

The Monomyth in *Star Trek* (2009): Kirk & Spock Together Again for the First Time

DONALD PALUMBO

ALREADY ABSTRACTED FROM NUMEROUS MYTHOLOGICAL, RELIGIOUS, and fantastic sources, the monomyth has also been repeatedly replicated since (as well as prior to) Joseph Campbell's spiritually insightful explication in 1949's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. In addition to serving as the underlying plot structure in the initial *Star Wars* trilogy, for which it is most widely known, Campbell's interpretation likewise occurs in meticulous detail in some of the most highly regarded, artistically successful science-fiction novels from the second half of the twentieth century—such as Alfred Bester's *The Stars My Destination*, Daniel Keyes' *Flowers for Algernon*, each of the six volumes in Frank Herbert's *Dune* series, and Gene Wolfe's four-volume *The Book of the New Sun* and its sequel, *The Urth of the New Sun*—as well as in numerous additional science-fiction films from this period, including *The Time Machine* (1960), *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Dune*, *Back to the Future*, *The Terminator*, *The Last Starfighter*, *Time after Time*, *Logan's Run*, *Escape from New York*, *Dreamscape*, *Tron*, *Total Recall*, *The Matrix*, and each of the first ten *Star Trek* films (the last of which, *Nemesis*, was released in 2002).¹ Thus, it is not surprising that the monomyth appears yet again as the underlying plot structure in the most recent *Star Trek* film, J. J. Abrams' *Star Trek* (2009). And Abrams' variation on the monomyth not only connects *Star Trek* (2009) to each of the ten preceding films, aesthetically as well as narratively, but also breaks new ground in ringing a few brand new changes on this ancient, archetypal plot structure.

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As in each of the first ten Star Trek movies (see Figures 1 and 2), but unlike the Star Wars films, *Star Trek* (2009) follows the monomyth's essential quest pattern in its entirety while also incorporating many additional elements of the monomyth to reproduce in itself this elaborate plot structure, yet again, fully and imaginatively. Aside from the Star Trek movies, all but one of those science-fiction films and novels mentioned above, like Campbell's analysis itself, feature the archetypal adventure of a single male hero; the sole exception, *The Terminator*, diverges significantly from the others and from nearly all the many myths, legends, and fables upon which Campbell bases his study in that its protagonist is a woman, Sarah Connor, who evolves into the heroine through sharing with Kyle Reese, her protector from the future, most of the monomythic hero's characteristics and nearly all of the incidents that comprise his adventure. In the first ten Star Trek films the monomythic hero, although still male, is likewise more often than not a composite character—a collective hero combining attributes and experiences of several protagonists who crew the various incarnations of the *Enterprise*—and is usually not the single most prominent protagonist, either Kirk or Picard, alone. Thus—not surprisingly, given their iconic stature in the franchise—in a sense the recurring monomythic hero in these earlier films is the *Enterprise* crew as an ensemble and, by extension, the ship itself. Only in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* and *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*, the earlier Star Trek films in which the monomyth is most prominent, does Kirk alone embody the attributes and enact the adventure of the hero. Kirk and Picard share the hero role in *Star Trek: Generations*, the only film in which both appear. And only in *Star Trek: Insurrection* is Picard a solo monomythic hero. Kirk shares crucial aspects of the hero role with Decker and Spock in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* and with Spock and (to a lesser extent) McCoy in *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*, *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier*, and *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*. Picard shares the hero role with Data (in many ways *The Next Generation* iteration of Spock) in both *Star Trek: First Contact* and *Star Trek: Nemesis*. Much like Picard and Data in these two films, Kirk and Spock share the qualities and adventure of the hero in *Star Trek* (2009). Yet, as this film's primary temporal setting—2233 to 2258—precedes those of the earlier Star Trek films and occurs before Kirk and Spock have established their legendary friendships with one another and the rest of the *Enterprise* crew, here *Enterprise* and its remaining personnel are relegated to purely supporting roles, are not a

	<i>Motion Picture</i>	<i>Wrath of Khan</i>	<i>Search for Spock</i>	<i>Voyage Home</i>	<i>Final Frontier</i>	<i>Undiscovered Country</i>	<i>Generations</i>	<i>First Contact</i>	<i>Insurrection</i>	<i>Nemesis</i>
Monomythic Hero(es)	Decker, Kirk, & Spock	Kirk	Kirk, Spock, McCoy	Kirk	Kirk, Spock, McCoy	Kirk, Spock, McCoy	Kirk & Picard	Picard & Data	Picard	Picard & Data
Special Birth			Spock		Spock					
Mother a Queen										
Exile or Orphan	Kirk has no ship	Kirk has no ship	Kirk & Spock	Kirk & crew	Spock as a youth	Kirk & McCoy	Kirk is retired	Picard disobeys orders	Picard disobeys orders	(Shinzon: Picard's clone)
Seeking his Father	(V'ger seeks creator)	Kirk (inverted)	Spock		seeks "god")					
Triumph over Pre-tenders	Kirk over Decker	Kirk over Spock	Kirk over Styles	Kirk made captain						
Exceptional Gifts	Kirk as captain	Kirk as captain	Kirk as captain	Kirk as captain	Kirk as captain	Kirk as captain	Picard as captain	Picard's Borg history	Picard as captain	Picard as captain
No Fear of Death	Kirk, crew, Decker	Kirk & Spock	(David Marcus)		Kirk, Spock, McCoy		Kirk & Picard	Picard	Picard	Picard & Data
World's Deficiencies			bureaucracy	bureaucracy & ecology		war & ecology		war & bureaucracy	bureaucracy & ecology	
Spiritual Significance	(V'ger)				Kirk (inverted)		Kirk	Picard: Vulcan contact	Picard: Prime Directive	
Make Humanity Comprehensible	Decker seizes his destiny	Kirk understands himself	Spock understands himself	Spock understands himself	Spock understands himself		Kirk makes a difference	Data installs emotion chip		Data as exemplar of humanity
Hero as Warrior	Kirk & Decker	Kirk defeats Khan	Kirk defeats Kruge	Kirk saves Earth	Kirk outwits "god"	Kirk outwits Chang	Kirk & Picard	Picard Borg	Picard saves Ba'ku	Picard defeats Shinzon
Hero as Lover	Decker to Ilia			Kirk to Gillian Taylor		Kirk to Martia			Picard to Antj. (Troi & Riker)	(Troi & Riker)
Hero as Ruler										
Hero as World-Redeemer	partial: Decker	Kirk, inverted	Kirk, inverted	partial: Kirk		partial: Kirk	partial: Kirk/Picard	partial: Picard	partial: Picard	Picard, inverted
Hero as Saint or Mystic	Decker									

FIGURE 1. The qualities of the hero in the first ten Star Trek films.

	<i>Motion Picture</i>	<i>Wrath of Khan</i>	<i>Search for Spock</i>	<i>Voyage Home</i>	<i>Final Frontier</i>	<i>Undiscovered Country</i>	<i>Generations</i>	<i>First Contact</i>	<i>Insurrection</i>	<i>Nemesis</i>
the Call to Adventure	Spock & Kirk	Kirk	Kirk & McCoy	Kirk & crew	Kirk & crew	Kirk	Kirk, Picard, crews	Picard & crew	Picard & crew	Picard & crew
the Call Refused by	(Scotty)		Kirk (as a ruse)			Kirk		Picard, inverted		
Super-natural Aid Provided by	Negum, Decker, Spock, & Ilia	Spock, Saavik, McCoy, Chekov	Scotty, Chekov, Uhura, & Sulu	Scotty, Spock, Gillian, President	Scotty, Chekov	Spock, Chekov, & Valeris	Guinan, Demora, Sulu, & Geordi	Geordi LaForge & Dr. Crusher	Anij, Dr. Crusher, Data, & Worf	Geordi, Riker, Troi, & Crusher
Crossing the Threshold	to into the cloud	to Regula I	to Genesis planet	back to 20 th century	to Sha Ka Ree	leaving space dock	into the Nexus	back to 21 st century	to Ba'ku	to Romulan system
in "Belly of the Whale"	worm-hole, V'ger	Regula I Mutara Nebula	the Genesis planet	whales on <i>Bounty</i>	Nimbus III, Sha Ka Ree	Rura Penthe mines			caves on Ba'ku	(Shinzon in mines)
Road of Trials	V'ger/ Decker, Spock	Khan shadows Kirk	McCoy shadows Spock	Kirk's court martial	Sybok shadows Spock	Kirk's Klingon trial	Picard saves Veridian	Borg Queen/ Data	Prime Directive	Shinzon shadows Picard
Meeting with the Goddess	Decker with Ilia	Kirk & Carol Marcus	Spock with Saavik	Kirk & Gillian Taylor			Picard with Guinan	Picard with Lily Sloane	Picard Anij	(Tel'aura as "bad mother")
Woman as Temptress					Uhura (& to Scotty)	Martia to Kirk		Borg Queen to Data		(Donatra to Shinzon)
Atonement with the Father	Decker/ Kirk, inverted	David/ Kirk, inverted	Spock with Sarek	Spock with Sarek	Spock/ Sarek, negative					Shinzon/ Picard, negative
Apotheosis	Decker, (V'ger)		Spock & katra	Kirk valorized			Nexus = nirvana	(Cochrane valorized)		
Receiving the Boon	Earth saved, data	lives of crew saved	Genesis not a weapon	Earth saved again	(Sybok is undeceived)	peace with Klingons	Veridian saved	Earth saved twice	Ba'ku is saved	Earth saved again
Hero Refuses to Return	Decker	Spock	(the <i>Enterprise</i>)		(Sybok) Kirk	crew & captains reject boon			Picard disobeys orders	Data
Magic Flight	ship & crew	ship & crew	Kirk & crew	ship & crew	Kirk McCoy	Kirk & McCoy	Kirk & Picard	Picard	Picard & crew	Picard & crew
Rescue from Outside					McCoy, Spock, & Kirk	Kirk McCoy				<i>Enterprise</i> & crew
Re-crossing Threshold		dilation, insulate, talisman	Spock, <i>Bounty</i> / talisman	dilation, insulate, talisman			time dilation, talisman	time dilation	time dilation, talisman	B-4 as talisman
Master of both Worlds	Decker & Kirk	Kirk acquires <i>Enterp.</i>	Kirk acquires <i>Enterp.</i>	Kirk acquires <i>Enterp.</i>			Picard	Picard disobeys orders	Picard disobeys orders	
Freedom to Live		Kirk		Kirk	Kirk	Kirk	Kirk & Picard	Picard	Picard	Picard

FIGURE 2. The stages of the adventure in the first ten Star Trek films.

symbolic composite hero, and here Kirk and Spock can be antagonists as shadow characters as well as the composite hero, a change that effects some particularly interesting variations in the hero's attributes and adventure.

Campbell defines the monomyth as that single "consciously controlled" pattern most widely exhibited in the world's folk tales, myths, and religious fables (255–56). Its morphology is, in broad outline, that of the quest. The hero is called to an adventure, crosses the threshold to an unknown world to endure tests and trials, and usually returns with a boon that benefits his fellows (36–38). Although agreeing with Carl Jung that "the changes rung on the simple scale of the monomyth defy description," Campbell's analysis fills in this outline with an anatomy of the archetypal hero and descriptions of those specific incidents likely to occur at each stage of his adventure (246). Sometimes the product of a virgin or special birth (297–314), the hero may have been exiled or orphaned, may be seeking his father, and may triumph over pretenders as the true son (318–34). His mother may be assumed into heaven or crowned a queen (119–20). He possesses exceptional gifts, and the world he inhabits may suffer symbolic deficiencies (37). He does not fear death, and he may be destined to make the world spiritually significant or humankind comprehensible to itself (388). If a warrior, he will change the *status quo* (334–41). If a lover, his triumph may be symbolized by a woman and accomplishing the impossible task may lead him to the bridal bed (342–45). If a tyrant or ruler, his search for the father will lead to the invisible unknown from which he will return as a lawgiver (345–49). If a world-redeemer, he will learn that he and the father are one (349–54). If a saint or mystic, he will transcend life and myth to enter an inexpressible realm beyond form (354–55).

The adventure's "separation" or "departure stage" entails up to five incidents: receiving a "Call to Adventure" in the guise of a blunder that reveals an unknown world or the appearance of a herald character from that world; 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 sojourn into the unknown symbolizing death and resurrection that may involve an underground journey symbolic of a descent into hell (36). The "initiation stage" includes up to six incidents: numerous tests endured in "The Road of Trials," including the hero's assimilation of his opposite, shadow, or

unsuspected self; meeting a mother goddess, who may take the form of the “good mother,” the “bad mother,” or “The Lady of the House of Sleep”; encountering a temptress; atonement with the father; apotheosis; and acquiring a boon (36, 110–11). The “return stage” also contains up to six incidents: refusing to return; magical flight from the unknown world; rescue from outside the unknown world; recrossing the threshold; attaining the power to cross the threshold freely; and the hero’s realization that he is the vehicle of the cosmic cycle of change (37).

Qualities of the Hero

Spock and Kirk share the qualities of the hero so thoroughly as to be presented as double characters—despite their different temperaments, which ultimately make them shadows—in *Star Trek*’s first five scenes. While Spock is the sole character whose nativity—and, far more so, literal rebirth—ever becomes an issue in the earlier films,² which all occur in an alternate reality, Kirk’s birth in 2233 is a focus of *Star Trek*’s extended, pretitling opening sequence and is special in that it occurs on a Medical Shuttle in deep space during the evacuation of the *USS Kelvin*, which is destroyed by renegade Romulan Nero’s mining-ship-from-the-future *Narada* while Kirk’s father, George, sacrifices his life during his twelve minutes as *Kelvin*’s acting captain by remaining on board and ramming *Narada* to effect the successful escape of *Kelvin*’s shuttles. Thus, in *Star Trek*’s alternate reality, Kirk is partially orphaned at birth. The film’s next scene depicts a “young Kirk” (Jimmy Bennett) as an alienated preteen evading police pursuit while joyriding in his stepfather’s stolen antique convertible, which he drives off a cliff. And three scenes later, in 2255, a young Uhura rejects “farm boy” and “townie” Kirk’s offer to buy her a drink (while refusing to divulge her given name) immediately before Kirk (Chris Pine) provokes a bar fight with four other Starfleet cadets; this establishes Kirk as a social misfit—as Captain Pike notes at the scene’s conclusion, “the only genius-level repeat offender in the Midwest.”

The two intervening scenes occur on Vulcan. The film’s third scene introduces a “young Spock” (Jacob Kogan) as a unique social outcast enduring his thirty-fifth victimization by three other young Vulcans who taunt and physically abuse him, claim that he is “neither human

nor Vulcan and, therefore, [has] no place in this universe,” and call his father a “traitor” and his mother “a human whore.” Implicitly, Spock’s had been a special as well as an alienating birth in that he is the universe’s only human-Vulcan hybrid. In the fourth scene a young-adult Spock (Zachary Quinto) refuses acceptance into the Vulcan Science Academy because the Academy’s Admissions Minister deems it “truly remarkable” that he has “achieved so much despite your disadvantage . . . your human mother.” The only Vulcan ever to “decline” admission to the Academy, Spock is still a social outcast as a young adult, too, which is consistent with his characterization in the earlier films.³ He further distances himself from his Vulcan heritage in joining Starfleet; and he becomes a literal exile when the *Narada* subsequently destroys Vulcan in 2258, by generating a black-hole/singularity in its core, and becomes another partial orphan when his mother, Amanda, is killed before his eyes in the process. Kirk and Spock meet, earlier in 2258, when Spock accuses Kirk before a Starfleet Academy tribunal of violating Starfleet’s “ethical code of conduct” by having “cheated” in reprogramming Spock’s “Kobayashi Maru” exercise, thus confirming that Kirk is still a misfit even as he graduates from Starfleet; thus, he is on “academic probation . . . grounded until the Academy Board rules,” when *Enterprise*’s green crew musters in response to a distress call from Vulcan that interrupts the Board’s proceedings.⁴

Immediately before his mother’s death Spock had literally and successfully sought his father, Sarek, in having beamed down to Vulcan’s surface to rescue the Vulcan High Council, of which Sarek is a member, from the planet’s impending destruction. Kirk cannot seek his father, who is dead, but he is challenged to—and subsequently does—seek to be worthy of his father by Captain Pike, who “dares” Kirk (after the bar fight in 2255) “to do better” than George, who had saved eight hundred lives in his twelve minutes as captain of the *Kelvin*. Ironically, Kirk triumphs over a “pretender” to be the “true son,” a starship captain like his father, when he wrests command of *Enterprise* from Spock near the film’s conclusion. The elderly “Spock Prime” (Leonard Nimoy), who is marooned on Delta Vega in the Vulcan system, informs Kirk that he, not Spock, is the rightful captain of the *Enterprise* and advises Kirk to return to the ship and claim his true role by demonstrating that Spock is unfit to command because he is “emotionally compromised” and, as First Officer, to replace him. Conversely, Spock assumes his rightful place from Kirk when Kirk subsequently appoints

Spock as *Enterprise*'s First Officer, a post Kirk had previously filled, in the film's final scenes.⁵

In the earlier films Kirk, already promoted to the rank of Admiral, initially, is the quintessential leader whose "first, best destiny," in Spock's opinion, is to captain a starship and who characteristically possesses an Odyssean ingenuity for outwitting opponents and evading defeat and death. He reveals this potential early in *Star Trek* (2009) by exhibiting a variety of special gifts: In 2255 Pike praises Kirk's "instinct to leap without looking that was your father's nature, too . . . and in my opinion . . . something Starfleet lost. . . . Your aptitude tests are off the charts . . . genius level." While Spock's aptitude is in many ways superior to Kirk's, his preeminent special gift is his ability to subordinate emotion to logic; the last *Enterprise* crewmember to "leap without looking," Spock is for this reason Kirk's shadow rather than his double. Kirk literally leaps without looking several times in the course of the film (as does Spock, but less often and uncharacteristically), and in a sense he outwits Spock, not only by goading Spock into revealing late in *Star Trek* that he is "emotionally compromised" by Vulcan's destruction and his mother's death, despite his Vulcan dedication to logic, but also in being the only cadet ever to beat Spock's "Kobayashi Maru" exercise's no-win scenario.

Spock accuses Kirk of having "failed to divine the purpose of the test . . . to experience fear in the face of certain death," but Kirk's acknowledgment that he does not "believe in the no-win scenario" also indicates that he has no fear of death; and his riposte—that Spock, as a Vulcan-human hybrid theoretically devoid of emotion, cannot experience the fear his test is intended to provoke, either—suggests that Spock, too, has no fear of death. Both exhibit this quality simultaneously at the film's conclusion when they both "leap without looking" in undertaking together the suicide mission of beaming aboard the *Narada* to locate the singularity-generating device and rescue Captain Pike.⁶ Kirk's world is deficient in that, in Pike's opinion, Starfleet has lost this ability to "leap without looking"; and the pervasive Vulcan prejudice against humanity is Spock's world's deficiency. Neither make the world spiritually significant nor humanity more comprehensible to itself, but Kirk comes to comprehend his destiny and—as is often the case in the earlier films—Spock comprehends both his destiny and his humanity more fully by *Star Trek*'s conclusion, when Spock Prime finally advises Spock to remain in Starfleet and "in this case, do yourself a favor; put aside logic; do what feels right."⁷

While it belabors the obvious to note that, as Starfleet officers, both Kirk and Spock are professional warriors, by saving Earth in *Star Trek* (2009) they preserve the *status quo* rather than change it.⁸ However, on a smaller scale, Kirk does change the *status quo* on *Enterprise* in supplanting Spock as Captain, and as a Vulcan Spock changes the *status quo* in Starfleet by simply enlisting. Even though Spock also indulges in a romance with Uhura while Kirk beds a green-skinned cadet, her roommate, in this film both are essentially the hero as world-redeemer, and the conditional quality of the world-redeemer is to discover that he and the father are one. Spock learns that his alternate-future self, Spock Prime, will become Vulcan Ambassador to Earth, like his father Sarek. And Kirk becomes a heroic starship Captain in an emergency situation, like his father George, and outdoes George (who, in saving the eight hundred aboard the *Kelvin*, likewise leaps before he looks and is also not afraid of death) in then saving Earth's entire population; at the film's conclusion Kirk is officially promoted to "Captain" and given command of *Enterprise* as the "relief" for also-promoted Admiral Pike, who tells Kirk, "Your father would be proud of you."⁹

The Departure Stage

The hero receives a "call to adventure," which he might refuse to heed, in the form of a "blunder" that "reveals an unsuspected world" or the appearance of a "herald" of or from that world (Campbell 51, 53). The universe beyond Iowa is Kirk's "unsuspected world," and Kirk's herald is Pike, the starship captain who also provides Kirk's first call to adventure in trying to convince him to "enlist in Starfleet" in 2255. At first Kirk rudely dismisses Pike's invitation, but the next day he shows up at Starfleet's Iowa shipyards to enlist. Spock permanently refuses a very different "call" in declining admittance to the Vulcan Science Academy to join Starfleet instead. In 2258 both receive a more literal and explicit "call to adventure" in the form of the distress call from Vulcan that musters *Enterprise's* crew. But this call is not addressed to Kirk, who is on "academic suspension" (a form of refusing the call, again, but involuntarily) and is initially not permitted to board *Enterprise*. However, he does board with the rest of the crew through a ruse perpetrated by Bones. Vulcan and its star system is the specific "unknown world" to which the call summons Kirk, but his homeworld

Vulcan is also an unknown world to Spock by the time he beams down to it to rescue the Vulcan High Council, as it is by then in the throes of geological upheaval and minutes from complete destruction. The “blunder” that precipitates this explicit “distress call” is Spock Prime’s failure to use the singularity-generating device in time to save Romulus from destruction by a supernova in 2387, the event that sends the *Narada* back in time to 2233 and that inspires Nero to seek revenge by forcing Spock Prime (and Spock as well, as it turns out) to witness the destruction of Vulcan, and then destroying every other Federation planet so that Romulus will be unfettered in the alternate reality he would thus fashion.¹⁰

After accepting the call, the hero receives “supernatural aid” from an old man or crone, who provides a talisman in a setting suggesting a womb-like sense of peace, or from a guide, teacher, wizard, ferryman, hermit, or smith who offers aid in a context of danger or temptation (Campbell 69–72). Spock Prime, now over 150 years old, is the old man from whom Kirk receives much-needed information about his own alternate-reality destiny and the importance of his taking command of *Enterprise*, on how to provoke Spock in order to do so, and on how to beam aboard a vessel traveling in warp space to do that. Previously marooned on Delta Vega by Nero, as Kirk is marooned there by Spock, Spock Prime is also the “hermit,” as well as the “guide” and “teacher,” who further assists Kirk in the context of the dangerous mission in which he is involved by introducing him to Scotty, who subsequently aids Kirk as Spock Prime’s agent, in effect, if not as a human talisman.¹¹

With the help of Spock Prime’s knowledge of Scotty’s future scientific achievements, Scotty assists Kirk—and, eventually, both Kirk and Spock—as the film’s “wizard” and as one of its several ferrymen. Referred to as a “miracle worker” in both *Search for Spock* and *Voyage Home*, Scotty is here wizard and ferryman, simultaneously, in beaming both himself and Kirk from Delta Vega to *Enterprise* as it travels in warp space, a feat believed in 2258 to be impossible; in subsequently beaming Kirk and Spock from *Enterprise*’s orbit around Saturn to *Narada*’s Earth orbit, which is also believed to be impossible, but which Scotty acknowledges is easier; in beaming “three people from two targets onto one pad” in transporting Kirk and Pike from the *Narada* back to *Enterprise* while simultaneously beaming Spock to *Enterprise* from the singularity-generating device’s spacecraft just as it

impacts *Narada*, which is destroyed by the resulting black hole; and in then suggesting that *Enterprise* eject and detonate its warp core to escape that singularity's gravity well. Pike, as *Enterprise* captain, and Sulu, as helmsman, are the initial ferrymen who transport Kirk and Spock to the Vulcan system; Chekov is the ferryman who beams Kirk and Sulu back to *Enterprise* as they subsequently plunge from *Narada*'s mining platform to Vulcan's surface, and Sulu is the ferryman as helmsman who successfully warps *Enterprise* to an orbit within Saturn's ring system, where *Narada* cannot detect it. Bones is the smith who gets Kirk aboard *Enterprise*, despite his being on "academic probation," by injecting him with an exotic viral vaccine to induce the variety of comical symptoms that enable Kirk to pass as Bones' patient.¹²

The hero next crosses the threshold to an unknown world that may be defended by a protective guardian and/or a destructive watchman (Campbell 77–89). Although it may seem that this happens more often, in nearly every Star Trek film, as in this one, *Enterprise* goes to warp speed on screen only twice—at the beginning and the end of the adventure—and this is usually a crossing and recrossing of the threshold.¹³ Here, *Enterprise* warps from the solar system to the Vulcan system, with Kirk and Spock aboard, in response to the Vulcan distress call. Bones is the protective guardian who injects Kirk with the viral vaccine to get him on board. And Nero in the *Narada* is a destructive watchman lying in ambush in the Vulcan system as he prepares to destroy the planet, as *Enterprise* arrives there amidst the wreckage of six other Federation starships that had responded earlier to the same distress call.

In the departure stage's final episode the hero is "swallowed" in "the belly of the whale," a journey to the World Womb or World Navel in which "the hero goes inward, to be born again" (Campbell 90–91). This is often either a literal or symbolic underground journey that represents a literal or figurative descent into hell; the hero may also enter a temple guarded by gargoyles and might be either literally or symbolically mutilated, dismembered, or killed (92).¹⁴ While there is no explicit suggestion of symbolic rebirth in *Star Trek* (2009), Spock visits a symbolic hell—the fiery surface of an erupting Vulcan to which he beams to save the Vulcan High Council, whose chambers and statuary suggest a temple guarded by gargoyles—and in the process is almost consumed by the black hole that destroys the planet, a symbolic threat of being swallowed. Moreover, when Spock maroons Kirk on Delta Vega for "mutiny," Kirk experiences three underground journeys

and is literally in peril of being eaten: his pod lands in a deep impact crater; he climbs out only to be pursued by two gigantic ice-planet creatures intent on consuming him; and he is saved by Spock Prime, who first takes him to an ice cavern and then to the Federation's underground installation on Delta Vega. Kirk and Spock, again, are at risk of being symbolically swallowed at the film's climax when the singularity that destroys the *Narada* nearly consumes *Enterprise* as well. And Kirk is comically mutilated by the symptoms Bones' viral vaccine gives him, which include grossly swollen hands.

The Initiation Stage

The first incident in the monomyth's initiation stage is "the road of trials," a series of tests in which the hero is assisted by the advice or agents of those who had offered supernatural aid; the hero may also "assimilate . . . his opposite . . . unsuspected self" or shadow (Campbell 97, 108).¹⁵ Spock is first seen being tested in an immersive Vulcan educational environment in the film's third scene, and must subsequently endure the trials of his homeworld's destruction, his mother's death, and being deposed as *Enterprise* captain by Kirk, a test from which he successfully emerges as Kirk's supporter and friend. This is a test for Kirk as well, who must on Spock Prime's advice board *Enterprise* with Scotty's assistance to taunt Spock into revealing that he is "emotionally compromised." Kirk had literally been tested earlier in 2258, when he famously passes Spock's "Kobayashi Maru" exercise, and his consequent indictment for "cheating" before Starfleet Academy's tribunal appears to be a literal trial.

Kirk not only triumphs over a "pretender" as the "true son," but he also simultaneously assimilates his shadow self in goading Spock into attacking him by claiming Spock "never loved" his mother—thus supplanting Spock as *Enterprise* captain when Sarek then insists that Spock step down. While their dissimilar temperaments prevent them from being doubles, Spock is more like Kirk in *Star Trek* (2009) than in any previous film or TV episode. Not only are both fearless natural leaders initially presented as misfits of special birth who refuse a call, and not only are both primarily world redeemers who discover similarity to their fathers, but Spock also uncharacteristically exhibits Kirk's trait of leaping before he looks, twice: earlier, when he insists on

being beamed to Vulcan as the singularity consumes it, and soon after Kirk supplants him, when both beam to *Narada's* bridge from *Enterprise's* Saturn orbit to save Earth. This film's most original innovation regarding the monomyth is its presentation of a dual/composite hero who overcomes his own composite self as shadow, as well as in its presentation of a composite hero who is both the "true son" and the "pretender" over whom he triumphs. This innovation invites one to see the monomyth as an interior psychic drama in which all the "characters" are really facets of the hero's personality and in which the adventure is an internal psychological struggle; this is completely consistent with Campbell's interpretation that the hero's literal geographical journey is symbolic of everyone's inward journey of the psyche, that "where we had thought to travel outward, we shall come to the center of our own existence" (25).

The hero might also encounter a goddess, a temptress, or both; and the goddess, with whom he might have a mystical marriage in a special location, may assume the guise of the unattainable "bad mother," who threatens castration, "the Lady of the House of Sleep," who is "the reply to all desire, the . . . goal of every hero's . . . quest," or the "good mother," who is bliss, perfection, and the combination of opposites (Campbell 109–11). While these often-muted incidents are even more understated in this Star Trek film than in most of the others,¹⁶ Kirk's mother Winona is implicitly the "good mother" who is her husband George's "bliss" while Spock's mother Amanda, as a human married to a Vulcan, is more explicitly the "good mother" who combines opposites. The hero may also experience atonement with the father or a father-figure, who might be "the initiating priest through whom the young being passes on into the larger world" (Campbell 136). Kirk's father George is such an "initiating priest" in that he sacrifices his life so that Kirk can be born during *Kelvin's* evacuation. Captain Pike subsequently appears as a father-figure to Kirk in 2255; Kirk and Spock, but specifically Kirk, rescue Pike, a starship captain like George, from *Narada* at the film's climax, as Spock had earlier rescued his father Sarek from the destruction of Vulcan. Sarek is characterized as being estranged from Spock due to his enlistment in Starfleet, in *Voyage Home*, and because Spock is "so human," in *Final Frontier*; while a similar reconciliation also occurs at *Voyage Home's* conclusion, the two reconcile for the first time in *Star Trek* (2009), after Sarek advises Spock to surrender command of *Enterprise* to Kirk, when Sarek tells Spock,

“You will always be a child of two worlds. I am grateful for this . . . and for you. . . . I married [your mother] because I loved her.” This reconciliation is echoed at the film’s conclusion when Spock Prime advises Spock both to remain in Starfleet and to “put aside logic”; Spock is his own father-figure, here, due to Spock Prime’s advanced age and because he, like Sarek, is Vulcan Ambassador to Earth.¹⁷

The penultimate episode in the initiation stage is the hero’s apotheosis, which symbolizes attaining enlightenment, involves an annihilation of consciousness that entails or represents loss of ego, and is characterized by a symbolic transcendence of duality that is signaled by the unification of opposites and signifies a return to the lost unity that had preceded creation (Campbell 149–71). Again as in the earlier films, this incident, too, is muted in *Star Trek* (2009), in which Kirk merely receives a Starfleet “commendation,” promotion to Captain, and official command of *Enterprise* at the film’s conclusion.¹⁸ Receiving the boon, which is “the means for the regeneration of [the hero’s] society as a whole,” is the final episode in the initiation stage and is implied by the hero’s apotheosis, for the boon in its highest form is transcendent revelation or enlightenment, the “perfect illumination” that apotheosis encompasses as well as symbolizes; however, the hero usually seeks such lesser gifts as immortality, power, or wealth (Campbell 38, 189). As in *Motion Picture*, *Voyage Home*, *First Contact*, and *Nemesis*, the boon in *Star Trek* (2009) is Earth’s salvation, which implies the immortality of humanity and human society. Kirk’s crucial revelation is his realization that the “lightning storm in space” described by Chekov in 2258 is the same lightning storm in space that had occurred at his birth in 2233, that *Narada* must again be involved, and that *Enterprise* must be heading into a trap in the Vulcan system. This film’s final “revelation,” however, is reserved for Spock; after Earth is saved Spock Prime tells Spock that what awaits him is “the revelation of all you [Spock and Kirk] could accomplish together, of a friendship that would define you both in ways you cannot yet realize,” which is in a sense another conjunction of opposites.¹⁹

The Return Stage

Several incidents may occur in the return stage; but some are mutually exclusive, and only several—rather than most or all, as in the earlier

stages—are likely to appear in any given narrative. The hero could refuse to return or to give the boon to humanity, his return could be a “magic flight” opposed or furthered by “magic” means, his attempt to return could end in failure, or he could be rescued from outside the unknown world; in crossing the return threshold the hero might convey new wisdom to the known world, reject the unknown world to embrace the known world, experience a dilation of time, encounter dangers in returning that require him to “insulate” himself, or return with a talisman of his quest; finally, on returning, the hero may become the “master of the two worlds,” which involves acquiring the ability to pass freely between them, or he might achieve the “freedom to live,” to participate in the known world without anxiety as a conscious vehicle of the cosmic cycle of change (Campbell 193–243). It is Spock’s refusal to return to Earth, his determination to rendezvous with the Federation fleet instead, that makes it necessary for Kirk to supplant him as *Enterprise* commander. As is usually the case in the earlier films, here the return (to Earth) is furthered by unprecedented scientific (i.e., magical) means: Scotty beams himself and Kirk to *Enterprise* while it is in warp space, warps *Enterprise* to an orbit within Saturn’s rings so that its presence in the solar system will be masked by “magnetic distortion,” and then beams Kirk and Spock from *Enterprise*’s Saturn orbit to *Narada* in Earth orbit; moreover, Spock then uses his Vulcan mind-meld on a *Narada* crewman to learn the locations of “the black-hole device . . . and Captain Pike,” and immediately uses the singularity-generating ship—which miraculously identifies and responds to him, through “facial recognition,” as “Ambassador Spock” (i.e., Spock Prime)—to destroy the drill boring to Earth’s core at San Francisco Bay and then to destroy *Narada*; finally, *Enterprise* escapes the resulting black hole by ejecting and detonating its warp core.²⁰

Crossing the return threshold occurs when *Enterprise*, with Kirk and Spock aboard, warps to the near-Saturn orbit from which Kirk and Spock beam to *Narada* in Earth orbit; Spock Prime had experienced a dilation of time when the moments of subjective time it takes him to follow *Narada* through the black hole in 2387 occupy twenty-five years of real time, so that *Narada* reappears in 2233 but Spock’s ship reappears in 2258; and Kirk and Spock return to Earth, as is often the case in earlier films, with a sentient being, in this instance Scotty, as talisman of the quest.²¹ Finally, in becoming *Enterprise*’s Captain and First Officer, respectively, Kirk and Spock become masters of the

known and unknown worlds by attaining the freedom to cross the threshold of outer space freely.²² *Star Trek* (2009) is a distillation and a compendium of all the myriad ways in which the monomyth is replicated in all ten of the previous *Star Trek* films and, as such, recapitulates the monomyth more comprehensively (if not, in some cases, so redundantly) than any earlier individual film²³ (see Figures 3 and 4).

As in each of the earlier films, in depicting a science-fiction quest that recapitulates in varying degrees of fine detail and fidelity nearly all of the seventeen episodes encompassed by the monomyth's essential departure–initiation–return structure, *Star Trek* (2009) also collectively symbolize, as does the monomyth itself, “transcendence”—which Henderson defines as “man’s striving to attain . . . the full realization of the potential of his individual Self” (149–50)—in imagery especially appropriate to the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Jung notes that “The universal hero myth . . . always refers to a powerful man or god-man who vanquishes evil . . . and . . . liberates his people from destruction and death” (80). Commenting on and extending the work of both Jung and Campbell, Henderson argues that “at the most archaic level” of the symbolism of transcendence this hero reappears as “the shaman . . . whose . . . power resides in his supposed ability to leave his body and fly about the universe as a bird” (151). While Henderson also observes that “one of the commonest dream symbols for this type of release through transcendence is the theme of the lonely journey or pilgrimage”—that is, the quest—he argues further that “not only the flight of birds or the journey into the wilderness represents this symbolism, but any strong movement exemplifying release” represents it as well; and he specifically identifies “space rockets” as contemporary “symbols of release or liberation . . . for they are the physical embodiment of the same transcendent principle, freeing us at least temporarily from gravity” (151, 152, 157). Thus, it is symbolically appropriate that space flight is the essential, common element in this series of films that repeatedly recapitulates the monomyth and is initiated by a film in which one hero, Decker, explicitly transcends his humanity. Yet to be freed from the constraints of time and, even more so, from the physical universe itself are far more fantastic releases or liberations than to be freed from either destruction and death or the constraint of gravity; and *Star Trek* (2009) is a time-travel and an alternate-reality film as well as a space-travel film.²⁴

Monomythic		
Hero	Kirk	Spock
Special Birth	on a medical shuttle in deep space during <i>Kelvin's</i> evacuation	born the universe's only human-Vulcan hybrid
Mother a Queen		
Exile or Orphan	his father dies at his birth; a social misfit in his youth; on academic probation in Starfleet	a Vulcan social outcast who joins Starfleet; his mother is killed & he is exiled in Vulcan's destruction
Seeking his Father	challenged by Pike to seek to be worthy of his father	beams down to save his father during Vulcan's destruction
Triumph Over Pretenders	wrests command of <i>Enterprise</i> from Spock by proving him to be "emotionally compromised"	Kirk finally appoints Spock as <i>Enterprise's</i> First Officer, a post formally held by Kirk
Exceptional Gifts	a "genius" with the instinct to "leap without looking;" he beats Spock's "Kobayashi Maru" test	the Vulcan ability to subordinate emotion to logic, as well as keen scientific intellect
No Fear of Death	often leaps before he looks; suicide mission to board <i>Narada</i>	can overcome fear as a Vulcan; suicide mission to board <i>Narada</i>
World's Deficiencies	Pike feels that Starfleet has lost that "leap before you look" trait	pervasive Vulcan prejudice against humanity that victimizes Spock
Spiritual Significance		
Make Humanity Comprehensible	comes to comprehend and accept his own destiny	comes to comprehend more fully his own destiny and his humanity
Hero as Warrior	a Starfleet officer who saves Earth with Spock	a Starfleet officer who saves Earth with Kirk
Hero as Lover	(dalliance with Uhura's green-skinned roommate)	(incipient romance with Uhura)
Hero as Ruler		
Hero as World Redeemer	like father in having the instinct to "leap without looking" and in becoming a heroic starship captain in an emergency situation	Spock learns that Spock Prime is, in the future, Vulcan Ambassador to Earth, like his father Sarek is in the present
Hero as Saint or Mystic		

FIGURE 3. The qualities of the hero in *Star Trek* (2009).

	Kirk	Spock
The Call to Adventure	Pike invites Kirk to join Starfleet; the distress "call" from Vulcan	Spock Prime fails to save Romulus; the distress call from Vulcan
The Call Refused by	dismisses Pike's invitation, at first; later, on "academic suspension"	(had declined admittance to Vulcan Science Academy)
Super-natural Aid Provided by	Bones, as smith, gets him aboard <i>Enterprise</i> ; Spock Prime—as old man, guide, teacher, hermit—provides info; Scotty as ferryman and wizard; Pike, Sulu, and Chekov as ferrymen	Scotty as ferryman and wizard; Pike and Sulu as ferrymen
Crossing the Threshold	<i>Enterprise</i> warps to Vulcan system; Bones as protective guardian; Nero in <i>Narada</i> as destructive watchman	<i>Enterprise</i> warps to Vulcan system; Nero in <i>Narada</i> as destructive watchman
in "The Belly of the Whale"	Delta Vega: pod impact crater, Spock Prime's cave, Federation installation; threat of being eaten by beasts; black hole consuming <i>Narada</i> ; vaccine	Vulcan erupting, as hell; Vulcan High Council chambers' statutory; black hole consuming Vulcan; black hole consuming <i>Narada</i>
Road of Trials	"Kobayashi Maru" test; Starfleet tribunal; must supplant Spock	Vulcan education system; mother killed, Vulcan destroyed; deposed by Kirk
Meeting With the Goddess	muted: mother, Winona, as "good mother" re her husband George	muted: mother, Amanda, as "good mother" who combines opposites
Woman as Temptress		
Atonement with Father	father, George, as "initiating priest"; Pike, a father-figure, is rescued	Sarek reconciles with Spock; Spock Prime, a father-figure, echoes this
Apotheosis	muted: commended, promoted to Captain, given <i>Enterprise</i> command	
Receiving the Boon	recognizes "lightning storm in space" is an ambush; Earth is saved	Earth is saved; anticipates the revelation of his friendship with Kirk
Hero Refuses to Return		Spock refuses to return <i>Enterprise</i> to solar system and Earth
Magic Flight	Scotty's help; warp core detonated	Scotty's help; warp core detonated
Rescue From Outside		
Recrossing Threshold	<i>Enterprise</i> warps back to solar system in Saturn orbit; Scotty as talisman	Spock Prime's time dilation; <i>Enterprise</i> warps back to solar system/Saturn
Master of Both Worlds	becomes <i>Enterprise</i> Captain	becomes <i>Enterprise</i> First Officer
Freedom to Live		

FIGURE 4. The stages of the adventure in *Star Trek* (2009).

Notes

1. Spinrad's "Emperor of Everything," which discusses the monomyth in the first three Dune novels and in *The Stars My Destination* at greater length, notes that this plot structure appears in *The Book of the New Sun* as well. In addition, Spinrad asserts that such science fiction novels as "*Neuromancer* . . . most of Gordon Dickson's Dorsai cycle . . . *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldrich*, *Lord of Light*, *Nova*, *The Einstein Intersection*, Philip Jose Farmer's *Riverworld* books, [and] *Stranger in a Strange Land* . . . are brothers between the covers, at least in plot summary terms, to the Ur-action-adventure formula" explicated in "Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*" (151). Yet most of these other science fiction novels, while they do correspond to the more general "Ur-action-adventure formula" that Spinrad discusses in very broad terms, do not exhibit nearly as close a correspondence to the numerous specific details of Campbell's analysis of the monomyth as do those novels and films mentioned in this paragraph. Palumbo discusses the monomyth in the *Back to the Future*, *The Terminator*, *Flowers for Algernon*, *The Stars My Destination*, Herbert's Dune series, Wolfe's *The Book of the New Sun* and *The Urth of the New Sun*, and the first ten Star Trek films in "The Monomyth in *Back to the Future*: SF Film Comedy as Adolescent Wish Fulfillment Fantasy," "The Monomyth in James Cameron's *The Terminator*: Sarah as Monomythic Heroine," "The Monomyth in Daniel Keyes' *Flowers for Algernon*," "The Monomyth in Alfred Bester's *The Stars My Destination*," "The Monomyth as Fractal Pattern in Frank Herbert's Dune Novels," "The Monomyth in Gene Wolfe's *The Book of the New Sun*," and "The Monomyth in Star Trek Films." Palumbo's "The Monomyth in Time Travel Films"—which discusses the monomyth in *The Time Machine* and *Star Trek IV* as well as in *Back to the Future* and *The Terminator*—notes that this plot structure also appears in *Dune*, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, the initial Star Wars Trilogy, and *2001: A Space Odyssey*.
2. In *Final Frontier* his Vulcan half-brother Sybok forces Spock to witness the scene of his birth, an occasion on which their father Sarek disparages the newborn Spock for being "so human." While his being half-human and half-Vulcan constitutes a "special birth" here as well, one for which Sybok believes Spock should feel shame, his rebirth and subsequent accelerated aging to maturity on the Genesis planet in *Search for Spock* (a result of the Genesis planet's effect on Spock's corpse, which is deposited there at the conclusion of *Wrath of Khan*) is both far more "special" and also far more crucial to *Search for Spock*'s plot.
3. In the first ten Star Trek films, Spock in his youth is also depicted as an exile on his own planet because he is only half Vulcan. Even though he tells his brother Sybok in *Final Frontier*, "I am not the outcast boy you left behind so many years ago. Since that time I have found myself, and my place" as a Starfleet officer, by joining Starfleet Spock had distanced himself even further from his Vulcan heritage and further alienated his father, who had hoped he would attend the Vulcan Science Academy. In *Search for Spock* the newly reborn Spock is literally in exile from Vulcan (as well as from his "katra" or spirit) on the Genesis planet, which Starfleet has placed under quarantine. While separation from his katra leaves Spock's reborn body without consciousness, his separation from Vulcan is uniquely excruciating because, due to his accelerated aging, he experiences "pon farr," a powerful mating drive that requires Vulcans either to mate or to die, on a planet with no indigenous Vulcans. (Lt. Saavik, fortuitously the only Vulcan female around, appears to save young Spock from death, but whatever mating experience they share occurs primarily off camera.)
4. Somewhat similarly, in *Voyage Home* "Admiral Kirk has been charged with nine violations of Starfleet regulations," and will be required to stand trial by court martial on his return to Earth, for having acted mutinously in having stolen and subsequently destroyed *Enterprise* in *Search for Spock*. Moreover, in *Undiscovered Country* Kirk and McCoy are effectively exiled from the Federation and its justice system altogether when they are tried for murder on the

- Klingon homeworld and sentenced to imprisonment on the Klingon penal planetoid Rura Penthe.
5. This is a contrast to the scene near the beginning *The Wrath of Khan* in which Spock voluntarily offers to relinquish command of *Enterprise* to Kirk. In fact, in regaining command of *Enterprise* in each of the first three Star Trek films, Kirk also triumphs as its true captain (and thus as more of a father-figure than a “son”) over characters whom the audience is invited to see as illegitimate usurpers: Decker, a sympathetic officer from whom Kirk wrests command through a meeting with Admiral Negura in *Motion Picture*; Spock, who insists on turning the ship over to Kirk when it is unexpectedly ordered to undertake a real mission rather than a “training cruise” in *Wrath of Khan*; and *Excelsior*’s Captain Styles, a priggish officer whom Kirk and Scotty must outwit to steal *Enterprise*, which is to be “decommissioned,” in *Search for Spock*. The ironic result of his court-martial at the conclusion of *Voyage Home* is that Kirk is demoted from admiral to captain and, as a happy consequence, given command of a new *Enterprise* (NCC-1701-A), a post he retains for the next two films. Reference to both the monomythic hero’s search for a father and his triumph over pretenders as the true son occurs only in the first four Star Trek films, which feature the “classic” crew, and even then only through a variety of reversals and inversions. While neither seeks the other, Kirk unexpectedly finds his and Carol Marcus’ son, David, from whom he is estranged, in *Wrath of Khan*. And, although intellectually incapable of seeking him, the reborn Spock is finally reunited with Sarek (as well as with his katra) at the conclusion of *Search for Spock*.
 6. Similarly, after witnessing the destruction of space station *Epsilon IX* at the beginning of *Motion Picture*, all aboard *Enterprise* clearly recognize that their assignment to “intercept” the V’ger energy cloud is a suicide mission. Moreover, Kirk later orders Scotty to activate *Enterprise*’s self-destruct sequence, hoping that this suicidal act will destroy V’ger as well. In *Final Frontier*, to cite another example, Kirk tells Sybok, “I’m afraid of nothing”—and proves it later by questioning, with Spock and McCoy, the identity of the alien masquerading as “god” on Sha Ka Ree. And at the climax of *Wrath of Khan* Spock sacrifices his life to save the lives of the others aboard *Enterprise* when he exposes himself to lethal radiation in enabling the ship to escape the detonation of the Genesis Device within the Mutara Nebula.
 7. Similarly, McCoy accuses Kirk of “hiding from” himself in denying that he is unhappy without a starship to command at the beginning of *Wrath of Khan*, but by the film’s conclusion Kirk has overcome his bad faith as well as regained his command. And Spock is the character who most pointedly comes to comprehend himself, and particularly his human qualities, in the seven earlier films featuring the “classic” crew. Reborn and reunited with his katra in *Search for Spock*, Spock is still so divorced from the human aspects of his dual heritage at the beginning of *Voyage Home* that he is unable to answer the question “How do you feel?” that his mother has inserted into his re-education program. At the film’s conclusion Spock sends his mother the message, “I feel fine,” indicating that he has connected with his humanity during his twentieth-century adventure; thus can he assure Sybok, “I have found myself, and my place. I know who I am,” in *Final Frontier*.
 8. Kirk, Spock, and Decker, another Starfleet officer, also save Earth in *Motion Picture*. As the hero as warrior, Kirk demonstrates that he is a master strategist by defeating Khan in *Wrath of Khan*, defeats Klingon Captain Kruge in *Search for Spock*, saves Earth again in *Voyage Home*, outmaneuvers both Klingon Captain Klaa and “god” in *Final Frontier*, outwits Klingon General Chang to prevent a war with the Klingons in *Undiscovered Country*, and saves *Enterprise* before helping Picard save the Veridian system in *Generations*. McCoy mockingly offers to “call Valhalla and reserve a room for” Kirk, when death become a topic of conversation early in *Final Frontier*, and Klaa later reflects, “If I could defeat Kirk, I would be the greatest warrior in the galaxy.” In *Undiscovered Country* Chang greets Kirk, albeit insincerely, with “sincere admiration . . . from one warrior to another” and later tells Kirk, “In space, all

warriors are cold warriors.” Although notorious womanizer Kirk flirts with twentieth-century whale biologist Dr. Gillian Taylor in *Voyage Home* and with the duplicitous, shape-changing alien prisoner Martia on Rura Penthe in *Undiscovered Country*, and although Picard indulges in a more serious romance with Ba’ku inhabitant Anij in *Insurrection* while Riker and Troi rekindle their romance in *Insurrection* and subsequently marry in *Nemesis*, the best example of the hero as lover in all the Star Trek films is *Motion Picture*’s Decker, who finally merges with V’ger in the form of the Ilia-probe—a perfect mechanical duplicate of the Deltan crew-member, killed earlier by V’ger, with whom Decker had previously had a Platonic affair and is clearly still in love. None of the monomythic heroes in any Star Trek film is a “ruler” who returns from the unknown as a lawgiver.

9. Although Decker and Spock are world-redeemers only once, in *Motion Picture*, while Kirk and Picard save a variety of worlds repeatedly—in *Motion Picture*, *Voyage Home*, *Generations*, *First Contact*, *Insurrection*, and *Nemesis*—the condition that any learn that he and the father are one is met in these earlier films only through inversion. Kirk learns that he is a lot more like his estranged son David (not his father) than either of them suspects in *Wrath of Khan* and *Search for Spock*; and Picard is even more like Shinzon, his “nemesis” and clone, but this similar inversion is complicated further by the fact that Shinzon is at best merely Picard’s symbolic son in *Nemesis*. While Decker in *Motion Picture* does not meet the conditional quality of the world-redeemer even through inversion, he does satisfy the condition for being a saint or mystic, which is to enter an inexpressible realm beyond form, in merging with V’ger to “evolve” into a “higher form of consciousness” that finally dissipates from this universe in a pyrotechnical display that Spock speculates is its entrance into the inexpressible realm beyond form of some unknown “higher dimensions.”
10. The call to adventure occurs in all ten of the earlier films; in all but *Insurrection* the “call” is literal and explicit, in addition to being signaled by a blunder and/or herald; and in *Motion Picture*, *Search for Spock*, and *Undiscovered Country* the call is in some way, although always temporarily, refused. Moreover, while it usually takes the form of an explicit order from Starfleet, the call to adventure is also specifically a distress “call” in *Voyage Home* and *Generations*.
11. *Enterprise* itself is the talismanic object in all ten earlier films, but not so much in this one. Admiral Negura is the old man who returns command to Kirk in *Motion Picture*; Spock relinquishes command to Kirk in *Wrath of Khan*; and the Federation Council President gives Kirk command of the rebuilt *Enterprise-A* in the peaceful aftermath of the adventure at the conclusion of *Voyage Home*.
12. With few exceptions (i.e., the guides), crewmembers likewise serve as guides, teachers, wizards, ferrymen, hermits, and smiths providing aid in a context of danger in the earlier films. In *Motion Picture* Deckard must teach Kirk about the reconfigured *Enterprise* systems, and Spock assumes his usual post as the classic crew’s scientific wizard. Whale biologist Gillian Taylor is the crew’s guide to the twentieth century in *Voyage Home*; Guinan becomes Picard’s guide within the Nexus in *Generations*; and in *Insurrection* Anij is Picard’s guide on Ba’ku. As Chief Engineer, Scotty is the classic crew’s resident smith, yet his legendary expertise often elevates him to the status of “wizard” in these films also. As ferrymen, Scotty often operates as well as repairs the transporter, and Chekov is often the helmsman; Ilia is the new navigator in *Motion Picture*; Lt. Saavik is the new navigator in *Wrath of Khan*, *Search for Spock*, and *Voyage Home*; the traitorous Lt. Valeris is the new helmsman in *Undiscovered Country*, in which Spock beams Kirk and McCoy from Rura Penthe; and Ensign Demora Sulu is the “new helmsman” in *Generations*. The post of ship’s doctor also makes McCoy and Next Generation crew’s Dr. Crusher a species of smith, but the Next Generation crew’s preeminent smith is Chief Engineer Geordi LaForge.
13. In *Motion Picture* the *Enterprise* crosses Jupiter’s orbit under impulse power but then, “in order to intercept [V’ger] at the earliest possible time . . . must . . . risk engaging warp drive while

still within the solar system." The threshold crossing in *Wrath of Khan* occurs when *Enterprise* goes to *Regula I* at warp speed to investigate Carol Marcus' claim that Starfleet has ordered her to "give up Genesis." In *Search for Spock* the *Enterprise* first crosses a literal threshold in reaching space dock's space doors before crossing its customary, figurative threshold in going to warp speed en route to the Mutara Sector and its Genesis planet. *Voyage Home's* crossing occurs when *Bounty* goes to "warp 10" in order to slingshot around the sun and travel back in time to the twentieth century. In *Final Frontier* the *Enterprise* evades destructive watchman Klaa's attack at Nimbus III by going to warp speed en route to Sha Ka Ree; however, to reach Sha Ka Ree it must also cross another literal threshold, "the Great Barrier," beyond which lies "the unknown." *Enterprise* crosses yet another literal threshold in *Undiscovered Country* when it again traverses space dock's space doors to begin its mission to pick up Chancellor Gorkon. *Enterprise-D* goes to warp speed to get to the Veridian system in time to prevent Soran from destroying its sun in *Generations*; yet this film's threshold is not so much the jump to warp speed as it is the "energy ribbon" traversing the Veridian system that Guinan tells Picard is "a doorway to . . . the Nexus," this film's "unknown world," and dual threshold crossings occur when Picard and Soran are swept up by the ribbon on Veridian III after Soran destroys its sun, in the twenty-fourth century, and when Kirk is swept into the ribbon in the twenty-third century while trying to save *Enterprise-B*. In *First Contact*, another time-travel adventure, *Enterprise* crosses the threshold to the unknown world in following the Borg sphere back to the twenty-first century. En route to Ba'ku, the unknown world of *Insurrection*, *Enterprise* crosses one threshold in penetrating a dense nebula in the anomaly-filled "Briar Patch" region of space, and Picard and Worf subsequently cross another in penetrating the planet's atmosphere in a shuttlecraft. Picard observes that "we are truly sailing into the unknown" as *Enterprise* goes to "warp 8" en route to Romulus in *Nemesis*.

14. Obvious variations of this pivotal episode, which are often surprisingly convoluted and elaborate, occur in each of the earlier films except *Generations* and *First Contact*. In *Motion Picture* the *Enterprise* is swallowed by a "wormhole," subsequently penetrates V'ger's energy cloud until it is seized by a "tractor beam" and drawn through an "aperture," leaving it "trapped" and "looking down their throats." After Spock then passes through another "orifice" into "the next chamber . . . inside a living machine," *Enterprise* is finally drawn into V'ger's innermost core, where the crew witnesses the "birth" of a "new life form" when Decker literally dies in merging with the Ilia-probe, itself the reborn replica of the deceased Ilia. *Wrath of Khan* features the film series' most extensive variety of literal and figurative underground journeys and is also most explicit in portraying them as symbolic descents into hell that represent death and rebirth, this film's central and unrelenting motif. The opening sequence seems to depict a "training mission" that appears to end with *Enterprise* "dead in space" and the deaths of Spock and his "trainee crew"; yet everyone then rises from this ersatz death as Kirk reveals that this is a simulation, the infamous "Kobayashi Maru" exercise. The film's literal underground journey is a descent "deep inside Regula . . . underground," where Carol and David Marcus had transported themselves to avoid capture by Khan, whom Kirk had already resurrected from centuries of cryogenic freeze fifteen years earlier, and to which they are later followed by Kirk, McCoy, Saavik, Chekov, and Terrell. Khan, who claims he had been "buried alive" on Ceti Alpha V, then tells Kirk, "I shall leave you as you left me: marooned for all eternity in then center of a dead planet, buried alive, buried alive!" While (in a noteworthy inversion) Regula's interior has been transformed by the Genesis Device into an underground Eden rather than a symbolic hell, Khan—whose "pride" is his undoing and who swears he will "chase [Kirk] around perdition's flames"—is nonetheless the film's symbolic devil; at the conclusion of the battle between *Enterprise* and Khan's *Reliant* in the Mutara Nebula, the film's other symbolic hell, the defeated Khan declares, "From hell's heart I stab at thee!" as he triggers the Genesis Device.

Spock dies in saving *Enterprise* from being consumed in the “Genesis wave” only to be resurrected on the Genesis planet, which erupts to become another symbolic hell, in *Search for Spock*. Scheduled to be “decommissioned” at the film’s beginning and destroyed at *Search for Spock*’s climax, *Enterprise*, too, is resurrected as the newly rebuilt *Enterprise-A* at the conclusion of *Voyage Home*, which also features a comic inversion of being “swallowed” in the “belly of the whale” when Scotty beams two whales aboard *Bounty*. Both Nimbus III and Sha Ka Ree—where Kirk, Spock, and McCoy are mutilated and then symbolically swallowed in rib-like spires of rock—are symbolic hells in *Final Frontier*, in which the trio is also thrown into *Enterprise*’s brig. Kirk and McCoy endure a literal underground journey when they are imprisoned in the dilithium mines of Rura Penthe, “a hell hole” and “the aliens’ graveyard,” in *Undiscovered Country*. Picard leads some *Enterprise* crew and all of Ba’ku’s inhabitants to refuge in a series of mountain caves, where he and Anij are trapped by a cave-in, in *Insurrection*. Yet in *Nemesis* it is not Picard but his clone, Shinzon, who has spent ten years underground in the Reman dilithium mines—where he had been sent “to die,” and where “in those terrible depths lived only the damned”—and it is not Data but his double, B-4, who is literally dismembered when initially found on Kolarus III.

15. Each earlier film involves tests and trials that challenge *Enterprise*’s crew; and in all but *Voyage Home*, *Generations*, and *Insurrection* a hero overcomes an antagonist who is clearly his shadow. These films’ most explicit tests and trials include Decker sacrificing himself to prevent V’ger from destroying all life on Earth in *Motion Picture*; the “Kobayashi Maru” test that begins *Wrath of Khan*; the necessity to violate orders and regulations in stealing *Enterprise* in *Search for Spock*; Kirk’s trial by court-marshal for “nine violations of Starfleet regulations” in *Voyage Home*; Kirk, Spock, McCoy, and Scotty resisting Sybok’s seductive offer to relieve them of their “pain” in *Final Frontier*; Spock unraveling the mystery of who had fired on Gorkon’s ship, and Kirk and McCoy standing trial for Gorkon’s murder before the Klingon High Council and then escaping Rura Penthe, in *Undiscovered Country*; Picard and Kirk preventing Soran from destroying Veridian in *Generations*; defeating the Borg in both the twenty-fourth and twenty-first centuries in *First Contact*; the necessity for Picard to violate orders and rebel against Starfleet Command in order to uphold the Prime Directive, as well to save Ba’ku, in *Insurrection*; and Picard and Data preventing Shinzon from destroying all life on Earth in *Nemesis*, which also features the clearest example of a hero being aided by a helper’s talisman when Data uses the “emergency transport unit” Geordi had given him to beam Picard back to *Enterprise* before sacrificing himself in destroying Shinzon’s *Scimitar*.

As V’ger is attempting to evolve beyond the state of “no emotion, only pure logic” to which Spock aspires through the Vulcan rite of Kolinahr, they are depicted as shadows from the beginning of *Motion Picture*. And Kahn is Kirk’s shadow in *Wrath of Khan*: Kirk begins this film, too, exiled (as an administrator) from “commanding a starship . . . [his] first, best destiny,” and Khan, who claims that Kirk had previously “exiled” him to Ceti Alpha V, later tells Kirk, “I shall leave you . . . in the center of a dead planet, buried alive” on Regula I; each escapes his figurative interment by employing a ruse to be beamed aboard a starship; and each acquires command of a starship prior to their final confrontation in the Mutara Nebula. While Kruge is to some extent Kirk’s shadow in *Search for Spock*, Spock and McCoy are this film’s more crucial shadows: McCoy’s histrionic secular humanism is constantly juxtaposed to Spock’s reserved scientific rationalism throughout the classic TV series as well as in each of the first six films; and McCoy both assimilates and is assimilated by Spock, when he becomes the unwilling recipient of Spock’s katra in *Wrath of Khan* and consequently often appears to be possessed by Spock until he returns it at *Search for Spock*’s conclusion. Both General Chang and Martia are Kirk’s shadows in *Undiscovered Country*: Kirk and Chang (who twice refers to Kirk as a fellow “warrior”) both oppose rapprochement between Klingons and the Federation, yet Kirk also thwarts Chang’s conspiracy to prevent it; Martia, a fellow prisoner who betrays Kirk

and McCoy during their escape from Rura Penthe, is a shape-shifter who assumes Kirk's appearance, fights him in that form, and is consequently mistaken for Kirk and killed by the warden. The Borg Queen, a woman who has almost entirely transformed herself into a machine, and Data, the android who aspires to be human and destroys her, are shadows in *First Contact*. And Data's "prototype" B-4, who has a less-advanced positronic brain, is Data's shadow in *Nemesis*. Yet the most obvious shadows in the entire film series are Picard and Shinzon, his clone, whom he kills in hand-to-hand combat at *Nemesis*' climax.

16. Kirk's true "goddess" is and always will be *Enterprise*, as he demonstrates most clearly in *Motion Picture* and also acknowledges to Picard in *Generations*. Yet females (if not, in every case, human women) do appear as versions of the goddess or the temptress, however perfunctorily, in each film. In *Motion Picture* Ilia is the goddess as the desired "Lady of the House of Sleep" and also as the forbidden "bad mother" to Decker, as she is the goal of his quest yet is "sworn to celibacy" because sex with Deltans is fatal to humans. In *Wrath of Khan* Kirk encounters the goddess as "good mother" in Dr. Marcus, the mother of his son and originator of the Genesis Project, which creates life. In *Search for Spock* Saavik is the goddess as "good mother" who helps Spock survive pon farr on the Genesis planet. Amanda is the goddess as "good mother" who wants Spock to get in touch with his "feelings" at the beginning of *Voyage Home*, in which Kirk playfully romances another goddess as "good mother" when he dines in the twentieth century with Dr. Gillian Taylor, whose deep ecological concern for the plight of whales suggests that she is, like Marcus, another symbolic nature goddess.

Uhura plays a comic temptress twice in *Final Frontier*: She repeatedly flirts with Scotty, who once implores her "to wait until I'm a wee bit stronger. I don't think I could take it in my present condition," and later seduces Sybok's followers into abandoning their posts by performing a ludicrous hoochi-koochi dance atop a sand dune. Martia, a more dangerous temptress in *Undiscovered Country*, seals with a kiss her pact to assist Kirk in escaping Rura Penthe, yet this is merely a ploy to entrap him. The closest approximation of a goddess-figure in *Generations* is Guinan, who is a "Lady of the House of Sleep" in that she both explains the dream-like nature of the Nexus to Picard and later turns up there. Cochrane's friend Lily Sloane is a goddess as "good mother" who deflects Picard from his counterproductive vendetta against the Borg in *First Contact*, in which the Borg Queen is a temptress who grafts "organic skin onto [Data's] endoskeletal structure" in attempting to seduce him into divulging *Enterprise*'s encryption codes; Data acknowledges that he was "tempted by her offer . . . for 0.68 seconds." Picard's most serious cinematic romance occurs in *Insurrection*, in which he indulges in a mystical marriage on Ba'ku with Anij—who exhibits attributes of a goddess in being apparently immortal and able to slow time. The "bad mother" in *Nemesis* is Romulan Senator Tel'aura, who murders everyone in the Romulan Senate in the film's first scene; this film's temptress is Commander Donatra, who unsuccessfully attempts to seduce Shinzon.

17. Atonement with fathers and/or father-figures also occurs in *Motion Picture* and *Wrath of Khan*, as well as *Voyage Home*, while three negative encounters occur in *Final Frontier* and one occurs in *Nemesis*. This atonement may be a negative encounter, in which the father might eat the hero, and may entail an initiatory rite of circumcision; the "initiation rites" that signal atonement might also contain both "a dramatized expression of the Oedipal aggression of the older generation; and the . . . patricidal impulse of the younger," as "there is a new element of rivalry in the picture: the son against the father for mastery of the universe"; thus, the father can be—or often only appears to be—a tyrant or ogre, and only after the hero sees beyond this negative manifestation, when the son finally "beholds the face of the father, . . . the two are atoned" (Campbell 137–39, 136, 147). As his superior officer who relieves him of command, Kirk is a father-figure as tyrant/ogre to Deckard in *Motion Picture*; they reconcile at the film's climax when Decker acknowledges that Kirk has compensated him for usurping his command in permitting him to merge with the Ilia-probe. *Wrath of Khan* completely inverts the

hero's role in that Kirk is both the film's sole monomythic hero and the father as tyrant/ogre who is atoned with his son, David, who feels he had been abandoned as a child and vilifies Kirk when they first meet at the core of Regula; but at the film's conclusion David faces Kirk and confesses "I was wrong about you, and I'm sorry. . . . I'm proud, very proud to be your son."

At the conclusion of *Search for Spock* Sarek shares the role of initiating priest through whom the hero passes into the world when he implores a Vulcan priestess to perform the risky fal-tor-pan ceremony that will reunite Spock's katra with his resurrected body. The two are atoned at the conclusion of *Voyage Home* when Sarek faces Spock, acknowledges him as "my son," and confesses that he may have been "incorrect" in having "opposed [Spock's] enlistment in Starfleet," which had caused the rift between them; and *Final Frontier* reveals the extent to which Sarek had been an ogre-father when Spock recalls how Sarek had tainted his original opportunity to serve as Spock's initiating priest, at his birth, in having disparaged him for being "so human." Sarek's reconciliation with Spock in *Voyage Home* occurs immediately after Kirk is atoned with the Federation Council President, an authoritative father-figure who exonerates Kirk for violating Starfleet regulations. *Final Frontier* also contains two additional negative encounters: McCoy recalls having taken the father he could not cure off life-support only to learn "not long after, [that] they found a cure"; and a false "god"-the-father later smites Kirk and Spock with energy bolts on Sha Ka Re. Finally, Picard killing his symbolic son Shinzon at the climax of *Nemesis* is an inverted negative atonement.

18. While significant conjunctions of opposites occur at the conclusions of each of the first four films—and while apotheosis is at least suggested by the association of the Nexus with nirvana in *Generations* and, more mundanely and ironically, by the elevation of a hero in *Voyage Home* and *First Contact*—the closest approximation of a literal apotheosis occurs at the end of *Motion Picture*, when Decker transcends his humanity and unites time and eternity (in evolving into a higher form of consciousness that enters a higher dimension) by merging with the Ilia-probe; this is not only a union of male and female, but also a union of self and other (in that the probe is a machine) as well as a unification of birth and death that entails loss of ego (in that Decker must sacrifice his humanity and identity to participate in this "birth" of a "new life form"). As in *Star Trek's* (2009) pretitle sequence, when George sacrifices himself so that Kirk can be born, life and death also merge at the climax of *Wrath of Khan* when Khan's suicidal attempt to destroy *Enterprise* in the expanding Genesis wave not only costs him his life but also transforms the Mutara Nebula into the vital, life-bestowing Genesis planet; echoing this death-into-life transformation, Spock (most specifically like George) simultaneously sacrifices himself to enable the rest of the crew to escape the Genesis wave and live. As he has no katra, the reborn Spock's consciousness is already annihilated for most of *Search for Spock* until the fal-tor-pan rite unites his flesh and spirit, which entails yet another merging of opposites in requiring the melding of Star Trek's preeminent foils, Spock and McCoy. At the beginning of *Voyage Home* Spock indicates that he is still out of touch with his human emotions when he does not understand the question "How do you feel?" Yet in saying "I feel fine" at the film's conclusion he signals that he has unified his human and alien qualities (self and other) in successfully integrating his emotions with Vulcan logic. Kirk and Picard experience something like an apotheosis in entering the nirvana-like Nexus in *Generations*: Guinan says that being within it "was like being inside joy," while Soran asserts that "time has no meaning" in the Nexus and that his prospective rendezvous with it is "an appointment with eternity." And, like Kirk's exoneration for having "saved" Earth at the end of *Voyage Home*—which, however, results in an ironic inversion, his demotion to Captain—another completely demystified and ironic, albeit more emphatic, suggestion of apotheosis occurs at the climax of *First Contact* when Cochrane attains warp speed, which (much to his dismay) assures that history will remember and venerate him as a great hero.

19. While the boon is literally “the regeneration of . . . society” (in the twenty-first century) in *First Contact*, and is most often the symbolic “regeneration of . . . society” in the form of humanity’s salvation (in *Motion Picture*, *Voyage Home*, *First Contact*, and *Nemesis*) or the salvation of life on another planet (Veridian IV and Ba’ku, respectively, in *Generations* and *Insurrection*)—the boon in several films involves significant revelations, more explicit intimations of immortality, or the salvation of life on a smaller scale as well. In addition to halting the prospective extermination of “every living thing on Earth,” another boon gained through Decker’s apotheosis in *Motion Picture* is knowledge, for V’ger also transmits to humanity all the data it has gathered in its three centuries’ exploration of the universe; moreover, Spock finally has the revelation that “logic and knowledge are not enough” and consequently abandons his attempt to attain Kolinahr. Life and peace are the similar boons in *Wrath of Khan* and *Search for Spock*—as in the former all but Spock survive Khan’s use of the Genesis device as a weapon and in the latter, despite Kruge’s efforts, it is not again transformed into a weapon after all—as well as in *Undiscovered Country*, in which war with the Klingons is averted. Sybok seeks “ultimate knowledge” in *Final Frontier*, but his revelation is only the knowledge that the “god” he had sought is false and that he is the victim of his own “arrogance” and “vanity,” while Kirk finally has a revelation similar to Spock’s at the conclusion of *Star Trek* (2009), that Spock and the rest of *Enterprise*’s crew are his “brothers . . . family.” Immortality is specifically a boon in *Generations*, as those in the Nexus enjoy an eternal as well as a blissful existence, and in *Insurrection*, in that the preservation of Ba’ku will permit the continued apparent immortality of its inhabitants; but immortality is rejected by Kirk in *Generations* and by Picard in both films.
20. In *Motion Picture* Decker can save Earth and convey new wisdom to it (acquire the boons) only by merging with V’ger and thus refusing to return, much as Spock refuses to return when he sacrifices himself to save *Enterprise* and its crew in *Wrath of Khan*. Similarly, although the boon of peace is attained, *Enterprise*’s crew refuses to return twice in *Undiscovered Country*: So that they can rescue Kirk and McCoy from Rura Penthe (and then thwart further assassination attempts at Camp Khitomer), Spock, Chekov, Scotty, and Uhura initially conspire to ignore Starfleet orders to return *Enterprise* to space dock; and at the film’s conclusion Kirk finally ignores the order to “return [*Enterprise*] to space dock to be decommissioned” in instead instructing Chekov to set course for the “second star to the right and straight on ‘til morning.” As it is destroyed, *Enterprise* itself does not return in both *Search for Spock* and *Generations*; and in choosing to leave the Nexus and return to the known world to prevent the destruction of Veridian in *Generations*, Picard and Kirk reject the boon of immortality that remaining in the Nexus confers in order to bestow the boon of extended life on those in the system and aboard *Enterprise*. In a similar partial inversion Picard refuses to give the boon of immortality to his own society in *Insurrection*, although Ba’ku’s inhabitants retain it, in that destroying Ra’af’s metaphasic collector to preserve Ba’ku denies the possibility of potential immortality to Federation citizens; moreover, Picard had earlier refused to return in ignoring Admiral Dougherty’s order that *Enterprise* leave the Ba’ku system. And, much like Spock in *Wrath of Khan*, Data refuses to return to *Enterprise* at the climax of *Nemesis* when he sacrifices himself to facilitate Picard’s return to the ship.

Although he does not return from his quest to Sha Ka Ree but dies there, Sybok is an antagonist, not a hero, in *Final Frontier*. In this film, however, McCoy and Spock are rescued from outside the unknown world when Scotty transports them from Sha Ka Ree back to *Enterprise*; Kirk’s return from Sha Ka Ree is then opposed by Klaa’s attack on *Enterprise*; but Kirk, too, is finally rescued from outside the unknown world when Spock convinces General Korrd to pull rank on Klaa and order that Kirk be beamed from Sha Ka Ree to the Klingon bird of prey. Likewise, Kirk and McCoy are rescued from outside the unknown world when Spock transports them from Rura Penthe to *Enterprise* after their escape has been both furthered

and opposed by Martia's shape-shifting ability. Rescue from outside the unknown world is similarly, but more convolutedly, combined with several elements of magic flight in *Nemesis*: Shinzar's warbird *Scimitar* opposes the return by attacking *Enterprise* and damaging its warp drive; rescue from outside the unknown world then occurs unexpectedly when two Romulan battleships decloak and come to *Enterprise's* aid; Troi subsequently furthers the return through extraordinary means when she uses Shinzar's viceroy's telepathic link with her to locate him, and thus also locates the cloaked *Scimitar* so that *Enterprise* can attack it; but the return is then opposed by extraordinary means again, when warriors from *Scimitar* board *Enterprise* to capture Picard so that Shinzon can extract his DNA, only to be furthered by extraordinary means again, finally, when Data uses the emergency transport device given him by Geordi to beam Picard back to *Enterprise* but fails to return himself.

Most often, however, the return is simply opposed and furthered—or, more simply still, merely furthered—by extraordinary means. In *Motion Picture* the *Enterprise* crew returns from within V'ger's energy cloud, which has by then reached Earth without their volition (a return via extraordinary means), by dissipating it when Decker finally keys the NASA code (a return via extraordinary means), by sacrificing himself to enable *Enterprise* to attain warp speed and return from the Mutara Nebula in *Wrath of Khan*. In *Search for Spock* the return is opposed by extraordinary means when Kruge's crew boards *Enterprise* and Kirk initiates its self-destruct sequence, but is then furthered by extraordinary means when *Enterprise's* crew beams aboard Kruge's nearly abandoned bird of prey, captures its lone remaining crewmember, and escapes from the Genesis system as the planet explodes. In *Voyage Home* Spock must make "the best guess I can" to determine the precise slingshot trajectory around the sun that will return *Bounty* successfully to the twenty-third century, an unlikely outcome that "miracle worker" Scotty terms "a miracle." In *Generations* the return is most inexplicably a "magic flight" in that Kirk and Picard merely exit the Nexus to a point in time of their choosing. The return only seems to be opposed by extraordinary means in *First Contact*, when Data appears to have been co-opted by the Borg Queen and to have betrayed his crewmembers, but is finally furthered by extraordinary means when Geordi reconfigures *Enterprise's* "warp field to match the chronometric readings of the Borg field" to return it to the twenty-fourth century. And Riker beams Picard onto *Enterprise* moments before Ra'af's metaphasic collector explodes in *Insurrection*.

21. Star Trek films' heroes experience a dilation of time in the unknown world surprisingly often, sometimes encounter dangers in returning to the known world that necessitate "insulation" in the form of precautions, and frequently return with a talisman (or several) that is always a sentient being. The ruse Spock and Kirk employ to rescue Kirk and his companions from the core of Regula I in *Wrath of Khan* involves a figurative dilation of time: Knowing that their conversation is being overheard, they refer to "hours" as "days" in communicating between *Enterprise* and the planet's interior. Later, Spock transfers his katra to McCoy, a form of psychic insurance, before exposing himself to lethal radiation in restoring *Enterprise's* warp drive. And *Enterprise* finally leaves the Mutara Nebula with Kirk's former lover Carol and son David on board as living talismans. Similarly, Spock's reborn body is the living talisman retrieved from the Genesis planet and returned to Vulcan, to be rejoined with his katra, at the conclusion of *Search for Spock*; and the crew also acquires Kruge's bird of prey (later christened *Bounty*), which transports them to Vulcan, after *Enterprise* is destroyed. A more literal dilation of time occurs in *Voyage Home*, in which the crew spends about a day in 1986 but returns to the twenty-third century a few minutes before they had departed; *Bounty* is then caught immediately in the alien probe's power drain and plunges into San Francisco Bay with its cargo of whales, George and Gracie—who serve as both the sought-after "insulation" against the danger posed by the probe and, with twentieth-century whale biologist Gillian Taylor, as the living talismans of the quest as well. A similar dilation of time also occurs in both *Generations*—in which Picard leaves the Nexus, where "time has no meaning," with Kirk, the

living talisman he recruits there, minutes before Picard and Soran had enter it—and *First Contact*, in which the crew return to the twenty-fourth century at the very moment they had left it after having spent several days in 2063. A more minor, albeit the most literal, dilation of time occurs in *Insurrection* when Anij slows time for Picard as they savor their brief romance on Ba'ku. And Data is the sentient talisman retrieved from Ba'ku in *Insurrection*, while B-4 is the sentient talisman retrieved from Kolarus III in *Nemesis*.

22. Decker symbolically becomes master of both the mundane and the unknown worlds at the climax of *Motion Picture* through accepting a literal transcendence in merging with V'ger; and Kirk simultaneously becomes “master of the two worlds” by literally gaining the freedom to cross the threshold of space freely when he thus, if only temporarily, retains command of *Enterprise* because the new captain whose position he had already usurped, Decker, is “missing.” He forcefully asserts this freedom again at the beginnings of both *Wrath of Khan* and *Search for Spock*, respectively, by again accepting command of and then stealing *Enterprise*, and regains it more permanently at the conclusion of *Voyage Home* when he is officially given command of the newly constructed *Enterprise-A*. At the end of *Wrath of Khan*, which begins on his birthday, Kirk also indicates that he has overcome his anxiety about aging, and thus attained “freedom to live,” in saying “I feel young.” And Kirk again attains “freedom to live” at the end of *Voyage Home*, both because he can now work in the known world without anxiety—in having freed Earth from the ravages of the alien probe, as well as in having again regained command of a starship—and also because the Federation Council President’s official acknowledgment that he has “saved this planet” reinforces his awareness that he is the vehicle of cosmic change, can “make a difference,” a role he reprises in the next three films. Signaling his acquisition of the “freedom to live” yet again at the conclusion of *Final Frontier*, Kirk—who had earlier lamented that “men like us don’t have families”—exhibits freedom from anxiety by singing around a campfire with Spock and McCoy in the film’s last scene after having realized that Spock is his “brother” and the *Enterprise* crew, his “family.”

Similarly, Picard reinforces the fact that commanding a starship likewise affords him the freedom to cross the threshold of space freely, making him another “master of the two worlds,” when he muses at the conclusion of *Generations*, after *Enterprise-D* is destroyed, “Somehow I doubt that this will be the last ship to carry the name *Enterprise*”—and is, indeed, discovered in command of *Enterprise-E* at the beginning of *First Contact*. As if to further emphasize this freedom, and analogous to Kirk’s insubordinate act of stealing *Enterprise*, Picard repeatedly disobeys Starfleet orders regarding the disposition of *Enterprise-E* in both *First Contact* and *Insurrection*. He is also conscious that he is the vehicle of cosmic change in having saved the Veridian system in *Generations*; in having twice saved Earth from assimilation by the Borg while assuring that Cochrane makes first contact with the Vulcans in *First Contact*; in having saved Ba’ku and the Prime Directive in *Insurrection*; and in having saved Earth again in *Nemesis*, at the conclusion of which he returns the badly damaged *Enterprise-E* to space dock for repairs and thus suggests that he will continue to possess the freedom to cross the threshold of space freely in the future.

23. This redundancy is most clearly exhibited in *Wrath of Khan*’s frequently reiterated death-and-rebirth motif and the many ways in which this film’s characters enact the monomyth’s closely related “Being Swallowed in the Belly of the Whale” episode. The footnotes to this analysis of *Star Trek* (2009) reveal that in the typical earlier *Star Trek* film the monomythic hero, while occasionally Kirk or Picard, is most often a combination of characters—usually either Kirk, Spock, and McCoy, or Picard and Data. This individual or composite hero almost always experiences some mode of exile; exhibits a genius for command and no fear of death; inhabits a world whose most prominent deficiencies are bureaucratic ineptitude and corruption, a failure to preserve the ecology, or war; acquires a more profound understanding of his humanity; and is a warrior who changes the status quo as well as literally a world-redeemer.

In the earlier films this hero also often seeks or finds a father or father-figure, although usually this involves some inversion, and frequently triumphs over pretenders. Moreover, this individual or composite hero always receives a literal call to adventure that is only infrequently refused; always receives supernatural aid, usually from other *Enterprise* crewmembers; always undertakes a dramatic threshold crossing to an unknown world that is usually a sphere of rebirth defended by protective guardians and destructive watchmen; almost always experiences a literal or figurative underground journey that is frequently a symbolic descent into hell; always endures tests and trials (sometimes literally) and usually assimilates a shadow self; almost always encounters a goddess-figure; often, but only in the later films, encounters a temptress; sometimes, but most often in the earlier films, experiences an inverted or negative atonement with a father or father-figure; occasionally experiences some weak approximation of apotheosis but always receives a boon, which is sometimes refused; frequently refuses to return, either by choosing to sacrifice himself or to disobey orders; almost always experiences a "magic flight" from the unknown world and is less often rescued from outside it; frequently experiences a dilation of time in recrossing the threshold and returns with a sentient talisman; and usually becomes "master of the two worlds" and acquires "freedom to live."

24. Similarly, *Voyage Home*, *First Contact*, and *Generations* are time-travel as well as a space-travel films, and the still-more-fabulous transcendence of reality itself occurs both in *Motion Picture*, when Decker transcends this universe as well as his humanity in evolving into a "higher form of consciousness" that can access "higher dimensions," and in *Generations*, when Kirk and Picard enter the nirvana-like Nexus as well as travel forward (Kirk) and backward (Picard) in time when they exit it.

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Donald Palumbo is professor of English at East Carolina University, where he teaches Science Fiction, Science Fiction Films, and the Short Story. He received his degrees from The University of Chicago and The University of Michigan and is currently Film Area Chair for PCA. He is also on the editorial boards of *The Journal of Popular Culture* and *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, and is series advisor to McFarland’s “Critical Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy” series.

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