



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2007 Volume I: Adapting Literature

The Odyssey: Seeing My Journey through Film

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Finding purpose—discovering meaning in life—the journey...each describes our quest to become better individuals. Some find meaning within the context of socially stereotyped structures, others in religious (or dare I say mysterious) traditions; yet, of the two, religion has been most instrumental. Our understanding of such relationship or lack thereof, ultimately forms our concept of self.

Homer's *The Odyssey* juxtaposes the struggle of one man, Odysseus, finding his place in this relationship as he journeys home. He is not unique in his quest. In literature and in films, such characters—be they heroes or the girl next door—are prevalent (even Dorothy was hailed as a savior after killing the Wicked Witch of the West). Many works themselves parallel epic characteristics with their vast setting, covering many nations/worlds, consistent deeds of valor and supernatural interventions.

This 2-week unit designed for ninth grade students at Booker T. Washington High School enrolled in the School of Fine, Visual and Performing Arts examines the elements of the written epic as well as contextual parallels through the use of modern films, *O Brother Where Art Thou?* and *The Wiz*.

(Developed for Literature, grade 9, and AP English Literature, grade 12)

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