Kimmo Markkanen

TOMB RAIDER REBOOT
As Reviewed through
Joseph Campbell's Monomyth

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Supervisor Suvi Pylvänen, lecturer		

Abstract

The aim of this thesis was to view video games as a medium of modern storytelling, the main focus being the textual content of the 2011 game TOMB RAIDER (a "reboot" version of the well-known game franchise) as to how it relates to author Joseph Campbell's *monomyth*, the 1959 concept of nearly every saga in the world history having been put together of same basic elements called "The Hero's Journey", a template that transcends cultures and is said have been originated from the collective subconscious and dreams of humankind by such scholars as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. As such this thesis will rely heavily on two sources; *The Hero with Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell and its contemporary interpretation *The Writer's Journey - Mythic Structure For Writer*s by Christopher Vogler. This thesis will not try to cover every aspect of the TOMB RAIDER Reboot game, but aims to map out the narrative; both lying under and explored through gameplay.

The secondary goal of this thesis is to review the reboot sequel of the Tomb Raider mythology as a *bildungsroman*, a miniature tale of personal growth of the young scientist deserted on an inhospitable island and forced to transform from a fledgling anthropologist into a clever survivalist and a full blown fighter to overcome the numerous obstacles the protagonist needs to overcome in order to survive.

The thesis also covers the basic concepts of multi-linear and interactive storytelling, a brief look in the maze of video game genres and terminology, the video game interface and its affordances used both in gameplay and narrative, and more than once it will compare video games to the other forms of narrative in popular culture.

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Tiivistelmä

Tämä opinnäytetyö tarkastelee videopelejä modernin tarinankerronnan välineenä. Työ keskittyy pääasiassa vuoden 2011 "TOMB RAIDER" -pelin (tunnetun pelisarjan mytologian uudelleenkirjoitus, "reboot") kerronnalliseen sisältöön tarkasteltuna Joseph Campbellin "monomyytin" kautta. Monomyytti on Campbellin vuonna 1949 lanseeraama konsepti, jonka mukaan lähes jokainen merkittävä maailmanhistorian saaga on rakennettu samoista elementeistä, joille Campbell antoi nimen "Hero's Journey." Tutkijat ja psykologit kuten Sigmund Freud ja Carl Jung esittävät psykoanalyysin keinoin ilmiön syyksi "ihmiskunnan kollektiivisen psyyken" joka selittää maailmanhistorian myyttien ja mielikuvien samanlaisuuden ajasta ja kulttuurista riippumatta. Tämä opinnäytetyö ammentaa suurimmilta osin kahdesta lähteestä: Joseph Campbellin "The Hero With Thousand Faces (1949) ja Christopher Voglerin nykyaikaisempi tulkinta, The Writer's Journey - Mythic Structure For Writers (2007)". Työ ei yritä esitellä TOMB RAIDER-peliä kokonaisuudessaan vaan keskittyy sen kerronnalliseen sisältöön, sekä pelitapahtumien että niitä taustoittavien elokuvallisten ja muiden elementtien kautta.

Työn toissijainen tarkoitus on tarkastella TOMB RAIDER-pelin mytologian uudelleenkirjoitusta kasvukertomuksena, pelimuodossa esitettynä tarinana nuoren antropologiharjoittelijan haaksirikosta vihamieliseen ympäristöön, jossa selvitäkseen seikkailunnälkäisen nuoren naisen on opittava sekä selviämään luonnon armoilla että väkivalloin taistelemaan henkensä edestä.

Työssä käsitellään lyhyesti myös multilineaarisen ja interaktiivisen tarinankerronnan peruskäsitteitä, videopeligenrejä ja terminologiaa, videopelien käyttöliittymän rakennetta sekä käyttöliittymää sekä pelaamisen että tarinankerronnan välineenä. Videopelejä verrataan myös muihin populäärikulttuurin muotoihin.

Asiasanat narratiivi videopeleissä, monomyytti, kasvukertomus

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis was to view video games as a medium of modern storytelling, the main focus being the textual content of the 2011 game TOMB RAIDER (a "reboot" version of the well-known game franchise) as to how it relates to author Joseph Campbell's *monomyth*, the 1959 concept of nearly every saga in the world history having been put together of same basic elements called "The Hero's Journey", a template that transcends cultures and is said have been originated from the collective subconscious and dreams of humankind by such scholars as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. As such this thesis will rely heavily on two sources; *The Hero with Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell and its contemporary interpretation *The Writer's Journey - Mythic Structure for Writer*s by Christopher Vogler. This thesis will not try to cover every aspect of the TOMB RAIDER Reboot game, but aims to map out the narrative; both lying under and explored through gameplay.

In order to study video games as a storytelling medium, it is necessary first not to view a video game as a sum of its parts but as a collection of elements that, put together, constitute a game; a closed, formal system that engages players in structured conflict and the outcome of which is random and uncertain. A video game is nothing more or less than a digitized version of the former. As a full analysis of the vast landscape of video game genres is beyond the scope of this thesis, the examples and elements presented below consist of games that can be said to have an explicit "story" or at least present a firm basis to build one; therefore, the genre most colloquially and extensively known as *casual games* will be excluded and the examples presented below are handpicked to contain a certain feature or a set of features that can be used as useful but general examples.

In the multitude of contemporary, story-driven "triple-A" games, many other titles could have been chosen to and presented as representing the classic mythic structure with its heroes, villains, trials and tribunals the ancient myths often incorporate. Titles such as Fallout -series or even Resident Evil (1997—) would have sufficed. It is perhaps more fitting, though, to view the ancient mythic structure through a saga such as TOMB RAIDER – derogatory for archaeologist – that deals with ancient myths almost exclusively.

Furthermore, there are "sandbox" games such as Minecraft (2011) or Journey (2012) where the player has no guidelines whatsoever other than those that the gameworld allows, or *affords* to the player, leaving the player to decide how to play or what to build. At the same time, there are vast open world games where the player can choose to perform various tasks or quests but is not by any means required to do so. Therefore it is convenient to choose a linear title such as TOMB RAIDER, a compromise between an open world and a linear storyline to view as an example, the more so as the series deals with myths and legends.

2 Narrative and ludology theory

Structuralist scholars such as Claude Levi-Strauss argue the stories (or more broadly, "narrative") have a pattern that surpasses the sequence of events as a linguistic model for the semiosis, the construction of a meaning. Others take it even further, suggesting there is an underlying structural *grammar* to all narrative in the structure of the content (Selden et al. 2005). This is one of the bases on which a discipline called *narratology* examines how we perceive stories and myths and construct meanings and intertextual references on seemingly arbitrary material (Felluga 2011). This thesis uses these and other narratological views as the basis of examining video games as a modern storytelling medium, explicitly the work of Joseph Campbell and his 1959 concept "The Hero's Journey."

Ludology is a cross-disciplinary branch of science(s) that deals with games in and the culture that surrounds them. There exists a feud within the ludology community between "ludologists" and "narratologists"; the former arguing that the experience of playing a game differs significantly from the experience of following a story (Eskelinen 2004). The intent in this thesis is not to side with either party, but rather to show that games, too, can include dramatic, classical storytelling arcs, leaving it to the player to choose what kind of experience is desired. Mateas and Stern (2004) write in their essay *Interaction and Narrative* about two different ways to experience the game, as an observer and as a player:

"[...] the first-time player within the world is experiencing agency. The designer of the dramatic world could conclude that since they are designing the world for the player, not for the observer, that as long as the player experiences a true sense of interactive freedom, that is, agency, transformation as variety is not an important design consideration."

3 STORYTELLING IN VIDEO GAMES

3.1 Diegesis

Diegesis is derived from ancient Greek, meaning *to explain, narrate* or lead *through*. As a noun, the word diegesis has come to mean "verbal narration in third person" from where the modern scholars have taken it further and, in context of video games, used it to mean and describe the fictional, imagined universe and all of its characters, objects and happenings, told by the succession of the game itself, the narrator. (Halliwell 2012.)

Video games contain both diegetic and non- or extra diegetic elements through which the narrative unfolds. In this thesis the word *non-diegetic* is used. TOMB RAIDER is a typical, linear action-adventure game, where most of the action (and therefore the story) is experienced through the gameplay whereas the main and critical points of the plot are presented either enhanced gameplay (cinematics) or as *cutscenes* the player will watch as if in a movie.

Either way, the main story in TOMB RAIDER is experienced through the gameworld, through diegesis, only partly augmented by a non-diegetic narrator's voice or various documents and clues that can also be found in the game world.

3.2 Video games as a medium

Video games, technologically speaking, are pieces of interactive software most people use for fun and recreational purposes. Viewed through their content, though, there are a plethora of different styles, genres, subgenres and even technology-related games containing various means of gameplay, content and stories,

presenting of which en masse is beyond the scope this thesis. The focus here will thus be twofold; that which is common to most games, and the element of narrative within a given game. (Rogers 2014.)

Unlike most utility software, video games are not means to an end but the end per se. As the utility software is said to have the interface and functions, a video game is almost wholly built of intertwining interfaces (Russell 2011). There are four distinct levels of graphical user interface (from now on "GUI") in any video game that present the player not just with the functions of the software but the proceedings of the gameplay (the music and sound are regarded here to be part of the "graphical" or at least *textual* part of the GUI, and thus mostly left without specific notice).

The non-diegetic GUI consists of the familiar menus to access the functions of the software; these are usually anything from the splash screen to the save functions to the many choices the player can make, usually[1] after stopping the gameplay such as going through the character's inventory. A common nominator for non-diegetic menus is that they do not affect the proceedings in the virtual world of the game in real time. (Fagerholz & Lorenzon 2009.)

Meta-elements are any GUI elements that address the game story or gameplay in real time but are *not* in the space of the game world. Examples of these are subtitles, minimaps, speedometers, cracked screens or blood or water splatter on the player's screen. (idid.)

The spatial GUI elements are graphical elements in the game world that are visible to the player but *not to the player's virtual avatar* such as name tags, arrows, stamina indicators or compasses. They do not belong to the narrative but are visible to the player in the game world space. (idid.)

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1) In some games, such as a real-time strategy game *Company of Heroes*, this distinction may be blurred since the RTS games do not often pause the semi-automatic gameplay while the player makes choices through a context-sensitive menu.

The *diegetic* elements are any elements within the game world that belong to the narrative and afford the player's character to interact with. An unreachable sword on the wall is just a prop, but a sword the player's avatar can pick up and use is a diegetic GUI element, one of the elements to experience the gameplay and the game's narrative with. (ibid.)

As far as stories and narrative are considered, it would be intuitive to suggest that this last of the aforementioned audio-visual layers of the GUI is the main storytelling tool of a game but as this thesis will point out, the narrative of the game is actually blended from and within them all, the end result being the immersive experience of the player.

3.3 Three-act structure

Narrative works, whether one talks literature, film, plays, video games or TV series, where the total length of the piece may vary from two hours to two days to two years or more, there are certain structures, templates and guidelines that authors throughout the history of fiction have used (Trottier 2014). This thesis gives a thorough view of the Hero's Journey, but cannot bypass other widely used methods of structuring and dividing works of fiction into smaller, more compact and digestible pieces for dramatic and practical purposes.

One such structure is the aristotelian Three Act Structure, where the story line or parts of it have been divided into three acts, often named Setup, Confrontation and Resolution where the drama builds in the first act, the tension rises in the second (that often is divided in two separate parts) and the dramatic arc reaches its resolution and climax in the third.

The writers and developers of the storyline of TOMB RAIDER wrote the game using this structure (Keighley 2013), but the three-act structure is also a blueprint for The Hero's Journey as will be shown below.

3.4 Bildungsroman

Though not rare as a plot or a sub-plot in classical or contemporary storytelling, a bildungsroman (from German;coming-of-age-story) is often incorporated in a myth or a story, where the protagonist goes through either psychological or physical (or both) growth, be it metaphorical or literal. Famous examples of these stories include *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton and even the *Harry Potter* -series.

If a game studio wants to both reboot a storyline of a legendary adventurer and in process humanize her to a level we can relate to but also believe in, what better way is there than including a coming-of-age -story into the plot of the game? When Eidos International decided to use "combat survival" (Keighley 2013) as the theme of the reboot of the series, it was only natural the archaeologist survivor-by-chance would have to master both abilities whereas they so far have been taken for granted in the former title in the cartoon-like Lara Croft embodiments.

The game developers use both images, animations, cut-scenes and narrator's voice (in form of LC's thoughts) to underline the transformation from a timid survivor into a hardened survivor/fighter. LC's spoken narrative undergoes changes from cries of mercy and disbelief into open defiance and even death threats as the game progresses through various melees, fights, captures and escapes. "What do you want from me?" turns into "Yes, I'm still alive!" and finally into a threat to "kill you all."

Violence, however, is not the only aspect of the coming-of-age of LC. In accordance to the heritage of the series, with spurring from her mentor Conrad Roth, LC learns to climb rocks and glaciers, swing across abysses on a rope, survive collapsing caves and burning buildings and ride wild rapids full of rocks, stakes and other deadly menaces not forgetting wild animals and supernatural creatures.

Finally LC transcends her role as a survivor to wear the shoes of her deceased mentor to save the rest of the survivors in the island. In her avatar there is a visible change of posture when she gains more trust in her abilities. According to Vogler (2007) "good stories have at least two journeys, outer and inner: an outer journey in

which the hero tries to do something difficult or get something, and an inner journey in which the hero faces some crisis of the spirit or test of character that *leads to transformation*." (italics by author).

3.5 Linear vs. nonlinear storytelling

Not every game story is a three-act, Hero's Journey type saga. Indeed, many games do not have an explicit story. Some games are not meant to have a story. All games are meant to be played, regardless of whether they contain a storyline or not. Some games do have a vast open world where the player can create his or her own storyline within the framework the developers have built. Sometimes the storyline is optional. Ludologists even have separate schools of thought as to whether games are a mere set of arranged rules to play with or rich, interactive vessels of storytelling (Eskelinen 2001).

Some argue against the three-act story arc as an outdated, stiff and unsuitable template for a platform as versatile as a modern video game. Some endorse player-made non-linear stories in games such as Elder Scrolls Series or Grand Theft Auto or *multiple players'* user created content in many MMOPRGs – where the storyline gets built along with the players' own decisions and the virtual world reacts to these actions accordingly. (Abernathy & Rouse 2014.)

Perhaps the most common way the game (or more likely, the actions of the player) alter the pre-set narrative is the death of the protagonist. The words "Game Over" have become almost synonymous with the character losing his or her life in the fictional chain of events of the game (Shamoon 2008). Some developers argue that the death of a main character in a story-driven game is actually bad game design (Muhkerjee 2015) and it would be more appropriate that the storyline itself would change if the character loses or underperforms. However, a virtual death or not, there may be dozens if not hundreds of alternate storylines in any given game. This includes many ways the narrative can become non-linear, such as alternate routes to an objective or an arbitrary order of missions in the game. Furthermore, some games such as Silent Hill and many RPGs like the Mass Effect Series do have several predefined endings based on the choices the player does during the game

The term "non-linear narrative" may be misleading, though, its original meaning being a disruptive chronological order of the otherwise set story elements rather than full freedom of reign for the viewer (or player) (Morgan 2016). Moreover, flashbacks are often used as cinematic *cut-scenes* in the middle of the gameplay where the background story of a game is shown between action sequences in games such as Black or Battlefield III. Perhaps a more suitable expression in this context would be *interactive narrative* or *nonlinear gameplay*, to stress the fact that it may indeed be the player and not the game developer who creates the finished story.

The purpose of this thesis in not to argue in favor or against stories in games, nor is it set to find a certain genre or gameplay where storytelling may thrive; the purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate how games *can* be valid vessels for story-driven classic sagas, three-act structures with both the gameplay and the story.

3.6 Gameplay and immersion

It is not true that video games are the only "interactive" media; our brains produce intertextual meanings and contexts (Berger 2002) and interact both emotionally and intellectually with characters and events presented in any given media. It is, however, fair to assume that near total control of the protagonist of the drama has the potentiality to produce deeper immersive experiences and that is all the games are there to do, to produce *experiences* (Fagerholt & Lorentzon 2009).

Scholars have named the condition of the human mind where one is highly occupied by fictional experiences *flow*. In their paper "The Pleasure Principle" Douglas Yellowlees and Andrew Hargadon (2012) of the University of Florida furthermore enlarge this phenomenon into three phases: Immersion, Engagement and Flow. Whereas a good book can be very immersive, having "hands on" in the proceedings greatly enhances the level (or depth) of the experience which leads to a greater engagement with the fictional world and that, at best, furthermore leads to a state of mind called flow.

A narrative is constructed of things that take place, usually based on a series of conflicts of some kind, which basically describes the game play too. (Dille et al.

2007). Gameplay can be defined as "player verbs" that are directly linked to what a player can *do* (Skolnick 2014). In layman's terms; you can enjoy a good, gripping book but through personal participation and even *co-writing* the story as it unfolds you can enjoy a storyline of a game even on a deeper basis. Providing, of course, that the right circumstances exist. (Berger 2002)

3.7 Narrative through gameplay

The constructivist theory of emerging of a meaning calls for a negotiated interplay with the content and the reader (Chandler 1995). Written text is not necessary for contents or narrative to be "textual." In his book, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* Peter Barry (2002, 40) describes "a structuralist approach to literature, (where) there is a constant movement away from the interpretation of the individual literary work and a parallel drive towards understanding the larger, abstract structures which contain them."

According to psychology and cognitive science the human brain recognizes repetitive patterns and these patterns are adopted as *schemas* as a basis of learning and constructing further meanings (Selden et al. 2005). A story can easily be viewed as such pattern. Most of us have heard stories, read stories, seen them on TV and in the cinema and furthermore adopted them as one key component of certain types of video games. A usual story has a dramatic arc, its own schematic structure which such psychologists as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung even suggest originates from the collective subconscious of human psyche (Jung 1959) and authors such as Aristotle and Joseph Campbell have further defined into a three-act structure of drama or Hero's Journey. (Campbell 1959.)

Therefore, if playing a video game is about immersion (just like a book) and can take this immersion even further (engagement, flow), and if we as humankind experience the world through the same archetypal schema, it is safe to assume that even in an open world game with no specific necessary goal, the player will start to draft out some sort of meaning for his or her virtual, immersive being in that fictional realm. In a game where the rules and goals are more set and the world is more confined, the player is almost *certain* to do so. That is, after all, what the gameplay is for. In the light of all aforementioned, it is not necessary for the story to be written

in text or by a designated author nor is it necessary for it to be narrated by a third party. The audience, in this case the player, will, or at least is quite capable of creating and experiencing a story of his or her own, given the right circumstances.

3.8 Balanced Narrative

In his book Video Game Storytelling – What Every Developer Needs to Know about Narrative Techniques, Evan Skolnick (2014) divides game narrative into Game Story and Player Story. Most games with any sort of story incorporate two parallel narrative lines; that which is predefined in the game script and every player will experience and that which each individual player will craft through the game play.

Most games seek balance between these two extremes, and Skolnick goes on to further divide games into five sub-categories. There are those that are *99 Percent Game Story*, like *Dragon's Lair (1983)*, that don't allow players to participate in narrative or individual gaming styles. Then there are games that are *Game Story Dominant*, that incorporate rich narrative with few player choices such as *The Last of Us (2013)* or *Batman: Arkham Asylum (2009)*.

In categories *Player Story Dominant* and *99% Player Story* the above is turned vice versa, the player having more control to build game strategy, dynamics and narrative given a predefined context. Examples of this type of titles are World of Warcraft (2004—) and The Sims –series (2000—), respectively. Most MMOGs belong to these latter categories as well as "sandbox" style game worlds such as *Elder Scrolls* –series (2004—) or *Journey* (2012).

Balanced Game and Player Story -subcategory seeks a balance between predetermined story and players' choice -generated narrative. These games have the same base story for every player with multiple optional or nonlinear choices for the player to proceed and "significant opportunities for expression of individual player style." This category includes titles such as Grand Theft Auto –series (1997—), Fallout (1997—), Bioshock series (2007—) and TOMB RAIDER.

"The goal is to provide the main components of a satisfying, resonant, and classically structured game story, while also offering the player ample opportunities

to — within that framework — express stylistic preferences, personal reactions to characters and situations, and a greater sense of agency."

- Evan Skolnick

4 The TOMB RAIDER -franchise

4.1 A brief history of the franchise

In 1993 Core Design, a small game studio in Derby, UK imagined an adventure game with an Indiana Jones type male character exploring tombs and other archaeological sites, made in 3D, similar to the then recent success title Quake. Tombs were originally chosen as a setting because they were easier to program in 1993 than outdoors scenes. (Keighley 2013.)

Soon the gender of the protagonist was changed and the comic book Tank Girl - inspired, scantily clad, double-pistol wielding acrobat adventurer with a cold stare and generous bust was created, eventually making her the winner of Guinness World Records of "most successful human virtual game heroine" twice, in 1996 and 1998. The games' series has been supplemented with two blockbuster movies, four official novels and a comic book series. (ibid.)

The first Tomb Raider game sold eight million copies immediately after its release and got three successful annual sequels, but by 1999 the developers grew tired of the somewhat narrow concept and tried to kill the franchise along with its now iconic virtual star. Publisher Eidos intervened, and asked the developers instead to re-invigorate the series alongside with the Angelina Jolie-starred Tomb Raider movies then in production. (ibid.)

By the third "new generation" Tomb Raider games (*Tomb Raider - Underworld*) it became apparent that the franchise was getting outdated both in terms of overall quality and gameplay, compared to such newer titles as *Uncharted* or *Gears of Wa*r, the rushed approach to finish *Tomb Raider – Underworld* by the premiere of the second movie and the subsequent falling back from the sales benchmark by half a million copies did not help. (idid.)

4.2 The reboot of the franchise

By 2008's *Tomb Raider – Underworld*, it had become apparent that the franchise was no longer a match to more recent titles and publisher Eidos took over the complete overhaul of the series, not wanting to waste the potential the character and the franchise still resonated. (Keighley 2013.)

Not only was the franchise lagging behind in game mechanics. The original Barbie-girl-like impersonal and emotionless and unnaturally busty character – that once was its greatest strength – no longer appealed to the gamers who had by then accustomed to more lifelike and less cartoony characters in other games. (ibid.)

From 2009 on Eidos Interactive set out to renew both the game mechanics and the game mythology to better answer to the players' tastes who were by now expecting more from both the games and the characters in them. Darrell Gallagher, the studio head of the new publisher Crystal Dynamics is said to have stated, "I would rather ship nothing than put Crystal Dynamic's name on another mediocre Tomb Raider." (ibid.)

4.3 The coming of age of Lara Croft

In 2009 Tomb Raider was the fourth most recognized franchise in the world, behind only Grand Theft Auto, Call of Duty and Resident Evil (1997 –) while Lara Croft was the second best-known game character, second only to Mario. Eidos Interactive and Crystal Dynamics set out to make a game that would be "so good it would fit in the top one percent of all games produced. (Keighley 2013.)

Along with making the game match more contemporary standards set by games such as Batman – The Arkham Asylum, Call of Duty or Assassin's Creed, with their rich worlds and lifelike characters, the developers had to reinvent their heroine who, with the oversized bust and M-shaped lips was "bordering on a parody." (ibid.)

The studio tested new concepts with a low-profile multiplayer title "Guardian of Light" (the name Tomb Raider was not used) and set out to re-write the mythology

of Lara and the Croft family story, the main focus being in re-imaging an emotionally rich heroine who felt like a real girl with real proportions, less pin-up and more like Kate Austen from the TV series Lost. (ibid.)

It was time the heiress of a known British archaeologist to have a *bildungsroman* of her own in the reboot of the legendary franchise.

5 A brief summary of the game TOMB RAIDER

5.1 The Plot

TOMB RAIDER (Working Title: Tomb Raider – Ascension) is a 2013 third person action-adventure game by publisher Square Enix (Keighley 2013.). It is the 9th Tomb Raider game as well as a reboot of the franchise and the Tomb Raider mythology. The game had its own chronological sequel in *Rise of the Tomb Raider* in 2015.

TOMB RAIDER takes place on a fictional island of Yamatai south of Japan on North-east Philippine Sea on an area called "The Dragon's Triangle" or "Devil's Sea", an area of similar mythology as the Bermuda Triangle off the coast of Florida, USA.

An expedition in search of Yamatai, with whom the Lara Croft travels as a young graduate, is shipwrecked on the mysterious island ruled by shamanistic "Sun Queen" Himiko and populated by a violent cult of other shipwreck survivors and hordes of the Sun Queen's immortal *stormguard*.

Lara Croft is first forced to learn to survive the island and the violent cult members, to call for help for the shipwrecked expedition and finally destroy the immortal spirit of Himiko, whose shamanistic powers are stopping anyone from being rescued.

5.2 The Game

TOMB RAIDER is a third-person "survival combat" game where the player guides the avatar of Lara Croft through the island. Lara Croft hunts prey, fights both animal, human and supernatural enemies, uses various survival skills, climbs rocks and mountains, explores the island and solves puzzles.

The game structure is mostly linear (as opposed to open world), although the player can revisit areas already explored and fast-travel through various campsites that serve as save and resource management points. The feel of the large island and considerable heights is created mostly through matte-paintings.

In addition to fighting, platforming and exploring the game has an RPG type character development system, where the player can earn Experience Points through various tasks that build Lara's abilities on two subsequent tiers. The player can also upgrade LC's equipment by hoarding various salvage throughout the island.

Surprisingly, most of the *tombs* are optional, the player has to visit only a few of them to beat the game. This thesis takes into consideration only those tombs that are within the main story arc and ignores the side quests for clarity.

5.3 Affordances to and Player Verbs in Tomb Raider

Playing games is about agency; doing things, interacting with the game and crafting the gameplay as it proceeds. Skolnick (2014) writes about *player verbs,* describing the core game mechanics that correspond to the game world as to what the player can *do.*

The relation of an agent and an object is called *affordance*. In real life, the stairs afford climbing provided the agent has access to them. If not, there is no affordance. (Norman 2013.) Similarly, in games, if the object affords interaction, it can be used by an agent (the player and/or the avatar), otherwise it is just a prop.

TOMB RAIDER uses a number of ways to deliver the storyline, both explicit and implicit. Most of the action and problem solving of the story consists of hands-on gameplay that the player can dictate to a certain extent. Interacting with the diegetic world (the player verbs) include walking, running, jumping, climbing, hiding, shooting, fighting, dodging, prying, stalking and context-sensitive interacting with doors, boxes, caches, environment and materials. The objects that afford interaction are marked by their similar appearance such as a scratched wall (that affords climbing) or by a spatial effect such as a flicker. The spatial "Survival Instinct" can be turned on any time, revealing the nearby objects with affordances.

5.4 Wrapping up the story

The player-story is augmented at set points with comments and reactions from LC and other character avatars as well as the world itself. The actions are confined to specific spaces the size of which varies from a small cave to a forest or a mountain. Every now and then, once the player has progressed to a certain point, the game either starts an *in-game cinematic* or a *cut-scene*, the difference being some measure of control on behalf of the player or a total takeover of a game engine run video, respectively (Rogers 2014). The climaxes of the action sequences (dubbed by the "expensive minutes" by the game developers (Keighley 2013) often consist of a cut-scene-augmented special gameplay with contextual game mechanics, also known as Quicktime Controls, such as fighting a wolf or flying down the mountainside on a parachute. The main points of the story are told by cut-scene videos, during which the player has no control.

The main story has further been augmented and contextualized by various indirect means, such as hidden documents and ancient artifacts and scriptures the player can study. As each individual player is given plenty of freedom to choose one's own style to proceed within the given parameters such as time, strategy and even ignoring places or adversaries, it is fair to assume that the player-story will be different each time. The game-story, however, will be experienced only in a predefined way, thus leaving every player to experience the same overall plot in their own manner and time.

6 JOSEPH CAMPBELL AND THE HERO'S JOURNEY

6.1 Introducing the Journey

According to Swiss psychologist C.G.Jung there exist in each human being two levels of psyche. The obvious ones are the aspects of our own self-awareness, the very elements that make each one of us an individual person. However, in addition to the perceivable and conscious levels of our personality we share an underlying collective psychic system that transcends cultures and through which we view the life and the world by *archetypes*. This system Jung calls Collective unconscious. (Jung 1916.)

In his 1949 book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* Joseph Campbell presented his theory of nearly all important myths in human history having a common basis and fundamental structure; this he decided to call "A Monomyth." Campbell, a dedicated scholar of the body of work of James Joyce, furthermore included concepts from Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung into his theory, such as Oedipal Complex and humankind's collective unconscious and the archetypes drawn from therein.

Consequently, if there indeed is an underlying, invisible layer of consciousness we all share, it is no wonder that the stories and sagas people have told each other through millennia (and the way they have perceived the world) is quite similar regardless of century or continent. The coming of age story of Lara Croft, the game TOMB RAIDER is no exception.

6.2 The brief summary of the stages of the Journey

Campbell adopted the three-part structure of Arnold Van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage* (1960), calling them Separation, Initiation and Return, thus reforming his concept of an archetypical saga along the guidelines of a classic three-act structure.

The three parts he proceeded to include sub-stages as follows: Separation was further divided into The Call to Adventure, Refusal of the Call, Supernatural Aid, Crossing the Threshold and Belly of the Whale. Initiation was accordingly divided into The Road of Trials, The Meeting with the Goddess, Woman as a Temptress,

Atonement with the Father, Apotheosis and The Ultimate Boon, whereas the last part was constructed of Refusal to Return, The Magic Flight, Rescue from Without, The Crossing of the Return Threshold, Master of Two Worlds and Freedom to Live*.*

These were the parts Campbell summarized as the *Monomyth*. They do not add to or change the classic three-act structure, but merely further divide it into pieces that necessarily do not have to be chronological or always present. Contemporary storytellers often bend, change and even reverse the stages, still retaining the basic form or stages. (Vogler 2007.)

The monomyth has since had more contemporary interpretations, by David Leeming (1981), Phil Cousineau(1990) and Christopher Vogler (2007), all of which have blended together various stages of the Monomyth to better serve contemporary narrative. Leeming and Cousineau settled with eight stages each, but Hollywood screenplay consultant and writing and cinematography teacher Christopher Vogler's 12-stage interpretation will be covered in this thesis alongside that of Campbell's.

6.3 The archetypes of storytelling

Not only did Campbell find a common structure to the world mythology, he also recognized many psychological *archetypes* within the mythical characters, first outlined by Carl Jung. According to Jung (1981), there is no such thing as tabula rasa in the human psychological development, there being a set of unconscious elements upon which individual people construct their personality. Such archetypes were included but not limited to a Hero, Mentor, Threshold Guardian, Herald, Shapeshifter, Shadow, Ally and Trickster. As unconsciously recognized and global, both Campbell and Vogler argue for the power of the archetypes in creating deeply emotional and immersive stories.

Vogler, in his role as a Hollywood screenplay consultant has commented and affected many contemporary blockbuster hits from Disney's *The Lion King* to *Fight Club*. In his book The Writer's Journey, Vogler (2007) stresses the fact that the Journey does not have to be mythic per se, but instead movies such as *Beverly*

Hills Cop and *Basic Instinct* incorporate the same basic format and structure in a contemporary and certainly more mundane world than that of Ulysses.

No doubt the most famous of contemporary followers of Campbell is Hollywood director, screenwriter and producer George Lucas. Much of his epic cinematic work Star Wars (later Star Wars: Episode IV, A New Hope) follows Campbell's structure almost act by act. The same applies to the final six-part Star Wars saga as a whole. Interestingly, both Lucas and his equally famous peer and myth builder Steven Spielberg have a demeaning attitude towards storytelling in games. Perhaps the comment of *filmmaker* Spielberg is bit prejudiced:

The big deal is that videogames are going to have more character… But you're not going to have a plot that says, you know… it's not going to be Shakespeare. (Bishop 2013.)

6.4 Archetypes as functions

Neither Jung nor Campbell suggest there is a fixed, unaltered archetype for each of us, but the archetypes are worn as masks, or perform a function in certain times and situations in people's lives and in stories. No hero probably gets through life or story wearing only the mask of a hero, performing only heroic functions.

Furthermore, that sort of otherworldliness distances the audience from the two-dimensional almighty hero, so writers (or the life itself) makes us wear other archetypal masks from time to time, transforming between a hero and a victim, or a madonna (Mother) and a femme fatale (Shapeshifter or Shadow). (Jung 1981; Vogler 2007)

As we will see, in TOMB RAIDER the graduate scientist Lara Croft will wear numerous masks, sometimes simultaneously as she goes through the Hero's Journey and a *bildungsroman* of her own.

7. LARA CROFT'S JOURNEY (The Storyline of TOMB RAIDER as Hero's Journey)

Despite the universal quality of the Hero's Journey, few sagas have literally incorporated the Monomyth per se, instead, the structure serves as a framework that writers bend and modify to fit their narrative purposes while still keeping the integrity of the three-act structure and the recognizable character of the Journey (Vogler 2007).

Tomb Raider's writers and the development team have incorporated a layered approach to Hero's Journey where some stages are quite literal and timely, while others keep stretching, overlapping and repeating or have switched places even to a point where the three acts each form a mini-saga with a theme of their own, usually so that the *Magic Flight* marks the ending not only of the saga proper, but also of the three acts separately. Instead of the rigid template, the stages of the journey may appear in any part of the story (Vogler 2007).

The rest of this thesis will study the contents of TOMB RAIDER as a three-act monomyth and, where appropriate, as a coming-to-age story of a fictitious young archaeologist Lara Croft.

7.1 SEPARATION (ACT 1)

In *Separation*, or act 1, the normal, mundane world of the Hero is established to provide the starting point and the frame of reference both to the events that will unfold and to the Hero and the other characters to stem from (Campbell 1949). Separation also often includes a prologue, something that both implies the tone of the story and the setting it will take place in (Vogler 2007).

Vogler has a very similar interpretation of this first part of the Journey, omitting only *Belly of the Whale*, or, more appropriately incorporating it into *Crossing the First Threshold*.

Of the first stage, The Ordinary World, Vogler (2007) writes: *The special world of the story is only special if we see it in contrast to a mundane world of everyday affairs from which the hero issues forth.*

7.1.1 The Call to Adventure

"Come with me, if you wanna live."
- *John Connor in James Cameron's Terminator (Cameron 1984).*

The *Call to Adventure* is stretched along the beginning of the game, the prologue consisting of a cut-scene of the shipwreck of the research ship Endurance off a mysterious Island in the South Japanese Sea. We meet an adventure-hungry young graduate archaeologist Lara Croft (from now on LC) nearly drowning and barely making it to the shore, only to be attacked and captured by an unnamed savage.

First, the player has to escape and make it out from the savage's scavenger den, which very much resembles a tomb, to destroy the den and make it out to the daylight to start the game proper. On the way out, most of the main mechanics of the game are introduced. The approach to the world is mostly diegetic, the player can freely move, explore and interact with the world via the LC avatar, contextual meta and spatial GUI elements such as texts and the special "Survival Instinct" augment and help with the exploration.

This first sequence that serves as a tutorial for the main game mechanics also lays out the twofold theme the developers decided for the game: "Combat survival." LC has to combat both the island and its macabre inhabitants to survive, get help and escape (Keighley 2013).

7.1.2 Refusal of Call

"Alderaan? I'm not going to Alderaan, I've gotta get home, it's late, I'm in for it as it is!"
- *Luke Skywalker, Star Wars IV: New Hope (Lucas 1977)*

Game's approach to *Refusal of Call* is twofold: The main storyline focuses on psychological struggles of LC who tries to locate the other survivors while persisting in the inhospitable conditions of the island, pushing herself to go on and find the courage and perseverance necessary for survival. The player makes Lara navigate

obstacles such as deep gorges and dangerous walls and learn to hunt for food and scavenge for firewood. Climaxes, such as falling down from a tree, have been augmented with cinematics, but mostly the story is told dietetically, through the player actions and exploration of the world.

True to the intended character development in a spirit of a *bildungsroman*, during the beginning of the game the animated avatar of the protagonist is insecure in her movements (although it does not affect gameplay), and we hear LC spurring herself aloud as the player makes her climb to dangerous heights and try to find the nerve to kill animals for food.

Another approach to the *Refusal of Call* is found in flashback cut scenes of the *Endurance* crew arguing the right approach to finding the mysterious island Yamatai the archaeologists and the accompanying film crew are after. Here the roles have been reversed, the young heroine arguing against the grain for the ship to sail south into the storm that eventually makes them end up shipwrecked.

7.1.3 Supernatural Aid

"But being this is a .44 Magnum, the most powerful handgun in the world and would blow your head clean off, you've gotta ask yourself one question: "Do I feel lucky?" Well, do ya, punk?

- *Harry Callahan, in the Film Dirty Harry (Siegel 1971)*

In sagas the hero often gets a talisman, a weapon or another supernatural aid from his or her mentor to help navigate the troubles ahead. In the primitive island inhabitat a radio telephone left behind by others serves as such, connecting LC to the rest of the survivors, and particularly to the head of the expedition, Conrad Roth, who takes the archetype function of LC's *Mentor*.

As perhaps is fitting for a *Supernatural Aid*, the player does not have to *use* the R/T. Whether it is an encouraging word by Roth as part of the game-story, a piece of advice on how to manage, survive or find a way as part of the player-story, or even a concrete warning to stay still to stay unnoticed, the LC / player *organism* (Andrews 2010) receives valuable guidance from her mentor for the best part of the game.

Much resembling the *Supernatural Aid* is also the *Survival Instinct*, a spatial filter the player can use to dim out the screen to leave objectives and important objects that afford interaction highlighted. This, of course, applies to the player-story only.

7.1.4 Crossing the First Threshold

"I'm flying, Jack!

- *Rose, Titanic (Cameron 1997)*

After surviving the initial coastal forest challenges, such as traps, wolves, dangerous climbs and being trapped in a WW2 -era bunker, LC finds the leader of the expedition, Dr. James Whitman, a complex character who, as the game progresses, wears by turns the mask of the *Threshold Guardian, Shapeshifter* and even the *Shadow*. Together they enter an ancient temple, after which point they – or the player – no longer can venture back to the relative safety of the coastal forest. This is where the story truly begins. The *Call to Adventure* has been heeded.

Extensive use of cinematics and cutscenes marks this end of the first act where LC first meets his main adversary, the first *Shadow* of the game, Father Mathias and his brutal thugs. In this first climatic point of the game Father Mathias doubles as a *Threshold Guardian*, ending up kidnapping Lara's friend and *Ally* Sam while egging his thugs on to the survivors. LC must resort to her wits and hesitantly to violence, while the game introduces hiding as a new game mechanic.

Meeting with the Goddess is also foretold at this point, as the original goal of the story, finding the ancient Kingdom of Yamatai, is re-established as a parallel plot-line. From now on the ancient "Sun Queen" ceases to be just a myth.

7.2 INITIATION

Despite the three-act structure, *Initiation* does not have to mean "second act of the story", but *those parts of the story* where the hero is committed to the adventure, either physically or mentally, sometimes spiritually or even romantically, to live and function in that other, strange world. Either way, Initiation incorporates the greatest

part of many stories, *Departure* and *Return* serving sometimes as an introduction and afterthought only (Vogler 2007).

Initiation also incorporates the *Ultimate Boon* or *Reward*, the part of the story that everything else in the story serves to prepare the hero for (Campbell 1959).

Vogler (2007) has simplified this part of the Journey considerably to fit all types of narrative such as romance or film noir. Yet his interpretation "Tests, allies and enemies", "Approach to the Innermost Cave", "The Ordeal" and "Reward" echo the same themes and sentiments common in both ancient and contemporary myths.

7.2.1 Belly of the Whale

"That's no moon. It's a battle station."

- *Obi-Van Kenobi, Star Wars IV: New Hope (Lucas, 1977)*

In the *Belly of the Whale* the *Hero* has accepted the separation from the ordinary world and the laws and uncertainties of this new, strange one and his own part in it. In the myths and stories from Siddharta Gautama to Indiana Jones there is usually a distinct obstacle the Hero has to escape or otherwise deal with (Campbell 1959; Vogler 2007).

Even though the Scavenger's Den in the very beginning of the game first touches the concept, and other places such as the bunkers, tombs and caves return to it, in a broader sense the inescapable belly of the whale in TOMB RAIDER is the Island of Yamatai. Eventually LC must literally deal with a goddess, too, to be able to escape the island.

Vogler (2007) incorporates this part into his own interpretation of the *Road of Trials*. Complemented by *Meeting with the Goddess* and *Temptation* he calls the composite stage "Tests, allies and enemies."

7.2.2 Road of Trials

"I'm too old for this shit!"

- *Sergeant Murtaugh, The Lethal Weapon I , II, III and IV (Donner 1987, 1989, 1992 & 1998)*

It would be tempting to suggest the *Road of Trials* is the game itself. Gameplay is conflict. Without conflict the player becomes bored and uncommitted. Without conflict there is no game. Here, though, it is more appropriate to seek the *Road of Trials* the player / LC organism get to navigate *through* the gameplay. It has already been established the games are partly if not mostly told via the player's actions.

According to game's theme, *combat survival*, the road of trials indeed starts right away at the beginning of the game, but rather than focusing on every single enemy (of which there are hundreds) or obstacle, this thesis focuses on the broader aspect of LC's trials, and her growth from the scary survivor-by-chance into a battle-hardened survivalist and fighter.

LC's *Road of Trials* has two main goals, to learn how to survive both the elements and adversaries, the nature and the supernatural. This she does with her wits and her – or the player's skills – both of which grow during the game, through the game-story and the non-diegetic tier menu system, respectively.

In the second act of TOMB RAIDER the two major quests are the fighting and climbing to the radio tower on top of the mountain island to call for rescue, followed by the quest to infiltrate the Solarii cult's stronghold to rescue the captured co-survivors and the friend Sam. As such, TOMB RAIDER fits perfectly to Vogler's adaptation of the Journey, where he divides Act II into two separate parts he calls *ordeal*, between which there is a *central crisis*. Between the quests to call for help and rescuing the friends, the central crisis takes the form of furious storm downing the search and rescue airplane.

The quests are predominantly done by exploring, seeking, climbing, hiding and fighting, where appropriate. LC performs a variation of *Magic Flight* repeatedly by running through collapsing caves or by sliding down the mountains on ropes and parachute, to name a few.

The third major trial, after the two failed attempts to get rescued, is going after the Sun Queen herself, to stop the Ascension Ritual to sacrifice the friend Sam, and to deprive the ancient goddess of her supernatural powers that are keeping everyone on the island from being rescued.

The basic diegetic, cinematics-augmented nature of the game is very similar from the beginning to the end with just a few new affordances or mechanics presented along the way. Among them are new or improved weapons and various gear, such as fire igniting arrows or climbing ropes.

7.2.3 Meeting with the Goddess

"You're a bit short for a Stormtrooper."

- *Princess Leia, Star Wars IV: New Hope (Lucas 1977)*

This stage stretches along the full length of the game, first by being the mythical subplot of the television expedition sent to find the ancient kingdom of Yamatai ruled by the goddess, Sun Queen *Himiko*.

During the game LC finds ancient scriptures and more contemporary documents from other parties suggesting that the vicious storms preventing anyone from leaving the island seem to have a supernatural origin. The soul of the Sun Queen does not allow anyone to escape until an Ascension Ritual, transferring the Sun Queen's ancient soul to a living human being, has been fulfilled.

With the exception of the very end, the story about the Sun Queen and Yamatai are told in cut scenes and various supplementing documents that can be found on the island. In the very climax of the endgame LC finally meets the goddess in a cinematic when stopping and preventing the ascension ritual and killing the Sun Queen's spirit inside her mummy.

7.2.4 Temptation

(Catherine Tramell changes her knee on top of another.)
- *Basic Instinct (Verhoeven 1992)*

This part, sometimes called "Woman as a temptress", echoes in TOMB RAIDER as LC's pertinent mistrust in her own potential, and fear and disbelief in her enemies' and eventually her own ruthlessness. She even takes a moral stand on describing the killing of an enemy "*unbelievable how easy it was.*"

Joseph Campbell writes about the temptation as inbuilt characteristic of a human: *The crux of the curious difficulty lies in the fact that our conscious views of what life ought to be seldom correspond to what life really is. Generally we refuse to admit within ourselves the lecherous fever which is the very nature of the organic cell. Rather, we tend to perfume, whitewash, and reinterpret.*

The coming-of-age of LC, that is the game in whole, is marked by her comments, that grow from timid to challenging to downright aggressive, and the appearance and movement of her avatar that becomes more self-assured as the game progresses and more obstacles are cleared.

7.2.5 Atonement with the Father

Sarah Wheeler: Who are you? Who are you... really?
The Preacher: Well, it really doesn't matter, does it?
- *The Pale Rider (Eastwood 1985)*

In many myths, the center point is the meeting of some kind of Father Figure, an entity who holds considerable, life-and-death power on the Hero. Lara Croft, an orphan daughter of a famous but emotionally distant archaeologist father, finds a twisted father figure in Father Mathias; a survivor himself and the cult leader in his search for a suitable sacrifice for the Sun Queen. Campbell writes (Campbell, 115):

Whether he knows it or not, [...] the father is the initiating priest through whom the young being passes on into the larger world. And just as, formerly, the mother represented the "good" or "evil", so now does he.

It is the bloodthirsty thugs of Mathias' Solarii cult that pervert the coming of age of LC by ruthlessly attacking her and forcing her to become not only a survivor but a fighter and a killer. Chronologically, LC confronts Father Mathias directly almost exactly at this stage of the game, only to succumb to his men, having to escape again and find a way to save her kidnapped fellow survivors.

In sagas, this is the stage that all the other parts of the story lead to, and in TOMB RAIDER it gets a repeat in the very end (Campbell 1949).

7.2.6 Apotheosis

Do it! (Barnes tells traumatized, apathetic Taylor to shoot him.)
- *Platoon (Stone 1986)*

"Apotheosis: The highest point in the development of something; a climax."
- *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*

Right before the end of act three LC's *Mentor* and teacher Conrad Roth gets killed by Father Mathias, forcing LC to transcend her role as a mere survivor to become an instrument of survival for the others. From this point on the fate of the rest of the *Endurance* survivors is in LC's hands. She must find the secret of the mystical storms as well as stop Father Mathias from sacrificing her friend Sam.

In this, she joins the ages-old cast of mythical figures from Jesus the Nazarean to Luke Skywalker, who at first refuse to serve the greater good at their own peril only to find out the destiny has already chosen them as a savior.

This is the metaphorical birth and rebirth stage of TOMB RAIDER, the dramatic moment of resurrection that audiences enjoy the most (Vogler 2007).

7.2.7 The Ultimate Boon

But you know what the best part of my day is? For about ten seconds, from when I pull up to the curb and when I get to your door, 'cause I think, maybe I'll get up there and I'll knock on the door and you won't be there.
- *Chuckie; Good Will Hunting (Van Sant 1997)*

Even though in sagas, the Ultimate Boon can be an elixir or a jewel, it does not have to be that concrete at all. The ultimate boon, the blessing, can also come in the form of romance, wisdom, a right decision, even a sacrifice. What is common to all boons, is the common good it promotes. (Vogler 2007.)

Even though the characters aboard *Endurance* were originally after the mythical Yamatai and its ruler Sun Queen Himiko, those serve only as a pretext of the ultimate goal or boon of the story, which is to get out, to escape and to survive. LC is promoted in the Act Three to serve that boon she eventually finds out is *via* the Sun Queen.

So the original and the new goal of the story are intertwined in the end, as LC follows the mythical footsteps of her ancient fictional counterparts into the realm of supernatural, inhibited by gods and goddesses, guarded by monsters.

7.2.8 Refusal of return

Just because there's no war going on does not give you the right to start one every time you get drunk!
- *Judge Zane; Heartbreak Ridge (Eastwood, 1986)*

The writers of TOMB RAIDER have a very literal view of this stage. After one catastrophic rescue attempt bogged by the unnatural storms, in the end of Act Two LC literally refuses to be rescued and forces the rescue helicopter pilot to abort the mission on gunpoint.

This stage often represents the Hero's unwillingness to return to the mundane world that cannot compare with the special one, but in TOMB RAIDER LC has no other option but to refuse, knowing it is impossible to escape until the storms and the forces that cause them have been dealt with. So the setup gets reversed, instead of being unwilling to leave LC has to persuade the others that it is impossible.

7.3 RETURN

7.3.1 Magic Flight

In accordance to Campbell and Vogler writing of the Return as being perhaps as adventurous as the Journey itself, the last act of TOMB RAIDER serves as a mini-monomyth of its own, recapping the adventure before blending back into the main story after LC has acquired the ultimate boon.

In the last third of TOMB RAIDER LC has to find an ancient document that tells of the Sun Queen and her supernatural powers over the weather, and end the Ascension Ritual where her soul is transferred to another human's body.

LC first visits the old military research base built upon an ancient Japanese general's tomb that contains the secret of the stopping of the storms.

From there on, mentored this time by the ancient Japanese themselves, LC has to persuade the rest of the survivors not to flee with the old, repaired gunboat, and instead head inland via a river like Marlow in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

After crossing the threshold of a windy gorge and climbing into the mountain monastery LC meets another kind of antagonists in form of immortal storm guard, ancient human-like monsters in antique federal Japan body armor.

After numerous "*Allies, Enemies and Tests*," and literally visiting the "*Inmost Cave*" LC gets to climb once more to the top of the monastery mountain, where she kills the rest of Father Mathias' thugs and Sun Queen's storm guard, the final ordeal being the boss fight of the game, where LC fights and defeats the leader of the Storm guard monsters.

Here, the plot line of the third act joins the main plot and LC finally settles the *Atonement with Father* by killing Father Mathias, and saving her friend Sam by stopping the Ascension Ritual and killing the spirit of the Sun Queen, thus calming the weather around the Island and allowing the survivors to escape, the *Ultimate Boon*.

7.3.2 Rescue From Without

Great shot kid! That was one in a million!

- *Han Solo: Star Wars IV: New Hope (Lucas 1977)*

In TOMB RAIDER, *Rescue from Without* is the ultimate boon or goal that the survivors of the expedition aboard Endurance seek. Added to the obvious, two distinct rescue attempts in the story, this stage is also presented as reversed, rescuing coming from *within*, as LC grows into her character, partly aided by others and driven by her will to survive.

The coming-of-age of LC reaches its true climax on top of the monastery mountain, where the once fearful and timid survivor yells in anger at her adversaries and goes to full offensive instead of merely fighting for her life.

Vogler includes the stages Magic Flight, Crossing the Return Threshold and Rescue from Without into a composite Stage called "Resurrection." True to her ancient mythic counterparts, LC dies to her former self and resurrects through the hardships of the island as the savior of her people.

7.3.3 Crossing the Return Threshold

Aboard the cargo ship that eventually picks up what is left of the Endurance Survivors the refusal of return is played literally, as the ship and its crew represent the return to the ordinary, mundane world, LC is heard muttering "I'm not going home", opting instead to follow his late father's footsteps into further adventures.

7.3.4 Master of Two Worlds

In the last cutscene of the game, LC looks to the horizon and is heard thinking:

I've been so blind… So naive. For years, I resented my father, doubted him like the rest. But he was right about so much. I just wish I could tell him that now. There are

so many mysteries I once dismissed as mere stories but the line between our myths and stories is fragile and blurry. I need to find answers. I must understand.

The stage *Master of Two Worlds* is about transcending the differences of the ordinary and the special world, the hero having reached a balance between them and having become a liaison between the two.

7.3.5 Freedom to Live

"I don't really know what happened you on that island [...] and I don't want to know. Anyway, we'll be home soon."
"I'm not going home."

- *TOMB RAIDER, conversation between a deckhand and Lara Croft (Square Enix 2011)*

The rebooted saga of TOMB RAIDER is continued in 2016's *Rise of the Tomb Raider*, where the new, confident explorer and survivalist sets out to complete his father's legacy and proving the late Croft senior to have been right in his theories, the reboot having functioned as a prequel and a coming-of-age story to the once superhuman-like, characterless cartoony adventurer.

8 CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to prove that a videogame can be a valid format for classic storytelling. Even though Finnish ludologists may disagree and even world famous filmmakers may turn up their noses, it would be naive to assume that storytelling *media* has reached its final form. Even though Marshall McLuhan famously wrote "medium is the message", no medium has so far neither killed the chronological storytelling or undermined ancient myths in favor for, say, a TV-series. Instead, there are obvious similarities in Ulysses' journeys and those of Starship Enterprise, "to boldly go where no man has gone before."

Same goes for TOMB RAIDER. Even without the obvious references to ancient mythology, goddesses and monsters, it is very easy to pick out all the classic elements of Campbell's Hero's Journey, the three-act structure and even the coming-of-age story. A few of the stages of the Journey have changed places, some take a repetitive form while others stretch to the length of the game. *All* are present.

It is true, that a 15-hour game, where the player may get stuck for hours in an action or riddle sequence, cannot present the drama at timely, preset cues. At the same time, it is also true that no nineteenth-century stage with cardboard props and actors could have delivered anything like Star Wars. In the light of all that, and the theories and findings of Jung and Campbell, it is safe to conclude the sagas may be changing format, but remaining much the same as far as the content is concerned. Whether it is a campfire story, a book, a play, a film or, even though *not Shakespeare*, a video game.

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