Star Wars as Modern Myth

A Comparative Analysis of George Lucas's *Star Wars* and
Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*

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Acknowledgements

PREFACE

This thesis came into being as a marriage between a boyhood fascination for George Lucas's galaxy far, far away and a more recent interest in religious science, such as the study of myth and ritual. I first watched Star Wars together with a friend at his parents's house in the first grade and we immediately took to it. Even though the imagery we were presented with was new to us, we had no problems understanding what was happening. The young hero wielding his magic sword, the old wizard, the captive princess and the imposing villain in the black mask all made perfect sense.

In April 2010 I visited London. While there I attended a Star Wars themed concert[1] hosted by the man behind the golden mask of the droid C-3PO, Anthony Daniels. What amazed me, besides the music, was the age span of the attendees. Sitting besides me was a gentleman and his wife who must at least have been in their sixties, in the row before me was a couple of thirty-something with their two children, none of them older than ten. Not many shows have the power to enthral such a diverse audience, but this one did and I began wondering why. Shortly thereafter, I obtained a copy of "Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth" (Campbell and Moyers 1988), which pointed me in the direction of Campbell and Jung. The rest is history.

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[1] http://www.starwarsinconcert.com/

1. Introduction

Myths and legends about heroic deeds have captured the collective imagination for thousands of years. The oldest extant hero myth dates back to 2800 B.C. and concerns the birth history of King Sargon the First, founder of ancient Babylonia (Rank 2004:9). Nearly five thousand years later, on the 25th of May 1977, the world was treated to a science fiction extravaganza unlike anything seen before, as *Star Wars*[2] premiered at *Grauman's Chinese Theatre* in Hollywood. The film was a success, both at the box office and with the critics. Canby (1977) described the film as "a breathless succession of escapes, pursuits, dangerous missions, unexpected encounters, with each one ending in some kind of defeat until the final one". Ebert (1977) described it as a "fairy tale, a fantasy, a legend, finding its roots in some of our most popular fictions" and argued that the "movie relies on the strength of pure narrative, in the most basic storytelling form known to man, the Journey". The journey of the mythic hero has been shown to follow a uniform progression (Campbell 1993). Inspired by Ebert's statements, this thesis posits that *Star Wars* (1977), as a retelling of Campbell's Heroic Journey, is essentially a modern hero myth.

The study of hero myths traces back to 1871, when English anthropologist Edward Tylor argued that many of them follow a uniform plot (Segal 1990:vii). However, Tylor offered no analysis of the pattern he delineated. The most influential scholars who attempted to analyse the hero patterns they posited have been Austrian psychoanalyst Otto Rank (1884-1939), English folklorist Lord Raglan (1885-1964) and American mythographer Joseph Campbell (1904-1987). Campbell was selected for use in this thesis as his theory is the most applicable to *Star Wars*: Rank (2004), as a disciple of Freud, was primarily concerned with the Hero in the beginning stages of his life and his relationship with his parents; Lord Raglan (1990), inspired by Frazer (1994), focused on the relationship between myth and ritual.

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[2] Later retitled *Star Wars: Episode IV: A New Hope.* This thesis will use italics when referring to the film and no formatting when discussing the saga as a whole.

Campbell (1993), like Jung,[3] focused on the hero in the second part of his life and his journey towards reconciliation with himself and the universe. The actions prescribed for their respective heroes further underlines Campbell's hero as the most suitable in the context of *Star Wars*:

> Rank's hero triumphs at the expense of everyone else; Lord Raglan's, like Campbell's, saves everyone else. Campbell's saving hero need not die; Raglan's must. Campbell's hero undertakes a dangerous journey to aid his community; Raglan's hero in the myth is driven *from* his community and, in the accompanying ritual, is sacrificed *by* the community (Segal 1990:xxiii)

The association of Campbell with *Star Wars* is not a new idea. Besides Ebert (1977), the first person to make the connection, and the likely basis for the general agreement that *Star Wars* conforms to Campbell's pattern (Cox 2004, Ebert 1999, Hendrickson 2005, Perlich 2008, Vogler 1999), was Gordon (1978) and his article titled *Star Wars: A Myth for Our Time*. This thesis is comparable to Gordon (1978) in its scope, but seeks to provide an analysis where Gordon provided a description. Further, this thesis will investigate an unanswered claim in Gordon (1978:318): he asserts that there must be a link between samurai films and *Star Wars*, but neglects to elaborate on the connection. This thesis will explore Japanese elements in *Star Wars*, as well as discuss the connection to Akira Kurosawa's *The Hidden Fortress* (1958). Other possible sources from popular culture will not be discussed, due to the broad and speculative nature of the subject. For more on possible sources for *Star Wars*, in particular sources from American popular culture, see Gordon (1978:315-319). Finally, in addition to showing the link between Campbell's heroic cycle and *Star Wars*, this thesis will also show how the main characters of *Star Wars* correspond to the central Jungian

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[3] While Campbell did not define himself as a Jungian, the *Hero With a Thousand Faces* is still the classic Jungian analysis of hero myths (Segal 1990:xi).

archetypes. The purpose of this is to show how the events and characters of *Star Wars* have a deeper mythic link than just one of narrative.

Due to space constrains, the scope of this thesis is limited to the original *Star Wars* film as it appeared in 1977. Note that as the movie has been re-released and edited several times, first for the 1997 VHS special editions, then for the 2004 release of the DVD set and possibly again for the upcoming Blu-Ray and 3D versions, all references are to the original 1977 version. Quotes and other references are drawn from the original manuscript, which is largely identical to the film, with four notable exceptions:

1. A brief scene in the Tatooine desert that introduces Luke Skywalker as he is watching the initial space battle take place overhead (Lucas 1997:5). Luke is with a droid, which malfunctions, setting up the scene where we first encounter him in the film, where he and his uncle are looking to purchase new droids (Lucas 1997:22).

2. A scene in Anchorhead Settlement set right after the initial space battle, which introduces the audience to Luke's friend Biggs Darklighter (Lucas 1997:11-13), which he is reunited with later in the film (Lucas 1997:128).

3. A second scene set in Anchorhead where Luke and Biggs talk about joining the Rebellion against the Galactic Empire (Lucas 1997:16-20).

4. A scene in Mos Eisley spaceport where we learn about Han Solo's financial troubles with the space gangster Jabba the Hutt (Lucas 1997:62-62). This scene was later included in the 1997 "special edition" re-release of the film.

As the focus is on the original film, this thesis will not employ information given in the subsequent films, such as the revelation that Darth Vader and Leia are Luke's father and sister, in the analysis. Further, as Campbell is rooted in Jungian psychology, only psychological theory of myth will be employed to provide a theoretical foundation for the analysis of myths. Finally, as not all mythological events described by Campbell are relevant

in the context of *Star Wars* and due to the aforementioned space constrains, the analysis will be limited to six key events.

The following chapter will offer a definition of the term myth, elaborate on what a theory of myth is, as well as outline the three fundamental questions all theories of myth seek to ask (origin, subject, function), with focus on psychological theories of myth. Further, a brief introduction to Jung and central concepts of Jungian psychology will be given, followed by a brief introduction to Campbell and *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1993). The next section will be a short comparison of *The Hidden Fortress* (1958) and *Star Wars*. Finally, a synopsis of *Star Wars* will be given, outlining the various levels of plot.

The third, fourth and fifth chapters contain the main analysis, which is presented in the following format: (1) A description of the event given by Campbell, (2) A description of corresponding events in *Star Wars* and (3) A detailed analysis. Two events will be discussed per chapter.

The sixth chapter will serve as a discussion chapter, leading up to the final, concluding chapter.

2. Background

2.1. *Myth*

2.1.1. Definition

The term *myth* is ambiguous, as it may signify vastly different things to different people. The Oxford English Dictionary lists two main definitions of the term:

> 1. A traditional story, typically involving supernatural beings or forces, which embodies and provides an explanation, aetiology, or justification for something such as the early history of a society, a religious belief or ritual, or a natural phenomenon.

> 2. A widespread but untrue or erroneous story or belief; a widely held misconception; a misrepresentation of the truth. Also: something existing only in myth, a fictitious or imaginary person or thing.

Barthes (1957:165) argues that a myth is simply a statement, a system of communication, which contains a message. Campbell (1993:3) takes a more poetic approach and claims "myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation". Cheney (1927:198), pointing to Burne and Myers in Malinowski claims that

> Myths are stories which, however marvellous and improbable to us, are nevertheless related in all good faith, because they are intended, or believed by the teller, to explain by means of something concrete and intelligible an abstract idea or such vague and difficult conceptions as Creation, Death, distinctions of race or animal species, the different occupations of men and women; the origins of rites and customs, or striking natural objects or prehistoric monuments; the meaning of the names of persons or places.

Fordham (1964:23,24), expounding on Jung, argues that myths are expressions of the fundamental qualities of human nature and that while they may appear to simply serve as an attempt to explain natural events, they are actually an expression of how these events are perceived and experienced.

The aforementioned definitions have common ground in that they all deal in some form with a narrative, either as a sacred or simply made-up story, or as a notion or idea passed along as a meme. However, one important distinction between popular and scientific use is the emphasis on the veracity of the statement or narrative. Scientific study of myth does not concern itself with the validity of mythical claims, as validity is not relevant for the field of study. Popular use of the term carries a negative connotation and posits myths as inherently false until proven otherwise.

2.1.2. Theories of Myth

The following will explain what a theory of myth is, as well as what it describes and some general characteristics of such a theory.

> Although people have theorized about myth for thousands of years, it is only recently that the theorizing has entered the scientific field. While the theorizing of the earlier philosophers was mostly just that, theoretical, the development of the social sciences, like anthropology, in the nineteenth century saw a far more empirical approach towards the study of myth and culture (Segal 1996:viii).

As myths are dealt with by people working in different disciplines, it naturally follows that there will exist multiple ways of talking about and describing myth. Generally speaking, it is the aim of a theory of myth to answer one or more of the fundamental

questions about myth: (1) What is its origin; (2) What is its subject matter and (3) What is its function?

Theorists mostly agree that myth "originates and functions to satisfy a need, but that need can be for anything–for example for food, information, hope or God" (Segal 1996:viii). Further, the need can be individual or communal. The subject matter can also be a vast array of things, both literal and abstract. Comparing theories of myth is further complicated by the fact that few theories lay claim to answering all three questions. Some may focus on origin, some on function, others again on the subject matter. It is also worth noting that theories of myth are never just that, as myth always falls under a larger category such as the mind, culture, knowledge, religion, ritual, symbolism, and narrative. The category reflects the discipline from where the theory originated. "Psychological theories see myth as an expression of the mind. Anthropological theories view myth as an instance of culture. Literary theories regard myth as a variety of narrative" (Segal 1996:vii).

As far as definition of the term, the various theories operate with different definitions. Some may define myth as a sheer belief or conviction; others demand that myth must be a story. The agents in the story must, according to some, be human or animal, while according to others the agents may be gods or extraordinary humans, such as heroes (Segal 1996:viii).

2.1.3. Psychological Theory and the Fundamental Questions About Myth

Origin

There are many opinions on the origin of myth found within the field of psychology. While the particulars differ, most, if not all, presume a certain universality of the human psyche, which accounts for the similarity of myths found throughout time and space. Psychoanalysts tend to support the theory of *polygenesis* of myth, that "the same item could have originated independently many times" (Boyer 1977:424), while others, such as

anthropologists, prefer the theory of *monogenesis and diffusion*, that the "themes of oral literature arose in a single or at the most a few cultures and spread to and were incorporated into the folklore body of other cultures" (Boyer 1977:424,425). Whatever its origin, Arlow (1961:379) points out, and this view is not unique for psychological theory, that "In the genesis of myth, for the group, as for the individual, only a kernel of realistic experience is necessary … Only the shadow of a real event is necessary on which to build the structure of the myth".

Many proponents of psychological theory of myth see a strong link between myth and dream (Abraham 1909; Arlow 1961; Campbell 1993; Cheney 1927; Freud 1965; Fordham 1964; Jung 1968; Rank & Sachs 1916). Campbell (1993:4) argues that myth and the symbols of mythology are spontaneous productions of the psyche and that mythology everywhere is the same, beneath its "varieties of costume". Cheney (1927:199) claims that "Myth is the product of the longings, cravings and wishes of mankind existing under varying conditions, and that they are analogous to the longings, cravings or wishes of children, to the dreams of adult, and to the delusional ideas of persons with mental disorder". Arlow (1961:380) argues that

> The recurrence of certain motifs in varied areas, separated geographically and historically, tells us something about the human psyche. It suggests that the interaction of a certain biological apparatus in a certain kind of physical world, with such inevitables of the human condition brings about some regularities in the formation of imaginative productions, of powerful images.

Hudson (1966:185), paraphrasing Jung, sees myths as "psychic phenomena that reveal the nature of the soul. They require psychological interpretation. Not created by primitive man to explain nature allegorically, but instead a symbolical expression of the unconscious drama of his psyche by means of projection". Further, he sees myth as a product of the

collective unconscious expressed symbolically in archetypal images, thus making it a universal natural phenomenon (Hudson 1966:181). Boyer (1977:427) supports this claim of universality, arguing that

> psychoanalysts had long since learned that the themes which are to be found in oral literature arise in the dreams of fantasies of patients who have no knowledge of that literature. Analysts knew, too, that when individuals heard folklore themes, the tales stimulated anxiety and guilt when they reflected cathected unresolved psychic conflicts.

Subject Matter

Due to the fact that the symbols of mythology are so diverse, the subject matter of myth is harder to pin down than its function and origin. However, this does not seem to have had a deterring effect on researchers of the field. Hero myths are commonly studied by proponents of psychology and such scholars as Campbell (1993), Dundes (1990), Raglan (1990) and Rank (2004) are known for their work focusing on the structure and content of such myths. Campbell (1991) later completed his work dealing with mythology in general, divided into volumes focusing on Primitive, Eastern, Western and Modern mythology. Jung recognized that the field of archetypal situations was too large to be studied extensively and therefore directed his focus towards archetypal figures.

Function

Psychological theory holds many different answers regarding the function of myth, but most point in the same direction. Bruner, in Arlow (1961:387), argues that in a "mythologically instructed" community there is to be found a set of images and models the individual may aspire to. Arlow (1961:387) claims that "The mythology of a particular culture or society points the direction to the younger generation for solutions for the infantile instinctual conflicts", highlighting the pedagogical function of mythology. Campbell

(1957:448) supports this claim, arguing that "The highest concern of all the mythologies of the agriculturally based societies has been that of suppressing the manifestations of individualism, this has been generally achieved by persuading people to identify themselves with archetypes of behaviour developed in the public domain". Cheney (1927:199) thinks in a similar way and argues that "myths serve principally to establish a sociological charter, or a retrospective moral pattern, or the primeval supreme miracle of magic". Cheney (1927:199) continues to claim that civilization and culture have "modified the usual mental activity of the adult, so that he thinks and acts differently in his normal state from primitive man or the child. Culture and civilization are but a thin veneer over the essential primitive make-up of man".

2.2. Jung and the Collective Unconscious

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) was a Swiss psychiatrist who, as opposed to his former colleague, Sigmund Freud, who focused on the mental development of childhood, focused his attention on the psychological development of adults. He postulated a process, *individuation*, in which the adult reconciles parts of his or her personality that have largely been ignored or repressed (Fordham 1964:73). The individuation process can be described as a journey towards psychic unity, in which the symbols of the unconscious, manifested through dreams, play a large part.

Jung hypothesized that human consciousness was made up of three levels: The *conscious*, the *personal unconscious* and the *collective unconscious*. The conscious consists of our premonitions, thoughts, feelings and intuitions (Jung 1992:65, Jung 1990:42, Grønkjær 1994:44). The personal unconscious is deemed a superficial layer of the unconscious and is entirely based on individual experience. As such, it is made up almost entirely of complexes (Jung 1990:3, Hudson 1966:183). Finally, the collective unconscious is a layer that is not

dependent upon personal experience nor acquired, but is innate. It contains "contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals" (Jung 1990:4). Jung formed his hypothesis of the collective unconscious based on his experience with patients in mental institutions. In communication with them he discovered fragments of ancient myths that the patients could not possibly have heard about, leading him to think that some mythic elements are manifestations of innate qualities of the psyche (Drake 1967:331). Jung (1990:4) referred to the contents of the collective unconscious as *archetypes*. According to Jung, the archetypes "circumscribe how we relate to the world: they manifest as instincts and emotions, as the primordial images and symbols in dreams and mythology, and in patterns of behaviour and experience" (Young-Eisendrath and Dawson 2008:63).

2.2.1. Archetypes

Since the archetypes have their origin in the collective unconscious, it is not possibly to observe them directly. However, the effects of the archetypes can be observed. Because they cannot be fully accessed by the conscious mind, archetypes must be expressed in mythological imagery or symbols. As such, myths may be regarded as "conglomerates of archetypes held together psychologically" (Hudson 1966:184). Jung (1990:155) argued that archetypal content so much resembles the "types of structures in fairy tales and myths so much that they must be seen as related". There are two classes of archetypes, one dealing with situations, the other one dealing with figures. Due to the numerousness of archetypal situations available, Jung focused on archetypal figures and postulated the existence of six principal archetypes: the shadow, the anima or animus, the mother, the child (hero), the maiden and the wise old man. All of these archetypes have a positive and negative aspect, and are as such capable of helping or hurting. In addition, they are difficult to isolate, as they have a tendency to interpenetrate (Hudson 1966:185).

The shadow is the most accessible archetype as it is largely made up of material from the personal unconscious. As such, the shadow corresponds with the id. The shadow represents the "repressed, primitive, inferior side of the psyche and is mostly negative, though not wholly bad" (Hudson 1966:186). The integration of the personal unconscious is necessary to achieve psychic unity. As such, coming to terms with the shadow is the first step of the individuation process (Hudson 1966:186).

The anima or animus represents the feminine element in a man and the masculine element in a woman. Like the shadow, they are mostly made up of parts from the personal unconscious. The recognition and acceptance of one's projected anima or animus is an important stage in the individuation process. Men readily project their anima upon real women, often the mother or wife, and the archetype is often intermingled with the maiden or mother archetypes. The anima is associated with *eros*, which in Jungian psychology is the principle of personal relatedness in human activities. Women usually project their animus onto their father or husband. The animus is associated with *logos*, which in Jungian psychology refers to the principle of reason or judgment. According to Jung, the anima and animus, frequently intermingled with other archetypes, form the archetypal basis for all gods and goddesses (Hudson 1966:188).

The mother may be represented in numerous ways and she may appear to be both terrible and loving. There are many mother goddesses in different cultures around the world and this archetype may be attached to anything that creates, protects or sustains life. The mother and the anima are not separate archetypes, but exist combined in a man's mind (Hudson 1966:190).

The child motif represents the "preconscious, childhood aspects of the collective psyche" (Jung 1990:161). According to Hudson (1966:191):

Repetition of myths about the child and ritual re-enactment of the mythological events place the image of man's childhood again before the eyes of the conscious mind and thus preserve a connection with the unconscious.

The child signifies potential consciousness working to be made manifest, grow stronger and distinguish itself from the unconscious. The child is often portrayed as a child god or young hero. The god "personifies the collective unconscious still not integrated and the hero represents a synthesis of the "divine" unconscious and human consciousness" (Hudson 1966:191).

The maiden is often portrayed as a *kore* figure. Coming from the Greek word for maiden, a kore is an archaic Greek statue of a young woman, standing and clothed in long loose robes. In a man, the maiden combines with the anima archetype, while in a woman she is mixed with the mother. In myth, the maiden may be exposed to dangers or subjected to bloody rites and is as such often the object of the heroic quest (Hudson 1966:190).

The wise old man is a kind of "fatherly authority-figure, though he is not a father" (Hudson 1966:189). Commonly found as a priest, doctor, wizard, teacher or shaman, his task is to provide counsel and guidance. He may also appear in his negative manifestation as a practitioner of dark magic, a dwarf or animal (Hudson 1966:189). The archetype can be regarded as a manifestation of the superego.

2.3. Campbell and the Hero's Journey

Joseph Campbell was an influential American mythologist working in the field of comparative mythology and religion. Inspired by Frazer (1994) and Rank (2004), Campbell published his seminal treatment of hero myths, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* in 1949. In it he argued that the prime function of mythology was to "supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward" (Campbell 1993:11). Campbell shared several of Jung's ideas, such as

the link between myth and dream (Campbell 1993:3-23, Fordham 1964:92-115), but he was not a strict Jungian (Segal 1990:ix). Campbell (1993:39) regarded the hero as important, as "the hero is symbolical of that divine creative and redemptive image which is hidden within us all, only waiting to be known and rendered into life". As such, Campbell's hero has much in common with Jung's (1990:151-181) child archetype.

2.3.1. The Monomyth

In *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* Campbell (1993:30) formulated his concept of the *monomyth* (see appendix eleven), which he defined as "the formula represented in the rites of passage: *separation-initiation-return*". He regarded this formula as the nucleus of most hero myths and summarizes the adventure of the mythological hero as follows:

> A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man (Campbell 1993:30).

Campbell (1993:4), like Jung, was a proponent of a universal view of mythology and argued that "mythology everywhere is the same beneath its varieties of costume". His argument for this statement is based on a psychological approach to myths. According to Campbell (1993:4) the "symbols of mythology are not manufactured; they cannot be ordered, invented, or permanently suppress. They are spontaneous productions of the psyche". As such, he is of the same mind as psychoanalysts such as Jung and Freud who argue that the symbols of mythology are rooted in the unconscious and observable through analysis of dreams (Rank 2004:6, Fordham 1964: 23,24).

Campbell, through a comparative study of myth, outlined and assigned a number of recurring myth-patterns to the three stages of the monomyth. These myth-patterns, or myth-

events, are found in a variety of myths from around the world. It is important to note that the monomyth does not require all of these elements to be present. Typically, a given myth will isolate and expand upon only one or two parts of this cycle (Campbell 1993:246).

Separation

The separation stage of the hero's journey concerns itself with the origin of the hero and the motivation for the quest. It is subdivided into the following categories: (1) The Call to Adventure, (2) Refusal of the Call, (3) Supernatural Aid, (4) The Crossing of the First Threshold and (5) The Belly of the Whale.

The call to adventure comes to a hero who is ready for it. The hero is often of noble or divine origin, but may have been raised as a normal human. The call usually comes from a herald, which may appear in a multitude of forms. The call signifies that the budding hero is ready to step out into the unknown world. The hero may be unwilling or unable to respond to the call. However, the refusal usually only delays the inevitable acceptance. Having accepted the task, the hero encounters a protective figure, often seen as an old crone or old man. This guardian force provides the hero with the tools needed to succeed. With the help of this guardian, the hero journeys forth to the edge of his known world. There he encounters the threshold guardian, who has both a protective and destructive aspect. The hero must challenge the guardian in order to pass the threshold and step out into the unknown. Having conquered the threshold guardian the hero is swallowed into the unknown, often represented as a giant animal or a natural phenomenon, like a cave. In this place, the hero undergoes a metamorphosis. If he is able to let go of his ego, he will be able to re-enter the outside world at will, preparing him for initiation into the secrets of the universe.

Initiation

The initiation stage is where the hero gains what he needs in order to reinvigorate his community. It is subdivided as follows: (1) The Road of Trials; (2) The Meeting with the Goddess; (3) Woman as the Temptress; (4) Atonement with the Father; (5) Apotheosis and (6) The Ultimate Boon.

After having passed the threshold, the hero is forced to undergo a series of trials, which serve as a means of purifying the self. In these trials, the hero receives assistance from his supernatural helper. The trials force the hero to put aside any personal considerations on the road to enlightenment. When the hero has overcome all the barriers of his journey, he is faced with the Queen Goddess of the world, which he may marry or reject. He will also come to terms with the father, realizing that the two are the same. It is also possible for the hero to be initiated into the ultimate secrets of the universe, attaining a perfect, divine state. If not elevated to the status of god himself, the hero may come in contact with, and visit the realm of, the gods. There he may be presented with the elixir of the gods, the source of their power, or he may steal it, or otherwise obtain it through illegitimate means. Having obtained the life-renewing goal of his quest, the hero must now begin the journey back to where he came from to share his boon.

Return

The return stage is the most important stage, as it insures the continued flow of spiritual energy and justifies the hero's retreat from the world. In this stage the hero returns and reintegrates with society. It is subdivided as follows: (1) Refusal of the Return; (2) The Magic Flight; (3) Rescue from Without; (4) Master of the Two Worlds and (5) Freedom to Live.

After the hero has obtained his boon, a return to society is required. This responsibility may be refused, as the hero wishes to remain in the realm of the gods for

eternity. If the hero decides to return, and the boon of the gods was given willingly, his journey home is swift and unhindered. If the hero won the boon through some act of trickery, or stole it from its guardian, the return to society becomes a chase scene interspersed with elements of magical evasion and obstructions. The flight is usually successful and the hero is now free to approach the return threshold. If the hero is caught during the flight, or if he is content with staying in the abode of the gods, it might be necessary for the world to come and get him. The returning hero is faced with several problems, the first being how to properly transmit what he has learned from his time in the divine realm. The second problem is that of being able to accept the trivialities of everyday life as meaningful, which may prove difficult. The returning hero may also encounter a disparity in time between the two realms. Commonly, a year in paradise is equated to a hundred years on earth or vice versa. In some myths, the hero gains mastery over both worlds and achieves the freedom to pass between them at will. Finally, the returning hero comes armed with the insight of the natural order of things. As such, he has gained the freedom to live without worry or delusion, as he realizes that things invariably happen and simply allows them to do so.

2.4. The Hidden Fortress

Initially, Kurosawa's *The Hidden Fortress* was mentioned as a possible source for *Star Wars*. The main element Lucas borrowed from Kurosawa was the device of storytelling from the point of view of the lowest characters. Kurosawa told his story, which deals with high characters like powerful generals and royalty, through the eyes of two poor farmers devoid of virtue: Matashichi and Tahei.

Matashichi and Tahei constantly squabble over money, they steal and even plan to rape a girl on several occasions. Lucas's droids Artoo and Threepio are more likable, but they are likewise low characters in the grand scheme of things. Despite this, the first line of

dialogue in *Star Wars* belongs to them (Lucas 1997:4), just as it does for Kurosawa's farmers. Further, they are the only characters to appear in the flesh (or metal, as it were) in all six Star Wars films, although the case could be made that Anakin Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi are also present in some shape or form in all six films.

The opening minutes of *The Hidden Fortress* and *Star Wars*, with regards to the farmers and the droids, are nearly identical, down to the scene where they argue and decide to go their separate ways only to end up as captives together (Kurosawa 2002:04.25-11.30, Lucas 1997:15-16,20-21).

In addition to the similarities between the farmers and droids, the case can be made that Obi-Wan Kenobi is in part inspired by Kurosawa's General Rokurota Makabe. Rokurota is intelligent, a strong fighter and a skilled manipulator. He is also loyal to the princess, and has it has his main mission to escort her out of enemy territory. Similarly, Obi-Wan once served as a general under the command of princess Leia's father (Lucas 1997:45); is also skilled in manipulation and is a capable fighter, despite his age (Lucas 1997:51,56). However, Kurosawa's Rokurota does not embody the wizardly qualities of Obi-Wan and he does not play the part of the wise old man serving as a mentor to a younger hero.

Finally, both *Star Wars* and *The Hidden Fortress* feature a princess who is not a typical distressed damsel. Both Lucas's Princess Leia and Kurosawa's Princess Yukihime are strong-willed women. However, where Yukihime holds absolute authority over the men in her life, it is questionable whether or not Leia does the same. Feminist critics regard Leia's function as simply to "invest [Luke and his friends's] actions with ultimate approval and to mark them as true heroes" (Hourihan 1997:173), but as the following analysis will show, this criticism may not be justified. Finally, the case can be made that Leia and Yukihime are very much the same character at different points of development: *The Hidden Fortress* is about Princess Yukihime growing out of her naïve, childlike state and realizing the plight of the

common people in medieval Japan. Princess Leia, as a member of the Rebellion against the Empire has already come to a similar realization. As such, she is arguably an advanced version of her Japanese analogue.

2.5. Plot of Star Wars

The plot of *Star Wars* can be divided into three categories: superplot, main plot and subplot.

The superplot of *Star Wars* deals with the war between the evil Galactic Empire and the Rebel Alliance. The Empire used to be a republic, but we learn that the Emperor has dissolved the senate and turned it into a dictatorship. Determined to tighten its grip on the galaxy, The Empire has constructed a superweapon capable of destroying a planet in a single blow, the *Death Star*.

There are in fact two main plots, although one is often ignored in analyses of the film: the plot pertaining to Princess Leia. As Leia attempts to escape with the plans for the Death Star, she is captured by Darth Vader. Before her capture, she manages to hide the plans along with a plea for help in a small droid and send it away. Leia is eventually rescued by Luke Skywalker and successfully brings the plans to the Rebel commanders.

The "main" main plot deals with a young man named Luke Skywalker who stumbles upon the droid sent by Leia. Encountering the old Jedi Knight Obi-Wan Kenobi, Luke learns that his father was also one of the Jedi. Following Obi-Wan, they set out to bring the droid to the Rebels. They are eventually captured by the Empire, but manage to escape the Death Star, freeing Princess Leia in the process. Obi-Wan meets his end at the hands of his old student, Darth Vader, the same man who killed Luke's father. Having returned the plans to the Rebels, they launch an attack on the Death Star. Through the help of Obi-Wan, Luke

manages to destroy the space station. Darth Vader is seen flying into space, leaving parts of the plot unresolved.

There are two 'main' subplots. The most important one concerns Han Solo and his debt to Jabba the Hutt for a failed smuggling run. It is important in that it provides the motivation for Han to accept Luke and Obi-Wan as passengers and also in that it sets up events in the following films, such as Han being frozen in carbonite. The second subplot concerns the relationship between Threepio and Artoo and how they are (mostly) powerless in relation to the grand events unfolding around them and are being swept around by circumstance. It is a comic, almost slapstick plot that is in a way the 'true' plot of the entire Star Wars saga, as they are the first characters to be introduced.

3. Departure

For the adventure to begin, some degree of separation from the familiar has to occur. In a fairy tale, this separation can be as small as the princess wandering off into the dark woods surrounding the castle; it can take place inside a rabbit hole or in the dark recesses of a wardrobe in an old mansion. On a larger scale, the separation may consist of the hero's literal death (literal is used here, because all separation can be considered to signify death), or perhaps a grand voyage into the uncharted regions of the world to bring back the world-restoring Holy Grail. The quest is motivated by necessity, either on behalf of the hero, the hero's society or even the world itself.

Campbell (1993) subdivided the departure stage of the hero's journey into five events: (1) The Call to Adventure, (2) Refusal of the Call, (3) Supernatural Aid, (4) The Crossing of the First Threshold and (5) The Belly of the Whale. The following will be a treatment of the Call to Adventure and Supernatural Aid events and their relation to the events of *Star Wars.*

3.1. The Call to Adventure

3.1.1. Campbell

While the hero's journey may begin in a multitude of ways, there are certain traits commonly seen in the early phase, the first being that that the call to adventure signifies a change, for the one who is ready for it. The call usually comes from what Campbell terms the "herald", which may appear as an animal, a human, a spirit or any other form. Whatever the shape of the herald is irrelevant, the important thing is what the herald's appearance signifies. The call rings up the curtain, always, on a mystery of transfiguration–a rite, or moment, of spiritual passage, which, when complete, amounts to a dying and a birth. The familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand (Campbell 1993:51). It is destiny itself that is responsible for calling the hero into action, and this summoning shifts the hero's "spiritual centre of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown" (Campbell 1993:58). This unknown zone lies beyond the horizons of what the hero knows and is often sealed off by (parental) guardians, whose influence may be so strong as to lead to a refusal of the call.

3.1.2. Star Wars

In *Star Wars,* Luke Skywalker is without a doubt ready for change. He is described as "a farm boy with heroic aspirations" (Lucas 1997:5). As Luke's father is dead (Lucas 1997:32), the roles of parental guardians are filled by his aunt and uncle. There is no mention of his mother. Luke is clearly not satisfied with farm life and there are several instances where he voices his complaints. The first one is when Owen tells him to clean up their newly purchased droids before dinner and Luke tries to get out of it (Lucas 1997:24). He later makes his frustrations with life on Tatooine very clear in conversation with Threepio:

Luke seems to be lost in thought as he runs his hand over the damaged fin of a small two-man skyhopper spaceship resting in a low hangar off the garage. Finally Luke's frustrations get the better of him and he slams a wrench across the workbench.

LUKE

It just isn't fair. Oh, Biggs is right. I'm never gonna get out of here.

[Threepio offers to help]

Well, not unless you can alter time, speed up the harvest or teleport me off this rock!

[Describing his home planet]

Well, if there's a bright centre to the universe, you're on the planet that it's farthest from. (Lucas 1997:26)

Finally, in his last conversation with his aunt and uncle, Luke again makes it evident that he wants to leave. He attempts to convince his uncle to let him leave for the Academy a year early, but fails (Lucas 1997:32,33).

The task of heralding Luke's coming adventure is performed by the droids Threepio and Artoo. Threepio mentions their association with the Rebellion and Artoo reveals part of the message intended for Obi-Wan (Lucas 1997:27,28). Artoo later inadvertently leads Luke to the meeting with Obi-Wan, as he escapes when Luke forgets[4] to replace the restraining bolt (Lucas 1997:30).

The call itself implicitly comes from Princess Leia, although the message Luke first sees is short and not intended for him; it simply says "Help me, Obi-Wan Kenobi. You're my only hope" (Lucas 1997:28). The call is later repeated in more explicit terms by Obi-Wan, who has already recognized that this is Luke's adventure, not his own (Lucas 1997:83): "You

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[4] Conveniently forgets, some would say. From a psychological point of view, mistakes are made for a reason, and this one may be read as a manifestation of Luke's subconscious desire to escape the drudgery of farm life.

must learn the ways of the Force if you're to come with me to Alderaan" (Lucas 1997:45). Faced with the task of stepping out of his known world, Luke has to make a choice.

3.1.3. Analysis

As has been shown, the heralds of Luke's adventure are the droids Artoo and Threepio and the call comes from Princess Leia. Using a pair of robots as heralds, as opposed to the more traditional human or animal messengers, provides a twist to an otherwise familiar scene. The first robots were arguably the golems of Jewish mythology, artificial creatures with souls, a description befitting both Artoo and Threepio. Despite their appearance clearly giving them away as robots, they both come across as more than a result of their programming, as they have an apparent ability to feel anger, elation, sadness and fear. The two robots are vastly different from each other and as such form a binary pair. Where Artoo is headstrong and characterized by action; Threepio is timid and heavily characterized by speech, both with regards to content and manner. Further, they are set apart by appearance. Artoo is described as a "short, claw-armed tripod. His face is a mass of computer lights surrounding a radar eye" (Lucas 1997:3). Threepio is described as a "tall, slender robot of human proportions. He has a gleaming bronze-like metallic surface of an Art Deco design" (Lucas 1997:3). These descriptions are not far from what ended up being used in the film (see appendix one and two), with the exception of making Artoo's claw arm retractable.

The colouring of the two also holds significance. Artoo is mainly white with some added blue and Threepio is a golden metallic hue. White can symbolize innocence, purity or truth, and blue is generally regarded as the most spiritually significant colour. In psychology, blue is often associated with a calm, careless demeanour (Biedermann 1992:51). Blue is also the colour of the sky or heaven. In the case of Threepio, gold is often associated with images of gods or enlightened beings or the sun. In the orthodox Christian tradition, gold is also

symbolic of perfection and of God's heavenly light. The use of colouring serves to underline the spiritual aspect of the droids's heraldic function. Fitting also, is the association with the heavenly spheres achieved through the use of blue and gold, since they literally fell from the sky.

As previously stated, the call comes to the one who is ready for it and Luke Skywalker is definitely ready. He is described as a "farm boy with heroic aspirations who looks much younger than his eighteen years" (Lucas 1997:5).[5] Luke's purity, innocence and inexperience is underlined by his oversized, as if he has not grown into it yet, white tunic (see appendix three). Further, the tunic resembles the *keikogi* worn by practitioners of Japanese martial arts, such as judo or karate. As such, the garment signifies that whoever wears it is ready and willing to learn. Further, Japanese martial arts have a strong focus on spiritual development as well as development of martial technique, which foreshadows the lesson given by Obi-Wan where he tells Luke to "let go of [his] conscious self and act on instinct" while training with his lightsaber (Lucas 1997:72). As a young hero, Luke's character corresponds to the archetype of the child. As such, he represents a marriage between the conscious and the unconscious. Further, the child signifies a desire to grow stronger and evolve; to develop a consciousness distinguished from the unconscious. As mentioned, the child archetype is often manifested as a child-god. Luke is not shown as a deity, but his surname, Skywalker, does carry with it an association with the heavenly spheres.[6]

Luke's desire to leave is based on the monotony of life on Tatooine. The first description of Tatooine paints it as a "death-white wasteland" (Lucas 1997:5). As such, it is symbolic of stillness and of death. More importantly, very few things grow in a desert. The stasis of Tatooine is only broken by the seasons marking the year for the moisture farmers. All of Luke's friends have left the planet, but Luke's uncle keeps finding excuses for refusing

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[5] Mark Hamill, who played the role of Luke, was around twenty-five during the filming of *Star Wars*.
[6] As does the ominous surname originally intended for Luke: Starkiller.

him to leave. This action reinforces Owen's role as threshold guardian, transposing the role from the metaphorical function it serves in the family unit to literally serving to keep Luke from leaving the planet and exploring the galaxy. Unbeknownst to Luke, however, Owen's attempts to keep him in stasis and from realizing his potential, are motivated by good intentions:

AUNT BERU

Luke's just not a farmer, Owen. He has too much of his father in him.

OWEN

That's what I'm afraid of (Lucas 1997:33).

Owen's fear of Luke becoming like his father can, in retrospect and with the knowledge that Darth Vader is Luke's father, be read as Owen fearing that Luke too will turn to evil. This reading, however, ignores vital cues in the text that Darth Vader and Anakin Skywalker were originally intended to be two separate people (Lucas 1997:43,44,110). In light of these, Owen's motivation for keeping Luke is arguably to keep him from going out to fight and die in what he deems a meaningless war.[7] The irony here is that, like in myths and fairy tales from all around the world, it is Owen's attempt to shield Luke from the outside world that fuels his drive and desire to seek it out.

The calling event itself takes place in the garage of the Lars homestead. Luke, working on cleaning up Artoo, gets a glimpse of Princess Leia's message for Obi-Wan. Luke does not only hear the message being spoken, he also sees parts of a hologram recorded by Leia before her capture. At this point, Leia's archetypal function is that of the maiden, and her appearance marks her as such (see appendix four). She is presented as a kore figure, clad in long white robes. The use of all white for her robes underlines her innocence, as well as

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[7] Lucas later attempted to make the scene where Obi-Wan tells Luke about the death of his father fit the continuity of the series by having Obi-Wan explain that everything he told him then was true "from a certain point of view" (Kasdan and Lucas 1997:43). However, Lucas neglected to account for the relationship described by Obi-Wan between Luke's father and uncle in the prequel trilogy, leaving the plotlines drawn up in this scene unresolved.

giving her a spiritual significance. This combined with her youth[8] and her royal title makes the scene reminiscent of a medieval courtly romance,[9] where the lady is to be worshipped from afar and eventually conquered or won. Further, as per the conventions of courtly love, the attraction holds an erotic component, but more importantly a spiritual one. Arguably, it is this illusion, combined with his lust for adventure, that causes Luke to respond to the call by removing Artoo's restraining bolt in order to see more of the recording, allowing for Artoo's escape and the meeting with Obi-Wan (Lucas 1997:30,34-41). In other words, Luke's response to the call is characterized by unconscious action, not words of acceptance, which together with all the other apparently random events leading up to this point, signifies that this is a destined event. When the call is later repeated by Obi-Wan, and subsequently rejected by Luke, it is too late; the wheels of destiny have already moved forward. Luke's home and parental guardians are gone and he is left with no choice but to follow where destiny leads him.

Comparing *Star Wars* to Campbell, it is evident that the calling event conforms to traditional myth-patterns. Luke is ready for change and wishes to leave, but is held back by the threshold guardians. The arrival of the droids heralds the start of the adventure and Leia's message serves as the call. At this point Luke would not knowingly accept, due to the influence of his Uncle, but through unconscious action he sets in motion the events that are about to change his life for ever.

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[8] Leia is described as a "beautiful young girl (about sixteen years old)" (Lucas 1997:6). Carrie Fisher, who played the role of Leia, was approximately twenty years old at the time of shooting the film.
[9] Bettelheim (1975:111) argued that the "Knight in Shining Armor and the Damsel in Distress" are expressions of the Oedipus complex. See also Herskovits and Herskovits (1958).

3.2. Supernatural Aid

3.2.1. Campbell

"For those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass" (Campbell 1993:69). This type of character is found in everything from European fairy tales (as fairy godmother and helpful crone) or in the legends of the Christian saints (as the Virgin). In Asian legends this role may be filled by a kind spirit or deity (such as a dragon god) or an enlightened being (such as a bodhisattva). Ultimately, what this type of figure represents is the "benign, protecting power of destiny … protective power is always and ever-present within the sanctuary of the heart … one has only to know and trust, and the ageless guardians will appear" (Campbell 1993:72). The encounter with the supernatural guardian signifies that the imminent change is something the world itself is ready for and as long as the actions of the hero coincide with this goal, he is virtually unstoppable.

The hero who receives the aid of this type of supernatural helper is commonly one who has already responded to the call of the herald, but this may not always be the case. Regardless, the result is always the same: the hero is now ready to leave his familiar surroundings and step out into an unknown world.

3.2.2. Star Wars

As Luke follows the call of the droid-heralds into the desert, he encounters his own supernatural helper: Obi-Wan Kenobi. Obi-Wan is a strange, old hermit who, as it turns out, is capable of performing feats of what can only be described as magic, as he is able to manipulate the minds of those around him. He is also seemingly immortal, as his body simply vanishes when Darth Vader cuts him in half. Further, although he is supposedly dead, he is

still able to communicate directly with Luke, urging him on and providing advice (Lucas 1997:51-52,104,112-113,130,165-166,171).

Obi-Wan provides and arms Luke with two things: his father's lightsaber and knowledge of the Force (Lucas 1997:44,45,71-74).[10] Further, he himself acts as a guardian for the fledgling Jedi (Lucas 1997:51,52,55,56). Together they set out to leave the planet and venture into the unknown.

3.2.3. Analysis

As mentioned prior, Luke's agreement to the removal of Artoo's restraining bolt in order to see more of Princess Leia's message for Obi-Wan is also an acceptance of the call to adventure. Following this, Luke embarks on what can be regarded as a preliminary quest, the search for the renegade droid Artoo. He manages to track Artoo, but is ambushed by Tusken raiders before he is able to return and subsequently rescued by Obi-Wan. The failure of this initial, relatively simple quest, undertaken in familiar territory, underlines Luke's inexperience. Further, it shows that Luke is in need of a teacher in order for him to become strong enough to succeed in the task that destiny has appointed him. Motivated by necessity, Obi-Wan Kenobi makes his appearance. His function is as previously stated to act as a mentor and protective figure for Luke. As such, he corresponds to the archetype of the wise old man. The character of Obi-Wan is an amalgam of European and Asian elements. The following will show how the character encompasses the qualities of wizard, mystic, monk and martial arts master in a marriage of the spiritual and the physical.

Obi-Wan is described as a "shabby old desert-rat-of-a-man. His ancient leathery face, cracked and weathered by exotic climates, is set off by dark, penetrating eyes and a scraggly

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[10] The gift of the lightsaber can seem like it serves no other function than to be like "something-out-of-a-fairy-tale" as we only see Luke use it once in a training sequence. However, Luke's animosity towards Darth Vader, combined with the fact that Vader survives the final space battle, points to a showdown between the two in the imminent futire. This fits well with the serialized *Flash Gordon*-type adventures that Lucas have listed as some of his inspiration for *Star Wars* (Zito 1997:viii).

white beard" (Lucas 1997:40). In the film (see appendix five) he is seen wearing a beige tunic, not unlike the one worn by Luke, covered by a hooded, brown robe. In psychology, brown is regarded as warm, calm and simple. In the Christian tradition, brown represents autumn, sorrow and humility,[11] and has therefore seen much use throughout history as the colour of choice for some monastic orders, like the Franciscans. Obi-Wan's appearance is a compound of several elements which put together say a lot about his character:

The white beard immediately sets him apart as a mature man. Traditionally, heroes, kings and gods have always been depicted with beards unless their youth was to be emphasized (Biedermann 1989:342). As none of the other characters have facial hair, the function of the white beard is to highlight his advanced age, which is associated with experience and wisdom. The combination of the white beard and hooded robe give Obi-Wan the appearance of an archetypal wizard and hints at supernatural powers. Note, however, that unlike the traditional image of a "Merlinian" wizard, Obi-Wan's beard is trimmed to a relatively short length. The simple, brown robe also, as previously mentioned, gives associations to Christian monastic orders, an image which is reinforced by the fact that Obi-Wan lives alone in the desert like an ascetic. Finally, the beige tunic, resembling Luke's, hint at martial ability. However, where Luke's is white and therefore connote inexperience, Obi-Wan's beige one can, through the association with autumn and therefore the association with advanced age, indicate superior ability. The tunic together with his trimmed beard may also gives an association to Obi-Wan's counterpart in *The Hidden Fortress*, Rokurota Makabe (see appendix six). Viewed in this light, Obi-Wan's potential martial ability is further highlighted.

As previously mentioned, Obi-Wan provides Luke with two things, a lightsaber and knowledge of the Force. In other words, he arms Luke both physically and spiritually. The

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[11] From latin "humilitas", "humus" literally translates as soil.

lightsaber is described as a "short handle with several electronic gadgets attached to it" (Lucas 1997:43). When turned on it produces a blue or red beam with a white centre between three and four feet in length.[12] The presence of the thing is enhanced by the sound it makes: it produces a distinct sound when turned on and off and hums ominously when extended.

The sword is not an ancient weapon, as it did not come into existence before the Bronze Age, yet it is found in myths and legends from all over the world. Regarded as a symbol of masculinity, swords are often thought to have power beyond their practical application as instruments of war. In Chinese lore, some swords were thought to be able to banish demons and in Japan the *katana* sword was regarded as the weapon and soul of the samurai. According to Japanese thought, as one polishes and perfects one's skill with the sword, one also polishes and perfects the self. In Christian mythology, the sword is the weapon of the archangel Michael and after Adam and Eve was driven out of Eden, an angel wielding a flaming sword was designated to keep them out. The sword is also regarded as a symbol of power, as seen in the Catholic doctrine of the two swords, which dictates that the spiritual sword is held by the Church and the temporal sword is held by the State. In fairy tale and legend, such as Arthurian romance, a sword may be given to designate the rightful ruler of the realm.

The lightsaber draws from all these sources. The Jedi's dedication to their weapon resembles that of the samurai, and the lightsaber's appearance is not unlike that of the flaming sword of Genesis. Further, as the lightsaber is intrinsically connected to the Jedi order, described as "guardians of peace and justice in the Old Republic" (Lucas 1997:44), it is not unlike the spiritual sword of the Church.[13] The colouring of the weapon is also

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[12] According to *Star Wars*. In *Return of the Jedi* we are shown Luke's green lightsaber and in *Attack of the Clones* we see Jedi master Mace Windu wield a purple one. There are no other colors according to the canon established by the films. However, the "expanded universe" of other media has seen lightsabers in almost every colour imaginable.

[13] This impression is supported by the prequel trilogy which expands upon the relationship between the Jedi Knights and the Galactic Senate.

significant. The weapon given to Luke is blue, as is the one wielded by Obi-Wan. As mentioned previously, blue is above all else thought of as the colour of spirituality and the heavens. It is calming and connected with wisdom and fidelity. The lightsaber wielded by Darth Vader is red, which is generally regarded as the opposite of blue. Red is seen as aggressive, vital and forceful. It is also connected to passion, anger and strife. In alchemy red and white together is symbolic of sulphur, which in turn gives associations to hellfire.

The other amulet provided by Obi-Wan is the knowledge of the Force. The Force is described as a source of power for the Jedi. According to Obi-Wan "it's an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us. It binds the galaxy together" (Lucas 1997:45). There are two aspects of the force: the light side, which is never explicitly named as such, and the dark side. The Force is neither good nor evil, it simply is. As such, it is comparable to the concept of yin and yang in Chinese philosophy, where the two poles are seen as part of each other and intrinsically linked together by the ebb and flow of the universe. The Force may be regarded as wholly feminine, or as a syzygy of masculine-feminine. Seen in light of the Abrahamic religious tradition, the light side of the Force represents the virtuous female qualities: it is passive, creative, healing and sustaining, whereas the dark side represents the dangerous aspects of the feminine: the active, seductive, sexual and aggressive. Further, the reading of the Force as wholly feminine lends itself towards the good-evil dichotomy of the Abrahamic tradition, whereas a reading of the Force as male-female corresponds with the viewpoint that both sides are parts of a mutual whole, which is commonly found in traditions like Hinduism, Taoism and Buddhism.

Having armed Luke with both a temporal and spiritual tool in the lightsaber and awareness of the Force, Obi-Wan has attempted to prepare the young Jedi initiate for the trials ahead, allowing him to break free of the boundaries of his familiar world and pass into the zone of the unknown.

4. Initiation

Having found the courage to step out if his known world, the hero's initiation process can now begin. In this stage the budding hero is faced with a succession of tests forcing him to abandon his ego; he can encounter the ultimate feminine made manifest in the goddess of the world, which he in turn may marry or reject; he may come to terms and reconcile with the father. Finally, he might reach the home of the gods and steal the source of their power or even be promoted to godhood himself.

Campbell (1993) outlined six events as part of the initiation stage: (1) The Road of Trials; (2) The Meeting with the Goddess; (3) Woman as the Temptress; (4) Atonement with the Father; (5) Apotheosis and (6) The Ultimate Boon. The following chapter will be a treatment of The Road of Trials and The Meeting with the Goddess events in relation to *Star Wars*.

4.1. The Road of Trials

4.1.1. Campbell

Having passed the threshold, the hero is now forced to undertake a series of trials. This stage of the myth-adventure is found in most myths and fairy tales of the world (Campbell 1993:97). During his trials, the hero receives assistance from the supernatural helper he met before his departure from the familiar world. This aid may come in form of advice, amulets or secret agents working for the helper. The trials of the hero serve as a means of purification of the self. Campbell (1993:101) describes it as: "the process of dissolving, transcending, or transmuting the infantile images of our personal past." The hero, little by little, comes in contact with, and assimilates, his own unsuspected self. Throughout the trials, the hero is forced to put aside his ego, he must let go of "his pride, his virtue,

beauty and life, and bow or submit to the absolutely intolerable. Then he finds that he and his opposite are not of differing species, but one flesh" (Campbell 1949:108).

The trials are a continuation of the first threshold passing, as the original departure was only the beginning of the journey towards illumination. If the hero is finally able to put his ego to death, he will ultimately attain enlightenment.

4.1.2. Star Wars

After leaving Tatooine, Luke is faced with several trials. The first trial is relatively simple and takes place during a training session with Obi-Wan on the *Millennium Falcon.* While Luke is training with his lightsaber against a small drone, Obi-Wan orders him to put on a helmet with the visor down, so that he cannot see anything. Being told to stretch out with his feelings, Luke manages to deflect several laser blasts in succession.

The second challenge is the rescue of Princess Leia and is in fact made up of two parts. As Obi-Wan has already left them by the time they learn that the princess is being held on the Death Star, her rescue has to be initiated by Luke, as Han is reluctant to help (Lucas 1997:85). Luke's first challenge is to convince Han, which he does by playing on his greed (Lucas 1997:86). Finally, he sets his plan into motion, which involves restraining Chewbacca. At this point Luke and Han are wearing stolen Imperial stormtrooper armour and as such they are able to freely walk the Death Star pretending that Chewbacca is their prisoner (Lucas 1997:87). Finally, they arrive at the holding area and manage to free Leia from her cell.

Luke's ultimate trial comes as the Rebel Alliance mounts their desperate assault on the Death Star. Manning a small *X-Wing* fighter Luke manages to destroy the gigantic space station. He is not alone in this venture, however. Red Leader, Luke's squadron commander, relying on his targeting computer, attempts to blow up the station but fails (Lucas 1997:157).

As Luke races closer to his target, he hears Obi-Wan's voice telling him to "use the Force" and "let go" (Lucas 1997:165). Deciding to trust his instincts, Luke succeeds in his task (Lucas 1997:170).

4.1.3. Analysis

After crossing the threshold of his known world, Luke is faced with several challenges that test his courage, wit and cunning. As stated, the first trial is encountered during the training session with Obi-Wan aboard the Millennium Falcon. The training scene, reinforcing the Japanese martial arts elements mentioned prior, is reminiscent of how training is conducted in the Japanese *koryu*.[14] The koryu stress a close relationship between teacher and student and one-to-one training is not uncommon. Further, as opposed to western pedagogics, where one is explained a concept first and then invited to try, the Japanese way is to have the student try first with little to no explanation given. Finally, training in the koryu is provided only to the student that understands that the survival and correct transmission of the ryu takes precedence over the student's own wishes.[15] It is in this context that Obi-Wan's methods must be read (Lucas 1997:72). Luke's compliance and subsequent success at deflecting the blaster bolts without involving his conscious mind, twice exemplifies the need for the hero to put his ego aside in order to grow. This scene is also significant in that it acts as a turning point in Luke's development. Where he previously failed at bargaining with his uncle and securing the runaway Artoo, Luke's actions will from this point on be marked by success. As put by Obi-Wan: "You have taken your first step into a large world" (Lucas 1997:74).

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[14] *Koryu* literally means "old stream/flow" and refers to the classical schools of warrior arts that predate the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603. Some of these are still extant today and training is conducted in much the same manner as it was hundreds of years ago.

[15] For a deeper understanding of the concept, see www.koryu.com

The next trial is the rescue of the princess. The first challenge undertaken by Luke in this quest is convincing Han Solo to aid in her rescue. Luke's decision to attempt to rescue Leia can be read in two ways: First, it can be read as purely altruistic; Luke is putting aside his ego and willingly endangers himself for the sake of others. This shows growth on Luke's behalf, as earlier, when Artoo escaped, Luke's motivation for going after him was to save himself from getting in trouble with his uncle. This time, there is no punishment associated with abstaining from the quest. However, there are indications, such as Luke's instant decision to effect her rescue despite being under clear instructions to stay put by Obi-Wan, that Luke has an ulterior motive for rescuing Leia. As such, it is not unreasonable to interpret Luke's decision to help Leia as a continuation of the courtly romance motif outlined earlier.

Regardless of the motivation behind Luke's decision to save Leia, he recognizes that he is unable to perform the feat alone. In order to effect the rescue he needs to enlist the help of the smuggler Han Solo. Han is described as a "tough, roguish starpilot, about thirty years old. A mercenary on a starship, he is simple, sentimental, and cocksure" (Lucas 1997:56). An insight into Han's character is immediately provided through his last name: Solo, which underlines his free nature. Han's actions, with the exception of his redeeming return, characterize him as an antihero.[16] The character corresponds to the archetype of the shadow. Han's dress (see appendix seven) supports this reading, denoting him as a dark and complex character. The black vest over the white shirt can be read as a variant of the *taijitu* symbol used in Chinese philosophy to show the relationship between yin and yang, or light and dark, or it may be read as showing how he is inherently good despite his dark exterior. He also wears dark blue trousers inlaid with red stitching, which can be interpreted as a Korean *taeguk*, the symbol found in the centre of the South Korean flag, which, like the *taijitu*, represents the relationship between the positive and negative, further cementing the

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[16] See Lucas 1997:57-60, 85-86, 126-127, 168. The scene where Han shoots Greedo in cold blood was edited for the Special Edition to make it look like he shoots in self defence, removing any moral ambiguity from the scene.

interpretation of Han as an ambiguous character. As previously mentioned, blue is the colour of spirituality and fidelity. However, it may also be read as representing something secretive, deceitful and unreliable. Red, as well as being the colour of blood, may stand for, as mentioned, passion, vitality and power. All these characteristics are applicable to the character of Han Solo and as such contribute to the image of him as a man of opposites.

Just like Luke failed at his quest to bring back Artoo before his departure from home, he failed at convincing his uncle to let him leave home earlier than they had agreed on (Lucas 1997:32,33). Therefore, that he successfully manages to convince Han to aid in Leia's rescue is as a testament to Luke's development. As shown in the following scene, which serves as a parallel to the aforementioned argument with Uncle Owen, Luke has learned that it is not always enough to appeal to reason when conducting an argument, as some people cannot be reasoned with:

[Having discovered that Princess Leia is aboard the Death Star.]

LUKE

The droid belongs to her. She's the one in the message. We've got to help her.

HAN

Now, look, don't get any funny ideas. The old man wants us to wait right here.

LUKE

But he didn't know she was here. Look, will you just find a way back into that detention block?

HAN

I'm not going anywhere.

LUKE

But they're going to kill her!

HAN

Better her than me.

[Pause]

LUKE

She's rich.

Chewbacca growls.

HAN

Rich? (Lucas 1997:85)

The second part of the rescue attempt is concerned with the actual rescue. As mentioned, this trial corresponds to Luke's earlier failed attempt to retrieve Artoo. Keeping with the reading of the quest for the Princess as a medieval romance, Luke, having donned the armour of an Imperial Stormtrooper (see appendix eight) has literally become the knight in shining armour.[17] The rescue is significant in that it is wholly orchestrated by Luke, even though Han is the more experienced of the two. The fact that Han defers to Luke's leadership in spite of his previous misgivings (Lucas 1997:57,64,66,67,72) is either indicative of bad writing or a sign of Han's growing respect for Luke after witnessing him train with Obi-Wan. Regardless, Luke's plan works and they successfully make their escape with the princess.

The final challenge undertaken by Luke is by far the greatest and also the one with the most serious ramifications in case of failure: the attack on the Death Star. Victory in this battle is contingent on successfully targeting the weak spot of the giant space station, an exhaust port. Important to note here is that before Luke makes his attack run, two other, unsuccessful, runs were made. Arguably, these two failed as a direct result of the pilots's inability to let go of their attachment to their egos and conscious selves: During the first run, upon seeing the Imperial TIE fighters closing in on them, Gold Leader panics (Lucas 1997:148) and is subsequently shot down. This may be read as support of Campbell's

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[17] Dressing as the enemy is a common trope in storytelling and myth. In most instances it is done as a means of disguise, however, in some cultures wearing the skin of an animal or enemy is regarded as a means for the wearer to absorb the power and take on qualities of that animal or person.

(1993:108) claim that the hero must be willing to put aside "his pride, his virtue, beauty and life" in order to attain the ultimate. Unwilling to perform this sacrifice, Gold Leader is unable to attain the ultimate. During the second run, performed by Red Leader, he survives long enough to manage to take a shot, but is unsuccessful as the torpedoes detonate on the surface of the Death Star (Lucas 1997:156). The blind reliance on the targeting computer, a machine programmed to follow a strict set of rules, not unlike the programming of the superego, is partly why Red Leader failed. The real reason is arguably his inability to disregard the programming of the superego and tap into his instinctive side, the id.

The third and final attack run, undertaken by Luke, is successful. As the following will show, Luke's success is dependent on his willingness to sacrifice everything, as well as the ability to let go of his conscious self and trust his instincts. During his attack run, Luke is flanked by two pilots: Biggs, his childhood friend, and Wedge. The first indication of Luke's willingness to sacrifice himself in order to achieve his goal is seen as Wedge's ship is hit by laser fire and Luke orders him away, despite that the prudent decision would have been to have him remain in order to buy the others time (Lucas 1997:161). The following destruction of Biggs's ship represents the final break with Luke's past life on Tatooine (Lucas 1997:163) and may be read in the context of Campbell's (1993:101) formerly mentioned view of the trials of the hero as "the process of dissolving, transcending, or transmuting the infantile images of our personal past". Left alone, save for the droid Artoo, Luke adheres to Obi-Wan's lesson and turns off his targeting computer, representing the abandonment of ego necessary for success.

The final moments before the destruction of the Death Star is the culmination of Luke's growth following his series of trials. At this point Luke has severed all ties to his past, submitted himself to his impending destruction and dissolved his conscious mind. As such, he is finally ready for the world-restoring task destiny has appointed him.

4.2. The Meeting with the Goddess

4.2.1. Campbell

When the hero at last has overcome all the barriers of his journey and defeated his adversaries, he is faced with the Queen Goddess of the World. She is characterized by unparalleled beauty and is described by Campbell (1993:110) as "the bliss-bestowing goal of every hero's earthly and unearthly quest." She promises that the bliss of early childhood, under the "good" or nourishing mother, will be restored. However, there is also a dangerous aspect to the Goddess, as she is also associated with the "bad" mother: the absent mother, the hampering or forbidding mother, the mother refusing to let her child grow up, the desired but forbidden mother (the root of the previously mentioned Oedipus complex).

In mythology, woman represents the totality of what we can know and the hero is the one who attains this knowledge. For one who is unprepared to see, she may appear ugly or inferior, but for the hero who understands and takes her as she is, she is revealed to be beautiful and he becomes the king of her world (Campbell 1993:116).

4.2.2. Star Wars

In *Star Wars* there are arguably two meeting-with-the-goddess events taking place. The first and the most obvious one is Luke's encounter with Princess Leia in the Death Star detention area. Luke has been fascinated by her beauty ever since he first laid eyes on her (Lucas 1997:29) and now that he has finally reached his goal, he is stunned. Their first encounter is described as such:

> When the smoke clears, Luke sees the dazzling young princess-senator. She
>
> had been sleeping and is now looking at him with an uncomprehending look

on her face. Luke is stunned by her incredible beauty and stands staring at her with his mouth open (Lucas 1997:90).

Leia is arguably the only woman of significance in the film, the other being Luke's aunt and mother figure, Beru. As Beru is no longer alive, Leia carries with her a hope of restoring Luke's world and she does take on motherly qualities after their escape from the Death Star (Lucas 1997:114). Despite this, Luke's feelings for her clearly extend to more than platonic affection (Lucas 1997:122).

The other meeting with the goddess is not a single event, but rather Luke's growing awareness of the Force. The Force may be said to be a representation of the feminine, with the light and dark side incorporating different aspects of it. The light side is creative, it grants power and it in turn has its origin in all living things (Lucas 1997:45). The dark side may be said to represent the "bad" aspects of the goddess, with its ability to seduce and corrupt (Lucas 1997:44).

4.2.3. Analysis

The following two readings do not exclude each other. Rather, they each represent the meeting with the goddess on different planes: the meeting with Leia is a physical meeting, while the recognition and integration of the Force represents a spiritual meeting. Despite taking place on different levels, as the following will show, they arguably represent the same theme.

Leia as the Goddess

The reading of Leia as a manifestation of the goddess is supported by her encompassment of the three feminine archetypes: the maiden, the mother and the anima, which freely intermingle in the male mind. This type of multi-faceted goddess, while not commonly found in the European tradition, is often seen in Asia, particularly in Hinduism.

The supreme goddess of Hinduism, Devi, manifests as a trinity: Durga, a proud warrior goddess, Kali, a terrible, destructive goddess and Parvati, a benign, motherly goddess. In the same manner, Leia appears as the maiden for the first part of the film, up until her meeting with Luke, as the anima/destructive mother in the middle part, up until leaving the Death Star and as the nourishing mother for the remainder of the film. The following will show how Leia's character incorporates and mixes elements from these feminine archetypes.

As stated, Leia initially appears as a manifestation of the maiden. Her appearance is that of a kore (see appendix nine), wearing long, white robes, as well as having braided hair. Her function as maiden is also made manifest by the nature of her request: as the maiden is often subjected to danger, so is a message containing a call for aid not unusual. As a manifestation of the maiden and Luke's anima, Leia is the object of his quest. The romance, however, is short-lived. As Leia morphs between the maiden and mother archetypes, Luke experiences first hand the ever-changing nature of the feminine. With the exception of the scene where she kisses Luke before they swing over the chasm (Lucas 1997:109), Leia's part as the maiden ends in an ironic twist when Luke steps into her cell:

Luke [dressed as a stormtrooper] *is stunned by her incredible beauty and stands staring at her with his mouth hanging open.*

LEIA

(*finally*)

Aren't you a little short for a stormtrooper?

Luke takes off his helmet, coming out of it.

LUKE

What? Oh . . . the uniform. I'm Luke Skywalker. I'm here to rescue you.

LEIA

You're who? (Lucas 1997:90)

This unexpected, comic scene effectively puts a stop to any illusions of grandeur on Luke's behalf. Simultaneously, it highlights the tendency in men to project feminine archetypes upon others.

After the meeting between Luke and Leia, she is given agency. As such, her role changes from an object to be rescued into a partner of equal value, not just to Luke, but to Han as well. Luke does not object to Leia's leadership, but Han voices his protest on several occasions (Lucas 1997: 92,94,96,103,104,105,121). Han's aversion can be read in light of the fact that most men are afraid of their anima (Hudson 1966:189). Luke's lack of disapproval may be due to his youth and therefore his strong association of his anima with the mother.[18] At this point, Leia does show aspects of the mother and can be likened to the goddess Durga.

Leia's final archetypal manifestation is as the benign mother. This stage is initiated as they escape the Death Star aboard the Millennium Falcon:

> *Luke, saddened by the loss of Obi-Wan Kenobi, stares off blankly as the robots look on. Leia puts a blanket around him protectively, and Luke turns and looks up at her. She sits down beside him … Luke looks downward sadly, shaking his head back and forth, as the princess smiles comfortingly at him.*

<div align="center">LUKE</div>

I can't believe he's gone.

<div align="center">LEIA</div>

There wasn't anything you could have done (Lucas 1997:113,114).

Leia's change of aspect is further highlighted when the Millennium Falcon is pursued by Imperial TIE fighters: A devastated Luke is called into action as a turret gunner, but no task is assigned to Leia. This is repeated once more as the men leave for the attack on the Death Star and Leia stays in the Rebel headquarters. Finally, in the last scene of the film Leia

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[18] The identification of Leia as Luke's anima is underlined in the subsequent films. In *Return of the Jedi* Luke learns that Leia is his twin sister (Kasdan & Lucas 1997:44), literally making her a female version of him.

once more plays the part of the maiden. The association with the kore figure is again emphasized: Dressed in a "long white dress [she] is staggeringly beautiful" (Lucas 1997:173).

As shown, the character of Leia is constantly subject to change, as she is associated with different feminine archetypes, not unlike deities associated with goddess-worship. As such, the meeting between Luke and Leia may truly be regarded as a "meeting with the Goddess", as Leia imbues the qualities of every feminine archetype.

The Force as the Goddess

The Force can be viewed as wholly feminine and a representation of the Goddess. Read as such, the light and dark sides represent the positive and negative aspects of the feminine archetypes. Further, this reading presumes that only men may use the Force, lest the animus be a part of it. Nothing in *Star Wars* affirms or dismisses the theory of Force users being all male, as little information is given about the nature of the Force. However, the fact remains that all Force users in the film, Luke, Obi-Wan and Darth Vader, are male. Further, the Jedi are described as an order of knights, which have traditionally been almost exclusively male. Additionally, Obi-Wan is described as a "wizard" by Uncle Owen (Lucas 1997:32), a title predominantly used on men. Masculine nomenclature is also used by Admiral Motti, who refers to the Force as "[Vader's] sorcerer's ways" (Lucas 1997:48). Finally, the weapon of the Jedi, the lightsaber, is a distinctly phallic object, which underlines the association of the Jedi with the masculine.

A reading of the Jedi as a representation of masculine consciousness makes the Force a manifestation of the anima. It follows then, that the "meeting with the goddess" is the spiritual encounter experienced during his training with Obi-Wan:

[After having successfully deflected laser blasts while unable to see.]

LUKE

You know, I did feel something. I could almost see the remote.

BEN

That's good. You have taken your first step into a large world.

(Lucas 1997:74)

This can be taken to mean that Luke has taken a step further in the individuation process by having begun the integration of his anima. Obi-Wan's instructions also point to the Force as something belonging to the realm of the feminine: "This time, let go of your conscious self and act on instinct … Stretch out with your feelings (Lucas 1997:72,73)." Feelings and instinct generally belong to the realm of eros, which is associated with the anima.

The Force also holds aspects of the mother, both positive and negative. As mentioned previously, the mother archetype is associated with anything that creates, protects and sustains life. This side of the Force is shown as Obi-Wan revives Luke after the ambush by the sand people (Lucas 1997:41). Further, according to Obi-Wan, the Force has a sustaining function, as it "binds the galaxy together" (Lucas 1997:45). The negative aspects of the Force is displayed through Obi-Wan's counterpart, Darth Vader. Vader claims that the "ability to destroy a planet is insignificant next to the power of the Force" (Lucas 1997:48) and then proceeds to choke Admiral Motti without actually touching him. The negative aspects of the mother archetype are further alluded to by Obi-Wan when talking about Darth Vader: claiming that Vader was "seduced by the dark side of the Force" (Lucas 1997:44), Obi-Wan's statement highlights the corruptive and possibly dangerous aspects of the mother.[19]

In summary, there is both a physical and spiritual meeting event. Leia is the physical manifestation of the feminine, and as such the character's function is varied in line with the

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[19] See "Woman as the Temptress" in Campbell 1993:120-126.

three feminine archetypes. The Force is the spiritual manifestation of the feminine principle and also holds within it aspects of the archetypes, notably the anima and mother.

5. Return

Having completed his adventure and obtained his treasure, the hero is faced with the task of returning to society. Some heroes decline the return in favour of eternal life in paradise; others may be forced to flee if the gods are unwilling to share their treasure. If the flight is unsuccessful, the hero may be in need of rescue. In some cases, the hero may not need to choose between the realm of the gods and the normal world, as he gains insight in and subsequent mastery over both. Finally, the returning hero, aware of the natural order of things, is able to live his life free of worry and attachment.

Campbell (1993) divided the return stage into the following events: (1) Refusal of the Return; (2) The Magic Flight; (3) Rescue from Without; (4) Master of the Two Worlds and (5) Freedom to Live. The following chapter will be a treatment of The Magic Flight and Master of the Two Worlds events in relation to *Star Wars.*

5.1. The Magic Flight

5.1.1. Campbell

If, after completing his quest, the hero has obtained his boon with the blessings of the gods, his return to society is swift and unhindered. If he wins his trophy through some act of trickery or in some other way has obtained it against the will of its guardian, the return becomes a chase scene, often comical, with elements of magical obstruction and evasion (Campbell 1993:197). In one variant of the flight, objects are left behind to speak for the fleeing hero, thus delaying pursuit. In another variant, objects are tossed behind to entangle or

otherwise delay the pursuer and let the hero escape. Regardless of the method employed, the flight is usually successful and the hero is now free to approach the return threshold.

5.1.2. Star Wars

In *Star Wars* there are arguably three magic flight events taking place. The first comes towards the end of an oft-ignored hero-cycle: Princess Leia's. Not much is said about her quest, but the opening text of the film provides some context:

> Rebel spaceships, striking from a hidden base, have won their first victory against the evil Galactic Empire.
>
> During the battle, Rebel spies managed to steal secret plans to the Empire's ultimate weapon, the Death Star, an armoured space station with enough power to destroy an entire planet.
>
> Pursued by the Empire's sinister agents, Princess Leia races home aboard her starship, custodian of the stolen plans that can save her people and restore freedom to the galaxy… (Lucas 1997:3).

Following this, the movie opens *in medias res* with Leia's starship pursued by an Imperial Star Destroyer. Her flight is unsuccessful, however, and she captured by Darth Vader, but not before she manages to get the secret plans off the ship (Lucas 1997:6-10).

The second magic flight is a variant of the first: Luke and his companions are racing from Imperial Star Destroyers with the secret plans on board. Unlike Princess Leia, however, they are able to jump to hyperspace and escape their pursuers (Lucas 1997:67).

The third magic flight is similar to the second: Luke and his companions are fleeing yet again, this time from the Death Star. The still have the secret plans on board. Pursued by Imperial TIE Fighters, they manage to destroy their pursuers and make the jump to hyperspace (Lucas 1997:115-120). Shortly after, the audience learns that this was not a "true"

magic flight, as Darth Vader, having planted a tracking beacon on their ship, allowed them to escape in order to find and destroy the rebel base (Lucas 1997:120). It is worth noting that this flight event is as much part of Leia's hero-cycle as it is of Luke's.

5.1.3. Analysis

The three magic flight events in *Star Wars* share some distinct similarities: They are identical in setting, outer space, and they are identical in that they employ the same type of vehicles, spaceships.

Generally, in science fiction spaceships are simply used as props to move the characters around (Roberts 2000:151). However, spaceships may be read as a variant of the flying chariot, a vehicle for gods and kings found commonly found in Indo-European mythology. The Greek sun god Helios was depicted as driving a flaming chariot across the sky every day, the Nordic god Thor flew in his chariot of thunder. In Indian mythology there is reference to the Vimana, which is depicted as an aerial vehicle able to fly without being drawn by an animal. As vehicles of gods, the use of spaceships for transportation and warfare is associated with heavenly or magical power. As such, their use adds to the magic of the magic flight.

The magic flight events are also similar in that they all feature the Empire as pursuers and happen for the same reason: the theft of the Death Star plans. The first event distinguishes itself by being set on another ship than the following two. Second, the characters involved are different. Finally, it distinguishes itself by virtue of its failure. However, it is arguably the most important of the three and the following will show how this event precipitates the rest of the events of the film.

The original flight event is the one referenced in the opening and subsequently shown: "Pursued by the Empire's sinister agents, Princess Leia races home aboard her starship,

custodian of the stolen plans that can save her people and restore freedom to the galaxy…" (Lucas 1997:3). As stated, this event is not a part of Luke's heroic journey, but rather belongs to Princess Leia's hero cycle. As the opening text implies, Leia has endured a separation and initiation of her own and is now at the return stage of the heroic journey. As such, combined with her youth, she may also be read as a manifestation of the child hero in addition to the previously provided reading of her as the ultimate feminine. A reading of Leia as centre of her own hero cycle that intersects with Luke's suggests a theme of cyclical action in *Star Wars.*[20] Leia's actions before her capture, uploading the Death Star plans into Artoo and recording a message for Obi-Wan, precipitates the events that are about to unfold. Effectively interlacing the beginning and end of two cycles. The cyclical underpinnings of the film is further revealed in the meeting between Obi-Wan and Darth Vader:

<div align="center">VADER</div>

I've been waiting for you, Obi-Wan. We meet again, at last. The circle is now complete. When I left you I was but the learner, now I am the master.

<div align="center">…</div>

<div align="center">BEN</div>

You can't win, Darth. If you strike me down I shall become more powerful than you can possibly imagine (Lucas 1997:110).

Vader's statement refers to events that have already transpired and that lead to this very point, closing the circle. Obi-Wan's statement reflects the futurity of the cycle, as destruction is not regarded as something final, but only as a prelude to another state. Finally, the very first lines of text in the film: "A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away …" (Lucas 1997:3) adds to the impression of time as a cyclical entity.[21] The effect of this, like in many

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[20] A theme that permeates the entire Star Wars saga.
[21] Most religions subscribe to the idea of cyclical time, while only a few, like the Judeo-Christian tradition, regard time as linear with a beginning and an end. However, even Christianity contains references to cyclical time, ref. Revelations 21:1 (King James version).

myths and fairy tales, is that it imbues the narrative with a sense of timelessness, which is further enhanced by the repetition of certain key events.

The motivation for the pursuit and the reason for the flight is, as stated by Campbell, the theft of the boon. The nature of the boon is explained in the opening text, the "secret plans to the Empire's ultimate weapon, the Death Star" (Lucas 1997:3). The boon is given physical form when Leia uploads the plans to Artoo, effectively making him the custodian of the restorative power.[22] As the boon is effectively knowledge and means for humanity to destroy evil, the theft of the plans may be read as a variant of the fire-theft, as fire is thought to have cleansing properties in some traditions.[23] As such, Leia's theft and subsequent capture and torture make her a Promethean figure, a reading further compounded by the fact that she, like Prometheus, was figuratively chained to a rock for her crime and eventually rescued.[24]

Because they build on the events preceding the first flight, the second and third flight events are of far less importance. Instead, they merely serve as a continuation of the first flight. However, it is of interest to note that none of the three are prototypical flight events, as they all differ somewhat from the structure outlined by Campbell: The first event is the original that follows organically after the theft of the boon. However, it is unsuccessful. The second flight is typical in that it succeeds due to magical evasion (the jump to light speed), but atypical in that the pursued have little to no connection to the preceding theft event. In fact, Han Solo does not even know why they are being pursued. Finally, the third event while successful and containing elements of magical obstruction, is not truly a flight, as Vader allows them to escape in order to learn the location of the Rebel base (Lucas 1997:120).

In summary, while there appears to be three magic flight events taking place in *Star Wars*, the other events are arguably nothing but echoes of the first event. The first event takes

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[22] A fact that everyone seems to forget once Princess Leia is introduced.
[23] See "purgatory" in Roman Catholic Doctrine.
[24] The Death Star was initially mistaken for a small moon, effectively a big rock.

place towards the end of Leia's hero cycle and serves as a catalyst for Luke's hero cycle, which in turn becomes about the rescue of Princess Leia. The function of this is to create a theme of cyclical time and action that continues throughout the film. Finally, while none of the flight events are prototypical, viewed together they contain all the elements described by Campbell.

5.2. *Master of the Two Worlds*

5.2.1. Campbell

In some myths the hero ultimately gains mastery over both worlds. In doing so, he achieves the freedom to pass between them at will, assuming the perspective of any one without contaminating it with the principles of the other. Achieving this, the hero is able to see past the scope of human destiny and into the eternal nature of the cosmos, all in terms "befitting his human understanding" (Campbell 1993:234). Realizing that symbols are only the vehicles, and not the final term, the tenor, of their reference, the hero sees things for what they are. Finally, the hero abandons all attachments, no longer resists the necessary annihilation in preparation for the realization of truth, and by doing so is ready for atonement with the universe.

5.2.2. Star Wars

There are two such events taking place in *Star Wars*. The first occurrence takes place in the meeting between Obi-Wan and Darth Vader:

> The old Jedi Knight looks over his shoulder at Luke, lifts his sword from Vader's, then watches his opponent with a serene look on his face. Vader brings his sword down, cutting old Ben in half. Ben's cloak falls to the floor in

two parts, but Ben is not in it. Vader is puzzled by Ben's disappearance and pokes at the empty cloak (Lucas 1997:112).

Obi-Wan's acceptance and even welcoming of death may be read as him being free from attachment to this world, and his subsequent communication with Luke hints at him having transcended the syzygy of life and death.[25]

The second mastery event occurs towards the end of the film as Luke approaches the Death Star exhaust port. Unfazed by the death of his fellow pilots and enemy fighters bearing down on him, Luke is able to apply Obi-Wan's training and let go of his conscious self. In doing so, he succeeds in his task (Lucas 1997:171).

5.2.3. Analysis

The 'two worlds' may refer to several pairings that are not mutually exclusive: it can be the temporal and spiritual world, the organic and technological world or the conscious and unconscious parts of the mind.

The Spiritual and Temporal worlds

'Spiritual' in this context refers to the realm of the Force. The association of the Force with a spiritual world apart from the physical reality is supported by Obi-Wan's statement to Luke after having completed his initial training: "You have taken your first step into a large world" (Lucas 1997:74). The relationship between the Force and the temporal world is circular: the Force is created by all living things and as such is inherently biased towards sustaining and protecting life. As such, the Force is comparable to the Chinese concept of *qi*, as opposed to an ultimate reality such as the concept of Brahman in Hinduism or the Christian God. Because the Force is created by living organisms, it is subject to fluctuation and any sudden, large changes may cause a disruption. As shown after the destruction of the

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[25] This seems to be the ultimate attainment of the Jedi. *Return of the Jedi* shows Obi-Wan, Yoda and Anakin Skywalker manifested after death (Kasdan & Lucas 1997:111).

planet Alderaan, death on a massive scale will cause a disturbance in the Force that resonates with those able to tap into it (Lucas 1997:70). Further, as shown by Obi-Wan, existence in the temporal realm is not a prerequisite for existence in the realm of the Force, as even after his apparent death at the hands of Darth Vader he is able to communicate with Luke (Lucas 1997:113,130,165,166,171). This level of mastery over the Force is apparently not something regularly seen, as Darth Vader seems unaware of the possibility of such a thing (Lucas 1997:110,112). Note that Obi-Wan's transcendence should also be regarded as an example of what Campbell terms an apotheosis event.[26]

Luke's moment of mastery occurs as he is making his attack run on the Death Star. By heeding Obi-Wan's advice and using the Force to succeed in his mission, Luke achieves the unity between spiritual existence and temporal action that was foreshadowed in the lightsaber training scene. As such, he is no longer a denizen of one world, but able to freely move between the two.

The Technological and Organic Worlds

The technological world refers to the droids and computers that are a necessary part of everyday life in the galaxy of *Star Wars*: Artoo and Threepio were able to escape because the computer on the Imperial Star Destroyer showed that there were no life forms aboard their escape pod (Lucas 1997:10); Uncle Owen is dependent on a droid to program the moisture vapourators on his farm (Lucas 1997:23); interstellar travel, essential for trade, is only possible via the use of navicomputers to calculate safe routes (Lucas 1997:67) and both Imperials and Rebels place employ targeting computers in their fighters (Lucas 1997:147,149). However, despite there being expressions of Ludditism in *Star Wars*,[27] no evil is attributed to technology alone. Technology is only shown as bad when it is used to

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[26] See Campbell (1993:149).
[27] "We don't serve their kind here" [Bartender referring to Artoo and Threepio] (Lucas 1997:53). The anti-technological theme continues to surface in episodes V and VI and is brought to the front in the prequel trilogy when the Galactic Republic goes to war against an army of machines.

alter and corrupt the natural world. This negative aspect of the technological world is manifested as the Galactic Empire and their war machine. The prime manifestations of this perversion of the natural world are the Death Star and Darth Vader. The Death Star is effectively an artificial planet that is unable to create or sustain life, but capable only of destruction. Darth Vader is a twisted synthesis of man and machine; a liminal being that is both human and inhuman at the same time.

He is described as the "awesome, seven-foot-tall Dark Lord of the Sith[28] … This is Darth Vader, right hand of the Emperor. His face is obscured by his flowing black robes and grotesque breath mask" (Lucas 1997:5). In addition to Vader's imposing appearance (see appendix ten), his presence is underlined by the rhythmic sound produced by his breathing apparatus.

Vader's cloak is arguably one of the key features of his appearance. It serves to amplify his appearance by draping and blending with his body, making him look larger and thus more powerful. In psychology, the cloak is read as symbolic of its qualities: it drapes, protects and hides. Vader's most striking feature is his helmet and mask, which are similar to the *kabuto* and *mempo* of Japanese samurai. Their intended effect was not just to protect the head and face of the warrior, but also to make him look more fearsome and hide his facial expression. This was important, as showing fear on the battlefield was disgraceful. The helmet also bears some resemblance to the medieval German *hundsgugel* as well as the more modern *stahlhelm*, which was used in the first and second World Wars. This helps identify him as an adversary, particularly at the release of the film in 1977, when most of the veterans from World War II were still alive.

The use of all black for Vader's outfit further cements his character as evil or bad. In psychology, black is seen as a manifestation of darkness and sorrow. In Europe, black has

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[28] The term 'Sith' is never used in the original trilogy. It first appears in *The Phantom Menace* and is shown to be an order made up of users of the dark side of the Force.

generally been viewed as a negative colour, related to death, dark gods and the devil. Black has also been used as the primary colour for terrifying gods, such as the Hindu deity Mahakala. Vader's final distinguishing feature is the control panel located on his chest. Presumably linked to his breathing apparatus, it, together with his facemask, gives him the appearance of being more machine than man.

Darth Vader's archetypal function is as a negative manifestation of the wise old man.[29] Like his counterpart Obi-Wan, Vader gives insights about the nature of the Force, albeit the destructive aspects of it. Further, as shown during his duel with Obi-Wan, Vader has eclipsed his former master in skill. Finally, Obi-Wan is only shown using the Force to mislead and compel (Lucas 1997:51,104), whereas Vader actively uses it to inflict harm (Lucas 1997:48).

The technological world can also be seen as symbolic of civilization: Technology has a civilizing function in that it allows for trade, travel and cultural exchange, which promotes cooperation between nations. The negative aspect of this is that as governments grow, they gradually encroach upon the lives of their citizens, becoming more and more suppressive. This is what has happened to the Empire, which was once a republic, but is now under the tyrannical rule of the Emperor (Lucas 1997:44,47).

The organic world stands in in opposition to the technological one. It too has a positive and negative aspect. The positive aspects of the organic world is manifested as the sustaining Force, the lush forest moon of Yavin IV and by the Rebels, particularly Rebel soldiers, who wear open helmets, as opposed to the uniform masks of the Imperial stormtroopers. The negative aspects of the organic world are made manifest on Luke's home planet, Tatooine, which, as a desert planet, represents death. The wasteland is filled with predators and the few pockets of life on Tatooine are equally wild and dangerous (Lucas

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[29] The impression of Vader as a negative manifestation of the wise old man archetype is propagated further in the sequels, as he attempts to convince Luke to join him as his apprentice.

1997:35,51). Also belonging to the realm of the negative manifestation of the organic world is the dark side of the Force, which has the ability to corrupt and destroy.

The struggle between the two worlds can be seen as a struggle between poles: The positive aspect of the organic world is in opposition to the negative aspect of the technological world and vice versa. The positive aspect of the technological world attempts to exert a civilizing influence over the negative aspect of the organic world, which in turn resists the change (Lucas 1997:53). Similarly, the positive aspect of the organic world is attempting to destroy the corrupting influence of the negative technological world aspect, which in turn works to exercise stricter control over the organic world.

In the context of the opposites of the technological and organic world, Luke's mastery event occurs as a consequence of him switching off the targeting computer on his ship and opening himself up to the power of the Force during his attack run. As shown previously, during Red Leader's attempt, blind reliance on technology does not lead anywhere and should be avoided (Lucas 1997:157). Luke's mastery of the two worlds is an amalgam of several compounds: as a Force user and fledgling Jedi, Luke is closely connected to the positive organic world. However, despite their close ties to the organic world, the Jedi do not reject the technological world, as proven with their relationship to their lightsabers, which Obi-Wan described as "an elegant weapon for a more civilized time" (Lucas 1997:44). What the Jedi seem to reject, as displayed by the incapacitation of Artoo and Luke disabling his targeting computer (Lucas 1997:166,167) is relinquishing control to a non-organic third party. As such, Luke's mastery event comes as a result of him acting in accord with Jedi principles and using the Force to guide his weapon.

The Conscious and Unconscious

A reading of the two worlds as the conscious and unconscious is in concord with the two preceding readings. The conscious world, by virtue of dealing with things that can be perceived, corresponds to the temporal world. Similarly, the unconscious world corresponds to the spiritual world. Further, there is support in the text for the identification of the technological- with the temporal-, and thus the conscious world, and the Force with the organic and unconscious world:

BEN

Well, the Force is what gives the Jedi his power. It's an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us. It binds the galaxy together (Lucas 1997:45).

VADER

Don't be too proud of this technological terror you've constructed. The ability to destroy a planet is insignificant next to the power of the Force (Lucas 1997:48).

A reading of Luke's mastery event in the context of the conscious and unconscious worlds is similar to the reading provided for the temporal and spiritual worlds: by using the Force Luke achieves unity between spiritual existence and temporal action. However, in this context, Luke's decision to continue his attack run after the destruction of his allies is read as an abandonment of ego. As a result of this, Luke is able to let go of his conscious self and tap into his unconscious, a prerequisite for the Jungian individuation process. In other words, Luke as master of his conscious and unconscious is nothing less than a fully realized individual.

In summary, the action involved in Luke's mastery event is the same, regardless of how it is read: Racing down the Death Star trench alone, chased by Darth Vader, Luke hears

Obi-Wan's voice telling him to use the Force. Heeding his master's advice, Luke switches off his targeting computer and trusts his instincts to guide his attack, which is a success. The two worlds can be identified as such: the organic/spiritual/unconscious world and the technological/temporal/conscious world. Both worlds have positive and negative aspects. In all readings, Luke's achievement is atonement between the two worlds, in concord with the outline drawn up by Campbell.

6. Discussion

6.1. Star Wars and the Monomyth

As has been shown, there is a clear analogue between the events of *Star Wars* and the cycle of Campbell's monomyth: In *Star Wars*, Luke Skywalker (the budding hero) encounters two droids (the heralds) with a message from a beautiful princess asking for help (The Call to Adventure). Having accepted the call, Luke encounters a strange old man, Obi-Wan Kenobi (The Supernatural Helper) in the desert. Obi-Wan gives Luke his father's lightsaber and tells him about the Force (amulets). Luke receives training by Obi-Wan and effects the rescue of Princess Leia on the Death Star (The Road of Trials, The Meeting With the Goddess). Together, they manage to escape with the secret plans (The Magic Flight). During the final space battle, Luke is able to let go of his conscious self and use the Force to destroy the Death Star (Master of the Two Worlds). While this narrative may appear basic, as the analysis has shown, it works on several levels: Read psychologically, *Star Wars* is an allegory for the Jungian individuation process, as Luke Skywalker encounters and assimilates different aspects of his personality and eventually achieves harmony between conscious and unconscious; read as an ironic courtly romance, Luke discovers that femininity is not what he imagined and is ultimately reconciled with his feminine side (Anima) through the Force; read

as a techno-myth, *Star Wars* warns of unethical applications of technology, but remains hopeful for the future.

It could be argued that as the events of *Star Wars* appear to be formulaic, they fail to fulfil Campbell's (1993:4) criteria for mythic expression as "spontaneous productions of the psyche". It could further be argued that since they appear to be so similar *Star Wars* was simply manufactured using *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* as a blueprint and that Lucas's wish to create a "modern fairy-tale, a myth" (Gordon 1978:315) somehow precludes him from doing so. However, correlation does not imply causation. It is difficult to tell if the similarities between *Star Wars* and *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* exist by chance or design. While early interviews with Lucas indicate his wish to create a traditional adventure story and list several sources of inspiration, there is no mention of Campbell (Rogers 1978; Zito 1997). Regardless, the point is moot, as authorial intent is deemed irrelevant for analysis of the work.

6.2. Star Wars and the Archetypes

As has been shown, the individual myth-events of *Star War* are compound events capable of being read in several ways within the monomyth framework provided by Campbell. As such, it can be argued that they qualify as archetypal situations. Further, it has been shown that the main characters of *Star Wars* can be seen as manifestations of the central Jungian archetypes: Luke represents the Child (God). Han Solo embodies the Shadow. Obi-Wan exemplifies the positive aspect of the Wise Old Man and Darth Vader exemplifies the negative. Both Leia and the Force may be regarded as manifestations of the Anima and Mother. In addition, Leia initially encompasses the Maiden archetype. Further, as the hero cycles in *Star Wars* are not limited to Luke alone, Leia may also be read as a manifestation of the Child hero. The fact that the main characters of *Star Wars* are manifestations of Jungian

archetypes should be read in the context of Campbell's view that symbols of mythology cannot be manufactured, invented or suppressed (Campbell 1993:4). Campbell would argue, and does so in his *Masks of God* (Campbell 1991), that the signifier may change over time, but the signified remains the same.

7. Conclusion

According to Campbell (1993:11), the prime function of mythology is to "supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward, in counteraction to those other constant human fantasies that tend to tie it back". *Star Wars* was released at a time when technological development had literally skyrocketed. The previous two decades had seen technological advancements make everyday life easier for millions of Americans. Further, Man had begun exploring the final frontier, space. In 1969 the first manned moon landing took place, thus pushing the threshold to the unknown back a little further. At the same time, technological advances made during the Second World War had led to the development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Mumford (1967:3) argued that the technological advances of the past century had altered the human personality. As such there was a need for new myths to aid in the processing of human experience. In 1977, *Star Wars* addressed the syzygy of positive and negative possibilities inherent in technology and provided hope for the future. As the world grows increasingly secular, as technological development and scientific discovery continue at an exponential rate and as the world becomes both more fragmented and unified at the same time, this thesis posits that the themes of *Star Wars* are as relevant today as they were over thirty years ago. As such, *Star Wars* truly is a modern myth.

For Further Research

The initial idea for this thesis was to read the entire original Star Wars trilogy in the context of the monomyth, but this plan had to be abandoned due to limitations on space. Further research could include reading each of the three films as phases of the monomyth: *A New Hope* as the departure phase; *The Empire Strikes Back* as the initiation phase and *Return of the Jedi* as the return phase. Including the myth-events analysed in this thesis, such a reading would allow analysis of the conflict and reconciliation with the Father-events described by Campbell. A similar and presumably untapped approach to the subject would be

analysing the "new" trilogy (*The Phantom Menace, Attack of the Clones and Revenge of the Sith*) in the context of Rank's (2004) *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* with focus on Anakin Skywalker. It is this author's opinion that the new trilogy, while less overtly mythical than its predecessor, holds a wealth of information for research on myth and the mythic.

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8. Appendix

APPENDIX ONE: C-3PO (THREEPIO)

APPENDIX TWO: R2-D2 (ARTOO)

Image source: http://images2.wikia.nocookie.net/__cb20090524204257/starwars/images/1/1a/R2d2.jpg

APPENIX THREE: LUKE SKYWALKER

Cropped image. Full image source:

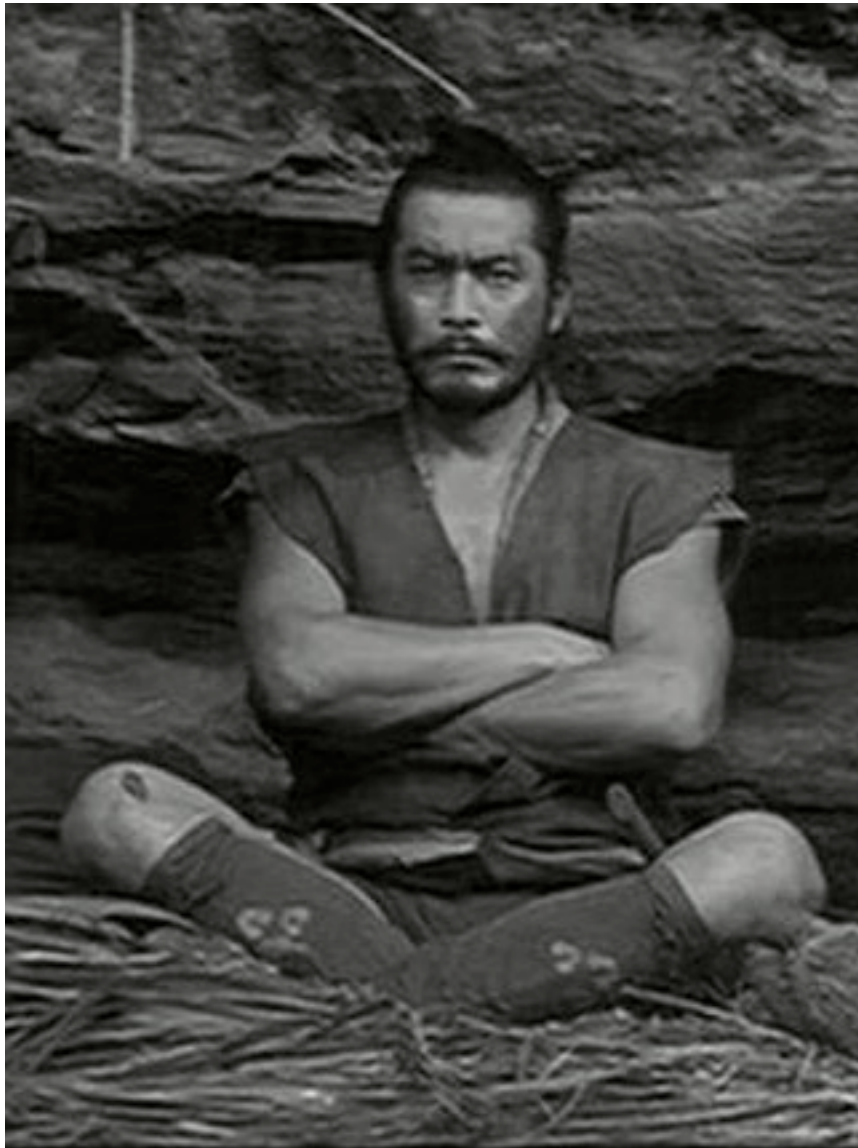APPENDIX FOUR: PRINCESS LEIA ORGANA

Image source: http://images3.wikia.nocookie.net/__cb20070328210314/starwars/images/1/1c/Leia_holo.jpg

APPENDIX FIVE: OBI-WAN KENOBI (BEN)

Image source: http://images4.wikia.nocookie.net/__cb20070114031651/starwars/images/b/b1/Obiwan_old.jpg

APPENDIX SIX: GENERAL ROKUROTA MAKABE

Cropped image. Full image source: http://filmjournal.net/mjocallaghan/files/2009/06/hidden-fortress.jpg

APPENDIX SEVEN: HAN SOLO

Image source: http://images3.wikia.nocookie.net/__cb20100616202935/starwars/images/e/e6/Han_Solo_OP.jpg

APPENDIX EIGHT: LUKE SKYWALKER (STORMTROOPER)

APPENDIX NINE: KORE FIGURE

Image source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e1/ACMA_679_Kore_1.JPG

APPENDIX TEN: DARTH VADER

Image source: http://images1.wikia.nocookie.net/__cb20070113163809/starwars/images/e/e8/VaderFather.jpg

APPENDIX ELEVEN: THE MONOMYTH

Heroic Monomyth

Call to
Adventure

Elixir

Helper

THRESHOLD OF ADVENTURE

Return
Resurrection
Rescue
Struggle

Crossing
Brother-battle
Dragon-battle
Dismemberment
Crucifixion
Abduction
Night-sea journ.
Wonder journ.
Whale's belly

Tests

Helpers

Flight

1. Sacred Marriage
2. Father Atonement
3. Apotheosis
4. Elixir Theft

Image source: http://orias.berkeley.edu/graphics/campbell.gif