

Darth Bane: The Monomyth's Dark Liberator is an original thesis based on Joseph Campbell's theory of the monomyth and Drew Karpysyn's Darth Bane Trilogy. Campbell's theory of the monomyth has most commonly been called the hero's journey. For many years, the archetypal hero has been thought to be the only character that met the requirements of Campbell's theory. However, through Karpysyn's trilogy of novels about the Sith Lord, Darth Bane, Bane illustrates what the epitome of an antihero is and also that he can make the monomyth his own. The antihero is one of the most fascinating character types in literature, and through Bane's complicated journey as an antihero, he proves that he embodies all of the qualifications set down by Campbell's theory and experiences a monomythic adventure.

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*"Grim fate and ill fortune have conspired against you.
[...] In life you just play the cards you're dealt."* – Groshik, *Path of Destruction* 58

Joseph Campbell's monomyth has long been coined the hero's journey. Campbell has demonstrated through his research into myth, folklore, legend, and religion that many heroes possess certain qualities and experience a series of events that are the defining pattern of the hero's adventure. However, these qualities and events can sometimes be found in the story of another character type, the antihero.

Ayoub Khote, a literary editor, defines the antihero as "a protagonist whose personality can be perceived as being villainous and heroic at the same time, in contrast to the more perpetually noble characteristics of an archetypal hero" (1). Antiheroes have many similarities to a traditional hero, yet they lack customary heroic qualities such as selflessness; they are ordinary people thrust into extraordinary circumstances. The antihero constantly struggles with his moral compass. He has, maybe in his mind only, noble motives, yet he seeks to gain them by bending or breaking the law. The antihero also has violent tendencies that usually stem from his feeling of self-hatred or helplessness in a world he cannot control. The antihero is an extraordinary character type that is usually incredibly complicated giving the reader the option to love or hate him. The reader can usually sympathize with the antihero's cause, but at the same time loathe the way in which they attempt to achieve their goal. In this way, the antihero can be perceived as a hero from a different perspective. Because of this perspective, the antihero is a great character type to run Campbell's monomythic gauntlet. The antihero represents both good and evil and therefore does not fall under any atypical representations of a character. Because of the antihero's complicated background, he is the best character type to prove that Campbell's theory of the monomyth is not just the hero's journey. There are many classic stories with great antiheroes such

as *Batman* and *X-Men's* Magneto, but there is one extended story that embodies many epic characters, both hero and antihero, *Star Wars*.

George Lucas' *Star Wars* is a well-known example of Campbell's monomyth. His main protagonist, Luke Skywalker, meets nearly all the qualifications and follows much of the journey of a monomythic hero. Along with Lucas' monomythic hero, the expanded universe of *Star Wars* exhibits a true monomythic antihero, Darth Bane. From Drew Karpysyn's novels, *The Darth Bane Trilogy - Path of Destruction, Rule of Two, and Dynasty of Evil* - set 1,000 years before Lucas' *Star Wars*, Darth Bane aka Dessel is introduced as the epitome of the antihero. Bane is an abused, poor miner from the mining world of Apatros. He grows up constantly fighting for his life. His father, Hurst, is abusive to Dessel, and the mining company, OROS, would forever keep him in debt. He is helpless to escape his own life until he begins to realize how special he is. His affinity for the Force, an all encompassing power, begins to manifest itself, and this set in motion the chain of events that creates Darth Bane, Dark Lord of the Sith. Bane is exiled from his homeland of Apatros, joins the Sith Army, and then is introduced to the world of the Sith. Here Bane learns about the Force and the true nature of the dark side. Bane realizes his fellow Sith are flawed and so Bane seeks to revamp the Sith order. The journey that follows is Bane's reconciliation of the Sith Order and the creation of the Rule of Two. Throughout his adventure, Bane constantly struggles with love and his moral compass. Despite his obvious violent tendencies, Bane struggles with caring for others and fighting for what he believes is the greater good. Bane also goes through several episodes of self-hatred. Bane is a strong, yet torn character, a true antihero, and he embodies all the necessary elements to make the monomyth his own.

Drew Karpysyn adheres to George Lucas' initial interpretation of the monomyth. Much like Luke Skywalker, Bane's journey is mostly in the Departure Stage of Campbell's monomyth, leaving the Initiation Stage and Return Stage mostly bare. Luke Skywalker spends most of the first film learning to be a Jedi Knight and seeking the truth about his father. He receives a call to adventure through the two

droids, C-3PO and R2-D2, but refuses it saying he cannot get involved. Obi-Wan is the wizard, and hermit, that ferries Skywalker across the threshold into the unknown world, as well as, provides him with supernatural aid and talismans. Finally, Luke Skywalker and his companions go on many underground journeys, through Luke's first flight into hyperspace and then his journey through the depths of the Death Star. After this, though, Skywalker's adventure is hit-and-miss on both the Initiation Stage and Return Stage. Regardless of how much either *Star Wars* author mentions all three stages, both Skywalker and Bane complete Campbell's monomythic journey.

Before there was *Star Wars* and Darth Bane, however, there were many stories that laid the groundwork for Campbell's theory. So let us first take a look at what the monomyth entails and the early theories that came before it. The earliest form of the monomyth was developed by Adolf Bastian in the late 1800s. He called his theory the psychic unity of mankind. The theory is that all humans have the same basic elementary thought processes that are universal, transcultural, and transhistorical. According to Bastian, folklore is the only cultural variation: "Due to the effects of the environment, however, these elementary ideas undergo certain changes, and cultural variations emerge. 'Folk ideas' develop as a result of this process" ("Adolf Bastian" 11). Bastian's theory on psychic unity led to a similar theory by Carl Jung.

Jung was a psychiatrist studying under Sigmund Freud. Jung and Freud split ways because of Jung's theories about precognition and parapsychology. Jung's studies included Bastian's theory of psychic unity, which Jung developed into what he called a collective unconscious. Jung's collective unconscious suggested that the elementary ideas that Bastian believed all humans possessed are actually involuntary thoughts that humans develop in their unconscious. Jung believed all humans are predisposed to do certain things in their lives. He studied the unconscious, including his own dreams and fantasies, his entire life. His scientific findings along with his extensive knowledge of religion, folklore, and even mysticism led him to the discovery of archetypes. His most common archetype, which Jung

discovered in Plato's original research, is "archetypal light" or the idea of God. The world's belief in God, or rather something greater than themselves, is a common belief amongst all religions. Through these common beliefs, Jung developed the idea of a collective unconscious because he believed that his mind was interconnected with the rest of humanity through these predisposed beliefs and unconscious thoughts. ("Carl Jung" 5-9)

Campbell's Monomyth

In the 1940s, Joseph Campbell took Jung's collective unconscious one step further with his development of the monomyth. Through his research in culture, tradition, and religion, Campbell came to the conclusion that humanity's collective ties are not a group of unconscious thoughts, but rather a similar process. Like Jung, Campbell based a large portion of his research on religion. However, Campbell did not believe in an archetypal God like Jung, but rather a life force that is behind all living things. In this way, Campbell developed his theory of the monomyth. Campbell discovered that religions, and their subsequent story books, are all containers for the same basic truth. Religions, and the cultures in which they are founded, share many of the same stories such as "The Great Flood" and "Jonah and the Whale." These similar stories are some of the oldest in history and illustrate the similar processes man develops. One of these common processes is the journey of the hero – the monomyth. Even Jesus Christ, humanity's savior in the Christian Bible, follows the monomythic pattern of the hero. In many stories, there is a hero that possesses certain qualities and travels a certain journey that makes him the hero. Because of this historical pattern, Campbell developed an outline that mapped out specific qualities a character must meet and three stages the character must travel to be deemed an archetypal hero.

The product of a virgin or special birth (Campbell 297-314), Campbell's monomythic hero may have been orphaned or in exile as a child, may be seeking his father, and may triumph over pretenders as the true son (Campbell 318-34). He possesses exceptional gifts, and the world he inhabits suffers

symbolic deficiency (Campbell 337). He does not fear death, and his role is to make the world spiritually significant and to make humankind comprehensible to itself (Campbell 388). If he is a warrior, he will change the status quo (Campbell 334-41). If he is a lover, his triumph may be symbolized by a woman and his accomplishment of the impossible task may lead to the bridal bed (Campbell 342-45). If he is a tyrant or ruler, his search for the father will lead to the invisible unknown from which he will return as a lawgiver (Campbell 345-49). If he is a world-redeemer, he will learn that he and the father are one (Campbell 349-54). And if he is a saint or mystic, he will transcend both life and myth to enter an inexpressible realm beyond forms (Campbell 354-55). As an anti-hero, Darth Bane meets nine of the possible ten qualities.

After meeting all of the qualifications, the hero must travel a three stage journey. These stages are the Departure Stage, the Initiation Stage, and the Return Stage. The adventure's Departure Stage may entail up to five incidents: receiving the call to adventure in the guise of a blunder that reveals an unknown world or through the appearance of a terrifying herald character; refusing the call; receiving supernatural aid; crossing a magical threshold that leads to a sphere of rebirth; and being swallowed in "the belly of the whale" – a descent into the unknown that symbolizes death and resurrection, and that may also involve an underground journey symbolic of a descent into hell (Campbell 36). The Initiation Stage may include up to six incidents: a series of tests and trials, including the hero's assimilation of his opposite, his shadow, or his unsuspected self; his meeting and possibly marrying, a mother-goddess; his encounter with a temptress; his atonement with his father; his apotheosis; and his acquisition of a boon (Campbell 36). The Return Stage may also contain up to six incidents: the hero's refusal to return; his magical flight from the unknown world; his rescue from outside the unknown world; his recrossing the threshold; his acquisition of the power to cross the threshold freely; and his conscious realization that he is the vehicle of the cosmic cycle of change (Campbell 37). Before Bane can begin his journey,

however, he must show proof that he, as an antihero, meets the qualities set down by Campbell for the archetypal hero.

Qualities of the Hero

Darth Bane is a looming figure of strength and willpower. He commands almost absolute control of the dark side, unlike many dark lords who came before him. Besides Bane's towering figure and dark presence, he must possess several other qualities of the monomythic hero in order to be considered a true monomythic antihero. First of these requirements is a birth of special origin or from a virgin mother (Campbell 297). In Bane's case, his birth is not quite as special as, say, Captain Kirk's timely birth in the midst of a deadly space battle as shown in the 2009 film *Star Trek*. Bane's birth is rather a precursor to his future and massive power. Bane discovers, while training on Korriban, that his Force abilities had taken lives long before he knew he possessed such power. Hurst, Bane's father, always blamed Bane for his mother's death. It can be deduced from the story that Bane's mother died in childbirth due to Bane's emanating Force power, although Bane never actually states this fact. Her body could not handle the birth of one so powerful in the Force, and so Bane was forced to grow up without a mother and with the hatred of his father.

The second quality is being an orphan or exile (Campbell 318-34). In Bane's case, he becomes both. Many years after the death of Bane's mother, Bane also loses his father. Like his mother's death, Hurst's death may have been Bane's fault. Bane always gave Hurst credit for his toughness because Hurst beat Bane unmercifully for all the problems in his life. This is how Bane got his Sith name, because Hurst believed his son Des to be the "bane of his existence" (*PoD* 134). One night, badly beaten and freshly bruised, Bane lay in bed imagining a hand squeezing his father's heart, and he prayed for Hurst's death. The next morning Bane got his wish in finding his father dead, supposedly from a heart attack. Bane realizes later that he had unknowingly killed his father by using the Force and made himself an orphan.

Bane's extensive Force power also sets into motion the events that saw him exiled from his home world of Apatros. Bane is a frequenter of a local bar that is best known for its sabaac tables, a card game. OROS manages to keep all its miners in debt any way they can, but Bane is different. The Force makes him a slightly better card player than his fellow miners. Because of this, Bane decides to challenge some Republic soldiers to a long, grueling game that eventually sees him the victor. Believing they had been cheated, the soldiers decide to take out their displeasure on Bane as he walks home. OROS is too cheap to pay for street lighting, so Bane walks home in darkness. He is attacked without warning, yet Bane reacts as if he had been waiting for it. His senses and reflexes are heightened, and he even sees their weapons as though they are glowing in the dark. Not until he plunges the vibroblade into one of the soldier's chests does he remember that vibroblades do not glow. Bane had killed a Republic soldier and knew he needed to flee because he had no way to prove it was self-defense. Luckily, Bane still has one friend – Groshik, the bartender. Groshik signs Bane up for the Sith army and has him smuggled off Apatros. Groshik is the closest person Bane has to a father figure prior to his training with the Sith lords. Groshik cares for Bane, and knows that "Grim fate and ill fortune have conspired against him," so Groshik does what he can to protect him. Bane knows he has been effectively exiled from Apatros because once he flees he becomes a fugitive. (*PoD* 52-60)

Later in *Path of Destruction*, Bane is again exiled. While studying to become a Sith Lord at Korriban's Academy, Bane discovers secrets about the ancient Sith order that Lord Qordis and the other masters have effectively discarded. Qordis confronts Bane about his study of the ancient archives and orders him to cast them aside. The two Sith clash over which ideals are more important, and when Bane wishes to seek answers in the Valley of the Dark Lords, Qordis banishes him to the wastelands:

Qordis leapt to his feet and slapped Bane hard across the face . . . "You think [the dead and gone] hold some great power, but they are nothing but dust and bone! Get out . . . If you value the wisdom of the dead so much, then go. Leave the Temple." (*PoD* 217)

Bane leaves the Temple, never returning to learn from its masters again, but not leaving entirely until he makes Qordis understand that he will never accept the teachings of the Academy. At this point, Bane is truly exiled, “He is of no use to us until he accepts the teachings of this Academy,” (*PoD* 220) and steals a ship to start his journey for the truth.

The next quality is that sometimes the antihero is seeking his father (Campbell 319). Bane, however, is not seeking his father, but rather a replacement for his father. Once Bane finds out he is responsible for his father’s death, he does feel remorse: “... when he closed his eyes, he could still see his father’s face” (*PoD* 36). Racked by guilt because of the deaths he causes, Bane begins seeking redemption for his father’s death by rejecting his power, but Bane becomes content with replacing his father as well. Initially, Groshik is his replacement. Groshik is constantly giving Bane advice, checking in on him, and ultimately is the one who saves his life and sets him on the path to the dark side. Once Bane has entered the realm of the Sith, he finds a new replacement for his father. The Sith Blademaster, Kas’im, takes Bane under his wing when he realizes the immense power Bane possesses. He even goes as far to bestow upon Bane his own master’s lightsaber, which requires a unique fighting style. Bane looks up to him, and is disappointed when Kas’im does not side with him in the end against the Brotherhood of Darkness. Bane is forced to kill Kas’im in a lightsaber duel that becomes his final transition to becoming a true Sith Lord. Bane kills the only “father” he has left and turns completely to the dark side:

Reaching out with the Force, he sought some sign that Kas’im was still alive beneath the mountain of stone. He felt nothing. Kas’im – his mentor, the only instructor at the Academy who had ever actually helped him – was dead. Darth Bane, Dark Lord of the Sith, turned his back and walked away. (*PoD* 295)

Bane seeks a complete reformation of the Sith, so now he no longer needs to seek redemption for his father’s death or even a replacement for his father. Bane had become the new father of the Sith. With

his reformation he would be the only leader, living by the rule of two: "Two there should be; no more, no less. One to embody the power, the other to crave it" (PoD 289).

The fourth quality of the hero does not apply to Bane's journey; his mother was not a virgin mother assumed into heaven. Yet, Bane is the "true son," triumphing over all the pretenders (Campbell 326-327) of the Sith who comprise the Brotherhood of Darkness. Bane's reason for wanting to revamp the Sith is his belief that all the Sith leaders are flawed:

He despised them all: Masters and apprentices alike. . . . The Academy was an abomination, a testament to how far the Sith had fallen from the true ideals of the dark side. Bane alone understood his. He alone saw the truth. And he alone could lead the Sith back to the way of the dark side. (PoD 237)

Bane leaves the Academy and seeks the truth from the ancient Sith masters. The Academy on Korriban has betrayed the true composition of the Sith, so Bane claims the title of "Darth" for himself and travels to the lost Sith planet of Lehon, or as the Sith referenced it, the Unknown World. He learns the true ways of the Sith from the holocron of the ancient dark lord Darth Revan. Bane took all Revan's knowledge and used it to destroy the Sith with a powerful Sith ritual called the Thought Bomb. He used their conceitedness against them, manipulating Lord Kaan, the claimed leader of the Brotherhood of darkness, into leading all of his followers in this ritual that ultimately destroys the entire Sith order, except Bane. Bane now has a fresh start to create a Sith order based on the true ways of the ancient Sith lords. In the end, Bane finds a holocron that may have allowed him to cheat death by casting a spell of essence transfer. Bane fears that his current apprentice, Zannah, will not be strong enough to lead the new Sith order, so he plans to cheat death by taking over her body, casting off his own time-ravaged corpse. In this way, Bane can jump from body to body until he is satisfied that he has found an apprentice who will defeat him in combat and become the new Sith Master.

Bane possesses many exceptional gifts, another quality of the monomythic hero (Campbell 337). Bane had always been skilled in the ways of the Force, from his knack for sabaac to his manifestation of a dark side energy storm. Bane even surpasses the dark lords at the Academy as soon as he realized his true potential. His command of the Force is his greatest gift. The Force fuels his ability to wield a lightsaber, and makes him more powerful than any of the other so-called Sith lords. Once Bane seeks the true secrets of the dark side, the holocrons give him an even greater power, knowledge. Bane's knowledge of the ancient Sith lords and their teachings gives him an advantage over both Sith and Jedi alike. Where both orders have tried to hide and destroy the Sith secrets, Bane embraces them and thus becomes more powerful than any of his adversaries. Also the hero does not fear death (Campbell 388). Bane bases his new Sith order on the Rule of Two. He does not fear death because the Rule of Two guarantees the Sith order will survive his own death: "Two there should be; no more, no less" (*PoD* 289). Bane knows that despite how powerful he is, his successor will be even more powerful.

The eighth quality of the hero is that the hero's world suffers deficiencies (Campbell 337). This is Bane's reasoning for destroying the Sith as embodied in the Brotherhood of Darkness. Besides Bane's obvious dislike for the Brotherhood of Darkness, Bane understands that they are not the only deficiency in his world. The war raging between the Jedi and the Sith represents a galaxy ravaged by two supposedly elite groups. Both sides see themselves as the ultimate authority in the universe and refuse to coexist: ". . . the Jedi cared more about ideology and the battle of light and dark than about living people" (*DoE* 65). Each wants to rule, and so Bane seeks ultimately to destroy them both. In his eyes, the masters, students, and the order the Brotherhood of Darkness has created are all deficient. They are a disgrace to the true order of the Sith and have to be destroyed in Bane's eyes. The hero also either makes the world spiritually significant or makes humankind comprehensible to itself (Campbell 388). Bane wanted to make his world spiritually significant by restoring order to the Sith. Patience is Bane's best ally, allowing him time potentially to create a future generation of Sith who would eventually

destroy the Jedi and control the galaxy. Bane wants humanity to comprehend itself and understand that they are not worthy to live unless they understand the true ways of the Sith – that the strong will always rule over the weak, “Equality is a myth to protect the weak . . . Some of us are strong in the Force, others are not. Only a fool believes otherwise” (*PoD* 194).

The monomythic hero may also possess one or more conditional qualities. He may be the hero as warrior, lover, ruler, world-redeemer, or saint (Campbell 334-54). Of all the possibilities, however, Bane is most successful at being a warrior. He fights for the Sith order and what it should truly represent, bringing back the ancient ways of the Sith and establishing the Rule of Two. The conditional quality of the hero as warrior is that he must change the status quo (Campbell 334). Bane is successful in changing the status quo. In the beginning of the trilogy, Karpysyn introduces his readers to the current dark lords of the Sith: Lord Kaan, Lord Qordis, and Lord Kopecz. From the very beginning, one can see how the leaders hate each other and are constantly vying for control over the Sith order. There are too many leaders and too many students just following in their footsteps. They have cast off the title of “Darth” because, according to Qordis, “The Darth title promoted rivalry amongst the Sith” (*PoD* 193). Yet, there is more rivalry than ever, as the students try to impress the masters while the masters try to take control for themselves. Bane puts a stop to all of this by destroying the Sith, all but himself. Bane became the lone master and took on a new apprentice. And that is how it would always be. There would be one master and one apprentice - one to have the power and one to crave it. Eventually the apprentice would destroy the master, claim the title of Darth for herself, and take an apprentice of her own. This way the Sith cannot be corrupted by multiple lords, and the knowledge of the Sith would not be lost to incompetence, as with the Brotherhood. Bane has met nine of the ten qualities of the hero prescribed in Campbell’s *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

Stages of the Adventure

Over three novels, Darth Bane's journey is a long and tumultuous one. Like the hero, the monomythic antihero's journey involves three stages: Departure, Initiation, and Return. The Departure Stage is the hero's call to adventure. As previously outlined, the hero must receive a call to adventure either through a blunder, or the unknown world is introduced by a herald character. Bane's initial call to adventure is through a blunder in his life (Campbell 36). His murder of the Republic ensign, as mentioned earlier, opens his world up to incredible possibilities. Up until now, Bane's view of the outside world has been focused on the petty war between the Republic and the Sith. He has no love for either side, but especially not the Republic, since he feels they have abandoned Apatros:

"I've been working the mines almost as long as I can remember, in one way or another, and I still owe ORO enough credits to fill a freighter hull. But I don't see any Jedi coming to save me from that little bit of injustice." (*PoD* 38)

When Groshik suggests Bane flee Apatros and join the Sith in their war, Bane is shocked at the initial suggestion but quickly realizes how much more likely it is that he will fit in with the Sith, rather than that Republic "justice" will eventually free him. Bane's call to adventure takes him into the heart of the war between Hoth's Army of Light and Kaan's Brotherhood of Darkness. Bane quickly makes a name for himself as a courageous leader and a keen sharpshooter. Bane's antihero characteristics manifest themselves profoundly while he is serving in his unit, The Gloom Walkers. Bane develops a relationship with his fellow soldiers, and when they are sent on a suicide mission, Bane is the one who saves them, disobeying a direct order and subsequently being arrested for insubordination. Here Bane is introduced to the unknown world of the Sith by his hooded herald character, Lord Kopecz. Kopecz rescues Bane from the pit in which he had been left to die. He takes him to a world where he will finally find his course in life. However, Bane is not completely taken by the ways of the Sith.

In some monomythic stories, the call to adventure is refused by the hero (Campbell 51). In Bane's case, he does not have much choice but to be taken to Korriban by Lord Kopecz and learn the ways of the Sith. However, while he does not outright refuse the call, Bane has many moments of hesitation. His anti-hero characteristics lay out a unique monomythic journey for Bane. When Bane finally reaches Korriban and is introduced to the headmaster of the Sith Academy there, he is immediately revolted by Lord Qordis, but is not afraid of him. Qordis ceremonially anoints Bane with his own blood:

Qordis reached out and placed his wounded palm on the crown of Bane's bare scalp, anointing him with the blood of a Sith Lord. Bane had seen plenty of blood as a soldier, yet for some reason this ceremonial act of self-mutilation revolted him more than any battlefield gore. It was all he could do not to pull away. (*PoD* 98)

Bane loves the idea of endless power, but he does not exhibit the gripping evil that some of the other Sith lords embody. He does not revel in taking another's life without cause and the idea of self-mutilation clearly revolts him. He questions the motives and understanding of the Sith Lords. So, although Bane does not refuse the call, he has doubts about following this path.

Although Bane travels down a questionable path, initially, he is provided with several instances of supernatural aid to bring him through his journey. The first instance of supernatural aid is when an old man provides the hero with a talisman (Campbell 69-73). In our anti-hero's case, Bane is provided with a couple of talismans that truly shape his future. The first talisman is a lightsaber given to Bane by his Blademaster Kas'im. Kas'im becomes like a father to Bane, helping him find his place among the Sith. The second talisman came from Qordis. A less personal item, but none the less important, it is a new crystal for his lightsaber. The crystal, along with Bane's new title of Dark Lord, is supposed to signify Bane's acceptance into the ranks of the Sith Lords, but Bane recognizes these gifts are a ploy of Qordis'. Qordis realizes how powerful Bane is and how much the Brotherhood needs him: "They had need of

every . . . Sith, especially one as powerful as Bane” (*PoD* 239). Knowing Bane could destroy them, Qordis wants to lure Bane in and make him a part of the Brotherhood, but Bane understands this can never be. Qordis’ gift only makes Bane understand more how flawed the Brotherhood is and how much they need to be destroyed:

“All the Sith must be united in the Brotherhood of Darkness if we are to defeat the Jedi.”

“The Brotherhood will fail,” Bane stated, boldly declaring what he knew to be true, only because he knew the other wouldn’t believe. (*PoD* 242)

In this moment, Bane makes his final decision to leave the Brotherhood behind, and he strikes out on his true quest to find the true ways of the Sith and save the Order.

The second form of supernatural aid is provided through a guide, teacher, ferryman, wizard, hermit, or smith in a setting that suggests danger or temptation (Campbell 69-73). Bane comes across several such helpers throughout his journey. Initially, Bane receives aid from his Sith Masters. Kopecz ferries Bane across the threshold of his ordinary life into his new life with the Sith. Qordis becomes Bane’s teacher in the new ways of Sith. He teaches Bane the code by which Bane lives his life and, in return, passes down to his apprentice Zannah:

*Peace is a lie. There is only passion.
Through passion, I gain strength.
Through strength, I gain power.
Through power, I gain victory.
Through victory, my chains are broken – (PoD 95)*

Githany, Bane’s love interest in *Path of Destruction*, is Bane’s teacher when all of the other Sith lords turn their back on Bane. She teaches Bane all of the lessons they have been learning, including his most powerful ability, the conjured storm. Bane is also guided by the holocrons he finds. Bane finds the holocrons of long gone Sith Masters such as Darth Revan, Belia Darzu, and Darth Andeddu. Holocrons are objects in the shape of a four sided pyramid that hold the secrets of its creator. Used by Jedi Masters and Sith Lords alike, the holocrons project a holographic video of the creator that acts as a guide to the

creator's knowledge. Constructing a holocron is an intricate task that requires much patience, skill, and time to complete and is a testament to the creator's power. The holocrons that Bane discovers have avatars of the former Sith Masters that act as guides to the knowledge they left behind, and they give Bane the power and information he needs to create a true order of the Sith. Bane receives his fair share of aid throughout his adventure, but none compares to the aid received from the Blademaster, Kas'im.

Kas'im is the only Sith Master that sees Bane as more than just a vessel of power. He takes Bane under his wing and teaches Bane private lightsaber lessons after the other masters had turned on him. He also gives Bane his first lightsaber, and he even comes to his aid when Qordis tries to make Bane an example for the rest of the Academy by exiling him. Kas'im is a father figure and mentor to Bane, "the only instructor at the Academy who had ever actually helped him" (*PoD* 295), and he is also the reason for Bane's final transition to the dark side. Bane has to kill Kas'im in order to establish the true Sith tradition. Kas'im, a man who had been the only good person in Bane's life, dies at his hand and Bane feels nothing. "Darth Bane, Dark Lord of the Sith, turned his back and walked away" (*PoD* 295). Bane's lack of emotion at his former master's death is his final transition to the dark side. In this way, Bane has made the final step across the threshold into the unknown world.

Darth Bane also encounters two hermits along his journey, Caleb and Darovit. Caleb is a very powerful healer on the desolate world of Ambria. Ambria, devoid of natural life except the few settlers who brave it, withered under the spell of a powerful Sith sorceress who enveloped the planet in dark side energy. A Jedi tried to cleanse the world of the darkness, but was only successful in trapping the energy in Ambria's only lake. Because of this, Ambria remains barren, but still radiates with the power of the Force. It is near this lake that the healer, Caleb, settles. Away from the battle between dark and light, Caleb resigns to neutrality, healing all that he deems is in need. Bane comes across Caleb after being poisoned by Githany with a deadly toxin. Caleb initially refuses to heal Bane, feeling the darkness emanating from the dark lord, but Bane is persuasive when he threatens to murder Caleb's daughter.

Caleb is the only person who could heal Bane, and therefore provides Bane's most important supernatural aid. The second hermit Bane encounters is the healing hermit, Darovit. He is often referred to in the novels as Tomcat. Darovit is Zannah's cousin, and Bane first meets him in the Thought Bomb cave. Darovit is still a child at this point, but he becomes a hermit because of his encounter with Bane. He confronts Bane because he has taken Zannah as his apprentice, so Bane intends to kill him. Zannah intervenes by slicing off Darovit's hand. Darovit perceives this sparing act as betrayal by his cousin, and seeks solace and refuge in the jungle of Ruusan. Here Darovit grows up learning to survive on the land. He becomes an herbalist, healing the war-torn survivors of the battle on Ruusan. As fate would have it, he eventually leaves Ruusan and runs in to Bane and Zannah once again. When Bane is mangled by his own Force storm, Darovit keeps him alive long enough to get Bane back to Caleb. In the end, when Bane is healed, Zannah sees to it that both Caleb and Darovit are murdered, ending Bane's true supernatural aid.

Bane's threshold crossing is his long and torturous journey to become a Sith master. Bane is not a truly evil character, which is why his personality fits the anti-hero mold so well. While the Sith leaders at Korriban seem to be totally self serving, Bane looks to the future for something better. Through his extensive study of the Academy's archives, Bane has found the true traditions of the Sith order that have long been abandoned. In order to restore these traditions, Bane has to take control of the Sith, and he is willing to kill to do that. His initial step over the threshold is his murder of Sirak at the Sith Academy. Sirak is initially believed to be the Sith'ari, "a perfect being, one who embodies the dark side and all we stand for" (*PoD* 130). When Bane defeats Sirak in the dueling ring, he steals that title from him. The Sith Masters begin to pay attention to him again and want to pull him into their circle and their ideas. Bane rejects Qordis and the new ways of the Sith and sets out on a journey to find answers. When he returns, Sirak is waiting for him. Bane is outnumbered 4 to 1, but he takes them all down in the end, saving Sirak for last. Bane's murder of Sirak is a huge step across the threshold:

He was of the dark side now; Sirak's execution had been the final step. He had crossed the threshold; there was no going back. He would never hesitate again. He would never doubt again. The transformation he had begun when he'd first come to the Academy was complete; he was Sith. (*PoD* 249)

Bane's goal was to become a Sith master like the leaders he had at the Academy, but in the end, through his execution of Sirak and his former master, Kas'im, Bane has gone beyond his former Sith masters.

Bane has crossed the threshold into becoming the true Sith'ari.

Crossing the threshold leads to a sphere of rebirth (Campbell 77-89), which Bane encounters on many occasions. His initial rebirth begins with the changing of his name. Darth Bane was born Dessel, but he was often called by his degrading nickname, Bane. This nickname was not a fond memory for Bane since it referred to the hatred his father bestowed upon him. However, as Bane progresses in the ways of the Dark side, he takes the name as his Sith name. He leaves Dessel behind, his old life, his debt, and is reborn as Bane, Dark Lord of the Sith. Bane experiences his second form of rebirth with his execution of Sirak, but makes another major step in his rebirth through adopting the Darth title. Sirak is Bane's only true rival at the Academy. Sirak is powerful enough to be considered the Sith'ari,¹ but Bane humiliates him in the dueling ring. Because of this failure, Sirak plots with Githany to destroy Bane. Bane and Sirak battle to the death in the archives of the Sith Academy with Bane as the victor. Here Bane is reborn as a true Sith, proving that none can stand in his way. After Bane kills Sirak, he believes he is worthy of the title Darth. The Darth title signifies a true Dark Lord of the Sith. According to Qordis, the Darth title was abandoned because it identified the strongest in their order making them targets for the Jedi. Bane sees this explanation as another reason to take the title since he believes the current Sith

¹ The Sith'ari was a title used in the ancient times of the Sith to signify an overlord. However, over time it has become a legend, deeming the Sith'ari a god. Legend states, "The Sith'ari will be free of limits; The Sith'ari will lead the Sith and destroy them; The Sith'ari will raise the Sith from death and make them stronger than before" ("Sith'ari" 2)

masters to be cowards. Bane's final stage of rebirth is his battle with Kas'im. However, this final stage is guarded by a protective watchman.

The threshold crossing is protected by a protective guardian or a destructive watchman (Campbell 77-89). In Bane's case, he encounters both. The destructive watchmen are the Sith masters and their followers. In this current period of Star Wars history, the Sith number in the thousands. In Bane's eyes, they are all misguided fools who will never really understand the true path of the Sith. The Brotherhood of Darkness are destructive watchmen because they have effectively destroyed the founding ways of the Sith order. Bane has always been the student to watch since he came to the Academy. All the masters know Bane is stronger in the Force than his fellow students, so they give him private lessons and special attention. Even though Lord Kaan has never actually met Bane, he is furious to discover Bane did not accompany the other masters to Ruusan: "We need him! . . . He's too strong for you to just let him go" (PoD 263). Bane separates himself from the destructive watchmen, and seeks to reestablish the ancient ways by wiping the slate clean and inflicting the Rule of Two. He destroys them all with the Thought Bomb to inaugurate a new order of the Sith that follows the Rule of Two. The Thought Bomb is a sphere of pure dark side energy that would consume all beings touched by the Force. Kaan's Sith conjure the Thought Bomb that consumes, not only the Sith, but a hundred Jedi as well, trapping their souls in a never ending misery. Through this act, Bane becomes the last surviving member of the Sith order. Before the Thought Bomb's devastating effects, though, Bane encounters the protective guardian of the threshold, the Blademaster Kas'im. Kas'im is the closest connection the reader has to Bane's humanity because of the pseudo father-son relationship they share. Kas'im, like Bane, tries to protect what he believes is the greater good. He fears Bane's destruction of their order and wants to save the order that he, Kaan, and the other masters had fought so hard to put together. Kas'im is not only protecting the Brotherhood of Darkness, but he is also guarding the threshold Bane must cross to become a true Sith lord. Kas'im is the only person, besides Githany, with whom Bane

makes an emotional connection. Bane destroys Kas'im in the end, and despite their previous emotional connection, "He had become simply an obstacle in Bane's path" (PoD 296), Bane accepts his rebirth as a true Sith Lord and walks away without regret. He no longer feels any remorse over the deaths he inflicts because they are all necessary sacrifices to ensure the rebirth of the Sith order.

One of the most prominent episodes of the monomyth, not only in the *Darth Bane Trilogy* but in the *Star Wars* films as well, is the underground journey or "being swallowed in the belly of the whale" (Campbell 90-96). Being swallowed in the belly of the whale is most recognizable as the Biblical story of "Jonah and the Whale." Jonah is defiant of God's will, so God sends a giant fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah is forced to live in its belly surviving only on what God provides. Jonah is left to reflect on his defiance and realizes his mistakes and repents. Being trapped inside the fish's belly was a torturous and miserable experience for Jonah and signifies a test of wills that left Jonah reborn. In this way, Campbell developed a series of categories that represent belly of the whale journeys. The hero must travel through a series of underground journeys that will test the hero's resolve, teach him lessons, and find him reborn out of his hellish descent. All three novels are riddled with "belly of the whale" adventures that can be categorized into five different types: symbolic deaths and rebirths, underground journeys, symbolic descents into hell, infiltrating a temple guarded by gargoyles, and the hero being mutilated, dismembered, or killed. Bane experiences many forms of rebirth throughout the trilogy, but not as many instances of symbolic death. The first instance of this, though, is Bane's grueling defeat in the dueling ring against Sirak. Bane is torn by guilt from killing another student in the dueling ring earlier in the novel. Foharg, a top student at the Academy, accepts a challenge from Bane with confidence, but Bane utterly destroys him, killing him with a surge of Dark side energy in the end. Bane struggles with the guilt of the deaths he had caused and loses his control over the Force. In order to maintain his prestige, Bane blindly challenges Sirak to a duel. Sirak destroys him the same way Bane had destroyed Foharg, yet Sirak spares his life so that he may suffer through his shame. The man that was Bane is destroyed, and as far

as the reader knows initially, he may have been killed. Bane awakens later in the bacta tank, seemingly ok.

The second symbolic death is when Githany poisons Bane. Githany gives Bane a kiss of death when they meet on Ambria, a remote world not far from the historic battle of Ruusan. She had laced her lips with not only rock wart venom, but also with a very subtle toxin called syntox, the deadliest poison in the universe. She had no reason to believe Bane would survive such a thing, as “a single kiss would have been enough to kill him, and [Bane] had received a triple dose” (*PoD* 313), so Githany reported Bane dead to Lord Kaan. When Bane returns seemingly to join the Brotherhood of Darkness on Ruusan, Kaan and the rest of the Brotherhood are understandably shocked, “[Lord Kaan] cast a quick glance in Githany’s direction. . . . From the expression on her face, it was obvious she was just as surprised as he was to see their visitor alive and well” (*PoD* 337). Bane is saved by a famous healer who has taken up residence on Ambria, Caleb, who is forced by Bane to save him. Once he is healed, Bane truly understands what he has to do to save the Sith, destroy the Brotherhood, even Githany. Bane is reborn on Ambria through the healing powers of Caleb, and Caleb saves Bane again in *The Rule of Two*. Bane battles a series of Jedi Masters while on Tython, a battle that ends badly for Bane. Although Bane and Zannah are victorious in the end, Bane electrocutes himself with his own lightning storm. The lightning kills the orbalisks², symbiotic organisms attached to his body, causing them to release a fatal poison. Zannah takes Bane to Ambria, where she persuades Caleb to save Bane one last time.

The final instance of death and rebirth is controversial. In the end of the final novel, *Dynasty of Evil*, Bane and his apprentice, Zannah, have their final showdown. To follow the Rule of Two, Zannah must destroy her master and take his place, taking on an apprentice of her own. Bane does not believe Zannah is ready for this, but to prevent her from defeating him because he has become old and weak,

² Orbalisks are crustaceans that feed off of living organisms that possess the power of the Force. They attach themselves to the host’s skin, multiplying until the host is completely covered. Impervious to even a lightsaber and powerful enough to suck the life from a host, the creatures are symbiotic and give as much power as they take. Orbalisks cause pain which fuel a Sith as strong as Bane, allowing him to survive.

Bane has a backup plan. He has discovered a Sith ritual that will allow him to transfer his essence into another's body. When Bane seems to be defeated by Zannah, he begins the ritual, destroying his body in the process. It appears that Bane, Dark Lord of the Sith, is dead. However, his soul survives and begins an internal struggle with Zannah's in order to take over her body. Whoever wins the battle will claim the body, and the other soul will be destroyed forever. When the dust settles, the survivor introduces herself as Darth Zannah. However, as Zannah tells her new apprentice of Bane's legacy and the future they must work towards, her apprentice notices an old mannerism of Bane's: "as she was speaking, Zannah was continually clenching and unclenching the fingers of her left hand" (*DoE* 304). As Bane ages throughout the trilogy, the power of the Force begins to take a ragged toll on his body. Bane develops an uncontrollable tremor in his left hand. In order to stifle it, he would often clench his hand open and closed. This final detail at the end of the novel has left the situation open for debate: who survived? Zannah or Bane? If Bane did survive, this final battle would be the last instance of death and rebirth for the Dark Lord³.

The second manifestation of being swallowed in the belly of the whale is the underground journey. As Dessel, the miner on Apatros, Bane spends most of his life underground working the mines. It is this that makes him the strong willed person that he is. However, his more adventurous underground journeys begin after his induction into the Sith Academy on Korriban. His first symbolic underground journey is when Bane discovers the archives of the Academy. The archives are on the lower-most level of the Academy's temple but is in no way cave-like, as seen in many of *Star Wars'* underground journeys, and Bane spends a good portion of his training learning of the old ways of the Sith there. Here Bane discovers the true order of things and how best to use his power. As a result, Bane rejects the ways of Qordis and the other masters at the Academy, and he travels to the Valley of the

³ Drew Karpysyn recently released an article stating that Zannah was the survivor of the ritual of essence transfer. However, Karpysyn goes on to say a piece of Bane did survive, based on Zannah's clenching hand, but how much of him survived is still debatable (Karpysyn 3, 4, & 9).

Dark Lords to learn from their lingering spirits. Bane travels across the desert to discover a series of underground tombs, guarded by the wildlife on Korriban, the Tuk'ata. Bane spends days underground searching the tombs only to find darkness and emptiness. His next underground journey is when Bane seeks out the lost tomb of Freedon Naad. Freedon Naad was a Sith lord who had lived over 3000 standard years. Bane hopes to learn from the dark lord's holocron. He ventures deep down to the lowest levels of his tomb to find the holocron guarded by an infestation of crustaceans known as orbalisks. Bane survives the encounter and comes away with not only the holocron but a new form of armor, as well, since the orbalisks are symbiotes that attach themselves to his flesh.

Like his journey into the crypt of Freedon Nadd, Bane travels into many temples in search of ancient Sith knowledge. Usually these temples are guarded by indigenous creatures or by gargoyle-like devices. In Nadd's tomb, the holocron is guarded by the orbalisks, and when Bane journeys to the Rakatan Temple, the temple is guarded by automated defensive mounts planted at the tops and corners of the temple much like gargoyles would have been. The best example of a gargoyle guarding a temple is Bane's tour of Belia Darzu's fortress on Tython. Belia Darzu was a Sith lord who had perfected the art of holocron crafting, and Bane is seeking to create his own holocron. In order to reach Darzu's holocron, Bane has to destroy a series of technobeasts. Technobeasts are an original creation of Darzu's. Originally both human and beast, the remains of these creatures are animated by robotic limbs and organs that sustain their life indefinitely. Even after Darzu's death, they gather around her tomb and holocron in a statue like state until Bane touches the holocron. They then spring to life to protect their master, and Bane must dispatch them all in order to walk away with his prize.

Another manifestation of being swallowed in the belly of the whale is a symbolic descent into hell. The cave in which Lord Kaan unleashes the Thought Bomb on Ruusan is the location of Bane's first descent into hell. The cave is literally a grave for the souls of hundreds of Sith and Jedi alike. They are forever trapped in a torturous hell, all screaming to be released:

The hateful whispers erupted into shrieks of torment. But these were not the screams of sentient beings: they were bestial howls of primal, mindless fury. . . . Only torn bits remained, broken pieces of what had once been spirits, no longer capable of conscious thought, wailing in the shared suffering of their eternal madness. (RoT 38)

Bane makes this journey into the cave mostly to make sure that Kaan and his Brotherhood are truly dead. The Thought Bomb even has some effect on Bane, despite how far away he is when it detonates, and Bane begins seeing images of Kaan and Qordis. They appear to and harass him, so Bane has to see for himself that they are trapped within the Thought Bomb. The next example of Bane's descent into hell is when he travels into the Deep Core, a journey to the perilous center of the Galaxy, to the final resting place of Darth Andeddu. Darth Andeddu's temple is surrounded by lava on a burnt husk of a world, Prakith. "Ribbons of lava crawled down from the surrounding peaks and crisscrossed their way across the valley. The malevolent power emanating from the stronghold kept the deadly streams at bay" (*DoE* 110). The temple is made of black obsidian, and Bane has to travel through its winding halls and incessant minions in order to reach Andeddu's crypt. Here, Bane recovers the secret to eternal life, the ritual of essence transfer.

The final manifestation of being swallowed in the belly of the whale is the symbolic mutilation of the hero through dismemberment or even death. His first mutilation is when Bane is taken over by the symbiotic organisms, the orbalisks. He initially was only infected by a couple of symbiotes, but they quickly multiply and spread over his entire body. Bane had to construct special boots, gloves, and a helmet to keep the parasites from completely encasing him. Though disfiguring, the orbalisks serve as armor since they are completely impenetrable, even to lightsabers. They are a disadvantage, though, because while he is infested with the orbalisks his appearance is so disfigured that he cannot go in public without drawing attention to himself. After the orbalisks are removed, there is one more instance of dismemberment. In the end of the trilogy, Bane and Zannah have their final battle. Zannah is very

powerful in the ways of Sith sorcery, and during their battle she conjures darkside tendrils and lops off Bane's lightsaber arm with one of these tendrils: "His disembodied forearm and fist tumbled harmlessly to the ground . . . Blind and alone, he felt the void closing in" (*DoE* 300). In this moment, Bane begins the ritual of essence transfer. His body is destroyed, leaving him all but dead as his soul struggles with Zannah's to stake claim over her body.

With the completion of the Departure Stage, Bane must begin his trials in the Initiation Stage. At the beginning of the Initiation Stage, the hero must undergo a series of trials and tests in which he receives help, usually through supernatural aid, talismans or amulets (Campbell 97). The hero is sometimes protected by a divine power, and must face his opposite, shadow, or unsuspected self. Bane's general test is whether or not he can truly recreate the Sith order into a galaxy dominating duo. In order to do this, Bane needs to preserve all that he has learned from ancient holocrons and Sith manuscripts. Bane needs to create his own holocron so that the Sith that come after him will carry on the Rule of Two and know what he has done to get them there. Bane struggles with the creation of his holocron for most of the second novel. Building a holocron is a test of Bane's training, patience, and power. He fails multiple times until he learns the secrets behind holocron construction from Belia Darzu. These holocrons are a common motif throughout the trilogy. Testing his resolve, Bane travels into the Deep Core many times to retrieve holocrons. It is these holocrons that guide him throughout the story in the development of the Rule of Two, in constructing his own holocron, and in learning the secret to eternal life. These holocrons are sometimes referred to by Bane as talismans, "Andeddu's Holocron was a talisman of undeniable power" (*DoE* 149). He encounters many of these talismans before he finally constructs his own in the third novel.

When Bane finally faces his shadow, it is none other than his own apprentice, Zannah. The shadow figure was originally created as a representation of the darker side of the hero. The shadow figure illustrated all of the things that the hero did not want to be or tried to avoid, like when Luke

Skywalker faces the version of Darth Vader that appears in the Dagobah tree. Since Bane is the antihero, and he claims no title of good or evil, Zannah is a representation of the potential destruction of the Rule of Two. Bane fears she does not truly understand the Rule of Two, and only seeks to destroy him now because he is too old and weak to defeat her. This encounter with the shadow figure must end with someone's death, as is illustrated in the Rule of Two. However, the hero must either swallow the shadow figure or be swallowed by it (Campbell 108). The shadow figure is the opposite of the hero in almost every way but must be similar to the hero in some respect. Zannah has obvious opposite characteristics: small in stature, female, her power comes from Sith sorcery rather than the raw power that Bane possesses. There is no doubt that she is as powerful as Bane, but not in the same ways. Bane's power comes from the anger he has always carried inside towards his father and the ignorance of the previous Sith order. Zannah's power comes from the pleasure she takes in torturing other people: "Zannah could have ended it then, dispelling the illusion and allowing Cyndra to fall into unconsciousness. . . . Or Zannah could push the illusion even farther, driving her victim to the edge of insanity and beyond. . . . – Zannah pushed" (*RoT* 183). Sith sorcery allows her to penetrate her victims' minds and project images of sheer horror that will usually drive them insane. She is like Bane in being a student of the Dark side of the Force, and she becomes Bane's unsuspected self due to their final encounter when Bane potentially destroys her soul in order to inhabit her body with his own spiritual essence. Whether or not Bane actually wins the battle of wills is irrelevant to this element of the monomyth because he has either swallowed the "shadow" or been swallowed by her.

The next step in the initiation stage is the meeting with the goddess (Campbell 109). In the Darth Bane Trilogy there are very few female characters, but of those few, only one character is the goddess in any form. The goddess can appear to the hero as "lady of the house of sleep," the bad mother, or the good mother. Githany is the female character that appears to Bane as the bad mother. The bad mother signifies a woman who creates a womb-like sense of peace for the hero, luring him into

a false comfort zone (Campbell 114). Once blinded by the goddesses' kindness, she seeks to maim or kill the hero. Githany, a former Jedi padawan turned Sith, lures Bane into her comfort zone on many occasions causing him to have feelings for her and even share his past as a miner on Apatros. Githany, despite her own feelings for Bane, attempts to kill him on two occasions. Githany lures Bane to the archives of the Academy, on the first attempt, and has a trio of Sith students waiting in ambush for him. He survives, only to be slyly attacked by Githany on Ambria. Githany uses Bane's feelings for her to entice him, and so he kisses her, unknowingly ingesting, not only rock wart venom, but also a triple dose of syntax. In this way, Githany is not only the bad mother, but also the woman as temptress.

After the hero's meeting with the goddess, the hero's journey is generally stalled by the woman as temptress. Githany also represents the woman as temptress. Githany defects to the Brotherhood of Darkness during the initial battles of Ruusan. When she joins the other students on Korriban, Bane becomes a person of interest to her. Recently destroyed during his initial duel with Sirak, Bane fades into the shadows, away from the shaming eyes of his fellow students: "He withdrew into himself, tried to make himself invisible to avoid the scorn and derision of others" (*PoD* 162). Githany could feel how powerful Bane was despite his pitiful state and planned to use him to help her destroy Sirak. Like the sirens in *The Odyssey*, she uses her seductive ways to lure Bane in, and she teaches him the ways of the Sith, despite the fact the masters refuse to teach him. Bane falls for Githany, sharing his past with her, and she begins to develop feelings for him, as well, "Despite her best intentions, some small part of her was drawn to him" (*PoD* 188). Despite their attraction to each other, however, Githany sides with the Brotherhood over Bane. Bane believed, at one time, that Githany would be his new apprentice once he destroyed the Brotherhood and established the Rule of Two. However, Githany sides with Kaan and tries to kill Bane with a poisoned kiss. Bane soon realizes Githany embodies everything he is trying to destroy.

Next in the Initiation Stage is the atonement with the father (Campbell 126). Possible ways to atone with the father include: the father becomes the initiating priest through whom the hero enters

the unknown world, the hero is initiated into the unknown world through castration, or the hero is eaten by the father signifying a negative encounter. In Bane's case, there is no atonement with the father, only negative encounters. Bane's biological father was never a true father to Bane. Hurst beat Bane unmercifully and blamed him for the harsh life he currently had. Bane inadvertently kills his father with the Force by giving him a heart attack. Bane has similar patterns with all the men that become father figures to him except for one. This character does not represent atonement with the father, but the account is much more positive than the others. Bane encounters an initiating priest who reflects the closest event to a positive encounter as Bane will get. This initiating priest is the bartender from Apatros, Groshik. Bane looks to Groshik for advice, especially when he is in the life threatening situation of murdering a Republic officer. Groshik does his best to save Bane's life by smuggling him off-world into the protection of the Sith Army. In this way, Groshik introduces Bane to the unknown world. Although Groshik never reappears in the trilogy, Bane often remembers some of the advice Groshik had given him and his kindness:

“Thank you, old friend. I won't forget this.”

“I know you won't, Des.” Though the words were kind, there was an unmistakable sorrow in the gravelly voice. (*PoD* 58)

Kas'im is closer to a father figure than any of the other characters. Kas'im takes Bane under his wing and trains him in the art of lightsaber battle, and he even passes down his former master's lightsaber to Bane. Bane strikes him down in an epic lightsaber duel on the Unknown World, dropping half of the Rakatan Temple entrance on top of him. The other father figures include Qordis and Kaan, both leaders of the Brotherhood. Qordis also trained Bane in private, but only when he thought Bane was an asset to the Brotherhood. Bane cut Qordis down just before the Thought Bomb went off. Kaan, on the other hand, never really spent any one on one time with Bane, but he did try very hard to bring him into the

fold of the Brotherhood. He pretends to treat Bane as an equal, but Bane talks him into setting off the Thought Bomb, destroying Kaan and the other Sith in the process.

The fifth episode of the Initiation Stage is apotheosis (Campbell 149). Apotheosis is when the hero transcends humanity to become godlike. Signs that one has attained apotheosis include: the annihilation of consciousness – beyond the reach of change – and the conjoining of opposites – male/female, good/evil, time/eternity (Campbell 169-170). Bane comes close to apotheosis on several occasions, one of which is at the end of the trilogy during his battle with Zannah. When Bane initiates the ritual of essence transfer, he may have destroyed Zannah's essence and taken over her body. In this case, Bane has become both male and female and has transcended time and eternity by discovering the route to immortality. By transcending gender, time, and eternity, Bane has become untouchable. Attaining apotheosis is generally the hero's path to success. Apotheosis denotes a character that has become godlike, and Bane truly achieves this by the end of the novel. As mentioned earlier, the Sith believe in the legend of the Sith'ari. The Sith'ari is a Sith who has fulfilled the legend and become a god. Bane is successful in fulfilling these requirements. He is free from limits because of his discovery of the ritual of essence transfer. He is looked to as a leader by the Sith because he has brought them the Thought Bomb to destroy the Jedi, but he actually destroys the Sith. Through this destruction, Bane revives the Sith with the creation of the Rule of Two, enacting a ritual that will leave the next Sith master stronger than his predecessor. Bane has met all the requirements to be the Sith'ari and has potentially become immortal, therefore becoming a god among men. This route to immortality is also the ultimate boon that the anti-hero obtains.

The ultimate boon is broken down into three categories: revelation, immortality, and wealth and power (Campbell 188-192). The hero will usually not obtain all three of these options. Mostly the hero seeks revelation, but immortality is an acceptable, but less desirable boon. Wealth and power are a common boon, but are generally less important to the hero. Bane's revelation is when he steals the

secret of essence transfer from Darth Andeddu's holocron. Andeddu had a process the student must go through before he would teach them the ritual of essence transfer but Bane decided to take it for himself. He bypassed the restrictions on the holocron and pulled out the ritual, nearly destroying the holocron in the process. The discovery of the ritual of essence transfer is the key to immortality, a boon which he does not wish to share with anyone else, especially not Zannah:

Even though she had disappointed Bane by not challenging him, Zannah was still a dangerous and formidable opponent. It was possible she might defeat him, leaving the Sith with a leader who lacked the necessary drive and ambition. Her complacency would infect the Order; eventually it would wither and die. (*DoE* 45)

Zannah's inability to challenge Bane made him underestimate her power and her resolve towards the new Sith order. He would hide the ritual of essence transfer from her at all costs. Throughout Bane's journey, Bane collected a vast amount of wealth. According to Bane, though, "material riches were only a means to an end" (*DoE* 46). The wealth was a cover up for Bane and Zannah. He never wanted anyone to know that a Sith had survived the Thought Bomb. Belief in the demise of the Sith is imperative to Bane's plan to take over the Universe and wipe out the Jedi Order for good. Bane's true ambition is power, "Through power, I gain victory. Through victory, my chains are broken" (*PoD* 95). Although Bane never really agreed with the teachings of his Sith masters, this quotation was one lesson he took away with him and lived by. Bane had always been shackled by his father, his life as a miner, ORO, and even his regiment, the Gloomwalkers, while he was a part of the Sith army. With his own power, Bane was able to do things he would have never been able to do if he had remained bound by all of these shackles.

The final stage of the monomyth is the Return Stage. As in George Lucas' Star Wars films, the Return Stage is almost entirely neglected in the Bane trilogy. Bane does refuse to give the boon over to humanity, however. The situation never really arises where he could share that information with the

world, but he has no intention of letting anyone know that he has the ability to become immortal. The second episode of the Return Stage is the magic flight. For Bane, the closest to a magic flight is braving hyperspace. When Bane travels into the Deep Core in order to obtain Andeddu's holocron, he must plot short, individual hyperspace jumps because the path to Prakith has unstable hyperspace lanes. They could collapse at any instant and Bane would be destroyed and sucked into the void of space, "There was no way to predict the stability or inherent safety of a given route until a ship charted it by going through it; as a result each stage of the journey had the potential for disaster" (*DoE* 106). Because of these disastrous hyperlanes, Bane's return flight to his home on Ciutric IV are opposed by "magic" means. However, Bane does return to Ciutric IV with the talisman of his quest, Andeddu's holocron and the ritual of essence transfer. With this Bane could potentially live out his plans to create an order of the Sith that would destroy the Jedi and rule the galaxy. This is Bane's true quest, to recreate the Sith Order in the ways of the ancient Sith:

The Academy was an abomination, a testament to how far the Sith had fallen from the true ideals of the dark side. Bane alone understood this. He alone saw the truth. And he alone could lead the Sith back to the way of the dark side. (*PoD* 237)

The last episode of the Return Stage relevant to the *Darth Bane Trilogy* is when the hero becomes the master of both the unknown and everyday worlds. Bane accepts the transcendence across both worlds – his everyday life as a miner and his new life as a Sith Lord. Bane knows that if he enacts the ritual of essence transfer that he will transcend death, which is by all means an unknown world, and his body will be destroyed. If he fails, his soul will be trapped in a void very similar to the Thought Bomb. Despite all of this, Bane does not fear death. He knows that this is something he has to do in order to preserve the true ways of the Sith. By becoming a Sith Lord, Bane becomes the master of his mundane world. He no longer needs to be a slave to ORO and die working in the mines of Apatros. In his current state, ORO should fear him. Bane has also become the master of the unknown world, the world of the Sith. Bane

has proven that he is the Sith'ari, and therefore ruler of them all. He also has proven that he cannot be defeated by the Jedi. This world, that was previously unknown to him, is now just one of many that Bane has transcended.

Darth Bane is the epitome of the anti-hero. He possesses a strong will towards a goal that to most would not seem valiant. However, Bane believes in the preservation of an ancient order. Although he destroys his "brothers" in the beginning of the trilogy, he creates a bright future for his successors. Despite being an anti-hero, Bane successfully travels through Joseph Campbell's three stages of the monomyth. Bane is no Odysseus or Luke Skywalker, but he meets the qualities of the hero, he accepts his call to adventure, and completes his quest to recreate the Sith Order. Like Lucas' hero, Luke Skywalker, Darth Bane completes Campbell's monomythic journey. In some ways, Bane completes the monomyth more successfully. There is no proof that Luke Skywalker ever achieves apotheosis, an important event for a true hero. In this way, Bane is superior as the anti-hero, meeting Campbell's qualities and journeying Campbell's stages. He is the anti-hero that liberated the Sith, and the monomyth. They call him Bane.

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