

THE JOURNEY OF MICHAEL CORLEONE:
AN ANALYSIS OF *THE GODFATHER TRILOGY*

Edmund Brown

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Godfather has been hailed by many to be “the greatest gangster picture ever made” (Kael 1981). But what makes it so great? While it is almost impossible to determine the trilogy’s “greatness,” it is possible to determine if Francis Ford Coppola and Mario Puzo used the monomythic framework outlined by Joseph Campbell. Although Coppola and Puzo never mentioned employing the works of Campbell in any of the films, it can be said that the features found in *The Godfather Trilogy* correlate to the structures outlined by Campbell. In his book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), Joseph Campbell studied the structures of many classic hero-based myths and identified a common “pattern” throughout. The pattern he identified has become known as the “monomyth.” Campbell posits that every hero must negotiate 17 stages during his journey. The 17 stages are divided into three larger chapters: *Departure*, *Initiation*, and *Return*. By taking the character of Michael Corleone and viewing him as a hero within his world, one may be able to make conclusions that *The Godfather* has employed the ideas of Joseph Campbell (even if subconsciously); which would help explain its long-standing popularity and familiarity.

George Lucas hailed the work of Joseph Campbell and has been quoted giving credit to Campbell when designing the script for *Star Wars*, although *Star Wars* was not the first or last movie of its kind to use the ideas of Joseph Campbell. The genre of science fiction has numerous films identified as having employed the Campbell formula including *The Time Machine*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Dune*, *Back to the Future*, *The Last Starfighter*, *Time after Time*, *Bill and Ted’s Excellent Adventure*, *Logan’s Run*,

Escape from New York, Dreamscape, Tron, The Matrix, all ten Star Trek films, and *The Terminator* (Palumbo 2008). Adding to the previous list, *The Lord of the Rings* has also employed the work of Campbell.

Many genres have been analyzed using the work of Joseph Campbell. The efforts of many critics have gone into analyzing many great films and trilogies by using the Campbellian method, but *The Godfather Trilogy* has never been analyzed in such manner. The purpose of this research will be to examine *The Godfather Trilogy* using the ideas of Joseph Campbell as outlined in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* as the theoretical framework, and by using the 17 stages as the means to answer the proposed hypotheses.

Science fiction films and fantasy films have long benefited from using the “journey of the hero” model; why can’t other genres also benefit? The findings will further support the claims that *The Godfather Trilogy* is one of the most enduring gangster pictures in film history.

CHAPTER II

HYPOTHESES

H1: The narrative structures and character archetypes of *The Godfather Part 1* follow the stages of a hero's journey as outlined in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

H2: The narrative structures and character archetypes of *The Godfather Part 2* follow the stages of a hero's journey as outlined in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

H3: The narrative structures and character archetypes of *The Godfather Part 3* follow the stages of a hero's journey as outlined in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

H4: The narrative structures and character archetypes of *The Godfather Trilogy* follow the stages of a hero's journey as outlined in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

After determining if any of the films follow the Campbellian structure, the results will be discussed in detail. Also, each film was chosen to be addressed separately because the results may reveal that one or more might not follow the guidelines. But it is important to consider the trilogy as one narrative story, with each film contributing to the Campbellian structure. It is only appropriate then to also study the works together, as one collective unit.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on *The Godfather* and myths and monomyth is vast, so in an attempt to organize the information logically, it will be presented in the order of general importance. Over the following pages will be a discussion of the sources that apply to each chapter and their unique contribution to the overall this study.

The Theory

The most important work for the theory of this research is the book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) by Joseph Campbell. His work is the foundation on which this study is based. In his book, Campbell outlines the stages that the hero must traverse in his journey. The stages that Campbell identifies are the stages that will be used to study the journey of Michael Corleone. All of the stages will be discussed in detail in the following chapters, along with discussions of Campbell's inspirations for writing his book and the impact he has had on others.

Another source that has been instrumental in the construction of this study is the work of Christopher Vogler, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers & Screenwriters* (1992). Vogler used Campbell's work while creating his own interpretation of the hero's journey. He took the classic 17 stage structure created by Campbell, and condensed it down to his 12-stage journey. Throughout the book, Vogler gives explanations of the sources used in Campbell's book, including how various scholars (Freud, Rank, and Propp) all influenced *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Along with Campbell's text, this appears in many chapters of this study. It provides

background and comparative information in “Myth & Monomyth: Its Origins and Applications,” a structure for examining the character of Michael Corleone in “Michael Corleone: A Hero?” and it provides basic structural information in the theory and method chapters.

The Application of the Theory

While studying the journey of Michael Corleone it will be necessary to identify what type of hero he is, especially a hero that is based in a crime family. *Shots in the Mirror: Crime Films and Society* (2000) by Nicole Rafter takes the idea of the typical hero and identifies him within the different categories of crime films. Rafter identifies eight different categories of crime films and examines the hero that is present in each. Most classic hero-based myths refer to a hero in the fairy tale sense but Rafter uses some of the same attributes to classify crime-based heroes. Some of the traits of a “typical” hero may differ from a hero who is the head of a crime family; making the distinction is important because the reader must understand that heroes can vary depending on situations, surroundings, and occupations. Rafter’s ideas will be used in the section titled, “Michael Corleone: A Hero,” which examines the commonalities that Michael shares with traditional heroes.

In aiding in the understanding of myth in film, Geoffrey Hill designed the “thread of mythic expression” in his 1992 book *Illuminating Shadow: The Mythic Power of Film*. The “thread” that Hill posits is one that runs through the “sociohistoric expression of human numinosity.” Hill’s work provides the base of information in the chapter “The Threading of Myths.” He provided explanations of how scholars have contributed to

understanding myths in modern society by using the works of Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell, Sigmund Freud, Claude Levi-Strauss and Erich Fromm, among numerous others; Hill strengthens other chapters of this study, specifically in the section that brings Joseph Campbell into context with other works.

Movies and the Mind: Theories of the Great Psychoanalysis Applied to Film (2004) by William Indick is another text that offers more interpretations of myth in film. This was another source that was used to contextualize Campbell's work; Indick also refers to the work of Otto Rank, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. He provides a basic historical outline of the authors that have contributed to mythic analysis, such as the ones previously listed. Indick uses Otto Rank's famous work, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (1912) and modernizes the concepts by applying it to current contexts; in this case he used *Harry Potter* as an example. Indick also discusses the power *The Godfather* had on the revitalization of the gangster genre; explaining that the gangster archetype is as strong as the one of the western cowboy.

A few authors that have used the work of Campbell to perform mythic film analyses are Joel Martin and Conrad Ostwalt's *Screening the Sacred* (1995) and Donald Palumbo's *The Monomyth in Alfred Bester's The Stars My Destination* (2004). Martin and Ostwalt used Campbell's method to outline the journey of Luke Skywalker in the film *Star Wars*. He even made a reference to *The Odyssey* when describing space opera based movies. Since *Star Wars* is one of the most recognized mythic films, this text will be used in the method chapter to explain the various stages with examples from the film. Palumbo's look at *The Stars My Destination* is not a film analysis but an analysis of a science fiction novel. Similar principles apply when analyzing either a film or a book.

Once again, these are more examples to follow when performing the analysis of *The Godfather*.

A second work by Donald Palumbo, *The Monomyth in James Cameron's The Terminator: Sarah as Monomythic Heroine* (2008) challenges the idea that only male heroes can undergo the journey of a hero. Using the framework as outlined in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Palumbo analyzes the film and determines that Sarah can be viewed as a hero in spite of her gender. Palumbo offers good interpretations of each of the stages. Once again, Palumbo's work will be beneficial by providing a framework on writing an analysis of this type. Having a few sources that have implemented Campbell's structure as a guide will prove to be useful because it shows how the authors address each stage, and the examples they chose from each film.

The Film Itself (Examining the Plot & Characters)

All of the books contained within this next section aid in explaining the structure of each of the three films. The texts listed below are the ones found to be the most informative and beneficial to this particular study.

Ronald Bergan briefly discusses the importance of *The Godfather Part 3* in the book, *Francis Ford Coppola: Close Up* (1998). Bergan talks about how Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) attempts to legitimize the family business; he also explains that Coppola only agreed to do the movie because he was in dire need of the money. Not many texts look at *Part 3* in an approving way (*Part 3* has always been regarded as the worst of the trilogy), but Bergan's work emphasizes the importance of the final movie and the importance it had on the trilogy as a whole. It is rare to find an author who writes

about *Part 3* in a positive light, and in this study, *Part 3* is as important as the first two films.

For all of the technical aspects of the films, *The Great Gangster Pictures* (1976) by James Robert Parish and Michael R. Pitts offers full cast and crew lists for *Part 1* and *Part 2*. Also, Parish and Pitts present background information on the production of the movie, its characters, and the production staff. *The Great Gangster Pictures* is important because it offers reviews about the films and their overall production. Mostly this text provides character names and the actors who portrayed them, and descriptions of basic plot points that can be used in this study.

Crime Movies (1980) by Carlos Clarens discusses the overall attitude and flow of *The Godfather* movies. Clarens talks about how Michael Corleone transforms the family business from an archaic structure into an almost legitimate corporation. In the book, he also discusses the transformation of Michael from the first movie into the second as his responsibility increases. Clarens also discusses the societal impact that *The Godfather* had and the amount of revenue it gained. Clarens also makes a quick reference about the first two films and the mythological undertone. “The director adopted as key scenes in both films that classic moment in mythological fiction in which the hero, under the influence of his past, confronts his fate and accepts it, as if the future had suddenly been revealed to him.” The examples that Clarens gives are about the first murder that Michael commits in *Part 1*, and the first murder Vito commits in *Part 2*.

Fran Mason writes in *American Gangster Cinema* (2002) that *The Godfather* changed the genre with its epic storylines and introduction of iconic characters. Mason also offers different interpretations of the films’ structures and characters. He discusses

the *mise-en scene* of each of the films and writes in a semiotic analysis style. By giving many different interpretations of each of the films, Fran Mason's work is very beneficial in this research because it offers examinations of each character, and their contributions to the story. Mason discusses the motivations of Michael as his character progresses through the films. He also explains, in agreement with Bergan, that *Part 3* is essential in the overall narrative of the trilogy.

A thorough synopsis of *The Godfather Part 1* and *2* is offered by Marilyn Yaquinto in the book, *Pump 'Em Full of Lead: A Look at Gangsters on Film* (1998). Yaquinto gives a complete scene-by-scene overview of the film. She points out all of the crucial parts of the film and discusses them in detail. Having a thorough synopsis written with such care is a great source to have when trying to condense such a complex movie into an easy-to-understand format.

Literature and Film as Modern Mythology (2000) by William Ferrell offers a quick excerpt about the character of Don Corleone and how he can be viewed as an oxymoron. Ferrell's analysis also posits the Biblical reference of the name Michael and how that name is derived from the famous archangel, Michael. Although brief, this insight can aid in the argument of Michael Corleone being considered a hero.

One of the most thorough sources for this study is *The Annotated Godfather: The Complete Screenplay* (2007) by Jenny Jones. In this text is the complete screenplay for *The Godfather Part 1*. Within it lies so much more; the author has taken the time to include the history leading up to the movie and the aftermath. On nearly every page is a side note about production details, "The Nuts and Bolts," and "adaptations and the cutting room floor." These side notes offer great insight into the thought process of

Coppola and Puzo when writing the screenplay. In addition to this, the reader is able to read how particular scenes were meant to be shot as well as the emotion that the character is supposed to convey. Overall, this is a great find and will prove to very useful, especially when citing direct quotes from the film.

In the text, *Dying to Belong: Gangster Movies in Hollywood and Hong Kong* (2007) by Martha Nochimson, she offers a character analysis of Michael Corleone, and an analysis of his surroundings using a feminist perspective. She explains that Michael went against the stereotype of the Italian gangster choosing the blonde American as his wife; Michael being with Kay was a way for him to convey a false front, and to keep him mentally connected to the world he left. This type of critique is unique in its findings; very few sources, if any, offer this type of argument. The following section discusses Joseph Campbell and the context of his work.

Myth & Monomyth: Its Origins and Applications

Mythology has been interpreted by the modern intellect as a primitive, fumbling effort to explain the world of nature (Frazer); as a production of poetical fantasy from prehistoric times, misunderstood by succeeding ages (Muller); as a repository of allegorical instruction, to shape the individual to his group (Durkheim); as a group dream, symptomatic of archetypal urges within depths of the human psyche (Jung); and as God's Revelation to His children (the Church). Mythology shows itself to be as amenable as life itself to the obsessions and requirements of the individual, the race, and the age (Campbell 1949).

Myths serve as a way of explaining life's phenomena, beliefs, and history.

Ancient civilizations to modern day tribes such as the Iroquois and the Sioux, have told stories passed down from their ancestors. The importance of the myth and mythology is vast. The above passage was taken from *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, in which Joseph Campbell summarizes many scholars' explanations of mythology.

Myths serve many purposes in society; they are what can bond us to others within our society, to nature and our surroundings; myths that employ archetypal themes connect us to persons from other cultures. In addition to the aforementioned purposes of the myth, they also serve as guidance for daily living, give meaning to life, and explain the unexplainable.

Joseph Campbell came to learn that many cultures and societies had numerous myths, legends, fables, and folklores about heroes and their journeys. With his vast knowledge of world myths and by incorporating the theories of Sigmund Freud, Otto Rank, and Carl Jung, Campbell introduced the idea that there could be one myth or "monomyth" that overarches many of the stories he read and studied. The idea of the

monomyth and the journey of the hero are quite simple when broken into stages as Campbell has done. Campbell explains the journey of the hero as one who “ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow people” (Campbell 1949).

Using the Campbellian method of deconstructing the journey of a hero, one is able to examine numerous stories, both ancient and modern, and discover that themes used thousands of years ago are still prevalent in today’s society. New adaptations of the monomyth can be seen in many films and in many books.

One of the texts most influenced by Campbell’s work is Christopher Vogler’s *The Writer’s Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers & Screenwriters*. Vogler takes the basic principles of Campbell’s work and modifies them to adapt to modern stories and films. Vogler takes the classic 17 stage structure of Campbell, and condenses it down to 12 key stages. The mythic stages presented by the two authors are similar, but Vogler offers a simplified version of the hero’s journey. Located in Table One on the next page are Campbell’s stages alongside Vogler’s for comparative purposes.

Table 1. Comparing the stages of Joseph Campbell structure to Christopher Vogler's

<u>Joseph Campbell</u>	<u>Christopher Vogler</u>
<p>Chapter 1: <i>Departure</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Call to Adventure 2. Refusal of the Call 3. Supernatural Aid 4. The Crossing of the First Threshold 5. The Belly of the Whale <p>Chapter 2: <i>Initiation</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Road of Trials 2. The Meeting with the Goddess 3. Woman as the Temptress 4. Atonement with the Father 5. Apotheosis 6. The Ultimate Boon <p>Chapter 3: <i>Return</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refusal of the Return 2. The Magic Flight 3. Rescue from Without 4. The Crossing of the Return Threshold 5. Master of the Two Worlds 6. Freedom to Live 	<p>Act 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ordinary World 2. Call to Adventure 3. Refusal of the Call 4. Meeting with the Mentor 5. Crossing the First Threshold <p>Act 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tests, Allies, Enemies 2. Approach to the Inmost Cave 3. Supreme Ordeal 4. Reward <p>Act 3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Road Back 2. Resurrection 3. Return with Elixir

*(Campbell's structure will be examined in greater detail in the Method chapter)

In the chapter titled, "The Archetypes" Vogler discusses the impact Carl Jung's work had in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. He explains the various character archetypes found in mythic stories, these include (but are not limited to):

- Hero
- Mentor (Wise Old Man or Woman)
- Threshold Guardian
- Shapeshifter
- Shadow

- Trickster

The most important character of this study is the hero, which is why the section titled “Michael Corleone: A Hero?” will be devoted to analyzing his character composition; i.e., his traits and his motivators as a hero.

The Threading of Myths

Joseph Campbell was not the first, or the last scholar to discuss myths and their effects/contributions on society. Many notables, such as Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and Otto Rank have influenced Campbell in different fashions; through the study of the psyche or dream analysis, each scholar influenced Campbell during his construction of the hero's journey. Over the following pages the Campbell approach to myths will be put into context with the previously mentioned authors and scholars.

Geoffrey Hill, author of *Illuminating Shadows: The Mythic Power of Film* (1992), offers a “rough sketch of the threading of myth through the various stages and varieties of human expression” (Hill 1992).

Consciousness → Dream → Myth → Religion → Art → Drama → Literature → Cinema

Hill explains that myths have evolved through the ages, changing their “costumes” to suit the generation for which they appear. The model he designed helps to examine the complex nature of the myth and the contributors who have influenced its perception through the years. Each thread employs the works of the scholars listed above; using Hill's model will help in the overall understanding of the myth's evolution and contributions.

Consciousness/Dream

“Dream is the personalized myth, myth the depersonalized dream; both myth and dream are symbolic in the same general way of the dynamics of the psyche. But in the

dream the forms are quirked by the peculiar troubles of the dreamer, whereas in myth the problems and solutions shown are directly valid for all mankind” (Campbell 1949).

What Campbell is describing is the notion that collective myths stem from what is dreamt but are also altered when in a dream state, unlike a myth that holds true for all cultures. In dissecting the above passage one finds the influence of Freud (dreams) and Jung (psyche).

Sigmund Freud’s work in psychoanalysis is known across the world. He unlocked the “Lapis Philosophorum” or the philosopher’s stone, which showed the link between the issues found in myths and the issues repressed in the unconscious. Carl Jung’s work was similar in nature to Freud’s, but Jung expanded upon Freud’s ideas. Jung went on to identify archetypes and how they can be “personally meaningful in dreams” which then “become collectively meaningful through myth” (Indick 2004).

Myth/Religion

“The way to become human is to learn to recognize the lineaments of God in all of the wonderful modulations of the face of man” (Campbell 1949). Throughout *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell explains that the hero can take on a mythic adventure, and examples of this can be found in the journeys of universally known figures like Mohammed, Jesus, and Guatama Buddha; the difference being their message/knowledge or boon is bestowed upon the world instead of just a society. He further elaborates on the fact that there is little variance between the journey of a typical hero and the journey of a mythic/religious hero.

Expanding upon this idea, Jung explains that the religious myth “is one of man’s greatest and most significant achievements, giving him the security and inner strength not to be crushed by the monstrosity of the universe” (Jung 1952). Jung viewed religion as another aspect of the unconscious and that all religion could be viewed as myth. Through the world of psychoanalysis, Jung could use religion to explore deeper into a person’s psyche.

Campbell and Jung complement each other in terms of myth and religion; Campbell explains that everyone has the ability to undergo the trials of a religious journey and Jung shows that through religion one can examine deeper the human psyche. The ideas of Campbell and Jung are circular in nature; Jung can look into a person’s unconscious with the aid of religion while Campbell states that a person has the ability to expand upon religious myths if they discover the ability within themselves.

Art

Art can be viewed as the physical representation of myths. The artists hold the power of carrying on traditional myths and the transformation of the old stories into new tales for future generations. “Every society is the embodiment of a myth, and as the artist is the shaper of myth, there is a sense in which he holds in his hand the thunderbolts that destroy one society and create another” (Hill 1992). There are many interpretations of myth and art. Campbell states that the “artist’s eye has a mythical slant upon life” (Campbell 1959). Freud feels that art is a symptom of sickness and Jung argues that the artist gathers inspiration from myth, but in order to understand the art, one must use the myth to give it form.

Drama/Literature

Drama stems from religion and myth. Many cultures act out adaptations of mythic stories or religious conquests. Drama has been the backbone of many earlier cultures serving as an aid in teaching illiterates the word of the Gospel.

Literature has served as a vehicle for myths. Some of the earliest works of literature carry on the tradition of myths, i.e. The Book of Job, the Homer epics, and the Attic tragedies (Hill 1992).

Joseph Campbell spent a majority of his life reading and studying the literature of many civilizations; this is how he collected his immense knowledge of myths. Literature has provided support for many of the claims scholars have made; without it, the works of Joseph Campbell, Otto Rank, Vladimir Propp, Eric Fromm and many others would not be possible. Each scholar listed earlier has contributed enormously to the world of literature and to the understanding of myths and the relevance of myths in today's society.

Cinema

Cinema is the manifestation of myth (Hill 1992). Many films have used mythic structures and archetypes. As mentioned, *Star Wars* is probably one of the most recognized films to use mythic archetypes and the structure outlined by Joseph Campbell's monomyth concept.

Besides the work of Joseph Campbell, other scholars have contributed to the understanding of the structure of myths. In 1914, Otto Rank wrote the book *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*; his writing has influences of Freud because of the psychological themes that Rank identifies. In the text, he explains the stages that occur in the legends

of mythical heroes. His structure has been applied to the stories of Jesus, Moses, Cyrus, Hercules, Siegfried, and many others; Rank notes that there is extremely little variance between the above mentioned stories (Rank 1914). Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, which appeared over three decades later, makes similar claims to Rank (little variance in structure) when he applied his monomyth structure to the stories of Jesus, Mohammed, and Buddha.

In comparison to Campbell, Vladimir Propp also wrote about the structure of stories. In contrast though, Propp's work was restricted to Russian fairy tales; Propp identified thirty-one functions of the fairy tale in his book *Morphology of the Folktale*. Propp's work was highly scrutinized by Claude Levi-Strauss, a French anthropologist, who also proposed a formula for the structure of narrative. Levi-Strauss' "formula was totally algebraic involving functions and terms. He sought to discover what he felt was the underlying paradigm (of oppositions)" (Dundes 1997).

"The most basic commonality behind all mythic structure is the symbolism behind the hero's journey, which is the same as the symbolism behind the dream" (Indick 2004). Many authors have been influential in Campbell's work. He has used the findings of Freud and Jung to make correlations among dreams, the human psyche and myth. Campbell's work can be paralleled with the work of Levi-Strauss; both were interested in identifying the common structure of the myth. Although Campbell's work has been highly regarded, it is important to look at earlier works of authors and scholars that Campbell turned to in understanding his own ideas.

Michael Corleone: A Hero?

Borrowing from the famed scholars, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Vladimir Propp, Christopher Vogler assembled the chapter titled “Hero” in his text, *The Writer’s Journey: Mythic Structures for Storytelling & Screenwriters*. Vogler identifies the unique traits that a hero embodies and, with the Campbell method as his guide, relates them to heroes found in popular films.

First, looking at the psychological makings of a hero, the works of Freud are examined. The hero lies in what Freud termed the “ego.” The ego is the part of the psyche that causes a person to separate themselves from the family, or Freud explained it as the part of the personality that separated from the mother. By looking at the hero archetype, it represents the “ego’s search for identity and wholeness.” The task of the hero is to unify all the aspects of the psyche, which allows them to become the “Self.” The hero must also perform certain functions in a film; Vogler refers to these as the “dramatic functions.”

In most mythically structured films, the hero is responsible for bringing the audience into a state of acceptance; the audience identifies with the hero, be it through the actions or characteristics that he/she possesses. For an audience to identify with the hero, the hero must possess “universal qualities, emotions, and motivations that everyone has experienced at one time or another” (Vogler 1992). Putting aside the fact that Michael Corleone is the head of a crime family, he does project emotions we, as an audience, have all experienced: anger, revenge, love, despair, isolation/outsider, patriotism and loyalty. In addition to that, he also served in the military during our country’s time of need; Michael enlists in the Marines during World War 2. These are all emotions that are

identifiable within ourselves. But the difference found in heroes is that they are endowed with many qualities, and at times, conflicting qualities. As Vogler states, “the more conflicting, the better” (Vogler 1992). Internal conflict is central to the character of Michael Corleone. From the film’s beginning, he dismisses his family and their business. After the attempted assassination of his father, Michael is now torn between the world he refused and revenging his father’s attack.

The transformation of his character leads into two more dramatic functions described by Vogler, growth and action. *Part 1* displays the biggest transformation of Michael’s character. Michael not only grows into the person he never intended on becoming, he also shows swift action against those who oppose him. After Michael kills Captain McCluskey and Sollozzo, he seizes full control of his destiny. Michael has accepted the challenge, and begins his journey as the hero.

What else constitutes a hero? What else must a hero endure? The first trait is sacrifice, the true mark of a hero. The hero sacrifices many things along his/her journey. This may be something of value, or even their life. By being a member of a crime family, the threat of death due to family loyalty is a daily concern. Dealing with death is another facet of the hero’s psyche. Either through a symbolic death, or facing real death, all heroes face this trial. Michael faced both. When Michael entered the restaurant in *Part 1* to kill Captain McCluskey and Sollozzo, he faced the possibility of dying. Rather than actually dying, Michael experiences a symbolic death. His life as a “normal” member of society has died, and he is reborn into the world of organized crime.

The last section of the Vogler chapter classifies the hero. There are numerous types of heroes:

- Willing Heroes
- Unwilling Heroes
- Anti-Heroes
- Group-Orientated Heroes
- Loner Heroes
- Catalyst Heroes

The last question to be posed is what type of hero is Michael Corleone? After examining Vogler's summation of each hero-type, a few traits are exemplified through the personality of Michael. As stated, Michael was reluctant to accept his fate; he disassociated himself with his family. This would push him into the category of the unwilling hero, initially. As the movie progresses, Michael assumes the role of the outlaw hero. As explained by Nicole Rafter in *Shots in the Mirror: Crime Films and Society*, the outlaw hero is "an adventurer, explorer, gunfighter, and loner who stands for the part of the American imagination valuing self-determination and freedom from entanglements" Rafter (2000). She goes on to explain that films with an outlaw hero invest more time in developing the character, which in turn, encourages the viewer to identify with them more.

Michael Corleone is a traditional mythic hero in most regards. Looking at his personality traits, the viewer can identify and relate to him through most of the films. The separation from traditional hero to criminal hero is due to the content of the films. By not having a traditional mythic setting, the notion of Michael being considered a hero may require more explanation. The Vogler and Rafter texts provide the basic understanding needed in order to fully understand the connections with an unlikely hero.

CHAPTER IV

THEORY

The theory used is the idea of the monomyth as outlined in Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. In this work he outlines the three chapters in the narrative structure of a hero. These three chapters are: *Departure*, *Initiation*, and *Return*; within each of the chapters lie five to six stages that the hero must traverse. The stages are (listed in order):

Chapter 1 – The Call to Adventure, Refusal of the Call, Supernatural Aid, The Crossing of the First Threshold, and The Belly of the Whale

Chapter 2 – The Road of Trials, The Meeting with the Goddess, Woman as the Temptress, Atonement with the Father, Apotheosis, and The Ultimate Boon

Chapter 3 – Refusal of the Return, The Magic Flight, Rescue from Without, The Crossing of the Return Threshold, Master of the Two Worlds, and Freedom to Live.

A complete description of each of these stages will be outlined in the following section.

Campbell uses these guidelines to simplify the narrative structure and character archetypes of classic works.

Campbell was a student of the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, and the ideas in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* are often described as Jungian. The book is based on Jung's idea of the "archetypes" constantly repeating characters who occur in the dreams of all people and the myths of all cultures (Vogler 1992).

Campbell's work has influenced many artists, musicians, and filmmakers, such as Bob Dylan, George Lucas, and Jerry Garcia, all of whom appeared in a 1986 seminar, "From

Ritual to Rapture,” alongside Campbell. Joseph Campbell’s study has also inspired work from authors Robert Jewett and John Shelton Lawrence, and Christopher Vogler.

The analysis of the hero and the journey as told in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* is the foundation of many works, including *The American Monomyth* (1977) by Robert Jewett and John Shelton Lawrence and *The Writer’s Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers & Screenwriters* (1992) by Christopher Vogler. Both books offer slight variations of Campbell’s original work. As explained in the introduction, the monomyth has been used in a multitude of film genres and trilogies; to apply the monomyth to a trilogy that revolutionized a genre would further expand the study and understanding of mythic analysis.

Joseph Campbell was the pioneer for conceptualizing the monomyth, and a wealth of directors, artists, and musicians have utilized the power of the archetypes in creating new material. Character archetypes, narrative structure, and the ability to tell a complete and entertaining story are the elements that can be analyzed with the aid of Campbell’s work.

Following is a detailed description of each stage; this will be used as the guideline when analyzing *The Godfather Trilogy*. In addition to the Campbell and Vogler texts, *Screening the Sacred* will provide examples from *Star Wars*, the most prevalent example of the application of Joseph Campbell’s monomyth.

Departure

The Call to Adventure

This begins the story of the hero; it is here that the hero is presented with a problem, challenge, or adventure. The call can come by way of a blunder. A blunder “reveals an unsuspected world and the individual is drawn into a relationship with forces that are not rightly understood” (Campbell 1949). “The call to adventure signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown” (Campbell, 1949). The call to adventure for Luke Skywalker begins with the urgent message from Princess Leia pleading for help.

Refusal of the Call

“The myths and folk tales of the whole world make clear that the refusal is essentially a refusal to give up what one takes to be one’s own interest” (Campbell, 1949). If the hero is reluctant, it is because of the fear of the unknown; on occasion there could be outside forces that contribute to the hero becoming motivated to begin the journey. The death of Luke’s aunt and uncle were the push of support that he needed to face destiny and continue on with his adventure.

Supernatural Aid

This stage is when the hero encounters either an old man or an old woman; it is these mentors that present the hero with advice or a magical weapon. The mentor only briefly travels with the hero; the hero must traverse most of the unknown by himself. One of the roles of the mentor is to provide the hero a push into accepting what has to be

done. Depending on the genre of the film, the mysticism of the weapon can vary. In *Star Wars*, Obi-wan Kenobi serves as the supernatural aid. He is the figure essential in Luke's transformation and acceptance of his destiny. Obi-wan teaches Luke the ways of the Force and bestows him the light saber of his father.

The Crossing of the First Threshold

After he receives the supernatural aid the hero is ready to continue on his journey. This is where one of the first challenges can appear; it can come in a variety of forms. The hero "fully enters the special world of his story for the first time. This is the moment at which the story takes off and the adventure gets going" (Vogler 1992). Once Luke leaves the safety of his home, Tatooine, he is no longer able to return; this stage also presents a series of threshold guardians. In *Star Wars* these guardians are: "the marauding Sandpeople; next a storm trooper guarding the entrance to the spaceport; and, finally a foul-looking alien in the spaceport bar. In each case Luke is saved by Ben."

The Belly of the Whale

This stage represents the descent of the hero into a hellish place to retrieve a loved one, and sometimes, this results in the gaining of a treasure. The belly is seen as a symbolic womb; the hero may experience death and rebirth in this stage. The heroes of *Star Wars* are sucked into the enemy space fortress by a tractor beam, and eventually plunge into the dark depths of the trash compactor. This represents a symbolic death of the heroes.

Initiation

The Road of Trials

Once the hero has survived the first threshold, he begins his long journey that is full of trials. Along the way the hero discovers that there is a “benign power” aiding him in his passage. The first of Luke’s trials entails devising a plan to save the Princess and escape the Death Star. Further trials include the training he endures with Yoda as he hones his abilities with the Force.

The Meeting with the Goddess

After the long road of trials has been accomplished, the hero encounters a goddess. Symbolically this shows the hero’s total mastery of life. The end result of the meeting with the goddess is a “mystical marriage.” The maternal nature of Princess Leia causes Luke to fall in love with her. The only factor that denies the “mystical marriage” is her inability to decide between Luke and Han Solo.

Woman as the Temptress

After the marriage with the goddess and the hero’s realization of his mastery of life, the hero “knows that he and the father are one: he is in his father’s place” (Campbell 1949). Instead of using a female as the temptress, George Lucas creates the temptation by way of the Dark Side. Luke feels the lure of its power, but he is able to see clearly and choose wisely as he dismisses the temptation.

Atonement with the Father

The hero must reconcile the “merciful aspects” of the father in order to understand his true self and the father figure. Luke makes peace with the death of the “father-like” figure, Obi-wan; Obi-wan returns to Ben as his guiding conscious. The hero may also be pitted against his father to obtain total mastery of the universe, in this stage. In *Star Wars*, Luke confronts Darth Vader and learns that he is his father.

Apotheosis

The hero is lifted to an almost god-like ranking; this comes to be after the hero and father are pitted against each other. Similar to the atonement with the father, the apotheosis urges the hero to reconcile with the father in order to achieve ultimate knowledge of himself and his power. Luke’s ascension to a god-like figure is two-part. First, he sacrifices himself rather than turning to the Dark Side, and second, he becomes a Jedi.

The Ultimate Boon

The atonement with the father and the apotheosis are two stages that are imperative in the hero’s journey. After traversing these last stages the hero achieves balance. With the achievement of balance, the hero is able to obtain the ultimate boon, or knowledge. This boon can be a great benefit to society. The ultimate boon is what the hero can use to restore his culture, in terms of this film the ultimate boon is the Force. He is able to use the boon to those who are “duly proven.” The final words of Obi-wan resonate as the first two chapters of the Campbell structure come to a close, “the Force will be with you always.”

Return

Refusal of the Return

After receiving the ultimate boon the hero is often reluctant to return to the “normal” world, the world that he came from. His refusal signifies his reluctance to bestow the knowledge, or boon, onto his fellow man. Luke refuses to return to the normal world because he insists upon avenging Obi-wan’s death.

The Magic Flight

The hero’s possession of the boon endangers his journey and as the opposition begins to invade, a chase or pursuit may occur. The magic flight in *Star Wars* is projected through the use of the Millennium Falcon.

Rescue from Without

The hero could face struggles returning to his previous world; in this occurrence help from the hero’s former world travels into the new world to rescue him. Luke is rescued by Han Solo from the eminent danger of Darth Vader and his “demons.”

The Crossing of the Return Threshold

The two worlds of which the hero is a part of are as dichotomous as night and day or life and death. “The hero adventures out of the land we know into darkness; there he accomplishes his adventure, or again is simply lost to us, imprisoned, or in danger; and his return is described as a coming back out of the yonder zone” (Campbell 1949). The crossing of the return threshold is probably one of the more famous scenes in the *Star*

Wars film. As Luke navigates the trenches of the Death Star, he is chased by Vader and his wingmen. As stated in the previous stage, Han saved Luke which provided him the chance he needed to use the Force and take the killing shot. The collapse of the Death Star provided Luke the chance to return to the world from which he left.

Master of the Two Worlds

The hero has achieved the freedom to travel between the two worlds freely. He understands the boundaries that accompany each world and knows how to segregate the two worlds mentally. The hero has become the master of his two worlds. With Luke's ability to use the Force at will, he is able to cross between the two worlds as needed, and bestow the boon if necessary.

Freedom to Live

The hero, after much reluctance, bestows the boon onto his fellow man. Reflecting on his great journey, the hero realizes that "the battlefield is symbolic of the field of life, where every creature lives on the death of another" (Campbell 1949). Now that the Rebellion is victorious over the Empire, Luke has the freedom to live knowing that his strength and perseverance brought peace to his world.

CHAPTER V

METHODOLOGY

“Textual analysis is the skill of deconstructing media texts” (Allison 2007).

Textual analysis allows the researcher to examine a text (i.e. film, television, book, etc.) and extrapolate a deeper meaning. Depending on the goals of the researcher, many interpretations can be discovered. A textual analysis is a process which can “reveal the inner workings of a text and identify its significance in terms of the wider social and cultural issues to which it relates” (Rayner, et al 2004).

Contained within the method of a textual analysis are basic guidelines to assist in performing the analysis. Some of these are:

- Choose your topic of interest. Which questions interest you? This can come from academic reading or a personal experience of a culture.
- Does my focus need to be more specific?
- List relevant texts that pertain to the question.
- Gather any texts, academic or popular.
- Watch examples and note how the textual elements work in each.
- Try to get a look at the bigger picture.
- With the context in mind, return to the texts and interpret likely interpretations (McKee 2001).

These guidelines are a summation of various sources found; it offers a basic overview of the common steps used when performing a textual analysis.

In addition to the guidelines above, textual analysis can also answer questions specific to a text. Examples that pertain to this study and explanations are listed below. The questions are taken from David Allison's article, *Textual Analysis* (2007).

Media Representation

Who is Being Represented?

The central figure of the study is Michael Corleone. His journey will be examined and compared to the stages outlined in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

In What Way?

In traditional myths the hero possesses certain characteristics that we have come to recognize, i.e. a knight in shining armor. But by examining a film genre not normally associated with heroes, the identification of the hero is more difficult. To identify the hero of a crime family, the works of Jung and his archetypes need to be implemented. Jung explains the characteristics of a hero's persona; by comparing them to the traits of Michael, it can be argued that Michael is a hero.

Media Language and Forms

What is the Significance of Mise-en-scene/sets/setting?

The settings found throughout the three films play an important role in the analysis. Settings can represent different stages of the Campbellian structure, such as: the belly of the whale or the crossing of the thresholds.

Narrative

How are Characters Delineated? What is Their Narrative Function?

Many of the characters in the three films lend support in Michael's quest. In Campbell's book he describes many important archetypes found in the hero's journey; the goddess, the temptress, the old crone or supernatural aid and the father-like figure.

Genre

To Which Genre Does the Text Belong?

The genre plays an important role in this study because it differentiates itself from other works that have been done. The most famous work studied that used the Campbellian structure is *Star Wars*. The monomyth has predominantly resided in the genres of science-fiction and fantasy. The crime genre is not typically associated with heroes and that's one reason why this study is important.

Media Values and Ideology

What Criteria have been Used for Selecting the Content Presented?

Some of the major films that have been analyzed using the monomyth have been trilogies: *Star Wars*, *The Matrix* and *The Lord of the Rings*. These films are important figures within their respective genre. One of the most famous films, and more important trilogy, in the gangster/crime genre is *The Godfather*. The monomyth has been applied to many films that were not part of a trilogy, but some of the strongest examples that exude Campbell's ideas are found in trilogies.

One of the biggest questions to ask while performing a textual analysis is, “what am I looking for?” The question can present some problems; what is the right interpretation, is there only one way to analyze this text. These problems can also be considered positives. There is no single correct answer; the interpretation is dependent upon many factors and the context for types of questions being asked. A textual analysis provides the researcher the ability to choose how the study will be performed and allows the choice of what perspectives to explore.

Joseph Campbell’s book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* explains the representation of the hero and the journey that ensues. Campbell lists identifiers that are commonly found in a hero’s journey. The identifiers that he lists include: specific character archetypes (i.e. the supernatural aid, the temptress, the goddess, the father figure, etc.) and specific stage signifiers (i.e. the belly of the whale, the road of trials, thresholds, etc.). By using textual analysis in conjunction with the Campbellian structure, all of the above questions can be answered.

CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS

The Godfather Part 1 (1972)

The mythic journey of the hero is one composed of 17 stages, as explained by Joseph Campbell. But as Campbell explains, not all journeys contain all 17 stages, and some journeys may approach the stages at different times along the story. *The Godfather* is not the typical hero-based mythic story society is accustomed to, but it does offer many elements found in traditional hero-based myths. Beginning with *Part 1*, the story starts with a traditional Italian wedding. This is where we are introduced to the family, including Michael Corleone, the “hero” of the three films, and the central character of this study. The adventure begins with chapter 1 of the Campbell structure, *Departure*.

Chapter 1 – Departure

Stage 2 – Refusal of the Call

As stated above, the movie begins with the wedding of Michael's sister, Connie, and during the festivities, the godfather is shown granting favors to his friends/family as tradition dictates. Unlike most myths, *The Godfather Part 1* begins with stage 2 of the Campbell structure, “refusal of the call.” As Johnny Fontaine (godson of Vito Corleone) sings in the background, Michael explains to Kay the story of how his father and Luca Brasi assisted Johnny in getting his big-band singing contract terminated. Michael explains that his father made the band leader an offer he couldn't refuse. Michael then tells Kay, “That's my family Kay, that's not me.” From this point, Michael asserts his

disassociation with his family. This one line establishes the character of Michael Corleone. We can see in the wedding scene that he is a military man, and throughout much of the movie he is considered a war hero.

The film progresses for numerous scenes, departing from the Campbell structure. The plot points that unfold all lend structure to Michael finally accepting his destined fate. Shortly after the wedding scene, Tom Hagen explains to Vito and Sonny about a narcotics deal being offered by Sollozzo (aka "The Turk"). During the meeting with Sollozzo and the crew of the Corleone family, Vito turns down the offer to financially back the deal presented by Sollozzo, claiming that his political and police contacts wouldn't remain friendly if they knew his business turned from gambling to narcotics. After the meeting, Vito tells Luca Brasi to go to the Tattaglia family and explain his disdain for the Corleone family, trying to gain some inside information. This leads to the death of Luca Brasi by the hands of The Turk.

As Fredo and Vito leave the meeting, Vito steps over to the fruit stand to pick up some items before the two of them leave. As the vendor bags up some oranges, two armed men (under the Sollozzo regime) gun down Vito in front of Fredo, leaving him to die in the street. To Sollozzo's surprise, Vito survived the attacks.

Stage 3 – Supernatural Aid

Often found in a hero's mythic journey is a supernatural aid, which is also the title of stage 3 of Campbell's structure. The supernatural aid is commonly an elderly figure, sometimes referred to as an old crone. In Michael's journey, the old crone is Clemenza. The role of the old crone is to provide advice to the hero, and provide a mystical weapon.

After Michael learns that his father has been attacked, he calls Sonny, who tells him to return home. Upon returning home, Clemenza teases Michael for not telling Kay that he loves her at the end of their phone call. Clemenza tells Michael to join him by the stove where he is making a pot of sauce, explaining all the stages necessary for cooking for a bunch of guys.

Come over here kid, learn somethin'. You never know, you might have to cook for twenty guys someday. You see? You start with a little bit of water, and you fry some garlic. Then you t'row in some tomatoes, some tomato paste. You fry it, you make sure it doesn't stick. You get it to a boil. You shove in all your sausage and you meatballs. Eh? Add a little bit o' wine and a little bit o' sugar, and that's my trick.

As is traditional with the old crone, he/she teaches the hero a skill or craft or lends advice for their journey. Adapting this stage to *The Godfather*, Clemenza teaches Michael what any Italian should know, how to make a pot of sauce. In their world, this is a necessary skill since much of the Italian culture (at least cinematically depicted) revolves around cooking and eating. In addition to teaching Michael a skill, Clemenza gives Michael a mystical weapon. In the world of organized crime, the mystical weapon is a hand gun. When Michael test fires it, under the supervision of Clemenza, it resonates with a supernatural tone. Clemenza had modified the gun to be louder than normal in order to scare away any “pain-in-the-ass innocent bystanders;” he even states that he put a special tape on the trigger and the butt of the gun in order to prevent fingerprints.

Stage 1 – The Call to Adventure

Backtracking a few minutes before Clemenza gives Michael the gun, stage 1 of the Campbell structure finally is addressed. Stage 1, or “the call to adventure” is when the

hero recognizes the need to undertake his journey; it is at this point when the hero accepts his fate and begins his journey. For Michael, his acceptance of the journey begins with the Vito-esque projection of his plan.

They want to have a meeting with me, right? It will be me, McCluskey and Sollozzo. Let's set the meeting. Get our informers to find out where it's gonna be held. Now we insist it's a public place – a bar, a restaurant – some place where there's people so I feel safe. They're gonna search me when I first meet them, right? So I can't have a weapon on me then. But if Clemenza can figure a way to have a weapon planted there for me, then I'll kill 'em both.

Stage 4 – The Crossing of the First Threshold & Stage 5 – The Belly of the Whale

Stages 4 and 5 appear in conjunction with one another; stage 4, “the crossing of the first threshold” and stage 5 “the belly of the whale.” Stage 4 begins when Michael goes to see his father in the hospital. Upon arrival, Michael realizes that all the guards have been sent home, and another attempt on his father’s life is eminent. With the help of the nurse, Michael moves his father into another room just as Enzo, the baker, arrives. Michael and Enzo stand guard outside of the hospital as a car suspiciously drives by, most likely containing the men sent to kill his father. Within minutes Captain McCluskey arrives with backup, as if by chance they knew something was going to occur at the hospital. Confronting the Captain, Michael asks, “What's the Turk paying you to set up my father?” This is the first time Michael becomes involved, even slightly, in the family business. Later, when Michael is picked up by McCluskey and Sollozzo, he is taking another step into a world he has never experienced. Knowing that within a short amount of time he will have to kill the two men, Michael crosses from his everyday world of

being a college educated - war veteran, to a Mafioso hitman. This will fully bring him into the world he has dismissed since the beginning of the film.

Upon arriving at the restaurant, Michael enters into the belly of the whale. Symbolically, stage 5 is the rebirth of the hero. As explained in the Campbell text, “The hero, rather than passing a threshold, passes into the new zone by means of rebirth. Appearing to have died by being swallowed or having their flesh scattered, the hero is transformed and becomes ready for the adventure ahead” (Campbell 1949). A literal translation of this passage that would be represented in the film is the physical splattering of the flesh and blood of Sollozzo and Captain McCluskey.

The belly of the whale is the darkest time of the hero's journey, often one of the most dangerous stages. The restaurant represents the belly of the whale for this scene. Its dimly lit interior emanates a somber atmosphere. When comparing Michael's personality from the beginning of the film to post-murder, the transformation is evident. After the murder of McCluskey and Sollozzo, Michael begins to settle in as he accepts his new identity. Previous to this, Coppola foreshadows Michael's change with the hospital scene; as Michael and Enzo wait outside the hospital while a car full of button men drive by, Enzo is visibly shaken whereas Michael is not. When Michael is sent to Italy to hide from his crimes, it ends chapter 1 of the Campbell structure. It is fitting that chapter 1 – *Departure*, ends with Michael's departure to Sicily.

Leading to this point in the film, many references are made regarding Michael being a war hero. In the scene where Clemenza gives Michael the gun, Clemenza tells Michael, “You know, Mike, we was all proud o' you. Bein' a hero and all. Your father too.” Vito even shows pained anguish in his face when Sonny informs him that Michael

was the one who shot McCluskey and Sollozzo. Vito never meant for Michael to become involved in the family business, but it seems destined that he did.

Chapter 2 – Initiation

Stage 6 – The Road of Trials

Chapter 2, *Initiation*, begins with Michael's arrival in Sicily. The first stage in this chapter is “the road of trials.” The scene opens with shots of the beautiful, Sicilian countryside. Campbell explains this stage as being “a dream landscape of ambiguous and fluid forms.” To the viewer, the rolling hills of the setting seem like a place of safety, there is a romanticized look to the scene, but we soon find out that Michael's enemies know that he is there. Michael faces a few obstacles while in Sicily. The first is the courting of Apollonia with approval of her father. Later in the film, Sonny is killed in a brutal attack outside a toll-booth; Michael must deal with the loss of his brother alone in a foreign country. Then, after his marriage to Apollonia, she is killed in a car bombing meant for him. After her death, Michael returns home to resume the life he abruptly left.

Stage 7 – The Meeting with the Goddess & Stage 8 – Woman as the Temptress

The next two stages of the hero's journey, “the meeting with the goddess” and “woman as the temptress” appear intertwined. When Michael left for Sicily he left behind Kay. Although their marriage is never officially shown in *Part I*, it can be assumed through conversations. This could be because Kay is not Italian. Michael only brings up marriage after he returns to the states. The meeting with the goddess is explained as “a marriage between the hero and a queen like, or mother like figure” (Campbell 1949). This

is important because when Michael returns, he confronts Kay to tell her, “I’ll do anything you ask, anything to make up for what’s happened to us...That we have a life together. That we have children. Our children. Kay...I need you. And I love you.”

Upon arriving in Sicily, Michael is struck by the beauty of Apollonia. “I think you got hit by the thunderbolt” Michael’s bodyguard says to him. Fabrizio (one of the bodyguards) explains to Vitelli (Apollonia’s father) that Michael was awestruck by the beauty of one female. He claims that “she would tempt the devil himself.” Not knowing that Vitelli is the father, Fabrizio continues his explanation, eventually aggravating Vitelli. Fabrizio explains to Michael what has happened. Michael then has Fabrizio explain to Vitelli, who he is, what he is doing in Sicily, and that he would like to meet his daughter under the supervision of the family; he also explains that knowing who he is could mean Apollonia losing a father instead of gaining a husband. In a short succession of scenes, Michael and Apollonia are married. Their marriage is only short lived; Apollonia is killed a few scenes later. After Michael’s brief departure for selfish pleasures, Apollonia’s death signifies his return to the correct path.

Stage 9 – Atonement with the Father

Michael’s atonement with his father is the next stage of his journey. Shortly after his return, Michael finds Kay to explain what has been happening. It is during this short dialogue between the two characters, that he finally accepts his fate. This is the first time Michael admits his involvement with the family business to the one person still connected to the ordinary world.

Michael: I’m working for my father now, Kay. He’s been sick. Very sick.

Kay: But you're not like him, Michael. I thought you weren't going to become a man like your father. That's what you told me.

Michael: My father's no different than any other powerful man.

Kay: Hah.

Michael: Any man who's responsible for other people – like a senator or president.

Kay: You know how naïve you sound?

Michael: Why?

Kay: Senators and presidents don't have men killed.

Michael: Oh, who's being naïve, Kay? Kay, my father's way of doing things is over, it's finished. Even he knows that. I mean, in five years the Corleone Family is gonna be completely legitimate. Trust me. That's all I can tell you about my business, Kay...

Michael's acceptance of his new role as the head of the Corleone family is fully realized.

He compares his father to figures known to a “normal” society, people we, the viewer, can relate to. Although, Michael still maintains he can transform the family into a legitimate business; this would signify Michael's return to the ordinary world from which he left.

There is a similarity between Michael and Vito's attitude about the business; in a sense, both wanted to protect each other from the business. During the murder scene of Sollozzo and McCluskey, Michael says that all he wants is a guarantee that there will be no more attempts on his father's life; this is the only reason Michael ever became involved. Vito explains in the following passage that he worked his whole life so Michael wouldn't have to become involved in the family business. So, Vito still has issues with Michael's new role as the leader of the family. During a conversation, Vito explains his feelings to Michael.

I knew that Santino was goin' to have to go through all this...But I never – I never wanted this for you. I worked my whole life, I don't apologize, to take care of my family, and I refused to be a fool dancing on a string held by all those big

shots. I don't apologize – that's my life, but I thought that – that when it was your time, that *you* would be the one to hold the strings. Senator Corleone, Governor Corleone, somethin'.

Looking at the ranks a mafia family, (more specifically the Corleone family) there are positions that are more honored than others. Starting from the bottom, the ranks are as follow (the ranks are taken from the indictment trial in *Part 2*):

- Associate – normally an errand runner for members in higher ranks
- Made Man – could be considered the workhorse of the family; they do most of the work; also known as “button men”
- Caporegimes – also means “captain”, they are the leader of a group of men
- Consiglieri – this is the family advisor, the person who handles legal matters
- Underboss – the second in charge under the Don
- Don – Head of the family, also known as the boss (or in this film Godfather)

When Michael began the film he wasn't even in the lowest of ranks; as mentioned earlier, he dismissed the family business. As the film progressed, and events began to unfold, Michael could be viewed as a made man once he committed the murder of Sollozzo and Captain McCluskey. After he returned from Sicily, Michael became the head of the family, according to Vito Corleone. Michael's quick ascension to the top ranks of the family is abnormal. Most Dons are involved in the business for their whole lives, only reaching “Don” status in the latter part of their life. The ease with which the adventure is here accomplished signifies that the hero is a superior man, a born king. “Where the usual

hero would face a test, the elect encounters no delaying obstacle and makes no mistake” (Campbell 1949).

Stage 11 – The Ultimate Boon

The final stage of the *Initiation* chapter is “the ultimate boon.” This stage is often the climax of the story. Michael orchestrates a list of hits to solidify his rank as the Don.

In a flawless display of planning, the following men are killed:

- Don Victor Stracci
- Moe Greene
- Don Carmine Cuneo
- Don Philip Tattaglia
- Don Emilio Barzini
- Sal Tessio
- Carlo Rizzi

Before the death of Carlo, Michael tells him, “Today, I settle all Family business.”

Michael has removed all who stood in his way. It is important the timing of the deaths because Michael is repenting all his sins during the baptism while the heads of the five families are being murdered. Michael is able to live with a clean conscience because he has repented his sins.

In traditional myths, the boon is viewed as knowledge or a gift passed down from the hero to the benefit of society. In terms of this film, the gift that Michael passes down to society (the Family) is the gift of power and protection. By eliminating anyone who has betrayed the family, they are able to continue business with others who have shown

respect. The very last line of the film is Clemenza calling Michael, “Don Corleone.” To the Family, being called the “Don” is the ultimate sign of respect. Michael has transformed into his father.

Chapter 3 - Return

The third chapter of the Campbell structure is *Return*. Not much can be said about these final stages of the hero’s journey since the film ends with Michael accepting his role as Don Corleone. Michael has realized his fate and has become accustomed to his new role. There are allusions, made by Michael, to return to the ordinary world; he explains to Kay that he wants to legitimize the Family business. He wants to be a normal man again; he does not want to lead a life in a crime family. Ironically, Kay is Michael's savior; she is the one who can bring him back to the ordinary world. But, as the film ends, only speculations can be made if Michael will actually carry out his plan of obtaining legitimacy.

The Godfather Part 2 (1974)

The Godfather Part 2 continues where *Part 1* left off. We are briefly shown Michael where he was last, in his father’s office, shortly after his acceptance of Don of the Corleone family. This film of the trilogy includes a detailed background story of Vito Corleone (Michael’s father), but for the purpose of this study it will only be briefly mentioned because Michael is the central character for the study. The treatment of this film will be in similar structure to the first film; it will be discussed as a sole entity, with no references to the other films. Joseph Campbell explains that not all stories contain all 17 stages and some may appear out of order.

After the flashback of Vito's arrival to America, the scene fades into Anthony Corleone (Michael's son) receiving his first communion, which then turns into an enormous party celebrating the event at their home in Lake Tahoe. Connie arrives, inappropriately dressed for the occasion, and greets her mother who shows a look of disdain over her arrival. Connie asks to see Michael, but her mother criticizes her, and tells her she should see her kids first; it can be assumed that Connie has been traveling around while leaving her kids behind. The action cuts to the band maestro introducing Senator Pat Geary thanking Michael Corleone for the check he has given to a state university in Nevada (no actual name was given). After some promotional pictures, Senator Geary joins Michael in his private quarters.

Once inside Michael's office, Senator Geary drops the façade of being cordial with Michael and tells him that he is going to charge him \$250,000 plus commission for the gambling license on Michael's new casino. Michael counters and tells him that a license is less than \$20,000. After some harsh words from Geary, which includes criticizing him for trying to pass as descent Americans and the dishonest way Michael poses himself through a false masquerade, Michael tells him that his final offer is nothing; he will give him nothing for the new license.

After Senator Geary leaves, we are introduced to Frank Pentangeli, one the guys from the old crew in New York, Fredo and Frank discuss their sadness for the death of Clemenza (Michael's mentor from *Part 1*). Frank is disgusted that he has to wait in line to see Michael about some business issues. The scene cuts to Michael's office where we are introduced to Johnny Ola, another guy from the old days (referring to when Vito still ran the Family). Johnny explains that the new casino Michael wants to buy is owned by a

guy named Klingman and Hyman Roth (from Miami). Roth is an old man who used to do business with Vito in the early years. Johnny tells Michael that Roth will quietly walk away if he can convince Klingman to hand over control of the casino.

Later that night, Michael finally sits down with Frank Pentangeli to discuss his concerns. Frank is irritated that he receives no respect from the Rosato Brothers (part of a rival family); he asks Michael for permission to kill them. Michael denies his request on the grounds that the Rosato Brothers are backed by Hyman Roth, and that a ripple in their relationship would collapse the deal between Michael and Roth. Disgusted with Michael, Frank criticizes him for choosing a Jew over his own blood. Frank continues to express his feelings by telling Michael that even though his father (Vito) did business with Roth, he never trusted him or his messenger boy, Johnny Ola. Frank leaves with these departing words, “And I want everybody here to know, there’s not going to be no trouble from me. (Frank bows to Michael) Don Corleone.”

Chapter 1 – Departure

Stage 1 – The Call to Adventure & Stage 2 – Refusal of the Call

In traditional monomyth stories, the hero is called into his adventure by departing from the ordinary world; the few events leading to this point have established that Michael’s “ordinary world” is one of crime and power. After Frank’s departure, the scene cuts to Michael and Kay dancing. The dialogue that ensues is the first addressing of stage 1 and 2 of the mythic structure.

Michael: How’s the baby?

Kay: Sleeping inside me.

Michael: Does it feel like a boy?

Kay: Yes, it does, Michael.

Michael: I'm sorry about all the people today. Bad timing. It couldn't be helped though.

Kay: It made me think of what you once told me. In five years, the Corleone family will be completely legitimate. That was seven years ago.

Michael: I know. I'm trying, darling.

Stage 1 of the monomyth structure is the “the call to adventure.” Here Kay is reminding Michael of the promise he made to her seven years ago. Kay is attempting to start Michael’s journey back to the ordinary world by bringing up what he once said. Due to the fact that it has been seven years since Michael told Kay that he would legitimize the family business, it shows his reluctance to accept the journey; this falls into stage 2, “refusal of the call.” It can be argued that Michael is making attempts at legitimizing the family business; he owns three hotels and is looking to purchase a fourth. But, this idea is squashed because all of his associates and business partners are members of various crime organizations.

After the party ends, Michael enters his bedroom and begins to get ready to go to sleep. Already in bed, Kay is woken up by Michael entering the room. Kay rolls over to look at Michael and she asks him, “Why are the drapes open?” Michael looks at the windows realizing something is out of place, and notices something in the trees. Before we are able to see what Michael saw, a barrage of bullets begins to wreck havoc. Michael instantly drops to the floor to avoid being hit, and he crawls to Kay’s side of the bed and pulls her to the floor and covers her for safety. Luckily, neither of them are hit. Instantly a flood of lights illuminates the compound as the search for the gunmen ensues.

Stage 4 – The Crossing of the First Threshold

As the search continues outside, inside Michael holds a private meeting with Tom (his brother). Michael confesses to Tom that he is the only person he can trust in these times, and he is giving power of the family to Tom. In addition to having the power over the family, Tom is also responsible for the lives of everyone attached to the family; Fredo and his men, Rocco, Neri, and most importantly, Kay and the children. He explains to Tom that someone on the inside has turned against him, and that they already killed the gunmen in fear that the job was botched. Michael explains to Tom that he will be leaving in the morning and as if in a fatalistic way, he knows that he might not return. Michael has now accepted his call to adventure. He is finishing any unfinished business for the protection of his family, even at the price of his life. This is his first step toward getting out of the family business. The assassination attempt on Michael's life brings stage 4 into perspective, "the crossing of the first threshold;" as Christopher Vogler explains, "this is the moment at which the story takes off and the adventure gets going."

Stage 3 – Supernatural Aid

During the same conversation, Michael talks about advice that he received from his father some time ago. The advice given can be considered stage 3 of the mythic journey, "supernatural aid." The mentor found in this stage is not always present, it can be something that was learned at an earlier time, or something that is self reflective on a lesson learned. Michael explains to Tom the advice he learned from his father. "See, all our people are businessmen. Their loyalty is based on that. One thing I learned from

Pop was to try to think as people around you think. Now, on that basis, anything's possible."

Following another flashback, we follow Michael on his trip to Miami to visit the humble home of Hyman Roth. Once there, Michael finds Roth relaxing in his den, watching a football game. Roth tells Michael that he heard of his trouble, but he's glad to see that he is in good health. Michael gets up to close the door to the den; he explains to Roth that he came there to tell him of the bloodshed, before it takes place, in an attempt to prevent another war. Michael goes on to discuss the meeting he had with Frank Pentangeli, and his denial for permission of getting rid of the Rosato brothers. Michael tells Roth that when he refused, Frank tried to have him killed. Michael reassures Roth that the important thing is nothing interferes with their plans for the future.

Stage 9 – Atonement with the Father

After Roth's wife interrupts them by bringing in their lunch, Roth tells Michael that what they have planned will make history: "not even your father would dream that such a thing could be possible." In the next scene, Michael surprises Frank with a visit to his home in New York (the former house of Vito Corleone). The dialogue that occurs over the next few minutes supports the idea that Hyman Roth is the father-like figure in Michael's life, and represents stage 9 of the hero's journey, "atonement with the father." As explained by Campbell, the father or father-like figure can be portrayed as a man who feels threatened by the hero. Michael confides to Frank the relationship he has with Hyman Roth. This realization further strengthens Michael's understanding of himself

and the father-like figure. The following dialogue is preceded by Michael telling Frank to make peace with the Rosato brothers, even though they disrespected him.

(Michael) My father taught me many things here. He taught me in this room. He taught me to keep your friends close, but your enemies closer. Now, if Hyman Roth sees that I interceded in this thing, in the Rosato brothers favor, he's gonna think his relationship with me is still good. That's what I want him to think. I want him completely relaxed and confident in our friendship. Then I'll be able to find out who the traitor in my family was.

The next scene opens with Fredo and his wife sleeping in bed. The phone rings and Fredo answers.

Fredo: Yeah?

Caller: Fredo. This is Johnny. Johnny Ola. We need some more help.

Fredo: Johnny? Jesus Christ, what the hell time is it?

Johnny: Listen good, Fredo.

Fredo: What are you callin' me here for? I don't want to talk to you.

Johnny: Pentangeli's set up a meeting with the Rosato brothers. He's gonna go for their deal.

Fredo: Oh, God.

Johnny: Will he come alone?

Fredo: I don't know anything. You got me in deep enough already.

Johnny: Just go along. Everything will be all right, Fredo. Pentangeli says he's willing to make a deal. All we wanna know is if he's on the level.

Fredo: You guys lied to me. I don't want you to call me anymore.

Johnny: Your brother's not gonna find out we talked.

Fredo: I don't know what you're talkin' about. (He hangs up the phone).

Before Michael becomes aware, we are given enough evidence to suspect that Fredo was the inside man that betrayed Michael, which nearly cost Michael his life. Fredo has

typically been the brother that's been referred to as the stupid one. This could have been Fredo's attempt at making a name for himself, at the cost of his brother's life.

So, with the instructions from Michael, Frank attempts to make amends with the Rosato brothers. After Frank enters their bar, the meeting location for the deal, he is only there a matter of seconds before one of the Rosato members slings a cord around his neck, as he yells, "Michael Corleone says hello." A cop enters just in time to see Frank lying on the floor near a back room. The Rosato gang runs out with guns firing; we are shown Frank sitting on the floor, still breathing. Frank's bodyguard is killed, along with other button men.

Stage 5 – The Belly of the Whale

Ending chapter 1 (*Departure*) of the monomyth structure is "the belly of the whale;" this occurs with Michael's departure to Havana, Cuba. The belly of the whale represents a place of danger and darkness for the hero; in one scene rebel fighters commit a suicide bombing to kill a few police officers. Cuba is to be the place that Michael and Roth solidify their deal and become business partners. In a meeting with heads of the families, including Michael, Roth explains that the Cuban government will offer a real partnership. Roth claims they know how to help businesses; along with the teamster, the government has put up half the cash for the new hotels, and they have relaxed restrictions on imports. Roth tells the group that he will turn over all his interest in the Havana operation to Michael at the time of his retirement or death; with the stipulation that the property will be divided amongst the present families.

Fredo arrives in Cuba with a briefcase holding two million dollars; this is to be used for the deal with Roth. Michael explains to Fredo about the deal he is making with Roth. Fredo asks Michael if there is anybody he knows on the island; Michael responds by asking him if he has ever heard of Hyman Roth or Johnny Ola to which Fredo replies no, but his body language contradicts his response.

Michael and Fredo go downstairs to an outside café to have some drinks. Fredo tells Michael that he was mad at him. It is during a conversation with Fredo that Michael informs Fredo that he will be assassinated. Michael explains that, that evening he “will be at the presidential palace, a reception to bring in the New Year. And that they’re gonna take him home in a military car alone, for his protection, and before he reaches his hotel, he’ll be assassinated.” Fredo asks by whom, and Michael replies, “Roth.” He continues to explain that it was Roth all along; how Roth acts like Michael is his son, his successor, when in reality Roth wants him out. Michael’s plan is to kill Roth before the New Year.

During a night on the town, Senator Geary, various other Senators and judges, Michael, Fredo and Johnny Ola visit some of the attractions that Havana has to offer. After they leave the restaurant, the group heads to a smaller club; the show seems to have an erotic tone. Senator Geary asked Fredo how he found such a place, he responded by telling him that Johnny Ola told him about it, that Johnny brought him there. Fredo has inadvertently admitted his guilt to being in cahoots with Roth and Ola; this proves to Michael that Fredo has been lying the entire time. After the erotic show, the group heads to the presidential palace, and Michael’s bodyguard leaves to pay a visit to Roth in the hospital. As Michael’s bodyguard lowers down the pillow to smother Roth, Cuban

guards throw open the door to the room and shoot the bodyguard multiple times, killing him instantly. This brings up the question of someone tipping off the police about the plan to kill Roth; the only person who knew was Fredo.

At the stroke of midnight cheering and celebration commence at the palace. Michael finds Fredo to give him a hug and he tells him, “there’s a plane waiting for us to take us to Miami in an hour. Don’t make a big thing about it. I know it was you, Fredo. You broke my heart. You broke my heart.” Michael’s departure from the island ends his journey through the belly of the whale. He was faced with the reality that his brother betrayed him, a possible assassination attempt on his life and a failed plot to take over Roth’s business (with no money given) because of a failed attempt at taking Hyman Roth’s life. Michael doesn’t realize the murder fails until he arrives back in Tahoe. And on top of all that, the President of Cuba resigns to avoid further bloodshed; this eliminates any possibility of future business with the government and the Corleone family, or any other family. Michael leaves Cuba as the rebels take over.

As Michael returns to his home in Lake Tahoe, he talks with Tom to get an update on Fredo. Tom explains to him that Roth got out on a boat, had a stroke, but survived. Again Michael asks about Fredo, Tom tells him that he thinks Fredo is in New York. Tom also informs Michael that Kay had a miscarriage and lost the baby, it was a boy. Act one ends with another flashback.

Chapter 2 – Initiation

Stage 6 – The Road of Trials

Act two resumes with Michael returning to his home in Lake Tahoe during the winter months; the atmosphere is melancholy. The scene fades to a Corleone button man being interrogated by an indictment panel. This also commences stage 6 of the hero's journey, "the road of trials" and chapter 2 of the Campbellian structure, *Initiation*. After Michael has a discussion with his mother, the scene cuts to another flashback. In stage 6, Michael faces many tribulations, including facing the same committee mentioned above, and the fact that Kay didn't have a miscarriage but rather an abortion; in her words, she aimed to end "all of this," referring to the Corleone family business.

During the indictment hearing of Michael Corleone, many stages of the Campbell structure come into action. The trial itself represents stage 6, "the road of trials" (as mentioned above); the next stage that is represented is stage 13, "the magic flight" (this is discussed below); one character unites stage 13 and 14 and provides "rescue from without" (stage 14); and the final stage represented is stage 16, "master of the two worlds." All of the mentioned stages will be discussed in further detail in the following paragraphs.

The Corleone family has owned and operated an olive oil business, the Genco Olive Oil Company, since Vito Corleone was Michael's age. This has been the cover used to disguise the illegal activities they commit. During the hearing, Willi Cicci, a button man for the family, admitted he killed people for the Corleone family. To the dismay of the panel, Cicci makes a joke about the amount of buffers used in the family;

he admits that he never received direct orders from Michael, rather he received orders from buffers, or people in-between the higher ranking members and the soldiers.

When Michael sits before the panel, they begin by asking some general questions. Where are you from? Are you the son of Vito Corleone? Where was he born? The panel then asks about the use of the alias, “godfather,” to which Michael explains that it is a term used out of affection and respect. As the interrogation continues, they inform Michael of the testimony of Willi Cicci; they tell him that Cicci identified Michael as the head of the Corleone crime family, and that he was responsible for the murder of Captain McCluskey and Virgil Sollozzo in 1947. Michael denies both charges. They then ask if he denies that he was the mastermind who devised the murder of the heads of the “five families.” Again Michael denies the charge. Switching gears, the panel asks Michael about his stock in three hotels in Las Vegas. Michael replies by saying he owns very little stock in the hotels and he owns stock in IBM and IT&T.

As the scene continues, Michael is granted permission to read a prepared statement defending himself and his family.

I consider it a great dishonor to me personally to have to deny that I am a criminal. I wish to have the following noted for the record: that I have served my country faithfully and honorably in World War Two and was awarded a Navy Cross for actions in defense of my country; that I have never been arrested or indicted for any crime whatsoever; that no proof linking me to any criminal conspiracy whether it is called “Mafia,” “Cosa Nostra” or whatever other name you wish to give has ever been made public. I challenge this committee to produce any witness or evidence against me.

Michael’s statement used examples based in the “ordinary world;” he mentioned that he served in WWII and even received a Navy Cross for his actions. The examples are

specifically chosen to represent that Michael is an ordinary person, from an ordinary world. The committee informs Michael that they will produce a witness who will testify and corroborate the charges that have been made against him, which could ultimately lead to indictment for perjury. The witness they have produced is Frank Pentangeli.

After the trial Michael questions Tom, he asks how the committee was able to get their hands on Pentangeli; Tom replies, “Roth. He engineered it.” Tom explains the attempted assassination of Pentangeli by the Rosato brothers and how they used Michael’s name. Pentangeli thought that Michael double crossed him, and to avoid the numerous charges that he faced, he made a deal with the FBI. Frank is now on an army base surrounded by guards.

Michael leaves his office after the discussion with Tom to confront Fredo about his involvement with Hyman Roth. Fredo explains that Johnny Ola needed some help in persuading Michael to close the deal with Roth quicker; Ola told Fredo that there would be something in it for him if he helped out. Fredo pleads to Michael that he didn’t know that there was going to be a hit attempt. Fredo erupts with emotions when Michael tells him, “I have always taken care of you.” He explains to Michael his resentment at being stepped over, and the fact he was supposed to be next in line for becoming the Don.

Stage 11 – The Ultimate Boon

The road of trials represents many things according to Joseph Campbell; one of the most important is the battle with the brother. There are certain tribulations that the hero faces during the initiation chapter of the journey, and in Michael’s journey, one of these tribulations is his fight with Fredo. After he learns that Fredo was responsible for

his near death experience, Michael tells Fredo, “You’re nothing to me. You’re not a brother. You’re not a friend. I don’t wanna know you or what you do.” Fredo is banned from all aspects of the Corleone family. Michael tells Fredo that he must give a one day advance notice if he is visiting their mother, just to make sure he is not there. Michael’s punishment of Fredo leads into stage 11, “the ultimate boon.” In traditional sense, the ultimate boon is meant to be a positive procurement in the hero’s journey; it could be an elixir of life or immortality. It can also be a moment of clarity within the hero’s mind; Michael has realized that Fredo is to blame for his entire ordeal.

The next morning Frank Pentangeli is escorted to the hearing by the army guards. After arriving, Frank is seated. As he waits he sees Michael enter, as well as another older gentleman. After some preliminary questions, the panel explains how crucial the testimony of Frank Pentangeli is and how it will solidify the indictment of Michael. The panel asks about the involvement of Frank Pentangeli in the Corleone family; he replies that he never knew of a “godfather,” contradicting his sworn affidavit he made previous to his appearance. Pentangeli said that he only agreed with the FBI because it was what they wanted to hear. The committee turns to Michael, who is sitting in the audience, to identify the gentleman sitting next to him. He is identified as Vincenzo Pentangeli, the brother of Frank Pentangeli.

Chapter 3 – Return

Stage 13 – The Magic Flight & Stage 14 – Rescue from Without

The mere presence of Vincenzo forced Frank to realize that one never turns on the family. “The magic flight” (stage 13) and “the rescue from without” (stage 14) are

exhibited by the arrival of Vincenzo. He flies into town for the hearing (the magic flight) and he provides the support and persuasion needed to make Frank contradict his sworn testimony (rescue from without). Although his role is minor, he contributes greatly to Michael's journey and ultimately he is responsible for the charges being dropped.

Stage 15 – The Crossing of the Return Threshold & Stage 16 – Master of the Two Worlds

With Michael being acquitted of all charges, he can now begin the final chapter of the hero's journey, *Return*. The acquittal represents stage 15, "the crossing of the return threshold." The final challenge of his journey is to prove to society that he is a "normal" person; he has explained his time served in WWII and his impeccable record. With Vincenzo Pentangeli providing assistance in Michael's return, Michael has traversed over half of the stages in the return phase of his journey. As described above, Vincenzo is responsible for stage 13 and 14, and since Michael was acquitted, he has now passed through stage 15 and progressed into stage 16, "master of the two worlds." Through many events that were masterfully crafted, Michael has exemplified his power over the world of his "family" and he has also proven that he can be considered an outstanding member of society. His two worlds have now merged together and he is free to live between them.

Although Michael's journey is nearly complete, the film is not. After the hearing, Michael returns to his hotel room to find Kay attempting to leave with his children. Michael and Kay have a boisterous argument and Kay tells Michael that she feels no love for him. Michael is dumbfounded that Kay would try to leave with the kids, fully knowing who he is and the power that he has. Michael tells her that he will change, that

he has the strength to change. But, Kay reveals the biggest secret a wife could keep from a husband; she didn't have a miscarriage, she had an abortion. She criticizes him for being blind. Kay calls their marriage an abortion, something that is unholy and evil. Joseph Campbell explains that the goddess can never possess more power than the hero. Kay attempts to control Michael and his fate by having their son aborted, claiming "this must all end." Rather than showing defeat, Michael removes Kay from his life; she is no longer allowed to be around when he is home, she can see their kids only when Michael is gone.

A few scenes later (after a flashback) we are brought back to Michael's Lake Tahoe home. Once inside, a funeral visitation is in progress. Connie walks up to the coffin where Fredo is kneeling, they are mourning the death of their mother. Fredo asks Tom if he is allowed to see Michael, Tom tells him no. Connie goes to talk to Michael and attempts to bargain with him to reconcile his differences with Fredo. In tears, Connie begs him to forgive Fredo; she says that Fredo is so sweet and helpless without him. Outside of the visitation room Fredo is sitting at a table, Michael walks up to him gives him a hug; it can be assumed that Michael may have forgiven him.

There are only a few loose strings left to sew up, the first is killing Hyman Roth. Despite the protests of Tom, Michael explains that history has taught them anyone can be killed; Tom believes that it will be an impossible task because there will be too many guards around. Michael turns to Rocco, a caporegime, who says it will be difficult but not impossible. Tom questions Michael's decision to kill Hyman Roth and the Rosato brothers; he tells Michael that he won and asks if he has to kill everyone. Michael replies, "I don't feel I have to wipe everybody out; just my enemies, that's all."

The scene fades to Fredo teaching Anthony his secret to catching fish, saying a Hail Mary. The scene is brief and it fades into the next, Tom going to visit Frank Pentangeli. They walk outside in the gated courtyard and reminisce about the old days, even comparing the Corleone Family to the Roman Empire. During their conversation they discuss how the Romans used to deal with traitors, especially when a plot against the emperor failed. Tom begins to explain that even “the plotters were given the chance to let the families keep their fortunes,” but Frank tells him that only the rich were given that chance. “The little guys were knocked off and their estates went to the emperors unless they went home to kill themselves, then nothing happened to them and their families were taken care of.” This story that the two share is a way to camouflage events that will happen and have happened. Frank is guilty of trying to “kill” Michael; his testimony would have sent Michael to prison for life, this would have represented a symbolic death. For Frank to protect his family and make sure they are provided for, he must kill himself. Frank talks about how the Romans used to have a small party for the accused, and how they would take a bath and slit their wrists to bleed to death. This is foreshadowing how Frank will die.

Returning to the Lake Tahoe home, Kay is visiting the children when Connie tries to make her hurry because Michael is on his way. As Kay stands in the doorway to give her final goodbyes, Michael walks into the room. They have a tense moment of eye contact and he closes the door in her face. Michael has officially closed the door on his relationship with Kay.

Stage 17 – Freedom to Live

The final scenes include Fredo going out to fish with Rocco, an interview with Hyman Roth and the FBI guys calling for Frank to come and play hearts. In a scene that resembles the murder of the five families in *Part 1*, Hyman Roth is shot, Frank slits his wrists in the bathtub and Fredo is shot while fishing. All of Michael's enemies have been eliminated. The scene fades with Michael sitting in his den alone which then fades into a flashback of the family sitting around the table for Vito's birthday. The party includes, Tom (still alive), Fredo (dead), Sonny (dead), Carlo (dead), Tessio (dead), Connie (widowed), Vito (dead) and Michael. This scene provides the viewer the chance to see Michael before he became Don of the family; it shows Michael before he was sent off to war. Symbolically this scene brings the viewer back to a time when Michael was an ordinary man, living in an ordinary world. It allows the viewer to comprehend the enormous transformation that Michael experienced, from college kid to the Don. Michael eliminated everyone who stood against him and he has finally reached stage 17, "freedom to live." His journey back to the ordinary world has left him alone, with barely any friends or family. Michael is now "free to live" as he wants, but he has become separated from everything he has ever valued.

The Godfather Part 3 (1990)

Although *The Godfather Part 3* was made 16 years after its predecessor, it still adds to the overall narrative of Michael Corleone's life. Continuing well after the end of *Part 2*, this film rejoins Michael after he transitioned back into the ordinary world. The treatment of this analysis will be the same as the previous analyses. This film will be

addressed as a sole entity with little or no references to the previous films. Joseph Campbell explains that not all stories contain all 17 stages and some may appear out of order.

The film begins with scenic shots from the Corleones's Lake Tahoe home. The house is in a decrepit state, and it is easy to see that no one has lived there in quite some time. The voice of Michael Corleone can be heard over the images as he reads a letter he is writing to his children. He explains to them that it has been several years since he has moved to New York; he is inviting them to a Papal Ceremony where he is receiving an award for his charity work. The scene fades into a church where we are shown Michael's kids, Anthony and Mary. As the ceremony progresses Michael experiences a flashback to the death of Fredo; it seems that he may still be affected by his decision to have him killed. The archbishop of the ceremony presents Michael with the medal of Saint Sebastian the Martyr. Michael himself could be considered a martyr; he suffered greatly because of his responsibilities to the family.

After the ceremony the reception is held at Michael's New York apartment. At the beginning of the party we are introduced to Vincent Mancini, the son of Sonny Corleone; we are also introduced to Joey Zasa and his bodyguard, Anthony 'The Ant' Squigliaro. Mary Corleone is also introduced; her personality is that of a temptress. Her speech and body language suggests seduction and she has directed her seduction towards Vincent, her cousin. As the honorary chairman of the Vito Corleone Foundation, Mary presents Archbishop Gilday with a check for \$100 million for the rebuilding of Sicily. During a song by Johnny Fontaine, Michael ducks away into the kitchen. There he finds Kay and attempts to carry on some small talk; Kay is still visibly disturbed with Michael.

In Michael's office, Kay, Anthony and Michael have a meeting to discuss Anthony's future. Anthony has chosen to quit Michael's plan for him to become lawyer; he has chosen his own path of becoming a musician. Much like his father, Anthony says that he will never work for the family and his memories of the family are horrible; he then storms out of the room. Frustrated, Michael asks Kay why she didn't support Michael in wanting Anthony to finish his law degree. Kay attacks Michael and says, "Now that you're so respectable, I think you're more dangerous than you ever were. In fact, I preferred you when you were just a common Mafia hood." Kay tells Michael that Anthony knows that he killed Fredo. She criticizes the entire day, calling the ceremony shameful. Michael tells Kay that he spent his life protecting his son and his family; he says that he did what he could to protect them from the horrors of life. Before Kay departs, Michael agrees to let Anthony choose his own path and allows him to become a musician.

After briefly cutting to the party we are back in Michael's office, he is joined by Don Altobello, an old friend, and his sister Connie. Don Altobello gives Michael a check for \$1 million to join him in his charity work. After Don Altobello leaves, Al Neri, Michael's bodyguard, informs him that Joey Zasa wants to personally congratulate him on his award; Michael looks less than thrilled by the news.

Chapter 1 – Departure

Stage 2 – Refusal of the Call

Joey Zasa presents Michael with the Meucci Italian-American of the year award; Zasa's motives for showing up are not to present Michael with an award. Zasa explains

that he has a stone in his shoe; someone who claims to be related to Michael. This scene establishes that Michael is out of the old family business. With Michael admitting that he is out, he has begun his journey with stage 2, “refusal of the call.” There is tension between Vincent and Joey Zasa; the tension stems from Joey Zasa owning the family business in New York; Vincent works for Zasa. Michael orders them to make peace with each other and Vincent bites the ear of Zasa. Michael tries to turn Vincent onto the path of legitimate business. The party ends with family pictures and dancing.

Later that night in Vincent’s apartment, two killers were sent by Joey Zasa to kill him. After hearing a noise coming from the kitchen, he sends Grace into the kitchen to get them a glass of water; Vincent uses her as a decoy because he knows what is going to happen. After attacking and killing one of the hoodlums, Vincent is able to pry information out of the other before he shoots him in the head. Back at Michael’s apartment, Vincent explains what happened. He tells Michael that he sent Joey Zasa a message; Michael informs Vincent that Joey Zasa is going to send a message back. After Vincent leaves, Michael sits down with B.J. Harrison, a business associate, and they discuss their deal with the church.

In the next scene Michael meets with Archbishop Gilday to discuss the troubles that Gilday is experiencing. The Archbishop explains that he was appointed to be the banker of the Vatican’s bank, although he doesn’t consider himself a banker. He explains to Michael that the church is in debt, \$769 million. As a way of becoming legitimate, Michael wants to deposit \$500 million into the Vatican bank; in return he would receive the controlling interest in the Immobiliare, an old real estate firm worth about \$6 billion. The Archbishop tells Michael that it is not a one vote deal; it must pass through many old

rules and that the Pope would have to approve of Michael. Michael informs the Archbishop that all ties to illegitimate business have been broken; all casinos have been sold, and all interest and investments in illegal business are done. Gilday convinces Michael to up his price to \$600 million; the two close the deal. Michael meets before the board of directors to plead his case; they decide to welcome Michael into the organization but the decision still has to be ratified and approved by the Pope.

Later, Michael meets with Don Altobello. Altobello explains that the heads of the other families are grateful for the money he has made them but they want to be part of the deal with Immobiliare; they want their money to be purified through the deal. Michael refuses because he wants the deal to be legitimate.

Michael travels to Rome to finalize the remaining aspects of the deal. The final hurdle is the Pope ratification of the deal, but the only issue is that the Pope's health looks grave. And, as one board member explains, if the pope dies, all bets are off. Michael is against a board of men that resent him; he calls their tactics despicable. One board member approaches Michael and tells him that they will gladly put him at the helm of their fleet but all "their ships must sail in the same direction." If not, they are not sure how long his stay with them will last.

While walking the town, Vincent and Mary visit the original Genco Olive Oil Company, where they are met by a couple of old ladies from the neighborhood. They tell Vincent that he needs to get rid of Joey Zasa because he sells drugs to the children. The two go into a neighborhood restaurant and Mary asks Vincent if the rumors about Michael are true; did Michael really kill Fredo, Vincent tells her it's all lies.

The next scene joins the heads of all the families that are associated with the Corleones. Michael informs all of them that he is out but he is giving them their fair share of the profits from the casinos; this dissolves all business connections between Michael and his former partners. The only person who does not receive any money is Joey Zasa. In an outburst, Joey Zasa tells the group that he has been disrespected, and that they must choose between allegiance to Michael or himself because he considers Michael an enemy. As Zasa storms out of the room, Don Altobello follows telling Michael that he will reason with him, trying to iron things out. After all the men sit back at the table, the room begins to rumble, the door handles are handcuffed closed, and a gunman from a helicopter begins to rain down a barrage of bullets killing nearly everyone inside. Michael, Vincent and Al Neri are the only few to escape. The survivors had made deals with Joey Zasa.

Stage 1 – The Call to Adventure & Stage 4 – The Crossing of the First Threshold

The mass assassination of the Dons represents many stages of the monomyth structure. After the three return to Michael's house, stage 1 begins, "the call to adventure." In one of the famous quotes from the film, Michael declares, "Just when I thought I was out they pull me back in." This shows that after refusing to become involved for the first third of the film, Michael finally has accepted that he need to take the journey again. Simply surviving the attacks represents stage 4, "the crossing of the first threshold." Michael has survived his first challenge of his journey, the assassination attempt in Atlantic City. As Michael tries to sort out the details of what occurred he

becomes so enraged that he suffers a diabetic stroke. As he suffers through the stroke he condemns Altobello, knowing it was he who planned the attack.

Stage 5 – The Belly of the Whale

Michael is rushed to the hospital and after he is made comfortable he enters stage 5 of his journey, “the belly of the whale.” In most myths, the belly of the whale represents a symbolic death and rebirth of the hero. Michael almost dies after his stroke and for the first time in any of the films, he is depicted as being weak and useless. This is the lowest place for Michael. Kay even comments that, “this is the first time I’ve ever seen you look so helpless.”

Chapter 2 – Initiation

Stage 8 – Woman as the Temptress

After the hospital, Mary goes to visit Vincent at his club. Vincent shows Mary how to make gnocchi but that lasts only a few seconds; they embrace and he carries her off screen while they kiss. Mary’s role in the film becomes more apparent as her relationship with Vincent progresses. They get too close, closer than two cousins should and Michael warns Vincent to not become involved. Mary is the temptress found in many mythic stories. Although her temptress ways are not aimed at Michael, they are aimed at Vincent. She represents stage 8 of the journey, “woman as the temptress.” Later in the film Michael tells Vincent that she is dangerous and that he needs to stay away from her.

Stage 6 – The Road of Trials

During a celebration in Joey Zasa's neighborhood, Zasa ends up being killed along with his body guard. The order didn't come from Michael, it came from Connie. She wanted to see retaliation for what happened in Atlantic City. Vincent carried out the order and we can see that it was Vincent who shot Joey Zasa while disguised as a policeman. With Zasa being taken out of the picture, chapter 2, *Initiation* and stage 6, "the road of trials" has begun. Michael must take control of the family again to re-organize and re-establish order.

In a private conversation with Vincent, Michael explains that he felt responsible for protecting Vincent after Sonny's death. Michael is not trying to prevent Vincent from going down the same path of the family business but he warns him of his weaknesses. Michael warns Vincent of his anger, telling him it clouds his mind and decisions.

Chapter 3 – Return

Stage 13 – The Magic Flight

The remaining portion of the film takes place in Sicily; the flight represents stage 13 of the monomyth structure, "the magic flight." Although Michael's journey has only addressed one stage from the *Return* chapter, there are issues left in chapter 2 to still be resolved. One reason for Michael's trip to Sicily is to see his son perform in his opera debut. The second reason is to visit Don Tommasino and seek his advice about Don Altobello and the situation that occurred in Atlantic City.

Due to the situation of Joey Zasa being killed, Michael and the remaining family must step back in to prevent an overthrow by other gangs. Michael asks Don Tommasino

who has the power to order such a massacre and still put pressure on the Vatican deal. Don Tommasino tells him that the only person who has the capability would be Don Lucchesi. It turns out that the Archbishop and the Vatican Bank are connected, and the powerful friends of the Archbishop will prove to be problematic. Their only hope is to win the trust of Cardinal Lamberto who is impartial and fair but also a man of great power.

Stage 9 – Atonement with the Father

Stage 9, “atonement with the father” is shown through flashbacks in the film. Michael still struggles with many aspects of his life and his father-like role over the family business and his actual father role over his family. During “Cavalleria Rusticana,” a Sicilian song sung by Anthony, Michael experiences flashbacks of his marriage with Apollonia juxtaposed with images of Vincent and Mary. Assuming that history repeats itself, Michael fears for his daughter’s life because of her love for Vincent.

In an attempt to uncover more information, Michael has Vincent “sell his soul” to Don Altobello in order to see how deep his power reaches. Wary of the plan, Vincent says that Altobello will see right through the lie. Michael tells him to discuss his problem of wanting to run away with Mary; if he did Michael would become his enemy. (It fades to Vincent and Altobello) Vincent explains to Altobello that he could never follow the legitimate footsteps of Michael and that he could straighten out the mess left behind by Joey Zasa. After their conversation, Don Altobello introduces Vincent to a friend, Don Lucchesi.

Stage 3 – Supernatural Aid

The visit with Michael and Cardinal Lamberto addresses stage 3 of Michael's journey, "supernatural aid." Michael explains the situation of being swindled by Archbishop Gilday. The Cardinal offers Michael comfort and explanations for what is happening. The most profound part of the scene is how Michael confides in Cardinal Lamberto and confesses his struggles and sins. Michael is reluctant because he feels that it will be useless and a waste of time; Michael feels that he is beyond redemption. The composition of the scene offers a make-shift confessional booth. Michael has never admitted any of the guilt that has weighed on his soul. He explains to the Cardinal that he betrayed his wife, had men killed, killed men himself, and his own betrayal. The hardest confession is admitting guilt to having Fredo killed; Michael drops his head in pain as he weeps. Cardinal Lamberto's role as the supernatural aid is to assist Michael in clearing his conscience and providing wisdom; the death of Fredo still weighs heavy on his mind and by confessing it will help bring some closure.

The next scene brings us to a small outdoor café where Don Altobello meets with Mosca, a professional assassin. Altobello explains that he has a "stone in shoe" and he needs it removed. The stone he speaks of is Michael Corleone (although not said in their first meeting it is later revealed).

Michael, Mary and Connie meet Kay at the train station to welcome her to Sicily. Michael thanks Kay for changing his mind and allowing Anthony to be free in choosing his own path because the results are promising. The film cuts to Mosco and Spara (his assistant) they decide on what disguises they will use during the assassination. This scene is brief but we know that Mosco will be dressed as a priest.

Escaping to have some time alone, Michael and Kay go to visit Corleone, Sicily and Michael shows her where Vito was born. A side-show puppeteer tells a story of a father killing his daughter for betraying him and marrying her cousin. This foreshadows the end of the film but the details will be explained later.

Following their departure from Corleone, the scene fades into a car driving down a dirt road with two figures walking down the side. The car approaches and the man offers them a ride. The man in the car is Don Tommasino. Don Tommasino glares at the man because he realizes that it is Mosca, the assassin. Mosca tells Tommasino that he knows Michael is at his house and tells him that he will pass through the front gate in his [Tommasino's] car. Tommasino slams the door shut just before Mosca fires two shotgun rounds into the side door, killing everyone inside.

Michael and Kay arrive at the house of Tommasino where they are greeted by Calo, Michael's old bodyguard. The two of them sit down and enjoy some food. Michael asks Kay to forgive him for everything.

You couldn't understand back in those days. I loved my father. I swore I would never be a man like him but I loved him and he was in danger. What could I do? And then later you were in danger. Our children were in danger. What could I do? You were all that I...loved...valued most in the world. And now I'm losing you. I lost you anyway. You're gone and it was all for nothing. So – you have to understand I had a whole different destiny planned.

Michael receives the closure he needs; Kay expresses to him that she loves him and always will. Just as the two begin to share a moment, Calo walks in to tell Michael that Don Tommasino is dead. Calo pleads to Michael that blood calls for blood; revenge must be granted.

Since the death of the Pope, the deal with Immobiliare has been put on hold. In the voting chambers, the members elect Cardinal Lamberto as their new Pope under the name of John Paul the First. During a montage, Archbishop Gilday, Frederick Keinszig (aka God's banker) and Don Lucchesi discuss the new Pope and how his views differ from theirs. Also, through the use of newspaper headlines and a radio report, we find out that Keinszig has vanished with a large amount of money from the Vatican, along with several documents. The reporter expresses how this raises suspicions about the dealings of the Vatican bank.

Stage 14 – Rescue from Without

Sitting alone, next to the coffin of Don Tommasino, Michael confesses his inner thoughts.

You could've lived a little longer. I could be closer to my dream. You were so loved, Don Tommasino. Why was I so feared, and you were so loved? What was it? I was no less honorable. I wanted to do good. What betrayed me? My mind? My heart? Why do I condemn myself so? I swear on the lives of my children, give me a chance to redeem myself and I will sin no more.

Even in death, Don Tommasino provides Michael guidance and support. Michael is able to open his soul and express his feelings with no judgment placed upon him. In stage 14 "rescue from without," Michael receives support from Don Tommasino because his death gave Michael the power to say "I will sin no more." Michael is showing that he is fully ready to return to his ordinary world, the world before his life as the Don of the Corleone family.

Stage 11 – The Ultimate Boon

Vincent enters the room bearing bad news. He explains to Michael that Lucchesi controls all of them; Altobello, the Archbishop and others that are higher up. Vincent tells Michael that they hired Masco, the assassin, to kill him because he is getting in their way; even the Pope is in danger. Afraid that he may be in over his head, Michael tells Vincent that there is nothing they can do. Vincent tells Michael to give him the order but Michael says that Vincent will turn out to be like him, to which he replies, “good.” “All my life I wanted out, I wanted the family out” Michael tells Vincent. But Vincent doesn’t want out, he wants to preserve the family. Just like the transfer of power in *Part I*, (Vito to Michael and now Michael to Vincent), Michael gives a nod and Vincent has been bestowed the power of the family. The transfer of power is stage 11 of the structure, “the ultimate boon.” It has been the boon that Michael has held since *Part I* and he has passed it down to the next in line. The shift of power is similar to when Michael was given power; Vito no longer had the strength to continue on, now Michael no longer has the strength. But as a warning, Michael tells Vincent that he can no longer see Mary, his reason for this is because of who Vincent has become. As Michael leaves the room he tells Vincent that he may call himself, Vincent Corleone. Vincent takes his “throne” and, reminiscent of the end of the first film, the loyal members remaining, kiss the hand of the new Don.

Stage 15 – The Crossing of the Return Threshold & Stage 16 – Master of the Two Worlds

Nearing the end of the film, the final plans begin to unfold; the setting will be at the opera house where Michael’s son is set to perform. Vincent has his guards in place

scouring the area for any signs of the assassin but they do not realize he is disguised as a priest; Masco enters without any trouble. Once inside, Connie presents Don Altobello with a present of a cannoli. He tells her that she is so thin and she should take a bite. Being oddly reluctant, Connie takes a small taste and hands it back to Altobello; he enjoys a bite and thanks her for the gift. Across the room Michael finds out that the Immobiliare deal has been approved by the new Pope; Michael has won his battle to become legitimate. By Michael transcending into the legitimate world, he passes through stage 15, “the crossing of the return threshold.” He has faced the last hurdle left in his journey. Since he passed the power to Vincent, only the last order needs to be carried out to make Michael completely legitimate. Since Michael gave the approval of the final hit, he is now contained within stage 16, “master of the two worlds.” Michael still commands some power over Vincent in the same way Vito had power while Michael took over. Until the plans come into fruition, Michael will remain in this stage.

During the opera, many events begin to transpire; the assassin secures a location by killing two bodyguards, Calo arrives at the house of Don Lucchesi with a message from Michael Corleone, Connie watches Don Altobello eat the cannoli she gave him and Al Neri is on a train with a gun disguised in a box of chocolates. Before Vincent’s plan takes place, the Pope is murdered with a poisoned cup of tea. After the Pope’s death, Vincent’s plan turns into actions. Calo enters the office of Don Lucchesi after being patted down numerous times, Calo snatches the eye glasses off of Don Lucchesi’s face and stabs him [Lucchesi] in the neck. Al Neri finds the Archbishop and shoots him while he ascends a staircase; the Archbishop then falls over the handrail and plummets to his death. Two button men from the Corleone family smother Frederick Keinszig and hang

him from a bridge. The last hit is with the poisoned cannoli; Don Altobello begins to fall into a sleep-like slump and dies within minutes.

Stage 17 – Freedom to Live

After the opera, the family meets with Anthony to congratulate him. They leave as a large group but Mary holds back Michael as she explains her frustration at not being allowed to date Vincent. The family is about half-way down the outside staircase when the assassin appears and fires off a shot at Michael. Before Masco has a chance to run, the other priests trap him and Vincent fires a shot that kills him. Checking his wound, Michael holds his shoulder in pain but realizes that Mary was shot in the chest. Mary looks down at her wound and calls for her father seconds before she drops and dies. Michael has lost his daughter, the one he has tried to protect since she was born. Realizing that he failed, he lets out a pain-filled scream. The scene fades into shots of Michael dancing with all the women he has lost: Mary and him at his party at the beginning of this film, Apollonia and Michael in the first film and Kay and him dancing together in the second movie. Fading from the dance with Kay, Michael sits alone in a chair in a courtyard. Within a few seconds he begins to fall over and eventually he falls completely out of the chair, face first, onto the ground. The hero has died. His death symbolizes stage 17, the last stage, the “freedom to live.” Michael accomplished what he set out to do, become completely legitimate. But his success came with the death of others, most importantly the death of his family.

CHAPTER VII

RESULTS

H1: The narrative structures and character archetypes of *The Godfather Part 1* follow the stages of a hero's journey as outlined in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

After examining the first part of *The Godfather Trilogy* it is easy to identify most of the stages discussed in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. With little variation, chapters 1 and 2 (*Departure* and *Initiation*) are followed in almost exact order in which they appear in the Campbell text. The most notable departure from the structure is Michael's acceptance of his destiny. Michael dismisses the family business, and during the first third of the film he is an outsider. It's not until he agrees to kill Sollozzo and McCluskey that he begins to realize his destiny. After a slight diversion from the journey's path, Michael returns to New York to assume the role of Don Corleone. Michael uses his power to orchestrate his dominance over all the families; Michael's plot against the five families ascends him into the status of a god. As the film ends, it leaves Michael as the Don; this ends his journey in *Part 1*, and ends the Campbell structure. Stage 3 (*Return*) is not addressed, simply because the film ends and Michael shows no desire to return to the ordinary world.

To address the hypothesis, *The Godfather Part 1* does not follow the Campbell structure as thoroughly as the films listed in the introduction. The main reason for this is because Michael does not return from his adventure; for a complete story the hero is supposed to leave his ordinary world, experience trials, capture a prize or boon, and then return to his ordinary world.

H2: The narrative structures and character archetypes of *The Godfather Part 2*

follow the stages of a hero's journey as outlined in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

The omission of a few stages in a hero's journey is common according to Joseph Campbell. Michael's journey, in this film, traverses almost every stage of the Campbellian structure. His world is now centered on being the Don of the Corleone family; this has become Michael's world, but it is not the world he chose. The struggle for Michael is to leave this world and re-enter the world he left behind in *Part 1*. But before he can escape his current situation he must encounter trials that will test his character as a hero. Michael was dealt a gamut of tests before he makes his return. He faced betrayal within his family, his son being aborted and the loss of his wife and brother. An average person would crumble under these circumstances but only a hero can truly prevail. Even in the face of adversity (the indictment trial) Michael succeeds, free to live in either world. The return to the ordinary world for the hero is normally depicted as joyous and celebratory; this can be seen in movies such as *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings*. But Michael's return is marked with loneliness and depression.

Looking at the hypothesis, *The Godfather Part 2* does implement the stages that are outlined in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. The final scene of the film reminds us that Michael left his world as a college student / military man to help protect the family. This is the world he left behind and it is the world he returns to by the end of this film. Michael has made the complete cycle.

H3: The narrative structures and character archetypes of *The Godfather Part 3*

follow the stages of a hero's journey as outlined in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

The Godfather Part 3 joins Michael as he makes the final arrangements of becoming completely legitimate. From scenes early in the film, we know that Michael has been detached from the family business. But due to turmoil and betrayal within the Corleone family, Michael must enter the world he happily left behind in *Part 2*. Michael thought that the deal with the Vatican and Immobiliare would be simple and his transition into legitimacy would be final. Before he can obtain this, Michael must face a round of trials.

Part 3 shows our hero in a way never before seen, weak and helpless. Michael expresses his fears and sins, something he has never done. We are shown the impact of living as a Mafia crime boss. There are many times throughout the film that Michael has flashbacks of Fredo, Apollonia and Kay; these were the people he tried to protect and he failed them. Michael's failures are a haunting reminder of his former life.

By looking at the structure and character archetypes, *The Godfather Part 3* does possess many of the attributes commonly found in many hero-based myths. Michael's journey in *Part 3* is circular; he leaves his ordinary world to settle business, when he is done, he returns to the ordinary world. This film supports the hypothesis.

H4: The narrative structures and character archetypes of *The Godfather Trilogy*

follow the stages of a hero's journey as outlined in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

If the three films were one complete narrative story it would be beneficial to separate them into acts, the same way *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* is separated into three chapters. Each of the films corresponds to a different chapter. Chapter 1 (*Departure*) is depicted through *The Godfather Part 1*, Chapter 2 (*Initiation*) is depicted through *The Godfather Part 2*, and Chapter 3 (*Return*) is depicted through *The Godfather Part 3*.

Looking at chapter 1, this represents the hero's departure from his ordinary world into an unknown world. Michael's attitude toward the family business throughout all of the films has been negative; his goal from the first film was to legitimize the business. Through the first 5 stages of the hero's journey, Michael becomes part of the new world with the help of his mentor, Clemenza. After he commits the murders of Captain McCluskey and Sollozzo, Michael accepts his destiny and he ventures on in his journey. The film ends with Michael ascending to the highest position in the family, the Don. But for Michael, this represents everything he has stood against, thus leaving him in the belly of the whale.

Continuing from the final scene of *Part 1*, *Part 2* is representative of chapter 2 of the Campbellian structure, *Initiation*. Throughout this film Michael is faced with the most difficult challenges he has ever encountered. After he learns about Fredo's involvement in the failed assassination attempt, Michael must face his brother; Joseph Campbell explains that the brother battle is often one of the most difficult trials a hero can experience. Michael must also deal with his relationships with Connie and Kay. Kay

tries to show Michael that she has power over him by having their unborn son aborted. Connie's role transforms from unfit mother into Michael's protector.

With the end of the film nearing, Michael makes decisions that display his power over others; this is represented through the last stage of chapter 2, "the ultimate boon." Michael has overcome many trials and hardships. He secures his status as the Godfather of the Corleone family by showing how far his power reaches.

The final chapter of the Campbell structure is *Return*. Michael is nearing the end of his journey, but he must face a final test before he can live freely in the ordinary world. After the events with Joey Zasa transpire, Michael devises a final plan, with Vincent, to eliminate anything that stands in his way, in order to secure his return to the ordinary world, leaving behind the world he has despised since day one. The final minutes of the movie show a hero who has been through war; a hero who is old and tired; as the scene fades, the hero dies. Michael has returned to the ordinary world but at the cost of his life.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

To conclude this study, let's look at the importance of the results. Hypothesis one posits that *The Godfather Part 1* follows the archetypes and structures of Joseph Campbell's monomyth and in many ways it does. But the first film ended without addressing the final chapter of the Campbell structure, *Return*. Although the film contains many mythic elements, it does not provide a resolution to the hero's journey; the end of the film shows Michael accepting his new role as Don Corleone. As stated, the film provides many mythic elements typically found in traditional hero-based myths; the hero (Michael), the mentor (Clemenza) and the threshold guardians (Captain McCluskey, Sollozzo and the heads of the five families).

Hypothesis two posits the same ideas about *The Godfather Part 2*. The difference between the two films is *Part 2* completes the mythic cycle. Michael is in the process of creating a legitimate empire when he is forced to take care of deception within his family. He must re-enter the world he wishes to escape from; Michael has attributed his journey to protecting his family. By the end of the film, Michael loses his family, but gains the freedom to live.

The third hypothesis addresses the third film; it states that the film follows the monomyth structure. The film opens with Michael taking the last steps toward absolving his connections with any illegitimate business partners. Michael's journey in *Part 3* can be compared to his journey in *Part 1*. He refuses to get involved in the business for much of the movie but as the need arises, he accepts his destiny and accepts his adventure. *Part 3* takes Michael from the ordinary world and brings him back into the world of the

family business. After he takes care of his final duties, Michael hands control over to Vincent who assumes the role of Don Corleone. Michael makes peace with his demons with the aid of the Cardinal, and is able to live freely, but ultimately Michael dies after his journey ends.

Hypothesis four looks at the three films as one complete narrative. Each film correlates to its respective chapter of the Campbell structure (*Part 1* represents *Chapter 1*, *Part 2* represents *Chapter 2* and *Part 3* represents *Chapter 3*). All of the mythic stages are present in *The Godfather Trilogy*, but there are a couple stages that appear out of order; Joseph Campbell explains that stages may appear out of order or some may just be omitted from the story. *Part 1* shows the ascension of Michael as the leader of the Corleone family. For Michael, this represents everything he has refused. This “dark place” that Michael has entered brings the story into Chapter 2. As the second film begins, Michael faces the trials that test the hero’s ability. The most difficult trial is having to call the hit on Fredo. The second film ends as Michael gets ready to begin his return to the ordinary world. The final stages of Michael’s journey are represented in *Part 3*. Michael is making all the necessary arrangements to fully legitimize the family business; this has been his goal since first taking control of the family. But before he is able to finish the deal he must cross the return threshold; the death of his last remaining opponents solidifies his return. The film ends with Michael dying alone but free to live.

As mentioned in the introduction, *Star Wars* is a classic example of the monomyth structure and from the results of this analysis; *The Godfather Trilogy* also supports many of the ideas presented by Joseph Campbell. But are there similarities between *Star Wars* and *The Godfather*? The beginning of Michael’s journey was his

refusal to take the journey. This correlates to Luke's refusal in *Star Wars* as explained by Martin and Ostwalt in *Screening the Sacred* (1995). Luke never wanted to accept his destiny, but the death of his aunt and uncle provided the push he needed. Michael disassociated himself with the family business until his father's attempted assassination. Both Michael and Luke share the same reasons for accepting their "call to adventure."

The father figures in both films possess similar attributes. Both men, Darth Vader and Vito Corleone, are the heads of their "families;" Darth Vader's family is the Storm Troopers, a group of men hired to swear their allegiance to the dark side; Vito Corleone is the head of the Corleone family, which is comprised of a group of men who swear their loyalty to the organization. Darth Vader and Vito reign over organizations that are not highly respected in the ordinary world; organized crime is looked down upon in everyday society and the dark side is a force everyone is trying to resist. Even the father-son relationships are similar. Luke despises his father's "business" and refuses to ever take part; Michael refuses to join the family business within the first few minutes of the film. The only difference between Luke and Michael is Michael eventually joins his father, but he attempts to legitimize his father's empire.

So why is this study important? As explained earlier, the basic idea of the hero's journey is part of our collective unconscious. The hero's journey and its structure have been part of the human psyche since the time of the ancient Greeks and earlier. Joseph Campbell's idea is nothing new, it just simplified and organized concepts that we inherently understood. In addition, the allure of the *Godfather* films, according to Fran Mason in *American Gangster Cinema* (2002), is in the familiar features of everyday life (the family, patriarchal power). Myths draw upon cultural experiences for inspiration to

explain many things; as explained earlier, myths serve as a way of explaining life's phenomena, beliefs, and history.

Directors have given acknowledgement to Joseph Campbell's monomyth structure. But, directors can use the structure without officially recognizing it. Unlike George Lucas, Francis Ford Coppola never gave credit to Joseph Campbell or the monomyth during the creation of *The Godfather Trilogy*, but the results reinforce the claim that the three films reflect the 17 stages of the hero's journey. The only difference between Michael Corleone and a traditional hero is his journey brought him into the epicenter of organized crime instead of a setting we commonly associate with a hero's journey (forests, caves, dungeons).

By broadening the spectrum of films open to mythic analysis, it allows researchers to explain the appeal of certain films. A majority of the films that have been mythically analyzed have been post *Star Wars*; one area of future research could be examining earlier films. This can range from classic film noir: *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950), *Double Indemnity* (1944), *Laura* (1944), etc.; to classic Hollywood blockbusters: *Cleopatra* (1963), *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *Casablanca* (1942), etc; or early gangster films: *Little Caesar* (1931), *Scarface* (1932), *'G'-Men* (1935), etc. It is the job of the researcher to explore new genres. Their analyses can help identify the work of Joseph Campbell in mainstream media. Myths, even those with roots 1000 years in the past, continue to influence us today. Whether it's in a religious ceremony or in our favorite television show, myths have served as guidance and inspiration since the earliest civilizations. As researchers, it is our duty to explore and find new adaptations of myths

in modern times; these explorations can show our link to the past and connections within our cultures and societies.

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