

# Ruth Netzer : The Hero's Journey

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# The Hero Mythos:

- ▶ The Hero encounters immense powers within the psyche, unconscious powers that support or threaten him. He copes with them and this coping creates the existence and development of the Conscious Ego.

- ▶ This process is described in the Mythos as combating the monster or dragon in various ways, symbolizing the chaotic, unknown and powerful forces of the psyche.

- ▶ The Mythos describes the dynamics in the psyche, the movement between developmental forces and regression, between being swallowed up and bursting forth, between destruction and redemption.

# 39 stages on the Hero's journey:

1. Prophecy about the Hero's birth.
2. Magic and modest birth of the Hero.
3. Double parents: Besides noble parents, the Hero has humble parents.
4. The exile from paradise: Departure from Mother, the experience of abandonment, rejection and being orphaned, facing the threat of extinction.
5. Great mother protects the hero, rescues him (big animals rescue him).

6. Onset of Hero's magical powers, childhood omnipotence.
7. Belief in self and omnipotence, grandiose feelings and a child's magical powers.
8. Coping with brother's jealousy.
9. Physical Power.
10. Trickster: resourcefulness, tricks, shrewdness for survival or rebellion.
11. Departure for a distant destination such as a forest, country, sky, underworld.
12. Fighting against monstrous great mothers.

13. Double birth: From biological mother and later on, rebirthing into spiritual birth after an attempt at extermination.
14. Departure from mother: search for a father figure, identification with father principle and its values.
15. Acquisition of the potential to restrain, control, sublimate drives and emotions according to cultural law.
16. Overcoming initiation assignments to prove courage, overcoming suffering, restraint and avoiding temptations in order to strengthen the Ego.
17. Connectedness, attachment to a significant other, social absorption.

18. Acquisition of ethics, morality and consciousness with either sin or guilt feelings.
19. Overcoming in the fight against a threatening monster or representatives of dreadful father images.
20. Rebelling against society and father's authority, stealing wisdom, individuation and aloneness.
21. Exit for protecting the weak and underprivileged.
22. Serving as shepherd, a preliminary stage towards taking over responsibility and leadership.
23. Revelation of the entity that assigns him the mission.



24. Mentor – such as animal, wise coach, God.
25. Receiving advice and gifts which possess a protecting/ fighting potential such as a rod, ring, talisman, amulet, shield, or sword.
26. Appearance of an identical twin brother or duplicate, complimentary figures who operate together.
27. Woman's redemption or attachment to the feminine side (anima).
28. Actualization of love, matrimony and family.
29. Finding the treasure that is the reservoir of inner assets.
30. Work, self-actualization and professional career.
31. Coping against pride – hubris.

32. Searching for meaning and spiritual self-actualization.
33. Establishing new creative elements: founding a city, social structure or theory.
34. Returning home and granting wisdom to tribe or community.
35. Returning to the inner savage potential in the psyche.
36. Returning towards motherhood and reconnecting to childhood and to existential resources.
37. Accepting limitations and reconciliation.
38. A betrayal, collapse or a heroic sacrifice, or premature death – all of which bestow a tragic or heroic aura.
39. Religious dimension: Acceptance of aging and death and preparation for the final journey.

# 8 types of Heroes:

1. Hero with physical super powers
2. Hero as trickster
3. Hero castrated by mother (Puer Eternus)
4. Hero of many valorous plots
5. Hero in search of his Anima
6. Hero in search of his savage, natural instinctual –sensory side
7. Hero in a religious process
8. Mature, moderate hero in second part of life

- ▶ Basic Ego forces required for Heroism:  
Restraint, self-discipline, control, tolerance, coping with physical suffering and difficulties, decisiveness, persistency, determination, will power, execution, initiative, courage, responsibility, commitment, patience, absorption, flexibility, rational thinking, differential consciousness.

The Hero is the Ego – characterized by masculine traits, breaking through in order to release himself from the mother's bosom, from a state of passivity, warmth, enveloping, and from the pre-conscious phase. The Hero is the phallus that bursts forth, intrudes, and conquers. Moving forwards towards the future. The fighter, the active initiator, director, planner, activator. The Ego hero is a competitive achiever, possesses the drive to succeed, with a will, power, ambition, tolerance and passivity.

- ▶ Fighting Hero
- ▶ Rebellious Hero
- ▶ Cultural Hero
- ▶ Hero as Leader
- ▶ Charismatic Hero
- ▶ Shaman
- ▶ The artist as Hero
- ▶ Modern heroes
- ▶ Mechanical Hero
- ▶ Science fiction Hero

# Aloneness and solitude in the Hero's quest

- ▶ It is essential for the Hero to be alone in order to absorb the inner and external world. Aloneness is crucial for the Hero's development.
- ▶ In this state, one can listen, sense, see, perceive, be and consequently express the psyche's wishes to be actualized.

- ▶ By being alone one arrives at the insights that **I am who I am**, and sees the **variance between oneself and others**. The discovery of one's own individuality is both frightening and exciting.



- ▶ Octavio Paz (1977): "Loneliness is the deepest fact of human existence".
- ▶ Rilke (1964): "In those deepest and most important matters of our lives we are finally very lonely. Fundamentally, it is not something we can either choose or relinquish."

- ▶ We are lonely. We can deceive ourselves or be mistaken or pretend that it is not so...but how important it is to admit, that indeed we are lonely. Turn your aloneness into your preliminary state of existence, love your loneliness and bear the suffering it causes you...so that your aloneness will serve you in the most peculiar moments as a source of support from which you will find the right solutions".

- ▶ Every transitional stage in life creates an encounter with a loneliness anxiety and may turn into a crisis unless there are preliminary inner psychic structures that enable the containment of our aloneness.

- ▶ The mythological monster/ dragon designates the destructive, passionate aspect of the Hero's unconscious. It symbolizes the bestial instinctual drive of the human being. Killing or destroying the monster does not mean killing the unconscious drives and passions, but overcoming their additional destructive power and connecting to their positive side.

- ▶ The monster is every drive or feeling that threatens to overcome the human being.
- ▶ The Ego is built through learning to restrain ourselves and to channel the drives and feelings in an efficient manner. The monster is also seen in every developmental stage known to us, putting us to sleep unawares.
- ▶ Animals present the passionate impulsive side of the human psyche.

- ▶ Unlike the monster that is to be either killed or stopped, the animal may have positive aspects symbolizing instincts that lead the psyche. One needs to learn to train them (the animals), befriend them and harness them to the psyche's chariot.
- ▶ Teachers along the road represent those aspects of the psyche that up until the moment we have come across them, were absent in our consciousness. We need to listen to them.
- ▶ **The Self sends its wisdom through the bestial, the shadowy, the spiritual, the feminine, the masculine, the wise, the child or magical power.**

# The Father's Role

- ▶ The father's laws put limits to drives and emotions; define order and organization as well as form the structure of personal and social life. The father principle decides upon relationships, upon the level of restraint versus spontaneity, flexibility and tolerance versus rigidity, sanctions and punishments. Hierarchy and democracy in family, society and organizations.

style of authority, extent of freedom for personal thinking, speech and behavior, approach towards intuition, creativity, initiatives and innovations, sacred codes, values for religion and faith, mythos and rituals, relationships between state and individual, the relationship between the individual and the collective. Ideals such as truth, justice, decency, honesty, responsibility, investment, tolerance, altruism, good, loyalty and respect.



**Paternal** values count also in hygiene, body, sexuality, materialism, property, land, work, nature, psyche, soul, spirit, superstitions, time, divinity, death. Also towards the approach to children, the elderly, the weak, the invalid, the sick, the stranger, towards women, women's values, relationship between men and women, education and initiations, all that is in the domain of ideology, ethics, religion, politics, administration, sociology and education.

# Anima

- ▶ A crucial assignment in the Hero's Quest is to release his repressed femininity, and save it from the Great Mother's domain into feminine territory.
- ▶ Anima, was C.G.Jung's central discovery in the field of psychology.
- ▶ He understood that only the Anima can transmit man to the level of consciousness and awareness based not on heroic self-control, not on emotional distancing and rationale but rather on emotional participation, deep sincere empathy towards his own and the other's psychic life.

- ▶ The Anima, as a positive function, grants men calm, tenderness, sensitivity, intuition, feelings, warmth, patience, contact with senses, with nature, connectedness to the unconscious, to the magical and mysterious, supernatural and spiritual.
- ▶ A positive integrated Anima, which serves as a bridge to his inner world, is indeed the function that connects the man to his actual feminine female partner in his life. For due to this positive Anima, man can create mutuality and perceive the woman not as a trapping figure or a suffering creature but rather as partner and individual (Beebe, 1991).