

Scientific Articles

SCRIPT ADVENTURE ANALYSIS – Adventuretts in “The Empire Strikes Back”

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The analysis of adventure stories has relevance in the analysis of the life scripts of persons having banal scripts such as the “Nothing Ever Happens” script. In the Script Drama Analysis article (*TAB* 7:26, 1968) I analyzed drama as arising from *switches* in roles (Persecutor, Rescuer, and Victim in the Drama Triangle) and location (near-far, private-public, closed-open spaces in the Location Diagram) by the characters set in the Role Diagram.

Adventure Analysis here will focus on the units of excitement I call “adventuretts,” and the *total number* of adventuretts crammed into a time frame determines the excitement of the participants and their audience.

The stimulus for this article is George Lucas’ *Star Wars* sequel *The Empire Strikes Back* which I’ve seen three times (the stimulus for Script Drama Analysis was *The Valley of the Dolls* and *Wuthering Heights* movies). Both articles analyze fairy tales. *Star Wars* was written as a fairy tale with morals for children. The units are named and randomly listed as adventuretts inserts that can be inserted into any adventure story (or script) by the writer to hype the excitement and involvement level (see discussion later). The list is not exhaustive nor organized by TA concepts, but the reader can find many of the currencies, drivers, ego states, etc. as they study the list.

ADVENTURETTES:

1. TRAVEL TO FAR PLACES: a galaxy far, far away.
2. A BATTLE OF GOOD AND EVIL: imperial forces vs. rebel alliance.
3. ROYALTY: Princess Leia.
4. EXTREME PERSECUTOR: relentless Darth Vader; asteroid field.
5. EXTREME RESCUER: heroics of Han and Luke.
6. EXTREME VICTIM: Luke dying in a freezing snowstorm.
7. COMEDY TEAM: R2-D2 and C-3PO.
8. NATURE’S VIOLENCE: snowstorm on Hoth; rainstorm on Dagobah.
9. EXTREME OUTDOORS: humid swamp on Dagobah; frozen tundra of Hoth.
10. EXTREME INDOORS: ice-cavern headquarters on Hoth.
11. DRAMA TRIANGLE SWITCHES: Admiral from persecutor to victim.
12. LOCATION SWITCHES: barren planet to busy interior of Star Destroyer.
13. CHALLENGED SIGHT: blinding zero visibility of Hoth snowstorm.
14. CHALLENGED HEARING: the assault on Chewbacca in Cloud City; the silence on Dagobah.
15. CHALLENGED SMELL: Cutting open the Tauntaun’s belly.
16. CHALLENGED TASTE: Luke tasting Yoda’s food.
17. CHALLENGED TOUCH: Leia and Han embrace; unstable footing in asteroid.
18. CHALLENGED ESP: Leia receives Luke’s thought message for help.
19. FIRE: explosions, fires.
20. FIRE + EARTH = LAVA: Han’s molten casing in carbon freezing.
21. FIRE + AIR = HEAT: sweltering heat on Dagobah.
22. FIRE + WATER = STEAM: R2-D2’s steam screen; bubbling swamp on Dagobah.
23. EARTH: asteroid cave; R2-D2 dropped twice to ground on Dagobah.
24. EARTH + AIR = DUST: soiled clothes.

25. EARTH + WATER = MUD: Dagobah swamp mud on R2-D2.
26. AIR: flying through space.
27. AIR + WATER = MIST: clouds around Cloud City; muggy air on Dagobah.
28. WATER: Luke's ship submerged on Dagobah; Luke in medical tank.
29. UNIQUE CHARACTERS: Yoda, Vader.
30. UNIQUE ANIMALS: Tauntauns, Mynocks.
31. UNIQUE MACHINES: R2-D2, imperial AT-AT walkers.
32. WISE TEACHER: Ben Kenobi.
33. BOUNTY HUNTERS: Boba Fett.
34. MAGICIAN: Yoda.
35. GHOSTS: Ben; holographs of Vader and Emperor.
36. LEECHES: Mynocks.
37. HORSEBACK: riding along on Tauntauns.
38. PIGGYBACK: Yoda on Luke; C-3PO on Chewbacca.
39. UNIQUE TRANSPORTATION: snowspeeder; Millennium Falcon.
40. UNIQUE HOUSING: ice-cavern; Cloud City.
41. UNIQUE NAMES: Chewbacca, Skywalker, Mynocks, Yoda.
42. INVADING ARMY: imperial forces on Hoth.
43. MASSEVACUATIONS: rebel alliance from Hoth.
44. UNIQUE WEAPONS: ion cannon; light sabres.
45. UNIQUE AIRCRAFT: TIE fighters; X-wing fighters.
46. LUCKY ESCAPE: Han escaping ice-cavern and asteroid cave.
47. LUCKY HIT: asteroids hitting TIE fighters.
48. BEING CAPTURED: Han on Cloud City.
49. BEING TRAPPED: Han's carbon freezing; prisoners.
50. SETTING A TRAP: Vader sets trap for Luke on Cloud City.
51. INJURIES: Luke's hand; C-3PO dismembered.
52. DEATH: admiral; battle victims.
53. SAVING LIVES: Han saves Luke on Hoth; Leia saves Luke on Cloud City.
54. SUSPENSE: awaiting Yoda on Dagobah; awaiting winner of battles.
55. THREATS: Vader and Calrissian.
57. HUNGER: mealtime on Dagobah and Cloud City.
58. WEALTH: riches for bounty hunter.
59. POVERTY: Yoda on Dagobah.
60. SLAPSTICK HUMOR: droids bumping into walls and ceilings.
61. DRY HUMOR: design of AT-AT walkers; acting of Vader's new commander.
62. VICTORY: Yoda lifts aircraft; rebels cheer escape; snow walker is downed.
63. DEFEAT: Vader loses track of rebel craft; The admiral is a failure.
64. DOUBLE CROSS: Vader to Calrissian; Calrissian to Solo.
65. REUNITED: Solo and Calrissian as old friends.
66. REVENGE: Calrissian to Vader; Chewbacca to Calrissian.
67. BATTLES: land battle on Hoth; air battle in asteroid field.
68. CHASE SCENES: TIE fighters going after the Millennium Falcon.
69. HIDING AWAY: rebels on Hoth; Han inside asteroid.
70. AN INVESTIGATION: Vader must find rebels and sends out probes for clues.
71. A SEARCH PARTY: Han goes out to find the missing Luke on Hoth.
72. LURKING DANGER: a sense of uneasiness with Luke on Dagobah and Han in asteroid cave.
73. SCARED OF THE DARK: R2-D2 on Dagobah; Leia inside asteroid tunnel.
74. UNDERGROUND PASSAGEWAYS: ice tunnels on Hoth and corridors on Cloud City.
75. SHELTER: ice-cavern; inside dead Tauntaun; Luke safely on Dagobah.
76. IRRESTIBLE ATTRACTION: tractor beams; Luke for rescue in Cloud City trap; Leia for Han.
77. ROMANCE: Han and Leia.
78. FRIENDSHIP: Han and Luke; R2-D2 and C-3PO.

79. A GANG OF FRIENDS WITH TEAMWORK: Han, Chewie, Luke, Leia.
80. FAMILY: the unfolding of Luke's story.
81. EXCLUSION: R2-D2 excluded from Yoda's cave; Luke hiding on Cloud City.
82. SURPRISE IDENTITY: Darth Vader's revelation; Yoda's revelation.
83. ALTERED MIND STATE: Luke's struggle to stay awake in snowstorm.
84. A RACE AGAINST TIME: Han's disappearance just before the tractor beam is turned on.
85. VERY HIGH SPEED: aircraft chase; laser beams.
86. AWESOME BEAUTY: Cloud City at sunset.
87. ACHILLES' HEEL DISCOVERED: power generators on Hoth.
88. GHOST TOWN: abandoned ice-cavern on Hoth.
89. MACHINES BEING REPAIRED: Han and Chewbacca working on the Falcon.
90. PERFECT EFFICIENCY: electronic marvels; Han's narrow squeeze on the asteroid.
91. CRUCIAL MALFUNCTION: light-speed failure on the Millennium Falcon.
92. INGENUITY UNDER STRESS: Han's attaching onto Star Destroyer; use of Tauntaun for shelter.
93. DESIRES INTERFERED WITH: Vader's captures thwarted; Yoda loses Luke.
94. FALLING DOWN: Luke into hole and out window while battling Vader.
95. SWINGING ON ROPE: Luke on cable under snow walkers and on vines on Dagobah.
96. SHARP CONTRASTS: big and small snow walkers; light and dark planets.
97. SYMBOLISM: peacefulness on Yoda's planet; metallic darkness of Vader's Star Destroyer.
98. SUPERLATIVE EFFECT: originality of imperial snow walkers; Yoda's charm.
99. A WELCOME PARTY: Lando welcomes Han's arrival.
100. COMING OUT OF RETIREMENT: Yoda at work again.
101. INNOCENCE: Luke, droids.
102. CUNNING: Darth Vader.
103. MORALLY UPRIGHT: Ben, Luke.
104. DECISIVENESS: Vader reacting to probe's findings; Han flies into asteroid field.
105. FREE SPIRIT: Luke leaving Dagobah prematurely; Han's daring exploits.
106. STRUGGLE WITH SELF: Luke fighting off evil temptation of Vader.
107. BEWILDERMENT: Puzzle over Han's disappearance behind Star Destroyer.
108. PREMONITIONS: "I've got a bad feeling about this."
109. OVERRIDING PURPOSE: Vader must find Luke.
110. DROWNING: Suspense of R2-D2 in swamp; Luke in medical tank; Han in carbon freezing.
111. SORROW AND TEARS: Wookiee's reaction to lost Luke; Leia to Han's mummy.
112. RAGE: Vader at incompetence of his admirals.
113. GUILT: Lando regrets the double cross.
114. FEAR: Yoda warns Luke that he will be afraid.
115. TEENAGE ANTICS: Han's bravado and shunning of romance.
116. A SPREE: planet to planet joyride at a carnival pace.
117. PRIDE OF OWNERSHIP: Han loves his Falcon as his own jalopy.
118. SIDELINE OBSERVERS: R2-D2 and C-3PO.
119. A DUEL TO THE DEATH: swordplay with Luke and Darth.
120. PHILOSOPHY: Zen messages from Yoda.
121. PROVEN SUBJECT MATTER: science fiction; fairy tales; epic war stories.

A WRITER'S GUIDE. The weaving of adventuretts into a flowing story can be done by script writers whose left brain and right brain get along with each other (left = logic, right = romance). A right brain writer can learn to logically insert a high number of adventuretts without losing the intuitive flow and artistry. A left brain writer can list and outline a prescribed number of adventuretts then allow an inspired imaginative story to flow from that. A third type of writer will have learned the adventuretts so thoroughly that they appear automatically in the intuitive creative process. In telling bedtime stories to my sons Eric (neighborhood stories) and Justin (science fiction stories) they pick four adventuretts each and with their help I weave a story from their choices.

A SCORING SYSTEM. Generally, the success of an adventure story is directly related to the total number of adventuretts in it. A viewer may casually add up the number of adventuretts in several movies and know why some were boring and some were involving. A writer may set a minimum number of adventuretts as a standard for his/her stories. When a high-adventure series such as *Sinbad the Sailor* doesn't have the mass appeal of a *Star War* series, it is often because a high number of personal experience adventuretts are omitted. *The Wizard of Oz* adventure had a very high number of personal experience units.

Some variations in the one-point-for-one-adventurett adding system is tempting for the scorer. It may seem useful in rare instances to give a double plus for an adventurett of astonishing originality, astonishing contrasts, exceptionally touching humanness, etc. These usually turn out to be a combination of adventuretts. For example, R2-D2 peering into Yoda's cave in the driving rain (like the "Little Match Girl" on a snowy Christmas Eve) has three adventuretts: exclusion, nature's violence, and superlative effect.

In technical scoring, it may be useful to include minus points for periods of endless repetition, inaction, slow entry of drama triangle roles, predictability, and other boring lapses that lag, sag, and drag the energy level down. These minus scores can be called dragetts or drainetts. Hypnotic techniques that are used inadvertently and create sleep induction can be called sleepetts. If an adventurett is highly offensive and gets people to indignantly walk out of the theatre, they need to be scored in a separate category, such as offenderetts, a unit of offensiveness.

The adventurett system lends itself to computer analysis of drama and adventure, as a creative aid to writers, but presumably not to replace writers.

SCRIPT ADVENTURE. As far as script adventure goes, people vary from adventureholics to teetotalers. Some adventure abstainers use only one adventurett a year called "vacation" or the once-in-a-lifetime reward adventurett called "gold watch." Some use short term adventuretts called "political activist" or "ethics charge." Some yearn for their Aspiration (from Berne's Script Apparatus, which added scriptbreakers to Steiner's Script Matrix), but wind up in Antiscript or Counterscript instead, still a slave to their long ignored "Don't Act" and "Don't Be Well" injunctions (Rx: See Bob and Mary on Dagobah). Some have adventure and deny it in the service of their "Don't Enjoy" injunction and "I'm being gypped" racket that support an Almost-Win script. Psychotherapy usually gets a person in touch with those personal experiences they have denied, and gives permission to trade in the "Banal" script button for the "Banal No More" one. And then, despite the "Be cautious," "Don't take risks," "Play it safe," "Please others" tapes, the potential for high adventure is within us, and the fairy tale level of the *Star Wars* saga suggests that the Role Diagram of Skywalker, Vader, Leia, Solo, Artoo, Threepio, Ben, and Yoda are all within us, waiting to be liberated for brief moments by a master story teller, ourselves.

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