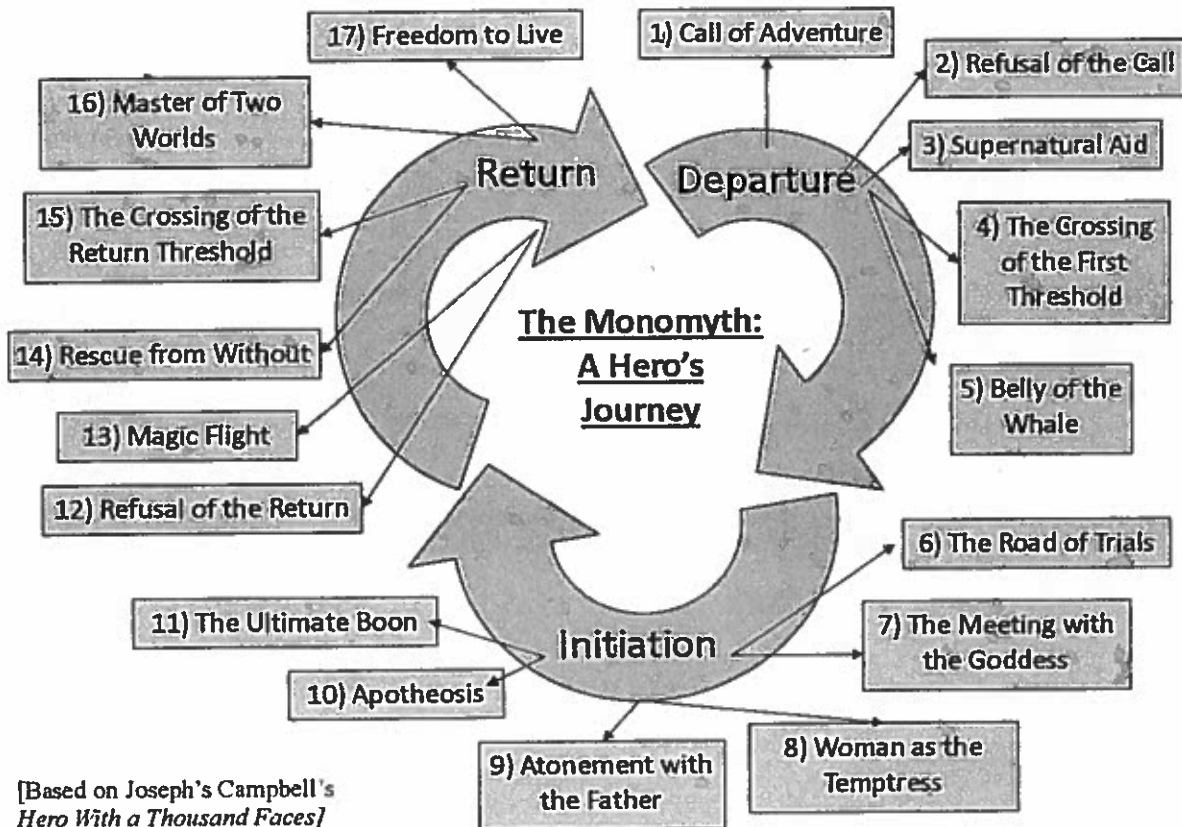


## Joseph Campbell's Monomyth: The Hero's Journey: from Classics to Baseball

We have made mention of the Campbell paradigm at various stages in our baseball/myth/literature discussions. This is a multi-stage process of Departure, Fulfillment, and Return (if successful) or failure to achieve the quest (the failed or anti-hero). We have mentioned timeless epics that fit this cycle well such as Homer's *Odyssey*, Shakespeare's "Hamlet", Sophocles' "Oedipus the King," or in traditional myths from all cultures, ancient, medieval, and more recent (fairy tales). This cycle can also be observed in the great religious traditions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism) as well as in movies like "Star Wars," as famously noted in Campbell's "Power of Myth" PBS series. The key moment in any of these epic narratives is the moment of "Transformation of Consciousness," the moment of epiphany or the breakthrough from one mode of experience/awareness to another more rich and deep. Some of these mythic cycles end in tragedy for the individual but the society itself can be transformed by the sacrifice of the heroes.

Clearly, in baseball themed narratives such as Malamud's *The Natural*, Kinsella's *Shoeless Joe* ("Field of Dreams" in the movies), Harris' *Bang the Drum Slowly*, Wilson's "Fences", we see many elements of the mythic hero's cycle clearly demonstrated.



## **Baseball Reference List: The Best Fiction with Literary/Mythic Resonance**

The Natural, Bernard Malamud  
The Art of Flelding, Chad Harbach  
Shoeless Joe, W.P. Kinsella  
Bang the Drum Slowly, Mark Harris  
The Southpaw, Mark Harris  
The Universal Baseball Association, Robert Coover  
The Great American Novel, Phillip Roth  
The Celebrant, Eric Rolfe Greenberg  
You Know Me Al, Ring Lardner  
Summerland (juvenile), Michael Chabon  
The Kid from Tomkinsville (juvenile) John R. Tunis  
Underworld, Don DeLillo  
Calico Joe, John Grisham  
"Casey at the Bat" (poem), Ernest Lawrence Thayer

### **Notable Literature with Baseball Scenes/References:**

"Fences" (drama), August Wilson  
"Damn Yankees (Broadway Musical)  
Ragtime, E.L. Doctorow  
One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest, Ken Kesey  
Of Time and the River, Thomas Wolfe  
The Sportswriter (and other Frank Bascombe novels), Richard Ford

### **The Best Nonfiction Authors with Baseball-Themed Books/Articles**

Roger Angell	Murray Kempton	Ken Burns (10 Part PBS
Willie Morris	Jim Brosnan	(Series "Baseball")
Jim Bouton	Bill Veeck	Eric Solomon (Jews/Baseball)
Roger Kahn	Jimmy Breslin	
Doris Kearns Goodwin	George Will	
George Plimpton	Lawrence S. Ritter	
Pat Jordan	Daniel Okrent	
Jonathan Schwartz	Donald Honig	
Robert Creamer	Jules Tygiel	
Roy Blount Jr.	Nicholas Dawidoff	
David Remnick	David Halberstam	
Stephen Jay Gould	Thomas Boswell	
Bob Costas	Bill Lee	
Martin Espada	Michael Lewis	
Buster Olney	Gerald Early	
Tom Verducci	Frank Deford	
Gay Talese	Bruce Jenkins	
John Updike	Claire Smith	