

Teaching Greek Myths: A Way To Understand Hero Archetypes

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Academic Setting

Highland High School is located in southeast Albuquerque. It is a four-year high school with approximately 1800-2000 students. The entering freshman class has around 600 students, but the graduating senior class has only around 300. Like several high schools in Albuquerque, the drop out rate among freshman is high. The policy of social promotion in the past has illy-equipped entering ninth graders to handle high school curriculum. The new law which only allows parents one year of social promotion for their students should have an effect on the drop-out rate within the next few years as more students who enter high school will actually have the skills for it. Highland is also adding a reading block for entering ninth graders who have low reading scores to help them have more success in all their classes.

Highland High has a very diverse population with close to an even split between Hispanic and Anglo in the largest majority, with Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans and other ethnicities making up the rest of the student body. Its special education population is growing with gifted, learning disabled, emotionally disabled, physically disabled, and severely disabled students. The number of Limited English Proficient students is on the rise. Highland has a strong inclusion program with special education students being placed in regular classrooms.

Highland's population is diverse economically as well. There are students from wealthy families, middle class families, the "war zone," which is high in gang activity and extreme poverty, and Kirtland Air Force Base, where students have high mobility. About half of the students are considered transient while the other half are more stable, many with parents who graduated from Highland.

Highland has a four-by-four block schedule which means the students are in four classes in the fall semester, August to December, and four classes in the spring, January to May. Each class is 87 minutes long which allows for multi-modal activities. By the end of a semester, a student will have a full year's credit for each class they successfully complete. With this type of scheduling students are able to earn eight credits per year, as opposed to the six credits per year in other high schools.

One of my courses this year will be a ninth grade reading block.

Students with lower reading scores will have a 90 minute block of reading in the fall to prepare them for English nine regular in the Spring. The purpose of this block is, of course, to change reluctant readers into students who can be more successful as their reading skills develop. Some of the problems that entering ninth graders have are that many are still acquiring English, others don't have the habit of homework or of coming to class regularly, and too many have been promoted on each year by their parents so that they can stay with their age level even if they don't have the skills to do the work. The reading block will be focused on the students who are struggling with reading, some with a third grade reading level.

Since the reading block is targeting non-readers or Limited English Proficient students, the curriculum must be one of high interest that will engage the students and get them involved in their own learning. I believe that a study of Greek mythology and heroes and their archetypes in genre literature will be that type of curriculum. I will include many visual clues to help students who have trouble with English or with reading. One of the questions I find most interesting to ask my students is how many get a picture in their mind while they read. Almost across the board, it is the students who are not able to "see" what they read who have the most trouble with reading comprehension. Even students who can read aloud perfectly may have no idea what they have read. Therefore, I believe film clips, documentaries, the internet, picture books, and current events will help students in their understanding of the curriculum I will be teaching. As they begin to picture what it might mean to be a hero, or what is meant by a society in chaos with the need for restoration of order, they will be able to use these archetypes of character and plot to comprehend and analyze other pieces of literature.

Many of today's students do not have a working knowledge of the myths and archetypes which influence Western literature. What students do know they have absorbed from cartoons or learned in elementary school or sixth grade. The teaching of Greek mythology, then, can provide a necessary point of reference for students who may be reading *The Odyssey* in ninth grade regular English, or *Antigone* in tenth grade. The myths can also provide another way of looking at works by Shakespeare, or novels such as *To Kill a Mockingbird*, or *Jane Eyre*.

Context and Background

In *The Young Hero in American Fiction* de Jovine argues, "The teacher must use every resource...to develop in the student the ability to comprehend...what an author has accomplished...and most

importantly, the ability to pass judgment on the author's total effort..." Therefore, a background in Greek mythology and the study of the archetypes which have come out of it is one way to help students find patterns in the literature they read in order to increase comprehension and enable them to analyze what they read. Much of the English literature and young adult literature high school students are required to read have references to and archetypes developed from Greek mythology. The hero archetype, and the hero's journey to restore order out of chaos is a way of looking at plot and characters, whether you are discussing *The Odyssey* in ninth grade or *Jane Eyre* in a tenth grade honors class. This same archetype is found in westerns, science fiction, mysteries, or autobiographical works such as *Warriors Don't Cry*. For that reason, providing students with a background in mythology is a useful step in helping them recognize the hero archetype.

Where does this archetype come from? What are the origins of the hero? Before a culture can have a hero, it has to have a creation of a world. In the Greek myths of Hesiod, translated by Evelyn-White, the world was created from Chaos, or a void. From that Chaos is an emergence of order, of light in place of darkness. After Chaos "...came forth Erebus and black Night; but of Night were born Aether and Day..."(Evelyn-White 87). There came to be a heaven and an earth, separated by Atlas holding up the sky. The heaven and earth could then create life. The earth was Gaea (an archetype of the "Great Goddess" which seems to be one of the earliest deities worshipped in most cultures) and Uranus. Gaea eventually became tired of Uranus's attention and his hiding his children away from the world. She conspired with her son Cronus to castrate Uranus. One of the stories says that when his member fell into the sea, it created Aphrodite, the goddess of love. There are also theories that Aphrodite was an Indo-European goddess who pre-dated the gods of the Greek pantheon and was fit in later.

Once Cronus was in power, he swallowed each of his children the minute they were born because he believed a child would overthrow his rule. After he had swallowed five of them, Rhea, his wife, decided to hide the next baby. When Zeus was born, Rhea fed Cronus a stone in place of the baby and put Zeus on an island for safekeeping. Thus begins the first stage of the hero's journey as described by Harris and Platzner. Once a hero is born, often with a god or goddess as parent, he often has to be hidden away to keep him safe.

The creation myth of the Greeks is similar to myths in many cultures. The Maori tell of a god and goddess so much in love that they won't let go of each other. The goddess bears many children, but they can't

get out from between their father and mother, so one son begins pushing and pushes for many years to separate them. Once they are separated, the father becomes the sky and the mother the earth. The tears that fall from the father's eyes because he is separated from his beloved is the rain. The son becomes the first hero of the Maori. Once again, we see the separation of earth and sky who become the creators of life. It also shows the succession of one son as the reigning hero, just as Zeus is in Greek myth.

Zeus, the first Greek hero, grows up on the island of Crete, then comes back to Olympus, feeds his father an emetic, and Cronus promptly throws up the other five children in reverse order of the way they were born. The children were Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades and Poseidon. Hestia was known as the first born and the last born because of this. Then these brothers and sisters of Zeus fight Cronus and Rhea, the leaders and parents of the Titans. As Hesiod says, "...Zeus no longer held back his might; but straight his heart was filled with fury...From Heaven and from Olympus he came...hurling his lightning." Eventually Zeus and his brothers and sisters win, and Zeus takes control of the new world order after defeating the Titans. The other gods "...pressed far-seeing Olympian Zeus to reign and to rule over them..."(Evelyn-White 129).

Once Zeus has control of the world, he has to change from a god who does nothing but fight battles to a god who can mediate differences and establish a new system of justice. He marries Metis, the wisest of the gods, and then, afraid a child of his will be worshipped more than himself, Zeus swallows the pregnant Metis. Athena is then born from Zeus's head dressed in full war gear. Athena becomes the goddess of wisdom, planning, thought, and strategic war. She is also the goddess of weaving and other crafts. The birth of Athena from Zeus's head "...suggests that Zeus will use his intellect in successfully defending his newly acquired power" (Harris and Platzner 62). He also keeps Metis inside of himself which helps him with decisions. He becomes the god of family love and of guest-host relationships. He is never overthrown after he attains power.

The major gods who make up the Olympian family are Zeus, Hera (who is a sister of Zeus and is married to him), Poseidon (god of the sea), Demeter (goddess of the earth), Hestia (goddess of the hearth), Athene, Apollo (god of rational harmony), Artemis (often identified with the moon and goddess of the moon), Hermes (personal messenger), Hephaestus (god of the forge), Aphrodite (goddess of love and sexuality), Ares (god of violent war), and Dionysus (god of wine and creative ecstasy). Dionysus is born half-human and has to be elevated to a god. The magic number of twelve gods ruling on

Olympus can not be changed. When Dioysus is elevated to a god, Hestia is demoted to the underworld where Hades, god of the underworld, reigns. There are many minor gods as well, many being a child of Zeus or another god or goddess who mates with a mortal. There are heroes like Heracles who become immortal and cannot die, but who are not part of the family of twelve.

One well-known legend centered around these gods is the one of Demeter and her daughter Persephone. Demeter apparently had the largest following of worshippers in Greece because she was goddess of the harvest, and she was probably identified with the original "Great Goddess." She had a daughter, Persephone, whom she loved very much. One day Hades kidnapped Persephone and took her to the underworld as his bride. Demeter searched the earth over for her beloved daughter. Since she couldn't find her, the earth was struck with famine as she grieved, "for she vowed that she would never set foot on fragrant Olympus nor let fruit spring out of the ground, until she beheld...her own fair-faced daughter" (Evelyn-White 313). Zeus sent Hermes to bring Persephone out of Hades. Because Hades tricks Persephone into eating the seeds of the pomegranate, Persephone can not remain on Earth forever. Eventually it is decided that Persephone will spend three months of the year in Hades with her husband and the other nine months on earth with her mother. This myth provides an explanation for the change of the seasons.

Out of the legends about Zeus and his children, come the stories of heroes. Who were the heroes who came out of this mythology and set the archetype for heroes to follow? Probably the earliest hero was Perseus, a son of Zeus and a mortal woman, Danae. Danae's father puts both mother and child in a casket and and throws it into the sea. They are saved and protected by Zeus who finds a safe out-of-the way island for them to live on. When Perseus becomes a man he is sent to get the head of the gorgon, Medusa, by a suitor of his mother's. The suitor wants Perseus to be killed because Perseus has been protecting his mother from him. With help from the gods, Perseus is able to kill Medusa, and use her head to turn opponents to stone. He also frees the princess Andromeda who is being sacrificed to a sea monster. He turns the monster to stone when he pulls Medusa's head out of a sack. Perseus has better relations with women than many of the later heroes. He marries Andromeda, becomes a king, and settles down to have many children. His story is more like the children's fairy tales of later times. He does not become immortal, but his myth provides the names of several constellations of stars.

The next great hero is Heracles, a legend who is certainly the best known and most popular among people of today's world due to a

Disney movie and the recent television show. Heracles is the archetypal hero "...who sets the model for Greek mythological heroes--extraordinary men who often combine the courage and strength of the gods with...bestial instincts..." He has a "...spark of the divine fire that...always seems...excessive when embodied in merely human form" (Harris & Platzner, 237). He protects cities and people and, through his travels, increases knowledge: but he can also be extremely violent.

Because Heracles' mother is mortal and Zeus is his father, Hera hates him from the start. She never stops trying to kill him from the time she sends a snake into his bed when he is a baby. It does no good, because even as a baby Heracles is able to kill the snake. As he grows up, he helps a number of kings, leading armies, building and defending cities, and his exploits are credited with starting the Olympic Games. Yet he can also be irrational. He cuts off the noses and ears of some visiting officials and sends them home with their body parts strung around their necks. At one point, after his first marriage, Hera sends a madness on him and he kills his wife and sons.

When Heracles realizes what he has done, he goes to the oracle at Delphi who tells him he must become a slave of a weak king and perform labors to help others. This king sends him on his "twelve labors." At first his labors are physical like strangling the Nemean lion, and he is always seen after this wearing the skin of the lion. He destroys birds who are plaguing a town, he cleans huge stables by diverting a river, and he kills the nine-headed Hydra. He also increases man's knowledge of the world by traveling to the far North and the far West of the known world, and establishing the Pillars of Heracles at the Strait of Gibraltar. Like all heroes after this, he goes to the underworld on a mission and, because of his heroic ability, returns safely. However, he dies when his new wife smears an ointment on him to make him love her again. Instead, it kills him by burning him alive. One theory states that the parts of him that are mortal have to be burned away so the gods can make him immortal (*The Powerful Gods of Mount Olympus*). Heracles differs from Perseus in that his relationships with women are never very good, and it is not until the stories of Odysseus that a hero once again has a satisfying relationship with a woman.

The stories of Theseus follow on the heels of Heracles. He is sired by a king, Aegeus (who may be an ocean deity since the Aegean sea is named after him). Some stories claim Poseidon as his father. When he is old enough and strong enough, he moves a huge stone and takes a sword and a pair of sandals to Athens to claim his inheritance from his father. Along the way he kills the bandits who have been plaguing

travelers for years. Finding Aegeus in Athens, he then volunteers to go on the sacrificial trip of youths and maidens to the Minotaur in Crete. There, Ariadne falls in love with him and, with the help of the builder of the Labyrinth, gives him the clues to get out once he kills the Minotaur. Like Heracles and the Nemean Lion, he has to use his bare hands to kill it because no weapon will pierce its hide. He then escapes from Crete with Ariadne. However, Theseus also does not have good relations with women. He seems to abandon Ariadne after she saves him, and later has many marriages. However, he is credited with unifying Athens. Theseus does not die a hero's death. He dies falling off a cliff, but ends up being made immortal like Heracles. His story probably arises out of the change in power from the Minoan culture in Crete to Athens.

Jason is another famous hero of legend whose story is still well known today, but in reality he is not of the caliber of a Heracles or a Perseus. He goes on a quest to get the golden fleece, but Medea has to help him get it. He survives all the horrible dangers of a mythical sea voyage, but he has Heracles to help him. Jason becomes more interested in power than in glory, which is different from the other heroes. He leaves Medea and marries the king's daughter, so Medea kills the princess and her own children. She then leaves in a dragon-pulled chariot. Jason is killed by a falling piece of his rotting ship, and he does not become immortal.

Although the Trojan War is often a story of two war heroes, Achilles and Hector, Odysseus, provides some new twists to the hero myth. He can fight and fight well, but he often uses diplomacy and trickery to win when needed. He is the archetype of the "clever hero." He wins the war by building the Trojan Horse. His goal is not power or glory, but to win the war and go home. He gets sidetracked, and his pride and ego get him into trouble when he brags about blinding the Cyclops. However, he learns from his mistakes and eventually achieves his goal. Odysseus becomes the prototype of a more modern hero. He uses brains as well as brawn. These are the heroes who have shaped our idea of what a hero should be. From the Western gunfighters like Charles Bronson or Clint Eastwood blasting away, to George Clooney in *O, Brother Where Art Thou?* using trickery to win, we see the basic pattern repeated, with slight variations and differences.

"The term 'hero' carries the popular connotation of the good man who overcomes evil by righting wrongs and redressing grievances." (de Jovine 18). Mythological examples of this are Theseus killing the Minotaur or Odysseus going home and getting rid of the suitors who have been violating the rules of hospitality. Jovine suggests using this

definition of a hero to look at *Huckleberry Finn*, *Billy Budd*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, and *The Red Badge of Courage* as well as some other novels such as *The Red Pony*, *Winesburg, Ohio*, and several short stories by Faulkner, Hawthorne, and Hemingway.

Another definition of the hero archetype in juvenile literature is proposed by Michael M. Levy. His definition is of a young protagonist who is

...frustrated, and somewhat immature...(is) confronted by a serious problem, struggles with it, learns something about the nature of good and evil in the world, deals with the problem, and emerges a more mature and more humane human being (Levy 99).

An example of this type of hero might be Scout or Jem in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Definitions similar to Levy's appear in other books dealing with genre literature including mystery and westerns. These statements are either overtly based on Joseph Campbell's work on the hero archetype, or imply the same basis for argument.

In conversations with Bill Moyers, as outlined in *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell states that there are two types of deeds performed by a hero. In one he shows courage in battle or some other conflict, and in the other the hero "takes off on a series of adventures beyond the ordinary, either to recover what has been lost or to discover some life-giving elixir." (Flowers 123). The hero is often someone like Heracles, Jason, or Odysseus who has to prove himself as he survives various dangers. Perhaps he is trying to save his life like Heracles, or is trying to win a treasure like Jason, or just trying to get home like Odysseus. This type of hero is exemplified by Maximus in *Gladiator*, Melba Patillo Beals in *Warriors Don't Cry*, or Willie in *The War Comes to Willie Freeman*. Whether the hero is fighting for his life in the Roman arena or to end segregation by integrating Central High in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957, or to remain a free Black during the American Revolution, he has to survive dangers and battles to achieve his goal.

The other type of deed has the hero off on adventures to find something he's missing. Examples of this might be Salamanca Tree Hiddle in *Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech, Kevin and Max in *Freak the Mighty*, Jason in *The Dark Side of Nowhere*, or Luvenia in *The Glory Field*. Salamanca wants to find her mother. She doesn't believe she is dead, and she goes on a journey which leads her to her mother's grave. At last she has to accept her mother's death. Kevin is always getting Max to go along on quests, and what they finally find is friendship. Max faces his violent father and Kevin rescues him.

When Kevin dies, Max discovers his own worth and abilities. Jason thinks his life is boring until he finds out he is an alien and eventually has to decide whether to conquer the world (as his counterparts are prepared to do), or warn human kind. Does he choose immortality? Does he decide god-like that humans don't matter? Luvenia, who works as a maid, first tries to find a way to get a secure job in 1930's Chicago so she can go to college. When her white employers fire her, she doesn't give up but finds another avenue to explore which will bring her independence and economic security. In the last segment of *The Glory Field*, the reader finds out that she has continued to conquer adversity and try new ventures.

"A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself." (Campbell 123) This description applies to many of our modern heroes, Martin Luther King, Jr., Medgar Evers, Cesar Chavez, or Dolores Huerta. It also applies to many of the young protagonists in young adult literature. He or she can either choose the adventure, like most of the above protagonists, or they can be thrown into it often unwillingly. This is a fairly common theme in mysteries where the person who has to solve the crime is not a private eye or a detective. The mysteries by Joan Lowery Nixon such as *Deadly Game of Magic* or *Whispers From the Dead* are this type of adventure. The protagonist doesn't choose to be in the situation, but is forced by circumstances to deal with it and try to stay alive in the process. In the case of mysteries about most private eyes, Sue Grafton's Kinsey Milhone series, Marcia Muller's Sharon McCone stories, or Tony Hillerman's mysteries with Jim Chee and Joe Leaphorn, their profession implies a willingness to be involved in the adventure. Even if they don't choose the problem, they choose the vocation.

According to David Geherin in *The American Private Eye*, the private eye is an archetypal hero who is "brave, courageous, resourceful, decisive, incorruptible, fiercely independent," who fights for truth and justice. (Geherin 197). His job is to bring order out of chaos, to reestablish the status quo. Kathleen Klein argues that the female private eye "winds up supporting the existing system which oppresses women when she reestablishes the ordered status quo." (Klein 201). Although the order that is restored may not be fair, in chaos there is no system of justice.

The male private eye keeps his childhood and past to himself, but it is surprising how many female private eyes lost their parents very young like Kinsey Milhone or Kat Colorado. Perhaps a hero cannot have a normal family background. Families certainly imply extra demands and baggage. It is a little difficult to chase after a killer when your mother is telling you to be careful or wants to go to lunch.

Their backgrounds foster a need to be the best, to earn love and acceptance in the guise of glory. The backgrounds of many female private eyes fit into the origins theory of the hero where they have been in danger (Kinsey survived a car wreck that killed her parents) and then, for their safety, were raised by someone else (Kinsey by an aunt and Kat by her grandmother). Sharon McCone, the archetypal female private eye, on the other hand, seemed to come from a large family, which makes a number of demands on her, and it is only in the last novel that she finds out she was adopted by this family. Another interesting facet of today's women detectives is that they often face moral dilemmas while solving their cases. Their lives resemble the story of Odysseus, who changes and grows as he faces each of his dilemmas. They, too, have to change and grow. Whereas, Odysseus can go home to a loving relationship with his wife, female private eyes have more trouble making that kind of connection. If they do, their lover is killed or lives a very separate life from them. The female private eyes tend to be more like Heracles or Theseus, unable to sustain a loving, healthy relationship. Sharon McCone is the only one who has managed it so far, and this is much later in her career.

If the American private eye is just the Western hero grown up (the cowboy in modern dress, as Geherin argues), then certainly much of the literature about the Old West also falls under Campbell's definition of a hero. In his book, *The Western Hero in History and Legend*, Kent Steckmesser compares the myths in Western literature to the early Greek myths. In fact, he documents that many folklorists have compared William Bonney (Billy the Kid) to Hercules or Ulysses: "They (folklorists) have found that the Kid's exploits in outwitting stronger opponents mark him as the kind of 'Clever Hero' found in all cultures." (Steckmesser 99). The stories about Billy the Kid and other Western heroes, beginning with Daniel Boone, always involve some combat with wild animals, fighting Indians or other gunfighters ten against one, going against impossible odds and winning. Steckmesser argues that the shootings and other conflicts rival the Greek myths for violence and bloodshed and serve the same purpose: an interest in violence. The stories about these gunfighters typify the American hero who has courage, self-reliance, and physical prowess. Certainly these are characteristics the Greeks admired in their heroes.

Lea F. McCarty produced a booklet, *The Gunfighters*, where he painted a full page picture of each famous gunfighter and included some biographical information and legends about each one. It is great fun to read his descriptions: Ike Clanton "Some fool of a woman married him and gave him four sons who had already learned to snarl

and bite; John Ringo "There wasn't a man in Dodge who had the courage to laugh at him, to take the risk of having him unlimber matched ivory-handled Colts which always spelled death;" and Billy the Kid, who "lived in hellhole towns and sagebrush beds from the border up to the Panhandle...He polished off three Apaches from Chiracahua...and cut a swath of hell along the border." (McCarty 32, 34, 42). The purple prose in this book resembles the descriptions of heroes in *The Iliad*: Achilles - "Fast in battle as a lion;" Agamemnon, - "Round his heart resentment welled, and his eyes shone out like licking fire;" and Diomedes, "If he had burned before to fight with Trojans, now indeed blood-lust three times as furious took hold of him." Whether these heroes fight wars with Troy or another band of outlaws, they defend their honor with prowess far beyond what mortal man can accomplish. They strike fear into men's hearts. The gunfighters had their time of glory after the Civil War. War had taught many of them to kill, and they used those skills to forge a life for themselves in the West. They were the Achilles and Hector of their day. If Achilles and Hector had survived, they might have been "hired guns" wandering in a strange land.

Steckmesser writes about Billy the Kid, Wild Bill Hickok, and other Western heroes and presents the facts behind the stories as much as he can from newspaper accounts, etc. He would not agree with most of the information in McCarty's book, but McCarty's book is one of myth and legend. It isn't concerned with historical fact, but is a performance the way the *Iliad* is a performance. His book is a glamorized version of the reality. One problem, Steckmesser admits, is that everyone uses the legends that have been told "a hundred times" and because they are so well known are taken for gospel. The stories may not be true, but like much of Greek myths they may be based on a real person at a real time, and the countless tellings of the stories turns them into myths. In fact, most of the early biographies of the Western gunfighters were written by dime-store novelists. They were written to entertain and to satisfy America's questions about a new land, much as Greek myths helped a people to understand their world. "The gods of myth...serve to inject meaning and purpose into a universe that can overwhelm the human mind with its painful complexities." (Harris and Platzner 6). The Western gunfighters didn't have to live by the law. They lived above the law most of their lives, just as the Greek gods and heroes did.

Introducing Greek mythology into the classroom and following it up with some lessons on Western gunfighters, including reading the book *Shane*, can help students begin to recognize the use of myth and legend in literature as well as begin to recognize the hero's journey as

typified by Greek legend and stories like *Shane* or movies like *Tombstone*. The Western sagas can also be used as a way of introducing students to Greek mythology.

Depending on the age group, *Tombstone* is a wonderful movie to use to demonstrate the elements of Greek literature: a society in chaos, the need for a hero, and the hero's ability to restore order. Wyatt Earp is a reluctant hero, who refuses at first to answer the call to bring order; the movie is a story about his need to become involved in the eventual restoration of order. One stage of the hero's journey outlined in Campbell's *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, is that of the call to adventure. But what happens if the hero refuses? What has to happen in order to get the hero involved? Wyatt Earp only gets involved when both his brothers have been attacked. The youngest one is killed, and the other brother loses an arm. The attack on his family finally brings Wyatt into the battle, and once the hero is engaged, chances are the good guys will win, although that is not always the case. Sometimes a new hero has to be brought in to restore the world to order.

What are the stages of a hero's journey? Campbell outlines several stages which fall under general classifications: the departure (the call to adventure, whether willingly or unwillingly, the refusal or acceptance of the call), the initiation (which includes whatever trials the hero must go through), and the return (where the hero shares what he has learned and wins the freedom to live). This journey is illustrated in the myths of Odysseus or Heracles. Harris and Platzner, in *Classical Mythology* add a piece to the hero journey, the origin of the hero: the hero has a miraculous birth of some kind, often believed to be the child of a god, someone tries to kill him and he has to be hidden away for safety, and often he is raised by either animals or foster parents. Think of King Arthur, hidden away with Sir Ector, pulling the sword from the stone, setting the seeds of his destruction by his behavior toward Lancelot and Guinevere, sleeping with Morgana, needing to restore order to his land by killing his son, dying, but sailing off to an island to return when needed, and you have the hero's journey.

After Campbell diagrams the journey that mythological heroes take, he then argues that modern man has a different kind of journey, because we are no longer a group with similar religious ideals that the early myths were built on. He says, "The modern hero-deed must be that of questing to bring to light again the lost Atlantis of the co-ordinated soul." This certainly supports Levy's definition of the hero eventually becoming more mature and more humane. It may be why the best stories today are about protagonists who also struggle

with personal issues and often get their values and beliefs challenged.

How does this archetype apply to female heroes in literature? Female private eyes are based on a tradition started by Charlotte Bronte in *Jane Eyre*. These women are no longer heroines who have to be rescued by the male hero. A character like Jane Eyre can have her own heroic goals. She is the protagonist in the novel. She is the one who goes on the hero's journey. How does Jane fit into this archetype? Her mother dies when she is young, and she is raised by a selfish aunt who does not care for her. Her only surrogate mother is the housekeeper, Bessie. She endures the torture of being locked up in the red room and then goes to a hell-hole like the orphanage, Lowood, where she is in danger of death. Yet she survives and becomes a governess at Thornfield, where she meets Rochester.

Jane does not easily succumb to his charms, but when they fall in love and she almost marries him, she discovers the truth about the "mad woman in the attic." Rather than be a victim or go against her own moral code, she runs away. On the moors she almost dies and, in a state of starvation, finds the Reed's house where she finds sanctuary. Yet, when John Reed wants to marry her, and almost convinces her that it is her duty, she hears Rochester calling her from across the moors. There is a type of spiritual intervention. At the end of the novel, it is Jane who saves Rochester, through their marriage which is the meeting of two independent minds (an example set by Odysseus and Penelope).

Jane is the hero in the novel in a male-dominated society. She is the only one who can face Bertha Mason, "so grave and quiet at the mouth of hell, looking collectedly at the gambols of a demon.'" Each of her battles is either against the demons around her, or her own inner demons which tell her to give in and marry Rochester even if it would be a lie. She faces her moral dilemmas and achieves her own goals on her own terms.

Whether you use a background in Greek mythology to *teach The Odyssey, Hamlet, Jane Eyre*, genre novels like *Shane, The Dark Side of Nowhere*, or *Walk Two Moons*, the archetype of the hero and his journey will provide a framework which will enable students to analyze a text and to understand characterization and plot, whether they are reluctant readers or in an honors class preparing for college. Spending the time to teach Greek mythology and other myths is a necessary part of our teaching, since there are so many references in our literature and our art to Greek mythology and other legends.

Implementation

The purpose of this curriculum is to engage students' interest, to get them involved in their own learning, to provide them another way to look at literature and analyze it, and to help them become more effective and experienced readers, thinkers and writers. Students will be using research, readings, and videos to acquire a background in Greek mythology. They will apply this information to readings from their required literature books and from other sources. Students will be asked to write their own creation myths and hero myths after they have done the research and some readings. They will use an outline of the hero's journey taken from Joseph Campbell and *Classical Mythology* throughout the course as we examine the role of the hero/protagonist in literature. Ninth graders are expected to read *The Odyssey* and tenth graders are expected to read a drama by Shakespeare and possibly *Antigone*. They will then be expected to develop final projects and essays about what they have read.

Lessons will include vocabulary studies, comprehension questions, and multi-sentence, multi-paragraph essays. For the last three years, I have used the Schaffer paragraph as a way to push students into doing their own thinking about what they read. A single paragraph include: a topic sentence which includes their own commentary, a sentence of fact backed by two sentences of their own commentary, another fact backed by two sentences of their own commentary, and a concluding sentence which can be all commentary. This type of writing fits within the standard developed for high school students. The content standard of **Strand Three** reads: The student writes effectively for different audiences and purposes (e.g., to describe, narrate, express, explain, persuade, and analyze) using appropriate writing strategies and conventions. The benchmark for this standard states students are expected to develop fluency and style in writing and a command of writing which fits the standard.

Since I have always believed in presenting the same type of material to all my students and then adjusting that material to fit their special needs, I will use the same basic curriculum to introduce the hero archetype through Greek mythology. Once they have the background information, their other readings and writings will be adjusted according to their abilities. Honors students will be required to do more reading and writing for homework and will have a broader range of readings that they will need to cover. Rather than focusing on a few myths, they will read several of each type of myth, and then write a paper comparing ideas and beliefs demonstrated by the myths. Students of different abilities in one class, such as ninth or tenth grade regular should be given the opportunity to choose some of what they read and then share that information with others.

Strand III of the standards for English covers writing. **Strand I** covers the reading process. The content standard says that the student will employ appropriate reading strategies to read and interpret increasingly complex texts for a variety of purposes. The benchmark says the student will develop and demonstrate proficiency in these areas. **Strand II** covers reading analysis. The content standard for this says the student will respond to, examine, and critique historically and culturally significant issues and events portrayed in literature that illustrates and affects people, society, and individuals. The benchmark for this standard has the student critiquing and evaluating the literary and social merit of these works. **Strand V** is listening and viewing and analyzing what is seen and heard, and **Strand VI** covers research. The following lesson plans cover all these strands for English for ninth and tenth graders. Since this is the first year I will be teaching ninth and tenth graders with 87 minute blocks, I don't know how to judge the length of these lessons in days. I would guess each myth lesson would take two to three days and the opposite point of view, one or one and a half.

Lesson One-The Creation Myth

The purpose of this lesson is to acquaint students with mythology and with each culture's need to find a way to explain their world and where they came from. First I will introduce the subject and explain what types of things we'll be looking at. I'll ask for ideas about how they think the world began, and then I will read a couple of creation myths from different cultures. Some of these can be found in *Man the Mythmaker* by Northrup Frye. In the library students will pick out books on myths, and in the computer lab they will do some research on myths and folktales. **Askjeeves.com** or **Google.com** seem to be the search engines that are most accessible for students. Once students have copied a folk tale or myth off the Internet, they will do close reading of their stories. This is something we walk through in class: look for names that are used the most often, find action words they recognize, review linking verbs and help them find those, and look for the strongest words used. Then students will be asked to write a short summary of what they think the plot is, and compare notes in groups on what their particular myth or folktale explained. Once I have checked their work, they will illustrate their myth to synthesize the information they get off the internet. These illustrations will be placed in the room. We will watch the section of *Fantasia 2000* in which the stag breathes life into the world. I will copy for the students and read aloud the version of Genesis One from the King James Bible (because of the poetry of the words), being careful to explain that for some

people this is sacred text, and it simply is one way to believe in the creation of the world. Students will be asked to write a paragraph comparing either the Genesis reading and the film clip, or one of these and their myth. Then in groups, students will begin to brainstorm ideas about how to write a creation myth and what should always be included. This list will be placed on the board or on butcher paper. The students will then write their own creation myth of at least one page, which should include correct grammar and spelling. They should also include some illustration. The final paper will be graded on 40 points for creativity, 30 points for developing their idea and including the elements we had discussed, 10 points for illustration, and 20 points for correct spelling and grammar. Writing their own creation myth enables students to start thinking critically about myths and their purpose.

Lesson Two-The Hero Myth

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the hero archetype of legend so that students can begin to look for this archetype in other pieces of literature. Part of the lesson will include an outline of the hero's journey. I will introduce the concept of the hero archetype by using a short piece about Theseus killing the Minotaur, other hero stories from the book by Northrop Frye, a video clip from *Excalibur*, in which Arthur pulls the sword from the stone, and the movie *Clash of the Titans*. Then, in groups, students will begin to brainstorm ideas about what makes a hero. We will put those ideas on butcher paper. I will show clips from *Gladiator*, *Ladyhawke*, and *Tombstone*. These clips should add to their ideas of what a hero should be or how a hero is portrayed in the media. They are also a way to introduce the concept of a world in chaos and the need to restore order. At this point, students will be asked to think about the connections with a creation story about the development of a world, and a story of a hero who has to bring order back to that world, and write a journal entry about their thoughts. Then I will write the hero's journey from *Classical Mythology* on the board or overhead for students to copy. Since it is difficult to place the more modern heroes in this outline, I will provide two versions (see worksheet following lesson plans).

Students will be expected to keep this outline throughout the semester as we apply it to other readings. Once students have a clear idea of what is expected of a hero and how a hero behaves, they will write their own hero myth, at least two pages in length, being sure to include all the stages in the shortened outline of a hero's journey. Honors students will be expected to use Harris and Platzner's outline (simplified) and to write three pages. The myth must include correct spelling and grammar. The rubric: 30 points for creativity, 50 points

for including all stages of the journey, and 20 points for grammar and spelling.

This summer I taught these two lessons to classes of sixth, seventh, and eighth graders who failed last year. Many of them never come to school during the regular year even though they are very bright. I found that my students in the summer had fun with these stories and most of them were engaged and interested, which is saying a lot for students who have turned off school. In the older group, students question and wonder and want to know more. Since some of them are students who will be in ninth grade next year, I believe these two lessons will also work well with ninth and tenth graders. I have adjusted the readings and some of the film clips depending on the grade level.

Lesson Three-Using Myths to Write Stories from Different Points of View

One of the suggestions in the Advanced Placement booklet for high school honors classes and college preparation is to have students write a story from the opposite point of view rather than the narrator's. The purpose of this lesson is to help students begin recognizing that point of view is chosen for a reason, and that a different point of view changes the focus of the story. One of the ways to break the ice on this is to have students write a story about how they feel about Highland and what they notice here. After doing that, turn it around and write the story from the school's point of view. They can even turn it into a myth about the past. At first, students may have a difficult time getting into the school's mind, but then they should begin to have fun with it. After they have completed this assignment, we will use several of the myths and stories we have studied and change who tells the story. How would the story be different if the Minotaur told it? or if Calibos from *Clash of the Titans*, or Grendel from a shortened myth about Beowulf? Students will be provided with a variety of choices and will then write the story from the opposite point of view. They will share these stories with a group, and then the final activity will be a discussion of what changes they found. Why do they think myths and stories are told the way they are? Why don't we know more about the victim's point of view? What questions does it raise when you change the point of view? What problems develop when you change the point of view? Students will receive ten points for each positive contribution they make to the discussion.

Lesson Four-Greek Gods and Heroes

Students have had a chance to look at different types of myths and think about what purpose they may have. Now it is time to look at the

stories of Greek gods and heroes, so that students will have a background which will inform their readings of *The Odyssey* or *Antigone* or other works of literature. Students will be given a packet of information about Hesiod's five ages of man and how the age of heroes fits into a timeline of Greece, a map of the Mediterranean with Troy, Athens, and Sparta noted on it, and a worksheet with a family tree of the Greek Gods and a description of each one. Then they will be asked to use reference books to find a short anecdote about each one and a description of what their roles were when dealing with humans. Once we have spent some time discussing our research, we will watch a video from the History Channel on the Greek gods. Students will also receive a list of terms and people that they will have to define and identify. This packet, when complete, will be worth 150 points. (see worksheets at end of implementation)

Lesson Five-Comparing *Antigone* and *Jane Eyre* for an essay for English 10 honors

As we read *Antigone* and *Jane Eyre*, students will be asked to use their outline of the hero's journey to identify the different stages of each protagonist's story in their journals. Once they have completed the readings they will write a multi-paragraph essay on how the two women fit into the hero archetype. In what ways are they similar? How do their lives differ from the archetype, or do they? What belief system are each one of these heroes using to make their decisions? Are their belief systems different? What makes these women heroes in their own worlds? The essay will be worth 100 points and will be graded according to the guidelines of the Advanced Placement Program.

Lesson Six-Medea, La Llorona and Modern Mothers Who Kill

Students will read the play *Medea*, a story of La Llorona, and a poem, "The Cruel Mother" (789), which is an old Scottish Ballad. They will be provided copies of news releases about Andrea Yates in Houston who drowned her children, and about Susan Smith who drove hers into a lake. Then using these readings they will try to find a common thread. Why did the ancient Greeks have a play about it, or the Spanish a story, or the Scots a poem, and why is it still happening today? Do they think the motives of each mother are the same? Once we have read the selections, I will provide them with some statistics from an article entitled, "When Grief is Gain" wherein Professor Cyrino documents that this type of crime is more common than one would think and proposes some explanations for the phenomena. The students will also do a comparison of the way a television reporter would report this story, and the way a newspaper would. Half of their

grade will be on an essay comparing the stories and their own ideas about the motives, and half the grade will be writing a news report on one of the pieces of literature for either a newspaper or television. This will give students a chance to look at the different ways these stories would be reported depending on the media used.

Worksheet for Background on Greek Myth and Heroes

Hesiod, a poet who probably lived at the end of the Dark Ages in Greece, wrote two major pieces, "The Theogony" which explained how the world was created, and the "Works and Days." Hesiod says the world was created out of a void. Heaven and earth were separated, and mother earth, Gaea "The Great Goddess," and the male sky, "Uranus" created life. Gaea and Uranus have many children, but when Gaea gets tired of Uranus's attention, she has her son, Cronus, castrate Uranus. Cronus then becomes the more important god, and he takes Rhea for a wife. Cronus is understandably afraid of his own children, so he swallows each one as they are born. After he has swallowed five of them, Rhea feeds him a stone in place of the sixth child, Zeus, and hides Zeus away on an island to keep him safe. Once Zeus is old enough he feeds his father an emetic which makes him cough up the other five children. Then Zeus, along with his brothers and sisters, fights Cronus for supremacy. When the battle is done, so Hesiod says, the other gods vote Zeus the ruler over all of them.

In the "Works and Days," Hesiod argues that there were five ages of man: a golden age, a silver, a bronze, an age of heroes, and an iron age. The golden age of man was the world without women, under Cronus, the father of Zeus (this tells you something of Hesiod's attitude toward women). The the next four ages are full of strife and war. The silver has in it the first race the Olympian gods create, and the experiment fails. The age of bronze had men created by Zeus from ash trees; they were only capable of tremendous strength and eventually disappeared. The next generation he called the age of heroes. He may have added this age because he knew the traditional date of the Trojan War. His age of heroes is the time of Perseus, Heracles, Jason, Theseus, and the Trojan War, and is probably the time called the Mycenaean Age in Greek history (roughly from 1600-1200 b.c.). Although no one has definite proof of the War, Troy was rebuilt with huge walls and then destroyed by seige and fire around 1184 b.c. Some of the heroes of the Mycenaean Age may have lived, and these legends were built on historical reality.

Hesiod believed the age after heroes was the age of iron. He saw this as a time filled with hard-hearted men who fight over everything as family values are lost. Hesiod believed that this age would end with

the extinction of the human race. Actually the time following the possible date of the Trojan War, from about 1200 to about 750 b.c., is called the Dark Age of Greece. Dorians, a less organized, more war-like society invaded Mycenae and the culture changed to a dark time filled with wandering bands of marauders. At the end of the Dark Age of Greece, you begin to find the writings of Homer, either a blind poet or a group of poets, who compiled the stories of the Trojan War in *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

The Hero's

Journey

Mythological Hero (Heracles, Odysseus)	Hero for Genre Literature (Westerns, Mystery, Sci Fi)
Hero's mother is a royal virgin	Don't always know who parents are
Father is a king, possibly a god	
conception and birth are unusual	Nothing known about past or childhood
In danger when very young	
Hidden for safekeeping,	Raised by another person
Possibly raised by others or animals	
Gets a call to adventure	Gets a call to adventure
Makes a journey to the Underworld	Almost dies
Fights a villain, giant, dragon, wild beast	Fights a wild beast, villain, outnumbered
Marries a princess, becomes a king	Sometimes never marries, often a loner
Does something to lose favor	Tempts fate
Meets a mysterious death	

End result of adventures for both types of heroes is that order is restored, something is found out, someone is safe, or there is a great prize.

Greek Gods and Goddesses and Their roman Counterparts

Zeus (Roman Jupiter or Jove), Hera (Juno), Poseidon (Neptune), Hades (Pluto), Demeter (Ceres), Persephone (Proserpina), Hestia

(Vesta), Apollo (Phoebus), Artemis (Diana), Athena (Minerva), Hermes (Mercury), Aphrodite (Venus), Ares (Mars), Hephaistos (Vulcan), Dionysos/Bacchus (Liber).

Terms and Definitions to Know

Define these terms in your notebook. It will be part of your notebook grade. Be sure to say not only what the poems and people are, but why they are important to Greek myth. What part did they play?

The Odyssey, *The Iliad*, Achilles, Trojan War, Helen, Paris, myth, saga, archetype, Titans, Cyclopes, Pandora, Mt. Olympus, Atlas, Delphi, oracle, Perseus, Medea, Jason, Argo, Theseus, Odysseus (Ulysses), Heracles (Hercules).

Documentation

* Indicates teacher resources

Bowra, C.M. *Classical Greece*. New York: Time-Life Books, 1965.

Part of the Great Ages of Man Series.
Interesting section on early Greece, beautiful illustration with short bios of gods and heroes.*

Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. New York: Random House, 1943.

The story of a young woman who has no power except her moral values.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*. New York: Meridian Books, 1956.

Interesting discussions of the hero archetype. Pretty dense but does have good explanations for each stage of hero's journey.*

Cyrino, Monica Silveira. "When Grief is Gain: The Psychodynamics of Abandonment and Filicide in Euripides *Medea*." *Pacific Coast Philology*. 1996, pp.1-12.

A discussion of correlations between the Medea story, La Llorona, reality. What could the motives be?*

de Jovine, F. Anthony. *The Young Hero in American Fiction*. New York: Meredith Corporation, 1971.

He builds on this precept to teach characterization, theme, and different styles to young readers of these novels and stories.*

Denby, David. *Great Books: My adventures with Homer, Rousseau, Woolf, and Other Indestructible Writers of the Western World*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.

Denby discusses his professor's and his own take on Achilles as a hero.*

Evelyn-White, Hugh G. Trans. *Hesiod: Homeric Hymns: Homeric*. Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk: St. Edmundsbury Press Ltd., 2000.

"The Theogony," "Works and Days" and other Homeric Hymns."*

(small excerpts could be printed for students)

Flowers, Betty Sue, ed. *Joseph Campbell The Power Of Myth with Bill Moyers*. New York: Doubleday, 1988.

Discussion between Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell on the archetype of the hero.*

Frye, Northrop. *Man the Myth-Maker*. Orlando, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981.

Selection of myths which are accessible to high school students.

Geherin, David. *The American Private Eye: The Image in Fiction*. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1985.

Chapter on how the private eye fits into the hero archetype.*

Harris, Stephen L. and Gloria Platzner. *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights*. Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1995.

Textbook with important readings on heroes and gods with other literature included.*

Kennedy X.J., and Dana Gioia. *Literature*. New York: Longman, 1999.

An anthology of poetry, fiction, and drama for high school students. The ballad "The Cruel Mother" is in this book.*

Klein, Kathleen Gregory. *The Woman Detective: Gender & Genre*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

Discussion of woman detective as hero.*

May, Herbert G. & Bruce M. Metzger, ed. The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977. "Genesis, verses" 1-31.

An example of a creation story.*

Mayer, Marianna, Julek Heller, illustrator. *Women Warriors: Myths and Legends of Heroic Women*. New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1999.

Beautiful picture book which tells the legends of famous women heroes including Scatha, Semiramis, and Boadicea. Cross cultural, a good intro to women heroes in modern literature.

McCarty, Lea F. *The Gunfighters*. Oakland California: Mike Roberts Color Productions, 1988.

This is a book consisting of one-page biographies accompanied by a full page color picture of various famous gunfighters of the Old West: Joaquin Murrietta, Jesse James, Wild Bill Hickock, Billy the Kid, Wyatt Earp, Calamity Jane, and others. A good accompaniment to *The Western Hero* for teachers and *Shane* for students.

Powell, Richard. *Whom the Gods Would Destroy*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970.

A version of the Trojan War in novel form told by Helios, a disputed son of Priam. Good read and fairly accurate as to depictions of heroes and events described in *The Iliad*.*

Reader's Digest Association Limited, ed. *Folklore, Myths, and Legends of Britain*. London: Reader's Digest Association, 1977.

Includes articles on people and places of myth including Arthur of Avalon, Land of Merlin, Norsemen's Kingdom, and Land of the Red Dragon.*

Renault, Mary. *The King Must Die*. New York, Pantheon Books, Inc., 1958.

Actually any book by Mary Renault on the Greek myths will do. This one is about Theseus and the Minotaur and other adventures with a note on the Theseus legend at the end.*

Ross, Anne. *The Folklore of the Scottish Highlands*. London: B.T.Batsford, Ltd., 1976.

Includes clan lore, cures, omens, tabus, the seasons, and life and death rituals.*

Sabuda, Robert. *Arthur and the Sword*. New York, New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 1995.

Beautifully illustrated by the author to look like stained glass. Good way to introduce the legend of the hero Arthur, to be followed up by the scene from *Excalibur* where Arthur pulls the sword from the stone.

Schaefer, Jack. *Shane*. Toronto, New York: Bantam Books, 1983.

"He was tall and terrible there in the road, looming up gigantic in the half-light." The story of a gunfighter who helps a homesteading family save their land.

Scribner Literature Series. *Understanding Literature*. Mission Hills, California: Glencoe Publishing Company, 1989.

"The Odyssey" translated by Robert Fitzgerald, pp.442-489.*

Shepherd, Sandy. Tudor Humphries, illustrator. *Myths and Legends From Around the World*. New York, New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1995.

A picture book with several creation myths and hero myths from many cultures.

Steckmesser, Kent Ladd. *The Western Hero in History and Legend*. Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965.

Debunking the myths of Billy the Kid, Wild Bill Hickock, and others.*

Sullivan, C.W. III. *Young Adult Science Fiction*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999.

Discussion of hero in science fiction.*

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1982.

Bilbo Baggins, a Hobbit, is called to a quest and encounters orcs, evil spiders, and the dragon, Smaug.

Warren, Paul. *Caleb Beldragon's Chronicle of the Three Counties*. Atlanta: Turner Publishing, Inc., 1995.

A picture book of a fantasy world. The section on how their world was formed is a good intro to writing a creation myth.

Videos:

All the Pretty Horses. Robert Salerno & Billy Bob Thornton. Videocassette. Miramax Films, 2000. PG13.

A hero's journey in the West and Mexico of the 1940's. If your school also has the book, an excellent source for teaching the hero archetype.

Clash of the Titans. Charles H. Schneer, Ray and Harry Haudn. Videocassette. MGM, 1981. PG rating.

The story of Perseus, the Medusa, Andromeda, and the Titans. Good movie to show the conventions of Greek myth. Engages students.

Excalibur. John Boorman. Videocassette. Orion Pictures Company, 1981. R rated.

Use the scene where Arthur pulls the sword from the stone. The ending would also be a good demonstration of a hero's battle for older students.

Fantasia 2000, "The Firebird." Roy Disney. Videocassette. Disney Pictures, 2000.

The cartoon based on the music is a myth of life, death, and rebirth. Beautiful animation.

Gladiator. Ridley Scott. Videocassette. Dreamworks Pictures, 2000.

The final battle with the emperor is a mythic hero's battle. Other clips can be shown to demonstrate the different stages of a hero's journey. Since the film is R rated, only edited sections of it can be used with students under 18 without permission.

Hercules & Xena: The Animated Movie. Raimi, Sam & Robert Tapert. Videocassette. Renaissance Pictures, 1997.

Somewhat campy cartoon that uses some of the symbols associated with the various gods (Aphrodite skateboarding down from Olympus and through the water on a clamshell). In this cartoon, Hera is angry with Zeus for bringing Hercules' mother (a mortal) to Olympus and calls forth the Titans to take over. This cartoon needs some previous background on the Greek gods in order for the students to understand many of the allusions.

Jason and the Argonauts. Dyson Lovell. Videocassette. Hallmark Home Entertainment, 2000.

Interesting picture of the capture of the golden fleece, Jason is somewhat of a whiner.

Ladyhawke. Richard Donner. Videocassette. Warner Bros., Inc. 1985.

Wonderful movie of a hero's quest and a curse by an evil bishop. The "clever hero," played by the young thief, Matthew Broderick, shares the hero role with the knight as they try to break the curse with the help of a drunken old priest.

O, Brother, Where Art Thou?. Ethan Coen. Videocassette. Touchstone and Universal Pictures, 2000. PG13.

A modern day telling of *The Odyssey*. Set in the 1930's in Mississippi. John Goodman is a wonderful Cyclops.

The Odyssey. Dyson Lovell. Videocassette. Hallmark Home

Entertainment, 1999.

The movie made for television with Armand Asante. PG13, so can be used for eighth grade and up, or with permission for sixth or seventh. Great depictions of the different adventures of Odeseus on his travels home from The Trojan War.

Powerful Gods of Mount Olympus. Craig Haffner and Donna E. Lusitana. Videocassette. Greystone Communications, Inc. for A&E network, 1996.

Hosted by Leonard Nemoy, fairly comprehensive short biographies of major gods.

Shane. George Stevens. Videocassette. Paramount Pictures, 1952.

The mythic hero rides out of the West and, although he tries to lay down his gun, ends up in a battle to save a way of life that will replace him.

The Tell Tale Heart. Jere Rae-Mansfield. Videocassette. Monterey Media, Inc., 2000.

Filming of Edgar Allen Poe's tale. Can be shown along with reading the story as a way to look at crime creating chaos and how order is restored.

Tombstone. Andrew G. Vajna. Videocassette. Hollywood Pictures.

R rated. unfortunately, but the scene where the Red Scarf Gang destroys a village wedding, and the scene where Wyatt Earp corners the gang as he finally decides to take on the quest can be shown to students with telling the story in between.