

Myth No.3

The hero archetype is a common part of mythological storytelling and is a recurring theme throughout the history of many different societies. The concept of 'the hero' is universal and fundamental to all cultures. Stories involving this archetype bring to light a specific culture's values through the retelling of a hero's identity and actions. Heroes vary by cultures but tend to share universal characteristics such as their traits, goals, and journey or 'Monomyth'. The Monomyth is the formula of the hero archetype, outputting a universal structure that can be applied to many hero stories throughout history. A hero is defined as a person who can go beyond the scope of human limitations and through their additional power, seek to teach humanity certain universal truths.

Analyzing the monomyth of hero archetypes clarifies the hero's journey and organizes the story into a cyclical formula. The journey of the Greek hero Perseus, son of Zeus known for slaying the Medusa, exemplifies stages of the monomyth while reflecting Greek and Roman values through his heroic acts and loyalty. Danae became Perseus' mother through Zeus, who was concerned with her prayers while her father the king, punished and casted her away. He feared a prophecy that said her son Perseus would kill him. The gods guided Danae and Perseus towards an island where Perseus would mature and grow. In order to keep the island's king from marrying Danae, he took on a mission to behead the Medusa. On his journey he encountered nymphs and his godly siblings, they gave him items to help fulfill his mission: a sword, winged sandals, a mirrored shield, a magic helmet & bag. Perseus succeeded in beheading the Medusa, on his way back he also encountered princess Andromeda, who through a series of events was chained to a rock and threatened by a monster. He returned to find his mother Danae abused by

the island's king, and used the Medusa's head to petrify him in stone. The prophecy of his grandfather's death, also king, came true accidentally years after.

The story of Perseus follows the monomyth formula in birth, call-to-action, supernatural aid, tests, marriage, and return. The story even features the rescuing of a princess, a very common theme for hero archetypes. I chose this story because at the start of my college career I created a presentation on the Medusa, so it was interesting to learn about her downfall and the hero that caused it.