Name:

Section:

The Heroic Cycle

The hero cycle is not a rubric created for storytellers; it is the primal urge of all people—across *ALL* cultures—to experience within their own lives the transformation of being a hero. Every ancient culture that has had its history recorded has some epic poem or story to guide its people. The heroic cycle represents the power of hope over despair; it gives us all the chance for redemption—even in the hardest of times. It is a recognition that without agnos (pain) there is no aristos (glory), and, in that sense, it validates even the most common and hard-bitten of lives by making the lives of every man, woman and child that has ever lived uncommon, unique, and worthwhile.

It is not an absurd idea to recognize the greatness and possibilities of our own lives. It is not absurd to think we have an epic tale worth telling, and it is certainly not absurd to examine every experience through a reflective lens and to start to appreciate the implications of transformation which heroic poetry represents. As human beings, we are hard-wired to need this epic poetry. We can’t just read the epic as a story and move on. We have to know the story and build and incorporate the allegory into our own lives; otherwise, we will run from the battles of life; we will avoid the straits of Skylla and the lair of the Cyclops; we will shun the Gods who come disguised to us and coddle the children given to us; we won’t shed tears for common friends, and we will lock out every stranger and blame our mishaps and misdeeds on the gods.

In short, we will not be remembered, and no songs will be sung about us. The saddest part is that you may think this is all exaggeration and hyperbole. But, it is not! Our lives are full of stories that use and embody the heroic cycle. In fact, I have a hard time trying to think of any “great” movie, book, or story that in same way, shape or fashion

Try to come up with a book or movie that you feel is a meaningful and powerful story that follows this heroic cycle. Fill in the blank boxes with a brief description of the scenes that best illustrate the use of the hero cycle in the story.

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| **The Heroic Cycle** | **Name of Book,**  **Movie or Story** |
| **The Steps of the cycle** | *Name Here* |
| 1. Home  Fabulous circumstances surrounding conception, birth, and childhood establish the hero's pedigree and often constitute their own monomyth cycle. |  |
| 2. Call to Adventure  The hero is called to adventure by some external event or messenger. The Hero may accept the call willingly or reluctantly. |  |
| 3. Helpers and/or Amulet  During the early stages of the journey, the hero will often receive aid from a protective figure. This supernatural helper can take a wide variety of forms, such as a wizard, and old man, a dwarf, a crone, or a fairy godmother. The helper commonly gives the hero a protective amulet or weapon for the journey |  |
| 4. Crossing the Threshold  Upon reaching the threshold of adventure, the hero must undergo some sort of ordeal in order to pass from the everyday world into the world of adventure. This trial may be as painless as entering a dark cave or as violent as being swallowed up by a whale. The important feature is the contrast between the familiar world of light and the dark, unknown world of adventure. |  |
| 5. Tests  The hero travels through the dream-like world of adventure where he must undergo a series of tests. These trials are often violent encounters with monsters, sorcerers, warriors, or forces of nature. Each successful test further proves the hero's ability and advances the journey toward its climax. |  |
| 6. Helpers (again)  The hero is often accompanied on the journey by a helper who assists in the series of tests and generally serves as a loyal companion. Alternately, the hero may encounter a supernatural helper in the world of adventure who fulfills this function. |  |
| 7. Climax/Final Battle  This is the critical moment in the hero's journey in which there is often a final battle with a monster, wizard, or warrior which facilitates the particular resolution of the the problem at hand. |  |
| 8. Flight  After accomplishing the mission, the hero must return to the threshold of adventure and prepare for a return to the everyday world. If the hero has angered the opposing forces by stealing the elixir or killing a powerful monster, the return may take the form of a hasty flight. If the hero has been given the elixir freely, the flight may be a benign stage of the journey. |  |
| 9. Return  The hero again crosses the threshold of adventure and returns to the everyday world of daylight. The return usually takes the form of an awakening, rebirth, resurrection, or a simple emergence from a cave or forest. Sometimes the hero is pulled out of the adventure world by a force from the daylight world. |  |
| 10. Elixir  The object, knowledge, or blessing that the hero acquired during the adventure is now put to use in the everyday world. Often it has a restorative or healing function, but it also serves to define the hero's role in the society. |  |
| Put your final thoughts below. Be sure to include “why” this story has meaning for you. | |
| Lorem Ipsum | |