Star Wars Versus The Hero With a Thousand Faces: Comparative Essay

The iconic and ageless film Star Wars created by George Lucas in 1977 follows the common path for hero's known as the Hero's Journey and is comparable to the novel "The Hero With a Thousand Faces" from Joseph Campbell made in 1949 not only in age but with patterns, moments and characters. This movie and novel are incredible not only because of the content and entertainment they contain but because of how they are both still relevant in the present despite both of them being forty-two plus years old.

To begin with we have the call to adventure on the hero's path. When Princess Leia puts a message in R2-D2 to find Obi Wan that luke discovers. In the novel, it states "destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown." (53) which is similar to Luke because he comes into contact with the unknown. Next is the refusal of the call and this is when Luke is asked to go on the adventure by Obi Wan but he isn't interested because he has to help his Uncle and Aunt on the farm. In the novel it says "the refusal is essentially a refusal to give up what one takes to be one's own interest" (55). Following that step is the supernatural aid and this is demonstrated when Luke receives a wide variety of aids but the main ones would be Obi Wan, R2, and C-3. In the story it says "he first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass" (65). Now Obi Wan doesn't provide amulets to slay dragon forces but he does guide him physically then as an actual supernatural aid. Up next is the crossing of the first threshold and in Star Wars this is when Luke comes home and finds that the farm is burned up and that his Aunt and Uncle are killed. In the Novel this step is when the hero takes his first step into the unknown and Luke takes his first step by seeing his home completely ruined. The next step is the belly of the whale and in the movie it's when Luke steps into the bar and tries to bring his droids in but isn't allowed too. This is when he is finally in the actual unknown, he is unaware of the rules in the cantina. So in the book is says that the hero is finally in the unknown and doesn't know the rules around places. This is where he finds Han Solo and Chewbacca that become aids to Luke.

Next is the road of trials and this starts when they escape the Imperial Blockade, Han Solo is the reason why they are chased due to the fact that he is in deep dept and is actually confronted. He handles the confrontation by smoothly drawing his gun while Greedo is talking to him about how he needs to pay up and shooting him at the end of the conversation. This draws attention for an undercover trooper who follows Luke and the whole gang to the Millennium Falcon and attacks them while in a hot pursuit. They escape and through the road of trials the book states that the hero is tested with obstacles and trials so in Star Wars Luke has plenty of them. Such as the lightsaber training, Obi Wan gets a drone that shoots at Luke that forces him to block the blast with his lightsaber. In this process Luke struggles a ton and Obi Wan throws a helmet with a visor on Luke's head so he cannot see what's in front of them and tells Luke to trust the force in order to block the blast and he does while Han Solo thinks it is luck. After that they hid in the spaceport in Han's ship and slowly snuck their way into the control room by taking down some guards. Han and Luke disguise themselves as troopers and act like Chewbacca was a prisoner to try to get to Princess Leia but eventually, their cover gets blown

and they begin to haven a shootout. Obi Wan sneaks off and finds Darth Vader in the halls and they have an epic battle while the Robots are still in the control room. Luke and his little group find Princess Leia and try to make their way back but there were too many troopers so they go into the trash compactor and find the trash monster in there. They see that the walls are closing and they begin to panic, they communicate through the radio with the droids and stop the walls from closing and escape. They all meet up expect for Obi-Wan and while Obi-Wan is fighting Darth Vader, Luke and the gang see the duel. Obi Wan lets his guard down and Darth Vader kills him. Luke finally meets the abyss and that is where he sees his mentor killed and is the lowest point for Luke in the movie. He must overcome this and that next step would be the apotheosis and that is when Luke uses the force to talk to Obi Wan and he begins to trust the force. This is the part where you can consider Obi-Wan to be a supernatural aid because he was no longer alive but he still helps Luke. The apotheosis in the book is when the hero overcomes his fears for the greater power. The ultimate boon for Star Wars would be when they get Princess Leia back to the rebel base and R-2 knowing the plans to destroy the Death Star. In the book this is the ultimate goal and throughout the movie most of the main plan was to get Princess Leia back to the rebel base.

Moving forward we come to the refusal of the return and this when when Luke screams no when Obi-Wan is slain, he tells Luke to run. In the book they are both similar because they are asked to return and they simply say no but obviously go anyways. Next is the magic flight and in the movie this when Luke and Han are using turrets on the Millennium Falcon to fight the tie fighters from chasing hem. In the novel this step is the flight after the ultimate boon when the hero's fight or flight in a final showdown. The rescue from without is when The Death Star is destroyed and Luke knows he is safe from the empire and is around the people he likes. Han Solo appears even after he refused to continue the journey and saves Luke from Darth Vader and other tie fighters. In the book this is when they the anti-hero comes back to save the main hero. Moving on we have the master of two worlds and the movie demonstrates this by Luke being able to use the force and becoming familiar with the unknown. In the book the master of two worlds is simply described as a hero being familiar with two different worlds and that would be known and the unknown. Finally the freedom to live, in the movie this is the ceremony at the end of the movie and is when Luke receives his medal. Luke is able to live a free life knowing the empire isn't after him anymore. In the book this is when the hero is finally at peace and is able to live his life comfortably.

Therefore i think it is safe to say that the novel from Campbell 'The Hero With a Thousand Faces" and Lucas's film Star Wars are not entirely the same but are easily comparable not only by long life time but also by steps, structure and roles that make them both epitomes of heroes.