

Archetype and Allegory in *Journey to the West*

By

Kai Zhang

B.Ed., University of Victoria, 2003

B.A., Shanxi Teachers' University, 1986

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Supervisory Committee

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Supervisory Committee

Dr. Richard King, (Department of Pacific and Asian Studies)

Supervisor

Dr. Daniel Bryant, Departmental Member (Department of Pacific and Asian Studies)

Departmental Member

Dr. Kathlyn Liscomb, Outside Member (Department of History in Art)

Outside Member

Examiners:

Dr. Richard King, Supervisor (Department of Pacific and Asian Studies)

Dr. Daniel Bryant, Departmental Member (Department of Pacific and Asian Studies)

Dr. Kathlyn Liscomb, Outside Member (Department of History in Art)

ABSTRACT

The *Journey to the West* (《西游记》) is one of the masterworks of classic Chinese fiction. It was written by Wu Cheng'en (吴承恩) in the 16th century CE. Many of the scholars, both Chinese and Western, who have studied the narrative of this Ming era (1368-1644) novel, have considered it to be an epic of myth and fantasy, heavily laden with allegorical meaning. Most scholars have chosen to interpret the novel by means of an encompassing framework of meaning rooted in the convergence of the teachings of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. I propose to look at the *Journey's* narrative structure as a heroic adventure or monomyth of the kind proposed by Joseph Campbell, following the insights of Carl Jung on the nature of the collective unconscious. To analyze the component parts of the quest story that forms the bulk of the novel's narrative, I shall turn to Vladimir Propp's categorization of the functioning of elements of plot and character in his morphology of folktales. I shall also argue that the *Journey* is not an allegory that serves the beliefs and practices of a number of religions and philosophies, but a specifically Buddhist allegory. The *Journey* is seen as intentionally composed of symbols, images, and codes that function to project a heroic adventure with a complex pattern of meaning, primarily representing the eternal human struggle for identity and a fully realized existence, that are Buddhist in nature.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Summary

Although it has been one of the most popular works of fiction in China since its publication in the late 16th century, the *Journey* is also a major work of Chinese religious literature. Perhaps no other work of fiction has had a more profound socio-religious impact on the Chinese mind than this novel. The narrative of the *Journey* is loosely based on an actual journey undertaken by Xuanzang (玄奘), a Buddhist monk, in the 7th century across the desert of Central Asia to India, the home of Buddhism. The task assigned to him by Emperor Tang Taizong was to collect Buddhist scriptures and translate them into Chinese. Xuanzang traveled four years, enduring horrendous hardships through Turfan, Darashar, Tashkent, and Kashmir, before he reached Magadha Kingdom of mid-India (now Bodhgaya). After studying with Silabhadra (Jiexian 戒贤), a man who had himself studied Buddhist scriptures for sixteen years, Xuanzang finally returned to the Chinese capital Chang'an.¹ His journey served to further the spread of Buddhism throughout China, due to its more inclusive concept of enlightenment and salvation than other existing religious views, and a belief that

the Buddha possesses an immortal self, that the final state of nirvana is one of bliss and purity enjoyed by the eternal self. Samsara

¹ Anthony C. Yu, "Introduction", *Journey to the West*. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980). 3-4. Subsequent references to this work will be from this edition.

(the cycle of reincarnation or rebirth in Buddhism) is thus a pilgrimage leading to this final goal of union with the Buddha, and this salvation is guaranteed by the fact that all living beings possess the Buddha-nature. All living beings from the beginning of life participated in the Buddha's eternal existence, and this gives dignity to them as children of the Buddha.²

The novel takes off from some of these historical events, and details in 100 chapters the adventures of Monk Xuanzang and three mythical companions who went to India to seek Buddhist sutras. Commentators have divided the novel into many sections, in order to best serve their analyses; I would like to break it up into four different parts. The first, chapters 1 to 13, is the introduction of the Monkey, his miraculous birth, his irrepressible behaviour, and his answering to the call to a greater level of awareness, consciousness and wisdom. It includes his training with a Buddhist patriarch Subodhi (须菩提祖师), from whom he acquired the religious name Wukong (悟空). The second part, chapters 14 to 22, involves the recruitment of disciples who were destined to follow the Tang Monk Xuanzang to India to obtain Buddhist scriptures. The monk, with the assistance of the Bodhisattva Guanyin, enlisted Wukong, the pig spirit Bajie (八戒), the Sha Monk (沙僧), and the Dragon-horse, who all sought to find their own salvation through the pursuit of a higher metaphysical truth. The third part, chapters 23 to 99, is the longest and consists of eighty-one trials over a period of fourteen years, as Xuanzang and his

² Kenneth Chen, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964) 117-18.

disciples journey to the West. The last part, the final chapter 100, is about the pilgrims reaching their destination, receiving the holy books and then returning to the capital Chang'an to be judged and honoured by Tathagata Buddha.

Although extensively studied by scholars such as Hu Shi, Lu Xun, and C. T. Hsia, the *Journey* was never completely or properly translated into English until recently. In 1942, Arthur Waley provided an abridged translation of the *Journey, Monkey: A Folk-Tale of China*. Unfortunately, he only translated 30 out of the 100 chapters. It was only in 1977 that Anthony C. Yu produced a fully translated English text. In his preface to his translation, he writes, "It is my intention ... to examine more closely how and in what significant manner the narrative occasions 'the necessity for philosophical or allegorical interpretation.'" ³ In what follows I shall attempt a similar task and examine the narrative structure of the *Journey* in order to set out what I consider to be its allegorical, religious and philosophical interpretations.

1.1.1 The Archetypal Story of the Hero's Journey

Yu's work has laid a new basis for an allegorical and a religious interpretation of the novel: the pilgrims set out on a journey full of peril and insurmountable odds in order to

³ It is above all Glen Dubridge, C. T. Hsia, and Andrew Plaks who have begun to set a new course. For the last named, see esp. his "Allegory in *Xiyouji* and *Honglongmeng*," in *Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays*, ed, Andrew H. Plaks (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977).

reach enlightenment. The journey is the equivalent to the “allegory of the cave”, found in Plato’s dialogue *The Republic*, an image of ignorant humanity, trapped in the cave and not even aware that its perceptions are limited. The rare individual, a hero, ventures out of the limited environment of the cave and, through a long, and arduous intellectual journey, finds the light, a higher realm, and discovers a new sense of being. The importance of the allegory lies in Plato’s belief that there are invisible truths lying beyond the apparent surface of things, truths which only the most enlightened among us can grasp. Though mythology is an apt way to be introduced to the hero’s journey, we see the same process everywhere, from the works of literature to the experiences of our own lives.

The psychological basis for the hero’s journey was studied extensively by Joseph Campbell (1904 – 1987), who was one of the foremost interpreters of myth in our time. He studied mythology all over the world. Applying Jungian psychology, he arrived at some observations about how human beings struggle to find self actualization, bliss, or spiritual fulfillment. In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, he shows how certain symbols and archetypes reveal themselves in myth after myth as universal themes of the Hero’s Journey. All heroes follow a path that takes them from the known world to a new world. Once separated from their old world, through a series of trials and tribulations, they undergo a transformation; all that changes them in new and unforeseen ways.

As Campbell demonstrated, the hero myths of many cultures follow the same basic pattern of departure or separation, initiation and return. The hero has a mysterious or

miraculous birth. He has a childhood with surrogate parents. His or her identity is known by only one individual. An old wise master guides him to complete his training or education. The hero is called to adventure and a quest for identity, or to fulfill a special duty in this world. He discovers his virtues and weaknesses, and develops or realizes his unique and special power. He receives a gift of a special weapon that strengthens his power. He embarks on a physical or psychological journey which consists of arduous tasks, trials, and temptations. He must ultimately rise above his fear or temptations, and succeed in the quest. The journey either progresses to a high spiritual plane with a return, or a descent into darkness with a return. It leads to an apotheosis - a transformation or self-realization. At the height of the quest, the hero undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward – this can be the reconciliation with the master, his own divinization, a special gift, or a mighty skill. He completes the final task, returns to the world from whence he set out, but very different and a better man.

This basic pattern can also be seen in novels, film and other modern media. J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* is an obvious example from the world of literature. Many film producers pay tribute to Campbell's monomyth as their inspiration. This includes George Lucas, creator of *Star Wars* movies, and the Wachowski brothers in their film *The Matrix*. It should not escape our notice that in each of these instances, the hero is in fact male. But then the monomyth, as Campbell presents it, is primarily a male hero's story.

1.1.2 The Male Hero

Although the sex of the hero in the monomyth is unspecified, many sequences of it clearly presuppose a male hero, and at the level of psychological integration the journey only makes sense from a male perspective. The stages of the journey as Campbell portrays them clearly suggest that he is committed to a male hero. On the road of trials, the male hero is often tempted by women. Although Wukong as the hero of the *Journey* seems untouched by fleshly desires, his companions Bajie and Xuanzang are often tricked by female wiles. When women do embark on a heroic journey, they often do so in disguise. They find ways to detract attention from their gender, as with the Chinese legendary story of Hua Mulan, a young girl disguising herself as a man so that she could take her elderly father's place in the army. This was the only way she could gain social recognition for her achievements. In myth a woman is more likely to be cast in the role of a goddess or temptress, than the hero of the tale. The *Journey* clearly fits the primary criterion of a Campbell monomyth narrative for a hero's journey, inasmuch the hero is male and the details of his quest, or adventures and spiritual enlightenment are those of a man.

1.1.3 The Hero's Return

Often, a hero is considered to be someone born with outstanding ability, courage, and bravery. Yet, many wonder whether heroes are born with superior qualities, or whether they also share typical human imperfections and flaws. We have read stories about heroes completing nearly impossible tasks that require courage and determination, stories

such as Gawain and Galahad's quest for the Holy Grail, Jason's for the Golden Fleece, and Ulysses's or Odysseus's 10-year voyage to Ithaca after the fall of Troy in the *Odyssey*. J.R.R. Tolkien's modern classic – the three-volume epic *Lord of the Rings* depicts hobbit Frodo Baggins' journeying to Mount Doom to destroy the evil ring before returning to his home in the Shire. Both the *Journey* and the *Lord of the Rings* contribute only one brief chapter to the last stage of the hero's journey, the Return, after the heroes have battled formidable enemies, and forged their strength and character through their experiences in spite of fear and human weaknesses.

1.2 The Author: Wu Cheng'en (吴承恩)

Wu Cheng'en has long been identified as the author who penned the *Journey*. Liu Cunren (柳存仁) provides quite a thorough study of the life and career of Wu Cheng'en. After debating with many other predecessors such as Hu Shi (胡适) and Lu Xun (鲁迅) over the question of when the author was born, he concludes that Wu was born in 1506 and died in 1582. He goes on to say that Wu grew up in a merchant family and loved to read as a child. His father often told him *Zhiguai* stories (志怪 a literary genre that deals with tales of the supernatural and/or phenomenal events) and *Chuanqi* tales (传奇 stories of the marvelous) in his spare time.⁵ Wu inherited his father's interest and was known

⁵ Lu Xun, *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction*, trans. Hsien-yi Yang and Gladys Yang (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1976). In this book, Lu Xun defined traditional Chinese genres such as *zhiguai* and *chuanqi* in terms of the fantastic. *Zhiguai* (lit.: "recording the abnormal") was dated back from at least the fourth century, through Tang and Song. *Chuanqi* (lit.: "conveying the marvelous") was dated back to Ming and Qing tales.

early in life for his literary leanings.⁶ He revealed his fondness for the marvelous, the exotic and monstrous in a manuscript he compiled as a pastime: *Yü-ding-zhi-xu* (禹鼎志序), *Preface to the Record of the Inscription on the Tripods Cast by Emperor Yu*, which is now lost. But the following quote can be found in the preface among Wu's other works concerning that manuscript:

I was very fond of strange stories when I was a child. In my village-school days, I used to buy popular novels and historical recitals stealthily. Fearing that my father and my teacher might punish me for this and rob me of these treasures, I carefully hid them in secret places where I could enjoy them unmolested. As I grew older, my love for strange stories became even stronger, and I learned of things stranger than what I had read in my childhood. When I was in my thirties, my memory was full of these stories accumulated through years of eager seeking...I gradually forgot most of the stories which I had learned. Now only these few stories, less than a score, have survived and have so successfully battled against my laziness that they are at last written down. Hence this Book of Monsters...Yet it is not confined to them: it also records the strange things of the human world and sometimes conveys a little bit of a moral lesson.⁷

⁶ Liu Cunren, *Wu Cheng'en: His Life and Career*, (Leiden, Netherlands, 1967). 7.

⁷ Quoted from Hu Shi's translation in the Preface to *Monkey: Folk Novel of China* by Wu Ch'eng-en, trans. Arthur Waley (London, 1943), 1.

Wu's literary brilliance was recognized and when he was forty-five, he took up the post of Vice Magistrate in Changxing County; but he found himself unable to get along with his superior, and left to accept a "tutorship (纪善) at the Princely Establishment of Prince Jing (荆王府)".⁸ Feeling under-appreciated and unrewarded, he turned his fury towards the civil servants who abused power for personal gain, took bribes, and manipulated the law to suit themselves. This sentiment can be seen in chapter 45 of the *Journey*, in which Wukong gives orders to the Squire of Thunder (雷公), Heavenly Lord Deng (邓天君), saying, "Old Deng, take care to look out for those greedy and corrupt officials, those churlish and disobedient sons. Strike down many of them for me and warn the public!"⁹

Wu did not produce any work of significance in his later life.

1.3 Historical and Social Context

1.3.1 Popularity of Buddhist Culture

The *Journey* was written in the late Ming (1550-1644) era when there was "universal interaction between religious institutions and society."¹⁰ Timothy Brook, in his *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China*, provides

⁸ Liu Cunren, 24.

⁹ Wu Cheng'en Vol. II 332.

¹⁰ Timothy Brook, "Introduction," *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China*. (Cambridge: The Council on East Asian Studies and the Harvard-Yenching Institute, Harvard University, 1993). 2.

a historical background that explains the popularity of Buddhism in China at this particular time. He deals with not only the social history in the late Ming period, but also the popularity of Buddhist culture among the gentry. For Brook, the increased monastic patronage signifies the separation of the gentry from the state and their “emerging sense of autonomy from public authority.”¹¹ He uses local and monastic histories, or “gazetteers” (地方志) as his main source material, to provide an analysis of the developments of the Ming religious philosophy that resulted in increased openness to Buddhism among local cultural authorities whose prior commitments were to Confucianism. This popularity and openness to Buddhism explain Wu Cheng’en’s childhood fascination with literature of the fantastic and his knowledge of Buddhist texts. Further investigation of Brook’s arguments into why the elite of the late Ming were seriously committed to Buddhism and how this commitment allowed for a partial separation of the local society from the state, will provide us with insight into the choice of the hero in the *Journey* and the intellectual milieu of this epic.

1.3.2 The Gentry vs. the State

The late Ming was a period of revival for institutional religion. “The chief context of this revival was the formation and expansion of the local gentry. It was they who paid for the monasteries, sponsored the clergy, and took up Buddhist devotions on a scale not seen for centuries.”¹² The spread of Buddhism was made possible by the Confucian literati

¹¹ Brook 29.

¹² Brook 3.

and the Buddhist establishment attempting to “reconcile their differences at a doctrinal level and to place both together on higher common ground.”¹³

This happened at a time when the constitution of society and the definition of social roles were changing. Buddhism became attractive to the elite “because it went beyond the capacity of Confucianism. It addressed issues beyond the measure of man and shifted the focus of cultivation from social roles, so dear to Confucianism, to the self.”¹⁴ Through philosophers such as Wang Yangming (王阳明 1472 – 1529), “a new, coherent world view that concentrated as much on the spiritual cultivation of the self as on the perfection of moral duty” was created.¹⁵ At the same time, Brook sees that there existed an ontological and moral gulf between Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism. For example, Buddhism “finds reality in the very unreality of ‘perceived phenomena’”, and this is supported in Wu Cheng’en’s comment in the *Journey* that “Formlessness is verily form; Nonemptiness is verily emptiness; Emptiness is indeed emptiness; form is indeed form; Form has no fixed form; thus form is emptiness; Emptiness has no fixed emptiness; thus emptiness is form. (非色为色，非空为空。空即是空，色即是色。色无定色，色即是空)”¹⁶. Neo-Confucianism, however, concentrates on principles and human morality rather than on phenomena, and whether they are real or unreal. Brook then discusses Neo-Confucianism’s concern with the cultivation of the mind. To do this, he seeks help from Lu Jiuyuan (陆九渊 1139 – 1192), a Southern Song thinker, who sought

¹³ Brook 16.

¹⁴ Wang Yangming was regarded as one of the most eminent of the thinkers representing an emphasis upon internal cultivation. He rejected the intellectualization of personal realization by identifying the heart-and-mind (心 *xin*) with pattern (理 *li*). For Wang, the human mind is both the locus and the standard of sagehood.

¹⁵ Brook 55-57.

¹⁶ Wu Cheng’en Vol. III. 129.

spiritual cultivation of the mind. Moreover, this thinker assumed that the universe is a spatial and temporal expression of the spirit. His school of thinking is called “School of the mind” (Xinxue 心学). His ideas were either an influence on some Ming philosophers, such as Wang Yangming, or at least similar to their ideas. Lu believed that mind (xin 心), pattern (li 理), and way (dao 道) are the most important and frequently interchangeable concepts. Subsequently, in the 16th century the “School of Mind encouraged Neo-Confucian thinkers to continue to absorb Buddhist elements into their philosophies, to the point of almost eliminating the boundary between the two teachings.”¹⁷ The scholars, who frequented the monasteries, seeking peace and freedom from confining rules and principles, developed the belief that the three teachings of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism could be merged into one, or be said to be speaking about the same place or destination; which, however, could be reached or attained by different routes.

1.3.3 The Disciple vs. the Master

In a cultural milieu largely permeated by Buddhist patterns of thought, language, and interaction, the Ming gentry saw an opportunity to seize a degree of independence from the government. I believe this search for independence prompted Wu Cheng'en to write the 100-chapter novel and thereby to set out his views on the issue. Yet, having longed to be part of the elite and sheltered class for most of his life, and feeling privileged to have at last become one of them, he must have felt torn between identifying with the comfort

¹⁷ Brook 58-63.

offered to the elite by the state and conformity to the social and religious demands of the state. I propose therefore that we consider the primary allegory of the novel as consisting of Buddhist themes, and the love-hate relationship between the elite group and the state as its secondary allegory.

I will use Wukong as the hero of my discussion rather than the historical figure of Xuanzang because that will allow me to explain the paradoxical relationship between Wukong and Xuanzang. Xuanzang's dogmatic approach to the Buddhist faith causes much anguish between him and Wukong. It also becomes a hindrance to his own spiritual progress. This ought to show why Xuanzang cannot succeed as a hero, for he is blinded by worldly comforts and temptations, all of which can be seen in his constant complaints about the arduous journey, and his losing sight of his ultimate spiritual vocation. In my view Xuanzang embodies the authoritarian control of the state. Wukong, on the other hand, transcends all the annoyances and frustrations to become the real hero. Often, he offers advice to his master on spiritual discipline and progress. Moreover, throughout the novel, the interdependence between the servant and the master can be seen in abundance, as Wukong and Xuanzang need each other to complete the journey. This also encapsulates predicament the author is wrestling with throughout the novel, inasmuch although the gentry struggled against the "authority of the state", without the state and its authority, they were not able to claim legitimacy as an elite at all. This argument is well set out by Benjamin Elman in his *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*,¹⁸ in which he discusses the tension and struggle

¹⁸ Benjamin A Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Phillip E Lillenthal Book) (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2000).

between the power of the imperial state and the literate elites and their control over the cultural arena.

1.4 Critical Theories

In this section, I shall discuss the ideas of theorists such as Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Carl Jung (1875–1961), Vladimir Propp (1895-1970), Joseph Campbell (1904 – 1987), and Northrop Frye (1912–1991), who share a search for understanding the meanings of texts, myths and utterances by examining the underlying invariant structures. This is a diverse group of scholars, and I do not wish to suggest that they belong to a single school of thought or share a common paradigm. Broadly and intuitively speaking, however, there is a resemblance between their approaches to the study of meaning and structures underlying “all human behavior and mental functioning, and by their belief that this structure can be discovered through orderly analysis, that it has cohesiveness and meaning, and that structures have generality.”¹⁹ I shall not discuss these theorists chronologically but according to their importance to my work.

Campbell studied the recurring patterns of hero adventures in myths across many cultures, and summarized their journey in what he called a monomyth. Frye, author most famously of *Anatomy of Criticism*,²⁰ examined how different cultural attitudes were conveyed in literary traditions through repeated patterns. Freud is best known for his

¹⁹ Howard Gardner, *The Quest for Mind* (New York: A Division of Random House, 1974) 10.

²⁰ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957)

theories of the unconscious mind. Jung, while practising as a psychologist and analyzing his patients' dreams, found archetypical symbols that he claimed were common to all people, in all times and all cultures. He also provided a useful framework for the discussion of myths in literary texts. Russian morphologist Propp also showed how the recurring patterns could be seen as the common ingredients of the narrative. All five people provided frameworks or maps of basic story structures that can be used to make sense of a wide variety of texts.

1.4.1 Joseph Campbell as Inheritor of Carl Jung

This thesis is a result of my discovering *Hero with a Thousand Faces* (“*Hero*”), written by Joseph Campbell. *Hero* provided many answers to the feelings of awe and bewilderment that I experienced as a child towards the mythical stories so obviously laden with concepts and meanings that I could not understand, including the adventures of the Monkey King, Sun Wukong. In *Hero*, Campbell revealed that there are parallels between myths, which show the development of common patterns. Many of Campbell's ideas relate to Swiss psychologist Carl Jung's theory of the collective unconscious; both men believed that frequent occurrences of similar mythologies show that people in different times and places have similar basic thought processes. For Jung, the hero was a projection of the unconscious. The heroic pattern is a manifestation of unconscious activity. Campbell's model is based on the application of psychoanalytic theories to a mythical context. He claimed that the symbols that we encounter in myths are creations

of the psyche, and that they can provide us with clues with which to understand the quests that we need to undertake in life. In his preface to *Hero*, he writes:

It is the purpose of this book to uncover some of the truths disguised for us under the figures of religion and mythology. My intention is that a comparative elucidation may contribute to the perhaps not-quite desperate cause of those forces that are working in the present world for unification, not in the name of some ecclesiastical or political empire, but in the sense of human mutual understanding.²¹

Campbell's contribution was to take the idea of archetypes and use it to map out the common underlying structures behind myth. He studied cultures from ancient tribal clans to modern industrial nations, and found that the societal behavior of each culture is primarily determined by its underlying mythology, and that many hero myths are expressions of the same story-pattern, which he called the "Hero's Journey," or the "monomyth". He concluded that all religions contain the same essential truth. His monomyth can be summed up as follows: A hero ventures forth from the known world or the common everyday world into the unknown or a region of supernatural wonder. Along the way he encounters fantastic forces over which he wins a decisive victory. He returns from his life-enriching adventure with the power to bestow benefit on his community and fellow man. According to Campbell, the sort of structural pattern underlying the mythic hero's journey could easily be seen in epics such as *Iliad* and the

²¹ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949) p. VIII.

Odyssey, biblical tales including those about Moses and Jesus, and ancient Greek and Roman myths about Oedipus, Jason and many other figures.

1.4.2 Sigmund Freud

By the middle of the 19th century, scholars had already begun to compare stories from various cultural backgrounds in order to find common beliefs and behavioural patterns between, within and beneath apparently diverse ways of life. Soon two disciplines emerged in order to study such matters. One was anthropology, which focused on role of culture, both as recurrent patterns of behaviour, thought and feeling and as a product or expression of behaviour, thought and feeling (stories, philosophies, religions, artworks, etc.), in accounting for the human condition. The other discipline that emerged to study, classify and analyze the human behaviour and its consequences was psychology. In contrast to anthropology which concerned itself with culture, psychology focused on the human mind or the psychic mechanisms and processes that gave rise to the beliefs, attitudes, actions and their products or expressions. When it emerged as a formal branch of knowledge at the end of the 19th century, psychology attempted to account for the workings of the human mind in terms of rational processes or principles. One psychologist, Sigmund Freud, however, found that the emphasis on rational principles was not adequate to explain the workings of the mind, and he began to investigate the irrational springs of human beliefs and behaviours.

The founder of modern psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, is perhaps most famous for his ideas on the psychosexual causes of mental illness. His masterpiece, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), offered a comprehensive theory of mental processes and gave birth to psychological studies of mythology. As he refined his theory, he asserted that the mind has three aspects -- the Id (the unconscious), the Ego (the conscious and rational mind, or self), and the Superego (the “conscience,” as embodied in cultural mores, customs, and laws). In Freud’s psychoanalysis, the Id, or the unconscious, which is not rational comprises the largest and most important aspect of the mind, but it functions below the level of conscious awareness. The conscious mind which we are aware of at any particular moment includes our perceptions, memories, thoughts, fantasies or feelings, and it is but a small part of our mind. The unconscious that accounts for the largest part includes all the things that are not easily available to awareness, such as our drives or instincts. According to Freud, it is the source of our motivations, but they are often available to us in disguised form. Although we often deny or resist becoming conscious of these motives, we are somewhat less resistant to the unconscious in sleep, and will allow a few things to come to awareness in symbolic form.

Throughout his work, Freud maintained that “the unconscious is the true psychological reality; in its innermost nature it is as much unknown to us as the reality of the external world, and it is as incompletely presented by the data of consciousness.”²² He was of the belief that our conscious mind censors our impulses, desires, fantasies, and preconscious thoughts because it considers them raw, dangerous, unpredictable and irrational.

²² Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Trans. Joyce Crick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 613.

1.4.3 Carl Jung

First a student and follower of Freud, Jung eventually dissociated himself from Freud and founded his own school of psychology. Both Jung and Freud believed that mythic symbols -- as they are encountered in life, manifested in dreams and works of the imagination -- emerge from the deep psychic well of the unconscious. While their theories about the landscape of the human mind differed, they both shared a belief that our dreams, characteristics, myths that sprang from the cultures, archetypal experiences, and works of fiction are projections of that which the unconscious contains.

Jung also concluded that dreams and myths are collections of archetypal images. They are not free compositions by an artist who plans them for artistic or informational purposes. Myths attempt to explain origins or tell of events before or outside of historical space and time; they explain natural and social phenomena found in human experience. They serve as metaphors of the human condition and through them are grasped the exploits of gods or demons in other realms beyond the world we live in. Myths ostensibly present a world that is different from that in which we live, yet they make recurring archetypes speak to us. What then is an archetype? Jung explains that "The archetype is . . . an irreprehensible, unconscious, pre-existent form that seems to be part of the inherited structure of the psyche and can therefore manifest itself spontaneously anywhere, at any time . . . again and again. I encounter the mistaken notion that an archetype is determined [by cultural influences] in regard to its content . . . It is necessary

to point out once more that archetypes are not determined [by cultural experience] as regards their content.”²³

Jung found that archetypal patterns and images operate throughout all of human cultures and in all time periods of human history. He argued that they behave in accordance with the same laws in all cases. Jung postulated the *Collective Unconscious* to answer for this observation. For Jung, human beings share a single collective unconscious mind, instead of having separate and personal unconscious minds. Although our personal mind often finds much material that is unique to our historical experience, material which could only have happened to us, it is ultimately shaped according to collective patterns. If we seek the source of our “personality”, we soon begin to discover, according to Jung, that it is rooted in more impersonal and collective patterns. The unconscious human mind, he claimed, is filled with and essentially grounded in underlying myths.

1.4.4 Northrop Frye

Northrop Frye shared Jung and Campbell’s interest in myths, and sought a rational framework for analyzing them. He observed that “theory obstinately adhered to a much larger theoretical structure.”²⁴ In his studies, he found himself “entangled in those parts of criticism that have to do with such words as ‘myth’, ‘symbol’, ‘ritual’, and

²³ Carl G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Trans. R. and C. Winston (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1983) 392-393.

²⁴ Frye vii.

‘archetype’”. As a result, he made an effort to “make sense of these words”.²⁵ Further, he saw “it as the essential task of the literary critic to distinguish ideology from myth, to help reconstitute a myth as a language, and to put literature in its proper cultural place as the central link of communication between society and the vision of its primary concerns.”²⁶ Frye took a keen interest in human nature and relationships as revealed through archetypes and symbols, and in myths and rituals. He believed that myth and ideology are interrelated such that one shapes the other. However, he speculated that myth and ideology are coextensive, and follow related but distinguishable courses of development. Over time a society’s verbal culture diversifies, and ideology reflects and even promotes this diversification. Ideology, therefore, parts company with myth when myth no longer promotes the goals of orthodoxy and legality. In time, myths are either marginalized or taken over by ideological concerns. In the third essay titled as “Archetypal Criticism” in his book *Anatomy of Criticism*, he discusses the development of literature and claims that the characters’ relationships can be categorized into the structure of five modes – mythic, romantic, high mimetic, low mimetic, or ironic.

“Archetypal criticism” opens with a discussion of Aristotle’s first element, *mythos* [plot], through four myths or narrative genres -- tragic, comic, romantic and ironic. Frye also mentions Aristotle’s second element, *ethos* [character], but briefly, and the six different phases of the myth. He points out that while literary characters are subject to plots, they also have structures of their own. Literature to Frye is the displacement of

²⁵ Frye vii.

²⁶ Northrop Frye, *Myth and Metaphor: Selected Essays, 1974 – 1988*. ed. Robert D. Denham (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 1990).

myth. It begins with myth and the divine, and descends through the stages of the romantic, high mimetic, low mimetic, and ironic or anti-heroic. For example, the mythic hero is usually a superior or divine being, a god, such as Hercules, Mercury and the Bodhisattva. Such heroes have a different “fundamental nature” than ordinary human beings. They explain why the world is as it is, and establish social structures which guide people’s actions. Frye believes that the romantic hero is superior to other humans. The hero, for example, the Monkey King, is capable of functioning in a world in which the ordinary laws can be slightly bent or even suspended. The hero displays courage and endurance, wielding an enchanted weapon, terrifying demons and monsters and exercising a miraculous power. At this stage, we have moved from myth into folktale, legend, and their literary affiliates and derivatives. A high mimetic hero, such as Tripitaka, is superior to other men but not to his natural environment. The hero is a leader with authority, passions and powers beyond common men, yet, the hero’s action is subject to social sanction and the order of nature. This type of hero belongs to the mode of epic and tragedy. He must establish his authority without the benefit of magic. A low mimetic hero is an average man. A “hero” such as Zhu Bajie is neither superior to other men nor to the natural environment. He is one of us, who responds to a sense of common humanity that we find in our own experience. We often have difficulty recognizing this character as a hero. This notion was confirmed by C. T. Hsia in his *Classic Chinese Novel: A Critical Introduction*, in which he categorized Zhu Bajie the Pig as one of us, characterized by being simpleminded, clumsy, lazy, slanderous, easily frustrated, greedy, and lustful.²⁷ Yet, not all is grim, as Bajie’s brute strength in battle is an enormous help

²⁷ C.T. Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel: A Critical Introduction*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968).

in fighting the dark forces. Moreover, he remains loyal to Guanyin, despite the fact that he consistently complains about the arduous journey, and that he wants to split up and go home. An ironic hero is one who is inferior in power or intelligence to that of our own. This character is controlled by some kind of malevolent force and belongs to the ironic mode. He feels very insecure and dissatisfied and is beset with unresolved problems or unfulfilled needs. His world is irrational and absurd. Analyzing the fifth mode, Frye points out that “the archetype of the incongruously ironic is Christ, the perfectly innocent victim excluded from human society.”²⁸ From this, Frye reaches the conclusion that modern, ironic literature, which “begins in realism and dispassionate observation,” “moves steadily towards myth, and dim outlines of sacrificial rituals and dying gods begin to reappear in it. Our five modes evidently go around in a circle.”²⁹

Frye has often been referred to as an archetypal critic or myth critic. Not surprisingly then there is a tendency for people to think that he arrived at his theory on the basis of his study of Jung’s archetypes, yet he only adopted the Jungian archetype in its literary sense. By Frye’s own admission, he saw archetypes as literary forms which are not connected to psychology: “[the] emphasis on impersonal content has been developed by Jung and his school, where the communicability of archetypes is accounted for by a theory of a collective unconscious - an unnecessary hypothesis in literary criticism, so far as I can judge.”³⁰ Jung’s belief that there is a collective “language” composed of principles and ideas beyond literature itself is inconsistent with Frye’s

²⁸ Frye, *Anatomy* 42.

²⁹ Frye, *Anatomy* 42-43.

³⁰ Frye, *Anatomy* 111-112.

analysis. Frye moved away from reliance on the Jungian claim that archetypes are located in the human psyche and that they structured the world of the collective unconscious. He developed his theory primarily on the basis of structures he was able to perceive in literature itself. He contended that literature forms a coherent unity and this claim was not based on an assumption or hypothesis but something self-evident.³¹ Further, Frye used “the symbolism of the Bible” as a grammar of literary archetypes because he regarded the Bible as a self-contained unity. He saw the Bible as “the main source for undisplaced myths in our tradition”, and indicated that he would use “the symbolism of the Bible, and to a lesser extent Classical mythology, as a grammar of literary archetypes.”³² He described the Bible as the “definitive myth, a single archetypal structure extending from creation to apocalypse.”³³ I find this questionable because clearly it does not take into account Chinese literature, which developed without the knowledge of the Bible. Perhaps it is the case that for centuries the Bible was the literature of the educated classes of the West, and thereby influenced western languages, literary theories and culture. And consequently, perhaps even those with no religious beliefs tend to identify and perceive events in terms of patterns and analogues (e.g. the prodigal son, Judas, Moses, etc.) that are Biblical in their origin. Nevertheless, despite some shortcomings, Frye’s summary of the five modes – from the mythical to the ironic, provides a different and interesting way to examine the functions of a hero.

³¹ Frye, *Anatomy* 16-17.

³² Frye, *Anatomy* 134, 140.

³³ Frye, *Anatomy* 315-316.

1.4.5 Vladimir Propp

Like psychology and anthropology, literary studies became a formal area of academic study at the end of the 19th century. At the most fundamental level, literary studies investigate the various features that constitute a sensible interpretation of a text. In order to arrive at plausible interpretations these studies have gradually developed a sophisticated language and a collection of concepts for discussing literary characters, plots, symbols, and meaning. In the past century, these analytical tools have been applied to various forms of written discourse and to the narratives that individuals create in order to understand themselves, and their culture. Literary mythology, then, studies the unique narrative and artistic features, narrative logic, and signifying systems and that clearly distinguishes and raises these studies from and above what we ordinarily think of as mythology. Ordinarily, we associate mythology with something mystical, perhaps religious or superstitious, but literary study of mythology is far removed from this.

Vladimir Propp was one of the founding members of literary mythological analysis. He worked almost exclusively on the Russian folktale and sought to identify recurrent structures and situations in these tales. Following a study of more than a thousand stories, he concluded that the characters in fairy tales change but their functions within the plot do not. In the forward of his renowned work *The Morphology of the Folktale* (*Morfologiia Skazk*), he points out that, the word “morphology” means “the study of

forms”.³⁴ He described his method for the study of structures and plot formations of Russian folktales as follows:

We are undertaking a comparison of the themes of these tales. For the sake of comparison we shall separate the component parts of fairy tales by special methods; and then, we shall make a comparison of the tales according to their components. The result will be a morphology (i.e., a description of the tale according to its component parts and the relationship of these components to each other and to the whole).³⁵

His ideas became a source of substantive reference in the studies of myth after the book was translated into English by Laurence Scott and published in 1958. Concluding that all the events are capable of many functions, he claimed that an event’s meaning at the basic level of interpretation in narrative is defined by its function. From the representative stages in the narrative process, Propp constructed a basic repertoire of thirty-one “functions”. He further observed that while individual folktales necessarily leave out one or more of these thirty-one functions, the ones that a tale does include always appear in the same order. This discovery of a fixed narrative syntax in the fairy tale suggested to Propp that there are a limited number of primary properties to the fantastic that guide all the narratives. These properties apply to hero myths as well and

³⁴ Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. Laurence Scott. 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968) xxv.

³⁵ Propp 19.

so a structured literary analysis helps us to determine the basic narrative syntax that gives adventure epics and folktales their unique and enduring appeal.

Although Jung, Campbell and Frye all dealt with archetypes, Jung and Campbell's theories are about the archetypes in the collective unconscious, primordial images found in literature, similarity of plot and the heroic quest, and as such the latter are more applicable to my analysis of the *Journey* than Frye's theories of archetype. Frye's major work deals with the function and effect in archetypes of literature, and not with how they come from the depths of the mind to literature. Frye was uninterested in the collective unconscious because to him the unconscious is unknowable and cannot be directly studied. However, with its reliance on the Bible, Frye's approach is very problematic when it comes to cross-cultural literary studies and comparative mythology, as it has to ignore the literature and mythology of cultures in which the Bible did not play a formative role. Propp's study of narrative structure is helpful in breaking down Russian folktales into analyzable narrative units. By doing so, we can see a typology of narrative structures, which coincides with Jung and Campbell's theories of collective unconscious and monomyth on a micro level.

Archetypal myths explain the nature of life and the world. Thus, many cultures have tales to explain the origins of places and objects: the mountain, the temple, the tree and even the stone. Other archetypal myths provide allegorical meaning to history and to ideologies that have a broad social impact. For example, the quest archetype is typically a journey in which the often male hero must overcome his own faults and weaknesses in

order to reemerge as a mature, productive member of his community. The hero may search for an object, or for knowledge or spiritual awakening. Sometimes his quest is to right a wrong. The hero's quest may also be prophesied. Percival, one of King Arthur's knights, searches for the Holy Grail. The Babylonian hero Gilgamesh, afraid of death, searches for immortality. Campbell tells a story of a Native American buffalo princess who let herself be married to a buffalo so that her tribe could eat.³⁶ It shows the deep connection that existed between these Native Americans and the animals they relied on for survival. In his television interview with Bill Moyers he also convincingly points out the connection between myths and human potentialities:

Bill Moyers: I came to understand from reading your books - *The Masks of God* or *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, for example - that what human beings have in common is revealed in myths. Myths are the stories of our search through the ages for truth, for meaning, for significance.

Joseph Campbell: People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our own innermost being and reality. That's what it's all finally

³⁶ Joseph Campbell, Bill Moyers, "The First Story Tellers," documentary, *Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth with Bill Moyers* (American PBS, 1988).

about, and that's what these clues help us to find within ourselves.

Bill Moyers: Myths are clues?

Joseph Campbell: Myths are clues to the spiritual potentialities of the human life.³⁷

1.5 Religious Allegory: Andrew H. Plaks and Francisca C. Bantly

While it is a work of fiction with identifiable narrative structures, the *Journey* is also a major work of religious literature. Although heroes have culturally unique features, and the purpose of their quests are quite specific, a sense of progression toward spiritual enlightenment through trials and ordeals is a common feature of many heroic texts around the world. Andrew Plaks' study of the *Journey* as one of the four major Ming novels is a masterwork of criticism. It has helped to shape our understanding of Ming literati culture in significant ways. Along with Anthony C. Yu, he argues that the *Journey* is more than just an ordinary fantastical text. Plaks takes a Neo-Confucian approach towards the interpretation of the novel, focusing on the synthesis of Taoist cosmology and Buddhist spirituality that revolve around the core Confucian concern with society and government that dominated in the intellectual and spiritual life of the time. Plaks speaks of the three philosophical schools, namely Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism and calls them a "philosophy of mind".³⁸ Clues to the religious aspects of

³⁷ Joseph Campbell, Bill Moyers, "The First Story Tellers," *The Power of Myth* (American PBS, 1988).

³⁸ Andrew H. Plaks, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) 241.

the text can be seen in explicit references to Buddhist scriptures such as the *Lotus Sutra*, *the Diamond Sutra*, and *the Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra*, among many others mentioned in the novel. Taoist terminology is evident in the uses of alchemical terms based on the ideals of *yin-yang* and five elements to “refer to some of the central figures in the narrative: Mother of Wood, Lord of Metal, Yellow Hag, etc.”³⁹ According to Plaks, there are also Confucian ideas in the novel that stress the perfection of morals and submission to authority. He acknowledges that the novel’s author denies us an easy interpretation in terms of the “didactic values of Buddhism, Taoism, or Confucianism,” thus making it difficult for us to make sense of the allegorical journey with its “apparent message of attainment through perseverance, or transcendence of worldly temptation, in the pursuit of a higher aim.”⁴⁰ Plaks chooses to treat the work as a “Pilgrim’s Progress”, a notion that he extends to an “internal pilgrimage of the mind”, primarily based on a Neo-Confucian groundwork,⁴¹ which, in my opinion, distracts from the predominant Buddhist references found throughout the text. Plaks believes that to view the allegorical journey simply as a pilgrimage of the mind raises as many questions as it answers. For example, it makes it impossible, he says, to adequately account for the physical and emotional obstacles and the philosophical paradoxes that bar the hero’s path to salvation. At one point, he comments, that we must also take into account the “recurrent pattern of development... [during which Wukong] fails in his initial attempts to break through the spell. In most cases it is only after he seeks external aid – the bestowal of either a secret formula or a magic weapon, or the direct intervention of powers of salvation – that the

³⁹ Plaks 231.

⁴⁰ Plaks 240.

⁴¹ Plaks 243.

demon is finally subdued.”⁴² This is Plaks’s version of “morphology”. The accounts of sexual and material temptations encountered by the pilgrims and the variety of bewildering weaponry used also pose a problem to Plaks’s “School of Mind” focus. In his conclusion, he believes that the allegory of the *Journey* is designed to “demonstrate the principle that, though the sensory perception of reality is ultimately an empty illusion, at the same time the converse is also true – meditation upon emptiness itself tends to turn into an illusory experience.” Therefore, the chief obstacle to overcome on the path to enlightenment is the conscious pursuit of enlightenment itself, or “the illusion of progress [that] may itself be the greatest impediment to ultimate attainment.”⁴³ As the *Heart Sutra*, he points out, tells us the “perceived reality is no different from emptiness, emptiness is no different from perceived reality, reality is emptiness, emptiness is reality.”⁴⁴

Although the *Heart Sutra* contains references to all the major categories of Buddhist philosophy, Plaks uses the two most famous lines from this most famous of Buddhist sutras to urge upon us his Neo-Confucian interpretation. This sutra was obtained by the historical Xuanzang after he reached India, but in the *Journey*, these important lines appear early on in the novel, merely a month after the pilgrims have been on their way to the West. Thus in Chapter 19, a Crow’s Nest Zen Master, who has cultivated his conduct on the Pagoda Mountain, tells Xuanzang the way to the Temple of the Western Heaven will be long; and “what’s more, the road is a difficult one, filled with tigers and leopards,

⁴² Plaks 253.

⁴³ Plaks 254.

⁴⁴ Plaks 275.

and all those mara hindrances along the way are hard to dispel. I have a *Heart Sutra* here in this scroll; it has fifty-four sentences containing two hundred and seventy characters. When you meet these mara hindrances, recite the sutra and you will not suffer any injury or harm.”⁴⁵ The narrator noted, “The *Heart Sutra* is the comprehensive classic for the cultivation of Truth, the very gateway to becoming a Buddha.”⁴⁶ Xuanzang begged to receive it, whereupon the Zen Master imparted the *Heart Sutra of the Great Perfection of Wisdom* by reciting it:

When the Bodhisattva Guan Zizan (Guanyin) was moving in the deep course of the Perfection of Wisdom, she saw that the five heaps⁴⁷ were but emptiness, and she transcended all sufferings. Sariputra, form is no different from emptiness, emptiness not different from form; form is emptiness, and emptiness is form. Of sensations, perceptions, volition, and consciousness, the same is also true. Sariputra, it is thus that all dharmas are but empty appearances, neither produced nor destroyed, neither defiled nor pure, neither increasing nor decreasing. This is why in emptiness there are no forms and no sensations, perceptions, volition, or consciousness; no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind; no form, sound, smell, taste, touch, or object of mind.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Wu Cheng'en, Vol. I 393.

⁴⁶ Wu Cheng'en, Vol. I 394.

⁴⁷ *Pancaskandha*: the five constitutive elements of the human being. 1, *rupa*, physical phenomena related to the five senses; 2, *vedana*, sensation or reception of stimuli from events and things; 3, *sanjna*, discernment of perception; 4, *sainskara*, decision of volition; and 5, *vijnana*, cognition and consciousness.

⁴⁸ Wu Cheng'en, Vol. I 393-394.

Xuanzang memorized it immediately and recited it daily. And when he was startled by the sound of flowing water, Wukong reminded him of the Sutra, saying: “Old Master, you have forgotten the one about ‘no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind.’ Those of us who have left the family should see no form with our eyes, hear no sound with ears, smell no smell with our noses, taste no taste with our tongues; our bodies should have no knowledge of heat or cold, and our minds should gather no vain thoughts... [In your fear] you have, in sum, assembled all the Six Robbers (senses) together. How could you possibly get to the Western Heaven to see Buddha?”⁴⁹

In a 1989 article on Buddhist allegory in the *Journey*, Francisca Cho Bantly concludes that the “most compelling reading of the *Journey* is an explicitly Buddhist one.” She believes that a combination approach encompassing all three schools of thoughts (Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism) will “challenge the authenticity of the Buddhist themes present in it”,⁵⁰ thereby suggesting that a philosophical rendering of the novel in terms of all three schools of philosophy combined, yields an interpretation of it that is very unsatisfactory. She also objects to Plaks’s dismissal of the significance of the *Journey* as a tale of spiritual or religious pilgrimage. Her focus is “on the integration of Buddhist concepts into the structure of the novel, especially by its literary techniques.”⁵¹ She also argues that because the *Journey*’s form is strongly influenced by the content of its Buddhist teachings, it is itself a religious text. This of course is contrary to the Plaks’s belief that the Chinese universe forms a matrix of allegorical meaning. He picks up on an

⁴⁹ Wu Cheng’en, Vol. II 284.

⁵⁰ Francisca Cho Bantly, “Buddhist Allegory in the ‘*Journey to the West*’”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 3. (Aug., 1989) 513.

⁵¹ Bantly 513.

all-encompassing meaning which consists of a combination of the three religions. “What he terms ‘the intelligibility of the whole’ describes the Chinese religio-philosophical universe and forms the basis for his theory of Chinese allegory.”⁵² Bantly provides an example from Chapter 14 of the *Journey* to prove that the narrative is primarily a Buddhist allegory. In this chapter, Xuanzang blamed Wukong for unceremoniously killing six robbers. Her explanation is that these six robbers are the personifications of the six senses, which “in the Buddhist system imbue phenomena with a false sense of sustainability.”⁵³ Xuanzang’s adherence to the virtue of non-injury only blinds him from knowing the true nature of all forms. Bantly also disagrees with Plaks on the doctrine of emptiness. She argues that “the emptiness paradox is itself empty”, and that “the converse of the emptiness teaching is that the insubstantial nature of reality [is such that it] takes on forms: form is emptiness, emptiness is form. There can be no devaluation of forms, because they are inherently equal to the truth of emptiness.”⁵⁴ I agree with Bantly that the allegory is specifically a Buddhist one, and that approaching it as such opens up the possibility of significantly better interpretations for the text. While this allows her to explore the Buddhist meanings, it affords me the opportunity to investigate a novel that rivals Homer’s *Odyssey* in complexity, on a structural level as a universal hero’s narrative in a Buddhist context. This approach will argue that besides Buddhist references which sustain the *Journey* as a work of allegory, the composition of its symbols, images and codes also function so as to project a hero’s adventure with complex patterns of meaning, which is bound up with a theme of quest and by a sense of physical and spiritual

⁵² Bantly 512.

⁵³ Bantly 514-515.

⁵⁴ Bantly 516.

progression. I will show the latter are inextricably connected with the series of trials and tribulations that the protagonist endures. Additionally, I shall argue that the hero's monomyth portrays humanity's eternal struggle for identity and a fully realized existence. In doing so, I will attempt to identify and explain the relevance of the recurring mythological themes that can be found on the structural level, and to show how profoundly the novel is influenced by the Buddhist tradition on the allegorical level.

Chapter 2: The Collective Unconscious and Monomyth

2.1 Introduction

Most systems of myth provide an explanation for the origin of the universe and its components; such explanations are known as creation myths. They are mankind's earliest attempts to answer some of the deepest and most difficult questions about the nature and origin of the universe. Modern scholars of myths and mythology propose themes or motifs that help to unify the cosmological stories and to give the reader the feeling of “familiar difference”. Historians have conjectured that Chinese mythology began in 1200 BCE, and that the myths and legends were passed down through oral traditions for over a thousand years before they were written down in books during the Han dynasty such as *Shan Hai Jing* (山海经 *Scroll of the Mountains and Seas*).⁵⁵ One myth that may be used to illustrate several themes is the traditional Chinese creation myth of Pan Gu (盘古). The most common form of the myth is as follows: The first living thing was Pan Gu, who was born of a gigantic cosmic egg, which contained all the elements of the universe mingled together. He grew by about ten feet each day; and he grew so big that he broke the egg. The egg white floated upwards to form the sky, and the egg yolk sank downwards to become the earth. At the same time Pan Gu gradually separated the many opposites in nature - light and dark, *yin* (阴) and *yang* (阳), male and female. Fearing that heaven and earth might meld together again, he placed himself between them, his head holding up the sky and his feet firmly upon the earth. Pan Gu continued to grow for

⁵⁵ Anne Birrell, trans., *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, (London: Penguin, 2000).

the next eighteen thousand years, increasing the distance between heaven and earth. From his eyes the sun and moon appeared, from his sweat rain and dew, from his voice thunder, and from his body all the mountains, valleys and plains of the earth. Exhausted, Pan Gu went back to sleep and never woke up. The original formless egg which was the birthplace of Pan Gu is an example of the idea of a primitive chaos (混沌 Hundun), or undifferentiated universe. This is the most frequently found account of the primordial material in creation myths. The term “Chaos” has its roots in the Greek word *Khaos*, meaning literally “gaping void”. This was the Greek word for the initial formless state of the universe as chaos. A second theme of creation myths that occurs in the story of Pan Gu is the idea of the earth and the sky being formed by the separation of the original body of the universe. In this case, the earth is female and the sky male. A similar idea is exemplified in the Egyptian creation myth of Nut and Geb. However, in contrast to most earth and sky deities, Nut, the sky god, is female. Campbell uses a myth from southeast Africa to show the first stages of the cosmogonic cycle. Here the original man is the moon; the morning star his first wife, the evening star his second. The moon man emerges from the abyssal waters. He and his wives become parents of all the creatures of the earth.⁵⁶ Another theme that occurs in the Pan Gu myth is the idea that the entire universe is the bodily remains of a primordial being. A similar idea can be found in the Norse creation myth in which the primordial giant Ymir is killed by Odin. The earth is formed from the dead body of Ymir. His flesh becomes the land, his blood becomes the sea, his bones become the mountains and his hair becomes the trees, and his skull becomes the vault of heaven. The final general aspect of the Pan Gu myth is that there is

⁵⁶ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 303.

a hierarchy of life between deities and humans beings. Man is placed below gods and other supernatural beings but above animals and plants. Creation myths then account for the existence of the material universe and the origin of life within it. In a nutshell, such myths were humanity's first attempts to arrive at what modern day cosmologists call a "theory of everything".

2.2 A Definition of Archetype and Collective Unconscious

Although we no longer look to creation myths to explain the origin and meaning of our existence, they continue to exert a powerful attraction on us. Some scholars, such as Jung and Campbell, go further and look to myths for answers to the roots of human behaviour. Jung devoted much of his life to the studies of folktales, myths and the psychological meaning behind stories. Once a student and follower of Freud, Jung later rejected Freud's contention that the primary motivation behind behavior lay in sexual urges. Instead, Jung believed that people are motivated by a more general psychological energy that pushes them to achieve psychological growth, wholeness and self-realization. He developed ideas of the conscious and the unconscious that differ significantly from those that were propounded by Freud. According to Jung, the conscious mind is primarily concerned with perception of objects that exist outside the mind and are experienced through the senses. Jung's concept of the collective unconscious can be best understood through his idea of archetypes. Archetypes are images and patterns that are shared by all of us, and which are not derived from sense perception and do not depend on personal experience. As Jung says, "These *a priori* categories have by nature a

collective character; they are images of parents, wife, and children *in general*, and are not individual predestinations. We must therefore think of these images as lacking in solid content, hence as unconscious. They only acquire solidity, influence, and eventual consciousness in the encounter with empirical facts, which touch the unconscious aptitude and quicken it to life. They are, in a sense, the deposits of all our ancestral experiences, but they are not the experiences themselves.”⁵⁷ According to Jung, the similarity between various hero myths suggested that they too originated from these common psychological structures deep within the mind.⁵⁸ Jung’s view on the psychological development of the hero is that the hero needs to integrate his consciousness with the unconscious elements of his psyche in order to gain a coherent sense of the self. The elements of the unconscious are the archetypes that originate in the collective unconscious. As a result, archetypes of the collective unconscious take on the role of helping to establish his/her identity. A hero needs to identify with these archetypes so that he/she can realize and expand his/her sense of self. Among the various archetypes that exist, Jung believed that three are most important. These are the “shadow”, the “mother” or the *anima* and the “father” or the *animus*.⁵⁹

For Jung, the “shadow” archetype represents the negative qualities of an individual. In order for self-growth to occur, the individual must be able to deal with these undesirable characteristics. It is often difficult to realize or admit that the dark aspects of

⁵⁷ *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, and Gerhard Adler (20 vols.; London: Routledge, 1953-78).vol. 7, Para 300.

⁵⁸ Joseph Campbell, ed., “The Concept of the Collective Unconscious”, *The Portable Jung*, by C.G. Jung (New York: Viking Press, 1971).

⁵⁹ *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung* (Princeton: Princeton University Press) vol 7, 66, n.5.

the personality are real.⁶⁰ However, as Jung commented, “We each must rediscover a deeper source of our own spiritual life... To do this, we are obliged to struggle with evil, to confront the shadow, to integrate the devil. There is no other choice.”⁶¹ The “mother” archetype is Jung’s second very important archetype,⁶² and it involves what Campbell calls the “sacred marriage”. Campbell describes the “sacred marriage” as uniting the hero with life itself and its gifts as being knowledge, and spiritual enlightenment. Jung too believed that the “mother” is most important for an individual’s development. Jung insisted, “Whenever she [the “mother”] appears, in dreams, visions, and fantasies, she takes on personified form, thus demonstrating that the factor she embodies possesses all the outstanding characteristics of a feminine being.”⁶³ For Jung, it is important that an individual stay in touch with the feminine principle and in tune with mother earth. It is essential for the hero to integrate all the archetypes of the unconscious in this “sacred marriage”, to overcome the “shadow” and complete his journey. Jung’s third principle archetype is the “father” archetype. He claims that the “father” figure is also vital for an individual’s development. Like Campbell, he believed that many myths have shown that the “father” archetype plays a decisive role in men’s quest for self-realization. In the Jungian analysis, encountering the “father” archetype symbolizes that the hero has realized his “calling” in life, and is committed to accomplishing his “mission.”⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Campbell, ed., “Aion: Phenomenology of the Self,” *The Portable Jung* 145.

⁶¹ Quoted in Jeremiah Abrams, “Shadow and Culture,” *Shadow in America: Reclaiming the Soul of a Nation*, ed. Jeremiah Abrams (Los Angeles: Nataraj, 1994) 24.

⁶² Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 246.

⁶³ Campbell, ed., “Aion: Phenomenology of the Self,” *The Portable Jung* 151.

⁶⁴ Campbell, ed., “Aion: Phenomenology of the Self,” *The Portable Jung* 145.

2.3 Campbell's Monomyth and the "Hero's Journey"

In his book *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell also identified a series of archetypal steps that characterized and provided a map of the "hero's journey". He believed that the hero undertakes the same essential quest regardless of the culture, and argued that the "hero's journey" is a "monomyth" that recurs again and again in the myths of all cultures.⁶⁵ He commented, "The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: *separation--initiation--return*: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth."⁶⁶ These three steps represent the process of self-discovery which is at the center of the "hero's journey".

The first step is seen by Campbell as "a radical transfer of emphasis from the external to the internal world, macro- to microcosms, a retreat from the desperation of the wasteland to the peace of the everlasting realm that is within."⁶⁷ There are five phases in the first step of the hero's journey: "The Call to Adventure", "Refusal of the Call", "Supernatural Aid", "The Crossing of the First Threshold", and "The Belly of the Whale."⁶⁸ We can use the character of Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey* to illustrate these phases. The call to adventure came to Odysseus when King Agamemnon and his brother

⁶⁵ Campbell, *the Power of Myth* 129.

⁶⁶ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 30.

⁶⁷ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 17.

⁶⁸ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 36.

arrived in Ithaca to ask Odysseus to join them in a battle against the Trojans. Odysseus did not wish to join them, so he pretended to be insane by tying a horse and an ox to a plough instead of two oxen. Realizing Odysseus was playing a trick on him, Agamemnon puts Odysseus' young son, Telemachus, in the path of the plough. In order to avoid killing his son, Odysseus abandoned his trick and decided to follow King Agamemnon.⁶⁹ Another example can be seen in filmmaker George Lucas's first three films of the *Star Wars* series. Lucas admitted to having drawn much of his inspiration in his creation of the science fiction's ultimate hero adventure from Campbell's analysis of mythology. He even invited Bill Moyers to conduct a set of interviews with Campbell at his Skywalker Ranch in Northern California. This production became a six-part PBS television series *The Power of Myth*.⁷⁰ In *Episode IV: A New Hope* that deals with *Star Wars*, Luke Skywalker is shown as unaware of whom his father is and uncertain about what his own future holds. His call to adventure comes when a droid (a robot in the *Star Wars* universe - android), brings a plea for help from Princess Leia. The message is intended for Obi-wan Kenobi. When Luke sets off to find Kenobi, he is ambushed by the sandmen. Kenobi shows up to save him and asks him to go together to save the Princess. Luke refuses the call by saying that he has to help his aunt and uncle attend to the farm. Sadly, when he returns, he finds that the farm has been burned and his aunt and uncle killed. Following Kenobi, who on Campbell's analysis serves as his supernatural aid, Luke crosses the first threshold and leaves his familiar world behind. His "Belly of the Whale" happens when he, along with Leia, and Han Solo, a seemingly carefree character,

⁶⁹ Samuel Butler, trans., *the Odyssey*, by Homer. (New York: Walter J. Black. 1944).

⁷⁰ Joseph Campbell, Bill Moyers, *Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth with Bill Moyers*. In the fourth episode of the series after the three prequels were released, *the Hero's Adventure*, Moyers and Campbell discuss George Lucas' claim that Campbell's work directly influenced the creation of the *Star Wars* films.

are trapped in the garbage compactor of the dark forces' space station known as the Death Star.⁷¹ In Jungian terms, the “Call to Adventure” and “Refusal of the Call” elements of the hero tale signify that the individual has become aware of the fragmentation in his character but refuses to respond to his inner calling because to do so would mean turning his back on certainties of the life he has lived and loved. The “Crossing of the First Threshold” indicates that the hero has stepped into or surrendered to the call of the collective unconscious and begun his journey of self-discovery.

Campbell's second step involves Jung's three archetypes of the unconscious – the “shadow”, or what Campbell referred to as the “Road of Trials”, in which the hero undergoes a series of tests and ordeals in a process of transformation; the “mother”, or what Campbell called the “Sacred Marriage” or “Supernatural Aid”,⁷² which in the Jungian psychoanalysis suggests a psychological encounter with a protective mother figure that assists in the hero's self-discovery; and “the father” archetype, or what Campbell identified as the “Atonement with the Father”,⁷³ where the hero transcends his personal desires and strives to regain a lost kingdom or a self-actualized life.⁷⁴ For Campbell, atonement with the father means that the hero has found his place in a cosmic plan. The hero “opens his soul beyond terror to such a degree that he will be ripe to understand how the sickening and insane tragedies of this vast and ruthless cosmos are completely validated in the majesty of Being...The hero transcends life with its peculiar

⁷¹ *Star Wars Episodes IV: A New Hope*, prod. Gary Kurtz and George Lucas, dir. George Lucas, 20th Century Fox, 1977.

⁷² Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 111, 246. It is interesting to note that Campbell's supernatural aids could come in male or female forms.

⁷³ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 145-47.

⁷⁴ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 246.

blind spot and for a moment rises to a glimpse of the source. He beholds the face of the father, understands—and the two are atoned.”⁷⁵ In the *Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi*, Luke brings his father back from the dark side by finally confronting his father, Darth Vader (Anakin Skywalker), and becoming atoned with the latter. This was symbolized through the removal of his father’s ghastly looking mask.⁷⁶ Joseph Campbell points out that the spelling of the phrase is not simply atonement but at-one-ment with the father or father figure.⁷⁷ The father or father figure is a competitive and authoritative force. In Freudian terms, there is an ogre aspect of the father, which is a mirror image of one’s own ego. Therefore, in the atonement with the father, one must first slay the ogre of his/her own superego and id, “and that is what is difficult. One must have a faith that the father is merciful, and then a reliance on that mercy. Therewith, the centre of belief is transferred outside of the bedeviling god’s tight scaly ring, and the dreadful ogres dissolve.”⁷⁸ In the Buddhist faith, the Buddha means “awakened one”. He was “not only a human being; he claimed no inspiration from any god or external power either. He attributed all his realization, attainments and achievements to human endeavor and human intelligence.”⁷⁹ Man’s position, according to Buddhism, is supreme. He is his own master, and there is no higher being or power that sits in judgment over his destiny. However, it is also worth pointing out that in the *Lotus Sutra*, one of the most important and influential of all the sutras of Mahayana Buddhism, the Buddha is deified, whose wisdom is “extremely profound and difficult to comprehend.”⁸⁰ In the *Journey*, the

⁷⁵ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 147.

⁷⁶ *Star Wars Episodes VI: Return of the Jedi*, prod. Howard Kazanjian, George Lucas, Robert Watts and Rick McCallum, dir. Richard Marquand . 20th Century Fox, Lucas Film Ltd. 1983.

⁷⁷ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 130.

⁷⁸ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 130.

⁷⁹ Walpola Sri Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York: Grove Press, 1959) 1.

⁸⁰ Burton Watson, trans., *The Lotus Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) xx.

Buddha also takes on the role of an all-powerful being, referring to himself as “the Venerable One from the Western Region of Ultimate Bliss,”⁸¹ who rides holy clouds, and is worshiped by the crowd whenever he appears. Wukong’s atonement with the Buddha is seen near the end of the novel, when he becomes fully awakened, and a Buddha himself.

“Woman as Temptress”, “Apotheosis” and “the Ultimate Boon” are also representative in the second step of Campbell’s hero analysis. “Woman as Temptress” indicates the temptations that can lead the hero to stray from his quest. Women here are used as a metaphor for the physical or material temptations, since the often-male hero is time and again tempted by his fleshly desires.⁸² In contrast with the perfect love of the goddess, the hero follows the temptress down a path that results in the hero losing his way. “Apotheosis” implies the glorification of a hero to a divine level, and the expansion of consciousness that the hero experiences when he defeats his enemy. The hero finds knowledge, love and bliss. Campbell uses the Chinese Bodhisattva Guanyin and Japanese Kwannon as an example. Because of her self-sacrificing ways and selfless actions, she is “found in every Buddhist temple of the farthest Orient. She is blessed alike to the simple and to the wise; for behind her vow there lies a profound intuition, world-redeeming, world sustaining.”⁸³ “The Ultimate Boon” is what the hero set out to find. It is the achievement of the search or the quest’s goal, whether this be King Arthur’s Holy Grail, or Jason’s Golden Fleece.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Wu, Vol. I 171.

⁸² Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 124-25.

⁸³ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 152.

⁸⁴ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 152.

The third step in Campbell's "hero's journey" involves a return, because the hero must complete the full circle of cycle of the monomyth after accomplishing his quest. This calls for the hero to bring the fruit of his victory "back into the kingdom of humanity".⁸⁵ In the *Journey*, as in most quest stories, this step happens very quickly and the author spends little time on it, as the novel is not about the hero's return but his quest. Accordingly, I too will not dissect the phases in this step or attempt to apply them to my analysis of the *Journey*.

2.3.1 Archetypes in the *Journey*

For this thesis, I will borrow the major archetypal figures delineated in *Hero with a Thousand Faces*. These are the hero, the supernatural aid, the goddess, and the temptress, along with the forces of evil; the aspects of a particular character are often combined into complex characters. Using these archetypes as a springboard I will show that Campbell's theories are largely able to accommodate the myths of one of the oldest continuous cultures in the world, namely China's, as seen through Wu Cheng'en's novel. Campbell was eclectic in his sources but focused primarily on the legends of Native Americans and the Indo-Aryan peoples. His studies of Asian sources focused on India. However, the application of Campbell's model to the *Journey* shows that Campbell's patterns of myth can greatly illuminate many Chinese hero myths. The *Journey*, while ranging very widely over many facets of Chinese culture, is only one tale in a culture rich

⁸⁵ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 193.

with myths and symbolisms, and this is just one way to shed light on this fascinating work of art.

One of the most familiar archetypes in myth is that of the hero or the warrior. We find the hero myth encoded in all the great warriors who take on the dragon, stand up to the tyrant, fight the sorcerer, or do battle with the monster: and in so doing “rescue” themselves and others. The hero/warrior is often seen setting out to protect the perimeters of the homestead or the psyche. A fitting example can be seen in a modern-day Disney movie called *Shrek*, in which the main character Shrek, an ogre, tries to protect his swamp for his own personal use instead of having a gathering of fairy creatures exiled to it by the local landholder Lord Farquaad. Saving Princess Fiona from the tower and fighting with a fire-breathing dragon are not in his original plan; however, he has to fight with Lord Farquaad in order to protect his own interests. In the process of rescuing her, he falls in love with the princess. He is afraid to tell her that he loves her because he considers himself too ugly. He relies on the counsel of his supernatural aid, a chattering donkey. He bravely decides to confront his own inner dragons by going to Farquaad’s castle to challenge him and win Fiona as his bride.⁸⁶ Here, the hero stands up against the unfairness of capricious authority, although traditionally, the hero is usually called to arms on behalf of others, or begins a quest for a divine vessel. There are of course limits to all hero challenges. In the Christian and Muslim religious traditions, the hero must not or cannot challenge God because that is the ultimate authority. Similarly,

⁸⁶ *Shrek*, prod. Jeffrey Katzenberg, Aron Warner and John H. Williamsdir, dir. Andrew Adamson and Vicky Jenson, Dream Works, 2001.

in the context of the *Journey*, Tathagata Buddha, who in the Buddhist canon dictates the order of all things in the universe, is not to be challenged in any shape or form.

In comparing the adventures of Wukong with the patterns described by Campbell, it is evident that Wukong's adventure corresponds quite closely to Campbell's structure of the departure and initiation, in which the hero is called to adventure, leaves the world he knows, acquires a magic weapon, meets a supernatural aid, sets out on the road to adventure, experiences very dark moments, faces many temptations, and eventually achieves his goal, namely the acquisition of Buddhist scriptures. There are some dissimilarities as well, such as the lack of a love interest for the hero, the atypical role for the magical supernatural helper, the use of a specific confining tool – the head clamp (紧箍咒 or “fillet” in Anthony C. Yu's translation), and the function of Zhu Bajie, also known as Stiff Bristles (猪钢鬃), who neither fits the helper nor trickster archetype as set out in Campbell's analysis. Depending on the chapter in question, the importance of these combinations can vary, but the following are the foundations of Wukong and Bodhisattva Guanyin's characters.

Much of the *Journey* tells us about the way in which Buddhist teachings can offer us clarity, help us attain a balance, and eventually help us to achieve enlightenment. Wukong knows how to reach all of these. He serves and protects his master Xuanzang, who is pure, innocent and easily deceived. For example, in Chapter 28, Xuanzang is tricked into eating meat balls made out of human flesh. In contrast, when Wukong is taken as a disciple by Xuanzang, he turns out to be more rational than emotional.

Xuanzang often gets himself into predicaments, thereby creating problems that Wukong must solve. Xuanzang is more emotional than rational, more idealistic than realistic, and more doctrinaire than empirical or flexible. In Chapter 50, when a high mountain obstructs the hungry disciples' progress, Wukong tells Xuanzang to stay inside a large circle which Wukong has drawn on the ground with his golden-hooped cudgel. At first, Xuanzang promises to heed Wukong's words. Then he agrees with Bajie that the circle cannot protect them from the wind or cold, and that not being able to move around feels as if they are imprisoned. He walks out of the circle and thereby alerts a monster-spirit to their location. Xuanzang is also known for repeatedly referring to a demon as a Bodhisattva simply because it often appears in the guise of a pure and innocent young woman. In Campbell's study of the "hero's journey", the call to adventure invites the hero to leave his world; or, as Jung puts it, the call leads to a "moral problem" which results in the individual having to confront his personal "shadow" and re-examine his identity.⁸⁷ It gives the hero the opportunity to challenge the unknown and by doing so increase his self-awareness and discover his spiritual values. The call may come in different forms. For King Arthur, it came in the form of a "great hart" (stag deer), which called upon him to enter the forest where he stumbled upon a beast.⁸⁸ In the case of Wukong, the call came from his awakening mind, and it snuck up on him gradually.

⁸⁷ Jung, "Aion: Phenomenology of the Self," *The Portable Jung* 145.

⁸⁸ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 53.

2.3.2 The Hero

In order to find out how this happened, it is necessary to take a look at the hero's humble beginning. Like many mythical heroes such as Pan Gu, Hercules, Aphrodite and Athena, the protagonist in *Journey to the West* also has unusual circumstances surrounding his birth. A magic rock on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit (花果山) is in harmony with Five Phases, or the Five Elements: Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth (五行: 金、木、水、火、土。) for millions of years and then gives birth to a stone monkey. One day, the monkey clan dares him to go through a curtain of water that covers the entrance to a cave. The stone monkey does so, and becomes the "Handsome Monkey King" (美猴王) of the clan. He eats peaches and drinks the nectar of flowers. One day he wakes up from a dream realizing that there must be a higher purpose to life, even though his most immediate concern is that he might die one day and then he will be unable to enjoy the pleasures of life. One of the older monkeys encourages him to leave his comfortable home to seek help from sages and immortals, who can lead him to immortality. The Monkey King follows the elder monkey's advice. After travelling for a few years, he comes to a cliff whose face is carved the words "the Cave of the Slanting Moon and Three Stars (斜月三星洞)".⁸⁹ He persuades the Patriarch (祖师) of the cave to take him in as a pupil. Seeing his potential, the Patriarch agrees. He also gives the Monkey King a religious name "Wake-to-Vacuity (Sun Wukong) (孙悟空)".⁹⁰ For six

⁸⁹ Wu, Vol. I 80.

⁹⁰ Wu, Vol. I 82.

or seven years Wukong diligently sprinkles water on the ground and works hard to speak and move with the proper degree of courtesy, demonstrating that he is worthy of instruction. The Patriarch thinks that he is “destined to learn”,⁹¹ and is happy to teach Wukong the way of long life; in addition, he teaches Wukong seventy-two magical transformations (七十二变) and a cloud-somersault (筋斗云) that can carry him around the world. Once he has mastered these skills, Wukong tries to show off in front of his fellow students. The Patriarch is not amused and tells Wukong that it is time for him to go back to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. Here, Wukong is prompted to complete Campbell’s first monomyth cycle and bring his newly acquired knowledge to his old community. As in myths and popular tales, Wukong is reluctant to leave and to face new challenges and responsibilities. He tries to convince the Patriarch to let him stay, and pleads, “...my master’s profound kindness to me has not yet been repaid; I therefore dare not leave.” His Master replies, “See that you don’t get into trouble and involve me; that’s all I ask.”⁹²

Being trained by a wise master, which Campbell calls a supernatural aid, is a very common step in the hero’s transformation. Wukong is no exception. He also goes through tough physical and mental exercises so that metamorphosis can begin. Campbell explains the process by using the example of Kyazimba from an East African tribe, a figure that sets out for the land where the sun rises. After a long journey when he can barely stand, he hears the sound of someone approaching from behind. He turns around and sees a “decrepit little woman”. She wants to know what he is after. When he tells

⁹¹ Wu, Vol. I 87.

⁹² Wu, Vol. I 93

her, she wraps her garment around him and transports him to the zenith, where the sun pauses in the middle of the day.⁹³ A similar example can be seen in the fifth episode of the *Star Wars*, where Luke Skywalker is recuperating in a mysterious and enchanted forest and undergoing training with the Jedi Master, Yoda. Among oddly shaped trees Luke gains tremendous energy and builds up a firm psychological foundation for his later transformation. Unlike Wukong, Luke is eager to leave despite Yoda's advice. To the contrary, master Yoda does not think Luke is ready to face all the trials and tribulations that await him. Although Wukong is in a similar situation, further training calls for much more profound and enduring influence than the Patriarch can offer.

Campbell observes that heroes often have magic weapons that they acquire in a mysterious or miraculous way. In *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell relates an American Indian story of a supernatural aid, that is disguised as a Spider Woman. She offers the twin war gods of the Navaho "a charm called 'feather of the alien gods,' which consists of a hoop with two life-feathers attached, and another life-feather to preserve their existence, to guard them against four places of danger when they set out to travel to the house of their father, the Sun."⁹⁴ Other examples can be seen in King Arthur's Excalibur, Odysseus' bow, and the light saber Luke Skywalker receives from Obi-Wan Kenobi. In hero myths, obtaining a special weapon is very representative of an archetype. Often, the hero is the only one that can wield his weapon. After Wukong returns to his Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, he sets out to obtain a unique weapon. Once again, four old monkeys suggest that he go to the Dragon Palace of the East Sea

⁹³ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 69.

⁹⁴ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 70.

(东海龙宫) and ask the Dragon King (龙王) for help. Wukong proclaims to the King that he is “the Sage of the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit (花果山天生圣人)” and a friendly neighbour. He expresses his desire for a special weapon to guard his mountain. The Dragon King fears Wukong’s power, so he orders his servants to bring him a nine-pronged fork (九股叉) which weighs three thousand six hundred pounds. Wukong holds the fork in his hand and says it is too light and wants to see another piece. The Dragon King commands his men to bring an ancient battle-axe (方天戟) which weighs seven thousand two hundred pounds. Wukong is still not satisfied. The Dragon King’s wife and daughters take the king aside and suggest to him that he let Wukong have a look at the rare magic iron that was used by the Great Yu (大禹) to conquer the Flood. The iron they note has been glowing with “a strange and lovely light” for a few days.⁹⁵ Thinking this can discourage Wukong once and for all, inasmuch as the iron is big and heavy, and has been used to calm the sea, the old Dragon King agrees with their proposal. He leads Wukong to the center of the ocean treasury where the “mighty needle” (神针) is kept. It is an iron rod more than twenty feet long and as thick as a barrel. Using all his might, Wukong pulls it out, saying, “It’s a little too long and too thick. It would be more serviceable if it were somewhat shorter and thinner.”⁹⁶ He keeps uttering these words until the iron becomes shorter and thinner until and he can hold it in his hand. He notices that on it are written the words: The Compliant Golden-Hooped Rod (如意金箍棒). Weight: thirteen thousand five hundred pounds.⁹⁷ The rod has golden loops at each end,

⁹⁵ Wu, Vol. I 103-04.

⁹⁶ Wu, Vol. I 105.

⁹⁷ Wu, Vol. I 105.

with solid black iron in between. Wukong is delighted and thanks the Dragon King for the treasure.

Other special weapons, tools or abilities that give their masters special powers include: Xuanzang's Head Clamp Spell (紧箍咒) which allows him to tighten the clamp around Wukong's head if Wukong disobeys him, his embroidered cassock that protects him from falling back into the wheel of transmiration (轮回), a Nine-Ring priestly Staff (九环锡杖) that keeps him from meeting harm, Wukong's seventy-two transformations that allow him to disguise himself, his cloud-somersault that can carry him a hundred and eighty thousand miles at a time, Wukong's magic of immobilization (定身术) that once transfixed seven fairies beneath the trees in Xiwangmu's peach garden, Bajie's Nine Pronged Muckrake (九齿钉耙), the Jade Emperor's Elixir that guarantees everlasting life, and the Demon-Reflecting Mirror of the Pagoda Bearer Devaraja (托塔天王) that detects monsters and fiends.

2.3.3 The Supernatural Aid

With a suitable weapon in hand, the hero usually embarks on a journey to answer the call to adventure. His first encounter is usually with a figure that becomes his mentor or Such what Campbell called his "the Supernatural Aid". By tradition this figure is often an old man (hermit) or old woman (crone); sometimes, however, it can be a young woman (virgin or maid). "What such a figure represents is the benign," according to Campbell, "protecting power of destiny. The fantasy is a reassurance - promise that the

peace of Paradise, which was known first within the mother womb, is not to be lost; that it supports the present and stands in the future as well as in the past (is omega as well as alpha); that though omnipotence may seem to be endangered...protective power is always and ever present within the sanctuary of the heart...The hero finds all the forces of the unconscious at his side. Mother Nature herself supports the mighty task.”⁹⁸

In Jungian terms, the supernatural aid is the “mother” archetype – a feminine being. She is not a substitute for the human mother, but rather a spontaneous product of the unconscious.⁹⁹ The psychological quality of the “mother” archetype is such that it gathers together all the archetypes of the unconscious for the hero so that he can achieve a coherent sense of identity. For example, in Homer’s *Iliad*, Paris, a Trojan prince, is asked to choose which of the three goddesses, Hera (symbol of power), Athena (symbol of wisdom) and Aphrodite (symbol of beauty), is the most beautiful. Each goddess has something to offer to Paris to gain his favour. Hera offers ownership of all of Europe and Asia; Athena offers skill in battle, wisdom and the abilities of the greatest warriors; and Aphrodite offers the love of the most beautiful woman on Earth, Helen of Sparta. To further convince Paris, Aphrodite lets her robe fall, exposing her nudity. Paris chooses Aphrodite—and Helen, inasmuch as he bases his judgment on what he truly wants, namely to act on his lust. His selection of Aphrodite leads to the Trojan War and his death, for he chose only one personification of the “mother” archetype, namely beauty.¹⁰⁰

When he is presented with this tough choice, Paris is faced with a dilemma and he

⁹⁸ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 71-72.

⁹⁹ Jung, “Aion: Phenomenology of the Self,” *The Portable Jung*, 151.

¹⁰⁰ Homer, *The Iliad*, tran. B. V. Rieu. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1950).

resolves his dilemma badly. One is left to wonder whether he could have chosen so as to achieve a coherent sense of identity if he was only allowed to make one choice. Jung's analysis lets us see the fate of a dysfunctional individual who is unable to integrate all the aspects of the unconscious. Campbell's goddess is the goddess of love, whom he describes as the "bliss of infancy regained", and "the ultimate adventure, when all the barriers and ogres have been overcome." This state is commonly represented as a "mystical marriage...of the triumphant hero-soul with the Queen Goddess of the World."¹⁰¹ The goddess symbolizes the point in the adventure when the hero encounters an all powerful and unconditional love that he may well have only previously experienced in his infancy. The "meeting with the goddess" also signifies the union of the opposites.

Campbell's supernatural aids are represented by both male guardians such as Hermes-Mercury, and Thoth in Egyptian myth,¹⁰² and female guardians such as the helpful crone and the Spider Woman mentioned earlier. In the *Journey*, Wukong's supernatural aid also takes on a female persona – the Bodhisattva Guanyin of the South Sea (南海观音), a goddess who is often at his side when he faces danger. Guanyin, literally the one who observes the sounds of the world, is the Chinese name for Avalokiteshvara, the compassionate savior worshiped by Buddhists. In India and in China before and during the Tang dynasty, Guanyin was depicted as a handsome prince. However, the "bodhisattva underwent a profound and startling transformation in China during the next several hundred years, and by the 16th century Guanyin had become not

¹⁰¹ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces*. 109.

¹⁰² Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 72.

only completely Chinese but also the much beloved Goddess of Mercy.”¹⁰³ It is believed that the Water and Moon Guanyin depicted at Dunhuang marked the beginning of the Chinese metamorphosis of Avalokiteshvara.¹⁰⁴ Guanyin plays a very important role in Buddhist scriptures. According to Yu Chunfang, more than eighty Buddhist scriptures are connected with Guanyin. Among the more influential ones are the *Lotus Sutra* (法华经), the *Avatamsaka Sutra* (华严经), the *Shurangama Sutra* (楞严经), and the *Heart Sutra* (多心经). Chapter 25 of the *Lotus Sutra* describes Guanyin as a universal savior.¹⁰⁵ Guanyin assumes many different forms in the various schools of Chinese Buddhism, among them, Guanyin of the South Sea (南海观音), the queen goddess, or the supernatural aid in the *Journey*, can be traced to the *Avatamsaka*. Her spiritual home is known as Putuo (普陀), and, in the 16th century, because of the patronage of the Ming emperor Wanli, it became a major pilgrimage centre. Yu Chunfang believes that Wu Cheng'en probably visited Putuo, which had become a place “frequently visited by writers and literati, for he provided detailed descriptions of the island in no less than nine places in the novel (chapters 17, 22, 26, 42, 49, and 58).”¹⁰⁶ In the *Journey*, the Jade Emperor, who is believed to be the supreme deity of Taoism and popular religion, bestows on Guanyin the title “the Efficacious Guanyin of Great Loving Kindness and Compassion”. Though she is used as an analogy for sexual beauty in some dramatic works such as *the Story of the Western Chamber*, in the *Journey* she is not Wukong's love interest. In the novel, she appears to Wukong as a mother figure. This is evident in

¹⁰³ Yu Chun-fang, “Guanyin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteshvara”, *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850 -1850*, ed. Marsha Weidner (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994). 151.

¹⁰⁴ Yu Chun-fang, “Guanyin”. *Latter Days of the Law* 151.

¹⁰⁵ Yu Chun-fang, “Guanyin”. *Latter Days of the Law* 152.

¹⁰⁶ Yu Chun-fang, “Guanyin”. *Latter Days of the Law* 164.

her constant and tireless support to him. Interestingly, she also shows that she is capable of causing Wukong pain when she makes Xuanzang put a head clamp on Wukong's head. Xuanzang is often portrayed as one who cannot think straight or make a sensible decision for himself or others; thus Guanyin's giving Xuanzang the power to constantly rein Wukong in does not quite fit Jung's mother archetype or the typical goddess or supernatural aid archetype that Campbell discusses. Wu Cheng'en explains the confinement tool as follows. Five hundred years after Tathagata Buddha pinned Wukong under the Mountain of Five Phases (metal, wood, water, fire, and earth),¹⁰⁷ he asks Guanyin to release Wukong from his "Belly of the Whale". He gives Guanyin three treasures, one of which is to be handed over to Xuanzang. They are called "the tightening clamps".¹⁰⁸ Though they are all alike, their uses are not the same; and each is accompanied by a separate spell. The Constrictive and the Prohibitive Clamp (紧禁箍儿) is to be put on Wukong's head after his release as soon as he shows a sign of misconduct. It will take root "the moment it comes into contact with the flesh", and by reciting the particular spell, it will "cause the head to swell and ache so painfully that he will think his brains are bursting."¹⁰⁹ It may be that the symbolism of the clamp is not entirely bad, inasmuch as Buddhism tends to make an effort to restrain the restless and unbridled mind, somewhat like the clamp. The clamp then may serve a positive purpose. In spite of the clamp, Guanyin's unwavering support of Wukong is evident throughout the novel. In Chapter twenty-one, when Wukong fails to rescue his master from the Wind Devil (风魔), he comes to Guanyin for help. Without any delay Guanyin takes the

¹⁰⁷ Wu, Vol. I 174.

¹⁰⁸ Wu, Vol. I 186.

¹⁰⁹ Wu, Vol. I 186.

Flying-Dragon Staff (飞龙杖) and “mounts the clouds with Wukong”.¹¹⁰ In Chapter twenty-six, Wukong seeks her help in order to resurrect a tree that can bear ginseng fruit. Guanyin is ready and only too happy to oblige.¹¹¹ Many similar examples can be found to show Guanyin as the compassionate savior. These incidents can be explained from a Jungian psychological viewpoint and ideology, as Guanyin acting as the embodiment of mercy, redemption, compassion, and kindness towards a once wild and impulsive pilgrim, even though at times she has to contain him with the head clamps. Wukong is drawn to such elements and having found Guanyin, he accepts her as his guide and mentor, and depends on her like an infant depends on his/her mother for care and comfort.

2.3.4 Women As Temptresses

The archetypal model of “Woman as Temptress” works well with the *Journey*. Temptress is a metaphor symbolizing that a male hero’s enslavement by his earthly desires which makes him stray from his journey and weakens his power. Campbell wrote, “Not even monastery walls, not even the remoteness of the desert, can defend against the female presences; for as long as the hermit’s flesh clings to his bones and pulses warm, the images of life are alert to storm his mind. Saint Anthony, practicing his austerities in the Egyptian Thebaid, was troubled by voluptuous hallucinations perpetrated by female devils attracted to his magnetic solitude.”¹¹² Although Wukong is

¹¹⁰ Wu, Vol. I 426.

¹¹¹ Wu, Vol. II 12-16.

¹¹² Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 125.

never swayed by such temptation, his fellow disciple, Zhu Bajie, proves to be a glutton for punishment when it comes to beauty. In Chapter 27, the White-Bone Demon functions as a temptress when she comes to Xuanzang and Bajie in order to lure them into her trap, so she can eat the monk and lengthen her life span. Succumbing to her beauty, as she “changes into a girl with a face like the moon and features like flowers, one cannot begin to describe the bright eyes and the elegant brows, the white teeth and the red lips,”¹¹³ both Xuanzang and Bajie are fooled by her. Her beauty and the food she brings arouse Bajie’s worldly mind.¹¹⁴ Xuanzang sees the girl, and right away folds his hands so that he can call her a lady Bodhisattva. When Wukong comes back from his search for food, his fiery eyes recognize that the girl is a fiend. He is about to strike her down when a greatly alarmed Xuanzang stops him. Realizing what is happening, Wukong says to the flesh-eyed monk, “your worldly mind must have been aroused by the sight of this woman’s beauty.” Xuanzang is struck dumb in his shame.¹¹⁵ In Chapter 73, seven beautiful female spirits in the Cobweb Cave (蜘蛛精) also desire Xuanzang’s flesh in order to extend their lives. They string him up with coils of thread which they produce from their navels. Aided by a Taoist master, they plan to boil Xuanzang in a copper cauldron. Once again, Wukong comes to his rescue by sneaking into the Yellow Flower Temple (黄花观), the spirits’ residence, and squishing the seven spider spirits to a pulp. Although some of the temptresses are bodhisattvas taking seductive forms in order to test the pilgrims’ power of discernment and worldly detachment, most of the supernatural temptresses are potentially harmful. In Chapter 64, the Apricot Immortal, with

¹¹³ Wu, Vol. II 19.

¹¹⁴ Wu, Vol. II 20.

¹¹⁵ Wu, Vol. II 23.

“luminous star like eyes” snuggles up to Xuanzang under the moon and flatters him by praising his poetry in order to “seal the marital contract”.¹¹⁶ In Chapter 93-95, the Jade Hare kidnaps the princess of the Kingdom of India and takes her place, seeking to make Xuanzang into her husband. Once again, he is saved by the wily intelligence of Wukong, and the rightful princess is restored. In Chapter 53, in what is surely a symbol of the loss of male identity and masculinity after consuming water from the Women’s Kingdom of the Western Liang, Xuanzang and Bajie both become pregnant. In order to undo the pregnancies and restore their masculine potency, “Yellow Hag”¹¹⁷ and Wukong have to seek an antidote from a river guarded by the uncle of the Red Boy (红孩).

2.4 The Journey and Ramayana: a Comparative Analysis

Throughout the hundred-chapter narrative, Xuanzang’s character is constantly overshadowed by Wukong. The pilgrims finally receive the Buddhist scriptures after facing eighty-one trials, represented by a series of monsters that must be subdued. In these episodes of conflict, Wukong is indispensable in subjugating the demons through his ability and courage. In Chapter 58, Wukong, having been temporarily rejected by Xuanzang from the group, returns to his home on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit only to find that his throne has been seized by an impostor. The fake monkey so resembles Wukong that even the Bodhisattva Guanyin fails to differentiate between the true and the false. She brings the two monkeys to Tathagata to sort them out. When the Buddha

¹¹⁶ Wu, Vol. II 233-235.

¹¹⁷ “Yellow Hag” is a nickname for the Sha Monk, and suggests a variety of obscure alchemical allusions. Anthony Yu notes, “In internal alchemy, the secretion of the spleen, called *huangpo* (“yellow hag”) is considered vital to the nourishment of the other viscera” (1:529).

correctly identifies the false monkey, an outraged Wukong immediately strikes the impostor dead, which surprises the Buddha.¹¹⁸ Wukong is afraid that Xuanzang might not take him back, so he asks the Buddha to relieve him of his obligation as Xuanzang's protector. The Buddha reminds him that eventually he will also sit on a lotus throne for the merit he gains. Guanyin brings Wukong back to Xuanzang to continue his mission. For the "Monkey of the Mind", there can only be one true monkey, as "two minds cause disturbance in the great universe."¹¹⁹ This episode can perhaps serve equally well as a metaphor for the "regrettably acrimonious dispute"¹²⁰ that has surrounded the issue of the character Wukong's historical origins. Not only does the debate circulate around two similar monkeys, but the scholarly community is also of two minds on this issue. Hu Shih's original suggestion that the character "is not a native product, but rather is an import from India"¹²¹ stimulated a controversy that has generally focused on whether Wukong is of "indigenous" creation or a copy of Hanuman, a prominent monkey character in the Indian epic the *Ramayana*. Certainly, the issue cannot and should not be reduced to a simple question as to which monkey is the original. In this chapter, I will attempt to widen this debate by looking into how and why a mythical character could develop from a combination of indigenous and foreign elements.

Since the beginning of this century, there has been an ongoing scholarly debate concerning the origins of Wukong. When Hu Shi first suggested a theory of a possible

¹¹⁸ Wu, Vol. III 118-133.

¹¹⁹ Wu, Vol. III 118.

¹²⁰ Victor H. Mair, ed., *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) 660.

¹²¹ Cited in Mair, 705.

connection between Sun Wukong and Hanuman, many of his contemporaries adamantly opposed the idea. The *Journey* is one of the most popular novels in Chinese literature. Likewise, the Rama tradition is very pervasive in India. Clearly, the popularity of these monkey heroes is without question.

Many similarities exist between the Chinese novel and the great Indian epic *Ramayana*. Both narratives are works of sustained allegory; in other words, the symbols, action, and language of both works function to project complex patterns of meaning beyond the literal level of the text.¹²² Although the heroes are culturally unrelated, and the aims of their quests differ, there exists a sense of progression toward spiritual perfection based on trials and tribulations encountered by the two novels' fundamental characters. The *Journey* and *Ramayana* offer many events that correspond remarkably in terms of subject matter or form of adversity met by the protagonists. Thus *Ramayana* tells the tale of Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu (preserver of the universe in Indian and Hindu mythology), whose mission is to kill the evil demon Ravana. The story takes the form of a journey from Rama's miraculous conception, through his childhood and his marriage to the beautiful Sita, his expulsion from his kingdom, the abduction of his beloved wife by the demon king Ravana, his long search to find her with the help of his devoted monkey servant Hanuman, and his triumphant battle with Ravana. Hanuman is the monkey-general of the Monkey-king Sugriva. By the king's command, Hanuman is ordered to help Rama rescue his wife. Hanuman plays an essential role in this mission.

¹²² Many critics have interpreted *The Journey* as an allegorical text, although they differ in their concepts of intended allegory. Commentaries can be seen in Plaks's *Archetype and Allegory*, and Anthony C. Yu's "Two examples of Religious Pilgrimage: *The Commedia* and *The Journey to the West*".

The story and the journey it recounts end with Rama's joyful return to the kingdom of Ayodhya.¹²³ Clearly, in its details *Ramayana*'s plot differs from that of the *Journey*, but both works narrate a journey that leads to an acquisition and growth in knowledge about ourselves that we call knowledge or enlightenment.

2.4.1 Spiritual Quest

Both these epics are about spiritual quests. Rama's heroic journey is a story with a moral allegory; setting Rama up as the perfect son, husband, warrior and king, while Sita being the perfect woman - tender, compassionate and devoted. Dharma (individual conduct in conformity with the law or principle that puts the universe in order) was personified in the form of Rama as a model of the Hindu concepts of harmony and duty. This can also be compared with the overriding tone of spiritual harmony and sense of duty in the *Journey*. Hanuman as an ideal unassuming and loving devotee mirrors Wukong's utter devotion towards his master Xuanzang. The primary antagonist of *Ramayana*, Ravana, represents the dangers of lust and ego, both of which can be seen in Bajie's temptations by female fiends. Xuanzang's categorical adherence to Buddhist moral rules against consuming flesh and against the taking of life often makes him egotistical, self-righteous and arrogant.

While *Ramayana* focuses on the quest of a human/spirit character, the *Journey* centers on the amazing adventures of the capable Monkey that fights off evil spirits who

¹²³ The information on *Ramayana* is summarized from Sri C. R. Sreenivasa Ayyangar's *The Ramayana of Valmiki*. Part 1 and 2. (Madras: The Title Flower Company, 1991).

endeavour to sabotage the pilgrims' journey and deter them from answering the call of duty. Throughout the journey, the demons come in a wide range of shapes and kinds. Among them is a pride of lion monsters, as well as a female spirit who takes Xuanzang to her bottomless cave to marry him. These and all the other fiends put Wukong's ingenuity and supernatural powers to the test. Undeniably, Wukong is the real hero of the pilgrimage and spiritual quest. Hanuman, the monkey character in *Ramayana*, is powerful, intelligent, and highly devotional. He saves many lives including Rama, Lakshmana (brother and close companion of Rama) and Sita. Hanuman brings the news to Rama that Sita is alive which gives Rama hope to go on living. Hanuman once battles with the demons and flies to the Himalayas to bring back medicinal plants to save Lakshmana's life. When Sita is about to hang herself from a tree with her long hair, Hanuman sings the glory of Rama which gives Sita the hope required to go on living. Thus Hanuman is the life sustainer to many and the slayer of demons in *Ramayana*, which makes the *Journey* closely resemble *Ramayana*.

2.4.2 Wukong vs. Hanuman

Like Hanuman, Wukong lives a life of extreme commitment and devotion, more specifically, a life of faithful adherence to a great cause which enabled the transformation and transcendence to occur. His devotion to his master Xuanzang is mirrored in that of Hanuman's devotion to Rama. Hanuman is an example of how devotional service is to be ideally practised and how a pure devotee is supposed to relate to his worthy Lord. Everything that Hanuman does is only for the pleasure and benefit of Lord Rama,

whether it is building bridges, fighting rakshasas or flying across the country to fetch life saving herbs. He constantly meditates on how to best serve Rama. When he is sent to seek out Sita in Ravana's Lanka, he is not satisfied with delivering her a message from Lord Rama. He also tries to destroy the forest, kill many rakshasas and burn down half of Lanka. That is the nature of a pure devotee: to cultivate everything that is positive or beneficial to the lord and reject everything that is not. Wukong demonstrates equal supernatural powers and shows his utmost devotion to Xuanzang. In addition, Wukong is capable of clarity, discernment and wisdom to an extent that surpasses his own master. Since Xuanzang is incapable of being a spiritual guide or mentor, Wukong requires Guanyin as a supernatural aid; she also serves as a stern, but benevolent mother figure for Wukong. In this respect Wukong differs from Hanuman, for the latter has no supernatural aid or benevolent mother figure.

As is the case with many archetypal mythical figures, the hero's birth is often mysterious and unusual. Hanuman was once a celestial being, the son of Anjani. As a result of a curse, Anjani is born in the monkey race. However, her unrivalled beauty attracts the powerful god of the winds, Vayu, and their union leads to the birth of Hanuman. It is said that as a young monkey god, Hanuman is quite naughty and abuses his powers and disturbs many peaceful sages that dwell in the forests. Eventually the sages pray to Brahma, the creator of the universe in the Hindu tradition, and ask him to find a solution to Hanuman's mischievous ways. In response to their pleas, Brahma curses Hanuman and removes his special powers so that others can not be disturbed or harmed. Yet, this is only a temporary measure because through their mystic vision the

sages realize that Hanuman will eventually play a vital role by assisting Lord Rama in his exploits. They decree therefore that when someone reminds Hanuman of his powers the effect of the curse will be lifted and Hanuman will completely remember his powers.

Wukong's mysterious birth can be traced to a stone egg that developed from a weathered rock. Like Hanuman, the reckless stone monkey declares that he is the "Great Sage – Equal to Heaven", and his rash behavior upsets many heavenly creatures. They gather together and then as a group go to see the all-powerful Tathagata Buddha for help.

Tathagata Buddha makes a bet with the monkey and challenges him to fly out of his palm. To the monkey's surprise, when he thinks he has reached the end of the universe where five pillars hold up the sky, he still remains in the Buddha's palm. The Buddha then traps the monkey under a mountain for five hundred years until he is set free by Xuanzang. The only redemption for him is to protect Xuanzang when he travels to the West to obtain Buddhist sutras. Wukong acquires a set of fiery eyes (火眼金睛) when he is put into Laozi's Crucible of the Eight Trigrams (八卦炉) and burns with an alchemic fire for forty-nine days. This bears a striking similarity to Hanuman, whose eyes are also ruby red in colour. Another similarity between the two can be seen in Hanuman's ability to change his shape and size at will much like Wukong who is capable of seventy-two transformations. Paintings of Hanuman often show him holding a staff with one leg off the ground ready to leap somewhere. For example, in one of the paintings entitled *Hanuman – the Remover of Unfavourable Astrological Influences* (the artist remains unknown), Hanuman is depicted as supporting a mountain in one hand and a staff in the other.¹²⁴ The staff is used to destroy evil forces and restore peace and righteousness. The

¹²⁴ Artist unknown, *Sanjivani Hanuman*, Batik Painting On Cotton; 2.2 ft x 3.6 ft.

mountain symbolizes Hanuman's ability to overcome insurmountable obstacles. He is also known to be able to fly. Likewise, Wukong can ride clouds and travel 180,000 miles in a single somersault. He wields a staff which expands and shrinks at his command. A prominent parallel between the two characters lies in their devotion to their masters. Unlike the Hindu myth, the Bodhisattva Guanyin advises Xuanzang to put a metal clamp on Wukong's head when he is rescued from beneath the mountains. This proves to be necessary because without the clamp Wukong's mind will remain restless and in a state of constant agitation. The clamps are symbolic of Buddhist sovereignty. Only Tathagata Buddha can be the judge for a perfect mind. The clamps naturally dissolve when Tathagata Buddha determines that one has reached one's highest potential – a perfect mind.

2.4.3 Hanuman as the Prototype of Wukong

There is no clear evidence of a historical link between the stories of Wukong with Hanuman. But considering the fact that *Ramayana* was written between the fourth and the second century BCE, and the historical Xuanzang journeyed to India to learn about Buddhism around 629 CE, it is possible that the character of Wukong stemmed from the stories of Hanuman. The oldest surviving manuscript of *Ramayana* is dated from the 11th century CE, and the *Journey* was written in the 16th century CE, another thousand years after the historical Xuanzang made his trip to India. Though the religious subtexts and allegories in the two works differ, distinctive parallels can be drawn between the two bachelor monkey heroes. For example, both are asexual, adventurous, wise, courageous,

and completely devoted to their masters. In Jungian analysis, these similarities can be referred to as the collective unconscious, or human beings' "psychic inheritance", which is a reservoir of psychological knowledge we are all born with, regardless of spatial, social and cultural codes of the place in which we are born.

The possible link between Sun Wukong and Hanuman was considered by a number of scholars. Though not officially confirming it, Hu Shi suggests that Hanuman, the monkey warrior in *Ramayana*, as the most likely model for Wukong.¹²⁵ C. T. Hsia has accepted the speculation that "the Chinese must have received the *Ramayana* story in a garbled form."¹²⁶ Anthony Yu also comments:

If indigenous materials prove insufficient to establish with any certainty the origin of the monkey hero, does it imply that one must follow Hu Shih's conjectures and look for a prototype in alien literature? An affirmative answer to this question seems inviting, since the universally popular Hanuman adventures in the *Ramayana* story might have found their way into China through centuries of mercantile and religious traffic with India.¹²⁷

The argument as to whether or not Hanuman is the prototype of Wukong might well

¹²⁵ Hu Shi, *Hu Shi Wen Cun* (胡适文存). 4 vol. (Taipei: Yuan-tung t'u-shu-kung-ssu, 1963). Vol. II. 370-372.

¹²⁶ C. T. Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968). 130.

¹²⁷ Anthony C. Yu, "His-yu Chi and the Tradition", *History of Religions*. Vol. 12, No. 1 (Aug., 1972). (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press). 90-94.

be pointless if Jung's collective unconscious enables us to identify universal patterns of similarity between literatures and cultural works no matter where or when they are produced. But if the link exists, then not only does Buddhism influence the *Journey* in its own right but it may also act as a means of conveying parts of a still earlier Indian religious philosophical tradition, namely those of Hinduism, to the Chinese classic and Chinese culture. Besides, if the monkey hero idea originated in an alien culture, the need for such an idea was surely Chinese. And resorting to an image drawn from Indian literature was just a convenient or apt way to express that need in words.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have given examples of how Campbell's "hero's journey" model and the archetypes of Jung's collective unconscious help us to understand this great classical Chinese tale. If I am right, then this examination not only serves to shed light on the *Journey*, but also to link us on a personal level to many of the mythical and fictional heroes, as we ourselves could be walking the path of a "hero's journey". In the case of Wukong, the "call to adventure" summons him to "transfer his spiritual centre of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown."¹²⁸ He never refuses any "summons" or desires to lead an ordinary and fairly uneventful life. He "follows courageously as the consequences unfold, and finds the forces of the unconscious at his side."¹²⁹ He has no fear of risk or peril because for one "with competence and courage

¹²⁸ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 58.

¹²⁹ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 72.

the danger fades.”¹³⁰ Confronted with some very dark moments in his life, the hero has the courage to rise above them, and emerge with a brand-new purpose for his life. As Campbell notes, “Once inside he may be said to have died to time and returned to the World Womb, the World Navel, the Earthly Paradise...Allegorically, then, the passage into a temple and the hero-dive through the jaws of the whale are identical adventures, both denoting in picture language, the life-centering, life renewing act.”¹³¹ Then, along comes the “perilous path of initiatory conquests and moments of illumination. Dragons have now to be slain and surprising barriers passed - again, again, and again.”¹³² Temptations are many, but Wukong stands firm with his supernatural aid at his side. He manifested what Campbell said, “Man is that alien presence with whom the forces of egoism must come to terms, through whom the ego is to be crucified and resurrected, and in whose image society is to be reformed. Man, understood however not as ‘I’ but as ‘Thou’: for the ideals and temporal institutions of no tribe, race, continent, social class, or century, can be the measure of the inexhaustible and multifariously wonderful divine existence that is the life in all of us.”¹³³ On a personal level, Wukong is and ought to be a model for all of us.

¹³⁰ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 82.

¹³¹ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 91-92.

¹³² Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 109.

¹³³ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 391.

Chapter 3: Typological Themes in the *Journey*

3.1 Introduction

The *Journey*'s narrative is broken into a series of incidents that have recurrent features – most notably the 81 trials faced by the pilgrims. By analyzing these features, we gain a greater understanding of the grand narrative of life, suffering, and redemption. In this chapter, Russian Scholar Vladimir Propp's formalist approach will be applied to the study of the narrative structure of the *Journey*. In the formalist approach, sentence structures were broken down into analyzable elements, or morphemes. By breaking down a large number of Russian folktales into their smallest narrative units, or narratemes, Propp was able to arrive at a typology of narrative structures. By analyzing character and action types, he concluded that there were thirty-one generic narratemes in the Russian folktale. While not all were present in a given tale, he found that the tales he had analyzed displayed the functions in the same sequence. My intention in adopting Propp's approach is to reveal the elemental building blocks that form the basis of the narrative structure of the *Journey*.

Although Propp's work appeared much earlier than Campbell's, his analysis of plot typology in Russian folktales corresponds with Campbell's monomyth, and with Jung's ideas of the collective unconscious that is discernable in mythology. Propp studied the narrative functions, while Jung and Campbell focused on the archetypes and meaning, to come to a conclusion that everyone in the world is born with the same basic subconscious

model of what a “hero”, a “mentor” or a “quest” is, even though they do not speak the same language. Campbell demonstrated that all stories are expressions of the same story-pattern, and concluded that all religions contain the same essential truth. Jung placed a slightly different emphasis on the significance of the structural foundation. For him, the quest pattern is crucial to “the process of individuation”,¹³⁴ which mirrors the stages of the psychological development of the individual.

In 1928 in his *Morphology of the Folktale (Morfoloġiia Skazk)*, which was translated into English in the late 1950’s, Propp categorized and identified the elements of a common plot as consisting of thirty-one steps. He concluded that after the initial situation is depicted, the tale takes the following sequence of thirty-one functions:

1. One of the members of a family absents himself from home.
2. An interdiction is addressed to the hero.
3. The interdiction is violated.
4. The villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance.
5. The villain receives information about his victim.
6. The villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or his belongings.
7. The victim submits to deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy.

¹³⁴ Carl. G. Jung, “A study in the process of individuation,” Introductory, in: Jung, C., *Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, Vol. 9, Part 1. 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968). 451 p. 290-292.

8. The villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family/or, one member of a family either lacks something or desires to have something.
9. Misfortune or lack is made known; the hero is approached with a request or command; he is allowed to go or he is dispatched.
10. The seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction.
11. The hero leaves home.
12. The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked, etc., which prepares the way for his receiving either a magical agent or helper.
13. The hero reacts to the actions of the future donor.
14. The hero acquires the use of a magical agent.
15. The hero is transferred, delivered, or led to the whereabouts of an object of search.
16. The hero and the villain join in direct combat.
17. The hero is branded.
18. The villain is defeated.
19. The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated.
20. The hero returns.
21. The hero is pursued.
22. Rescue of the hero from pursuit.
23. The hero, unrecognized, arrives home or in another country.
24. A false hero presents unfounded claims.
25. A difficult task is proposed to the hero.
26. The task is resolved.

27. The hero is recognized.
28. The false hero or villain is exposed.
29. The hero is given a new appearance.
30. The villain is punished.
31. The hero is married and ascends the throne.¹³⁵

It is widely acknowledged that myths are part of a culture's oral tradition. They are considered a form of spoken language, while literature is said to be a part of the written tradition. Nevertheless, anthropologists and literary analysts both acknowledge the connections between myths and more contemporary literature. Therefore, many literary critics and anthropologists alike take the same approach to literature as they do to myth to search for the most basic elements of the story. Furthermore, they believe the structural approaches and narrative functions deployed in analyzing myths are similar in nature to those used to analyze literature. Thus, Jung, Campbell and Propp all sought to break down stories into their component parts and then analyze the relations between the parts.

3.2 Narrative Functions

Propp's thirty-one literary building blocks were drawn from Russian folktales. The characters and narrative functions of the folktales were further grouped into seven "spheres of action" which join together logically, to express the meaning of action. The spheres coincide remarkably with Jung's archetype methodology and Campbell's stages

¹³⁵ Peter Barry, "Narratology," *Beginning Theory*. 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) 227-228.

of the myth cycle because Propp believed that mythical tales were constructed of certain plot elements and that these elements consistently occurred in a uniform sequence. To summarize, Propp categorized the following “actors” according to the narrative structure, corresponding to some common archetypal characters:

1. The hero whose quest is to restore the equilibrium.
2. The villain whose task is to disrupt the equilibrium.
3. The donor (provider) who gives the hero something, advice, information or an object.
4. The helper who aids the hero with his task.
5. The princess (a sought-for-person) and her father – the princess marries the hero while the father proposes difficult tasks to the hero and exposes the false hero.
6. The dispatcher (the herald) who sends the hero on his quest.
7. The false hero who sets out to undermine the hero’s quest by pretending to aid him.¹³⁶

Propp concluded that using the recurring patterns of thirty-one “functions” and the seven “spheres of action”, one can generate the plot of any individual folktale in the Russian corpus. Students of his theory believe that applying his methods, one can begin to analyze the seemingly simple materials for complexities of characterization and motivation which form the basis of even psychological and realist fiction. At times, we find a realistic story in the form of myth. For example, the Cinderella archetype, a tale

¹³⁶ Barry, 229-230.

that is found in similar forms worldwide, lies beneath novels and movies like *Jane Eyre* and *The Sound of Music*.

To apply Propp's theory more broadly, almost all types of fantastic fiction, whether fairy tales, chivalric romances, fantasy novels or adventure stories, need to be understood in the context of historical, social and cultural "reality". The purpose is not only to make them appear as conceivable as possible, but also to enable the reader to see the real meaning of the natural and supernatural elements. In the case of the *Journey*, the form of the story is that of the supernatural adventure, but the outline of its narrative is a quest for the understanding of oneself. It is the hero that goes on an adventure in which he does battle with evil powers, and seeks the meaning of the sutras and thereby attains enlightenment. Its message is primarily that of a Buddhist allegory with a Taoist twist. The Buddhist tone underlies most of the one-hundred chapters. As was pointed out earlier on by the novel's author that "the Mind is Buddha and Buddha is Mind."¹³⁷ The scriptures sought by the pilgrims turn out to be wordless at the end. This is because the journey is one that cultivates and transforms an unbridled mind that was full of desires, temptations, fears, inhibitions and worries, into one that is in touch with the void. The void is totally devoid of self and ego. The mind is the void and supreme happiness lies in the void.

¹³⁷ Wu, Vol. I 297.

3.3 Disturbance of Equilibrium

To apply Propp's stages of narrative sequence to the novel, it is necessary to see how the events and situations in the *Journey* move from the disruption of one equilibrium to the establishment of a new equilibrium. And how the fantastic is used by Wu Cheng'en to express "realism", particularly in those sections in which the Buddhist connotation is presented. Both the fantastic and realistic elements will be examined in parallel, with the assistance of both Propp and a French critic, Philippe Hamon. Hamon is a French academic born in 1940, who has concentrated on stylistics, literary theory, and writing essays on how literary descriptions, irony and images work. Like Propp, he studied the techniques of description in fantastic stories. In his literary analysis "Le discours contraint" published in 1973, he listed fifteen procedures that arise out of the preconceptions of realism, and finds "the mechanisms of duplication and digression inherent to the Marvelous for expansion in the direction of realism."¹³⁸

Hamon's analysis can be summarized in the following fashion:

1. The appeal to memory where the text refers to its own past, through flashback or summary; and to its own future, through such devices as flash-forwards or the plans of a character.

¹³⁸ Christine Brooke-Rose, "The Evil Ring: Realism and the Marvellous," *Poetics Today* Vol. 1, No. 4, Narratology II: The Fictional Text and the Reader (Summer, 1980) 67-90.

2. The psychological motivation of characters. This is a characteristic of realism. Characters' actions are motivated and rendered believable by the kinds of personalities they exhibit.
3. The parallel story which refers to the names and events that are familiar in history and geography, and are used in the narrative like a kind of shorthand for a body of information.
4. The systematic motivation of proper names (names that signify, or suggest a signification). I shall discuss this in chapter 4.
5. Redundancy and foreseeability of content, where the character's daily activities and social world are described.
6. The author's role in magic realism is to maintain an easy integration of the natural and the supernatural.¹³⁹

The *Journey* is not only laden with mechanisms inherent in the fantastic, but also by those of the realistic novel that give it an allegorical subtext. A condensed version of Propp's morphological approach in connection with some of Hamon's key procedures will be followed in this chapter to see the effect of realism and allegory in the fantastic fiction.

Applied to the *Journey*, Propp's morphology may be summarized as follows:

1. An unforeseen event happens to break the initial equilibrium.

¹³⁹ Philippe Hamon, "Qu'est-ce qu'une description?," *Poétique* 12. (1972) 465–485.

2. A call for the hero to alleviate the situation where villains appear to disturb the peace, cause misfortune, damage or harm.
3. The villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or of his belongings.
4. The victim submits to deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy.
5. The hero decides whether or not to intervene.
6. The hero is tested for strength and intelligence.
7. The hero responds to the test.
8. The hero acquires help and empowerment from magical helpers or donor characters.
9. The hero arrives to alleviate the situation. He and the villain join in direct combat.
10. The hero succeeds and the villain is defeated.
11. The initial misfortune is liquidated, and a new equilibrium is established.

In the following example, my focus will be on the character of Xuanzang, not Wukong. In the *Journey*, the narrator's focus guides the readers as he encounters events and interprets them. Chapter 9 contains a realistic account of the family background of the historical monk Tripitaka Xuanzang, although his journey to India is nothing short of adventurous and miraculous, complying with all the necessary steps of Propp's morphology of folktales and Hamon's prescription for magic realism. The story starts with a joyous departure of Chen E from his home to Chang'an (the capital city at the time) to attend government exams required for a post or an appointment. He passes the

preliminary tests, and goes on to take the imperial examination¹⁴⁰ where he takes first place, “receiving the title Zhuangyuan, the certificate of which is signed by the Tang emperor’s own hand.”¹⁴¹ His academic achievements and his striking appearance catch the eye of a beautiful maiden Wenjiao. The two marry and leave Chang’an immediately, intending to go to Jiangzhou where he is supposed to take up a post of governor. When they are on the road, Chen buys a carp one day from a fisherman. He then decides not to cook it for dinner and releases him back to the river where it was caught. The happy equilibrium is broken as they step into the unknown. Misfortune strikes when they board a boat to cross a river. The boat owner Liu desires Wenjiao’s beauty, thus plots to have Chen killed. Being pregnant with her husband’s child and feeling helpless, Wenjiao agrees to marry Liu. When her son, the future Tripitaka, is born, she wraps him in his garments and places him on a plank which she hopes will drift down the river. She prays someone will find the note in the garment and save the newborn. An abbot of a monastery finds the child, raises him, and gives him a good education as a monk named Xuanzang. When Xuanzang turns eighteen, he makes a conscious decision to leave his mentor and look for his mother. One day, when he stops for a rest in a monastery in Jiangzhou, he runs into his mother Wenjiao. She warns him, “My son, leave at once, as if you were on fire! If that bandit Liu returns, he will surely take your life.” Though Xuanzang leaves weeping, he is determined to rescue his mother. He travels to the

¹⁴⁰ Benjamin A. Elman. *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). In the imperial examinations (科举; kējǔ) in dynastic China, a successful candidate’s rank in the last exam had a major influence on the relative rank and importance of his first appointment. This promoted upward mobility among the population for centuries. The civil service examination system in the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) periods saw many changes in the curriculum, grading practice, and results of examinations based on metropolitan and provincial examination records. The civil examination included linguistic, social, political, and intellectual aspects. The imperial state and the literate elites also struggled in their control over this “cultural arena”. (p. xxiv).

¹⁴¹ Wu, Vol. I 199. 113.

capital Chang'an and finds his way to the house of the chief minister, his grandfather. The next day, the chief minister goes to the emperor and convinces him to call up sixty thousand imperial soldiers in order to seize the bandits. The mother and the son are quickly reunited. But feeling ashamed for having lived with a bandit for many years, Wenjiao tries to kill herself by plunging into the river. Xuanzang stops her and notices that something is floating towards them. It turns out to be his father, who did not drown. In an act of gratitude for Chen's having saved his life, the carp, who turns out to be the river god has saved and preserved Chen's life. The chief minister orders a banquet named the "Festival of Reunion", for a new equilibrium has been now established. Through flashbacks, a description of Xuanzang's ancestry and childhood trauma, by the abbot of the monastery who knows the hero's past, the *Journey* is made historically and realistically valid for the readers.

In Chapter 16, "The monks of the Guanyin Monastery plot to take the treasure; the monster of the Black Wind Mountain steals the cassock", Wukong functions as the protector of Xuanzang once the equilibrium is broken. This happens when Xuanzang and his disciples come to a secluded monastery where they meet an aged abbot. The abbot invites the pilgrims to the temple and offers them tea. When asked whether Xuanzang has brought anything unusual with him, Wukong blurts out that his master has a cassock that is worth seeing. Xuanzang is quite hesitant. He pulls Wukong aside and says, "As the ancients declared, 'The rare object of art should not be exposed to the covetous and deceitful person.' For once he sees it, he will be tempted; and once he is tempted, he will

plot and scheme.”¹⁴² Wukong assures Xuanzang that everything will be fine, and proceeds to show the abbot the robe. Immediately, it gives off a radiant glow, and the old monk’s heart is indeed agitated. He convinces Xuanzang to set aside his fears and let him take it to his room to examine it closely during the night. Although this request startles Xuanzang, he is reassured by Wukong that there is “nothing to be frightened of”, because he Wukong will ensure that nothing will go wrong. At night, Wukong keeps his eyes half open as he sleeps. His suspicions are aroused by the sound of people moving around outside the meditation hall where his master and fellow pilgrims are sleeping, and the rustling of firewood in the breeze. He uses his magic power to turn himself into a bee. He sees that the monks have piled straw and firewood all around the hall in order to burn the pilgrims. Putting an Anti-Fire Cover (辟火罩儿) over the hall, Wukong then goes to sit on top of the roof of the old monk’s room to protect the cassock. As he watches the monks starting the fire, he recites a spell and blows a magic breath towards the Southwest. Within moments the raging wind blows the fire up into an inferno, and the whole Guanyin Monastery is engulfed in flames. When the fire broke out, all the animals and demons of the mountain are disturbed. Seven miles south of the monastery lay the Black Wind Mountain, on which there is a Black Wind Cave. A monster sleeping in the cave awakes and comes out to take a better look at the fire raging to the north. Arriving at the scene he leaps off his cloud and goes down below the smoke and flames to investigate the situation. He sees that the front halls are all empty, and that the cloisters on both sides of the monastery are on fire. He rushes forward and notices that the rooms at the back are not burning, as there is someone on the roof keeping the wind away. He rushes in to take a look and sees a magic glow emanating from a bundle on the

¹⁴² Wu, Vol. I 334.

table. On opening it, he finds it contains a rare and treasured cassock belonging to the Buddhist religion. He grabs the valuable object, jumps on a cloud and goes straight back to his cave. Having fought him unsuccessfully, Wukong goes to seek help from Guanyin, who subdues the Bear Spirit (monster of Black Wind Cave) and recovers the cassock. At that point Wukong says “Auspicious light surrounds the golden form: What maze of colours so worthy of praise. With her great mercy she succors mankind; this revealed Gold Lotus scans the whole world. She came for the cause of scripture seeking; then she withdrew, as ever chaste and pure.”¹⁴³

Other examples of disturbances to and reestablishments of the equilibrium can be seen in the following chapters. In Chapter 41, the pilgrims encounter a Red Boy monster that also craves a piece of Xuanzang’s flesh. This is a very powerful monster. The two fight for a few rounds, but neither Wukong nor the Red Boy can best the other. Having exhausted his skills and options, Wukong seeks help from the supernatural aid, the Bodhisattva. He pleads, “I must have been hurt by the monster-spirit, and my strength has weakened.” Guanyin “freely and gladly leaves her lotus seat, with scented steps she walks up the rocky cliff and goes with Wukong to find the Red Boy. Knowing the holy monk is threatened with harm, she readily helps Wukong subdue the fiend.”¹⁴⁴ Guanyin comes to Wukong’s aid again in chapter 54 and 55 when Tripitaka is in trouble. First, he is tested by the Queen of the Women’s Nation who tries to seduce him, and then by a female fiend, who “banishes violence from her mind and takes on a pleasant appearance.” Despite the temptations, Tripitaka never “loosens his clothes or touches their beds.”

¹⁴³ Wu, Vol. I 366.

¹⁴⁴ Wu, Vol. II 272-273.

Annoyed by his resolve and self-control, the female fiend, a scorpion spirit, locks him up in her cave.¹⁴⁵ Although Wukong is capable and powerful, he often seems lost without Guanyin's guidance.

Conclusion

Propp's analytical scheme of narrative structures provides us with the tools to break down Jung's archetypes and Campbell's "hero's journey" framework into finer components. This allows us to see the building blocks that contribute to the macro structure of the monomyth. It offers a way of comparing individual incidents belonging to different traditions and cultures so as to see their similarities, and gain a better understanding of both. Propp's typology can be easily applied to the *Journey* and yields results that are complementary to those that can be obtained with the aid of Campbell's theory of monomyth. Propp's technique also allows us to understand how the author weaves the realistic elements into the narrative that are necessary to generate an allegory.

¹⁴⁵ Wu, Vol. III 52-85.

Chapter 4: Buddhist Allegory in the *Journey*

4.1 Introduction

Buddhism received imperial support for most of the Ming period. The court was very enthusiastic for the religion and used imperial funds lavishly to support the construction of monasteries, which at times provoked criticism from Confucian advisers. Tension existed between Confucianism and Buddhism mainly because of the Confucian domination of the civil service system and the necessity of maintaining the Confucian image of the emperor. The Confucian scholars were often described as the literati because they were schooled in Confucian classics that prepared them for careers in the civil service. However, “like the emperors, while carefully tending their Confucian personas, many were devout Buddhists. They took active part in the late Ming revival of Buddhism.”¹⁴⁶ There can be no doubt of Wu Cheng’en’s Buddhist background and of the Buddhist references contained in the *Journey*. One example of the latter can be seen in the detailed descriptions of lofty mountain temples reachable by a steep path—a metaphor for the arduous quest for spiritual enlightenment. Another example lies in the fact that the names given to the main characters have significant Buddhist connotations.

4.2 The Naming Process

The naming of characters in the *Journey* proves to be a clever word exercise. The

¹⁴⁶ Marsha Weidner, “Buddhist Pictorial Art in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644),” *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850 -1850*, ed. Marsha Weidner (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994) 69.

technique used by Wu Cheng'en is to make the characters representative, memorable and functional. The artifice and symbolism may be noticed in the naming of characters. The Monkey King was given the name "Wake-to-Vacuity" – an apparent reference to Buddhist notions of void and emptiness. The pig was called "Wake-to-Senses", as well as Bajie, which means literally "abstaining from eight desires". The Sha Monk was given the name "Wake-to-Calmness". Xuanzang was also called Tripitaka, which is the name of the three parts of the Pali canon, the standard scripture collection of the Theravada Buddhist tradition. The three *Pitakas* are *Sutta-Pitaka*, which contains the sermons attributed to the Shakyamuni Buddha; *Vinaya-Pitaka*, which deals with rules of monastic life, and *Abhidharma-Pitaka*, which is described as philosophy, psychology, and metaphysics.¹⁴⁷ It is evident that the author of the *Journey* adopted an approach to characterization that is very personal and reflects his view of life – a concern with self-cultivation and living in harmony with the rest of society. In general, the spiritual and psychological motivation of the characters is particularly noticeable in a narrative that is deemed realistic. This is certainly true with the *Journey* in that despite its fantastic setting it clearly has an underlying Buddhist message set against a fantastic background. Wukong's "spiritual detachment, restless energy, and his passionate devotion to his master"¹⁴⁸ make it possible for the journey to come to a successful end; yet his unbridled mind makes it necessary for him to be guided by the gracious Bodhisattva. Bajie's non-heroic but human nature is essential to the types of struggle he has. Sha Monk's dedication and loyalty are indispensable to the achievement of the pilgrims. The fictional

¹⁴⁷ Richard Francis Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism: A social history from ancient Benares to modern Colombo*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2006) 4.

¹⁴⁸ Hsia, "Introduction," *The Classic Chinese Novel* 130.

Xuanzang's fallible character and his steadfast adherence to "the letter by the law, respecting both secular and religious authorities", puts him in the position of walking a spiritual path blindfolded.¹⁴⁹

4.3 Guanyin's Skillful Means

Guanyin, originally a male Indian Buddhist deity, also successfully transformed into a genuine Chinese goddess in social-religious practice by the 15th century. Feminine images of Guanyin represent "Chinese adaptations and modifications of Buddhist ideals. More importantly, they contain core values, such as filial piety and feminine chastity, that are central to the Chinese cultural tradition. These feminine forms of Guanyin were advertised by miracle tales and pilgrims' reports and made familiar through literary and artistic media until they finally became widely diffused throughout Chinese society."¹⁵⁰

A unique supernatural aid, Guanyin is the bodhisattva of compassion as venerated by East Asian Buddhists. She is seen by Bantly as someone that encompasses both wisdom and empathy. "Her maneuvers bespeak a plane of purposeful intent that is best summarized by the Buddhist term skillful means."¹⁵¹ This concept is prominent in Mahayana Buddhism. The idea is that a bodhisattva, especially the bodhisattva of compassion, called Avalokiteshvara in Sanskrit, and Guanyin in Chinese, may use any means that is expedient to introduce people to the *dharma*, or help them on their road to nirvana. This doctrine is sometimes used to explain some of the otherwise unusual or

¹⁴⁹ Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel* 125.

¹⁵⁰ Marsha Weidner, ed., *Latter Days of the Law* 160.

¹⁵¹ Bantly, "Buddhist Allegory in the 'Journey to the West'" 519.

unorthodox behaviors engaged in by Buddhist teachers. In theory, at the very least, it is possible to use violence and sexuality as part of the skillful means to convey a lesson. The use of violence on one's disciples has occasionally been explained and justified as a way of opening their eyes to the nature of self and suffering. An example of this is discussed in the *Lotus Sutra*, where several parables illustrate aspects of skillful means. In the parable of the burning house, a man has to entice his children to come out of their house with descriptions of many colourful carriages waiting outside. The children come out only to find one ox cart, symbolizing the One Vehicle of Buddha's Way that can carry everyone. The One Vehicle with its skillful teachings is capable of saving all from the flames of worldly suffering. The sutra emphasizes that the father's words to his children in the parable do not count as lies.

In the *Journey*, Guanyin often applies skillful means to bring various demons and fiends into submission. Using skillful means, she converts the "bogus immortals" (妖仙) such as the Red Boy (Chapters 40-43), and the Bear Monster of Black Wind Mountain (Chapters 16-17) to dharma (降妖成真). It is she that devises the 81 trials for Xuanzang to endure so that he can be cleansed of all his wrong doings. Xuanzang was formerly one of Buddha's disciples. Because he was inattentive to one of Buddha's sermons, he was evicted as punishment for his negligence. His nine previous incarnations all resulted in death at the hands of a river monster, the Sha Monk. At one point the monster comments that "such is the nature of this water that not even goose down can float on it. But the skulls of the nine pilgrims float on the water and will not sink."¹⁵² Regarding them as

¹⁵² Wu, Vol. I 190.

something unusual, he chains them together with a rope and plays with them at his leisure. Guanyin instructs him to hang the skulls around his neck so that when Xuanzang appears again, there will be a use for them. Wukong, Bajie and Xuanzang are indeed able to use the skulls later on. Together with a gourd from Guanyin as a floating device, they create a “dharma vessel” to cross the river guarded by the Sha Monk.

In chapter 23, Guanyin skillfully disguises herself as a lovely and wealthy widow with three bewitching daughters. Bajie can not resist the temptation and thus is hung upside down from a tree in a net which he mistakes for a wedding garment. As observed by Qiancheng Li, the Bodhisattva and other divine figures are both rescuers of the pilgrims and agents of their distress, but inflicting such calamities is a part of the process of their salvation.¹⁵³ Almost invariably, Xuanzang and his disciples are tested in many trials by a fiend whose master is either a Buddhist deity (神) or Taoist immortal (仙). Frequently, the latter either comes in person or lends Wukong some powerful device to help capture the fiend. Guanyin’s offer of a head clamp/Golden Fillet to Xuanzang to be used on Wukong’s head is another example of how she is capable of inflicting misfortune as a skillful Buddhist practice to bridle the monkey mind. Yu once commented that contemporary Chinese critics view Wukong’s ordeal as symbolic of the superstitious shackles of that feudalistic religion placed on the popular hero.¹⁵⁴ Yet this gift was not given with malicious intent or purpose. It marks the starting point of Wukong’s transformation from being a lost soul to a dedicated follower of the Buddhism.

¹⁵³ Qiancheng Li, “Journey to the West,” *Fictions of Enlightenment: Journey to the West, Tower of Myriad Mirrors, and Dream of the Red Chamber* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. 2004) 73.

¹⁵⁴ Yu, “Heroic Verse,” 894-895.

As Tathagata Buddha hands over the treasures to Guanyin, he informs her:

These treasures are called the tightening fillets, and though they are all alike, their uses are not the same. I have a separate spell for each of them: the Golden, the Constrictive, and the Prohibitive Spell. If you encounter on your way any monster who possesses great magic powers, you must persuade him to learn to be good and to follow the scripture pilgrim as his disciple. If he is disobedient, this fillet may be put on his head, and it will strike root the moment it comes into contact with the flesh. Recite the particular spell which belongs to the fillet and it will cause the head to swell and ache so painfully that he will think his brains are busting. That will persuade him to come within our fold.¹⁵⁵

These tightening fillets or head clamps can be compared to what Campbell calls the father's "tight scaly ring", which prompts the hero to seek "hope and assurance from the helpful female figure, by whose magic he is protected through all the frightening experiences of the father's ego-shattering initiation...and with that reliance for support, one endures the crisis—only to find, in the end, that the father and mother reflect each other, and are in essence the same."¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Wu, Vol. I 186.

¹⁵⁶ Campbell, *the Hero with a Thousand Faces* 130-131.

4.4 Merit and Karma

The concept of merit and karma pervades the *Journey*. Merit acquired in this life would have its reward in a future life. In order for merit to be rewarded according to the Buddhist teaching, one must accumulate it and purify one's mind through good deeds and devotion. The merit ultimately leads the pilgrims to Buddha, to the fulfillment of the mission, and the forgiveness of their sins. In Chapter 2, when Wukong arrives at the "Mountain of Heart and Mind and the Cave of Slanting Moon and Three Stars" to seek the way to immortality, the Patriarch asks him the question, "...there are three hundred and sixty heteronomous divisions, all the practices of which may result in Illumination. I don't know which division you would like to follow?"¹⁵⁷ The division chosen by Wukong at this point has seventy-two transformations and a summersault that can cover 180,000 miles, the exact distance Xuanzang needs to travel from China to the West, on foot, in order to seek the sutras. The novel provides ample reasons as to why only the master can retrieve the scriptures and not anyone else. When Bajie asks Wukong why Wukong cannot simply carry the master on his back to get to the West quickly, Wukong replies:

If it is this kind of magic, old Monkey knows every trick well, including becoming invisible and making distances shorter. But it is required of Master to go through all these strange territories before he

¹⁵⁷ Wu, Vol. I 84.

finds deliverance from the sea of sorrows; hence even one step turns out to be difficult. You and I are only his protective companions, guarding his body and life, but we cannot exempt him from the woes, nor can we obtain the scriptures all by ourselves. Even if we had the ability to go and see Buddha first, he would not bestow the scriptures on you and me.¹⁵⁸

Clearly then, no one else could complete the mission for Xuanzang. This is the path destined for him so that he may gain merit and recover his position as one of Buddha's disciples, and another opportunity to hear the great dharma and the truth. The promise of merit or good deeds offered by the Bodhisattva convinces the river monster, previously the Curtain-Raising Marshall, to atone for his sin of breaking a crystal cup in heaven by following the scripture pilgrim to the West. She says, "At the time you achieve merit, your sin will be expiated and you will be restored to your former position."¹⁵⁹ When she speaks to Wukong, she tells him, "He (the scripture pilgrim) will come and rescue you, and you can follow him as a disciple. You shall keep the teachings and hold the rosary to enter our gate of Buddha, so that you may again cultivate the fruits of righteousness."¹⁶⁰ In chapter 15, Wukong brings Guanyin to help him subdue the dragon-horse. Guanyin changes the dragon into a horse and instructs the animal, "You must overcome with utmost diligence all the cursed barriers. When your merit is achieved, you will no longer be an ordinary dragon; you will acquire the true fruit of a golden body."¹⁶¹ To Bajie, she

¹⁵⁸ Wu, Vol. I 436.

¹⁵⁹ Wu, Vol. I 190.

¹⁶⁰ Wu, Vol. I 196.

¹⁶¹ Wu, Vol. I 323.

says, “You can follow him (Xuanzang) as his disciple and make a trip to the Western Heaven; your merit will cancel out your sins, and you will surely be delivered from your calamities.” All of the disciples happily follow her advice.

In the course of their journey, the pilgrims not only face calamities caused by various fiends, powerful demons and lesser ones, but also setbacks due to Xuanzang’s shortsightedness, fragility, and paralysis by fear. Wukong also makes much merit by steadfastly following his master regardless of his flaws. However, at the time of frustration, he often seeks solace from Guanyin. He once complains to the Bodhisattva that Xuanzang can not recognize any virtuous cause, nor can he distinguish between black and white, despite Wukong’s hope of “returning to the Real (Tathagata Buddha) to attain the right fruit, to cleanse himself of sins and destroy the deviates.”¹⁶² As fittingly summarized by Yu, “The slightest foreboding of ill or danger terrifies him; the most groundless kind of slander at once shatters his confidence in his most trustworthy follower, Monkey, who has never failed to come to his rescue.”¹⁶³ After the pilgrims reach their destination, Xuanzang expresses his appreciation to his disciples. But Wukong has come to realize that the journey is mutually beneficial to them:

Immediately Tripitaka awoke to the truth. Turning quickly, he thanked his three disciples instead. Pilgrim said, “We two parties need not thank each other, for we are meant to support each other. We are indebted to our master for our liberation, through which we have found

¹⁶² Wu, Vol. III 105.

¹⁶³ Yu, “Heroic Verse,” 892.

the gateway to making of merit, and fortunately we have achieved the right fruit. Our master also has to rely on our protection so that he may be firm in keeping both law and faith to find happy deliverance from this mortal stock.¹⁶⁴

At that point, the pilgrims are cleansed of their karma and gain the fruits of righteousness. Furthermore, the Buddha, speaking of the pilgrims' apotheosis after they return to Chang'an with the scriptures, cites the merit of each as the reason for his appointment to the hierarchy. Clearly, the Buddhist concept of karma is not only invoked to explain the pilgrims' placements but also to explain their upward and downward movement on the cosmic ladder.

“Sage Monk,” said Tathagata, “you remained faithful to our teaching, succeeded in acquiring the true scriptures. For such magnificent merit, you will receive a great promotion to become the Buddha of Candana Merit.

“Sun Wukong, you embraced the teaching of Buddhism. Throughout your journey you made great merit by smelting the demons and defeating the fiends. For being faithful in the end as you were in the beginning, I hereby give you the grand promotion and appoint you the Buddha Victorious in Strife.

¹⁶⁴ Wu, Vol. IV, 384-385.

“Zhu Wuneng, you eventually returned to our great teaching and embraced our vows. While you protected the sage monk on his way, you were still quite mischievous, for greed and lust were never wholly extinguished in you. For the merit of toting the luggage, however, I hereby grant you promotion and appoint you Janitor of the Altars.”

“Sha Wujing, you submitted to our teaching and remained firm in your faith. As you escorted the sage monk, you made merit by leading his horse over all those mountains. I hereby grant you promotion and appoint you the Golden-Bodied Arhat.”

Then he said to the white horse, “You made submission to the Law and accepted our vows. Because you carried the sage monk daily on your back during his journey to the West and because you also took the Holy Scriptures back to the East, you too have made merit. I hereby grant you promotion and appoint you one of the dragons belonging to the Eight Classes of the Supernatural Beings.”¹⁶⁵

Wukong’s head clamp also magically disappears now that he has become a Buddha. The “Karmic process” (这段因果) and the pilgrims’ fourteen-year quest thus comes to an end. The cultivation of the mind is fully realized through the making of merit, gaining of

¹⁶⁵ Wu, Vol. IV 425-426.

insight, and building of virtues. Although the demons and sometimes deities seemed a hindrance to the progress of the journey, they were at the same time a key ingredient to the fulfillment of the quest. Their conflict, or rather, their mutual conquest (相克) and mutual production (相生)¹⁶⁶ also suggest that there is an interdependence between them, due to the circular structure of the quest itself.

4.5 The Wordless Scriptures

The pilgrims were promised a copy of the *Heart Sutra* at the journey's end. When they first arrive at Spirit Vulture Peak and present their traveling documents to Tathagata in the Great Hero Treasure Hall, he directs Ananda and Kasyapa, two honored ones to take the pilgrims to select some scrolls from his three canons as a token of grace. Because the pilgrims present no gift to the disciples, they are given wordless scrolls of scriptures in turn. The aged Dipmakara sends someone after them so that the wordless scriptures can be traded for actual texts. The pilgrims are upset by this and return to Tathagata to complain about Ananda and Kasyapa, but the Buddha reminds them that he already knew that "the two of them would ask for a little present. After all, the holy scriptures are not to be given lightly, nor are they to be received gratis... Since you people came with empty hands to acquire scriptures, blank texts were handed over to you. But these blank texts are actually true, and they are just as good as those with words.

¹⁶⁶ Wu, Vol. III 252, 392.

However, those creatures in your Land of the East are so foolish and unenlightened that I have no choice but to impart to you now the texts with words.”¹⁶⁷

Puzzled by this episode, Andrew Plaks sees “the final irony of the ‘wordless scriptures’ . . . [as] a rather transparent joke” about emptiness.¹⁶⁸ In chapter 93 of the *Journey*, Xuanzang and Monkey have a discussion about the *Heart Sutra*. Xuanzang says to Wuneng and Wujing, “Wukong’s interpretation is made in a speechless language. That’s true interpretation.”¹⁶⁹ The wordless scriptures are not only connected to the *Heart Sutra*, with its emphasis on emptiness, but also to Wukong, “Wake-to-Vacuity”, who understands the wordless language. For Xuanzang, however, in order to fulfill his mission, he must bring written scriptures back to the people in China. The scriptures can only become wordless once they are understood and internalized. As illustrated in chapter 85 when Xuanzang feels intimidated by his surroundings, saying, “I can see how precipitous the mountain peak is, and even from a great distance there appear to be violent vapors and savage clouds soaring up from it. I am getting more and more apprehensive; my whole body’s turning numb, and I’m filled with troubled thoughts.” On hearing this, Wukong reminds him of the *Heart Sutra*, “Seek not afar for Buddha on Spirit Mount; Mount Spirit lives only in your mind. There is in each man a Spirit Mount stupa; beneath there the Great Art must be refined.” Then, Xuanzang realizes that “the lesson of all scriptures concerns only the cultivation of the mind.”¹⁷⁰ For this reason, one writer has observed that the *Lotus Sutra* is “about a discourse that is never delivered, . . . a

¹⁶⁷ Wu, Vol. IV 393.

¹⁶⁸ Plaks, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel* 243.

¹⁶⁹ Wu, Vol. IV, 295.

¹⁷⁰ Wu, Vol. IV 159.

lengthy preface without a book.”¹⁷¹ Burton Watson, translator of the *Lotus Sutra* also comments, “This is no doubt because Mahayana Buddhism has always insisted that its highest truth can never in the end be expressed in words... All the sutra can do, therefore, is to talk around it, leaving a hole in the middle where truth can reside.”¹⁷²

4.6 Conclusion

Through a tale of myth and fantasy told in four volumes, the *Journey* presents an allegory of the human quest for consciousness and enlightenment. It exhibits the predominant Buddhist themes of illusion, impermanence, emptiness/non-attachment, karma, merit, and transcendence through sustained mind cultivation. These concepts connote potentiality and opportunity. In Buddhism, the perceived reality is considered illusory not in the sense that reality is a fantasy or unreal, but that our perceptions often lead us to made false assumptions. Impermanence means that nothing is permanent. This explains the Buddhist belief that by its nature everything a person experiences is only temporary, is by its nature unsatisfactory and causes anxiety. Not until we accept the premise that the self is an illusion we will be able to have a solid foundation on which to experience and accept emptiness. Karma relates all causation ultimately to moral action. It is based on cosmic principle of rewards and punishments for the acts performed. Enlightenment is a place of spiritual retreat, reached by a journey of solitude

¹⁷¹ George J. Tanabe, Jr. and Wilma Jane Tanabe, eds., *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989) 2.

¹⁷² Watson, *The Lotus Sutra* xx.

away from the world. The book is not a traditional Buddhist teaching text, or a sutra that can be contemplated, nonetheless, because it is a highly entertaining and insightful novel, it is equally inspiring. It is also a text that shows the profound influence and development of Buddhism in China, and how the journey to enlightenment can be played out in human experiences.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

There are many possible ways to analyze and interpret the 100-chapter late Ming novel *the Journey*. It is nearly impossible to determine what would count as the one and only correct approach to the structure and meaning of such a rich text. In this thesis, I have sought to apply modern myth analysis, Jungian psychology, and narrative morphology in order to arrive at an analysis and an interpretation of this literary classic. Although it was written in the late 16th century in China, its structural arrangement is parallel to Campbell's "hero's journey". The details may vary, and some sequences of Campbell's analysis are left out while others are elaborated, there is a basic pattern in the *Journey* which is seen in many hero tales. While Campbell never specified the gender of the hero, the sequence clearly presupposes a male hero. The hero's journey incorporates the threefold pattern of a rite of passage (separation – initiation – return), in which the hero answers the call to adventure, enters the unpredictable and unknown, goes through trials and tribulations of the journey, finally attains enlightenment and returns to his home. This astonishingly similar path can be further explained by Jung's "collective unconscious", as he convincingly argued that myths are based on the archetypes which exist independently of social structures. Jung believed that mythology is the reservoir of deep, hidden, and wondrous truths. I was further drawn to the narrative elements of the novel, which are best explained by Propp's morphological approach towards Russian folktales. His analysis shows an underlying pattern of hero myths in 31 generic narrative functions. While not all are necessarily present in each folktale, their sequence is unvarying. These analytical theories provide a structural basis for the *Journey* which has

familiar patterns and characters that appear in many myths, legends and folktales around the world.

Jung's archetypal theory seeks to identify patterns in diverse literary works across cultures. One of the most often identified archetypal patterns is that of the quest by the protagonist (or hero), who must leave her/his home, travel into unfamiliar territory, meet a guide, endure dangerous situations and adventures, reach the object of her/his quest, gain important new knowledge, and return home with that knowledge to share with others. For Campbell, the standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero can be contained in the unit of the monomyth. There are unusual circumstances surrounding the hero's conception and birth. He is called to adventure by some external event, and he may accept the call willingly or reluctantly. During the early stages of the journey, the hero often receives aid from a protective figure. Upon reaching the threshold of adventure, the hero must undergo some ordeal in order to pass from the everyday world into the world of adventure. The hero undergoes a series of tests. These trials are often fraught with temptations and danger from forces of evil that obstruct the hero's quest. The hero accomplishes the mission, returns to the threshold of adventure and prepares for a return to the everyday world. The return usually takes the form of a rebirth, resurrection, or enlightenment. The object, knowledge, or blessing that the hero acquires during the adventure is brought back to his community. Propp concluded that nearly all the tales in his analysis had the same basic narrative structure. The various characters could fit into several categories of *dramatis personae* (hero, villain, victim, and so on). He found that the morphemes came in related pairs, such as the establishment of a

misfortune and its liquidation, the pursuit of the hero and his rescue, the introduction of a false hero and his exposure. The order of the elements in a story also seems to be constant, even if a particular version of a story might lack some of the elements. As a testimony to Jung's archetypal analysis, Campbell's monomyth and Propp's morphology, Wukong's adventure can be summarized as containing these identifiable steps. He leaves his mundane world of blissful living on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit where he receives a call to adventure. He is guided and encouraged by Guanyin, the supernatural aid to venture forth. He endures various tests and trials, encounters obstacles, and forces benign and malevolent. He exhibits qualities of endurance, patience and determination. Most women he meets are cast in the role of temptresses. On reaching his destination, he experiences the supreme ordeal, in which he prevails, finds that all the scriptures he has received are wordless, and attains the spiritual enlightenment. He returns to the old world with his prize of renewed power and purpose, blessed and elevated to a celestial status.

The novel is patently allegorical in intention; the *Journey's* protagonists' prevailing goal is to journey to the West to receive Buddhist sutras, and the particular adventure is only part of the progress of the quest as a whole. Although the pilgrims wish to continue on their quest, formidable forces wish to deter them from the call of duty. In facing unfamiliar situations, Bajie and Xuanzang often fall victim to their misinterpretation of appearances, thus greatly increasing the danger of obstacles and hindrances. Allegorically, this is often presented as a problem between form and emptiness that lies at the heart of the *Heart Sutra*. A pilgrim may falter when he is unable to apprehend the

true nature of an evil spirit or the real implication of a situation. Concepts of karma and merit are present throughout the narrative, and an attempt to reach a higher spiritual plane or level of consciousness through righteous actions is implied. It seems likely that apparently external obstacles are in fact manifestations or expressions of hidden feelings and fears within the self. Sometimes even the most illusion-ridden impediments seem to have palpable existence. To attain true enlightenment, or nirvana, the ultimate aim of Buddhism, one must be free of desire and self consciousness. Although it is debatable whether Wu Cheng'en was solely a Buddhist, it is undeniable that the text is primarily an embodiment of Buddhist teaching of redemption through righteous action. In a country in which subordination to authority, particularly those of tradition and the state, was widely taught and widely practiced, Buddhism offered a sense of freedom and autonomy to the Ming elite. It was seen not simply as a refuge from the yoke of social convention and imperial power but as a vehicle of individual empowerment. Buddhism not only made the Ming literati aware of the possibility of freedom from tyranny of social convention and state power but offered them the tools or techniques by which it could be realized.

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