

THE MONOMYTH: AN ANALYSIS OF
20th CENTURY PROPAGANDA FILMS FROM
NAZI GERMANY AND NORTH KOREA

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Secondly, I want to thank my great-grandmother Renata Harter, whose experiences during the Third Reich exposed me to perspectives that otherwise would have been unknown to me. Though she was a part of the League of German Girls when she was young, this did not impede on her love for all humans regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other category. This living proof of goodness existing within the most evil of regimes taught me that the people they rule over do not necessarily reflect the same values or ideals. However, more importantly for this research, her experiences in a nation consumed by propaganda had forever left a part of her remembering the Third Reich as "not so bad." She is my inspiration to study propaganda and the regimes who restrict open access to facts.

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Abstract

Thesis: The Monomyth: An Analysis of 20th Century Totalitarian Propaganda Films from Nazi Germany and North Korea

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The purpose of this thesis is to critically analyze the narrative structures of propaganda in Nazi Germany and the DPRK to find if they are consistent with The Monomyth narrative structure coined by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. The regimes offer a messianic solution to the perceived impending doom upon their nations that cause their rise to power. This analysis finds that the narrative structures of *Hitlerjunge Quex* and *Pulgasari* are consistent with the Monomyth narrative structure. However, limitations were discovered along the way which led the author to offer insights on future study on the subject of both propaganda and the Monomyth in non-fiction.

Chapter 1: An Introduction to Joseph Campbell's *Monomyth* Narrative Structure and Propaganda in Nazi Germany and North Korea

As the recent 2016 United States election cycle has shown propaganda can be a powerful tool to spread misinformation, especially as platforms become increasingly more complex with technological advancements. The misinformation campaign sewed doubt into the election process by taking advantage of a politically fractured society. Mainstream political parties were posed as dangers to society and presented their candidates as the only way to stop the impending doom presented by the other.

The United States House of Representatives House Intelligence Committee disclosed examples of the propaganda campaign used in the 2016 election. Examples included comparing Donald Trump to the messianic figure Jesus Christ and likening Hilary Clinton to Satan. The propagandists utilized every divisive issue in American politics to spread distrust and polarization among the citizenry. They took both sides of already divisive issues and inflamed the passions of both sides to create a tribal political climate. These issues included immigration, Black Lives Matter, gun control, and others. By appealing to both the far right and far left, they were able to undermine a political establishment and norms that had been the center of American politics for decades.

As we shall see, this strategy has been implemented throughout history to stir up fear and to create a sense of urgency during times of political and economic struggle. An example of this can be found during the post-World War I era in Germany. The Nazis and Communists, the far right and far left, portrayed themselves as saviors during a time of economic and political decline

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and the other as an impending doom. This narrative is consistent with mythological structures used throughout history.

The impending doom/savior dynamic is predicated on the belief that society is on track to change for the worse unless a worthy and messianic figure is given the power to stop it. This call to action is consistent with Joseph Campbell's (1949) *monomyth* narrative structure coined in *The Hero with A Thousand Faces*. Intent on pointing out consistencies amongst all hero storylines, Campbell's (1949) in depth analysis caused the author to consider whether or not this narrative structure could apply not only to narrative fiction but to non-fiction as well.

After spending much of my life studying the history of Nazi Germany, I had always been curious as to how a once enlightened and prosperous people could turn to someone like Adolf Hitler to lead their nation. Understanding historical context is critical, but it is equally important to understand how the Nazi narrative was convincing as opposed to other political groups that offered their own solutions during a time of hardship. The same question is posed can be posed in a regime that still exists to this day, North Korea, whose reign could be confused as something straight out of Orwell's *1984*.

The goal of this study is to use the basic stages of Joseph Campbell's *Monomyth* as a framework to analyze if the narrative structure is consistent with propaganda in Nazi Germany and North Korea, thus making it possible to identify propaganda in the future. This research is relevant during a time where authoritarian regimes still exist and propaganda is as effective as ever with liberal nations. Their source of power comes from misinformation aimed to portray an individual as a hero to defend against the great external threats beyond their borders. In the totalitarian state of North Korea, like Nazi Germany before, the government has total control over the information that is received by their citizens. Generations of North Korean citizens have

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been fed the narrative that the United States and its allies are a threat to their existence and that the Kim family are their saviors.

This paper is an attempt to offer a new manner in which to analyze propaganda's narrative structure used by regimes to portray dictators as heroes. Nazi Germany's and North Korea's use of propaganda brought about the rise of a new party and a new leader by portraying them as a messianic figure. The parameters focus on the Campbell's (1949) departure, initiation, and return character arc and how it applies to the leaders of Nazi Germany and North Korea. Within the character arch are different phases which are introduced and explained in detail in the methodology.

Though the mediums and platforms used for propaganda are progressing, the narrative structure used to tell the story is as old as human storytelling. Joseph Campbell (1949) identified the universality of the hero narrative: "Throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, myths of man have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind." (Campbell p. 1)

Key Terms: The Monomyth, the Cult of Personality, a Fractured Society, and Censorship

Campbell (1949) coined the narrative structure, the *Monomyth*, to point out the similarities of the hero/villain narrative throughout history. Understanding these parallels makes it possible to analyze their story arch in order to find a formula consistent with the human experience from a psychological perspective. In stories that adhere to the Monomyth narrative structure, the hero receives a call to action that takes them away from their comfort zone in order to gain the knowledge and skills to combat a threat, then return home in order to bring this prize

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of knowledge and skills to the place they started. After studying the *Monomyth* and reflecting on its structure I could not help but notice the same narrative is found in the realm of propaganda.

This pattern of departure, initiation, and return can be found in the case of Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany. Hitler, who fought in the First World War for the German army, used this as his departure point on his road to becoming the Chancellor of Germany. His anti-semitism was solidified not only from his own personal injuries during the war but from the defeat of the German army. He blamed the Jewish community for the failures in the war, and upon his return he dove into politics and became the man we all know today.

The same pattern can be found in the case of Kim Il Sung, the founder of the state of North Korea, and his road to becoming the first of several North Korean dictators. His departure to China in his youth and initiation into Communist politics led him to eventually return to Korea as a dominant force. His “hero’s journey” and the narrative surrounding it led to support growing around him to combat the impending doom of the Japanese occupiers and later American invaders. His legacy has led to a dynasty that lasts into the modern era. To this day, many North Koreans see Kim Il Sung as a messianic figure who founded the world. His son Kim Jong Il and grandson Kim Jong Un have succeeded him in leading the nation portrayed as divine figures.

George Orwell’s (1949) dystopian novel *1984*, though it is narrative fiction, does an excellent job of putting the *cult of personality* revolving around a leader and a political party on display. Written shortly after the fall of Nazi Germany, Orwell understood the importance of the *cult of personality*. This same principle revolved around Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany in order to create a massive following which led to him and his party to power. More importantly, this cult of personality led to the destruction of the old system to make room for a totalitarian dictatorship. This same strategy still revolves around Kim Jong Un in North Korea today as the

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third generation of his family to retain power. This, in combination with decades of brainwashing and censorship, has led to society to consider Kim and his family as god-like.

Orwell's antithetical and ironic tagline for Big Brother's regime "war is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength" in *1984* points to how totalitarian regimes attempt to mold their citizens in a way that adheres to their vision through coercion. The strategy of twisting the truth is undertaken by real life totalitarian regimes who have the desire to not only have power over a nation through force, but power over each individual's actions and thoughts in order to reflect their vision of an ideal society.

Another aspect to Orwell's novel that is important to understanding propagandas effectiveness is how regimes can manipulate the emotions of their subjects. In the novel, Big Brother allocates a portion of the day to an event called "Two Minutes Hate" that allows the citizens time to vent their anger and frustrations towards the ultimate enemy of the State. The frustrations of people, which ironically are caused by the policies of the State, are turned around into being blamed on a scapegoat. Another instance of irony is the fact that the people causing the problems are the ones providing a "solution". Orwell provides an example of this strategy in *1984*. "As usual, the face of the Emmanuel Goldstein, the Enemy of the People, had flashed onto the screen. There were hisses here and there among the audience. The little sandy-haired woman gave a squeak of mingled fear and disgust" (p. 12).

Parallels of this strategy can be found in both Nazi Germany and Communist North Korea. This is a clear narrative choice that can be found in real life propaganda. In the case of Nazi Germany, book burning was a way in which sympathizers could collectively vent their frustrations while also adhering to the principles of the party. In the case of North Korea, citizens often participate in public displays of affection towards the nation's leader as well as regularly

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pointing out one's own flaws in comparison to the ideals of the party. Though the specifics regarding the enemy, the leader, and the party differ from regime to regime the strategies regarding narrative structure are universal in the realm of propaganda. This universality, as argued in this paper, is the same universality that can be found in fictional hero storylines.

In order for propagandist's to become successful they need to take advantage of an already fractured society in order to further divide and conquer them. In the case of Germany, prior to the rise of the Nazis the Germans had suffered defeat after World War I. This not only resulted in the annexation of a portion of their lands and the requirement to pay war reparations, but most importantly an era of national shame . As if matters could not get worse, the Great Depression further tanked the German economy and left a recently powerful nation with nothing but scraps and a worthless currency.

A similarly fractured society existed in Korea prior to the creation of North Korea and the Kim regime. For centuries the North Korean people were subjected to colonization by China and Japan which included involuntary servitude, sexual slavery, and other injustices. This led to a massive independence movement that the Communists, eventually led by Kim Il Sung, took advantage of in order to rise to power.

One final aspect that should be addressed that is of utmost importance in order to understand the effectiveness of propaganda in Nazi Germany and North Korea is their strict censorship policies. Both regimes took extreme censorship positions in order to monopolize information the citizenry has access to. After both regimes consolidated power within their respective countries, both eventually outlawed opposition parties as well as access to outside information. Possessing or receiving foreign media was not only prohibited, but also equated to

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treason. This, done under the guise of national security, made it possible to mold the opinions of the citizenry to adhere to whatever narrative the regime liked.

Films from both Nazi Germany and North Korea, *Hitlerjunge Quex* and *Pulgasari* respectively, will be analyzed using the Monomyth as a template to find any consistencies. By finding consistencies between two propaganda films and the Monomyth narrative structure, light can be shed on the effectiveness of propaganda in fractured societies.

Propaganda, and the narrative structures used to cause its effectiveness, are pertinent today during a time of political polarization both in the United States and abroad. As we shall see in the next chapter, there is a gap in the literature in regards to analyzing propaganda through the lens of the *Monomyth* narrative structure. Though there is plenty of literature about propaganda and the *Monomyth* respectively, there is no literature currently published using the narrative theory to explain how and why governments use propaganda to advance their agendas. By examining the films *Hitlerjunge Quex* and *Pulgasari* through the lens of the Monomyth, this research will hopefully close that gap and will be the base for others upon which to build and expand.

Chapter 2: A Literature Review

The structure of the Monomyth in Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) has many aspects but the foundation of the hero's story arch is the *departure, initiation,* and *return* narrative structure. These three phases, with the regularly utilized sub-phases, are crucial to deciding whether or not a particular narrative adheres to the Monomyth.

Additional to the hero's journey itself are characters that frequently appear in stories that adhere to the Monomyth: the hero, the mentor, the ally, the herald, the trickster, the shapeshifter,

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the guardian, and the shadow. The non-hero characters assist and/or mold the hero along his/her journey to prepare him/her for their eventual confrontation with an impending doom.

The first phase, *departure*, begins with “The Call to Adventure” (Campbell, 1949, p. 41) where the hero embarks on a journey to a foreign land that begins to shape the character into the hero. The “call” can take any number of forms such as mere chance, a desire to explore, an event, or any other variable that leads the character to feel the desire or need to leave their comfort zone. This is where the “herald” (Campbell, 1949, p. 42), a character that assists or inspires the hero to embark on their quest, is introduced.

This call to action is sometimes followed by what Campbell referred to as the “Refusal of the Call” (Campbell, 1949, p. 49) where the hero denies taking the risk of leaving their comfort zone until “Supernatural Aid” (p. 57) changes their mind. The source of their refusal, as happens in real life, is “essentially a refusal to give up what one takes to be one’s own interest” (p. 49). One popular example of this refusal can be found in *Star Wars* when the hero, Luke Skywalker, initially refuses Obi-Wan Kenobi’s offer to train him to become a Jedi. Another example can be found in *The Hobbit* where Bilbo Baggins initially refuses and is apprehensive to leave the Shire with Gandalf.

The *supernatural aid* typically comes in the form of a character that causes the hero to no longer fear the unknown and leave their old world behind (p. 64). This aid helps the character during the beginning of their journey to give them both confidence and resolve to see the mission through. After answering the call and accepting aid is when “The Crossing of the First Threshold” (p. 64) occurs. This is the moment when the character separates themselves from their comfort zone more than they ever had in the past.

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The Monomyth as a whole takes a novice surrounded by one form of comfort or another and causes them to embark on a journey of rebirth in order to return to face a challenge that he/she otherwise would not have had the skills to confront. Perhaps the most important aspect of this molding of the character is what Campbell refers to as the “Belly of the Whale” (p. 74). This initial challenge permanently changes the character, essentially killing what they once were, to evolve into what they are destined to become.

The second phase, *initiation*, consists of the “Road of Trials” (p. 81) where the hero must overcome a series of obstacles in order to undergo the transformation into a hero. The hero often fails during these challenges which build to their character, resolve, and skills. The hero is often confronted with a “Meeting with the Goddess” (p. 91) where they experience an unparalleled level of attraction. This is known as the “Woman as Temptress” (p. 101) that distract him/her from their mission. Though many stories place women in the position of the temptress, that is not always the case nor is it required for the Monomyth.

This is then followed by a confrontation and/or initiation with the ultimate power in the hero’s narrative known as the “Atonement with the Father” (p. 105). The “father” is a powerful figure that is important for the hero’s initiation to eventually form into the “father” him/herself. Another equally important aspect of the *initiation* is the “Apotheosis” which occurs when the hero raises to a new level of consciousness after defeating their foe or completing their quest (p. 127). The final stage in the initiation process according to Campbell is the “Ultimate Boon” (p. 148) or the resolution that displays how far the hero has come from the beginning of their narrative by stopping the impending doom or threat to the hero’s cause.

In the *return* phase the hero initially, according to Campbell (p. 167), takes part in the “Refusal of the Return.” The hero, now with the prize after defeating their foe, struggles with

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returning and integrating to where they embarked on their journey now that they have changed dramatically. However, they eventually do return in what is called “The Magic Flight” (p. 170) where they bring with them the restoration of society with the support of all the supernatural aids. There is the possibility where the hero struggles to return and requires aid called “Rescue from Without” (p. 178). The “Crossing of the Return Threshold” aspect of the *return* phase is when the hero must utilize their improved self to return home (Campbell, 1949, p. 188 which makes the hero “Master of Two Worlds” (p. 196). This causes the hero to finally have the “Freedom to Live” without fear of what the future has in store for them or even death itself (p. 205).

To better understand the Monomyth and how it can pertain to Propaganda I researched examples of stories that adhere to the narrative structure within the realm of non-fiction. Most commonly known examples are found in fictional works however there have been some who focus on the Monomyth and how it relates to real life applications. Additional to applying to both fiction and non-fiction, the Monomyth applies to stories regardless of medium including film, television, and novels.

An example of the Monomyth’s application in the realm of non-fiction can be found in Mark Poindexter’s writing on post-9/11 society. Poindexter (2008) argues that some post-9/11 societal reactions are in part due to the American monomythic way of thinking. Poindexter makes the point that this societal perception holds nationalism up on a pedestal while also being overly emotionally driven. This sort of mindset could lead to what Poindexter describes as the desire to redeem the world in the name of that nationalism. According to the literature, in the American Monomyth model the hero is an outsider who comes into the community to save the day when the traditional institutions fail. That was the way of thinking when the United States

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invaded Afghanistan and Iraq in 2003. The thought was that they would be the protagonists in what would eventually become an American monolithic narrative structure, but this was war. This reaction comes along with the fear of the “other” which is consistent with the Campbell’s (1949) narrative structure. The American people were susceptible after a devastating attack on 9/11, with the combination of fear and rage, to support war and an invasion of civil liberties in the name of national security.

Rosteck and Frentz (2009) pointed out the parallels with the use of environmental rhetoric in *An Inconvenient Truth* and the Monomyth. The film illustrates the drastic contrasts between the beauty of nature and the horror of what could happen if climate change is not addressed as a global issue amongst its inhabitants. This illustrates fear of an impending doom and also the call to action for humankind to become the hero that confronts the issue.

According to the literature the hero, call to action, initial reluctance, then eventual action is both what comprises the Monomyth model as well as vaguely but accurately represents the way in which humans have reacted to the evidence of climate change. The way in which Al Gore frames the narrative in the documentary is complementary of the Monomyth in the sense that there is an external threat and everyone can contribute to the neutralization of that threat.

Sutton and Win (2001) aim to point out parallels between post-Vietnam POW rescue films and the Monomyth. Some of the most popular examples of these are *Rambo: First Blood, Part II* (1985), *Uncommon Valor* (1984), and *Missing in Action* (1985). These films were consistent with the narrative structure of the American variation of the Monomyth. The traditional institutions failed the POWs in leaving them behind while claiming it was not true. This requires someone outside of the traditional institution to save the prisoners from the threat of permanent imprisonment in a POW camp. The Christ-like figures such as John Rambo are

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typical of the American Monomyth model, which frequents such characters with almost supernatural abilities that are also consistent with the American model.

The following is research based on both Nazi Germany and the DPRK, particularly focusing on their leaders and the propaganda machines they had at their disposal. They are also tied to parts of the Monomyth that I argue consistent with their use of the narrative structure to effectively portray their leaders as heroes and their enemies as an impending doom. Though their specifics are different, their strategies used are not only similar but consistent with the Monomyth.

In *The Rise and Fall of Adolf Hitler* William Shirer gives an in depth analysis of Hitler's life from his early years in Austria, his military experiences during the World War I, to his death in his underground Berlin bunker. He focuses on Hitler's personality, his relationships, and how he developed throughout his life to become the conqueror of most of Europe. Shirer was a journalist who was embedded in Nazi Germany whose perspective is unique due to the fact that not many outsiders were allowed to be so close to Hitler.

This is pertinent because understanding the personality of the leader, as well as his relationship with other party members, is important if you are to understand the intentions and reasons behind his propaganda machine. Without understanding his personality and how it progressed throughout his life it would be more difficult to understand the desires and ambitions that led to arguably the worst mass genocide in world history. The fear of the other, clearly in the form of mainly Jewish and other non-Aryan peoples, is both important to understanding Nazi propaganda and how it ties into the Monomyth narrative structure.

In *The Mythical World of Nazi War Propaganda 1939-1945* Jay Baird explains the links between mythological narrative and the Nazi regime. The Nazis since their founding, before

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even Hitler joined the party, believed to be a part of the superior Aryan race. They focused on Hitler's ability to put those beliefs into political practice through symbols myths in the form of propaganda that became essential to winning over the masses. They also focused on the relationship between Hitler and Goebbels who together constructed a propaganda machine that fused Nazism and what it meant to be truly German together to the point that the two became indistinguishable. Understanding Hitler and Goebbels relationship, as well as their use of myth and symbols through the Ministry of Propaganda, is both important and pertinent to this research.

In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler's autobiography and memoirs, he gives his perspective on politics, society, and the solution to the problems within Germany. This text is not compiled of facts but rather the opinions of a man who is imprisoned for a failed coup in Bavaria. However, it is pertinent to read the words of the dictator so one can truly understand the desires and goals of a man who believed in mass social change and the use of coercion to make it happen. Hitler spends chapters describing how he best felt propaganda should be used and who should be the targets of their messaging. This is pertinent to this research because it is a primary source of the mindset of a dictator that eventually used his propaganda machine to nearly wipe out the Jewish people in Europe.

Ernst Kris and Hans Speier explore Nazi radio propaganda strategies in *German Radio Propaganda: Report on Home Broadcasts During the War*. This book, published shortly after the war ended, is written by Austrian and German immigrants experts of totalitarian communication. They focus on the actors of propaganda that are important for its effectiveness: the stage, the self, the enemy, the rest of the world, and others that are pertinent to this study.

In *North Korea Confidential: Private Markets, Fashion Trends, Prison Camps, Dissenters and Defectors* Pearson and Tudor (2015) discuss society in North Korea and how it

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differs from the stereotypical portrayal of strict obedience to the political system. For example, Pearson and Tudor explain the necessity for a capitalist black market in North Korea after the infamous famine in the 1990's. Though the existence of such a system is highly illegal, and could lead to the death penalty for those involved, it is necessary in order for the Korean people to be self sustaining in the 21st century. The North Korean government takes full responsibility and has total control of the official economic decisions through a command economy, though behind closed doors this has not led to the intended success collectivist regimes portray.

Pearson and Tudor also introduce and explain the North Korean prison camp system and its levels based upon crimes against the state. The use of propaganda is both widespread in these camps and is obviously pertinent to this research. Those who have the potential to get out are constantly exposed to propaganda to change their point of view to the socially acceptable obedience to the regime. The propaganda strategies both inside and outside of the prison camp system in North Korea is necessary for to give a thorough analysis.

In Lankov's *North of the DMZ: Essays on Daily Life in North Korea* (2007) anti-American propaganda is introduced as a way of explaining how North Koreans receive information and why they feel the way they do towards American and its allies. The examples provided in the text are both graphic and emotional to those who view it regardless of nationality. They show American soldiers killing and torturing North Korean men, women, and children with such brutality that one can understand why some North Koreans hold anti-American views. This is pertinent to this research based upon the important piece of the Monomyth, the enemy, clearly being used in this example.

In Myer's *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves - And Why it Matters* historical context of colonization in North Korea is introduced to help explain why North

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Koreans regularly mention the “imperialists” when referring to their enemies, particularly the United States. The differences between Marxism and the Kim regime are also introduced, explaining that the Kim form is more of a mixture of monarchism and communism rather than purist Marxism. Rule by a single family, which seems antithetical to Marxist teaching, has occurred in North Korea since its founding after the Korean War.

Another important point of note in this text is the rampant xenophobia that occurs within North Korea due to the propaganda campaign imposed by the regime. The fear of the other, in the form of those who either are or look like an American, is expressed continuously in the text. This is important because the same strategies are used within Nazi Germany as well as being a key aspect of the Monomyth. This helps add to the argument that propagandists in both regimes, though not directly intending to, use the monomyth narrative structure to successfully persuade the masses.

In Hunter’s *Kim Il-Sung’s North Korea* the cult of personality around the founder of North Korea, his son and grandson, and the government structure used to sustain it are the main areas of focus. The custom of *songbun*, the ranking system based on loyalty to the party and its leader, is also introduced to give additional context.

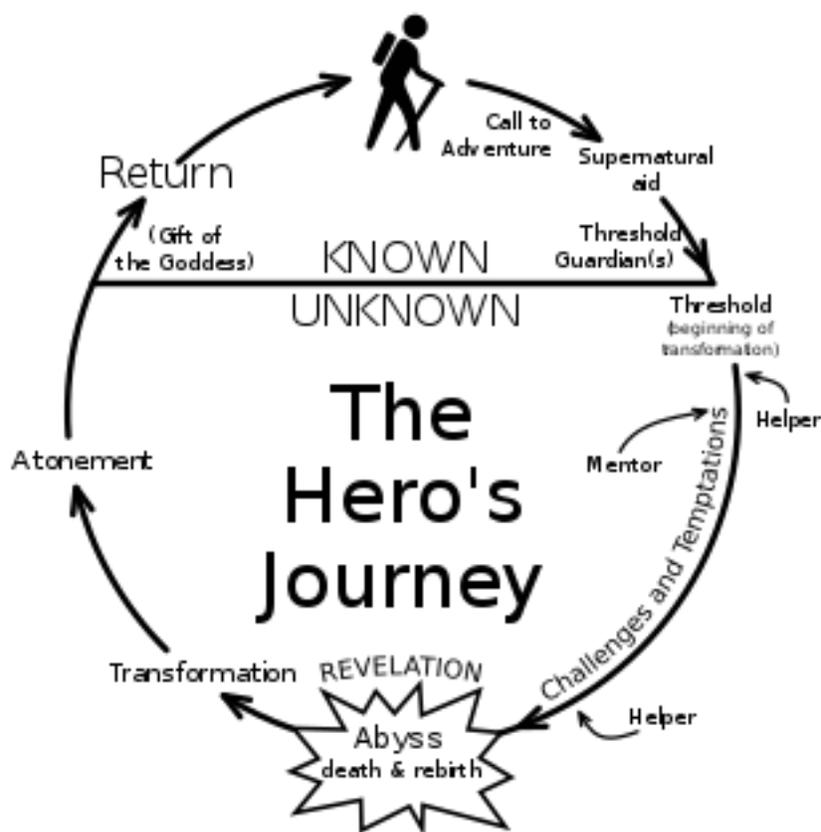
There is plenty of research focusing on the Monomyth, Nazi Germany, and the DPRK respectively however there is no research that ties these topics together. Though there are clearly links between the two, there have not been connections through research to compare the two regimes by their propaganda strategies. There has also, more importantly, not been research that connects the monomyth with propaganda in general.

This leaves a research gap that should be filled due to the limited scope of understanding how the Monomyth can be applied to non-fiction. Understanding the strategies propagandists use

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to effectively persuade the masses is also pertinent for any citizen to be able to label what is propaganda. The Monomyth is one of the most commonly used narrative structures so it is important to research if it can also apply to propaganda. If found to be applicable to both regimes, this could expand the understanding of how something as complex as propaganda can be effective by means of a common narrative structure found in countless stories.

Chapter 3: Methodology



In order to analyze propaganda in Nazi Germany and North Korea through the scope of the *monomyth*, I have decided to focus on the protagonist in propaganda films from both regimes. In order to decide if the protagonist of these films followed the hero's journey, I will analyze whether or not they follow the 17 steps of the Monomyth.

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These steps are as follows: 1.) The Call to Adventure, 2.) Refusal of the Call, 3.) Supernatural Aid, 4.) Crossing the First Threshold, 5.) Belly of the Whale, 6.) The Road of Trials, 7.) Meeting with the Goddess/Love, 8.) Temptation, 9.) Atone with the Hero's Father, 10.) Peace and Fulfillment Before the Hero's Return, 11.) The Ultimate Boon, 12.) Refusal of the Return, 13.) Magic Flight, 14.) Rescue from Without, 15.) Return. 16.) Master of Two Worlds, 17.) Freedom to Live.

In the *Call to Adventure* the hero receives a calling to the unknown, a place outside of the protagonist's comfort zone and away from the familiar. "This first stage of the mythological journey—which we have designated the "call to adventure"—signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown." (Campbell, 1949, p. 48)

In the *Refusal of the Call* fear or obligations prevent the hero from embarking on this journey to the unknown. Both in fiction and non-fiction individuals hit a point in their lives where they must make a major decision: to go or not to go, to do or not to do, to take a risk. This is the portion of the story where the hero makes their initial choice to deny their destiny.

In the *Supernatural Aid* a magical helper appears or makes its presence known to the protagonist. "For those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) who proves the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass." (p.57)

In the *Crossing First Threshold* phase the hero leaves their known world and ventures into the unknown. "With the personification of his destiny to guide and aid him, the hero goes forward in his adventure until he comes to the "threshold guardian" at the entrance to the zone of magnified power." (p. 64)

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In the *Belly of the Whale* phase, the final stage of the separation from the known world, represents the rebirth transition. “The hero, instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died.” (p. 74).

In *The Road of Trials*, the first portion of the *initiation* phase the protagonist must pass a series of tests to begin the transformation to become the hero. “Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trails.” (Campbell, 1949, p. 81)

In the *Meeting with the Goddess/Love* phase the hero experiences unconditional love. “The ultimate adventure, when all the barriers and ogres have been overcome, is commonly represented as a mystical marriage of the triumphant hero-soul with the Queen Goddess of the World.” (p. 91)

In the *Temptation* phase the hero faces temptation that will distract from ultimate quest.

In the *Atonement with the Hero's Father* phase the hero must confront the person that holds ultimate power in their life.

In the *Apotheosis* (Peace and Fulfillment Before the Hero's Return) phase the hero moves to a state of divine knowledge (usually through some form of death). A common example of this is Buddha who achieved surpassing “the last terrors of ignorance.” (p. 127)

In *The Ultimate Boon* phase the ultimate goal is achieved, proving that the protagonist is truly the prodigal son or daughter in the story. “The ease with which the adventure is here accomplished signifies that the hero is a superior man, a born king.” (p. 148)

In the *Refusal of the Return*, the first portion of the *return* phase, the hero has found bliss and enlightenment in the other world causing a reluctance to return to their home world. “When the hero-quest has been accomplished, through penetration to the source, or through the grace of

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some male or female, human or animal personification, the adventurer still must return with his life-transforming trophy. The full round, the norm of the monomyth, requires that the hero shall now begin the labor of bringing the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds.” (p. 167)

In the *Magic Flight* phase, the hero has to escape with the ultimate prize to return to their home world. “If the hero in his triumph wins the blessing of the goddess or the god and is then explicitly commissioned to return to the world with some elixir for the restoration of society, the final stage of his adventure is supported by all the powers of his supernatural patron. On the other hand, if the trophy has been attained against the opposition of its guardian, or if the hero’s wish to return to the world has been resented by the gods or demons, then the last stage of the mythological round becomes a lively, often comical, pursuit.” (Campbell, 1949, p. 170)

In the *Rescue from Without* phase, when it occurs, the hero needs a rescuer from outside in order for them to return home. “The hero may have to be brought back from his supernatural adventure by assistance from without. That is to say, the world may have to come and get him.” (p. 178)

In the *Crossing of the Return Threshold* phase the hero retains the wisdom gained on quest and integrates wisdom in human society by sharing wisdom with the world. “The hero adventures out of the land we know into the darkness; there accomplishes his adventure, or again is simply lost to us, imprisoned, or in danger and his return is described as a coming back out of that yonder zone. Nevertheless-and here is a great key to the understanding of myth and symbol-the two kingdoms are actually one.” (p. 188)

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In the *Master of Two Worlds* phase the hero achieves balance between the material and spiritual (inner *and outer world*). “Freedom to pass back and forth across the world division, from the perspective of the apparitions of time to that of the causal deep and back- not contaminating the principles of the one with those of the other, yet permitting the mind to know the one by virtue of the other- is the talent of the master.” (p. 198)

In the *Freedom to Live* phase, the hero, after a miraculous departure and return, is released from fear of death which causes the hero to live with no concern for the future or regrets of the past.

The films *Pulgasari* and *Hitlerjunge Quex* will be used to analyze North Korea and Nazi Germany respectively. In the discussion section, the author will detail whether or not the protagonist follows each of the 17 steps to determine if they adhere to the monomyth fully, partially, or not at all.

Chapter 4: A Discussion of Propaganda in Nazi Germany and North Korea

Hitlerjunge Quex (1933)

Stage 1: The Call to Adventure

Heini’s father, a staunch Communist, insists that he joins the Communist Party by tagging along with its members on a retreat. Heini is suspicious of the people his father associates with yet reluctantly agrees to go. The film portrays the Communists as lazy, drunken, thieving, and abusive people who consume rather than produce. On the other hand, the film portrays Nazis as principled, loyal, and are able to restrain their selfish desires for the greater good.

Stage 2: Refusal of the Call

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Heini initially refuses his father's orders of joining the Communists before being struck by him, which leads him to reluctantly accept the proposal. After embarking on their retreat, they encounter Hitler Youth along the way, which is Heini's first interaction with the fascist movement. Heini becomes intrigued with the Nazi movement and its stark differences from the Communists. An example of this is when a fellow Communist child throws an object at a Nazi boy, which leads a group of fellow Nazis to initially run towards the Communists before being told to stand down by their commander. Their self-restraint is in stark contrast to the Communists, whose leaders cheer on the display of disrespect. This confirms Heini's initial reluctance to become a member of the Communist movement.

Stage 3: Supernatural Aid

The third stage of the Monomyth does not seem to apply to *Hitlerjunge Quex* in the traditional sense. An explanation is that Adolf Hitler, a man, was the center of the Nazi movement. Hitler is portrayed as an almost supernatural figure, with National Socialism being the "holy spirit" of sorts. Considering this as a parallel in Nazi culture, the *Supernatural Aid* would come in the form of Hitler Youth in *Hitlerjunge Quex*.

Stage 4: Crossing the First Threshold

Heini's *departure* begins as he leaves for the Communist retreat with his father's colleagues. This stark contrast between the Nazis and Communists is put on display immediately upon boarding the train they take to their retreat. The members immediately become belligerent and toss Heini around the car. Once they arrive to the camp Heini discovers it is full of binge drinking, gambling, sex, and other dishonorable behavior which he is pressured to take part in. This causes Heini to venture away from the group, who is too drunk and unaware to realize it, and wander in the wilderness until the sound of a nearby camp catches his attention.

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Stage 5: Belly of the Whale

Heini discovers a Nazi camp that is disciplined in both cleanliness as well as the conduct of its members. As Heini watches the Nazi ritualistic event before him, he becomes entranced in the comradery as well as it's the discipline displayed by its members.

Stage 6: The Road of Trials

Once Heini is discovered by the Hitler Youth they realize he was among the Communists who taunted them earlier in the film. This causes them to immediately distrust Heini and consider him to be a Communist spy from the nearby camp. They do not believe his pleading to the contrary and make him leave their camp. Heini is determined to win over their trust, staying in the woods overnight to watch the Nazi camp through the morning.

Heini eventually finds and confronts one of the Hitler Youth pleading his case to join their cause. The boy is willing to give Heini a chance and invites him to his home for lunch. His home is in stark contrast to Heini's home. It is spacious, clean, and full of expensive furniture which is an attempt to visualize the different outcomes for Germany depending on which path it takes. The Communists are portrayed as poor, lazy, and solely skilled in consuming whereas the Nazis are portrayed as intelligent, productive, and hard working.

After earning the confidence of one of the Hitler Youth, Heini is invited to a meeting of the organization. On his way to the meeting he is intercepted by a friend of his fathers, a Communist who has planned to disrupt the meeting by provoking a clash of the two groups, and is prevented from warning them of what is to happen. Eventually a mob breaks out, and eventually Heini is blamed for selling the Hitler Youth out to the Communists. This causes Heini to believe he will never be trusted by the organization in which he strives to earn membership.

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Heini, believing to have lost any chances of becoming a member of the Hitler Youth, is told of a Communist plan to attack the Hitler Youth with bombs they are creating. Heini desperately attempts to warn the Hitler Youth member who had once opened up to him, but he is met with skepticism as they believe he is leaking secrets to the Communists. This is the beginning of Heini's final and most important trial: embarking on a search throughout the community to find the would-be bombers. However, Heini is too late. A bomb explodes near the Carnival and rumors spread that the Nazis are behind it.

This sequence of events is consistent with *The Road of Trials* in the Monomyth. Heini's resilience despite the increasing difficulty of his trials is consistent with the role of the Hero. He progresses down the path of the hero's journey with every trial and struggle he endures.

Stage 7: Meeting with the Goddess/Love

The feeling of unconditional love from the point of view of Heini comes from this mother. The Communists accuse Heini of being a spy for the Nazis and the Nazis accuse him of being a spy for the Communists. The sole character to defend him no matter what is his mother. Her undying love for her son is consistent with the *Meeting with the Goddess* stage of the Monomyth.

Stage 8: Temptation

After Heini officially becomes a member of the Hitler Youth the lead Communist militant, Stoeppel, tempts Heini with a knife he wanted earlier in the film. However, due to Heini's purity as a character he denies the offer which leads to a final threat from the Communist. This temptation to turn back towards the original path his father set for him is consistent with this stage of the Monomyth.

Stage 9: Atone with the Hero's Father

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This particular stage of the Monomyth applies to *Hitlerjunge Quex* by the reconciliation between father and son, fulfilling the arch of their relationship that began with bitter feelings. Heini's father, who at the outset was a devout Communist, turns towards the Nazi movement as his son does before him. After Heini is hospitalized from the gassing that occurred in his home, which lead to the death of his mother, his turns from a brutish to compassionate figure.

When Heini's father visits him in the hospital he waits next to a Nazi who is also waiting to see Heini. The Nazi and Heini's father sit with Heini and discuss what he is to do after he leaves the hospital. The Nazi attempts to persuade both Heini and his father to join the Nazi movement. His father is eventually persuaded to allow his son to join the movement and this brings the father-son relationship between the two characters closer than ever before. The nationalistic and nativist arguments used to persuade the father are then used by the father as he attempts to persuade the lead Communist militant in the film.

Stage 10: Peace and Fulfillment Before the Hero's Return

The *Apotheosis* in the film takes the form of Heini finally becoming an official member of the Hitler Youth. Wearing the Swastika emblem of the Nazi movement is the visualization of this fulfillment of the *initiation* portion of the hero's journey.

Stage 11: The Ultimate Boon

The climax of the film is a massive demonstration with the Communists and Nazis on opposing sides. What starts as a political protest between the two groups becomes a clash between the two groups. Heini, who is doing work for the movement at the time, attempts to convince his superior officer to leave and assist his brothers in arms at the demonstration but is initially denied. After eventually convincing his superior officer to go, the Communists are revealed to have plotted to ambush Heini. As Heini attempts to escape he is chased by a mob of

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Communists. Meanwhile his Nazi friends rally to find and support Heini. However, they are too late. Heini is stabbed to death by the mob and prior to his death his final words are the recurring Nazi song. This is consistent with the *Ultimate Boon* phase of the Monomyth as the character arch goes full circle.

Stage 12: Refusal of the Return

Hitlerjunge Quex is void of the *Refusal of the Return* phase due to the fact that Heini is more than happy to *return* in the form of an initiated member of the Nazi movement. Due to this being a propaganda-focused film rather than strict fantasy, this phase of the Monomyth may be antithetical to that pursuit.

Stage 13: Magic Flight

The *Magic Flight* phase of the Monomyth cannot be identified in *Hitlerjunge Quex*.

Stage 14: Rescue from Without

The *Rescue from Without* phase of the Monomyth does not apply to the film either. He does not receive any sort of exterior assistance in order to make the return arch.

Stage 15: Return

Heini, once a member of the Hitler Youth, impresses even the leaders of the Nazi movement by his devotion to the cause and passion for his work. This inspires the rest of the members of the organization which causes the members to go from originally despising the boy to racing to save him from harm. This sharing of wisdom is consistent with the *Return* phase of the Monomyth.

Stage 16: Master of Two Worlds

Heini certainly became the *Master of Two Worlds* by his sacrifice in the end of the film. In the material world the people memorialize Heini's sacrifice and purity in the ideals of the Nazi

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movement. His spirit lives on the form of the Nazi movement that ends the film marching towards the camera singing the same tune that was Heini's final words.

17. Freedom to Live

The *Freedom to Live* could arguably exist or not exist in *Hitlerjunge Quex* due to Heini's death in the film. In Nazi ideology, Heini would be immortalized through National Socialism and the Nazi movement due to his sacrifice. In this regard, Heini would fulfill the *freedom to live* in after death. Due to the hero being killed he is no longer living in fear of death which would fulfill the final phase of the Monomyth.

Pulgasari (1988)

Stage 1: The Call to Adventure

Before *Pulgasari* was created, the unnamed North Korean village is controlled by and regularly a victim of the King, his governors, and their soldiers. The film begins in a poor, pre-industrial village in Korea whose inhabitants are visually and audibly suffering. The weather is rainy, the ground is muddy, and the entire setting is grim from the start. To add insult to injury, their village is raided by a band of soldiers commanded by the governor who controls the land they occupy. One of the elders in the community is tortured in the attempt to coerce him into giving the names of the "rebels". In addition to refusing he also starves himself in protest. In lieu of eating the rice they give him, he forms the shape of a small Godzilla-like creature and prays that it will take form and restore peace.

Once *Pulgasari* gains life, he gains an appetite for metal and as he eats it he grows to eventually become the size of a human being. *Pulgasari* then journeys into the wilderness, leaving his human companions behind, in order to become fulfill his obligations as the hero of the narrative. The context of the coercion by the King and his government upon his people

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causes the *Call to Adventure* that Pulgasari embarks upon. Though he does not have the communication skills of a human, the plot creates a need for Pulgasari and he answers the call by embarking on his adventure to gain the strength to return and defeat the king and his men.

Stage 2: Refusal of the Call

The *Refusal of the Call* does not apply to *Pulgasari* due to its primal instincts and his inability to communicate. His only instincts are to consume iron, gain strength, and protect the humans who brought it to life in the first place. This especially pertains to the female supporting character who is also the *Goddess* in the film.

Stage 3: Supernatural Aid

The use of *Supernatural Aid* is apparent by the creation of Pulgasari itself. The prayers and sacrifice of the elder in the village created Pulgasari which by definition is consistent with *Supernatural Aid*. Pulgasari as a being is another form of *Supernatural Aid* from the perspective of the villagers in the film who view it as a savior figure.

Stage 4: Crossing the First Threshold

Pulgasari's venture into the wilderness is consistent with the *Crossing the First Threshold* phase of the Monomyth. It is a very literal use of this particular phase of the hero's journey, but it is consistent nonetheless. Pulgasari's primary instinct is to consume iron which leads it to wander into the wilderness and embark on its journey. Coincidentally the people need a hero with the strength of Pulgasari and as it consumes iron it becomes larger and stronger, fulfilling the role of the hero in the narrative.

Stage 5: Belly of the Whale

When the King captures the female supporting character in the story Pulgasari rushes to save her. However, in order to stop the King from executing her, Pulgasari must submit and put

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itself into confinement. Once the confinement is locked the King's men light the confinement on fire, leading Pulgasari's followers to believe this is the end of their messianic hero. The roars of Pulgasari dwindle and disappear, presumably consumed by the massive flames. However, once the flames disappear Pulgasari is revealed to be unharmed.

After the initial failed attempt, the King and his men devise another trap to defeat Pulgasari once and for all. This trap is a massive canyon that Pulgasari is to fall into, followed by being buried underneath giant boulders. Initially, the King and his men are successful in killing Pulgasari but the female character gives a blood sacrifice over the dead Pulgasari which reanimates him, saving her and the rebel cause.

Stage 6: The Road of Trials

After Pulgasari becomes large and strong enough to become an unstoppable weapon they begin to win battle after battle. These battles represent the trials that the characters were required to overcome in order to establish peace from the coercion of the King. The series of battles is consistent with the *Road of Trials* phase of the Monomyth.

Stage 7: Meeting with the Goddess/Love

The female supporting role in the film the source of love for Pulgasari. Consistent with predecessors like *Kong*, she is someone who humanizes Pulgasari and causes it to display signs of love and empathy towards those it is defending. Not only do the two characters care about one another, but they both risk their lives for one another. This unconditional love is consistent with the *Meeting with the Goddess* phase of the Monomyth.

Stage 8: Temptation

The *Temptation* phase of the Monomyth does not seem to appear in *Pulgasari*.

Stage 9: Atone with the Hero's Father

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Due to the nature of the plot of *Pulgasari*, this portion of the Monomyth does not apply.

Stage 10: Peace and Fulfillment Before the Hero's Return

After Pulgasari is killed and brought back to life, he returns at his most powerful state which results in the destruction of the Kings palace. His reanimation shows that Pulgasari has achieved the role of the hero in this narrative.

Stage 11: The Ultimate Boon

Pulgasari and the villager's ultimate goal is achieved when the King is killed. Pulgasari destroys the Kings palace, his army, and his dynasty. This was the primary goal of the narrative which led to fulfilling the character arch of Pulgasari in the film.

Stage 12: Refusal of the Return

Once the King is finally defeated, Pulgasari wanders to a remote area to rest from exhaustion. Due to his work to bring about peace to Korea, he is reluctant to return to his former self as nothing more than a small idol made of rice.

Stage 13: Magic Flight

There is no escape with an ultimate prize in *Pulgasari* so the *Magic Flight* phase does not apply to the film.

Stage 14: Rescue from Without

Pulgasari is presumably dead after he falls into the canyon trap and is toppled with massive boulders by the Kings men. However, he is brought back to life so he is able to fulfill his destiny as the hero. The sacrifice on behalf of the lead female role in order to save Pulgasari is consistent with the *Rescue from Without* phase of the Monomyth.

Stage 15: Return

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In order to *return*, he must disappear from the Earth. The only way this is possible is if the female character who brought Pulgasari back to life sacrifices herself. She places herself in an iron bell that Pulgasari eats, sacrificing herself and Pulgasari in order to finalize what is to be a lasting peace in Korea.

Stage 16: Master of Two Worlds

The ending of the film concludes with Pulgasari achieving a balance between the material and spiritual world. They were able to both create a lasting peace for the material world of Korea as well as an internal peace for themselves in the spiritual realm. This is consistent with the *Master of Two Worlds* phase of the Monomyth.

17. Freedom to Live

After sacrificing themselves, Pulgasari and the lead female character are able to live peacefully in the spiritual realm without concern of coercion or threats of violence. This is consistent with the *Freedom to Live* phase of the Monomyth.

Chapter 5: A Critical Analysis of the Role of the Monomyth in Nazi and North Korean

Propaganda with Limitations and Recommendations for Future Study

After reviewing *Hitlerjunge Quex* and *Pulgasari* it has become clear that both regimes utilized narrative structures consistent with the later coined *Monomyth*. The two films consist of the majority of the phases of the Monomyth, though there are some aspects that are missing from both films. Due to the Monomyth being coined after the fall of the Third Reich it is no surprise that they did not cover every phase, however a majority can be found in *Hitlerjunge Quex*. Though *Pulgasari* was created after the Monomyth, it does not reflect every phase either. This is due to the self-imposed restrictions and political blockades which would make it difficult or

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impossible to read *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* or understand the Monomyth narrative structure.

Both films display that the creators were propagandists first rather than mythologists or fictional scriptwriters. This skews the ability to truly analyze the films through the lens of a mythological narrative structure. However, in spite of these limitations on the part of the two film creators there are clear consistencies between the narratives of both films and the Monomyth. This shows the universality of the Monomyth as a narrative structure which is inherent in humanity and has been since the dawn of storytelling..

The largest limitation I found for this research is the amount of film available from North Korea. Due to the isolationist nature of the country and its regime, the number of films available are limited even in the age of the internet. Though there is plenty of propaganda available, narrative pieces are much more difficult to come by due to the fact that the regime is still in power as opposed to Nazi Germany being dismantled over sixty years ago. Narrative pieces created within North Korea are limited, and even more so the number of narrative pieces that are consistent with the hero's journey. Hopefully over time access to North Korean narrative films and novels is more widespread which would make it possible to conduct further research on the topic.

Another limitation I found through this research is that the execution of propaganda is universal no matter the political structure. Though the ends may differ, the means are the same. This makes it just as easy to apply the Monomyth to propaganda in liberal governments as authoritarian ones. I would recommend research in the future to analyze consistencies between propaganda from both forms of government.

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This is the primary criticism of the *monomyth* as well. The structure has been argued to be so broad that nearly every story can be considered adhering to the narrative structure. Though this may be true it is because the Monomyth is the most natural narrative structure for both fiction and real life. Every person goes on a journey throughout life that prepares them for the future no matter how significant. This is the human narrative. The hero's journey is a structure common to all cultures. Given these limitations I believe I have shed light that the *monomyth* narrative structure, whether the narrative as a whole or in phases, can explain how propagandists successfully portray dictators as heroes.

Future researchers might study liberal democracies in their research as it pertains to propaganda. I noticed consistencies in terms of narrative structure in propaganda in general, however I decided to narrow my focus to totalitarian regimes both past and present. There is still a gap in the research to analyze whether the *monomyth* does or does not play a role in the way in which democratic governments portray their leaders and their principles. Additionally, determining whether or not the narrative structure works more or less within a democratic nation would be beneficial to understand whether or not cultural, economic, or political context matters in terms of propagandas effectiveness.

I would encourage those seeking to study propaganda to do an in-depth analysis of the historical context that explains how a particular regime rises to power. Additionally, for those who plan to study the narrative structure regardless of topic I would encourage them to analyze films through the lens of the Monomyth to see if they find consistencies in surprising stories. The *departure*, *initiation*, and *return* character arc is regularly used. By analyzing more films using the Monomyth as a theoretical framework these it becomes easier to conduct a study.

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My hope is that this study filled a gap in the research as it pertains to the role of the *monomyth* in propaganda as well as helps individuals identify both Campbell's narrative structure and propaganda in their own personal lives. Realizing those who live under totalitarian regimes are constantly bombarding by state-sponsored messaging makes it easier to understand why there is a level of disconnect between their reality and those living in democratic nations where dissenting viewpoints and alternative sources of information are available to the general public.

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