

Joseph Campbell *and* Bill Moyers Symbolism of the descent into the deep

Moyers: My favorite scene was when they were in the garbage compactor and the walls were closing in, and I thought, "That's like the belly of the whale that Jonah..."

Campbell: That's what it is. Yeah, that's where they were. **Down in the belly of the whale.**

Moyers: What's the mythological significance of the belly?

Campbell: It is the descent into the **belly of the whale** is **symbolic of the descent into the dark.** Jonah in the whale is a standard motif of going into the whales belly and coming out again.

Moyers: Why must the hero do that?

Campbell: **The whale represents the personification of all that is in the unconscious.**

In reading these things psychologically **water is the unconscious.**

The creature in the water would be the dynamism of the unconscious which is a dangerous and powerful. **And has to be controlled by consciousness.**



The **first stage in the hero adventure, when he starts off on adventure, is leaving the realm of light** which he controls and knows about, and moving toward the threshold and it is at the threshold that the monster out of the abyss comes to meet him.

Then there are two or three results:

One: The hero is cut to pieces and then descends into the abyss in fragments to be resurrected.

Two: He may kill the dragon power as Siegfried does when he kills the dragon. But then he tastes the dragons blood, that's to say he has to assimilate that power.

Three: And when Siegfried has killed the dragon and tastes the blood he hears the song of nature, he has transcended his humanity, you know. And re-associates himself with all the powers of nature which are the powers of our life from which our mind removes us.

