

Psychoanalytic Criticism

Only through literature do we experience someone else's feelings, thoughts, words, and actions as if we were that character. Through reading, we momentarily become that character and view that character from the inside out. Yet we're also separate from that character which allows us to step back and examine those feelings, thoughts, words, and actions more objectively. In many ways, as readers we become psychologists who try to aid the character in discovering the meanings and purposes for specific behaviors. But as we examine characters, we often are able to see ourselves, our troubles, our experiences, and our feelings in a new light and perhaps we can gain more meaningful understanding in our own lives.

Explore how the unconscious becomes manifest in the conscious through a text.

Think of the times in your life when you've waken from a dream and you've wondered what it means. Or at other times when you have caught yourself behaving in a particular way and you question what or why you were thinking to do or say such a thing. You consider what was going on in your mind at the time, hoping to make sense of things.

Because Sigmund Freud has introduced basic insights of our unconscious on our conscious, we're able to explore more fully why and how our minds work. Freud has helped us explore the inaccessible world of the unconscious as it is exhibited in conscious life. Since Freud believed that a literary work is to the author what dreams are to the dreamer, we can also delve into the unconscious of the writer, the character, and the reader. Psychoanalytic Criticism becomes a rich source of insight into the psychology of the individual, a rich manifestation of unconscious desires, fears, and fantasies. In turn, characters themselves, in the hands of sensitive writers and readers, give expression to the personality characteristics and patterns to which we all share. Finally, readers' responses to literature reveal perspectives on their own lives—we're able to view and make meaning of our own unconscious and conscious experiences.

Let's turn now to an example of examining a text through Psychological Criticism to help us understand how a conscious experience reveals much about the underlying unconscious desires, feelings, and fears of an individual. In the early chapters of the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 5), we read a few verses about Nephi's mother Sariah. Camille Fronk presents Sariah with an enlightening perspective that we'll consider now. The family has fled for their lives and has camped in the wilderness. Nephi and his brothers have returned to Jerusalem to obtain the brass plates from Laban. While they are there, what is happening back in the wilderness camp? We get a glimpse from a few verses when Nephi reveals that his mother Sariah has been complaining against her husband Lehi, saying "Behold thou has led us forth from the land of our inheritance, and my sons are no more, and we perish in the wilderness" (1 Nephi 5:2).

Let's question why Nephi has selected this single event to introduce his mother to us. Sariah is the first and only woman whom Nephi identifies by name in his record. In almost reverential tones, he acknowledges her in the opening line ("I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents. . .") and specifically names her when identifying his family members (see 1 Nephi 2:5). In his record, Nephi records more descriptive coverage of his mother than of any other woman. In these ten consecutive verses of Sariah's fearful reaction when her sons are gone can lead a casual reader to consider that Sariah was a "murmurer."

Let's consider the following questions: What is required of Sariah to leave her accustomed lifestyle in Jerusalem? What indications of Sariah's faith emerge when the family departs? Why does Nephi choose to record this incident to focus our attention on his mother—an incident that clearly manifests her murmuring against Lehi? Why not choose an experience that more obviously shows her spiritual strength?

By looking at this incident through Psychological Criticism, we can arrive at possible answers to these questions that reveal how the unconscious exhibits itself in the conscious experience.

We learn from Nephi that his parents were wealthy when he refers to the family's "gold and silver, and all manner of riches" (1 Nephi 3:16), their "precious things" (1 Nephi 2:4; 3:22), and Laban's lustful response to Lehi's family property (see 1 Nephi 3:25). So we can assume that the family inhabits one of the better houses in or near the city and enjoys unusually favorable conditions and lifestyle.

Although leaving home is a sacrifice for Lehi, it is arguably a greater test of faith for Sariah. First, Sariah undoubtedly spends more time at home and has more domestic responsibilities than Lehi has, so leaving home has tremendous significance for her. Second, because Lehi is probably a merchant who has had much more experience traveling with caravans and living in tents than Sariah, she will have to adjust more to extended traveling and moving her household. Third, perhaps more difficult than leaving her house's comforts and luxuries, Sariah has to leave a lifetime of family, friends, and her associations with other women. At the time of this recorded incident, Sariah is alone; Ishmael's family has yet to join them in the wilderness. And fourth, Sariah is experiencing her own trials and tests that will eventually strengthen her witness and testimony of God.

We learn from Nephi that his prophet father Lehi has received many visions and dreams (1 Nephi 16) that allow him to see, hear, and read to know God and His will. We see Lehi's great faith and obedience even when his life is in jeopardy, but we learn little about Sariah through these dreams and visions. She also is obedient to the word of the Lord and departs into the wilderness. Why does she leave? The record is silent. If his mother does receive a spiritual manifestation, Nephi does not record it. Yet, her ready obedience to the Lord's command through Lehi that the family leave Jerusalem is indicative of a strong faith and resolve to follow the Lord's will, respect for her husband,

and honor to her marriage covenant. Yes, Sariah obeys, as does her prophet-husband, leaving behind a beautiful, servant-supported home surrounded by kinfolk and friends to live in a world to which she is unaccustomed. There is no indication that Sariah murmurs as she leaves Jerusalem.

Sariah soon encounters another test far more demanding than abandoning her home and family. When Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi return to Jerusalem to obtain the brass plates from Laban, she faces the potential death and loss of her all four of her sons. Not only are there the dangers of traveling in the wilderness, but she is fully aware that her own husband's life has been in jeopardy in Jerusalem, and her sons are returning to that same physically, politically, and morally dangerous city. Her sons are in grave danger in Jerusalem.

When her sons fail to return, Sariah fears their death, showing that her present faith, though admirably strong to leave Jerusalem, is not yet strong enough for this crisis. In her fear, Sariah “[complains] against” her husband, calling him a “visionary man” and blaming him for leading her family to “perish in the wilderness” (1 Nephi 5:2). Sariah must have begun to pray more fervently than ever before during her son's absence—not only for their safety but also for a confirmation that their journey was of great importance to the Lord. We can imagine Sariah gazing longingly toward the horizon several times a day, hoping for some sign of her sons' return, all the while pleading with God.

Nephi gives us a glimpse of the emotional reunion with his parents when he and his brothers returned from Jerusalem. “And it came to pass that after we had come down into the wilderness unto our father, behold he was filled with joy, and also my mother, Sariah, was exceedingly glad, for she truly mourned because of us (1 Nephi 5:1).

Sariah's reunion with her sons is charged with spiritual witness and stronger faith as a result of her trial. Now Sariah has a stronger, deeper testimony than she has previously known. Notice the power in Sariah's testimony as she bears witness to her family: “Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath commanded my husband to flee into the wilderness; yea and I also know of a surety that the Lord hath protected my sons, and delivered them out of the hands of Laban, and given them power whereby they could accomplish the thing which the Lord hath commanded them” (1 Nephi 5:8). And Nephi tells us that his mother's faith continues when he adds, “And after this manner of language did she speak” (1 Nephi 5:8). We also sense from Nephi that both his father and his mother (“they”) do offer “sacrifice and burnt offerings unto the Lord; and they [give] thanks unto the God of Israel” (1 Nephi 5:9).

By looking at the unconscious and unstated circumstances surrounding a single recorded event in Sariah's life, we're able to dramatically sense Nephi's purpose for these verses. We're able to see that for God to establish Lehi and his family in a new land where they could instruct and bring a family and future generations to Christ, they need more than a faithful father and son, but also a faithful matriarch, tested by her own trials to receive an unwavering witness, to stand with her prophet-husband. Without examining Sariah's

inner feelings and fears we erroneously see her as a “murmurer” rather than seeing a powerful demonstration of her conviction and witness of God. There is no indication that Sariah ever murmurs again.

Probably the most important and meaningful aspect of Freudian theory is the significance of the unconscious and how that unconscious is manifested in the conscious life. As we have seen with Sariah’s experience, the unconscious brings meaning to the conscious. So how can we apply Freudian principles and Psychological Criticism to our literary experience?

We can begin by asking questions about underlying motivations or reasons for a character’s actions. Some questions, according to Ann B. Dobie in her *Theory into Practice*, can guide our reading and interpretation:

- What do you see as the main traits of the character?
- How are those traits revealed?
- What does the narrator reveal about the character?
- In the course of the narrative, does he change? If so, how and why?
- Does the character come to understand something not understood at the outset?
- How does the character view himself or herself?
- How is he viewed by other characters?
- Do the two views agree?
- Does the character have any interior monologues or dreams? If so, what do you learn about the character that is not revealed by outward behavior or conversation?
- Are there conflicts between what is observable and what is going on inside the character?
- Where do the characters act in ways that are inconsistent with the way they are described by the narrator or perceived by the other characters?
- How do you explain a character’s irrational behavior? What causes you to find? What motivation?

The answers to these questions supported with evidence from the text can lead us to examining how the unconscious is made manifest through the consciousness of the character or the author. We can begin to articulate how the unconscious can have a significant and meaningful impact on behavior, motivation, and understanding.

Identify and interpret common literary symbols that have suggested psychoanalytical significance.

We can continue our interpretation by discovering ways that the unconscious becomes manifest in the conscious through symbols. Common manifestations in Psychoanalytic Criticism occur through rich images and symbolism. Below are some general psychoanalytic images and possible symbolic meanings. These meanings can vary

significantly from one context to another, but these can suggest some possibilities. Be careful to recognize that symbols are simply tools to help us with our interpretation. Some readers become so involved with symbol-hunting that they fail to examine how the symbols help shape and contribute to the overall meaning of the text.

Shapes

Circle or Sphere	wholeness, unity
Oval or Egg	the mystery of life and the forces of generation
Concave	female, fertility, warmth, protection, growth
Pillar	male, rigidity, power, aggression

Images

Water	creation; birth-death-resurrection; purification and redemption; fertility and growth
Sea	mother of all life; spiritual mystery and infinity; death and rebirth; timelessness and eternity; the unconscious
Rivers	death and rebirth (baptism); the flowing of time into eternity; transitional phases of the life cycle; incarnations of deities.
Sun or Fire	creative energy; law in nature; consciousness (thinking, enlightenment, wisdom, spiritual vision); father principle (moon and earth tend to be associated with female or mother principle); passage of time and life. Rising sun: birth; creation; enlightenment. Setting sun: death
Garden	paradise; innocence; unspoiled beauty (especially feminine); fertility.
Tree	life of the cosmos: its consistence, growth, proliferation, generative and regenerative processes; inexhaustible life; immortality; redemption
Desert	spiritual aridity; death; nihilism; hopelessness
Mountain	aspiration and inspiration; meditation and spiritual elevation
Serpent	energy and pure force (libido); evil corruption, sensuality; destruction; mystery; wisdom; the unconscious

Numbers

Three	light; spiritual awareness and unity (the Holy Trinity); the male principle
Four	associated with the circle, life cycle, four seasons; female principle, earth, nature; four elements (earth, air, fire, water).
Five	integration, the four limbs and the head that controls them; the four cardinal points plus the center.
Seven	the most potent of all symbolic numbers—signifying the union of <i>three</i> and <i>four</i> , the completion of a cycle, perfect order.

Individuals

Good Mother	associated with the life principle, birth, warmth, nourishment,
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Terrible Mother	protection, fertility, growth, abundance witch, sorceress, femme fatale—associated with sensuality, fear, danger, darkness, death; the unconscious in its terrifying aspects
Demon Lover	the male counterpart of the Terrible Mother: the devil, Satan, Dracula
Wise Old Man	personification of the spiritual principle (savior, redeemer, guru), representing knowledge, reflection, insight wisdom, moral principles, goodwill, willingness to help
Trickster	joker, jester, clown, fool, fraud, prankster, magician, medicine man; appears to be the opposite of the Wise Old Man; survivor and transformer

Ann B. Dobie advises us to ask questions about the images and symbols within a text to assist us with a psychoanalytic interpretation:

- What images are associated with the character?
- What shapes and numbers are associated with any of the characters?
- What are the main symbols?
- Which symbols are connected with the character or forces that affect the character?
- Does the character have any interior monologues or dreams? If so, how are these symbolic of behavior or thoughts?
- Are there conflicts between what is observable and what is going on inside the character? Are there any revealing symbols in them?
- How do any of the characters represent symbolic stereotypes of individuals? Are any characters inherently good or inherently evil?
- Is the character aware of the lack or absence of something significant in the self? Are there objects that symbolize what is missing or lacking?

By identifying and examining literary images and symbols within a text, we can increase our understanding of a character's motivations, the manifestation of the unconscious in the conscious, and the psychological significance of our interpretation.

Examine literature through the three-part human psyche of id, ego, and superego.

We have learned that most of our individual mental processes are unconscious. Our unconscious can become manifest in our consciousness through our human psyche. Freud suggests that our psyche consists of three parts, most of which are unconscious: the id, the ego, and the super ego. Broadly, these three parts can be characterized by the familiar concept of a horned devil (id) and a haloed angel (superego) sitting on our shoulders trying to influence our own decisions (ego). First we'll briefly define the three terms then illustrate the concepts with a familiar story.

The Id. According to Freud, the id is the reservoir of libido, the primary source of all psychic energy. Its function is the *pleasure principle*—it is principally impulsive and seeks to obtain satisfaction and to fulfill instinctive needs. It often deals with aggression and passions. Its concern is purely self gratification—doing whatever is needed regardless of others or values. The id becomes the devil figure on our shoulders telling us it doesn't matter what we do as long as we're happy.

The Superego. The superego, on the other hand, is like the angel figure telling us what society considers as right and good. The superego is the regulating agent that functions to protect society. It is largely unconscious and becomes the moral censoring agency, the repository of conscience. The superego serves to repress or inhibit the id impulse towards pleasure that society considers unacceptable. Its function is the *morality principle*—determining what is right and what is wrong.

The Ego. The ego is the balance between the id and the superego. Even though the ego is largely unconscious, it represents what most of us consider the conscious mind—it's our reasoning. The ego serves as the intersection between the world without and the world within and the world of our desires and the world of the society's restrictions. Its function is the *reality principle*.

To help illustrate these concepts, we will return to a childhood story and examine it in a different light, Dr. Seuss's *The Cat in the Hat*. If you have access to a copy of the book, please take a few minutes to reread it with these new terms in mind.

We remember the story. It's a wet, rainy day, and the first few images we have as the book begins are of a boy and a girl looking through the window to the rain outside, and sitting next to them is their sleeping goldfish. The unnamed boy is the narrator who is with his sister Sally. Because of the rain, they have nothing to do except to "Sit! Sit! Sit! Sit!" They do not "like it. Not one little bit."

Then with a "Bump!" in walks the Cat in the Hat. The Cat in the Hat begins to tell them that he knows some new tricks that he will show them, and he exclaims to them, "Your mother will not mind at all if I do." But on the same page is a very worried looking goldfish who declares "No! No! Make that cat go away! . . . He should not be here when your mother is out!" The Cat in the Hat ignores the goldfish and balances it on his umbrella while standing on a ball, with a cup on his hat, and a book in one hand. He adds to his balancing a cake, another book, milk on a dish, while holding a rake, a fan, and other toys. Of course, the Cat in the Hat falls, and the goldfish falls into a pot and exclaims, "Do I like this? Oh, no! I do not. This is not a good game."

Ignoring the goldfish, the Cat in the Hat brings in Thing One and Thing Two who continue to wreck havoc in the house. Again the fish insists, "No! No! Those Things should not be in this house! Make them go! They should not be here when your mother is not! Put them out! Put them out!" Thing One and Thing Two now fly kites in the house and do all kinds of bad tricks. The fish sees the children's mother approaching, and the

boy eventually catches Thing One and Thing Two in a net. The boy then says to the Cat in the Hat, “Now you do as I say. You pack up those Things and you take them away!” The Cat in the Hat enters with some machine that cleans the house, and he is gone before Mother steps in.

The Cat in the Hat clearly represents the id—his entire purpose is to provide immediate pleasure without any thought of consequence. He adds on and on to whatever he wants to do. The goldfish, on the other hand, represents the superego because it tries to keep control of the chaos. The fish knows the cat shouldn’t be there, so it repeatedly reminds the children that the cat should go. And finally, the boy, represents the ego who decides and acts and takes charge of the situation and puts the Cat in the Hat, or the id, under his control.

This three-part human psyche is also manifest through literature. We can examine a character to determine whether that character operates according to the pleasure principle, the morality principle, or the reality principle. We can explain if a character’s typical behavior is determined by a personality if it is a “balanced” one or whether it is dominated by the id or the superego.

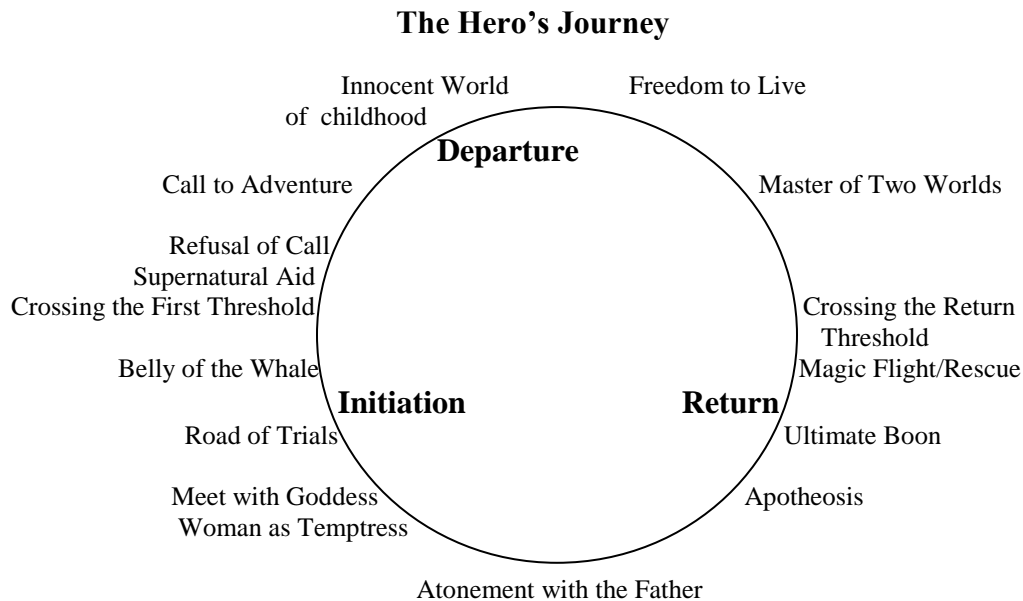
We can now ask ourselves how these three aspects of our psyche apply in gospel terms. When Elder Maxwell was responding to his new calling as one of the seven presidents of the Quorum of Seventy, he focused his remarks on the natural feelings of inadequacy, feelings of falling short. He admits these feelings are common and normal, especially when we have our sights on eternal possibilities, we often feel a great distance from where we are and where we want to be. He then makes this declaration: “Following celestial road signs while in telestial traffic jams is not easy.” We can assume that the id is the “natural man” who is drawn towards Satan (Mosiah 3:19). The superego is “the child of God” drawn toward the divine (Mosiah 3:19). And the ego is the mortal individual “following celestial road signs while in telestial traffic jams” (Maxwell, Neal A. “Notwithstanding My Weakness.” *Ensign*, November 1976, 12). Each aspect of our psyches becomes evident on own lives just as characters’ psyches become manifest in literature through their thoughts, actions, and interactions.

Examine literature through the archetypal hero’s journey, specifically the departure, initiation, and return.

Freud’s famous pupil Carl Jung adds to our understanding of Psychological Criticism. Jung also teaches that our unconscious mind powerfully directs much of our behavior. However, while Freud focuses much on the personal unconscious, Jung emphasizes the collective unconscious, a storehouse of knowledge, experiences, and images of the human race—something we all share. Repeated experiences that we all share Jung calls the archetypes of the collective unconscious. These archetypes or patterns reflect the deepest experiences and meanings of our lives, and they become the manifestation of the unconscious in our conscious lives.

A discussion of archetypes can be extensive; however, we will draw our attention to one pattern to illustrate archetypal criticism: the hero's journey. The hero's journey is very common in our culture. It's the story of an individual who must depart a comfortable, known environment and enter into a world of initiation through trials and temptations. After intense struggling, the hero becomes stronger to return again to the beginning; however the hero upon returning now has new understanding and growth.

The hero's journey also known as the hero's quest is a popular pattern of contemporary film. We see this pattern in movies such as *The Wizard of Oz*, the *Star Wars* sagas, the *Lord of the Ring* trilogy, *Batman Begins*, *Harry Potter*, *Superman*, and *Spiderman*. Joseph Campbell, author of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, exemplifies the hero's journey with the following hero's cycle.



The framework of the hero's journey is Campbell's, as he defined it. Not every myth – contains every element or every archetype, and is not laid out neatly in chronological order according to this framework. Heroes in their journeys often pass through most of these stages, maybe not in order, but the archetypes, symbols, and stages are what make the hero's journey a familiar story to most people regardless of their cultural background, and also what make mythic, epic stories so enjoyable.

Star Wars as Stacey Lee explains, has a collection of likeable characters who are all going through their own hero's journey, though we will focus on one main protagonist Luke Skywalker, though taking the entire six-episode saga into account, his father Anakin Skywalker, and Obi-Wan Kenobi to an extent, as well as Han Solo, have hero's journeys of their own to carry out. Luke carries the charm of the "chosen," in that while he appears to be a perfectly average individual, he does have an extraordinary history and

heritage that sets him apart and marks him as the one on whom the burden of the quest will fall.

Campbell's definition of the hero's journey passes through three main stages: the Departure, the Initiation, and the Return. Within these stages are sub-stages that uniquely control the events which inevitably happen to the hero and encounters which he must make to overcome trials and achieve the goal of his quest. Luke goes through most of the stages in his journey, though not all of the ones Campbell laid out, and not in the same order. We will pass through them in the order Campbell puts them.

Departure

1. ***Call to Adventure.*** For there to be a journey, the hero must be notified somehow that he is to undertake some quest and (most of the time) depart his home to do so. In most myths, "home" is the place of ease and stability, but to be changed and to see the quest through, the hero has to be taken out of his comfort zone and sent through strange lands where he is out of his element in order to get things done. This has a natural effect of causing the hero to grow and change as a person. In classic myths, the call to adventure is intended to set the hero apart from his people and start him on a road which will bring him close to becoming a god, or somehow imbuing himself with god-like power, before returning with a treasure or other boon that will grant life to his people. It often starts with a herald of some sort who meets the hero and sparks the adventure (Campbell, 51). Luke sees the hologram of Princess Leia and is captivated by her image, which causes him to persist in finding out about what it is that brought her image to him, assuming that there is some great adventure behind it. The way he questions C-3PO about being in battles with the rebellion suggests that he is willing to go in search of adventure. Leia plays the part of the herald, then, though it is Obi-Wan who actively sets Luke on his journey: "You must learn the ways of the Force..."

Campbell suggests that one way most heroes begin their journey is through a blunder, or mere chance. In *Star Wars*, it is the unlikely chance that a pair of droids jettisoned from a captured ship should land in the empty Tatooine desert and somehow make their way into the possession of Luke Skywalker, the hero-in-waiting who merely needed a spark to get going on his way.

2. ***Refusal of the Call.*** In some myths, the hero doesn't want to leave the comfort of home, or put up with the demands made of him, and there the story ends. The hero refuses the call, and that is it. Yet, in the broader scope, other heroes are given an opportunity to put the quest aside, to leave the journey and go on with life, but do not do so. In *Star Wars*, when Obi-Wan tells Luke that he must come with him to Alderaan, Luke tells Obi-Wan he can't, he has his duty and responsibility to his uncle. Luke does accept the call when he walks away from Obi-Wan and goes home to find the Lars homestead destroyed and his aunt and uncle slain.

3. ***Supernatural Aid.*** In nearly every quest, task, and journey, based in myth, a helper or guide appears shortly after the hero's call to adventure – sometimes in conjunction with it – and is there to give the hero advice, direction, and even magical aids, talismans, or weapons. Often, but not always, the guide takes the form of an old man or woman, who mysteriously appears to the hero in his moment of need. In *Star Wars*, Luke learns about the Force from Obi-Wan Kenobi, his guide and mentor. Obi-Wan appears to Luke when he is attacked by Tusken Raiders, showing immediately that he has supernatural powers when he heals Luke with a touch. He also gives Luke his father's lightsaber, which could be seen as both a talisman and a weapon, magical in origin (at least to Luke). Generally speaking, from beginning to end of the saga, the Force is the supernatural aid given to heroes, and the Jedi Master (first Qui-Gon, then Obi-Wan) is the mentor.

Now, unlike the supernatural mentors of most myths, Obi-Wan is a strange little man who pops up only when needed and wanders off after making the impossible possible for the hero, but rather he is deeply involved in the hero's quest, and in fact is the one on whom the quest is first laid until he must depart by death. Obi-Wan is the one who is asked by Leia to take the droids to Alderaan so the Rebellion can try to defeat the Death Star. Obi-Wan has the mentor's quality of having some veiled power behind his simple, humble, hermit-like exterior, but he is much more mortal and fallible in character than traditional supernatural guides.

As the *Star Wars* story goes on, Yoda appears to fill the role of supernatural aid more completely than Obi-Wan, being even more of a hermit and even more mysterious – and even older, too. He teaches Luke everything else he needs to know about the Force, and about his family, and clearly is the Jedi Master who knows the most about the ways of the Force. For a time, taking Episode 1 into account, Qui-Gon Jinn also fills the role of mentor in Obi-Wan's own hero's journey from apprentice to Master. Qui-Gon would have been Anakin's mentor as well, but for fate stepping in and Obi-Wan taking that role instead, though not so much in a "mythic" sense as with Luke.

Though nothing in Campbell's writing suggests it, the departure of the mentor is often a step on the hero's journey, signifying a sort of "coming-of-age" moment for the hero in which he grows to think for himself and not rely on the mentor. Both Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan fall to their enemies, leaving their charges (Obi-Wan and Luke, respectively), tragically bereft of guidance, forcing them to make their own decisions. Both decide to continue with their journeys

4. ***Crossing the First Threshold.*** The world of adventure lies beyond the borders of the hero's home land, and in many myths, he has to cross some kind of barrier, pass a test, or slay an enemy or threshold guardian as he leaves the ordinary world behind and enters an unknown and dangerous realm. Campbell seems to suggest that upon crossing the threshold into the wider world, the hero will encounter some kind of

peculiar, sometimes libidinous, often tempting, always dangerous, creature or guardian of the threshold (79). The very first threshold Luke must cross is the Jundland Wastes, where he goes seeking Obi-Wan Kenobi, and meets the threshold guardians in the form of the Tusken Raiders, who precipitate Obi-Wan's appearance. After Luke accepts the Call to Adventure, he travels to Mos Eisley where he literally crosses the threshold in the Cantina and enters the new world of adventure. His life is threatened, but he also meets new allies, a common occurrence surrounding the Threshold encounter. Both occurrences are Threshold encounters because of the aspect of the guardian. In the Cantina, the strange and dangerous guardians are the aliens, among which only one – Chewbacca – is trustworthy and proves to be the aid for the next step in the journey.

5. *Belly of the Whale*. In many myths, the hero's first true test is shortly after he enters the wider world and a beast or monster of some sort appears to swallow him up, and those who witness it think the hero has died. Metaphorically, it points to the hero figuratively dying to his old self and being reborn as the Hero, who can conquer the beast. It is said that Joseph Campbell identified this stage of the journey in *Star Wars* as the scene where Luke, Han and Leia are in the trash compactor on the Death Star and Luke is pulled under by the creature. His friends briefly think him dead. It can also be said, though, that the Millennium Falcon being tractorized into the Death Star is a prime example of the "whale" swallowing them up.

So ends the Departure stage of the hero's journey, and Luke finds himself caught up in his adventures with no sign of turning back, after surmounting several obstacles. The greater Quest, though, has only begun.

Initiation

1. *The Road of Trials*. This is the term Campbell uses to refer to the meat of a mythic saga, the story of whatever series of tests, tasks or ordeals the hero must undergo to begin the transformation from the old self to the new self, and to fulfill his Quest. This is the perilous journey, that which makes for a good story to be told, but also gives the story's audience parables from which to glean advice. These perils are often off-set by the beauty or mystery of the strange lands in which the journey takes place, and can range from simple tests to attacks in which the hero's death seems certain. Campbell adds that this is the stage where the hero either discovers the power of the world around him and within himself that can help him, or he uses the devices, agents, and advice of his supernatural helper (97).

Luke's first tests are conquering the remote during lightsaber practice, rescuing the princess from her cell, and escaping from the Death Star. He does this by discovering the Force and beginning to wield the lightsaber given him by Obi-Wan, though he also begins to display his courage and heroism in taking risks to save Leia.

Within this stage of the hero's journey, many other archetypes common to mythology can pop up, though no one saga necessarily contains all of these elements. Among them are the Labyrinth and the Enchanted Forest, and sometimes another Threshold to cross at which there is another Guardian to defeat. The Death Star represents labyrinths of *Star Wars*, as they are giant mazes of passageways and halls and cubicles, in the center of which hide the Rebellion's enemy. The second Death Star contains the Emperor at its center like some Minotaur waiting to devour the hero Luke as he makes his way inside to rescue his father.

Star Wars also has an Enchanted Forest in common, where the hero finds himself unexpectedly aided by strange folk and sometimes given gifts by a Guardian of the forest. In *Star Wars*, the forest was Endor and the benevolent gifts came in the form of aid and succor by the Ewoks, which the Rebellion hardly knew about, let alone anticipated, as they came to make their attack on the second Death Star.

Luke faces trials when he confronts his fear in a cave on Dagobah and fails the trial, which symbolizes the need to reconcile opposites within himself, the Light and Dark Side of the Force (108).

The rest of the sub-stages Campbell identifies are not necessarily separate elements of the hero's journey, but rather different possibilities that the hero may encounter in the middle of his trials or at the end of the road, just prior to fulfilling his quest and receiving the boon. Not all heroes fall in love (or "get the girl"), not all of them encounter a goddess and have the potential to be unified with god-like powers. Not every hero is deified, and only some of them have to reconcile with their father. The initiation step is an either/or circumstance – either the hero marries the goddess, atones with his father, is deified, or he achieves his quest and is granted the boon he sought. In *Star Wars* there are slight elements of some of these stages, the primary outcome of the initiation stage is a fulfillment of the quest. Luke regains his father and the galaxy regains its freedom. However, each stage should be glanced at to see whether our hero passes through them on his way to the Ultimate Boon.

The Meeting With the Goddess. The goddess represents the power of love, an "ultimate quest" in which the hero is united with the goddess-power of the world, and in most mythologies *is* a woman where the hero is a man. It doesn't have to be that way, though. Sometimes the figure is benevolent, but sometimes it can be malevolent (111). Luke does not fall in love during his journey, since Luke discovers Leia to be his sister

Woman as the Temptress. Nowhere does Campbell say that the hero is simply tempted, by fate or by powers, he points only to the archetype of a woman temptress and the hero being more heroic for resisting temptation or more tragic for failing to resist. Examples of this include the Sirens who tempted Odysseus. Luke does not encounter this kind of temptation but faces other sorts of temptation which are not

necessarily archetypal but common to human conflict – Luke to the Dark Side of the Force.

Atonement with the Father. Nothing in Campbell suggests the father figure is anything but a father or universal god with a fatherly persona. *Star Wars* has the ultimate atonement with the father, Luke reconciling with Vader/Anakin, and having to confront his father to both reconcile to himself that the potential for becoming evil is within him, and to win his father back to Light from the Dark.

Apotheosis. At the last stage of some hero's journey, the hero may be deified. He or she leaves his or her former circle of life and is permanently changed into something with greater power, god-like or sometimes a god themselves. Often in myths the hero's quest goal is to bring back some kind of power or enlightenment to lift up all the peoples of earth, and to do so, the hero must become a god. Luke's apotheosis is coming to grips with the fact that his father is Vader and the Light and Dark Sides of the Force are at war within him. This element of a hero journey's potential outcome seems to be absent in *Star Wars*.

2. ***The Ultimate Boon.*** This is the achievement of the goal of the quest. In most mythologies the boon is something that the hero has gone to get, some treasure to be won or a feat accomplished. In others, it is a goal that must be achieved, maybe a prophecy fulfilled, maybe even the girl won and married. *Star Wars* has no clear boon, but perhaps it is simply that Luke redeems his father in the end and Anakin dies a hero and a Jedi again. The Emperor has been overthrown, and though Luke did not actually do that himself, he had a hand in it. Luke knows who he is, what his destiny is, his heritage and power. He is on his way to restoring the Jedi Order, and in a sense then has brought back from his "journey" the power of the Force to be used again as it was of old, to protect the innocent.

After the quest is fulfilled, the story is not over. The hero must return from his quest, and deal with the consequences of what he has done, the use of his boon, and the resolution of the journey. This can be done in one of two ways: either the chance to return is rejected, or it is accepted and another series of archetypal stages are passed through before the hero finally comes home.

Return

1. ***Refusal of the Return.*** As Moonscribe wrote, "Here the question is, if hero is now a god, has drunk ambrosia, and has achieved the ultimate boon, why go back to the ordinary world?" *Star Wars* has no refusal of the return. Luke is all too happy to rejoin his friends who survived the battle because he loves them and wants to see them again, has some loose ends to tie up, and he has a future ahead of him as the last of the Jedi. He has to rebuild the Order unless he wants to remain the Last.

2. ***Magic Flight.*** When the hero accepts a return, he must first escape with the boon or treasure that he has come to get, or escape with his life if the quest involved something else. This magic flight can be just as dangerous and adventurous as the journey to obtain the treasure. "Flight" does not mean flying, but fleeing – escape. In *Star Wars: A New Hope* the magic part of the flight is the hope that the tractor beam has been deactivated by Obi-Wan (it has) and the lack of pursuit, accompanied with the adventure of Han and Luke shooting down the TIE fighters. In fact, *Star Wars* has several harrowing flights from exploding starships – episodes 1, 4, and 6 climax in the hero's escape from an exploding ship (or Death Star as the case may be). Episode 5 culminates in the hero's dramatic rescue from under Cloud City, by the "magic" miracle of Luke's call to Leia through the Force.

3. ***Rescue from Without.*** Often in myths, the hero needs guidance from other players back to the ordinary world with the boon or treasure or knowledge he or she has obtained. A good example in *Star Wars* may be when Leia rescues Luke from under Cloud City after he has fallen from his fight with Darth Vader. The knowledge that Luke possess, that Vader is his father, will become valuable in *Return of the Jedi* when Luke uses his compassion for his father as means of bringing Vader back to the light side. The "supernatural aid" does return to again aid the hero one last time, *Return of the Jedi* where Luke (and Anakin) draws on the Force to defeat the Emperor – but the Force does not rescue them.

4. ***Crossing the Return Threshold.*** Often when the hero returns with the boon or wisdom gained on the journey, and tries to share it with his people, others may not want to hear the message. It is a risk the hero must take in crossing the return threshold, and signals the end of the quest, the door to the outer world closing and his true return to the old world he left at the beginning of the quest. This doesn't really happen in *Star Wars*, because it has a happy ending, and we never see the consequences of the end of the Empire.

5. ***Master of Two Worlds.*** Once the hero has balanced both his or her inner and outer worlds, the spiritual and the material, he can be seen as a master of both and transcends what he used to be. *Star Wars* has Luke balancing Light and Dark, defeating the Dark and embracing the Light after walking the fine line between them. He is also both a Jedi and a civilian, rather unlike the Jedi of the past, in that he did not undergo a lifetime of training in the shelter of a Jedi Temple with the benefit of many Masters to instruct and one to mentor him. He is the last Jedi, only because he has mastered the use of the Force and faced his Dark side.

6. *Freedom to Live*. The hero has passed beyond fear of death and has learned how to live with the wisdom he has gained on his journey, especially if the step of deification occurred. The hero, unlike his people to whom he has returned, is wiser, more learned, sometimes more courageous, and may be a leader. Luke has persevered, the Emperor is dead, and the Rebellion has survived to re-establish the Republic.

The quest structure and the hero's journey which is present in so many world mythologies and legends, and survives in many present-day legends such as books and movies, raises up a hero from among the commoners and sets him or her to be some kind of savior, a world-changer.

Ann B. Dobie suggests questions we can ask of a text to examine the archetypal possibilities:

- What similarities do you find among the characters, situations, and settings of the text under consideration and other works that you have read?
- What commonly encountered archetypes do you recognize?
- Is the narrative like any classic myth or stories you know?
- How do any of the characters follow (or vary from) well-established patterns of behavior or recreate well-known figures from literary history—for example, from Greek mythology.
- How do archetypal images and situations work together to create meaning?

So to condense Psychoanalytical Criticism to several fundamental questions can help us examine the unconscious made manifest through literature:

1. What is happening in the character's unconscious as it is suggested by images, symbols, or interior monologues? How do these help reveal the character's personality or motivations?
2. How does the author portray the conflict or balance of the character's id, superego, and ego?
3. How do the character's experiences reflect a universal pattern of a hero's journey through departure, initiation, and return? What is the character's quest, and what does the character achieve or understand because of the journey?

In Psychoanalytical Criticism, consequently, you will explain and describe the underlying unconscious motivations, influences, and images that reveal themselves in the conscious of the characters. By looking deeply within the characters' psyches and motivations, your literary interpretations will become richer and more meaningful, and you may also see more of yourself in the literature you read.