

The Female Hero's Journey in Narrative Media

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Summary

Joseph Campbell's 'hero's journey' narrative model (1949) features prominently in blockbuster films which valorize the male warrior archetype. This thesis undertakes a comparative textual analysis of *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) and *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015), in concert with 'hero' and 'heroine' narrative journey templates, to determine whether there is evidence of a female equivalent of Campbell's mythological 'hero's journey' in contemporary narrative media.

Previous studies have sought to reinterpret Campbell's prototype by exploring archetypal patterns of the female hero's journey through Jungian psychology, fairy tale and modern fantasy analyses. These have been criticized for their overtly feminist positions, neglect of mythology's significance, or irrelevance to screen texts. This thesis represents an original approach to media text analysis, moving beyond cultural studies, feminist criticism, discourse analysis and literary theory to critically address mythic 'hero's journey' narrative structures, in dialogue with recently proposed female models, more pertinent to narrative media.

My research seeks evidence of mythic structure in a socially constructive, culturally resonant, contemporary 'female hero's journey' narrative model. It contributes to the field of textual analysis of narrative media by creating a pathway to the formulation of a new, inclusive narrative model, directly applicable to screen text production.

This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Research at Macquarie University. I certify that this thesis is entirely my own work and that I have given fully documented reference to the work of others. This thesis has not previously, in part or in whole, been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Signed: _____



(Sophia Riley Kobacker)

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Introduction

It will come as no surprise to cinema audiences that screen heroines frequently die by the end of the film.¹ Female heroes have historically been perceived as transgressive character types. They are considered subversive because they threaten the status quo of those in authority by saying “No” to convention.² Societal norms have acted like a ‘compressor’ to limit the agency and expression of female heroes in films like *Joan of Arc* (Fleming 1948), *Thelma & Louise* (Scott 1991), and Satine in Baz Luhrmann’s *Moulin Rouge!* (2001).³

However, an encouraging trend has emerged in recent expressions of the female hero, as seen in the blockbuster films *Mad Max: Fury Road* (Miller 2015) and *Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens* (Abrams, J. J. 2015). Unlike earlier representations in cinematic texts, these screen heroines do not die. Instead, they help to restore their worlds. In *The Force Awakens*, when the young female hero, Rey, is asked by Han Solo how she managed in-flight repairs to the Millennium Falcon, thus saving its crew and the overall mission, she exclaims: “I bypassed the compressor!” (2015). Like heroic ancient goddesses, when faced with a broken world, the female heroes emerging in contemporary screen narrative not only survive until the end of the movie, they also exert considerable force towards restoring their worlds to unity and wholeness (Campbell 2013: 86; Chinen 1996: 166).⁴

¹ Joseph Campbell cites Nietzsche who coined: ‘the Hamlet experience’ – the bowing down to the masculine father principle and saying “Ophelia, you can go drown yourself” (2013: 87). Having internalized the patriarchal need to punish the female hero, she thus becomes the ‘sacrificial heroine’ (Edwards 1984: 9; Crosby 2004: 171,155).

² See further discussion in Chinen (1996:50), Redenbach (2015) and McCarthy (2016:191).

³ Luhrmann explains that, due to Joseph Campbell’s influence, “the power of the myth and storytelling is something I’ve been at work on in many levels”, so that while *Moulin Rouge!* is derived from *La Bohème*, his film is shaped on the myth of Orpheus (Guardian 2001), whose wife Eurydice dies tragically (Campbell 2008: 178).

⁴ Campbell discusses the radical split in the history of civilizations and mythologies between the masculine principle of the Old Testament, which is given all power, and the female principle of the older Great Mother Goddess, which is deprived of it. He maintains that “where the male [principle comes in], you have division, while where the female comes in you have union” (Campbell 2013: 86).

The three phases in Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey narrative model have proven highly adaptable to the three-act screenplay structure, and, like Vladimir Propp's character functions, are widely referenced in the humanities. Yet, while comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell theorized in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* [THWATF] (2008 [1949]) that the mythological hero's narrative pattern is not exclusively masculine, the unique narrative model his research produced has been most frequently applied to the male hero. Various attempts have been made by researchers in diverse fields to define the narrative features of the mythological Female Hero's Journey. But, is there evidence of a female equivalent of Joseph Campbell's mythological formula for 'The Hero's Journey' (2008 [1949]) in contemporary narrative media? To date, little or no media research has attempted to specifically address this question.

My research will undertake a narrative analysis of the blockbuster cinema texts *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) and *Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens* (2015), in concert with 'hero' and 'heroine' narrative journey models to answer this question. This study will contribute to the field of media analysis of fictional narrative by creating a pathway towards further research to establish socially constructive, culturally resonant narrative features for the contemporary, mythologically-based Female Hero's Journey in screen narrative.

Myth, Heroes and Film

Many blockbuster films have successfully used elements from Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey to support the male hero's narrative arc,⁵ and continue to utilize Campbell's mythological story elements with great success.⁶ The monomyth, devised by Joseph Campbell

⁵ *Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope* (Lucas 1977) and *Mad Max* (Miller 1979).

⁶ *Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens* (Abrams 2015) and *Mad Max: Fury Road* (Miller 2015).

in 1949, is essentially a structure or template which is apparent in all myths. Myths⁷ are deeply related to our social and human concerns (Warner 2003: xiv). They teach us how to live by providing a model to guide us on the journey towards psychological and spiritual growth (Biallus 1986: 29). In fact, the oldest expression of who we are as human beings is contained within ancient myths (Eliade 1974: 19).⁸ This may account for the recurrence of the mythological hero archetype throughout literature, art, history, philosophy, psychology and anthropology (Neumann 1963; 1970; Pearson, C. and Pope 1981; Segal 2000).⁹

The enduring power of the hero archetype¹⁰ is reflected in its proliferation across contemporary¹¹ mass media. In particular, the male archetypal hero features prominently in commercially successful cinematic texts such as the original *Star Wars* (Lucas 1977) and *Mad Max* (Miller 1979) film series. George Miller, Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, John Boorman and Francis Ford Coppola have all employed Joseph Campbell's mythological hero's journey narrative structure in the films they have directed (Vogler 1985: xxxi, 3). Like myths¹² and fairy tales, film texts in popular culture are able to articulate universal human hopes, fears and

⁷ In *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell stated that myths are metaphorical of spiritual potentiality in the human being (1988: 22). Bill Moyers, who interviewed Campbell for the book, gave a simplified explanation of mythology as: "an interior roadmap of experience, drawn by people who have travelled it" (xvi).

⁸ The renowned structuralist and mythologist, Lévi-Strauss, who, after studying thousands of myths, discovered that they share a limited number of basic structures that profoundly shape cultural life, claimed in *Myth and Meaning* that mythological stories reappear all over the world (2001 [1978]: 9).

⁹ The characteristic structures of the hero and heroism are described in numerous works including: Otto Rank, 'The Myth of the Birth of the Hero' in: *In Quest of the Hero* (Princeton University Press, (1990 [1909]: 3-86); Lord Raglan, *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama* (New York: Dover Publications, 2003[1936]); Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (3rd ed., Novato CA: New World Library (2008[1949])); *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series 20, 20 vols. (Princeton University Press, 1953-1979); especially *Symbols of Transformation*, vol. 5 (1969 [1956]) and *The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*, vol. 9. part 1 (1959 [1934]); Erich Neumann, *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series 42 (Princeton University Press, 1963); and *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*, trans. Ralph Manheim, Bollingen Series 47 (Princeton University Press 1963).

¹⁰ Ursula Le Guin described the 'archetype' as not a thing or an object, but, as Jung explained, a psychic modality (1982 [1979]: 81). In *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*, C. G. Jung states that archetypes "do not in any sense represent things as they are in themselves, but rather the forms in which things can be perceived and conceived." They are "a priori structural forms of the stuff of consciousness" (1961: 347; cited in Le Guin: 81).

¹¹ The term 'contemporary,' within the context of this thesis, refers to the period of cinematic texts from the late 1970s (due to their relevance to this discussion) to the present.

¹² According to Joseph Campbell, "myth is a picture language" (1990:33).

desires (Jung and Von Franz 1971; Stephens and McCallum 2013).¹³ Through their narrative exposition, they demonstrate ways of overcoming obstacles to achieving a goal or completing a quest (Eliade 1974: 2). Like myths, they provide audiences with templates for living (Stephens and McCallum 2013: 62), just as stories about heroic archetypes teach us how to live (Pearson, C. S. 1991: 7). Such texts both reflect and construct social actions through positioning the viewer's identification with the main protagonist (Stam et al. 1992: 149).

As viewers of media texts in popular culture, we internalize the dominant values of our society, which they reflect (Berger 2014: 123; O'Shaughnessy and Stadler 2006: 305).¹⁴ Not only are media central to what ultimately represents our social realities (Brooks and Hébert 2006), but audiences also unconsciously seek models to identify with and imitate while viewing screen narratives (Berger 2014: 124).¹⁵ Media critics have argued that the mass media consistently assign women to destructive roles (122). And because the social impact of privileged gendered media narratives may be contagious by observational learning and social agreement (Luskin 2012), they can serve to reinforce the disempowerment of women and girls (Brooks and Hébert 2006; Gallagher, M. 2003). Feminist scholarship argues that this in turn discourages female inclusion and women's productive participation in building personal, social, cultural and economic capital (Matanle et al. 2014). Arguably, the assumption that the main protagonists of heroic narratives are male by default "[limits] our understanding of the basic spiritual and psychological archetype of human life" (Pearson, C. and Pope 1981: 4).¹⁶

¹³ Former actor, US President Ronald Reagan, whose government won a copyright dispute against director George Lucas over the rights to name his Strategic Defense Initiative after the 1977 film *Star Wars*, said: "It is the motion picture that shows us not only how we look and sound, but – more importantly – how we feel" (Stone: 131-32).

¹⁴ Annette Kuhn noted a widely-held belief that social concerns and trends are reflected in mass media and film, and that these popular cultural forms can thus be regarded as a gauge of social attitudes and change (1996: 15).

¹⁵ Craig Batty notes: "Not only do myths appear in stories, naturally finding attachment with an audience, it is suggested that myths are in fact actively sought [by audiences]" (2011: 44).

¹⁶ Pearson and Pope lament the scarcity of female heroes in contemporary literature and film, and criticize the literary concept that "the woman who elects a life of courage, strength and initiative in her own behalf is an exception, a deviant, and doomed to destruction" (1981:7).

Previous scholarship has explored the effects of gender stereotyping and disempowering images of women portrayed in popular culture (Tuchman 1978; Weibel 1977). Children's advocate, Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund in 1973, is noted as saying, "You can't be what you can't see." According to Geena Davis, advocate for equitable gender representation in the media for the empowerment of women and girls: "We are in effect enculturating kids from the very beginning to see women and girls as not taking up half of the space."¹⁷ Nevertheless, the impact on contemporary media-consuming cultures due to the absence of an authentic narrative model representing the mythological Female Hero's Journey – expressed in popular culture through narrative media – has yet to be fully explored.

Within contemporary popular culture, the masculine warrior archetype has been valorised in a canon of blockbuster films which follow the narrative formula for the male hero's journey. Recent attempts to insert a female hero into the blueprint of the hero's journey genre – without altering the narrative formula to reflect an authentic female narrative arc – have been less than convincing. They have rarely achieved comparable box office success. For example, *Spiderman* (2002) earned ten times¹⁸ more than *Catwoman* (2004). But, should the female hero occupy the same template as the male hero? Or does she merit her own authentic narrative pattern? I assert that the female hero¹⁹ warrants a distinct narrative pattern, sourced from and founded upon female mythologies.²⁰

¹⁷ Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media (2016).

¹⁸ See *Superhero Genre* IMDb.com (1978-2015).

¹⁹ The term 'heroine' connotes "passive, submissive, and helpless" female characters (Lieberman 1987: 190), whereas the developing convention of the empowered female protagonist is better reflected in the term 'female hero.' See Lori M. Campbell's 'Introduction' in *A Quest of Her Own* (2014: 4 -14). Increasing usage of the term 'female hero' is also illustrated in historical data referencing analysis at Google Books in *Ngram Viewer* (2016).

²⁰ Others have also asserted that women's stories have their own pattern. See Murdock (1990); Hudson (2009); Jacey (2010); and Rogers (2013).

Joseph Campbell's Monomyth

After reading and analysing hundreds of mythological hero stories from around the world, Joseph Campbell defined the narrative pattern for the Hero's Journey as:

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder; fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won; the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow human beings" (2008 [1949]: 23).

Note that Campbell does not confine the definition of the hero's journey to the masculine domain, declaring that the hero "is a man or woman who has been able to battle past his [or her] personal and local historical limitations" (2008 [1949]: 14). A "hero or heroine... has found and done something beyond the normal range of achievement and experience... someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself" (Campbell and Moyers 1988: 123). Thus, the hero archetype, which represents "the ego's search for identity and wholeness" (Vogler 2007 [1998]: 29), can be portrayed in fictional narrative by a protagonist of any gender.

However, the mythological hero's journey model offered by Joseph Campbell has been interpreted and applied by theorists and film practitioners alike as being distinctly masculine.²¹ Campbell once stated that in mythology, "woman... represents the totality of what can be known. The hero is the one who comes to know" (1993: 97). This appears to position man as active questor and woman as passive goal. It is important to note that Campbell sourced and

²¹ Although Joseph Campbell did not claim that heroism is an exclusively male preserve, feminist modifications of theories that make this claim are provided by: Ann Belford Ulanov, *The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and Christian Theory* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1971); Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973); Carolyn Heilbrun, *Reinventing Womanhood* (New York: Norton 1979); Carol P. Christ, *Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers and Spiritual Quest* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1980); Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981); Carol Pearson and Katherine Pope, *The Female Hero in American and British Literature* (New York and London: Bowker, 1981); Lee. R. Edwards, *Psyche as Hero: Female Heroism and Fictional Form* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1984); Sarah Nicholson, 'The Problem of Woman as Hero in the Work of Joseph Campbell' in *Feminist Theology* 19 (2) 182-193 (2011).

analysed myths from a pool of texts within an existing patriarchal canon of literature (Stephens and McCallum 2013: 63-64). Further, in his 1949 monograph, the majority of myths he selected were of the male Hero type. The outcomes of this narrative type have historically privileged the status of male protagonists (Plant 2012: 104). Such narratives were embedded in and thereby serve to perpetuate patriarchal ideologies. Therefore, while it is reasonable that Campbell has been subject to feminist criticism (Frankel 2010),²² the all-encompassing patriarchal attitudes surrounding many of Campbell's chosen narrative texts,²³ as well as the historical period in which his analysis was written, must also be considered. In my view, Campbell's mythological narrative model, although valuable as a foundation, merits being updated and built upon to reflect contemporary social values.

Methods

In this research thesis, I will analyse two commercially successful films, considered by some as apparent attempts to characterise a narrative representation of the Female Hero's Journey. For example, is *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) a narrative example of a Female Hero's Journey based on Campbell's mythological narrative pattern, or merely a representation of a female protagonist superimposed upon the archetypical male hero's journey? The research methodology I will use represents an original approach to standard theoretical analyses of media texts (Berger 2014). Others might evaluate the selected film texts using the established methodological models found in discourse analysis, feminist criticism, cultural studies,

²² I do not dismiss feminist critiques of Campbell and agree that a new female hero narrative model is needed. Nevertheless, to exhaust the evidence on this debate would enlarge the chapters of the current work prodigiously, without making the narrative foundations of the emerging mythological 'Female Hero's Journey' any clearer. However, this important historical debate will both inform and be expanded upon in my future research.

²³ See Stephens and McCallum (2013: 78) and Nicholson (2011:187) for further discussion on this subject.

narrative and literary theory. I will instead approach my research by placing a specific emphasis on comparative narrative analysis of media texts against mythic structural models.

Since the 1970s, filmmakers have made use of the foundation provided by Joseph Campbell's comparative mythological research in its universalist approach to the archetypal narrative journey. Fortuitously, the three phases of his mythological model – Separation, Initiation and Return – are highly adaptable to the very basis of the three-act structure of screenplays (Field 1984 [1979]). However, Campbell's template is repeatedly interpreted as a single-gendered example of the hero's narrative pattern. With the noted exception of Batty (2011), and Vogler's non-academic approach (2007 [1998]), academic research undertaken in the field of the narrative structure of the hero's journey infrequently applies to the production of media texts.

Scope

Due to inherent space limitations, this thesis will not evaluate narrative non-fiction documentary film, Art House Cinema, television shows, adaptations,²⁴ 'Superheroes' in comics or films, nor engage in lengthy debates around feminist theories. It will instead discuss blockbuster English-speaking films, mostly within the action genre, and emerging story models which can be directly applied to narrative media texts. Whereas 'narratives'²⁵ can be seen as story-telling mechanisms which help audiences make sense of their world, the narrative constructions of best-selling blockbuster films often reflect mythological structures.²⁶

²⁴ Although originally female-authored, with female protagonists, the screen series *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* are not considered in this study as they are adaptations from literary works (Collins 2011; Roth 2011).

²⁵ Genette defines narrative as "the representation of an event or sequence of events, real or fictitious, by means of language" (Knight 1987:11). Because narrative is a "human phenomenon" it occurs in all aspects of everyday human life as well as in all forms of discourse, including literature, drama and film (Porter Abbott, H. 2002).

²⁶ For a discussion on the structuralist approach to blockbuster film narrative, see 'Introduction: Spectacle, Narrative and "Frontier" Mythology' in *Spectacular Narratives: Hollywood in the Age of the Blockbuster* (King 2000). See also 'The Structural Study of Myth' in *Structural Anthropology* by Lévi-Strauss (1968 [1957]), whose work catalysed the development of narratology and structuralism in general.

Blockbuster films²⁷ are specifically referenced here due to their high cultural impact, resulting from their interactive, participatory nature, wherein people re-watch them multiple times in order to join in the discussion with an audience united in a “common cause” (Shone 2004: 37).

Joseph Campbell and Mythology in the Field of Screenwriting Research

Scholarly research on screenwriting in recent years has highlighted the importance of the screenwriting industry, the role of the screenwriter and the screenplay itself. While academic works on screenwriting have been published within the field of film and screen studies (Boon 2008; Corliss 1975; Murphy 2007; Stempel 1991), scope remains for further research. As Baker, Batty, Beattie and Davis point out, the formation of the Screenwriting Research Network (2006) and the *Journal of Screenwriting* (2009) have given rise to greater recognition of screenwriting as a serious field of research (Baker et al. 2015).²⁸ This, according to Sternberg, has given screenwriting a “more sustained and diversified theorization under various framings, such as history, authorship, culture, philosophy and poetics” (Sternberg 2014). The emergence of screenwriting as a research discipline has seen the field expand beyond comparisons of creative writing and literary studies to include a focus not just on the screenplay, but on screenwriting, which has been under-represented in the academy.

Similarly, Joseph Campbell’s body of work has, to date, been largely excluded from the scholarly literature of narrative analysis. His mythological narrative model has more in

²⁷ Paramount Pictures’ Michael Eisner (1976 -1984) defined ‘blockbuster’ films: “The super-grossers are things that become cultural phenomena” (Eisner quoted in Shone 2004: 28). Blockbusters don’t usually win Oscars (39), but have sired “a small cottage industry of academic analysis devoted to [their] subtextual nooks and semiological crannies,” including Feminist, Marxist and Freudian debates, particularly surrounding the 1979 film, *Alien* (94).

²⁸ Baker et al. (2015) accentuate scholarly works, many Australian-based, published in recent years, on: historical studies on screenwriting (Maras 2009; Nelmes 2013; Price 2010; 2013); the screenplay as object of research (Nelmes 2010); and critical studies of screenwriting practice (Batty 2011; Lee 2013; Millard 2014).

common with Jungian analysis and the unity of the individual than theories of narrative analysis which sit within a long tradition of Russian formalist, structuralist and poststructuralist canons of scholarly literature. Indeed, Joseph Campbell continues to remain outside the traditional linguistic approach to understanding the formation of cultural meaning and identity through the analysis of narrative structure,²⁹ or the way “aesthetic manipulation of language produce[s] the interpretive cooperation of the addressee” (Eco 1979: vii).

However, as discussed in this thesis, it is evident that Campbell’s monomyth has been widely applied by screenwriters beyond the academy, including highly successful contemporary filmmakers such as George Lucas and George Miller. Because the stories told by these filmmakers have been powerfully influential, Campbell’s thinking has had a substantial impact on contemporary culture. Further, Joseph Campbell’s work can be seen as the genesis for the development of a newly-emerging paradigm from within the Hero’s Journey narrative pattern to include the recognition of a Female Hero’s Journey narrative model.³⁰ Therefore, because Campbell’s narrative structure remains highly influential for screenwriters and filmmakers alike, further research and discussion of his ideas by the academy, within the field of film and screen studies, is justified.

Professor Lillian E. Doherty postulates that the classical study of myths might benefit from an examination of the way folk tales show us that the ‘same’ story can be narrated in completely different ways towards different ends, thus highlighting mythology’s “simultaneous persistence and changeability” (2001: 164). As evidenced in fan fiction, where “fans own the characters” (Schultz 2001; cited in Doherty 2001: 168), contemporary audiences yearn for

²⁹ In particular, see Claude Lévi-Strauss in: 'The Structural Study of Myth' in: *Structural Anthropology* (1968 [1957]); *Structural Anthropology II* (1976); and *Myth and Meaning* (2001 [1978]).

³⁰ See Discussion and Analyses of *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) and *Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens* (2015) in the current study.

identification with the characters in the modern retellings of mythological hero stories, now propagating across our screens. Henry Jenkins further noted a correlation between the modern desire to reinterpret classical mythology and the original hero stories from Greek mythology. “Historically, these characters belonged to all the storytellers within that community” (Jenkins 1992: cited in Doherty 2001: 169). Recent Box Office figures³¹ have begun to reflect an agreement among today’s cinema audiences that the narrative formula of the male hero ‘monomyth’ is fully ripe for reinterpretation and retelling from the contemporary female hero’s point of view.

Aims

This study poses the question: Is there evidence of a female equivalent of Joseph Campbell’s mythological formula for ‘The Hero’s Journey’ in contemporary narrative media? The research question will be addressed by undertaking a narrative analysis of *Mad Max: Fury Road* (Miller 2015) and *Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens* (Abrams, J. J. 2015),³² as discussed within the structural context of the mythological Hero’s Journey model (Campbell 2008 [1949]). This analysis will be conducted in further dialogue with recently-offered mythologically-based models proposed by contemporary female authors, which, coming from the writer’s perspective, more closely approach application to narrative media texts (McCarthy 2016). My research aims not only to critically address the central relevance of mythological structure as a basis for establishing an authentic Female Hero’s Journey narrative pattern, but to propose a pathway to an innovative narrative model which can be directly applied to the production of screen texts.

³¹ See Box Office Mojo (2015).

³² Both *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) and *Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens* (2015) fall within the action-adventure and science fiction-fantasy genres.

Chapter 1

Mythological Narrative Models and the Female Hero's Journey

An evaluation of influential theorists, whose work relates to the field of the Female Hero's Journey in narrative media, reveals that there remains a need for an archetypal narrative model for the mythological structure of the Female Hero's Journey, which can be directly applied to screen texts. Although flaws are noted in the research of Vladimir Propp, Joseph Campbell and Maureen Murdock, each has made a significant contribution to this field. When viewed in combination, together with 'Heroine's Journey' models proposed by Victoria Lynn Schmidt, Valerie E. Frankel and most recently, Patti McCarthy, their works provide a firm foundation for further productive research towards formulating a pathway to a revised narrative model for the Female Hero's Journey in narrative media.¹

Vladimir Propp – *Morphology of the Folk Tale* 1928

Propp's Morphological Approach to the Structure of Folktales

Vladimir Propp belonged to the Russian Formalist School of literary criticism (1915 – 1930). His influential analysis of Russian folktales (Propp 1968 [1928]) concluded that all folktales are based on a recurring pattern of set characters and plot actions. His character functions can be seen in application to the plot structures of various film and literary texts, such as *Star Wars* (Lucas 1977), *Harry Potter* (Rowling 1997) and *North by Northwest* (Hitchcock 1959). Propp designated seven spheres of action corresponding to different functions of the *dramatis personae*: villain; donor (provider); helper; princess (or sought after); dispatcher; hero (or

¹ Whereas 'heroine' connotes female characters who are "passive, submissive, and helpless" (Lieberman 1987: 190), the developing convention of the empowered female protagonist is better reflected in the term 'female hero'.

victim); and false hero (1968 [1928]: 25). He identified six stages in plot structure: preparation; complication; transference; struggle; return; and recognition, which he distilled into thirty-one constant and limited but recurring functions (Propp 1968 [1928]: 21; Stam et al. 1992: 80). Propp's method, especially his character functions, has been employed by literary theorists such as Barthes and Pavel, as well as feminist theorists in defining gender codes in literature and film (Stam et al. 1992: 80; Warner 1995). Yet, some critics disagree that morphological analysis of film texts is appropriate, arguing there are no sound reasons for film theorists to conclude that films share an underlying structure with folk tales (Bordwell 1988: 16).

Weaknesses in Propp's Approach

It is commonly agreed among folklorists that Propp's motif and type indexes remain indispensable yet flawed (Dundes 1997; Jorgensen 2014: 17). Propp attempted to verify rather than analyse the narrative pattern he established for the Hero myth (Segal 1999: 117). Although later remediated by Hans-Jörg Uther (2008), Propp's tale types employed selective labelling which obscured the importance of female characters (Lundell 1986: 152). Perhaps because "the folk frequently gave male oriented titles," Propp's structural analysis frequently assumed that all 'heroes' are male (Jorgensen 2014: 18-19), or fit the masculine tale type (Holbek 1998: 381). Propp's motif index not only overlooked gender identity in its labelling, but focused on male activity while disregarding female activity (Lundell 1986: 150). Thus the female hero, when portrayed in narrative, often falls into Propp's donor or provider function (1968 [1928]: 39). Specifically, Propp did not sever the character function of the princess from her father's, treating them as a single sphere of action. "The princess and her father cannot be exactly delineated from each other according to functions" (79-80). Further, Propp privileged the father's role by analysing folktales from his point of view, assigning mothers to donor or

villain roles. Propp thus not only disclosed the patriarchal character of traditional marriage, but, by sending women to the background and constructing alliances which set women against women, reproduced the weight of male power in the folk tale (Warner 1995: 238).

The Science of Morphological Structure Vs the Poetry of Mythological Structure

Formalists like Vladimir Propp advocated a ‘scientific’ method for studying poetic language to the exclusion of traditional psychological and cultural-historical approaches. While Propp’s 1928 work on formalist structure in folktales had been suppressed by the Soviets, it resurfaced to influence the 1960s structuralists, who were inspired by its representation of a new, objective method of analysing narrative structure. Propp’s legacy can thus be seen in the way the Formalist model influenced modern literary criticism as it developed in the structuralist and post-structuralist periods (Stam et al. 1992: 10). Formalists were more interested in narrative structure than the representational and expressive aspects of texts (10). Propp believed in the possibility of making “an examination of the forms of the [folk] tale which will be as exact as the morphology of organic formations” 1968 [1928]: xxv). He stated:

The word ‘morphology’ means the study of forms. In botany, the term ‘morphology’ means the study of the component parts of a plant, of their relationship to each other and to the whole – in other words, the study of a plant’s structure” (1968 [1928]: xxv).

Joseph Campbell’s more Romantic view of myths stands in opposition to rationalists, for whom myth is the counterpart to science. Segal posits the scientific model as more exclusively modern (1999a: 136). Whereas for rationalists, science can explain the *function* of a myth, Romantics believe their more psychological approach better explains the *content* of myth.² I agree with Campbell’s statement that:

² “Myth is an attempt to explain, in rational terms, facts not yet rationally understood” (Le Guin 1982: 73), and when the genuine myth rises into consciousness, its message is always the same: you must change your life (78).

Wherever the poetry of myth is interpreted as biography, history, or science, it is killed. The living images become only remote facts of a distant time or sky. Furthermore, it is never difficult to demonstrate that as science and history mythology is absurd. When a civilization begins to reinterpret its mythology in this way, the life goes out of it, temples become museums, and the link between the two perspectives is dissolved (2008 [1949]: 213).

Whereas Morphology studied fixed forms as a science, like biology (Propp 1968 [1928]: xxv), Mythology is alive and fluid, like poetry (Campbell 2008 [1949]: 213). A mythological approach to narrative is thus more adaptable to the needs of any evolving contemporary culture.

Joseph Campbell – Mythology and The Hero's Journey

Campbell's Influential Monomyth 1949

The hero archetype,³ found in the disciplines of history, mythology, art and literature,⁴ (Lord Raglan 2003 [1936]) anthropology, philosophy, and psychology (Pearson, C. and Pope 1981; Segal 2000), now features prominently in popular cinematic texts: *Star Wars* (Lucas 1977), *Mad Max* (Miller 1979), *The Lord of the Rings* (Jackson 2001), and *Game of Thrones* (Benioff et al. 2011-). Joseph Campbell delineated the structure of the 'monomyth'⁵ in his persuasive 1949 monograph, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* [*THWATF*] (2008 [1949]). In it, he outlined the basic conditions, stages, and results of the archetypal hero's adventure, and asserted a single essential pattern of heroic journey that all cultures have shared in their various

³ The word 'hero' is derived from the Greek word *hērōs*, which means 'warrior' and 'defender.' A hero is someone who is ready to sacrifice to protect the greater good; who *must* sacrifice in order to transform him or herself and the world he/she is attempting to save, because "the dragon to be slain by him is precisely the monster of the status quo" (Campbell 2008 [1949]: 289).

⁴ Lord Raglan provided a list of heroic traits in *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama* (2003 [1936]:174-5), applying this pattern of traits to heroes across time, from Oedipus to Robin Hood (175-85).

⁵ Campbell borrowed the term 'monomyth' from James Joyce for whom he wrote *A Skeleton Key* (2005 [1944]).

heroic myths (416). Numerous science-fiction films, in addition to the initial *Star Wars* trilogy (1977-1983), reflect Campbell's monomythic plot structure.⁶

Bill Moyers' television series *The Power of Myth* (Campbell and Moyers 1988) introduced Campbell's ideas to millions of people, such that the application of his narrative structure for the Hero's Journey is now evidenced not just in film, but also in many forms of popular storytelling. Campbell's own words reflect his universalist approach to mythology:

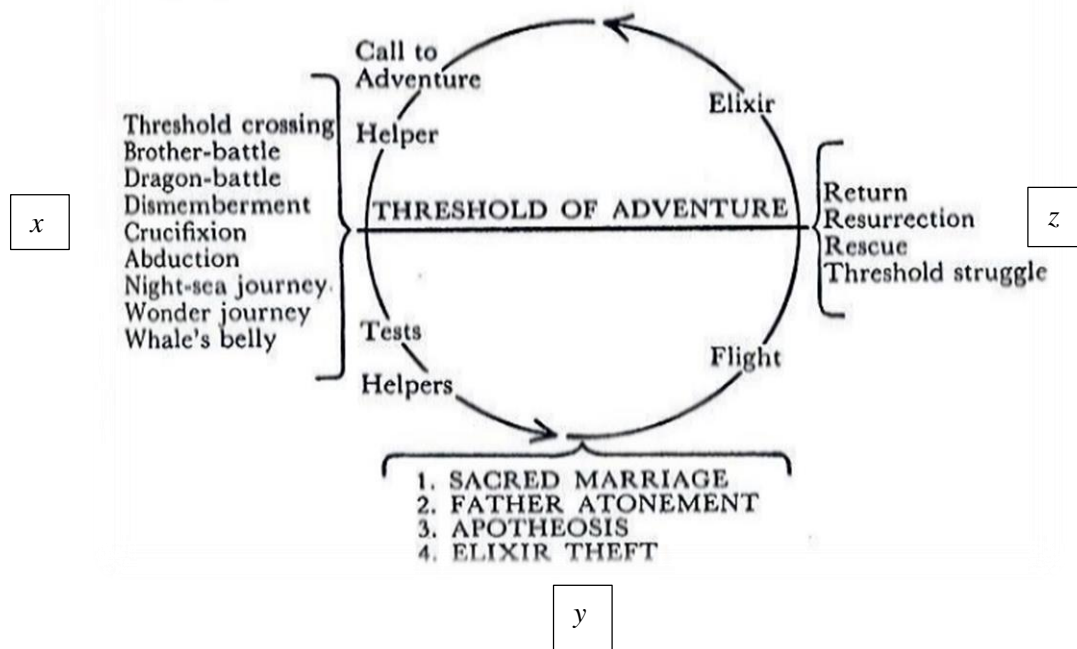
Mythology has been interpreted by the modern intellect as a primitive, fumbling effort to explain the world of nature (Frazer 1922); as a production of poetical fantasy from prehistoric times, misunderstood by succeeding ages (Müller 1894); as a repository of allegorical instruction, to shape the individual to his group (Durkheim 1961); as a group dream, symptomatic of archetypal urges within the depths of the human psyche (Jung 1959 [1934]); as the traditional vehicle of man's profoundest metaphysical insights (Coomaraswamy 1916); and as God's revelation to His children (the Church). Mythology is all of these. The various judgements are determined by the view points of the judges. For when scrutinized in terms not of what it is but of how it functions, of how it has served mankind in the past, of how it may serve today, mythology shows itself to be as amenable as life itself to the obsessions and requirements of the individual, the race, the age (2008 [1949]: 330).

Unlike Propp's pattern, 'Initiation' is an essential component of Campbell's narrative model. Campbell contends that it "has always been the prime function of mythology and rite to supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward..." (2008 [1949]: 7). The hero's journey or monomyth represents a rite of passage comprising three necessary stages: Departure; Initiation; and Return (41, 81, 167). A succinct version of the journey detailed on page 211 appears with the addition of a circular graphic in the paperback edition:

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder [x]: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won [y]; the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man [z] (1993 [1949]: 30).

⁶ A partial list includes: *The Time Machine* (1960), *Time After Time* (1979), *Escape from New York* (1981), *Tron* (1982), *Dreamscape* (1984), *The Last Starfighter* (1984), *Dune* (1984), *The Terminator* (1984), *Back to the Future* (1985), and *Total Recall* (1990).

THE adventure can be summarized in the following diagram:



The Hero's Journey Summary (1993 [1949]: 245)

Joseph Campbell is criticised both for “oversimplification and ahistoricism” (Keller 1986: 54), and for citing multiple illustrative myths for individual sections of his hero narrative while neglecting to cite one which represents his entire pattern (Segal 1999: 129). Yet his work remains highly influential, since the stages of the Hero's Journey are easily adapted to modern storytelling in both film and game design (Schell 2008: 77).

Joseph Campbell's Monomythic Structure applied to Narrative Media

George Lucas was the first Hollywood writer/director to publicly credit the influence of Campbell's narrative model on his film. Lucas stated that his story for *Star Wars* (1977) was shaped by ideas described in Campbell's work:

It was very eerie because in reading *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* I began to realize that my first draft of *Star Wars* was following classic motifs... so I modified my next draft [of *Star Wars*] according to what I'd been learning about classical motifs and made it a bit more consistent (Larsen and Larsen 1991: 541).

George Lucas freely acknowledges the influence of reading Campbell's *THWATF* (2008 [1949]) and *The Masks of God* (1986) on his *Star Wars* films (McCarthy 2015), which emphasised individual heroism; a theme, according to Robert Ellwood, which was "dear to Joseph Campbell's heart" (1999: 128).⁷ Campbell stressed that the individual heroes of all great stories are symbolic vehicles. Thus, while *Star Wars* appears to be themed around heroic conquests and the cause of individualism against tyranny, its narrative premise highlights the "ultimate futility of grasping for power" (129).⁸

Australian director George Miller is also widely cited as having credited the influence of Joseph Campbell's work related to the hero's journey, particularly on his second *Mad Max* film, *The Road Warrior* (1981). After the first *Mad Max* (1979) film was embraced by non-English-speaking critics around the world, Miller was puzzled. When he became aware that a Japanese critic likened his film characters to Samurai warriors, and Scandinavians saw the spirit of the Vikings in his film, Miller stated:

I began to feel that we had struck a lot of mythological chords with *Mad Max*, [as if] we who had put the film together were the unwitting servants of the collective unconscious (Barra 1999).

George Miller went on to read Campbell's *THWATF* (2008 [1949]) to study the Hero's Journey archetype, along with Carl Jung's works, as he conceived *Mad Max: The Road Warrior* (1981) while living in California in 1980 (Barra 1999; Douglas 2015).⁹

⁷ Robert Ellwood saw *Star Wars* (1977) as containing themes from traditional folklore and mythology made famous by Campbell: "the hero who is of noble blood but doesn't know it (Luke Skywalker), the intelligent robots in the role of companion animal or faithful 'sidekick' like Don Quixote's Sancho Panza" (1999: 128).

⁸ Ellwood claimed that the dreamlike quality of the film reflected Campbell's belief that myth, dream and literature "all came from the same place" (129).

⁹ Christopher Sharrett pointed to pp.175-383 of Joseph Campbell's *The Masks of God* (1968), which examined the mythology of individuation, in illuminating Campbell's influence on Miller's *The Road Warrior* (1985: 91).

Joseph Campbell's story model and narrative archetypes have been sourced by Hollywood story consultant, Christopher Vogler, to create a simplified guide in *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers and Screenwriters* (2007 [1998]), enabling writers to use the hero's journey as a practical framework for narrative structure. He reduced Campbell's seventeen stages of the hero's journey to twelve:

1. Ordinary World
 2. Call to Adventure
 3. Refusal of the Call
 4. Meeting with the Mentor
 5. Crossing the First Threshold
 6. Tests, Allies, Enemies
 7. Approaching to the Inmost Cave
 8. Ordeal
 9. Reward (Seizing the Sword)
 10. The Road Back
 11. Resurrection
 12. Returning with the Elixir
- (2007 [1998]: 8)

While Vogler's model made Campbell's work more accessible, it has been criticised for being over-formulaic.¹⁰ Yet, because so many video games are themed around heroism, it remains a relevant, simplified structure in application to narrative in game design (Schell 2008: 273).

Dozens of films, as wide-ranging as *An Officer and a Gentleman* (Hackford 1982), *Beverly Hills Cop* (Brest 1984), *The Lion King* (Allers 1994), *Pulp Fiction* (Tarantino 1994), *Titanic* (Cameron 1997), and *The Full Monty* (Cattaneo 1997), have been shown to reflect Campbell's original monomyth in their narrative structure (Vogler 2007 [1998]). *The Matrix* (Wachowski and Wachowski 1999) and *Kill Bill: Vol. 1* (Tarantino 2003) are further examples of popular film texts influenced by Campbell's narrative model. However, as identified by

¹⁰ However, Vogler noted that the order of the stages as presented is just one of many possible variations. "The stages can be deleted, added to, and drastically shuffled without losing any of their power" (Vogler 2007: 19-20).

O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, these have been criticised for supporting the typical American ideology of individual power over the importance of the whole society (2006: 310).¹¹

Although originally the work of Kristen Brennan,¹² the following chart was reprinted with permission in the monograph, *David Perry on Game Design: A Brainstorming Toolbox* (Perry and DeMaria 2009: 78-79), and appears here slightly modified for clarity. It shows the seventeen stages of Campbell's monomyth in application to the structure of *Star Wars* (1977) and *The Matrix* (1999).¹³

Joseph Campbell's Narrative Model

I: Departure

1. The Call to Adventure
2. Refusal of the Call
3. Supernatural Aid/ Meeting Mentor
4. Crossing the First Threshold
5. The Belly of the Whale

II: Initiation

6. The Road of Trials
7. The Meeting with the Goddess
8. Woman as the Temptress¹⁴
9. Atonement with the Father
10. Apotheosis (becoming god-like)
11. The Ultimate Boon

III: Return

12. Refusal of the Return
13. The Magic Flight
14. Rescue from Without
15. Crossing the Return Threshold
16. Master of the Two Worlds
17. Freedom to Live

Star Wars (1977)

Princess Leia's message
Luke must help with the harvest
Obi-wan rescues Luke from the Sand People
Escaping Tatooine agents
Trash compactor

Light saber practice
Princess Leia
Luke is tempted by the Dark Side

Darth Vader and Luke reconcile

Luke becomes a Jedi
Death Star destroyed

"Luke, come on!"
Luke wants to stay to avenge Obi-Wan
Millennium Falcon
Han Solo saves Luke from Darth Vader
Millennium Falcon destroys the pursuing TIE fighters
Victory ceremony

Rebellion is victorious over Empire

The Matrix (1999)

"Follow the white rabbit"
Neo won't climb out window
Trinity extracts the "bug" from Neo
Capture Neo/ he takes the red pill
Torture room/ awakens in a pod

Sparring with Morpheus
The Oracle
Cypher (the failed messiah) is tempted by the world of comfortable illusions
Neo rescues and comes to agree (that he's The One) with his father-figure, Morpheus
Neo becomes The One
Humanity's salvation now within reach

Neo fights agent instead of running

"Jacking in"
Trinity saves Neo from agents
Neo fights Agent Smith
Neo declares victory over machines in final phone call
Humans are victorious over machines

¹¹ Robert Ellwood, among others, disagrees with Campbell's 'monomyth' because of its perceived tendency to oversimplify different cultures. He saw in Jung's archetypes, Eliade's structuralism, and Campbell's monomyth (1999: 174) the "tendency to think in generic terms of people, races, religions... [which is] undoubtedly the profoundest flaw in mythological thinking" (x).

¹² www.moongadget.com/origins/myth.html

¹³ Bruce Isaacs notes that "*The Matrix* offers neatly formed parcels of traditional mythology, accessible and imminently recognisable to a greater part of the viewing audience" (2004).

¹⁴ Vogler cautions that *Woman as the Temptress* and *The Meeting with the Goddess* are misleading. The energy of these stages may be male or female because archetypes have positive and negative sides (2007 [1998]: 168).

Structuralist Narrative Models – Criticism of Selectivity of Texts

Both Propp and Campbell selected texts for analysis which either concluded with the folk tale marriage motif (Propp 1968 [1928]) or myths exclusive to the Hero type (Campbell 2008 [1949]). The outcomes of both these narrative types have historically privileged the status of male characters (Doherty 2001: 76; Plant 2012: 104). Such narratives were embedded in and thereby serve to perpetuate patriarchal ideologies (Stephens and McCallum 2013: 64). The structuralist models in classical studies of heroes (Dundes 1997; Lord Raglan 2003 [1936]; Rank 1990 [1909]),¹⁵ which follow the sequential structure of the hero's life story, all conceptualize a pattern in which the hero is male by default (Jorgensen 2014: 19). Although Campbell allows for female heroes (Campbell and Moyers 1988: 125) and provides some example tales (2008 [1949]), he too has been criticized for presupposing male heroes in *THWATF* (Segal 1990: xvii).

In her book, *Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood*, Merlin Stone has criticised the existing gender bias among predominantly male scholars of Ancient History and Mythology, stating that their research was never objective because of subjective selection of themes and texts (1979: 12). According to Stone, by choosing to begin their studies with Homer and Ancient Greece, most ignored at least two thousand years of earlier written accounts of human history (10). She documented images and narratives of women from a wide variety of religious and mythological origins, previously ignored by male scholars. Stone claimed, justifiably, that these portray women not only as courageous heroes, but as providers and teachers of law, initiators of important cultural developments and prophets of ultimate wisdom (9).

¹⁵ Otto Rank's work in *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*, while influenced by Freud, with whom he later broke irrevocably, "offers a striking foil to Campbell's largely Jungian analysis" of the hero myth (Segal 1990: ix).

The Female Hero's Journey – The Need for a Mythological Narrative Model

It is the historical period which determines the kind of hero needed or even possible at a given moment in history (Segal 2000: 2). In the cultural context, the hero's appearance can be interpreted as a product of a society at a certain developmental stage (Segal 1990a: 3; Spencer 1874). This explains why the characteristics of heroes may vary as they adapt to the circumstances and needs of their particular era. Having recreated them, cultures then use heroes as a guide to feeling, thinking and decision-making (Knight, S. 2015: 2). However, while heroes act in accordance with their times (Carlyle 1897; Hook 1955; Segal 1990a: 5), they may be either male or female (Campbell 2008 [1949]: 14; Hook 1955: 154; Polster 1992: 49). Covington argues the need to incorporate the hero/heroine spectrum so that both of their aspects can be valued together (1989: 253). George Miller claims that the feminist notion of his female warrior hero, *Imperator Furiosa* (Miller 2015), evolved out of the mechanics of his story, as part of a canon of superhero movies telling stories that were conducive to their time (Patten 2015). Contemporary Writer/Transmedia Producer Maya Zuckerman posits a further argument for evolving the monomyth's archetypal pairing from the Masculine Hero/Female Sidekick to a Champion/Steward partnership of either sex, in order to more appropriately address contemporary audiences (2015).

Many scholars agree that the narrative of the hero's journey evolves to meet the needs of the times. Yet there remains a need to define and articulate the narrative pattern for a specifically female hero's journey, which can be applied to narrative media. To date, a proliferation of warrior heroes has been valorised in a canon of blockbuster films wherein the hero resolves conflict through violence. There is a need for alternative portrayals of heroes that show both

male and female audiences that there are other ways of being a contemporary hero, apart from enacting the aggressive male warrior archetype.

Previous research in this field has attempted to reinterpret the male model of the hero's narrative journey. Some scholars have sought to transpose Joseph Campbell's archetypal sequences of 'separation', 'initiation' and 'return' (2008 [1949]) into archetypal patterns for the female hero's narrative arc (Pearson, C. and Pope 1981). Such studies have been censured for their predictably politicized feminist positions (Dickie 1983) or their failure to address the central importance of myth (Allen, J. A. 1982).¹⁶ Other investigations in this field have been themed around the valorization of motherhood (Frankel 2010) or healing the mother-daughter split (Murdock 1990). Additional research has addressed the topic of the heroine from the varied approaches of Jungian psychology (Pearson, C. S. 2013), gestalt therapy (Polster 1992), or through modern fantasy (Campbell, L. M. 2014), fairy tale (Haase 2004) and screenwriting analyses (Vogler 2007 [1998]).¹⁷ However, much of this former research has neglected to foreground Campbell's mythological emphasis.

Valerie E. Frankel Mythological Model – The Heroine's Journey towards Motherhood

Although Joseph Campbell's compelling pattern for the hero's journey has proven popular, many female readers feel it lacks an understanding that the heroine's journey may be parallel

¹⁶ Pearson and Pope named the three primary stages of the female hero's journey, in which "the protagonist is faced with a powerful figure to interpret, a dragon to slay, and a treasure to win", as: *The Exit from the Garden*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, and *A Woman is Her Mother* (1981: 68). Their 'Return' stage of the female hero's quest is largely devoted to a discussion of literary feminist utopias (260-278). Although the authors set out 'to do for the female protagonist what Joseph Campbell had done for the male hero', their study drew criticism in that "they neither know nor greatly care about myth" (Allen 1982).

¹⁷ Christopher Vogler recommends that while the Hero's Journey archetypal narrative pattern applies, in theory, to both male and female heroes, writers might look to Jungian feminist theorists Maureen Murdock and Clarissa Pinkola Estés, as well as the work of Merlin Stone and Jean Shinoda Bolen for alternative paradigms for the woman's journey (2007: xxii).

but different from the male hero's journey. The female hero faces different challenges on her mythological journey and her interests and goal(s) may differ.¹⁸ Campbell himself acknowledged this difference, as quoted in *Goddesses: Mysteries of the Feminine Divine*:

I taught at a women's college for nearly four decades, and as I said to my students, all I can tell you about mythology is what men have said and have experienced, and now women have to tell us from their point of view what the possibilities of the feminine future are.... There is something that the world hasn't really recognized yet in the female, something that we are waiting now to see (2013: 263-64).¹⁹

Previous authors have attempted to offer mythological keys to the female hero's journey through examining either the patriarchal shift away from ancient goddess worship (Eisler 1988); Jungian archetypes interpreted through Greek goddesses (Bolen 1984); a therapeutic roadmap for feminine healing (Murdock 1990); or tales of the wild woman archetype (Pinkola Estés 1992). None are directed towards narrative structure in the production of film texts.

However, like each of the above-mentioned feminist authors, Valerie Estelle Frankel offers a mythologically-based heroine's journey that differs from that of the male hero. Significantly, her model is similar in structure to Joseph Campbell's monomyth (Frankel 2010). Like Campbell, Frankel drew upon diverse historic sources (8-10) including eastern and western mythologies, religious and literary texts, and Jungian archetypes (173) to establish a pattern for a journey of the self towards wholeness (22). In *From Girl to Goddess: The Heroine's Journey through Myth and Legend*, Valerie Estelle Frankel describes her model:

¹⁸ Science fiction author Ursula K. Le Guin railed against the dominance of the male Hero in traditional Western narratives, which celebrate "the use of long, hard objects for sticking, bashing and killing" (1996: 151), and posits the feminine alternative of a cultural carrier bag, in which stories are less linear and "not apocalyptic at all" (154).
¹⁹ Robert Ellwood explained that "as [Campbell] became more interested in, and positive toward, feminine values in myth, [he] spoke of the ancient Hebrew conquest of Canaan as a truly egregious example of pastoral fighting people subjugating the feminine and promoting warlike attitudes" (1999: 163). Campbell declared in *The Power of Myth*, while explaining the origins of what Ellwood describes as the dolorous patriarchal monotheism that has long afflicted Western culture, that "the Yahweh cult was a specific movement in the Hebrew community, which finally won. This was a pushing through of a certain temple-bound god against the nature cult, which was celebrated all over the place, [especially by women]. And this imperialistic thrust of a certain in-group culture is continued in the West" (Campbell & Moyers 1988: 21).

The heroine's journey is a path of cleverness and intuition, buoyed by water and earth. It is a path of circular logic, of kindness, of creativity so forceful that the world shapes itself to a wish. It is a path of birth and patience, or guardianship, but never of passivity. Women's work, nowadays devalued as folk craft and biological urges and time wasting, is the work that has conquered and preserved nations. It is as White Buffalo Calf Woman told the Lakota women: The work of their hands and the fruit of their bodies keep the people alive. "You are from the Mother Earth," she said. "What you are doing is as great as warriors do." This is the path of the great mother goddess, destroying mountains and creating civilizations. And each woman journeying toward insight, toward adventure, toward motherhood, toward wisdom is following this path, just as great Astarte, valiant Judith, passionate Isolde, and even sweet Cinderella once did (2010: 10).

Frankel's monograph begins in agreement with Campbell's articulation of the narrative model for the Hero's Journey, which she paraphrases: "The hero feels something's lacking in his life. He then goes off to recover it or to discover a life-giving elixir. There's a cycle of going and returning" (Campbell and Moyers 1988: 123; Frankel 2010: 2). She also concurs that the hero's struggle to confront the ultimate enemy, which represents the "submerged half" of his own dark side, often represents a war with the father figure, as Campbell claimed, stating that this is most apparent in the climax of George Lucas' film *Star Wars* (1977), with Darth Vader's line, "Luke, I am your father" (Frankel 2010: 2-3). Yet Frankel indicates that while Campbell explained that the hero's mentor bestows on him Excalibur, (or a Light saber), none of the fairy tale heroines she had studied carried swords (3). And while she notes that Campbell provides the possibility of the hero being female by offering the feminine myth of Inanna's underworld descent, to explain the stage where the hero descends into almost certain death (Campbell 2008 [1949]: 87-89), Frankel points out that none of the patterns she was seeing in stories about heroines contained the "sword-young warrior-dark lord-kingship struggle" (2010: 3).

Campbell had stated that for the hero in classical mythology, "The mystical marriage with the queen goddess of the world represents the hero's total mastery of life, for the woman is life, the hero its master and knower" (1993 [1949]: 120). From this statement, Frankel concluded that the hero quest "provides an unbalanced and unfair view of the world. In today's society,

women oppressed by hero myths see only two choices: Be the helpless princess sobbing for rescue, or be the knight... armored against the natural world, featureless behind a helmet. Only men or those who act like them, with business suits and power lunches and strategy charts, will succeed” (2010: 3).

Frankel provides a commentary on her Heroine’s Journey model with a comparison to Joseph Campbell’s monomyth, including a graph, in her unauthorized guide and commentary on the Television Series *True Blood* (2008–2014) and its related book series *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* (Harris 2001), titled *Bloodsuckers on the Bayou: The Myths, Symbols and Tales Behind HBO’s True Blood* (Frankel 2013). Referring to Joseph Campbell’s hero’s journey quest, she states:

This quest, into the otherworld of fairyland or the dark underworld of death, represents facing one’s dark side and thus journeying into adulthood. It’s the most popular story pattern for fantasy, creating the foundation of plots from *Harry Potter* to *Star Wars*. [...] The heroine’s journey is similar, though not identical. The heroine is more likely to have a magical box (seen in the twelfth Sookie Stackhouse novel) or light (seen in the show’s sixth season) rather than a hero sword, wand, or lightsaber (2013: ebook, no pagination).

Campbell's Hero's Journey	Frankel's Heroine's Journey
The World of Common Day	The World of Common Day
The Call To Adventure	The Call To Adventure
Refusal of the Call	Refusal of the Call
Supernatural Aid	The Ruthless Mentor and the Bladeless Talisman
The Crossing of the First Threshold The Belly of the Whale	The Crossing of the First Threshold Opening One's Senses
The Road of Trials	Sidekicks, Trials, Adversaries
The Meeting With the Goddess Woman as the Temptress	Wedding the Animus Facing Bluebeard Finding the Sensitive Man Confronting the Powerless Father
Atonement with the Father Apotheosis	Descent into Darkness Atonement with the Mother Integration and Apotheosis
The Ultimate Boon	Reward: Winning the Family
Refusal of the Return The Magic Flight Rescue From Without The Crossing of the Return Threshold	Torn Desires The Magic Flight Reinstating the Family Return
Master of the Two Worlds	Power over Life and Death
Freedom To Live	Ascension of the New Mother

(Frankel 2013: ebook, no pagination)

Taking up the argument that clever, creative heroines have always existed, from ancient goddesses to the heroines of popular fiction, Frankel posits that girls may follow such journey examples by “forming a family circle they can rule as supreme nurturer and protector”, which, according to Frankel, is the heroine’s journey, “the true goal of which is to become this archetypal, all-powerful mother” (3-4). Here Frankel introduces a significant difference between her heroine’s journey and Campbell’s monomyth: *The Bladeless Talisman*. According to the model on which she later elaborates (read anticlockwise), heroines set out on rescue missions to restore their shattered families, working as hard as any fairy tale heroes, and “they do it without swords” (4).²⁰

Valerie E. Frankel’s Model: *The Heroine’s Journey*



(Frankel 2010: 121)

²⁰ Donna Haraway, citing death-dealing metaphors in technoscience narratives, shares Le Guin’s frustration with ‘killer’ hero narratives (Grebowicz & Merrick 2013: 131) in her desire for “stories which do not reveal secrets acquired by heroes pursuing luminous objects across and through the plot matrix of the world” (2004: 127).

Strengths and Weaknesses of Frankel's Mythological Model

Like Maureen Murdock, writing two decades prior (1990), Valerie Estelle Frankel endeavoured to chart feminine alternatives to narrative elements in Joseph Campbell's mythological model (Croft 2011).²¹ For example, Frankel augmented Campbell's "The Call to Adventure" with 'a desire to reconnect with the feminine' (2010: 20); substituted "Confronting the Powerless Father" for Campbell's "Meeting with the Goddess"; "Atonement with the Mother" for Campbell's "Atonement with the Father"; and "Power over Life and Death" for Campbell's "Master of the Two Worlds" (Campbell 2008 [1949]; Frankel 2010: 121). However, her final stage, "Ascension of the New Mother" as a substitute for Campbell's "Freedom to Live", limits the field of female success to the role of mother, and has been criticized for undercutting any true freedom for women (Laity 2014).²²

Not all of the stories Frankel offered as examples match her claim that "the true goal of the heroine is to become this archetypal, all-powerful mother" (2010: 4). Not all women see the female hero within the gender confinement of women's usefulness as "man's saviours and protectors", as Frankel's pattern appears to suggest (317). While Frankel's Heroine's Journey narrative model was based on women's literature, folktales and mythology, and can thus stand in comparison to Campbell's mythological model, it fails to offer a narrative pattern to satisfy the majority of contemporary women. Many authors have attempted to offer keys to the female

²¹ Frankel's work owes much to the previous writings of Maureen Murdock (1990). Frankel cites a passage from Murdock (Frankel 2010: 131; Murdock 1990:18), who is also correctly citing from Kathie Carlson's book, *In Her Image: The Unhealed Daughter's Search for Her Mother* (1989: 55). The quoted text is fundamentally relevant to Murdock and Frankel's shared points of difference with Campbell. The passage, quoted in full by all three authors, relates to the heroine's split from her mother, wherein the daughter projects the negative aspects of Jung's 'devouring feminine' archetype onto her mother (Carlson 1989: 55; Murdock 1990:18; Frankel 2010: 131). This mother/daughter split, and later reconnection with the feminine, is a significant point of departure from Campbell's 'Atonement with the Father', a concept first proposed by Murdock, then later by Frankel.

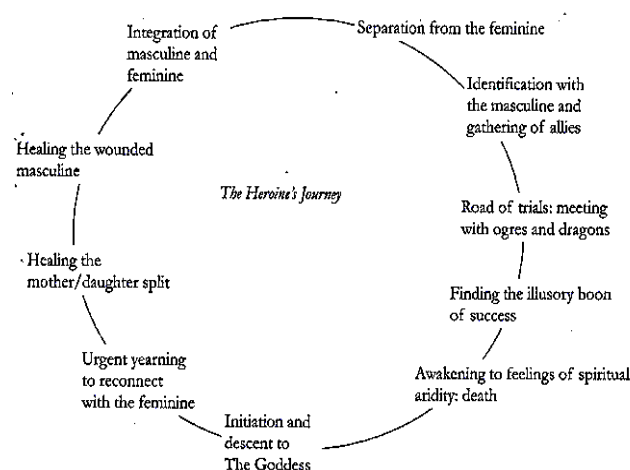
²² Terri Frontgia contested Joseph Campbell's model for a similar reason: that the gendered stereotype and biological determinism of 'mother' delimits the female paradigm (16).

hero's journey. Most are not specifically directed at narrative structure in the production of film texts. My research aims to fill this gap in the literature.

Maureen Murdock's Heroine's Journey – Healing the Mother-Daughter Split

Maureen Murdock, author of *The Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholeness* (1990), is a family therapist and educational consultant. Her book, an exploration of the feminine psyche, proposed a clockwise model for the heroine's journey to wholeness, which she stated is derived in part from Joseph Campbell's model of the heroic quest (Murdock 1990: 3). "The language of the stages, however, is particular to women, and the model appeared to me in a very feminine way" (3). She summarized the journey as:

It began with a very abrupt rejection of the feminine as defined by me as dependent, overcontrolling, and full of rage. It continued with total submersion into the familiar outer heroic journey, complete with masculine allies, to achieve the boon of independence, prestige, money, power, and success. This is followed by a bewildering period of dryness and despair, which led to an inevitable descent to the underworld to meet *the dark feminine*. Out of this darkness came an urgent need to heal what I call the *mother/daughter split*, the *deep feminine wound*. The return trip involved a redefinition and validation of feminine values and an integration of these with the masculine skills learned during the first half of the journey (1990: 3-4).



The heroine's journey begins with "Separation from the feminine" and ends with "Integration of masculine and feminine (Murdock 1990: 5).

Expounding on Murdock's Heroine's Journey model, author Patti McCarthy posited that since the prevailing myth in our society is decidedly patriarchal, many women judge themselves against the male model of success (2016: 183). McCarthy cited Murdock's explanation:

Male norms have become the social standard for leadership, personal autonomy, and success in this culture, and in comparison women find themselves perceived as lacking in competence, intelligence and power. The girl observes this as she grows up and wants to identify with the glamour, prestige, authority, independence, and money controlled by men. Many high-achieving women are considered *daughters of the father* because they seek the approval of the first male model. Somehow mother's approval doesn't matter as much; father defines the feminine, and this affects her sexuality, her ability to relate to men, and her ability to pursue success in the world (McCarthy 2016: 183; Murdock 1990: 29).

Like Joseph Campbell, who claimed that his Heroic Journey is not limited to men (1988: 125), Maureen Murdock explicitly stated that her proposed model is not limited to women, nor does it fit the experience of all women of all ages (1990: 4).²³ She further clarified:

[The model I am presenting] addresses the journeys of both genders. It describes the experience of many people who strive to be active and make a contribution in the world, but who also fear what our progress-oriented society has done to the human psyche and to the ecological balance of the planet (1990: 4).

Murdock's Influential Heroine's Journey Model 1990

The works of authors, Patti McCarthy (2006) and Victoria Lynn Schmidt (2001),²⁴ were significantly influenced by Maureen Murdock's Model. Both their models reveal Maureen Murdock's pre-existing, essential pattern of the Heroine's Journey. Each of their journey models begins with feelings of betrayal after the heroine initially follows the male heroic

²³ Murdock is often cited as 'the student of Joseph Campbell' who was deeply unsatisfied with Campbell's answer to her 1981 interview question, in which he stated, in part: "When a woman realizes what her wonderful character is, she's not going to get messed up with the notion of being pseudo-male" (Campbell quoted in Murdock 1990: 2). While perhaps unintended, Murdock's claim that she was stunned by Campbell's answer is at least partially responsible for some of the subsequent feminist criticism of Campbell's work. Although Murdock's own work is derived in part from Campbell's, she has benefited from her frequently quoted 'opposition' to it, partly by allowing their works to stand in contrast, and partly by standing in Joseph Campbell's reflected eminence.

²⁴ Victoria Lynn Schmidt's work (2001) is relevant in that it specifically addressed an audience of writers. However, like Frankel, Schmidt did not directly credit Maureen Murdock's influence on her model.

pattern, as outlined by Murdock (1990: 71-79). This betrayal is followed by The Descent stage,²⁵ common to both Campbell's and Murdock's original models (Campbell 1993 [1949]: 213-16; Murdock 1990: 90-91), after which, having faced her demons, the heroine undergoes rebirth and return. In her book, *45 Master Characters: Mythic Models for Creating Original Characters* (2001), Victoria Lynn Schmidt proposed a Feminine Journey of nine stages:

Act 1: Containment

1. The Illusion of a Perfect World
2. The Betrayal or Realization
3. The Awakening – Preparing for the Journey

ACT II: Transformation

4. The Descent – Passing the Gates of Judgement
5. The Eye of the Storm
6. Death – All is Lost

Act III: Emergence

7. Support
 8. Rebirth – The Moment of Truth
 9. Full Circle – Return to the Perfect World
- (2001: 185-86)

Patti McCarthy's Heroine's Journey Narrative Model 2016

In discussing the Heroine's Journey Model offered in her book chapter, *The Heroine's Journey: Claire Beauchamp Reclaims the Feminine* (2016: 182-84), author Patti McCarthy not only credited both Joseph Campbell's and Maureen Murdock's narrative models (2016: 183),²⁶ but also cited the influence of Victoria Lynn Schmidt's work (185). The three stages of Patti McCarthy's Heroine's Journey pattern contain many of Joseph Campbell's original seventeen steps of the Hero's Journey, as seen in an earlier graphic (Campbell 1993 [1949]: 245). McCarthy's forthcoming book, *Outlander and the Heroine's Journey*, due to be published by

²⁵ See also the myth of Inanna (Campbell 2008 [1949]: 87-89, 184-86).

²⁶ Maureen Murdock clearly acknowledged that her journey model was also derived from Campbell's (1990: 3).

McFarland Press in early 2017, unfortunately cannot be referenced in this study.²⁷ However, as the most recently-proposed model, which has clearly credited the influence of previous scholars in this field, McCarthy's female narrative journey model warrants further scrutiny in context with the selected film texts which will be later examined in this thesis.

McCarthy's story model substitutes Campbell's 'Departure'; 'Initiation'; and 'Return'; with 'Awakening'; 'Transformation'; and 'Rebirth'; matching them to the Triple Goddess²⁸ stages of Maiden, Mother and Crone. McCarthy summarised her Heroine's Journey model as follows:

1. AWAKENING – The Maiden

World of Illusions
The Call to Adventure
Refusal of the Call
Harsh Mentor/Supernatural Aid/Talisman
Threshold Guardians
Crossing of the First Threshold
Fortunate Fall

2. TRANSFORMATION – The Lover and Great Mother

Road of Trials (Revelations and Losses)
Meeting with the Animus
- Face Bluebeard (*Negative Animus*)
- Meet Green Man (*Positive Animus*)
Tempted to Abort Quest/True Path
Atonement with the Mother
Confront False and Powerless Father
Apotheosis
Reward: Integrated Self/Family

3. REBIRTH – The Crone

Refusal of the Return
Supreme Ordeal: Rescue from Within
Crossing of the Return Threshold
Rebirth: Power of Life and Death
Mother of the World

(2016: 184)

²⁷ Assistant Professor McCarthy authored *The Lucas Effect: George Lucas and the New Hollywood* (2014). See her academic and industry profile at: <https://theconversation.com/profiles/patti-mccarthy-210859> and <http://www.pacific.edu/Academics/Schools-and-Colleges/College-of-the-Pacific/Academics/Departments-and-Programs/English/Our-Faculty/Patti-McCarthy.html>.

²⁸ The Threefold Goddess is described in Robert Graves' *The White Goddess*: "As Goddess of the Underworld she was concerned with Birth, Procreation and Death. As Goddess of the Earth she was concerned with the three seasons of Spring, Summer and Winter: she animated trees and plants and ruled all living creatures. As Goddess of the Sky she was the Moon, in her three phases of New Moon, Full Moon, and Waning Moon. [...] As the New Moon or Spring she was a girl; as the Full Moon or Summer she was woman; as the Old Moon or Winter she was hag" (2013 [1948]: 646).

Here, McCarthy has substituted 'World of Illusions' for Frankel and Campbell's 'World of Common Day'. Whereas Frankel specifies a 'Bladeless Talisman' and 'Wedding with the Animus', McCarthy substitutes 'Talisman' and 'Meeting with the Animus'. For Frankel's 'Descent into Darkness', McCarthy supplants 'Tempted to Abort Quest/True Path'. Where Frankel specifies 'Winning the Family' and 'Torn Desires', McCarthy inserts 'Reward: Integrated Self/Family' and 'Refusal of Return'. Frankel's 'Magic Flight' and 'Reinstating the Family' are condensed by McCarthy into 'Supreme Ordeal: Rescue from Within'. Finally, Frankel's 'Ascension of the New Mother' becomes 'Mother of the World' in McCarthy's model.

Patti McCarthy's Heroine's Journey narrative template reveals an awareness of both mythic structure and screenwriting principles (2016: 205). Because she not only credits the influence of previous scholars in this field, including Murdock (1990), Vogler (2007 [1998]), Schmidt (2001) and Frankel (2010), but also specifically credits the foundational influence of Joseph Campbell's narrative model (2008 [1949]), McCarthy's template, along with her forthcoming book, deserve greater scrutiny in the scholarly literature.²⁹ Therefore, Patti McCarthy's Heroine's Journey narrative model will be further considered in relation to an analysis of selected contemporary film texts in the following chapter of this thesis.

²⁹ See McCarthy's book, *Outlander and the Heroine's Journey*, due for publication by McFarland Press in 2017.

Chapter 2

Evidence of the Mythological Female Hero's Journey

in Two Contemporary Films

Are *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) and *Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens* (2015) narrative representations of a Female Hero's Journey, based on Campbell's original mythological narrative pattern? Or, do the character arcs of Imperator Furiosa and Rey conform to recently proposed narrative models of the mythological Heroine's Journey? To address these questions, in this chapter, I will conduct a comparative narrative analysis of *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) and *Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens* (2015), to establish whether there is evidence in these two films, as representations of contemporary narrative media, to suggest a new model that may be seen as the female equivalent of Joseph Campbell's mythological formula for 'The Hero's Journey' (2008 [1949]).

In PART ONE, I will analyse the dramatic journey of Imperator Furiosa in *Fury Road* in two segments. *Part One: Section One* will examine Furiosa's narrative progression against the Seventeen Stages of Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey (2008 [1949]). By testing whether or not Campbell's narrative model can be applied to Furiosa's role in the narrative, this analysis will also help to establish whether Furiosa is the film's hero, despite Max being the putative hero, as suggested by the film's title. *Part One: Section Two* will scrutinise Furiosa's narrative against the Nineteen Stages of Patti McCarthy's recently proposed Heroine's Journey model (2016). In PART TWO, Rey's narrative journey in *The Force Awakens* will likewise be examined in two subgroups. *Part Two: Section One* will analyse Rey's narrative against Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey model (2008 [1949]), while *Part Two: Section Two* will consider Rey's narrative progression against Patti McCarthy's Heroine's Journey model (2016).

PART ONE

Mad Max: Fury Road (2015)

The cinematic world of Warrior Woman, Imperator Furiosa, is a post-apocalyptic wasteland, where all the action takes place in *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015). According to George Miller, in the Foreword to *The Art of Mad Max: Fury Road*:

Well, it starts next Wednesday... when the bad stuff we see in the news comes to pass all at once. A catastrophic cascade of economic crises, power grids collapsing, Oil Wars, Water Wars, failed states, a random nuclear 'skirmish.' Humanity terrorizing itself, an Earth gone sour, plus pitfalls none could foresee. Now leap forty-five years into the future. The great cities have been razed, the remote center of a continent has become a wasteland marauded by roving gangs. There is no honor, no rule of law, just a dominance hierarchy overseen by a tyrannical warlord and his cronies. They control the essentials... Water, Gasoline, and Munitions. A Citadel, Gastown and the Bullet Farm. Everyone is a survivor trying to find meaning in a world gone insane (Miller 2015a: 8).

Part One: Section One – Analysis of Imperator Furiosa's Narrative Journey

Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey in Seventeen Stages

Note that according to both Vogler and Aringer, the order of the monomyth's various stages is flexible and subject to variation: "The stages can be deleted, added to, and drastically shuffled without losing any of their power" (Vogler 2007: 19-20). "Campbell... describes 17 stages or steps along this (ideal) journey. Very few myths contain all stages – some contain many of the stages, while others contain only a few or may deal with them in a somewhat different order; some may focus on only one. These stages may be organized in a number of ways..." (Aringer 2014: p.2 of 9). Campbell states that if any of the basic elemental patterns is omitted, it is

bound to be implied, or that its omission can speak volumes for the history and pathology of the narrative example (2008 [1949]: 30).

World of Common Day – The Ordinary World

Furiosa, stolen into slavery as a child by the tyrant, Immortan Joe (along with her mother who died three days later), now drives his War Rig as Imperator, delivering gasoline from the Wasteland to the Citadel and fighting off marauders. Max Rockatansky, acting as narrator in the film's opening scenes, explains his own status:

My name is Max. My world is fire and blood. Once I was a cop; a road warrior searching for a righteous cause. As the world fell, each of us, in our own way, was broken. It was hard to know who was more crazy: me or everyone else. Here they come again. Worming their way into the black matter of my brain. I told myself, they cannot touch me. They are all dead. I am the one who runs from both the living and the dead. Hunted by scavengers. Haunted by those I could not protect. So I exist in this Wasteland. A man reduced to a single instinct: Survive (Miller 2015).

1. DEPARTURE

The Call to Adventure

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, *The Call to Adventure* 2008: 48).

Furiosa's call to adventure has occurred off screen. She has been ‘called’ to assist the Wives to escape the brutal Immortan Joe.

Refusal of the Call

Often in actual life, and not infrequently in the myths and popular tales, we encounter the dull case of the call unanswered; for it is always possible to turn the ear to other interests (Campbell, *Refusal of the Call* 2008: 49).

The film's dialogue hints that Furiosa may have initially turned down the Wives' request to help them escape, since Miss Giddy explains to Immortan Joe: "She didn't take them. They begged her to go." Furiosa later tells Max that now that she drives a War Rig, this is the best shot at escape she'll ever have. This implies previous refusal of the call to make her personal escape due to lack of opportunity and the extreme risk of Joe's violent reprisal. This time, she does not refuse the call.

Supernatural Aid

For those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure... who provides the adventurer with [protection] against the dragon forces he is about to pass (Campbell, *Supernatural Aid* 2008: 57).

The sand storm acts as Furiosa's initial protection – Campbell's Supernatural Aid – against the 'dragon forces' (2008: 57). Its arrival affords Furiosa a protective shield, and allows her, driving the War Rig and her cargo of Joe's Wives, to escape Joe and his pursuing convoy of War Boys. However Max, who has been captured for use as a Blood Bag and strapped to the front of Nux's vehicle, also uses the storm to attempt his escape.

As the result of the sand storm, which is symbolic of the First Threshold, Furiosa meets Max. Although they initially engage in a fight to the death, Furiosa and Max are forced by circumstances (the need to survive) into forging a mutually beneficial partnership. In this way, Max becomes Furiosa's helper. But equally, Furiosa becomes Max's helper on his own hero's journey.¹ They each assist the other on a path to redemption. This is the first striking indication that the director, George Miller, may be constructing a pair of equally strong co-heroes, of opposite gender, in this screen narrative.

¹ Campbell's model refers to 'helpers' offering Supernatural Aid and, at times, mentorship (2008: 57-63), rather than 'Allies' or 'Mentors', which are Jungian archetypes posited in Murdock's, Vogler's and McCarthy's models.

The Crossing of the First Threshold²

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 (Campbell, *The Crossing of the First Threshold* 2008: 64).

When Furiosa suddenly takes a detour from her designated escape route, the War Rig is attacked by the spiked vehicles of The Buzzards tribe, in addition to Immortan Joe's pursuing convoy. While The Buzzards represent the threshold guardian(s), whose tests must be dealt with before the First Threshold of the hero's adventure can be crossed, the sand storm represents that metaphorical threshold.

The Belly of the Whale

The hero, instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown and would appear to have died (Campbell, *Belly of the Whale* 2008: 74).

Furiosa drives directly into the huge sand storm which appears out of the Wasteland like a terrible monster, engulfing the War Rig and multiple pursuit vehicles. This act shows that Furiosa is fully committed to her quest to escape while saving the Wives. At the height of the storm the film fades to black, so that in the next scene, when we see the vast stillness of the Wasteland, it is possible to believe that everyone is dead. But Furiosa, the Wives, Max and Nux all survive, emerging into a different world on the other side of the threshold of the storm.

² Furiosa's encounter with the sand storm embodies three stages of her hero's journey: Supernatural Aid; The Crossing of the First Threshold; and The Belly of a Whale. According to Campbell's model, the process of crossing the first Threshold of Adventure may involve any combination of the following narrative incidents, whose order may vary: Threshold Crossing; Brother Battle; Dragon-Battle; Dismemberment; Crucifixion; Abduction; Night-Sea Journey; Wonder Journey; Whale's Belly (2008 [1949]: 210).

2. INITIATION

The Road of Trials

Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials (Campbell, *The Road of Trials* 2008: 81).

The fates of Furiosa and Max are now linked by their shared need to survive against common enemies. Max earns Furiosa's trust as she later gives him the codes to the kill switches and allows him to operate the War Rig. The Trials they face and fight together, as Furiosa keeps driving towards the Green Place, involve Immortan Joe and his War Boy army, the Motorcycle Gang, the Bullet Farmer, the death of The Splendid Angharad, and the Quagmire.

The Meeting with the Goddess

The mythological figure of the Universal Mother imputes to the cosmos the feminine attributes of the first, nourishing and protecting presence (Campbell, *The Meeting with the Goddess* 2008: 94).

Furiosa and her group finally encounter the Vulvalini, The Many Mothers, the tribe to which Furiosa and her dead mother belong. For the first time since she was stolen away from them as a child, having survived years of Immortan Joe's cruel male-dominated regime as an orphan, Furiosa encounters maternal acceptance, love and hope.

Woman as the Temptress³

Nevertheless, every failure to cope with a life situation must be laid, in the end, to a restriction of consciousness. Wars and temper tantrums are the makeshifts of ignorance; regrets are illuminations come too late (Campbell, *Woman as the Temptress* 2008: 101).

³ Vogler says of the *Woman as the Temptress* stage: "The title is perhaps misleading - as with *The Meeting with the Goddess*, the energy of this moment could be male or female. This Ordeal possibility takes the hero to a junction of betrayal, abandonment, or disappointment. It's a crisis of faith in the arena of love. Every archetype has both a bright, positive side and a dark, negative side" (Vogler 2007 [1998]: 168).

Furiosa's grief and despair in the knowledge that the Green Place no longer exists tempts her to keep fleeing. She, the Wives and the Many Mothers are tempted to ride out on motorcycles across the salt flats towards an uncertain fate. But Max refuses their invitation to join them. He realises they can all return to the Citadel and together defeat Immortan Joe. Max, no longer playing the role of wandering loner, helps Furiosa to understand that their true redemption lies in working together to build a better future, not just for themselves, but for everyone. He convinces Furiosa to resist the temptation to keep running.

Atonement with the Father

It is in this ordeal that the hero may derive hope and assurance from the helpful female figure, by whose magic... he is protected through all the frightening experiences of the father's ego-shattering initiation (Campbell, *Atonement* 2008: 110).

Their race back to the Citadel to reach it ahead of Immortan Joe's forces is a battle in which all of the women actively participate, along with Max and Nux. This high speed ordeal involves leaping between vehicles, fist fights, guns, knives and pole cats. Immortan Joe, who thus far has held the power over life and death, and, to his War Boy followers, rules Valhalla, is the ultimate patriarch. Instead of running away, Furiosa, emboldened by the Vulvalini's supportive presence,⁴ now confronts the father figure, Immortan Joe. Before killing him with her robotic arm, a symbol of her woundedness and weapon of her disability, Furiosa asks, "Remember me?" In so doing, she defeats the tyrant, exposing him as a mere power-hungry man, breaking his godlike power over the Wasteland and all who live there.

⁴ Campbell refers to the mythical Navaho crone, Spider Woman (2008: 57), who, representing "the benign, protecting power of destiny," bestows magical pollen as protection on the hero who has responded to the call, indicating that "Mother Nature herself supports the mighty task" (59). Similarly, the Vulvalini, bearing their seeds, metaphorically play a similar role for Furiosa in *Fury Road*.

Apotheosis (becoming god-like)⁵

This godlike being is a pattern of the divine state to which the human hero attains who has gone beyond the last terrors of ignorance (Campbell, *Apotheosis* 2008: 127). [...] The pause on the threshold of *nirvana*... represents a realization that the distinction between eternity and time is only apparent – made, perforce, by the rational mind, but dissolved in the perfect knowledge of the mind that has transcended the pairs of opposites (129-30).

In overcoming her fear in order to slay Immortan Joe, Furiosa sustains a fatal wound. She is bleeding out on the floor of the War Rig through a stab wound to her abdomen. Already proven to be a universal blood donor, Max now becomes a donor of life force to Furiosa. After giving her a life-giving transfusion of his own blood, Max finally trusts Furiosa enough to tell her his real name. In this act of union, the sharing of mutual trust and animating blood, they literally transcend the pairs of opposites. Furiosa and Max both achieve a form of heroic redemption.

The Ultimate Boon

What the hero seeks through his intercourse with [the gods and goddesses, the custodians of the elixir of Imperishable being] is... their grace, i.e. the power of their sustaining substance (Campbell, *The Ultimate Boon* 2008: 155).

Through surviving her ordeal against Immortan Joe and returning with the surviving women to remove his power over the Citadel and the Wasteland, Furiosa is able to liberate and share life-giving substances once regulated by Immortan Joe: Water, Mothers' Milk, and Seeds.

3. RETURN

Refusal of the Return

When the hero-quest has been accomplished, through penetration to the source, or through the grace of some male or female... the adventurer still must return with his life-giving trophy (Campbell, *Refusal of the Return* 2008: 167).

⁵ Apotheosis: the elevation of someone to divine status (*The Oxford English Dictionary* 1970).

While Campbell states that the responsibility to return is often refused by the mythical hero (167), there is no refusal of the return for Furiosa.

The Magic Flight

If the hero in his triumph wins the blessing of the goddess or the god [he or she] is then explicitly commissioned to return to the world with some elixir for the restoration of society (Campbell, *The Magic Flight* 2008: 170). [...] And yet, if the monomyth is to fulfill its promise, not human failure or superhuman success but human success is what we shall have to be shown. That is the problem of the crisis of the threshold of the return (178).

The race back to the Citadel, with Immortan Joe's forces in pursuit, proves even more dangerous and deadly with more at stake than the initial flight towards the Green Place. In her efforts to return with the women and seeds, many of Furiosa's helpers are lost or sacrificed in battle, including Nux, the War Rig, and several of the Vulvalini.

Rescue from Without

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 (Campbell, *Rescue from Without* 2008: 178).

During the final approach to the Citadel, when Furiosa is near death, her helpers ably assist her return. Besides Max's dramatic life-saving blood transfusion, Furiosa's many helpers are willing to lay down their lives in battle to ensure that her mission to return to the Citadel is a success. Those who assist Furiosa are all representatives of the New World to come.

The Crossing of the Return Threshold

Many failures attest to the difficulties of this life-affirming threshold (Campbell, *The Crossing of the Return Threshold* 2008:189). [...] The returning hero, to complete his adventure, must survive the impact of the world (194).

Furiosa's returning party is prevented from entering the Citadel by the remnants of Immortan Joe's guard, who act as Threshold Guardians to the Return Threshold. The sight of Immortan Joe's dead body proves that Furiosa has slain the despot, revealing to the wretched crowds that Joe was a mere mortal and not a god after all. They chant: "Immortan Joe is dead! Joe is dead!" Others chant: "Furiosa! Furiosa!" It is evident she has destroyed Joe and his regime.

Master of the Two Worlds

The [hero], through prolonged psychological disciplines, gives up completely all attachment to his personal limitations, idiosyncrasies, hopes and fears, no longer resists the self-annihilation that is prerequisite to rebirth in the realization of truth... His personal ambitions being totally dissolved, he no longer tries to live but willingly relaxes to whatever may come to pass in him; he becomes, that is to say, an anonymity. The Law lives in him with his unreserved consent (Campbell, *Master of the Two Worlds* 2008:204-205).

A revived Furiosa is allowed to cross the Return Threshold and is winched up into the Citadel with the women and seeds she has rescued. Furiosa is now the Master of Two Worlds: The Wasteland and the Citadel, reflecting her contrasting inner and outer worlds. Though she did not seek it, Furiosa is now positioned to be the beneficial ruler of Joe's former empire, this time with hope, after returning from her quest having retrieved what his brutal world was lacking.

Freedom to Live

The hero is the champion of things becoming, not of things become, because he is. [...] He does not mistake apparent changelessness in time for the permanence of Being, nor is he fearful of the next moment (or of the 'other thing'), as destroying the permanent with its change (Campbell, *Freedom to Live* 2008:209).

Furiosa is now free to live in the moment, just as the rescued women are free to grow food and live without fear for their safety. Cheers rise up as water is allowed to cascade down from the Citadel onto the masses below, now freed from thirst by Furiosa's triumphant return. The New World beyond the reign of the tyrant has been established. Yet Max, without whose help

Furiosa could not have succeeded, chooses not to cross that final threshold into this New World. He slips away silently, acknowledged by Furiosa, into the crowd.

In an echo of Max's narration at the beginning of the film, a graphic appears on screen before the final film credits:

Where must we go...
we who wander this Wasteland
In search of our better selves?
- *The First History Man*

Part One: Section Two – Analysis of Imperator Furiosa's Narrative Journey

Patti McCarthy's Heroine's Journey in Nineteen Stages

Let us now apply Furiosa's heroic journey to Patti McCarthy's Heroine's Journey narrative model (2016). Because many of the stages in these two models share significant similarities, in order to avoid repetition, this study will focus on any points of difference between them, as they apply to our female heroes. Note that if any particular stage in McCarthy's model is experienced by the character as the same or similar to a corresponding narrative stage in Campbell's model, I will use the abbreviation of S/S, to indicate the 'Same or Similar'.⁶

⁶ The designation of S/S does not mean that the stages are identical. Rather, it means that when compared, these stages are *experienced* by the hero character in the film narrative as relatively the same episode, event, or outcome.

Comparison of the Hero/Heroine Journey Models

Joseph Campbell – HERO’S JOURNEY

I: DEPARTURE

1. The Call to Adventure
2. Refusal of the Call
3. Supernatural Aid
4. Crossing the First Threshold
5. The Belly of the Whale

II: INITIATION

6. The Road of Trials
7. The Meeting with the Goddess
8. Woman as the Temptress
9. Atonement with the Father
10. Apotheosis (becoming god-like)
11. The Ultimate Boon

III: RETURN

12. Refusal of the Return
13. The Magic Flight
14. Rescue from Without
15. Crossing the Return Threshold
16. Master of the Two Worlds
17. Freedom to Live

Patti McCarthy – HEROINE’S JOURNEY

I: AWAKENING – The Maiden

1. World of Illusions
2. The Call to Adventure
3. Refusal of the Call
4. Harsh Mentor/Supernatural Aid/Talisman
5. Threshold Guardians
6. Crossing of the First Threshold
7. Fortunate Fall

II: TRANSFORMATION – The Lover and Great Mother

8. Road of Trials (Revelation and Losses)
9. Meeting with the Animus
 - Face Bluebeard (*Negative Animus*)
 - Meet Green Man (*Positive Animus*)
10. Tempted to Abort Quest/True Path
11. Atonement with the Mother
12. Confront False and Powerless Father
13. Apotheosis
14. Rewards: Integrated Self/Family

III: REBIRTH – The Crone

15. Refusal of the Return
16. Supreme Ordeal: Rescue from Within
17. Crossing of the Return Threshold
18. Rebirth: Power of Life and Death
19. Mother of the World

(Campbell 2008 [1949]: 41-209; McCarthy 2016: 184)⁷

1. AWAKENING – The Maiden

World of Illusions

For Furiosa, McCarthy’s World of Illusions is essentially the same as Campbell’s previously discussed World of Common Day, which is the status quo before the adventure begins. Although it represents the starting point for all heroic journeys, this phase is not included as a specific stage in Campbell’s model. McCarthy adds here, that: “Deep down, the heroine knows her perfect world isn’t so perfect and creates any manner of coping strategies to live in it” (2016: 185). Furiosa knows very well how to survive in Immortan Joe’s savage world.

⁷ While Campbell described the mythic element at 8. as “Woman as the Temptress” (2008: 101), filmmakers including George Lucas and the Wachowski Brothers (now sisters Lana & Lilly) succeeded in creating compelling temptations from the path without casting woman as the temptress/villain in their film narratives (1979; 1999).

The Call to Adventure

S/S. McCarthy's description of this stage is particularly apt for Furiosa: "A road trip always signifies that our heroine has begun a journey of self-discovery" (2016: 186).

Refusal of the Call

S/S. Like the heroine in *Outlander* (Hüseyin 2014 -), as discussed by McCarthy (2016: 187-188), Furiosa accepts The Call to Adventure.

Harsh Mentor/Supernatural Aid/Talisman

S/S. The Supernatural Aid of the shielding sand storm also yields Furiosa's first encounter with Max, which although initially combative, results in them each playing a mutual role of ally or mentor to one other. Furiosa, already a fully armed, battle-hardened warrior, is not gifted with any tangible Talisman at this stage.

The use of weaponry is often prohibited for females in the narratives from which emerging Heroine's Journey models have been developed. Weapons prohibitions imposed on heroines will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Threshold Guardians

S/S.

Crossing of the First Threshold

S/S.

Fortunate Fall

S/S to Campbell's Belly of the Whale, in that Furiosa, the Wives, Max and Nux have all survived the fortunate sand storm to emerge into a different world on the other side.

2. TRANSFORMATION – The Lover and Great Mother

Road of Trials (Revelations and Losses)⁸

S/S. McCarthy further describes this phase as 'Road of Trials/Allies and Villains' (2016: 191).

Meeting with the Animus

- **Face Bluebeard** (*Negative Animus*)
- **Meet Green Man** (*Positive Animus*)

This stage is a substitute for Campbell's Meeting with the Goddess. "To grow on her journey, and reconnect to the 'lost' feminine in herself, the heroine must experience these aspects of the negative and positive masculine personified as both Blue Beard and the Green Man" (McCarthy 2016: 191). With both Max and Nux now along for the ride, and the tyrant still in pursuit, Furiosa has the opportunity to interact with both negative and positive reflections of the animus.⁹ Immortan Joe plays the role of Blue Beard while Max represents the Green Man.

Tempted to Abort Quest/True Path

S/S to Campbell's Woman as the Temptress for Furiosa, where the temptation may come from a man, woman or situation.

⁸ Schmidt states that here the "heroine must face Issues of Attachment, Fear, Guilt, Lies, Shame, Grief and Illusion" (Schmidt 2001: 220-221; quoted in McCarthy 2016: 191). This would indicate a more inward emotional journey, which for Furiosa comes to a grief-stricken climax when she learns the Green Place no longer exists.

⁹ In Jungian psychology, the animus represents the masculine part of a woman's personality.

Atonement with the Mother

S/S. This stage is identical to Campbell's Meeting with the Goddess, represented by Furiosa's encounter with the Vulvalini. McCarthy substitutes this stage for Campbell's Atonement with the Father, and adds Confront False and Powerless Father (below). Just as Campbell's Atonement with the Father reflects a form of initiation, McCarthy states that here the heroine is forced to undergo a symbolic death experience (2016: 200). In the film, Furiosa experiences the depths of despair when the Vulvalini inform her that the fertile Green Place no longer exists.

Confront False and Powerless Father

S/S to Campbell's Atonement with the Father.

Apotheosis

S/S. "[T]o fully reach wholeness within the self, an individual must harmonize the masculine and feminine within" (McCarthy 2016: 203). Here, just as in Campbell's Apotheosis stage, Max becomes a donor of life-giving blood to assist Furiosa's rebirth.

Rewards: Integrated Self/Family

S/S. For Furiosa, this stage represents the same characteristics as Campbell's The Ultimate Boon. She integrates her own needs with those of her allies and the wider community by liberating the life-giving elixirs of Water, Mother's Milk and Seeds.

3. REBIRTH – The Crone

Refusal of the Return

S/S.

Supreme Ordeal: Rescue from Within

In Rescue from Without in Campbell's model, Furiosa is physically assisted by Max and her allies to return to the Citadel. McCarthy, however, speaks of an inner ordeal. The heroine "must learn to internalize the Green Man now – become the Green Man, and heal" (McCarthy 2016: 203). The Green Man may teach the female hero to confront her fears instead of running from them (195). Max has helped Furiosa to realise that instead of running away in fear, out into the salt plains, they can return together to confront Immortan Joe and take the Citadel.

Crossing of the Return Threshold

S/S.

Rebirth: Power of Life and Death

S/S to Campbell's Master of Two Worlds stage for Furiosa. McCarthy says that after saving themselves and those around them, heroines must make the sometimes difficult decision to go home (McCarthy 2016: 204). By returning to the Citadel, Furiosa now has the power of life and death by being in possession of the Seeds and Water.

Mother of the World

S/S to Campbell's Freedom to Live. McCarthy states that "anyone can kill, but not all can give life" (2016: 204). Having been on the journey of "battling and taming inner demons, and finding [her] center" (204), by confronting the tyrant and liberating both people and resources, Furiosa has now freed herself and the entire community, to live.

Conclusion

In *Fury Road*, Furiosa and Max appear to move beyond being the other's 'helper', to establish a mutually beneficial partnership. Max's name is shown in the film's title and his heroic journey can surely be traced. Indeed, a supplementary analysis of Max's narrative journey against Campbell's model may find it possible that, in this film, Furiosa and Max represent co-heroes. However, since almost all of the film's action is driven by Furiosa's narrative arc, the main hero of this film is Furiosa, not Max. This is further demonstrated by the analysis in this study, which clearly establishes that Furiosa's narrative journey closely follows Campbell's Hero's Journey narrative model. A discussion of the overall findings, from both PART ONE and PART TWO of this narrative analysis, will be conducted in the following chapter.

PART TWO

Star Wars: Episode VII -The Force Awakens (2015)

The character arc of the female hero, Rey, in *The Force Awakens* follows Joseph Campbell's stages of the monomyth as closely as did her male hero predecessor's, Luke Skywalker, from the original *Star Wars: A New Hope* (Lucas 1977).¹⁰ Rey's World of Common Day begins on the desert outpost planet of Jakku, where, living alone in a wrecked space craft, she has waited many years for her family to return for her.¹¹ But, the adventure has hardly begun before we see that the self-sufficient, multilingual Rey possesses highly developed mechanical, piloting and fighting skills, having gained expert scavenger knowledge of the spare parts of various

¹⁰ *The Force Awakens* is set thirty years after the events in 1983's *Return of the Jedi* (McNary 2015).

¹¹ The heroes Rey and Luke, as well as Furiosa in *Fury Road* (2015), all share an 'orphaned' quality. Campbell notes a common theme of 'exile' in the childhood of heroes in many myths and folk tales (2008 [1949]: 280).

space craft, practiced on a flight-simulator, and mastered the art of self-defence with her quarterstaff. Rey's heroic journey involves moving from being a lone survivor to learning how to trust and relate to others, as well as trusting her inner self enough to use The Force.

Part Two: Section One – Analysis of Rey's Narrative Journey

Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey in Seventeen Stages

1. DEPARTURE

The Call to Adventure

Rey's Call to Adventure comes when she hears the beeping noise of the BB-8 droid objecting to his capture. Like Furiosa, Rey immediately exemplifies what Campbell describes as the heroic role of the mythological female hero as 'rescuer' (Campbell 2013: 82). Rey does not hesitate to rescue BB-8. While she subsequently tries to be rid of the droid, she later empathises with its need to wait for its master's return, just as she too is waiting for her family to return.

Refusal of the Call

After first trying to avoid involvement with BB-8 and refusing the call, Rey learns that the droid is carrying the missing piece of a map to Luke Skywalker, which must not be allowed to fall into the hands of the First Order before it can be returned to The Resistance. Rey again refuses the call when she tells Finn she will return to waiting for her family on Jakku after they have delivered BB-8 to The Resistance base. She will later refuse the call when she turns down a job offer as Han Solo's second officer. Her final refusals come when she refuses to touch

Luke's light saber when Maz offers it to her, at the same time refusing her destiny, found in mastering The Force.¹²

Supernatural Aid

Soon after their initial escape from the First Order with the droid, Rey meets her mentor, Han Solo, along with a new helper, Chewbacca. Although Han Solo is not a magical figure, he validates key supernatural elements of Rey's journey, particularly that the light and dark sides of The Force exist, and that the magic is real. He confirms that all those stories about the Jedi and the heroes of the Rebellion are genuine, including Luke Skywalker. Rey muses, "I thought he was a myth" (Abrams 2015). Han offers to help Rey and Finn return the droid to The Resistance and to take Rey to meet his 'helper', Maz. He gifts Rey with a talisman, a blaster, to aid her on her quest.

The Crossing of the First Threshold

Although the First Threshold begins, for Rey, when she leaves Jakku to voyage into space flying the stolen Millennium Falcon, a very distinct threshold is reached when she arrives at Maz Kanata's castle, which sits on the edge of a lake surrounded by forest. Rey is entranced by the fresh, new smells, the abundant water supply and the vast, intense greenery of this new planet's landscape, in stark contrast to her arid desert hideaway of Jakku. The vivid transition into this new world is reminiscent of Dorothy's arrival into the Technicolor land of Oz (Fleming 1939).

¹² As Obi-Wan Kenobi (Sir Alec Guinness) tells Luke in the original *Star Wars* film, The Force is "an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us. It binds the galaxy together" (Lucas 1977).

The Belly of the Whale

Campbell's metaphor for this stage – of the hero being swallowed into the unknown to later emerge transformed – is first represented by the Millennium Falcon being swallowed up by an enormous whale-like space freighter, piloted by Han Solo. Rey and Finn, forced into hiding, crawl through tunnels in the freighter's underbelly to fight off two attacking pirate gangs and Han Solo's freight of three huge monsters. The pirates and these octopus-like rathtars represent the Threshold Guardians which must be dealt with before the First Threshold can be truly crossed. Rey first solves the technical problem of how to trigger a blast door to save Finn from an attacking rathtar. When Han Solo pilots the Millennium Falcon to thrust them out of the belly of the whale (the freighter's hanger) towards escape, Rey bypasses the compressor to engineer the Falcon to jump into hyperspace. Rey's transformation into a hero has begun.

2. INITIATION

The Road of Trials

Having crossed the threshold to arrive at Maz's castle, Rey now finds herself in a dream landscape where she must survive a succession of trials. Like Luke before her (1977), Rey has arrived at a cantina filled with aliens from distant parts of the universe, and will here be challenged by the rules of a different world that will test her character.

The Meeting with the Goddess

Rey encounters her first maternal presence, the wise and ancient crone, Maz. Like Han Solo, Maz Kanata has no Jedi training, but she knows about The Force and counsels Rey to resist the dark side. Rey's conversation with Maz in the cellars represents her Meeting with the Goddess.

Woman as the Temptress

Finn tries to convince Rey to run away with him, but she refuses this temptation.¹³ Reeling from the loss of her friend, Finn, Rey wanders down into the cellars following the illusory cries (perhaps her own) of a child. Here, Rey experiences buried memories from her past.

The unconscious sends up all sorts of vapors, odd beings, terrors, and deluding images up into the mind – whether in dream, broad daylight, or insanity; for the human kingdom, beneath the floor of the comparatively neat little dwelling that we call our consciousness, goes down into unsuspected Aladdin caves. There not only jewels but also dangerous jinn abide: the inconvenient or resisted psychological powers that we have not thought or dared to integrate into our lives... These are dangerous because they threaten the fabric of the security into which we have built ourselves and our family. But they are fiendishly fascinating too, for they carry keys that open the whole realm of the desired and feared adventure of the discovery of the self (Campbell 2008 [1949]: 5).

Rey discovers Luke Skywalker's light saber in a chest. Touching it, she experiences flashbacks, and scenes from the future. Rey hears Luke Skywalker's voice crying "No!" and sees his metal hand resting on R2-D2. The voices of all the past Jedi mentors, including Yoda, are heard. Alec Guinness, Obi-Wan Kenobi from the original trilogy, utters her name, "Rey." Ewan McGregor, as the prequel Obi-Wan Kenobi, says: "You've taken your first steps." While the mentors' voices are heard encouraging Rey into her destiny, Rey pictures herself standing face to face with a child, Kylo Ren. She then sees the bodies of young Jedi students, killed by the surrounding Knights of Ren, and Kylo. This is Rey's first encounter with The Force.

Maz, having followed Rey into the cellars, encourages her to take up her destiny. Rather than tempting Rey away from her path, Maz plays the role of Wise Mentor, saying: "The belonging you seek is not behind you, it is ahead. I am no Jedi, but I know The Force. It moves through and surrounds every living thing. Close your eyes; feel it. The light. It's always been there. It will guide you. The saber – take it. That light saber was Luke's, and his father's before him

¹³ Campbell's original stage, *Woman as the Temptress*, is flipped here, with Finn playing the role of 'temptress'.

and now it calls to you!”¹⁴ But Rey refuses the light saber, and her destiny, and runs into the forest. Thus, Rey, tempted from her path by long-buried fears, refuses the call. She will later be tempted with the power of the Dark Side by Kylo Ren.

Atonement with the Father

After fleeing into the forest from childhood memories involving Jedi, Rey is captured and knocked unconscious by Kylo Ren, her masculine adversary. He confines her to a torture chamber on Starkiller Base, then reads her mind to see that her destiny involves an island surrounded by ocean. But Rey resists his dark Jedi power, confronting and overcoming her tormenter. Using the same Jedi Mind Trick against Kylo Ren, Rey retorts, “You’re afraid. That you will never be as strong as Darth Vader.” She also uses the trick to convince a Stormtrooper (Daniel Craig) to release her. Although Rey does not succumb to the negative masculine authority figure, represented here by Kylo Ren, Rey’s Atonement with the Father stage may not be fully realized until a future cinematic episode of her narrative journey.

Apotheosis

Kylo Ren murders his own father and Rey’s mentor, Han Solo, then pursues Rey and Finn who have fled into the forest. When Ren again knocks Rey unconscious (a second ‘death’), Rey finally elects to use Luke’s light saber against Ren. The saber confirms Rey’s Jedi destiny since her mastery of The Force wills it to fly into her hand. Mid-battle, Kylo Ren tempts her by saying, “You need a teacher. I can show you the way of The Force.” However, remembering Maz’s guidance, Rey closes her eyes to summon The Force. She mobilises her latent powers to overcome Kylo Ren in battle, wounding him repeatedly. This contest represents the battle

¹⁴ Maz plays the role of Spider Woman, described by Campbell as the mythic wise crone of the Navaho, who, representing “the benign, protecting power of destiny,” bestows magical protection on the hero who responds to the call (2008: 59). Maz offers Rey Luke’s light saber as both symbol of the hero’s destiny and magical protection.

between good and evil, symbolised by the ground splitting apart as their combat ends. Rey succeeds in resisting the urge to kill Ren, thus not yielding to the Dark Side, and thus experiencing her Apotheosis.

The Ultimate Boon

For Rey, the Ultimate Boon is the positive side of The Force, Campbell's 'elixir of Imperishable being' (2008: 155), symbolised by Luke's light sabre, which she is no longer afraid to wield.

3. RETURN

Refusal of the Return

Like Furiosa in *Fury Road* (2015), there is no Refusal of the Return for Rey.

The Magic Flight

Rey experiences The Magic Flight when the Wookie, Chewbacca, arrives with the Millennium Falcon, enabling both the wounded Finn and Rey to escape into space from First Order forces.

Rescue from Without

Rey's Rescue from Without comes via her helper, the Wookie.

The Crossing of the Return Threshold

This stage is achieved when Rey Crosses the Return Threshold to return to the Resistance Base, there to be embraced by the unmistakably maternal General Leia Organa, formally Princess Leia. Rey returns with the droid containing the missing piece of the map to Luke Skywalker's

location. BB-8's piece can now be reunited with the rest of the map held in the recently awakened R2-D2's memory.

Master of the Two Worlds

Rey appears in the uniform of The Resistance, ready to leave on her journey to find Luke Skywalker. She is farewelled by General Leia with the blessing: "May The Force be with you." Rey has now mastered two worlds. She has not only assumed the role of physical warrior, but also of spiritual warrior, as a once-and-future Jedi apprentice.

Freedom to Live

After many Refusals of the Call, Rey has now overcome her desire to remain isolated back on Jakku, as well as her fear of venturing towards her destiny. She has finally heeded Maz's counsel: "The belonging you seek is not behind you, it is ahead." When Rey arrives at the Jedi Temple on a remote island and offers Luke his light saber, it signals her willingness to fully accept what the future holds for her. Rey is now free to live as the hero, whom Campbell describes as "the champion of things becoming, not of things become" (2008 [1949]: 209).

Part Two: Section Two – Analysis of Rey's Narrative Journey

Patti McCarthy's Heroine's Journey in Nineteen Stages

Note that if any particular stage in McCarthy's model is experienced by the character as the same or similar to a corresponding narrative stage in Campbell's model, the abbreviation of S/S, to indicate the 'Same or Similar,' will be used.

1. AWAKENING – The Maiden

World of Illusions

S/S.¹⁵

The Call to Adventure

S/S.

Refusal of the Call

S/S.

Harsh Mentor/Supernatural Aid/Talisman

S/S. Han Solo, as Rey's first Mentor, although gruff, is not particularly harsh. The Talisman he gifts her is a weapon: an LPA NN-13 blaster. Weapons prohibitions imposed on heroines in emerging Heroine's Journey models will be further examined in the following chapter.

Threshold Guardians

S/S.

Crossing of the First Threshold

S/S.

¹⁵ There are numerous journey stages in McCarthy's model which can be experienced by the female hero as the same or similar (S/S) to a corresponding narrative stage in Joseph Campbell's model. See comparison chart p. 50.

Fortunate Fall

S/S to Campbell's The Belly of the Whale.

2. TRANSFORMATION – The Lover and Great Mother

Road of Trials (Revelations and Losses)

S/S.

Meeting with the Animus

- **Face Bluebeard** (*Negative Animus*)

- **Meet Green Man** (*Positive Animus*)

This stage flips the gender of Campbell's Meeting with the Goddess.

Rey's Bluebeard is Kylo Ren, while her Green Man is Finn.

Tempted to Abort Quest/True Path

S/S to Campbell's Woman as the Temptress. Temptation comes from man, woman or situation.

Atonement with the Mother

S/S to Campbell's Meeting with the Goddess.

Confront False and Powerless Father

S/S to Campbell's Atonement with the Father.

Apotheosis

S/S.

Rewards: Integrated Self/Family

S/S to Campbell's The Ultimate Boon. Rey integrates her own needs with the positive side of The Force, to the benefit of her community.

3. REBIRTH – The Crone

Refusal of the Return

S/S.

Supreme Ordeal: Rescue from Within

S/S. Rey is physically rescued by her non-human ally, the Wookie. In a Jungian sense, animals may represent the instincts as an aspect of the human psyche (Shamdasani 2003: 253). Rey's instinctual use of The Force to overcome Kylo Ren also reflects Rescue from Within.

Crossing of the Return Threshold

S/S.

Rebirth: Power of Life and Death

S/S to Campbell's Master of Two Worlds.

Mother of the World

S/S to Campbell's Freedom to Live.

Conclusion

This analysis of the narrative journeys of the female heroes, Imperator Furiosa and Rey, shows that while they are distinctly female characters, they both follow a masculine path of adventure. They are heroes who use weapons as skilfully as any male. Although neither of these characters conforms to the usual female tropes to act as victims, villains, seductresses or sidekicks, they also do not conform exclusively to recently proposed narrative models for the Heroine's Journey, especially those which have emerged from narrative genres which advocate weapons prohibitions for heroines.

While it could be argued that the narratives of the female heroes from both films may be superimposed upon Patti McCarthy's Heroine's Journey model, this is attributable to the fact that a significant portion of her model is derived, as McCarthy concedes, from Campbell's three-phase Hero's Journey narrative model. In fact, there are numerous indications in this study of journey stages in McCarthy's model which can be experienced by the female hero as the same or similar (S/S) to a corresponding narrative stage in Campbell's model. The comparison chart on page 50 of the current study also reveals multiple similarities between the various stages of Campbell's and McCarthy's Hero/Heroine's Journey models.

Furiosa and Rey have been revealed as the indisputable heroes of each film, since almost all of the action in both *Fury Road* and *The Force Awakens* is driven by these female heroes. This has been conclusively shown by testing whether or not their narrative journeys conform to Campbell's Hero's Journey narrative model. Indeed, both the narrative journeys of the female heroes, Rey and Furiosa, have been demonstrated to closely match Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey model, the implications of which will be further discussed in the following chapter.

The application of Campbell's mytho-poetic template to these film narratives acts to construct both female protagonists as heroes, and in the process, normalise the representation of female protagonists as cinematic heroes. Female audience reactions were reported as largely positive towards both Furiosa and Rey. After all, narrative representations of agentic female heroes in contemporary media have, until recently, been relatively uncommon. Male critics of both characters were extremely vocal on social media, arguably for the same reason. The characters of Furiosa and Rey demonstrate that when female heroes, whose narratives closely correspond to the stages of Joseph Campbell's monomyth, are represented in action-oriented film genres, they are able to assume the kind of agency previously exclusive to male heroes.

This study has shown that, in spite of decades of criticism of Joseph Campbell's monomyth as being the exclusive domain of masculine heroes, the Female Hero's Journey may be successfully articulated through the application of Joseph Campbell's original Hero's Journey narrative model, specifically in action-oriented film genres. However, it is also entirely valid to posit that – where the screen narratives of female heroes are required to reflect either a) the more inward character journeys of female leads in various, less action-oriented genres; or, b) to reflect a combination of *both* action-oriented *and* inner-psychological female protagonists' journeys in various screen genres – an alternative Female Hero's Journey narrative model, which remains to be written, may be more appropriate.

Chapter 3

The Female Hero's Journey

When goddesses embark upon heroic journeys, it is to restore what is broken or injured. Isis searched for the pieces of Osiris's body to resurrect him; the Shekina gathers up Jewish souls in exile; and Nu Kwa, a Chinese goddess, went through the world after a holocaust, repairing the cosmos (Merlin Stone 1979; cited in Chinen 1996: 166).

It has been said that “there are no models in our mythology for an individual woman's quest” (Rossi 2013: xiv). However, Joseph Campbell – otherwise known for formulating the narrative arc of the masculine hero's journey or monomyth – perceived the need for a female hero's narrative model. He provided the bones of the narrative structure for this heroic feminine journey in more than twenty lectures on the divine feminine from 1972 to 1986. Campbell's focus in this series was to highlight the uniqueness of the feminine archetype in mythology through its three main themes of initiation, transformation and energy consciousness.¹

At the same time, Campbell emphasised the enduring power of the feminine archetype, despite two thousand years of attempts by patriarchal and monotheistic religious traditions to exclude it (2013: ix-x). He recognised the importance and potential of the feminine spirit within the process of birthing the meaning of women's experiences into mythic and creative form. Campbell not only saw the archetypal feminine form in mythology “as the gift and challenge of our age”, but also “honoured women in their visioning and forming of the journey” (xi).

¹ Campbell perceived a feminine narrative structure within the “bones and imaginations of the great goddess” through his explorations into her symbolic, mythological, and archetypal themes of “*initiation* into the mysteries of immanence experienced through time and space and the eternal; *transformation* of life and death; and the *energy consciousness* that informs and enlivens all life” (Campbell 2013: ix-x).

While Joseph Campbell did not fully formulate the mythological Female Hero's Journey narrative model in his own lifetime (1904-1987), he invited women to take up this task.²

In Campbell's discussion of the Babylonian goddess Ishtar, also known as Inanna,³ he points to the heroic role of the mythological female hero as 'rescuer'.⁴

What is the hero, essentially? The hero isn't someone who has hit six hundred home runs in his lifetime. The hero is someone who has given his life for a cause or for others. And this giving of life is here represented in the female role as the wife who goes into the underworld for her husband because she is one with him, and brings him back to eternal life. We find this in the great story of the underworld journey of Ishtar to bring the god, her spouse Tammuz, back to life. This is the great myth of the Goddess, how She descends to the underworld to bring immortal life to her spouse and herself. This image of the woman's role not only as creator of the cosmos but as rescuer within the cosmos is the basis of the old traditions (2013: 82).

The mythological archetype of the female hero may differ from her male counterpart, but in order to be perceived as a hero she must still satisfy the requisites of the mythological model for the heroic narrative arc. And like the male hero who is "the champion not of things become but of things becoming" (Campbell 2008 [1949]: 289), her full potential is initially unrealised.

Imperator Furiosa as Female Hero

Although *Fury Road* (2015) is a *Mad Max* film, Imperator Furiosa, played by Charlize Theron, drives almost all the film's action.⁵ This female hero's quest is to liberate five young women,

² Gary Abrams gives an account of one of a series of final public lectures sponsored by a California non-profit organisation, in which Joseph Campbell answered an audience question with: "If women don't write the Female Hero's Journey it may never exist." (Abrams, G. 1987).

³ "Inanna, Ishtar, Astarte, Aphrodite, Venus: those were the names she bore in successive culture periods... in Egypt she became the goddess of the Dog Star, Sirius, whose annual reappearance in the sky announced the earth-fructifying flood season of the river Nile" (Campbell 2008 [1949]: 184).

⁴ Frankel agrees that "many heroines set out on rescue missions... to restore their shattered families" (2010: 4).

⁵ In this film's narrative, the male hero is effectively decentralised (de Coning 2016: 175).

the brutal Warlord's 'Wives'. Viable baby boys are being taken from these breeder Wives and raised in the Citadel to be War Boys as part of Immortan Joe's loyal army. When Joe bursts into the Wives' quarters, filled with the world's last remaining books, he finds words of rebellion graffitied onto the floor and walls: 'Who killed the world?' and 'We are not things'. Joe and his War Boys then give chase to Furiosa and his escaped Wives as she speeds them away in the War Rig. Furiosa believes that there is somewhere called The Green Place out across the Wasteland. It is there she hopes to take the young women so that they may have a chance at a decent life.

In *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015), Furiosa's heroic actions clearly enact Campbell's prescribed mythological female hero role as 'rescuer' (2013: 82). George Miller flips the hero narrative from the original *Mad Max* trilogy⁶ to focus on a female protagonist as heroic rescuer.⁷ While the original *Mad Max* films were themed around revenge and disputes over commodities, *Fury Road* is about the "ultimate commodity: the human race itself – about sperms and wombs and women and men" (cowriter Brendan McCarthy quoted in Bernstein 2015: 13). In a film with minimal dialogue and visuals which do most of the storytelling, Furiosa's character is portrayed as a very strong equal to Max's. Miller's innovation in this film contributes to the emerging Female Hero's Journey narrative model in that it imagines not only the possibility of equally strong 'helpers' of opposite gender, but of male and female co-heroes.

The film's storyboard artist, Brendan McCarthy, confirms that "Max and Furiosa have the same intention and purpose" (Bernstein 2015: 48-49). Production Designer, Colin Gibson, explains

⁶ *Mad Max* (1979); *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior* (1981); and *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome* (1985).

⁷ Here, Miller is seen to radically challenge Campbell's monomyth in allowing Max to give power to Furiosa, so that the journey is now in the hands of women; since only they can rebuild the tarnished Eden, the product of "an impotent patriarchy blindly following a fearsome leader and convinced killing is the only solution" (Murray 2015).

that Furiosa earned the right to drive the mighty War Rig⁸ having already proven herself to Immortan Joe, not just as a driver and mechanic, but as a warrior (55). However, Anita Sarkeesian, a prominent media critic, sees Furiosa as stoic, emotionless, violent and calculating; an example of a female movie character who, in order to be identified as ‘strong’, typically embodies “some of the more highly valued characteristics identified with men, while also avoiding those devalued traits associated with women” (Herstein 2016).⁹ For Sarkeesian, Furiosa’s journey is a masculine representation of the hero story-type played by a woman, rather than a narrative example of a Female Hero’s Journey. Yet, what Furiosa rescues or liberates is mythologically sacred to women: the life-giving power of Women; Seeds for Food; Mother’s Milk; and Water.¹⁰ Furiosa reflects a radically new Female Hero’s Journey expressed in context with a dystopian world where survival depends on strength, not frailty.

Rey as Female Hero

In the highest grossing film of all time (Box Office Mojo 2016), *Star Wars: Episode VII – The Force Awakens* (Abrams, J. J. 2015), the youthful character of Rey is portrayed as a reluctant hero who Refuses the Call to her heroic journey multiple times. She is initially presented as an abandoned survivor. But because she is gifted in a variety of self-sufficient skills, Rey has been labelled as a ‘Mary Sue’ (Kain 2016).¹¹ Yet, since this film is the first in a trilogy, like the character herself, the audience does not yet know the mystery of Rey’s apparently untutored skills with The Force. Rey’s most vocal critics were likely unsettled by her potential threat to

⁸ Furiosa describes the War Rig as a “2,000 horsepower nitro-boosted war machine” (Miller 2015).

⁹ On her Feminist Frequency account, Sarkeesian tweeted: “I’m not one to shy away from expressing unpopular opinions. So here goes. I saw *Fury Road*. I get why people like it. But it isn’t feminist” (2015a).

¹⁰ See Joseph Campbell in *Goddesses* (2013: 6, 22).

¹¹ “A Mary Sue is a female fan-fiction character that is cloyingly perfect in every way” (Kain 2016).

the traditionally masculine heroic world of the *Star Wars* franchise, as the first female Jedi.¹² This alone makes her a ground-breaking female hero character. Nevertheless, Rey enacts Joseph Campbell's prescribed mythological female hero role as 'rescuer' (2013: 82) in first saving BB-8, then Finn, and later the original hero, Luke.

Rey's character is likened by Anita Sarkeesian to Buffy Summers from the TV series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003), in that she "never uses her sexuality as power" (Herstein 2016). Sarkeesian applauds the filmmakers' recognition that the traditional hero's journey does not always have to be associated with male figures:

Rey, the young woman at the center of *The Force Awakens*, is immediately compelling. She isn't stoic or emotionless or hardened by violence, and her humanity keeps her from being another example of the tired "strong female character" type we've seen too much of these past few decades. She's resilient and has learned to fend for herself, but she isn't a loner. She's competent and capable but also recognizes that she has so much to learn, and she welcomes friendship and support on her adventure. *The Force Awakens* seems to establish that this trilogy will focus on Rey's journey in much the same way that the original trilogy focused on Luke's. From King Arthur to Luke Skywalker,¹³ we've been taught to associate the traditional hero's journey with male figures; for a franchise as massive as *Star Wars* to demonstrate that it doesn't always have to be this way is hugely significant (Sarkeesian 2015).

Others have called Rey's character a game changer, one which transcends gender. In describing the character she plays in the film, Daisy Ridley explains: "[Rey's] brave and she's vulnerable and she's nuanced... She doesn't have to be one thing to embody a woman in a film. It just so happens she's a woman, but she transcends gender. She's going to speak to men and women" (Ridley quoted in Garber 2015).¹⁴ Australian broadcaster, Patricia Karvelas,

¹² "All of us, everyone involved in *The Force Awakens*, we had to immerse ourselves in the mythology of *Star Wars* before we could even begin to take the mantle and move forward with what George [Lucas] had created," according to Producer, Kathleen Kennedy (The Times 2015).

¹³ Ursula Le Guin labels science fiction as one of the mythologies of the modern world, which has been profoundly reshaped by science and technology (1982 [1979]: 74).

¹⁴ Director, J.J. Abrams, told GMA host George Stephanopoulos: "*Star Wars* was always a boys' thing and a movie that dads take their sons to, and though that's still very much the case, I was really hoping this could be a movie that mothers could take their daughters to as well" (ABC News Network 2015).

who sees the film as a “the feminist punch-in-the-air moment we’ve all been waiting for” noted: “The character of Rey is a game changer for the little girls around the world who have been disgracefully ignored by the *Star Wars* empire for decades. She is the real deal – smart, formidable and loyal” (Karvelas 2015). Like Ellen Ripley in *Alien* (Scott 1979), whose character was originally written for a man (Robinson 2015), both Rey and Furiosa are radically new portrayals of female heroes whose agency is not defined by the men around them.

Female Heroes: Genre Conventions, Episodic Narrative and Film Sequels

As examples of female heroes within the same genre categories of action-adventure and science fiction-fantasy, neither Furiosa nor Rey are portrayed as sexually active characters. In fact, none of the characters in these two films is portrayed as being in sexual partnership. This may reflect the conventions of these particular film genres, the narratives of which are generally aimed at a more youthful audience, as well as the innocent nature of the *Bildungsroman* or coming-of-age narrative.¹⁵ However, the portrayal of these contemporary female heroes as asexual suggests they are not bound by more traditional narrative tropes or gender conventions.

Patti McCarthy’s Heroine’s Journey narrative model is partially derived from Valerie E. Frankel’s model,¹⁶ in which weapons are customarily not handled by female heroes. Frankel states: “Only through valor and ingenuity, not swordplay, can the heroine survive...” (2010: 52). And further, “heroines work as hard as any fairytale hero. And they do it without swords” (4).¹⁷ McCarthy discusses her Heroine’s Journey model in context with the heroine of the

¹⁵ *Star Wars* is intended as “the traditional, ritualistic coming-of-age story” (Lucas 2004).

¹⁶ Compare their models found on pages 32 and 37 of the current study.

¹⁷ Frankel notes elsewhere that while the “sword is an unusual weapon for the heroine – a lightsabre that’s a hybrid with Xena’s chakram (a round distance weapon) or Buffy’s scythe (the woman’s ancestral weapon of death) would be a more appropriate choice” (Frankel 2016: eBook, no pagination).

television series *Outlander* (Hüseyin 2014 -), which was adapted by Starz from the original historical fantasy romance novel, *Outlander* (Gabaldon 1991). In an early scene in this book, the heroine, Claire, is being taught how to fight. However, her male companions hesitate to supply her with a weapon. Believing that a featherweight smallsword (weighing less than a kilogram) and flintlock pistol are each too heavy for Claire to wield, they provide her with a petite dagger instead. While this does not constitute a comprehensive weapons prohibition for the heroine, it does reflect the patriarchal belief that a cultural norm is somehow transgressed when a female is allowed to handle weaponry.

While McCarthy's model speaks of a stage where the heroine is gifted with a talisman, Frankel's model specifies a 'Bladeless Talisman' stage (Frankel 2010: 5; McCarthy 2016: 184). Kristin Bovaird-Abbo reinforces this concept, not unusual in scholarship related to the modern fantasy genre, saying that "traditional weapons such as swords are often beyond the [female hero's] reach" (2014: 51). The canon of texts selected to fashion some versions of the Heroine's Journey narrative model would prohibit female heroes like Rey and Furiosa from being represented as joining a military force, or participating in Olympic sports such as archery, fencing, javelin, or shooting, since all involve the skilful use of some form of weaponry.

Because Furiosa and Rey are not bound by genre conventions which prohibit the female hero's use of weapons, the differences between the applied models for the Hero's Journey and the Heroine's Journey appear to originate in the contrasting mediums and genres through which they have been developed.¹⁸ For example, Patti McCarthy discusses her Heroine's Journey model (2016) through the narrative of the adapted-for-television series *Outlander* (Hüseyin

¹⁸ Both *Fury Road* (2015) and *The Force Awakens* (2015) are developments of previous film texts which followed the male hero's narrative journey through the stages of Joseph Campbell's monomythic model.

2014 -), which combines a variety of genres from war epic to romantic fantasy. Frankel matches her Heroine's Journey model (2012; 2013) to female protagonists from television series such as *True Blood* (Warn 2008–2014) and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Whedon 1997–2003), whose narratives are spread across the diverse genre categories of dark fantasy, supernatural drama and horror. These television genres are more closely related to the genre conventions and literary tropes of fairy tales, than the spectacular big-screen genres of action-adventure and science fiction-fantasy. Women and girls are more likely to be represented as villains, victims, girlfriends, seductresses or sidekicks¹⁹ within the traditional female tropes of fairy tale and fantasy genres.

Feminist critics of fairy tales have highlighted the stereotypical gendered pathways in their metanarratives which reinforce patriarchal constructions of female functions.²⁰ These include passivity, dependency and self-sacrifice (Stone, K. F. 1985: 127), as well as the valorisation by fairy tales of beauty, motherhood and domesticity, which are rewarded with marriage (Rowe 1991: 348; Stephens and McCallum 2013a: 205). The screen adaptations of fairy tales, *Ever After* (Tennant 1998), *La Belle Endormie* (Breillat 2010) and *Snow White and the Huntsman* (Rupert 2012), each attempted to disrupt the narrative of the traditionally passive female heroine. They sought to reinstate her agency by “recuperat[ing] gender bias and its effect on the representation of female roles” (Stephens and McCallum 2013a: 201). However, modern adaptations of fairy tales sometimes inadvertently retain narrative components of their pretexts, which act to reinforce social values reflecting the dominant cultural traditions.²¹ This

¹⁹ Women are commonly represented in narrative as desirable but dangerous to men, as being “the obstacle to the male quest” (Kaplan 1998: 16).

²⁰ Feminists have also used Foucault's concept of a hierarchy of discourses in any culture to argue that “female discourse within film narratives is subordinated to overarching heterosexual male discourses” (Kaplan 1998: 3).

²¹ The film industry is not immune to such social conditioning. A female action toy of Rey did not appear for months after the release of *The Force Awakens*, due to the toy marketing executives' culturally entrenched belief that “No boy wants to be given a product with a female character on it” (Kain 2016a). However, after a social media outcry over its absence, when the Rey action toy was eventually released, Rey carried weaponry.

appears so in emerging Heroine's Journey narrative models, with implied weapons prohibitions, which are derived, not from film texts, but from the genre conventions of fairy tales and modern fantasy as expressed through the medium of television.

Since film is a visual medium, the struggles and conflicts which any character undergoes, whether internal or external, must be communicated externally through dialogue or action. Although the Heroine's Journey narrative model in literary texts attempts to place greater emphasis on the inner struggles²² of the heroine,²³ by contrast, screenwriters employing a female hero's journey model must find a way to physicalize the protagonist's emotional journey through a greater emphasis on screen action.²⁴ Thus, when represented in the action-oriented film genres of action-adventure and science fiction-fantasy, female heroes such as Furiosa and Rey, whose narratives clearly correspond to the stages of Joseph Campbell's monomyth, have been afforded the kind of agency historically only granted to male heroes.

Nevertheless, there are points of accord between the fairy tale-fantasy and action-adventure genres.²⁵ The first is the idea of wish fulfilment. Both the narrative models of the Hero's and Heroine's Journey reflect some form of quest, or wish fulfilment. Fantasy and fairy tale adaptations are screen narratives in which the heroine's goal may involve wish fulfilment, just

²² The hero or heroine's inner struggles are reflected not only in the Heroine's Journey models discussed, but in Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey. Campbell, who defines the hero as 'the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations' (2008 [1949]: 14), also states that the physical or outer journey of the hero represents everybody's inward psychological journey of continuous re-discovery and self-transformation (21, 276). Binary gendered demarcations of the heroic narrative journey are not absolute according to Maureen Murdock, who asserts that her Heroine's Journey "addresses the journeys of both genders" (1990: 4).

²³ Marina Warner sees Joan of Arc as a preeminent heroine because, while so many feminine models are confined to the sphere of contemplation, Joan of Arc belongs to the sphere of action (1981: 9).

²⁴ Craig Batty has provided a useful guide to understanding the separate structures of the protagonist's inner/emotional and outer/physical journeys, based on Vogler's simplified narrative model (2011). Yet, since emotion frequently underpins physicality, it can be difficult for screenwriters to completely separate the physical and emotional journeys of the heroic film protagonist (91). Campbell notes that while heroic deeds are shown as moral in higher religious myths, in popular tales, heroic action is represented as physical (2008 [1949]: 30).

²⁵ Genre texts may contain a combination of both convention (the familiar aspects of the form) and invention (novel experimentation with the form). "[G]enre describes not so much a group of texts or textual features as it does a dynamic relationship between texts and interpretative communities" (Allen 1989: 44).

as filmmakers like Spielberg have demonstrated wish fulfilment plots through action-adventure and science fiction genres (Dancyger and Rush 2007: 66).²⁶ Secondly, each of these genres has been expressed through episodic wish-fulfilment narratives, either through television series like *Outlander*, *True Blood* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, or film sequels like *Star Wars*.²⁷

The narrative structure of Campbell's Hero's Journey is inherently suitable for adaptation to episodic drama, since the internal structure of each stage can be constructed to reflect the monomyth's overarching three-part theme. Palumbo asserts that each stage of Campbell's structure "mirrors the monomyth as a whole in at least one of three ways" (2014: 12). Each narrative stage echoes the "'separation – initiation – return' structure symbolically in one or more death-and-rebirth incidents, symbols, or metaphors;"²⁸ by representing this structure literally in containing one or more initiation rituals *per se*; or by reflecting the symbolic action of the whole, which is attaining enlightenment and conveying it to others" (Palumbo 2002: 218).²⁹ This 'fractal' quality of Campbell's Hero's Journey narrative structure facilitates its application to sequel driven storytelling, including episodic television drama and film sequels.

Film Sequels, similar in dramatic form to Soap Operas, appear to break with the Aristotelian notion of three-act drama (Butcher 1895). George Lucas – the original creator of the *Star Wars* series of films, and also the first filmmaker to acknowledge the application of Joseph

²⁶ The Hero's Journey 'quest narrative' can be found in many other narrative genres including mystery, romance and historical fiction. Thrillers like the films *Jaws* (1975), *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) and *The Sixth Sense* (1999) also reflect a mythic/archetypal quest.

²⁷ I refer here to the original *Star Wars* trilogy.

²⁸ Note that death and rebirth in the monomyth is often a symbolic representation of the protagonist's death to a previous life pattern and rebirth into a new life situation (Campbell 2008 [1949]: 28).

²⁹ An example in *Fury Road* is the Belly of the Whale stage, where in the wake of the sand storm all appear dead, but reappear resurrected (2015). See Palumbo's close analysis of the stages in *Chaos Theory* (2002: 216-23).

Campbell's three-part hero's journey structure to his filmmaking – sees *Star Wars* as a soap opera. Lucas told interviewer, Charlie Rose: ³⁰

[Disney] looked at the stories [from the first three movies], and they said, we want to make something for the fans. I said, all I wanted to do is tell a story of what happened, it started here and went here... it's a family soap opera, ultimately. We call it a space opera, but people don't realize it's actually a soap opera, and it's all about family problems. It's not about spaceships (Kelly 2016).

However, film sequels, like soap operas, do not completely discard the three-act structure, advocated by Hollywood screenwriting consultants like Field (1984 [1979]), Seger (1992), McKee (1997), Vogler (2007 [1998]), Aronson (2010), and Hauge (2011).³¹ Sequels and soap operas simply delay the final third act, sometimes for decades (Hiltunen 2002: 88), completing their extended narrative with a *finale* episode, and sometimes, an abrupt ending (Mittell 2015). Some appear to continue on indefinitely.³² In episodic narratives employing Campbell's monomythic structure, like the *Star Wars* and *Mad Max* film series, although the entire hero's story is not fully played out in each episode, the audience's need for relief from dramatic tension can be resolved through an intense cliff-hanger, or be brought to resolution through an open-ended question.

For example, *Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens* (2015), contains an epilogue which jumps into the future to provide a form of dramatic closure for the audience. Since the film's narrative is based on the imperative of finding Luke Skywalker, it delivers on that promise. In the final scene, we are shown that the female hero, Rey, has succeeded in travelling across the

³⁰ George Lucas appeared on the American television breakfast program CBS *This Morning* with Charlie Rose on 25th December, 2015.

³¹ While the dominance of the three-act paradigm is often criticized by independent film buffs, Matthias Brüttsch's study found low consensus on how to divide feature films into three acts, suggesting that structural analysis of film requires greater emphasis on interpretation to allow for the complexity of mainstream films (2015).

³² See the twenty-first century *Star Wars* franchise.

universe to find Luke. The two characters are shown on the rocky summit of a remote island, gazing wordlessly at each other while Rey, holding Luke's light saber in her hand, offers it to him. Thematically, this denouement in the epilogue is part of the next stage of Rey's hero's journey adventure. Here, it acts as a cliff-hanger. It allows the audience to project forward into a future episode of Rey's narrative journey, in which she may continue through the further or repeated stages of her hero's journey metanarrative.³³ Conversely, *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) concludes with an open-ended question. The final sequence shows Max slipping away into the crowd, acknowledged by Furiosa, to continue on with his own adventure. The audience is left wondering whether Max will journey on alone like this, the way he has in previous *Mad Max* film episodes,³⁴ in spite of gaining a remarkably strong partner in Furiosa, in this episode.

Fury Road and The Force Awakens: Feminist Issues

Even before *Fury Road* was released, men's rights blogger, Aaron Clarey, was urging men to boycott the film, declaring it "a feminist piece of propaganda posing as a guy flick" (2015). Fearing Max's emasculation, he protested, "Nobody barks orders to Mad Max" and that, should the film be a success, "the world [will] never be able to see a real action movie ever again that doesn't contain some damn political lecture or moray [sic] about feminism" (2015).³⁵ Early word-of-mouth describing *Fury Road* as a feminist film had been reinforced by the presence of Eve Ensler, author of *The Vagina Monologues* (2007), hired by Miller to work with the cast to help them understand what happens with women who have been raped, enslaved and

³³ Sarkeesian notes that "Rey's journey isn't over yet... and there's opportunity for the next two films to develop the characters in more substantial ways and to complicate the simplistic lens through which the series has always framed notions of good and evil" (Review 2015).

³⁴ Rather than being a film sequel, *Fury Road* is intended more as a relaunch and revisit to the *Mad Max* world, bringing it up to date by thirty years (Tom Hardy quoted in Lesnick 2010).

³⁵ An even more 'fetid Men's Rights brigade' than that which targeted *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) on social media, attacked the use of female lead characters in the *Ghostbusters* reboot (Feig 2016), causing Twitter to permanently ban 'notorious troll' Milo Yiannopoulos – whose boss ran Donald Trump's campaign from August 2016 (Stein 2016) – for his targeted online abuse of female cast member Leslie Jones (Child 2016; Hunt 2016).

trafficked (Perry 2015). Ensler drew on her experiences with women in the Congo, Haiti, Bosnia and Afghanistan to coach credible performances from *Immortan Joe's Wives*. She praised the film for granting autonomy to its female characters (Gallagher, C. 2015):

To me feminism [...] means women are equal. We have equal roles, equal rights, equal pay. If you look at this film from an objective point of view, women are equally capable of fighting. Women have equal desires. Women are independent and have agency over their own lives. They exist without men [...] I also love the older women in that film – that was brilliant. When do we even see older women in movies? [...] So that alone was significant. (Ensler quoted in Youngs 2015).

Yet the director, George Miller, explains the perception of *Fury Road* as being pro-feminist as originating from the mechanics of plot, rather than being part of his original vision. At the film's Cannes Film Festival press conference, he stated:

Initially, there wasn't a feminist agenda [...] the thing that people were chasing was to be not an object, but the five wives. I needed a warrior. But it couldn't be a man taking five wives from another man. That's an entirely different story. So everything grew out of that (Miller, quoted in Kilday 2015).

To what extent *Fury Road* is an explicitly feminist film, with Furiosa and Max joining forces to take down what the movie portrays as a literal patriarchy, will continue to be debated. Like *Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens*, *Fury Road* not only easily passes the Bechdel Test (2015), but has also inspired a new film standard called The Furiosa Test.³⁶ While these films cannot be classified as 'women's movies', both portray female leads executing the same feats that audiences regularly see men performing on screen, along with practical effects, stunts and minimal use of CGI, making the action seem more 'real' to audiences. By doing so, they

³⁶ *Fury Road* passes all four contemporary pop culture tests: The Bechdel Test, where two named women must be shown conversing in a film about something other than a male character (2015); The Sexy Lamp Test, where a female character cannot be replaced with a sexy lamp while the plot remains relatively unchanged; The Mako Mori Test, where the female character has her own narrative arc that is not about supporting the man's story; and The Furiosa Test, where men rant on Twitter about a film they perceive as feminist (Powers 2015; Righetti 2016).

normalise the representation of gender equality in narrative media. They make female heroes conventional.³⁷ Miller, a self-confessed feminist (Adams 2015), hired his wife Margaret Sixel to edit *Fury Road* so that it would not “look like every other action movie you see” (Sixel quoted in Kilday 2015).³⁸ Sixel went on to win the Oscar for Film Editing, along with the film’s five other wins from ten nominations at the 2016 Academy Awards (Goldstein 2016).

In the clamour of debate around representation of female heroes on screen, the lack of female voices in the construction of distributed screen narratives³⁹ continues to be neglected by its most vocal critics. For contemporary women screenwriters there is a perception of a double oppression.⁴⁰ In discussing the emergence of screenwriting theories, and the scriptwriter’s disputed claim to film authorship in the wake of auteur theory, Steven Maras cites Nora Ephron as saying: “It is the writer’s job to get screwed... Writers are the women of the movie business” (Maras 2009: 20; McCreadie 1994: 3, 186).⁴¹

Feminist actress, Geena Davis, is outspoken about the negative social effects of inequitable gender representation in the film industry, championing the slogan: “If she can see it, she can be it” (Smith, S. 2016). Research from the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media suggests that a more balanced gender representation in screen narrative benefits young female audiences

³⁷ I acknowledge that greater weight may have been placed on Furiosa’s narrative journey in this study, perhaps because she came first (before Rey) and therefore appears to have taken on greater criticism from men’s rights groups in her trailblazing cinematic representation of a female action hero.

³⁸ Only 18% of contemporary Hollywood films are edited by women, according to the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University (Lang 2015).

³⁹ A recent study of 2010-2015 films refutes the perception that women’s voices are not bankable in film. It showed that in spite of receiving 63% less distribution than male-helmed movies, films produced by, written by, acted in, or directed by women more often had a greater return on investment than those made by men (Sun 2016).

⁴⁰ A proliferation of women worked productively in the early US film industry of the 1910s, not only as screenwriters, but as producers, directors, and actors, particularly in the popular action films of the Chapter Film or Serial genre with their “extraordinary emphasis on female heroism” (Singer quoted in Vatsal 2016).

⁴¹ Female screenwriters accounted for only 11% of writers working on the top two hundred and fifty films of 2015 (Lauzen 2016: 2). There are even fewer women of colour either represented on screen or involved in the construction of contemporary screen narratives (Morné 2016).

(2016). I assert that it benefits all audiences. Yet, box-office takings for female-driven movies have increased since 2008 (Byrnes 2016), and blockbuster action films like *The Force Awakens* (2015) and *Fury Road* (2015) have proven the fiscal power of female audiences (McNally 2016).⁴²

Mythic Storytelling in Screen Narrative

Rather than being a Trojan Horse for feminist propaganda (Clarey 2015), *Mad Max: Fury Road* is a story about healing disguised as a summer blockbuster. Nico Lathouris, who co-wrote the screenplay with Miller, explains the film's underlying themes:

It's about a man running away from his better self, and his better self catches up to him. It's about a man that is 'apart from,' at the beginning: he becomes a part *of* at the end. The premise of it was that what's broken is healed by love only (quoted in Bernstein 2015: 17).

Another of the film's cowriters, Brendan McCarthy, who designed the initial storyline and visuals, said the writers' slogan for Max's character was: 'Engage to heal'. The film pivots on Max's commitment to engage, reluctantly at first, with Furiosa and the rebellious Wives. Equally, Furiosa must engage to heal. The film revolves around the theme that "as you become engaged, healing can happen, emotionally and spiritually" (McCarthy quoted in Bernstein 2015: 17). This theme is mirrored in the character arcs of each of the major protagonists in the film. For George Miller, the film's creator, this healing represents the 'Ultimate Boon' of

⁴² As Box Office hits like *Fury Road* proved that female empowerment sells movie tickets and *The Force Awakens* ushered in more diverse characters, female lead or co-leads in mainstream films improved by eleven percent from 2014-2015 (Coyle 2016). But this may have led to a 'misplaced optimism' that the status quo in Hollywood has changed (Smith 2016). A USC Annenberg study of 2007-2014 films found that "the norm in Hollywood is to exclude girls and women from the screen" (Smith, S. L. et al. 2016). In the top 700 top grossing films, only 30.2 percent of speaking characters were female, all overwhelmingly more likely to be sexualized than men (1).

Campbell's Initiation stage (2008 [1949]: 148-165); 'The Elixir' each hero brings back from their journey.⁴³

Fury Road provides the kind of transformative experience for its audience that is characteristic of many blockbuster film narratives which employ the Hero's Journey narrative arc. In Campbell's monomyth, transformation is achieved in the Initiation stage within the three-part structure of Departure, Initiation and Return (2008 [1949]). George Miller's narrative invites us to participate in the transformational journeys of people who were once captive, escaping to achieve self-definition; characters who were once lost, finding themselves again; and heroes – Furiosa, Max, and Nux as well – learning to find new meaning in life. Immortan Joe's Wives were seeking hope; Furiosa sought redemption. These aspirations were shared by the Vulvalini, Nux, and eventually by Max.⁴⁴ Through experiencing the ordeal of transformation as part of Furiosa's female hero's narrative journey, even while it follows the traditional monomythic structure, audiences may also experience a measure of this cathartic redemption.

Campbell himself points to the significance of applying mythology to narrative cinema, while also drawing attention to its pitfalls. "We must not confuse mythology with ideology" (Toms 1990: 21). *The Matrix* (1999)⁴⁵ and *Kill Bill* (2003) are examples of popular films influenced by Campbell's narrative model which have drawn criticism for apparently reinforcing the typical American ideology of individual power over the importance of the whole society (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler 2006: 310). However, Campbell considers the more essential

⁴³ Vogler describes the Elixir as something which changes us, something that we can share, or "something with the power to heal a wounded land" (2007 [1998]: 215, 227).

⁴⁴ While *Fury Road* focusses the action on the female protagonist, Max Rockatansky remains the original protagonist from the film's title. Max's hero's journey, which represents a substantial character arc in the film's narrative, and is arguable equally as significant as Furiosa's, will be discussed in greater detail in a future study.

⁴⁵ Bruce Isaacs posits that "The cultural resonance of [*The Matrix*] stems from its collage of traditional and postmodern myths" (2004).

quality of myth when applied to the creation of narrative. “Myths come from where the heart is, and where the experience is, even as the mind may wonder why people believe these things. The myth does not point to a fact; the myth points beyond facts to something that informs the fact” (Toms 1990: 21). This reflects a postmodern view, in which filmmakers move back towards the truth of the mythic narrative to emphasize the ‘story’ of human experience.

Joseph Campbell asserts that artists may be the ‘mythmakers of our day’. In a series of interviews with Bill Moyers, shortly before his death,⁴⁶ he declares that “Myth must be kept alive. The people who keep it alive are artists of one kind or another. The function of the artist is the mythologization of the environment and the world” (1988: 85). Campbell proposes that movies “might be our counterpart to mythological re-enactments – except that we don’t have the same kind of thinking going into the production of a movie that goes into an initiation ritual” (82). Still, “what is unfortunate for us is that a lot of the people who write these stories do not have the sense of their responsibility. These stories are making and breaking lives. But the movies are made simply to make money” (82). Yet, when screenwriters craft mythic stories ‘from the heart,’ as Campbell suggests, the results, in the context of collaborative production partnerships, can be original, audience-pleasing, blockbuster filmmaking.

The mythic structures evidenced in screenplays that have inspired some of the most successful films of all time reflect the influence of Joseph Campbell’s Hero’s Journey model in their narrative structure. While screenwriters are storytellers who write stories for film (Dancyger and Rush 2007: 379), dramatic structure articulates a means by which to identify the screenwriting process (Lennon 2016). The narrative strategy of ‘structure’, with its four

⁴⁶ These conversations took place between Moyers and Campbell in 1985 and 1986 at George Lucas’ Skywalker Ranch in California and later at the Museum of Natural History in New York (Campbell and Moyers 1988: xi).

microelements of three-act structure, plot, the character layer and genre, has dominated screenwriting practice for the past twenty years (Dancyger 2013: 43). Yet, Campbell insisted that myths should be continually renewed to address contemporary social needs. In *Myths to Live By*, Campbell explains what is meant by the ‘new mythology’ or the ‘living myth’.

It is – and will forever be, as long as our human race exists – the old, everlasting, perennial mythology, in its “subjective sense,” poetically renewed in terms neither of a remembered past nor of a projected future, but of now: addressed... to the waking of individuals in the knowledge of themselves (1972: 275).

Just as myths should be renewed in each age, so too must the underlying structure of screenwriting practice evolve to better reflect cultural change. Hence, Campbell’s mythic model may be steadily adapted by screenwriters to suit the needs of their audiences, should they wish to tell stories that matter in today’s world. Narrative models for both the mythically-structured male and female hero’s journeys, based on Campbell’s remarkable three-part construction, especially in various wish-fulfilment or quest genres, will continue to keenly influence the evolving structure of contemporary screen narratives.

Acknowledging Campbell’s call for ‘continual renewal’, there remains a need to formulate a revised narrative model that can be applied by screenwriters working across diverse screen genres. Its mythic three-part structure – designed to reflect both the protagonist’s outward and inner narrative journeys – would specifically address the Female Hero’s Journey. The updated template I am proposing should explicitly encourage the portrayal of unrestricted female agency in multiple screen formats. Ideally, this renewed narrative structure would take the form of a combination and reworking of: a) Joseph Campbell’s original Hero’s Journey model; b) Campbell’s preliminary research into the three-part structure of the Heroic Feminine narrative journey;⁴⁷ and c) Heroine’s Journey narrative models, subsequently proposed.

⁴⁷ As discussed by Joseph Campbell throughout his 1972-1986 lecture series (2013: ix-x).

Patti McCarthy's Heroine's Journey narrative template, which credits the influence of previous scholars in this field, including Murdock (1990), Vogler (2007 [1998]), Schmidt (2001) and Frankel (2010), also specifically credits the foundational influence of Joseph Campbell's narrative model (2008 [1949]). It is one of many attempts to provide a template to portray the unique narrative arc of a female hero's journey, which successive authors contend differs from that of a male hero. McCarthy's story model substitutes Campbell's Departure; Initiation; and Return; with Awakening; Transformation; and Rebirth; matching them to the three stages of a woman's life: Maiden, Mother and Crone. This suggests thematic and temporal differences between the former as a coming-of-age narrative model and the latter as a whole-of-life narrative pattern. However, since her narrative template reveals an awareness of both mythic structure and screenwriting principles (2016: 205), McCarthy's Heroine's Journey narrative model, along with her forthcoming book, deserve greater scrutiny in the scholarly literature.⁴⁸

This analysis of the narrative journeys of the female heroes, Furiosa and Rey, has shown that they indeed correspond to Joseph Campbell's mythological Hero's Journey model. While their characters do not comply with established literary tropes or gender conventions, both conform to Campbell's mythological female hero role as 'rescuer'. Yet, through their use of weapons, they appear to violate conventions of some emerging Heroine's Journey models derived from the fairy tale and modern fantasy genres found in episodic television series. Nevertheless, the characters of Furiosa and Rey demonstrate that when female heroes, whose narratives closely correspond to the stages of Joseph Campbell's monomyth, are represented in action-oriented film genres, they are able to assume the kind of agency previously exclusive to male heroes.

⁴⁸ McCarthy's book, *Outlander and the Heroine's Journey*, is due for publication by McFarland Press in 2017.

Conclusion

The Female Hero's Journey in Narrative Media: The Journey Ahead

I set out in this thesis to discover whether there was evidence in these two films to suggest a new narrative model that may be seen as the female equivalent of Joseph Campbell's mythological formula for 'The Hero's Journey'. So often in film narrative, screen heroines are written to die by the end of the film, perhaps because their characters transgress societal norms, or contravene the confines of a certain genre, or because audiences have come to expect it. Even so, the female heroes of *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) and *Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens* (2015) do not die. Instead, not only can the narrative journeys of both Furiosa and Rey be seen to represent the female equivalent of Joseph Campbell's mythological formula for the Hero's Journey in contemporary narrative media texts, but, like most male heroes in great action-adventure films, they also live on to fight another day.

Furiosa and Rey, whose characters are not bound by traditional narrative tropes or gender conventions, represent remarkable cinematic innovations. Both their narrative journeys have been shown to closely match Joseph Campbell's mythological Hero's Journey model. The traditionally male hero narrative was flipped by George Miller, in *Fury Road* (2015), to focus on his female protagonist as heroic rescuer, allowing Furiosa to fulfil the 'rescuer' role of Campbell's mythic female hero. In *The Force Awakens* (2015), Rey enacts Campbell's prescribed role of the mythological female hero by rescuing the BB-8 droid, Finn and Luke. These contemporary heroines, both presented as asexual, are radically new portrayals of female heroes, whose agency is not defined by the men around them. Further, neither Rey nor Furiosa are bound by genre conventions which have informed emerging Heroine's Journey models.

The differences between narrative models for the Hero's and Heroine's Journeys appear to originate in the contrasting media and genres through which they have evolved. Unlike Campbell's model, adapted to shape the narratives of the films examined in this study, emerging Heroine's Journey models are largely derived, not from film texts, but from the genre conventions of fairy tales and modern fantasy, as portrayed in television series. Within the literary tropes of fairy tale and fantasy genres, female characters are more likely to be represented as seductresses, villains and victims. Further, screen adaptations and retellings of fairy tales may retain narrative features from their pre-texts, which act to reinforce the social values of the dominant culture, thereby limiting the agency of female heroes. However, when represented in action-oriented film genres such as action-adventure and science fiction-fantasy, female heroes like Furiosa and Rey, whose narratives closely correspond to the stages of Joseph Campbell's monomyth, are afforded an agency historically only granted to male heroes. Yet there are points of agreement between fairy tale-fantasy and action-adventure genres.

Screen adaptations of fantasy and fairy tale narratives frequently reflect wish-fulfilment themes in their portrayal of the heroine's journey towards her goal, just as quest-themed plots are common in cinematic action-adventure and science fiction genres. In addition, each of these genres has been expressed through episodic quest-themed metanarratives in both television series or film sequels. And when the protagonist's entire heroic arc is not fully played out within an individual instalment of the story, episodic narratives that employ Campbell's monomythic structure may provide audiences with relief from suspense through temporary endings, such as the cliff-hanger (as in *The Force Awakens*), or an open-ended question (*Fury Road*). The narrative structure of Campbell's Hero's Journey is intrinsically suitable for adaptation to episodic drama because of its ability to reflect the monomyth's overarching three-part theme within the internal structure of each scene or stage of the journey. Therefore,

narrative models for mythically-structured male and female hero's journeys, based on Campbell's three-part quest-themed structure, will continue to be a useful tool for screenwriters working in diverse wish-fulfilment genres in various narrative media, including game design.

The Force Awakens and *Fury Road* have provided large audiences with the kind of transformative experience characteristic of blockbuster films which employ the Hero's Journey narrative arc. And while the debate continues over whether these are explicitly feminist films, the lack of female voices in the construction of screen narratives remains irrefutable.¹ A more balanced gender representation in screen narrative is not only appropriate for younger female audiences, it is of benefit to all. Yet, rather than being a subterfuge for feminist propaganda, both *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens* are stories about healing journeys disguised as blockbuster films. Indeed, as a direct reflection of the enduring influence of Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey model, mythic structure is evidenced, not just in the narratives of these two films, but in some of the most successful films of all time.

While Patti McCarthy's Heroine's Journey narrative model suggests thematic and temporal differences to Joseph Campbell's model, it is conscious of screenwriting principles and mythic structures. As the most recently proposed in a field of emerging Heroine's Journey narrative models, McCarthy's prototype, along with her forthcoming book, will provide a firm foundation for further scholarly research on this topic. The fact that McCarthy's template is founded upon previous models, all of which are derived from Campbell's original Hero's Journey narrative paradigm, is evidence not only of the cogency and endurance of Campbell's mythological formula, but of the capacity of his three-part narrative structure to be adapted by contemporary screenwriters for the transformed narrative needs of evolving societies.

¹ See footnoted data, pp. 81-82. Women in academia and the film industry are actively seeking to address this.

The Journey Ahead

This study has shown that Joseph Campbell's original seventeen stages of the Hero's Journey can be directly applied to the Female Hero's Journey in both *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) and *Star Wars: Episode VII – The Force Awakens* (2015), regardless of the hero's gender. It answers the research question affirmatively and in detail. There is ample evidence in these two contemporary films of a female hero's narrative arc that represents the female equivalent of Joseph Campbell's mythological hero's journey. The arrival of Furiosa and Rey as female heroes is a watershed moment in cinema history, certain to influence future screenwriters. However, although Campbell's monomyth can be directly applied to the female protagonists of these two films, this does not mean that it will apply to all films containing female heroes.

The evidence emerging from an analysis of the narrative models examined in this study points to a number of adjustments which might constitute a more inclusive Female Hero's Journey model, based on: a) Joseph Campbell's original monomyth; b) Campbell's three-part Heroic Feminine narrative structure; and c) Heroine's Journey templates. This renewed narrative structure, like models proposed by both Murdock and Campbell, could be applied to the more inward mythic journeys of either gender.² Many of the existing stages of the various narrative journeys cited could be modified or updated. Some elementary examples are: Meeting with the 'deity' might be with either the God or Goddess/Animus or Anima; the Atonement stage may be a Meeting with either the Father or Mother; Encountering the Dark Side of the 'parent' could be with either (or both) the Mother or Father's Dark Side; and Woman as Temptress/Tempted to Abort True Path may sometimes be another form of Refusal of the Call.

² Craig Batty provides a helpful guide to the interwoven physical and emotional narrative journeys of the protagonist in *Movies That Move Us* (2011), based on Christopher Vogler's twelve stage model and applicable to male or female heroes (55). My approach differs in that I propose a narrative model based on Joseph Campbell's original seventeen stage prototype that also addresses the particular implications of a Female Hero's Journey.

The character journeys of the two heroes in this study, while proven to follow Campbell's monomythic narrative pattern, offer alternative approaches to traditionally masculine hero's journeys. They help make female heroes conventional by normalising the representation of gender equality in screen narrative. Rey's character, shaped by Lucasfilm president, Kathleen Kennedy, and director, J. J. Abrams, offers a reluctant female hero, driven not by dreams of conquest, but by a quest to belong. The subtlety in her heroic character development reflects the lives of many young, contemporary women. Unlike traditional male heroes, and although clearly competent, Rey does not fully accept her heroic destiny until the film's final scenes. George Miller also offers an alternative form of heroism, expressed through the character of Furiosa. Beyond his acclaimed cinematic innovations, Miller's original contribution to the field of the emerging Female Hero's Journey narrative model is his reimagining of equally strong male and female co-heroes. Each of these films, based on Campbell's monomyth, offers new approaches to the portrayal of female heroes in narrative media.

However, both films can be categorised in the action-adventure and science-fiction genres, in which exterior character action dominates the portrayal of interior character dynamics. While this does not limit the agency of these particular films' female heroes, it does not fully rectify the original difficulty of effective representation of the inner journey of the female hero, the very problem which the authors of various Heroine's Journey models have been attempting to address. This dilemma can be remedied by formulating a revised Female Hero's Journey narrative model, capable of portraying unrestricted female agency through screen action, but also applicable across multiple film genres, without delimiting its application to the action-adventure or science fiction-fantasy genres. I hope to address this problem by devising and demonstrating a new and inclusive Female Hero's Journey narrative model in a future study.

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