A THEOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF
JOSEPH CAMPBELL’S MONOMYTH AS
A SOURCE FOR MEANING MAKING IN
AMERICAN FILM

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ABSTRACT

A THEOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF JOSEPH CAMPBELL’S MONOMYTH AS A SOURCE FOR MEANING MAKING IN AMERICAN FILM

In the last thirty years Joseph Campbell’s monomyth has provided a particular pattern and approach for American movie makers production of films. The thesis is a theological critique of this theory and the way it is used in movies. It shows how the monomyth has been used to influence movie viewer’s concept of spiritual and religious meaning making.

Campbell’s writing is reviewed as well as the literature that influenced his writings, especially the sources that helped his development of the monomyth. This is followed by an overarching review of the literature surrounding myth, film and the contemporary dialogue between theology and film. A concise overview of the monomyth framework and its influence on western cultural understandings of the self, heroism and decision making is established before exploring some of the critics of Campbell’s hero formula.

Campbell’s monomyth is placed in its historical context. He was an anthropologist who formulated his monomyth framework in the late 1940’s. Campbell’s work is compared and contrasted with Rudolf Bultmann, another thinker addressing the nature of myth in the same decade. Rudolf Bultmann’s understanding of myth, the Gnostic Redeemer myth, and the need for demythologisation is theologically assessed.

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1 This thesis will focus mainly on Hollywood movies. This is due to the fact that the Hollywood machine is one of the wealthiest film industries in the world, having some of the widest distribution and thus some of the most powerful influence around the world, especially in western society.
The influence of Campbell’s monomyth spread far beyond anthropological circles. It seeped into popular culture, especially that of storytelling, specifically film. The reliance of the Hollywood movie machine on the monomyth as its almost exclusive storyline is shown. A brief history of Hollywood shows why it provides fertile ground for using the monomyth as a basis for plots and story lines, as well as a basis for meaning making for the audience. The rise of pop culture religions like Jediism and Matrixism especially among those of Generation X shows the influence of the movie industry and its role in providing meaning. As such, one case study will be undertaken to analyse the rise of the Jedi religion, as a result of the Star Wars movies.

The theological critique draws on Alistair McFadyen’s framework of worship, joy, sin and idolatry, and shows that Campbell’s monomyth reflects the dominant enlightenment perspective of western civilisation in which the right to choose has been made primary.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

‘Movies are spectacle, they are dreams, they are a view of reality, a world of fantasy, an escape, a Utopia, a separate universe of their own - movies are several different things to many different people. They are the art of the twentieth century and of the twenty-first century as well. Movies, for good or ill, touch the lives of more people on this planet than books, music or theatre do. There is no escaping them.’

Don Shiach (2001, p. 7)

JOSEPH CAMPBELL

Campbell’s influential work The Hero with a Thousand Faces (J. Campbell, 1949) proposed a theory that all myths, no matter their religious, cultural, national and historical heritage, followed the same pattern. Campbell named this pattern the monomyth. The Hero’s Journey, as it is more commonly known, is one where an individual is invited to take on a journey and in doing so must face many challenges and obstacles before attaining the goal of the journey, retrieving the prize and eventually returning to the world from which they came. The three major movements of the story or stages are subsequently split into seventeen phases.\(^2\)

While many people may not know Joseph Campbell’s name or the title of any one of his several works, they do know his monomyth, albeit not consciously. They recognise it because they know the formula that movies are ‘meant’ to follow. Certainly once people know the monomyth pattern, they can readily identify it in movies.\(^4\) The monomyth phases have been reinterpreted and condensed specifically for movies and movie scripts. The condensed twelve stages, known in the movie industry as The Hero’s Journey, are as follows (Vogler, 2009):

\(^2\) This is Christopher Vogler’s name for Campbell’s monomyth. Vogler worked for Disney and developed The Hero’s Journey pattern specifically for movie scriptwriting (Vogler, 2009).

\(^3\) Campbell’s full seventeen stage pattern will be explored in depth in Chapter 3.

\(^4\) As evidenced by this author when a friend claimed that Captain America (J. Johnston, 2011) had been ruined for them due to knowing the monomyth and thus being able to predict what was going to happen.
STAGE 1: THE ORDINARY WORLD.
The hero, uneasy, uncomfortable or unaware, is introduced sympathetically so the audience can identify with the situation or dilemma. The hero is shown against a background of environment, heredity, and personal history. Some kind of polarity in the hero’s life is pulling in different directions and causing stress.

STAGE 2: THE CALL TO ADVENTURE.
Something shakes up the situation, either from external pressures or from something rising up from deep within, so the hero must face the beginnings of change.

STAGE 3: REFUSAL OF THE CALL.
The hero feels the fear of the unknown and tries to turn away from the adventure, however briefly. Alternately, another character may express the uncertainty and danger ahead.

STAGE 4: MEETING WITH THE MENTOR.
The hero comes across a seasoned traveller of the worlds who gives him or her training, equipment, or advice that will help on the journey. Alternatively, the hero reaches within to a source of courage and wisdom.

STAGE 5: CROSSING THE THRESHOLD.
At the end of Act One, the hero commits to leaving the Ordinary World and entering a new region or condition with unfamiliar rules and values.

STAGE 6: TESTS, ALLIES AND ENEMIES.
The hero is tested and sorts out allegiances in the Special World.

STAGE 7: APPROACH.
The hero and newfound allies prepare for the major challenge in the Special World.
STAGE 8: THE ORDEAL.
Near the middle of the story, the hero enters a central space in the Special World and confronts death or faces his or her greatest fear. Out of the moment of death comes a new life.

STAGE 9: THE REWARD.
The hero takes possession of the treasure won by facing death. There may be celebration, but there is also danger of losing the treasure again.

STAGE 10: THE ROAD BACK.
About three-quarters of the way through the story, the hero is driven to complete the adventure, leaving the Special World to be sure the treasure is brought home. Often a chase scene signals the urgency and danger of the mission.

STAGE 11: THE RESURRECTION.
At the climax, the hero is severely tested once more on the threshold of home. He or she is purified by a last sacrifice, another moment of death and rebirth, but on a higher and more complete level. By the hero’s action, the polarities that were in conflict at the beginning are finally resolved.

STAGE 12: RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR.
The hero returns home or continues the journey, bearing some element of the treasure that has the power to transform the world as the hero has been transformed.

These twelve points form a basis for the script of films with many different permutations. It can be seen in genres as diverse as children’s animation, romantic comedy, drama, indie films, science fiction and westerns. In the movies, both men and women follow the pattern to become heroes. However, Campbell, using Freudian\(^5\) and Jungian\(^6\) psychology, suggests that this journey

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\(^5\) Especially Freud’s seminal work *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1965).
\(^6\) Mattoon’s *Jung and the Human Psyche: An Understandable Introduction* (2005) is a helpful reference for Jungian psychology.
is one that all must take in order to find spiritual meaning and, ultimately, themselves.\textsuperscript{7}

Film production companies are aware that if they use Campbell’s monomyth theory, they have a story that is more likely to connect with audiences and therefore be more of a financial gain. It has been claimed that Disney Animation Studios will no longer look at a script unless it follows the monomyth pattern\textsuperscript{8}. The realm of storytelling and myth making has moved from religions, tribes and small communities. The myths of the contemporary, western world are seen at the cinema. It is thus an important exercise to examine how meaning is offered in the movies and how audiences respond and create their own.

\textbf{MYTH MAKING POWER OF FILM}

Some films using Joseph Campbell’s monomyth are deliberately and self consciously involved in meaning making. They set out a way of living with and in the world. This thesis seeks to explore how effective this meaning making is. The proposition this thesis seeks to test is whether Campbell’s hero myth in films creates meaning for audiences and gives rise to groups of believers who meet with structures similar to traditional religious groups.

According to Campbell, the monomyth is a journey that, traditionally, religions have helped their believers to travel. He, however, suggests that religions are no longer necessary with the enlightenment that modern psychology brings. Dream analysis is used throughout \textit{The Hero with a Thousand Faces} (J. Campbell, 1949) to demonstrate how people live the journey. Movies, like dreams, offer viewers a way of living a particular life, dealing with specific problems and overcoming adversity. Even when the scenario is fantastical, lessons can be gleaned and applied to one’s own life if so desired. Hence,

\textsuperscript{7} This journey that Campbell claims all people need to undertake to be fully human will be explored in more depth in Chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{8} This claim was made by Michael Frost in his paper \textit{Neo, Frodo, Nemo in Depth: The Hero with a Thousand Faces}, presented at Macquarie University on 24\textsuperscript{th} March 2004. The studio was apparently in financial crisis and would possibly have to close, until \textit{The Lion King}, following the monomyth pattern, became one of their most successful movies, spawning a huge range of merchandise and a musical stage production.
movies are a powerful medium for generating meaning. This is one of the contributing factors as to why the monomyth is so popular in movie plotlines.

Campbell’s monomyth forms the basis for many movie scripts. The film industry has embraced his ‘formula’ because it means that a movie is more likely to be successful at the box office. However, the majority of audience members probably do not recognise the specific monomyth features. What they do recognise is that it ‘feels right’ – the guy got the girl in the end, the enemies were overthrown, the obstacles were overcome and the main character has saved the day, or the company, or the town, or the universe as the case may be. It is a common understanding that audiences like walking away from a movie feeling good, having had a cathartic experience as well as being entertained.

It is one thing for producers and directors to create a good story and entertain their audience. It is quite another when they use the film medium and Campbell’s monomyth to create meaning for that audience. This thesis seeks to explore how movie makers, those with the ideas and the money to create films, can create a specific world view of meaning for their audiences, which actually has an effect upon some viewers. The role of film is then highly influential, if the audience indeed participates in the meaning making presented by the movie. Films then have hidden power for creating meaning in the late 20th and early 21st century (R. K. Johnston, 2000, p. 28).

The intention of the producers, directors and screenwriters to create a world of meaning shows the power of film for communicating a message, even if the story has been in book form first. Participation in the meaning making presented by a movie gives rise to the possibility that audience members may take the meaning making to a religious level.
JEDI RELIGION

What is remarkable is that a series of movies has influenced a group of people so deeply that it has resulted in a new religion being formed – Jediism. In 1977, little known director George Lucas released the first of his Star Wars movies. Renamed A New Hope (Lucas, 1977) upon its re-release in 1997, it remains one of the highest grossing films of all times and two sequels followed, The Empire Strikes Back (Kershner, 1980) and Return of the Jedi (Marquand, 1983). The success of the films and the strong merchandising campaign, which included toys, figurines, spin off movies, computer games, models and eventually authorised books, helped Lucas to become one of the wealthiest directors in Hollywood, enabling him to become somewhat independent from the major studios. After a break of eighteen years, he began to release the prequels, The Phantom Menace (Lucas, 2001), Attack of the Clones (Lucas, 2002) and Revenge of the Sith (Lucas, 2005). Most recently an animated movie and television series set in the Clone Wars (which occur between the movie episodes 2 and 3) has been added to the saga. The saga is very well known and its characters, especially Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker, have become iconic. People recognise John Williams’ score, even when they haven’t seen the movies. The Museum of Science in Boston, USA, used Star Wars as a recognisable ‘hook’ to help visitors understand future technology in their exhibition Star Wars: Where Science Meets Imagination (Rodley, 2005, pp. 12-13). What makes this worldwide phenomenon of interest in this thesis is the way that Lucas ‘consciously set about to re-create myths and the classic mythological motifs’ in order to deal with issues that exist in the contemporary world (Moyers, 1999, p. 71). In an interview with Bill Moyers, Lucas claimed:

‘I see Star Wars as taking all the issues that religion represents and trying to distill them down into a more modern and easily accessible construct – that there is a greater mystery out there…Religion is basically a container for faith. And faith in our culture, our world and on a larger issue, the mystical level – which is God, what one might describe as a supernatural, or the things that we can’t explain – is a very important part of what allows us to

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9 The Jedi religion or Jediism will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 7.
10 This was demonstrated to the author when a 24 year old young woman was asked what a particular piece of music was that was playing. She immediately identified it as coming from Star Wars although she had never actually seen any of the movies. It was the Main Title from A New Hope (Lucas, 1977).
remain stable, remain balanced…but I put the Force into the movie in order to try to awaken a certain kind of spirituality in young people – more a belief in God than in any particular religious system. I wanted to make it so that young people would begin to ask questions about the mystery…I think it’s important to have a belief system and to have faith’ (Moyers, 1999, p. 72).

While it seems that Lucas never intended to start a whole new religion, the *Star Wars* movies have sparked exactly that. The rise of the Jedi religion, or Jediism, has been an interesting phenomenon. Occurring mostly online, Jedi members can be found hailing from around the world, but most churches are based in the United States, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Canada. It came to the attention of Australians in 2001 when radio advertising and spam type emails promoted the idea that if enough people put down Jedi as their religion in the national census, it would become official. Although only 70,000 Australians declared themselves Jedi in the 2001 census and it was seen as a hoax by most Australians, it was serious enough for the Bureau of Statistics to issue an official statement. *The 2001 Census, Religion and the Jedi (Census of Population and Housing - The 2001 Census, Religion and the Jedi, 2001)* explained the background and need for the optional question on religion, but defends itself saying that it hadn’t issued threats or warnings about the issue. Rather, it required people to state that Jedi was their religion, if they actually identified with that religion, but that pure numbers was not the determining factor for a religion to become official in Australia. The Jedi church has, however, received greater recognition in New Zealand where in 2006 there were 20,241 Jedi’s recorded in their national census (Palmer, 2007), making it far larger than Judaism (6,858), Sikh (9,507), Exclusive Brethren (2,316) and even Jehovah Witnesses (17,910). With Pentecostals numbering 79,155 and Baptists 56,913 Jedi are comparatively a numerous group. The results made Jediism New Zealand’s fifth largest religion behind Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. It is interesting to note that this result was a decline from the 2001 New Zealand census results, where 53,715 people responded, which would have made Jedi the second largest religion behind Christianity, if the

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11 There were also 390,000 in the UK, with the majority in their 20’s. (Clarke, 2006, p. 149)
replies had been counted (Perrott, 2002). The decline in number was in line with most other religious groups over the same period.

The online churches are a community of believers who dedicate themselves to following the Jedi Way. They encourage one another in their faith, living out their code in the 'real' world. However, there is still contention within the Jedi religion with church splits and 'backsliders' being recorded on blogs and chat room threads. There is also much dialogue currently about compiling a sacred text containing their teachings and appropriate practices and behaviours for Jedi followers. While many would view this as an extreme, or possibly just a sad, reaction of disturbed individuals to a fictional movie, the Jedi Church claims that George Lucas simply exposed something that was always there, namely the Force, to the popular mindset. Possamai (in Clarke, 2006, p. 149) uses the term 'hyper-religion' for the Jedi movement designating it a 'simulacrum of a religion created out of popular culture which provides inspiration for believers and consumers at a metaphorical level.' It might use the stories of George Lucas' Star Wars universe, but claims its teachings and practices transcend fiction. Jediism wants to distance itself from fictional characters and narrative, but rather sees itself as a supportive community where people can journey to find relationship with the True Light and their own true selves, making it often characterised as a New Age Movement. Jediism claims to have a 5000 year history and has practices that are similar to mainstream religions like meditation and temple worship. Their religion is just as valid as any other to those who follow the Jedi way. As such, society needs to take seriously just how Jedi understand their religion and what role it plays in their lives.

**RELIGIOUS RESPONSE**

A cursory examination of the Star Wars phenomenon demonstrates how movies have had a powerful impact on individuals, culture and society.12 As such

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12 Blizek (2009, p. 1) acknowledges the influence of film:

'...everyone now agrees that movies have a unique power to influence how people think and feel...Given the power of film to influence culture, sometimes in positive ways and sometimes in negative ways, we ought to be paying close attention to film and its impact on individuals and on the culture at large.'
religious bodies have had to respond.\textsuperscript{13} Movies, for a long time, have enjoyed mixed responses from religious groups. They have been seen as helpful tools for illustrating points, harmless entertainment, potentially dangerous, to downright evil. Some churches at certain times have banned the watching of movies for their followers, believing that they had a corrupting influence (R. K. Johnston, 2000, p. 46). However, in the last twenty years and even more so in the last ten, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of publications exploring the themes, value and religious significance of movies. There has begun to be more theological dialogue with film and a greater openness within most religious groups to discuss the role of film. It is indeed possible that with the decline in traditional religion in the Western world, that the cinema is increasingly becoming the place of story-telling, preaching, teaching on morals and values\textsuperscript{14} and meaning making for a large proportion of the population (R. K. Johnston, 2000, pp. 24, 26). Deacy (2005, p. 12), writing from a Christian perspective, notes

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...scholars in the fields of religious studies and theology are being faced with a new challenge - one that involves coming to terms with the fact that all the vicissitudes of human life and endeavour, as traditionally expressed in Christianity in the language of sin, alienation, atonement and redemption, are capable of being articulated through new vehicles of expression and outside traditionally demarcated boundaries of religious activity. Provided that academics take this capacity for change and development into consideration, then there is scope for religious expression to be located in all manner of unexpected places...film is one of the many contemporary "secular" agencies that has challenged traditional religious institution and, even, taken on many of their functions.''
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Multi media and the audio-visual realm play a far greater role in the lives of humans today than at any previous time in history. Today's Generation Y deal almost completely in the realm of the audio-visual and bodies, such as the church and the academic world, need to take developments in film and multimedia seriously if they are to remain relevant. There has been an increase in interdisciplinary study, especially between pop culture and film and between film

\textsuperscript{13} The Routledge Companion to Religion and Film (Lyden, 2009) and The Continuum Companion to Religion and Film (Bilzék, 2009) offer helpful introductions to many of the issues surrounding the dialogue between film and religion.

\textsuperscript{14} For example, the documentary \textit{Indie Sex: Teen Flicks} (Ades, 2007) states that 70\% of American teenagers learn about sex and sexuality primarily from the movies.
and theology (Lyden, 2003, p. 1). It is hoped that this thesis might be a helpful addition to that growing field of knowledge.

**THE IMPLICATIONS OF MEANING MAKING FILMS FOR RELIGIOUS BODIES**

The rise of Jediism is one example of the meaning making power of movies. It is important for religious bodies to take meaning making from Campbell’s monomyth seriously, especially when films use its pattern so readily. Campbell’s monomyth, however, is not the only form of meaning making in film. Religious groups themselves have used and created films. As such, they need to be aware of just how film can be used to convey their own message. Some examples have included the television show *Monkey* to convey Buddhist principles, *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy as allegories for Christianity and *Battlefield Earth*, a movie released by the founder of Scientology, L. Ron Hubbard.

Religious bodies would do wisely to recognise the importance of other major films which have the potential to give rise to religious movements (R. K. Johnston, 2000, pp. 25-34). *Star Trek* has already seen the rise of Trekkies, but the *Matrix* trilogy and the *Harry Potter* series have also begun to inspire serious theological, religious and social dialogue. All of these films use Joseph Campbell’s monomyth. As such religious bodies can ask what they can learn from his seventeen step pattern. There is critical importance for theologically examining the assumptions implicit in Campbell’s monomyth in order for religious bodies to be clear about what is happening in contemporary society, especially when simulacrum type religions are being established through its use in film (Clarke, 2006, p. 149). From the perspective of the Christian church, as one particular religious body, it can ask how to better address the question of meaning making through this most vital means of contemporary communication.
THEOLOGY AND FILM

When the message is so important to religious groups, so is the way that they communicate that message. This has helped give rise to a dialogue between religion and film. Christian theologians have begun to take the dialogue between theology and film, the message and the communication medium, very seriously. Robert Johnston, in his book *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue* (2000), explores five theological approaches to film criticism that can be loosely connected with H. Richard Niebuhr’s *Christ and Culture* (1951). The five approaches are avoidance (Christ against culture), caution (Christ and culture in paradox), dialogue (Christ the transformer of culture), appropriation (Christ above culture) and divine encounter (Christ in culture) (R. K. Johnston, 2000, p. 78). These can be understood as having had a linear time appearance with avoidance being the earliest response to film and divine encounter the most recent. However, all five approaches can still be found today in theologian’s responses to film depending on whether they start from their personal theological position or from the movie itself and whether they approach the movie from an ethical or aesthetic viewpoint (R. K. Johnston, 2000, p. 55).

Avoidance is either where movies are viewed as opposed to Christian values and an enemy of Christ and the church or that particular movies are to be avoided due to containing morally objectionable content. As such they are either all to be boycotted or just the movies that the church or a particular Christian leader identifies (R. K. Johnston, 2000, p. 57). Blanket avoidance is no longer seen as a viable strategy especially since the advent of television. Thus, caution is a more common theological response to film. Caution is the stance taken by theologians who want to engage with popular culture, but who warn against anti-Christian and morally deficient content. Discrimination, sensitivity and maturity are all called for in this approach (R. K. Johnston, 2000, pp. 60-61).

Dialogue is the first approach where the movie itself is the starting position, not the theological position of the reviewer. Allowing the movie to speak for itself, and then engage with the primary position of religious faith, enables the viewer a greater opportunity for fruitful theological dialogue. This is probably where the majority of recent books on theology and film are positioned (R. K. Johnston, 2000, pp. 64-67). Appropriation is the title given to a theological approach which seeks to recover the ‘religious wisdom and insight that film can offer’ (Hurley in
R. K. Johnston, 2000, p. 70). Movies can thus be seen as devotional, transformative and an engagement of spirit where human meaning can be powerfully revealed. Divine encounter goes one step further. ‘Movies have, at times, a sacramental capacity to provide the viewer an experience of transcendence’ (R. K. Johnston, 2000, p. 74). God’s very presence and God’s interaction with humans can be found in film. As such viewers can have a spiritual encounter with God as they watch a film. This experience can be healing, encouraging, challenging, instructional or whatever God requires it to be for the individual. As such, film operates on a religious level.

Many theologians\textsuperscript{15}, church commentators\textsuperscript{16} and youth ministry experts\textsuperscript{17} recognize the importance of listening to the world in order to be relevant to those whom they are ministering to. Understanding the cultural and societal shifts in the western world in its postmodern and post-Christendom state is valuable in being able to respond with a Christian message of hope, relevance and meaning. But the other side of the coin is that the church must also understand what message it proclaims – what is its gospel or good news. Drayton in his book \textit{Which Gospel?} (2005) offers three perspectives from the New Testament, suggesting that the Pauline\textsuperscript{18}, Johannine\textsuperscript{19} and Synoptic gospels\textsuperscript{20} actually present three different ways of understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ. By clearly articulating its own message, the church can better position itself to speak that message into other places. If it understands the message that the world offers, it has a ‘hook’ on which to hang its message.

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{15}] Frost and Hirsh’s \textit{The Shape of Things to Come} (2003) gives an overview of some of the most innovative missional projects from around the world dealing with the issues of living in a post-Christendom era.
\item[\textsuperscript{16}] Church commentator George Barna and futurist Mark Hatch explore the shifts in cultural values, worldviews, lifestyle preferences and forms of church in their book \textit{Boiling Point} (2001).
\item[\textsuperscript{17}] Tony Jones’ \textit{Postmodern Youth Ministry} (2001) explores the issues of youth ministry and how it relates to the postmodern world with all the changes it has brought for young people.
\item[\textsuperscript{18}] ‘Paul was the first to speak of “the gospel” focused on the death of Jesus Christ for our sins and his resurrection bringing new life… for Paul, the gospel is the “power of God”’ (Drayton, 2005, p. 46).
\item[\textsuperscript{19}] ‘The gospel of John reports how in the midst of human history, there is the possibility of seeing the reality of God incarnate in the Son, and through him the nature of eternal life from which the human race derives its life’ (Drayton, 2005, p. 91).
\item[\textsuperscript{20}] ‘The gospel’ is...defined as the “kingdom of God being at hand”, with Jesus calling for a response to the kingdom’s presence, for a response is now possible since the kingdom of God is at hand’ (Drayton, 2005, p. 66).
\end{itemize}
METHODOLOGY

After this brief introduction to the impact of Joseph Campbell’s monomyth it is important to describe the way that this thesis will approach the question of a theological critique of the monomyth. This thesis seeks to not only describe the phenomenon that lies behind the experience of meaning making gleaned from the movies but to respond theologically. To do this we need to provide a description of the monomyth, how it came into being, how it has been adapted for film, the effects of this usage and place it in its wider context before reflecting upon it theologically. This picks up the approach of public theologians such as Clive Pearson with the Cronulla Riots or Alistair McFadyen with the Holocaust and childhood sexual abuse.

In a public theology it is vital that the matter being studied is presented in a way that can be appreciated by the wider public. It needs to be explored in a way that provides insight beyond the initial phenomenon and is able to be reflected upon theologically. As such a public theology focuses on describing, contextualising and responding theologically to a phenomenon. Thus, a public and contextual theological approach, rather than a systematic theology, is most appropriate to be able to make a theological critique of Joseph Campbell’s monomyth as a source for meaning making in American film.

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21 In *Alienated Neighbours: Interpreting the Cronulla Race Riots For Christ's Sake* (2008, pp. 1,11) Pearson demonstrates that:

'The nature of a public theology is that it must be interdisciplinary and embedded in praxis. The case for a public theology is thus set within coverage of what transpired and interpretations emerging out of diverse forms of cultural studies...the Christian faith cannot lay claim in this arena to privileged position, It is one voice among many in the public forum...The task of a public theology is to find a way into the public forum. It should seek to assist a Christian constituency to recognize how public debates can be related to that tradition of faith. It should seek to address public issues and explore the public consequences of core Christian beliefs. The intention of a public theology carries a desire to relate the cost of discipleship with the call to citizenship in the service of the public good and "human flourishing".'

John de Gruchy (in Pearson, 2008, p. 11) believes that of critical significance in a public theology is the ‘doing of theology in a way that is interdisciplinary in character’ and required is a ‘language that is accessible to people outside the Christian tradition and convincing in its own right’.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

In Chapter 1 the monomyth is briefly explained in light of the way it has been appropriated and reworked for the movies. It also introduces the concept of meaning making and how this appears to be expressed to those who claim to follow the Jedi religion. A methodology for the approach of a public and contextual theology as applied to the monomyth is then presented. Chapter 2 is a survey of the literature and thinking that influenced Joseph Campbell and his development of the monomyth. This includes a basic overview of some of the literature that explores myth and mythology, how the monomyth has been utilised in American films, the meaning making that results from that reliance and the contemporary dialogue between film and religion. Chapter 3 is an in-depth presentation of the monomyth itself and Campbell’s understanding of its universal application. The monomyth is pitted against contemporary understandings of myth and mythology. Several critics of Campbell offer alternative viewpoints and illuminate limitations of the monomyth. Chapter 4 moves into a specific comparison of the monomyth with another understanding of myth that was a contemporary of the monomyth – that of Rudolph Bultmann’s Gnostic Redeemer myth. A very brief introduction to Gnosticism is given as well as critiques of Bultmann’s position. It also examines why the monomyth has become so popular and the strong cultural embracing of it, especially in America. How the monomyth has been used in movies will be described in chapter 5, especially the influence of Christopher Vogler in identifying and promoting the monomyth. This chapter contains a more in-depth analysis of meaning making and how movies can be a source of this for many people. It also explores the history of the hero in film, whilst recognising the limitations of the American film industry to explore a distinctive heroine’s journey. A history of the film industry also sheds light on the influence of the American Dream and the monomyth in American film. Chapter 6 examines several examples of the use of the monomyth in particular films. Using Campbell’s framework, the following meaning making films that have been made in recent years will be analysed, compared and contrasted:

- Star Wars
- Matrix
- Star Trek
- *Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*
- *Lord of the Rings*
- *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*

These movies were chosen due to their huge box-office success. They have a very wide audience and their popularity continues to endure resulting in greater opportunity for meaning making.

- *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*

This movie was chosen because of its explicit statement of having followed the monomyth for its structure in one of its deleted scenes.

- *Battlefield Earth*

This movie is an example of a meaning making attempt by another religion – scientology.

Chapter 7 is a case study of Jediism, the religion spawned by the *Star Wars* movies. This religion is given voice as various dedicated websites and books are analysed. It is an illustration of how a mythology is applied in Star Wars and the resulting meaning making for its religious aficionados. Chapter 8 is a theological reflection of the monomyth, its use in movies and the resulting Jedi movement. A specific theological critique is made using McFadyen’s (2000) recent theology of joy, sin and the human will. These varied aspects are then brought together in the conclusion found in chapter 9.
'In our imperfect society, with its increasing demands to achieve success in our study, sport or work, we need to be reassured by stories of a world where all things are possible if we are brave enough, strong and wise enough. We need inner strength to deal with the problems of being human and we need shining examples in our search for the meaning and value of life and for our moral development.'
(Saxby, 1989, p. 7)

As a preparation for the study of Joseph Campbell’s monomyth, it is important to understand the literature and thinking that influenced Campbell as he was developing his theories. This chapter seeks to explore these literary influences in an appropriate overview. It will also give a brief discussion of some of the major literature that has subsequently been important for understanding Campbell, critiquing the monomyth and how it has influenced popular culture and religion.

The literature surrounding myth and mythology is quite comprehensive. It has been studied and explored, thoroughly from a contemporary perspective, for more than 150 years, while the semantics of the word mythology has been argued over for more than a hundred years (Sherman, 2003, p. 1). Joseph Campbell’s understanding of the hero myth is more recent, but has still had scholarly interaction with other theorists and critics. It is the linking of mythology, film and religion that is unique to this thesis. Understanding Campbell’s own influences in his conception of mythology and the subsequent development of his monomyth is vital to gaining a better insight into its use in American film making and subsequent meaning making.

This chapter will seek to give an overview of contemporary understandings of mythology and the history that has preceded it. Several pivotal works on mythology will be examined, leading into what specifically influenced Joseph
Campbell in his development of the monomyth. Critics of Campbell will be given voice as will works that touch on the broader aspects of this thesis.23

**MYTHOLOGY**

Mythology has been part of every society in history that has left records of some kind, including writings, wall reliefs, clay tablets and pictures on cave walls (Sherman, 2003, p. 1). Mythology is a term used for the study and interpretation of myths in general or the study of a body of myths found in a particular tradition (Bolle, 2005, p. 6359; Sherman, 2003, p. 2). For example, Dreamtime mythology is therefore the study of Australian indigenous mythology. In its broadest sense a myth is any traditional story; however, mythology predominantly recognises myth as a story about gods and superhuman beings.

‘A myth is an expression of the sacred in words: it reports realities and events from the origin of the world that remain valid as the basis and purpose of all there is. Consequently, a myth functions as a model for human activity, society, wisdom, and knowledge’ (Bolle, 2005, p. 6359).

Bolle (2005, p. 6359) is quick to point out, however, that the above definition is not accepted by all specialists in the field. There is much debate over what constitutes a myth, the purpose it had in its original setting and the relevance it holds for contemporary society. It is important to note that the colloquial use of myth to describe an untrue story is not the focus of the study of mythology. Anthropologists, ethnographers, mythologists and theologians are rather looking for the history, meaning, function, role and purpose of myths in their cultural setting. The approaches used and the conclusions formed have changed and developed over time, especially with the interaction of other disciplines like religious studies, psychology and theology.

Sherman (2003, p. 2) notes it is difficult to generalise about the vast variety of the world's mythologies, but that three basic elements help to define a genuine myth. Firstly it has a serious purpose, usually to explain a 'big question' like creation or death. Secondly, it teaches proper behaviour and belief and the

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23 Though most of these will be examined in closer depth in the appropriate chapters of this thesis.
meanings of customs and rituals within the culture that utilises it. Thirdly, it is usually of unknown origin. Sherman (2003, pp. 2-3) lists seven broad categories of myth: cosmological or creation myths, explaining the how and why of the universe, myths of birth and life, explaining personal mysteries, myths of sex and procreation, myths of death, myths of rebirth, exploring the possibility of an afterlife, myths of the gods, attempting to understand the divine and myths of the heroes, following the adventures of the codified image of a culture's ideals. Sherman (2003, p. 2) claims that all myths are going to have certain themes in common, due to humans being members of the same species, regardless of culture. In this sense, Sherman appears to sympathise with Campbell's assertion that all myths follow the same pattern.

Bascom (1984, p. 9) offers a comprehensive definition of myth:

'Myths are prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past. They are accepted on faith, they are taught to be believed, and they can be cited as authority in answer to ignorance, doubt, or disbelief. Myths are the embodiment of dogma, they are usually sacred, and they are often associated with theology and ritual. Their main characters are not usually human beings, but they often have human attributes; they are animals, deities, or culture heroes, whose actions are set in an earlier world, when the earth was different from what it is today, or in another world such as the sky or underworld. Myths account for the origin of the world, of mankind, of death, or for characteristics of birds, animals, geographic features, and the phenomena of nature. They may recount the activities of the deities, their love affairs, their family relationships, their friendships and enmities, their victories and defeats. They may purport to "explain" details of ceremonial paraphernalia or ritual, or why taboos must be observed, but such etiological elements are not confined to myths.'

Bascom thus hints at the complexity of interpretations that are available for mythology.

Well known Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1984, pp. 195, 197) believed that myth and sacred tradition deeply enters the pursuits of those who follow or believe it. It has power in the sense that myth can control moral and social behaviour. There is an intimate connection between the sacred tales or myths of a group and their ritual, practical and moral acts and social
organisation. Mythology or sacred lore of a tribe or group is a powerful means of assisting its members and allows them to make the two ends of their cultural patrimony meet. His understanding of myth is as follows:

'Studied alive, myth...is not symbolic but a direct expression of its subject-matter; it is not an explanation in satisfaction of a scientific interest, but a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality, told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions, even practical requirements. Myth fulfils in primitive culture an indispensable function: it expresses, enhances, and codifies belief; it safeguards and enforces morality; it vouches for the efficacy of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of man. Myth is thus a vital ingredient of human civilization; it is not an idle tale but a hard-worked active force; it is not an intellectual explanation or an artistic imagery, but a pragmatic charter of primitive faith and moral wisdom...The myth comes into play when rite, ceremony, or a social or moral rule demands justification, warrant of antiquity, reality, and sanctity' (Malinowski, 1984, pp. 109-203)\textsuperscript{24}.

For Malinowski (1984, p. 204) myths are a sacred group of stories, embodied in social organisation, ritual and morals which are integral to the groups that use them. They are a statement of a greater, primeval reality which determines present life and fates and provides motive and instruction for ritual and moral actions. It can be gleaned that myths and mythology play an incredibly important role in the vast majority of cultures,\textsuperscript{25} giving structure to that culture’s beliefs, behaviour, religious practice and social norms.

It can be seen from the above definitions from anthropologists, historians and mythologists, that there is some debate about what constitutes a myth and the role it plays in the life of the hearing community. Terms are often interchanged, making definitions less precise than desired. They are also influenced by the individual’s own social, cultural, educational and academic frameworks.

It is therefore important to note the difference between myths, folktales and legends. Legends are generally about historic figures or events and are on a smaller scale than myths (Sherman, 2003, p. 3). Bascom (1984, pp. 9-10) defines legends as ‘...prose narratives which, like myths, are regarded as true by the narrator and his audience, but they are set in a period considered less

\textsuperscript{24} First published in Psyche, 24 (1926), pp.29-39.
\textsuperscript{25} If not all.
remote, when the world was much as it is today.' The characters are usually human and more often secular rather than sacred. Deeds of past heroes, dynasties, migrations and war are types of content and can be the verbal counterpart of written history. As such, legends will not be a major focus in this thesis. Bascom (1984, p. 8) states that 'Folktales are prose narratives which are regarded as fiction.' They are not history or dogma nor are they taken seriously, but they are timeless and placeless, having important functions. Human tales, animal tales, tall tales, trickster tales, dilemma tales, moral tales and fables are sub-genres of folktales. Again, these will not be considered in this thesis.

There are some important questions often raised in relation to myths. Are they true? Can we believe myths? Are they historically accurate? Whether myths faithfully record actual events is not the focus for anthropologists and mythologists. They see something quite different. Sherman (2003, p. 4) understands that myths are true from the sense that they 'answer the unanswerable, comfort our fears, and give us hope...' They can also be true in a legal or historical sense, helping to settle quarrels, keeping old hatreds alive or used as political reinforcement with their retelling within a society.

Karen Armstrong, in *A Short History of Myth* (2005, p. 10), also responds to the concept of the truth of myths:

'A myth, therefore, is true because it is effective, not because it gives us factual information. If, however, it does not give us new insight into the deeper meaning of life, it has failed. If it works, that is, if it forces us to change our minds and hearts, gives us new hope, and compels us to live more fully, it is a valid myth. Mythology will only transform us if we follow its directives. A myth is essentially a guide; it tells us what we must do in order to live more richly. If we do not apply it to our own situation and make the myth a reality in our own lives, it will remain ...incomprehensible and remote...'

For Armstrong (2005, p. 6), myth is valuable because of the impact that it has on human lives. Myth helps people to live more fully, to learn and grow within the context of their community and society. Mythology was designed to help cope with the human predicament, to aid individuals to find their place in the world. Myths do not just speak of ancient times or prehistory or forefathers but help to explain current attitudes to one's neighbours, customs and environment. They also speak of a posthumous existence. In response to the idea that
mythology is some sort of escapist entertainment, Armstrong (2005, p. 3) insists that mythology 'is not about opting out of this world, but about enabling us to live more intensely within it'. One of the important reasons for this is that mythology is not about theology, but about human experience. There was no difference between the world of the gods and the human experience for those who created ancients myths (Armstrong, 2005, p. 5). If myths help humans to cope with their existence and live wisely, they cannot remain static. There is never a single, approved version of a myth. As circumstances change, myths are revised to continue to speak their timeless truth26 (Armstrong, 2005, p. 11).

What cannot be ignored in the scholarly pursuit of mythological understanding, Sherman (2003, p. 5) believes, is that all humans have been influenced, and remain influenced, by mythology on some level, despite the sociological, psychological and ethnic arguments surrounding myth. Sherman (2003, pp. 12-14) reminds us that the influence of mythology is everywhere. The naming of several weekdays and months in the English speaking world after various gods, goddesses, or mythically significant objects like the sun and moon is one example. Most of the planets are named after Roman gods while earth is named after a Saxon goddess. The visual arts, painting, sculpture, plays, musical scores, poetry and literary works have all been inspired at various times by the mythologies of where they arose. It can thus be argued that film, another artist expression, has not only been influenced by mythology, but helps to create new myths for its audience as it continues the practice of telling stories.

HISTORY OF MYTHOLOGY

It is important to give a more general overview of what constitutes mythology.

26 One might look at the mythology of King Arthur as an example of this. With reincarnations covering books, movies and television series, this hero of the past has been variously represented as a selfish teenager in the television series The Adventures of Merlin (J. Jones, Murphy, Capps, & Michie, 2008), a sex addicted young man in the mini-series Camelot (Hirst & Chibnall, 2011), ruled by his wife in the movie Guinevere (J. Taylor, 1994) and hero worthy of the name in the book Arthur (Lawhead, 1996). Batman is another example – the all-American good guy in the original DC comics, quirky in the television series (Kane, 1966) through to the dark anti-hero of the most recent movie franchise of Batman Begins (Nolan, 2005), The Dark Knight (Nolan, 2008) and The Dark Knight Rises (Nolan, 2012).
Josepha Sherman in his book *Mythology for Storytellers: Themes and Tales from Around the World* (2003) gives a brief history of the study of mythology. He claims (2003, p. 6) that the actual study of mythology could be said to have started around 3000 B.C.E. when the Egyptian scholar and priest Imhotep is believed to have collected folk proverbs. In Babylon, scholars made collections of tales around 1000 B.C.E. Formal study, however, seems to have started with the Hellenistic Greeks around 400 B.C.E. when Plato and Aristotle, among others, recognised a difference between *mythos*, meaning myth, story or even storytelling, and *logos*, reason. They claimed that myths could not present reality, except where *mythos* and *logos* overlapped in historical myths. Myths began not to be accepted as fact. Graves (1961, pp. 10,12) notes that Socrates made one of the earliest and most uncompromising rejections of Greek mythology - he preferred to think scientifically: 'to investigate the reason of the being of everything - of everything as it is, not as it appears, and to reject all opinions of which no account can be given.' When Socrates died, his followers made him a martyr and continued to 'explain away' myths as corruptions of history. Thus mythology fell into greater disrepute. The later Roman era began to see myths as allegories and they were scrutinised for deeper, hidden meanings. Judeo-Christian cultures followed this trend.

The Middle Ages through to the nineteenth century constitute Sherman’s next area of study (2003, pp. 7-8). During the Middle Ages, argument over the roles of myth, history and reason continued, but it wasn’t a scholarly pursuit. During the Age of Enlightenment in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the allegorical interpretation of myths fell out of favour and myths were seen as primitive and irrelevant to the modern world. German scholar Christian Gottlob Heyne, however, coined the term *mythology* in the eighteenth century. His understanding of mythology, taken from the Greek *mythos*, was the formal study of myths themselves. Mythology became a valid field of study by the nineteenth century in the United States and Europe as more myths were available through anthropological fieldwork in ‘primitive’ societies and scholars recognised their complexity. Linguistics was also growing in popularity and as scholars looked for common roots of language, so mythologists began looking for common roots amongst myths. Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution encouraged mythologists to explore the evolution of myths. It was in this
environment that Sir James Frazer’s multi volume study *The Golden Bough* (1922,1996) was printed.

Sherman (2003, p. 8) concludes his analysis with an examination of the twentieth century. During the twentieth century, mythologists began to focus on the stories themselves and their content. As the science of psychology and psychoanalysis gained importance, led by Sigmund Freud’s research into dream analysis and Carl Jung’s discussion of archetypes, an increasing link between myth and the human mind was postulated. Jung focused on the worldwide similarities of myths, due to his understanding of myth as an expression of human psyche and human need. These similarities sprung from what Jung called the ‘collective unconsciousness’, a series of memories that are shared, but buried in the psyche of all human beings. Jung also proposed the concept of ‘archetypes’, the basic elements or characters that appear in every culture’s myths and tales and which resonate with the human mind. The trickster, spirit, mother, father, child, hero and the wise old man are all examples of archetypes or archetypal images.²⁷ Armstrong (2005, p. 11) believes that mythology was an early form of psychology - the great stories bringing to light the workings of the psyche. Freud and Jung turned to mythology to explain their quest for the soul and gave the myths a new interpretation.

The study of primitive cultures was gaining momentum in the early part of the twentieth century and various ideas concerning the role mythology had in those cultures was postulated. Bronislaw Malinowski (in De Vries, 1984, p. 37) wrote²⁸

‘...primitive man has to a very limited extent the purely artistic or scientific interest in nature; there is but little room for symbolism in his ideas and tales; and myth, in fact, is not an idle rhapsody, not an aimless outpouring of vain imaginings, but a hard-working, extremely important cultural force.’

Also gaining credence in the early part of the twentieth century was the Myth and Ritual school. Harrelson (2005, pp. 6380-6382) explains that the term Myth and Ritual school refers to two movements occurring at around the second

²⁷ It can be a little confusing as to what Jung actually understands to be an archetype, possibly due to his own developing ideas and the subsequent interpretation of his concepts by a myriad of psychologists, analysts and theorists.

quarter of the twentieth century in Great Britain and Scandinavia. It arose in opposition to the evolutionary approach to the study of ancient religions, recognising the importance of ritual acts and the myths that were their accompanying texts for ancient peoples. The Myth and Ritual school 'sought to show how pervasive were the central ritual acts of ancient societies and how inseparable from these acts were the accompanying words' (Harrelson, 2005, p. 6380). The school identified the celebration of New Year's Day and the place of the king in those celebrations as the main pattern of religious activity in ancient societies. Those communities could participate in the renewal of the cosmos as the rituals were observed, giving the community its self understanding. The work of Hermann Gunkel, founder of form criticism, is the basis for the origins of both the British and Scandinavian branches. He saw the connection between myth and ritual in his studies of legends and myths in Genesis. Later, Norwegian Sigmund Mowinckel applied Gunkel's insights to the cultic materials of the Hebrew Psalter. The British School's focus was to show how many of the cultic motifs and practices of ancient Near Eastern myths had Hebrew scriptural counterparts. The school presented a needed critique of the evolutionary approach to religious studies. It reminded scholarship to heed the actual practices of a religion and underscored the king's importance. It is an approach that has endured and enlarged the vision of those scholars engaged in religious studies.

In this cognitive environment, popular mythologist Joseph Campbell presented theories concerning the connections between myths and their world wide themes, in the mid to late twentieth century. His most well known book on the subject of the universality of myths was *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (J. Campbell, 1949). Through his written works and later television participation, Sherman (2003, p. 14) claims that he introduced mythology to a whole new generation of people. As such, Joseph Campbell has popularised mythology in the late twentieth century for a contemporary Western audience.

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29 This means that it was prevalent at the right time to influence Joseph Campbell.
PIVOTAL WORKS ON MYTHOLOGY

In the field of mythology there have been a number of seminal works that are recognised and provide important resources for assessing the development of subsequent works on mythology. These are works that subsequently influenced Joseph Campbell, directly or indirectly, and his development of the monomyth theory.

A pivotal work in the history of the study of mythology was Scottish anthropologist Sir James George Frazer’s (1854–1941) *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. A massive work, the third edition of which eventually comprised twelve volumes, *The Golden Bough* (Frazer, 1922,1996) is a comparative study of mythology and religion. First published in two volumes in 1890, it discussed religion dispassionately. Rather than viewing mythology from a theological perspective, this modernist approach treated it as a cultural phenomenon. *The Golden Bough* has had a substantial impact on contemporary understandings of mythology as well as European literature. Robert Temple, in the introduction to *The Illustrated Golden Bough* (Frazer, 1996, pp. 6-7), notes that it was written at a time when scholars were questioning the past and trying to explain human beliefs and thoughts and was a landmark in the study of religion and magic. His far reaching work led Frazer to the opinion that religion was a human attempt to conciliate powers that 'control and direct the course of nature and of human life.' His book had influence on the study of culture, history, development of belief and evolution. His approach was essentially evolutionary and psychological. He described three stages in human progress - firstly, a belief in magic to control the environment, secondly, religious belief in gods and spirits and thirdly, scientific thought. He was the first to put forward the notion that matters of human belief were important for their psychological significance, and not so much for their actual content and was the first person to explore totemism and taboo seriously.

By comparing ancient belief systems through to relatively modern religions, such as Christianity, Frazer attempts to define the common elements of religious belief. His thesis is that old religions were merely fertility cults. These cults and their rituals, revolved around the worship of a sacred king, who would
be eventually sacrificed and replaced. Followers of these ancient religions believed that the king was the incarnation of a solar deity who underwent a mystic marriage to a goddess of the Earth, who then died at the harvest, and was eventually reincarnated in the spring. Frazer posited that this legend pattern is central to virtually all of the world's mythologies.\footnote{Note the similarities between Frazer’s conclusion and Campbell’s monomyth.}

While the first release of *The Golden Bough* in 1890 was met with some resistance due to its treatment of Christianity and the possibility of it being a relic of a pagan religion, the work has had substantial influence on the study of mythology, anthropology and literature. The Polish anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski (1884-1942), abandoned a career in mathematics and the physical sciences after reading it. It was the defining work that caused him to take up anthropology and become one of the world's best known and most respected ethnographers. He is often regarded as the pioneer of ethnographic field work, where anthropologists would live and participate in the life of the people whom they were studying.

English poet, novelist and translator Robert Ranke Graves (1895–1985) was also greatly inspired by *The Golden Bough*. Amongst the myriad of poems and novels that he has written, Graves authored an historical study of poetic inspiration, rituals and myths, called *The White Goddess* (1961), first published in 1948. In this pivotal work Graves (1961, p. 11) claimed that 'The study of mythology...is based squarely on tree-lore and seasonal observation of life in the fields'. At the time of writing he believed that mythical had come to mean 'fanciful, absurd, unhistorical' (Graves, 1961, p. 13). He noted, however, that Greek, Latin, Palestinian and early Celtic myths are '*all grave records of ancient religious customs or events, and reliable enough as history once their language is understood and allowance has been made for errors in transcription, misunderstandings of obsolete ritual, and deliberate changes introduced for moral or political reasons'* (Graves, 1961, p. 13).

For Graves, more important than the name of a deity and their contextual time and place, was the nature of the sacrifices that were offered to them because their power was constantly being redefined (1961, p. 14).
Temple (in Frazer, 1996, p. 7) understands that James George Frazer was in essence a nineteenth century thinker and some of his views are no longer compatible with contemporary thinking, especially when approaches to social anthropology have changed. However, it is still an influential work. *The Golden Bough* may have waned in its influence on anthropology, but it has continued to inspire authors and poets. As such, it remains an important cultural and scholarly work as it continues to be used and referenced in literary circles.

Sigmund Freud's famous *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1965), first published in November 1899, began Freud's investigation of the psychoanalysis of dreams. It was also one of the first books to link dream and mythology. Freud believed that the symbolism that he found in client's dreams was shared with psychoneuroses, legends and other popular customs (1965, p. 381). He also conceived that there was a possibility of a permanently fixed meaning for the symbolism representing material in dreams, especially sexual material. He believed that a decoding book could be composed because the symbolism could be found in places other than dreams:

'...this symbolism is not peculiar to dreams, but is characteristic of unconscious ideation, in particular among the people, and it is to be found in folklore, and in popular myths, legends, linguistic idioms, proverbial wisdom and current jokes, to a more complete extent than in dreams' (Freud, 1965, p. 386).

The symbolism that Freud hinted at was given a deeper meaning by psychologist Carl Jung who developed the idea of archetypes. In his partially autobiographical book *Memories, Dreams and Reflections* (1963, p. 153) Jung records how he began studying mythology when he concluded that psychotherapy was not enough to treat his patients because he did not understand the symbolism of their psychoses. In relation to the importance of myth for humanity he concluded:

'What we are to our inward vision, and what man appears to be *sub specie aeternitatis*\(^{31}\), can only be expressed by way of myth. Myth is more individual and expresses life more precisely than does science. Science works with concepts of averages which are far too general to do justice to the subjective variety of an individual life' (Jung, 1963, p. 17).

\(^{31}\) Under the aspect of eternity.
From his studies in psychotherapy and mythology, Jung developed his concept of archetypes. Jung (1972, pp. 3-4) theorised that the personal unconscious was a first, superficial layer of the unconscious. This, however, rested on a deeper inborn level, the collective unconscious. Rather than being individual, it was universal:

'It has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us...The contents of the collective unconscious...are known as archetypes.'

Jung (1968, p. 42) understood that the collective unconscious was the part of the psyche that did not 'owe its existence to personal experience and consequently is not a personal acquisition.' Its contents were hereditary and made up basically of archetypes which are definite forms or 'motifs' in the psyche that are present everywhere and always.

Jung (1972, p. 5) understood that the archetype was a 'hypothetical and irrepresentable model', a pattern for all types of individuals, whether real, primitive, fictional or mythological. He also posited that the unconscious is the source of archetypes. The psychic structure of humans and the elements that make it up, the archetypes, are given and present in all humans (Jung, 1972, p. 35). While Jung (1969, pp. 122-123) believed that the archetype was a 'formative principle of instinctual power', he also stressed that the archetypal representations, ideas and images that are mediated from the unconscious could not be confused with the archetype itself. The latter can only be grasped approximately through formal elements and fundamental meanings because it is a 'psychoid factor' not able to reach consciousness. Thus Jung’s thesis was that:

'In addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche...there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and
which give definite form to certain psychic contents’ (Jung, 1968, p. 43).

Mircea Eliade (1907-1986), the Romanian historian of religion and philosopher, penned a number of works on mythology, two of the most recognised being The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion (1961) and Myths, Dreams and Mysteries: The Encounter Between Contemporary Faiths and Archaic Reality (1968). While these two books overlap somewhat in their content concerning myth, they are representative of Eliade’s seminal thinking on the nature of myth and its relationship to religion and modern humanity. One of his most influential ideas was the concept of hierophany where sacred time and space is revealed and participated in by humans in contrast to profane time and space. Myths were thus a way of communicating sacredness, especially sacred history:

‘The myth relates a sacred history, that is, a primordial event that took place at the beginning of time, *ab initio*[^32]. But to relate a sacred history is equivalent to revealing a mystery. For the persons of the myth are not human beings; they are gods or culture heroes, and for this reason their *gesta*[^33] constitute mysteries; man could not know their acts if they were not revealed to him. The myth, then, is the history of what took place *in illo tempore*[^34], the recital of what the gods or the semidivine beings did at the beginning of time. To tell a myth is to proclaim what happened *ab origine*[^35]. Once told, that is, revealed, the myth becomes apodictic truth; it establishes a truth that is absolute...The myth proclaims the appearance of a new cosmic situation or of a primordial event. Hence it is always the recital of a creation; it tells how something was accomplished, began to be. It is for this reason that myth is bound up with ontology; it speaks only of *realities*, of what *really* happened, of what was fully manifested’ (Eliade, 1961, p. 95).

JOSEPH CAMPBELL

The time was ready at the beginning of the twentieth century, given the rationalist approach to research, for an overarching approach to mythology to emerge.

[^32]: From the beginning.
[^33]: Deeds.
[^34]: At that time.
[^35]: From the very beginning.
Amongst other writers in this field, Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) presents a particular understanding of the hero myth which he calls the monomyth\(^{36}\). He presents a universalist approach whereby he claims all hero myths, no matter the cultural, national or religious heritage, follow a pattern (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 13). His seventeen stage pattern\(^{37}\) is split into three major movements – the hero’s separation from the familiar world, penetration to a new source of power and finally a life-enhancing return to their world, changed (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 35).

‘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’ (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 31).

The hero’s journey, in a sense, magnifies the formula represented in the rites of passage of separation, initiation and return. Campbell understands that these are nuclear units of the monomyth (1949, p. 31). He does make clear, however, that different myths can focus on different elements, may skip a section, fuse stages together or have independent cycles running together. Myths can also change over time and with retelling (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 213).

It can be seen from this universalist approach that Joseph Campbell’s *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) is also greatly indebted to Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*. Campbell’s monomyth has, in part, been influenced by Frazer’s understanding of a common theme or storyline throughout many of the world’s mythologies. The solar deity who must live, die and be revived was an inspiration for Campbell’s hero journey.

There are a large number of works that influenced Campbell’s thinking. Campbell cites Clement Wood’s *Dreams: Their Meaning and Practical Application* (1931), Géza Róheim’s *The Eternal Ones of the Dream* (1945) and *The Origin and Function of Culture* (1943), Carl Jung’s *Symbols of Transformation* (1967) and *Psychology and Alchemy* (1953), Harold Peake and Herbert Fleure’s *The Way of the Sea* (1929) and *Merchant Venturers in Bronze*

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\(^{36}\) The term ‘monomyth’ was adopted from James Joyce and describes the pattern that hero myths follow (Segal, 1987, p. 3).

\(^{37}\) This is explored in depth in Chapter 3.
Arnold Toynbee’s comprehensive, multi-volume *A Study of History* (1934), Frederick Pierce’s *Dreams and Personality* (1931), James Joyce’s *Finnegan’s Wake* (1939), Evelyn Underhill’s *Mysticism* (1930) and Sigmund Freud’s *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1973). There are also a number of works covering the anthropology and mythology of various tribes and people groups from Africa, Asia, India, North America, South America and Australia as well as Pacific Islands. From earlier writers, Campbell draws on the likes of Aristotle’s *On the Art of Poetry* (1920), Euripides’ plays *Bacchae* (1979) and *The Cretans*, Ovid’s epic poem *Metamorphoses* (2004), Apuleius’ story *The Golden Ass* (1998)\(^{38}\) and sacred writings from Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism. This small sample demonstrates the diverse influences on Joseph Campbell’s monomyth concept; from autobiography to history, dream analysis to psychology, anthropology to theology, poetry, prose and plays, many disciplines helped create the hero’s journey pattern.

Campbell laments the loss of myth in modern western culture, seeing in the change a detrimental effect on humanity and its ability to live fully. He understands that images from myths can be hidden or justified when a civilisation moves from mythology into secularism. Gods then become merely household patrons or literary identities. Campbell claims (1949, p. 215) that in modern progressive Christianity, Jesus simply becomes a Jewish wise man who preached a harmless doctrine of ‘do unto others’ but was killed as a criminal and his death is merely a lesson of ‘integrity and fortitude’. This occurs when myth is killed – when it is read as science, history or biography. Images become mere facts of a distant time. Science and history render mythology absurd and its life is gone. Campbell (1949, p. 215) understands that the Bible has been interpreted this way. Instead, one must seek ‘illuminating hints from the inspired past’ revealing the myth’s human meaning, to return the myth to life.

In addition to suggesting the monomyth pattern, Campbell (1949, p. 24) connects mythology with contemporary humanity’s dream-state:

\(^{38}\) The dates of these editions are those used by this author, not those Joseph Campbell would have referenced.
'Dream is the personalised myth, myth the depersonalised dream; both myth and dream and symbolic in the same general way of the dynamics of the psyche. But in the dream the forms are quirked by the peculiar troubles of the dreamer, whereas in myth the problems and solutions are directly valid for all mankind.'

He uses psychology, mostly from Carl Jung and, to a lesser extent, Sigmund Freud, to encourage individuals to take on the journey of the hero, to break free from the effects of the outside world, find the real problems in their psyche and experience the 'archetypal image'. For Campbell, detachment means moving from the external world to the internal one where peace is found in the everlasting realm within. A hero is one who has confronted and defeated their inner, personal limitations and become fully human (J. Campbell, 1949, pp. 23-24). The resulting journey results in a person finding a 'god', which could be understood to mean themself, slaying their ego and finding the centre of existence with all the world (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 27). Campbell’s claim is a classical statement of the enlightenment where everything revolves around the subjective self.

In praising psychoanalysts and psychologists like Jung, Freud, Stekel, Rank, Abraham and others, Campbell (1949, p. 221) writes:

‘With their discovery that the patterns and logic of fairy tale and myth correspond to those of dream, the long discredited chimeras of archaic man have returned dramatically to the foreground of modern consciousness.

According to this view it appears that through the wonder tales - which pretend to describe the lives of legendary heroes, the powers of the divinities of nature, the spirits of the dead, and the totem ancestors of the group - symbolic expression is given to the unconscious desires, fears, and tensions that underlie the conscious patterns of human behaviour. Mythology, in other words, is psychology misread as biography, history, and cosmology. The modern psychologist can translate it back to its proper denotations and thus rescue for the contemporary world a rich and eloquent document of the profoundest depths of human character'.

By bringing mythology into the realm of modern psychology, Campbell suggests that it is essential for humanity’s growth, maturity and very existence. Without mythology, humans are unable to grow into mature adults, able to engage purposefully and heroically with the world that surrounds them.
This psychological approach has an important foundation for Campbell. In asking why myths are the same everywhere and what that teaches, he ends up going beyond just similarities to explain myth's origin, function and interpret their meaning. Segal (1987, pp. 2-3) lists a number of important frameworks that Campbell’s monomyth thus follows. Campbell's analysis is psychological in part – 'hero myths are the same because the mind, which creates them, is' (Segal, 1987, p. 3) – and their true subject is the mind rather than the cosmos, the body or society. His analysis thus uses psychoanalysis. His analysis also commits him to a symbolic approach rather than a literal one. As such, the hero symbolises the mind. Campbell's analysis also commits him to a conscious rather than unconscious interpretation of hero myths. For him, meaning was once conscious, became unconscious and must be made conscious again. For Jung and Freud, however, meaning was always unconscious and became conscious for the first time (Segal, 1987, pp. 2-3).

Campbell’s thinking has spawned what has become known as the ‘Joseph Campbell phenomenon’ as it has grown in popularity and adherents. William Dingess (1992) in his chapter ‘Joseph Campbell and the Contemporary Spiritual Milieu’ outlines a number of reasons why Joseph Campbell’s monomyth and his general thinking on mythology have gained such an interest in the public realm. These include the culture crisis that began in the United States in the 1960’s evidenced by declining mainline religions, a growing population of unchurched young people and their corresponding feelings of spiritual poverty, the failures of science and reason to solve contemporary human problems and the growth of spiritual experimentation (Dinges, 1992, pp. 13-17). The rise of the New Age movement in the 1970’s corresponded with Campbell’s vision of the ‘power of myth’. This new religious consciousness opposed rigid dogmatism and formalism, but rather embraced mysticism, features that Campbell promoted. Campbell understood that myth could only be experienced and his focus on the symbolic aspects of life encouraged personal spiritual potential. Campbell’s syncretistic and universal approach also appealed to the new religious consciousness promotion of an eclectic and syncretistic spirituality drawn from non-Christian and non-western traditions (Dinges, 1992, pp. 17-20). Dingess (1992, pp. 21-31) suggests five other principal reasons for Campbell’s influence
including the movement towards psychology as religion, where the psychologist acts as a surrogate theologian and psychology and mythology became a faith language, the rise of cultural individualism, consumerism and materialism, American romanticism that elevates one’s life to high drama, the privatisation of faith and a growing interest in the ecological movement.

THE USE OF THE MONOMYTH IN MOVIES AND STAR WARS

These reasons help to explain why Joseph Campbell’s monomyth was thus uniquely timed in terms of being influential in American movies. Mythology has been used since films were first made and, since the 1950’s, the monomyth specifically has been utilised to create storylines. In a now famous *Time* interview with Bill Moyers (1999, p. 7) George Lucas explains his deliberate use of myth as he was writing his *Star Wars* movie scripts:

'With *Star Wars* I consciously set about to re-create myths and the classic mythological motifs. I wanted to use those motifs to deal with issues that exist today. The more research I did, the more I realized that the issues are the same ones that existed 3,000 years ago.'

The use of mythological motifs has resulted in one of the most, if not the most, popular movie franchises in cinema history. Dinges’ reasons for Campbell’s popularity have some similarities to Mary Henderson’s reasons for the phenomenal success of George Lucas’ *Star Wars* saga. She is adamant that myths arise in the context of their time and place and as such, understanding the context sheds light on myth:

'Myths are made not just of classic recurring themes but of the specific context out of which they spring. The *Star Wars* saga tells a timeless story of a hero’s journey to fulfil his destiny and conquer the forces of darkness. It is distinctly a myth of the late-twentieth century. And so we need to look at the other stories that were being told and at the stories that history was in the process of writing when *Star Wars* came into being. Some of these elements may have had a conscious influence on George Lucas as he

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39 The original *Star Wars* trilogy holds second (*Star Wars: A New Hope*), twelfth (*The Empire Strikes Back*) and fourteenth (*Return of the Jedi*) position in the United States Domestic Top 100 Movies of All Time adjusted for inflation. The prequel trilogy hold nineteenth (*The Phantom Menace*), fifty-eighth (*Revenge of the Sith*) and eighty-fifth (*Attack of the Clones*) position (Dirks, 2008).
created the *Star Wars* scripts; others are simply part of the general context in which the story appeared, having an impact on the viewers instead' (Henderson, 1997, p. 125).

Some of the influences and other stories that Henderson sees as important in the creation and popularity of *Star Wars* include the decline of the classic Western genre, with its frontier focus, by the end of the 1970’s, the rising interest in the space age and a growing acceptance of science fiction and the aftermath of World War II that George Lucas grew up in. The multiple crises of the 1970’s including the Cold War, the Watergate scandal, and the Vietnam and Yom Kippur Wars had seriously scarred American confidence in their leaders. The failure of supreme American weaponry in the Vietnam War was the culmination of a mythic conflict of humanity versus the machine that had started in the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century. There were also huge changes in the status and role of women during the twentieth century. All of these factors helped the viewing public be ripe for a mythic tale of good versus evil and where the hero does the right thing, saving the universe in the end. Bill Moyers in *The Power of Myth* (in Henderson, 1997, p. 198) stated

'It wasn't just the production value that made that such an exciting film to watch, it was that it came along at a time when people needed to see in recognizable images the clash of good and evil. They needed to be reminded of idealism, to see a romance based on selflessness rather than selfishness.‘

The influence of *Star Wars* can be seen in the number of fan web sites, fan fiction, directors who state that it was a defining movie for them (ref) and number of authors who feel privileged to contribute to the canon of this franchise. Steven Barnes, author of *Star Wars: The Cestus Deception* (2004, p. 398) hints at his own gratefulness and the powerful impact that *Star Wars* had in general:

'Thank you for creating one of the twentieth century's most popular myths, a gift that has brought billions of happy viewing hours at a critical time in world history, a time when, perhaps, we need more than ever to believe in honor, sacrifice, heart, and that special magic called *life itself*...

Hundreds of millions of people said yes, and sighed, and applauded, and went home or turned off their videos feeling just a little more empowered than they did before the lights went down and the Twentieth Century-Fox fanfare came up.
CRITICISM OF CAMPBELL

While Campbell’s monomyth and its supporting psychology have been eagerly accepted in some quarters, he is not without his critics. Robert Segal is one of the most stringent critics, having written a number of journal articles, book chapters and an introductory book, amongst others, on Campbell. He comprehensively outlines Campbell’s monomyth proposal, in addition to exploring Campbell’s other writings, and suggests a number of limitations and problems that it contains. Segal (1984, pp. 262,264) points out that Campbell dismisses the contributions that other psychologists and anthropologists have made to this area of study and concludes that Campbell’s universal, symbolic, psychological and Jungian approach is mere speculation as myths can not reveal their meaning as such. Campbell is also accused by Segal (1984, p. 268) of failing to analyse myths in full and instead, only using parts of myths that support his claims. One of Segal’s (1984, p. 264) most compelling arguments is that the recovery of meaning may not necessarily be the solution for social unrest. If myth is symbolic then how can it deal with the very realities that it denies? The reason that Segal (1987, p. 1) finds so many holes in Campbell’s arguments, is because he claims that Campbell is attempting to establish the similarities in various hero myths rather than explain or interpret them.

Segal is not the only one who has concerns about Campbell's universalist and particularistic approach. Other mythologists, theologians and scholars suggest different approaches to mythology.40

40 Some of Campbell’s critics will be analysed in Chapter 3.
THE FILM INDUSTRY’S USE OF THE MONOMYTH

While Campbell’s approach may have been found wanting in some scholarly arenas, it has been openly welcomed by one major popular source – the western, especially American, film industry. It needs to be recognised that mythology has not been left in the realm of scholar, but due to the film industry, it is actually an active part of the lives of the majority of Western people.41

Eric Dardel (1984, p. 230) reminds us that myth does not have to be confined to primitive peoples. Modern people live with myths or ‘truths’ that they may not recognise as such, but which give meaning, direction and value. Myth is a universal phenomenon revealing something of humanity’s inner workings and the secrets of the individual. This is possibly why the film industry uses a mythic style approach. Movies are used by individuals to create meaning and establish values in their lives. This is even more the case with fans and ‘followers’ of particular movies and television shows like the Star Wars saga, the Matrix trilogy, the Star Trek series and The Lord of the Rings franchise, to name just a few. A cursory glance at forums on the fan sites for these shows demonstrates how much influence these stories have in the lives of fans.

George Lucas, one of America’s best known directors, readily admits the influence that Campbell’s monomyth had on his most successful Star Wars saga and his desire to awaken spirituality in viewers.

‘I put the Force into the movie in order to try to awaken a certain kind of spirituality in young people--more a belief in God than a belief in any particular religious system. I wanted to make it so that young people would begin to ask questions about the mystery. Not having enough interest in the mysteries of life to ask the question, “Is there a God or is there not a God?”--that is for me the worst thing that can happen. I think you should have an opinion about that. Or you should be saying, “I'm looking. I'm very curious about this, and I am going to continue to look until I can find an answer, and if I can't find an answer, then I'll die trying.” I think it's important to have a belief system and to have faith' (in Moyers, 1999, p. 72).

41 This phenomenon will be explored in greater depth in Chapters 5 and 6.
While Lucas first deliberately utilised the monomyth in the late 1970’s, Christopher Vogler, a script consultant, has greatly influenced the use of the monomyth formula in film scripts since his involvement with *The Lion King* (Allers & Minkoff, 1994). His analysis of Campbell’s monomyth and its use in movies can be found in *The Writer’s Journey* (Vogler, 2007). Vogler (2007, p. 231) acknowledges that the *Star Wars* saga has played a pivotal role in helping him develop the Hero’s Journey formula, a condensed version of the monomyth, especially suited to film. He dedicates an entire chapter to analysing a number of movies, demonstrating their use of the Hero’s Journey formula and the meaning that can be gained from them.

**MEANING MAKING FROM STAR WARS AND JEDIISM**

While the obvious use of the monomyth is clearly observed in movies, it is valuable to investigate the meaning making that result for the viewers of those films that utilise it. Numerous books explore the religious, political and social influence of movies and the *Star Wars* franchise is no exception. Kevin Wetmore in his book *The Empire Triumphant* (2005, p. 3) acknowledges the influence the *Star Wars* movies have had on American culture in particular:

‘Not only is the *Star Wars* series an embodiment of key American political and cultural concerns, the films themselves have become the embodiment of American culture...Its imagery, characters, terminology, concepts and plots are almost universally recognizable, not because of the mythic structure, as Lucas and Joseph Campbell have argued, but simply because global marketing of the films have ensured that more people have encountered these movies than almost any other.’

Richard Simon Keller (in Wetmore, 2005, p. 2) also notes the widespread awareness of *Star Wars* stating that the original *Star Wars* trilogy is ‘the only story that virtually all...students know today.’

While there are a few books and many papers on *Star Wars* and the religious themes the six movie epic contains, there is very little in the way of publications that explore the nature of how *Star Wars* operates as a religion or the impact that it has had on fans. While Taoism, Buddhism, Christianity and, according to George Lucas himself (Moyers, 1999, p. 73), all religions have found themes
that they could identify with and related to their sacred texts, the Jedi religion, however, has not been studied in depth. The one work that does address this in part is Will Brooker’s *Using the Force: Creativity, Community and Star Wars Fans* (2002). In this innovative work, Brooker studies the phenomenon that is *Star Wars* from the audience’s, and especially, the fan’s perspective. He claims that the movies not only have a social and cultural influence over those drawn into the saga, but a profound spiritual place as well. He describes fans debating over what constitutes the canon of *Star Wars*. He dedicates an entire chapter to this debate, exploring the movies, the extended universe of books, radio dramas, comics and computer games. He also examines the debates surrounding whether characters and places have entered the prequels from the extended universe. This debate, occurring mostly over the internet, is much the same process as the early church had deciding the canon of the New Testament. Is it only the original six George Lucas films, or does it include the approved books or could it expand to all the fan films and fan fiction that one can find on the internet? In some of the Jedi online chatrooms one can also find evidence of the struggles that some fans have of how to live as a Jedi in the real world, when one has the Force dwelling inside you. This also could be seen as similar to the experience of early Christians who struggled with what it meant to be a follower of Jesus, especially when a Christian was meant to live by the power of the Holy Spirit. As such, can an argument be made that humanity is seeing the birth of a new (legitimate) religion, Jediism?

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42 The first chapter, Star wars and Everyday Life, examines the experiences of a number of fans and their love of Star Wars as well as its influence on them from a spiritual, vocational, moral and social perspective. Other chapters explore specific fan involvement, for example female fandom, the slash fiction phenomenon and how a new generation of children are being brought into the Star Wars fan world via the release of the prequel movies. Chapter Four is especially interesting as it describes the feeling of disappointment and even betrayal of many fans who thought *The Phantom Menace* (Lucas, 2001) did not do justice the *Star Wars* epic.

43 Dr. Dr. James F. McGrath, Clarence L. Goodwin Chair in New Testament Language and Literature at Butler University, Indianapolis, has a humorous theological blog entry exploring the issue of canon and applying exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism approaches to theology to the world of *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* fans (McGrath, 2011).

44 At the time of the book’s publication the television series *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* had not started so is not included in the discussion. As it is a George Lucas production, it is likely that most fans would include the series in the canon, chronicling events between the second and third prequels.

45 One example of this is whether Coruscant, the ruling planet of the Galactic Empire, was actually invented by Lucas or Timothy Zahn, the author of *Heir to the Empire* (1991), one of the first novels of the *Star Wars* extended universe.
While there may not be books on the subject, the internet, especially the Jedi religion websites, contain a myriad of information concerning the doctrine, beliefs and practices of Jediism. Jedi Church\textsuperscript{46}, The Jedi Praxeum\textsuperscript{47}, Temple of the Jedi Order\textsuperscript{48}, The Church of Jediism\textsuperscript{49} and Order of the Jedi\textsuperscript{50} are just five of the largest websites dedicated to the Jedi religion\textsuperscript{51}. These sites contain detailed information about what Jedi’s believe, meditation and other religious practices and blog threads where Jedi’s can discuss issues of concern for them. This is where a lot of the mentoring, faith development, encouragement and even chastisement occur.

Wetmore (2005, p. 1) believes that \textit{Star Wars} makes ideological assertions and interacts with the real world it reflects. He uses the methodology of postcolonialism to examine the \textit{Star Wars} series to see how American and non-American cultures, rebellion, religion and race and ethnicity are represented in the films (Wetmore, 2005, pp. 2, 16). Wetmore (2005, pp. 6,8) concludes that Lucas 'chooses to defend colonialist constructions rather than create a more positive and encompassing view of the future.' This includes viewing Asians as evil and humans of colour as worthless and inactive role models for viewers.

Wetmore (2005, p. 6) acknowledges the educational power that \textit{Star Wars} carries: 'Films teach: \textit{Star Wars} is education.' By targeting young people, \textit{Star Wars} actually 'shapes the real world perceptions of young people by creating a world in which negative characters become associated with real world equivalencies.' The films are marketed to young, white, middle class males and most of the characters are white males. Women are mostly in subservient roles while ethnic people are in minor roles or absent altogether (Wetmore, 2005, p. 4). Because the films are educational, the young target audience has the potential to turn to the 'dark side' and embrace the negative representations that \textit{Star Wars} carries - oppression, Othering, appropriation and imperialism, seeing white people as the heroic centre of the universe while people of colour and

\textsuperscript{46} http://www.jedichurch.org
\textsuperscript{47} http://jedipraxeum.forumwise.com
\textsuperscript{48} http://www.templeofthejediorder.org
\textsuperscript{49} http://www.churchofjediism.org.uk/Home.html
\textsuperscript{50} http://www.orderofthejedi.org
\textsuperscript{51} It is interesting to note that during the writing period of this thesis, Jedi websites have come and gone. The Jedi Sanctuary is one site that has essentially disappeared and at http://www.churchofjediism.org there is a site dedicated to parodying the Jedi religion.
women are marginalised and stereotyped (Wetmore, 2005, p. 185). Wetmore (2005, pp. 186-187) claims that George Lucas is changing the world because a viewer, captivated by the story, 'now understands the world in terms of the models provided to him or her by the films and their merchandise.' While this may not be Lucas’ intention, Wetmore (2005, p. 5) contends that '...all films are the product of the culture and the individuals who produced it, even if the implications in the film are unintentional. No culture is innocent.'

Another book in this vein is *Star Wars and Philosophy* (Eberl & Decker, 2005). In this edited work seventeen authors reflect on the philosophy, ethics, metaphysics, identity, truth, faith and social implications that they have gleaned from the *Star Wars* franchise. The book claims that there are answers to be found, or at the very least, discussion to be had on life’s many questions in the narrative that is *Star Wars* (Eberl & Decker, 2005, p. xiii).

Christian authors have also sought to glean some meaning and underlying truth from the *Star Wars* series. In Dick Staub’s *Christian Wisdom of the Jedi Masters* (2005) there is an interesting syncretism of Jedi and Christian teaching. It is not clear whether Staub is trying to promote the idea of people becoming Jedi Christians or just using the *Star Wars* universe as a hook to teach Christianity, much like the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney used *Star Wars* as a hook to teach scientific developments. Staub covers a number of issues like theology, Christology, Christian living (the importance of Christian mentors and friends, faith, forgiveness, reading the Bible, prayer and meditation, etc), spirituality (spiritual warfare, weapons, etc), and ethics (care of environment, protection of the poor, respecting elders, etc). In this sense it is an overview and introduction to the Christian faith. But perhaps it is more of a contextual systematic theology in that Staub is claiming to be trying to reach a generation of young people who desire spirituality, but Christianity has become meaningless. For Staub, *Star Wars* presents a spirituality that is far more appealing and relevant for them.

In a similar fashion, Caleb Grimes’ *Star Wars Jesus* (2007, p. xx) is ‘a celebration of the beautiful commonalities between *Star Wars*, the most popular myth of our time, and Jesus, the real live myth of all time.’ Grimes (2007, p. xix) claims that
'Star Wars does inform our morality - our perspective on life - and, for many of us, these movies contain the images and metaphors that we look to as we go through tough times... *Star Wars* is a mythical fairy tale that teaches many of us right from wrong, good from evil, just like Sunday School.'

Thus Grimes seeks to find some Christian wisdom in the *Star Wars* narratives does Timothy Paul Jones in *Finding God in a Galaxy Far, Far Away* (2005).

While Christian authors may seek some kind of theological or Christological snippets in *Star Wars*, another group have found *Star Wars* to be the source of their whole religious framework. What has proven fascinating from this meaning making gleaned from use of the monomyth in the movies is the rise of a group of people, resembling a religious group, called the Jedi. At this point, very little has been written on this new religion and the life of its followers. The vast majority of information can be found on a number of Jedi Church websites and a small handful of books. Matthew Vossler, a practicing Jedi, has written two volumes on Jedi beliefs and practices with a possible third to be released in print in 2012. These are *Jedi Manual Basic: Introduction to Jedi Knighthood* (Vossler, 2009) and *Jedi Manual Intermediate: The Path of Truth* (Vossler, 2011). Another Jedi, calling himself Master Bramarshi, has a self-published book called *Da’at Jedi Order: Force Manual* (Bramarshi, 2008). These are the closest to sacred type writings that Jediism possesses, but they are in reality more like self-help books. Lucasfilm have also released two books focusing on the Force, but these also tend to focus on the films, books, comics and television series rather than contemporary Jedi beliefs and customs. These are *Jedi vs. Sith: The Essential Guide to the Force* (Windham, 2007) and *The Jedi Path: A Manual for Students of the Force* (Greve, 2010).

The websites contain far more informative content. The Jedi Church based in New Zealand, the Order of the Jedi in Canada and the Church of Jediism in Britain are the three largest online Jedi communities. These websites contain information regarding Jedi beliefs, practices, history, philosophy and apologetics. They also have community message boards where members discuss various issues that face them as Jedi.

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52 Jediism will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 7.
53 As most of these require membership it would be unethical and inappropriate to reveal exact content of these personal interactions. Generally speaking, however, moral instruction, worries
Jediism claims that it follows the Force, a spiritual energy that George Lucas simply brought to popular awareness, but that has always been present in the universe. Followers claim that Jediism is a way of life that has helped them to live in the world and to better themselves.

Others would claim that Jediism is merely a simulacrum of a religion. Possamai (in Clarke, 2006, p. 149) uses the term 'hyper-religion' designating a 'simulacrum of a religion created out of popular culture which provides inspiration for believers and consumers at a metaphorical level.' Jediism might use the stories of George Lucas' Star Wars universe, but claims its teachings and practices transcend fiction. It therefore makes use of popular culture for a religious purpose. Clarke (2006, p. 149) characterises Jediism as one of dozens of New Age Movements because of the emphasis on following the True Light and finding one’s true self.

Whether one resorts to following Jediism or simply enjoys the Star Wars movies, it is undeniable that there is a community of like-minded individuals that enjoy the community that fandom brings. Wetmore (2005, p. 3) believes that Star Wars creates community by allowing unconnected individuals to share a particular language, codes and concepts in a symbolic relational culture. This is understood by some as reflecting a religious like group.

**FILM AS RELIGION**

Until only recently, there have been very few books or studies written on the relationship between theology and film. Now there is a growing number exploring the dialogue between the two disciplines and posing new ways forward. Deacy (2005) notes the rise in academic study of film at tertiary institutions and theological colleges, however it is still embryonic. The aim of his book Faith in Film is ‘to build on the premise...that it is possible to read film as a

and concerns, discipline and philosophical debate occur most animatedly in these online spaces.
viable and fertile repository of religious significance in contemporary, western culture' (Deacy, 2005, p. 4). One of the most significant developments in this work is the recognition of the role that the audience plays in responding to a movie. The director and the critic may not necessarily be the ones that determine meaning from the movie for the audience. Deacy, however, does recognize that

'... different audience members will, at the end of the day, interpret...film in a multiplicity of different ways - for some it will be especially amenable to a religious reading, while for others it will be nothing more than a work of escapism, whose aim is to shock, titillate and, ultimately, entertain those who pay money to see it. Even among audience members who share a particular religious sensibility, there will be no consensus of opinion as to how to interpret even an explicitly religious film' (Deacy, 2005, p. 7).

Historically, there have been three main approaches taken by scholars as they investigated the relationships between film and religion according to Lyden (2003). Firstly, there is a theological approach, where film was viewed purely as a secular religion. Bryant (in May & Bird, 1982, pp. 105-106) describes the difference:

'The difference between a "religious" and a "secular" culture is that a religious culture seeks to mediate a transcendent order, whereas a secular culture has no referent beyond itself and consequently worships itself...as a popular form of the religious life, movies do what we have always asked of popular religion, namely that they provide us with archetypal forms of humanity - heroic figures - and instruct us in the basic values and myths of our society.'

This theological approach, while acknowledging that film has a religious function, fails to see film operating in a religious way in and of itself.

A second approach is ideological, where some religion scholars approach film by analysing its ideological content and simply recognise when and how religious themes serve the ideology of the film. This approach also has helpful aspects. It can help viewers to see religious content and how this might apply to the situation that the film is presenting. However, it is limited to thematic content and does not address the way that the film may operate religiously for a viewer.
A third approach is mythological. Mythological study is 'comparative religious studies and the history of religions approach, which asserts that "religion manifests itself through cross-cultural forms" including myth and ritual' (Martin & Ostwalt in Lyden, 2003, pp. 32-33). Lyden (2003, pp. 33-34) actually critiques Campbell and his contemporaries for reducing religious studies to archetypes that are common to all religions and neglecting the distinctive and important differences.

John Lyden (2003) suggests that film itself can actually function as a type of religion. Film actually has the potential to fulfil the roles and purposes traditionally attributed to institutional religion (Kraemer, 2011, p. 192). There are a number of books that explore the philosophy of film, but it is another thing to engage with film theologically. At one end of the spectrum are books that are cautionary warnings to Christians concerning film. This would include Patterson’s *At a Theatre Near You* (1994) and Godawa’s *Hollywood Worldviews* (2002). Further along the spectrum are books that promote Christian spirituality through film. McNulty’s *Praying the Movies* (2001) contends that film can be a source of devotion and meditation while *Lights, Camera...Faith!* (Pacatte & Malone, 2006) specifically explores the Ten Commandments through the lens of film. Matthesius argues that movies can be used as modern day parables in *God in Hollywood* (2004).

Kraemer (2011, p. 187) acknowledges the influence of film in contemporary society:

'Most Americans spend far more time watching and thinking about film than they do attending church or considering traditionally religious ideas. In an era where mainstream Christian churches are losing congregants and both fundamentalism and eclectic new religious movements are growing rapidly, film has become a culture-wide touchstone whose forms and content are appreciated

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54 Film is not the only medium that has the potential to have a religious function. James Smith in his exploration of cultural liturgies *Desiring the Kingdom* (2009) examines how the shopping mall, the sporting stadium and the university function as religious spaces and have their own liturgies. Charles Taylor analyses the impact of secularisation on religion and spirituality in *The Secular Age* (2007), acknowledging that modern story tellers, including film makers, influence our perception of reality.

55 For example, Open Court's *Popular Culture and Philosophy Series* which includes titles like *Star Trek and Philosophy* (Eberl & Decker, 2008) and *Star Wars and Philosophy* (Eberl & Decker, 2005).
by both the religious right and religious left, as well, perhaps, as by the more casual religious center.'

Filmmaker George Lucas, in an interview with Aljean Harmetz (in Wetmore, 2005, p. 9), agrees:

'Film and [other] visual entertainment are a pervasively important part of our culture, an extremely significant influence on the way our society operates...People in the film industry don't want to accept the responsibility that they had a hand in the way the world is loused up. But, for better or worse, the influence of the church, which used to be all-powerful, has been usurped by film.'

Along with the belief that films has a powerful influence on society and that filmmakers are responsible for their films and the influence they have, Lucas believes that the cinema has replaced traditional religion as a meaning-maker in viewer's lives. 'For Lucas, film is religion' (Wetmore, 2005, p. 9).

In her article *Film as Religion*, Kraemer (2011, pp. 187-192) gives a very helpful overview of how scholars, using a variety of methods, have seriously begun to explore the impact of film as religion. Film has begun to be treated as a partner in theological dialogue, whilst sometimes having a religious message, it at least articulates cultural themes. She (2011, p. 190) explains the four approaches that theologians and scholars have taken in relating film and religion – film in dialogue with theology, film as communicator of ethics, film as expression of myth, and film as venue for ritual.

In relation to theology and film in dialogue, Clive Marsh (in Marsh & Ortiz, 1997) in his chapter ‘Film and Theologies of Culture’ in *Explorations in Theology and Film* sees film as both challenging and confirming the content of Christian theology. Protestant theologian Paul Tillich (in Kraemer, 2011, p. 187) saw 'all art as potentially religious, as it orients itself toward issues of meaning and value most fundamental to human beings'. This framework yields a significant number of works – Anker's *Catching Light: Looking for God in the Movies* (2004), *Finding God in the Movies* (Barsotti & Johnston, 2004), Romanowski’s *Eyes Wide Open* (2007), *Through a Screen Darkly* (Overstreet, 2007) and *Movies that Matter* (Leonard, 2006) are all general theological dialogues. Deacy’s *Screen Christologies* (2001) is a specific analysis of redemption in film, *Saviour on the Silver Screen* (Stern, Jefford, & Debona, 1999) analyses movie

Kraemer (2011, p. 188) also acknowledges film is a powerful shaper of popular morality, ethics and ideology as they present values in both their form and content. From a positive aspect films can promote values of optimism, compassion, hope, hard work and forgiveness. While there may be debate as to whether film expresses desirable ethical values, there does seem to be agreement that they do present values convincingly to a very wide audience. A number of recent works fall into this category: *The Gospel According to Disney* (Pinsky, 2004), *Field Guide to Harry Potter* (Duriez, 2007), *The Gospel According to Harry Potter* (Neal, 2008), *Can Movies be a Moral Compass?* (Malone, 2005), *The Gospel According to Science Fiction* (McKee, 2007), *A Closer Look at Science Fiction* (Thacker, 2001) and Wood’s *The Gospel According to Tolkien* (2003) all seek to engage their subject theologically, and conclude that Christians can glean positive values from them like faith, courage, determination, reconciliation, trust, joy, humility and hope for the future, amongst others. McDowell argues in *The Gospel According to Star Wars* (2007, pp. 2, 37) that George Lucas hoped the movie saga would be used as a vehicle for ethical and moral education and not just entertainment. Psychotherapist Maria Grace in her book *Reel Fulfillment* (2006) actually lays out a twelve step plan to transform one’s life through watching movies.

Kraemer (2011, p. 189) demonstrates how films have also been explored theologically as 'systems of meaning-making narrative that may offer entire cosmologies for understanding the world'. Joel Martin and Conrad Ostwalt (in Kraemer, 2011, p. 189) define mythological criticism as equating religion with
universal symbols and archetypes rather than recognised religions. Andrew Gordon's *Star Wars: A Myth for Our Time* (in Kraemer, 2011, p. 189) argues for the meaning-making function of *Star Wars* by using a highly recognisable plot that resonates for Americans and concludes that the 'passion for Star Wars is akin to the fervor of a religious revival'. He asserts that film can fill the gap that religious narrative once filled as a shared mythic narrative. It is therefore vital to examine what narrative viewers are embracing because shared meaning helps bind communities. This is especially important when studying science fiction as it explores questions of pivotal concern by confronting social trends with dystopian and utopian futures. *Sith, Slayers, Stargates, + Cyborgs* (Whitt & Perlich, 2008) explores philosophical and religious aspects of the mythology of a number of contemporary science fiction films and television series while *Star Wars: The New Myth* (Hanson & Kay, 2001) does the same specifically for the *Star Wars* saga. Alsford theologically explores the concepts of heroes and villains in popular mythology in *Heroes and Villains* (Alsford, 2006). *Film and Religion* (Flesher & Torry, 2007) analyses symbolism and meaning-making in film for a variety of mainstream religions.

Film can also be explored through ritual studies (Kraemer, 2011, pp. 189-190). Films can be

'venues for ritualized performance of community myths and values, whether in the physical act of viewing, the psychological act of identifying with characters in the film, or the elaborately staged enactment of subcultural community values that accompanies the screening of some "cult" films... The viewing of a film, therefore, can be considered as a performative ritual that may well have lasting effects outside of the theatre'.

*Star Trek* has thus been examined as source of optimistic, humanistic philosophy for fans of the series by Michael Jindra (in Kraemer, 2011, p. 190). Jennifer E. Porter (in Kraemer, 2011, p. 190) has explored how *Star Trek* conventions are like pilgrimages where fans celebrate their shared values in an egalitarian community. These examples demonstrate that film is 'not something that is passively consumed by the viewer; it is participatory and potentially transformative, and may even help to build and sustain community' (Kraemer, 2011, p. 190). Marsh’s *Cinema and Sentiment* (2004) is an interesting exploration of film watching as theological and religious practice.
Lyden in his work *Film as Religion: Myths, Morals and Rituals* (2003) argues that film operates as a religion, or at the very least performs a religious function, for many people. For Lyden, film provides viewers with ways of interpreting and understanding the world around them, the values and morals it holds and the options of how to respond to that world.\(^{56}\) Movies have a ritual power to provide viewers with emotional catharsis, much like a church service or synagogue meeting do. He notes that ‘... what we have always called "religion" is identified by its function in society, and that this function can be met even by cultural phenomena not normally called "religions"’ (Lyden, 2003, pp. 2-3). Pop culture, of which film plays a major role, is one such phenomenon. He claims that theological, ideological and mythological interpretations of film have limitations and that if one is to explore film as religion, it must be understood how it operates as such on its own terms and for its viewers. Only then can we grasp more fully its power and dynamics within the film.

According to Kraemer (2011, pp. 190-191), Lyden (2003) synthesises the previous four approaches, suggesting that film should be viewed as a religion in its own right. He also acknowledges the integral nature of the individual and community viewers for the experience of film. His model is one of interreligious dialogue between film and religion, but where the viewer seeks to hear the film's message first before bringing it into dialogue with other religious traditions. She claims that Lyden does not go far enough, however, as his model does not take into consideration the cultural afterlife of a film. Film as 'modern myth' could be explored from the perspective of its influence on the religious beliefs and practices of audiences, how the worldview presented in the film might be appropriated, changed and developed by fan fiction writers and filmmakers or

\(^{56}\) At least one television show claims this of stories and therefore of itself. In the very first episode of the new *Once Upon a Time* (Horowitz & Kitsis, 2011) local school teacher Mary Margaret Blanchard gives one of her students Henry Mills a book of fairytales and folk stories. He believes that the stories are actually true and that he is actually the grandchild of Snow White and Prince Charming and that his adopted mother is the Evil Queen. An insightful conversation ensues when Mary is questioned by Henry's birthmother, Emma Swan:

**Emma:** ‘How’s the book supposed to help?’

**Mary:** ‘What do you think stories are for? These stories, the classics - there's a reason we all know them. They're a way for us to deal with our world if it doesn't always make sense...Look I gave the book to him because I wanted Henry to have the most important thing anyone can have - hope. Believing in even the possibility of a happy ending is a very powerful thing.’
how the meanings presented in the films become like sacred texts in these countercultural communities. *Star Wars* and *The Matrix* have provided vocabulary that has become pervasive in contemporary society.

It is in this perceived gap that this thesis hopes to position itself. While it acknowledges these five approaches and the helpful reality of their insight, at least in the expression of Jediism, it attempts to explore the very real afterlife that films can have on viewers.

**VITAL ISSUES THAT EMERGE FROM THE SURVEY OF MYTHS**

It is clear from the previous discussion that there needs to be a critical assessment of Joseph Campbell’s monomyth, its use and its effects on people. While the monomyth has been critiqued from a psychological and mythological perspective, it has had little direct theological reflection. There is also little written on the way that the monomyth has influenced film and the subsequent rise of religious ‘looking’ groups. Finally, while there has been quite a lot written on the messages and meanings to be found in films, and the rise of fan culture surrounding them, especially that of *Star Wars*, there is need for an in depth study of the way the meaning presented in film gives rise to religious groups or cults.
CHAPTER 3

JOSEPH CAMPBELL’S MONOMYTH PATTERN: AN OVERVIEW AND CRITIQUE

‘Heroes are simply ourselves projected outwardly. Their stories are our stories, and their adventures are meaningful only to the degree that we can identify with the heroes’ struggles and anxieties.’

(Indick, 2004)

Having explored the literary influences on Campbell’s thinking and writing, it is important to determine just what Campbell understood by mythology, how his monomyth pattern actually progresses and what meaning it holds for individuals. This chapter will also compare and contrast Campbell’s monomyth to other frameworks of myth. Finally, it seeks to explore some of the limitations and criticisms that have been pointed at the monomyth.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL ON MYTHOLOGY

When Joseph Campbell wrote The Hero with a Thousand Faces (1949) he had a very particular understanding of myth and mythology. He believed that ‘Myths are clues to the spiritual potentialities of the human life’ (J. Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 5). As he wrote in the late 1940’s, after having witnessed a world ravaged by two devastating wars, Campbell was aware that something was lacking in contemporary society. He believed that attitudes, beliefs and therefore behaviour had changed from ancient and medieval times. The changes wrought in society could possibly explain the situation that he found western society entrenched in during the mid twentieth century. Campbell concluded that contemporary society lived in a demythologised world (J. Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 9). Without myths or grand narratives, individuals and the larger society had no guiding hand. It was lost and people did not know what it meant to be human, to be members of a community or to live a purposeful life.
Campbell believed that myths offered individuals and societies patterns that could enhance life. For him myths were 'stories about the wisdom of life' (J. Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 9). Campbell lamented that what students learnt in schools was not wisdom of life but merely information and exposure to technology. Yet, as he began teaching in universities and eventually on television, he found that people were interested in mythology because they believed that myths brought them messages. While mythology teaches about literature and the arts and what is behind them, it also teaches people about their own lives. For Campbell, mythology was a life-nourishing arena (J. Campbell & Moyers, 1988, pp. 11-12).

When Campbell was asked by Bill Moyers, in a television interview series for American station PBS, to define myth, he responded:

'Now what is a myth? The dictionary definition of a myth would be stories about gods. So then you have to ask the next question: What is a god? A god is a personification of a motivating power or a value system that functions in human life and in the universe - the powers of your own body and of nature. The myths are metaphorical of spiritual potentiality in the human being, and the same powers that animate our life animate the life of the world. But also there are myths and gods that have to do with specific societies or the patron deities of the society. In other words, there are two totally different orders of mythology. There is the mythology that relates to your nature and to the natural world, of which you're a part. And there is the mythology that is strictly sociological, linking you to a particular society. You are not simply a natural man, you are a member of a particular group' (J. Campbell & Moyers, 1988, pp. 22-23).

Campbell understood that myth served four functions (J. Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 31). The first was the mystical function where myth opens the world to a dimension of transcendent mystery and wonder about the whole universe and the individual self. The second was the cosmological function, the dimension where science is concerned, but which shows again the shape of the universe but the mystery that shapes it as well. The third function is sociological where the myth supports and validates a certain social order. The final function is the pedagogical one where myths can teach individuals how to live a human life in any situation.
Campbell studied myths and stories from a huge variety of sources, including tribal groups, animistic worshippers, eastern mysticism, polytheistic religions and the three mainline monotheistic religions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. In his research he concluded that mythology was intimately linked to the stages of life and the movements from one to another, especially initiation ceremonies. Rituals were mythological rites and had to do with one's recognition of their new role, whether child to adult, single to married, moving into a new profession or any other sacred initiation rites (J. Campbell & Moyers, 1988, pp. 11-12). He believed that if people were able to learn from and apply the principles found in myths, they could become more human. In essence, they could become the heroes of their own life's journey. This hope, combined with his extensive comparative study of the world’s myths, led him to develop the monomyth.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL’S MONOMYTH OR THE HERO’S JOURNEY

Campbell's guiding idea in studying mythology was to find

‘the commonality of themes in world myths, pointing to a constant requirement in the human psyche for a centering in terms of deep principles...For the experience of being alive’ (J. Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. xvi).

Campbell claimed that there was a constant pattern underlying the myths and legends of the world, despite the myriad variety of settings, characters, events and content contained within them (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 13). He set out a three stage, seventeen part pattern which he claimed all myths followed, though they did not necessarily have to contain all parts. Two or more stages could be collapsed into a single event or skipped altogether (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 213). The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation from the world, an initiation or penetration to a source of power and a return that is life-enhancing; each of which might be named a nuclear unit of monomyth (J. Campbell, 1949, pp. 31,35). Campbell's (1949, p. 31) summary of the monomyth is:

‘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’.
While Campbell may have been one of the first anthropologists to articulate a single overarching mythological storyline, and certainly the most well known to have done so, he is not alone in his thinking. Other scholars support Campbell’s universalist perspective. Armstrong (2005, p. 36) states

‘All cultures have developed a similar mythology about the heroic quest. The hero feels that there is something missing in his own life or in his society. The old ideas that have nourished his community for generations no longer speak to him. So he leaves his home and endures death-defying adventures. He fights monsters, climbs inaccessible mountains, traverses dark forests and, in the process, dies to his old self, and gains new insight or skill, which he brings back to his people...So engrained is the myth of the hero that even the lives of historical figures, such as the Buddha, Jesus or Muhammad, are told in a way that conforms to this archetypal pattern, which was probably first forged in the Palaeolithic era.’

**STAGES OF THE MONOMYTH**

The monomyth has become quite well known in anthropological and sociological circles. It is also familiar to many people due to its use in stories, novels, myths and movies. They may not, however, know its name or the formal pattern that Campbell laid out. What follows below is a summary of the stages and phases of Campbell’s monomyth as set out in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (J. Campbell, 1949).57

**STAGE ONE: DEPARTURE**

**Phase 1: The Call to Adventure**

It is interesting to note that often blunders or chances can be the beginning of the hero’s call to adventure and reveal a world that is completely unsuspected. A relationship with forces not understood by the hero thus begins. There is a herald of some kind, not necessarily human, and the crisis of the herald’s appearance is the call to adventure for the hero. The herald may in fact be a dark or loathing figure, a beast or a mysterious figure. However, they do begin

57 Much of Campbell’s language is retained in this overview in the hope of allowing his words to speak.
to reveal something of the power of the undiscovered and unknown world and as such there is an 'atmosphere of irresistible fascination' about the herald. The call to adventure signifies that the hero has been called by destiny to move from the known world to that of the unknown (J. Campbell, 1949, pp. 52-57).

**Phase 2: Refusal of the Call**

It is possible for the hero to turn a deaf ear on the herald's call to adventure and the hero then becomes a victim to be saved from a meaningless life. By refusing the call the hero refuses what is in their best interest and possibly that of their society. Many myths do not contain this phase as the call is accepted by many heroes (J. Campbell, 1949, pp. 58-59). Sometimes the hero can refuse the call at first, but circumstances later compel the hero to accept the offered journey.

**Phase 3: Supernatural Aid**

If the hero has accepted the call, their first encounter is with a protective figure, often an old crone or man, who provides them with amulets to ward off any evil forces. The figure represents the ever present and available protecting, propitious power of destiny reassuring peace for the hero. The usually male figure is the guide and teacher for the hero and their journey. The helper normally appears to the hero who has answered to call. However, refusal does not always mean that the hero's story has finished. The helper can appear to an individual who has refused the call as well (J. Campbell, 1949, pp. 65-68).

**Phase 4: The Crossing of the First Threshold**

With the help of the protector the hero moves forward until they meet the 'threshold guardian' at the 'entrance to the zone of magnified power'. These two entities represent the bounds of the hero's world and life. Beyond them is the complete unknown where there is much danger. Although the threshold guardian can keep the hero in the realm of the known and safe, it is only by going through them that the hero can enjoy the new experience of the unknown. It might be a risk to engage the guardians, but this decreases for those with the courage and competence to engage them (J. Campbell, 1949, pp. 71-74).
Phase 5: The Belly of the Whale

By conquering the power of the threshold, the hero is swallowed into the unknown and may even appear to have died. This phase is a picture of self-annihilation and being born again inwardly, or metamorphosed, where the old self is left outside and a new self discovered. It is possible that the hero may actually be slain during this part of the action of the myth, but by also returning demonstrates that there is nothing to fear because they are actually imperishable (J. Campbell, 1949, pp. 79-81).

STAGE TWO: INITIATION

Phase 1: The Road of Trials

'Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials. This is a favourite phase of the myth-adventure. It has produced a world literature of miraculous tests and ordeals. The hero is covertly aided by the advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper whom he met before his entrance into this region. Or it may be that he here discovers for the first time that there is a benign power everywhere supporting him in his supernatural passage' (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 90)

The hero must put aside their pride, life, virtue, beauty, etc. so that these things don't gain power over the hero and something intolerable eventuate. The hero must face putting their ego to death. In doing so, they see glimpses of the wonderful land in small victories (J. Campbell, 1949, pp. 90-98).

Phase 2: The Meeting with the Goddess

When all the trials have been overcome, the ultimate adventure is often represented as a mystical marriage between the hero and the 'Queen Goddess of the World'. This is the zenith moment and can be played out on various physical stages or in the recesses of the heart. Campbell understands that the goddess is

'the paragon of all paragons of beauty, the reply to all desire, the bliss-bestowing goal of every hero's earthly and unearthly quest. She is mother, sister, mistress, bride...she is the incarnation of the promise of perfection...' (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 99).

58 This stage is possibly the most represented in movies. It is the stage of action and adventure. It is also the stage that is most commonly portrayed in comics and computer games.
The 'universal mother' figure gives the new world feminine attributes of protection and nourishment.

However, there is also the possibility that this goddess might be absent, hampering, forbidding, clinging or desired but forbidden. These are the unattainable goddesses.

'Woman, in the picture language of mythology, represents the totality of what can be known. The hero is the one who comes to know. As he progresses in the slow initiation which is life, the form of the goddess undergoes for him a series of transfigurations: she can never be greater than himself, though she can always promise more than he is yet capable of comprehending. She lures, she guides, she bids him break his fetters. And if he can match her import, the two, the knower and the known, will be released from every limitation. Woman is the guide to the sublime acme of sensuous adventure. By deficient eyes she is reduced to inferior states; by the evil eye of ignorance she is spellbound to banality and ugliness. But she is redeemed by the eyes of understanding. The hero who can take her as she is, without undue commotion but with the kindness and assurance she requires, is potentially the king, the incarnate god, of her created world' (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 103)

Whether present or absent, the goddess requires of the hero a 'gentle heart'. 'The meeting with the goddess (who is incarnate in every woman) is the final test of the talent of the hero to win the boon of love... which is life itself enjoyed as the encasement of eternity' (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 105)

It is important to note a difference if the hero is female. If this is the case, then she becomes fit to be the 'consort of an immortal'. If she has shunned him in the past, she will see the light and be united with him. If she desired him during the journey, she can now be at peace (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 105).

**Phase 3: Woman as the Temptress**

When the hero has reached this stage, there is a realisation that the hero is in their father's place and is one with the father. The hero has thus to identify the restrictions that are placed around them, acknowledging their temptations and limitations. Humans need to get to the very core of their evil nature instead of justifying and whitewashing or blaming someone else. This is the main
temptation that the hero must address but this realisation can produce revulsion. When the hero experiences revulsion, the world, body and especially woman become symbols of defeat and sin (J. Campbell, 1949, pp. 106-108).

**Phase 4: Atonement with the Father**
To be at-one-ment with the father the hero must abandon that which was thought to be good and that which was thought to be sin. The father's mercy must be relied upon especially in this phase. One important reason is because the hero endures initiation at the hands of the father which shatters their ego, often with the help of the female figure. The hero then discovers that the father and mother are in essence the same as they reflect each other. The father needs to take great care in this process and only admits to his house those that have been thoroughly tested. When the hero meets the father, they open themselves to the understanding of the pain and suffering in the world, but now that is validated in the god. By understanding, the hero is atoned. For those who know the father, there is the comfort of everlasting 'Presence' (J. Campbell, 1949, pp. 113-126).

**Phase 5: Apotheosis**
This is the phase where the hero gains a god-like status. The 'godlike being is the pattern of the divine state to which the hero attains who has gone beyond the last terrors of ignorance...This is the release potential within us all, and which anyone can attain - through herohood...' (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 127). The image of creation stands at the beginning of the cosmogonic cycle and at the conclusion of the hero-task. The divine form is found and remembered and wisdom is regained.

**Phase 6: The Ultimate Boon**
If at this stage of the adventure the hero encounters little in the way of opposition or setbacks, they are a 'superior man, a born king.' If the hero faces a test, then they are just a usual hero. Any opposition that the hero may face at this stage are the guardians or bestowers of indestructible life. One picture of indestructibility is the concept of an external soul which cannot be afflicted. ‘The supreme boon desired for the Indestructible Body is uninterrupted residence in the Paradise of the Milk that Never Fails’ (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 142). What this
means is that the hero is not after the gods in and of themselves, but after their grace, that is, the power of their sustaining substance. Myths name this sustaining substance energy, fertility, consecration and illumination. If the gods do not release the gift, the hero may actually need to trick them out of it. If the hero is able to gain the ultimate boon, not only are they annihilated, but the Father as well. The masks are thus removed (J. Campbell, 1949, pp. 140-153).

STAGE THREE: RETURN

Phase 1: Refusal of the Return

For the full adventure to be complete, the hero must return to the realm of humanity, with their boon, once it has been gained. Upon return, wisdom, blessing or another such gain renews the community, nation, planet or universe. The hero, however, can refuse to return, especially if they doubt that the boon will be well received upon their return (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 170).

Phase 2: The Magic Flight

If the hero has gained the boon through the support of the gods or helper, their return is fully supported by the supernatural powers. However, if they have gained it by stealth or trickery, then pursuit is the result, often with obstruction. The hero evades these magically. Sometimes the hero can leave items behind to speak for them, thus delaying pursuit. At other times the hero can put their own delaying obstacles in the road of the pursuer but the hero should not challenge the opposing powers lightly (J. Campbell, 1949, pp. 172-177).

The hero does not always succeed in their flight from the opposing powers. Sometimes the hero fails.

'The myths of failure touch us with the tragedy of life, but those of success only with their own incredibility. And yet, if the monomyth is to fulfil its promise, not human failure or superhuman success but human success is what we shall have to be shown. That is the problem of the threshold of the return' (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 180).

Phase 3: Rescue from Without

The hero may need help from their own world in order to return from their supernatural adventure (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 181).
Phase 4: The Crossing of the Return Threshold

Though there are two worlds, the divine and the human, the hero discovers on their journey that they are in fact one.

‘The realm of the gods is a forgotten dimension of the world we know. And the exploration of that dimension, either willingly or unwillingly, is the whole sense of the deed of the hero. The values and distinctions that in normal life seem so important disappear with the terrifying assimilation of the self into what was formally otherness’ (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 188)

There is a tension and inconsistency between the wisdom gained in the divine world and the prudence that is found in the natural, which can result in the degeneration of the human existence. The boon is 'rationalised into nonentity' and another hero is needed to refresh the natural world. The biggest trial for the hero then is actually trying to teach the residents of their world the wisdom of the divine, when those around them have 'unlearned' it on previous occasions. One of the first steps for the hero, in order to do this, is to accept the reality of the world they have returned to, despite the supernatural experience they have just had. In other words, the hero must 'survive the impact of the world' and must 'knit together' the two worlds of their experience (J. Campbell, 1949, pp. 188-197).

Phase 5: Master of the Two Worlds

If the hero is able to synthesise the two worlds, they have the freedom then to pass between the two, but not contaminate one with the other. They are the master of both worlds fully recognising one from the other (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 197).

Phase 6: Freedom to Live

The goal of the hero adventure myth is to remove the need to either justify one's sin or to sink into despair at the meaningless of life. If the hero is able to do this they enjoy powerful insight, are free in action and able to communicate the Law to others (J. Campbell, 1949, pp. 203-204).

'The hero is the champion of things becoming, not of things become, because he is...He does not mistake apparent changelessness in time for permanence of Being, nor is he fearful
of the next moment (or of the "other thing"), as destroying the permanent with its change' (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 207)

INFLUENCES ON CAMPBELL’S MONOMYTH

This well established framework may be familiar to many people today, but it is indebted to the scholarship in a variety of fields preceding and contemporary to Campbell’s composition. Campbell’s theory was influenced by his cultural, social and scholarly era. It is thus a concept of its time that has continued to have power and importance up to the current age. It was also heavily indebted to the thinking of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung who were advocates of a psychological understanding of myth. Although these two men differed in their final conclusions about myth and its use and function for individuals, they both had connected myths with patient’s dreams. Dream analysis thus became important processes in their psychoanalytic treatment and their understanding of the human condition. In fact, Campbell believed that the grammar of the symbols found in myth was psychoanalysis (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 11). For Campbell, myths ‘have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind...Religions, philosophies, arts, the social forms of primitive and historic man, prime discoveries in science and technology, the very dreams that blister sleep, boil up from the basic, magic ring of myth...the symbols of mythology are not manufactured; they cannot be ordered, invented or permanently suppressed. They are spontaneous productions of the psyche, and each bears within it, undamaged, the germ power of its source’ (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 13).

This psychological interpretation of myth still holds credence in some quarters. It is thought that myths tell us what people need to do and how to behave to be fully human. In fact, it is claimed that we all need to be heroes at some point in our lives but this will require giving up everything and be willing to die in order to gain new life, to descend to the depths in order to ascend to the heights. When people find themselves in difficult situations, the hero myth shows them how to
behave. The final path in human life is that of death and all must face it. This is the ultimate human journey (Armstrong, 2005, p. 37)

To understand Joseph Campbell’s concept of the monomyth, one must wrestle with the definition of myth and his claim that there is one overarching myth. Since Campbell presented his monomyth, other writers have continued to explore this field. Some scholars have theories that agree with Campbell, while others, of course, critique it.

MODERN THEORIES OF MYTH

Karen Armstrong’s concept of myth aligns well with Joseph Campbell’s. She sees myth as having the potential to guide people in their life journey. Armstrong (2005, p. 7) reminds her readers that myth is often currently used to describe something that is not true - a lie or a fictional story. But when pre-modern people wrote about the past they were concerned with the meaning of an event. It happened once, but it also happened all the time. Her understanding is that

‘...mythology is an art form that points beyond history to what is timeless in human existence, helping us to get beyond the chaotic flux of random events, and glimpse the core of reality... A myth, therefore, is true because it is effective, not because it gives us factual information. If, however, it does not give us new insight into the deeper meaning of life, it has failed. If it works, that is, if it forces us to change our minds and hearts, gives us new hope, and compels us to live more fully, it is a valid myth. Mythology will only transform us if we follow its directives. A myth is essentially a guide; it tells us what we must do in order to live more richly. If we do not apply it to our own situation and make the myth a reality in our own lives, it will remain ...incomprehensible and remote...' (Armstrong, 2005, pp. 7,10).

For Armstrong myths have a purpose of informing the present and enabling human beings to live their lives with greater awareness and meaning, even if the myths are from bygone eras. Humans have always been mythmakers. Even as early as the Neanderthals, their graves show that they developed a counter-narrative when these people realised their mortality. History has shown us that
humans have ideas that go beyond their everyday experience. All cultures and all ages demonstrate a creativity and ability to create and nourish myths, stories and legends which spoke, and continue to speak, into their lives. Humans seek meaning and invent stories that place life in a larger setting, reveal an underlying pattern and give a sense that life has meaning. Armstrong (2005, pp. 1-2) states that the human mind can have ideas that cannot be explained rationally and that in fact it is human imagination has brought mythology, religion and scientific discovery into existence.

For Armstrong (2005, pp. 3-4), the Neanderthal graves (and subsequent mythological discoveries) tell us five things about myths. Firstly, they are rooted in the experience and fear of death. Secondly, myths are usually associated with ritual. Thirdly, they are about going to extremity and beyond experience. Fourth, myths are told to show us how to behave. Finally, myths speak of another plane of existence that somehow supports our world. An important factor in myth development, however, is that there is never a single, approved version of a myth. As circumstances change, myths are revised to continue to speak their timeless truth (Armstrong, 2005, p. 11).

Armstrong’s understanding is only one definition of myth, however. Other scholars have different concepts and these are often determined by their approach. Anthropologists, theologians, social scientists, mythologists and psychologists all approach mythology from a slightly different perspective and starting point.

William Bascom is one scholar who makes clear definitions between myth, legend and folklore which make up the genre of verbal art known as prose narrative. His distinctions make a helpful contribution, but it means that what is considered a myth in one culture may be a legend or folktale in another (Bascom, 1984, p. 13).

‘Folktales are prose narratives which are regarded as fiction’ (Bascom, 1984, p. 8). They are not history or dogma nor are they taken seriously, but they are timeless and placeless, having important functions. Human tales, animal tales, tall tales, trickster tales, dilemma tales, moral tales and fables are sub-genres.
Myths are something quite different for Bascom:

'Myths are prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past. They are accepted on faith, they are taught to be believed, and they can be cited as authority in answer to ignorance, doubt, or disbelief. Myths are the embodiment of dogma, they are usually sacred, and they are often associated with theology and ritual. Their main characters are not usually human beings, but they often have human attributes; they are animals, deities, or culture heroes, whose actions are set in an earlier world, when the earth was different from what it is today, or in another world such as the sky or underworld. Myths account for the origin of the world, of mankind, of death, or for characteristics of birds, animals, geographic features, and the phenomena of nature. They may recount the activities of the deities, their love affairs, their family relationships, their friendships and enmities, their victories and defeats. They may purport to "explain" details of ceremonial paraphernalia or ritual, or why tabus (sic) must be observed, but such etiological elements are not confined to myths' (Bascom, 1984, p. 9).

Bascom (1984, pp. 9-10) continues by differentiating legends from myths and folktales. 'Legends are prose narratives which, like myths, are regarded as true by the narrator and his audience, but they are set in a period considered less remote, when the world was much as it is today.' The characters are usually human and more often secular rather than sacred. Deeds of past heroes, dynasties, migrations and war are types of content and can be the verbal counterpart of written history.

While it is important to distinguish between narratives that are primarily for entertainment and those which have moral invectives, there are still other ways of understanding myth. Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko gives a helpful overview of some of the prevailing concepts of myth in his article The Problem of Defining Myth (1984). This article demonstrates that myth was not always understood in the same ways as it is today. In antiquity, people were operating within a mythological worldview, rather than analysing it. It is important to understand how myth was understood in antiquity as it gives valuable groundwork for
understanding Campbell and others. Honko lists ten ways that myth was interpreted in antiquity and twelve different modern theories of myth.

**HONKO’S TEN INTERPRETATIONS OF ANTIQUITY**

Ancient philosophers, like Plato, Epicurus, Statius, Critias, Polybius and Herodotus tried to understand myths just as contemporary scholars seek to do today. They did not all agree on how myths were to be interpreted, however, and ten of those different understanding are explored below (Honko, 1984, pp. 44-46).

Firstly, *mythographic interpretations* were partly concerned with religious practice and partly with literature. While some ancient interpreters of myth might desire transmitting the mythic traditions, they still had some freedom to interpret or give poetic expression to any given myth. Secondly, some *philosophical criticisms* rejected myths completely. If there are any compensations, they could range from monotheism to religion merely being an instrument to deal with the masses. Plato, for example, held to this latter view. Thirdly, *pre-scientific interpretations* explained away myths. For example, water could be understood as the cause of all things but this did not necessarily contradict religion and deities could still be believed as existing. Fourthly, *allegorical explanations of myths based on natural phenomena* understood gods to be the personification of elements of nature. In this interpretation, Apollo was fire, Artemis the moon, and Poseidon water, etc. Myths thus spoke about the natural world. The fifth approach was *allegorical explanations based on spiritual qualities*. In a similar take to the previous theory, Athena was wise judgement or art, desire was personified in Aphrodite and the intellect as Zeus or Hermes, depending on the philosopher interpreting the individual myths. Myths are thus sources of instruction for wise living and warnings against vices. In the sixth theory, *etymological interpretations* tried to ensure myths made sense by looking at meaning found in the names and epithets of the gods. By so doing, it was believed that the secrets of the gods could be determined. A seventh approach was *historical (comparative and derivative) interpretations* where myths and gods are borrowed from one culture to another. Zeus was thus understood by

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59 Just as contemporary scholars fail to agree on one approach to the understanding and analysis of myth.
this philosophical position as having been derived from the Egyptian god Ammon and Apollo from Horus. By exploring the 'ethnology' of the god's names and attributes an atmosphere of secularisation and relativity resulted. *Euhemeristic interpretations* were the eighth theory and claimed that the worship of gods developed from the lives of human beings. Thus myths were the result of a cult worshiping usually a king or some cultural hero and then possibly enhanced by novelists and poets of an earlier age. In the ninth theory *sociological interpretations or the deceit of priests, law-makers, rulers, etc.* claimed that religion was invented to control society and restrain the masses or was simply the invention of poets. Finally, *psychological interpretations* state that fear is the basis of belief and worship. According to this philosophy, people only worship because they perceive the gods give them good things, like a bountiful harvest, but can take those away if not appeased or acknowledged in the proper manner.

**HONKO’S TWELVE CATEGORIES OF MODERN THEORIES OF MYTH**

These ten ancient approaches to interpreting myth have continued to influence and assist contemporary scholars in their study of mythology. Some of their philosophical viewpoints can be seen echoed in the modern approaches that Honko describes. Honko’s twelve modern approaches to myth are divided into four subgroups - psychological, sociological, historical and structural. Honko (1984, pp. 46-47) stresses two facts that are generally accepted by modern scholars – that the approaches overlap and complement one another and that myths are multidimensional, thus able to be explored in different ways. Honko’s (1984, pp. 47-48) analysis of the twelve main modern approaches to myth are found below.

**Psychological Approaches**

Firstly, *myth as source of cognitive categories*. Myth is understood to explain certain enigmatic and natural phenomena to help the human intellect to grasp the universe and the relationships it contains. Secondly, *myth as form of symbolic expression* and, as simply a creative expression of humanity, is equivalent to art or poetry. A third approach is *myth as projection of the subconscious*. This is where myth is understood in relation to a substratum shared by all humans or members of the same race or culture. For example,
Jung focused on socialisation and cultural group while Freud saw daydreams as models for myth.

Sociological Approaches
This sub-category contains the majority of contemporary theories of myth. The fourth approach is *myth as an integrating factor in man's adaption to life*. This can also be understood as *myth as world view* where the individual is able to integrate elements of social, cultural and natural ways of viewing the world that are in keeping with traditional understanding but can be individualised. The fifth theory is *myth as charter of behaviour*. Myths give explanations and support for socially acceptable forms of behaviour comparing modern day situations with the past and justify certain privileges and responsibilities of citizens. The sixth theory is *myth as legitimation of social institutions*. According to this approach, myths sustain, legitimise and give expression to institutions. A seventh approach is *myth as marker of social relevance*. Myths are not random stories but a means by which a culture determines what is socially relevant. The final theory in this category is *myth as mirror of culture, social structure, etc.* Myths are thus considered a reflection of culture revealing values and insights that may otherwise be difficult to determine.

Historical Approaches
The ninth theory presents *myth as result of historical situation*. Proponents of this theory stress the reconstruction of the events that gave rise to a myth and the historical background of their origin.

Structural Approaches
The remaining three theories fit into the sub-category of structural approaches. The tenth theory is *myth as religious communication* where myth is merely information being transmitted from sender to receiver and can thus be analysed in terms of changes to language and non-verbal expression. The eleventh approach is *myth as religious genre* where myths are regarded principally as narrative in nature and assist in the spread of the message of the myth. Finally, *myth as medium for structure* where the study deals with the language, content and structure of myth.

It can be seen by these wide range of theories that defining myth can be difficult and will usually be determined by the approach that one starts from. Due to
Honko’s wide ranging analysis, his definition of myth is much broader and encompassing than others.

‘Myth, a story of the gods, a religious account of the beginning of the world, the creation, fundamental events, the exemplary deeds of the gods as a result of which the world, nature and culture were created together with all the parts thereof and given their order; which still obtains. A myth expresses and confirms society's religious values and norms, it provides patterns of behaviour to be imitated, testifies to the efficacy of ritual with its practical ends and establishes the sanctity of cult. The true milieu of myth is to be found in religious rites and ceremonial. The ritual acting out of myth implies the defence of the world order; by imitating sacred exemplars the world is prevented from being brought to chaos. The reenactment of a creative event, for example, the healing wrought by a god in the beginning of time, is the common aim of myth and ritual. In this way the event is transferred to the present and its result, i.e. the healing of a sick person, can be achieved once more here and now. In this way, too, the world order, which was created in the primeval era and which is reflected in myths, preserves its value as an exemplar and model for the people of today. The events recounted in myths have true validity for a religious person. For this reason the use of the term myth in everyday language is from the scholarly point of view inexact (in ordinary language myth is often used expressly for something untrue, utopian, misguided, etc.). The point de depart, then, is criticism directed towards religious groups and traditions from outside and this criticism has always existed. Nowadays attempts have often been made to brand non-religious ideas, political ideas, economic teaching, etc., as myth’ (Honko, 1984, p. 49).

The definition given above is based on four criteria according to Honko (1984, pp. 49-50): form, function, content and context. Form is where ‘myth is a narrative which provides a verbal account of what is known of sacred origins’ and includes intimations, mythical symbols and allusions to myths. Function is what role the myth plays in its setting. Myths also function as models and examples. Content is understood where myths contain information concerning creative events at the beginning of time. Context is the social, religious and/or cultural setting in which the myth operates. In myth the context is usually ritual or a specific pattern of behaviour required of the hearers.
CAMPBELL’S MONOMYTH IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN THEORISTS

Given the myriad of voices, concepts and approaches to understanding and analysing myth, it is worth examining how Campbell’s view’s might align or contrast with other contemporary mythologists and anthropologists.

ARMSTRONG AND CAMPBELL
Armstrong is one mythologist some of whose ideas complement Campbell’s. She recognises myth’s potential to guide people through their lives, just as Campbell insists that myth can. Myths are a way of showing individuals and the larger society how to live and thus provide meaning for life. Campbell too, recognises these aspects of the nature of myth. She, like Campbell, acknowledges the universal human practice of creating stories and myths to challenge, educate and meaning-make.

BASCOM AND CAMPBELL
Bascom’s understanding of myth seems to correlate well with Campbell’s. Bascom focuses mostly on two main ways in which myths function. Firstly, they explain natural phenomenon, like seasons, crop cycles, rain, heavenly bodies like the sun and moon, and powerful displays of nature like earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. In this he sits well with Campbell's cosmological function of myth. Campbell also understands that myth has traditionally had a role in explaining the natural world and its elements. He also makes connections between that world and the individual’s and society’s place within it. For example, according to Campbell (1949, p. 325), seasonal festivals in any given culture are times to submit to the inevitable process of nature and encourage one another to endure through that season to the next. The second focus that Bascom holds for myth is for the teaching of social and religious norms. In this instance he supports Campbell’s sociological function of myth. For Campbell (1949, pp. 324-325), the totality of an individual can only be found in the context of society. A human is limited by their gender, age, trade or career within their societal constraints. It is from society that a human actually learns all things. Consequently, ceremonies celebrating birth, initiation, marriage, death, etc. translate an individual’s experience into the impersonal forms that society
represents, helping both the individual to move into the next stage and society to establish the archetypal image of that stage (warrior, mother, etc.). Expected social duties continue and strengthen the connection between the individual and society cemented in the ceremonies. Any revolt and rebellion destroy the connection. A specific example would be initiation ceremonies. These show the link between the individual and the society and what role they are expected to perform within it. In these two frameworks Bascom and Campbell’s concepts of myth align well.

HONKO AND CAMPBELL

Five clear correlations can be made between Honko’s analysis of the contemporary theories of myth and Campbell’s framework. The first psychological approach, *myth as source of cognitive categories* is myth’s second, or cosmological, function according to Campbell. Due to his Jungian bias, however, Joseph Campbell’s understanding of myth fits most comfortably in the third theory, *myth as projection of the subconscious*. When Campbell promotes the idea of the monomyth and that all individuals need to make a hero’s journey, he is drawing on concepts of archetypes that he believes are universal to human subconscious. Campbell also purports the type of thinking that is the basis of the fourth theory, *myth as world view*. Yet, he is also a firm believer in the fifth type of approach, *myth as charter of behaviour*, seeing it as the fourth, or pedagogical, function of myth. Finally, Campbell would see the sixth theory, *myth as legitimation of social institutions*, as the third, or sociological, function of myth. As such, Campbell’s definitions and understandings of myth and mythology morph between several of the modern approaches most obviously. Campbell’s position, however, seats itself firmly in the psychological and sociological categories of myth analysis.

CRITICISM OF JOSEPH CAMPBELL’S VIEW OF MYTH

Not all scholars agree with Campbell’s universalist position, however. Over the years Campbell has received criticism for failing to appreciate the differences found in the myths that he has studied and used in his research. He has also
been criticized for using a predominantly Jungian approach that can be seen as limiting in the understanding of myth.

ROBERT SEGAL
Possibly the most thorough and well-known critic of Campbell is Robert Segal. In his paper *Joseph Campbell's Theory of Myth* (1984), Segal gives an overview of Campbell's position and then outlines a number of reasons why Campbell's monomyth premise does not hold weight.

>'In all his writings Campbell offers a veritable revelation which, if heeded, can save modern man from his despair. Campbell offers his with passion but also with modesty, for it is not new. It is the wisdom of primitive and ancient man, and it is to be found in myths, which modern man has blindly dismissed because he has misunderstood them. Rightly understood, they can save him from his spiritual plight...Put summarily, Campbell's claims are these: (1) that modern society is in turmoil; (2) that it is in turmoil because modern man finds life meaningless; (3) that modern man finds life meaningless because he is bereft of myths, which alone make life meaningful; (4) that modern man is bereft of myths because science, the belief in which virtually defines modern man, has refuted myths taken literally; (5) that the real meaning of myth is not, however, literal but symbolic; (6) that the symbolic meaning of myth is psychological; (7) that the psychological meaning of myth is Jungian; (8) that read in symbolic, psychological, Jungian fashion, myth is compatible with science and so is acceptable to modern man; and (9) that when accepted, myth gives meaning to life and can thereby restore tranquility to society' (Segal, 1984, pp. 258-259).

Segal's serious accusation is that Campbell fails to justify each of his nine positions outlined above.

>'Campbell no more proves that these varied causes and functions of myth are the true ones than he proves that the changing meanings he unravels are the true ones. He bases his assertions not on arguments but on examples' (Segal, 1984, p. 268).

What Segal refutes in the above points is important for the context of this thesis because it demonstrates that Campbell's position is, firstly, not the only one available, and, secondly, his claims are not always justified. For example, in critique of point number three above, Segal believes that life's meaningless can also be attributed to lack of ritual or lack of religion. The meaningless that Campbell claims humanity and individual's find themselves in cannot be
contained merely in the absence of myth. Campbell's subordination of ritual to myth is therefore not justified according to Segal because myth may actually serve ritual. Both ritual and religion might give meaning to life rather than myth alone (Segal, 1984, p. 260). Claiming that myth gives all humanity meaning can thus be viewed as reductionist.

Segal continues to examine each point in turn. For point number four, Segal notes that Campbell includes in his myths, ideologies which do not involve the supernatural, like Marxism and the myth of the American frontier. But this does not necessarily make them compatible with science as they have not provided modern man with literal alternatives to supernatural myths (Segal, 1984, p. 260).

In point five Campbell justifies a symbolic interpretation of myth on pragmatic grounds - that somehow myth must accommodate modern man. This justification may not be valid according to Segal as myth may not need to fulfil this function. Campbell's claim is that the true meaning of myth is symbolic and literal interpretation perverts myth. Any conflict between science and myth is an opportunity to reinterpret myth (Segal, 1984, p. 261).

Segal also points out some shortcomings for the psychological and Jungian aspects as laid in points six and seven. Campbell simply pronounces that the symbolic meaning of myth is psychological without ever justifying it. Bultmann, in fact, suggests that the symbolic meaning of myth is existential (Segal, 1984, p. 261). Campbell also needs to justify why the psychological meaning of myth is Jungian, instead of simply contrasting the negative meaning of myth that Freud finds with Jung's positive meaning.

'Freud, he explains, regards myth as the disguised fulfillment of repressed sexual desires. Jung by contrast, sees myth as the hidden expression of unrecognised spiritual desires. Clearly, however, Campbell's view of myth is much like Jung's. For both, myths not only, as for Freud, concern man rather than the world but also concern the spiritual side of man and give meaning to life' (Segal, 1984, pp. 261-262).

Segal is clear in stating that Freud's reduction of myth to infantile, sexual origins cannot account for its spiritual and more adult meaning for believers. The
meaning of myth for both Jung and Freud is unconscious, but Campbell fails to justify whether the adult, spiritual meaning is the correct one (Segal, 1984, p. 262).

Segal also claims that Campbell merely dismisses the theories of Jung's rivals, both historians and anthropologists, who claim that myths are particular to culture, age or society or literal or non-psychological, rather than universal. He understands that Jung’s amassing of world myths presupposes that the meaning of myth is universal and fails to address their differences. Other theorists who have studied world myths have, however, yielded very different theories, for example, Eliade, Tylor and Levi-Strauss. This suggests that the comparative study of world myths can result in imposed theories rather than derived. Segal concludes that myths can not reveal that their meaning is universal, symbolic, psychological and Jungian, but this is only Campbell’s speculation. The existence of rival theories means that Campbell needs to validate his theory instead of saying that it validates itself (Segal, 1984, pp. 262-264).

Segal (1984, p. 264) also makes some compelling arguments against the final two points. He claims that the scientific credibility of Campbell's thesis is tenuous because myths have more to do with the spiritual side of humanity than the scientific. He is concerned that the recovery of meaning may not necessarily be the solution for social unrest, posing the questions that if myth is symbolic then how can it deal with the realities that it denies?

Segal (1984, pp. 265-267) concludes his paper with a number of general criticisms of Campbell’s monomyth. He states that Campbell makes assertions, but provides little in the way of argument. Campbell at different times suggests that myths are psychological, anthropological, historical, and metaphysical phenomenon, creating confusion. He also claims that there is no single correct interpretation of myths and that all interpretations are equally correct. If this is the case, then Campbell's own position becomes one of preference for himself rather than the true meaning of myth.
Segal (1984, pp. 267-268) believes that Campbell presents at least five different, discontinuous explanations for the cause of myth - (1) the fear of death; (2) the experience of society; (3) the experience of the world; (4) the imprintings of socially produced signals; and (5) the inherited archetypes of the collective unconscious. Campbell also provides six different reasons for the function of myth - (1) to justify society; (2) to integrate man with society; (3) to integrate man with the world; (4) to explain the world; (5) to convey socially produced signals which enable man to adjust to life crises; and (6) to convey messages from the collective unconscious. These varied reasons create confusion and seem to demonstrate that Campbell was not entirely clear of his own position. Campbell bases his assertions on the varied examples he cites rather than arguments, but these are interpretable in a variety of ways according to Segal, ways in which Campbell rejects. 'In sum, for all his lifelong devotion to myth, Campbell has yet to prove that his interpretation of myth is correct' (Segal, 1984, p. 268).

ALAN DUNDESE
While Segal may be one of the most thorough and comprehensive critics of Joseph Campbell, it is worth reviewing the comments of others who have concerns with the monomyth. Alan Dundes is one such critic. Dundes (1984, pp. 256-257) admits that Campbell does need to be considered purely based on the fact that he is 'such a well known popularizer of mythology' and 'has attracted a large following outside the academy' due to his universalist approach, despite not having substantiated his generalisations concerning myth. He also recognises that Campbell is far more influential in the humanities than in the social sciences due to his popular universal approach. Dundes does, however, note two major problems with Campbell.

Firstly, Campbell failed to acknowledge the earlier scholarly explorations of a cross-cultural hero pattern in his *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. A common pattern in myth was not a new idea, nor did Campbell invent it. The only reference Campbell makes is one footnote to Otto Rank's *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (1909). Dundes (1984, p. 256) records two of the most influential writers on this topic before *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*— Johann Georg von Hahn wrote *Aryan Expulsion and Return Formula* in 1876 based on the
lives of fourteen heroes and Lord Raglan's important article 'The Hero of Tradition' in *Folklore* (1934) that expanded into a book *The Hero* (1936). Raglan's pattern is quite similar to Campbell's in that it contains twenty two common biographical stages based on some twenty one Indo-European and Semitic heroes. This failure to recognise the work of others in the field that had already written about similar patterns in mythology is Dundes' minor complaint.

Dundes' (1984, pp. 256-257) far more serious accusation is that Campbell's monomyth is merely constructed from bits and pieces of a variety of myths. No myth is explored in full but rather several parts of a number of myths are used to support each one of his seventeen stages. He simply asserts universality rather than documenting the phenomena. 'It is undoubtedly comforting to think that all mankind shares common myths and metaphors, but the empirical facts don't support such an illusion' (Dundes, 1984, p. 257). Dundes backs this argument by demonstrating that Campbell only uses two examples of heroes being swallowed by whales in his 'Belly of the Whale' stage. He questions whether all cultures would even have a concept of a whale and therefore a hero being swallowed by one cannot be a universal motif. Campbell’s failure to substantiate his monomyth pattern by using whole mythic examples is Dundes’ greatest concern. The monomyth is thus suspect of being a universal framework, in that it cannot be applied to the myths from all societies, cultures and religions without there being comprehensive evidence of this, nor full examples to demonstrate it.

**DAVID BRIN**

From a different perspective, authors and screenwriters have lamented that the use, even reliance, on the monomyth has resulted in unoriginal and predictable stories and movies. Scientist and award winning author David Brin (1999), in a scathing article attacking what he believes is George Lucas’ 'elitist, anti-democratic agenda' in the *Star Wars* movies, argues that Campbell’s monomyth is part of the problem. Brin believes that the monomyth promotes elitist ideals, oppresses the wishes of the masses and was deliberately used by kings and priests to justify tyranny.

‘Alas, Campbell only highlighted positive traits, completely ignoring a much darker side — such as how easily this standard fable-template was co-opted by kings, priests and tyrants, extolling the
all-importance of elites who tower over common women and men. Or the implication that we must always adhere to variations on a single story, a single theme, repeating the same prescribed plot outline over and over again. Those who praise Joseph Campbell seem to perceive this uniformity as cause for rejoicing — but it isn’t. Playing a large part in the tragic miring of our spirit, demigod myths helped reinforce sameness and changelessness for millennia, transfixing people in nearly every culture, from Gilgamesh all the way to comic book super heroes’ (Brin, 1999).

Brin laments that Campbell has not been questioned more seriously, especially in light of the way the monomyth is slavishly utilised as the predominant story formula. It promotes conformity and demi-god worship, resulting in unquestioning following, propping up the rule of the elites.

Brin is raising issues of power and justice by highlighting the ‘dark side’ of the monomyth’s prevalent use. While he acknowledges the wide acceptance of the monomyth, he exposes the fact that there is actually a constructed worldview embedded within it. He articulately questions what the monomyth is actually being used for and why we should give such weight to a story that can be used in ways that promote injustice and undemocratic practices.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to outline Campbell’s monomyth pattern and to demonstrate, in part, why it has been so widely accepted. Its widespread use, however, masks the serious questions raised by critics. Brin’s exposure of its political and potentially oppressive ‘dark side’ and Dundes’ highlighting of Campbell’s piecemeal approach demonstrate some cracks in the monomyth’s claims. Campbell has supposedly created the universal myth but Segal recognises that this is merely an assertion of Campbell himself rather than a proven fact borne from the actual sources used.

These criticisms illuminate some of the anthropological, social and cultural concerns over Joseph Campbell’s monomyth. What might it look like to question it from a theological perspective? The next chapter seeks to do just that by
exploring a theological monomyth – Rudolf Bultmann's Gnostic Redeemer myth.
CHAPTER 4
TWO MONOMYTHS COMPARED

“There are only two or three human stories, and they go on repeating themselves as fiercely as if they had never happened before.”
Willa Cather (in Vogler, 1985)

This thesis has so far examined the monomyth, its development and some of the criticism raised against it. Joseph Campbell has held scholars and lay people interested in his thinking for some time. Theologians, anthropologists, religion historians, mythologists, psychologists and analysts, among others, have interacted with Campbell’s thinking on mythology, his hero’s journey monomyth and the meaning that it offers. At this stage it is important to question what myths might mean to people. Campbell, as we have seen, heads down the path of the hero and that myths are a vehicle for individuals to fulfil their destiny as fully human. There are other possibilities, however. Rudolph Bultmann is an existentialist theologian who is immersed in myth, but who is adamant that myths need to be demythologised for people to reap their full meaning. A major theological development in the mid twentieth century was Bultmann’s framing of the Gnostic Redeemer Myth. This chapter seeks to explore some of the impact and popularity of Campbell and his monomyth theory. It will also compare and contrast Campbell’s monomyth with Bultmann’s Gnostic Redeemer Myth and analyse them in relation to their affinity to one another.

CAMPBELL’S POPULARITY

While Campbell’s writings on the monomyth emerged in the late 1940’s, he didn’t begin to gain credence outside of scholarly circles and in the popular media until the 1960’s. His popularity increased especially after an American six part television series with Bill Moyers on PBS called The Power of Myth in 1988. Campbell’s ideas have also been diffused through to the Western world indirectly through George Lucas’ Star Wars saga, popular literary works like Watership Down by Richard Adams and conferences and workshops
associated with New Age religiosity (Dinges, 1992, p. 10). The interest that people have shown in Campbell’s ideas and concepts has sparked what many call the ‘Joseph Campbell Phenomenon’.

William Dinges notes that the Joseph Campbell phenomenon is 'the cultural dissemination of ideas of a comparative mythologist who taught for nearly thirty-seven years in relative obscurity - aside from the academic world and an avid circle of friends and admirers' (1992, p. 9). Around the time of his death in 1987 at age eighty three, Campbell was being lionised as one of the world's foremost experts of comparative mythology offering new ways of understanding mythology and self-fulfilment. The Joseph Campbell phenomenon is both the public admiration for this man and his ideas and the resurgence of interest in mythology and myth. His ideas and images populate public discourse, rather than just academic circles, especially in relation to the hero's journey and synthesising eastern and western religious symbols, religions and philosophies (Dinges, 1992, pp. 9-10).

‘Through his writings and public appearances, Campbell brought both a recovery of and heightened sensibility to the meaning of myth as a form of cultural language and thought. However, while he did not start a religious or therapeutic movement, Campbell's thinking on mythology is clearly more than a purely literary or academic exercise. For Campbell, myths are clues to our deepest spiritual potentials...In evangelic-like fashion, Campbell preached the gospel of myth as the truest guide to understanding human experience. He asserted, in essence, that myth had the power to bring us to where we are brought by religion: to inward illumination, to an experience of ultimate meaning beyond the bounds of ordinary certainties and knowledge, to the fullest potentiality of personhood, to an experience of heightened consciousness from which vitality flows. Focus on the "Joseph Campbell phenomenon" is, therefore, highly relevant to any discussion of the ongoing realignment of religion and culture in ...society and to the nature and meaning of spirituality and self-realization...' (Dinges, 1992, p. 11).

Dinges does claim that some warnings are in order, however. The actual scope of the phenomenon is unknown and its long-term holding power is yet to be seen. Not everyone finds Campbell's myth as religion concept spiritually edifying, scholarly rigorous or intellectually sound. Finally, he notes that
Campbell’s ‘power of myth’ has not really penetrated the fundamental Christian camp where members do not read the Bible as myth nor are partial to religious syncretism (Dinges, 1992, pp. 11-12). It could be claimed then that Campbell has had wide popular significance but not wide religious significance.

CAMPBELL’S APPEAL

Why Campbell is so popular is a question that needs to be asked. William Dinges, in his essay *Joseph Campbell and the Contemporary American Spiritual Milieu* (1992), explores the context in which Campbell’s thinking blossomed, noting a number of factors that contributed to its popularity and influence.

CULTURE CRISIS

Campbell’s popularity emerged mostly in the ‘culture crisis’ beginning in the 1960’s. One of the major aspects of the ‘culture crisis’ was the significant decline of the mainline religions of Protestant and Catholic Christianity and Reformed and Conservative Judaism, losing not only members but cultural vitality as well. During this time many young, educated and affluent westerners became ‘unchurched’ and spiritually adrift. Those who remained were often in conflict over issues of authority and change, highlighting the growing division between religious conservatives and liberals (Dinges, 1992, pp. 13-14).

Another aspect that Dinges (1992, pp. 14-15) records was the ‘crisis of unbelief’, where the insufficiencies of science, rationalism and instrumental behaviourism to solve contemporary human problems were highlighted. Spiritual poverty amongst a technical and bureaucratic world was rife and the whole person was being sacrificed to one of their parts as depersonalisation and coercion began to characterise large portions of modern life. This also tended to be focused on the upper middle and affluent classes. In the midst of this change, however, there is no indication that the majority of individuals have become hardened materialists or that their spiritual journey has ended completely. Rather, there has been an emergence of spiritual experimentation resulting in new religious and self-help movements gaining momentum. The
desire for ultimate meaning and inner peace still exist for most people, even amongst the unchurched, who are often religious but express it outside the church.

'They did so either by reappropriating traditional symbols and rituals thereby giving them more relevant meaning and experiential significance, or by seeking to find meaning and significance in entirely new ones derived from non-western and esoteric traditions. The popularity of Joseph Campbell's perspective on mythology with its elevation of myth as a new (yet old) type of spiritual and psychological capital from which enlightenment and personal well-being can be derived, needs to be situated, first and foremost, in this broader context of cultural upheaval, spiritual hypochondria, and the dynamics of religious revitalization and experimentation' (Dinges, 1992, pp. 14-15).

Dinges poses 'a "vacuum theory" approach to the renewed interest in mythology in general and to the appeal of Joseph Campbell in particular.

'The collapse of the Enlightenment dream of the rationalist millennium has left a spiritual void in contemporary culture. This void, in turn, has provided inducement for movements of counter-secularly, for a re-enactment of the universe, for the taking up of vestiges of ancient myths, for an elevation of the sacred and expressive side of life over the purely rational and instrumental, for new schemes of coherence and meaning, and for new avenues of spiritual and psychological self-fulfillment. The social and spiritual traumas associated with the inner decay of American culture and its religious traditions over the last three decades, combined with the free-market nature of the American religious economy, have proven highly conducive to the rise of and receptivity to new religious movements and metaphysical orientations, to the emergence of new symbol systems, to the search for a "new story"

60 This ‘shopping cart’ mentality, whereby individuals pick and choose the elements that will make up their spirituality, is potentially one of the contributing factors of the rise of religions based on popular culture. In response to the upcoming Australian census, documentary maker John Safran investigated this phenomena in *Jedis and Juggalos: Your Census Guide* (McMicking, 2011). Airing on Tuesday 19th July 2011, Safran interviewed a number of people including a Muslim Jedi, an Italian Matrixist and an ordained minister who is also a Juggalo, someone who finds religious significance in the music and lyrics of Insane Clown Posse, a rap band based in the United States. Safran (McMicking, 2011) describes his motivation and questioning behind his exploration: “I thought I’d potter off around the world and try to find people who sincerely and unsarcastically synchronise spirituality with popular culture. Is it good, is it trivialising, is it even spiritually dangerous?” Part of the inspiration for the documentary was hearing academics ‘claim that far from being a joke, young people were combining spirituality with popular culture’ (from the ABC website about the documentary http://www.abc.net.au/arts/stories/s3267939.htm?WT.mc_id=ABCARTS_safran_au%3Cbr%3E).
in human experience, and to a rediscovery of the transcendent and of new modalities for self-fulfillment. During a time of cultural and social upheaval, when conventional religious symbols lost much of their evocative power and cultural authority, especially among the more affluent social classes, Joseph Campbell's vision of the "power of myth" offered the possibility of a new template, a new path for spiritual revitalization and for the experience of "transcendence." Campbell's thinking also harmonized with the emerging "New Age" initiative to reconnect with the ancient insights and wisdom of the past. Furthermore, Campbell offered to the better educated who carried with them a more liberal cultural and religious orientation a highly individualized path to self-realization, one that was unencumbered by dogmatism, by institutional demands, by any system of morality, or by the necessity of a community commitment' (Dinges, 1992, pp. 16-17).

THE NEW RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

Campbell's 'power of myth' also corresponded with the rise of Aquarian 'new religious consciousness' that metamorphosed in the late 1970's into the New Age movement (Dinges, 1992, p. 17).

Firstly, the 'new religious consciousness' was opposed to immovable dogmatism and creedal formulas, ritual formalism and sterile values. Reason was seen to have a limited use for determining religious truth and experience was more valued. Campbell's 'power of myth' played heavily on the experiential and symbolic aspects of life and downplayed the role of ideology, dogma and institutions. Myth could only be experienced, according to Campbell (Dinges, 1992, pp. 17-19).

Secondly, Dinges (1992, pp. 19-20) claims the 'new religious consciousness' expressed great interest in mysticism which Campbell's thinking fed well with its close connection between myth, mysticism and personal spiritual potential.

Thirdly, the 'new religious consciousness' promoted an eclectic and syncretistic spirituality drawn from non-western and non-Christian traditions. Campbell appealed to this spirituality because of his own syncretistic and universal approach, rejecting the exclusive position of the Judeo-Christian position (Dinges, 1992, p. 20).
OTHER CULTURAL CONVERGENCES

Psychology as Religion
Campbell's emphasis on mysticism and psychological interpretation of myth sits comfortably with a trend towards psychology as religion where the psychologist acts as a surrogate theologian and psychology and mythology became a faith language. Hostility towards religion is displaced by a more sympathetic view where mythic and symbolic explanations are needed. Myth provides for Campbell, as well as psychoanalyst Carl Jung, a key to unlocking psychic treasures which they understood as manifestations of spiritual truths and as such replaces what was offered by the Christian tradition. Campbell's hero journey was also congruent with revolutions in contemporary cognitive psychology, where the individual is encouraged to become a more active and powerful force in their life (Dinges, 1992, pp. 21-23).

Cultural Individualism
Dinges (1992, pp. 23-24) believes that Campbell's popularity is also caught up in the growing phenomenon of individualism, consumerism, the quest for the ideal 'self' and the widening gap between the haves and have-nots. His signature phrase 'follow your bliss' seemed to sit well with the concept of doing your own thing. Campbell's hero, while receiving some assistance from helpers, guides and talismans, basically needed to follow his own path and make his own internal breakthrough. The 'self-reliant' hero echoed the self-expressive individual that was growing in popularity from the 1970's on.

American Romanticism
Campbell's adulation of heroic individualism and embracing the fullness of life was in keeping with the American tendency to elevate an ordinary person's life to high drama and the American dream to reinvent oneself, overcoming one's background (Dinges, 1992, pp. 27-28).

Spiritual Individualism
Individualism and privatisation in secular society spilled over into religious life in the 1970's and 1980's in which 'personal psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual needs take precedence over inherited ties to a normative community.' Religious belonging is no longer a natural consequence of religious belief and
religion has therefore lost much of its integrative influence in society. Religious symbols are co opted by individuals and groups for new purposes giving rise to a 'shopping mentality' where one can pick and choose their religiosity according to taste and preference.\textsuperscript{61} Campbell's hero journey is essential for personal and spiritual fulfilment as individuals attend to their own spiritual quest (Dinges, 1992, pp. 28-30).

**Narrative Theology and the Ecological Movement**

Campbell wrote and spoke on the need to get back in accord with the wisdom of nature and connect with animals, plants and water. This was in line with the emerging ecological movement and its philosophical underpinnings. Campbell's focus on myth also arrived at a time of increased interest and awareness of the narrative nature of scripture, where narrative theologians were rediscovering the importance of myth and symbols in understanding religious text and meaning (Dinges, 1992, pp. 30-31).

**The Media**

Dinges (1992, p. 31) notes finally that the media played an important role in Campbell's popularity with television interviews and articles produced from the early 1970's and throughout the 1980's. This gave him exposure in the popular media that resulted in far more than just scholarly circles having access to his theories.

**CONNECTIONS WITH THE FIELD OF THEOLOGY**

While the above aspects help to explain Joseph Campbell’s popularity, there is another that is more foundational. Joseph Campbell was a man of his times. He was steeped in the thinking and philosophy of the modern world, of scientific rationalism and a framework that said a single concept could explain the myriad variations of myth that the world offered.

\textsuperscript{61} We might think here of popular American singer Madonna's penchant for using religious symbols for alternative purposes. The crucifix became a very popular fashion accessory in the 1980's due to her wearing of several in video clips. Her public move from Catholicism to Jewish mystical tradition Kabbalah demonstrates some degree of spiritual fluidity. It can also be seen in the movies. The saviour death and resurrection narrative of the Christian tradition is reinvented in *The Matrix* (Wachowski & Wachowski, 1999) with Neo’s sacrifice and rebirth.
This modernist way of thinking was not limited to only the field of anthropology so it is instructive to see the influence of myth in other fields of intellectual study. There had been an extensive discussion of the role of myth in theology at about the same time. Theologian Rudolph Bultmann also proposed a single theory to explain what he called the ‘Christ Event’. The understanding of Jesus as the Son of God and the atoner of humankind’s sin was, for Bultmann, the result of the Gnostic Redeemer Myth. Rudolf Bultmann first studied the role of the Gnostic Redeemer Myth in Greco Roman times, then developed his understanding of the role of mythical thinking and its impact on the writing of the New Testament. One of his most controversial claims was that the New Testament is inherently mythological and that people in the twentieth century first needed to demythologise the New Testament before they could hear how it was calling them to live.

Campbell wants to develop or uncover the monomyth and present it in a modern framework of understanding. Bultmann is so convinced of the power of myth 2,000 years ago that he can only see that it is by demythologising myth that it can be understood in a scientific age. While Bultmann focussed his discussion on how to demythologise myth, many writers believed that it was his understanding of myth that was the problem.

For the purposes of our study, it is worth describing this ‘monomyth’ of the New Testament, that is, the Gnostic Redeemer Myth, its impact in Greco Roman society and upon the religions of the day. It will also be important to note the time at which this particular framework was underway. Before exploring the Gnostic Redeemer Myth and its connections to Joseph Campbell’s monomyth, however, it is important to explore what Gnosticism actually was and what Bultmann understood by mythology.

**GNOSTICISM**

Hans Jonas (1903-1993), born and educated in Germany, was a student of Rudolf Bultmann. His influential book, *The Gnostic Religion* (2001), gives a
helpful and scholarly overview of the history and concepts contained within Gnosticism.

ORIGINS OF Gnosticism

The beginning of the Christian era and through the next two centuries, there was profound spiritual ferment in the eastern Mediterranean (Jonas, 2001, p. 31). This meant that there was incredibly fertile ground for the development of new religions and religious practices. There are conflicting theories surrounding the origins of Gnosticism. It does, however, seem to be a religion of syncretism and possibly has Hellenic, Babylonian, Egyptian, Iranian, Jewish and Christian influences. It is important to note that Gnosticism does have an autonomous essence and is not just a mosaic of all these cultural elements (Jonas, 2001, p. 33). Gnosticism developed in the oriental part of the Mediterranean, particularly Egypt and Alexandria and offered a road to salvation (van den Broek in van den Broek & Hanegraaff, 1998, p. 17).

THE NATURE OF Gnostic Knowledge

The Gnostics of antiquity had a particular understanding of *gnosis* or knowledge. Gnosticism has a strong interest in knowledge or gnosis that is divinely revealed, the divine world and the 'final bliss of the soul'. Gnostic knowledge was a saving knowledge and as such it was basically of a religious nature with its ultimate goal to know or see God, to be united with and be in God (van den Broek in van den Broek & Hanegraaff, 1998, p. 1).

'The ultimate "object" of gnosis is God: its event in the soul transforms the knower himself by making him a partaker in the divine existence (which means more than assimilating him to the divine essence). Thus...the "knowledge" is not only an instrument of salvation but itself the very form in which the goal of salvation, i.e., ultimate perfection is possessed' (Jonas, 2001, p. 35).

Gnostic Mythology

Gnostic writings abound in myth, carefully crafted to be the vessels of Gnostic ideas, despite their mostly artificial character. Giovanni Filoramo in his book *A History of Gnosticism* (1992, pp. 51-52) notes that while it is true that the mythological material that Gnosticism uses is derived from a wide variety of other religious traditions, it is also true that Gnosticism tends to transform that
material, giving it new meaning. Gnostic myths are myths in their own right, due to the fact that they are the basis of realities of the world, they have their own particular narrative form and structure of underlying thought as well as rich and varied symbolic values. Their content is, however, related to history. Gnostic myth moved from focusing on the gods apart from humanity, to those of the original *Anthrōpos* (human being) from whom all *anthrōpoi* (humans) are descended.

Bultmann thus associates the Gnostic Redeemer myth with the fate of the human soul.

'The Gnostic myth recounts - with manifold variations - the fate of the soul. It tells of its origin in the world of light, of its tragic fall and its life as an alien on earth, its imprisonment in the body, its deliverance and final ascent and return to the body of light' (Bultmann, 1956, p. 194).

According to Bultmann (1956, pp. 195-196) the supreme Gnostic deity is the one who acts to free the imprisoned sparks of light by sending his Son, the heavenly figure of light, to redeem them. The Son takes on an earthly body to avoid detection by the demons and awakens his own to their heavenly home, passing on the secret passwords that they will need for the trip. The Son reveals himself in discourses like 'I am the shepherd', 'I am the truth', etc. but eventually returns to the heavenly realm. There he prepares a way for his own and gathers the sparks of light in order that they may follow him. When this is complete, the world will end and darkness and chaos return.

**Gnostic Motifs in Christianity**

Rudolf Bultmann gives an overview in his *Theology of the New Testament* (Bultmann, 1952b, pp. 164-183) of what he considers to be the main motifs of Gnosticism that influenced Christianity at the time of the early church. He points out that the mythology of Gnosticism was quite important for the development of Christian theologies like Christology, Ecclesiology, Eschatology, salvation and redemption. Bultmann (1952b, p. 168) claimed that the Christians of the New Testament era understood that humans, body and soul, were creatures of God and no pre-existent spark of heavenly light existed. The world was the creation of the one true God who was both creator-God and redeemer-God. There is no heavenly journey made possible by Gnosis and sacraments, rather the last
judgement and the resurrection are the focus of early Christian teaching. Gnosticism rejects the humanity of Jesus and sees it only as a disguise of a pre-existent heavenly being.

Gnostic concepts of the history of salvation have the Redeemer as a pre-existent, cosmic, divine being, who was the Son of the Father. He assumes human form and once he concludes his earthly activity, he is exalted to heavenly glory. Bultmann (1952b, pp. 175-177) believed that this Gnostic Redeemer myth influenced the Christology of both biblical writers John and Paul as well as the writer of Hebrews.

BULTMANN’S UNDERSTANDING OF MYTH AND DEMYTHOLOGIZING


Bultmann (1941, p. 1) made a claim that the ‘world picture of the New Testament is a mythical world picture.’ It had a three story structure with heaven, the dwelling place of the gods, above, earth in the middle and hell, the place of torment, below. Earth was occasionally the site for the working of supernatural powers as well as natural occurrences. This was not a new claim as D.F Strauss had presented a similar idea in the nineteenth century. Bultmann’s more provocative contention was that

‘the Enlightenment’s negative criticism of myth could be put to positive purpose by a theology concerned for the preaching of the gospel. The intolerable scandal of demanding intellectual assent to the incredible must give way to proclaiming the real scandal of faith: the cross of Christ as decisive for human existence’ (Kay, 1991, p. 326).
Bultmann has a particular understanding of myth. For him, 'myth embraces those reality claims that do not square with scientific understanding' (Kay, 1991, p. 327).

'I understand by "myth" a very specific historical phenomenon and by "mythology" a very specific mode of thinking...I use the concept "myth" in the sense in which it is customarily used in the science of history and religion. Myth is the report of an occurrence or an event in which supernatural, superhuman forces or persona are at work (which explains why it is often defined simply as history of the gods). Mythical thinking is the opposite of scientific thinking' (Bultmann, 1952a, p. 95).

As literature, myths were a common genre in the ancient world, being stories about the gods. Mythological talk provides pictures and symbols that conceal meaning. This meaning can be made clear through philosophical and theological reflection. The meaning cannot be re-expressed only in mythological language, because the meaning of the language would thus need to be interpreted as well (Bultmann, 1961, p. 161).

This holds true for the mythological concepts in the Bible - God is a transcendent being enlightening human life (Bultmann, 1958, p. 20). As such, the New Testament proclamation of the salvation occurrence corresponds to this mythical picture of the world and uses mythological language (Bultmann, 1941, p. 2). According to Bultmann,

'the Christ myth of the New Testament is one version of the Gnostic myth of the heavenly Redeemer, the antecedents of which are found in the Iranian myth of the Primal Man first isolated by Richard Reitzenstein...The difference between the New Testament and other ancient versions of dying and rising saviors is that the New Testament "intertwines" its Christ figure with a real historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate. Only through the mythical conceptuality of a redeemed Redeemer, or an apocalyptic Son, could Paul and John convey in their time the saving significance of Jesus. Thus proclaiming the kerygma does not eliminate myth in order to return to the historical Jesus, as liberalism vainly attempted. Rather the task is to interpret the Christian myth so that it can again declare to our time God's saving will for human existence. This is the hermeneutical program that Bultmann advances in 1941 as "demythologizing" ' (Kay, 1991, p. 327).
Bultmann also had very distinct ideas about what demythologizing was and what it would achieve.

'By "demythologizing" I understand a hermeneutical procedure that inquires about the reality referred to by mythological statements or texts. This presupposes that myth indeed talks about a reality, but in an inadequate way. It also presupposes a specific understanding of reality' (Bultmann, 1961, p. 155).

Bultmann (1941, p. 9) had earlier claimed that:

'The real point of myth is not to give an objective world picture; what is expressed in it, rather, is how we human beings understand ourselves in our world. Thus, myth does not want to be interpreted in cosmological terms but in anthropological terms - or, better, in existentialist terms.'

For Bultmann the Christian faith was a very personalised and internal one – he believed that '...the hearing of the word of the Bible can take place only in personal decision' (Bultmann, 1958, p. 57). Along with this concept was that of the active God who participated in the lives of those who responded. 'I cannot speak of God as my God by looking into myself. My personal relation with God can be made real by God only, by the acting God who meets me in His Word' (Bultmann, 1958, p. 59).

This personal understanding of the God/human relationship had consequences for the church according to Bultmann. In order for church to remain relevant and valid it needed to thus reinterpret the scriptures, especially those of the New Testament, concerning Jesus Christ. 'If the New Testament is to retain its validity, there is nothing to do but to demythologize it' (Bultmann, 1941, p. 9). For Bultmann (1941, pp. 2-3) the proclamation of contemporary Christianity needed to be demythologized and this was the task of theology - to allow the truth that was independent of the mythical world picture to be discovered. He believed that humanity could not repristinate a mythical world picture of the past, when all of contemporary thinking is formed by science. Bultmann's overwhelming conclusion was that ‘...the wonders of the New Testament are also finished as wonders' (Bultmann, 1941, p. 4).

'Demythologizing seeks to bring out the real intention of myth, namely, its intention to talk about human existence as grounded in
and limited by a transcendent, unworldly power, which is not visible to objectifying thinking. Thus, negatively, demythologizing is criticism of the mythical world picture insofar as it conceals the real interpretation of myth. Positively, demythologizing is existentialist interpretation, in that it seeks to make clear the intention of myth to talk about human existence’ (Bultmann, 1952a, p. 99).

**BULTMANN’S GNOSTIC REDEEMER MYTH**

Bultmann (1941, pp. 2-3) understood that the motifs of Jesus’ virgin birth, performance of miracles, resurrection and the understanding that the early church had of him as the Jewish Messiah ‘may be easily traced to the contemporary mythology of Jewish apocalypticism and of the Gnostic myth of redemption.’ Bultmann (1941, p. 7) concluded that the doctrine of substitutionary atonement through Christ’s death was an impossible concept. There were too many problems with primitive concepts of guilt and righteousness, atonement, sacrifice, legal issues and God. These Bultmann saw as being influenced by Gnosticism. The Gnostic scheme of ideas had the dead and risen Christ as a God-man, not merely a man. His death and resurrection were cosmic events that all were drawn into. ‘We certainly cannot think this way ourselves because it represents the human self as nature and the salvation occurrence as a natural process’ (Bultmann, 1941, p. 8).

Bultmann (1941, pp. 33-35) believed that humans could no longer believe in the mythological interpretation of Christ as the pre-existent Son of God whose sinless life and death provides the blood that atones for one’s sin, thus freeing one from it.

‘Those of us who have outgrown mythical thinking understand our existence as a unity and attribute our feeling, thinking, and willing to ourselves; we no longer refer them, as myth does, to the intervention of divine or demonic powers...we know about our own freedom and responsibility for ourselves’ (Bultmann, 1952a, p. 97).

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62 It is possible to compare Bultmann’s understanding of redemption with Campbell’s ninth stage of *Atonement with the Father*. In both there is some level of identification and restoration of relationship, which was hitherto unknown.
The cross is thus not a mythical process that happens outside ourselves but which is reckoned to our credit; rather 'to believe in the cross of Christ means to accept the cross as one's own and to allow oneself to be crucified with Christ' (1941, pp. 33-35). The Christ event has cosmic dimensions and is constantly present when it is understood in its significance for faith. '...Jesus Christ is the eschatological event' (Bultmann, 1958, p. 81). Bultmann (1952a, p. 102) believed that demythologizing revealed the real scandal of the scriptures by removing the problems associated with a biblical mythical world picture. The scandal is that God calls us to authentic existence and out of our anxiety and self-sufficiency. Faith is the surrender of self-security and the overcoming of despair; it is the answer to the kerygma that is addressed to humans. Thus, for Bultmann, faith is the only proper response to the proclamation of the kerygma or gospel message.

**DUNN’S CRITIQUE OF BULTMANN’S POSITION**

Bultmann’s position was controversial in the mid twentieth century. Theological arguments raged over the evolution and historical placing of Gnosticism, the efficacy and relevance of the Gnostic Redeemer Myth and what influence it had on Christian theology, especially Christology. It is important to recognise the limitations and critique made of Bultmann’s position, especially when trying to compare and contrast it with Campbell's monomyth.

For theologian James Dunn, Rudolph Bultmann presented a view of New Testament mythology that was far more difficult to explain away than those presented by D.F Strauss and the inherent problems with miracles or the History of Religions School with its focus on the influence of Jewish and Hellenistic myths. Dunn’s (1979, pp. 294-295) understanding of Bultmann’s position was that the

‘kerygma is expressed through myth, not alongside it or inside it.
The gospel is not somehow separate and distinct from myth; rather

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63 See Dunn’s chapter entitled ‘Demythologizing - The Problem of Myth in the New Testament’ in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods* (Dunn, 1979) for a more in depth analysis of these approaches.
it is embodied in the mythical language of the NT. To discard the myth is to discard the gospel'.

Dunn (1979, p. 295) recognises that Bultmann holds to the definition of myth as a pre-scientific, primitive conceptualisation of reality and therefore incapable of abstract thought and lacks true understanding of the causes of natural and mental processes. Bultmann sees the New Testament accounts of Jesus as written in this manner and thus the solution is to demythologise the myth - to interpret it rather than eliminate myth – and to do so in existentialist terms.

It is Bultmann's position of interpreting only in existential terms that Dunn (1979, p. 296) sees as the starting point that has led to most of the criticism levelled against him. Bultmann's understanding of 'the event of Jesus Christ' is that the proclamation of the cross and resurrection is the saving event that enables the possibility of actual authentic life. The individual can thus make the cross of Christ their own and participate in Christ's crucifixion.

The first problem that Dunn (1979, pp. 296-297) identifies with Bultmann's position is that he concerns himself with language which objectifies God, where God is thus supposedly able to be investigated through scientific and historical research. Demythologising is thus necessary because mythological language is language that objectifies and thus threatens faith. Demythologising, for Bultmann, is thus only possible in terms of existential interpretation. Faith has to be wedded to the kerygma alone to deliver it from myth, thus he claimed at the end of his 1941 essay, 'It is precisely its immunity from proof which secures the Christian proclamation against the charge of being mythological'. Dunn questions this position by asking whether the problem of myth can be equated completely with the problem of objectifying God and whether existentialist interpretation is the only way that a theologically satisfying answer can be posed.

Dunn (1979, pp. 297-298) raises a second problem - Bultmann has been criticised as having a definition of mythology that is to all-embracing, confusing myth and analogy and thus making it impossible to talk about God at all. While he recognised this, and later defended talk about 'God as Creator' in terms of analogy, if there is analogy, symbol and metaphor in Scripture, one must ask
how much of Bultmann's mythological language is in fact an analogy, symbol or metaphor. The New Testament writers' concept of the cosmos may be more sophisticated than Bultmann proposes. The analogies and metaphors found in the New Testament are appropriate to their age and used language and concepts of that age to speak of God's beyondness. Bultmann thus fails to sufficiently examine what kind of myth is in the New Testament.

According to Dunn (1979, pp. 298-299) a third problem that Bultmann's position raises is that of the truth of New Testament myth. His position here has been criticised as being too narrow. His disciples argue that he stops too early - if he insists that the gospel can be interpreted into existentialist categories, why keep any mention of Christ or God acting in Christ at all? If faith is just the human possibility of authentic existence, then its realisation cannot be tied to Christ alone. Demythologisation, for these critics, thus must also involve 'dekerygmatizing'. Bultmann, however, has always seen demythologisation in terms of apologetic and Christian evangelism. He desires to affirm the gospel and defend faith by freeing it from any meaningless first century concepts, making the call of the word of God clear. His critics from the theological right, however, accuse Bultmann of reducing theology to anthropology. This fails to acknowledge his existential interpretive leanings. A better criticism might be of reducing Christology to soteriology.

Dunn's (1979, p. 300) conclusion concerning Bultmann's position on demythologising was that

"In short, it would appear that because it is addressed primarily to the problem of objectifying God rather than to the wider problem of myth in the NT, Bultmann's programme of demythologizing fails to do justice to the truth of NT mythological language by abandoning the very historical and ontological affirmations about Jesus which that language is able to convey by its very nature as myth."

OTHER CRITIQUES OF BULTMANN

Kay (1991, p. 328) believes that many now see Bultmann's contribution as irrelevant for theology today, having been criticised by theologians who are
informed by Einsteinian developments in physics, such as Thomas F. Torrance. Ernst Käsemann, Wolfhart Pannenberg and Jürgen Moltmann have explored the futurist dimension of Christian hope which has led to an 'eschatological relativization of Enlightenment historiography' (Kay, 1991, p. 328). Kay (1991, p. 328) believes that Bultmann's Gnostic-Redeemer myth has been convincingly debunked as a pre-Christian phenomenon by German theologian Carsten Colpe.

We can see the effects of this criticism, according to Kay (1991, p. 328). Bultmann's term 'myth' has been supplanted by 'narrative' or 'story'. Myth no longer functions as the dominant category of New Testament interpretation or theology, except for some feminists and Jungians. 'Story' has steadily triumphed as reflected in narrative theology, narrative criticism, narrative homiletics and narrative ethics.

Swiss theologian Karl Barth has a preference for 'saga', in relating the Biblical accounts of Jesus' resurrection or the world's creation, which has also influenced this development. But it was arguably Hans W. Frei in his essay, The Identity of Jesus Christ, who projected narrative into the centre of the discussion hitherto dominated by myth (Kay, 1991, p. 329).

Frei agrees with Bultmann in that Jesus is the 'chief character in a soteriological narrative' (Kay, 1991, p. 329). He departs from Bultmann in rejecting the 'category of myth as suitable for either the story line or the chief character of the Gospels.' For Frei the gospel narrative is unique as it tries to distinguish the Gospel story of the Saviour Jesus Christ from any saviour myths that were common for the period. Frei's critical distinction between myth and story lies in the Gospel story being a particular type of narrative, which he terms a 'realistic narrative', more akin to the traditional novel or historical writing than to myth. The three factors contributing to this are the depiction of the common public world, the close interaction of incident and character and the no-symbolic quality of the relation between what the story is about and the story itself. This leads him to describe Bultmann's Christ as a 'storied' character rather than a 'mythical' one. For Frei it is not about an existential interpretation of the Christ
myth, but a realistic rendering of the Gospel story, that gives the identity of the Saviour.

In order to show how the literary character of Jesus Christ has saving significance for people today Bultmann 'invokes a divine miracle, whereby the proclamation of the kerygma occasions the saving presence of God-in-Christ.' In contrast, Frei 'infers the present factuality of the Savior on the basis of his literary identity. The fictional Gospel narrative renders an identity of Jesus that entails the claim of his factual presence today' (Kay, 1991, pp. 329-330). In this sense Frei's proposition is that to know who Jesus is in relation to what took place in the narrative is to know that Jesus is. For Frei, the Gospel narrative so clearly renders the presence and identity of Jesus that there is no need for any type of preaching other than recitation of the narrative.

Kay (1991, p. 30) is quick to point out that such 'reduction of proclamation to narrative recitation is questionable in light of Paul's kerygma. The Word of God for Paul is not primarily a story about Jesus Christ, but a saving summons from Jesus Christ through the mouths of his heralds.' Kay (1991, p. 331) claims that Bultmann is very aware that there is a saving story that is presupposed and present in Paul's epistles, for example 1 Corinthians 15 and Philippians 2:5-11. While he doesn't deny the presence of this saving narrative, the question for Bultmann is whether that narrative genre is 'mythical' or 'realistic'. Bultmann concludes that it is mythical based on the antecedents and parallels found in the history of other religions. As such, it must be translated and interpreted into direct address for existence, as the Reformation and Enlightenment, to which Bultmann is an heir, require.

Kay (1991, p. 331) notes that one problem with narrative criticism is that it regards the Biblical stories about Jesus as so different to any other narrative form in their cultural milieu, that the nearest comparable literary works are not seen until nineteenth century realistic fiction. Where Bultmann's form criticism presupposes a social context and life situation that the preacher must be aware

64 Movies are thus another step away from any comparison to the four gospel narrative concerning Jesus' life, death and resurrection.
of, Frei's abandonment of both form and redaction criticism signal that this context is no longer hermeneutically important.

Bultmann (1956, p. 193) called Gnosticism a 'redemptive religion based on dualism' which gave it an affinity to Christianity. He believes that Gnosticism was a pre-Christian religion that invaded the West from the Orient and was a competitor to Christianity, rather than a movement from within Christianity. Later theologians, like Colpe and Kay, however, argue that Gnosticism was introduced after Christianity was established and infiltrated some Christian churches due to similarities shared with Christianity.

**COMPARING BULTMANN AND CAMPBELL**

A foray into Bultmann’s concept of the Gnostic Redeemer myth is valuable for this thesis. Both Bultmann and Campbell perceive myth to be a major issue that must be addressed.

Both Campbell and Bultmann originally presented their theories in the 1940’s and continued to write and expound on them in the following decades. They were both men of their times, supporting the modern worldview which held that a single overarching theory could explain a multitude of problems or issues. They both wanted to come to terms with the role of myth in the twentieth century. For Campbell it was how to explain the similarities that existed amongst the world’s myths. For Bultmann it was how to make relevant and acceptable the New Testament’s ‘mythological’ representation of Jesus as Son of God and saviour of humanity. Both want to analyse the impact of myth for the contemporary individual. Campbell understood that each human being can travel their own hero’s journey, if indeed they take stock of the exemplars and warnings contained in all myths. For Bultmann, responding by faith to the proclamation of the demythologised *kerygma* of the New Testament issues in authentic life.

Since the time of Campbell and Bultmann a postmodern way of examining the issues of mythology has emerged. From the perspective of post modernity the
The twentieth century was trapped in its own mythology of modernism or modernity – a rationalist, overarching individualistic framework. Campbell is writing in this modernist environment, and is therefore limited by his own time and his own views on mythology. Campbell claims that there is only one universal myth, but it is not a ‘myth’ to Campbell because it is true for him. In fact, Campbell's claim is a classical statement of the Enlightenment where everything revolves around the subjective self.65

Campbell and Bultmann both reduce their concepts to a single overarching idea. As such, they can both be criticised for providing a far too generalised framework that lack meaning for specific scenarios. When the theories are both so all-encompassing, they fail to appreciate the nuances, uniqueness and individual qualities found in myths for Campbell and the Biblical narrative for Bultmann.

Bultmann interprets using an existential framework, while for Campbell a symbolic and psychological interpretation is preeminent. By only interpreting in one framework, both theories lack the ability to use other schemas to apply to their theories. Bultmann refuses a psychological approach to theories of faith response while Campbell cannot acknowledge an existential framework for concepts of human progress. There are in fact completely different ways of approaching the human experience and its use of myth that both have completely overlooked. Segal (1984, p. 261) actually critiques both men for failing to justify their particular symbolic meanings of myth:

'Even if Campbell were able to justify his claim that the meaning of myth is symbolic, he would still have to justify his further claim that the particular symbolic meaning of myth is psychological. Here Campbell is like Bultmann, not unlike him. Bultmann may offer arguments, convincing or not, that the meaning of myth is symbolic, but he offers no arguments that the particular symbolic meaning of myth is, for him, existential. He simply pronounces it so. Campbell does the same...'

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65 It is the same influence that has governed a particular branch of theology, that says there is only one way to read the Bible, and the development of the Four Spiritual Laws (sin of creaturely humans and the resulting separation from God, Jesus coming to earth as a human, Jesus being the only bridge to God and restored relationship, humans must accept that offer of a bridge to receive forgiveness of sin).
For Campbell, true humanity is only found by successfully engaging in a hero’s journey. Bultmann contends that true humanity can only be found by responding in faith to the demythologised proclamation of the kerygma. Once again, this reductionist approach limits the myriad of ways that humans can respond to their situations and specifically to the Christian message. They also do not recognise any other frameworks for authentic human experience, for example those offered by other religions, like Buddhism or Islam, historical, narrative and poetic frameworks, or by social and cultural foundations.

In light of this critique, it is thus important to ask the question ‘is there a myth that controls the current age?’ By doing so, one can more clearly analyse the values, the heritage, the intellectual frameworks posed and the dominating worldviews. If one were to conclude that capitalistic consumerism and materialism is the dominating feature of modern Western society, Campbell’s monomyth sits easily in its schema. The individual is told that they can achieve whatever they desire. They simply need to dream big enough, work hard and the goal will be achieved. This is a predictable consequence for Campbell’s monomyth as well. If a ‘hero’ is willing to take on the journey of self-fulfilment, all of their innermost desires, many that they won’t even realise until on the path or even at its conclusion, can come to pass. It might be a simple journey of gaining some education, taking a risk to find a new job, or entering into a relationship. At its most extreme, it can be seen in the idea that anyone can be rich or, for Americans, the President of the United States.

This worldview has its share of problems too. It denies the very real situations where individuals have little or no power. Social, religious and cultural circumstances and conditioning may make it virtually impossible for some to have any ability to choose their destiny. Campbell and Bultmann are both men from the West, writing in the middle of the twentieth century. As such they are conditioned by their own social, cultural and intellectual frameworks. Neither can successfully devise a theory that will be comprehensive and culturally diverse enough to be applicable for all individuals in all humanity.

The modern world has the individual as the sum focus of the world. New thinking, however, demonstrates radical interconnectedness. How can people
be together and create relationship? In the following chapter Campbell’s monomyth is explored in relation to its deliberate use in the movies. The meaning making that individuals and groups gain from films may highlight some of the reasons why this interconnectedness is taking shape.
CHAPTER 5
MEANING MAKING AND THE MOVIES: THE MONOMYTH STRUCTURES THE MOVIES

‘Stories about a person willing to exchange their life for another are a golden thread in your world, revealing both your need and my heart.’
Papa (God) to Mackenzie Philips
William Paul Young (2007, p. 185)

Myth has the power to create meaning for those who participate in the myth in some physical way, whether it is by hearing a story, participating in a ritual or watching a movie. Campbell insists that this meaning making is one reason why the monomyth is so prevalent. This chapter seeks to explore the deliberate use of the monomyth in American movies and the way that creates a particular space for meaning making for viewers.

THE MONOMYTH AND THE MOVIES

Campbell and other scholars note that there is a typical sequence to the action in most myths. The hero must separate from his or her ordinary life, undergo a series of trials and adventures in a new world gaining an initiation into unknown ways of being, and finally returns to share what he or she has learned with others. The journey is not just a physical one, the hero moving from one place to another, but a spiritual one. The hero grows from innocence and ignorance to enlightenment and experience.

‘In a psychological sense, then, this is a voyage of self-discovery, an expedition whose true destination is the realm within each of us, where we must find our own unique center with all its strengths and weaknesses’ (Henderson, 1997, pp. 19-20).

This pattern is one that can be repeatedly found in movie plots. Screenwriters, directors and producers all recognize that it is a pattern that sells a movie and
helps to ensure it will be watched. The monomyth pattern is the most used plot device in Hollywood movies today and has been for some time.\textsuperscript{66}

The influence of a company memo written for Hollywood screenwriters concerning the monomyth, penned by Christopher Vogler when he worked for Walt Disney Pictures as a story consultant, cannot be underestimated. This seven page document, entitled \textit{A Practical Guide to the Hero with a Thousand Faces} (Vogler, 1985) was later expanded into a book, \textit{The Writer’s Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers} (Vogler, 2007). Vogler gives a brief overview of the heritage of the memo and the influence of Campbell as well as George Lucas:

‘It was written in the mid-1980s when I was working as a story consultant for Walt Disney Pictures, but I had discovered the work of mythologist Joseph Campbell a few years earlier while studying cinema at the University of Southern California. I was sure I saw Campbell’s ideas being put to work in the first of the \textit{Star Wars} movies and wrote a term paper for a class in which I attempted to identify the mythic patterns that made that film such a huge success. The research and writing for that paper inflamed my imagination and later, when I started working as a story analyst at Fox and other Hollywood studios, I showed the paper to a few colleagues, writers and executives to stimulate some discussion of Campbell’s ideas which I found to be of unlimited value for creating mass entertainment. I was certainly making profitable use of them, applying them to every script and novel I considered in my job’ (Vogler).

The memo, submitted to key Disney executives, began to be circulated around the film industry and to other studios, including Touchstone, Hollywood Pictures and Paramount. Vogler, as a result of his insights, began working in research and development on \textit{The Lion King} (Allers & Minkoff, 1994), in Disney’s Feature Animation division. The memo had preceded him and the storyboards for the animated movie were already being laid out according to the hero’s journey pattern Vogler had outlined (Vogler). Australian theologian Michael Frost

\textsuperscript{66} Of the several hundred Hollywood movies that this author watched during the writing of this thesis, only one could be deemed to not follow the monomyth. Controversial movie \textit{Tree of Life} (Malick, 2011) contains snippets of the life of a family of five, parents, Mr and Mrs O’Brien, and their three sons, Jack, R.L. and Steve. Moving back and forward through time, you do not see a hero’s journey and not until the credits do the viewers realise which son is actually being focused on in the story.
claimed that Disney Pictures will no longer make a movie that is not based on the monomyth pattern.  

The impact that the monomyth has had on movie making is profound. Whether studios, producers, directors or screenwriters realise it, the vast majority of movies coming out of American studios follow this pattern. Websites, dedicated to scriptwriting, acknowledge that it is a framework that needs to be addressed, even if individuals may see it as resulting in unoriginal, formulaic scripts. Movie analysts Tony Nigro and Lewis Manalo (Nigro, 2010) engage in an online argument where Manalo claims that following the monomyth structure is tiresome and boring to write, resulting in audiences failing to engage fully with the story. He believes that audiences too often turn their brains off, sending themselves into a voluntary, thoughtless trance and are susceptible to anything a scriptwriter wants to offer them. While he acknowledges that people are hardwired for stories, he does not believe that they are therefore hardwired for the monomyth structure of stories. Nigro, on the other hand, believes that the ‘monomyth is everywhere and inescapable, whether it’s intentional or not.’ Author Adair Jones (2010) also notes how critics often pan movies that follow the monomyth as being ‘predictable, derivative, the common fare’. She, on the other hand, finds the familiarity of the story line comforting. For her, the hero’s journey is simple, allowing audiences to always know what is happening and usually how the story will end. This results in the audience being freed to focus on the characters, the philosophical ideas and the small moments that explore humanity in its depths.

Vogler (1985) claims that ‘In the long run, one of the most influential books of the 20th century may turn out to be Joseph Campbell’s The Hero with a Thousand Faces’ because of the major impact that it has had on story-telling,  

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67 This claim was made by Michael Frost in his paper Neo, Frodo, Nemo in Depth: The Hero with a Thousand Faces, presented at Macquarie University on 24th March 2004. Disney Studios also recently announced that it would not produce anymore ‘princess’ movies, the genre that has made Disney its bread and butter throughout most of its existence, due to its narrow focus audience – little girls. It is trying to appeal to a wider audience, acknowledging that genre movies do ‘run a course’ (Chmielewski & Eller, 2010).

68 Many of these websites are difficult to reference as they do not state who the author is. It is possible that scriptwriters are more likely to make anonymous, confidential statements online, rather than public ones, especially if there is the possibility of damaging their careers. One such website is http://source-report.com/monomyth-sells/monomyth-sells-3.25m.htm.

69 In this case, it is for James Cameron’s special effects laden Avatar (2009).
writing and especially on movie-making. He notes that some of the most well
known directors like John Boorman, George Miller, Steven Spielberg, George
Lucas, and Francis Coppola have all used the monomyth pattern in their
movies. Jones (2010) lists the Wachowski brothers and James Cameron as
directors who have used the monomyth in their movies and who acknowledge a
debt to Campbell. Indick (2004) concurs with Vogler’s view of the importance of
Campbell’s monomyth, especially to the movie making world:

‘Campbell’s model of the mythological hero, from his book *The
Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), is by far the most influential,
especially in the field of screenwriting, for several reasons. First,
Campbell himself delineated clear stages of the hero’s journey,
providing a distinct structure for screenwriters to follow when
devising their plots and character development. Secondly,
Campbell’s model is the most eclectic of the major studies,
integrating Freudian, Rankian, Jungian and Frazerian theory into a
cohesive pattern of heroic elements. And finally, Campbell
arranged his model in three broad units, (“the nuclear unit of the
monomyth”), which corresponds quite nicely with the three-act
structure that most screenplays follow.’

The three-act structure is probably the most common framework that Hollywood
movies follow. The first act, sometimes known as the exposition or the set-up,
usually takes up the first quarter of a movie. The audience is being prepared for
the story and they are establishing their own relationship with the characters.
This is where the characters are all introduced and the interesting incidents start
that propel the story forward. The relationships between the characters are also
established, especially any conflict between the protagonist and antagonist. The
plot and the subplot/s are introduced in the first act. There is usually a plot point,
some kind of reversal of action that changes the direction of the plot, which
prepares the audience for the second act. In Campbell’s monomyth framework,
this is most likely to be when the hero accepts their status and crosses the first
threshold. The second act, usually referred to as the confrontation, contains the
action of the movie and consists of most of the middle half of the timeframe.
The main plot has been complicated and the protagonist must face trials,
obstacles, choices, antagonism and relationship challenges as the story
progresses. There is often another plot point, or major reversal, towards the end
of act two, introducing the possibility of a conclusion. For Campbell, this is most
likely to be when the hero gains the ultimate boon, but in doing so is annihilated
in some way. The various plotlines often converge at this point. Act three, the resolution, is usually the final quarter of a movie. This is where the climax, or the highest point of the drama, is played out. Campbell would most likely link this with the hero crossing the return threshold. Hollywood movies, for the most part, resolve all the plotlines, reach a dénouement and the relationships contained are ‘finalised’. This is not always the case and occasionally sub plots may be left open or the main plot left unresolved, but this is a departure from the majority of Hollywood scripts.

The reason why the monomyth is so pervasive, and therefore so useful to movie makers, can be seen in Vogler’s analysis of its universality:

‘The repeating characters of the hero myth such as the young hero, the wise old man or woman, the shape-shifting woman or man, and the shadowy antagonist are identical with the archetypes of the human mind, as revealed in dreams. That’s why myths, and stories constructed on the mythological model, strike us as psychologically true. Such stories are true models of the workings of the human mind, true maps of the psyche. They are psychologically valid and realistic even when they portray fantastic, impossible, unreal events’ (Vogler, 1985).

This is a very bold and generalised statement. To claim that stories that follow the monomyth pattern are the true, and therefore only, models of the psyche is to ignore the variety of stories that are available to humans. Vogler is using Campbell’s own language and terminology, seemingly accepting it without question. He continues:

‘This accounts for the universal power of such stories. Stories built on the model of the hero myth have an appeal that can be felt by everyone, because they spring from a universal source in the collective unconscious, and because they reflect universal concerns. They deal with the child-like but universal questions: Who am I? Where did I come from? Where will I go when I die? What is good and what is evil? What must I do about it? What will tomorrow be like? Where did yesterday go? Is there anybody else out there’ (Vogler, 1985)?

Again, it is a generalisation to claim that everyone will respond to the monomyth pattern in any given story. The critiques of the monomyth in chapter three
demonstrate some of the limitations, assumptions and problems with universalising the efficacy and power of the monomyth. There are other ways that these questions might be raised and answered and other story patterns that hold appeal for human beings.

Vogler (1985) believed that the ideas found in mythology and identified by Campbell were applicable to any human problem, which made the monomyth a perfect key, not only for life in general, but for dealing effectively with a mass audience, such as those who watch movies. While Campbell may not have coined the term monomyth, the archetypal qualities that the monomyth espouses ensures its universality.

‘Campbell’s term “monomyth” is a reference to a term originally created by James Joyce in *Finnegan’s Wake* (1939). It refers to the basic elements of myth, the archetypal qualities of all legends and heroes, that transcend individual cultures and specific periods of time. The monomyth is universal and timeless. Hence, the hero that Campbell explains is not one particular hero from one particular myth, but the universal qualities of all heroes from all myths… the “hero with a thousand faces.” The monomyth is universal and timeless because its basic form fulfills a psychological function for both the mythmakers and their audiences’ (Indick, 2004).

It is of interest to recognise that there seems to be a ‘myth’ about the term ‘monomyth’. The vast majority of the references to this are from Campbell’s own interpretation of Joyce’s use of the phrase. Campbell was an enthusiast and scholar of Joyce and wrote a commentary on the novel *Finnegan’s Wake* with Henry Morton Robinson - *A Skeleton Key to Finnegan’s Wake* (1944). In its context, however, ‘monomyth’ seems to have a much more sexual, phallic and Freudian sense, rather than a word that conjures a universal story framework. The narrator, while possibly reflecting on the past whilst sitting on a toilet, recounts:

‘Use they not, our noesmall termtraders, to abhors offrom him, the yet unregendered thunderslog, whose sbrogue cunneth none lordmade undersiding, how betwixt wifely rule and *mens conscia*

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70 Indeed, Campbell does not acknowledge any other writers who developed a ‘monomyth’ before him. The term ‘monomyth’ was adopted from James Joyce and Campbell uses it to describe the pattern that hero myths follow (Segal, 1987, p. 3). Campbell only acknowledges this source in his notes for the prologue of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949, p. 46).
Joyce was the first to write in this stream of consciousness style. He is using literary impressionism to allude to other things, possibly that of an oppressive catholic society. The context of this passage suggests that the narrator has viewed, and is reflecting upon, a sexual act. ‘Illian’ seems to represent the woman’s vagina, ‘willyum’ and ‘monomyth’, the man’s penis and ‘their bivouac’, the sexual act. It is quite ironic that Campbell chooses to use the male member as the term for the monomyth. This possibly is linked to the male myth of the (sexually) conquering being as opposed to the female myth of a nurturing and relational being. How the phrase ‘monomyth’ morphed from Joyce’s colloquial usage into Campbell’s universal hero journey framework is somewhat of a mystery. Authors on the monomyth seem to acknowledge where Campbell borrowed the term from, but don’t seem to know what Joyce actually meant by it.

The infinite variety of ways the monomyth can be applied is also apparent to Vogler (1985). While he warns against just rigidly following the formula and therefore being in danger of creating an obvious and dry story, he acknowledges that it can be used to tell everything from comic book stories to sophisticated drama, romances to action adventures. This is because the symbolic figures and props of the hero can be replaced by modern equivalents. The wizard of the old myths can be any modern day mentor or teacher, parent or employer. Caves and labyrinths are now the far reaches of space, the depths of the city or even the hero’s own mind. Characters can be blended or divided, gender changed and aged differently, adding to the complexity and variety of the storytelling. The monomyth is thus infinitely flexible and is capable of endless variation without sacrificing any of its power or magic, resulting in a supposedly truly universal story.
Vogler does reduce Campbell’s seventeen stage monomyth to twelve in his hero’s journey. He summarises the twelve stage plot as follows:

‘The hero is introduced in his ORDINARY WORLD where he receives the CALL TO ADVENTURE. He is RELUCTANT at first to CROSS THE FIRST THRESHOLD where he eventually encounters TESTS, ALLIES and ENEMIES. He reaches the INNERMOST CAVE where he endures the SUPREME ORDEAL. He SEIZES THE SWORD or the treasure and is pursued on the ROAD BACK to his world. He is RESURRECTED and transformed by his experience. He RETURNS to his ordinary world with a treasure, boon, or ELIXIR to benefit his world’ (Vogler, 1985). 71

Several scriptwriting websites encourage potential scriptwriters to seriously investigate and utilise Joseph Campbell’s monomyth when penning movie scripts, including Vogler’s own Storytech Literary Consulting (2009) and Movie Outline, a software programme with support articles penned by ‘The Unknown Screenwriter’ (2004-2008). A working screenwriter and producer, ‘The Unknown Screenwriter’ claims that he has never seen a movie that has not had some element of the Hero’s Journey contained within it, even though the scriptwriter may not have deliberately written it with the monomyth structure as their basis. He acknowledges that it is one of the oldest storytelling forms known. The monomyth structure speaks to people on deep, archetypal levels, conveying ‘universal truths about one's personal self-discovery and self-transcendence, one's role in society, and the relationship between the two.’ This is why movies that follow this pattern tend to do well at the box office – they can hit an audience deep in their psyche. To this effect, the monomyth continues to be used successfully, tweaked to suit different scenarios and to reach different audiences, but the end product still follows the pattern because movies are the myths of the contemporary age.

One needs to ask some questions in light of these claims. Is the monomyth the only structure that movie plots can follow? Are there actually other forms of storytelling that movies might in fact utilise? Are the scriptwriters in fact duped into believing that it is the only framework?

71 It is interesting to note that Vogler capitalises the key issues, highlighting his twelve stages of the Hero’s Journey.
The European Film Industry has been claimed to follow a more existential framework in its movie making. The hero is not the focus of their films. Rather, the focus in many movies is simply the experience of the characters. Some kind of personal development or psychological development is absent for the characters. So to, the action and conflict familiar in most Hollywood movies to propel the action forward, is missing.

A powerful and very disturbing example of this is the Romanian movie *Four Months, Three Weeks and Two Days* (Mungiu, 2007). The movie is a snapshot of the experience of one woman trapped under Nicolae Ceaușescu’s Communist regime where contraception and abortion are illegal, but being an unmarried mother is socially unacceptable. Gabriela is a victim who has no other option but to have an illegal abortion. The movie has an almost documentary feel as it demonstrates the horror of what she must endure, as well as her friend who helps organise the abortion. Seemingly, the only journey is from being pregnant to not, but it is not presented as a choice or as something that is going to benefit or grow Gabriela. It just ‘is’.

Another example is the French film *Father of My Children* (Hansen-Løve, 2009). If this film were to follow the monomyth, it would be case for every character failing to take the hero’s journey. The main character, Grégoire Canvel commits suicide after realising that his film production company is going under. His wife, Sylvia, takes their two daughters and moves when offered to take over the company. Once again, this more existential approach, of simply presenting the experiences of the characters, rather than ensuring that they follow a hero’s journey of some kind or that they have to have some psychological development, is more prevalent in European films.72

Asian films, however, steeped in their own mythological and cultural heritage, often follow the monomyth pattern. This is seen most clearly in their crime dramas, martial arts films and the retelling of their own cultural and historical myths. Australian films, influenced mostly by American and British film, tend to mostly follow the monomyth. The underdog story, where an unlikely character

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72 It might be possible to argue that this is the result of a post World War II mindset and the consequences of that horror on the nations that fought. This is outside the parameters of this thesis to test and prove, however.
comes good’, is a genre that Australian film makers do particularly well.\textsuperscript{73} Bollywood is well known for its colourful musical films, but these also tend to follow the monomyth. Forbidden love is a common plotline and the hero and heroine must overcome prejudice and social conventions to ensure that they can be together in the end.

The monomyth, it would seem, is the most common plot formula for the majority of the world’s film industries. It must be stressed, however, that it is not the only storyline that movies follow. Existential approaches are also prevalent, but mostly in the European film industry.

\textbf{THE HERO AT THE MOVIES}

The male hero is, unsurprisingly, the most common figure in Hollywood movies. Men dominate in the leading roles and are also paid the highest salaries. William Indick, in his paper \textit{Classical Heroes in Modern Movies: Mythological Patterns of the Superhero} (2004) acknowledges the prevalence of the hero in American film and its influence on audiences:

‘As the central figure in the film experience, the hero is the integral archetype in the collective unconscious of American culture. He is at once a collective and personal encounter, as each individual in the audience identifies personally with the hero’s story, while the hero simultaneously embodies the collective hopes and ideals of the culture that creates him. It is this compound phenomenon - the personal identification with the collective hero - that makes the hero archetype so psychologically powerful.’

This is a broad and possibly unsubstantiated claim. To say that each person in a movie’s audience will relate with the hero character is quite a generalisation. There are a number of other archetypes in the monomyth structure – the trickster, the wise old man, the femme fatale, the child, etc. These may in fact provide a character that audience members might relate to and indentify with more readily. It is also possible that the situations and circumstances that the hero finds themselves in are so outside the experience of the audience that no identification can actually occur.

\textsuperscript{73} Kenny (Jacobson, 2006) would be a popular comedic example of this.
Indick continues:

'In Jungian psychology, myths are collective dreams, the communal expression of a culture’s goals, wishes, anxieties and fears. Dreams, on the other hand, are personal myths. They are the individual expression of personal unconscious issues, amplified into visions and projected onto a screen in the “theater of the mind,” in the form of a personalized movie. Experiencing a modern myth in the form of a film is, in a Jungian sense, a transcendent experience, because when we identify with the hero and vicariously experience his journey, we transcend our own private conscious existence and integrate a collective cultural archetype. Furthermore, as a function of the film-going experience, we transcend our own individual neuroses, allowing ourselves to commune with the rest of the audience through a shared understanding, integrating the collective encounter on a personal level’ (Indick, 2004).

In this sense Indick is claiming that a movie, being a modern myth and therefore a transcendent experience, has some level of healing therapy. The argument is then set up for questioning whether human beings have always needed stories of some kind for this to occur. The other side of the coin might be to say that movies are filling a space that family, friends, religion and society once filled. The breakdown in human community across much of the Western world has resulted in people looking for meaning, significance, healing and understanding outside of human relationships and is finding some sense of it at the movies.

Saxby (1989, p. 13) too writes of the experience of participating in the stories of heroes as presented by the movies:

'Reliving the lives of these super heroes of the past is an exciting, mind-enlarging and deeply moving emotional experience which gives a new and proper perspective to the rock stars, the cinema heroes and the super-men and women of today. There is a colour, richness, and opulence of detail about the lives of these old heroes that makes today's megastars appear to be clothed in tinsel...The characteristics of the hero may vary over the years and from society to society, but the need for great heroes remains with us constantly.'

There has been a change over time, however, of the clear-cut, all good hero and the anti-hero, popular in today's movies and television shows:
‘No longer does the hero of a story have to be an outright hero. We are obviously more sophisticated than the audiences that used to sit around the campfire and listen to the tales of how the world came to be so we can now HANDLE a hero with flaws. We can now handle a hero that isn't all good yet using the monomyth in some form for your story will still HIT your audience on a deep level because these are events that should be so powerful that we are eager to swallow them whole. We are eager to jump on the Protagonist's train and ride along with him or her to the very end’ (Screenwriter, 2004-2008).

EXPERIENCING LIMINALITY AT THE MOVIES

The hero may be the main character in American films, but what role does the audience play? What happens when we enter the movie theatre? What sort of space is it that we enter into? What is it like to watch in the dark and how does that impact on us? The concept of liminality helps us consider the effects upon us of entering different place, space and modes. The process of identification and learning from the movies could be compared to Victor Turner’s concept of liminality. An experienced anthropologist of the mid twentieth century, Turner wrote a seminal book on the structure of tribal groups and their various religious and social rituals, *The Ritual Process* (1969). Turner builds on what Arnold van Gennep called the ‘liminal phase’ of *rites de passage*. These rites of passage contained three phases - separation or preliminal ('comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point into the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions...or both'), margin or liminal (where ‘the characteristics of the ritual subject...are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state’) and reaggregation or postliminal ('when the passage is consummated. The ritual subject, individual or corporate, is in a relatively stable state once more and ...has rights and obligations...is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards...’) (Turner, 1969, pp. 94-95).

Turner (1969, pp. 95-96) proceeds to inform his readers that people who are in this liminal threshold have ambiguous attributes as their condition does not fit the normal network of cultural classifications. Liminal entities are between and
betwixt the two positions assigned by culture, law ceremony and custom for before and after this phase. This is often accompanied by rich symbolism in these transitional cultures and is often likened to death, invisibility, the wilderness or even an eclipse. The participants possess nothing - no status, property, role, position in the community and often wear something or are disguised to indicate this. The initiands must behave a certain way, accept punishment and obey instructors humbly and passively.

Turner (1969, pp. 96-97) presents a particular understanding of communitas. During the liminal phase we are presented with a moment 'in and out of time' as well as in and out of the normal social structure of the culture demonstrating that there are two parts of the society. The first is recognisably structured, usually hierarchical and differentiated. The second, that of the liminal initiands, is only rudimentarily structured at best with little differentiation, a communitas of equal individuals who are submitting together to the community elders and the traditions of the people. This enables the participants to experience what it is to be made 'low' so that they can behave appropriately when they are 'high' once again after reincorporation. 'The passage from lower to higher status is through a limbo of statuslessness' (Turner, 1969, p. 97).

It is important to grasp the state of the person going through the rite and the experiences they endure.

'In tribal societies...speech is not merely communication but also power and wisdom. The wisdom (mana) that is imparted in sacred liminality is not just an aggregation of words and sentences; it has ontological value, it refashions the very being of the neophyte...The neophyte in liminality must be a tabula rasa, a blank slate, on which is inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group, in those respects that pertain to the new status. The ordeals and humiliations, often of a grossly physiological character, to which neophytes are submitted, represent partly a destruction of the previous status and partly a tempering of their essence in order to prepare them to cope with their new responsibilities and restrain them in advance from abusing their new privileges. They have to be shown that in themselves they are clay or dust, mere matter, whose form is impressed upon them by society' (Turner, 1969, p. 103).
There are also different types of rites. Turner (1969, pp. 168-169) lists three main types. Life-crisis rites are usually performed when an individual or occasionally a collective moves from life stage to another - birth, puberty, marriage, gaining political or cultural office, death, etc. and are usually status elevating. Calendrical rites are usually for a large group or whole community, and refer most commonly to the annual agricultural and productive cycle and are often status reducing. There are also rites of group crisis like when a tribe goes to war or attempts to ward off drought, famine or plague, etc.

It may be argued, therefore, that a similar process is occurring when people view a movie as what Turner sees occurring in tribal cultures. In the liminal phase of ritual

'We find social relationships simplifies, while myth and ritual are elaborated...if liminality is regarded as a time and place of withdrawal from normal modes of social action, it can be seen as potentially a period of scrutinization of the central values and axioms of the culture in which it occurs' (Turner, 1969, p. 167).

The individual is taken out of their normal circumstances; they are hidden with a number of others whose status in the theatre is undetermined. They all share a common experience and are exposed to a mythical story, which, according to Jung and Campbell, has the power to teach and change the individual. These people then leave and can utilise what they have seen and heard in the cinema, applying it to their own lives. As such, they fulfil the requirements of Turner’s concept of liminality. While all moviegoers may experience liminality, the meaning they glean from the same movie can be as varied as the number of people in the audience, especially when the hero may not even be of the same gender as the viewer.

**WHAT ABOUT THE WOMEN?**

Adair Jones (2010) acknowledges two critiques that others have made of Joseph Campbell’s monomyth. Firstly, it is accused of being so general that it is rendered meaningless. The second is more specific – it is too male-centred. While Saxby (1990, p. 7) could easily recognise an obvious pattern of birth and behaviour of male heroes, he could detect no such pattern with heroines.
Rather, he became ‘more and more aware of the many-faceted nature of heroic womanhood’. Indick (2004, p. 1) notes that Maureen Murdock, in her book *The Heroine’s Journey* (1990), addresses this shortcoming by reconfiguring Campbell’s more androcentric monomyth structure, creating a mythic structure that is more in keeping with the particular needs, desires and struggles of women in a modern age.

‘The heroine must become a spiritual warrior. This demands that she learn the delicate art of balance and have the patience for the slow, subtle integration of the feminine and masculine aspects of herself. She first hungers to lose her feminine self and to merge with the masculine, and once she has done this, she begins to realize that this is neither the answer nor the end. She must not discard nor give up what she has learned throughout her heroic quest, but learn to view her hard-earned skills and successes not so much as the *goal* but as one part of the entire journey. She will then begin to use these skills to work toward the larger quest of bringing people together, rather than for her own individual gain. This is the sacred marriage of the feminine and masculine - when a woman can truly serve not only the needs of others but can value and be responsive to her own needs as well’ (Murdock, 1990, p. 11).

Murdock’s (1990, p. 5) stages of the heroine’s journey are as follows74:

1. Separation from the feminine
2. Identification with the masculine and gathering of allies
3. The road of trials: meeting ogres and dragons
4. Finding the illusory boon of success
5. Awakening to feelings of spiritual aridity: death
6. Initiation and descent to the Goddess
7. Urgent yearning to reconnect with the feminine
8. Healing the mother/daughter split
9. Healing the wounded masculine
10. Integration of masculine and feminine75

While there are obvious similarities with Campbell’s monomyth, the fact that there is a pattern, the trials and the boon of success are the easiest to identify,

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74 This is also presented visually as a circular path moving clockwise (Murdock, 1990, p. 3).
75 *Wonder Woman* (Marston, 1975) is one of the few heroines that follows this pattern. A late 1970’s television show possibly meant that there was a strong feminist undercurrent, with many episodes written by women. The vast majority of movie heroines still follow Campbell’s monomyth – they are men in women’s guise.
there are significant differences. Stages seven to ten are important to note as they have far more emotional and spiritual significance for the heroine. The acknowledgement that both feminine and masculine elements are valuable and that the feminine can justifiably be reintegrated into the heroine’s being are vital stages.

Bishop Harber acknowledges the issue of androcentrism in Campbell’s monomyth, but does not believe that it is an insurmountable problem.

'It is alleged by Pearson and Pope in *The Female Hero in American and British Literature*, that works such as Campbell's "all begin with the assumption that the hero is male" (vii). This assertion may be true but it does not inhibit the use of the monomyth in relation to heroes that are female’ (Harber, 2007, p. 1).

BEFORE THE MOVIES: THE HERO IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

The hero, therefore, continues to be the main archetype in American film. Before Hollywood ever came into existence, however, there was still a sense of the values of the lone hero, that the individual can make it, the conquering of the frontier, etc in America literature. It is of value to explore briefly the influence of literature and the prevalence of the lone, usually male, hero character within its pages before exploring the history of the hero in the movies.

The original colonies in America were British and, as such, literature was influenced by European thinking for a time. In the first two hundred years of white settlement, literature consisted of mostly non-fiction religious studies (exemplified by Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield), histories (Edward Winslow and William Bradford), political treatises (Captain John Smith, Benjamin Franklin and Daniel Denton) and accounts of interactions with Native American Indians (Daniel Gookin and Mary Rowlandson). During the eighteenth century there was a move from Puritan and religious ideas to rational thought and science. The Enlightenment and the dramatic increase in America’s population during this century resulted in people being interested in the stories of the individual especially in the colonies. This is possibly one of the reasons for the popularity of Benjamin Franklin’s *Autobiography*. The first American
novels were published in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The first American novel was the Sentimental tragic love story *The Power of Sympathy* by William Hill Brown and published in 1789. Extremely popular and a best seller was Susanna Rowson’s seduction tale *Charlotte Temple*, reissued in 1794 and published in Philadelphia after its first British publication a few years earlier. Gothic and Picturesque genres were also popular during this period. Author James Fenimore Cooper was best known for his novel, *The Last of the Mohicans* written in 1826 and interestingly made into American feature films in 1911, 1920, 1932, 1936, and again in 1992. Germany, France and Romania made movie versions of the story and *The Last of the Mohicans* has also been reincarnated as several television mini-series and animated cartoons.

A distinctive American literary and cultural voice, however, began to be seen after the war of 1812 between the United States of America and the British Empire. Edgar Allan Poe and Washington Irving, whom debate surrounds as being the first to develop and write in a unique American style, are two who exemplify this new groups of writers. Davy Crockett and George Washington Harris were very well known for writing about the American frontier and the characters that populated it. Ralph Waldo Emerson, an ex-minister, and Henry David Thoreau were pioneers of Transcendentalism which promoted the removal of organised religion and society. Thoreau’s writing especially express in the American character a deeply rooted bent towards individualism. Novels like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain (the pen name of Samuel Langhorne Clemens) and *Moby-Dick*, by Herman Melville, are examples of the genres of Realism and Dark Romanticism respectively which reacted against Transcendentalism, yet still had at its core the individual hero character. At the beginning of the twentieth century American writers began to express disillusionment with the collapse of American ideals, such as good governance, social unity, liberty, and peace that were threatened by modern life and especially following the First World War. The novels and stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway exemplify this new mood. Their respective novels, *The Great Gatsby* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, however, still contain narration surrounding a main individual ‘hero’ character.

This very brief overview of American literature, before movies became a popular entertainment medium, demonstrates that the hero character was alive and well.
in the American mindset. The American hero was being seen on the frontier battling nature and Native American Indians, on the high seas, fighting in wars and resisting oppressive religion and political tyranny. It is no wonder that this understanding seeped into the world of movie making – it was entrenched in the American worldview and influenced the people at the core of the creation of the early Hollywood movie studios.

A SHORT HISTORY OF HOLLYWOOD’S STUDIO ROOTS AND AMERICAN VALUES

Hollywood movies have long been argued over – do they simply reflect American values or do they actually influence and shape them? This is an important question to ask in relation to meaning making and how the myths infused in movies influence their audience. It is worth an investigative excursion into the founding days of Hollywood to ascertain if there is anything unique about its beginnings – the people involved, their beliefs and actions in creating the Hollywood empire.

CALIFORNIA’S HERITAGE

California at the beginning of the twentieth century was ripe with promise. Oil had been discovered some fifty years earlier and there was fertile farming land in many parts of the state. Land was cheap and people, farmers especially, were invited to come and make their way, perhaps their fortune, in California. There was a definite sense of positive movement in California – new communities were being established, various new industrial, farming and entertainment successes were celebrated and the entrepreneur could really make it big. It was a new frontier and offered individuals and families a fresh start. John Steinbeck’s novel The Grapes of Wrath tells the ‘fictional’ other side

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76 Native American Indians were often perceived as savages and brutes, sub-human and requiring elimination or breeding out in early writings (and in early movies). This attitude has only seen change in the latter half of the twentieth century where there was recognition of the genocidal type behaviour of the white majority population (Shiach, 2001, p. 206).

77 In an interesting aside, the movie J. Edgar (Eastwood, 2011) portrays the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation as using advertising, merchandising, comics and movies to promote the activities of the FBI. He is portrayed as having a very simplistic concept of heroes and villains, good and evil. The movies and comics especially showed FBI agents as courageous heroes and criminals as evil villains. Boys were thus encouraged to be G-men when they grew up.
of this promising new world. It describes the story of a family, the Joads, caught in the mass movement of farming labourers from Oklahoma trying to escape drought and bank closures of their farms. Flyers offering new life, hope and income were distributed and people were devastated, and often just as destitute, when they found the reality was far from what was promised. New agricultural and labour laws were resulting in the beginning of corporate owned farms and it proved difficult for all the migrants to find work.

The movie industry fared somewhat better. Due to the cheap land and cheap labour, a Mediterranean climate and varied geography, the movie industry had a fortuitous beginning. All sorts of movies could be shot within a fairly short distance from the Hollywood studios, which were mostly established in Hollywood, a small subdivision on the outskirts of Los Angeles of an area called Hollywoodland. Westerns, desert movies, pirate movies, winter movies and even Mediterranean and European movies could be shot on locations within a day’s drive or on huge sets located within studio grounds. By the 1930s California had extended into radio production and by the 1950’s television production was also a major force.

JEWSH AMERICAN INFLUENCE

In his award winning history An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood (1988, pp. 1-2), Neal Gabler claims that Hollywood began with a paradox.78

‘The paradox is that the American film industry, which Will Hays, president of the original Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, called "the quintessence of what we mean by 'America,' " was founded and for more than thirty years operated by Eastern European Jews who themselves seemed to be anything but the quintessence of America.’

The largest movie studios in Hollywood's heyday were run by second generation Jewish Americans who for the most part regarded themselves as marginal men trying to break into America's mainstream. When movies began to have sound a large number of the writers were Jewish Americans heralding

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78 While some may see this study as a source of pride, positive heritage and achievement for the Jewish people, it must be acknowledged that it could be interpreted as racist. Gabler’s use of the terminology ‘Hollywood Jews’ is to distinguish them as a particular group of people who had such an important and ground breaking influence on the establishment of Hollywood and the studios it contains. I will use the term ‘Jewish American’ to describe this group of men.
from Eastern Europe. Many talent agencies were run by Jewish Americans and the majority of the producers were Jewish Americans as well.

The Jewish American men who helped found Hollywood embraced traditional American values and their supporting power structures. They wanted to reinvent themselves and be known, not as Jews, but as Americans. The film industry, according to Gabler (1988, p. 2), was their way of achieving it.

Gabler (1988, pp. 3-4) notes that there is a great similarity between the first generation of Jewish Americans in Hollywood. Carl Laemmle, founder of Universal Pictures, Adolph Zucker, founder of Paramount Pictures, William Fox, founder of Fox Film Corporation, Louis B. Mayer, head of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and the four brothers that founded Warner Brothers, Harry, Sam, Albert and Jack Warner, all experienced failure of their fathers or the complete absence of them. These older men, for the most part, could not adjust to American life. The sons, in a sense, rejected their European roots, language, accent, customs and religion and devoted themselves fully, even pathologically, to the American way of life. Handlin (in Herberg, 1960, p. 175) writes

'As the second generation grew to maturity, there was a strong likelihood that, eager to be Americanized, it would discard everything associated with the immigrant heritage of its fathers, including religion.'

This second generation of Jewish American men identified most closely with their new country’s values. Hollywood was where these values were seen at their starkest. It was certainly a man’s world at the beginning of this new entertainment industry, but one could succeed if American values were applied.79

Will Herberg explores this generational phenomenon in some depth in his seminal work on American religious sociology, Protestant, Catholic, Jew (1960).

79 It is interesting that some of George Lucas’ biographer’s note the way he has succumbed to American capitalistic values despite his efforts in Star Wars to portray a resistance to them. Sally Klein (in Wetmore, 2005, p. 187) writes, ‘Even at the height of his wealth and domination, Lucas’ anti-establishment attitude belies his position as the ultimate symbol of that establishment.’ John Seabrook (in Wetmore, 2005, p. 187) contends that Lucas became the conservative business man his father wanted. Despite his rebellion by becoming a filmmaker, Lucas is the ‘Emperor’ of his own private Star Wars universe. This is ‘the real lesson of Star Wars: In the end, the empire wins.’
Herberg (1960, pp. 9-10) records that Jewish people, mostly petty merchants, labourers and artisans, came in huge numbers to America's shores in the last twenty five years of the nineteenth century. While most started off as wage workers in factories, building trades and light industry, it quickly changed. They brought with them a very high value of education and 'educated' occupations. As such, many went into business or gained degrees, effecting a type of 'deproletarianization' almost as soon as they were proletarianized. This upward mobility of the sons, and later daughters, of the first generation of Jewish American immigrants demonstrated that they were very receptive to Americanisation. In fact, the Jewish cultural emphasis on the importance of education paradoxically meant that the Jewish people were one of the most 'American' of the ethnic groups. A Jewish American factory worker, it was said at the time, was 'a man of one generation: neither the son nor the father of workers' (Herberg, 1960, p. 10).

The film industry admitted the Jewish Americans in a way that few other businesses allowed at the time, according to Gabler (1988, p. 5). In the early years of the twentieth century the industry was so new and faintly disreputable resulting in few social barriers. There was little financial barrier either which attracted immigrant entrepreneurs. The Jewish Americans who entered this industry were primarily from fashion and retail backgrounds, so they had a unique understanding of public taste, market swings, merchandising and competition. As immigrants, they understood the dreams and aspirations of working class families and other immigrants, the two groups that made up the vast majority of the early movie going audience.

The movies offered these particular Jewish Americans a unique opportunity, when other ways to American status and gentility was denied them. The studios and the screen productions enabled them to create their own country, their own empire, where they would be admitted and even govern.

'They would fabricate their empire in the image of America as they would fabricate themselves in the image of prosperous Americans. They would create its values and myths, its traditions and archetypes. It would be an America where fathers were strong, families stable, people attractive, resilient, resourceful, and decent.
This was *their* America, and its invention may be their most enduring legacy' (Gabler, 1988, pp. 5-6).

While the Jewish Americans of Hollywood would mythologise a ‘fictive rehabilitation’ of their own unstable, weak, doomed and indifferent family lives on screen, they also reinvented themselves living in huge mansions, and simulating the cultural life of the eastern aristocracy. While they may have been patronised and alienated by a very class-conscious society,

"the Hollywood Jews would cope through "a sustained attempt to live a fiction, and to cast its spell over the minds of others." What is amazing is the extent to which they succeeded in promulgating this fiction throughout the world. By making a "shadow" America, one which idealized every old glorifying bromide about the country, the Hollywood Jews created a powerful cluster of images and ideas - so powerful that, in a sense, they colonized the American imagination. No one could think about this country without thinking about the movies. As a result, the paradox - that the movies were quintessentially American while the men who made them were not - doubled back on itself. Ultimately, American values came to be *defined* largely by the movies the Jews made. Ultimately, by creating their idealized America on the screen, the Jews reinvented the country in the image of their fiction' (Gabler, 1988, pp. 6-7).

### HOLLYWOOD'S DEVELOPMENT IN THE TWENTIETH AND EARLY TWENTY FIRST CENTURIES

Hollywood and its influence is one of the foci of this thesis. As such, it is helpful to have an idea of its history and development since its start in the early 1900’s. Don Shiach in his book *The Movies: An Illustrated History of the Silver Screen* (2001) has a concise overview in the introduction.

While the first movie projectors were kinetoscopes, where a person looked into a hole in a large box that projected the film onto the back of the cabinet, the first motion picture theatre was opened in Los Angeles in 1902 (Shiach, 2001, p. 10). In the first decade of the twentieth century New York was the centre of filmmaking in America as Hollywood was a mere suburb of Los Angeles. The
first true narrative film was *The Great Train Robbery*, but most features were only fifteen to thirty minutes long (Shiach, 2001, p. 11).

In the second decade of the twentieth century dedicated cinemas were common and feature movies had lengthened to four and five reels, approximately forty-five to seventy-five minutes. Adolph Zucker, founder of the Famous Players Film Company, and other entrepreneurs began to seduce stage actors away from theatre and into the film industry. It was during this decade that Hollywood began to replace New York as the American filmmaking centre. There were several reasons for this:

‘independent producers went west to escape the clutches of the Motion Picture Patents Company, a trust ...formed to enforce a monopoly on filmmaking patents; the suburbs round Los Angeles were relatively undeveloped and furnished excellent natural resources for filmmaking on the cheap;...and, crucially, the area was also a source of far cheaper labour than could be found in New York’ (Shiach, 2001, pp. 11-12).

Shiach (2001, p. 13) notes that the American Film Industry dominated the world of cinema by the end of World War I. During the twenties the Soviet Union, France, Scandinavia and Germany would challenge it in terms of artistic use, but Hollywood studios and ruthless movie executives could impose their locally made products wherever films were commercially shown. The huge American domestic market ensured that local filmmakers had a substantial advantage over international films. They were guaranteed generous profits from American box office revenues. Foreign revenues just added to it. There was a worldwide hunger for films and America simply produced more than any other country. Studio heads realised that production, distribution and exhibition were the three key areas to control to establish a virtual monopoly in the movie marketplace. The latter two produced the most amount of profit, so they set up their own distribution arms and bought or built as many cinemas as they could, charging others high rentals to show their films. Publicity and marketing were also very important and an aura of glamour and excitement always surrounded the movies and especially the stars of the screen who were a new type of royalty. Studios, aided by newspapers, magazines and other advertising mediums helped to keep the publicity machine turning.
By the 1920's movies were exceedingly big business offering escapism, harmless entertainment rather than 'messages' and focused on the profit providing family audience.

'Movies offered an escape from everyday problems; they transported you to exotic locations and embroiled you in romantic and dangerous exploits...Spectacle, mayhem and moralising melodrama are the stuff of which dreams are made, and the movies sold dreams.
The Hollywood Studios were the Dream Factories, manufacturing fantasy for the millions' (Shiach, 2001, p. 15).

The Depression meant that movie audiences began to decline. The coming of sound to movies, the talkies, by Warner brothers resulted in their becoming a major studio player and the end of the silent film (Shiach, 2001, pp. 15-16). The 1930's saw gangster movies and portrayed sexuality result in opposition from organisations and individuals to movie content. The film industry, recognising that if they did not do something about this themselves, were likely to find themselves under external censorship, updated the 1927 code governing the making of movies by the Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA). A new office, the Production Code Administration (PCA), was established to ensure that all studios obeyed the updated code. The studios used it for their own advantage - while the PCA had to approve scripts and could demand cuts, the studios effectively used it to prevent competitors and independent producers from creating many movies. The puritanism of the PCA meant that what was produced was what the wanted - family friendly, mass audience, harmless movies that promoted 'The American Way of Life' (Shiach, 2001, pp. 16-17).

Shiach (2001, p. 18) records that colour was introduced in the 1930's and the box-office winner of all time, Gone with the Wind, premiered on the 31 December 1939. It wasn't until America entered the war that there was an economic boom and people once again had money to go to the movies.

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80 The first three-strip Technicolour movie was Becky Sharp (Mamoulian) released in 1935.
81 This is based on ticket prices being adjusted. Otherwise, new blockbusters would always claim to have the highest box office takings, but it is due only to increased ticket prices over time.
1946 was the peak for audience attendance at movies - 90 million admissions in America per week. The sale of televisions at the end of the forties would see a decline in attendance and the industry would never be the same. The Paramount Decree of 1948 resulted in the studios having to sell off their cinemas, effectively breaking their monopoly on the film industry. A 50 percent drop in movie attendance contributed to the destruction of the old studio system and a new Hollywood would emerge over the next thirty odd years. The PCA were forced to relax censorship to help entice people away from their television sets and previously taboo subjects were now being seen on film directed by a new generation of filmmakers (Shiach, 2001, p. 22).

Shiach (2001, pp. 27-28) notes that when the studio system broke up agents became the new power brokers of Hollywood, bring package deals to the studios, consisting of a script, a few stars, a director and an executive producer, all of whom were under contract to the agency. The sixties saw the end of the family friendly and beautiful movies of previous decades and Hollywood seemed willing to make money from any content. The seventies saw a new generation of directors who were steeped in Hollywood myths themselves and who often looked to 'old Hollywood' for inspiration and ideas. Huge box-office hits began to be seen in the likes of Star Wars (Lucas, 1977), Raiders of the Lost Ark (Spielberg, 1981) and Jaws (Spielberg, 1974).

National cinemas really came to the fore in the seventies, especially from Australia, France and Germany. Arthouse films began to circulate as well. During the seventies and eighties, television, video players and later DVD players, challenged cinema. The movie businessmen, however, harnessed the new technology and took advantage of it (Shiach, 2001, pp. 28-29).

What will be interesting in the second decade of the twenty first century is how the Hollywood machine will respond to new threats to its industry. Blu-Ray has been touted as the final physical format that movies will take. With the rapid rise of the Internet and online accessibility to movie formats, the ease of downloading movies is potentially a money drainer for the studios. 3D movies have increased in popularity and the first 4D movies have began to show in specially built theatres. Could this be the heralding of ‘feelies’ reminiscent of
Aldus Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932, 2007)? The popularity of online gaming and possessing an avatar could also mean we may see virtual participation in movies, at some stage in the future, similar to that seen in the science fiction television show *Caprica* (Aubuchon & Moore, 2009).

**MEANING MAKING FOR THE AUDIENCE**

This chapter has sought to explore how the monomyth is utilised in movies and the history of that usage. Before the 1950’s Hollywood used a variety of different plots taken from many arenas of life, including mythology. What Campbell claimed to show was that all of these plots and storylines were merely examples or sub-plots of the overarching monomyth. The other aspect of concern is how the audience, whether collectively or individually, respond to the portrayal of the monomyth in movies. Do people glean any meaning that can be applied to their own lives outside the darkened cinema? Can a movie have the power to change a person?

Will Brooker, a self-confessed *Star Wars* fan, wrote an insightful book on *Star Wars* fandom, called *Using the Force* (2002). The first chapter explores how *Star Wars* has impacted the lives of dozens of fans and the meaning they have gleaned from the saga. Brooker (2002, pp. 2-4) recounts some of the emails he received in relation to his studies on *Star Wars* fandom. One fan has a bedroom that is essentially a shrine to all things *Star Wars*. Another describes how a normal day for him revolves around *Star Wars*. One correspondent stated that ‘*Star Wars* is my life’. Yet another claims that *Star Wars* ‘rules my imagination and fascination.’ One woman describes how she fell in love with *Star Wars* because the characters represented everything for her. A man states that his love for *Star Wars* consumes him. And the final example was from a fifteen year old who believed that without *Star Wars*, he would be lost.

While these are just examples of committed fans, Brooker (2002, p. 5) acknowledges the development of religious and spiritual meaning making of some of his correspondents. There are a number of individuals who draw on *Star Wars* for their spiritual and ethical beliefs. ‘...the *Star Wars* saga is cited not
just as a supplement that illustrates and parallels existing religion, but as a workable, persuasive ethical system that traditional religion has failed to provide.' As such *Star Wars* is a moral primer for many of these fans.

John Scott (in Brooker, 2002, p. 5) is described as The Missionary when he talks about *Star Wars* and claims that people who see it for the first time go through a sort of religious conversion. Philip Guillet (in Brooker, 2002, pp. 5-6) writes that

'It's message is so positive and optimistic, making us all feel special...like we belong to something much bigger than ourselves. For many, including myself, what occurs in those movies is a personification of what we are all struggling through: forces of good and evil tugging at our mind. The seduction of the Dark Side gives us incentive to turn to evil, however, the devotion and love of the Light Side is what may keep us on the side of good... *Star Wars* represents my own personal beliefs of religion and spirituality...(Yoda), Obi-Wan, Qui-Gon and Luke are such respectable figures that some of us can't help but aspire to be like them. Sure, we may not be able to lift droids, rocks or X-Wings, but we could "use the Force" in other ways such as helping, loving, caring and supporting, and be our own personal Jedi.'

Many fans are inspired by the Jedi and create their own code of behaviour and belief based on their example. Tiffany Pessotti (in Brooker, 2002, p. 6) believed that 'Yoda's teachings can easily be spread into your everyday life.' Kes Massey (in Brooker, 2002, p. 6) recognises that he learnt much of his morality from *Star Wars*. Barbara Gardener (in Brooker, 2002, p. 11) describes how *Star Wars* helped her get through the early death of her mother and survive the abuse of her step father. It was her distraction, escape, addiction and dreams and has continued to add meaning to her life, even as an adult. Brooker (2002, p. 11) concludes that 'In cases like these, the fan use of *Star Wars* as inspirational escapism and as a source of emotional guidance and comfort is anything but trivial'.

Brooker not only relates the importance of *Star Wars* in creating meaning in these individual’s lives but demonstrates how the saga has influenced their decision making process, especially in relation to career paths. Thomas Hodges (in Brooker, 2002, p. 12) relates that as a five year old, seeing *A New Hope* for
the first time, his 'imagination exploded. I began to think that anything was possible, anything I could dream, could be made real. When the film was over, I was changed forever.' He began drawing and has worked as a comic book artist and trained as a computer animator. Brooker's examples demonstrate that *Star Wars* has impacted the lives of many people at a profound and deep level.

*Star Wars* is not the only film, however, to have given viewers meaning. Teenager Angus Attwood became a voracious reader due to the Harry Potter novels. In an article for *The Big Issue* (Attwood, 2011, p. 17) he describes the impact of both the books and the movies, and how they helped shaped his own perspective on life. Attwood started reading Harry Potter in Year 2, so by age seventeen, he had spent ten years with the series. He describes how he related to Harry as an awkward, skinny boy and needed to know what happened to him. The main interest the books and movies held for Attwood was Harry's relationship with his friends because it mirrored his own social interactions. Harry was a role model for him and as someone who made mistakes, it comforted Attwood to see that 'someone as great as Harry Potter could still screw up' (2011, p. 17). Harry grew as Attwood did. They both began to understand loss and grief. About a month before the release of the sixth book *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (Rowling, 2005) in which Albus Dumbledore dies, Attwood lost his grandfather. Both young men had lost mentors in their lives. Harry and Attwood became interested in girls at the same time, struggled with school and were exposed to corruption and racism together. The release of the final movie occurred in the same year that Attwood would legally become an adult and symbolises the end of Attwood's childhood. He claims that nothing will stop him from reading the books year after year.

Adults also gain varied levels of meaning through movies. At the Reel Dialogue conference, held in 2007 at the Uniting Church Centre for Ministry, Sydney, participants were asked to join in an ice breaker activity. They had to select a movie from several dozen choices and explain to others what meaning they had gained from watching it. Every single person was able to choose a movie from the limited ones offered and talk about how it had impacted their lives. One man described how after watching a movie about mountain climbing, he and some men from his church were inspired to take a journey to the Himalayas and
challenge themselves to survive in the harsh conditions. It was also a spiritual
journey for them and he spoke of his relationship with God deepening as a
result of the trip. Other participants spoke of movies helping them through a
tough time, challenging a particular area of their lives or being a release from
difficult circumstances. Everyone present had a story to tell of meaning making
from watching movies. Can this phenomenon be a legitimate way of making
meaning in one’s life?

GLEANING FAITH FROM A VIRTUAL WORLD

Theologian Tom Beaudoin explores the impact of popular culture on meaning
He offers a theological interpretation of Generation X popular culture which
he understands to be a lived theology (Beaudoin, 1998, p. xvii). One of the most
helpful contributions is Beaudoin’s analysis of why popular culture has become
so important in the lives of GenX.

Beaudoin (1998, pp. 5-6) notes that being latch key kids, GenX often spent
more time in front of the television between getting home from school and
returning parents than with their parents. Massive amounts of unsupervised
time meant that GenX children formed habits and tastes influenced mostly from
popular culture and at a much earlier age than previous generations. Cheap
recording devices made it possible to 'privatise' popular culture - music and
television shows could be taped, copied, watched and listened to repeatedly by
individuals. Handheld electronic games encouraged technological literacy, but
as 'diversions' they began to blur the lines between play and work. This

82 Or GenX as commonly referred to. From this point the shortened version will be used.
83 Beaudoin (1998, pp. 27-28) notes that sociologically GenX has been defined several ways –
for example those born between 1961 and 1981, or 1965-1983, or after 1976. The confusion
over dates makes it hard to pin down the generation accurately. Possibly better than using
chronological dates is identifying the cultural elements of this living generation. Rob Nelson and
Jon Cowan in Revolution X (in Beaudoin, 1998, p. 29) notes 100 harsh facts about GenX
including declining wages, increased work hours, young adult poverty, devastation of AIDS,
socioeconomic crises, continuing divorce and suicide rates, overqualification of graduates for
available jobs, violence, drug abuse and lack of health insurance.
84 I would suggest that Generation Y and the Millennium Generation would have some
overlapping experiences and thus also be heavily influenced by popular culture.
technological literacy is a hallmark of GenX, but so is tolerance of religious diversity.

Beaudoin (1998, pp. 8-10) explores the issues facing GenX in terms of family relationships and social conditions. During the 1980's and 1990's divorce increased and many GenX children experienced blended families and visiting one parent on weekends, split holidays and other issues relating to broken families. Half of marriages failed in the 1980's so GenX learnt the fragility of relationships and were forced into adulthood earlier and unprepared. Popular culture became a surrogate parent and minister with many GenX feeling isolated from religious institutions. These fragile families were a microcosm of a fragile world that, at the time, were under the spell of *Star Wars* – both the movie series and the American anti-nuclear missile defence system signalling the fear of nuclear war. Many GenXers actually feared for their future as they incorporated the possibility of annihilation into their lives due to an apocalyptic atmosphere during the 1980's with major environmental disasters, terrorism, and AIDS, etc. becoming prominent. It was the first American\(^{85}\) generation that lacked a common cause. It lacked a binding theme - or it only had a theme of absence. As a result, many GenXers are apathetic to social movements - it is in opposition to the idealism of the baby boomer generation which on many accounts failed to live up to their promises.

Beaudoin (1998, pp. 12-14) sees remote controls as an analogy of the reduction of GenX's hold on reality. Cable television, radio playing Top 40 songs and later MTV, movies, comic books, clothing, fantasy gaming, concerts and sports were the aspects of popular culture that had the most influence on GenX and gave rise to a culture of simulation. The imitation of the real was important. Religious participation diminished in the 1980's for GenX as cynicism and dismissiveness for out of touch churches and fallen televangelists rose. Hostility by churches to popular culture, 'boring' music and irrelevant teaching helped facilitate the decline in attendance. However, there was still a sense of spirituality for Gen Xers and this can be seen in song lyrics, movie content and music videos. Sin, salvation, redemption, etc. were issues that were treated by these media. This

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\(^{85}\) One would also suggest that much of these experiences could be translated to GenX in Australia.
suggests that GenX is a theological and perhaps religious generation. How their ‘religion’ worked, however, was different to any previous generation. GenX tended to piece together their own set of beliefs taken from a variety of religious and spiritual sources and claimed religious experiences outside the boundaries of religious institutions.

Beaudoin (1998, pp. 21-22) acknowledges that pop culture filled the spiritual gaps for a generation who had broken or fractured relationships to formal religion. Having gained their independence early due to absentee parents and distance from formal religious institutions, they expressed their free will in the world of pop culture, which was like a surrogate clergy. It was also strengthened by large disposable incomes from part time and summer jobs and pocket money. There is a profound symbiosis between GenX and popular culture and the two cannot be readily understood without knowledge of the other. It is important to note that pop culture events include fashion, body adornment, TV, movies, music videos, songs, board games, and other trends and products.

Some authors, according to Beaudoin (1998, pp. 23-27) suggest that a ‘crisis of religious meaning’ binds GenX together. While surveys have been done, statistics fail to determine whether GenX is lacking religious interest or they don’t call themselves religious because they associate it only with formal religious institutions. It is possibly more helpful to say that GenX generally find religion irrelevant. Rather, GenX is living religiously through popular culture, taking religion into their own hands. Any definition of GenX needs to highlight the relationship it has with popular culture and the way that pop culture has created meaning for the generation, even making the generation itself.

Simon Frith (in Beaudoin, 1998, p. 31) notes three ways of defining popular culture:

‘first, as produced by a culture for the people (people consume what is fed to them); second, as the culture of the people (people consume what resonates with their own values); third, as the culture by the people (popular ways people live daily life).’

GenX culture is mostly the second - a culture of the generation expressing popular religiosity. Beaudoin (1998, pp. 35-36) observes that GenX cannot believe that the religious and the cultural are two totally separate worlds.
Rather, they believe that God might just work through popular culture as well as people from other religious backgrounds. 'In such a world, religious meaning can be expressed in and drawn from popular culture' (Beaudoin, 1998, p. 36).

Katherine Bergeron (in Beaudoin, 1998, p. 37) in her essay 'The Virtual Sacred' posits that religious experiences are increasingly being packaged and sold in and by contemporary culture giving recipients a kind of 'virtual religiousness'. Beaudoin (1998, p. 39) thus argues that simulating the religious and making it virtual may actually lead to a more thorough religious practice, especially for those belonging to GenX.

'...Generation X has developed a keen way of finding meaning in fragmentary and disparate pop culture "moments," from magazine advertisement to television commercials to styles of footwear, in a series of endless reassociations with popular culture ephemera' (Beaudoin, 1998, p. 45).

As such, Beaudoin (1998, p. 46) notes that various 'quotations' from popular music, TV, movies, advertising, etc are assembled and reassembled to make or find meaning and thus ambiguity becomes the norm. Another major dimension of GenX spirituality is that they tend to find the religious in personal experience, especially sensual spirituality (Beaudoin, 1998, p. 74).

Technology and the rise of the internet cannot be ignored in popular culture spirituality. Beaudoin (1998, p. 90) observes that cyberspace is where GenXers often feel most comfortable and gives them a voice in religious matters. Communities of faith meet and coagulate online often because it allows discussions of faith without the need to be face-to-face and a place to meet other religiously curious people. This can be as meaningful as any 'real' religious institution.⁸⁶

Beaudoin (1998, pp. 145-146) makes the claim that

'...Generation X is a "both-and" generation, practicing both "virtual" and "real" religiousness. What I mean by this distinction is that although Xers live religiously in real ways (involving real faith, real practice, and a real spiritual journey), they also indulge in an imitation of religiousness. Being "virtually religious," they imitate real faith and real practice, simulating what they expect institutional

⁸⁶ This is an important consideration when exploring the phenomenon of Jediism, because online is where the vast majority of their interaction takes place.
religion and real religiousness to be. They enact both this real and virtual religiousness through the popular culture. Generation X, in other words, seems to want the "real" thing and an "imitation" of the real thing. Xers want the genuine and the posture, the authentic and the artificial...By practicing religiosity in popular culture, Xers stake out their own space for religious practice, expression, and experimentation. It is a safe, if unlikely, environment in which to be "real." At the same time, by practicing religiosity in pop culture, Xers use the superficiality, irony, mockery, fluidity, and ephemerality of pop culture to imitate real religion. This is also a safe place to be "virtually" religious.'

Xers relationship with the real and the virtual is not heresy or heterodoxy, but rather orthopraxis - the seeking of right practice through erring, imitation and experimentation (Beaudoin, 1998, p. 146).

Movies are a powerful source of meaning making, especially for those in Generation X and younger. Movies can potentially determine morals and values, influence behaviour and beliefs and affect emotions. The monomyth is being used by movie makers to offer a particular framework of meaning. The following chapter seeks to give examples of the monomyth in popular movies.
CHAPTER 6
MYTHS AND MEANING MAKING: AN ATTEMPT TO CREATE A PUBLIC MYTH

'It wasn’t the church, but it was like the church, better, far better. It was at the pictures that you could look around and see that rapt gaze on people’s faces that maybe the priest or the minister dreamed of one day seeing on the faces of their parishioners...all those different people and different degrees, paupers and princes, united by their enchantment.’

Narrated by Roseanne McNulty
Sebastian Barry (2008, p. 180)

THE APPLICATION OF THE MONOMYTH TO THE MOVIES

The analysis of Hollywood movies reveals a general pattern, despite the genre of the individual film. Romantic comedies, thrillers, science fiction and dramas, amongst others, for the most part follow the Hero’s Journey, clarified by Christopher Vogler and first brought to popular attention by the monomyth theory of Joseph Campbell. Fantasy and action adventure stories, however, most clearly demonstrate their reliance on the monomyth. It is important to demonstrate just how pervasive this framework is in American movies and how, in turn, it has the potential to shape the worldview of those who watch them.

This chapter seeks to analyse a number of major Hollywood movies and attempts to demonstrate the influence of Hollywood on the creation of a public mythology. This is important as it demonstrates the degree to which the monomyth is used to shape movies and therefore cultural meaning making. The Star Wars saga is the first to be analysed. This will be the most in-depth analysis, given the reliance upon these movies by those who refer to themselves as Jedi and the importance to this thesis of using Star Wars as an illustration to explore the nature of meaning making. Several other major Hollywood movies follow, chosen due to their popularity and/or their deliberate use of the monomyth. A pro forma analysis is used based on Vogler’s Hero’s

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87 These can be found in the Appendix.
Journey pattern, which he developed specifically for movies. Campbell’s monomyth stages have been inserted to demonstrate their presence in the films and to demonstrate how the two patterns overlap. The significance of these particular movies is explored and are compared and contrasted with each other.

**STAR WARS AS THE HERO’S JOURNEY**

Arguably one of the most influential movie franchises of all time, *Star Wars* has entered the cultural milieu in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries. It consists of six feature length movies and a number of spin-off books, comics, television shows and other movies which flesh out the stories. It has been referenced in dozens of other movies and television shows, spawned a number of spoofs, thousands of people belong to fan clubs all over the world, its vocabulary has entered into mainstream and merchandising ranges from toothbrushes to life size models of the characters. Film critic Simon Miraudo (2012) comments on the undeniable influence of Star Wars:

'It's hard to imagine a time in which *Star Wars* wasn't such a megalathon (a word I have invented to encapsulate the incomparable hugeness of its influence and cultural infiltration; nothing in the English language conveys it properly, does it?). For those of us born after the release of *Return of the Jedi*, we have known no world in which George Lucas’ space saga isn't a universal touchstone and reference point.'

The *Star Wars* universe is a franchise worth billions of dollars. Its popularity invites investigation as to the inspiration of this iconic movie series, especially

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88 One of the concerns of the monomyth is that it doesn’t know how to continue the story of the hero once the original redemption has finished. As can be seen in the extended *Star Wars* universe, the monomyth pattern just keeps getting repeated.

89 For example, a good proportion of the Western population aged forty years and younger would know what the Force, a Jedi and a lightsaber are.

90 A quick Google search reveals that at 2009 the franchise had made $6.68 billion at the box office, $9 billion on toys, $1.6 billion on video games and $200 million on novels. It is interesting to note that the sales of toys, books and games brought in more than the box office revenue (Vickaz, 2009). On the 23rd September 2011 Forbes reported that the sales of the recently released Blu-ray Box Set of the whole *Star Wars* saga had made $84 million in its first week of sale. George Lucas was ranked 107th in the Forbes 400 with an estimated worth of $3.2 billion. Games and merchandise brought in $510 million in 2010 alone. There is also the possibility of
due to possibly its most controversial spawning – that of the religion of Jediism. Director George Lucas acknowledges the influence that Joseph Campbell’s monomyth had on his Star Wars movies. He explains his creative process in an interview at Skywalker Ranch, California, September 27, 1996:

'I was trying to take certain mythological principles and apply them to a story. Ultimately, I had to abandon that and just simply write the story. I found that when I went back and read it, then started applying it against the sort of principles that I was trying to work with originally, they were all there. It's just that I didn't put them in there consciously. I'd sort of immersed myself in the principles that I was trying to put into the script... (And) these things were just indelibly infused into the script. Then went back and honed that a little bit. I would find something where I'd sort of gotten off the track, and I would make it more, let's say, universal, in its mythical application...' (Lucas in Henderson, 1997, p. 10)."\(^{91}\)

Luke Skywalker, the main character in the original Star Wars trilogy, is a hero in that he fulfils the monomyth clearly. His journey through the original trilogy follows the hero's pattern, as he starts as a simple orphan farm boy and after many adventures becomes the hero of the Rebellion, defeating the epitome of evil, the Emperor, by redeeming his father Darth Vader. Hanson and Kay (2001, p. 49) demonstrate that as there are three stages to Joseph Campbell's monomyth, there are three movies in the original Star Wars trilogy to correspond. Luke endures the first stage of separation in the original movie, Star Wars: A New Hope (Lucas, 1977), completes initiation in The Empire Strikes Back (Kershner, 1980) and eventually returns renewed in The Return of the Jedi (Marquand, 1983). According to Hanson and Kay (2001, p. 49) Luke's journey is major evidence that Star Wars can be considered a modern myth. However, he is not the only hero in the story. Henderson (1997, p. 20) notes that part of the appeal of these movies is that there are many heroes - Princess Leia, Han Solo, See-Threepio and even Darth Vader have their own hero journeys and transformations. Luke’s hero journey links in with the story of Anakin Skywalker, his father, whose own journey is revealed in the prequel trilogy. The son of no father, Anakin is taken from his home planet and trained the whole movie series being brought out in 3D, bringing in even more revenue for the franchise (Pomerantz, 2011).

Wetmore (2005, p. 186) contends that the continual reworking of the Star Wars films can be seen as 'the attempt to maintain a living mythology' or, more cynically, as a capitalistic way of earning even more money from repackaging the same material with slight variations.
to be a Jedi, but succumbs to the Emperor’s plans and the Dark Side of the Force in an effort to save his wife, being transformed into Darth Vader. Hanson and Kay (2001, pp. 49-50) remind us that aligning with the Hero’s Journey, Campbell described the Cosmogonic Cycle or ‘universal round’, a second heroic pattern conveying a world without end in its repetition. In this cycle, the hero emerges from a deep sleep and in waking slowly becomes aware of the realities of the world. This continues until the hero ages and follows a path of dissolution, finally returning to the dream state and deep sleep from whence he came. Anakin Skywalker is the cosmogonic hero of the Star Wars saga and the cosmogonic cycle underpins the entire six Star Wars films.

Mary Henderson in her book Star Wars: The Magic of Myth (1997) comprehensively explores how A New Hope, The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi follow the hero’s journey pattern. She was the curator of a Smithsonian Institution exhibition of the same name that travelled around the world and was shown at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, Australia. Her book is the companion volume to that exhibition. The following is an overview of her analysis of the three movies, using not only the seventeen stage monomyth pattern, but a number of the mythical elements that Campbell identifies in his framework.

THE CALL TO ADVENTURE

In myth, heroes are mostly drawn from the extremes of life, either princes or paupers. Luke Skywalker is the latter - an orphan living with his farmer relatives, Aunt Beru and Uncle Owen, on the remote planet of Tatooine. His ‘royal’ heritage will take some time to emerge. He is unformed and untested, innocent of the wider world though he longs to join the Academy and become a pilot. The hero's journey begins with a call to adventure. This can be at the hero’s own initiation, but most likely a herald of some kind invites the hero into a new phase that will separate them from family and home. Often the hero does not recognise the herald or the hand of fate (Henderson, 1997, p. 22).

In Star Wars, two droids, Artoo-Detoo and See-Threepio are sent by Princess Leia to try to gain the assistance of Obi-Wan Kenobi in the Rebellion’s fight against the Empire. Through some misadventures they are sold to Uncle Owen
and Artoo-Detoo reveals the existence of the princess and hints at the wider world to Luke. This droid is the unassuming herald for Luke's adventure and Luke unknowingly gains the plans for the Death Star - the ultimate planet-destroying weapon. As archetypes, the droids can be compared to aspects of the psyche - See-Threepio seems all ego and no insight with his six million forms of communication but understands little. Artoo-Detoo is more the subconscious mind - he has great inner power, can take on large amounts of data, but can only communicate through electronic beeps, relying on Threepio's translations. See-Threepio is also a kind of herald in that his first meeting with Luke is 'prophetic'. He calls the farm boy 'Sir Luke' and by the end of the trilogy, he has matured and earned that title. Threepio claims he is not much of a storyteller, but in *Return of the Jedi* this changes (Henderson, 1997, pp. 26-29).

**THRESHOLD GUARDIANS**

Entry in to the new realm is always guarded in myth. The threshold guardians must be overcome for the hero to continue the journey. Uncle Owen and Aunt Beru represent these guardians for Luke, discouraging him from pursuing his piloting dreams and making him stay on the farm. The Tuskan Raiders are another threshold guardian who try to overwhelm Luke when he goes to look for the missing Artoo-Detoo. Luke is aided in overcoming them by a mysterious figure - Obi-Wan Kenobi (Henderson, 1997, p. 30).

**THE WISE AND HELPFUL GUIDE AND THE MAGIC TALISMAN**

Often the hero needs supernatural aid and magical amulets at the beginning of the quest. Obi-Wan or Ben Kenobi is a Jedi Knight who helps Luke with training, understanding and provides him with a lightsaber - a powerful sword that once belonged to Luke's father. Luke now has a goal - to become a Jedi Knight like his father. An amulet can protect a hero, but requires no action on the part of the bearer. A sword on the other hand, must be wielded and requires training and action for it to be useful and effective. The choice to use it for good or evil is important - if it is used for good, the sword, or lightsaber in *Star Wars*, is a symbol of justice - the ways that the Jedi Knights represent. If it is used for evil, it is a symbol of destruction - the Sith Lord's legacy. Obi-Wan is not only the provider of the lightsaber. He must also introduce and help Luke in the ways of the Force, the spiritual power that holds the universe together, and guide him
along the path of light as the dark side is a source of evil (Henderson, 1997, pp. 30-36).

**REFUSAL OF THE CALL**
Heroes and heroines can back out of the journey that they have been called to. Luke is no different. When Ben retrieves Princess Leia's distress call and invites him to start the journey of becoming a Jedi Knight and helping in the Rebellion, Luke echoes his Uncle's objections, claiming that he has to help on the farm. It is only when he returns to the farm to find it destroyed and his Aunt and Uncle killed, that he determines to follow Ben. He has been cut off from his old life and this indicates that this journey may well be one full of hardship and heartbreak (Henderson, 1997, pp. 36-39).

**PASSING THE FIRST THRESHOLD**
Luke has to not only leave his home, but his planet as well. He believes he is just going to Alderaan, instead he will find himself wandering for several years before completing his adventure. Eventually he will lose his companions and must face his destiny alone. The Mos Eisley spaceport is the final threshold that Luke must pass through to leave on the journey and it is here that he finds two hero partners and a ship that will carry them all on the first part of the adventure (Henderson, 1997, p. 39).

**HERO PARTNERS**
In myth, the hero partners are people or creatures that help the hero in their quest. To find Luke's hero partners, Ben and Luke descend into the Mos Eisley cantina where pilots and adventurers abound. This descent is symbolic of the psychological descent from the everyday consciousness to the lower regions of the unconscious where both wonderful and perilous forces reign. But not all the creatures found in the underworld are negative. Ben talks to an eight foot, 200 year old Wookie, who, while looks fearsome, is the first mate on the *Millennium Falcon*. Chewbacca (also known as Chewie) leads the pair to Han Solo, the captain of the ship, who is also a smuggler. But Han has his own threshold
guardian, Greedo, as he begins his journey but overcomes him with his blaster (Henderson, 1997, pp. 39-44).

**MYSTICAL INSIGHT**

Joseph Campbell understood that all myths have a transformation from one consciousness or thinking to another. For Luke, he must know the Force the spiritual energy that gives Jedi’s their power. Luke is taking a spiritual path, while Han, who pokes fun at the 'hokey religion', takes the path of warrior and lover. Wielding the lightsaber, he must let go of his conscious self and his use of sight and act out of his feelings. The Force, in many ways, combines principles from many major religions, but highlights what they all have in common - faith in a spiritual power. For those who tap into it, the Force provides all that they need. While incorporating ideas from Eastern philosophy the Force remains true to the Western value of the importance of the individual. *Star Wars* characters will certainly learn about teamwork and self-sacrifice but they also 'demonstrate the power of the individual even in the face of a massive machine like the Empire' (Henderson, 1997, pp. 44-47).

**THE LABYRINTH AND THE RESCUE OF THE PRINCESS**

When the *Millennium Falcon* comes out of hyperspace the heroes discover that Alderaan has been destroyed and they are caught in the tractor beam of a huge space station, the Death Star. The heroes find themselves in a labyrinth of passages, rooms, trenches and dead ends. The labyrinth forces the heroes to separate to achieve their goals. Obi-Wan needs to disable the tractor beam to free the ship. Luke and Han must free the Princess. Both are representative of difficult trips into the unknown. The 'monster' of traditional myth, who guards the Princess, is, in *Star Wars*, the Death Star itself - powerful and able to destroy the heroes and their ship. Han and Luke must fight their way to the captive Princess Leia, but she is no helpless, passive victim. Leia Organa has her own career in the Empire's Senate while simultaneously being a member of the Rebellion. She has managed to keep their location a secret despite torture. While Darth Vader, her captor, is the typical Jungian shadow archetype, all black-clad and dangerous, Leia is the white robed, angelic anima - the feminine

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92 This is one of the most controversial reworking that Lucas made to the series. Depending on which release is watched, Han fires first or Greedo does and misses.
aspects of the masculine psyche. She is on her own hero quest as a member of the Rebellion, but she is also Luke's inspiration for heroism. After freeing the Princess from her cell, Luke, Han, Chewie and Leia are sucked into the Death Star's very bowels, the 'belly of the whale' - a garbage compactor where they are surrounded by water and rubbish. But in overcoming this ordeal, it also represents a transformation and rebirth for the heroes. They are helped by the droids via a comlink to escape and return from the labyrinth to the *Falcon*. This journey helps them all to reach the centre of their being to discover truth about themselves. Luke moves from adolescent to competent adult when he swings Leia across a precipice, while the selfish Han risks his life chasing stormtroopers down a hallway with the ever faithful Chewie following (Henderson, 1997, pp. 47-56).

**LOSING THE GUIDE**

In myth, the guide can only bring the hero so far. Ben has helped Luke across the threshold, given him the magic talisman in the form of the lightsaber, introduced him to the Force and to companions and guided him to the Princess. Luke must let go of his mentor and the process is forced when Darth Vader kills Obi-Wan, after he has disengaged the tractor beam, in a challenge to single combat. But Obi-Wan knows what is coming and smiles to Luke before allowing Vader to cut him down. Obi-Wan in a sense has become part of Luke's psyche and will return in spirit form when his help is required (Henderson, 1997, pp. 56-57).

**HERO DEEDS AND DRAGON SLAYERS**

Having passed their initiation, the heroes are ready for more direct confrontation and begin planning an attack on the Death Star back at the Rebel base. Luke joins the fighter pilots, pledging his youthful life to a higher cause and flies off to 'slay the dragon' in the form of the Death Star which is essentially holding the galaxy captive. In a battle reminiscent of David and Goliath, the Rebel's only hope is a proton torpedo shot directly into a two metre wide thermal exhaust port. Size is not the issue, but the knowledge of exactly when and where to release the weapon. As such, Luke is encouraged by his mentor's voice to use the Force and switch off his targeting computer. When he does he is successful and destroys the Death Star. Luke, however, could not have done it without
help. The seemingly self-absorbed Han, who has left before the battle even begins, returns to the fight to protect Luke on his final run down the Death Star's trench and prevents Darth Vader from taking a killing shot. He has transcended his self-centeredness and begins to work as part of the team. It shows a part of his character that he hadn't known existed. Both Luke and Han are rewarded by the Rebel Alliance for their heroic deeds and are given respected positions within the organisation. This is, however, only the beginning of the next initiation stage - more trials await them (Henderson, 1997, pp. 57-59).

**THE DARK ROAD OF TRIALS**

When *The Empire Strikes Back* opens, Luke's hero journey is only at a midpoint that signals the beginning of a journey through 'hell'. The heroes have to overcome the powers of darkness and there are more trials and enemies to face. In a sense, the quest darkens\(^{93}\) (Henderson, 1997, p. 60).

**THE HUNT**

The mythical motif of the hunt is repeated several times in this mid part of Luke’s journey. Darth Vader has hired fearsome bounty hunters to track down the *Millennium Falcon* and its occupants. Luke, now three years into his participation in the Rebellion, is 'frozen' there, symbolised by the ice planet of Hoth. For him to grow and continue the journey, he must free himself and alone go deeper into the realms of his quest. While scouting out this frozen world, Luke is attacked by a Wampa but he is able to free himself using the Force and his lightsaber. He escapes only to collapse in the snow and hear Obi-Wan's instructions to go to Dagobah where he will learn more of the Jedi ways from Yoda, a Jedi Master. The vision of Ben fades to reveal Luke's real world protector, Han, who has grown into a warrior with the Rebel Alliance. An Imperial attack on the Rebel base consequently forces the heroes in different directions - Luke to Dagobah on a spiritual quest for eventual atonement with his father, and Han, Chewie and Leia on the path for Han to find his 'hero heart' and a 'sacred marriage' (Henderson, 1997, pp. 60-64).

\(^{93}\) The fifth instalment is often claimed by fans to be the best of the six movies due in part to its darker narrative.
INTO THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

Spiritual and emotional transformation often requires some form of self-annihilation. The heroes must now face a symbolic death. In psychological terms, 'the hard shell of the hero's ego must be shattered in order to gain access to the spirit and the heart.' Joseph Campbell understood that the hero's journey must involve a separation from the world to access the source of power to enable any chance of a life-enhancing return. Han and Leia are chased by Imperial Star Destroyers as they leave Hoth and Han tries to escape by putting the *Falcon* down in a cave on an asteroid. It turns out to be the innards of a giant space slug and Han, Leia, Chewie and Threepio have been swallowed whole. This time, another rebirth occurs, but Han is able to pass unaided. He has left his cynicism behind and found his compassionate, protective side. Han is now able to find love (Henderson, 1997, pp. 64-65).

THE MYSTICAL MARRIAGE

The real romance between Han and Leia is just beginning to blossom due to their rebirth and the opening of their hearts to love. The romantic tales of the troubadours of the Middle Ages transformed romantic love to the level of a sacrament. The woman is the complement to the male hero and represents all that can be known. The hero's task, then, is to know her. First, however, he must earn her and Han has fought his way to Leia, rescued her and works for her 'surrogate father' the Rebel Alliance. Han now shows Leia his 'gentle heart, allowing their love to bloom' (Henderson, 1997, p. 65).

THE SACRED GROVE

Luke also enters an enclosure that will transform him - a sacred grove in the form of the swampy landscape of Dagobah, Yoda's home planet. The mythic 'pre-hero' archetype is hunter, warrior and ascetic all in one who has an affinity and mastery of living creatures and natural environments. Yoda is such a Master and begins to instruct Luke in the ways of the Force. But forests also represent the unconscious mind and we find Luke, having left his friends and familiar world entering a place to continue his vision quest where he can explore his dark secrets and emotions. Yoda makes clear that the Force is not to be used for aggression but only 'knowledge and defence' and as such Luke must concentrate to find that peaceful centre within himself from where he can act.
with wisdom and balance.\textsuperscript{94} It has some elements that are reminiscent of Zen Buddhism - enlightenment by means of intuition and insight. Luke has to overcome his reckless, excitement focused self and enters a tree 'strong with the dark side of the Force' to find that peace. In taking his weapons he demonstrates his impatience, lack of faith and indoctrination in the world's ways of violence and hostility. But his descent shows that, spiritually, Darth Vader is not an external evil presence but an aspect of Luke's very own nature. The dark side of the force dwells within as well as without, but Luke still needs to grasp this (Henderson, 1997, pp. 68-73).

**SACRIFICE AND BETRAYAL**

Luke has a vision of the future where he sees his friends in pain and he leaves Dagobah to try and help them before his training is complete. Bespin, the Cloud City, symbolises the dangers of illusion: it looks serene and peaceful but hides a dark underside of sacrifice and betrayal which accompanies the opening of the mind and heart to spiritual knowledge. In *Star Wars*, the smooth Lando Calrissian is the betrayer. A one time friend of Han, Lando delivers him, Leia and Chewbacca into the hands of Vader. Han's final torture is to be frozen in carbonite, a symbol of hell that will turn him to stone. Han's friends will have to descend into the world of Jabba the Hutt's lair to rescue him in *Return of the Jedi*. Leia will be his rescuer and Han's last words before he is frozen are an acknowledgement of her love. Han's hibernation is symbolic of the hero's sleeping until awakening at the predestined hour. Bounty hunter Boba Fett takes Han away. Meanwhile, Luke is no longer running from Vader, but heading toward him in the corridors and bowels of Bespin. But in confronting Vader a startling revelation is made. The monster at the heart of the maze is no stranger, but a part of Luke himself: Vader is Anakin Skywalker, his father, 'and akin' to him. Luke has to come to terms with this unsuspected self; his resistances must be broken. His pride and virtue are put aside to embrace the intolerable and discovers, as Joseph Campbell (in Henderson, 1997, p. 82) understands it, 'that he and his opposite are not of differing species, but one flesh.' Mastery of the world is at stake in the battle between Luke and Vader. Vader shows that he would devour his own children to ensure the Empire's

\textsuperscript{94} Luke's knowledge is of the Force, the universe and the creatures that populate it. Any defence he makes must be against evil and specifically the Dark Side of the Force. He is searching for true peace, not just peace in the midst of chaos.
supremacy. Luke has arrogantly overestimated his abilities and cannot overcome Vader with his limited skills. Vader slices off his son’s hand and Luke's flesh becomes part of his sacrifice. Vader, however, fails to overcome Luke and turns to seduction and temptation to win him to the dark side. Vader appeals to Luke's self-preservation, flatters him, tempts with hero values of 'protecting' the galaxy and finally uses family. Luke resists and falls into the abyss, choosing certain death instead of the dark side. His fall shows that he is no longer innocent of the evils of the dark side of the Force. If he survives, his relinquishing of his childhood innocence ensures that he can return with the 'ultimate boon' to save the galaxy. Fate intervenes to make sure Luke fulfils his destiny and he is sucked into an exhaust pipe and snags on a weather vane, where Leia finds him with the help of the Force. Leia too has grown - her love for both Han and Luke has enabled her to touch the Force, before she or Luke knows that they are siblings and she also has inherited her father's abilities. As the Falcon flies away, Vader contacts Luke telepathically and Luke responds with 'father' acknowledging the dark side of himself. It concludes the second movie and begins the final part of the journey because it opens the doors for Vader's transformation and reconciliation with his son (Henderson, 1997, pp. 76-90).

THE HERO'S RETURN
The original trilogy started with a clear hero goal - rescue the princess and 'slay the dragon'. The midpoint saw the quest turn inward to explore the growth of each hero. In Return of the Jedi the focus is once again outward to bring the themes to a final conclusion. Luke as grown and has now mastered much of what he has learnt under Yoda and Obi-Wan Kenobi, having tapped into the Force and matured as an adult. He is ready for a hero's return, translating his knowledge into action. It will not be easy though, as other characters fail to acknowledge his change, especially as his training is incomplete at this point. His first test is in the palace of Jabba the Hutt where he participates in the rescue of Han Solo (Henderson, 1997, p. 91).

RESURRECTION
In Return of the Jedi, each of the heroes faces great trials yet discovers inner resources to help them triumph. Leia, for example, disguises herself as a
bounty hunter to gain access to Jabba’s hideout and ends up freeing Han from 
the carbonite tomb. In a sense, he rises from the dead. They are captured 
quickly - Han is sent to the palace prison and Leia is chained to Jabba’s dais as 
a slave. Even Luke, when he arrives, is captured and dropped into a dungeon 
where a hungry rancor awaits (Henderson, 1997, p. 93).

MONSTER COMBAT
Myth often contains hand-to-hand combat which is one way that a hero can 
prove themselves. Luke is able to defeat the rancor without his lightsaber, using 
only what he finds around him. This is short lived as Jabba decides to kill Han, 
the plank, he reveals that he is indeed a new person. He jumps off and flips 
back onto the skiff, catching his lightsaber which Artoo has thrown him. His 
action shows that he has achieved excellence. Leia meanwhile strangles Jabba 
with the chain that is holding her captive. These actions demonstrate that the 
heroes have indeed triumphed physically and spiritually over the road of trails 
and are ready for a final showdown (Henderson, 1997, pp. 97-101).

THE RESURGENCE OF EVIL
The construction of a new Death Star is the resurgence of evil in the Star Wars 
mythology. While Luke goes to complete his training on Dagobah, the Emperor 
arrives on the Death Star. He is the essence of the monster, all ego and no 
spirit, trapped in hate and aggression. He threatens to transform the whole 
world around him into a wasteland represented by the giant machine the Empire 
is constructing. Only the hero whose heart and spirit are integrated can 
penetrate this monstrosity. Meanwhile Ben appears to Luke and reveals that he 
has a twin sister - Leia. She represents Luke’s anima - the feminine side of his 
nature. Luke’s integration of opposites within him, light and dark, masculine and 
feminine, is almost complete (Henderson, 1997, pp. 101-102).

THE ENCHANTED FOREST AND HELPFUL ANIMALS
Lando Calrissian has redeemed himself by helping to free Han Solo. The Rebel 
Alliance plan to destroy the Death Star sees Lando leading a squadron of 
fighters, while Han leads a team to the moon of Endor to take out the shield 
generator protecting the space station. It is a place of mystery and is inhabited

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by small, furry creatures, called Ewoks, who assist the team. They are connected to nature intimately, a stark contrast to the mechanical, hard world of the Empire, and interestingly, they are the only creatures in the original trilogy that are shown as having children. In their 'primitiveness' they take See-Threepio as a god and prepare a feast with Han and Luke as the menu. Luke uses his new Jedi powers to free them and See-Threepio instead becomes the storyteller informing the Ewoks of their plight and mission. This 'mythic' story inspires the Ewoks and a battle ensues between them and the stormtroopers. The heroes are made as the crisis unfolds - Chewie saves the day at the shield generator, Lando blows up the Death Star, Han, Luke and Leia are inspiring leaders and Vader will ultimately destroy the Empire, by killing the Emperor, fulfilling his destiny and the prophecy surrounding him (Henderson, 1997, pp. 102-106).

DESCENT INTO THE UNDERWORLD

Luke realises that he must take a different path to his friends in order to determine whether his father can be turned back from the Dark Side. His journey into the second Death Star is another descent into the underworld. The physical battle on Endor mirrors Luke's spiritual battle with himself and the Emperor who is the monster at the centre of the labyrinth. Darth Vader is his guardian, half man, half machine. He, in part, represents what would happen if the Emperor's technological sterility is allowed to continue. The Emperor tempts and taunts Luke, evoking feelings of anger, hate and aggression within the Jedi. Luke, with his friends in danger and an Emperor assuring him of his failure, endures the ultimate crisis - facing his father and the darkness within himself (Henderson, 1997, pp. 106-107).

ATONEMENT WITH THE FATHER

Luke attacks his father in anger and beats him, severing Vader's sword hand. As the Emperor prompts Luke to finish his father, Luke realises that he is on the way to the Dark Side and becoming another Vader. He masters his feelings, casts aside his weapon and refuses to kill his father. The Emperor responds in rage and begins to kill him with electrical energy. This is the crisis moment for Darth Vader - will he succumb to the Dark Side and allow his son to die or will he redeem himself and enable atonement with Luke? Vader must act on the
knowledge that Luke is his child for atonement to occur. Vader shows that he has 'life-potentialities', using Campbell's term, and demonstrates that he can be hero and saviour. Luke too has to find life-potentiality within himself, reclaiming the child within who cannot do everything on their own. This renews his own life and that of all civilisation by calling on the heart rather than his warrior skills. He cries out to his father to help him and Vader responds by seizing the Emperor and casting him into the Death Star's core shaft (Henderson, 1997, pp. 107-111).

'Regeneration has occurred within the very walls of the tyrant's kingdom. Vader has detached himself from his evil master and has been transformed through his son. Vader has become a tragic persona, and his own suffering is now the supreme monstrosity with which he must contend. Vader's hero quest has only been hinted at because, like many heroes' journeys, the heroic feats and monster tests he must overcome take place within. Vader is, in a sense, a fallen angel who reveals his true essence at last' (Henderson, 1997, p. 111).

UNMASKING

One of the important themes in Return of the Jedi is the unveiling of the true being from under a disguise. Leia for example starts as a tough, resourceful senator, but reveals herself as a loving, sensual woman as well. Vader also must remove his mask, the most visible aspect of his evil, both literally and figuratively. Luke tries to carry Vader to safety as the Death Star collapses around them. In the docking bay, Vader requests that Luke remove his mask so that he can look on his son with his own eyes, even though the action means certain death. Luke does so and the scarred face of Vader reveals that you cannot develop your humanity by serving a system (Henderson, 1997, pp. 111-112).

FINAL VICTORY

Luke gives his father a hero's send-off in the midst of the Rebel celebrations - a funeral pyre representing purification. As Luke rejoins his friends, Anakin is reunited with Yoda and Obi-Wan Kenobi to form a triad of Jedi Knights. Luke's atonement is complete as the compassion and wisdom of the warrior-hero, sage and saint are now complete in him. Luke, once an untested youth, has
now completed the final hero task - he has brought back the boon that will allow society to live and grow (Henderson, 1997, p. 113).

THE PREQUEL TRILOGY

Mary Henderson’s book Star Wars: The Magic of Myth (1997) is a thorough exploration of how the original trilogy follows Joseph Campbell’s monomyth pattern with Luke Skywalker as the hero. However, now that the prequel trilogy has been added to the Star Wars saga, it is important to see how the six movies follow the journey of Luke’s father, Anakin Skywalker, who became the feared Darth Vader of the original three movies. When asked about the Star Wars saga being a story of transformation, Lucas admitted

‘It will be about how young Anakin Skywalker became evil and then was redeemed by his son. But it's also about the transformation of how his son came to find the call and then ultimately realize what it was. Because Luke works intuitively through most of the original trilogy until he gets to the very end. And it's only in the last act--when he throws his sword down and says, "I'm not going to fight this" - that he makes a more conscious, rational decision. And he does it at the risk of his life because the Emperor is going to kill him. It's only that way that he is able to redeem his father. It's not as apparent in the earlier movies, but when you see the next trilogy, then you see the issue is, How do we get Darth Vader back? How do we get him back to that little boy that he was in the first movie, that good person who loved and was generous and kind? Who had a good heart’ (Moyers, 1999, p. 74).

While Anakin’s story does follow the monomyth pattern in The Phantom Menace (Lucas, 2001), Attack of the Clones (Lucas, 2002) and Revenge of the Sith (Lucas, 2005), it is his son Luke’s hero journey that allows for Anakin’s redemption in the original trilogy.

Once again there are multiple heroes in this story – Bail Organa, Qui-Gon Jinn, various Jedi Knights, even Jar-Jar Binks all demonstrate aspects of the hero journey. This analysis, as observed by the author, will focus on the journeys of Anakin Skywalker, Padmé Amidala and Obi-Wan Kenobi.

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95 There is evidence that George Lucas originally planned a nine movie saga, starting with the middle trilogy. While Lucas now seems content to conclude the franchise with six movies, the prequel trilogy does seem to have been in his mind from a very early stage, hence the reason why the movies started with Episode IV (“George Lucas Talks On ‘Star Wars’ Sequels 7, 8 & 9,” 2004).
THE ORDINARY WORLD

For young Anakin Skywalker, Tatooine is his home world; he is a slave and the child of a slave mother. He has no knowledge of his father. His mother Shmi Skywalker actually claims that there was no father, hinting at his special birth. There is speculation that the Force and mitichlorians actually ‘conceived’ Anakin. Lucas explains the unusual birth of Anakin in an interview with Vanity Fair:

'It was a virgin birth in an ecosystem of symbiotic relationships. It means that between the Force, which is sort of a life force, and reality, the connectors between these two things are what we call mitichlorians. They're kind of based on mitochondria, which are a completely different species, a different animal, that live inside every single cell and allow it to live, allow it to reproduce, allow life to exist. They also, in their own way, communicate with the Force itself. The more you have, the more your cells are able to speak intuitively to the Force itself and use the powers of the Force. Ultimately, I would say the Force itself created Anakin. I don't want to get into specific terms of labelling things to make it one religion or another, but, basically, that's one of the foundations of the hero's journey' (Windolf, 2005).

Although he is only a child of around ten or so years, Anakin is an accomplished pilot of land based vehicles and builds pod racers, droids and various other mechanical things.

Naboo is Padmé Amidala’s world where she has been elected to be the Queen at fourteen years of age. She disguises herself as a handmaiden for protection and is thus able to safely enter different arenas.

CALL TO WAR

Queen Amidala is called into a conflict by the Trade Federation Viceroy, who is blockading Naboo as part of a plan by Darth Sidious. Amidala does not want to follow a course of action that will lead her people to war. She wants to stay with her people rather than go to Coruscant to plead her planet’s case with the Senate. While her refusal is admirable, it is only by leaving that she can truly be a saviour to her people.
RESCUING THE QUEEN
Obi-Wan Kenobi and Qui-Gon Jinn’s flight through Naboo’s core is a labyrinth journey before rescuing the Queen. They have to escape sea monsters and navigate through treacherous waters to reach their goal. Amidala meets Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan when they rescue her from the Trade Federation after she is taken prisoner. They become her mentors and guides for the journey ahead.

FLIGHT TO FIND A HERO
A damaged Naboo cruiser results in the escaping group having to go to Tatooine to repair it. This leads them to Anakin whose call to adventure is about to start. Anakin meets Qui-Gon when he comes to buy parts for the damaged Naboo cruiser. Qui-Gon Jinn becomes Anakin’s mentor and guide throughout most of the first movie, despite opposition.

A THRESHOLD TEST
The pod-race on Tatooine provides Anakin with a way to help Amidala and Qui-Gon to get the parts they need for the damaged ship and to be freed from slavery. Qui-Gon begins to teach him the ways of the Force in preparation for the race. With his force sensitive skills, and Qui-Gon’s clever manipulation of the betting culture, Anakin wins the race and is freed from slavery. He is offered the opportunity to become a Jedi by Qui-Gon Jinn. Anakin, however, is afraid to leave his mother on Tatooine, even though she encourages him to leave and fulfill his destiny. In this sense, she is a threshold guardian as Sebulba and the other pilots were in the pod-race. She tells him to not look back when he says that he cannot do it. When he finally chooses the way of the Jedi, Darth Maul tries to prevent the Jedi’s and Anakin from leaving Tatooine, but Qui-Gon Jinn escapes, protecting the others. Anakin meets Obi-Wan when he is brought on board the Naboo cruiser on Tatooine. Obi-Wan will become his mentor and Jedi Master in the future.

TESTS FOR THE HERO
Anakin must be tested by the Jedi Council to determine his abilities and whether he is able to be trained. Yoda begins to teach him about the Dark Side of the Force when he acknowledges his fear of losing his mother but the Jedi Council refuse to give Qui-Gon permission to train Anakin as a Jedi Padawan. It seems
that there is going to be opposition to Anakin’s fulfilling his destiny. There is one scene where there is a glimpse of Anakin’s future internal, spiritual battle – does he go with Qui-Gon Jinn to the Jedi Council or follow Padmé’s request to come with her?

**A BATTLE FOR A PLANET**

Queen Amidala must return to Naboo, after unsuccessfully pleading her case in the Senate, and fight to release her planet and her people. She has shown her abilities and designed a comprehensive plan to defeat the Trade Federation. She is no longer an untried Queen but one that has faced the bureaucracy and is able to lead her warriors in a fight for freedom. The fight in Naboo’s buildings is another form of labyrinth. Amidala’s ultimate crisis is with the Federation Viceroy and she comes face to face with him in her own throne room. Her battle plan proves to be successful when she takes him prisoner and overturns the conditions of the treaty.

Meanwhile, during the Battle for Naboo, Anakin is in a ship with the auto-pilot engaged. He must override it in order to survive, but enters the battle. He shoots the main power reactor inside the Battle Droid Control Ship, thus disengaging all the battle droids and saving the Gungan and Naboo residents.

**LOSS OF THE MENTOR**

Qui-Gon Jinn is killed by Darth Maul and can no longer be Anakin or Obi-Wan’s Jedi Master or mentor. He asks Obi-Wan to train Anakin as he believes Anakin is the Chosen One, referring to a Jedi prophecy, who will bring balance to the Force. It is Obi-Wan, a Jedi Padawan at this stage, who defeats the ‘monster’ at the centre of the labyrinth, Darth Maul.

**BOONS TO BE GAINED**

Anakin and Amidala bring peace to the planet of Naboo. The Gungans and the Naboo gain a new relationship of harmony, partly through the assistance of the Trickster figure of Jar-Jar Binks. The love between Anakin and Padmé begins to take root and is innocent at this stage. Eventually, Obi-Wan is given permission to train Anakin after Qui-Gon is killed.
NEW BEGINNINGS
At the beginning of the second movie, *Attack of the Clones*, the heroes have all progressed in their journey. Anakin is now a Jedi Padawan. Padmé Amidala has served her two terms as Queen and is now a Naboo Senator. Obi-Wan, promoted to the level of a Jedi, is currently training his Padawan Anakin.

NEW THREATS
Amidala is targeted for attack due to her position on a Military Creation Act in the Senate. She narrowly escapes an assassination attempt which results in the intervention of the Emperor to try and protect her. At Anakin and Padmé’s first meeting in years, Anakin argues with Obi-Wan in order to establish his desire to protect her and find out who is trying to kill her. The flight through Coruscant’s city skyline is another labyrinth adventure that results in Anakin and Obi-Wan descending to its depths to find the assassin, Zam Wesell, who represents a type of threshold guardian. In the midst of their investigation, however, Obi-Wan ‘prophesies’ that Anakin will be the death of him. Anakin rejects this seeing Obi-Wan as a father figure.

Eventually, the Jedi Council gives the Jedi pair their missions. Obi-Wan is required to track down the Bounty Hunter who tried to kill Amidala. Anakin is called to protect Padmé on her return to Naboo until she is safe. It is his first solo assignment and the beginning of a new stage of his hero journey.

A NEW MENTOR
Anakin begins to meet with the Supreme Chancellor Palpatine. At this point, Palpatine’s real motivations and character are hidden. He is the shadow figure, but is disguised as a caring politician, concerned for Anakin’s welfare and the young Padawan’s progress. Little does Anakin know what is at the heart of Palpatine’s interest – he is a Sith Lord, bent on ruling the galaxy and bending all to his will. He is the archetypal shadow figure.

FINDING AN ENEMY
Obi-Wan needs to get through the sabotaged Jedi Archives in order to discover the location of Kamino – the cloner’s planet. It is Yoda and a youngling, a child Jedi trainee, who help Obi-Wan to find the planet. Once there, Obi-Wan
confronts and battles Jango Fett, the bounty hunter who is also the prototype for the clones of the Republic’s Army. He follows Jango and Boba Fett through an asteroid field – another labyrinth motif. Obi-Wan is captured in the depths of Geonosis’ droid foundries. Count Dooku, part of the Separatist movement and an ex-Jedi, reveals the existence of the Dark Lord of the Sith, Darth Sidious.

PROTECTING THE PRINCESS
We begin to see Anakin’s failures to progress in his hero journey. Anakin has to learn to submit to Amidala’s superior knowledge of her home planet in order to best protect her. This is a subtle lesson in Padmé’s anima needing to balance Anakin’s masculine side. While learning here, he fails to follow this through in the long run. Anakin begins to blame Obi-Wan for his lack of progress in the Jedi Order, failing to grasp that his mentor is trying to lead and teach him in order to help him grow. Anakin begins to show signs of wanting power and control by suggesting that a dictatorship style of leadership would be better than the Senate and would result in getting things done.

MOTHER LOVE
Anakin dreams of his mother suffering on Tatooine. As a result, he attempts to find and rescue her. He meets his stepfather Cliegg Lars, stepbrother Owen and his girlfriend Beru. Anakin finds his mother, tortured and barely alive. On seeing her son, Shmi declares her love and pride in her son and dies feeling complete. But this triggers Anakin’s hatred and he begins a path down the Dark Side. He ends up slaughtering her captors, a group of Tuscan Raiders, in passionate anger. Not even Qui-Gon Jinn’s voice from the otherworld can prevent Anakin’s slaughter. The event causes him to start looking for ways of preventing death and gaining more power.

FORBIDDEN LOVE
Anakin and Padmé begin to kindle their love, but secretly. Padmé at first refuses the relationship, recognising the limitations of Anakin’s commitment to the Jedi and her position as a Senator. Padmé declares her love for Anakin as they face death at the hands of Count Dooku, even though they both know that it would force them to live a lie and could even destroy them. They marry in secret on Naboo with only See-Threepio and Artoo-Detoo in attendance.
BATTLE FOR THE JEDI
Padmé and Anakin are captured on Geonosis when they try to rescue Obi-Wan, after a labyrinth experience in the droid foundry, and face an execution with Obi-Wan. Anakin, Padmé and Obi-Wan all face monsters in an execution ring. Using Jedi and other skills they manage to overcome the monsters and escape before they are surrounded by destroyer droids. Jedi’s and clones arrive to help them in a final battle. They are rescued by the Jedi, but many die in the process at the hands of the Separatist’s droid army. Only the intervention of Yoda and the clones prevents them all from being slaughtered.

FACING THE MONSTER
While chasing the instigator of the Jedi slaughter, Count Dooku, Padmé falls out of the troop carrier ship. Obi-Wan convinces Anakin to do his Jedi duty and leave Padmé in the sand in order to take Count Dooku. Anakin and Obi-Wan face Count Dooku alone. Anakin’s impatience to engage the Sith Lord results in him losing a hand in a lightsaber duel. Obi-Wan is also injured and it is Yoda who actually saves the two of them.

MISLEADING BOONS
In the aftermath of the Geonosis battle, Anakin returns Padmé to Naboo. It is here that Anakin refuses the disciplines of the Jedi order and marries Amidala. The only positive boon is that the Jedi now have some information about the possibility of a Sith Lord in control of the Senate.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH
The beginning of the third movie, Revenge of the Sith, once again sees the heroes in new positions some time after the closure of Attack of the Clones. This will be the spiritual turning point for all of them, the time when the decision will be made about their journey. Will they commit to growth and becoming fully human or will they be deceived by the evil forces surrounding them? Obi-Wan is a now a Jedi Master and Anakin has progressed to the status of Jedi Knight. Padmé continues her role as a Senator but the Republic is in the midst of the Clone Wars making her role quite different.
ANOTHER THRESHOLD TEST
Anakin and Obi-Wan are called to rescue the Chancellor who has been kidnapped by General Grievous. Obi-Wan and Anakin overcome enemy fighters, buzz droids, General Grievous and destroyers to rescue the Chancellor. Getting on board Grievous’ ship is another descent into the belly of the beast. However, not all is as it seems. Anakin killing Count Dooku is part of Chancellor Palpatine’s plan to turn Anakin to the Dark Side. Anakin seeks revenge for Dooku taking his arm. He has great fear and anger and slowly fails to control them. His pride and arrogance is part of his downfall. Although the Chancellor is rescued, Anakin has failed to show compassion and mercy for an unarmed opponent. This is not the Jedi way that he has been called to.

A DECEPTIVE MENTOR
Anakin begins to meet with the Chancellor as his representative on the Jedi Council, but the Council asks him to spy on him. This causes Anakin confusion as Palpatine uses this to further question the loyalties of the Jedi, especially when he is not granted the rank of Jedi Master. Anakin apologises to Obi-Wan for his lack of appreciation and arrogance. Obi-Wan encourages him that he is a great Jedi and will be a Master soon – he just needs patience. Obi-Wan leaves Anakin at this fragile stage of his growth and goes on a mission to find and defeat General Grievous. He kills him after an epic battle in Pau City.

ENCROACHING EVIL
The Republic slowly degenerates into a dictatorship, the Galactic Empire. Padmé realises that democracy has died, but Anakin doesn’t, believing that it is the best way to get things done and for the future peace of the galaxy.

FACING THE GREATEST FEAR
Anakin and Padmé keep their love, marriage and unborn child a secret and fail to seek the wisdom and help of Obi-Wan or another wise guide. Anakin’s greatest fear is losing Padmé in childbirth. Anakin acknowledges to Padmé that he is not the Jedi that he should be. He wants more but he knows he shouldn’t. Yoda teaches Anakin that he must let go of all the things he does not want to lose. Attachment can lead to jealousy and to the Dark Side. But Anakin fails to follow the Jedi Master’s advice. His desire to protect and keep Padmé overrides
his commitment to bettering himself as a Jedi. In choosing to try and gain knowledge to prevent Padmé from dying, Anakin ends up choosing the Dark Side and the Emperor’s deceptive offers of power and of leading the galaxy to peace. Anakin finds out that Palpatine is the Sith Lord and reports this to Mace Windu. Instead of obeying orders and remaining at the Council Chambers, he intervenes, wanting the secrets to save Padmé from death, resulting in him participating in killing Mace Windu. He has to choose between the Jedi way and the Dark Side and his tortured choice plummets the galaxy into oppression. He is thus renamed Darth Vader, becoming another Sith Lord and a pawn in the Emperor’s hands.

THE HERO BECOMES THE SHADOW
Darth Vader is required by the Emperor to destroy all the Jedi. This is Vader’s threshold test. The Emperor claims that this is the only way that he will be strong enough in the Dark Side to save Padmé’s life. Darth Vader enters the Jedi Temple and kills all the Jedi’s, including Padawans and younglings. Meanwhile, Palpatine’s Order 66 is carried out across the galaxy – the Jedi are killed by the Clone soldiers.

A new evil and a new enemy have emerged. Obi-Wan and Yoda return to the Jedi Temple to disarm a signal requesting the Jedi to return. Instead they change it to a warning, but they also discover that Anakin has turned and is now Darth Vader. Obi-Wan and Yoda face very difficult decisions. They must face the Sith Lord and his new apprentice. Obi-Wan faces Anakin on Mustafar. He appeals to his Jedi heritage but when that fails and he realises that Anakin has indeed succumbed to the Dark Side he battles with him, leaving him for dead when he loses his legs and an arm and is severely burnt. Yoda engages the Emperor in battle on Coruscant but fails to defeat him so chooses to go into exile after arranging for Anakin and Padmé’s children to be separated and kept safe. Anakin is saved from death by the Emperor and is ‘reborn’ as the black clad Darth Vader familiar from the original trilogy. Even when he finds out that Padmé has died, Vader continues his allegiance to the Emperor. He hasn’t saved her at all, but actually been the source of her death – she fails to live, because she has lost him to the Dark Side. He is no longer the man she loved, though she believes that there is still good in Anakin.
HOPE IN NEW HEROES
Padmé gives birth to the twins, Luke and Leia Skywalker, but has lost the will to live without Anakin. Before dying she tells Obi-Wan that she knows there is still good in him. The twins represent the hope for the future and the possible redemption of Anakin. Obi-Wan commits to taking Luke to Tatooine to be cared for by Owen and Beru Lars and protecting him until the time is right for the Jedi to resurface. Leia is taken to Alderaan and is cared for by Senator Bail Organa and his wife. Obi-Wan is taught by Yoda to commune with Qui-Gon Jinn who has returned from the nether regions of the Force. This communication will prove vital in the future.

This analysis clearly demonstrates Star Wars’ reliance on Joseph Campbell’s monomyth. It is one of Hollywood’s most obvious examples of the use of the Hero’s Journey in its films. It is not, however, the only example by any means. As the following analyses demonstrate, the monomyth is alive and well in Hollywood films.

FILM ANALYSIS

HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER’S STONE
Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone (Columbus, 2001) is the first instalment of eight movies chronicling the adventures of a young wizard. Originally penned by J.K. Rowling, this highly popular and successful seven book series has proven to translate very well to the big screen. It is a classic monomyth story where an orphan boy finds out that he has magical abilities and after a series of adventures at a wizarding school, demonstrates self sacrifice, learning a number of lessons about life and love along the way.

While the main arc of the Harry Potter series, where ultimately Harry dies, is resurrected and Voldemort destroyed, requires all eight movies, each one has its own ‘mini’ hero’s journey. This is a common feature of multi-movie franchises. To be successful, each one is perceived as needing its own hero’s
journey, but there must be a larger narrative to continue the story. In a sense, there is a monomyth\textsuperscript{96} within a monomyth.

It is a simple enough exercise to see that Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone and Star Wars: A New Hope follow a very similar pattern. Change the names, locations and Harry’s wand for Luke’s lightsaber and you effectively have the same storyline. Regular movie watchers can lament the fact that movies can seem predictable and familiar. They are right, in the fact that they are watching the same monomyth framework being repeated time and time again. Watch enough movies and one begins to anticipate the flow and ending of each one. There is little doubt that Harry would have to sacrifice himself at the conclusion of the final movie. The previous seven have set that up very clearly. Yet one is almost sure that he can’t stay dead – Harry will return to his own world, its saviour, just as Neo does at the end of the Matrix for example.

\textbf{STAR TREK}

The latest instalment of the hugely successful franchise, Star Trek (Abrams, 2009) is known in the film industry as a reboot. New actors play established characters and the plot is usually kept fairly close to the original. In Star Trek, however, the plot is entirely new, but believably intersects with the established Star Trek canon. The eventuating story allows for Gene Roddenberry’s creation to be modernised and, hopefully, attract a whole new generation of fans, affectionately known as Trekkers. This release sees the (now different) beginnings of James T. Kirk as a man without a father and his journey to Star Fleet Academy and eventually to commanding his own star ship. Revealing these early days of the well known heroes ensures that one sees a very clear monomyth pattern, especially for Kirk and Spock, a Vulcan.

The Star Trek franchise started out in the late 1960’s as a weekly television series and has become known as a ground-breaking science fiction show. It is recognised as containing morality tales. Each week the hero, James Kirk, would be faced with moral, ethical and practical problems that he and his crew needed

\textsuperscript{96} Often there is more than one monomyth storyline occurring in film franchises. In this case Harry Potter, Hermoine Granger and Ron Weasley all take hero journeys of their own. Harry’s is simply the focus and the most thorough.
to overcome. These problems, however, can be related to political and social concerns of the mid twentieth century. Racial issues, gender concerns, political ideologies and the very nature of humanity, to name a few, were all explored in a one hour episodic television show. Being sci-fi, however, meant that these issues were being raised, questioned and answered in a subtle way. Gene Roddenberry got away with much political comment that politicians, civil rights activists and other forms of media just couldn't. While this morality teaching has continued through the various television shows, they and the movies still follow the monomyth pattern. The most recent movie, however, is by far the clearest example of it. It moves through the monomyth pattern revealing the special birth of Kirk, a clear call to adventure, a threshold barrier in a bar (much like Luke Skywalker's in *A New Hope*), learning his trade at the Academy and then being flung into an ultimate adventure when the Federation comes under attack by a Romulan enemy from the future. Along the way, Kirk discovers that he is much like his father, who also saved hundreds of people in his very short time of being the captain of a Star Ship. Even though he experiences being sacrificed, he fights to return to the Enterprise and take command of the mission which ultimately ensures the victory.

The parallels between this eleventh *Star Trek* movie and the other movies analysed here are even more obvious than the previous ten instalments. Kirk could quite easily be seen as a hero in the vein of Peter in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.


*The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Adamson, 2005) is the first movie released based on the second book of C.S. Lewis’ much loved Narnia series. The movie stays quite faithful to the book it is based on and tells the story of four children who are taken from their family for safety in World War 2. In their new home they discover a magical land inside a wardrobe and their many adventures in Narnia show that they can be heroes. C.S. Lewis was himself an expert in Norse legends and medieval history, so was well versed in mythological tales. He uses a mythological language to tell his stories. The
original book was published in 1950, but completed by the end of March 1949, so it is possible that Lewis was aware of Campbell's monomyth. The movie, as well, seeks to give a profound sense of the mythic in its portrayal of Narnia and its ruler, Aslan.

While Peter, the eldest brother, is the main hero in this story, all four children participate in their own hero journeys. This is similar to the *Harry Potter* series or the *Star Wars* saga where several characters follow the monomyth pattern, but there is one central hero. Lucy, the youngest, embraces the adventure; Susan and Peter are sceptical of her claims of another world beyond the wardrobe, while Edmund is hostile even when he knows the truth. He is portrayed as a traitor and it is only through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Aslan, often understood as a Christ-figure, that Edmund is redeemed from the hands of the evil White Witch.

Being a classic fantasy myth means that it is easy to differentiate between the ordinary world of 1940’s war torn Britain and the world of adventure, a magical land called Narnia where there are animals who talk and help the children and which is guarded by the wardrobe, an archetypal threshold. *The Matrix* is another movie where the ordinary world and the magical are easily identified – one is real and the other is simply a computer generated virtual world. Archetypal figures are also easy to identify – the White Witch is clearly a shadow figure, Edmund is a shapeshifter, Aslan is a mentor, the wardrobe and its coats is a threshold guardian and the beavers are portrayed as tricksters. This type of fantasy tale can be contrasted with the likes of *Battlefield Earth* where all the action occurs in the same physical place, a particular planet, but is the world of the adventure is the space occupied by the enemy.

**BATTLEFIELD EARTH**

Almost universally panned, *Battlefield Earth* (Christian, 2000) is the only one of Scientology founder, L. Ron Hubbard’s, books to be made into a film. It has mostly been seen as a poorly acted, poorly scripted and poorly filmed movie by
critics and viewers alike. It follows a classic monomyth pattern of a man who finds his destiny as the saviour of his people and planet.

The importance of analysing this film is that its original author, L. Ron Hubbard, started a religion. Scientology and Jediism are both religions based on popular culture. While Hubbard may have deliberately set out to start a religion, while Lucas certainly didn’t, what is clear is that followers of both religions have taken the concepts presented in both frameworks and taken meaning and purpose from them. While the movie of *Battlefield Earth* is by no means the starting point of the Scientology religion, the writings of the L. Ron Hubbard have certainly contributed to it. While sceptics may be astounded at how people can believe in a religion founded on science fiction, Scientologists can be just as devout in their faith as a Christian, Muslim, Jew or any other follower of a religion.

The movie follows the adventures of Johnny Goodboy Tyler who decides that he is going to fight the invading aliens, Psychlos, and free his people and the (futuristic) planet earth. Through his ordeal and doubt, he is helped by fellow slaves and inadvertently by one particular alien, Terl. The magical amulet is portrayed in two ways, a breathing apparatus so he can survive in the alien controlled areas and, more importantly, a device that teaches Johnny all about his enemies and possible ways of defeating them. A predictable feature of this movie is that not only does Johnny win the boon of ultimate victory against the aliens, he also gets the girl in the end, much the same as in the cult film *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*.

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98 There is a rumour that Hubbard had made a bar-bet with fellow Science Fiction writer Robert A. Heinlein, that he could start a cult, but this has remained unproven. There does seem to be some evidence, however, that Hubbard did believe that starting a religion would make him money, including a number of eyewitness accounts of personal conversations and a letter, penned in April 1953, found in a raid on Scientology headquarters by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

99 Followers of Scientology include well known actors, such as Tom Cruise and John Travolta (who starred in the film and provided much of its financial capitol).

100 It is worth noting his second name. An heroic style name for the hero?
SCOTT PILGRIM VS. THE WORLD

*Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* (Wright, 2010) has an intriguing feature demonstrating its reliance upon the monomyth pattern. *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* follows the monomyth basically to the letter. Interestingly, in a deleted scene (Scene 95 and 96, *Dream Desert* and *Extra Life*) Scott actually recounts the monomyth stages that he has gone through to his flatmate Wallace after he has been resurrected from death and had a dream experience where he realises that he has learned something from his whole adventure. Scott recounts:

'Wallace, when my journey began, I was living in an ordinary world. Ramona skated through my dreams and it was like a call to adventure, a call I considered refusing. But my mentor, that's you, told me that if I want something bad enough, I have to fight for it. So I did. There were tests, allies, enemies. I approached a deep cave and went through a crazy ordeal, during which I totally seized the sword. Sadly, I died. Then I resurrected. Now I realise what I should have been fighting for all along...'

A tongue in cheek play on the fact that Hollywood movies follow the monomyth sequence?

This deleted monologue effectively describes the whole movie. The tests were computer game inspired battles with his enemies, Ramona’s seven evil exes. Scott really does get a sword when he declares his love for Ramona, a literal interpretation of the monomyth’s amulet. After his resurrection he realises that he should have been fighting for Ramona and for his own sense of self respect. This kind of movie, where the woman (or the man if the woman is the hero character) is the ultimate boon, is reflected in romance and romantic comedy movies ad nauseam.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS TRILOGY

*The Lord of the Rings* movie trilogy is based on the books of the same name, penned by J.R.R. Tolkien. A friend and colleague of C.S. Lewis, Tolkien was endeavouring to write a new mythology for Britain. He was well versed in mythology and folktales and was also an excellent linguist, having invented all the languages found in the books.
Tolkien finished the books in 1949\textsuperscript{101}, the same year that Campbell published \textit{The Hero with a Thousand Faces} (1949). This, of course, means that Tolkien could not have used Campbell’s monomyth as a blueprint as subsequent books and movies have done (Kesti, 2007, p. 8). As Kesti (2007, p. 35) has clearly shown there are actually a number of heroes in the \textit{Lord of the Rings} Saga, who all participate in their own hero’s journey. The analysis for this paper, however, focuses on the journey of the main character, Frodo Baggins, a hobbit of the Shire in Middle-Earth, as represented by Peter Jackson’s visionary film versions of \textit{The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring} (2001), \textit{The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers} (2002) and \textit{The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King} (2003). Much like the original \textit{Star Wars} movies, Frodo moves through the various stages of Campbell’s monomyth with the three movies. He would not have succeeded without the aid of the fellowship, but especially of Samwise Gamgee, Frodo’s friend and gardener. The remainder of the fellowship may go their own separate ways, but ultimately, their personal hero’s journey all assist Frodo in achieving his – the destruction of the One Ring and of Sauron, its creator. He thus becomes a hero that can stand in two worlds, that of the ordinary world of Middle-Earth and of the evil world of Mordor with all its far reaching consequences, much like Neo does at the end of \textit{The Matrix}.

\textbf{THE MATRIX}

The Wachowski brothers stunned audiences and critics alike with their first instalment of what was to become a trilogy, \textit{The Matrix} (1999). With never before seen special effects and a grand narrative, \textit{The Matrix} became a very successful box-office hit. It follows the adventures of Neo, a computer programmer who is aware of something called the Matrix, but he doesn’t know what it is. His journey of discovery follows the monomyth very closely and often quite literally. His sacrifice is his death and resurrection, transforming him into \textit{The One} – the individual who can control the Matrix and simultaneously exist in the real world of the humans. Like Johnny in \textit{Battlefield Earth} Neo also gets the girl in the end, Trinity. She has actually played the role of the herald, inviting Neo on his adventure to learn exactly what the Matrix actually is, and one of his mentors as she teaches him how to survive in the computer generated world.

\textsuperscript{101} They were not actually published, however, until 1954 and 1955 (Kesti, 2007, p. 8).
and the newly discovered real world. His powers are gained as he begins to understand how to manipulate the Matrix using his own mind. Most of this is learnt from his main mentor, Morpheus who also acts as the threshold guardian when he offers Neo two pills, only one of which will lead him to knowledge of the Matrix. Neo is one of film’s quintessential hero characters and one that follows Campbell’s monomyth faithfully.

CREATING A PUBLIC MYTH

As can be seen by this small sample, the monomyth is readily used in Hollywood movies. Its prevalence would suggest a dependency on this framework for American film making. No matter the genre, the monomyth is utilised in the vast majority of American films. By relying on the framework of the monomyth, directors, producers and scriptwriters are promoting a worldview – a meaning making exercise that promotes the concept that the individual is the main ‘character’ in one’s life and that one’s choices result in the accepting or refusal of a personal hero’s journey. In the following chapter a particular case study will be made exploring the effect of this attempt to create a public myth.
CASE STUDY RELEVENCE

One of purposes of this thesis is to explore whether the use of the monomyth in movies to create meaning has resulted in what could be called ‘religious’ groups. This chapter will be a case study of the Jedi religion or Jediism. Canada has recognised this religion\textsuperscript{102} while followers can be found in a number of countries around the world.

Of importance is the fact that this is a mostly online phenomenon. While there are some groups of Jedi who regularly meet together, the vast majority of interaction occurs on the internet on any one of several Jedi ‘church’ websites. There is also very little literature about the Jedi religion. At the time of writing, there are only three very small self-published works\textsuperscript{103} that explore the religion or philosophy of being a modern day Jedi Knight. Again, most of the teaching of the Jedi religion is found online. There are some Lucasfilm approved books on the Force\textsuperscript{104}, but these deal mostly with the ideas, characters and plotlines from the movies, books, television series, comics and computer games, rather than the translation of these ideas into a religious framework for contemporary individuals.

\textsuperscript{102} The Order of the Jedi, Canada, was officially recognized as a Non-Profit Corporation by the Federal Government of Canada on the 12\textsuperscript{th} January, 2009.

\textsuperscript{103} These are \textit{Jedi Manual Basic: Introduction to Jedi Knighthood} (Vossler, 2009), \textit{Jedi Manual Intermediate: The Path of Truth} (Vossler, 2011) and \textit{Da'at Jedi Order: Force Manual} (Bramarshi, 2008). Vossler is planning a third instalment of his Jedi series, possibly to be released in print in 2012.

\textsuperscript{104} The two most prominent books are \textit{Jedi vs. Sith: The Essential Guide to the Force} (Windham, 2007) and \textit{The Jedi Path: A Manual for Students of the Force} (Greve, 2010). The latter is styled as ‘real’ Jedi manual, having been passed from Master Jedi to Padawan, from Yoda to Ahsoka Tano, acquired by Darth Sidious, the Emperor, and then found in Jedi ruins by Luke Skywalker. It demonstrates the ongoing nature of the Star Wars Universe as it contains characters, situations and places not seen in the original movies.
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE JEDI RELIGION

The rise of the Jedi religion first came to popular and media attention during the 2001 census, where a mostly email campaign in several English speaking countries, encouraged residents to put down ‘Jedi’ as their religion. The claim was that if enough people did this, Jediism would be recognized as an official religion. This of course proved spurious, as most countries require more than pure numbers to make a religion official. The campaign proved quite successful in getting people to put Jedi as their religion – the 2001 Census revealed over half a million adults claim to be of the Jedi faith worldwide. 390,000 of these people were from Britain, making it the fourth largest religion in the United Kingdom (A. Barnes, 2010). 53,715 New Zealanders claimed Jedi as their religion in the 2001 census, making there more Jedi Knights than Buddhists, Baptists, Mormons, Hindus and Ratana Christians in the nation. Australia had 70,509 Jedi responses in their census but Star Wars Appreciation Society president Chris Brennan said that probably only 5000 would actually believe the Jedi religion. British census officials actually gave the Jedi Order its own official code as did Statistics New Zealand, but it would still fall outside the scope of recognised religions (Perrott, 2002). While numbers dropped in the 2006 census, it still remained a strong religious choice. 20241 individuals recorded themselves as Jedi in New Zealand’s 2006 census, making it their fifth largest religion behind Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam (Palmer, 2007).

The reality of these statistics, though, can be questioned. It is quite likely that the majority of people who recorded Jedi as their religion did so as a joke or just as a supposedly harmless jab at the governments requiring information on religious affiliation. The actual number of people who follow Jediism, carte blanche, is far more difficult to identify and track. This is due in part to the fact that it is not recognised as an official religion in any country bar Canada and because it is a mostly online community.\(^{105}\)

\(^{105}\) While some people may see Jediism as nothing more than a sad joke, others are more tolerant of it as a religion, even though they may not be followers themselves. While the author attended the 2011 Sydney Supanova Conference, authors Kevin J. Anderson and Rebecca
Jedi communities began appearing online in the early 2000’s, many as a response to the census phenomenon. During this time, Will Brooker published a book exploring *Star Wars* fandom called *Using the Force: Creativity, Community and Star Wars Fans* (2002). The book begun to uncover some of the developments of the *Star Wars* fan community including discussions over what constituted the ‘canon’ of *Star Wars*. Was it just the original three movies,\(^{106}\) or the prequels as well, or the authorised books and television cartoons and comics as well? Was fan fiction a relevant part of the canon? It also explored such questions as how a Jedi should live if they have the Force dwelling inside them. To a Christian reader, these questions seem awfully familiar – they are similar to the questions that revolved around the early church. What letters and books constituted the canon of scripture? How do I live as a Christian if I have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside me?

These questions among others seem to have given rise to some debate and division amongst the Jedi, as evidenced in online discussion boards and church splits\(^{107}\). Much of the division revolves around what Jedi believe. Without a codified belief structure or a single ‘holy book’ to refer to, Jedi\(^{108}\) are left to determine their own understanding of the Force and how to live as a Jedi.

**JEDI BELIEFS**

For the sake of this thesis, the beliefs of the three most prominent online Jedi churches and the three published works on the topic will be explored. Most of the online church beliefs come directly from their website to ensure that their

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\(^{106}\) Sometimes known as the ‘Holy Trilogy’.

\(^{107}\) For example, The Jedi Mythos Universe (http://www.jedimythos.com/) is a website for those Jedi who have been outcast from the Jedi Academy website. A Google search for Jedi church or Jedi community will result in a number of Jedi websites. Their forums are full of discussions concerning the nature of the Force, what it means to live as a Jedi, mentoring hints and even some disciplining.

\(^{108}\) There does not seem to be any consistency as to the plural of a Jedi. Some authors use Jedi, while others use Jedi’s. This author will use Jedi unless a website or a specific author uses the latter.
voice is heard and not misinterpreted by this author. The author will simply comment on the important issues of relevance for this thesis.

**JEDI CHURCH**

New Zealand based Jedi Church\(^{109}\) claims to be the original and largest Jedi Church with around 4000 members worldwide.

**Jedi Religious Faith**

\(^{110}\) The Jedi Church believes that there is one all powerful force that binds all things in the universe together. The Jedi religion is something innate inside everyone of us, the Jedi Church believes that our sense of morality is innate.’

**All Welcome**

‘The Jedi Church recognises that there is one all powerful force that binds all things in the universe together, and accepts all races and species from all over the universe as potential members of the religion.’

**Jedi Doctrine**

‘The Jedi church has no official doctrine or scripture. The Jedi church recognizes that all living things share a living force and that all people have an innate knowledge of what is right and wrong, and the Jedi Church celebrates this like no other religion.’

**The Basic Concepts**

‘There is one all powerful force that binds the entire universe together. It is "an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us, penetrates us, and binds the galaxy together"\(^{111}\).

This is a concept that most religions of the world concur with. Some refer to it as their deity, some refer to it as a life force, but the one thing nearly all religions agree with, is that there exists a single unifying force.

There are two sides to the force, the dark side and the light side. "Beware of the dark side... The dark side leads to fear. Fear leads to

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\(^{109}\) Found at www.JediChurch.org ("Jedi Church.").

\(^{110}\) Quotes used directly from websites can be distinguished by the use of Candara font.

\(^{111}\) This was said by Obi Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars: A New Hope*. 
hate. Hate leads to suffering”\textsuperscript{112}. Good versus Evil is a common element through most religions. The issues of good versus evil, right versus wrong permeate through the doctrines of all religions. Most religions attempt to state what is right and wrong, to establish their moral code. Sometimes religions make codes that don't reach a great consensus. Outsiders, and sometime insiders, begin to judge their religious code by something more powerful, something more innate, an innate ability to know what is right and wrong. This is the Jedi's belief, that morality, good and evil, are all axioms of the force, and that we must listen to the force so that we will know the right thing to do.

Can good exist without evil? The Jedi believe that good and evil are only axioms of the all powerful and unifying force. The force contains all that is good and all that is bad. We all are free and sentient beings who have the capability to do good or evil. It is our choice of direction that determines if we do good or evil. The existence of good and evil is necessary for freewill.’

The tone of these beliefs tends to be quite moralistic and humanistic. It is important to notice the requirement of faith and the essential understanding of human free will.

\textbf{History of Our Religion}

‘The force has always existed and always will.

Our faith in the force existed well before the fictional Star Wars movies brought popular recognition to the terminology and concepts that our members always innately held, but had difficulty describing in a shared forum.

When the movement to answer Jedi to the religion question in the NZ census began, it was incredible to see how quickly word spread, and just how many people embraced the new popular name of their shared innate religion. With such immediacy, people from all around the world followed suit, now having an obvious and common name for their deeply held religious and moral convictions. It is the speed and numbers of people involved in the census movement, that show just how powerful the concepts of the Jedi Faith are.

\textsuperscript{112} This was said by Yoda in \textit{Star Wars: The Phantom Menace}. 
The terminology used by the Jedi Church were introduced by the fictional Star Wars movies, and often references are made to the movies by our members, as a conceptual demonstration of how some might ascribe to the higher levels of a Jedi faith, in a far away land, a long time ago. The fact remains, that these concepts merely reflect a deep held innate morality, that we all have inside us, and now we have some common terminology and place to share our thoughts with each other. This morality existed prior to the movies. The movies do not in any way legitimise nor negate the legitimacy of the Jedi Church. They are merely a discussion point.

The Jedi Church neither confirm nor deny that George Lucas is a member of the Jedi Church. We do not mind if our members deny their involvement in our church should they seek to avoid persecution.

The Jedi Church movement is now progressing to gain legal status as a separate legal entity just like any other corner Church congregation. We have already received confirmation that Jedi themed marriages may be conducted by registered celebrants (registered celebrants with the Department of Internal Affairs in NZ), in a manor no different, nor less recognised in law than any Christian marriage or marriage of any other religion or denomination.’

It is important to note that the relevancy of Jediism is based on the understanding that the Force is real and it existed well before the Star Wars movies gave it a recognisable name and framework. It is also noteworthy that the morality that Jedism promotes is believed to have existed innately in all human beings, well before the movies.

Is the Jedi Religion Fiction?

‘Many religions claim to be the one and only true religion, thus necessitating that all other religions are fictitious. In addition, although many religions claim to speak the word of God, but the truth is they are only the written word of prophets or followers of the religion. There is no way to prove or deny that what was written was the word of God. Several other religions openly admit that their text is not the word of God, and that it is only a prescribed behaviour or a philosophy of life (e.g. Buddhism, Scientology). Most non-fiction is a discussion of science and life, of things that can be observed, quantified and readily challenged for its truth and authenticity. But not religion. Any religion put to scrutiny is merely words on paper, with no
ability to confirm its authenticity. The Jedi church makes no denial that its name and terminology originates from a fictitious past, but the concepts and ideals that are identified by Jedi followers are known for their innate truth. The sun existed before it was given a name, and it could be revered as a God, however, when the sun finally had a human name, it could be written about and communicated with others. The Jedi religion is just like the Sun, it existed before a popular movie gave it a name, and now that it has a name, people all over the world can share their experiences of the Jedi religion, here in the Jedi Church.

So in summary, no religion is truth. It is all just a matter of faith.'

Jediism is thus given credence by comparing it to all other religions and finding that they are essentially the same as they all have faith as their foundation.

**What Right Do We Have to Start a Jedi Church?**

‘What right does anyone have to start a church? If a group of like minded people wish to organise a place and a structure to practise and discuss their religious thoughts, then that is the right of anyone who lives in a free and fair society. As soon as enough people are involved, they experience administrative issues that create costs too much for any single member to bear on their own. At that stage it is necessary that the organisation may create its own legitimate status to operate bank accounts and manage its own set of financial accounts, which are not to the betterment of any individual, and are long lasting should any founding members pass on.

Lets (sic) consider the Church of Scientology. About 60 years ago, a fiction writer named L. Ron Hubbard wrote a body of beliefs and related practices. Hubbard chose only later to characterize his writings as an "applied religious philosophy" and since it has gained legal recognition as an official religion in many western countries. Unlike the Church of Scientology, we will not harass members of the public, nor ex members of our Church. We welcome all those who wish to join, and we farewell all those who wish to leave. We only request that the Jedi Church is given every legal right and recognition that is given to other legal and recognised churches in our society, and that our members be free to practise their religion free from persecution.’

It is interesting that the Jedi Church should compare their right to exist with that of the Church of Scientology, given that many people observing their history
would say that they are simply based on fictional works and not on any true spiritual or religious framework.

**THE ORDER OF THE JEDI**

The second online church is The Order of the Jedi. This church seems to have a more comprehensive and ordered belief structure and have a training (discipleship?) programme for their members.

“The Order of the Jedi, while seated in Canada, is a worldwide Order. It is meant to consolidate the communications between all other organizations promoting Jediism. We put efforts in making resources available to all who take Jediism as their faith, regardless of their denomination, geographical location, or organization. We make available our Force training program to all members of all Jediism organizations deemed serious and respectful.’

**What is Jediism?**

‘Jediism is not fiction. Our ways are based on ancient wisdom as well as modern philosophies. Our ways are modern adaptations of Taoism and Buddhism. We encourage activities that cultivate physical and mental health, such as martial arts and meditation. "Jediism" is a term inspired by films created by Mr. George Lucas.’

The Order of the Jedi also promotes the idea that Jediism has a history and foundation that precedes George Lucas’ Star Wars movies. A history is meant to give a religion or philosophy more credence.

**Philosophy, Order or Religion**

‘Jediism is a philosophy above all. Then, we use the Order to get together, to stay in touch, to share our united view of life and the Force. It is not required to be a warrior to be a member of the Order of the Jedi, nor to be religiously implicated.

We are non-exclusive. This means that you may keep participating in the religion of your choice, and study the principles of the Force, with no obligations. Our members are free thinkers, with free minds.

By joining the Order of the Jedi, you remain free to declare Jediism as your official religion, or not. We will provide access to a Force training

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113 This site can be found at www.orderofthejedi.org ("Order of the Jedi,").
program, the religion of Jediism, and other Jediism resources, that you can use at your convenience, in complete freedom.’

The notion that Jedi are thinkers and are not under obligation to declare themselves as Jedi could be quite appealing, as is the concept of complete freedom.

Real

‘We are serious in our faith in the Force, and in all our undertakings. While some believe Jediism to be a role-playing attempt to simulate a religious fantasy with no other aims than entertainment, the Church of Jediism is real, and not based on science-fiction, nor gaming.’

Terminology

‘Various terms throughout our website and documentation have been borrowed from different philosophies, some as old as 3000 years, other quite recent. Some of these terms were used in the movie series Star Wars. We wish to respect the legal rights of its owners, and we will be sober in the use of terms used in these movies.

We encourage our members to purchase Star Wars products to inspire themselves in their own inner quest. Watch it, play it, own it. Yet, our order is down-to-earth, realist, and our philosophy is inspired by ancient philosophies that past the test of time, such as Daoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Kabbalah, and others.

Jediism is a philosophy and religion based on the personal cultivation of our relationship with The Force. The term “Force” was used up to 3000 years ago by the Daoist immortals, and was made first popular in a Chinese text written in the 6th century BC. The text is entitled “Tao te King”, and can be translated in various manners, such as “The way of the Force”.

The term “Force” was used in Hinduism as a quality and power of the divinity Indra, lord of minor gods, various aspects of the unique unnamed God. The Force was call in Sanskrit “Vajra”, and described in the same was that we describe the Force in Jediism. The Force was also called “Ka”, as a property of Vishnu, the One God united with the creator Bramha (sic) and the transformer Shiva.
The ways of Jediism are mostly inspired by Buddhism and Taoism. Although modern movies are useful for inspiration, we do not base our ways on science fiction, but on the true inner culture of the Force.

The term “Jediism” is obviously inspired by the word “Jedi” made popular by the science-fiction movies. In the members section, in our private forum, and behind closed doors, we have the right to use any term we wish. However, on our public façade, we will respect the law and seldom use terms that are subject to legal debate, out of respect for Lucasfilm upon their request.

The use of borrowed terms is interesting here. It could be argued that this practice is simply another expression of post-modern spirituality, where an individual can choose whatever form of religion they so desire, borrowing concepts from any number of religious or spiritual frameworks.

The Code of the Jedi

‘The keys of the Code of the Jedi are an important part of our philosophy. Whoever wants to accomplish themselves in Jediism should thrive to apply its keys in daily life.

We call them keys, not rules. The keys are meant to inspire and guide. We do not believe in someone having power over someone else, thus, not even our institution can have power over its members, nor a code have power over your mind. Respect all life; This is the way of the Force.

Have faith in the Force, and it will be with you.’

Of note here is the general practice of calling Jedi guidelines keys, goals and other such general terms rather than rules. This suggests a level of flexibility and interpretation is possible.

Thirteen Keys of the Code of the Jedi

‘1 – Cultivate the Force
Everyday, take a moment to absorb yourself in the Force.
2 – Take shelter in the Force
Whenever you feel trialled, take refuge in the Force. Seek out reasonable solutions, handle your responsibilities, and have faith in the Force.”
3 – Expand within the Force
See beyond your senses, perceive beyond the physical realm. Pay attention to what flows within the Force. The Force is everywhere, in everything.

4 – Give room to the Force
Reserve a small space, somewhere discreet, where you can let the Force inspire you. Be it an altar, a wall of symbolic traits, or a specific sitting area, find a place for your human senses to contemplate representations of the Force.

5 – Act with the Force
Whatever you do, do it with the Force. Keep the Force in your mind, in your heart, and in your body. Do not allow yourself to think that you are acting alone.

6 – Have faith in the Force
Let the Force guide your actions. Let your will become the will of the Force. Let the will of the Force become your will. Trust your intuition, and have faith in the Force.

7 – Hold high moral principles
Seek integrity in your own behavior. Be virtuous. Have humility, yet strength. Have a sense of justice, yet with compassion. Do not request virtue from others, only from yourself. Those are the principles of a Master of the Force.

8 – Emancipate yourself in the Force
Practice an activity that implicates the Force (martial arts, qi-gong, creative arts…)

9 – Accept the mystery of the Force
The Force works in a wonderful yet mysterious manner. Accept your actual state of being, and yet keep working at bettering yourself. Have faith in the Force.

10 – Study the Force
Find ways to feel the Force, do not limit yourself to understand it. Study the Force through experience as much as through intellectual comprehension.

11 – Promote the Force
Not your organization, not your beliefs, not even Jediism, but promote the Force itself, silently, through your actions and your daily life. Talk about Jediism only when appropriate, and only to those who wish to hear about it.

12 – Incarnate the Force
Be mindful of every moment, here and now. Focus on the present more than on the past or the future. Be prudent enough to plan ahead, yet detached enough not to expect your plan to work out. Have faith in the Force.
13 – Respect, Protect and Preserve all life.
The 13th key is the one of hundreds more.’

Many of these keys can be found in similar forms in other religions.

The Force

‘The Force is everywhere, the Force is everything. It flows through everything in the universe. It unites and binds us all. The Force works in mysterious ways. Have faith in the Force.’

The Order

‘The Order of the Jedi is a gathering ground for those who cherish their faith in the Force. The Order has no power over its members, and is non-exclusive. Free your mind.’

Light vs. Dark Side

‘Jediism is not a science-fiction theme. Although there are apparently Light and Dark ways to use the Force, we do not promote the concept of Light and Dark side of the Force. The Force is holy in nature. It is its usage that can make it to lose its holy appearance, but the Force nonetheless remains holy in nature...

Once this concept is understood, we can state that Jediism promotes the use, and practice, of only the Light side of the Force.’

Prayer and Meditation

‘We pray the Force, and we meditate on the Force.

The Force is not something that will grant us our wishes. There is no savior in Jediism. We pray as a means to commune with the Force. We meditate to exist within the Force.’

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Jedi?

‘A Jedi is someone who believes in an energy that surrounds, binds, penetrates, and encompasses all living things. A Jedi believes in the greater good, and always tries to follow the light or positive energy. Jedi do not discriminate, all are welcome.’
What is Jediism?

‘Jediism is a term inspired by films created by Mr. George Lucas. However, Jediism is not fiction. Our ways are based on ancient wisdom as well as modern philosophies. Our ways are modern adaptations of Taoism and Buddhism. We encourage activities that cultivate physical and mental health, such as martial arts and meditation. It is not required to be a warrior to be a member of the Order of the Jedi.’

Is this a religion or an ideological movement?

‘Jediism is a philosophy above all, and we use this Order to get together, to stay in touch, to share our united view of life and the Force. There are various religious institutions, for those who wish to go further in the religious, clerical path. The Order of the Jedi is opened to the clerical path.’

What kind of concepts do you teach?

‘The list could go on and on, as we are constantly adding teachings. A few of our current teachings include Meditation, Self Awareness, Sensory Enhancement, and Visualization.’

What is the difference between Jediism and other mainstream religions?

‘Most of today’s mainstream religions focus only on their religion. Jedi believe in Experiential Wisdom (the wisdom of knowledge through experience), Jedi are fully aware that the stories written are fiction, and understand the lessons behind those stories are very real. Jedi also believe that all religions have truth, and are not bound to our Doctrine only. Jedi are encouraged to learn as much as they can about others in order to increase their knowledge.’

When joining the Jedi to I have to give up any other religion I am attached to?

‘Absolutely not. You may remain a member of your preferred religion, and study the tenets of Jediism on the philosophical level. We do not believe in exclusivity. Each is the rightful owner of their mind, thoughts and feelings.’

What’s the difference between the Star Wars Jedi and the real-life Jedi?

‘A Star Wars Jedi lives on many different planets, travels in advanced spacecrafts, and yields a lightsaber. A real life Jedi lives on earth,
travels in many different ways, and is taught self defence with modern day weapons such as kendo sword, a bo staff, a samurai sword, a katana and others. Both train to seek improvement of themselves and those they surround.’

Can anyone become Jedi?
‘Anyone can become a guest, to browse the members section, or become an official lay member, with no condition to meet. To advance in the clergy, requirements are mostly philosophical, and are developed in depth in the members section.’

How much does it cost to be a member?
‘It costs nothing to join. We have a donations section for those who wish to donate to our cause, but nothing is mandatory. One's own evolution and spiritual path must not be limited by their financial situation. Those who make offerings are blessed by the Force for they cover the fees for others to study for free.’

How do you meet if you do not have a church?
‘We are in an era of science and technology. We use various web tools to meet online, such as email, skype, and a video conference system. Members receive email invitations to public web events.’

What are the advantages of membership?
‘For each individual the advantages will differ. As with any religion there will be members whose dedication will run deeper than others. You will be given the opportunity to expand your knowledge, and understand yourself better.’

These questions and answers serve to give more insight into the beliefs and practices of the Jedi. It demonstrates at least some of the things that interested parties want to know about this religion/philosophy.

CHURCH OF JEDIISM
The third online Jedi community is the British based Church of Jediism\textsuperscript{114} which was founded in 2008 by Daniel Jones. There are eight chapters worldwide including one in New South Wales at the time of writing.

\textsuperscript{114} This site can be found at www.churchofjediism.org.uk (A. Barnes, 2010).
About the Church of Jediism

‘The Church's beginnings were influenced by the results of the 2001 Census. An email petition was sent round in 2001 asking people to put 'Jedi' as their religion on the census. This petition saw some 390,000 people in Britain do just that. Yes, some may have done this as a joke, however the main outcome was it brought people together. What some people don't realise is that Jediism existed many years before 'Star Wars' was written.

For hundreds if not thousands of years, people across the world had a belief that did not quite fit in to any 'categorized' religion such as Christianity, Buddhism or Islam. When 'Star Wars' was released in May 1977, these people noticed the ideals of the fictional Jedi were very close to their own beliefs. With help from the 2001 Census, people from all over the world gathered and founded many communities, most of which were online. They discussed their beliefs and came up with a compromise, which is today recognized as Jediism.

One of these communities, which is said to have the largest media exposure, is the Church of Jediism. Initially with only a few followers, the Church of Jediism has grown over the last two years to, now, having more than 16,000 members. We are constantly expanding our presence, and invite everyone from all walks of life, backgrounds and creeds to join us and learn about the Force, and use it for the greater good.’

The Church of Jediism Doctrine

‘In Jediism, we believe in the Force. The Force is a unifying energy which exists around us, in us, and is always present. It is the catalyst for life - it is the power that keeps the universe together. The Force is not something Jedi worship, rather it is something we concentrate on, and can relate to. The Force exists in many forms, but it is not something which can be seen. It flows through everything in existence as neutral energy, and according to the way we see, treat and act in life, can change it from neutral to positive or negative Force.

It is often said in life there are two sides to things - good and evil, black and white, yin and yang. In Jediism, we believe the Force also has two sides to it - the Light and Dark sides. In the Church of Jediism, we encourage members to take the path of the Light side through the practice of positive thought and meditation.'
We believe the mind is like a sponge. As sponges, they soak up information daily - we are constantly learning new things. But not all of this information is stored as positive thoughts. There are always negative thoughts and information which can contaminate the mind, whether that is for a short time or a lifetime. We believe the practice of self-enlightenment helps clear the mind, rinsing the sponge of all negative thoughts. This therefore makes more room for positive thoughts, and also changes one's thought process and ability to take in and learn more information.

Our aim is to bring all of the world's believers in the Force together for the power of good. We will form a community that does not have bias or any type of prejudice. A community that does not reject other religions, but in fact encourages their positive teachings. It is through positivity that we shall thrive, for that is the Light side of the Force.

We use the wisdom gathered from all sources in the Star Wars movies, mostly from the Jedi characters themselves, and especially Master Yoda. We take this information and apply it to modern day living in our society. Quotes like "Do or do not - there is no try" are so relevant and can help your self-esteem and decision making strategies.

We encourage people to watch the films, read the books and enjoy them for what they are - wonderfully entertaining stories. But most of all, take a look at the positive messages expressed within and apply them to your own lives. With guidance, we can all attain the title of Jedi and forever live on the Light side of the Force.'

Once again, it can be seen that the Church of Jediism also believes that the Force is real and that the life of a Jedi is one of good works, positivity and walking in the Light side. Meaning can be found in the stories and applied to an individual's life.

MATTHEW VOSSLER
Vossler's first two books in a proposed series explore the basic understandings of the Jedi way. While Vossler acknowledges Lucas’ influence, he still differentiates between fictional Jedi Knights and contemporary Jedi:

'George Lucas invented the term Jedi Knight. In the Star Wars movie series and the numerous books and websites they spawned, the Jedi Knight has become famous as guardians and protectors of the people. They have special powers to manipulate energy, or
“The Force”, and they brandish high-tech light sabers to accomplish their noble goals. Real world Jedi Knights accomplish their goals and purpose not with a sword or light saber, but with calm debate, the pen, or any number of peaceful techniques, including energy manipulation. But a Jedi can also take advantage of technology to create a better world’ (Vossler, 2009, p. 8).

Vossler (2009, pp. 10-11) recognises that the tales of knights and similar myths have woven themselves into the human psyche. He understands that a Jedi Knight is chivalrous, putting others before themselves.115 They are true to a noble or higher cause, while following the law of the land. A Jedi is humble and just, but knows that justice differs for individuals. Defending the innocent is one such just act, but force is only used as a last resort. Enemies are rendered harmless and rehabilitated, rather than destroyed.

'A Jedi Knight is courageous, dauntless, valiant, courtly, faithful, true and devoted. Someone who serves others, leads by good example and upholds high standards defined by true integrity. A good measure for a Jedi Knight is to interfere in other's affairs only when they are unjustly harming others or have intentions to do so. Ultimately, a Jedi is a hero.

A Jedi Knight is not cowardly, cruel, discourteous, disloyal, crude or weak. He or she is not one to seek power for the sake of power or vainglory' (Vossler, 2009, p. 12).

According to Vossler (2009, p. 16) Jedi can come from any profession or background. They just need to be committed to training, either formally or informally through life experience, improving themselves and passing on their wisdom to others. Interestingly, a Jedi Knight can be religious, spiritual or neither. Vossler (2011, pp. 3-5) notes that Jedi vary on whether they view their path as religious or not. Jedi Realists focus on using the Force through Eastern, alternative and New Age techniques. Others focus more on the teachings found in the Star Wars movies and literature, including training a Padawan and lightsaber skills. Some Jedi are solo, while others belong to a group. It is even possible for Jedi to backslide and lose motivation for growth and integrity.

115 It is interesting to note in his second book that Vossler (2011, p. 23) instructs Jedi: 'Don't put others needs before your own. You are of no help to anyone else if you haven't ensured that your own needs are being met'. This actually seems like the exact opposite of the example given by the Jedi Knights in the movies.
Formal training requires following one or more paths:

'Training to be a Jedi Knight includes the following paths. Each path leads to the final path, the goal of a Jedi Knight. A Jedi can choose to focus on one or more of these at any given time. A Jedi is a master if they achieve mastery in one or more of the 12 paths. The 12 Paths of a Jedi Knight

- Training and practice in meditation
- Training and practice in martial arts (specifically)
- Training and practice in the healing arts
- Training and practice in psychic awareness and social graces
- Training and practice in mediation, diplomacy, and peacemaking
- Training and practice in the Jedi philosophy and religion
- Training and practice in teaching, coaching, and mentoring
- Training and practice in practical skills for defending and protecting others
- Training and practice in gentle and objective deliberation, persuasion, and debate
- Training and practice in literary and theatrical arts
- Training and practice in working with energy and the supernatural
- Sustained pursuit of knowledge and wisdom and attaining a good measure thereof

The goal: To use one or more of these masteries to better serve others' (Vossler, 2009, pp. 18-19).

If being a Jedi is what an individual aspires to, Vossler (2009, p. 21) claims they must make a decision to pursue it. 'A true decision means to cut off all other possibilities. As Master Yoda says, "Try not. Do, or do not. There is no try."' The decision to be a Jedi Knight is to pursue a higher purpose, putting aside self and serving others. Jedi know when they are following the path, but also when they stray because there will be pain in not doing what is right.

Vossler (2009, p. 26) also has a concept of what the Force is:

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116 Vossler (2011, p. 15) insists on the importance and necessity of meditation: 'Jedi are committed to helping others and creating a better world. If you don't discipline yourself through meditation, you cannot honestly call yourself a Jedi'.

117 This looks very much like McFadyen's (2000) concept of idolatry where Jediism becomes controlling and dominant. See Chapter 8 for more on this theme.
‘To many modern day Jedi, The Force is an impersonal energy source. It is also the intelligence that sets all things in place and motion along with the natural and spiritual laws. It is in us, of us, and through us, as well as all things in the universe. It is energy, it is intelligence, it is love, and it is eternal’.

Vossler (2011, p. 28) notes that a Jedi’s understanding of the Force comes from within:

‘But the truth about the Force, just like finding the strength to change, ultimately can only come from within. By quieting the mind through meditation, we find the truth and meaning of life and the Force’.\(^{118}\)

He also realises the importance of acceptance in the life of a Jedi:

‘Accepting what we don’t have control over is the only way to be at peace with life. We live in a chaotic world, but the one thing we can always control is how we choose to relate to the chaos’ (Vossler, 2011, p. 60).

Vossler (2009, p. 27) actually uses the fictional Jedi Code\(^{119}\):

‘The Jedi Code was rewritten by Grand Master Luke Skywalker upon reestablishing the Jedi Order in the Galaxy:

- Jedi are the guardians of peace in the galaxy.
- Jedi use their powers to defend and to protect.
- Jedi respect all life, in any form.
- Jedi serve others rather than ruling over them, for the good of the galaxy.
- Jedi seek to improve themselves through knowledge and training’.

This is an interesting example of how the fictional Jedi influence the beliefs and behaviour of the contemporary Jedi.

For Vossler (2009, pp. 28-29), a Jedi is an ideal to strive for and Jedi’s are committed to improving themselves, improving the conditions of others and passing on one’s knowledge. Jedi’s are not particularly attached to outcomes or

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\(^{118}\) Without an external framework to measure one’s thinking, Jedi could be accused of simply making up their own religion, if all they are doing is getting their understanding of the Force from within.

\(^{119}\) This code can actually be found on the last page of a small children’s picture book called *I am a Jedi* by Mark Cerasini (1999, p. 24) framed under the page heading ‘The Jedi Ways’. After much searching and asking on *Star Wars* forums, no success has been made of finding whether this Jedi Code is in any ‘adult’ work.
attachments, trying to live a middle way, embracing both the physical and spiritual realms. There is an aspect of reality requiring a leap of faith that Jedi’s revere and know to be true. A Jedi is detached from this world because death is only the opportunity to join with the Living Force.

'A Jedi believes that she or he can ask or draw upon the Living Force at any time and what a person does with the power is a matter of choice. In this respect the Force can be understood as an impersonal energy source' (Vossler, 2009, p. 30).

Vossler (2009, p. 30) acknowledges what he believes to be the multifaceted understanding of the Force. He claims that the Force is also known as the Source, Source of Life, The Light, God, Goddess, Chi, Lord, Lady, Kundalini, Zeus, Odin, Isis, Allah, Aphrodite and others. He goes on to justify belief in the Force:

'All religions have at their core a body of literature; stories told either by oral tradition or through the written word or other media. Jediism is no different in this respect. Like the Sun, which existed before people gave it a name, modern Jedi see their beliefs grounded in truths that were here before the popular movies put a name to them. It is only natural that many spiritually-minded people would resonate with and follow the notions put forth in the works of George Lucas' (Vossler, 2009, p. 31).

While it may be theoretical and unproven, Vossler (2009, pp. 34-37) also claims that there is scientific evidence, especially in quantum physics and cosmology, that seems to be supporting the idea of The Force. Theories like string theory, super gravity theory and m theory suggest that all things are in fact energy, rather than purely matter. If this energy does indeed exist, Jedi have merely called it the Force.

Another area that Vossler (2009, p. 40) touches on is the practical application of the Force and his understanding of the Dark Side of the Force and the Sith:

'In Star Wars, those who embrace the dark side of The Force are called Sith. The main difference between Sith and Jedi are that Jedi strive to serve others, while Sith strive to be served by others, to rule with complete power. Jedi are devoted to democracy and human rights, while Sith wish to control completely without regard to the individual'.
The dark side can draw any person in, as all people have a dark side to their nature. The individual chooses whether they feed it and thus give it strength and power according to Vossler (2009, p. 41).

Vossler’s first book is a very slim and basic introduction to Jediism. Its simplicity and lay out suggest it is aimed at young boys who are possibly those most interested in becoming Jedi. It tries to support its stance with scientific backing, historical evidence and religious relevance. It seems, however, to mostly focus on being a good person, who supports democracy, human rights and protects those who can't protect themselves. One might argue that it is simply a modern day version of the Medieval Knights. Vossler’s second book seems to be more focused on ensuring Jedi stay on the right path. The demands and expectations of Jedi are quite high. As such, backsliding and inappropriate behaviour are not encouraged. This text seems to be trying to help individuals to recognise whether they are meant to be Jedi and, if so, how to remain on the path of truth.

MASTER BRAMARSHI

While the true name of the author of the book Da’at Jedi Order: Force Manual (Bramarshi, 2008) is never revealed, online he is simply known as ‘Jedi’. Bramarshi explores a slightly different aspect of Jediism as he is quite clear that (for him at least?) it is a philosophy and not a religion. The Da’at Jedi Order ‘does not exist to play Jedi; it exists to provide guidance in ways to be a Jedi, as close as a living 21st Century person can. We focus on methods of peace, inner and outer, and we contemplate Da’at, a mystical state of Union with the Divine. We find the Jedi mythos perfectly suited for the needs of our nation and community right now...This is not a religion, but a philosophy' (Bramarshi, 2008, pp. 3-4).

Bramarshi (2008, pp. 6-7) explains that there are at least two views concerning the Force. The Living Force view focuses on the moment, living by instinct and sensitivity. The Unifying Force philosophy focuses more on destiny and observing future events. Bramarshi identifies that Da’at Jediism teaches:

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120 These two philosophies are one of the areas of debate in online discussions concerning the nature of the Force.
'the Force is all about the living moment, not only future concerns, which are too far off. No, we consider our glimpses into that which is coming, but *our concentration is on the flow of the Force here, now in this full moment* (Bramarshi, 2008, p. 7).

Bramarshi, like Vossler, believes that there is scientific grounding for the Force: 'Science has shown that this physical existence is really a dance of energy, nothing ever truly touching; it is The Force that binds it all together' (Bramarshi, 2008, p. 8). Due to this understanding, he can claim that all people are joined by the Force as they breathe.

Bramarshi's Da'at Jedi have a particular philosophy:

'It is the position of the Da'at Jedi Order that:
The life, death, burial and resurrection of Christ are the points in humanity's history when the how, why and when of mankind's complete spiritual and eternal freedom are presented and attained in the sight of God and man.
You and I may be and believe whatever we choose...

The Three Realities of the Da'at Jedi Order are:
 Faith:
 We are One with the Force, and there can be no opponent.
 Walk:
 Only peaceful emotion.
 Only faith in inspiration.
 Only a calm, loving heart.
 Only Forever.
 Service:
 We are One with humanity, and we will strive for species-wide inner peace and friendship' (Bramarshi, 2008, pp. 9-10).

It is quite interesting that Bramarshi acknowledges the Christ event specifically as the focal point of human history. While other Jedi groups are quite accepting of people of any religion joining their ranks, Bramarshi insists on this as vital, while still gathering ideas and concepts from a number of different religions.

The Da'at Jedi Walk is explained in the motto (for want of a better word): 'Cheerful endurance (patience), due to calm delight (joy), overflowing from gentle thankfulness (to God)'. Bramarshi (2008, p. 11) explains that Da'at Jedi
are grateful to God for their lives and the love that God shows them. They show their appreciation of God by generating love and returning it to Him.

Bramarshi (2008, pp. 15-17) understands that The Living Force\textsuperscript{121} is alive and therefore sentient which means one can have a relationship with The Force. The Living Force is one with Everything and all experience. It simply is and is known as the Holy Spirit to the Christian and the Great Spirit by the Native American, for example. The relationship a Jedi has with The Force is one of being a peaceful temple of The Force, because it is the body, creator, spirit and soul of a Jedi. To be a Temple of Stillness a Jedi must envision what it is to be a Da’at Jedi in the current day and age. A Jedi and The Force are One, therefore their relationship is perfect. What is required is awareness of this truth and the ability to effortlessly flow with The Force. A Jedi needs to notice the flow of The Force - events in the life of the surrounding world and environment. It is similar to the concept in Zen called 'Beginner’s Mind'.

According to Bramarshi (2008, pp. 20-28) there are a number of things that can help a Jedi improve their interaction with the Force. Becoming mindful of the surrounding world requires silence and listening. In time that can lead to being able to hear the Spirit world. Spirit guides are interested in a Jedi’s development and growth, but friends, family and colleagues can also help. Jedi’s may also experience astral travel (moving in a given plane of existence in one’s astral body located between the physical and intelligent bodies, guided by conscious intent) because the astral body is more attuned to The Force. This can also include remote viewing where a Jedi transverses the Force and sees things anywhere in the world and beyond as well as time travel, where the astral body can visit any time.

Bramarshi (2008, pp. 29-30) understands that a mature Jedi can have some degree of power. When a Jedi is in tune with The Force, they can begin to see the foreseeable future, feel a disturbance in The Force or feel what others are feeling. Any power that a Jedi possesses should be used for the betterment of others, however. For example, Jedi can lead others to wellness which is the opposite of 'dis-ease'.

\footnote{Bramarshi tends to capitalise The Force or The Living Force.}
Bramarshi’s Da’at Jediism seems heavily influenced by other religions. Da’at, in Kabbalah or Jewish mysticism, is the location or mystical state ‘where all ten sephirot in the Tree of Life are united as one’. It is a state that cannot be taught and should be sought from God as it is the goal of Da’at Jedi. The quest for peace is the Jedi side of the equation. A Da’at Jedi considers the world with a calm and meditative approach that avoids quarrels, seeking tranquility, peace and contentment (Bramarshi, 2008, pp. 33-35). While this Jewish influence is seen in its very name, Da’at Jediism has a foundation in Christianity as well. For Bramarshi (2008, pp. 37-38) The 'Rightly Divided Grace of Jesus Christ' is available to all and produces a life of mindful ease. Christ requires nothing of anyone to enter this peace - Christ is already at peace with people and it is by his name that people are saved, but no one is required to accept him. Christ's only commandments were to love God and one's neighbour. It is people who are accepted by Christ, not vice versa, and are offered God's grace.

ANALYSIS

While it can be seen from these five examples that Jediism is not one coherent philosophy, they also demonstrate some of the common threads. There may well be arguments concerning the nature of the Force and how Jedi utilise it, but all Jedi seem to believe that the Force is a real energy source that has some degree of power to influence human events.

It is clear that all expressions of Jediism borrow heavily from other religions, new-age philosophy and post-modern thinking, but again, there is no consistent use of these. Jedi also acknowledge the influence that the fictional Jedi have had on their understanding of Jediism, but that influence varies greatly from one church, online community or author to another. Clarke (2006, p. 149) notes that Jediism wants to distant itself from fictional characters and the narrative found in the movies and books. Rather, Jediism sees itself as a supportive community where people can journey to find relationship with the True Light and their own true selves making it often characterised as a New Age Movement. It claims to

122 As seen above.
have a 5000 year history and has practices that are similar to mainstream religions like meditation and temple worship.

What does seem to be a common thread is the importance that Jediism plays in the lives of those who follow it, whatever form it takes. It shapes their behaviour, their treatment of others, their beliefs and their spiritual practices. In this sense Star Wars plays a vital and living part of the lives of Jedi's as 'it expresses, enhances, and codifies belief; it safeguards and enforces morality; it vouches for the efficacy of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of' (Malinowski, 1984, p. 199) the Jedi.

Bultmann (1952a, p. 114) believed that an 'encounter' can only be understood by the person who experiences it and is affected by it. In one sense this is what is happening with the Jedi’s. While others may accuse the Jedi of acting out a childhood fantasy or simply being victims of post-modern consumerist spirituality, the Jedi themselves find profound meaning and purpose in their philosophy and religion. It seems clear that the Star Wars movies, which slavishly follow Joseph Campbell’s monomyth, have provided significant meaning for the lives of those who practice Jediism.
'Billions of years ago, a race of immortals harnessed the most powerful force in existence: the emerald energy of willpower. These immortals, the Guardians of the Universe, built a world from where they could watch over all of existence: the planet Oa. They divided the universe into three thousand six hundred sectors, a ring powered by the energy of will was sent to every sector of the universe to select a recruit. In order to be chosen by the ring, it is said that one must be without fear. Together these three thousand six hundred recruits formed the intergalactic peacekeepers known as the Green Lantern Corps.'

Tomar-Re

Green Lantern (M. Campbell, 2011)

The monomyth is pervasive in Hollywood movies. A large proportion of films follow its pattern very closely. It is important to ask what kind of influence this worldview has had on the viewers of movies and the wider Western world. The monomyth is an incredibly powerful way of thinking in not only Western, but many cultures around the world. In this chapter a further theological perspective is brought to bear on the monomyth.

THE ROLE OF HUMAN DECISION MAKING IN MOVIES

At the very core of the monomyth is the concept that I decide to be a hero, that I am called to be a hero. Its larger framework is that individuals, guided by subconscious archetypes, can decide to go on a journey, to become a hero and follow their deepest desires or ‘bliss’. This is how Joseph Campbell understands becoming fully human. One of the most fundamental affirmations of modernity is ‘that the individual is autonomous, and that autonomy is the sole basis for establishing responsibility and guilt. The standard supposition of modernity has been that freedom (construed as a freedom from determination, the capacity for transcendence of determining conditions and hence as capacity for unforced and undetermined choice) is an innate and inalienable property of the individual, since freedom - and hence personal-moral responsibility - belongs to the basic structure of human being. In modernity, then, freedom is not merely considered an essential condition for the
passing of moral judgement. Freedom enjoys an ontological and metaphysical status as a basic and enduring structure of human existence. It is therefore inalienable; it cannot be destroyed or lost within existence. It is an assumption shared by diverse modern theologies that we retain sufficient freedom to be personally responsible for what we do in at least some domains of life' (McFadyen, 2000, pp. 27-28).

One of the most explicit examples of this in contemporary cinema is the recent release of Green Lantern (M. Campbell, 2011) starring Ryan Reynolds as the DC Comic superhero. A race of immortals known as the Guardians has harnessed the most powerful force in the universe, the emerald energy of willpower and created rings to allow beings throughout the universe to use that energy to protect their allocated sectors. A human, Hal Jordan, is chosen by one of the rings to be its bearer. While considered the weakest link in the Green Lantern Corps, due to humanity’s youth, Hal proves to be the greatest example of will overcoming fear, precisely because he is human. He battles and succeeds in defeating fear, which is personified in a being known as Parallax, a fallen Guardian. The Green Lantern follows Joseph Campbell's monomyth pattern exceedingly closely, but has an added dimension of explicitly stating that the human will is the most powerful and decisive factor in all human endeavours.

Failure of individuals is often viewed as failing to will. In Christopher Nolan's epic Batman Begins (2005) Bruce Wayne's mentor, Henri Ducard ‘explains' the death of Bruce’s parents during the middle of a training fight:

Henri Ducard: 'Your parents' death was not your fault. It was your father's. Anger does not change the fact that your father failed to act.'
Bruce Wayne: 'The man had a gun!'
Henri Ducard: 'Would that stop you?'
Bruce Wayne: 'I've had training!'
Henri Ducard: 'The training is nothing! The will is everything! The will to act.'

The failure of Thomas Wayne to act against injustice and to protect himself and his family against a petty criminal was, in Ducard’s mind, the reason why he and his wife Martha died leaving the opera. He did not have the will to act and as such was to blame, rather than the criminal. The will is seen as the decisive factor in this particular life and death situation. Again, the human will is
understood to be the most vital aspect of human character, what differentiates a failure from a hero.

It is not only teen and adult adventure movies that promote this concept. Children’s movies are also flooded with references, implied or explicit, about the importance of making decisions to enable one’s desires to happen. In the most recent instalment of the *Happy Feet* franchise, *Happy Feet Two* (Miller, 2011) The most repeated line in the movie is, or is a variation of, 'If you want it, you must will it, and if you will it, it will be yours.' The irony is that the baby penguin Erik's great desire to fly, cannot be willed into being. Emperor penguins can't fly. This is conveniently glossed over by the storyline providing another solution for the trapped Emperor penguins. Mumble, Erik's father, is able to unite another group of penguins, some elephant seals and even some krill to dance, resulting in the entrapping ice being broken and a route out of the 'ice prison' created.

Even the idea of becoming a nation’s leader is the result of willing it to happen, according to one movie at least. In the recent release of *The Iron Lady* (Lloyd, 2011), former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s father is alluded to as being the inspiration for her leadership success. In one scene she quotes the following:

'Watch your thoughts for they become words. Watch your words for they become actions. Watch your actions for they become... habits. Watch your habits, for they become your character. And watch your character, for it becomes your destiny! What we think we become.'

The screenplay implies that this was a mantra of Margaret Thatcher's father and the very reason she became Prime Minister. She willed it into being with her courage, strength and determination.

**THE ROLE OF HUMAN DECISION MAKING FOR CAMPBELL**

It does appear to be quite clear in Joseph Campbell’s monomyth that the human capacity for decision making and using one’s will is the determining factor in one’s ability to be a hero in one’s own context. Crossing the threshold, the fourth phase of the monomyth, requires a decision of the will to begin the
hero’s journey. Other decisions will need to be made along the way to ensure that the individual remains on the hero’s path. An unlimited number of problems may face individuals. Humans can even personify problems in terms of the tyrants of mythology – fear, anger, oppression, etc. As such, we cry out for a hero, according to Campbell. 'The hero is the man of self-achieved submission' (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 22). Campbell’s concept of submission is to the ‘primary virtue and historic deed of the hero to be solved’ (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 22). This means that for Campbell, any problem, conflict or ‘tyrant’ can be faced, challenged, even defeated, when an individual recognises the issue and makes the appropriate decision required to overcome it. The individual consequently has the power and ability to perform whatever deeds are required to be victorious and thus, a hero.

In the monomyth pattern, the hero must choose to take a journey, thus moving from their ordinary world to a previously unknown, ‘special’ world. For individuals, a similar journey must be taken. Campbell (1949, p. 23) understands that the first step of detachment or withdrawal is the move from the external world to the internal world where peace is found in the everlasting realm within. The hero's first step is to break free from the effects of the outside world, find the real problems in their psyche and experience the 'archetypal image'. This process can be helped by psychoanalysis and dream interpretation as dreams and the archetypes found within them help humans determine their decisions and actions.

'Dream is the personalised myth, myth the depersonalised dream; both myth and dream and symbolic in the same general way of the dynamics of the psyche. But in the dream the forms are quirked by the peculiar troubles of the dreamer, whereas in myth the problems and solutions are directly valid for all mankind' (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 24).

For Campbell (1949, p. 24) the hero is someone who has confronted and defeated their personal limitations and embraced 'the generally valid, normally human forms.' In other words they embrace what it is to be fully human. He warns (1949, p. 26), however, that the majority of people do not choose the way of the hero, but still enjoy salvation due to participating in the symbols,
sacraments, rites of passage and ceremonies found in their society.\footnote{These might include baptism, graduation from high school or university, winning a sports competition, bar mitzvah, receiving a first pay, marriage, and any number of cultural ceremonies or initiation rites, etc.} The danger implied in this claim is that if a society fails to practice or discontinues its salvation producing ceremonies, individuals can never truly be fully human or be the heroes they were meant to be.

Campbell (1949, p. 27) believed that the journey is one that we do not take alone. There have been others who have done it before. The problems and conflicts are actually well known and the hero-path has already been laid out. The journey will result in a number of things. Firstly, we will find a god\footnote{It could be suggested that for Campbell, the god found is ourselves or at least within ourselves.}. We will also slay our own ego,\footnote{This is probably best understood as one’s desire for power, pride and sense of superiority.} finding the centre of existence with all the world. These can either be concrete decisions that are made as part of the hero’s journey, or they can be the positive result of choosing to embark on the journey in the first place. As such, they are still an aspect of the decision making process of the individual.

This is essentially why Campbell believes that myths are so important to humanity. Without them, humanity does not have the framework to be heroes or to become fully human. Myths

‘have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind...Religions, philosophies, arts, the social forms of primitive and historic man, prime discoveries in science and technology, the very dreams that blister sleep, boil up from the basic, magic ring of myth... the symbols of mythology are not manufactured; they cannot be ordered, invented or permanently suppressed. They are spontaneous productions of the psyche, and each bears within it, undamaged, the germ power of its source’ (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 13).

According to Campbell (1949, p. 14) both Freud and Jung had clearly demonstrated how the story, hero and deeds of myth still exist today in the realm of individual's and their psychological state as demonstrated in their dreams. While the rites of passage in 'primitive' society are formal ways of
severing from one stage and moving into another, these threshold moments also appear in the dreams of modern people (J. Campbell, 1949, p. 18). This similarity between ancient and contemporary societies is one of the contributing factors as to why Campbell (1949, p. 13) believed that all mythic stories, no matter what nationality or cultural heritage have the same constant story.

In all those myths, ancient and modern, tribal, religious, social or cultural, the decision of the hero to take the journey and step into the unknown is at the very core. This is the essence of the monomyth. It says that individual decision making is the powerful tool to be a hero. In the monomyth we make the decision to free ourselves from our constraints. Humans have the power, by virtue of their will and the ability to decide, to determine their own future and fate. From a theological perspective, it can be called a substitution conversion story.

**CHRISTIAN PARALLELS**

This mode of thinking actually has parallels in contemporary Christian circles. In the monomyth, the decision making framework is where the emphasis lies – one must make a decision to take the journey of a hero. Many individual Christians, and Christian denominations alike, promote the idea that one must decide to become a follower of Jesus. The question is asked: ‘have you made a decision for Christ?’ The ‘Sinner’s Prayer’, a formula found nowhere in Scripture, seems to have become the predominant method for starting the Christian discipleship journey. While there is no set wording, the ‘Sinner’s Prayer’ in essence contains assurances that the person reciting it acknowledges their sin, asks for God’s forgiveness and declares that they now follow Christ. Even here, we can clearly see that human will and a single human decision have become the determining factor in becoming a Christian. Humans, according to this theology, have the power to convert themselves from one ‘ordinary world’, a life of condemned sinfulness, to a new journey of grace-filled forgiveness and eternal life. There is almost a sense of a transaction taking place – ‘I say the ‘Sinner’s Prayer’ and God gives me forgiveness and eternal life.
When analysed from this perspective, the individual becomes the centre of their own story. The process of Christian conversion is simply a stage on their journey of following God. The monomyth would call it a hero’s step, a threshold moment when the individual moves from their ‘old life’ to their new, forgiven, cleansed existence. They may face challenges and opposition as a Christian, but they’ve made a hero’s decision to follow God and as such, can look forward to a transformative experience. Ultimately, the Christian will ‘win’ the ultimate boon, eternal life, having become more like their father figure’s human incarnation, Jesus Christ, on their journey.

Is this, however, an accurate portrayal of Biblical conversion? Is this indeed the method by which one becomes a Christian? Or is this another example of the influence of Enlightenment thinking upon Christian theology that has little basis in Scripture? To answer these questions we need to examine historical understandings of conversion, will and decision making allowing for a reflection of Campbell’s mythology of the hero. It is important to pull back from the framework associated with the monomyth and consider it from a much wider theological perspective.

The monomyth is set very concretely in a particular time and place. Joseph Campbell wrote about it most comprehensively in the late 1940’s. It is also written by an American deeply steeped in American culture and values, despite his relatively short stints in Europe in his early twenties and a twelve month trip to Asia, mostly Japan and India, in 1955 and 1956. This results in Campbell and his writings being deeply entrenched in Enlightenment and modernist thinking. The individual had already risen to the centre of existence and this thinking influenced literature, politics and cultural values. There was a corresponding decline in emphasis on community, family and other social groupings. The Church had also seen changes in theology. Whilst possibly trying to faithfully defend the Christian Church in a new world of ideas, the concept of Jesus as a personal Saviour began to come to the fore. Faith became a private venture and we see the beginning of the separation of the Church and the State. Hymns began to reflect the change with an ever increasing emphasis on the ‘I’. No longer were you born into faith, or became a part of the Church within some kind of social group. One had to decide to
become a Christian. Campbell, in writing on myth, is reflecting a worldview concerning decision making that was already well-established.

Campbell wasn’t the only one talking of myth and decision making. Rudolph Bultmann was also speaking and writing about myth at the same time as Campbell, but specifically in relation to the influence of first century Gnostic thinking upon the writing of the New Testament. Yet his conclusions seem to resonate with Campbell’s on this point. Bultmann also focuses on the individual and their decision making as key. The individual must still choose to respond to the proclamation of the gospel message as revealed in Scripture, once it has been demythologised. The human will thus becomes the vital fulcrum on which conversion relies.

Yet, the human will is not an Enlightenment invention. Nor has the Church only spoken on the topic in the last couple of centuries. This is actually an issue that Christianity has grappled with since the discussions between Pelagius and Augustine in the first decades of the fifth century. These two men wrestled with the concepts of sin, willing, conversion, freedom and human decision making.

Their arguments have recently been reconsidered in McFadyen’s Bound to Sin (2000). Given a traditional Christian understanding of human action, McFadyen wrestles with two major issues of the 20th and 21st century, the holocaust of World War II and child sexual abuse. He wants to look at these and see if theology can add anything to the discussion. After analysing these terrible events from a theological perspective he comes back to the nature of human

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126 While McFadyen is one theologian highly suited to a dialogue with Campbell’s monomyth and meaning making in film, due to his focus on human will and decision making, other theologians provide different insights. Douglas John Hall in his book The Cross in Our Context (2003) examines a theology of the cross in a contextual response to increased religious violence, growing inequality and environmental concerns. Using Luther as a theological voice, Hall can critique the monomyth because it places the hero self at the centre. Christ's life is in direct contrast to a hero's journey. Instead, in the incarnation Hall describes how Jesus lives out the experience of the marginalised, rejected and forsaken. The Christ experiences the worst of life to the uttermost. While Campbell would see this as an illustration of the hero's myth, Hall repudiates Jesus’ role as hero and affirms that the central actor is God. It is God who raises one who has rejected dependence upon his own self and even his own life story in the cross event.

‘That logic is grounded in the foundational claim of this theology, which is that the cross of the Christ hides – and reveals – the decision of God, *vere Deus*, to absorb in his own person the compulsions of the alienated human spirit to kill, and so create “a new spirit within us,” a spirit that has passed through death to the life that is possible on death’s far side (Hall, 2003, p. 6).’
decision making. He concludes that joy is utterly crucial to our understanding of decision making. Life is created to give us joy. He asks why joy, in these two circumstances is restricted or denied. His reaffirmation of joy is thus intimately involved in decision making. Joy is denied to child abuse and holocaust victims because of other people’s decisions. He raises important questions as to how decision making distorts what we understand God’s intention for creation to be. What follows is an overview of McFadyen’s comparison of Augustine and Pelagius’ theology and how he has applied it to the holocaust and child sexual abuse. This can then be analysed in terms of its relevance and applicability to the monomyth and religious groups inspired by popular culture.

PELAGIAN INFLUENCE IN CONTEMPORARY THINKING

Theologically speaking, one must go back to the early church fathers to find one of the core roots to the modern idea of the freedom to choose and make decisions. Pelagius, an ascetic Culdee Monk, and Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo Regius, debated this very issue. Pelagius was eventually declared a heretic by the Council of Carthage in 418 C.E. As a result, Augustine’s theology was held as orthodox for centuries. Yet modern concepts of free will and the self hold much closer ties to Pelagius than Augustine’s. Alistair McFadyen’s book *Bound to Sin: Abuse, Holocaust and the Doctrine of Sin* (2000) has a helpful overview of the theological debate. It also contains some practical applications that have potential to be applied to an understanding of the monomyth and its use by Jedi’s.

‘For Pelagius, freedom in choosing and willing is an inalienable characteristic of the human creature. It belongs to our given *essence* as human beings to be free to choose between competing possibilities. Pelagius understood will as a pure organ of free choice. It's freedom he construed in terms of a neutral suspension between different possibilities’ (McFadyen, 2000, p. 168).’

McFadyen (2000, p. 171) recognises that Pelagius’ understanding of will had a profound influence on his conception of sin. Pelagius thought of sin in axiological terms. The will itself could not be sinful, only the acts of the will. The latter could be subject to moral evaluation. He also believed that the will is always free in relation to history and situatedness, therefore inherited sin
becomes unintelligible. Sin cannot be a state that pre-conditions or binds the will. The will is always free to will unless coerced into inoperativeness. Pelagius affirms that it is always possible, though conceivably difficult, to avoid sinning. Humans are capable of willing and doing good and are culpable if they fail to do so. A clear intimation and reminder of virtue and right is all that is required to recall humans from habitual sinning.

At this point it is worth inserting a caveat. This is a theological critique and several words will necessarily arise that have specific theological meaning, weight and therefore appropriateness. As such, they need to be understood from the context of their usage and the specific definition they contain. Worship and joy are two of these specific theological words that have unique meaning in the context of this thesis and especially in McFadyen’s (2000) analysis of Pelagian and Augustinian doctrines of sin and human will. McFadyen’s doctrine of the trinity concludes that the highest expression of human experience is joy. Joy is actually what suffers in cases of abuse and for the victims of the holocaust because it affects one’s ability to worship. From McFadyen’s perspective, the lack of joy is a sign of sin and idolatry. In this context sin and idolatry are specific theological terms which describe ways of talking about human reality. They describe a state of being that humans find themselves, specifically in relationship to God. While they can be viewed as judgemental, harsh, and even out of keeping in a post-modern world, these unique theological definitions are helpful in explaining the human condition. For this thesis, they are words that cannot be shied away from, but rather need to be held in the uncomfortable tension that they bring.

For the 20th and 21st centuries McFadyen looks at a key theological discussion on decision making that started with Pelagius and Augustine. McFadyen (2000, p. 173) highlights the contention between these two early church fathers.

‘Pelagius understood the freedom of the will as its capacity always to motivate itself to do otherwise; in particular, to counter and resist any external direction. In that way, Pelagius defends faith as a free act of the will’.

McFadyen clarifies that Augustine saw this view as unacceptable as it

‘makes the faith through which we are saved a human act and achievement and does scant justice to the view of the human
situation implied by the Christian proclamation of salvation. If our salvation is wrought through a radical self-sacrifice on God's part, then grace acts on the human condition from without (it is not then a neutral property). In so acting, it does more than illuminate the good so we may subsequently, on our own resources, freely recognise and will it (or not). Augustine held that the means of our salvation imply a radical distortion in our being, not only in our acting, and that perfection also requires and entails something more than a self-modification in our acting: we cannot save ourselves’ (McFadyen, 2000, p. 173).

For Pelagius, faith is a free act of the will. The will could choose not to respond to the good that grace illuminates. Humans appropriate grace by exercising a free choice outside the sphere of grace's influence from a position of neutrality. Human freedom is essentially the will's independent neutrality and autonomy in relation to God and God's movement towards humanity. It has the capacity to choose its own motives, rather than being attracted and moved by that which is good.

'Modern moralistic sympathies tend to be naturally attracted towards such a view of freedom as inalienable power to counter and to will arbitrarily. Indeed, there is a widespread assumption that human and divine freedom and power are competitive: either we are free to resist God or God is free to overcome our resistance. And so modern sensibilities (tutored in the notion of freedom as indivisible, unshareable (sic), absolute autonomy) tend to share Pelagian wariness when encountering Augustine's affirmation of God's sovereignty over creation, especially where that appears to include the power to counter the misuse of human freedom' (McFadyen, 2000, p. 175).

Augustine, according to McFadyen (2000, p. 175), preferred to speak of faith as a gift. He was certain that achieving faith lay beyond the natural, unaided power of the will. Faith requires the spirit of faith, which is only possible as a consequence of the Holy Spirit's working within structures of intentionality, reorienting and revivifying them. It is the gift of grace that enables good works, including faith. Without grace, it would be impossible for humans to will or do the good. For Augustine '...it is the goodness or otherwise of active willing, not the possession of the gift of arbitrary choice, which shows whether or not a will is in fact good in any meaningful, concrete sense' (McFadyen, 2000, p. 177).
Pelagius understandably countered that if one is unable to choose otherwise how could there be any freedom?

**COMPELLED WILLING**

McFadyen (2000, pp. 182-184) explores Augustine's understanding of the difference between forced and compelled willing and their effect upon human action. Augustine understood that the human will could not actually be engaged when forced willing occurs. That is due to a superior force overcoming the forced person's will. Compulsion, however, does not overcome the will but directs, constrains and utilises it. Compulsion engages will rather than rendering it inoperative. Therefore compelled willing engages the human will, unlike forced willing. When a person has faith and is oriented toward God there is conformity between their God-compelled desire and their will. They are not in competition, but are uniquely oriented toward good. Augustine believed that in faith the will is constrained but also free. It is actually because the will is compelled in movement toward God that it is free. Augustine defined freedom in a particular way as the 'freedom to do and will the good'. For him, genuine freedom cannot be defined apart from grace, as it can only be enabled by grace.

According to McFadyen (2000, p. 184), Augustine claimed that the freedom to make choices outside of God's grace or to choose to withhold oneself from God is not true freedom of will but actually the will's bondage to sin. The will's freedom consists 'in being so related to the source of goodness that one is motivated permanently, unavoidably and indivisibly in active devotion to it' (McFadyen, 2000, p. 185).

'...the opposite of sin for Augustine is not the good act predicated on the potent freedom of the free (neutral) will, but faith (which issues, not in legal obedience, but a concrete spirit of love). Faith is, by contrast, predicated on the potency of the grace of God in instilling the spirit of faith' (McFadyen, 2000, p. 197).

McFadyen (2000, pp. 203-204) explains that for Augustine, willing is relational and situated. True integrity and genuine freedom can only be found when one's freedom is 'bound in an orientation toward God'. Freedom is not the power to
arbitrarily chose, but 'our willing being pulled in an orientation towards what is genuinely good'. When this occurs, one's own integrity has proper foundation and one's goodness and being are fulfilled.

The plenitude and goodness of God are seen most clearly in the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

'Sin is that which counters the dynamics of God in creation and salvation. But, paradoxically, sin is known in the context of God's active countering of it, working through the damage and brokenness caused by sin, in order to reorient the world towards more abundant possibilities than were available hitherto' (McFadyen, 2000, pp. 210-211).

Thus, humans only know about sin because God has been actively working against it. The Easter event is what brings right orientation between Creator and creation.

In Christianity, one example of this right orientation is that Christ sets humans free. It is not a human decision or an act of will. The recital of a ‘Sinner’s Prayer’ is not what saves the speaker. Australian theologian Drayton corrects this transactional thinking in regards to faith:

‘This is not an Automatic Transaction Machine in which we believe, and a certain result follows immediately, such that because I have done my bit, God must do God’s bit. No, it is not our believing that creates this. Then faith would be a verb, something I do. No, our believing is a prelude, a phase one, that puts us in a place where we discover that it is God’s act to do this. The power of faith is the discovery that through our believing in Jesus Christ, it is God who creates the relationship, then holds us in this relationship God has made possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is quite remarkable to realise that, for Paul, faith is a noun, and not a verb. The noun names the God-event of faith’ (Drayton, 2005, p. 54).

Theologically for Christians, God makes us who we are through Christ’s action on the cross and his resurrection. Western theology, much of which has reflected Augustine’s understandings and concerns, actually suggests that becoming a Christian is the result of 'right hearing', that Jesus is the Son of God who has set creation free from death and destruction through his death and resurrection. It is Christ’s actions that save people, not their decision. Any human participation is a realisation that 'I am the child of God through the action
of God in Christ’. Faith is the work of the Holy Spirit in an individual’s life and comes from right hearing resulting in the discovery that God has brought us into God’s bountiful and joyful story of creation.

The difficulty in recognising this is due, according to Augustinian theology (McFadyen, 2000, pp. 188-190), to the fact that humans are trapped in a context that stops or limits their ability to make a decision. Augustine understood that sin resulted in separation from God and this was inherited from Adam. It was thus ‘biological’ in that each human received this distortion from God’s original creation at conception. As such it is not external or situational. Sin was internal. This distortion prevents anyone from being able to make any kind of decision, any act of will, to pursue the good absolutely. Sinning is thus completely inevitable because humans are trapped in a framework that allows nothing else; their desires are disordered due to their disconnection from God. Not only is this state inherited through human procreation, it is then reinforced through social education, interaction and conditioning. No one is innocent. The sinful, fallen state of humankind is so prevalent, so familiar, that it is normalised. Humans can believe that this is the way they were meant to be, how life is meant to be. They can no longer identify that there is any problem or distortion. The distortion becomes their ‘true reality’. Any attempt at willing or making a decision is from the outset completely impaired. Not only was all humanity and thus every individual trapped in sin, but Augustine also believed that all culture was a distortion. This was especially true when the ‘I’ becomes the centre and the source of decision making, which was a particular form of idolatry.

McFadyen (2000) demonstrates that the absence of joy is a result of distortion experienced in will and decision making. He does this by applying this reasoning to two terrible issues – the abuse of children and the holocaust of World War II. Neither of these situations can be explained completely by sociology, pathology or politics. There is actually a profound distortion of the context that the victims of both find themselves in. Children who are the victims of abuse are trapped in a distorted world, bounded by the rules, threats, actions and mental trauma inflicted by the abuser. That world is so distorted, but at the same time, so consuming, that it becomes ‘normal’. The child knows nothing different. Usually isolated from others, even family, the abused child can never
recognise the abuse for what it is. Without the intervention of others and serious emotional, mental, social and physical healing, the child will carry the effects and consequences of that abuse throughout their lives. Either they become abusers themselves, repeating the pattern they were taught in childhood, or they continue to be victims of abuse into adulthood. Hence the disturbing statistics concerning the childhood abuse victims becoming domestic violence victims.

Similarly, the holocaust could not have happened without the complicity of virtually the entire German nation. It needed people at every level of German society and in a huge variety of industries, services and government positions, to be able to slaughter six million Jewish people plus other targeted ‘undesirables’ including intellectuals, religious figures, gypsies and homosexuals to name a few. The concept of the ‘Jewish problem’ was indoctrinated in the German people slowly and surely. Propaganda, Hitler’s dynamism and the devastating effects of the aftermath of World War I, helped to create a distorted context where it was acceptable to remove Jewish people from society. Many Germans, who otherwise would have protested at this treatment of fellow human beings, were swept along in the tide of the times, sometimes knowingly a part of the Holocaust and other times completely oblivious that their actions or jobs were contributing to the massacre. The Holocaust had been ‘normalised’.

This raises the awful possibility that much of what we take to be acceptable in civilised life in fact normalises attitudes and behaviours which are not at all appropriate. The monomyth is presented as a true description of human reality. McFadyen’s discussion raises the possibility that the monomyth normalises attitudes and behaviours that distort the human context. A theological critique must ask whether distortion occurs especially when the individual becomes the centre of human existence. It is such a commonly held idea – you make your

127 Interestingly, there is a movie that chronicles this very phenomenon. Good (Amorim, 2008) follows the life of John Halder, an upright and moral German citizen who gets noticed and used by political figures in the German socialist movement. With an aging mother suffering from dementia, the literary professor pens a book promoting compassionate euthanasia. It receives attention because of its usefulness for propaganda and Halder’s career moves ever upward. The choices made on the way, however, have devastating consequences, especially for his Jewish friend Maurice Israel Glückstein. Yet Halder, and millions of ‘good’ German citizens like him, never fully appreciates the situation of the German nation spiralling into chaos.
own destiny, your decisions decide your future – that it is rarely questioned. It is fed to us through movies, television, advertising, education and ordinary socialisation. A poster in a Canberra primary school promotes to pre-teens ‘If you can dream it, you can do it’. Robert Davis (in Brooker, 2002, p. 6) states that what he learned from Star Wars was to ‘Aim high...reach for the stars...and your dreams can come true as well.’ Even picking up a copy of The Big Issue (Razer, 2011, p. 13) exposes the reader to this ideological trap. Philanthropist and writer Helen Razer humorously explores her introduction and exploration of the ‘We All Create Our Own Reality’ worldview. She recognises the influence of Oprah Winfrey as an influential reality-creationist. Razer also summarises the ideas put forward in contemporary personal development books – one does not need to feel guilty for privilege or blame others or circumstances for lack and tuning into the right ‘frequencies’ one can enjoy one’s heart’s desires. Yet Razer’s conclusion dismisses the reality creation framework. It does so due to her neighbour’s life experience. An older woman, who had been brought to Australia in the 1950’s as a victim of war and poverty, actually had very little choices in Razer’s opinion. ‘She did not Create Her Own Reality. It was the great arc of history that did it for her’ (Razer, 2011, p. 13).

While Razer might dismiss the monomyth sentiment (though she never acknowledges it by name), she does recognise its influence. The monomyth is pervasive and as such it is normalised. It is the distorted context that contemporary humans are trapped in. We are constantly being told that we can make our own decisions to influence our life, that we can make our own destiny, that we can become whatever we chose to be. But is life truly like that?

From the Christian perspective, a believer is not someone who has made a decision to follow Christ. Rather, it is the profound discovery of the world that God has brought us into. This is not what the monomyth promotes. It is, in fact, completely counter to the monomyth framework. The Christian message speaks of the way that God in Christ, not a human hero, interacts with creation and humans especially. It is a life-giving submission to God’s creation story that is moving toward a hope and peace filled fulfilment. In its entirety, it does not present itself as a myth. Rather, the gospel or kerygma, presents itself as a reality. It is the monomyth that is the myth.
McFadyen (2000, pp. 212-216) explores how Augustine and Pelagius’ views affect an understanding of joy and worship. He concludes that both are vital for the fullness of human experience. Joy actually gives and shapes life, giving it intentionality. Joy characterises the particularity of an individual’s personhood. Individuals actually live from what they most enjoy and whatever that might be is foundational for human ‘being-in-the-world’. Joys determine one’s life orientation, how one lives before God, the world and others and invigorates one’s living. Humans actually depend on the objects of their enjoyment, but it is a relationship that goes beyond need-satisfaction. In its proper expression, joy has a character of freedom in relation to the things that bring them true joy. Joy is an abundance that goes beyond utility – it fills, even overflows, one’s very being. In joy, there is proper responsibility and relationship to that which is enjoyed undercutting any usually notions of dependence.

‘So, joy cuts across our usual ways of construing dependence and autonomy. It establishes the person’s uniqueness and integrity apart from those others she enjoys. Yet, that independence is rooted in and dependent upon enjoyment of something other than herself, which intensifies the integrity of her lived personal identity. Hence, joy is a mode of relationship, both expressive of and constitutive for personal identity and integrity. Joy establishes, expresses and intensifies the integrity of a personal identity, being a relationship with an object of joy from the depths from which one lives’ (2000, p. 213).

Joy is also intrinsically linked with relationship with God. True joy cannot be experienced apart from the triune God as this is what humans were created for.

‘From the perspective of the dynamics of God in creation and salvation, we were born into and for joy in a God who loves, blesses and has joy in us...Joy in ourselves and God is at the same time joyous intensification of the particularity of others that knows no exclusions. Joy in ourselves is indivisible, not only from our joy in others, but from their joy in themselves, in us and in God. Universal human solidarity of joy in the triune God is something we are both born into and called towards’ (McFadyen, 2000, pp. 247-248).
From this perspective, joy is an inescapable consequence of being fully human in relation with the triune God. At no time is the concept of being a hero or choosing one's destiny promoted as what makes one fully human.

When an energising spirit of faith, ‘an exciting willing into a new orientation upon God’ (McFadyen, 2000, p. 214), is given to someone by the Holy Spirit, worship is the active form of that joy. Worship is directing one’s situated being toward God. In communion with God, who is directed toward humanity and creation, one finds the proper relational dynamics between others and the world. Joy thus manifests itself in worship of and joy in God, but also joy in others and ourselves. This is right relation and the fullness of human experience (McFadyen, 2000, p. 216).

When joy and worship are fundamental to the human experience there are inevitable consequences when they are distorted or misused. Pride and idolatry are two such distortions.

‘Pride is misdirected worship: living within and from a false dynamic. Pride is sin, for Augustine, not because it is a refusal to be nothing and allow God to be everything; rather, because it represents a stepping out of the ecology of relation to the dynamic order of God. Pride elevates oneself (or that which one identifies oneself: class, race, sex, political movement) to the ultimate good, the arbiter and criterion of the worth of everything else, the good towards which all other goods (already defined in terms of their utility to the self) are to be dedicated. Pride is hence the attempt to live without reference to external realities as values, limits or claims, the active referral of all goods to the self...The sin of pride lies, not in finding human integrity and autonomy good, but in founding them in supposed separation from God’ (McFadyen, 2000, p. 217).

It is important to note that Augustine wanted to liberate humans from the illusion that they have power, freedom or integrity apart from the order of God that is at the heart of pride. He believed that Pelagianism invited humans to live as if their integrity and power were independent of God's grace-filled relation with humanity (McFadyen, 2000, pp. 217-218). For Augustine, 'Freedom is being freed for God through the spirit of faith which drives us to worship' (McFadyen, 2000, p. 220). McFadyen notes that the 'construal of sin as disorientation or
distortion of worship is familiar from both Bible and tradition, where it is named idolatry' (McFadyen, 2000, p. 222).

A key feature of idolatry is granting ultimacy or independence to other worldly forces, which fail to align with the order of the worlds under the sovereignty of God, according to McFadyen (2000, p. 225). The idol exerts its own field of force which recruits all other forces into its service. All things are valued on their utility to the idol, which in turn becomes the criterion of truth, rightness and goodness.

'Not only does the idol override all other claims, it bends the whole of life into its exclusive service...Above all, then, sin is failure in orientation in the world to God as God: disruption of the proper conditions and practices of right worship...Measured against the criterion of the abundant life of God, idols are dead. Furthermore, their worship substitutes comprehensive dynamics of closure and rigidity in relational orientation (death) for the joyful, expansive, life-giving dynamism of true worship. It binds the dynamism of our life-intentionalities into a comprehensive disorientation in all our relationships and in all dimensions of life' (McFadyen, 2000, pp. 225-226).

This construal of sin is what is occurring in McFadyen’s (2000, pp. 229-232) understanding of child abuse and the holocaust. The child abuser distorts the entire world of the child, dominating his or her every action, relationship and decisions. The isolation and rigidity in keeping the ‘secret’ of the abuse result in the child leading a completely disoriented life. Meaning, identity and life-trajectory are determined by the abuser and the abusive situation they create. As such they are an idol and the object of a distorted form of worship. In the case of the Holocaust, the ‘Jewish problem’, and the Nazi Party’s ‘solution’, dominated the German mindscape for years. This distortion, which was increasingly normalised during World War II, bent the German nation to its service. Its binding of all aspects of German life means that it can be regarded by McFadyen as an idol.

Pride and idolatry are thus two tragic consequences of distorted worship, resulting in a lack of true joy. While these two concrete situations are extreme examples, they alert us to the existence to other idolatrous systems in which we may all be involved. The problem is that we are so ‘normalised’ that these
systems are virtually undetectable, especially to those who are locked within them. A ‘victim’ cannot even recognise that they are trapped. The danger is that the creation of any kind of any universal myth creates for its followers a distorted worldview from which they cannot easily escape. The monomyth can be from this stark analysis an idolatrous framework that traps humans in a distorted worldview. When the values of the monomyth are so widely accepted it is not easy to identify its failings. Joseph Campbell did not invent the idea that we can make our own destiny. He simply exposed how pervasive it was in the world’s myths. Idols today are not necessarily stone statues, gold figurines or natural phenomenon. Today, idols are the myths we have created about ourselves. The monomyth, and its focus on human will and decision making, is our context and as such must be considered an idol of the twenty first century.

By applying McFadyen’s (2000) construal of sin, worship, idolatry and joy to the monomyth, it can be claimed that humans are caught within a distorted dynamic. The monomyth exerts power over individuals, capturing them with the concept that they can make their own destiny. If they don’t the individual is a failure. The monomyth thus determines identity – a successful hero or an embarrassing disappointment, a loser. It subtly captures all levels of society from policy makers to corporate giants to children. Its message is purchased at the shopping mall and preached from the pulpit of the cinema. Careers are determined by it, individuals are pressured by it and society continues to promote and embrace it, whether knowingly\(^{128}\) or obliviously. It prevents ‘the possibility of standing in the proper economy of thanks and praise of God, which requires dynamic self-affirmation and openness to others in loving joy’ (McFadyen, 2000, p. 238) because it makes the individual a god, the very centre of their own existence. The monomyth consistently deceives by celebrating the human will, human determination, and human journey as one of individual decision. Further, the monomyth claims that anyone who does not take the hero’s journey is less than fully human. The monomyth promises so much for the living of a fulfilled human life. For this reason it must be critiqued.

Physicist and award winning author David Brin’s (1999) exposure of the ‘shadow side’ of the monomyth provides us with a critical perspective. He

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\(^{128}\) For example, as promoted by the self-help movement.
shows that the monomyth is used by those in power and authority to oppress and undermine others, and concludes that it is not a positive framework for humanity. It is elitist and anti-democratic and may be used for exploitation and manipulation. It restricts creativity, difference and variety by prescribing that stories must follow a specific formula. It reinforces uniformity which can result in the ensnaring of the human spirit. As such, the monomyth is a dangerous and destructive story for humankind. It fails to see that we are trapped in a context that says we can make our own decisions and enjoy life as a hero, but we cannot truly do either as that context is distorted. It fails to take into account life circumstances, social conditions, religious restrictions, gender politics or national policies. All power is given to the human individual, but no human can ever exercise total and unequivocal power over their own lives, let alone the lives of others. The monomyth is a disenchanting dynamic, unable to ever live up to its own claims for all individuals.

Despite its failing and limitations the monomyth remains a powerful ‘myth’ of its own. It is so pervasive in the Western world that it has given rise to the creation of groups of people that believe they can choose their own spirituality, even create a religion, based on a particular aspect of popular culture. This particular expression of the practical application of all the monomyth promotes has underpinned the genesis of the Jedi, who seem convinced that they have joy and are worshiping the truth; they simply call it The Force. As Augustine and McFadyen suggest, however, is this just another example of distortion in the world?

CONSEQUENCES FOR JEDIISM

It is possible that McFadyen’s formulation of will, joy, worship and idolatry have implications for how one might understand the phenomenon of Jediism.

'...in sin, the will is bound into the dynamics of idolatry...To worship is actively to orient and order one's life, whether more or less explicitly, around a reality as primary to and constitutive of meaning, worth, truth and value. In more dynamic terms, it is for one's personal energy (spirit) to be energised by and oriented towards this reality as the energising ground and criterion of active
life-intentionality. Thus what is worshipped is an absolute, unconditional and therefore exclusive horizon of loyalty to which all else is related and in the service of which all is done' (McFadyen, 2000, p. 227).

The vast majority of Jedi are men in their 20's and 30's. Brooker (2002, p. 27) notes the way that Star Wars can bring men together:

'Star Wars can also work as a common culture that binds people together. Rituals of quotation, memories of playground space battles, friendly trivia contests, attempts to imitate the sound of a lightsaber or Vader's labored breathing: this is the stuff of many a male friendship.'

These Generation X and Generation Y men have been heavily influenced by a worldview, helped by the monomyth as portrayed in the movies, which says they have the freedom to choose their own beliefs and thus create their own joy. Thus, they choose to believe that the Force is real, that it exists and has power to impact human lives. Jediism is thus all about decision. In his book 21st Century Jedi: Spiritual Athletes on the Cosmic Chessboard, Dr Damon Joseph Sprock highlights the role of decision making:

'You have been given the freedom to choose which of the influences before you at any given moment will be your path of reality, based on your internal, subjective observation' (Sprock, 2009, p. 45).

In his first book of a proposed series, Introduction to Jedi Knighthood (2009), Matthew Vossler also states clearly that a decision is required to become a Jedi and follow this ‘higher path’. If being a Jedi is what an individual aspires to then one must make a decision to pursue it. 'A true decision means to cut off all other possibilities. As Master Yoda says, "Try not. Do, or do not. There is no try"' (Vossler, 2009, p. 21). This looks suspiciously like McFadyen’s concept of idolatry - Jediism becomes controlling and dominant. The horizon of loyalty for

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129 Whilst his book never actually states that the creation of Jedi is its goal, Sprock seems to want to ascend humanity to another level of existence. It is an exploration of mostly metaphysics, some ancient religious lessons (like chakras) and breathing. He speaks of scientific discoveries concerning brain function, consciousness, kinetics, wave vibrations and quantum physics, yet still maintains that God created the universe via ‘spiritual DNA’ and thus, humans still need connection to God.
Jedi is actually the Force. Their identity and worship are intimately entwined with their beliefs concerning this universal energy source. In Christian theological terms, however, all that has happened is that their worship has been distorted and they are actually engaging in idolatry. The Force, in effect, does have power over them, but not in the way they conceive it. For Jedi the movie’s concepts like the Force are more than a reality. They are truth, but they become truth by one’s decision that they are true. The Force, due to their decision to submit to it, has become overriding and demanding, thus becoming an idol.

'What makes something into an absolute is that it is both overriding and demanding. It claims to stand superior to any competing claim, and unlike merely an overriding rule it is also something that provides a program and a cause, thereby demanding dedication and devotion.
Any nonabsolute value that is made absolute and demands to be the center of dedicated life is idolatry' (Halbertal & Margalit, 1992, pp. 245-246).

It is reasonable to argue that the virtual world, from which the Jedi are gleaning much of their understanding of faith and spirituality, would, for Augustine, still be a part of the distorted context of this world. Just because it is the invention of humans, and in one sense somehow apart from them, the virtual world is still trapped in the distortion that is a sinful world. This element of popular culture still has the potential to distort individuals and groups. It is a good question to ask whether the expression of popular culture as found in these religious groups truly gives fundamental joy or whether it is actually a substitute for keeping their adherents in imprisonment. McFadyen would argue that culture does not in fact set people free and nor does the monomyth as one of its contemporary expressions.

McFadyen’s construal of pride\textsuperscript{130} also requires mention here. If Jedi are indeed placing the self as the determiner of human direction and thereby able to choose to worship or follow the Force, in McFadyen’s terms they are guilty of pride and misdirected worship. Jedi have moved out of the right ecology of relationship with God and have established themselves as the determiners of what is good, right and just. By removing God from God’s place of worship and

\textsuperscript{130} Another specifically theological term describing a human state of being in relation to God.
the source of all good, Jedi are thus guilty of pride – they have placed themselves in the position of God. They become a poor copy of the real.

**JEDIISM AS SIMULACRUM**

Jediism can be understood as a simulacrum of religion. French sociologist Jean Baudrillard (in Beaudoin, 1998, p. 147) posits a concept of the simulacrum - 'a copy for which no original exists.'

>'These simulacra - pure imitations whose "real" referent has been lost - are freely at play in our culture...we have moved beyond any certainty about knowledge of reality and can only deal in simulations...each time we think we have found the "real" thing to which a simulation refers, we realize that we have merely discovered another simulation. Because of this...we live in the age not of the "real" but of the "hyperreal." Each simulation refers only to other simulations and can never come to rest on any "real," original ground' (Beaudoin, 1998, p. 147).

Beaudoin (1998, pp. 147-148) observes that pop culture images, like the Wild West of the movies, perpetuate the culture of simulation. The image bears no resemblance to any reality but is its own simulacrum. When reality is separated from the simulation it is possible to have free-floating religious images like crosses, stigmata, baptism, etc discernible in movies as well as music videos and cyberspace. Jameson (in Beaudoin, 1998, p. 148) calls this cultural situation 'surrealism without the unconscious' where the unconscious is no longer needed to concoct or understand the surreal fluidity of ever-changing imagery. He does acknowledge, however, that these virtual realities can help us imagine the real very differently giving us critical, new lenses.

Beaudoin (1998, pp. 148-149) notes that increasingly religious symbols are unhinged from the religious tradition to which they belong resulting in people using them as symbolic 'toolboxes' to give personal meaning without reference to the religion of origin. Generation X, to which the vast majority of Jedi belong, consistently recycle and recontextualise existing imagery and pre-existent texts to create a new and heightened bricolage - a French term meaning an
'improvised, rough assemblage of whatever tools are at hand to solve a problem.'

'Floating between reality and simulation, sifting through culture, and bricolating religious images to deconstruct and reconstruct religious meaning, Xers have learned that the sacred always dresses in the trappings of culture, never apart from it. Knowing this, Xers thrive in their popular culture as one way of encountering the divine' (Beaudoin, 1998, p. 149).

In this sense, it gives the Jedi a legitimacy. They are seeking something greater than themselves, something real. Their journey is valid. Their choice of religious worship however, fails to truly satisfy as it is only a simulation. In their desire to find a spirituality that is real to them and to be heroes in their own lives, Jedi have found only a poor substitution.

**AN IMPORTANT QUESTION**

It is pertinent to ask ourselves a question in light of this discussion. Do we even want to be a hero? It is an incredibly seductive supposition, especially given the pervasiveness of the mythology in contemporary movies, but is it indeed what humans are ultimately to be if they are to experience the full measure of their humanity? Oral stories of the ancient past, religious texts across the world, written tales of courage and bravery, and modern cinema may well have the hero as the central character. It does not necessarily follow that individuals must all be heroes to be fully human as Joseph Campbell purports.

Are humans, or Christians in particular, really called to be heroes? While Campbell may well see Jesus as a hero, Christians see him as the Son of God

> 'who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross' (Philippians 2:6-8)!

Christ's acts suggest more of a servant role and a profound teacher than the traditional hero character.
One may suggest that the horizon of loyalty for Joseph Campbell is the hero and taking the journey to become one. For Christians, however, their horizon of loyalty is God. Is it possible that by succumbing to the mythology of the hero, individuals are actually being swept up in another form of idolatry? An idolatry of self, of human determination and securing one’s heroic destiny? The self becomes the determining factor and the focus of all decisions and actions. The self becomes a little god and thus an idol.

THE TRUTH IN CAPITALIST SOCIETIES?

The prevalent understanding in Western society, and especially in America where the Hollywood machine is situated, is that human decision making is paramount. The dominant economic framework in Western countries is capitalism, which is often associated with the political practice of democracy. It contains elements of the accumulation of wealth, wage labour, competitive trade markets and the private ownership for income and/or profit of the means of production and creation of goods and services. The seductiveness of capitalism can be seen in its promotion, though possibly never explicitly stated, of the idea that any individual can make a fortune, as long as they apply their mind to it. The horizon of loyalty in a capitalist society is thus the creation of wealth. Identity and worth for individuals in that society is shaped by capitalism. Identity can be found predominantly in one’s job or career, especially for men, and in the value of their pay packet. Identity is also found in the accumulation of goods, possessions, a house and anything else that the popular media promotes as ‘necessary’. Money thus becomes something that is worshiped, an idol according to McFadyen’s framework.

The capitalist myth does not seem to be played out in reality. Many people may want to be rich, but cannot find a way of making their ‘dream’ a reality. Capitalism, may in fact, keep the vast majority of people in poverty and service

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131 In Kevin Smith’s comedy *Mallrats* (1995) one character Brodie spies a girl, Trisha Jones, in the local shopping mall and greets her with a cutting and insightful ‘What's a pretty girl like you doin’ sittin’ alone in this monument to consumerism?’ Despite the sleaziness of his greeting, Brodie recognises that the shopping mall is probably the preeminent, certainly the most visual, of the consequences of consumerism. Interestingly, Smith is known for his proclivity of inserting *Star Wars* references into his films.
because it exploits the poor and requires large, cheap workforces to produce the goods that the wealthier desire. Sociology Professor G. William Domhoff (2011) notes the obscene disparity between rich and poor in the USA:

>'In the United States, wealth is highly concentrated in a relatively few hands. As of 2007, the top 1% of households (the upper class) owned 34.6% of all privately held wealth, and the next 19% (the managerial, professional, and small business stratum) had 50.5%, which means that just 20% of the people owned a remarkable 85%, leaving only 15% of the wealth for the bottom 80% (wage and salary workers). In terms of financial wealth (total net worth minus the value of one's home), the top 1% of households had an even greater share: 42.7%. In terms of types of financial wealth, the top one percent of households have 38.3% of all privately held stock, 60.6% of financial securities, and 62.4% of business equity. The top 10% have 80% to 90% of stocks, bonds, trust funds, and business equity, and over 75% of non-home real estate. Since financial wealth is what counts as far as the control of income-producing assets, we can say that just 10% of the people own the United States of America.‘

It would seem that the capitalist myth is only achievable for a small proportion of any given population and the remainder must make do with little wealth. It also demonstrates that power is concentrated in the hands of the few, because wealth is able to influence politics, corporations and shape the social climate in favour of the wealthy. The bottom eighty percent of Americans actually have very little power to organise and respond to this situation (Domhoff, 2011).

It could thus be argued that idolatry, in this case the worship of wealth and power accumulation, results in the oppression of the majority of the population who are enslaved to a system that requires them to continue working to earn money to buy products. How can Joseph Campbell’s monomyth be applied here? It would seem that only a small percentage are able to take the ‘hero’s journey’ to create wealth and thus become fully human. This is a disturbing consequence of the monomyth. Applied in such a way, it can become a source of abuse and greed. Yet it is a myth that is still based on human will and the ability to make decisions.
HUMAN DECISION MAKING

The monomyth presents a particular framework, a worldview, of how individuals can become fully human. At the core of this process is the (supposed) ability of individuals to make their own decisions, to utilise their will and determine their own destiny. This is, however, an illusion. It fails to acknowledge outside influences. It also does not allow for any reference to or appropriate role of culture, society, groups, individual people or God playing a formative part in human history or in the lives of individuals. As such, it is a very limiting and potentially destructive dynamic, placing the human individual at the centre of all existence. It is an incredibly seductive framework. Its prevalence in the storytelling and thus meaning making machines of our time, namely the movies, television, music and culture in general, means that individuals are exposed to it basically on a daily basis. Such exposure, with little public criticism or questioning, results in the vast majority of people believing that it is essentially ‘true’ without consciously realising that they are buying into a myth of the age. Not all individuals can make all their dreams come true, or follow their ‘bliss’ or be a hero. While the search for truth and spirituality is to be commended and encouraged, the monomyth fails to satisfy that search in its entirety.

OTHER PERSPECTIVES

While the results of this thesis have been arrived at after much research and deliberation, they can only ever be one perspective. It cannot be ignored that there are other perspectives. Just as the monomyth may be the dominant plot line of the majority of movies, especially those coming out of America, there are other ways of telling a story and making meaning. This may require some deliberate and conscious effort on the part of movie makers. Currently, there is usually a sense of frustration, incompleteness and lack of positive reinforcement when a movie does not finish the way the monomyth promotes and culture expects.Movies are usually a reinforcement of the enlightenment culture of

132 This can be seen in the author’s recent viewing of Academy Award winning, Iranian film A Separation (Farhadi, 2011). This movie explores the reality of life in a specific Islamic and family context. A typical hero’s journey is absent. At the conclusion of the film, almost the entire
our day which stresses that we are the centre of our existence and can determine our own destiny.

There is the possibility that the more people go to Campbell, the more film makers may realise that this is not the only framework for story telling or for meaning making. In their search for ‘truth’ film makers will hopefully not be satisfied with a singular myth. Rather, they can choose to go beyond this framework and seek to offer films that give a broader portrayal of humanity.

The real search for fulfilment can never be satisfied by a myth. Myths are stories that are cut short and can never portray the fullness of human experience, emotion or belief. Humanity is far too diverse and complex to ever be captured by a single myth framework.

The audience of the local independent cinema remained in their seats discussing the film. Most were expressing frustration that the director had failed to resolve one of the most important plotlines in the movie and left another one open. One audience member was heard to say ‘Well that’s not fair! Now we’ll never know what happened...’ Perhaps this experience portends an opening of different frameworks for telling stories as directors from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds seek to offer stories and thus meaning that stray from the monomyth.
CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSION

'It is hard to laugh at the need for beauty and romance, no matter how tasteless, even horrible, the results of that need are. But it is easy to sigh. Few things are sadder than the truly monstrous.'

Tod Hackett’s response to seeing two garish sets on location in Hollywood.
Nathanael West (1939, 1991, p. 8)

We live in a time where one of the dominant paradigms of the Western world is presented in Joseph Campbell’s monomyth and readily distributed through the medium of movies.\(^{133}\) The monomyth is a very important and powerful concept – it legitimates a particular worldview that is widely accepted and rarely critiqued. It affects us greatly through the movies that we watch, constantly repeating the mantra that individuals can make their own decisions, create their own destiny and thus become fully human.

This thesis has sought to delve into Joseph Campbell’s monomyth from a theological perspective. It has attempted a theological critique of the monomyth and its deliberate use in movies to create meaning as well as to examine whether that meaning making has resulted in groups of people with religious expressions. As the thesis comes to an end it is important to examine the four issues raised in its examination.

THEOLOGICAL CRITIQUE

The monomyth is a particular framework for understanding myth. It is not the only approach, however, and anthropologists, sociologists and theologians alike have proposed a variety of ways to understand and utilise myth. Campbell’s monomyth is thus a ‘sub story’ in the history of the study of myth. Yet it is possibly the best known framework in the popular mindset and as such exudes

\(^{133}\) One of the clearest examples of the monomyth in movies can be found expressed in the Star Wars franchise.
a particular ‘dominance’ over other ways of understanding myth. It is a powerful framework that has garnered popular support since it was conceived in the late 1940’s. One of the clearest reasons for its popularity is that it resonates with a worldview moulded by the Enlightenment and modernist thinking. Secondly, the movies are a powerful medium to promote it. Does popularity and wide usage, however, mean that the monomyth is ‘right’ or ‘true’?

To answer this question, it is important to listen to Campbell’s critics. The monomyth is not the only way to understand myths. Nor is it the one formula to ensure humans reach their fullness. It is set in its own context, its own time and place, its own *Sitz im Leben*. It is one individual's attempt to explain, in the middle of the twentieth century, the reason behind the many similarities between myths from all over the world. Campbell was a person of Modern times and as an American national, heavily influenced by the concept of the ‘American Dream’. As such, Campbell needs to be understood in his context and the limitations of his theory established.

The monomyth presents a worldview concerning human will, freedom and destiny. It places the individual human being at the centre of their existence and claims that they have the power to decide their destiny. The assumptions of this worldview are shown to be at odds with classical understandings of Christian theology as presented by McFadyen.

Firstly, a traditional Western Christian perspective does not affirm the concept that human beings can choose their own destiny, can become whatever they want and have the power of will to make their dreams reality.\textsuperscript{134} According to Augustine, whose concepts have been followed for most of Western church history\textsuperscript{135}, humanity is actually trapped in a distorted world, bounded by inherited sin. Humans actually have no true freedom at all, because the distortion does not allow it. Any form of freedom is merely an illusion. Without the intervention of God in human affairs, all humanity would remain entrapped. Yet sin and the fallen state of humans is so normalised that those trapped do not even recognise the prison. The Christ event demonstrates that humans

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{134} Nor does the majority of the world’s religions.
\footnotesize\textsuperscript{135} Augustine’s theology has recently been re-examined and re-contextualised by McFadyen (2000) in relation to sin, idolatry and worship.
cannot save themselves. Rather, Jesus, in his crucifixion and resurrection, implements the salvation of humanity. Humans cannot decide their salvation. They can merely respond to the gospel message with grateful acceptance. Human destiny is seen most perfectly fulfilled when one aligns one’s will and journey with God’s. The monomyth presents a worldview where the individual, not God, is the centre of existence and enjoys total power over their lives. This is due to the fact that they can make decisions. The choice to participate in the hero’s journey, and to face whatever it brings, results in the creation of a hero. The decision not to choose or to choose poorly results in a failure. The human being is raised to the determiner of destiny, becoming a ‘god’. As such, from a historical Christian understanding of God, the monomyth can be concluded to be a distortion of reality. To put it in direct language, it is idolatrous. It is a distortion of reality, but, like most idolatrous frameworks, one that has become so normalised that those who believe and follow it do not even realise that this is the case.

Secondly, Joseph Campbell’s monomyth was not the only understanding of myth being presented in the mid twentieth century. Rudolf Bultmann proposed the idea of the Gnostic Redeemer myth in which the Christ event needed to be understood in mythic terms. Its true meaning would only be divulged once the story was demythologised and stripped of all its first century Gnostic influence. Campbell and Bultmann both suffer from being men of their time. Modernist thinking held to the idea that one overarching framework could explain everything. Hence, the monomyth explained all myths for Campbell and demythologisation held the key to understanding Christian Scriptures for Bultmann. For Campbell, taking a hero’s journey resulted in the individual finding their true self and becoming fully human. Bultmann understood that becoming fully human was the result of responding in faith to the proclamation of the demythologised kerygma. Campbell interprets myth through a symbolic and psychological framework, while Bultmann does the same using an existential framework. They fail to acknowledge the variety of other ways that myth can be analysed and utilised. Both are using myth in a very particular way and in differing ways attempting to explain contemporary life with one overarching framework.
Thirdly, this thesis has argued that the monomyth is a substitution conversion story for the 20\textsuperscript{th} and 21\textsuperscript{st} centuries, as presented in the previous chapter. What is meant by this phrase is the idea that one can be saved from their situation, circumstances, or in a religious sense, their sin, through the saving power of someone or something else. In the monomyth we make the decision to free ourselves from our constraints. The individual has the power to save themselves. They simply have to make a decision to do so and take the journey that will fulfil that salvation. But is this a viable option for most people? Too many other influences, out of one’s decision making ability or control, happen for this to be the whole truth. For example, the crippling effects of multigenerational poverty can make it impossible for the majority of people in that situation to ever get out, let alone become wealthy. Some social, cultural or religious conditions that mean particular individuals cannot choose their future. This can be demonstrated by girls not being allowed to have an education in some cultures, thus limiting their choices, or people with disabilities being excluded from employment in certain jobs. A person suffering from dementia or terminal cancer has very limited ability to control decisions concerning their future. Prisoners, especially those facing the death penalty, have little freedom to choose their own destiny. Women and children trapped in slavery, trafficking and the illegal sex trade are very vulnerable and have virtually no way of making decisions that affect their future.\textsuperscript{136} With so many theological holes, the monomyth is a framework built on sand.

\textbf{THE AMERICAN MOVIE INDUSTRY’S USE OF THE MONOMYTH}

Yet, if the monomyth fails on a theological level to convey truth or reality, why is it so pervasive in the plotlines of movies? Why does this particular formula hold such a powerful grip on the American movie making industry? Joseph

\textsuperscript{136} A graphic portrayal of this is found in the movie \textit{The Whistleblower} (Kondracki, 2011). Based on the true story of Kathryn Bolkovac, an American policewoman who joins the United Nations peacekeeping force in Bosnia and exposes their involvement in the illegal trafficking and sex slavery of women, it is a disturbing account of women trapped in this dehumanising trade. Even when the women are offered a way out of their circumstances, the fear, torture and manipulation they have endured, meant that the vast majority of them were too afraid to take the chance. They knew if they were ever caught, they would be tortured and killed. The ability to make decisions for a positive future was virtually nil. While Kathryn is presented as the hero character in the film and the monomyth is followed accordingly, the girls are simply presented as victims of the perpetrators and the system that supports them.
Campbell’s monomyth is a seventeen phase framework that he believes shapes the stories, myths and hero legends of all civilisations, ages, religions and cultures. It explores the life and choices of the central hero character who is given the opportunity to journey from their ordinary world into a new one filled with challenges, battles, and rewards. They are joined by threshold guardians, mentors, shadow figures and fellow sojourners. Often there is major interaction with a father figure and a goddess character. Ultimately, the hero, if they have chosen wisely and fought valiantly, will win the ultimate boon and be able to return to their own world with the ability to teach others about the journey. We can begin to see why this framework might be suitable for film – it offers a huge variety of settings, characters, conflicts and possibilities for storytelling and a grand adventure for a hero.

‘For Campbell, the hero of a myth is heroic for two reasons. First, he does what no one else will or can do. Second, he does it on behalf of everyone else as well as himself. No one else dares or manages to venture forth to a strange, supernatural world, confront yet usually befriend its inhabitants, and return home to share their bounty with his fellow man...The hero may be a prince, a warrior, a saint, or a god. He can be a local hero or a universal one. The treasure he seeks can be wealth, a bride, or wisdom. He can be seeking it for only his people or for all mankind. If literally a hero discovers a strange external world, symbolically, or psychologically, he discovers a strange internal one. Literally, the hero discovers that there is more to the world than the physical world. Symbolically, he discovers that there is more to him than his consciousness. Literally, the hero discovers the ultimate nature of the world. Symbolically, he discovers his own ultimate nature. He discovers his true identity. He discovers who he really is’ (Segal, 1987, pp. 4-5).

The monomyth was posited most clearly in the book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). In it, Campbell uses dozens of mythic examples from a myriad of cultures and times to demonstrate each stage of the monomyth. Campbell not only describes the stages in detail, using examples, but he also suggests that common archetypes can be found in these myths. The wise old man, trickster, shapeshifter, goddess, shadow, threshold guardian, amongst others, and, of course, the hero character, can be found repeated in myths from all over the world and at all times. These characters can be seen to be assisting the hero on their journey, resisting or opposing the hero or perhaps even tempting them to
take a different path. They progress the story in some fashion for the hero. Again, the suitability of the archetypes for movies can be identified. As easily recognisable types, they offer the possibility of a huge cast of characters for movies.

Campbell believes, based on Freudian and Jungian psychology, that this framework is also the pattern that all individuals need to take to become fully human. All the opportunities that life throws at a person are invitations to take a journey and become a hero in one’s own context. The battles faced might be relational, career focused, the challenges of aging – anything that people face in their lives. If they face them and choose to journey along the path, they can be a hero, a human being who ‘follows their bliss’. The archetypal figures are also universally subconscious. They are figures that Campbell argues all people can recognise and relate to because they are imbedded in the human psyche. As such, myths become entirely relatable for individuals, because they speak of the human condition and the human need to learn, grow and better oneself. This is another reason why the monomyth is deliberately used in movies – it suggests ways of dealing with an infinite number of problems, issues and conflicts and how to respond as an individual.\textsuperscript{137} For Campbell, myth needs to be used, or lived by, as well as believed. Myths are useable in this manner because they are true, in that they can help an individual to improve themselves and societies to function properly.

‘Admittedly, when Campbell says that myth functions to keep society intact, its efficacy depends on only the belief in its veracity: Myth can doubtless work as effectively when members of society believe it true as when it really is true. But when Campbell says, far more often, that myth functions to reveal a deeper reality, to enable man to experience that reality, to enable him to experience the world as awesome and mysterious, and to guide him through stages of life, its efficacy depends on its veracity. To say that myth serves to reveal a deeper reality is surely to assume that that reality exists. Otherwise myth could not serve its function. Even to say that myth serves to guide man through life is surely to presuppose that myth is sufficiently in touch with reality to be able to guide him’ (Segal, 1987, pp. 136-137)

\textsuperscript{137} The problem arises if the monomyth is utilised to present a particular way of behaving or a particular agenda that suits some people in power whilst oppressing others as suggested by Brin (1999).
As has been shown, Campbell’s monomyth is so general that any story could be made to fit it, especially when he says that not all phases need to be included in a myth and sometimes two or more phases get morphed into the one piece of action. This is one of the reasons for its suitability for the movies. The scope of the settings, characters and situations is virtually without limit. It is male dominated and does not take into account the differing experience of heroines. Segal’s (1987, p. 140) telling comment against Campbell is that first he spends far too much time revelling in myth and not enough in actually analysing it. Secondly, he contradicts himself on why myths are the same, whether they are indeed the same and what the actual message of myth is. Thirdly, he also fails to prove that his claims about the psychological and symbolic nature of myth are actually true. Brin (1999) and other’s major criticism is that by relying on the monomyth, authors, storytellers and scriptwriters are pumping out unoriginal and predictable stories and movies. At its worst, the monomyth is criticised as a worldview with an agenda, one that keeps the rich and powerful in their positions of authority and everyone else oppressed to do their bidding. It is claimed to be undemocratic and elitist.

Nevertheless, the monomyth framework is highly suited to Hollywood for storytelling and especially movie script writing. Christopher Vogler was one of the people who recognised and popularised its use in movie scripts. Currently, the vast majority of movies that are produced in America follow this pattern. It is used in all genres from romantic comedies to science fiction and thrillers. The hero may be male or female, human, alien or animal. The mentor may be an actual wise old man, but could just as easily be a work colleague, a parent or a friend. The journey might be as recognisable as finding a love interest or as far-fetched as saving the universe. The ultimate boon may be a magic sword or the girl or recognising the value of oneself. The combinations are limitless and as such, infinitely suitable for movie scripts, especially those influenced by an American worldview.

The American movie industry, most famous for Hollywood, grew out of a pioneering spirit and the concept of the American dream. It has, however, also

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138 This phenomenon can certainly be seen at the movies with a marked majority of movies having a male lead, ‘hero’ character.
perpetuated that very same idea; the dream that anyone can ‘make it’, no matter your background, upbringing or ethnicity. The major Hollywood studios were born from the determination of a group of Jewish American men who believed in this very dream and wanted to show it on the big screen. They were the epitome of the American dream and they perpetuated it by making and showing movies that embraced its precepts. The downcast could become rich, the guy could get the girl, the family could overcome the odds, and people could live ‘happily ever after’.

Today, the monomyth continues to be utilised, especially now that it has been strategically identified as an important and almost ‘foolproof’ way of telling a story. Christopher Vogler’s company memo for Walt Disney Studios, at a time when the company had made several films that had not done well at the box office, was very important. *A Practical Guide to Joseph Campbell’s The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Vogler, 1985) was one of the driving forces behind *The Lion King* (Allers & Minkoff, 1994), one of Disney’s most profitable movies. Its success and its reliance on the monomyth formula, ensured that the hero’s journey pattern would be used extensively, if not almost exclusively, by the major American film studios.

The monomyth’s three stage formula is a nice fit for movies that mostly utilise a three act structure. It is broad and general allowing for a huge variety of plotlines, characters and settings to be utilised. It is also a recognisable formula, making it somewhat ‘reassuring’ for movie goers. The vast majority of movies have everything working out in the end, the shadow figure getting their just rewards and the hero ‘saving the day’, whatever context that might be. The monomyth is such a popular and pervasive storytelling technique in American movies, that one can be forgiven for thinking that it is the only formula available to moviemakers.

An existential framework is another way of telling stories that is utilised mostly in European filmmaking. Instead of a solitary hero having to make a journey, real or psychological, an existential movie simply presents life as it is.\(^\text{139}\) The characters are presented in realistic contexts, may or may not face challenges,\(^\text{139}\) Supposedly!

\(^\text{139}\) Supposedly!
but do not take a specific journey to be a better person or to ‘save the day’. Rather, life happens to them and they are merely participants or even victims, of their circumstances. The monomyth is not followed in these movies. As such, they can appear rather defeatist, disappointing and unresolved to audiences who are used to the monomyth framework.

In a sense, an existential framework is a denial of the monomyth and as such it is not just another story telling technique. It is utilised mostly in Europe where people and nations have experienced two World Wars. There is a sense in which they are not willing to accept overly simplistic explanations of reality. This thesis has demonstrated that there is at least one other way of structuring a film and telling a story in this medium. It is important to recognise that films do not have to be ‘trapped’ in the one worldview of the monomyth.

The monomyth is utilised in movies also because of its supposed universality. The recurring, familiar characters, the challenging situations, the choices made by the hero are argued to be reflected in the human mind, echoed in our dreams and therefore relatable. The viewer can take a movie and apply the scenario presented to their own lives because it is meant to be a ‘psychologically true’ portrayal of humanity. This is why a space opera like Avatar (Cameron, 2009) or Star Wars (Lucas, 1977) or a period drama like Good (Amorim, 2008), for example, can still be relatable. The audience can place themselves in the shoes of a particular character and identify in some way, even though they have never been in space or alive at the time portrayed in a movie. They can in some way take the decisions made by the movie characters and apply them to their own situation even though they may be completely different.

THE MONOMYTH, MOVIES AND MEANING MAKING

The common and often deliberate use of the monomyth in movies, and the ability for audiences to identify with them, has an important side effect. It promotes a particular worldview – one that says that the individual has the power to choose their destiny. The seat of all power lies within the individual
and as such, they have the ability to use their will and decision making processes to determine the outcome of their lives. This thesis has shown that the monomyth is a powerful basis for democratic individualism. Democracy promotes the idea of freedom and an important concept of freedom is the ability to live as one chooses.

‘Where democracy exists, there will be individualism. The historical record shows that democracy inevitably engenders individualism...The defining characteristic of democracy is freedom, and the oldest democratic concept of freedom is the Greek one: To be free is to live as one likes. Versions of that definition are found wherever people are or aspire to be democratic. To live as one likes means that one is allowed to try out various roles in life. Each person is more than any single role, function, or place in society. Individualism consists in that idea. Only democracy inspires it. It is also true that democracy, in reaction, produces antidemocratic individualism’ (Kateb, 2003).

Movies, by using the monomyth framework, legitimise this particular worldview. They promote the very idea that every person is free to choose what they will be, how they will behave and the success they will enjoy. The monomyth’s basic understanding is that your decisions make you who you are. It says that individual decision making is the powerful tool to be a hero. It is the capitalist myth in a phrase, because it suggests that anything is possible if you decide it, including becoming rich. When it promotes the idea that anyone can be a millionaire, if they just put their mind to it, the monomyth helps to support a capitalist worldview.

It is important for individuals and communities to recognise the worldview that is being ‘sold’ to them when they watch the majority of movies. It is pervasive and has entered into the popular mindset – that we can be whatever we choose to be. Viewers, if they are not aware of this, are being manipulated, simply due to the fact that they are constantly being fed a single cultural milieu.

Another by-product of the use of the monomyth in movies is that it helps create meaning for those who watch films. The ability to identify with characters, their experiences and their circumstances means that viewers can take meaning

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140 After all, one has usually paid for the privilege of viewing a movie.
from the journey and resolution presented in the movie. This meaning making has resulted in many people, mostly in Generation X and younger, who have fused spirituality with popular culture. Music, television, art and other contemporary multimedia have the ability to create meaning for participants. Theologian Tom Beaudoin (1998, p. xiv) acknowledges that popular culture is a major meaning-making system for Generation X. Many of life's most religious experiences occur outside religious institutions, especially when those of Generation X are distant from them (even if they attend regularly). This becomes even more pertinent when many Generation X individuals have borne the brunt of relationship breakdowns, family dysfunction and failed promises of older generations so hardship and suffering are common experiences. Religion is meant to ‘answer’ these problems.

'A generation on such intimate terms with popular culture is bound to practice religion at least partly in and through this medium. We express our religious interests, dreams, fears, hopes, and desires through popular culture' (Beaudoin, 1998, p. xiv).

Movies are in a unique and quite powerful position to do this due to their combination of visuals, story, music, dialogue and relatable characters. The experience of attending a movie is also conducive to meaning making. Sitting in a darkened cinema, completely withdrawn from the normal locus of the world, surrounded by unknown bodies, an individual invites the possibility of a liminal experience. They give permission to the director, producer, screenwriter and actors to tell them a story; a story of how things can be, should be, have been, a story that has the potential to change lives.

THE MONOMYTH AND JEDIISM

The way that movies provide meaning for individuals varies from person to person. It is clear, however, that this meaning making does indeed occur. Groups of people can come away from a movie with similar meaning making experiences. They can also find others who have shared that experience and begin a more formal relationship. A very strong example is the case of modern
Followers of Jediism have found deep and profound meaning for their lives in the philosophies, characters and storylines shown in the Star Wars movies and the larger franchise of books, television shows, comics and games. The Force has moved from being a fictional creation of George Lucas to a legitimate and real energy source that Jedi claim can be scientifically explained using, as yet unproven, quantum physics. For Jedi, though they may have different ideas on what the Force actually is, how to utilise its power and how a Jedi should live in this world, it is clear that the Star Wars universe offers them a way of journeying through their human existence. A revealing dialogue in a Star Wars fan film Fanboys (Haynes, 2003) illustrates the desire of some fans for a more honourable and just way of life:

**Comic Store Owner**: ‘You’re obsessed.’

**Markus**: ‘I look at the way of the world and I see fear, I see hate, I see injustice. I look at the world of Star Wars and I see honour, I see heroism and adventure and the good guys always win. Now I ask you, which do you think is the better path to follow?’

**Comic Store Owner**: ‘That’s because you prefer a black and white world with clearly defined choices where everything’s simple. Well I’ve got news for you - life ain’t like that and I prefer reality.’

**Markus**: ‘Reality sucks! Get it away from me! Besides, it’s a big universe out there. Who’s to say that somewhere out there this isn’t actually happening?’ (While pointing to the cover of a Star Wars comic.)

The heroic actions of the fictional Jedi and their honourable way of life are appealing. They stand against oppression and injustice, protect the poor, innocent and downtrodden. They have high values and clear cut rules to abide by. It is no wonder that a particular group of people, especially in a post modern, all views are acceptable, Western world, would turn to Jediism for a moral framework to follow.

Although there may not be a single, consistent Jedi philosophy or set of codified beliefs, it is clear that Jedi have found meaning in the Star Wars movies. Jedi meet together, mostly online, but also physically, to discuss Jedi philosophy, to

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141 Other examples include common fan groupings like Trekkies (inspired by Star Trek) and Twi-hards (fans of the Twilight series) through to people who get spiritual or religious meaning from specific areas of popular culture like Juggalos (worshippers who find religious symbolism in US rap band, Insane Clown Posse) and Matrixism (otherwise known as ‘The Path of the One’, the religion spawned by the Matrix movies which claims to have approximately 2000 adherents worldwide (“Matrixism,” 2012)).
do good for others in need and to walk together as a community of like-minded people. They may practice swordsmanship and physical fitness, but it does seem to be a mostly spiritual and philosophical expression of their belief system. Being a Jedi gives purpose to their lives as can be witnessed on the forum pages of various Jedi ‘church’ websites. One must ask, however, whether this is a distorted form of worship, especially from classical theological terms as presented by McFadyen.

It is important to investigate the theological implications of popular culture spawning groups that have religious expression. To do this, one must have some grasp of theology, culture and human behaviour. Beaudoin (1998, pp. 29-30) notes that 'Theology has to do with culture because theology has to do with living religiously, which always takes place within a culture.' Theology is thus always created within a particular cultural perspective. Theology is talk about God, a *logos* (word or reason) about a *theos* (god).\(^{142}\) A key component of the religious is when an individual or a group discover a limit to their human experience. Catholic theologian Karl Rahner (in Beaudoin, 1998, p. 31) believes that 'the very commonness of everyday things harbors the eternal marvel and silent mystery of God.' It could be argued then that popular culture, a prevalent everyday thing, can harbour something\(^{143}\) of the mystery of God. The individuals involved in pop culture religiosity are spiritual seekers, desiring to live their lives for a higher purpose. The Jedi are an example of this new generation of seekers.

The meaning Jedi have found in the *Star Wars* stories has impacted their lives, affected their decisions, and exercises power over their being. As such, theologian Alistair McFadyen (2000) would argue that Jedi are caught in a distorted reality. The Force, according to McFadyen’s understanding, exercises dominance and control over them. Jedi no longer enjoy the freedom that they believe they have, derived from their chosen belief structure. Rather, they are bound by a ‘force’ that controls and dominates them. Thus Jediism, as McFadyen (2000, p. 229) states in the case of child sexual abuse, is

\(^{142}\) For Christians, this is the God of the Biblical scriptures. For Jedi, however, this would be considered the Force.

\(^{143}\) But not the fullness.
'...a clear, concrete manifestation of the dynamics pertaining to worship: the direction of all energies towards demands which do not only override, but exclude, all other loyalties and which are lived as foundational to identity, relation, meaning, worth and truth. Nothing transcends this locus of commitment, which energises and orients being-in-relation by establishing itself as a total enclosure of living.'

The people who follow Jediism are legitimate seekers. They are searching for a moral framework and a spiritual experience that is meaningful and fulfilling in their lives. The fact that there is something greater than themselves, what they label the ‘Force’, is real to them. This would suggest a level of openness to spiritual ideas and concepts.

**FINAL SUMMARY**

The theological critique has elucidated the ‘dark side’ of the monomyth for individual and society. The monomyth is a framework that offers a distorted worldview, one in which individuals are placed at the centre of their existence with the power to choose and create their own destiny, in order to become fully human. The normalisation of this worldview means that it is not readily critiqued. It is heavily promoted through movies which offer a powerful medium for meaning making. It allows for the emergence of groups of people that find spiritual and religious meaning in movies.

Yet, as has been clearly shown by Segal, Brim and others, this is a dated universalising of myth that has great power because it underlines and reinforces the key concepts of the powerful in a capitalistic society.

This is not a denial of the importance of movie making, but a call for directors to move beyond formulas and patterns that are distorted. When even Christian movies fall into the same trap of presenting life in a monomyth pattern, we need to look carefully at what is being promoted. Directors and producers who are not bound by the monomyth and explore life in different ways need to be acknowledged and encouraged.
## APPENDIX 1
### MOVIE ANALYSES

**HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER’S STONE**  
(Columbus, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage in the Hero’s Journey</th>
<th>Film Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ordinary World</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero’s normal world before the story begins.</td>
<td>Harry Potter is an orphan living with his aunt and uncle in London’s suburbia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. DEPARTURE</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Call to Adventure</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero is presented with a problem, challenge or adventure to undertake.</td>
<td>After hundreds of magical letters accepting Harry to Hogwarts’s School of Witchcraft and Wizardry invade the household, the uncle moves the family to an island. Hagrid, a wizard, finds him there and gives him a letter, informing Harry that he is in fact a wizard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refusal of the Call</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero refuses the challenge or journey, usually out of fear.</td>
<td>Harry does not believe Hagrid, stating that he is ‘just Harry’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Meeting with the Mentor**<br>The hero meets a mentor to gain confidence, advice or training to face the adventure. | Hagrid ‘rescues’ Harry from the ‘muggles’.  
Eventually, Harry meets Professor Albus Dumbledore, who will be his guide and mentor throughout the movie and series. |
<p>| <strong>Crossing the First Threshold</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero crosses the gateway that separates the ordinary world from the special world. | Hagrid takes Harry to Diagon Alley where he begins to get his wizarding equipment, including books, and owl and importantly, his wand. |
| <strong>5. The Belly of the Whale</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero is immersed in the new world and is transformed. | Harry, with the help of the Weasleys, finds his way onto Platform 9¾ where he finds himself on a train headed to Hogwarts. Once there, rules are explained, he is sorted into Gryffindor House and is shown to his rooms. Eventually, he starts school. |
| <strong>B. INITIATION</strong>&lt;br&gt;Tests, Allies, Enemies&lt;br&gt;The hero faces tests, | Harry makes friends with several students, especially Ron Weasley and Hermoine Granger. There are some supportive teachers. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Approach** | The hero has hit setbacks during tests & may need to reorganize his helpers or rekindle morale with mentor’s rally cry. Stakes heightened. | 1. **The Road of Trials**<br>Harry finds enemies in Professor Severus Snape and Professor Quirinus Quirrell.<br>Harry discovers that he is a natural Quiddich Seeker and makes the catch in his first match to take Gryffindor to victory.  
2. **The Meeting with the Goddess**<br>Hermoine shows Harry on a school trophy that his father was also a Quiddich Seeker.  
Harry is prevented by Dumbledore from being distracted by a mirror that shows you your deepest desires. In it he sees his parents and himself as a family again.  
3. **Woman as the Temptress** | 4. **Atonement with the Father**<br>Harry, helped by Ron and Hermoine, face a three headed giant dog, a suffocating plant, flying keys, a locked door and a real game of Wizard’s Chess. |
| **Ordeal** | The biggest life or death crisis – the hero faces his greatest fear & only through “death” can the hero be “reborn” experiencing even greater powers to see the journey to the end. | 5. **Apotheosis**<br>Harry looks into a magical mirror which results in him gaining the Philosopher’s Stone, which can give the bearer eternal life. |
| **Reward** | The hero has survived death, overcome his greatest fear and now earns the reward he sought. | 6. **The Ultimate Boon**<br>Harry must complete the journey alone after the Wizard’s Chess match is completed through Ron’s self-sacrifice. He heads into the last chamber alone to find Professor Quirrell. |
| **C. RETURN** | The hero must recommit to completing the journey & travel the road back to the Ordinary World. The dramatic question is asked again. | 1. **Refusal of the Return**<br>Harry faces Lord Voldemort, who killed his parents, and manages to defeat him through touch and by not using the Philosopher’s Stone for personal gain.  
2. **The Magic Flight**<br>Harry must complete the journey alone after the Wizard’s Chess match is completed through Ron’s self-sacrifice. He heads into the last chamber alone to find Professor Quirrell.  
3. **Rescue from Without**<br>Harry looks into a magical mirror which results in him gaining the Philosopher’s Stone, which can give the bearer eternal life.  
4. **The Crossing of the Return** |
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<th><strong>Threshold</strong></th>
<th><strong>Return with Elixir</strong></th>
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<td></td>
<td>The hero returns from the journey with the “elixir”, so everyone in the world can use to heal physical or emotional wounds.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td><em>Master of the Two Worlds</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td><em>Freedom to Live</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harry wakes up in the school sick bay where Dumbledore explains that love is what saved him from Voldemort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harry, Ron, Hermoine and Neville Longbottom’s efforts help Gryffindor to win the House Cup, defeating Slytherin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Archetypes in the Film

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archetype</th>
<th>Who plays this Archetype in the Film?</th>
<th>How do you know?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Hero</td>
<td>Harry Potter makes the major hero’s journey from orphan to victorious wizard.</td>
<td>Harry Potter makes the major hero’s journey from orphan to victorious wizard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ron and Hermione also have smaller hero’s journeys to make, learning about friendship and sacrifice.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td>Professor Dumbledore, who provides Harry with advice and wisdom at important stages in the story.</td>
<td>Professor Dumbledore, who provides Harry with advice and wisdom at important stages in the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hagrid, who helps Harry to take the first steps to becoming a wizard.</td>
<td>Hagrid, who helps Harry to take the first steps to becoming a wizard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trickster</td>
<td>Hagrid, who accidentally lets slip a number of details to help Harry, Ron and Hermione to gain access to the three headed dog and what it is guarding.</td>
<td>Hagrid, who accidentally lets slip a number of details to help Harry, Ron and Hermione to gain access to the three headed dog and what it is guarding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow</td>
<td>Lord Voldemort, the epitome of evil in the story and the murderer of Harry's parents along with many other magical folk.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shapeshifter</td>
<td>Professor Quirrell, who stutters and behaves nervously, yet is an agent of Voldemort's.</td>
<td>Professor Quirrell, who stutters and behaves nervously, yet is an agent of Voldemort's.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professor Snape, who appears to be an enemy, but is actually protecting Harry.</td>
<td>Professor Snape, who appears to be an enemy, but is actually protecting Harry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herald</td>
<td>Hagrid, announcing that Harry is a Wizard</td>
<td>Hagrid, announcing that Harry is a Wizard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threshold Guardian</td>
<td>The Magic Wall that separates the Muggle world from the magical. It requires magic to pass through.</td>
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## Stage in the Hero’s Journey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ordinary World</th>
<th>Film Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The hero’s normal world before the story begins. | Farm boy who gets himself into trouble, fights and has no ambition to change the situation. He is a ‘genius level repeat offender’.
Spock is part of the Vulcan world and tormented as a child due to his half-breed status. |

## A. DEPARTURE

### Call to Adventure

The hero is presented with a problem, challenge or adventure to undertake.

1. **Call to Adventure**
   - Captain Pike meets Kirk in a bar and challenges him, with the memory of his father’s bravery to go to Star Fleet Academy, daring him to do better than his father’s 12 minute experience of captain.
   - Spock’s father encourages him to take control of his destiny. His mother assures him that she will be proud of him no matter what he decides to do.

### Refusal of the Call

The hero refuses the challenge or journey, usually out of fear.

1. **Refusal of the Call**
   - Kirk refuses Pike while discussing it at the bar.
   - Spock refuses entry to the Vulcan Science Academy due to the inference that he is disadvantaged due to having a human mother. He has also applied to Star Fleet so goes there instead.

### Meeting with the Mentor

The hero meets a mentor to gain confidence, advice or training to face the adventure.

3. **Supernatural Aid**
   - Kirk meets Pike at a bar after getting into a fight with Star Fleet Academy soldiers. Dr Leonard McCoy gives Kirk an infection in order to get him on the USS Enterprise to avoid being grounded.
   - He later meets with the older Ambassador Spock.
   - Spock meets Kirk at the Academy.

### Crossing the First Threshold

The hero crosses the gateway that separates the ordinary world from the special world.

4. **The Crossing of the First Threshold**
   - Kirk gets on the shuttle and leaves earth for Star Fleet Academy.

5. **The Belly of the Whale**
   - Kirk ‘cheats’ to pass an unwinnable Academy test. He fails to understand the purpose of the test – to face fear, remain in control and experience a simulated death.

## B. INITIATION

### Tests, Allies, Enemies

The hero faces tests, meets allies, confronts enemies & learns the rules of the Special World.

Kirk has to stop the Enterprise from flying into a Romulan trap lead by Captain Nero in his futuristic vehicle the Nerada, utilising the linguistic skills of Uhura, comedic medical skills of McCoy, piloting ability of Sulu and transportation adeptness of Chekov. His ‘hunch’ proves to be logically sound.
Kirk and Sulu have to disable a laser drilling platform that is disrupting their transportation and communication systems.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. <strong>The Road of Trials</strong></th>
<th>Spock is promoted to Acting Captain and must rescue the Vulcan High Council including his parents. His mother dies in the transportation. It is revealed that Spock and Uhura are in a relationship. Uhura is the emotional hook that Spock needs at his darkest hour.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>The Meeting with the Goddess</strong></td>
<td>Kirk is removed from the Enterprise when he disagrees with Spock and is marooned on Delta Vaga. It is here that Spock informs him of the future events that caused the destruction of the Kelvin and the subsequent events. It is here that they find Scotty who proves indispensible in saving the Enterprise and Earth. Kirk forces Spock to show his passionate anger and therefore gains the Captaincy of the Enterprise. Spock has lost his home planet and all but 10000 odd Vulcans. He is now a part of ‘an endangered species’. Spock’s father reveals his love for his wife, calming Spock and giving him insight into Vulcan emotion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3. **Woman as the Temptress** | **Approach**  
The hero has hit setbacks during tests & may need to reorganize his helpers or rekindle morale with mentor’s rally cry. Stakes heightened.  
4. **Atonement with the Father** |
| **Ordeal** | Kirk battles Nero, rescues Pike. Spock flies the red matter ship into the Romulan vessel destroying their enemies. |
| **Reward** | Kirk is promoted and commended for his valour. Spock meets his older self and gains new insight into his character and person. He is advised to pass over logic in this instance and do what feels right. |
| **C. RETURN** | Kirk offers help to the Romulans, but when it is refused, attacks the ship before it succumbs to the black hole. Spock commits to staying with Star Fleet, rather than resign and rebuild Vulcan |
| **The Road Back** | Kirk, Spock and Pike are beamed out by Scotty. |
| **Refusal of the Return** | **Resurrection**  
Hero faces most dangerous meeting with death – this shows the hero can apply all the wisdom he’s brought back to the Ordinary World.  
3. **Rescue from Without**  
4. **The Crossing of the Return** |
<table>
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<th>Threshold</th>
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</table>
| **Return with Elixir**  
The hero returns from the journey with the “elixir”, so everyone in the world can use to heal physical or emotional wounds.  
5. **Master of the Two Worlds**  
6. **Freedom to Live** | Kirk gains the Captaincy of the USS Enterprise.  
Spock is given the First Officer’s position. |
## ARCHETYPES IN THE FILM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archetype</th>
<th>Who plays this Archetype in the Film?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Hero</strong></td>
<td>James T Kirk (father Lt George Kirk died protecting him, his mother and 800 crew against an alien attack on their craft the USS Kelvin, while his mother was giving birth to him). Spock (half human, half Vulcan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentor</strong></td>
<td>Captain Pike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spock Prime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spock's father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trickster</strong></td>
<td>Dr Leonard McCoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chekov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scotty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow</strong></td>
<td>Captain Nero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shapeshifter</strong></td>
<td>The four Star Fleet Academy security men who are at the bar and on the shuttle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Commander who informs Kirk that he is on academic suspension and therefore grounded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Vulcan Ministers of Science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Herald</strong></td>
<td>Captain Pike</td>
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</table>

(Adamson, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage in the Hero's Journey</th>
<th>Film Component</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary World</td>
<td>The Pevensie children are living in London at the time of the Second World War.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. DEPARTURE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call to Adventure</td>
<td>The German bombing of London results in the children being sent to the country for safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Call to Adventure</td>
<td>The four children say their farewells to their mother at the station with her instructions to look after the others, to listen to Peter and to be a big girl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal of the Call</td>
<td>Susan, Edmund and Peter refuse to believe Lucy's tale of a world beyond the wardrobe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with the Mentor</td>
<td>Lucy meets Mr Tumnus who introduces her to Narnia. At tea he reveals that he was going to kidnap her for the White Witch, but then releases her, jeopardising himself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Supernatural Aid</td>
<td>Edmund meets his more sinister mentor, the White Witch, who beguiles him with Turkish Delight, hot chocolate and a promise of being a king.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Crossing of the First Threshold</td>
<td>Professor Kirke mentors Peter and Susan to believe their younger sister, hinting that he has some knowledge of this other world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossing the First Threshold</td>
<td>Lucy Pevensie is the first to cross over the threshold into the world of snowy Narnia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Belly of the Whale</td>
<td>The other siblings cross at a later time, Edmund first, then Susan and Peter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Crossing of the First Threshold</td>
<td>When the four children enter they begin their transformation by putting on fur coats from the wardrobe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Belly of the Whale</td>
<td>They discover Tumnus' house is deserted and he has been arrested by the Secret Police, foreshadowing the conflict with the White Witch and her minions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. INITIATION</td>
<td>The children meet Mr Beaver who takes them to his home and tells them of the prophecy concerning two sons of Adam and two daughters of Eve who will defeat the White Witch and bring peace to Narnia. He instructs them that they have to meet Aslan, the king and ruler of Narnia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tests, Allies, Enemies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Approach

The hero has hit setbacks during tests & may need to reorganize his helpers or rekindle morale with mentor’s rally cry. Stakes heightened.  

4. **Atonement with the Father**

   - The children finally enter Aslan’s camp. They meet Aslan and the large number of creatures that form his army.  
   - Susan and Lucy are surrounded by wolves, but Peter rescues them, fighting them off with his sword.  
   - The children must begin practicing with their weapons in preparation for the coming battle.  
   - Aslan plans a rescue of Edmund. When they finally meet, Edmund is reconciled not only to Aslan, but to his siblings as well. He acknowledges that he has not only seen what the White Witch can do, but he has helped her do it. The four of them cannot leave the Narnians to suffer at her hands.

### Ordeal

The biggest life or death crisis – the hero faces his greatest fear & only through “death” can the hero be “reborn” experiencing even greater powers to see the journey to the end.  

5. **Apotheosis**

   - The White Witch meets with Aslan, demanding the blood of Edmund because he is a traitor. If she does not have it, as the law of Deep Magic demands, all Narnia will be plunged into chaos.  
   - Peter is knighted after rescuing his sisters. Edmund is freed from the penalty of death at the hands of the White Witch.

### Reward

The hero has survived death, overcome his greatest fear and now earns the reward he sought.  

6. **The Ultimate Boon**

   - Aslan makes his way to the Stone Table at night. Lucy and Susan follow but cannot go into the Witch’s camp. Aslan refuses to fight back and is killed, paying the blood price for Edmund.

### C. RETURN

The hero must recommit to completing the journey & travel the road back to the Ordinary World. The dramatic question is asked again.
<table>
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<th>Refusal of the Return</th>
<th>Peter prepares Aslan’s Army, but they are outnumbered. The battle begins with the Witch sure of victory.</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Magic Flight</td>
<td>Aslan, however, is alive again. He knows the true meaning of sacrifice and the Deep Magic that breaks the power of death and the Stone Table. He is reunited with Lucy and Susan and reawakens the stone animals, including Tumnus.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The White Witch overpowers all, including Edmund, who breaks her magic sceptre and threatens Peter.</td>
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<td>3. Rescue from Without</td>
<td>Aslan arrives with the other animals, kills the White Witch and they win the battle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Crossing of the Return Threshold</td>
<td>Lucy is able to help the wounded with her potion, including the mortally wounded Edmund.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return with Elixir</td>
<td>The siblings are crowned kings and queens of Narnia and enjoy a long passage of time in Narnia aging into young adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On a hunt they are drawn to the wardrobe and walk back through it. They are once again children and are greeted by the Professor. It is he who informs Lucy that they will not be able to return to Narnia through the wardrobe, but probably would return when they are not ready for it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resurrection**

Hero faces most dangerous meeting with death – this shows the hero can apply all the wisdom he’s brought back to the Ordinary World.

**Return with Elixir**

The hero returns from the journey with the “elixir”, so everyone in the world can use to heal physical or emotional wounds.

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<th>Peter prepares Aslan’s Army, but they are outnumbered. The battle begins with the Witch sure of victory.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Hero</strong></td>
<td>Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy Pevensie all make hero journeys.</td>
<td>Aslan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usually the main character – a person who needs to learn something in the story.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentor</strong></td>
<td>Aslan, who guides and instructs the Pevensies and other creatures throughout the story.</td>
<td>Professor Kirke for the children in the ordinary world. Mr Tumnus for Lucy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A wise person or animal who provides guidance to the hero – usually giving him magical gifts or advice for the journey ahead.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trickster</strong></td>
<td>Mr and Mrs Badger who help the Pevensies fight the White Witch.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The “wise-fool” – someone who uses tricks and jokes to guide the hero.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow</strong></td>
<td>The White Witch who has Narnia in an evil grip – always winter, but never Christmas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Represents our darkest desire, untapped resources, or rejected qualities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shapeshifter</strong></td>
<td>Edmund Pevensie who betrays his siblings for Turkish Delight.</td>
<td>Mr Tumnus, the fawn, who almost betrays Lucy to the White Witch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A character who “changes appearance” to disrupt the adventure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Herald</strong></td>
<td>Mrs Macready who instructs the children of their new life in the country.</td>
<td>The fox who tells the group that Aslan has arrived and is assembling an army.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Issues challenges and announces coming of significant change – gets the story rolling.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threshold Guardian</strong></td>
<td>The Wardrobe with its coats only allows people in at certain times.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protects the special world and its secrets from the hero – provides tests for hero to prove worth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## BATTLEFIELD EARTH

*(Christian, 2000)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage in the Hero’s Journey</th>
<th>Film Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ordinary World</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero’s normal world before the story begins.</td>
<td>Jonnie Goodboy Tyler is a human who is under the rule of an alien species called the Psychlos who have invaded earth and for 1000 years have been mining the planet for metals. His father has just died.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. DEPARTURE</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Call to Adventure</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero is presented with a problem, challenge or adventure to undertake.&lt;br&gt;1. <strong>Call to Adventure</strong>&lt;br&gt;The death of his father sparks Jonnie to look for a better place to live for his people.</td>
<td>The death of his father sparks Jonnie to look for a better place to live for his people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refusal of the Call</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero refuses the challenge or journey, usually out of fear.&lt;br&gt;2. <strong>Refusal of the Call</strong>&lt;br&gt;Jonnie refuses to escape.</td>
<td>While being processed, Jonnie meets Terl, a Psychlo Chief of Security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting with the Mentor</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero meets a mentor to gain confidence, advice or training to face the adventure.&lt;br&gt;3. <strong>Supernatural Aid</strong>&lt;br&gt;While being processed, Jonnie meets Terl, a Psychlo Chief of Security.</td>
<td>Jonnie is captured by the Psychlos and taken to their protected gasdome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crossing the First Threshold</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero crosses the gateway that separates the ordinary world from the special world.&lt;br&gt;4. <strong>The Crossing of the First Threshold</strong>&lt;br&gt;Jonnie is captured by the Psychlos and taken to their protected gasdome.</td>
<td>Jonnie is captured by the Psychlos and taken to their protected gasdome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>The Belly of the Whale</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero is immersed in the new world and is transformed.</td>
<td>Jonnie is imprisoned once he receives a breathing apparatus for the poisoned air under the dome. He fights an alpha male in order that all can eat equally rather than hierarchically. He begins to be a leader of the human slaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. INITIATION</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Tests, Allies, Enemies</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero faces tests, meets allies, confronts enemies &amp; learns the rules of the Special World.&lt;br&gt;1. <strong>The Road of Trials</strong>&lt;br&gt;Jonnie is almost killed when his mask is taken from him after he tries to escape. Another slave shares his breathing mask, enabling his survival. Jonnie and two other slaves are allowed to escape as part of Terl’s plan to exploit them as miners.</td>
<td>Jonnie is almost killed when his mask is taken from him after he tries to escape. Another slave shares his breathing mask, enabling his survival. Jonnie and two other slaves are allowed to escape as part of Terl’s plan to exploit them as miners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. <strong>The Meeting with the Goddess</strong>&lt;br&gt;The slaves are recaptured and Jonnie is placed on a training machine that feeds information about a huge number of subjects into his brain. He learns at a superhuman rate. Armed with his newly gained knowledge from the machine and from a visit to a human library, he begins to teach the</td>
<td>The slaves are recaptured and Jonnie is placed on a training machine that feeds information about a huge number of subjects into his brain. He learns at a superhuman rate. Armed with his newly gained knowledge from the machine and from a visit to a human library, he begins to teach the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **Woman as the Temptress**

Terl captures Chrissy, Jonnie’s love interest, tempting him to remain inactive for her safety.

**Approach**
The hero has hit setbacks during tests & may need to reorganize his helpers or rekindle morale with mentor’s rally cry. Stakes heightened.

**4. Atonement with the Father**

Jonnie actually learns how to fight and defeat the Psychlos from the varied instruction and behaviour shown by Terl.

**Ordeal**
The biggest life or death crisis – the hero faces his greatest fear & only through “death” can the hero be “reborn” experiencing even greater powers to see the journey to the end.

**5. Apotheosis**

When Jonnie is discouraged by the death of another slave, Carlo and Mickey encourage him to keep moving forward – they would join him in the fight. The other slaves rally together in their cages.

Jonnie learns to fly, teaching other slaves to be pilots.

**Reward**
The hero has survived death, overcome his greatest fear and now earns the reward he sought.

**6. The Ultimate Boon**

Jonnie becomes the leader of the human resistance.

**C. RETURN**

**The Road Back**
The hero must recommit to completing the journey & travel the road back to the Ordinary World. The dramatic question is asked again.

1. **Refusal of the Return**
2. **The Magic Flight**

Jonnie devises an elaborate plot to eliminate the planet of Psychlo, freeing earth. The gasdome is blown killing the aliens who can’t breathe air. A free human tribe, led by Robert the Fox, have been trained to fly Harriet jets and fight the alien’s spacecrafts. A nuclear bomb is transported to the enemy planet where Mickey detonates it and mixing with the gas atmosphere, it blows up the planet.

**Resurrection**

Hero faces most dangerous meeting with death – this shows the hero can apply all the wisdom he’s brought back to the Ordinary World.

1. **Rescue from Without**
2. **The Crossing of the Return Threshold**

Jonnie faces Terl in hand combat, but it is Jonnie who outsmarts Terl, tricking him into blowing off his own arm.

After the great battle he and all humans gain their freedom. Chrissy admits that she always believed that this was Jonnie’s destiny.

**Return with Elixir**
The hero returns from the journey with the

Jonnie is reunited with Chrissy surrounded by the free slaves.

Jonnie imprisons Terl as security against any future attack.
“elixir”, so everyone in the world can use to heal physical or emotional wounds.

5. *Master of the Two Worlds*
6. *Freedom to Live*

from Psychlo – he now has the leverage that Terl has often talked to him about.
### ARCHETYPES IN THE FILM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archetype</th>
<th>Who plays this Archetype in the Film?</th>
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<td><strong>The Hero</strong></td>
<td>Jonnie Goodboy Tyler</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Usually the main character – a person who needs to learn something in the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentor</strong></td>
<td>Terl, despite being an enemy, is the one who trains and teaches Jonnie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A wise person or animal who provides guidance to the hero – usually giving him magical gifts or advice for the journey ahead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A holoprojected Clinco language slave initiates Jonnie to the teaching machine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trickster</strong></td>
<td>Terl, whose greed threatens the safety of earth, humans and eventually his own planet of Psychlo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow</strong></td>
<td>Ker, a Psychlo who repeatedly betrays his master, Terl, trying to get ahead. He eventually serves the humans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shapeshifter</strong></td>
<td>Ker, a Psychlo who repeatedly betrays his master, Terl, trying to get ahead. He eventually serves the humans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Herald</strong></td>
<td>Rock and Carlo who introduce Jonnie to the wasteland of human cities, telling him their version of history and the gods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threshold Guardian</strong></td>
<td>Parson Staffer, a tribesman who tries to prevent Jonnie from trying to find a better, safer place for the tribe to live.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A man-made dragon figure which Jonnie mistakes for real.</td>
</tr>
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Scott Pilgrim vs. The World
(Wright, 2010)

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<td><strong>Ordinary World</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero’s normal world before the story begins.</td>
<td>Scott Pilgrim is a young adult and a member of a band.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. DEPARTURE</strong>&lt;br&gt;Call to Adventure&lt;br&gt;The hero is presented with a problem, challenge or adventure to undertake.&lt;br&gt;1. Call to Adventure</td>
<td>An unknown girl rollerblades through Scott’s dream announcing that he is not alone. Scott then meets her in real life at the local library. He finds out her name is Ramona Flowers at a party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refusal of the Call</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero refuses the challenge or journey, usually out of fear.&lt;br&gt;2. Refusal of the Call</td>
<td>Scott tries to talk to Ramona at the party, but gets flustered and embarrassed and eventually says that he will leave her alone forever, for which she seems grateful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting with the Mentor</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero meets a mentor to gain confidence, advice or training to face the adventure.&lt;br&gt;3. Supernatural Aid</td>
<td>Wallace Wells is Scott’s flatmate and advises Scott that he should break up with his ‘fake high-school girlfriend’ before going out with Ramona. Wallace is also the one that tells Scott that he has to fight the evil ex’s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crossing the First Threshold</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero crosses the gateway that separates the ordinary world from the special world.&lt;br&gt;4. The Crossing of the First Threshold&lt;br&gt;5. The Belly of the Whale&lt;br&gt;The hero is immersed in the new world and is transformed.</td>
<td>Scott orders a package from Amazon which Ramona delivers. At the threshold of his front door, she eventually agrees to go out with him if he signs for the package. They go on a date that evening. Scott continues to see Ramona and learns more about her. Eventually, he finds out that he has to defeat Ramona’s evil exes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. INITIATION</strong>&lt;br&gt;Tests, Allies, Enemies&lt;br&gt;The hero faces tests, meets allies, confronts enemies &amp; learns the rules of the Special World.&lt;br&gt;1. The Road of Trials&lt;br&gt;2. The Meeting with the Goddess</td>
<td>Scott faces seven of Ramona’s ex-partners who are all out to kill him (Matthew Patel, Lucas Lee, Roxy Richter, vegan Todd Ingram, Kyle and Ken Katayanagi and Gideon Graves). He uses a variety of strategies to defeat them, including tricking them, battling by base guitar, fighting and music playoffs. Knives Chau is the high schooler who Scott is dating at the beginning of the movie. She tries to get Scott back at various points during the movie by fighting for him, tempting Scott with a rival and stalking him.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **Woman as the Temptress**

   Envoy (Natalie) Adams, an ex-girlfriend returns to tempt Scott.

   Wallace’s gay friends prove to have some helpful insight into dealing with his own ex-girlfriend.

   Kim, the band’s drummer, advises that Scott needs to talk to Ramona after they have a fight.

**Approach**

   The hero has hit setbacks during tests & may need to reorganize his helpers or rekindle morale with mentor’s rally cry. Stakes heightened.

4. **Atonement with the Father**

   Scott eventually breaks up with Knives at Wallace’s insistence.

   Despite having had a fight with Ramona, Scott insists that the band plays at a Battle of the Band. It is here that he tries to declare his love but Ramona breaks up with him and the band signs up with Gideon’s music label.

   Scott faces a life without Ramona, but Gideon invites him to SexBobOmb’s launch. Wallace advises him to finish Gideon.

**Ordeal**

   The biggest life or death crisis – the hero faces his greatest fear & only through “death” can the hero be “reborn” experiencing even greater powers to see the journey to the end.

5. **Apothecosis**

   When Scott declares his love for Ramona he is given a flaming sword, which he uses to defeat Gideon’s henchmen.

   Gideon kills Scott when he is confessing that he cheated on Knives and Ramona.

   Scott enters a dream state and Ramona tells him how Gideon has a way of getting into her head (via a computer terminal in her neck. He realises that the ordeal has taught him something and he returns to finish the fight.

**Reward**

   The hero has survived death, overcome his greatest fear and now earns the reward he sought.

6. **The Ultimate Boon**

   Scott learns and gains self respect.

**C. RETURN**

   The Road Back

   The hero must recommit to completing the journey & travel the road back to the Ordinary World. The dramatic question is asked again.

   1. **Refusal of the Return**

   2. **The Magic Flight**

   Ramona tries to leave and allow Knives to have Scott.

   Knives gives Scott permission to go with Ramona.

**Resurrection**

   Hero faces most dangerous meeting with death – this shows the hero can apply all the wisdom he’s brought back to the Ordinary World.

   3. **Rescue from Without**

   4. **The Crossing of the Return Threshold**

   Scott learns self respect, admits his failings to Knives and Ramona, and battles Gideon with Knives and Ramona’s help. Ramona’s computer terminal connection is severed. He eventually defeats Gideon, but then has to defeat himself. He actually makes friends with himself.

**Return with Elixir**

   Scott ends up with Ramona at the end!
The hero returns from the journey with the “elixir”, so everyone in the world can use to heal physical or emotional wounds.

5. Master of the Two Worlds
6. Freedom to Live
## Archetypes in the Film

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archetype</th>
<th>Who plays this Archetype in the Film? How do you know?</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>The Hero</strong></td>
<td>Scott Pilgrim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually the main character – a person who needs to learn something in the story.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentor</strong></td>
<td>Wallace Wells, Scott’s roommate, is the one who tells Scott that if he wants something he has to fight for it, step up his game and commit to love, letting Ramona know and overcoming all obstacles in his path. Being with Ramona is actually Scott’s destiny.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A wise person or animal who provides guidance to the hero – usually giving him magical gifts or advice for the journey ahead.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trickster</strong></td>
<td>Stacey Pilgrim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “wise-fool” – someone who uses tricks and jokes to guide the hero.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow</strong></td>
<td>Gideon Graves, Ramona’s 7th evil ex-boyfriend who conspires so that no one can date Ramona, creating the League of Evil Ex’s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Represents our darkest desire, untapped resources, or rejected qualities.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shapeshifter</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A character who “changes appearance” to disrupt the adventure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Herald</strong></td>
<td>Ramona Flowers, with her entry into Scott’s dream via the Subspace Highway, running through his head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues challenges and announces coming of significant change – gets the story rolling.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threshold Guardian</strong></td>
<td>Stacey Pilgrim, Scott’s sister Julie Powers, a friend, forbids Scott from hitting on Ramona.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protects the special world and its secrets from the hero – provides tests for hero to prove worth.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### THE LORD OF THE RINGS TRILOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage in the Hero’s Journey</th>
<th>Film Component[^144]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ordinary World</strong></td>
<td>Frodo Baggins is a hobbit of the Shire. He is cared for by his uncle, Bilbo Baggins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hero’s normal world before the story begins.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. DEPARTURE</strong></td>
<td>Bilbo leaves Frodo a Ring, which turns out to be the Ring of Power, forged in the fires of Mount Doom. When Gandalf realises the significance and the danger of this discovery, he asks Frodo to take the ring and meet him at the Inn of the Prancing Pony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Call to Adventure</strong></td>
<td>Frodo’s only refusal is in the form of suggesting Gandalf take the Ring. However, as soon as Gandalf explains, Frodo readies himself, much to the amazement and encouragement of Gandalf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hero is presented with a problem, challenge or adventure to undertake.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Call to Adventure</strong></td>
<td>Frodo meets Aragorn at the Inn of the Prancing Pony. Through some deception Aragorn is able to save Frodo, Sam, Pippin and Merry from the Ringwraiths. Bilbo provides Frodo with a sword, Sting, which warns him of the presence of Orcs and a mithril coat, which can stop any blade or arrow attack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Refusal of the Call</strong></td>
<td>Frodo and his three hobbit friends cross the boundary of the Shire, entering the Old Forest, crossing the river and arriving in Bree, a village of men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting with the Mentor</strong></td>
<td>Frodo is in the land of men and elves, where is vulnerable. He is attacked by Ringwraiths at Weathertop and is wounded with a morgul blade. An elf, Arwen, takes him to Rivendell where her father, Elrond, heals him. After recovering in Rivendell, he is given the challenge of taking the Ring to Mordor to destroy it in the fires of Mount Doom. He is now a Ringbearer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hero meets a mentor to gain confidence, advice or training to face the adventure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Supernatural Aid</strong></td>
<td>Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin are helped and protected by Gandalf, Aragorn, Gimli, Legolas and Boromir. They form the Fellowship of the Ring and they travel extensively heading towards Mordor. They have to fight Orcs and Ringwraiths on the way. The Fellowship meets Galadriel and her husband Celeborn. They encourage the Fellowship after Gandalf’s ‘death’ and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crossing the First Threshold</strong></td>
<td>This analysis is indebted to Kesti’s thesis <em>Heroes of Middle Earth</em> (2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hero crosses the gateway that separates the ordinary world from the special world.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4. <strong>The Crossing of the First Threshold</strong></td>
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<td>5. <strong>The Belly of the Whole</strong></td>
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[^144]: This analysis is indebted to Kesti’s thesis *Heroes of Middle Earth* (2007).
World.
1. *The Road of Trials*
2. *The Meeting with the Goddess*
3. *Woman as the Temptress*

provide the remaining members with magical gifts. Frodo receives a phial and a cloak.

Frodo offers Galadriel the Ring of Power. As one of the Ringbearers, she is tempted to use it, but she resists, knowing that she would become an evil queen.

Boromir also tempts Frodo to go to Minis Tirith before heading to Mordor and thus allowing the Ring to be used by men in its defence.

The Ring itself is also a source of temptation as it seeks a way to return to Sauron.

Approach
The hero has hit setbacks during tests & may need to reorganize his helpers or rekindle morale with mentor’s rally cry. Stakes heightened.
4. *Atonement with the Father*

When travelling through the Dwarf Mines of Moria, the Fellowship encounters Orcs and a Balrog. The fire creature sends Gandalf plummeting into the depths of the mine. The Fellowship believes that Gandalf is dead.

Ordeal
The biggest life or death crisis – the hero faces his greatest fear & only through “death” can the hero be “reborn” experiencing even greater powers to see the journey to the end.
5. *Apotheosis*

The remaining stages all occur in the subsequent films – *The Two Towers* (Jackson, 2002) and *The Return of the King* (Jackson, 2003).

The apotheosis event is when Frodo actually fails to destroy the Ring at Mount Doom and tries to keep it for himself. He has in a sense become the very evil he hoped to destroy.

Reward
The hero has survived death, overcome his greatest fear and now earns the reward he sought.
6. *The Ultimate Boon*

The Ring is actually destroyed when Gollum bites off the finger that Frodo has put it on and falls into the lava. The deed is finally completed but through another’s hand.

Peace is now the ultimate boon as Sauron’s power is completely destroyed and Mordor ripped asunder.

C. RETURN
The Road Back
The hero must recommit to completing the journey & travel the road back to the Ordinary World. The dramatic question is asked again.
1. *Refusal of the Return*
2. *The Magic Flight*

Frodo gives up on being able to return to the Shire. He failed to complete the quest, although it has been done. He waits for his death outside Mount Doom.

The Eagles come and rescue Frodo and Sam, delivering them from the lava.

Resurrection
Hero faces most dangerous meeting with death – this shows the hero can apply all the wisdom he’s brought

Frodo and Sam are delivered out of Mordor to what is familiar to them.

The hobbits return to the Shire where Frodo writes his memoirs.
| 3. Return with Elixir | Though Frodo never leaves the Shire until going to Valinor, he is reminded every year of his journey, because of the wound he suffered. He may be well regarded by those outside the Shire, because of all that he has done, but many inside the Shire have little respect for him.

All of Middle Earth is given the freedom to live in peace and harmony.

Frodo is given the greatest gift by the elves. He has a place on the ship to Valinor where he can be healed of his wounds. |
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<tr>
<td>Return with Elixir</td>
<td>The hero returns from the journey with the “elixir”, so everyone in the world can use to heal physical or emotional wounds.</td>
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## ARCHETYPES IN THE FILM

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| Usually the main character – a person who needs to learn something in the story. | Frodo Baggins  
Aragorn  
Samwise Gamgee |
| **Mentor**                 |                                                        |
| A wise person or animal who provides guidance to the hero – usually giving him magical gifts or advice for the journey ahead. | Gandalf the Grey  
Galadriel who gives the fellowship magical elvish gifts which assist them throughout their journey.  
Aragorn |
| **Trickster**              |                                                        |
| The “wise-fool” – someone who uses tricks and jokes to guide the hero. | Merry Brandybuck  
Pippin Took |
| **Shadow**                 |                                                        |
| Represents our darkest desire, untapped resources, or rejected qualities. | Sauron |
| **Shapeshifter**           |                                                        |
| A character who “changes appearance” to disrupt the adventure. | Boromir whose temptation to use the ring for his own purposes endangers the fellowship and contributes to its splitting up.  
Saruman who betrays the fellowship to Sauron. |
| **Herald**                 |                                                        |
| Issues challenges and announces coming of significant change – gets the story rolling. | Gandalf who reveals the identity of the ring and its consequences.  
Elrond who brings the fellowship together and hints at the dire nature of the situation. |
| **Threshold Guardian**     |                                                        |
| Protects the special world and its secrets from the hero – provides tests for hero to prove worth. | Ringwraiths who try to stop Frodo from starting his journey. |
# THE MATRIX

*(Wachowski & Wachowski, 1999)*

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<tr>
<td><strong>Ordinary World</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero’s normal world before the story begins.</td>
<td>Neo is a computer programmer in a major firm, Metacortex. He spends his evenings at his home computer, often falling asleep at his desk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. DEPARTURE</strong>&lt;br&gt;Call to Adventure&lt;br&gt;The hero is presented with a problem, challenge or adventure to undertake.</td>
<td>After an intriguing computer interaction and a visit from a mate and his girlfriend who sports a White Rabbit tattoo, Neo agrees to go to a nightclub. Trinity talks to Neo there, offering a way to answer the question, ‘What is the Matrix?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refusal of the Call</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero refuses the challenge or journey, usually out of fear.</td>
<td>The next day Neo receives a phone in the mail at his work, which gives him instructions on how to avoid those who are coming after him. While he initially follows the instructions, he ends up on a window ledge and his fear means that he ends up being taken by the authorities and injected with a tracking device.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting with the Mentor</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero meets a mentor to gain confidence, advice or training to face the adventure.</td>
<td>Neo awakes in bed and receives a phone call from Morpheus, who instructs him to meet at the Adams Street bridge. He is picked up by Trinity, Switch and another man. Trinity removes the tracking device using a debugging machine. He is taken to an apartment block where he meets Morpheus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crossing the First Threshold</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero crosses the gateway that separates the ordinary world from the special world.</td>
<td>Morpheus offers Neo a onetime offer. The blue pill will allow Neo to continue living as he always has. The red pill will give Neo the opportunity to find out exactly what the Matrix is and just how extensive its reach is. Neo takes the red pill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. The Belly of the Whale</strong>&lt;br&gt;The hero is immersed in the new world and is transformed.</td>
<td>Neo awakens in a mechanical ‘womb’ where umbilical like cords are attached all over his body. It rejects him and he is forced out a tube and expelled into a sewer like system. He is picked up by a flying craft and is put into rehabilitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. INITIATION</strong>&lt;br&gt;Tests, Allies, Enemies&lt;br&gt;The hero faces tests, meets allies, confronts enemies &amp; learns the rules of the Special World.</td>
<td>Once Neo recovers, Morpheus explains that he is now in the real world and his former existence is a computer generated space known as the Matrix. He is shown how to go in and out of this world and how to survive within its boundaries. He has to go through a series of training exercises and trials, including fighting Morpheus and attempting to jump between skyscrapers. He discovers he is in the midst of a war between humans and machines.</td>
</tr>
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<sup>145</sup> This analysis is indebted to William Melton’s essay *The Monomyth and The Matrix* (2007).
| 1. **The Road of Trials**  
2. **The Meeting with the Goddess**  
3. **Woman as the Temptress** | There are two Goddess figures. Trinity, who sports a ‘divine’ name, balances Neo’s heart. The Oracle, is a mother figure, and helps Neo to understand his role and purpose as ‘The One’. While in the Matrix, Neo sees a woman in a red dress. She is a programme designed to help new trainees. When Neo is distracted by her, she morphs into an agent. |
|---|---|
| **Approach**  
*The hero has hit setbacks during tests & may need to reorganize his helpers or rekindle morale with mentor’s rally cry. Stakes heightened.* | Morpheus is the father figure who continually encourages Neo on his path as ‘The One’. Although Neo doesn’t believe Morpheus at first, when he witnesses Morpheus sacrifice himself to Agents to protect Neo, he begins to see himself as Morpheus does. |
| **Ordeal**  
*The biggest life or death crisis – the hero faces his greatest fear & only through “death” can the hero be “reborn” experiencing even greater powers to see the journey to the end.* | Neo plans and executes a successful rescue of Morpheus. |
| **Reward**  
*The hero has survived death, overcome his greatest fear and now earns the reward he sought.* | In helping Trinity to escape after the rescue of Morpheus, he begins to see that he can manipulate the Matrix and has powers never before seen. This ability is the ultimate boon. |
| **C. RETURN**  
**The Road Back**  
*The hero must recommit to completing the journey & travel the road back to the Ordinary World. The dramatic question is asked again.*  
1. **Refusal of the Return**  
2. **The Magic Flight** | Instead of returning to the real world, Neo decides to stay in the Matrix to fight the Agents. They pursue him. |
| **Resurrection**  
*Hero faces most dangerous meeting with death – this shows the hero can apply all the wisdom he’s brought back to the Ordinary World*  
3. **Rescue from Without**  
4. **The Crossing of the Return Threshold** | Neo is shot by Agent Smith. He dies in the Matrix, but in the real world Trinity reveals her love for Neo. This enables him to be resurrected in the Matrix and he is ‘born again’ as a new being. When the Agents shower him with bullets, he is able to deflect them with his mind. Neo is able to destroy Agent Smith and then gets to the phone to return to the Nebuchadnezzar in the real world. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Return with Elixir</strong></th>
<th>Neo is also able to see the Agents and the Matrix for what they are – computer code. He can pass from one world to the other. He can defeat the Agents.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The hero returns from the journey with the “elixir”, so everyone in the world can use to heal physical or emotional wounds.</td>
<td>Neo states that he will show humanity a world without the control of the Matrix. He hangs up the phone and takes flight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archetype</td>
<td>Who plays this Archetype in the Film? How do you know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Hero</strong></td>
<td>Neo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually the main character – a person who needs to learn something in the story.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentor</strong></td>
<td>Morpheus, The Oracle, Trinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A wise person or animal who provides guidance to the hero – usually giving him magical gifts or advice for the journey ahead.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trickster</strong></td>
<td>Mouse, who makes the woman in the red dress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “wise-fool” – someone who uses tricks and jokes to guide the hero.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow</strong></td>
<td>Agent Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Represents our darkest desire, untapped resources, or rejected qualities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shapeshifter</strong></td>
<td>Cypher, who betrays the humans to Agent Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A character who “changes appearance” to disrupt the adventure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Herald</strong></td>
<td>Trinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues challenges and announces coming of significant change – gets the story rolling.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threshold Guardian</strong></td>
<td>Morpheus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protects the special world and its secrets from the hero – provides tests for hero to prove worth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Canada: Samuel Goldwyn Films.


