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Myths and Religion in Star Wars

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Bakalářská práce se zaměří na roli mýtu a náboženství v ikonické sérii *Star Wars*. Soustředí se bude především na tzv. G- kánon, případně ale také na vedlejší linie hlavní ságy (student má možnost vlastního výběru, musí však svou volbu pečlivě odůvodnit). V teoretické části autor definuje žánr *space opera* (vývoj, charakteristiky apod.) a sérii *Star Wars* patřičně představí v širším literárním kontextu. V praktické části autor představí *hvězdné* mýty a náboženské systémy a konfrontuje s americkou (západní) mytickou a náboženskou tradicí.

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ANNOTATION

This bachelor thesis focuses on Myth and Religion in Star Wars original trilogy. The theoretical part introduces Star Wars and defines Hero's Journey by Joseph Campbell and The American Monomyth by Jewett and Lawrence. Furthermore, it deals with Taoism and its important terms that are related to it. The practical part has its base in the theoretical part. It analyses The Hero's Journey and The American Monomyth throughout the original trilogy. The last chapter shows Taoist elements in Star Wars trilogy.

KEYWORDS

Myth, Star Wars, Hero's Journey, Joseph Campbell, The American Monomyth, Taoism, Tao Te Ching

NÁZEV

Mýtus a Náboženství ve fenoménu Star Wars

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na mýtus a náboženství v původní trilogii Hvězdných válek. Teoretická část představuje Hvězdné války a definuje Cestu hrdiny od Josepha Campbella a Americký monomýtus od Jewetta a Lawrencea. Dále se zabývá taoismem a jeho důležitými pojmy, které s taoismem souvisí. Praktická část vychází z teoretické části této práce. Analyzuje Cestu hrdiny a Americký monomýtus v celé původní trilogii. Poslední kapitola ukazuje taoistické prvky v trilogii Hvězdných válek.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Mýtus, Hvězdné války, Cesta hrdiny, Joseph Campbell, Americký Monomýtus, Taoismus, Tao te ťing

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INTRODUCTION

The primary target of this paper is to analyse the myths and religion used in the original Star Wars trilogy. Concerning the myth, the thesis works with Hero's Journey from *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell and American Monomyth from *The American Monomyth* and *The Myth of the American Superhero* written by John Shelton Lawrence and Robert Jewett. Regarding the religion part, it analyses Taoism in the trilogy. The main source for that is going to be *Tao Te Thing* by Lao Tzu.

The first chapter deals with Star Wars itself. It provides information about George Lucas and Lucasfilm Ltd, common terminology used in this thesis related to Star Wars and together with that also story of the trilogy.

The second chapter explains the theoretical part of the thesis. Firstly, the chapter focuses on Campbell's Hero's Journey and its stages such as Departure, Initiation and The Return. Apart from that *The American Monomyth* by Lawrence and Jewett is dealt with. Secondly, examines Taoism using translations of *Tao Te Ching*. It explains what it is, where it comes from and terms such as The Tao, Wu, Wu Wei, Patience and others.

The third chapter examines myths in the trilogy. This chapter goes throughout the story of the trilogy and tracks Campbell's Hero's Journey. It gives examples from the trilogy for every stage of the Journey. Additionally, this chapter explores *The American Monomyth* in the trilogy. As in Campbell's case, this chapter looks into all aspects of the American Monomyth and provides examples from the trilogy.

The last but not least chapter analyses religion in the trilogy. This chapter explores Taoism in the trilogy. It describes the main Taoist terms and compares them with the terms in the trilogy. For example, it compares The Tao from Taoism to The Force from Star Wars, or how emptiness in Star Wars is similar to Wu from Taoism. Basically, it examines what similarities Taoism and Star Wars have.

The sources used for this thesis are all in the English language.

1. STAR WARS

INTRODUCTION TO STAR WARS UNIVERSE

This chapter introduces the Star Wars franchise. It presents original movies and sequel together with that basic information about George Lucas.

The movie saga Star Wars no longer consists of George Lucas' original six movies (A New Hope (1977); Empire Strikes Back (1980); Return of the Jedi (1983); The Phantom Menace (1999); Attack of the Clones (2002); Revenge of the Sith (2005) and The Walt Disney Company's Sequel trilogy to Lucas' movies The Force Awakens (2015); The Last Jedi (2017); The Rise of Skywalker (2019)). The term Star Wars covers a complex, elaborated and enormous world with its own laws and mythology, in which not only main characters from the original hexalogy play a part but also hundreds of other characters.

Many books, whether they are short stories, novels or comixes, tell the story based on the original Star Wars and they extend the Star Wars universe. Numerous stories take place hundreds or even thousands of years before the movie timeline story or after it. Even TV shows and computer games work with Star Wars, tens of tv shows and computer games are made with principles in a similar way.

Lucasfilm Ltd has produced animated tv shows such as Star Wars: Clone Wars (2008-2014), which takes place in between movie episodes Attacks of the Clones and Revenge of the Sith, then they produced Star Wars: Rebels (2014-2018), which is set in between movie episodes Revenge of The Sith and A New Hope. The most recent animated series is Star Wars: Resistance (2018-2020), which deals with events that happened closely before the movie The Force Awakens. In late 2019, Disney produced the very first live-action series in the Star Wars franchise called The Mandalorian. The show takes place in between episodes Return of the Jedi and The Force Awakens.

Each newly told story gives a wide space to characters already known from Lucas' saga, but also allows the presence of dozens of characters or worlds completely new and unknown. At first glance, the whole Lucas' world may seem chaotic and confusing, however, upon closer examination, we find that the Star Wars world follows rules that are universal to similar fictional constructs — the rules of the fictional universe.

GEORGE LUCAS

American director, producer and screenwriter that studied at the University of Southern California. His classmate showed Lucas works of Japanese director Kurosawa Akira, from whom Lucas took inspiration for his future movies. Warner Brothers signed him for an internship where he gained many experiences. After the internship, Warner Brothers - Seven Arts sign him to direct a feature-length movie. He produced the movie *THX 1138* in 1971. In the same year, Lucas formed Lucasfilm Ltd., a production company.

George Lucas produced, wrote and directed *Star Wars* in 1977, which became immediately popular. After that, he retired from the director position and became just executive producer for the other two episodes of *Star Wars*. In addition to the *Star Wars* movies, Lucas also created the character, Indiana Jones. Not only he produced fantastic movies, but he also played a major role in advancing the art of computer graphics technology and high definition digital production.¹

1.1 CANONICITY AND SPACE OPERA

This chapter deals with technical terms. It explains the canonicity, the importance of it, it shows canons that are in *Star Wars*. This chapter also introduces Space Opera and the history of the genre, since the *Star Wars* are considered to be Space Opera.

CANONS

Not only tv shows expand George Lucas' *Star Wars* universe but literature and comic books do as well. The popularity of the *Star Wars* fictional universe is enormous. The webpage *Star Wars Books & Comics*, which has registered all published *Star Wars* literature and comic books so far, states that there are over 800 official books, comics and short stories from the *Star Wars* galaxy.²

However, as I will be paying attention to official and original movies in this thesis, I need to explain the term Canon. According to the website on *Star Wars*, Canon is comprised of screenplays, films, radio dramas and novelizations that are based on the original stories of

¹ "George Lucas: [SIGGRAPH 2005 EDITION]," *Millimeter* 3, no. 1 (Sum, 2005): 8.
<https://search.proquest.com/trade-journals/george-lucas/docview/227118152/se-2?accountid=17239>.

² "FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions," *Star Wars Books & Comics*, accessed February 13, 2021,
<http://www.swbooks.net/faq.htm>.

George Lucas and they expand this universe, the rest are written by other authors.³ Meaning that the canonical stories from the world of Star Wars are, in addition to the original films, also official works which, despite the fact that they describe side stories, do not interfere in any way with the continuum of the whole saga. Roy T. Cook defines canon as the result of practices that identify a privileged sub-fiction that constitutes the real story regarding what is fictionally ‘true,’ whereas noncanonical stories are ‘imaginary’ or are de-legitimized in some other sense.⁴

This broad concept of the canon is also divided into several categories: the so-called G-canon is canon consisted of George Lucas’ works, thus it means the first 6 movie episodes and any utterance by him whether it is published or not. This is the canon I am paying attention to. The Canon that follows is T-canon or as often called Television Canon refers to the animated tv series Star Wars: The Clone Wars and Star Wars live-action TV series broadcasted on television. Another canon is C-canon – Continuity Canon, which includes all official works released under the title Star Wars such as books, comics, games, cartoons and more. According to the article on Wired, stories that made a radical change in the continuity required Lucas’s approval.⁵ Wookieepedia article explains S-canon or Secondary Canon as following: “S-canon are materials that can be used by authors as they want, mainly older works. Basically, it means that they do not necessarily have to be used and can be omitted.”⁶ D-canon is Detours Canon, which are elements of the animated tv show Star Wars Detours that stayed unreleased. Last but not least is N-canon or Non-Canon. The website on canons states that the works, so-called “What-if stories,” are published under the label “Infinities,” which means they do not apply to the continuity timeline.⁷

However, George Lucas made his comment on the topic of what is canon in Star Wars during an interview:

There are two worlds. There's my world, which is the movies, and there's this other world that has been created, which I say is the parallel universe—the licensing world of the books, games and comic books. They don't intrude on my world, which is a select period of time, [but] they do intrude in between the movies. I don't get too involved in the parallel universe.⁸

³ “Canon,” Wookieepedia, accessed February 14, 2021, <https://starwars.fandom.com/wiki/Canon>.

⁴ Cook, Roy T, “Canonicity and Normativity in Massive, Serialized, Collaborative Fiction,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 71, no. 3 (2013): 272, accessed March 8, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23597576>.

⁵ “Meet Leland Chee, the Star Wars Franchise Continuity Cop,” *Wired*, posted August 18, 2008, <https://web.archive.org/web/20151121141152/http://www.wired.com/2008/08/ff-starwarscanon/>.

⁶ Wookieepedia, “Canon.”

⁷ Wookieepedia, “Canon.”

⁸ Wookieepedia, “Canon.”

Christopher Cerasi, the former editor for LucasBooks, sees canon as:

When it comes to absolute canon, the real story of Star Wars, you must turn to the films themselves—and only the films. Even novelizations are interpretations of the film, and while they are largely true to George Lucas' vision (he works quite closely with the novel authors), the method in which they are written does allow for some minor differences. The novelizations are written concurrently with the film's production, so variations in detail do creep in from time to time. Nonetheless, they should be regarded as very accurate depictions of the fictional Star Wars movies.⁹

It needs to be emphasized that in a world such as the Star Wars saga, the fan community plays a very important role. This community created the whole online encyclopaedia Wookieepedia, from which I draw ideas and information. This fan base also discusses the issue with canons on Wookieepedia's forum.

SPACE OPERA

The Star Wars movies, in terms of genre, are Space opera. Website on literary terms argues that space opera is an adventurous melodramatic film or tv series that takes place in outer space. It often has plenty of space combat with magical powers and a universe, which needs to be saved by a hero.¹⁰ However, the term space opera does not have anything to do with music as in a traditional opera, but it is inspired by an old genre from the 1930s *horse opera*, a genre that deals with cowboys in wild western movies and tv shows.¹¹

Space opera is one of the most usual forms of sci-fi. Themes typical of space opera appeared in some works before they became a genre in sci-fi magazines. The first space opera that became famous is *The Skylark of Space* published in 1928 by E. E. Smith. His novel was numerously rejected, however, the magazine *Amazing Stories* published it. The novel had an enthusiastic response and readers demanded more similar stories.¹²

The 1930s were the golden age of space opera. The works resembled naval stories, detective stories or stories from the colonization of the Wild West. Ominous pirates roamed the endless universe, robbing innocent passengers, lucrative prospectors searching for gold on asteroids, and precious stone and persevering agents chasing criminals across unexplored planets. All the stories had one thing in common: the universe was a new open space that the authors wanted to

⁹ Wookieepedia, "Canon."

¹⁰ "Science Fiction: Definition and Examples," Literary Terms, accessed February 14, 2021, <https://literaryterms.net/science-fiction/>.

¹¹ "Horse opera," Dictionary, accessed February 14, 2021, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/horse-opera>.

¹² Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn, *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 198.

bring as close to the reader as possible and used familiar stories to stimulate the reader's imagination.¹³

Despite the rapidly growing popularity of space opera, this subgenre was not named until 1941. According to Wilson Tucker, who named it, space opera has three crucial characteristics. Firstly, it includes spaceships, alien planets and spaceports. Secondly, the story of space opera has to be adventurous, where the conflicts between humans and aliens, whether friendly or hostile do not matter, appears and the conflicts usually result in violence. Thirdly, space opera often gives away to repetitive plots and blandness. Most space operas generate sequels.¹⁴

Despite its growing popularity, space opera continued to appear only in secondary magazines of dubious literary value. However, the crucial shift came, when *Star Trek* was published in 1966 and *Star Wars* in 1977. These two space operas are considered as the top work of the development of this subgenre.¹⁵

According to an article on space opera, *Star Wars* saved the genre. Critics started to approve books that were related to the space genre and some even won awards for best novel. The article also states that not only in literature was a massive boom once *Star Wars* were published in 1977 but also in the production of movies that focused on aliens in outer space.¹⁶

1.2 TERMINOLOGY AND TRILOGY

Since the story of *Star Wars* and the terminology used in this universe is absolutely crucial for this thesis, I am going to briefly present on the following pages the main terms related to *Star Wars* and are used in this thesis and the story of the three original *Star Wars* movies – *A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi* that I am going to analyse further in this paper. Firstly, I am going to start with the terms used in this thesis. Then I am going to move on to the story.

¹³ James et al., *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, 199.

¹⁴ James et al., *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, 197-198.

¹⁵ James et al., *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, 200-203.

¹⁶ “How *Star Wars* Saved Space Opera,” Medium, accessed February 14, 2021, <https://medium.com/@jedtaylor68/how-star-wars-saved-space-opera-80bc8a70c754>.

The FORCE

When Obi-Wan Kenobi explained to Luke Skywalker the Force, he used these exact words: “The Force is what gives a Jedi his power. It's an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us, it binds the galaxy together.”¹⁷ To understand it more I am going to give a more detailed description.

The Force is an invisible energy, that has been in the universe since the creation of the universe itself as the official Star Wars website mentions it. All living things generate this energy and it connects the whole galaxy together. Every living being can communicate and use the Force via Midi-chlorians, which are in all beings.¹⁸ Those, who are sensitive to the Force, can obtain magical powers such as a levitating object, tricking the minds of others and being able to predict future events. They can even sense calmness and happiness in other beings. The Force also controls how the user acts since it has its own will. There are sides of the Force – light side, used by Jedi knights and Dark Side used by the Dark Jedi. There are doom and destruction in this Dark Side of the Force.

JEDI

The Jedi Knights are members of an ancient order. Back in the day, they studied philosophy and theology, but then they understood the Force and learned how to use it. With the development of the order, the Jedi began to serve the Old Republic. They acted as diplomats and fought only when necessary. Jedi knights use the Force only to gain knowledge and to defend, never to attack. Manipulating with the Force allows the Jedi to move objects at a distance, partially move their body – that is, to perform several meters long jumps, to influence somebody’s simple mind and brilliant control of lightsabers.

The Jedi Code:

There is no emotion, there is peace.

There is no ignorance, there is knowledge.

There is no passion, there is serenity.

There is no chaos, there is harmony.

There is no death, there is the Force.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope*, directed by George Lucas. (LucasFilm and Twentieth Century Fox, 1977), 00:34:40 - 00:34:52.

¹⁸ “The Force,” Star Wars, accessed February 15, 2021, <https://www.starwars.com/databank/the-force>.

¹⁹ “Jedi Code,” Wookieepedia, accessed February 15, 2021, https://starwars.fandom.com/wiki/Jedi_Code.

STORY

Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope

The story of this episode takes place a long ago in a galaxy far, far away, a galaxy that is controlled by the Empire. The rebel movement, which is trying to liberate the galaxy again, is fighting against it. When the rebel ship was attacked by the Empire, Princess Leia, one of the main leaders of the resistance, saves the plans in the memory of the droid R2-D2, which she sends together with the other droid C-3PO to find help. Princess Leia is captured by the Empire's leader Darth Vader. The droids end up on the desert planet Tatooine, where they find themselves owned by Luke Skywalker's family. Skywalker later meets Obi-Wan Kenobi, who lives as a hermit in the rocks. R2-D2 plays a message from Princess Leia asking Obi-Wan for help. Obi-Wan hands Luke a lightsaber.

Meanwhile, the Empire's soldiers plundered Luke's home and killed his aunt and uncle. Luke then decided to go with Obi-Wan Kenobi to rescue Princess Leia. They hire the smuggler and pilot Han Solo and his Wookiee assistant Chewbacca and set out for the planet Alderaan. Kenobi teaches Luke how to control the Force. Once they arrive at the Alderaan, they discovered that the planet has been destroyed and instead of the planet, they saw a huge Imperial battle station, the Death Star, which will then pull them with a tractor beam. The group splits aboard the Death Star. Obi-Wan goes to deactivate the tractor beam, while Luke, Han and Chewbacca set out to rescue Princess Leia, who is trapped at the battle station. Obi-Wan meets Darth Vader, his former disciple, who, however, has moved to the dark side of the Force. To allow Luke and the others to escape, Obi-Wan sacrifices himself in a duel with Vader. However, Obi-Wan Kenobi moves into the spiritual world.

Leia leads the Group to a rebel group on the planet Yavin. The plans Leia stored in R2-D2's memory are Death Star's plans. The Empire, meanwhile, is attacking Yavin and the battle for Yavin begins. Luke used the Force, on the advice of the spiritual Obi-Wan, to prioritize his intuition overusing the technology. With this advice, Luke managed to shoot from his spacecraft into a vulnerable spot of the Death Star and destroy it and the Empire is therefore temporarily defeated. After the fight, Luke and Han are honoured by the rebellion Alliance.

Star Wars: Episode V – The Empire Strikes Back

The episode The Empire Strikes Back begins on the icy planet Hoth, where the rebels have built a new base. Luke, Han, Chewbacca and Leia are now full members of the resistance. The ghost

of Obi-Wan Kenobi appears to Luke and sends him to the planet Dagobah to find Master Yoda, who can complete his training as a Jedi Knight. Meanwhile, the planet Hoth is attacked by the Empire, which is searching for the rebels throughout the galaxy. They must evacuate from the base, with Luke heading for the planet Dagobah, while Han, Leia and Chewbacca are pursued by the Empire. They then set out for the Cloud City on the planet Bespin, which is ruled by Han's long-time friend Lando Calrissian, who could hide them from the Empire. Meanwhile, Luke is undergoing training under Master Yoda. During meditation, he has a vision of the future in which his friends are in danger.

Han and the others were tracked into the Cloud City by the bounty hunter Bob Fett, who works for the Empire, after which Calrissian was forced to make a deal with Vader and betray his friends.

Although Yoda warns Luke that his training is not over and he is not ready to stand up to Vader, Luke decides to fly to the Cloud City to help his friends. However, he promises Yoda that he will return and complete his training.

Luke has no idea that Vader wants to lure him to the Cloud City so that he can bring him to the emperor, who intends to draw Luke to the dark side of the Force. Vader wants to transport Luke to the emperor by freezing Luke into a block of carbonite, but Vader tries it first on Han. Vader froze Han into the block and Boba Fett transports Han to Jabba the Hutt. Luke Arrives in the Cloud City too late to save his friends and meets Vader.

Meanwhile, Lando Calrissian tries to atone for his betrayal and frees Leia and Chewbacca from the captivity of the Imperial soldiers and flee the Cloud City together. Luke, meanwhile, is fighting Darth Vader. Not only does Luke lose his hand in the fight, but Vader also tells him that his father did not die, but that he is his father. Luke will not let Vader draw him to the dark side of the Force and flee from Vader.

Star Wars: Episode VI – Return of Jedi

At the beginning of the episode, the group frees Han Solo from the captivity of Jabba the Hutt, and in the process Luke's transformation into a real Jedi is evident. They all flee together, and while Luke heads for Yoda again, who confirms to Luke that Vader is indeed Luke's father. After that Yoda passes away since he is almost 900 years old. The ghost of Obi-Wan Kenobi appears to Luke and reveals to Luke that Leia is his sister. Luke meets his friends with a rebel fleet planning an attack on the new Imperial Death Star. Luke tell Leia that she is his sister and

voluntarily goes to Vader. He believes that his Father is still good and can get him back to the bright side of the Force. Vader takes him to the emperor, who wants to drag Luke to his side.

As the rebels fight for the Death Star, Luke barely resists the emperor's temptations and nearly kills Vader in a duel. However, he realizes it would lead to the dark side and reject the Emperor's order, by doing so he is definitely becoming a Jedi Knight. So the Emperor decides to assassinate Luke, but Vader decides to save his son and overthrows the Emperor into the heart of the Death Star. Vader himself is mortally wounded by electric shocks and dies. The rebels destroy the second Death Star in battle and for now, they freed the galaxy.

2. MYTHS AND RELIGION

This chapter's topics are myths and religion. The Hero's Journey and The American Monomyth are discussed and explained. Apart from that, Taoism is examined as well. These terms need to be explained since they are going to be used later in this paper.

2.1 MYTHS

In this chapter, the topic of myth is going to be discussed, its definition, function and its history. The chapter also defines myth according to Joseph Campbell and his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. All the stages from the Hero's Journey get to be explained. To compare the myth by Joseph Campbell, the chapter also describes The American Monomyth. It is a way to understand myths by Robert Jewett and John S. Lawrence. Their books *The American Monomyth* and *The Myth of American Superhero* explains the idea behind their beliefs and it also gives examples from many stories. Once the two myths are explained, they are going to be compared in the practical part of the thesis. The definition of the myth follows.

Definition of myth

As I have been doing my research on myths, I found out that for more than a hundred years mythology has been debated about and theorized and that many myths can be read and interpreted in many ways. Myths are usually ancient stories and are often told in many different forms. Because of that, it is discussed by many scholars their whole lives. Myth is an ancient, basic form of communication that serves as an alternative mode of reasoning to logic and rationality. Several communication scholars have described myth and explored its essence. According to Gregory L. Lucente, a literature scholar, traditionally, the word "myth" used to mean "falsehood" but in term of American and European criticism it stands for "basic story."²⁰ Marek Oziewicz suggests that the word "myth" to refer to a lie is an outcome of a change in the term after the Enlightenment and Oziewicz also notes that before modernism, "mythos," which referred to roots of human thinking and living, was considered to be as crucial as "logos," which describes more logical and realistic thought of proper function of humans in the world.²¹ Myth

²⁰ Gregory L. Lucente, "The Creation of Myth's Rhetoric: Views of the Mythic Sign," *Comparative Literature Studies* 18, no. 1 (1981): 50.

²¹ Marek Oziewicz, "Joseph Campbell's 'New Mythology' and the Rise of Mythopoeic Fantasy," *The AnaChronisT* 13 (2007-2008): 115-6.

is usually a model or pattern that narrates how something was created. Next, the paper looks into the history of myth.

History of myth

The myth has been studied from a lot of points of view. In Lucente's studies of myth, he goes back to Plato, who was worried about myths being accurately portrayed and not fall as prey to untrustworthy poets as inspiration.²² Lucente later refers to the work of Giambattista Vico, a scholar of the eighteenth century, who viewed the study of myth as a science and interpreted myth as a "core of metaphorical meaning" accompanying language as it evolved.²³ Oziewicz states that the scientific progress in the Enlightenment era was responsible for the lack of interest in myths. However, he urges that scholar in the 20th century, such as J. Campbell, studied the myth from a different point of views and that they renewed the interest in this study.²⁴ The study of myth continues to this day and is examined in everything, whether it is in a book, movie or life. It is not surprising since myths influence everyday lives.

Function of myth

It is no wonder that myth is a strong influence on the most basic ideas of societies and cultures, considering its potential to impact how people think. The basic essence of myths is also pointed out by Joseph Campbell, who is famous for his studies of myths. He divides mythical narratives into a structure that is consist of 3 parts – departure, initiation, and return. He calls it The Hero's Journey and he outlines a basic pattern for the myths of heroic gods that are told all over the world. Campbell also claims that these myths advise people how to act in a situation.²⁵

Moving on to the Hero's Journey by Joseph Campbell. Campbell's book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* gives a perspective on myths and on a path, that hero takes throughout his story. The following paragraphs are going to explain and analyse the pattern.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY

The hero's journey studied and assembled by Joseph Campbell, is the basic tale of the hero's maturation, his quests and his success in defeating evil. Campbell also believes that it is one of

²² Lucente, "The Creation of Myth's Rhetoric," 51.

²³ Lucente, "The Creation of Myth's Rhetoric," 52-3.

²⁴ Oziewicz, "Joseph Campbell's 'New Mythology,'" 115-8.

²⁵ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (California: New World Library, 3rd ed. Novato), 1949, 33-34.

the most essential myths in all human narrative. In such tales, Campbell describes the protagonist as “the world’s symbolic carriers of the destiny of Everyman.”²⁶ The hero’s journey includes 3 stages of a story. The first stage is called Departure, also known as Separation, where the hero travels from his daily, ordinary life into a world of the unknown with magical powers. The second stage is Initiation, in which he encounters magical powers and manages to defeat them. The last stage is Return, where the hero comes back from his adventure back to ordinary life, however, now wielding extraordinary powers.²⁷ Each stage is divided into other stages and those are described in detail in Campbell’s book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. I am going to summarize all the stages in my own words.

Departure

Sections of departure are titled “Call to Adventure,” “Refusal of Call,” “Supernatural Aid,” “Crossing First Threshold,” and “Belly of the Whale.” Let me start with Call to Adventure. At the beginning of the story, the “soon to be a hero” is living in his peaceful common life, where he is comfortable. However, someone or something appears (it could be an event, problem or person) that brings him the attention to the extraordinary world full of magical creatures. Despite the temptation to explore the magical world, some heroes may feel the urge to refuse the call at first since they are so comfortable with their daily life. Some other event happens in meantime, and the hero usually accepts the call. The hero then meets some kind of supernatural aid – advisor, who then guides them. Typically, it is a character of older age - a wise man, who has a lot of experience. This elder man or women gives the hero an amulet that helps the hero throughout the journey. Next, the hero must cross the first threshold. Once he accepts the quest and is armed for the danger that awaits, the hero is ready for his first battle. It is crossing the entrance to, for him new, extraordinary world. Once he crosses the threshold, he finds himself in The Belly of the Whale – in the extraordinary unknown world and the dangers await him. It represents the final departure from the hero’s known world and the hero’s will to undergo a change.²⁸

Initiation

The second stage is Initiation and the sections in this stage are “Road of Trials,” “Meeting with the Goddess,” “Temptation,” “Atonement with the Father,” “Apotheosis,” and “The Ultimate Boon.” After the hero survives The Belly of the Whale, the hero faces a series of tests in the

²⁶ Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 33.

²⁷ Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 34-35.

²⁸ Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 45-88.

Road of Trials. It takes place in the unknown world, where is tested the hero's ability to survive or even some literal challenges and the hero often fails some challenges. Trials are followed by the Meeting with the Goddess. The Goddess does not need to be a woman, however, it represents love, light goodness, positive power in the world and a person that holds the power the hero needs. The temptation phase is a test of the hero's resolve and so it is an offering of some form of gratification. In modern stories, this is often represented by the hero being tempted to give up on his quest. Falling for the temptation symbolizes that the hero is not grown enough to complete the quest. Once he resists the temptation Atonement with the Father awaits. Usually, it is the climax of the story. The hero finally faces the villain, who usually is the hero's father and has enormous powers. Nevertheless, in this stage, the hero does not defeat the villain. With that, the Apotheosis stage appears. The hero was struck down and he realizes that he needs to stand back up and face the villain once more. But this time the hero discovers the power that was in him all along and becomes victorious. The last section in this stage is The Ultimate Boon which represents that the goal of the quest has been accomplished. All previous steps lead to this one. It is the reward for the quest, most of the time it is not what they wanted, but what they needed.²⁹

The Return

The third and last stage is The Return and the sections are called "Refusal of Return," "Magic Flight," "Rescue from Without," "Crossing the Return Threshold," "Master of Two Worlds," and "Freedom to Live." Even though this stage consists of 6 sections, the first three sections are just possible outcomes and they do not coexist within the same story. Let me start with Refusal of Return. To put it simply, the hero found himself in the new blissful world and he may not want to return to his previous world. Another option of return is Magic Flight. The hero must escape with the knowledge he gained and often is given assistance that guides him back to the beginning. However, this flight might be as dangerous as the journey he was before. When the hero is not able to return by himself, for example, if he is wounded, his friends need to come to rescue him, it is called Rescue from Without. The following stage is The Crossing of the Return Threshold, a stage where the hero has returned, but the hero is not the same man as he was before the adventure. He is marked by his knowledge and is a completely different person. He uses his new wisdom and might share the wisdom with the rest of the world. After that Master of Two Worlds stage starts, the hero found the balance between the knowledge he

²⁹ Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 89-178.

has learnt in the extraordinary world and the knowledge he already had in the ordinary world. Last but not least is Freedom to Live. Once someone masters something, freedom comes with that. Usually, it is just a single line, a closing image, or a final paragraph and it is meant to show that the hero is at peace.³⁰

Another understanding of myth is by Robert Jewett and John S. Lawrence called The American Monomyth from their books *The American Monomyth* and *The Myth of American Superhero*. The American Monomyth is the myth of an Eden-like society helpless in the face of evil but rescued by an outsider, a superhero, who then disappears again.³¹ The next few pages explain this understanding of the myth.

THE AMERICAN MONOMYTH

Jewett and Lawrence explain the American Monomyth as following:

A community in a harmonious paradise is threatened by evil; normal institutions fail to contend with this threat; a selfless superhero emerges to renounce temptations and carry out the redemptive task; aided by fate, his decisive victory restores the community to its paradisaical condition; the superhero then recedes into obscurity.³²

Even from this extract, it is obvious that there are key elements for the American Monomyth. These elements are as follows: paradise, evil threat, failure of institutions, a hero arises, temptation, aided by fate, hero's victory, paradise restored, obscurity.

The beginning of the American Monomyth according to Jewett and Lawrence always starts with a community being in Paradise living in peace. The community that is being overwatched is most of the time group of hardworking farmers etc.³³ The book *The Myth of the American Superhero* gives an example of Disney's *Lion King*, where it all starts peacefully.³⁴ The *American Monomyth* book explains it on the famous television series *Star Trek*, where the whole crew is cruising tranquillity in the space or in *Death Wish*, where the story opens with a harmonious ideal life.³⁵

³⁰ Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 179-226.

³¹ Robert Jewett and John S. Lawrence, *The American Monomyth* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1977), Front Cover.

³² Jewett et al., *The American Monomyth*, xx.

³³ Jewett et al., *The American Monomyth*, 169-170.

³⁴ John Shelton Lawrence and Robert Jewett, *The Myth of the American Superhero* (USA: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 22.

³⁵ Jewett et al., *The American Monomyth*, 170.

All this peaceful living of the small community in the paradise mentioned above ends once a villain starts treating the paradise. The paradise is usually under a siege of a villain and most of the time the villain has some kind of superpowers.³⁶ In Disney's *Lion King* the paradise ends when Scar murders Mufasa and Scar is the villain in the story.³⁷ The book also mentions the movie *Jaws*, where the paradise is threatened by a shark.³⁸ The *Star Trek* series peaceful cruising is ended by a dangerous threat from outside of the universe such as Klingons or Romulans and in *Death Wish* the Eden-like town is threatened by criminals.³⁹

Jewett and Lawrence note that neither the police department nor the law institution is able to stop this villain and fails the community. The institutions are powerless and cannot defeat this evil by themselves and the city is left defenceless. The book gives an example from *Star Trek* of humanoids on Gamma Trianguli VI being helpless and incapable to get free by themselves from technological monsters or in *Jaws* the Board of Selectmen cannot get rid of the monster shark.⁴⁰ *The Myth of the American Superhero* gives an example from the movie *Independence Day*. In this movie, the whole world is unable to defend the siege of aliens.⁴¹

Since the law institutions failed to defeat the villain, a hero has to come out from the shadows of the city to save it.⁴² If the hero was part of the normal institutions the villain would have no chance to defeat the institution, therefore, the hero is separate from the institutions. The hero would have been needed if the institutions had been able to stop the villain without him/her.⁴³

When the hero steps out of the shadows, he can be tempted not only sexually or romantically but he can be also tempted by his family. The hero needs to renounce these temptations in order to defeat the villain. He would not have been able to defeat it if he had been bound to someone.⁴⁴

Jewett in the *American Monomyth* describes the fact that the hero always succeeds. Even though all the odds are against the hero, he always finds a solution and wins. Since he is so pure and is devoted to justice, he overcomes everything that normal institutions fail.⁴⁵

³⁶ Jewett et al., *The American Monomyth*, 174.

³⁷ Lawrence et al., *The Myth of the American Superhero*, 22.

³⁸ Lawrence et al., *The Myth of the American Superhero*, 26.

³⁹ Jewett et al., *The American Monomyth*, 174.

⁴⁰ Jewett et al., *The American Monomyth*, 178-179.

⁴¹ Lawrence et al., *The Myth of the American Superhero*, 29.

⁴² Jewett et al., *The American Monomyth*, 183-184.

⁴³ Lawrence et al., *The Myth of the American Superhero*, 31-32.

⁴⁴ Lawrence et al., *The Myth of the American Superhero*, 36-37.

⁴⁵ Jewett et al., *The American Monomyth*, 195-196.

The hero is able to defeat the evil and restore the paradise in the city. His main goal has been fulfilled - putting an end to the villain before he can do further damage. Whether it was accomplished by violence or nonviolence does not matter.⁴⁶ Jewett explains that the American Monomyth always ends with the restoration of the paradise in the universe.⁴⁷

The Myth of the American Superhero states that the hero lives outside of the community and if he lives within the community, he is the idealistic loner and his identity is secret. He is the outsider and after the evil is defeated and paradise restored, the hero fades into obscurity.⁴⁸

2.2 RELIGION

This chapter deals with the religious aspect in this thesis. More specifically, it focuses on Taoism. It answers questions such as what it is, where it comes from and it explains important terms that are used in Taoism philosophy. However, most of the terms have many definitions in the world and I chose the definitions that were close to me and how I understand them. The chapter continues with the description of Taoism.

Taoism

Taoism, also known as Daoism, is a religion and philosophy from ancient China. The beginning is not exactly known, but Scholars believe that thinking in the way of Taoism began in the sixth century B.C. However, the origins of Taoism lay much deeper than sixth century B.C. According to the book *Taoism, The Taoists* traces the roots to the great and wise ruler Huang Di, also known as the Yellow Emperor, who ruled from 2696 to 2598 B.C. Legends say that Huang Di went to a wise man, who lives in mountains, to ask him about the secret of life. The wise man showed him his knowledge and Huang Di applied this knowledge not only to areas of life but also to the government. He was the first to diagnose and cure many illnesses, tame wild animals and efficiently use military tactics. Huang Di was also told that the wise man had lived for twelve hundred years by living in Tao, or in peace with the universe. Huang Di accepted the wise man's thinking and practices and after his almost 100 years reign, he set off to heaven on a dragon and became immortal.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Lawrence et al., *The Myth of the American Superhero*, 46-47.

⁴⁷ Jewett et al., *The American Monomyth*, 169-170.

⁴⁸ Lawrence et al., *The Myth of the American Superhero*, 47-48.

⁴⁹ Paula R. Hartz, *Taoism* (New York, Facts of File, 1993), 16-18.

Laozi and The Tao Te Ching

Tradition pictures Laozi as a worker in royal archives in Luoyang. In accord with the traditions, he was said to be a wise man, to whom people were coming to get answers on questions related to religion and politics. “Laozi” is not a name, but rather a nickname, which means “The Old One” or “The Master,” his real name was Li Ehr. As the tradition has it, Laozi, after several years of working as a librarian, set off into mountains on a water buffalo to search for immortality. He wrote the book “Tao Te Ching” before he started his travels. The Tao Te Ching is the foundation of Taoism.⁵⁰ It is a collection of short poems, usually function as advice on how to govern for rulers, by Laozi. Nevertheless, nowadays’ Scholars believe that it was not written by only Laozi, they assume it is a collection of works from different authors collected over some time and even after Laozi life.⁵¹

The Tao

The centre of Taoism is The Tao. The Tao is very personal, and every person understands it differently and that is why there are so many translations of Tao Te Ching. However, The Tao is often translated as “the path” thus if someone follows The Tao, they follow the path, or it is interpreted as “the way.” According to Taoists, the Tao is the creator of all things in the universe and it determines how the universe functions as well as how to live in accordance with the way things are. To experience the Tao, one must first be conscious of it. They can flow with the Tao, and once they are in harmony with the Tao, the appropriate action will appear.⁵²

Nevertheless, no one can thoroughly describe Tao since the human mind is incapable of comprehending it. Tao is not anything that can be seen, touched, or felt through the senses. The natural forces of the universe express it. However, from Tao Te Ching we know that Tao is the beginning of all things.⁵³

*The Tao gives birth to One.
One gives birth to Two.
Two gives birth to Three.
Three gives birth to all things.*⁵⁴

The Tao will be present after the universe and was before the universe. Taoist accept that they can never fully understand Tao. They focus on finding a way to get into harmony with this

⁵⁰ Hartz, *Taoism*, 20-23.

⁵¹ Hartz, *Taoism*, 22-25.

⁵² John M. Porter, *Tao of Star Wars* (Humanics Publishing Group, 2015), 18.

⁵³ Hartz, *Taoism*, 59.

⁵⁴ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, trans. Mitchell Stephen. (New York: HarperCollins, 2000), 42.

ultimate force – to go with the flow of the Tao and the universe.⁵⁵ From this harmony and balance come Yin and Yang. Yin and Yang together form the Tao, and because Tao is in everything, yin and yang are part of Tao. Yang is the positive and sunny side such as day, birth, summer. Yin is the opposite of Yang, meaning it is the negative and shady side such as night, death and winter. Nothing exists that can escape this duality of positive and masculine(yang) and negative and feminine(yin) which means without a night there cannot be a day, without a moon there cannot be a sun. In Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu says:

*When people see some things as beautiful,
other things become ugly.
When people see some things as good,
other things become bad.
Being and non-being create each other.
Difficult and easy support each other.
Long and short define each other.
High and low depend on each other.
Before and after follow each other.*⁵⁶

These two forces exist in a dynamic balance when there is harmony. The imbalance of Yin and Yang causes discord and dysfunction. For Example, illness is viewed in traditional Chinese medicine as:

An imbalance between internal influences such as diet, exercise, rest and emotions; and external factors such as weather, trauma microbes or poisons. Health is not just the absence of symptoms, it is a state of being in balance in body, mind and spirit.⁵⁷

Wu Wei

*Act without doing;
Work without effort.*⁵⁸

Wu Wei's most common translation is nonaction, inaction or actionless action. Xiaogon argues that these translations are usually misunderstood, and most people think it means doing nothing, but it actually expresses spontaneous non-thinking action or acting naturally.⁵⁹ A website on Taoism mentions that wu-wei means the *actionless of Heaven*.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Hartz, *Taoism*, 59.

⁵⁶ Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 2.

⁵⁷ Subhash Durlabhji, *The Tao of Organization Behavior*. (Journal of Business Ethics 52, no. 4, 2004): 402, accessed March 12, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25123270>.

⁵⁸ Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 63.

⁵⁹ Liu Xiaogan, *Wuwei (Non-action): From Laozi to Huainanzi*, (Taoist Resources 3.1, 1991), 41.

⁶⁰ "What is Wu-Wei (Nondoing?)," Taoism Initiation Page, accessed March 12, 2021, <https://www.taopage.org/nondoing.html>.

*The Tao never does anything,
Yet through it all things are done.*⁶¹

Wu Wei is an action without desire, meaning that people do not use the effort to act unnaturally. Xiaogan defines Wu wei as “taking no action, loving tranquillity, engaging in no activity and having no desires— all of which lead to natural transformation, correctness, prosperity and simplicity.”⁶² Xiaogan also gives examples of this kind of behaviour - water naturally flows downhill and reeds naturally bend in the high wind instead of breaking.

As I mentioned above, Wu Wei does not mean doing nothing of course, but rather it is an action without thinking or planning something in one’s mind and the action is just being done. John Porter gives an amazing example in his book *Tao of Star Wars*. Porter speaks of Wu Wei as if athletes are “in their zone” while competing. Their actions do not come from thinking or planning, they are just being executed.⁶³ With this analogy, we can say that wu wei can be the most effective, spontaneous action. Non-doing can also be thought of as non-forced behaviour. Only enough action to get the task done without putting effort. It is not about forcing something to happen, but rather about gently influencing it.

It is effortless because it does not force things to happen, instead, it just goes with the flow. Wu Wei is following nature's lead. It is completely unplanned. It is moving along in the changing stream of life. Why is it referred to as non-doing if it is actually doing something? Because wu wei also implies the process of emptying. One must first understand the meaning of emptiness before acting spontaneously.⁶⁴

Wu

*The Tao is called the Great Mother:
Empty yet inexhaustible,
It gives birth to infinite worlds.*⁶⁵

Emptiness, nonexistence or nonbeing is the meaning of the word Wu. The Tao is everything that exists, but it is also the nothingness from which everything arises. The concept of

⁶¹ Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 37.

⁶² Xiaogan, *Wuwei: From Laozi to Huainanzi*, 43.

⁶³ Porter, *Tao of Star Wars*, 9.

⁶⁴ Sorajjakool, Siroj, "Wu Wei" (Non-Doing) and the Negativity of Depression." *Journal of Religion and Health* 39, no. 2 (2000): 160, accessed March 13, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27511436>.

⁶⁵ Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 6.

emptiness, void, non-being, or nothingness can be difficult to grasp at times. The tangible can be held on to, but the intangible cannot.⁶⁶

*We join spokes together in a wheel,
But it is the center hole
That makes the wagon move.
We shape clay into a pot,
But it is the emptiness inside
That holds whatever we want.
We hammer wood for a house,
But it is the inner space
That makes it livable.
We work with being,
But non-being is what we use.*⁶⁷

The wheel's functionality is determined by the amount of empty space on the wheel axle. Similarly, the pot's use is determined by the emptiness on the inside, and the house can only be used through the emptiness on the inside. As a result, emptiness gives a thing its usefulness.⁶⁸

The mind can benefit from emptiness as well. The beginner's mind is a blank slate, free of presumptions and prejudices, and thus open to new experiences. Empty mind but it is emptiness filled with energy, with potential, not just the dead emptiness of a void.⁶⁹

Lao Tzu believed that in life, there are three main thoughts, that people should keep close to their hearts and I examine two of them - patience and compassion.

*I have just three things to teach:
simplicity, patience, compassion.*⁷⁰

Patience

*Patient with both friends and enemies,
you accord with the way things are.*⁷¹

One must first be patient with oneself and then with the details of one's life. Even though the Cambridge dictionary defines patience as the ability to stand by, or to keep accomplishing

⁶⁶ Hartz, *Taoism*. 24-25.

⁶⁷ Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 11.

⁶⁸ "What is Wu (Emptiness)?," Taoism Initiation Page, accessed March 13, 2021, <https://www.taopage.org/emptiness.html>.

⁶⁹ Porter, *Tao of Star Wars*, 3.

⁷⁰ Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 67.

⁷¹ Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 67.

something notwithstanding troubles, or to endure without getting irritated or complaining,⁷² the meaning of it in Taoism is a bit different. It is a skill like any other - it needs to be practised. Meaning that if someone pushes the patience hard, they are most likely going to fail. Also, they will not focus on what is happening around them if they try to learn patience all alone. In both of these cases they are not going to be in harmony, and they will not feel patient. People think that being patient is letting the world catching up to them, however, it is the other way around. They can catch up to the world while being patient. And many times, they need to move quickly to keep up. Patience allows them to connect to the world around them. A person is not patient because he waits, but because he pauses for a minute in order to understand the essences around him. Once he understands the flow he acts.⁷³

Compassion

*Compassionate toward yourself,
you reconcile all beings in the world.*⁷⁴

Compassion does not mean that sitting around and pitying others. Being compassionate means loving all living things. If we are really compassionate and we truly want to protect someone's best interest, is it not more appropriate to tell them the whole truth in the right circumstances? Perhaps we are being truly compassionate by doing this by bringing people face to face with reality, because only when they fully comprehend all of the implications will they be able to reach their full potential. The Tao Te Ching explains that being extremely judgmental of others is a bad way to live. The Tao nourishes all that exists, be it good or bad. This idea is based on the Taoist principle of unity, according to which everything in the world is connected to and flows through the Tao. This naturally leads to love and our goodness is expressed in our compassion.⁷⁵ However, compassion is dynamic and one can attack with it and win or one can defend with it and stand firm as it is depicted in this following extract from Tao Te Ching:

*If one fights with compassion, then victory
With defense, then security
Heaven shall save them
And with compassion guard them.*⁷⁶

⁷² "Patience," Cambridge Dictionary, accessed March 13, 2021, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/patience>.

⁷³ "Being Patient," Personal Tao, accessed March 14, 2021, <https://personaltao.com/taoism/teach-me-patience/>.

⁷⁴ Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 67.

⁷⁵ Porter, *Tao of Star Wars*, 7.

⁷⁶ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching: Annotated & Explained*. trans. Derek Lin. (Nashville, Tennessee: SkyLight Illuminations, 1994). 43.

3. MYTHS IN STAR WARS

This chapter analyses myth traits in the three original Star Wars movies. It takes information from the theoretical part of the thesis. The first section focuses on Campbell's Hero's Journey, its stages and how they are projected throughout the Star Wars trilogy. The next section deals with The American Monomyth by Robert Jewett and John S. Lawrence. In the same case as with the Hero's Journey, it analyses the use of The American Monomyth throughout the story.

3.1 HERO'S JOURNEY

Starting with Hero's Journey by Joseph Campbell. Since the hero of the first three Star Wars movies is Luke Skywalker, I focus on him and his journey throughout the series.

When the movie starts, Luke is on the planet Tatooine, the farthest planet from the centre of the universe, and he is farming with his uncle. Luke is getting bored and all of his friends are already gone, so he is planning on applying to an academy. However, his uncle forces him to stay one more year. Luke and his uncle buy two droids – R2D2 and C-3PO, and later that day when Luke is cleaning the droids, R2D2 accidentally plays a recording of Princess Leia asking Obi-Wan Kenobi for help. Luke manages to find Obi-Wan Kenobi, who then tells Luke that Luke's father was a noble Jedi Knight and that he had been killed by Darth Vader. Obi-Wan then asks Luke to come with him to Alderaan. This, I believe, is a Call to Adventure for Luke.

Once Obi-Wan offered Luke to go to Alderaan with him, Luke is confused. Even though he is eager to travel throughout the galaxy, he is comfortable on Tatooine with his uncle and aunt. So, Luke refuses and says that he cannot go to Alderaan, since he has obligations on Tatooine. This represents the Refusal of the Call. My take on that matches with McDowell's idea in his book *The Gospel according to Star Wars*. McDowell states that the Call to Adventure appears when Luke sees holographic Princess Leia, however, Luke refuses it, because he has work to do.⁷⁷

However, when they return to Luke's home, they find out that Luke's uncle and aunt were killed by the Empire and Luke decides to go to Alderaan with Obi-Wan. He tells Obi-Wan that he wants to learn the way of Jedi and to control the force. Obi-Wan gives Luke a lightsaber that belonged to Luke's father and Luke asks Obi-Wan to train him the way of the Force. Here, Obi-

⁷⁷ John C. McDowell, *The Gospel according to Star Wars: Faith, Hope, and the Force* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 7.

Wan is referred to as the Supernatural Aid and he also gave Luke an amulet that should help the hero on the journey – Lightsaber. Obi-Wan also explains that he is too old for doing this by himself.

Later on, the group of four – Obi-Wan, Luke, R2D2 and C-3PO, travels to a spaceport to get a spaceship and a pilot. They hire pilot Han Solo and his co-pilot Chewbacca and with few troubles they leave Tatooine, travelling through the galaxy with adventures awaiting in front of them. This part refers to Crossing the First Threshold – Luke leaving his home planet for the adventure.

When they arrive at the Alderaan, they discovered that the planet has been destroyed and instead of the planet, they saw a huge Imperial battle station, the Death Star, which will then pull them with a tractor beam. They end up in the middle of the Death Star. The Death Star represents the Belly of the Whale. They rescue Princess Leia and Luke commits to the life of a rebellion member. If I compare my beliefs and McDowell's on this topic, they are relatively identical. McDowell mentions that Obi-Wan is the wise old man, who provides aid to Luke, Luke crosses the Threshold once he leaves his home planet and that Luke escapes from Death Star, which McDowell refers to as Belly of the Whale.⁷⁸

The Road of Trials section is a bit difficult and different from the previous ones. The challenges are throughout the first two movies – A New Hope and The Empire Strikes Back. The very first challenge is to rescue Princess Leia, fleeing from the heart of the Death Star and later even the destruction of it. All these challenges are successfully accomplished. However, these are not the only trials that Luke had to pass. The trials continue in The Empire Strikes Back episode by escaping from the icy planet called Hoth before the Empire destroys them and training with Master Yoda. All these challenges help him in becoming a Jedi Knight himself.

In comparison with McDowell, he argues that Luke faces the road of trials only in A New Hope.⁷⁹ However, The Gospel according to Star Wars deals with Hero's Journey only in episode IV. After this stage, it is difficult to compare my finding with other studies because most of the works and studies that were researched on this topic and are available for me, they deal with Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey episode by episode as separate journeys, whereas I deal with the whole trilogy as one journey.

⁷⁸ McDowell, *The Gospel according to Star Wars*, 7-8.

⁷⁹ McDowell, *The Gospel according to Star Wars*, 8-9.

Meeting with the Goddess takes part in the second movie – *The Empire Strikes Back*. However, Luke does not meet the literal Goddess. When Luke leaves Hoth, he aims for Yoda – Jedi Master, who is supposed to teach him the way of Jedi Knight, according to Obi-Wan Kenobi. Even though Yoda is neither God nor Goddess, he is one of the most powerful Jedi in the universe. He is almost 900 years old and dedicated to the Force for most of the time. His wisdom and experience make him a perfect match for the “so-called God” in the Hero’s Journey. He then trains Luke to defeat Darth Vader. Even though Yoda is not Goddess, I still believe that he represents the god in the Hero’s Journey. Many kinds of research refer to Princess Leia as the Goddess, for example, Andrew Gordon argues that when Luke rescued Princess Leia he met the Goddess.⁸⁰ In my opinion, it is not quite right since the goddess in Hero's Journey is the positive power in the world and a person that holds the power the hero needs as it was explained in previous chapters and Leia does not hold the power Luke needs.

When Luke is training with Yoda, he sees his friend in trouble in his mind and he urges to leave the training and help them. Even though Yoda is against it, Luke decides to go help them. Luke meets with Darth Vader and Vader reveals to Luke, that he is Luke’s father. Vader tries to get Luke on the dark side and interrupt the training with Yoda. Luke felt the temptation since Vader is his father, however, he managed to not fall for the trap and escaped. This sequence is most likely similar to the Atonement with the Father. Luke is defeated by Vader. He is physically and mentally at the complete bottom, he lost one arm in the fight and finds out that Vader, the cruel lord, is his father however, Luke manages to escape.

To analyse Apotheosis, we need to look at the third movie – *Return of the Jedi*. Under the training of Master Yoda, Luke has managed to properly control the Force. When Luke appears for the first time in this episode, Luke’s improvement in the way of Jedi is more than noticeable. With the wisdom and experience he gained from Master Yoda, he is now ready to challenge Vader once more. He faces Vader and manages to defeat him and with him also Emperor Lord Sidious. Andrew Gordon argues that when Luke defeats the empire, it is the Atonement with the Father.⁸¹ However, in stage Atonement with the Father, the hero usually does not defeat the villain, and that is the reason why I believe this scene is Apotheosis.

The Empire is defeated, and the democracy is finally restored. That is the Ultimate Boon, Luke is now official a Jedi Master with knowledge of the Force. All previous actions and challenges

⁸⁰ Andrew Gordon, “*Star Wars*”: *A Myth of Our Time* (In: *Literature/Film Quarterly* 6, 1978), 323.

⁸¹ Andrew Gordon, “*Return of the Jedi*”: *The End of the Myth* (Film Criticism 8, no. 2, 1984), 48-49.

lead to this moment, even though it might not be the thing Luke wanted, it is what he needed in his life.

The stage of Return is a bit confusing in the series and it is covered only in one scene in the last few minutes of the movie.

I believe the following stage is the Refusal of Return. Even though it is not said, I believe Luke does not want to return back to his previous life. He now has new friends, supernatural powers and has a completely new life also there is nothing left for him on Tatooine. In my opinion, in this series, he does not return to his homeland, however, he is returning from the adventure to his new home as the last scene in the movie indicates, he is celebrating with his friends and even with the spirits of Yoda, Obi-Wan and his father. He is also marked by the adventure – robotic hand and knowing the way of the Force. I believe he became Master of Two Worlds – he is now Jedi Knight and has knowledge about the extraordinary world, but he also knows from his past the knowledge of the ordinary world. Leah Deyneka points out that Luke changed from farmer boy to Jedi Knight who is able to control The Force and defeat the Empire.⁸² The Freedom to live, in my opinion, is pictured in the last scene. The Rebellion Alliance celebrating the defeat of the Empire. Luke has mastered the way of the Force and with that freedom came. In the final scene, Luke appears to be at peace. Andrew Gordon also believes that the episode Return of the Jedi consists of the Return stage, however, Gordon does not name particular stages. Gordon believes that after Luke defeats the Empire, the Return stage begins.⁸³

This chapter showed that George Lucas used Hero's Journey by Joseph Campbell when he was making this Star Wars Trilogy and it fulfilled my beliefs about the issue. To compare it with another understanding of a myth, the next chapter deals with The American Monomyth.

3.2 AMERICAN MONOMYTH

Moving onto the American Monomyth by Robert Jewett and John S. Lawrence. It is different in many ways from the Hero's Journey however, few similarities can be found. The American Monomyth, as it was explained in the previous chapters, is a myth where people, who live in harmonious peace, gets threatened by Evil that cannot be stopped by legal institutions and the

⁸² Douglas Brode and Leah Deyneka, *Myth, media and Culture in Star Wars: An Anthology* (The Scarecrow Press, 2012), 41.

⁸³ Gordon, *The End of the Myth*, 48.

hero must come out of hiding to save the world. To remind how Jewett and Lawrence explained the American Monomyth, here is the extract from their book:

A community in a harmonious paradise is threatened by evil; normal institutions fail to contend with this threat; a selfless superhero emerges to renounce temptations and carry out the redemptive task; aided by fate, his decisive victory restores the community to its paradisaical condition; the superhero then recedes into obscurity.⁸⁴

Key elements for the American Monomyth are paradise, evil threat, the failure of institutions, a hero arises, temptation, the hero gets aided by fate, the hero's decisive victory, paradise is brought back, and the hero goes to obscurity.

The story of the trilogy does not start exactly with the universe being in paradise however Luke's world and home starts in complete harmony and all he cares about is farming and going to an academy. Lawrence gives, among other examples, one mention but only one in the whole book of Star Wars in *The Myth of American Superhero*: "Star Wars begins in a small farming community on Tatooine, where Luke Skywalker dutifully helps his aunt and uncle on their subsistence farm."⁸⁵ This statement confirms my beliefs of the first stage of the American Monomyth.

From the beginning, Vader and his empire threaten the whole universe and he is the villain in the trilogy. The evil in Star Wars is the Galactic Empire with their Stormtroopers, but I believe Darth Vader represents this whole evil organization. He is the most iconic representative of evil. A tall, impressive and horrifying figure dressed all in black armour. At the very first glance audience can notice that Vader is not exactly human. He is partly mechanical, and it is indicated by the mechanical parts on his chest and belt. Additionally, his voice sounds robotic and evil. Together with his black skeleton-like helmet and long black cloak, Vader makes the perfect candidate for an evil villain. Vader terrorizes the whole universe with his unnatural powers and with his huge Empire he crashes everything he crosses paths with.

The institution in the trilogy is, in my opinion, Princess Leia with her rebellion group and resistance. She and her people are unable to defeat Vader's Empire and the whole galaxy is on verge of Empire's supremacy. In the first scene, Vader is demolishing another rebellion ship, but now also with their leader on board. Princess Leia fails to escape or defeat Vader on the ship and is captured by the empire. Due to this, her home planet is destroyed by Death Star. I also

⁸⁴ Jewett et al., *The American Monomyth*, xx.

⁸⁵ Lawrence et al., *The Myth of the American Superhero*, 22.

argue that the rebellion fails to defeat the Empire without Luke. Throughout the trilogy, the rebellion is unable to do anything without him. To be exact, in *A New Hope* at the end, no one from the rebellion group is able to destroy the Death Star but Luke Skywalker. None of the fighter pilots was able to aim their torpedo into the Death Star's weak spot with their targeting technology.

I believe that this stage has two heroes, but they did not arise at the same time. In *A New Hope*, the first hero who arose was Obi-Wan Kenobi. The story says that Obi-Wan was hiding from Galactic Empire and Darth Vader and was secretly looking after Luke Skywalker. Obi-Wan comes from hiding once Luke was knocked unconscious by Tusken Riders. Once Luke finds out that the Empire killed his uncle and aunt, Luke longs for revenge. This is the point in the trilogy, where the second hero starts arising. Throughout the trilogy he is going through several challenges such as rescuing Princess Leia, destroying Death Star or Yoda's training.

As mentioned in the chapter on Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey, the temptation is displayed in the Star Wars trilogy by the temptation to join the Dark Side. When Darth Vader reveals the truth to Luke about Vader being his father, Luke hesitates and is tempted to join the Dark Side. However, Luke manages to stand up to the temptation.

Luke, the son of the notorious Darth Vader one of the most powerful being in the universe, is now facing his father. All the odds are against him and yet he manages to defeat the empire. The main reason he is able to defeat the Emperor is to expose the good side inside of Darth Vader since he is his father. I am going to support my believes with the following extracts.

In this particular scene, Luke senses the good in Vader since he is his father and used to be Jedi and a good person. Luke even gives reasoning why he feels the goodness inside Vader. They already faced before where Vader cut Luke's hand and Vader was not able to kill Luke due to his emotions toward his son.

Luke and Vader are fighting against each other.

Luke: Your thoughts betray you, Father. I feel the good in you, the conflict.

Vader: There is no conflict.

Luke: You couldn't bring yourself to kill me before, and I don't believe you'll destroy me now.⁸⁶

Another following scene shows that Luke was right, and Vader had the good inside him. Vader scared that Emperor would kill his son Luke, acts on emotions and kills the Emperor.

⁸⁶ *Star Wars: Episode VI – The Return of the Jedi*, directed by Richard Marquand, (LucasFilm and Twentieth Century Fox, 1983), 1:49:59 - 1:50:14.

Emperor using force lighting on Luke and almost kills him

Luke: Father, please!

Emperor: Now, young Skywalker... you will die.

Emperor starts killing Luke with force lightning.

Vader: No. No!

*Vader grabs Emperor and throws him over a bridge while being electrocuted almost to death.*⁸⁷

The last scene I am presenting shows how Vader himself realizes he had the good inside him and that Luke was right.

Luke takes off Vader mask and they talk together before Vader dies

Vader: You were right. You were right about me. Tell your sister, you were right.⁸⁸

These three extracts show how the fact that Vader is Luke's father helped Luke to defeat the Galactic Empire. The fact that Luke and Vader are related, makes Luke's victory over the Empire aided by Fate. If Vader and Luke were not related, Luke would have never been able to defeat the Empire since Luke was almost dead when the Emperor was using force lighting on Luke.

After Luke defeated Darth Vader, Emperor and together with them the whole Galactic Empire, the universe is slowly getting back to normal. Luke manages to bring back the paradise by overcoming the evil that threatened the universe, which the legal institutions were unable to stop. At the end of the movie, Princess Leia is honouring Luke with a medal alongside with Han Solo. The ceremony takes place in a great hall on Yavin IV and the rebel soldiers honour Luke and Han for their heroic actions. The setting of the place resembles some kind of sanctuary and at the first sight, the place screams *paradise*.

The last stage of The American Monomyth is Obscurity, which represents the hero going back to hiding. However, the trilogy does not have this kind of ending and I believe that this is the only stage that is not included in the trilogy from the American Monomyth structured by Lawrence and Jewett. The trilogy ends with a massive social event where Luke and all other people of any race celebrate the paradise being restored.

Even though Lucas might not follow the American Monomyth step by step, he used the majority of it in the trilogy, and this chapter proves it. The myths had been analysed successfully and now it is the turn for the religious aspect of the trilogy. The following chapter examines Taoism used in the story of the trilogy.

⁸⁷ *The Return of the Jedi*, Marquand, 1:56:01 - 1:57:18.

⁸⁸ *The Return of the Jedi*, Marquand, 2:01:12 - 2:01:25.

4. RELIGION IN STAR WARS

4.1 THE FORCE AS THE TAO

This chapter studies Taoism in Star Wars episodes. It gives examples from Star Wars and compares them to extracts from Tao Te Ching and explain the differences and similarities. The chapter starts with finding the similarities between the Tao and The Force in Star Wars, continues to find Wu in Star Wars as well as Wu Wei. Other than that, patience and compassion are being analysed throughout this chapter.

THE TAO x THE FORCE

As it was stated in the chapter on Taoism, the Tao is the creator of all things in the universe and it is similar to the Force. I am showing the similarity on following extracts from Tao Te Ching written by Lao Tzu and Star Wars:

Tao Te Ching

The Tao explained in Tao Te Ching:

*The great Tao flows everywhere
All things are born from it...
...It is merged with all things
And hidden in their hearts.
...all things vanish into it...⁸⁹*

*It flows through all things,
Inside and outside, and returns
To the origin of all things.⁹⁰*

Star Wars

Obi-Wan explains the Force to Luke: *The Force is what gives the Jedi his power. It's an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us, penetrates us, it binds the galaxy together.⁹¹*

Yoda explains the Force to Luke: *Life creates it, makes it grow. Its energy surrounds us and binds us... You must feel the Force around you. Here, between you, me... the tree, the rock... everywhere. Yes... even between the land and the ship.⁹²*

In these extracts, similarities can be noticed. Phrases such as *Tao flows everywhere* and *feel the Force...everywhere* are examples of The Tao and the Force being everywhere around us. Both create all living creatures and it can be seen in the extracts: *All things are born from it* and *Life creates it*. There is also proof of the connectedness between all things: *It is merged with all things* and *it penetrates us / its energy binds us*. These two phrases indicate the fact that the Tao and the Force flow through every creature and that it connects everything. The book Sex, Politics, and Religion in Star Wars compares when Yoda was listing thing through which the

⁸⁹ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 34.

⁹⁰ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 25.

⁹¹ *A New Hope*, Lucas, 00:34:40 - 00:34:52.

⁹² *Star Wars: Episode V – The Empire Strikes Back*, directed by Irvin Kershner. (LucasFilm and Twentieth Century Fox, 1980). 01:10:47 - 01:11:21.

Force flow to a list from Chuang Tzu writing, where he states that The Tao has no place where it does not exist. The list goes as follows: “It is in the ant. It is in the panic grass. It is in the tiles and shard. It is in the piss and shit... There is no thing that escapes its presence.”⁹³ The list is basically the same as Yoda’s list just the objects are changed.

Me and John M. Porter have the same view on this matter. In his book he points out the same extracts from Tao Te Ching and to showcase the relation between The Tao and The Force, Porter also showed the same scenes with Obi-Wan and Yoda as I did.⁹⁴ Porter also argues that another sign of The Tao being The Force is the duality in The Tao - Ying and Yang. He explains that The Tao does not choose sides but rather that good and evil comes from it. Porter then backs up his argument by stating the two sides of the force - The Good side and the Dark side.⁹⁵ Also, the duality represents the statement that you cannot have one thing without the other and in this case, in my opinion, you cannot have a good side without the dark one.

Wu

Another aspect that the Tao and the Force have similar is Wu, also known as Emptiness, more specifically the skill to empty one’s mind in order to act properly. I am presenting here extracts from the Taoism book Tao Te Ching and Dialogs from Star Wars to show the similarities.

Tao Te Ching

The ancient Masters

Didn’t try to educate the people,

But kindly taught them to not-know.

When they think that they know the answers,

People are difficult to guide.

When they know that they don’t know,

People can find their own way.⁹⁶

Star Wars

Yoda wants Luke to lift his ship.

Luke: *Master, moving stones around is one thing. This is totally different.*

Yoda: *No. No different. Only different in your mind. You must unlearn what you have learned.*

Luke: *All right. I’ll give it a try.*

Yoda: *Try not. Do or do not. There is no try.⁹⁸*

 Luke about to go into the cave.

Luke: *What’s in there?*

Yoda: *Only what you take with you. Your weapons, you will not need them.⁹⁹*

⁹³ Douglas Brode and Leah Deyneka, *Sex, Politics, and Religion in Star Wars: An Anthology* (The Scarecrow Press, 2012), 37-38.

⁹⁴ Porter, *Tao of Star Wars*, 17-18.

⁹⁵ Porter, *Tao of Star Wars*, 20-22.

⁹⁶ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 65.

⁹⁸ *The Empire Strikes Back*, Kershner, 01:09:16 - 01:09:39

⁹⁹ *The Empire Strikes Back*, Kershner, 01:03:03 - 01:03:09.

*We shape clay into a pot,
But it is the emptiness inside
That holds whatever we want.
We hammer wood for a house,
But it is the inner space
That makes it livable.⁹⁷*

Luke and Yoda talking about the dark side:

Luke: *But tell me why I can't...*

Yoda: *No. There is no why. Nothing more will I teach you today. Clear your mind of questions.¹⁰⁰*

Lao Tzu shows the importance of emptying one's mind by *(Masters) taught them (people) to not-know* which basically means he tried to unlearn them what they have learned before so they do not have any assumption in order to follow their **own** way. And that is exactly what was Yoda trying to say by *You must unlearn what you have learned*. Luke lived by the idea that such things are impossible and he has the assumption that he cannot do it. Luke thought he knew the *answer*, that it is impossible and that makes Luke difficult to guide. However, Yoda explains that he needs to clear his mind of what he had been taught. Porter states that one has to have a fresh mind so one can see new possibilities.¹⁰¹

The second dialogue shows perfectly the idea of emptying one's mind in order to not have any presumptions. Yoda tells Luke to empty his mind, however, Luke does not do it and he went in there with anger and he sees Vader inside, but it was only in his mind. The third dialogue indicates Yoda does not want to teach anyone who does not have a clear or let me say an empty mind by saying *Clear your mind of questions*. John Porter in *Tao of Star Wars* states that a beginner's mind is a clear mind, that does not have any presumptions and is ready for the experience.¹⁰² That is an idea I completely agree with.

WU WEI

As I explained in the chapter on Taoism, Wu Wei is an action while being in harmony with the Tao, meaning it is effortless action. You cannot be in harmony with Tao if you do not feel it.

⁹⁷ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 11.

¹⁰⁰ *The Empire Strikes Back*, Kershner, 01:02:11 - 01:02:20.

¹⁰¹ Porter, *Tao of Star Wars*, 24.

¹⁰² Porter, *Tao of Star Wars*, 2.

Tao Te Ching

*The Tao never does anything,
Yet through it all things are done.*¹⁰³

*Act without doing;
Work without effort.*¹⁰⁴

*True mastery can be gained
By letting things go their own way.
It can't be gained by interfering.*¹⁰⁵

Star Wars

Obi-Wan teaches Luke with lightsaber:
Obi-Wan: *Remember, a Jedi can feel the Force flowing through him.*

Luke: *You mean it controls your actions?*

Obi-Wan: *Partially, but it also obeys your commands.*¹⁰⁶

Luke about to destroy the Death Star:

Obi-Wan: *Use the Force, Luke. Let go, Luke.*¹⁰⁷

Luke upside down lifting stones then falls:

Yoda: *Use the Force. Yes. Now, the stone. Feel it. Concentrate!*¹⁰⁸

Luke: *All right. I'll give it a try.*

Yoda: *Try not. Do or do not. There is no try.*¹⁰⁹

I am showing examples from Star Wars, where Yoda and Obi-Wan always urge Luke to feel the force. John Porter explains that in order to do the effortless action, one needs to feel the Tao. If one does not feel or recognize the Tao, he will not be able to be in harmony with it.¹¹⁰ Everything needs to be learnt and it is not different from feeling the Tao or the Force. Website Tao in You gives example with a bicycle: When one learns how to ride a bicycle, they struggle at first, they are focus on balance, going straight too much. But once you figure it out, you do barely anything. Riding the bicycle becomes effortless and the action becomes Wu Wei.¹¹¹ One needs to feel the force in order to act effortlessly and that is the idea behind Yoda's and Obi-Wan's urging Luke to feel the force. Or in other words, one needs to let go in order to feel either The Tao or The Force.

One must not try he has to just act or do. That is how Wu Wei acts. Porter explains that nature does not try to do things. The planet does not make an attempt to orbit the sun. The seed does not attempt to become a tree. Nature operates with effortless ease, often choosing the course of

¹⁰³ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 37.

¹⁰⁴ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 63.

¹⁰⁵ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 48.

¹⁰⁶ *A New Hope*, Lucas, 01:00:54 - 01:01:03.

¹⁰⁷ *A New Hope*, Lucas, 01:55:39 - 01:55:47.

¹⁰⁸ *The Empire Strikes Back*, Kershner, 01:08:16 - 01:08:47.

¹⁰⁹ *The Empire Strikes Back*, Kershner, 01:09:29 - 01:09:39.

¹¹⁰ Porter, *Tao of Star Wars*, 55.

¹¹¹ "While wuwei is effortless, arriving at the state of wuwei usually requires effort," Tao in you, last modified January 15, 2016, <https://tao-in-you.com/examples-of-wuwei/>.

least resistance. Wu Wei does not make an effort, it just acts. Excessive effort ends in failure.¹¹² Porter also argues that Wu Wei is related to acceptance and gives an example of Yoda's final word to Luke, where Luke says to Yoda that he cannot die, nevertheless, Yoda accepts his fate and his death and says to Luke *That is the way of things... the way of the Force*. Porter then states that Yoda could even say *That is the way of the Tao*.¹¹³

PATIENCE and COMPASSION

Taoism is all about patience and the same can be said about using the Force in Star Wars. Here are few examples that show the similarity between Tao Te Ching and Star Wars.

Tao Te Ching	Star Wars
<i>Rushing into action, you fail.</i>	Luke about to leave Dagobah
<i>Trying to grasp things, you lose them.</i> ¹¹⁴	Yoda: <i>If you end your training now, if you choose the quick and easy path, as Vader did, you will become an agent of evil.</i>
<i>Do you have the patience to wait</i>	Obi-Wan: <i>Patience.</i> ¹¹⁷
<i>Till your mud settles and the water is clear?</i>	-----
<i>...Till the right action arises by itself?</i> ¹¹⁵	Luke asking Yoda about the dark side
<i>... the Master takes action</i>	Luke: <i>How am I to know the good side from the bad?</i>
<i>By letting things take their course</i>	Yoda: <i>You will know when you are calm, at peace, passive.</i> ¹¹⁸
<i>He remains as calm</i>	-----
<i>At the end as at the beginning.</i> ¹¹⁶	Luke about to destroy the Death Star
	Obi-Wan: <i>Use the Force, Luke. Let go, Luke.</i> ¹¹⁹

	Yoda: <i>I cannot teach him. The boy has no patience.</i> ¹²⁰

In these extracts, the importance of patience can be seen. Rushing into action can be dangerous and it is clearly indicated in the Tao Te Ching by *Rushing into action, you will fail* or *Trying to grasp things, you will lose them*. In Star Wars, Yoda is saying to Luke not to rush things, that he should finish his training first because if he does not finish the training, he might fall into the grasp of the dark side. Obi-wan then explains that it is patience what Luke is lacking and

¹¹² Porter, *Tao of Star Wars*, 58.

¹¹³ Porter, *Tao of Star Wars*, 34-36.

¹¹⁴ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 64.

¹¹⁵ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 15.

¹¹⁶ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 64.

¹¹⁷ *The Empire Strikes Back*, Kershner, 01:24:08 - 01:24:25.

¹¹⁸ *The Empire Strikes Back*, Kershner, 01:01:54 - 01:02:03.

¹¹⁹ *A New Hope*, Lucas, 01:55:39 - 01:55:47

¹²⁰ *The Empire Strikes Back*, Kershner, 55:37 - 55:42.

what Yoda was trying to say. Yoda also explains to Luke that he should wait before making the decision to be calm and at peace, simply said to be patient. In Tao Te Ching it is nicely indicated by the sentence *Do you have the patience to wait till your mud settles and the water is clear?* Which basically means wait until one is calm. When Luke was in his ship trying to destroy the Death Star he was unable to aim via computer technology, Obi-Wan told Luke to *Let go* - to let go of computer technology and rely on his judgment, clear his mind and believe in himself and *take the action by letting go* and remain calm.

John Porter had a good point in asking a question what does it take to become good at something, such as a pianist, surgeon or martial art. The answer to that is time, which basically means patience.¹²¹ Therefore becoming Jedi requires patience. Luke is being constantly reminded throughout his training, he needs patience, yet he does not listen for a long time. Yoda even says he cannot teach him because he does not have patience.

Love and compassion are crucial to the role of Jedi. George Lucas confirmed it by saying this in an interview:

And as Yoda says, if you choose the bad side, it's easy because you don't have to do anything. Maybe kill a few people, cheat, lie, steal. Lord it over everybody. But the good side is hard because you have to be compassionate. You have to give of yourself. Whereas the dark side is selfish.¹²²

Here are few examples in Tao Te Ching and Star Wars:

Tao Te Ching

*Compassionate toward yourself,
you reconcile all beings in the world.*

*If one fights with compassion, then victory...
...And with compassion guard them.¹²³*

*...Love the world as your self;
Then you can care for all things.¹²⁴*

Star Wars

Obi-Wan: *Don't give in to hate. That leads to the dark side.¹²⁵*

Yoda: *Anger, fear, aggression. The dark side of the Force are they. Easily they flow, quick to join you in a fight. If once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny. Consume you it will, as it did Obi-Wan's apprentice.*

Luke: *Vader. Is the dark side stronger?*

Yoda: *No, no. Quicker, easier, more seductive.¹²⁶*

¹²¹ Porter, *Tao of Star Wars*, 40.

¹²² "All Films Are Personal": An Oral History of Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace," Star Wars, last modified May 24, 2019, <https://www.starwars.com/news/star-wars-episode-i-the-phantom-menace-oral-history>.

¹²³ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 67.

¹²⁴ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, 13.

¹²⁵ *The Empire Strikes Back*, Kershner, 01:25:53 - 01:25:59

¹²⁶ *The Empire Strikes Back*, Kershner, 01:01:27 - 01:01:53.

George Lucas is stating that Jedi needs to be compassionate, however, they cannot have love attachment. Meaning they do feel compassionate to others, but they do not develop attachment because it could blind their judgment. If that happens, with the Jedi's power they could do bad things. This can be seen on Vader. As Yoda was explaining, *Anger, fear, aggression* blinded Vader's judgment and began the dark path and it consumed him. Love and compassion are good things to feel. But, jealousy, fear, and vengeance often follow as a result and those result in the dark side. Therefore, it is similar to Tao Te Ching - to fight with compassion, not with hate because fighting with this feeling usually ends up terribly. To *care for all thing* with compassion.

All the crucial terms from Taoism had been examined and compared with Star Wars trilogy. This chapter confirms that Taoism was a huge inspiration for George Lucas's trilogy, mainly the force and therefore the goal of the chapter is accomplished.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the thesis was to analyse myths and religion in the original trilogy of Star Wars. The work was using Hero's Journey by Joseph Campbell and Lawrence's and Jewett's American Monomyth from books *The American Monomyth* and *The Myth of American Superhero*. The religion that was being explored was Taoism. The Taoism in the trilogy was examined by using *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Tzu.

The topic of the first two chapters was Star Wars, myth and religion. It focused on introducing the Star Wars universe, canonicity and space opera. It explained not only the understanding of myth by Joseph Campbell but also the understanding of myth by Jewett and Lawrence. It described the Hero's Journey step by step as it is in *The Hero with Thousand Faces*, and together with that, it described the American Monomyth. Taoism was another topic that was discussed. It took extracts from *Tao Te Ching* written by Lao Tzu and the chapter explained important term from the book.

The third chapter dealt with myth issues in the trilogy. It went alongside the trilogy story and compared it with the Hero's Journey and how it relates to it. It recognized the similarities in the story in most stages, whether it was in Departure, Initiation or The Return. When the paper compared the American Monomyth, similarly to the comparison with Hero's Journey, it showed most of the American Monomyth stages in the trilogy.

The last chapter of the paper gave insight into Taoism inside the story. It gave samples from the Star Wars trilogy and the book *Tao Te Ching*. The samples from *Tao Te Ching* were compared with the samples from Star Wars and then the chapter analysed the samples and explained how they are related. The samples were concerning terms such as The Tao, Wu, Wu Wei and patience.

The goal of the bachelor thesis has been accomplished by providing enough explanations and examples from the Star Wars trilogy, *The Hero with Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell, *The American Monomyth* and *The Myth of American Superhero* by John Shelton Lawrence and Robert Jewett and the *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Tzu. The thesis proved my beliefs of Star Wars being inspired by myths and religion.

However, George Lucas in an interview with Bill Moyers said the following:

Moyers: Have you made peace with the fact that people read into your movies what you didn't necessarily invest there?

Lucas: ... I also find it very interesting, especially in terms of the academic world, that they will take a work and dissect it in so many different ways. Some of the ways are very profound, and some are very accurate. A lot of it, though, is just the person using their imagination to put things in there that really weren't there, which I don't mind either...¹²⁷

This means that all my finding might be just imaginations of mine and that Lucas never used these mythical and religious aspects in his work. However, all the findings showed in this thesis proves otherwise and I believe George Lucas was inspired by the topics I analysed.

¹²⁷ "Cinema: Of Myth And Men," TIME.com, published April 26, 1999, Bill Moyers, <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,990820-2,00.html>.

RESUMÉ

Primárním cílem této práce je analyzovat mýty a náboženství použité v původní trilogii Hvězdných válek. Co se mýtu týče, práce pracuje s Cestou hrdiny z knihy *Tisíc tváří hrdiny* od Josepha Campbella a Americkým monomýtem z knih *Americký monomýtus* a *Mýtus o americkém superhrdinovi*, které napsali John Shelton Lawrence a Robert Jewett. Pokud jde o náboženskou část, práce analyzuje taoismus v trilogii. Hlavním zdrojem této části je *Tao te t'ing* od Lao-c'.

Teoretická část této práce je členěna do dvou hlavních kapitol a každá z nich má dvě podkapitoly. První kapitola se zabývá samotnými Hvězdnými válkami, poskytuje informace o Hvězdných válkách a Georgi Lucasovi. První část této se věnuje zařazení Hvězdných válek do specifického žánru, dále také vysvětluje kánon ve světě Hvězdných válek a určuje kterým kánonem se práce zabývá. Druhá část této kapitoly se zabývá běžnou terminologií používanou v této práci v souvislosti s Hvězdnými válkami a spolu s tím také příběh trilogie.

Druhá kapitola je podklad pro praktickou část práce a dělí se na dvě části. Kapitola se nejprve vysvětluje mýtus, jeho historii a funkci. První část kapitoly se zaměřuje na Campbellu Cestu hrdiny a její etapy jako Odchod, Inicieace a Návrat. Tato část vysvětluje jednotlivé části Cesty hrdiny. Dále se zde rozebírá Americký monomýtus od Lawrencea a Jewetta a vysvětluje jednotlivé etapy monomýtu. Druhá část této kapitoly zkoumá Taoismus. Zde se uvádí krátké shrnutí historie a vysvětlení co je to Taoismus. Hlavním literárním zdrojem pro tuto část je kniha od Pauly Hartzové s názvem *Taoismus (Světové náboženství)*. Za pomoci překladů z textů *Tao te t'ing*, se zde vysvětlují důležité pojmy týkající se Taoismu. Mezi tyto pojmy patří Tao, Wu, Wu Wei, trpělivost a další.

Praktická část této práce se skládá z dvou hlavních kapitol, z nichž první kapitola obsahuje dvě podkapitoly a druhá kapitola obsahuje jednu podkapitolu. První kapitola v praktické části zkoumá mýty v trilogii Hvězdných válek. Tato kapitola prochází příběhem trilogie a sleduje Luka Skywalkerera z Hvězdných válek a porovnává jeho dobrodružství s Campbellovou Cestou hrdiny. Kapitola analyzuje etapu po etapě z Cesty hrdiny a porovnává etapy k příběhu trilogie. Tato kapitola dále zkoumá Americký monomýtus v trilogii. Stejně jako v případě Campbella se tato kapitola zabývá všemi aspekty amerického monomýtu a poskytuje příklady ke každé fázi z trilogie.

V neposlední řadě čtvrtá kapitola analyzuje náboženství v Hvězdných válkách, přesněji řečeno tato kapitola zkoumá taoismus v trilogii. Kapitola popisuje hlavní taoistické pojmy a porovnává je s pojmy v trilogii. Zde je používána kniha Tao te t'ing od Lao-c' a porovnávají se texty z této knihy s dialogy nebo monology z vybraných epizod Hvězdných válek. Například se porovnává Tao z taoismu vysvětlené v Tao te t'ing k Síle z Hvězdných válek, když ji vysvětluje Obi-Wan nebo Yoda. Dále také jak je klidná mysl ve Hvězdných válkách podobná Wu z taoismu. V zásadě zkoumá, jaké podobnosti mají Hvězdné války s taoismem.

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