

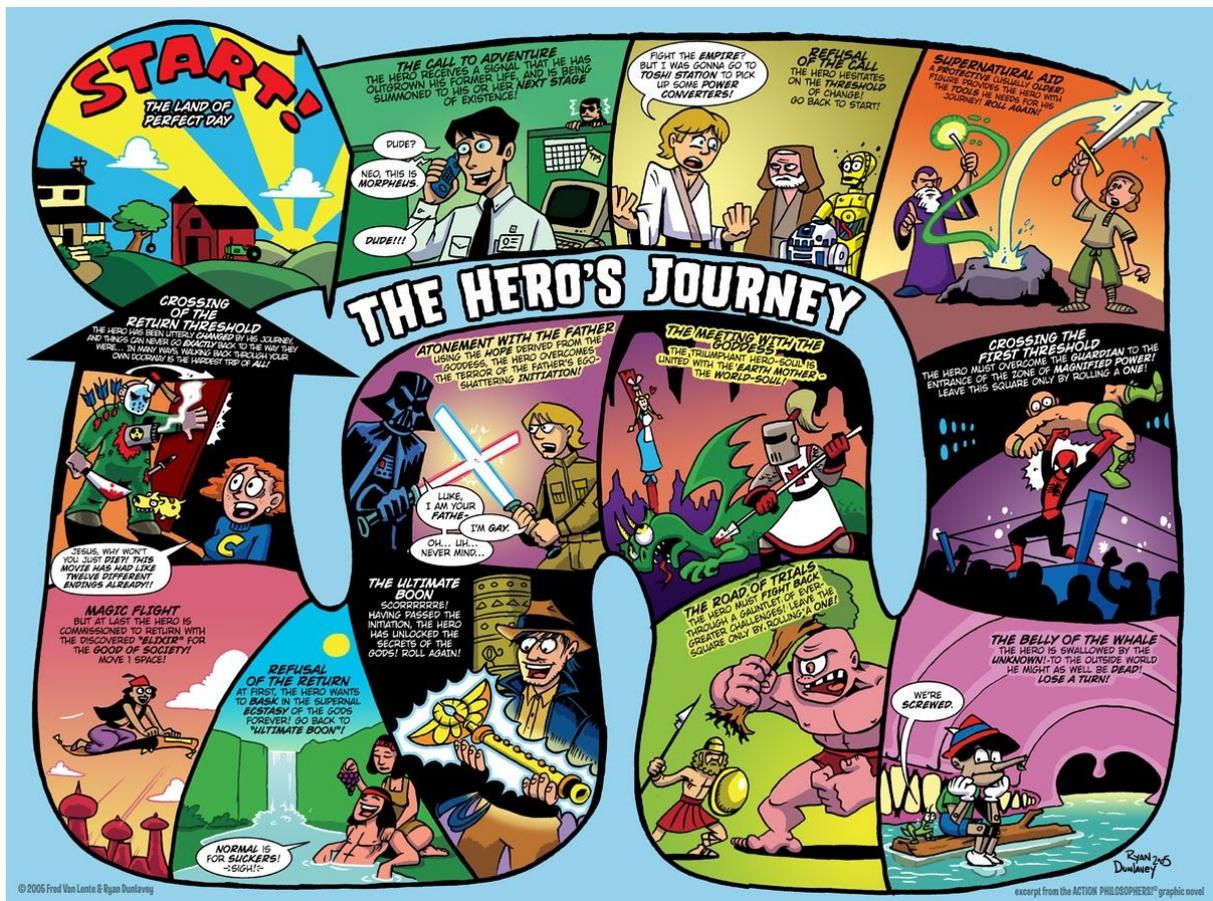
# Advanced Science Fiction & Fantasy

## Writing The 21st Century Myth

### Part THREE - Writing Challenge

#### Beyond the Hero's Journey

Joseph Campbell developed a powerful tool for storytellers with the Hero's Journey. Thousands of humankind's ancient myths are distilled down into a simple structure that can be applied to many kinds of story.



But the Hero's Journey has limits. It is best used for stories about children or adolescents taking their first journey into the world.

Successful examples of the Hero's Journey in science fiction and fantasy include:

**The Matrix** - Neo is called to adventure by the “White Rabbit”, meets his mentor, crosses the threshold out of the Matrix in the wasteland, and so on!

**The Hobbit** - Tolkien defined the idea of Mythopoeia as modern myth making, and his classic children’s story had all the archetypal elements of the Hero’s Journey, long before Campbell charted them.

**Star Wars : A New Hope** - George Lucas re-wrote the script for Star Wars around the 17 stages of Campbell’s theory.

### **Writing Challenge 3**

Each part of Advanced Science Fiction & Fantasy highlights an idea that has the potential for telling new myths for the 21st century. And each part sets out a “writing challenge” for you to create your own stories.

The Hero’s Journey provides a STRUCTURE for story that can be used on many kinds of CONTENT. To explore this idea we can apply the Hero’s Journey to content that might seem to have no mythic structure.

Take an event from your own life when you experienced any kind of change. It could be leaving home, losing a person you love, achieving a major ambition, or any significant life event.

Make a timeline of the steps that lead up to and beyond the event. Then look at how and where the real steps, mirror the stage of the Hero’s Journey. Did you meet a mentor? Cross a threshold? Enter the belly of the whale?

You will find surprising resonances. And as a storyteller you can alter events to give them a more mythic quality.

**Write a short account (1 to 3 pages) of an event from your own life using the structure of the Hero’s Journey**