood of the slain she had absorbed, and for the bodies of the murdered whom she covered. The earth was not calmed until she heard the first words of the Decalogue.

"The heavens opened and Mount Sinai, freed from the earth, rose into the air, so that its summit towered into the heavens, while a thick cloud covered the sides of it, and touched the feet of the Divine Throne. Accompanying God on one side, appeared twenty-two thousand angels with crowns for the Levites, the only tribe that remained true to God while the rest worshiped the Golden Calf. On the second side were sixty myriads, three thousand five hundred and fifty angels, each bearing a crown of fire for each individual Israelite. Double this number of angels was on the third side; whereas on the fourth side they were simply innumerable. For God did not appear from one direction, but from all simultaneously, which, however, did not prevent His glory from filling the heaven as well as the earth. In spite of these innumerable hosts there was no crowding on Mount Sinai, no mob, there was room for all.

As we soon shall see, whether presented in the vast, almost oceanic images of the Orient, in the vigorous narratives of the Greeks, or in the majestic legends of the Bible, the adventure of the hero normally follows the pattern of the nuclear unit above described: a separation from the world, a penetration to some source of power, and a life-enhancing return. The whole of the Orient has been blessed by the boon brought back by Gautama Buddha—his wonderful teaching of the Good Law—just as the Occident has been by the Decalogue of Moses. The Greeks referred fire, the first support of all human culture, to the world-transcending deed of their Prometheus, and the Romans the founding of their worldsupporting city to Aeneas, following his departure from fallen Troy and his visit to the eerie underworld of the dead. Everywhere, no matter what the sphere of interest {whether religious, political, or personal), the really creative acts are represented as those deriving from some sort of dying to the world; and what happens in the interval of the hero's nonentity, so that he comes back as one reborn, made great and filled with creative power, mankind is also unanimous in declaring. We shall have only to follow, therefore, a multitude of heroic figures through the classic stages of the universal adventure in order to see again what has always been revealed. This will help us to understand not only the meaning of those images for contemporary life, but also the singleness of the human spirit in its aspirations, powers, vicissitudes, and wisdom.

The following pages will present in the form of one composite adventure the tales of a number of the world's symbolic carriers of the destiny of F-veryman. The first great stage, that of the separation or departure, will be shown in Part I, Chapter I, in five subsections: (1) "The Call to Adventure," or the signs of the vocation of the hero; (2) "Refusal of the Call," or the folly of the flight from the god; (3) "Supernatural Aid," the unsuspected assistance that comes to one who has undertaken his proper adventure; (4) "The Crossing of the first Threshold"; and (5) "The Belly of the Whale," or the passage into the realm of night. The stage of the trials and victories of initiation will appear in Chapter II in six subsections: (1) "The Road of Trials," or the dangerous aspect of the gods; (2) "The Meeting with the Goddess" (Magna Mater), or the bliss of infancy regained; (3) "Woman as the Temptress," the realization and agony of Oedipus; (4) "Atonement with the Father"; (5) "Apotheosis"; and (6) "The Ultimate Boon."

The return and reintegration with society, which is indispensable to the continuous circulation of spiritual energy into the world, and which, from the standpoint of the community, is the justification of the long retreat, the hero himself may find the most difficult requirement of all. For if he has won through, like the Buddha, to the profound repose of complete enlightenment, there is danger that the bliss of this experience may annihilate all recollection of, interest in, or hope for, the sorrows of the world; or else the problem of making known the way of illumination to people wrapped in economic problems may seem too great to solve. And on the other hand, if the hero, instead of submitting to all of the initiatory tests, has, like Prometheus, simply darted to his goal (by violence, quick device, or luck) and plucked the boon for the world that he intended, then the powers that he has unbalanced may react so sharply that he will be blasted from within and without— crucified, like Prometheus, on the rock of his own violated unconscious. Or if the hero, in the third place, makes his safe and willing return, he may meet with such a blank misunderstanding and disregard from those whom he has come to help that his career will collapse. The third of the following chapters will conclude the discussion of these prospects under six subheadings: (1) "Refusal of the Return," or the world denied; (2) "The Magic

Flight," or the escape of Prometheus; (3) "Rescue from Without"; (4) "The Crossing of the Return Threshold," or the return to the world of common day; (5) "Master of the Two Worlds"; and (6) "Freedom to Live," the nature and function of the ultimate boon.

The composite hero of the monomyth is a personage of exceptional gifts. Frequently he is honored by his society, frequently unrecognized or disdained. He and/or the world in which he finds himself suffers from a symbolical deficiency. In fairy tales this may be as slight as the lack of a certain golden ring, whereas in apocalyptic vision the physical and spiritual life of the whole earth can be represented as fallen, or on the point of falling, into ruin.

Typically, the hero of the fairy tale achieves a domestic, microcosmic triumph, and the hero of myth a world-historical, macrocosmic triumph. Whereas the former—the youngest or despised child who becomes the master of extraordinar}' powers—prevails over his personal oppressors, the latter brings back from his adventure the means for the regeneration of his society as a whole. Tribal or local heroes, such as the emperor Huang Ti, Moses, or the A2tec Tezcatlipoca, commit their boons to a single folk; universal heroes —Mohammed, Jesus, Gautama Buddha—bring a message for the entire world.

Whether the hero be ridiculous or sublime, Greek or barbarian, gentile or Jew, his journey varies little in essential plan. Popular tales represent the heroic action as physical; the higher religions show the deed to be moral; nevertheless, there will be found astonishingly little variation in the morphology of the adventure, the character roles involved, the victories gained. If one or another of the basic elements of the archetypal pattern is omitted from a given fairy tale, legend, ritual, or myth, it bound to be somehow or other implied—and the omission itself can speak volumes for the history and pathology of the example, as we shall presently see.

Part II, "The Cosmogonic Cycle," unrolls the great vision of the creation and destruction of the world which is vouchsafed as revelation to the successful hero. Chapter I, Emanations, treats of the coming of the forms of the universe out of the void. Chapter II, The Virgin Birth, is a review of the creative and redemptive roles of the female power, first on a cosmic scale as the Mother of the Universe, then again on the human plane as the Mother of the

Hero. Chapter III, Transformations of the Hero, traces the course of the legendary history of the human race through its typical stages, the hero appearing on the scene in various forms according to the changing needs of the race. And Chapter IV, Dissolutions, tells of the foretold end, first of the hero, then of the manifested world.

The cosmogonic cycle is presented with astonishing consistency in the sacred writings of all the continents, and it gives to the adventure of the hero a new and interesting turn; for now it appears that the perilous journey was a labor not of attainment but of reattainment, not discovery but rediscovery. The godly powers sought and dangerously won are revealed to have been within the heart of the hero all the time. He is "the king's son" who has come to know who he is and therewith has entered into the exercise of his proper power—"God's son," who has learned to know how niche that title means. From this point of view the hero is symbolical of that divine creative and redemptive image which is hidden within us all, only waiting to be known and rendered into life.

"For the One who has become many, remains the One undivided, but each part is all of Christ," we read in the writings of Saint Symeon the younger (949-1022 A.D.). "I saw Him in my house," the saint goes on. "Among all those everyday things He appeared unexpectedly and became unutterably united and merged with me, and leaped over to me without anything in between, as fire to iron, as the light to glass. And He made me like fire and like light. And I became that which I saw before and beheld from afar. I do not know how to relate this miracle to you. . . . I am man by nature, and God by the grace of God."

A comparable vision is described in the apocryphal Gospel of Eve. "I stood on a lofty mountain and saw a gigantic man and another a dwarf; and I heard as it were a voice of thunder, and drew nigh for to hear; and He spake unto me and said: I am thou, and thou art I; and wheresoever thou mayest be I am there. In all am I scattered, and whensoever thou wiliest, thou gatherest Me; and gathering Me, thou gatherest Thyself."

The two—the hero and his ultimate god, the seeker and the found—are thus understood as the outside and inside of a single, self-mirrored mystery, which is identical with the mystery of the manifest world. The great deed of the supreme hero is to come to the knowledge of this unity in multiplicity and then to make it known.

**The World Nave!**

The effect of the successful adventure of the hero is the unlocking and release again of the flow of life into the body of the world. The miracle of this flow may be represented in physical terms as a circulation of food substance, dynamically as a streaming of energy, or spiritually as a manifestation of grace. Such varieties of image alternate easily, representing three degrees of condensation of the one life force. An abundant harvest is the sign of God's grace; God's grace is the food of the soul; the lightning bolt is the harbinger of fertilizing rain, and at the same time the manifestation of the released energy of God. Grace, food substance, energy: these pour into the living world, and wherever they fail, life decomposes into death.

The torrent pours from an invisible source, the point of entry being the center of the symbolic circle of the universe, the Immovable Spot to the Buddha legend, 6 around which the world may be said to revolve. Beneath this spot is the earth-supporting head of the cosmic serpent, the dragon, symbolical of the waters of the abyss, which are the divine life-creative energy and substance of the demiurge, the world-generative aspect of immortal being.1' The tree of life, i.e., the universe itself, grows from this point. It is rooted in the supporting darkness; the golden sun bird perches on its peak; a spring, the inexhaustible well, bubbles at its foot. Or the figure may be that of a cosmic mountain, with the city of the gods, like a lotus of light, upon its summit, and in its hollow the cities of the demons, illuminated by precious stones. Again, the figure may be that of the cosmic man or woman (for example the Buddha himself, or the dancing Hindu goddess Kali) seated or standing on this spot, or even fixed to the tree; for the hero as the incarnation of God is himself the navel of the world, the umbilical point through which the energies of eternity break into time. Thus the World Navel is the symbol of the continuous creation: the mystery of the maintenance of the world through that continuous miracle of vivification which wells within all things.

Among the Pawnees of northern Kansas and southern Nebraska, the priest, during the ceremonial of the Hako, draws a circle with his toe. "Hie circle represents a nest," such a priest is reported to have said, "and it is drawn by the toe because the eagle builds its nest with its claws. Although we are imitating the bird making its nest, there is another meaning to the action; we are thinking of Tirawa making the world for the people to live in. If you go on a high hill and look around, you will see the sky touching the earth on every side, and within this circular enclosure the people live. So the circles we have made are not only nests, but they also represent the circle Tirawa-atius has made for the dwelling place of all the people. The circles also stand for the kinship group, the clan, and the tribe."

The dome of heaven rests on the quarters of the earth, sometimes supported by four caryatidal kings, dwarfs, giants, elephants, or turtles. Hence, the traditional importance of the mathematical problem of the quadrature of the circle: it contains the secret of the transformation of heavenly into earthly forms. The hearth in the home, the altar in the temple, is the hub of the wheel of the earth, the womb of the Universal Mother whose fire is the fire of life. And the opening at the top of the lodge —or the crown, pinnacle, or lantern, of the dome—is the hub or midpoint of the sky: the sun door, through which souls pass back from time to eternity, like the savor of the offerings, burned in the fire of life, and lifted on the axis of ascending smoke from the hub of the earthly to that of the celestial wheel.

Thus filled, the sun is the eating bowl of God, an inexhaustible grail, abundant with the substance of the sacrifice, whose flesh is meat indeed and whose blood is drink indeed.""0 At the same time it is the nourisher of mankind. The solar ray igniting the hearth symbolizes the communication of divine energy to the womb of the world—and is again the axis uniting and turning the two wheels. Through the sun door the circulation of energy is continuous. God descends and man ascends through k. "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."'"1 "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

For a culture still nurtured in mythology the landscape, as well as every phase of human existence, is made alive with symbolical suggestion. The hills and groves have their supernatural protectors and are associated with popularly known episodes in the local history of the creation of the world. Here and there, furthermore, are special shrines. Wherever a hero has been born, has wrought, or has passed back into the void, the place is marked and sanctified. A temple is erected there to signify and inspire the miracle of perfect centeredness; for this is the place of the breakthrough into abundance. Someone at this point discovered eternity. The site can serve, therefore, as a support for fruitful meditation. Such temples are designed, as a rule, to simulate the four directions of the world horizon, the shrine or altar at the center being symbolical of the Inexhaustible Point. The one who enters the temple compound and proceeds to the sanctuary is imitating the deed of the original hero. His aim is to rehearse the universal pattern as a means of evoking within himself the recollection of the life-centering, life-renewing form.

Ancient cities are built like temples, having their portals to the four directions, while in the central place stands the major shrine of the divine city founder. The citizens live and work within the confines of this symbol. And in the same spirit, the domains of the national and world religions are centered around the hub of some mother city: Western Christendom around Rome, Islam around Mecca. The concerted bowing, three times a day, of the Mohammedan community throughout the world, all pointing like the spokes of a world-extensive wheel to the centering Kaaba, constructs a vast, living symbol of the "submission" (islam) of each and all to Allah's will. "For it is He," we read in the Koran, "that will show you the truth of all that ye do."53 Or again: a great temple can be established anywhere. Because, finally, the All is everywhere, and anywhere may become the seat of power. Any blade of grass may assume, in myth, the figure of the savior and conduct the questing wanderer into the sanctum sanctorum of his own heart.

The World Navel, then, is ubiquitous. And since it is the source of all existence, it yields the world's plenitude of both good and evil. Ugliness and beauty, sin and virtue, pleasure and pain, are equally its production. "To God all things are fair and good and right," declares Heraclitus; "but men hold some things wrong and some right."34 Hence the figures worshiped in the temples of the world are by no means always beautiful, always benign, or even necessarily virtuous. Like the deity of the Book of Job, they far transcend the scales of human value. And likewise, mythology does not hold as its greatest hero the merely virtuous man. Virtue is but the pedagogical prelude to the culminating insight, which goes beyond all pairs of opposites. Virtue quells the self-centered ego and makes the transpersonal centeredness possible; but when that has been achieved, what then of the pain or pleasure, vice or virtue, either of our own ego or of any other? Through all, the transcendent force is then perceived which lives in all, in all is wonderful, and is worthy, in all, of our profound obeisance.

For as Heraclitus has declared: "The unlike is joined together, and from differences results the most beautiful harmony, and all things take place by strife." Or again, as we have it from the poet Blake: "The roaring of lions, the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, and the destructive sword, are portions of eternity too great for the eye of man."

The difficult point is made vivid in an anecdote from Yorubaland (West Africa), which is told of the trickster-divinity Edshu. One day, this odd god came walking along a path between two fields. "He beheld in either field a farmer at work and proposed to play the two a turn. He donned a hat that was on the one side red but on the other white, green before and black behind [these being the colors of the four World Directions: i.e., Edshu was a personification of the Center, the axis mundi, or the World Navel]; so that when the two friendly farmers had gone home to their village and the one had said to the other, 'Did yon see that old fellow go by today in the white hat?' the other replied, 'Why, the hat was red.' To which the first retorted, 'It was not; it was white." 'But it was red,' insisted the friend, 'I saw it with my own two eyes.' 'Well, you must be blind,' declared the first. 'You must be drunk,' rejoined the other. And so the argument developed and the two came to blows. When they began to knife each other, they were brought by neighbors before the headman for judgment. Edshu was among the crowd at the trial, and when the headman sat at a loss to know where justice lay, the old trickster revealed himself, made known his prank, and showed the hat. 'The two could not help but quarrel,' he said. 'I wanted it that way. Spreading strife is my greatest joy.

Where the moralist would be filled with indignation and the tragic poet with pity and terror, mythology breaks the whole of life into a vast, horrendous Divine Comedy. Its Olympian laugh is not escapist in the least, but hard, with the hardness of life itself—which, we may take it, is the hardness of God, the Creator. Mythology, in this respect, makes the tragic attitude seem somewhat hysterical, and the merely moral judgment shortsighted. Yet the hardness is balanced by an assurance that all that we see is but the reflex of a power that endures, untouched by the pain. Thus the tales are both pitiless and terrorless—suffused with the joy of a transcendent anonymity regarding itself in all of the self-centered, battling egos that are born and die in time.

**Use the following questions as a guide to write your 300 word critical response. Use specific language, provide plenty of examples, and check your grammar and spelling.**

* What points are interesting or confusing?
* Could any of the author’s ideas apply to modern stories, or stories he does not bring up as examples? Which ones and how?
* Why might it be necessary that we need to see a hero go through this three step process rather than start off “perfect” and able to accomplish goals?