



**The Amazon goes nova:
considering the female hero in speculative fiction**

by

Eileen Donaldson

submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of

Magister Artium (English)

in the Faculty of Humanities

University of Pretoria

Pretoria

December 2003

Supervisor: Ms Molly Brown

Acknowledgements

Ms Molly Brown for her unfailing tact, guidance, support and encouragement.

Dedication

To my grandfather who loves all ‘dishevelled wandering stars,’

And has shared that love with all of us,

To my grandmother for countless ‘Once upon a times,’

And to my mother and father who saw a UFO in the harvest of 1978.

Summary

The female hero has been marginalized through history, to the extent that theorists, from Plato and Aristotle to those of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, state that a female hero is impossible. This thesis argues that she is not impossible. Concentrating on the work of Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell, a heroic standard is proposed against which to measure both male and female heroes. This heroic standard suggests that a hero must be human, must act, must champion a heroic ethic and must undertake a quest. Should a person, male or female, comply with these criteria, that person can be considered a hero.

This thesis refutes the patriarchal argument against female heroism, proposing that the argument is faulty because it has at its base a constricting male-constructed myth of femininity. This myth suggests that women are naturally docile and passive, not given to aggression and heroism, but rather to motherhood and adaptation to adverse circumstances, it does not reflect the reality of women's natural abilities or capacity for action. Indeed, with the rise of contemporary feminist discourse the patriarchal myth of femininity is being demystified and, without the myth of femininity to constrain her, the female hero is now re-emerging in certain areas of cultural expression.

The examples of female heroes discussed in this study are taken from speculative fiction, encompassing the genres of both science fiction and fantasy. Speculative fiction, which has a propensity for challenging the *status quo* and questioning common societal assumptions, provides the perfect platform for women writers to confront feminist issues and launch the female hero. The female hero challenges the patriarchal claim that all heroes must be masculine, she defies patriarchal power structures and she demands a re-evaluation of women's capabilities. The female hero gives women an example of heroic

activity to emulate, in place of the ‘angel in the house’ that women have had to bow to for so long.

The works discussed in this thesis cover a range of authors, from those of outspoken contemporary feminist, Joanna Russ, to early speculative works like those of C.L. Moore. Lesser-known authors such as Vonda McIntyre and Tanith Lee are also discussed.

Key terms: hero, female hero, Joanna Russ, C.L. Moore, Vonda McIntyre, Tanith Lee, Joseph Campbell, speculative fiction, archetypes, feminism.

Table of Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	6
Chapter One: <u>The Light in the Darkness: Heroes in Society</u>	22
Chapter Two: <u>Arming the Damsel in Distress: Recovering the Female Hero</u>	55
Chapter Three: <u>Drawing the Virtuous Sword</u>	97
Chapter Four: <u>Wielding the Sceptre of Dominion</u>	144
<u>Conclusion</u>	184
<u>Bibliography</u>	197
Appendix A: Lord Raglan's template of the hero's life.	206

Introduction

Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size. Without that power probably the earth would still be swamp and jungle. The glories of all our wars would be unknown. ... Supermen and Fingers of Destiny would never have existed. The Tsar and the Kaiser would never have worn crowns or lost them. Whatever may be their use in civilised societies, mirrors are essential to all violent and heroic action. That is why Napoleon and Mussolini both insist so emphatically upon the inferiority of women, for if they were not inferior, they would not enlarge. (Woolf, 2000:37)

If Virginia Woolf is right, then it is to women that thanks are due for the figure of the hero: if women had not elevated men, encouraging glorious heroic status, and maintained them in such a position, the world might not have known a Beowulf, or a Superman. Although I do believe that this is an oversimplification of the hero's story, it is certainly an interesting explanation for why there are so few recognised female heroes in history. Woolf suggests that it is because women have an inferior position to men that men have naturally assumed positions of power and leadership in the various spheres of human endeavour. If women have magnified men to twice their natural size, it stands to reason that women are always only half a man's stature themselves; because of this, it seems natural that men should achieve heroic status, while women both cannot and should not.

Women, who have had their gaze directed solely at men as subjects worthy of hero-worship, have not paused to look at themselves until fairly recently. But this change in perspective is a vital one. Female academics and revolutionaries have, in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, produced a vast amount of philosophy and literature in which the position of women (in the past and in the present) has been subjected to much criticism. In these writings the direction of the female gaze has changed somewhat,

from being directed to and by the male, to being far more truly self-reflective. Because of this, an interesting re-evaluation of the female, and the female as hero, is taking place. In fact, women are no longer willing to accept their status as 'half-a-man', instead they are beginning to resurrect ancient images of powerful females from history and myth to construct their own contemporary images of female heroes. (Larrington, 1992:441) And that there are powerful female images to which women can look is telling. Obviously, woman has not always been half the size of her male counterpart; there have been times in the past when she seems to have overshadowed him.

Antonia Fraser, in her book *The Warrior Queens*, cites the Ptolemaic creed of Isis, which is a marvellous invocation of undiminished female power:

I am the queen of war. I am the queen of the thunderbolt.
I stir up the sea and calm it. I am the rays of the sun.
(Fraser, 1999:27)

This creed evokes an awe of the sovereignty of the goddess. There is no suggestion here of a Ra to whom one may do obeisance, there is only Isis, herself the sun. Similarly, one has only to consider the energetic figures of armoured Athena on the battlefields of Troy, Diana, Acteon's brutal judge, Kali and the bloodthirsty Celtic Morrigan to recognise that there are powerful female figures in world lore. These figures often appeal more than the less spectacular male gods in their respective pantheons. These are the queens of war and they evoke more terror and inspire more action than their male counterparts. A testimony to this is the modern western world's adoption of the female warrior as an icon: Artemis, Athena, Isis (and even Medusa) appear everywhere as Britannia, La Liberte, Victory and

so on. It is the female warrior who adorns houses of parliament and courts of justice the world over. (Warner, 1996:87) As Antonia Fraser writes

Whereas woman on the whole, taking the rough with the smooth, the good epochs with the bad, has been considered inferior to man throughout history, the arrival of the Warrior Queen, by whatever accident of fate, descent or sheer character, has been the signal for a remarkable outburst of excitement and even awe, sometimes accompanied by admiration and enthusiasm for her cause, beyond the ability of a mere male to arouse. (Fraser, 1999:6)

Fraser suggests that this power of the warrior queen to inspire her society (to fear or admiration) is ‘undoubtedly due to the fact that woman as a whole has been seen as a pacifying influence through history, this pacifying role being perceived as hers by nature and hers in duty.’ (Fraser, 1999:7) The warrior queen’s actions are contrary to those expected of a woman by patriarchal society, and this is what makes her powerful. She has the audacity to defy various patriarchies and claim agency. Thus, even while women have been considered incapable of heroic action, for whatever reason, there are those who have battled against society and overthrown patriarchal taboos to claim the status of Warrior Queens. These women demand recognition of the fact that women’s position as pacifier and maternal nurturer is certainly not all they are capable of; women can be bloody warriors and uncompromising heroes as well.

The female hero has been vilified for a long time. Possibly because the female warrior queen, or Amazon, has for so long threatened patriarchal society, that society has had little recourse but to actively undermine her power. Lane and Wurts write that

To ancient patriarchs (the Amazons) were moon-worshipping Artemesians who boldly embodied the Female Principle and were prepared to thrust its most dreaded manifestation – full-blooded matriarchy – onto the men who ran the world. ... To patriarchs, Amazons represented one type of woman warrior: an outsider, a disrupter, a terrifying force for unmanaged change, a serious threat to

both domestic tranquillity and the evolution of European civilisation. (Lane & Wurts, 2002:51-52)

The Amazon warrior, who is a distinct symbol of female agency and independence, has been feared and reviled as an ‘unnatural’ phenomenon in patriarchal culture. She is reviled because she does threaten the stability of society through her refusal to become a ‘domesticated’ woman. However, this refusal to lay down her weapons is precisely what makes the Amazon an unsurpassed example of the female capacity for heroism. Today, when many women are no longer willing to accept domestic passivity as their lot, the figure of the Amazon has become an important signpost, a figure pointing out an alternative route for these women to travel. This is essential for women who have almost no examples of active and independent female heroes that they may emulate. For these women, the Amazon becomes a symbol of all woman, as a whole, has been and all she may be again.

This thesis recognises the importance of the hero; as an archetype, there is none more powerful in terms of inspiring healthy human psychological development and encouraging individual striving for greatness. That patriarchal culture has denied women female heroes is unacceptable. Fortunately, with the rise of feminist discourse and the attempt by women to reclaim their sense of agency and individual power, they have begun to demand the reinstatement of the Amazon, their own heroic archetype. This thesis recognises that the Amazon, who was forced underground by the patriarchy, is now re-emerging in everyday consciousness. And this re-emergence of the female hero is crucial to women’s bid for freedom from the patriarchy.

Lucente suggests that myths manipulated by the ruling class to achieve a particular end can be demystified through the ideologies that follow them. (Lucente, 1981:28) The gender myth (which encourages the thinking that woman is predisposed to passivity and domesticity) is in the process of being demystified, and in the wake of this, so is the myth that women cannot be heroic. This change that is taking place in social consciousness has, however, only been reflected in a few areas thus far, and is often equivocal. Unfortunately, those areas that have allowed the re-emergence of the Amazon, often present the public with conflicting images of the demure virgin, the self-sacrificing mother and the scantily clad seductress. Popular culture, for example, has produced some startlingly powerful female characters in the last century: GI Jane, Xena (Warrior Princess), Nancy Drew, Captain Janeway (*Star Trek: Voyager*), Thelma and Louise, Ellen Ripley (*Alien*) and Cagney and Lacey. (Lane & Wurts, 2002: 223-235) I could, however, also list a number of un-heroic female characters with which the public have been presented. Still, this change signified by the re-introduction of heroic female characters into mass consciousness must not be dismissed. As Pearson and Pope suggest

Unless the heroism that women demonstrate in the world is reflected in the literature and myth of culture, women and men are left with the impression that women are not heroic; that their heroism, when it occurs, is a reaction to the moment and that they ultimately revert to dependence on a man; and 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. (Pearson & Pope, 1981:7)

One of the most outspoken voices in popular culture, which supports the re-emergence of the Amazon, is that of speculative fiction¹ (encompassing the genres of science fiction

¹ This term is used by Cortiel (1995) to encapsulate the genres of science fiction and fantasy; the term 'speculative fiction' comes from the ability of science fiction and fantasy to question reality and suggest alternatives to the *status quo*.

and fantasy)². Pearson and Pope suggest that unless female heroism is reflected in the myths of culture, it is unlikely to be given much credence – speculative fiction is one of the places where modern mythology is made (Le Guin, 1976:62), and it is often supportive of the female hero.

Speculative fiction author, Joanna Russ writes

Perhaps one place to look for myths which escape from the equation Culture = Male is in those genres which already employ plots not limited to one sex - i.e., myths which have nothing to do with our accepted gender roles. There seem to be three places one can look: 1) Detective Fiction ... 2) Supernatural Fiction ... 3) Science Fiction, which seems to me to provide a broad pattern for human myths, even if the specifically futuristic or fantastic elements are subtracted. ... The myths of science fiction run along the lines of exploring a new world conceptually (not necessarily physically), creating needed physical or social machinery, assessing the consequences of technological or other changes, and so on. These are not stories about men qua Man or women qua Woman; they are the myths of human intelligence and human adaptability. They not only ignore gender roles but – at least theoretically – are not culture-bound. ... Darko Suvin of the University of Montreal has suggested that science fiction patterns often resemble those of medieval literature. I think the resemblance lies in that medieval literature so often dramatises not people's social roles but the life of the soul, hence we find the following patterns in both science fiction and medieval tales. (In Cornillon, 1972:18)

Russ suggests that science fiction, like detective fiction and supernatural fiction, is a genre which is relatively free of restrictive gender myths, in which one can explore the possibilities of what it is to be human, not only man or woman. This is one of the most important elements that makes speculative fiction an ideal platform for the re-emerging

² Although it is notoriously difficult to define what science fiction is and is not, I hold with author, Brian Aldiss's definition. He writes, 'science fiction is the search for a definition of mankind and his status in the universe which will stand in our advanced but confused state of knowledge (science), and is characteristically cast in the Gothic or post-Gothic mode. ... It is often impossible to separate science fiction from science fantasy or either from fantasy, since both modes are a part of fantasy in a general sense.' (Aldiss, 1986:26-27) Because all these sub-genres seem to belong to one whole with no name, I have chosen to refer to them all as belonging to a body of speculative fiction, all of which performs the task Aldiss suggests.

Amazon. Because most speculative fiction is concerned with an interrogation of the world, with human behaviour and the systems that influence and govern humanity, it is one of the places in which interrogation of gender specific behaviour can take place, and therefore a place in which an active female hero, rare in much realistic fiction, may be suggested.

Speculative fiction authors have a penchant for disguised (and sometimes not so disguised) social commentary, through experimentation with controversial ideas that challenge the *status quo*. As Avril Rubenstein writes, '(science fiction) and fantasy asks of its readers that they call into question the very fabric of everyday life: these genres force the reader to look with a different sort of vision, forcing also a questioning of a great many common assumptions'. (Rubenstein, 1998:24) It is this forcing of the reader to question destructive common assumptions (like those that lead to racism and sexism) that allows speculative fiction to suggest alternatives to these attitudes, and therefore allow a female hero. Russ writes that, 'science fiction [is] the perfect literary mode in which to explore (and explode) our assumptions about "innate" values and "natural" social arrangements, in short our ideas about Human Nature, Which Never Changes.' (In Cornillon, 1972:80)

Part of speculative fiction's ability to render experience human rather than 'feminine' or 'masculine' has to do with its innate exploration/explosion of our common assumptions, an exploration which is done largely through the device which distinguishes speculative fiction from other forms of literature; this device is described by Darko Suvin as

cognitive estrangement. Darko Suvin, considered one of the leading critics of speculative fiction, defines science fiction as ‘a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical environment.’ (Suvin, 1979:7-8) Effectively, the speculative fiction author creates a world, or a space, in which things are different from the world in which both author and readers live. This creates a feeling of estrangement in the reader, and tends to force the reader to consider the implications of the differences between his or her own world and that presented by the author. This cognitive interaction with the text is what encourages an interrogation of the reader’s empirical world, hence Suvin’s suggestion that speculative fiction is particularly concerned with the interaction of cognition and estrangement.

Parrinder suggests, in reading Suvin, that Suvin’s technique can be described in another way. He writes

By interesting coincidence, the English word “alien”, in the special sense appropriated to it by science fiction writers and readers, shares the same stem as one of the most fashionable twentieth-century metaphysical concepts, that of “alienation”. ... Science fiction employs a particular kind of defamiliarisation [alienation] technique, since it confronts the reader with new and strange conditions of life outside his own likely or possible experience. This is the technique that Darko Suvin ... has named “cognitive estrangement”. Philosophically considered, the process of defamiliarisation leads us to see men in their present state as the unconscious prisoners of an ideology. (Parrinder, 1979:149)

The worlds created in speculative fiction, because they are removed from our world (whether by time, vast galactic distances, or dimensional gates), are far enough away for the reader to be drawn into philosophical contemplation without being overly threatened

by the propositions of the author. However, these propositions, once made, leave ‘What if?’ questions in the mind of the reader. These questions, when repeated often enough, are what contribute to the eventual demystification of harmful common assumptions, and the encouragement of new ways of thinking; certainly, they are what awaken intimations in the reader of the restrictions and insidious social manipulations which govern much of the world in which he or she lives. The reader becomes aware that he or she is as much a prisoner of an ideology as the characters in the book may be.

Speculative fiction distances the reader from the reality it presents through the quasi-scientific (and therefore cognitive) device of the novum; this is the intellectual device (time travel, androids, extra sensory perception) that first alerts the reader to the fact that the reality in the story is substantially different from the reader’s own. The ‘scientific’ distancing, or alienation, that this effects allows for a more intellectual experience, and an intellectual forum for discussion of themes and social concerns, more so than any other form of popular culture. As Rubenstein suggests, the novum ‘is simply the means to set plot in motion and, often, to provide a background against which intellectual or ethical enquiry becomes valid ... the best sf has always been written in reaction to social and cultural phenomena.’ (Rubenstein, 1998:7,14)

The speculative fiction device of cognitive estrangement, centred on the novum, is particularly useful when interrogating gender roles and the oppression of women. Because this kind of prejudice is so deeply ingrained in everyday life, many people refuse to consider that women are even at a disadvantage in many situations. There are small

indicators in ordinary interactions between people that allow one to perceive the oppression, but this world requires the reader to have something against which to measure these prejudicial actions. The worlds created in speculative fiction force the reader to recognise attitudes and actions which place women at a disadvantage in the real world; speculative fiction forces the reader into a cognitive relationship with his or her empirical world through comparison with the fictional reality.

Freedman writes that

Feminist theory is ... of all forms of critical theory the most concerned with the ideological inscriptions of everyday life, with the imbrication of the political in the empirical and the personal. Everyday life, however, remains one of the most problematically theorised moments of the social field, and discursive feminist theory, for all its achievements, has only partially made up the deficiency ... therefore feminism must, for at least some of its strongest critical-theoretical expressions, find alternative modes of discourse. The most important of these other modes is that of narrative itself. Feminist fiction would thus function as the 'completion' of feminist discursive theory, rather than the other way around. I further suggest that, of all the varieties of fiction, the forms of narrative art specific to science fiction – with its special resources for estranging the familiar and suggesting alternatives to the given – may be particularly well suited to deal with the penetration of sexism into the quotidian world. The oppression of woman is so closely woven into the fabric of daily experience that the strongest cognitive estrangements (those of which science fiction is uniquely capable) may be required in order to display such oppression as it cannot know or display itself. At once committed, in the most fundamental formal and epistemological terms, both to the centrality of the everyday sphere and to a radically critical perspective on the latter, science-fictional narration may well be capable of demystifying the structures of gender oppression with unique force and clarity. (Freedman, 2000:132-134)

I agree with Freedman that speculative fiction is the genre which most encourages, and allows for, feminist interrogation of the norms of modern patriarchal society. Much successful feminist speculative fiction has been produced which does defy patriarchal culture and alert the reader to the imbalances present in our world; it is specifically in

these texts in which the reader may find the female hero. The four authors whom I discuss in this thesis have produced female heroes who are strong, powerful women. Reading the work of these authors, one realises that their work, and that of other feminist authors of speculative fiction, is vital in its introduction of female heroes into popular culture.

Cortiel, who has written a critique of Joanna Russ's fiction, concurs with Freedman's view and also writes that it is to speculative fiction that women must turn for literary reproductions of real women. She writes that

Feminist speculative texts have generated more than just images of women that female readers can recognise and identify with; they have resisted the reproduction of the stories patriarchal societies tell about women and instead envision stories that thoroughly displace them. Feminist writers have used genre fiction to challenge these dichotomies (between "theory" and "politics") as they have challenged patriarchal constructions of reality. Their stories counteract sexist manipulation in the areas where it is most effectively perpetuated: popular culture and the media. ... Speculative fiction, and specifically science fiction, thus has the potential to break down distinctions between feminist theory, feminist fiction and feminist practice, exploring as it does complex theoretical concepts in the terms of popular fiction. Feminist theory becomes part of the "science" in science fiction while feminist practice motivates the text. For at its best, speculative fiction can be a popular platform on which issues related to such diverse fields as technology, science, social theory, reproduction and ecology combine with feminist concerns to call into question the social and ecological policies of (post-industrial) capitalist patriarchy. (Cortiel, 1999:5-6)

According to Cortiel, speculative fiction allows feminist writers to create realities which displace the patriarchal societies which have circumscribed the sphere of women's activity; it allows feminist writers a place with almost no boundaries in which to explore what it means to be a woman, without having to perform the experiment according to someone else's set of specifications. And, most importantly, speculative fiction allows feminists to write for a popular audience, which might otherwise not have been aware of

feminist concerns. Speculative fiction has created a space for feminists to question the assumptions made about women, and the relationships of women to the world, to each other and to men. This space is cardinal in women's literary reclamation of their agency and the assertion of women's right to be heroes and to engage in heroic action.

What is interesting about the figure of the hero is that the primary characteristic of the hero (regardless of the specific culture from which he or she comes) is his or her almost defiant assertion of his or her individual identity; this assertion of identity has special significance in both speculative fiction and in feminist writing. One of the most prominent concerns of feminist authors (of speculative fiction) is that of women's identity and individuality, rescued from the anonymity of the patriarchal 'system.' This rescue of identity is not something that only concerns feminist authors, however; speculative fiction as a genre is particularly concerned with the loss of identity, and the anonymity of human beings in a world in which huge bureaucracies, machines, and corporations control everything. Because of this, much speculative fiction deals with the fear of external control and the dread of anonymity. In these worlds in which Big Brother controls everything, what happens is that it is the heroes and the monsters who stand out; these become the individuals who rebel against external control and assert 'human' individuality. Woodman writes that

Monsters and supermen are the psychological twins of robots. Just as the mechanical men symbolise conformity and anonymity, so the Abominable Snowmen, King Kongs, and Creatures from the Black Lagoon, together with all the science-fictional superheroes who are endowed with extraordinary powers, symbolise non-conformity and individuality. They are the eccentrics, defying laws both physical and social, insisting on their uniqueness. ... In all these rebellious figures, struggling to become "true individuals," fighting against "social pressures," we find revealed the central predicament of characters in

science fiction. ... Identity has become problematic in SF. (In Parrinder, 1979:144-145)

In speculative fiction, the hero archetype therefore takes on a poignant significance; he or she represents the last vestige of humanity, or human feeling, fighting for survival against immense mechanical odds. The author of speculative fiction who writes an archetypal hero into his or her tale is already introducing humanity's battle for self-assertion, however, when the author makes that hero a female the battle for self-assertion becomes more complex. The female hero must first fight to assert her independence from the patriarchal social system, and then battle for recognition of her humanity against the larger mechanised system. Speculative fiction as a genre is made to interrogate the construction of human identity and, when married to the feminist concern for female individuality and independence, it can produce outstanding examples of (female) heroes. This, again, suggests that speculative fiction is the ideal genre for feminists in which to explore their concerns, especially those concerns to do with the resurrection of the female heroic archetype.

However, when one begins to discuss heroes, and the archetypal hero, one begins to delve into the realms of mythic discourse; this is a realm in which one must be careful to clarify one's terms before entering into any discussion. Many critics have commented on the fact that speculative fiction has a link to the mythic mode. Ursula Le Guin writes of speculative fiction that, 'science fiction is the mythology of the modern world – or one of its mythologies. ... For science fiction does use the mythmaking faculty to apprehend the world we live in, a world profoundly shaped and changed by science and technology, and its originality is that it uses the mythmaking faculty on new material.' (Le Guin, 1976:62)

So, for Le Guin, there is a great similarity between the way myth unfolds reality, and the way in which speculative fiction discloses reality; both explore the same issue, that of the human soul (as is suggested earlier by Russ).

Rubenstein also writes that

Because the work of some writers of sf and fantasy uses motifs and images which function on cryptic and symbolic levels of meaning, their writing bears a distinct relationship to myth. Rather than by using realistic or mimetic techniques, such writing comments on culture and society in a diffused rather than pointed, inferred rather than direct ways, through the use of symbol and metaphor rather than by obvious didactic lessons. ... But there is another facet of sf and fantasy literature that is closely related to the effects and functions of myth. "Myth," says Mircea Eliade (1974:3), "narrates a sacred history." It "supplies models for behaviour and ... gives meaning to life. Myth offers paradigms for all significant human acts." (1974:6) Myth, therefore, has something of the religious or the revelatory about it. Because myth is "sacred," because it comes from a time that is unmapped in terms of human history, because it deals with events and beings that are suprahuman or supranatural, the response evoked by this sacred narration is one of awe. And it is here that we may find another parallel between myth and science fiction, for Damon Knight's "sense of wonder" is an expression of something akin to this same awed response. Sf and fantasy – like myth, which lies in the lost hinterland of the past – also take place in the unknown and mysterious areas of time and place and introduce the reader to fabulous creations, both living and mechanical. (Rubenstein, 1998:33)

As Rubenstein suggests, speculative fiction shares with myth the explicit use of archetypes and symbols, encouraging an exploration of the mysterious and the supranatural, the soul. It is this delving into that to which there is no straightforward answer or explanation that links myth and speculative fiction to each other; both attempt an illumination of things which lie in perpetual shadow.

Of all the work inspired by myth, the work of psychologist, C.G. Jung perhaps comes the closest to illuminating this realm fraught with shadow; because of this, it is to his theory

of archetypes and the collective unconscious that I will turn in my discussion of speculative fiction and the hero in this thesis. Briefly, Jung believed that the ego is that part of a person's self of which they are conscious, but it is only a very small part of their whole Self. He hypothesises that the ego 'revolves around the Self as the earth around the sun.' (In Le Guin, 1974:52) He also suggests that all people in the world share one overarching Self. This is the ultimate identity at the heart of man; it may even be that which we call God. Jung posits that the whole task of every man and woman is so come to know something of the Self during his or her lifetime, and the only way to come to know the Self, is to navigate what Jung calls the collective unconscious.

The Self is mysterious and so overpowering that people cannot look directly into it because they would be confronted with ultimate reality. Because of this, humanity has created a body of images and symbols that allow us to translate the Self into 'bytes' that our systems can absorb and understand. These 'bytes' are archetypes; they each express something of the Self but are not as threatening in themselves as the Whole; these archetypes are adrift in the collective unconscious of humanity. And the collective unconscious finds expression in modes like myth (or speculative fiction) that use these archetypal images and symbols to translate amorphous meaning into comprehensible language.

There are a few main archetypes that Jung identifies, and these are the archetypes on which I focus in this thesis. These are the shadow, the anima and animus and the hero. In an oversimplified description, the shadow is that part of a person's psyche that Freud

calls the id; this is the part of the psyche that contains the predisposition to nastiness, lasciviousness, anger, greed, fear and so on. The shadow is often the part of a person that is repressed; the shadow is the part of one that one does not want to acknowledge. Because of this, the shadow often manifests itself as a figure or a creature that is greatly feared by the person in question. As for the anima and animus, Jung writes that

Difficult and subtle ethical problems are not invariably brought up by the shadow itself. Often another “inner figure” appears. If the dreamer is a man, he will discover a female personification of his unconscious, and it will be a male figure in the case of a woman. Often this second symbolic figure turns up behind the shadow, bringing up new and different problems. ... The male and female forms [are called] “animus” and “anima.” The anima is a personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man’s psyche [and the animus is a personification of all masculine tendencies in a woman’s psyche.] (Jung, 1978:186)

The anima and animus are therefore respectively the feminine tendencies in a man, and the masculine tendencies in a woman, often manifesting themselves as male or female figures in the individual’s dreams or life. What Jung suggests is that the individual who is striving for individuation must incorporate these disparate elements of his or her psyche into a unified whole. Only then, having faced the manifestations of his or her shadow and his or her anima or animus, is the individual able to claim a whole and healthy psyche; this individual will begin to know something of the Self.

Jung writes of the following archetype, the hero, that, ‘as a general rule the hero symbol arises when the ego needs strengthening – when, that is to say, the conscious mind needs assistance in some task that it cannot accomplish unaided or without drawing on the sources of strength that lie in the subconscious mind.’ (Jung, 1978:114) The hero, therefore, is the strength of the Self, manifested in the figure of a human male or female who ‘comes to the rescue’ of the individual in question. The individual may call on the

hero for help in confronting his or her shadow, or for help in integrating his or her anima or animus.

Jung's theory focuses on the meaning of the symbols and archetypes he identifies because Jung believes each symbol and archetype to manifest a particular issue within the collective unconscious of mankind. It is how each person navigates his or her relationship with these symbols and archetypes that creates the personality of the individual, and colours his or her relationship with the Self. Speculative fiction, which uses archetypes and symbols, allows perhaps a more popular door into the collective unconscious than formal psychotherapy. The reader who opens this door to explore the realm of speculative fiction will find himself or herself confronted with much the same questions and revelations that myth offers, and will be forced to navigate perhaps hitherto locked parts of his or her own psyche. When, in this environment, the reader encounters an Amazon, the reader is more likely to accept her as a plausible manifestation of the archetypal hero. Thus may the Amazonian female hero gain credibility, and, as her myth gains numinosity, it may offer an alternative to the 'angel in the house' as a model for female behaviour.

The effectiveness of speculative fiction as a space in which to reconstitute cultural myth and explore arcane myth is unmistakable. As well as this, because of its position in popular culture, speculative fiction can also reach a large number of people and, while readers enjoy the often rollicking adventures, its insidious voice is almost always flouting convention. As P.L. Travers writes

Nor do we need to be in a special state or a special place – in a temple or on top of a steeple – to approach the things the bees know. Myth, symbol, tradition, albeit in degraded forms, cry out to us from the street corners. You cannot open a newspaper without them crowding there with all their splendour and violence. Every comic strip acclaims them – Superman, Dick Tracy, the Incredible Hulk, all have their prototypes in myth. (Tracers, 1980:87)

And Le Guin adds to this that

Beyond and beneath the great living mythologies of religion and power there is another region into which science fiction enters. I would call it the area of submyth: by which I mean those images, figures and motifs which have no religious resonance and no intellectual or aesthetic value, but which are vigorously alive and powerful, so that they cannot be dismissed as mere stereotypes. They are shared by all of us, they are genuinely collective. Superman is a submyth. His father was Nietzsche and his mother a funnybook, and he is alive and well in the mind of every ten-year-old and millions of others. (Le Guin, 1976:64)

Speculative fiction breathes new life into the mythic symbols that are so vital to our understanding of humanity and our position in the universe; it may be that it is in this genre that our rediscovery of ourselves may take place. I disagree with Le Guin that these ‘submythic’ figures have no intellectual or aesthetic value, I do believe, like Travers, that some of these images and figures are merely the prototypes dusted off; Superman is as Hercules is/was. And he is vigorously alive in the modern myths we have woven for ourselves. Speculative fiction reconfigures myths, much like updating the costume of a superhero to accommodate the fashion of the time; but archetypal concerns are still at the heart of the heroic figure, no matter how he or she is dressed.

This is why it is to speculative fiction I turn to find the Amazon. It is in speculative fiction, which makes place for both the old and the new, that the Amazon will go nova: she is both re-emerging and a wholly new/nova character in this genre, a hero who

explodes gender stereotypes (goes nova) and demands her right to action: in Chapter One of my thesis, I have attempted a brief survey of some of the theory relating to the hero, with the purpose of formulating a heroic standard. This establishment of a working heroic standard is essential in order to define what it is that makes a person a hero; we must understand the nature of the hero's character and his or her reaction to the demands that are made of him or her in order to argue for or against the plausibility of a female hero. In Chapter Two, the chequered history of the female hero is discussed and an argument is made as to her viability and the need for her in the modern world. Chapters Three and Four look at examples of female heroes in some of the speculative fiction produced in the last fifty years. Chapter Three deals with the female hero as warrior, looking particularly at two examples of female heroes from feminist speculative fiction. These heroes rely on their strength and physical abilities to overcome the obstacles in their ways. Chapter Four looks at the female culture hero, with another close examination of two female characters from feminist speculative fiction. These heroes rely more on their minds (skills) and emotions to master the situations in which they find themselves.

The authors I have chosen to discuss cover a range of speculative fiction: C.L. Moore writes early speculative fiction, while Joanna Russ represents modern, outspoken feminist speculative fiction. I have also chosen to look at authors who are less well known, like Vonda McIntyre and Tanith Lee.

Of the four authors I consider, three of them are American: Joanna Russ (1938-), Vonda McIntyre (1948-) and C.L. Moore (1911-1987). Only Tanith Lee (1947-) is British. The reason for this is that, as Priest suggests

Modern science fiction is a primarily American phenomenon, and much of the genre is written either by Americans or authors who adopt American idiom. ... The process of dynamic social change – whose own product is an awakening of public curiosity about the prospect of more change, and an arousing of interest in the future, within which social environment science fiction thrives – moved through American society earlier and more dramatically than it did elsewhere. (In Parrinder, 1979:187)

Given the societal change necessary for speculation about the future and the production of speculative fiction, and considering Priest's argument, one can understand why America may have produced more speculative fiction than anywhere else in the English-speaking world. Priest suggests that the United States, forced into self-awareness by a number of social forces (the Black Rights Movement, Vietnam, and the Feminist Movement), was overtly exploring these issues in its fiction before Britain or the Colonies were. However, another interesting and, I believe more plausible, take on America's 'cornering of the modern sf market' is that suggested by Sutherland. Sutherland, making much the same point as Priest, argues that the phenomenon (of modern speculative fiction being predominantly American) may also have something to do with the pressure placed on American authors of speculative fiction by American publishing houses that were (and still are) eager to capitalise on the demands of eager sf readers (Sutherland, 1979:162-186). Priest suggests that British authors of speculative fiction, who are not under the same pressure as their American counterparts, must inevitably produce less output than American authors. He does suggest, however, that the quality of the British speculative fiction is competitive and in many cases outweighs the

quality of the ‘pulp’ speculative fiction produced at an alarming pace in the United States.

A more intriguing reason that modern speculative fiction may be argued to be an American more than a British phenomenon is that much British speculative fiction finds itself on the boundary between science fiction and science-fantasy, and is therefore often classified as fantasy rather than science fiction. As Priest argues, the most marked difference between British and American authors of speculative fiction is that, ‘British writers have always seemed more at ease with an instinctive grasp of the fantastic metaphor’ (Priest, 1979:200).

The authors I discuss are predominantly American, and whether they are such due to the reasons Priest and Sutherland suggest is beyond the scope of this thesis. That there are more American authors publishing than there are British ones means that it is easier to find American books by American authors; there is no reason other than this one for my discussing three American authors and only a single British one. However, perhaps it is fitting that the single British author I consider in this thesis, Tanith Lee, is particularly well noted for her writing of fantasy. Although, having said that Lee is noted for her fantasy, it is important to note that she has been accorded a sizable entry in John Clute and Peter Nicholls’s Hugo Award winning *Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction*. Part of the entry reads

Tanith Lee’s sf, though she is clearly conversant with its instruments, makes such individual use of the normal displacements of the genre that nothing – from robots to cosmogony – fails to serve her primary impulses as a storyteller. For Tanith Lee, sf is a kind of metaphysical pathos. (Clute & Nicholls, 1999:700)

Tanith Lee, therefore, while writing in a mode far more akin to fantasy than hard science fiction, makes such original use of science fictional nova that she is considered an author of science fiction. I have chosen to discuss her because, although she is a little known author, her appreciation of the ‘metaphysical pathos’ of speculative fiction is remarkable. Lee’s writing deserves critical reflection and, because she is a clear example of the British crossover writing of science-fantasy, her writing is an excellent example of modern British speculative fiction.

Apart from the fact that three of the four authors I discuss are American, three of the four authors have also published their work post 1960³. This is noteworthy because it is during the 1960s that the New Wave phenomenon swept through speculative fiction. The New Wave encouraged a departure from stock-in-trade hard science fiction motifs and plot scenarios as well as the investigation of relevant social issues and ecological concerns. In 1970, James Blish, an author of hard science fiction described the New Wave as follows

It has consisted mainly of the following elements: (1) Heavy emphasis upon the problems of the present, such as overpopulation, racism, pollution and the Vietnam War, sometimes only slightly disguised by s-f trappings; (2) Heavy emphasis upon the manner in which a story is told, sometimes almost to the exclusion of its matter, and with an accompanying borrowing of such devices old in the mainstream but new to science fiction; (3) Loud claims that this is the direction in which science fiction must go, and all other forms of practice in the field are fossilized; (4) Some genuinely new and worthy experiments embedded in the mud. (Blish, 1970:123)

According to Blish, and many other authors of ‘old school’ speculative fiction, the New Wave was introducing unwelcome changes into the established tradition of hard science

fiction writing. However, that the New Wave did encourage confrontation of social issues, experimentation with literary form and a change in the direction of speculative fiction meant that female authors could finally explore the possibilities of speculative fiction as a genre in which they could voice their own particular concerns. Speculative fiction post 1960 therefore sees the introduction of a number of new female authors writing about women and feminist issues.

Joanna Russ, in particular, is one of the most strident feminist voices to have emerged from the New Wave. In this thesis I consider one of Russ's early works, a series of short stories tracing the adventures of a forceful female protagonist named Alyx. Of this work, *The Adventures of Alyx*, the *Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction* notes that

Much of the initial impact of the sequence lies in its use of Alyx in situations where she acts as a fully responsible agent, vigorously engaged in the circumstances surrounding her. ... The liberating effect of the Alyx tales has been pervasive, and the ease with which later writers now use active female protagonists in adventure roles, without having to argue the case, owes much to this example. (Clute & Nicholls, 1999:1035)

The introduction of active female protagonists into speculative fiction has been an arduous struggle for female speculative fiction authors, but it solely to their perseverance that we owe the re-emergence of the female hero in popular culture. Authors like Joanna Russ, McIntyre, Moore and Lee, and Russ in particular, have spent their careers laying the groundwork on which other authors have been able to build. Russ's Alyx is one of the first examples of an active, independent female character in speculative fiction and as such, she is a pivotal character who is discussed in some depth.

³ Lee's *The Winter Players* is published in 1976, McIntyre's *Dreamsnake* in 1989, and Russ's *The Adventures of Alyx* is published in 1983.

Vonda McIntyre is, like Russ, another female author who explores feminist concerns through the speculative fiction she produces. A geneticist by profession, McIntyre uses her knowledge of genetics and the biological sciences to explore the future consequences of a wholly scientific and technological world, *sans* any compassion and human feeling. She investigates the sexual tensions between men and women, suggesting alternatives to the sexual/reproductive power struggle she diagnoses in modern society. McIntyre's female protagonist, Snake, in her Hugo and Nebula Award winning novel, *Dreamsnake*, is another of the powerful female characters to have emerged from post-1960 speculative fiction. And, like Russ's Alyx, Snake serves to pave the way for other female heroes. McIntyre's fiction, like Russ's and Lee's could not have been produced, or received the critical acclaim they did, before the 'innovations' encouraged by the New Wave. It is the openness in speculative fiction of the post-1960 era that allowed female authors of this calibre to produce the groundbreaking literary works that they did.

The last author I have chosen to discuss in this thesis is, however, noteworthy for the fact that her work is published prior to 1960. In fact, C.L. Moore was publishing her stories through World War II, and it is astounding that this early in the history of speculative fiction, and into an environment so anti the active female hero, she manages to write a character like Jirel of Joiry⁴. Moore's series of stories about Jirel is the *first* to feature a sword-wielding female protagonist and this in itself suggests that the work merits critical attention. However, while Moore is certainly a progressive thinker and Jirel is a force with which to be reckoned, it is interesting to reflect on the differences between the

manner in which Moore writes her hero, in 1935, and McIntyre, Russ and Lee write theirs almost forty years hence. An important aspect that is considered later in this thesis is that Moore would have been writing for an audience composed of far fewer female readers than that enjoyed by the later authors. Moore would thus have been far more constricted by the demands of her audience, and would have written, consciously or unconsciously, to the specifications of those readers; Jirel does reflect this at times. However, even though, or perhaps because of, the fact that Moore had to write for a more male-dominated audience than that of the authors publishing post-1960, Jirel is an astounding female character who must be taken into account. Like Snake and Alyx, Jirel is one of the prototypes of female heroism in speculative fiction and she is magnificent.

The authors I have chosen to discuss have written work that encourages critical exploration, and their individual expositions of the female hero provide essential examples of how speculative fiction is able to operate, when it does so free of the constraints of a biased society. Their respective work proves how useful speculative fiction can be particularly to feminism.

Women have been denied their own heroes, not because they are incapable of heroic endeavour, or nobility of action, but because patriarchies insist on women's inferiority. Women have played the looking glass to men for long enough; the time has come for the female gaze to be redirected, so that its sole object is no longer man. And with this redirection of the female gaze, perhaps it is also time to consider whether the arguments against the female hero have any validity, and if they do not, to consider what a female

⁴ The first of Jirel's adventures, *Jirel Meets Magic*, was published in 1935 by Weird Tales Inc.

hero would be like. The authors I consider in this thesis have proposed an answer to my query; they suggest there is no reason why a female hero is not viable. And they suggest she is as powerful, formidable and inspiring as her foremothers in myth were and are.

Robin Morgan writes, in the *Feminist Companion to Mythology*, that

We are the myths. We are the Amazons, the Furies, the Witches. We have never not been here, this exact sliver of time, this precise place.’ (In Larrington, 1992:431)

Speculative fiction, as a genre, allows feminist authors to explore this premise.

The Light in the Darkness: Heroes in Society

The mighty hero of extraordinary powers – able to lift Mount Govardhan on a finger and to fill himself with the terrible glory of the universe – is each of us: not the physical self we see in the mirror, but the king within. Krishna declares: “I am the self, seated in the hearts of all creatures. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all beings.” (Campbell, 1993:365)

In the first book of the Christian Bible, Genesis, there is a passage in which Jacob battles in the dark against an opponent whose name he does not know. The two men wrestle furiously and at the break of day when Jacob remains undefeated, his opponent addresses him and says: ‘Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.’ (Genesis 32v22) Jacob later becomes the father of the Israeli people.

This thesis is particularly concerned with the human hero and what he or she means to us. As such, this biblical episode stands as a magnificent encapsulation of the heroic struggle for the hero is the mortal man or woman whose name is always ‘Israel’; he or she is the one person who is able to prevail in the struggle against God and men. In the Bible, when God renames Jacob, the New American Standard Bible translates ‘Israel’ to mean either ‘struggle against God and men’ or ‘God struggles’. The hero is the human champion who struggles to understand the mysteries of this world, to illuminate each corner in which darkness causes fear and confusion. But the hero is also the person through whom God struggles to show Himself to the world; the hero and the god are one self-mirrored mystery. (Campbell, 1991)

It is only in the hero that Krishna and God are glimpsed, and because God is the 'beginning, middle and end of all beings' it is through our glimpse of Him, in the hero, that we are shown our own divine, heroic potential. It is here that we realise that the hero could be any one of us and that we could, ourselves, also command the name 'Israel'. This is what makes the hero an object worthy of meditation and study and what moves us along so irrevocably in his or her wake.

The hero exhibits greatness and that can, at times, mean that he or she presents a terrifying glimpse into the glory of the universe. The hero refuses to surrender to the order of things and, through his or her struggle against this order, reconstitutes the world to reflect the truth that he or she has encountered. Thomas Carlyle suggests that the hero 'is the light fountain which it is good and pleasant to be near ... a natural luminary shining by the gift of heaven.' (Carlyle, 1840:3) And it is so. What sets the hero apart from the rest of humanity is the fact that he or she is fully human and yet is able to commit himself or herself to an action which demands of him or her almost super-human virtue and strength; it is the difference between the fearful or lethargic passivity of society and the action of heroes which sets them apart from us.

Heroes are human champions who do battle on behalf of their society; they take that first step, an irrevocable offensive into an unknown territory and we, their people, are encouraged and liberated by their actions. We depend upon them to make some sense of the world around us, to restore order to chaos and banish the torments of the endless dark. These heroes appear throughout the literatures and myths of all peoples worldwide and

their heroic actions remain largely alike no matter what the cultural context. Hercules and Boadicea, James Bond and Ulysses, Scheherazade and Taliesin are all heroes who battle against the darkness that lays siege to their societies; even though they belong to vastly different cultures and times and use different weapons in their battles against the dark.

Heroes, like the shadow, move in the deep psyche of humanity, a deep that is not culture-specific but which permeates the relationship of each human being with his or her world. And when we choose to spend time contemplating the heroes and bring them into our conscious world, we cannot but be transformed and strengthened by their powerful presence. As Thomas Carlyle suggests in *Heroes and Hero Worship* (my brackets)

One comfort is that Great Men (or Women), taken up in any way, are profitable company. We cannot look, however imperfectly, upon a great man without gaining something by him. He is the light-fountain which it is good and pleasant to be near. The light which enlightens, which has enlightened the darkness of the world, and this not as a kindled lamp only, but rather as a natural luminary shining by the gift of Heaven; a flowing light-fountain, as I say, of native original insight, of manhood (and womanhood) and heroic nobleness; - in whose radiance all souls feel that it is well with them. (Carlyle, 1840:3)

Heroes enable us to face the shadow; because they have overcome the dark world, we are inspired to do the same through their example. The hero is the light that scatters the shadows.

However, because the shadow is able to assume many different shapes, heroism too assumes different faces. Because of this, it becomes increasingly difficult to define what makes a hero, to demarcate the area of some all-encompassing heroic standard. Even for theorists dedicated to the study of the hero, agreeing on what the hero is or should be has

been a thorny issue; Robert Segal has compiled a fascinating collection of varying viewpoints to do with the hero in his book *Hero Myths: A Reader* (2000). Segal compares the views of various critics as they discuss certain themes to do with the hero. He suggests that even the impact the hero has on society is by no means something agreed upon by the critics.

Segal discusses what he believes to be the three seminal views to do with the hero, those of Otto Rank, Joseph Campbell and Lord Raglan. These views differ enormously in accordance with the particular philosophical or psychological leanings of the theorist. Freudian psychoanalyst, Otto Rank, attributes the appeal of the hero to his incessant enacting of the Oedipal myth. Hence, because we as society relive and supposedly resolve our Freudian psychoses through the adventures of the hero, we are drawn to him. (Segal, 2000: 13-15) Joseph Campbell's theory diverges from that of Rank, particularly where Campbell follows Jung in opposing Rank's following of Freud. Segal summarises this difference neatly when he writes that 'for Freud and Rank, heroism involves relations with parents and instincts. For Jung, heroism, in even the first half (of life) involves, in addition, relations with the unconscious.' (Segal, 2000:17) And, as Segal continues his comparison of these two theories we find more differences between the two theories; he writes

Just as Rank confines heroism to the first half of life, so Campbell restricts it to the second half. Rank's scheme begins with the hero's birth; Campbell's with the hero's adventure. Where Rank's scheme ends, Campbell's begins: with the adult ensconced at home. ... Rank's heroes must be the sons of royal or at least distinguished parents. Campbell's need not be, though they often are. Where Rank's heroes must be male, Campbell's can be female as well, though Campbell inconsistently describes the hero's initiation from an exclusively male point of view. (Segal, 2000:18)

Campbell's theory differs greatly from that of Rank. Both expect certain behavioural patterns from their heroes, but these patterns do not conform to a standard that both theorists would agree on. Their heroes begin their quests at different stages of their lives, the status of the heroes differ, and, finally, the ultimate task of each of the heroes is different. So Campbell differs from Rank and, according to Segal, Lord Raglan differs from them both. He writes that, while Campbell and Rank focus on the person of the hero, Raglan chooses to concentrate on the hero's relationship to myth and ritual.

Neither Rank nor Campbell focuses on the relationship between myth and ritual. Campbell would doubtless assume that every ritual has an accompanying myth, but neither he nor Rank assumes that every myth has an accompanying ritual. It is Lord Raglan who ties hero myths to rituals. He is a myth-ritualist. (Segal, 2000:23)

There are, however, more differences than merely Raglan's association of the hero's quest with the enacting of tribal rituals or rites of passage. Segal suggests that while

Rank's hero triumphs at the expense of everyone else; Lord Raglan's, like Campbell's, saves everyone else. Campbell's saving hero does not die, Raglan's must. Campbell's hero undertakes a dangerous journey to aid the community; Raglan's hero in the myth is driven from the community and, in the accompanying ritual is sacrificed by the community. Campbell's hero can be any adult; Raglan's must not only be male but also a king. Campbell's hero must- or should- be human; Raglan's can be either divine or human. (Segal, 2000:25)

Having glanced at these few passages one realises that, even though Segal's sample of theories is by no means exhaustive, even the three theorists he discusses do not agree on what it is that constitutes a hero or the heroic journey. However, within these varying viewpoints, there are certain aspects that recur no matter who the specific hero is with whom we may be dealing or the preferred perspective of the theorist. I believe these similarities are important and I would like to suggest that they be combined to create a

working heroic standard. A heroic standard like this one becomes essential if one is to attempt an argument as to what constitutes a heroic action, or what quality of man or woman achieves and deserves the title of hero.

The first important aspect that must be addressed is that the hero is always human; he or she is mortal and suffers the same passions and follies natural to humankind. As Lash writes

Both morally and physically, the hero is ... of the human species, not superior to it, not beyond it. Even if his earliest prototypes are partially divine, the hero is, in his prime, fully human rather than superhuman. A rare configuration of traits and a striking style of action mark him as having *arete*, excellence. In excelling and exceeding himself, the hero becomes a model of higher potential for his clan, his race or nation, or even for humanity at large. (Lash, 1995:5)

Lash suggests that the hero displays human strengths and abilities at a level which most humans do not, and that it is this human excellence that makes a hero. P.L. Travers agrees with his assertion; she states unequivocally that, 'the hero is not a god, nor even a saint, though many saints have been heroes. He or she has a human heart and therefore a dimension of vulnerability.' (Travers, 1989:17) This is an important point: the hero is vulnerable to the same fears and dangers as we are and yet takes that step which we cannot. We are able to relate to our champion because he or she is human and we are able to admire the hero because he or she chooses to embody only the best of humanity's traits.

Northrop Frye, in his *Anatomy of Criticism*, also distinguishes between the types of hero one may find in literature. He classifies the heroes thus

1. If superior in *kind* to both other men and to the environment of other men, the hero is a divine being, and the story about him will be a *myth* in the common sense of a story about a god. Such stories have an important place in literature, but are as a rule found outside the normal literary categories.
2. If superior in *degree* to other men and to his environment, the hero is the typical hero of *romance*, whose actions are marvellous but who is himself identified as a human being. The hero of romance moves in a world in which the ordinary laws of nature are slightly suspended: prodigies of courage and endurance, unnatural to us, are natural to him, and enchanted weapons, talking animals, terrifying ogres and witches, and talismans of miraculous power violate no probability once the postulates of romance have been established. Here we have moved from myth, properly so-called, into legend, folk tale, *marchen* and their literary affiliates and derivatives.
3. If superior in degree to other men but not to his natural environment, the hero is a leader. He has authority, passions, and powers of expression far greater than ours, but what he does is subject both to social criticism and to the order of nature. This is the hero of the *high mimetic* mode, of most epic and tragedy, and is primarily the kind of hero Aristotle had in mind. (Frye, 1971: 33)

We are not concerned here with the stories of gods, so Frye's first classification has little value apart from distinguishing the god from the hero. The second and third classifications, however, both apply to the heroes with which we will be dealing. In these cases, Frye's heroes are fully human, no matter how their specific environments may change; it is the degree to which they are remarkable human beings that sets them apart from their societies. In the Romantic mode, we expect the hero's environment, and the hero himself or herself to display traits 'out of fairytale' as it were; it is not surprising to find that the hero can wield magic or speak to animals. But, because the environment of the hero is as wonderful as the hero himself or herself, his or her traits are not so special, they are part of the structure of the world. Hence, Frye suggests that we have to rely once again on the hero's human excellence to set him or her apart from his or her society.

For Joseph Campbell, it is also imperative that the hero is human; he makes much the same point as Travers, Lash and Frye, in his *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, when he writes, ‘the hero is the man of self-achieved submission’. (Campbell, 1993:16) The hero is first of all a mortal man (or woman) and is secondly able to submit his (or her) fate to the hands of the indifferent unknown with startling courage and a determination not to be overwhelmed. It is interesting to mark Campbell’s choice of phrase here: the hero achieves everything of note through his or her own endeavour. It is a self-achieved submission to the unknown.

The second aspect of the heroic standard has to do with the heroic task, that ‘self-achieved’ submission of oneself to the unknown. Once we have fully appreciated the humanity of our champion, the fact that he or she is able to act when we would not is what makes such a person a hero. James Redfield writes in his book *Nature and Culture in ‘The Iliad’* that

Culture is, like language, a ‘system of differences’. When a hero acts or responds in a way we would not have expected, we should not only record our surprise but also ask ourselves what alternatives the hero had before him. No element of culture has meaning except in contrast to the other elements which might have become actual in that place. Therefore no part can be interpreted without some reference to the whole system. (Redfield, 1975:X)

The hero is born into a particular culture and should be bound by the taboos and strictures of that culture, as much as we are by those of ours. What Redfield posits is that it is in the hero’s divergence from those all-too-well-worn paths that the heroic is signified. The hero’s act differs from the way we would have acted in his or her place and we must

therefore consider the heroic act in contrast to what our act would have been, and consider the impact of the hero's divergence on society.

In the twentieth century, the French philosopher, Georges Sorel, who desperately sought to have men live by an eternal heroic ethic, formulated his philosophy in a 'myth of heroic action'.

Sorel was not so much interested in concrete results as in the eternal perpetuation of struggle which permanently restores to human life the invaluable quality of the sublime. ... Unless, then, men rose above the average life to a life of heroic abnegation, they would lose self-respect and destroy their dignity as human beings. ... His mind and soul longed for the regions his age and natural prudence kept from him: the regions where men stake their lives on the provisional answers they find for questions they themselves put to the unresponsive universe. (Golberger, 1965:15-20)

Sorel sought to invoke in men enough respect for the heroic that they themselves would attempt the heroic life, a life he believed was absolutely possible to achieve. He writes that heroes are the men (and women) who rise above the mundane and claim their right to divinity, in spite of the bleak world within which they find themselves. And this is effectively what heroes do, as mortal men or women, they inspire us through their magnificent action, their 'staking their lives on the provisional answers they find', to live with a greater human dignity in the face of an 'unresponsive universe'.

The hero acts, not as we would have (as our nurture would have guided us), but as though he or she has tapped into something powerful beyond the conscious self and the decrees of culture so that he or she seems to see more clearly what the implications of each action are and thus, which action is the only one open to him or her. The hero then acts without

hesitation and ‘possesses a consistent capacity for action which surpasses the norm of man or woman.’ (Lash, 1995:5) And this the hero does because, for him or her, there is no alternative. Joseph Campbell describes it thus

The hero, therefore, is the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally rated, normally human forms. Such a one’s visions, ideas and inspirations come pristine from the primary springs of human life and thought. Hence they are eloquent, not of the present, disintegrating society and psyche, but of the unquenched source through which society is reborn. The hero has died as modern man, but as eternal man – perfected, unspecific, universal man – he has been reborn. His second solemn task and deed therefore ... is to return then to us, transfigured, and teach the lesson of life renewed. (Campbell, 1993:19)

For Campbell, the hero reflects the face of God to the world, and it is our recognition of the eternal in the hero that gives us hope and challenges us to live with greater integrity. The heroic action, therefore, is one very simple thing, the hero acting ‘out of the ordinary’ of his or her society, according to the truth he or she has established and having the courage to see his or her action through to its conclusion. This then forces society to change and expand. The heroic action, in whatever form it may take, should ultimately lead to the enlightenment or encouragement of society, which should lead to our liberation from the dark. Campbell writes that ‘those listening (to the hero’s story) are oriented to the Imperishable in themselves’ (Campbell, 1993:243); it is this recognition of the imperishable within us, animated in the hero’s action, that enables us to pit our own strength against that of the similarly imperishable darkness.

Waith writes of the hero that

There is no great difficulty in pointing out what sort of a man this hero is. He is a warrior of great stature who is guilty of striking departures from the morality of the society in which he lives. The problem is what to think of him. What values

does he represent? What is the meaning of his disregard for certain moral conventions? Ultimately, what attitude is expressed (by society) towards the values he represents? (Waith, 1962:11)

These are all important questions and an attempt at answering them is imperative if one is to comprehend the heroic individual. The posing of these questions brings us to the third aspect of the heroic standard, the hero's embodiment of a heroic ethic. Every hero who expects of himself or herself behaviour that upholds certain virtues or strengths regardless of personal safety or status, creates a heroic ethic, which is then upheld even in death. However, the heroic ethic itself does not remain a constant. Different epochs have expected different virtues of their heroes and the ethics championed by those heroes are therefore coloured by the expectations of specific societies. The heroic ethic championed by Hercules, or the Celtic Boadicea, is different from that expected of Gawain, St. Joan or more modern heroes like Gandhi and Mother Theresa.

I would like to diverge here for a moment to deal with what seems to be a paradox. The hero comes to champion the virtues valued by his or her society, but in so doing, his or her action marks the hero as different from society; he or she no longer belongs to the societal norm. Redfield has commented on this particular problem at length, specifically in the case of Homer's Achilles. He writes that

In the story of Achilles the poet dramatises a fundamental contradiction: communities, in the interest of their own needs, produce figures who are unassimilable, men they cannot live with and who cannot live with them. ... In such stories the hero and his community stand as problems to each other. The hero behaves in a way he has been told is admirable and then is baffled to find that, in meeting the declared expectations of his community, he comes into conflict with it. Thus Shakespeare's Coriolanus, like Achilles, constantly asserts that he is acting only as he has been taught to act. Both heroes are led to the conviction that not they themselves, but their communities have been faithless to the communal norm. (Redfield, 1975:104)

This is the same problem met by almost every hero; you may champion those virtues lauded by society, and be crucified for your trouble. Society needs heroes, but it does not, perhaps, like to have its own faults revealed. The paradox is not easily solved, if indeed there is a solution at all. Society runs smoothly upon cogs that should be ill-matched, due to the contradictions which they represent, but which fit very snugly. This is why the hero, while championing the cause of the people, is separate from them; the hero does not suffer the same contradictory weaknesses of the general populace. Once he or she has adopted the heroic ethic, the hero cannot waver from his or her pact nor excuse any behaviour that contradicts this ethic. And society will appreciate heroes from a safe distance, whether it is that of geographical separation or one of time. Perhaps this is the most uncomfortable aspect of the hero; he or she highlights the daily hypocrisy with which we live and through which we conduct our affairs.

John Lash, in his book, *The Hero: Manhood and Power*, traces the development of the hero and the heroic ethic through the ages. According to him, the hero's first incarnation is that of the 'monster-slayer'; 'man is born of woman, but the hero is born of the hunt'. (Lash, 1995:13) The heroic ethic in this case is a simple one, kill or be killed; physical strength is of paramount importance to the survival of both the individual and the clan, man must eat and he must survive. The act of hunting takes on ritual tones and is considered sacred as it ties man to nature in a brutally reciprocal relationship. When man begins to settle and work the land, however, there is 'the first evidence of intra-species conflict, man against man' as competition begins to drive action. Man becomes warrior instead of hunter and Lash suggests that

The transition from hunter to warrior engaged the entire human species in the dilemma of the moral dimension of heroism. No longer is the hero merely a monster-slayer like Cadmus or Beowulf or Saint George, but now he is a man capable of using monstrous excess against his own kind. ... Among themselves, warriors (therefore) developed an unwritten code based on their experiences of facing mutual adversaries. Often meeting death together, dying in each other's arms, covered in blood, they became bound by blood, man to man, as they had previously been bound in mystic communion with the prey. Over time their hunting instincts became converted into a silent knowledge of how men must behave in hand-to-hand combat with their equals on the field of battle. (Lash, 1995:16)

Lash suggests that, with the change from hunter to warrior, man begins to accept that there is an ethical (and non-ethical) way to behave in these situations and one must behave honourably in battle against one's fellow human beings. This ethic developed by the warrior hero begins to delve into concepts of nobility and honour, but is still, at this stage, very bloody and physical.

Redfield's discussion of the origin of the word 'hero' becomes interesting in this light.

He writes that

The burden of Homeric battle falls on a few leading men. The anonymous mass may appear on the battlefield, but they are insignificant in the course of war; battles are won and lost by those who step forward from the mass. ... These are the *aristoi* or princes, men who own armour and chariots, who are trained to the art and labour of war. To these leading warriors the Homeric language gives the name of *heros*, heroes. Thus heroism is for Homer a definite social task, and the heroes are a definite social stratum. The name is given to those who are, have been, or will be warriors. (Redfield, 1975:99)

The hero is therefore, according to Redfield, a warrior. This is his place in society, and this is what makes him heroic, even though it suggests bloodiness and at least some ruthlessness. Therefore, the heroic ethic is, here, one of valour in battle, courage and power. The word *arete* that is translated earlier by Lash to mean 'excellence,' is also

discussed by Werner Jaeger in his book *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*. He states that ‘there is no complete equivalent for the word *arete* in modern English: its oldest meaning is a combination of proud and courtly morality with warlike valour.’ (Jaeger, 1954:5) The Greek warrior hero epitomises this, as do most of the warrior-heroes of old.

As man moves into the middle ages, however, we find the heroic ethic of the warrior hero is modified and refined to include the religio-ethical principles of the time, particularly those principles expounded by the New Testament of the Christian Bible. The Old Testament advocates that heroic ethic which is discussed above, one of strength, brutality, prowess in battle and political leadership. The shift in emphasis to the heroic code of the New Testament Christ occurred to complete the introduction of ethics into the warrior-code, a change that had become explicit in the medieval chivalric code of knighthood. Lash writes that

Eventually the heroic code was formulated into the morals and manners of chivalry. The knights of the middle ages were bound to a volunteer system of ethical principles that included, first and foremost, the use of superior strength to protect the weak and helpless. Honour (which means the same as honesty: that is, consistency of word and deed), generosity, fearlessness and self-restraint were all chivalric virtues. (Lash, 1995:16)

It was not, however, easy to distance the hero from the bloodiness of the hunter-warrior’s code of behaviour. P. J. C. Field has argued, in his introduction to the Hodder and Stoughton edition of Malory’s *Le Morte Darthur* (1986), that while feudal chivalry had a great impact on the knights’ behaviour one to another, there was still a dangerous aggression that posed a threat to the rest of society. According to Field, there were three main virtues associated with feudal chivalry. He writes that

The knight's place in society brought it about that the three essential chivalric virtues should be prowess, loyalty and generosity. *Prowess* – the ability to win in battle – was vital because the knight's occupation was war; *loyalty*, particularly to his lord and to his word of honour, because there being no means of compulsion, the alternative was an anarchy that prowess would only aggravate; and *generosity*, because gifts were a sign of love and evoked loyalty in return. (Field, 1986:7)

He adds to this, however, that

(Feudal chivalry) did nothing to restrain a knight's behaviour towards anyone who could not stand up and fight him: the old, the poor, women, priests, cripples, peasants, merchants, children and Jews. ... If the ideal, let alone the reality, of medieval knighthood were ever to include compassion for those who were not knights, some external factor would have to modify the killing machines that feudal chivalry would otherwise produce. The two principal external factors that did so were *Christianity* and *the Court*. ... Even after the barbarian invasions, the Christian message was preached to what had been the Empire in the West. That message was primarily a statement about the relationship between God and Man. Individual moral behaviour, and still more the moral behaviour of men in society, came second; but it came a close second, directly and by no remote inference. (Field, 1986:11)

The hero's behaviour, as a warrior, is still threatening to medieval society. As Field suggests, some other body has to exert a pressure on these heroes to have them adopt an ethic that is better suited to the society in which the heroes find themselves. This body was the Church, which then 'evolved a *theory of knighthood*'. This included various Christian virtues alongside the chivalric code already accepted by the knights. Field writes that

The Church's theory took account of two difficulties that the feudal code alone could not: the knight as danger to others and the knight as danger to himself. He should have a wide range of virtues besides the feudal ones – notably humility, temperance, pity, chastity and wisdom. ... Then he would be able to master not only the enemy but also, in himself, rage, avarice, lust, quarrelsomeness, and most of all the pride and naked aggression that were so nearly uncontrolled in feudal chivalry. (Field, 1986:13-14)

The Church guided the knights into tempering their naked aggression and ability in battle with temperance and compassion, and this modified the heroic ethic considerably. In fact, the influence of Christianity is the single most important factor in the modification of the heroic ethic in the West, after the initial development of the feudal chivalric system. The warrior-hero himself underwent a 'sea-change' in being expected to be the embodiment of moral excellence as well as exhibiting prowess in battle. This need for the hero to abide by an ethical code, and specifically a Christian ethical code, reflected the changing needs of that specific time and that specific society.

Alongside the development of the warrior-hero in history, with the settlement of tribes and the introduction of trade and rudimentary systems of laws, we have the surfacing of another heroic type: the 'culture-hero' (Lash, 1995:17). In this case, the hero's skills lean more towards the creation of new objects and the introduction of new systems that better the life of the community than they do to warfare. This heroic type will eventually come to be the artist-hero, the inventor-hero and the statesman-hero of latter days. To these heroes may be attributed the founding of civilisations and they may be considered the mothers or fathers of dynasties or races. (Lash, 1995:19) Campbell suggests that the mythic figure Daedalus is just such a one. He writes that

For centuries Daedalus has represented the type of the artist-scientist: that curiously disinterested, almost diabolical human phenomenon, beyond the normal bounds of social judgement, dedicated not to the morals of his time, but of his art. He is the hero of the way of thought - single-hearted, courageous, and full of the faith that the truth, as he finds it, shall make us free. (Campbell, 1993:24)

According to Campbell, the culture hero is dedicated to his sphere of endeavour, producing great things that will challenge humanity; he or she is also on a quest to

discover truth, through the experiments he or she does. The culture hero, like the warrior hero, challenges the *status quo*; he or she battles the Ogre Tyrant who controls society and prevents change and progress. The primary difference between the warrior-hero and the culture-hero is that the culture hero does not resort to physical battle with weapons; the culture-hero uses philosophy, science, art and spirituality to revolutionise his or society. These heroes challenge existing patterns of thought, patterns of behaviour and mechanical means of doing things through mental, emotional and spiritual experimentation. The heroic ethic of the culture hero calls for wisdom, courage, strength and action as much as does that of the warrior-hero, the battle is merely waged in a different arena.

The hero is primarily a representation of noble action. This noble action may take the form of warfare or it may take the form of statesmanship; both incarnate humanity's desire to change things, to have the One presence manifest in all that we do. Joseph Campbell writes that

The supreme hero, however, is not one who merely continues the dynamics of the cosmogonic round, but who reopens the eye – so that through all the comings and goings, delights and agonies of the world panorama; the One presence will be seen again. This requires a deeper wisdom than the other, and results in a pattern not of action but of significant representation. The symbol of the first is the virtuous sword, of the second the sceptre of dominion, or the book of the law. (Campbell, 1993:345)

The warrior-hero and the culture-hero both share the responsibility for bringing that One presence into the world. And Campbell suggests that all that separates these two heroic types is the symbols that signify the realms in which they act: the virtuous sword (for the warrior-hero) and the sceptre of dominion (for the culture-hero).

It is interesting to see how the heroic ethic has developed through history, insofar as it has had to support the needs of different societies, at different times. Because of this, we recognise heroes as different as Beowulf and Albert Schweitzer. As humanity's understanding of itself has grown more complex, it has needed more heroes to champion the different virtues and strengths it has come to appreciate. However, it is important to note that no particular heroic ethic is completely rewritten or discarded. Even today in the 21st century we still find incarnations of the monster-slayer appearing in movies like *The Terminator*, *Predator* and *Alien*, and the warrior-hero, minus any 10th century Christian modifications, in *Rambo* and *Conan the Barbarian*.

The reason for this is that, although the heroic ethic is modified as times change, many virtues remain constant. Lash writes that 'heroic discipline requires access to a surfeit of power or strategic skill, and the prudence to regulate its use. In classical idiom, these are *fortitudo* and *sapientia*.' (Lash, 1995:10) These terms recur often in texts that deal with the hero and therefore need careful exploration. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (1973) defines *fortitudo* as 'physical or structural strength, moral strength or courage, firmness in the endurance of pain or adversity.' *Sapientia* it defines as 'belonging to or characterised by wisdom, sensible or wise.' *The Wessely Latin Dictionary* (no date) likewise defines the terms as 'strength, firmness, courage, valour, manfulness' (*fortitudo*) and 'prudence, wisdom, philosophy, eloquence, statesmanship' (*sapientia*). No matter how the heroic ethic may differ from hero to hero, they all share these two qualities; the hero is strong and wise; though the particular nature of the

strength and wisdom may change, they are both always present in the heroic code. It is because the hero has both of these qualities that we are able to entrust our survival to him or her.

The hero is therefore defined through his or her behaviour, and his or her behaviour is regulated by the heroic ethic. The ethic may reflect different virtues at different times in history, but it will always present the highest ethical expectations of that society. And it is interesting to note that the heroic ethic is reflected in seemingly disparate realms of human endeavour, from business books based on Sun Tzu's *Art of War* and shoot-'em-up computer games to advertisements for soft drinks; it has soaked into our common inheritance so that we find popular characters like Spiderman espousing a motto of 'with great power comes great responsibility,' and songs like 'To Dream the Impossible Dream' (from the 1960's musical *The Man of La Mancha*) reaching the number one position in the pop charts.

What Redfield says about Hector in the *Iliad*, applies to the hero throughout time; 'as I thought about Hector, my affection for him grew. I found him a martyr to loyalties, a witness to the things of this world, a hero ready to die for the precious imperfections of ordinary life.' (Redfield, 1975:IX) This then, is the heroic ethic, and through the ages this 'heroic code of morality has remained profoundly consistent.' (Lash, 1995:30) This heroic ethic may be what calls the hero to adventure, it may be developed as the hero adventures or it may be a result of the hero's completion of his quest, but it is an intrinsic part of the hero and what makes him or her great. The hero chooses to live with integrity

according to a code that is never betrayed no matter how difficult the path may become or into what dangers it may lead. And the world *is* better for this, though we may scorn the hero and note his or her achievements only when he or she has been gone for centuries.

Redfield writes that

The highest heroes are not men of delusion. They are men of clarity and purity, who will a good impossible in the world and eventually achieve it, through suffering, in their own spiritual terms. It is the will to the impossible which resembles delusion until the terms are found in which it is possible. ... The absolute is the ability and right of the heroic individual to perceive- or better conceive- law for himself, and then prove his case by action. (Redfield, 1975:10)

The hero changes our world, using himself or herself and his or her experiences as proof that there is a better way to live.

Having discussed these three aspects of our heroic standard, we may therefore entertain the conclusion that the hero is always human, is always able to act where we would not (and hence effect irrevocable changes in our world) and adopts a heroic ethic (which expresses his or her understanding of truth). There is a fourth aspect that forms part of the heroic standard: the heroic quest. No matter whether the hero is mythical or tragic, whether he or she belongs to the world of the warrior or the world of the scientist, the heroic journey is sure to follow the pattern outlined below. The only difference between the quests of the mythical hero and other heroes is that the journey becomes less literal and more figurative depending on the mode within which the hero appears.

Lord Raglan, Dorothy Norman, Jessie Weston and Joseph Campbell (who have all written classical works on the hero) ‘conclude that the basic heroic pattern in all cultures

can be reduced to a monomyth.’ (Pearson & Pope, 1981:3) Campbell further suggests that the cycle of events which marks the action of the heroic quest (departure- initiation- return) can be viewed as the ‘nuclear unit of the monomyth’ (Campbell, 1993:30); the term ‘monomyth’, coined by James Joyce in his book *Finnegan’s Wake*, has since been adopted by Campbell and many other writers who work within the realms of myth. In this case, the monomyth is the recurrent structure within which all heroic myths operate:

Whether the hero be ridiculous or sublime, Greek or Barbarian, Gentile or Jew, his journey varies little in essential plan. Popular tales represent the heroic action as physical; the higher religions show the deed to be moral; nevertheless, there will be found astonishingly little variation in the morphology of the adventure, the character roles involved, the victories gained. If one or another of the basic elements of the archetypal pattern is omitted from a given fairytale, legend, ritual or myth, it is bound to be somehow or the other implied- and the omission itself can speak volumes for the history and pathology of the example. (Campbell, 1993:38)

This monomyth therefore forms the endoskeleton of the hero’s story. It is, however, also important to keep in mind that, while

The passage of the mythological hero may be overground, incidentally; fundamentally it is inward- into depths where obscure resistances are overcome, and long lost, forgotten powers are revived, to be made available for the transfiguration of the world. (Campbell, 1993:29)

The reason for this is that the hero, if he or she conforms to the heroic standard, is allied to the archetypal hero. The hero becomes imbued with that which is eternal and mythical even if he or she, as an individual, does not appear to have any connections with or affinity for the realms of myth and the archetypal unconscious. The heroic quest, likewise, takes on mythical proportions even in the setting of a hard-science science fiction novel. Andre Malraux, a contemporary of Georges Sorel comments on this, saying

Somewhere in the shadowy region between the areas of acts and indefinable inner-being stands the Hero. He is more than his deeds and their success or failure; he is also will, aspiration and refusal to surrender to the order of the world of ordinary men ... he may not be individualised, since the aim of myth is insight into the eternal struggle of men with the universe and not fictional biography. (In Golberger, 1965:186)

The hero is more than man or woman, because he or she will become a symbol that inspires his or her society. Because the hero is able to operate on a level that is purely symbolic, he or she is imbued with significance beyond the 'ordinary' actions he or she undertakes. The hero's journey may thus take place on a number of levels but, while it is often shown as a physical journey, it is fundamentally psychological.

It is pertinent to recognise at this point that, because the journey of the hero is fundamentally psychological, the movement of the quest, while seemingly following a horizontal, linear progression (that will eventually come full circle) is also made up of the vertical movements of ascents and descents. These ascents and descents signify the stages of the psychological journey at which the hero may be found, moving deeper within his or her own unconscious mind or coming into the upper world of the ego or super-conscious. This movement is an intrinsic feature of the romance within which the hero moves. Northrop Frye, in *The Secular Scripture*, discusses this movement at length. He writes that

From the beginning the poetic imagination has inhabited a middle earth. Above it is the sky with whatever it reveals or conceals; below it is a mysterious place of birth and death. ... There are therefore four primary narrative movements in literature. These are, first, the descent from a higher world; second, the descent to a lower world; third, the ascent from a lower world; and fourth, the ascent to a higher world. All stories are complications of, or metaphorical derivations from, these four narrative radicals. (Frye, 1976:97)

He continues with a description of the thematic concerns of each of these movements.

The general theme of descent (is) that of a growing confusion of identity and of restriction on action. There is a break in consciousness at the beginning, with analogies to falling asleep, followed by a descent to a lower world which is sometimes a world of cruelty and imprisonment, sometimes an oracular cave. In the descent there is a growing isolation and immobility: charms and spells hold one motionless; human beings are turned into subhuman creature, and made more mechanical in behaviour; hero or heroine are trapped in labyrinths or prisons. The narrative themes and images of ascent are much the same in reverse, and the chief conceptions are those of escape, remembrance, or discovery of one's real identity, growing freedom and the breaking of enchantment. (Frye, 1976:129)

As the hero traces the pattern of the quest, he or she similarly follows Frye's vertical movements. He or she descends first from the normal waking world, in which it is felt that there is something lacking, to the dark subterranean world where the confusion over identity and purpose will become acute. Here the hero meets with the darkness inside him or her and, if he or she is able to free himself or herself from the illusions that have ensorcelled him or her, ascends to the waking world and moves on with his quest. As the hero is tried and is victorious he or she will eventually be able to ascend to that higher world which constitutes the supreme reality. Here confusion is finally alleviated and the hero learns the truth about himself or herself and the world; he or she is awarded freedom from all illusions. Depending on the pattern traced by the hero, these ascents and descents may seem to vary in degree or purpose, but they remain constant in their thematic significance and occur in a fairly regular rhythm, operating within and in accordance with the pattern of the heroic quest.

Joseph Campbell breaks the heroic quest into particular stages and each of these must be dealt with individually; it is important to keep in mind not only the horizontal movement

of the hero, but his or her vertical movement too if one is to appreciate the thematic richness of each of the hero's trials.

The first stage of the hero's journey is the Departure. The term 'departure' serves a double purpose when applied to the figure of the man or woman to-become-hero; often it is because the hero is a departure from society that he or she is forced to depart from society. Pearson and Pope write that, 'the potential for self-actualisation and the heroic life is obscured from men as well as women by society's restrictive myths' (Pearson & Pope, 1981:17). They hold that:

The status quo includes a system of assumptions that go largely unquestioned by the culture. These assumptions are embodied in myths, which oversimplify the nature of the social, physical and metaphysical world and hide the truth about the hero's identity. The hero, by definition, departs from convention and thereby implicitly or explicitly challenges the myths that define the status quo. In so doing, the hero exposes the truth regarding society's distorted vision of the world and of the hero's own potential. The restrictive myths, which are potentially destructive forces, thus become a source of wisdom. (Pearson & Pope, 1981:17)

According to Pearson and Pope, therefore, society restricts the thoughts and actions of people through its own propagated myths (to do with gender, race, age and so on); most people are either unaware of this, or choose to conform to society's standards. When the hero chooses to step 'beyond the pale' of society, however, he or she makes the decision to refuse the rules of the *status quo*. After this, the hero inhabits a place on the margins of society only, and continually challenges those rules that he or she has refused to abide by. Redfield agrees with this and writes of Homer's Achilles in the *Iliad* that, 'Achilles [the greatest of the heroes], then, is a marginal figure in his society, but a hero's place is on the margins; as so often happens in social systems, Achilles' uncertain status makes

possible for him a kind of ethical fundamentalism and purity of spirit.’ (Redfield, 1975:105) And Lash, in his brief consideration of the Hebrew hero, brings even more evidence forward in support of the marginal position of the hero:

For the Hebrews the hero was an outsider, an exile or marginal figure who raises a voice of moral outrage against the corrupt or impotent authority of the priesthood. Remaining a loner and a law unto himself, he was true to the heroic mould (and we share an) empathic identification with his lonely and often desperate path. (Lash, 1995:9)

The hero therefore is a departure from convention, and, once he or she has moved beyond the cultural strictures of his or her society, the hero becomes free to search for his or her own truths.

Campbell divides the departure of the hero into five stages: the call to adventure, refusal of the call, supernatural aid, the crossing of the first threshold and the belly of the whale. (Campbell, 1993:IX) In the ‘call to adventure’ the hero awakens to a sense of something beyond his or her insular world and feels the need to follow this Ariadne’s thread through the labyrinth and into whatever realm stands beyond the labyrinth. When the hero hears the call, there is always the choice of refusing to listen to it (‘refusal of the call’). If the ‘hero’ does not follow the call, he or she is obviously no longer the hero of the tale, the quest will go untraced and this person will no longer be of any interest to us.

Often the call to adventure signifies the point at which the hero is ready to recognize the fork in the road and make the appropriate decision. He or she must, effectively, be willing to surrender completely to forces with which he or she is unacquainted, and trust the future to a Fate whose nature is always equivocal. Jung was himself confronted with this

decision and chose the heroic path through his unconscious, as the hero, too, must choose the path through her own unconscious:

I therefore felt that I was confronted with the choice of either continuing my academic career, whose road lay smooth before me, or following the laws of my inner personality, of a higher reason, and forging ahead with this curious task of mine, this experiment in confronting the unconscious. ... Consciously, deliberately, then, I abandoned my academic career. For I felt that something great was happening to me, and I put my trust in the thing which I felt to be more important *sub specie oeterntatis*. I knew that it would fill my life, and for the sake of that goal I was ready to take any kind of risk. (In Storr, 1998:83)

The hero makes the difficult decision to make his or her own path through the world, and whatever it is that he or she accomplishes is more important to the whole species, than the action of an ordinary man or woman.

The hero may also receive further prompting to take up her quest from an agent of supernatural aid. This could take the form of a dream or perhaps the appearance in the hero's life of a person or animal who prods them in the right direction (keeping in mind always that these physical signs signify the internal processes of the hero). Campbell calls this awareness of inner processes 'the awakening of the self'.

But whether small or great, and no matter what the stage or grade of life, the call rings up the curtain, always, on a mystery of transfiguration- a rite, or moment, of spiritual passage, which, when complete, amounts to a dying and a birth. The familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of the threshold is at hand. (Campbell, 1993:51)

The emergence of the hero from the 'belly of the whale' (having crossed the first threshold) is his or her rebirth into the world as the hero. He or she has had to descend into the depths after crossing the first threshold, so that when he or she ascends it is a re-

birthing from the womb of the world; hence the emergence from the ‘belly of the whale’. He or she is now equipped to do battle because the hero knows what strengths and skills are at his or her disposal and must now continue on the path that he or she has chosen.

The second part of the hero’s quest, the Initiation, is similarly divided into separate stages by Campbell: the road of trials, the meeting with the goddess, woman as the temptress, atonement with the father, apotheosis and the ultimate boon. (Campbell, 1993:IX) Lash also writes that in this stage of the hero’s quest, ‘universal evidence ... suggests a threefold structure: the “eternal triangle” of hero-monster-woman.’ (Lash, 1995:5) This dynamic poses a problem when the active hero is female; however, slight modifications of the processes involved allow us to consider her part. (The position of the female hero is debated at length in the next chapter.) In Jungian terms therefore, the (male) hero must face his shadow⁵ and incorporate it into his understanding of himself (the ‘road of trials’ and ‘hero-monster’) and he must then face his anima⁶ and incorporate that into his understanding of himself (‘meeting with the goddess’, ‘woman as temptress’ and ‘hero-woman’). Needless to say, this incorporation of anima only occurs if the hero is male (in the case of the female hero we should find the incorporation of the animus). Once the hero has acknowledged and been reconciled with the hidden parts of himself (or herself),

⁵ The ‘shadow’, according to Jung is ‘the “negative” side of the personality, the sum of all those unpleasant qualities we like to hide, together with the insufficiently developed functions and contents of the personal unconscious’; he posited that ‘everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual’s conscious life, the blacker and denser it is.’ (Storr, 1998:87-88)

⁶ Jung also identified, apart from the shadow, two other ‘energies’, which are present in the individual unconscious of a person. The anima and the animus, respectively female and male, represent the personality traits traditionally associated with the two genders. Jung proposed that a very masculine man, in order to have the balance necessary for healthy psychological functioning, would have a strong female presence in his unconscious; his ‘female’ anima would rule his unconscious decisions while his conscious mind remained aggressively masculine. Similarly, the unconscious mind of a very feminine woman would

the hero is able to transcend the ego and move into the realm of the eternal, the Father God, so to speak.

Before meeting the 'Eternal Father', what the hero must have faced is his or her own mortality. Having seen death and survived the deaths of the disparate parts of himself or herself as they come together in a whole, he or she will now move freely to the place at which the 'eternal source' is found; it is here that the hero is taught the secrets of life and is given 'the ultimate boon'. This ability of the hero to transcend death is perhaps the most important of his or her tasks in human terms. We need the hero to take on the responsibility of the quest for self-knowledge and we need to see that it does not kill him or her; the hero must face death on our behalf and return to tell us of the experience. Dorothy Norman writes that, 'myths of the heroes speak most eloquently of (humanity's) quest to choose life over death,' (Norman, 1969:11) and Redfield adds to that that:

Man dies in any case, but he can choose to die well. ... All men are born to die, but (the hero) alone must confront this fact in his social life, since he fulfils his obligations only by meeting those who intend his death. (Redfield, 1975:101)

The hero embodies, for us, the struggle between Freud's thanatos (death drive) and the libido (life drive). It is because the hero is able to defeat our fear, and overcome our fascination with, death and obscurity that he or she gives us hope. The hero becomes irrevocably identified with the libido. The hero therefore 'dies' and is resurrected. He or she meets the Eternal Father, and is given the boon which the hero must now take back to his or her people in order to enlighten them as to the authentic nature of reality beyond their minimal perceptions.

be defined in terms of her 'masculine' animus, in order to balance the 'feminine' conscious mind. (Storr,

The stages into which the hero's Return is divided are: refusal of the return, the magic flight, rescue from without, the crossing of the return threshold, master of the two worlds and the freedom to live. (Campbell, 1993:IX) As Campbell writes,

The full round, the norm of the monomyth, requires that the hero shall now begin the labour of bringing the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess, back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds. (Campbell, 1993:193)

The 'refusal of the return' by the hero occurs when he or she decides to remain in the realm of the gods to which he or she has ascended, in which case the fact of this ascension will have to be boon enough for society. The 'magic flight' occurs when the hero attains the boon against the wishes of its guardian, much like Prometheus and his eternal flame, and must flee the scene of the 'crime'. Sometimes, when the hero refuses or is unable to return to the world, there is a 'rescue from without'; he or she is forcibly brought back to the mundane world. Then, in the return to the world, the hero must cross 'the return threshold'.

The two worlds, the divine and the human, can be pictured only as distinct from each other- different as life and death, as day and night. The hero adventures out of the land we know into darkness; there he accomplishes his adventure, or again is simply lost to us, imprisoned or in danger; and his return is described as a coming back out of that yonder zone. Nevertheless- and here is the great key to the understanding of myth and symbol- the two kingdoms are actually one. The realm of the gods is a forgotten dimension of the world we know. And the exploration of that realm, either willingly or unwillingly, is the whole sense of the deed of the hero. (Campbell, 1993:217)

If the hero returns to our world, he or she is ‘master of both the worlds’ traversed. Because of this, the hero’s understanding of time and being changes significantly. According to Campbell, the hero becomes aware of and immersed in the eternal and so no longer considers the ‘perishable’ either within or without himself or herself. ‘The hero is champion of things becoming, not of things become, because he *is*.’ (Campbell, 1993:243) The hero is an agent of change, always bringing that renewal to the world without which it would petrify. Because of this, the hero earns the ‘freedom to live’. And so the quest draws to a close.

The heroic quest takes the hero out of his or her society on a journey through which the hero comes to understand himself or herself and the world. It then leads the hero back to his or her people with whom the hero must now share the new knowledge so that they may benefit from his or her self-sacrifice. However

The hero is certainly the temporal redeemer of peoples ... but with an important qualification: this may be a result of the heroic life, but must not be its goal. ... As the saint’s first allegiance is to God, that of the hero is to self-realisation. Nevertheless, the exterior consequence of sanctity is the renewal of faith in the faithful, while heroism ... delivers the human spirit from bondage. (Goldberger, 1965:32)

The hero, because it is his or her destiny, leads us to the light. The hero does not need to be bringing the light to us, he or she has merely to seek it for himself or herself for us to find it. If the hero takes up the cross, the rest of his or her quest is a foregone conclusion and we are reminded of Romain Rolland’s maxim: ‘Et nous ne savons pas si nous serons heureux, mais nous savons que nous ne serons pas petits’ (Rolland, 1932:XIV); ‘We don’t know if we’ll be happy, but we know we shan’t be small.’

As Golberger suggests

Life is an ill-matched struggle. Man is a sinful, miserable, precarious creature whose best efforts can never definitively achieve anything good. His greatest success is doomed to fail at least in part. ... As death and decay are a part of man himself, so are they inherent in all that he does. Slow extinction is the fate of his work on earth. ... Man always loses, says Clio, the somber voice of History: for the law of time decrees that what is born of time dies of the sheer weight of time. ... Heroes and saints, alone, have the power to break through the general apathy at propitious moments and shape the destiny of the world, leaving to others an immortal model for imitation. (Goldberger, 1965:101-109)

The heroic standard is this: the hero is human and suffers anguish and anxiety and fear, but he or she also feels the rush of the adventure that awaits. He or she may dread taking that first step that cuts him or her off from the people he or she loves and the home that he or she knows, but the hero takes it, following the path before him or her and learning to champion an ethic that encompasses that which is great. He or she is the champion of order in a place where malevolent chaos threatens a fragile humanity at every turn. He or she is 'scorned and scarred' and yet brings the boon he or she has won to us, and we are redeemed by our saviour.

Arming the Damsel in Distress: Recovering the Female Hero

The subject of the female hero has become an awkward problem in the world of the hero and the heroic. Although there have been many vigorous female figures in legend and history who have assumed the roles of both the warrior hero (Maeve, Boadicea, the Amazons) and the culture hero (Cleopatra, Marie Curie), most of the academic work produced to do with the hero either patronises the efforts of these women or ignores them. The predominant feeling of most theorists is that

The hero is undeniably *he*, the male of the species. Gender is an issue here...the hero has no exact counterpart in the opposite sex, and heroines who act in the manner of the hero are wild anomalies. (Lash, 1995:5)

This denigration of female heroes has served its purpose, a purpose sanctioned and perpetuated by culture, in that women have not been allowed to create their own heroic template. Because of this women have not been allowed models of active, heroic behaviour and so have had to assume, for far too long, that the only noble role which they can fill in the heroic epic (and often in real life) is that of the damsel-in-distress-turned-love-interest. However, with the relatively modern interest in women's studies, the treatment of the female hero by the patriarchy is at last being called into question; women are reclaiming the female hero and arming the damsel-in-distress.

Pearson and Pope, in their book *The Female Hero*, write that

Our understanding of the basic spiritual and psychological archetype of human life has been limited ... by the assumption that the hero and central character of the myth is male. The hero is almost always assumed to be white and upper class

as well. The journey of the upper class white male - a socially, politically and economically powerful subgroup of the human race - is identified as the generic type for the normal human condition; and other members of society - racial minorities, the poor and women - are seen as secondary characters, important only as obstacles, aids or rewards on his journey. (Pearson & Pope, 1981:4)

They add to this statement that, 'the assumption that the male is subject and hero and the female is object and heroine injects patriarchal sex-role assumptions into the discussion of the archetypal hero's journey: this confuses the issue and obscures the true archetypal elements of the pattern.' (Pearson & Pope, 1981:4)

Therefore, what needs to be done in order to reclaim the hero for women is to rethink the gender myth perpetuated by culture, which has allowed women to be seen as objects and the female hero to be negated. In order to do this, we need to consider the particular issue of the female hero alongside the issues already raised by feminist theoreticians; to consider the treatment of the female hero is to consider the treatment of women through history. And once the gender myth has been demythologised, the damsel in distress will finally be able to re-assume those arms she was made to lay down.

The first element that must be considered is the nature of culture and the constraints it places on both the hero and on men and women. Culture seems to be that set of assumptions according to which people in a given society regulate their behaviour. It informs them of what they can and cannot do and what they are and are not capable of doing and it does this through various mediums; these could be as diverse as law, poetry, medicine, philosophy (and 'myth'). Hamer suggests, too, that the particularly crucial element of culture is that it 'is in culture that hierarchies of power are defined and

specified' (Hamer, 1993:ix). The ruling class, or the people with the most power and influence in a society, are the ones who create the culture of that society, assuming that because they have wealth or power they are naturally elevated to a position in which they should regulate the operation and behaviour of their society.

Feminist theory asserts that most cultures through history have been male-dominated. The men in those societies have been able to influence culture because they were the people with power (physical, religious or economic). It was 'natural' for them to assume responsibility for the regulation of the behaviour of others and assert their right to positions within the hierarchies of power. Because of this, certain character traits and values, ways of thinking and behavioural patterns have been favoured over others, specifically those which are considered masculine. This means that any hero called forth within a culture would more than likely be male; male culture is unlikely to call for a female hero when women have neither positions of power in society nor, apparently, any character traits suited to heroic endeavour.⁷

Science fiction author and feminist, Joanna Russ, presents a neat debate on the effect male culture has had on society and the way it sees itself in her article, 'What Can a Heroine Do? Or Why Women Can't Write.' She begins her article with the presentation of a number of stock literary scenarios in which the roles of male and female characters have been switched; this role reversal makes an amusing point re-the roles of women.

1. Two strong women battle for supremacy in the early West.
2. A young girl in Minnesota finds her womanhood by killing a bear ...

⁷ The fact that culture is male has been explored by many feminist theoreticians, among them Luce Irigaray (in *Je, Te, Nous, Vous*) and Simone de Beauvoir (in *The Second Sex*).

5. A handsome young man, quite virginal, is seduced by an older woman who has made a pact with the Devil to give her back her youth. When the woman becomes pregnant, she proudly announces the paternity of her child; this revelation so shames the young man that he goes quite insane, steals into the house where the baby is kept, murders it, and is taken to prison where – repentant and surrounded by angel voices – he dies.

8. A beautiful, seductive boy whose narcissism and instinctive cunning hide the fact that he has no mind (and in fact, hardly any sentient consciousness) drives a succession of successful actresses, female movie produceresses, cowgirls and film directresses wild with desire. They rape him.

(These) are tales for heroes, not heroines, and one of the things that handicaps women writers in our – and every other – culture is that there are so very few stories in which women can figure as protagonists.

Culture is male. This does not mean that every man in Western (or Eastern) society can do exactly as he pleases, or that every man creates the culture *solus*, or that every man is luckier or more privileged than every woman. What it does mean (among other things) is that the society we live in, like all other historical societies, is a patriarchy. And patriarchies imagine or picture themselves from the male point of view. ... Both men and women in our culture conceive the culture from a single point of view – the male. ... An examination of English literature, or Western literature (or Eastern literature for that matter) reveals that all of the possible actions people can do in fiction, very few can be done by women. Our literature is not about women. It is not about men and women equally. It is by and about men. (Russ, 1972:3-4)

Russ asserts that the way women see themselves is governed by the view of men. It is this perspective that must change if women are ever to recognise their own heroic potential; male culture has created a society in which women are bound to restrictive patterns of behaviour with no means of counteracting this restriction.

The question of how male culture might first have come into being is a difficult one, because there were ancient cultures (albeit few of them) that did not succumb to this way of thinking. Mary Ellman has proposed a theory that explains how and why the initial division of power may have occurred, and later been perpetuated. Feminist theoretician,

Toril Moi, writes of fellow feminist, Mary Ellman's work *Thinking about Women* (1968), that

The main thesis of *Thinking about Women* is that Western culture at all levels is permeated by a phenomenon Ellman labels "thought by sexual analogy". According to Ellman, this can best be described as our general tendency to "comprehend all phenomena, however shifting, in terms of our original and simple sexual differences; and ... classify almost all experience by means of sexual analogy (p6)." This intellectual habit deeply influences our perceptions of the world. "Ordinarily, not only sexual terms but sexual opinions are imposed upon the external world. All forms are subsumed by our concept of the male and female temperament (p8)." (Moi, 1985:32)

What Ellman suggests makes good sense, and her statement has rested unchallenged by the growing body of feminist argument; experience of the world is (and has apparently always been) defined in terms of sexual identity. There are only two overt sexual identities: male and female and, because we can see physical differences, it requires merely a small step to assume there to be other differences too. And perhaps this is how male culture initially managed to justify its position and approach to women; women are biologically created to fulfil a particular purpose, their sexual identity therefore determines their fate. However, although women may, at times, be physically weaker than men because of their role in the reproductive process, that role which is hers biologically has been extended by male culture so that she remains a crippled weakling even when she is too young to bear children, too old to bear children or simply in-between the births of children. She has had her fate determined by biology in a culture where that biology is a rational natural law upheld by the ruling class.

Feminist theory has gone a long way to refuting the 'natural' assumption that biology determines the role or behaviour of the person in question. That males behave in a

masculine (active) manner, and women in a feminine (passive) manner, is no longer asserted as being an infallible natural law. Instead, feminists assert that sex and gender are two different things; sex is biological and gender (appropriate behavioural pattern) is constructed through the exertions of culture-specific social pressure. According to this notion, women need no longer be tied to passive, submissive behaviour, and neither should men have to prove themselves constantly through feats of physical strength or assertiveness merely because they are biologically male or female. Instead, men should be able to adopt feminine traits in certain situations, as women should be able to adopt masculine traits in others; we should no longer allow culture to determine which character traits we exhibit and which we repress. Sex should not automatically prescribe gender-specific behaviour. This is discussed at length by Moi in her excellent book, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*.

However, while there are few enough modern cultures that accept this, there are far fewer ancient cultures who accepted this type of thinking, and that is possibly why it is rare to find the names of female heroes among those of the ancient male heroes. That women were weak and passive and men strong aggressors was an accepted rule. However, of the cultures of the ancient world, two of them stand out as having provided us with startling examples of female heroism, and this is probably because neither of them could have been classified as male-dominated cultures.

The first of these two cultures is that of the Celts (recognised collectively from 600BC), from whom we have gained a number of great female figures, the two most well known

being the warrior queens Boadicea and Meave of Connacht. Conway writes that women were held in high regard among the Celts and that it was a matter of course for them to be warriors as brutal as their men. The Celtic women were also able to take up positions as Druids and were expected to choose their own marriage partners. Trial marriages were favoured, lasting a year and a day, at which point either partner could wish the other well and choose to leave. There was no shame in having children without a husband, because fertility was a sacred gift and children were necessary in a time when few survived. (Conway, 1997:75-78) This way of seeing the world and the relationship between men and women is what enabled the Celts to produce both male and female heroes, neither men nor women assumed a false superiority over the other.

The second ancient culture, Egypt, has provided us with certainly one of the most well known female culture heroes, Queen Cleopatra (69-30 BC). The Egyptians, like the Celts, did not emphasise the differences between the sexes and allowed their women as much power and independence as they did their men; this is a society in which Cleopatra *could* wield power. Hamer writes, in her book *Signs of Cleopatra* that

Polarity between the sexes was not heavily emphasised in Ptolemaic Egypt. Here we begin to touch on the questions of gender distinction and family organisation. ... Roman notions of these are familiar to us to some degree because in many ways we are still governed by them in the west. Egyptian practice, however, diverged from the Roman. Even though the rights of women under the law had been eroded under the Greek administration, in Egypt there was less discrimination between the rights of male and female than was known elsewhere in the ancient world, with regard, in particular, to marriage legislation and the inheritance of property. ... In Egypt daughters inherited equally with sons and women were at liberty to choose their own husbands - a freedom, incidentally, which made them a scandal to the men of Rome. (Hamer, 1993:18-19)

An ancient Egypt in which women were expected to command the same rights as the men, is an Egypt for whom a ruling female would not be a strange thing, much as a warrior woman would not have been strange for the Celts. However, with the Roman conquest of both these nations, that 'liberal' past came to an end. Octavian defeated Cleopatra in 30BC and, similarly, in the first century BC the Romans had also begun what would be their conquest of Celtic Europe (with the exceptions of Ireland and Scotland) (Conway, 1997:75). In this way begins the era of western civilisation; the western world adopted the philosophies, laws and social structures of the Roman Empire and the position of women suffered; women who may previously have had rights, were now treated as the Roman women were and female heroism became increasingly less plausible and less possible.

Hamer tells us that

Roman women, though not so confined as the Greek ones were, like them, disadvantaged under the law in comparison with men. Under both Greek and Roman law women were defined in terms of their male relatives, their inheritance rights were restricted, and their freedom to engage in marriage or public contracts was subjected to the guidance or agency of a male. (Hamer, 1993:19)

As well as the Roman women, Greek women, under Athenian law, could not own property, respectable women were not to be seen in public (at all) and a woman's husband was considered in all things her 'lord and master' (J.A.C.T. 1986:161-162) The

Joint Association of Classical Teachers write, too, that

One more factor has to be taken into account [regarding the position of women in Athenian society]: the role of women in myth ... in myth their functions and roles - as seen by men - are shot through with ambiguities and tensions. That is to say, male attitudes to Athenian women as revealed in the imaginative projections of myth show a deep sense of unease. They oscillate between the poles of fear, even

revulsion, and of total dependence on women. Here, perhaps, lies the clue to explaining ... the 'position' in society of Athenian citizen women. They are essential to the functioning and continuity of society and yet by their (alleged) potentially rampant sexuality and crossing of kinship lines they constantly threaten its male-dominated orderliness. In public - that is, in the strictly political arenas of the democracy - women are allotted no role whatsoever. (J.A.C.T. 1986:166)

This was the legacy women were to inherit and this is what has formed the basis of man's evaluation of women ever since. Firmly entrenched in male culture, woman is allowed no position of any outstanding public importance and she is still treated with the suspicion that the Greeks explored in their mythology.

Woman's subservient position was also supported later by the advent of Christianity and the writings of various Christian thinkers. This had the advantage of suggesting that the position of women was not only naturally lawful, but divinely preordained, something that had already been suggested in the Greek and Roman myths. Marina Warner, in her book, *Monuments and Maidens: the Allegory of the Female Form*, writes a short history of this divine misogyny.

St Paul, blending Greek and Judaic misogyny, notoriously defined woman's place in the plan of redemption, and gave her little space for spiritual potential: 'I am not giving permission for a woman to teach or tell a man what to do. A woman ought not to speak, because Adam was formed first and Eve afterwards, and it was not Adam who was led astray but the woman who was led astray and fell into sin. Nevertheless, she will be saved by childbearing.' (1Tim. 2:12-15) The argument against woman, aligning the female with carnality, weakness and nature, with 'womanishness' and the male with spirituality, strength and mind or reason, beats its persistent rhythm down through the years, and though the values assigned to each category alter and shift, women usually fare the worse. The demiurge in Plato's *Timaeus*, a book which exercised a profound influence on the development of medieval philosophy, mixes the souls of humankind in his bowl, 'and ... being of two sexes, the better of the two was that which in future would be called man.' Later, developing a non-Christian doctrine of reincarnation, the *Timaeus* nevertheless strengthened latent Pauline misogyny: 'Anyone who lived

well for his appointed time would return home to his native star and live an appropriately happy life, but anyone who failed to do so would be changed into a woman at his second birth.' ... The Christian soul, who achieves a true resemblance to Christ, also changes gender: 'The spiritually enlightened receive the features and image and manliness of Christ.' (Warner, 1996:63-64)

It is ironic that the Christian era, which heralded a change in western culture so that what may previously have been considered 'womanish' virtues (compassion, gentleness, meekness) were now lauded and expected of the Christian hero, should still not allow women to assume a heroic role. In fact, what may previously have been unease at women's behaviour and character traits, now becomes a straightforward declaration that woman is inherently sinful and to blame for man's eviction from paradise. The patent bias in favour of man in texts which should be without any gender bias merely served to further entrench anti-female sentiment in the mind of western man.

This particular problem, Christian chauvinism, has led to the retaliatory arguments of many feminists, particularly as feminism has gained ground and women have been able to voice their opposition to male culture. Liberal feminist, Sarah Grimke, wrote in 1838 that

As (men) have determined that Jehovah has placed women on a lower platform than man, they of course wish to keep her there; and hence the noble faculties of our minds are crushed, and our reasoning powers are almost wholly uncultivated (p61). He has adorned the creature whom God gave him as a companion, with baubles and geegaws, turned her attention to personal attractions, offered incense to her vanity, and made her the instrument of his selfish gratification, a plaything to please his eye and amuse his hours of leisure. (Grimke, 1970:17)

As a liberal feminist, Grimke's position was predominantly that of lobbying for the human rights that should have been allowed women as well as men at the time Grimke was writing. She agreed with Wollestonecraft that because women had not been privy to

the same education and training as men, their powers of reasoning were not of the same quality as those of men. This posed serious problems because both Grimke and Wollestonecraft subscribed to ‘the tradition of Christian rationalism of Thomas Aquinas and Augustine (in which the) *sine qua non* of moral growth is the ability to make moral judgements. ... (So that) any system of education that prevents a woman from developing her reason is denying her access to immortality (and) is condemning her to a materialistic limbo.’ (Donovan, 2001:25) Hence, the fact that men kept education from women meant that women were unable to achieve sanctification and redemption, because they were unable to attempt the reasoning through which they were meant to realise this salvation.

This patronising of women within church doctrine and religious law has been and still is at least as, if not more, damaging than that of biological determinism because it alienates woman from her own spirituality and suggests that God condones such a position. This has been a contentious point throughout the (to date, relatively) brief history of feminist writing; and it continues to be a sore point because of the largely unquestioned authority of the Church and Biblical writings. And if woman does want a release from the shackles that have bound her, this patriarchal authority of the Church must be questioned in public, not merely within the relative safety of intellectual feminist debate, because the effect that the Church has on women’s lives is a very public one. As Gage writes,

During the Christian ages, the Church has not alone shown cruelty and contempt for women, but has exhibited an impious and insolent disregard of the most common rights of humanity. It has robbed her of her responsibility, putting man in place of God. It has forbidden her the offices of the Church. ... It has denied her independent thought, declaring her a secondary creation for man’s use. ... It has anathematised her sex, teaching her to feel shame for the very fact of her being. (Gage, 1980:241)

And so we find that man is made first (in the image of God), and woman is made second. She is the cause of original sin and can only achieve some redemption through childbirth, producing progeny for her master and mate. She cannot, however, achieve that transcendence of her nature, which is inherent in 'maleness'. The Church keeps women in their divine position of subjugation because it suits them to do so; a lord/Lord must have subjects. That this prevents her from exploring her spirituality and her human potential means that she *is* condemned to a 'materialistic limbo', a limbo that is not natural to anyone of the human race.

For the female hero, however, this sexist liturgy sounds an even more certain death knell, because

The hero is (supposed to be) symbolical of that divine creative and redemptive image which is hidden within us all, only waiting to be known and rendered into life. ... The two - the hero and his (or her) ultimate god, the seeker and the found - are thus understood as the outside and inside of a single self-mirrored mystery, which is identical with the mystery of the manifest world. The great deed of the supreme hero is to come to the knowledge of this unity in multiplicity and then make it known. (Campbell, 1993:39-40) (my brackets)

The hero who is searching for the truth of all things comes to know God, the divine, or truth in whatever form it may take, intimately; if women are unable to enjoy that communion with God (let alone speak of it to others), we must acknowledge the verity of the question 'how can they be heroes?'

These arguments, which are used to keep women in a place of subservience, have become more and more refined as man's powers of reasoning have grown through the ages; woman has had the dubious privilege of spurring man on to greater philosophical heights

as he has attempted to explain why woman is a lesser creature than he is. The quality of man's reasoning has changed through history so that what may have begun as a biological argument and later developed into a religious treatise has come to be an argument supported by mathematical, behavioural and psychological evidence in the modern world. Donovan, in her book on feminist theory, explores the beginnings of the particular male culture within which we (in the modern western world) reside today and suggests that it stems from the rational theories of the age of reason.

She writes that

The mechanical metaphor, which saw the world essentially as a great clock and God the great clock-winder, was in many ways a deficient paradigm; for, it left out - because it could not explain - basic areas of reality. It neglected, most importantly, what we might call the subjective world: the realm of the emotions and the non-rational to which were relegated questions of aesthetic and moral value. The Newtonian paradigm presumed that all which did not operate according to reason, according to mathematical principles of mechanism, was Other, that is, secondary, not significant, less than real, not nameable. Into this category fell women, according to the view of male liberal thinkers. The Newtonian world view therefore postulated a fundamental dissociation or split between the public world and the physical world of the cosmos, on the one hand, which were governed by reason, and on the other hand, the fringe marginal world to which were relegated such non-rational matters as emotional engagements, personal idiosyncrasies, questions of faith, questions of aesthetic and moral judgement, and women. This Neo-Stoical view also included the presumption that the rational world is superior to, and must control, the non-rational; that order must be imposed upon the non-ordered, the marginal, the Other world. (Donovan, 2001:19)

Man, therefore, (defined and still) defines the world according to the mathematical and rational principles which delight him and, according to this paradigm, women become relegated to the realms of the non-rational. However, it could be argued that it is not because *she* is (supposedly) incapable of rational thought that woman is bound to the non-rational, but because man cannot fully understand or appreciate his emotions or

subjective experience of the world. He can also not reason away his reaction to woman, so he assumes that she must, therefore, be unreasonable. And the next logical step is, of course, to want to render her rational. It is man's prerogative to find a role for woman to play which allows her a spot in his ordered universe (out of which she is not allowed to venture), hence the further perpetuation of male-dominated culture.

With this in mind, though, we are able to understand why perception of the world can, and has, developed into the contemporary binary system (a natural outgrowth of sexual/biological determinism), which Helene Cixous has proposed is in place. Cixous suggests that the following sets of binary oppositions are accepted constructs used to define gender differences within our culture and she asks the question, the answer to which is central to any attempt at a definition of female identity, 'where is she?'

Activity/ Passivity
Sun/ Moon
Culture/ Nature
Day/ Night
Father/ Mother
Head/ Emotions
Intelligible/ Sensitive
Logos/ Pathos (Cixous, 1975:10)

The answer to the question is that 'she' is inevitably found in that position of the binary construct that denotes passivity and the non-rational, the mysterious and the dark and the inexplicable. This proposal of Cixous's is a fascinating further exploration of the 'thinking by sexual analogy', which Ellman introduced into feminist debate. And both these feminist theoreticians suggest that in order to free women from this stultifying

system of classification, we must challenge this binary system which petrifies both men and women into particular sets of behaviours.

However, that all experience becomes divided into that which qualifies as ‘masculine’ (active), and that which qualifies as ‘feminine’ (passive) is not necessarily problematic in theory. The problem arises only when we are told that those experiences are biologically specific, the ‘masculine experiences’ are to be ascribed to males alone and the ‘feminine experiences’ to females, and that any experience which does not conform to these set parameters is unnatural and unlawful (according to ‘natural’ patriarchal law). As Moi writes

It has long been an established practice among most feminists to use ‘feminine’ (and ‘masculine’) to represent *social constructs* (patterns of sexuality and behaviour imposed by cultural and social norms), and to reserve ‘female’ and ‘male’ for the purely biological aspects of sexual difference. Thus ‘feminine’ represents nurture and ‘female’ nature in this usage. ... Seen in this perspective, patriarchal oppression consists of imposing certain social standards of femininity on all biological women, in order precisely to make us believe that the chosen standards for ‘femininity’ are natural. Thus a woman who refuses to conform can be labelled both *unfeminine* and *unnatural*. (Moi, 1985:65) (Italics in text)

With this in mind we can begin to see why the female hero would have been an unpopular (unnatural) component in a patriarchal society, and perhaps we begin to understand why we don’t hear much about her. If there were stories or myths, they would have been discouraged and replaced with those of male heroes because the female hero would have challenged the roles set aside for her by male culture. Her behaviour would not have corresponded to the passive non-action that ‘femininity’ demanded, and she may very well have encouraged the rebellion of other women. A prime example of this

subversion of powerful female myth could well have led to the Greek story of Herakles' decimation of the Amazons.

The female hero in the past was a threat to male culture and, as such, had to be quietly done away with. She would therefore have become as biologically determined as her fellow woman, bound to passivity and pregnancy. It is no wonder then that the female hero was unable to quest for truth and glory or self-knowledge like her active male counterpart. In fact, there was no need for her to quest for self-knowledge, male-dominated culture knew exactly where she belonged and had secured for her a comfortable and stable (and boring) place in their cosmos.

Campbell writes of the hero that if he is 'walled in (by) boredom, hard work or "culture", the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved' (Campbell, 1993:59), he could just as easily have been describing the particular plight of the female, or the female hero. She has become a victim to be saved.

I would like to consider here some of the theoretical approaches that have been taken in dealing with the female hero *per se*, not just women and their roles in society. The first one (which seems to be the most popular by far) is that *women cannot be heroes*, and that there have therefore never been and never will be female heroes. The first theoretician I consider, John Lash, writes

Gender is an issue here, for ideally the hero incarnates masculinity at its best, most noble aspects, even though he is potentially equal to the worst of which his sex is capable. ... The hero has no exact counterpart in the opposite sex, and heroines who act in the manner of the hero are wild anomalies in world

mythology and racial lore: the fabled Amazons, Athene, the armoured war-goddess of Greece, Joan of Arc, the virgin in full knight's regalia; also Boadicea and the ferocious warrior-women celebrated among the Celts. These exceptions prove the rule that heroic identity and masculine prowess are based on the mastery of certain interior (i.e. 'feminine') powers of the body, predominantly but not exclusively exploited by men. (Lash, 1995:5)

This is a problematic passage and by no means the only problematic passage in Lash's work on the hero. The first thing which becomes patently clear is that Lash subscribes to the notion that 'masculine' behaviour is that which is enacted by males, and 'feminine', that which is enacted by females. This point has already been disputed; we have noted that it serves only to prescribe, not describe the behaviours of each gender and perpetuates a very narrow conception of what each gender should do.

Lash goes on to compound his misogynist view later in his work; he writes

Furious, superheated force is the male equivalent to the procreative largesse of the female. ... Superfluity of the 'solar-phallic' type, demonstrated in the figure and feats of the warrior-hero, is variously called *furor*, *wut*, *lust*, *kudos*, *ferg*, *fury*. Rage is the male complement to nurture, and equally essential to the survival of the species. ... We may well ask, what is specifically 'masculine' about this attainment of moral-physical superiority? Are not women also capable of peak expression of our species' potential? Certainly, but the hero in his trials and triumphs displays exclusively one dimension of our common endowment: *the full ripening of the aggressive instinct which assures survival by the mastery of overwhelming forces rather than by adaptation to them*, adaptation being the forte of the female. (Lash, 1995:8-10) (Italics in text)

According to Lash, the hero must be male because 'he' has access to a rage and aggression, which is absent in the feminine make-up of the female, and because 'he' is unwilling (or unable?) to adapt to circumstances, which is what the female would automatically do. This statement is problematic on two counts, the gender stereotyping and the assumption that heroism rests solely on the hero's capacity for aggression.

Lash accepts gender stereotypes as absolutes and does not pause to consider that his reasoning might be flawed. He harks back to the idea that woman is made for reproduction (given her procreative largesse) and is hence incapable of anything else, specifically rage and aggression. I also find it problematic that Lash begins his argument by citing a number of examples of female *heroes* (in his own words) and then blithely undermines their heroic nature because he believes they are exceptions to a stereotyped rule, which he does not prove unequivocally. Lash does not consider the fact that the hero belongs to humanity; he takes the hero to be the type of male behaviour (not masculine behaviour which may be adopted by females too) and denigrates any female attempt at such activity, without giving good reasons as to why women cannot be heroes.

In the first chapter of this thesis, the nature of heroism is fully explored and the conclusion arrived at is that heroism is not dependent on aggression, as Lash suggests. There are certain situations in which the hero must act with aggression and possibly with violent force and strength, but there are also times when gentleness and compassion are called for. Different heroes are called to exhibit different virtues. If Lash proposes that the hero is the person who displays rage and aggression more than anyone else, he limits humanity to only one heroic type. This is not plausible given the number of heroes, in history and mythology, who display traits other than aggression.

As well as this, Lash's proposal that men do not adapt to circumstances (as women evidently do) is poorly argued. The culture hero lives in a society in which things are not

ideal; he or she adapts so well to these circumstances that they discover solutions to which others have been blind. Thomas Edison adapted to his circumstances, Viktor Frankl adapted to his circumstances – Lash cannot be unaware of these men and what they accomplished. As there have been ample examples of both female and male culture heroes through history, I believe Lash's argument that women are more adaptable than men is undermined.

Lash also suggests that 'heroic identity and masculine prowess are based on the mastery of certain interior (i.e. 'feminine') powers of the body, predominantly but not exclusively exploited by men'. He does not go on to explore what it is that he means by feminine, 'interior powers of the body' but, because mastery of these is what forms the basis of the heroic identity (according to Lash), we must explore what it is that he could mean by this statement. Given that Lash accepts and applies gender stereotypes in his argument, I assume that when he speaks of the feminine powers of the body he means anything from menstruation and pregnancy to compassion and emotions, the various effluents associated with females and femininity. But if so, how are these predominantly (but not exclusively) exploited by *men* who, because they are male, can surely have had no recourse to those feminine things in the first place? I do not here mean pregnancy and menstruation, with which men do not obviously have to contend. But if Lash is suggesting that men have recourse to feminine traits (compassion perhaps, adaptation to circumstances perhaps) why is it improbable that women may have access to masculine traits? And does this not undermine Lash's strict adherence to the masculine (male)/ feminine (female) dichotomy?

What Lash writes is extremely problematic and seemingly inconsistent, because he feels no need to explain himself. Lash assumes that his reader will be complicit with Lash's own views, and the views of patriarchal ideology; he does not think to question those stereotypes that he blithely uses to *support* his argument. It is this naïve acceptance of sexist dogma that weakens Lash's argument against the possibility of a female hero.

French hero-theorist and artist, Andre Saures is another whose views I would like to introduce within this approach to the female hero.

Saures proceeded from the assumption that woman, bound to the flesh by nature, is the born enemy of a spiritual dimension she cannot properly imagine. ... According to Genesis, God created male and female, calling them man. (Saures) reserved the title to the former. Woman for him is a force of nature, and man's primary duty is to transcend natural manifestations. Utterly determined by biological functions, she has no capacity for the higher levels of thought, much less ... divine action. (Golberger, 1965:38-45)

For Saures, woman does not qualify as being human; it never becomes a question of whether or not she is capable of heroic endeavour. Saures's French compatriots in the theory of heroic grandeur, Sorel, Malraux and Rolland also only refer to the hero as man; it does not occur to any of them to consider that woman should be included in their speculations. She exists only as a hindrance to man's transcendental nature.

Thomas Carlyle states that heroes are Great Men of action who are able to mould the course of history (Carlyle, 1840). He does not consider woman because she could not, certainly at the time of his writing, have managed to mould anything in the public world according to her will. Theorists Herbert Spencer and G.W.F. Hegel also lack any

consideration of women in their work on the hero and for Otto Rank and Lord Raglan the hero must be male (for Lord Raglan, as we have read, the hero must not only be male but of royal birth) (Segal, 2000). There are scores of theorists writing today who still take no note of female heroes; it does not occur to them because the history of the male hero and the dominance of misogynist patriarchal thought has made up their minds for them; there are no female heroes.

The second theoretical approach to the female hero is very much a modern, politically correct acknowledgement that a hero may be female. I have only found one theorist who allows for this possibility, however, and yet he, too, feels no need or desire to follow up his blithe concession with any more argument or examination. His work follows only the actions and journey of the male hero.

Joseph Campbell, in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, allows for the possibility of a female hero ('The hero, whether [...] man or woman' [Campbell, 1993:108]) but does not follow this with any internal consistency of argument. Throughout his work he continues to explore the journey of the male hero and demotes the female to her traditional roles of seductive maiden, cosmic mother, and helpful or wicked crone; she becomes merely obstacle or interesting interlude along the path of the male hero.

Campbell peppers his work with statements like the following ones:

Woman, in the picture language of mythology, represents the totality of what can be known. The hero is the one who comes to know. ... 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 knower and master. (Campbell, 1993:116,120)

Campbell does not explore what it is that a female hero would come to know, or what it is that she would master; is the assumption that she would also come to marry the queen goddess of the world? That her entire task is effectively to master her own feminine nature? Campbell's theory would pose a number of problems if one were to take it *verbatim* as a template for the journey of the female hero as well as the male, purely because he never really imagines that it is a female with whom he may be dealing. For Campbell, although he may be a little kinder about it than Lash, Saures and the others, the hero is still most realistically male.

Both the strength and the weakness of Campbell's work on the hero is his strict following of Jung. Jung's translation of psychological forces into archetypal images forms the backbone of Campbell's work and is an excellent manner in which to approach any study of the hero because it offers valuable insights into the psychological significance of the hero figure and his (or her) actions. However, because Jung's conceptions of the anima and animus are respectively female and male, and because these forces are to be encountered at every step throughout the hero's journey, it becomes logical for these forces to be represented, at these turns and 'in the picture language of mythology', as male and female characters. The masculine energy of the animus thus comes to be represented by the active male hero and that, unfortunately, leaves the feminine anima as only the passive other-than-the-hero.

This becomes problematic when the time is not taken by the general populace to translate these pictures into the psychological forces of masculine and feminine energy they are

meant to represent; we only see male heroes and passive female extras. This has had a very obvious and detrimental effect on society because those same feminine incarnations of the anima have been assumed to describe actual patterns of female behaviour, those of the evil witch, the femme fatale and the innocent virgin (or damsel in distress). What the heroic pattern of animus meeting anima is meant to represent is an eventual integration of the two energies in a healthy whole psyche, not the supposed supremacy of male over female.

As Jung suggests

Archetypes only come to life when one patiently tries to discover why and in what fashion they are meaningful to a living individual. The mere use of words is futile when you do not know what they stand for. This is particularly true in psychology, where we speak of archetypes like the anima and animus, the wise man, the great mother, and so on. You can know all about saints, sages, prophets and other godly men, and all the great mothers of the world. But if they are mere images whose numinosity you have never experienced, it will be as if you were talking in a dream, for you will not know what you are talking about. The mere words you use will be empty and valueless. They gain life and meaning only when you try to take into account their numinosity – i.e., their relationship to the living individual. Only then do you begin to understand that their names mean very little, whereas the way they are *related* to you is all-important. (Jung, 1964:88)

We must translate the characters of myth into their archetypes and then translate the meaning of the archetypes so that we come to understand ourselves better, which is, at bottom, the task of the hero. The anima and the animus are primary archetypal forces in the heroic myth and it is therefore imperative that we understand the role that each plays.

According to Jung

Difficult and subtle ethical problems are not invariably brought up by the shadow itself. Often another “inner figure” emerges. If the dreamer is a man, he will discover a female personification of his unconscious, and it will be a male figure

in the case of a woman. ... Jung called its male and female forms “animus” and “anima”. The anima is a personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man’s psyche (and vice versa). (Jung, 1964:186)

The anima is the feminine energy in the psyche of a man, and the animus is the masculine energy in the psyche of a woman. These are often represented, in the heroic journey by male and female characters. When the hero is a male, he often encounters female characters who represent the projection of his anima. He must learn to re-internalise these feminine aspects of himself, or resolve the conflicts that lie between him and the women he meets. Because he is male, he already contains the masculine energy of the animus and so his task is to integrate the animus (which he represents) with the anima (which is the ‘other’ to him).

The flaw in Campbell’s theory is that he does not consider what would happen if the male hero were to be a female, whether she would also encounter the same psychological obstacles as the male hero or whether these encounters with anima and the animus would be reversed. But this is an interesting question and pertinent to the subject of the female hero. I would like to diverge here for a moment from my discussion of Campbell’s theory to introduce Pearson and Pope’s theory on the energies at work in the female hero’s journey and how they reflect on Campbell’s theory. They write

The heroic journey is a psychological journey in which the hero escapes from the captivity of her conditioning and searches for her true self. As in the classic version of the story, she descends into the underworld of her psyche to encounter the life-denying forces, or ‘dragons’ within. These are the forces of fragmentation, self-loathing, fear and paralysis. When she slays the dragons, she becomes, or is united with, her true self. ... Among works with a female protagonist there is little consensus about the identity of the external figures (who she may meet on her journey). A husband or lover, mother or father, female friend or stranger may be a captor figure if he or she reinforces the myths of female inferiority, virginity and

romantic love; yet any of these may be a rescuer if he or she reinforces the hero's sense of worth and power. ... The inner self-hater may be personified as either male (the Ogre Tyrant) or female (the Wicked Witch), depending on the hero's experience. (Pearson & Pope, 1981:63-66)

The most important thing to note in Pearson and Pope's brief summary of the female hero's journey is the rapidity of the female hero's integration of animus into her psyche. Where the male hero may take as many as three stages in Campbell's monomyth to integrate his anima into his psyche, the female hero does not have that luxury. Because the animus represents masculinity (encapsulating the capacity for movement, action and self-assertion), the female hero must integrate her animus into her psyche fairly quickly otherwise she will be incapable of attempting the heroic quest. Within the first stage of the heroic journey, the female hero is already accepting her masculine traits: this is hinted at in her movement away from the situation in which she was held captive, and her aggressive self-assertion against those who were previously her captors.

This almost immediate integration and assertion of her animus means that the female hero, almost from the start of the quest, represents both anima (passive feminine energy) and animus (active masculine energy). This means that the female hero is not bound only to be encountering that which is 'other' to her, as the male hero must (because he has come to represent only animus). Instead, the female hero often meets those aspects of her femininity (anima) *and* masculinity (animus) which have been difficult for her to face or incorporate into her self, or those aspects which have been serving as a prison for her true self. Theoretically then, the female hero could also have a meeting with Campbell's 'queen goddess of the world', but the relationship between the goddess and the female

hero may turn out to be slightly different from that of the male hero and the goddess. This facet of the female hero, her representation of both masculine and feminine energies, is what makes her so vital and is the key to understanding what we have lost by assuming the hero to be only male.

The third theoretical approach to the female hero is generally espoused by female critics, and holds that women can be heroes. As yet, however, relatively little has been written, in comparison with the body of work that has been written about the (male) hero, about the female hero and how both she and her actions should be evaluated. The work of those who have written on the topic of the female hero makes interesting reading; the work of Pearson and Pope has already been touched on, and the next theorist I would like to consider here is Mary Anne Jezewski.

Jzewski takes Raglan's heroic template and applies it to the stories of various powerful female figures in order to see whether the same template will work for both male heroes and female heroes or, if not, what the template for the female hero should be. She defines the hero as

A person whose life story is passed on by oral tradition and/or written accounts and is remembered for exceptional deeds that have as their basis qualities exemplified in courage, power or magic. The hero may be a character of folktale, legend, myth or history. (Jzewski, 1984:55)

After having selected and compared the stories of the female characters with which she intends to work, Jezewski notes that

The similarity in the patterns of the life story of these selected female heroes is readily apparent (and) the diversity of the times and the cultures they represent

does not significantly alter the presence of the characteristic traits of female heroes. (Jezewski, 1984:55)

Among the characters with which Jezewski works are Hera, Helen of Troy, Brunhild, Cleopatra, Catherine the Great, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Empress Wu Chao, Empress Tz'u-his and Mata Hari. The traits Jezewski notes as being characteristic of the female hero are

1. Her parents are royal or godlike and
 2. they are often related.
 3. There is a mystery surrounding her conception and/or birth.
 4. Little is known of her childhood.
 5. She herself is a ruler or a goddess.
 6. She is charming and beautiful.
 7. She uses men for political purposes.
 8. She also controls men in matters of love and sex.
 9. She is married and
 10. she has a child or children.
 11. She has lovers.
 12. Her child succeeds her.
 13. She does a man's job or deeds.
 14. She prescribes law.
 15. There are conflicting views of her goodness.
 16. Her legend contains the Andromeda⁸ theme and
 17. The subsequent resolution of this theme by treacherous means resulting in untimely death or exile, or incarceration etc.
 18. Her death is uneventful and may not be mentioned in her legend.
- (Jezewski, 1984:57-58)

The similarities and differences between Jezewski's list of traits and those compiled by Raglan (Appendix A) are very interesting because there are surprisingly few differences between the pattern of the male and female hero. Only three differences stand out, and these are differences in the nature of the actions undertaken by the hero. The female hero is far more sexually active than the male hero; the male hero goes on quests and has

⁸ 'The "Andromeda Theme"...derives from the classical tale of Perseus. The beautiful Andromeda is tied to a rock as a sacrifice to a monster ravaging her country. Perseus sees Andromeda, falls in love with her, kills the monster, frees her and marries Andromeda. (...)The "rescue" may involve the female choosing a lover more appropriate to her beauty, intelligence and social position and being "saved" by this man from a life with one who is not considered a suitable mate for the female hero.' (Jezewski, 1984:58)

adventures while the female hero remains at home; and, at some point in her career, the female hero is rescued (from some or other predicament) by a male, where the male hero suffers no such rescue by a woman.

It is interesting that it is in these three things that the male and female hero's life pattern differs because these actions are ones particularly expected from women by male culture. I would argue that this pattern into which the female hero's life falls describes the same behaviour against which I would expect a female hero (or a male hero) to revolt, particularly because the behaviour is that which is prescribed for them by culture.

It is not Jezewski's intention to suggest that the pattern she identifies represents either heroic liberation or the constriction of female heroism, all she does is suggest that this pattern seems to emerge in the lives of the women she has taken under consideration. However, what she proposes is interesting because, if we consider the two lists of heroic traits (those of the male hero and those of the female hero), what is brought to our attention once again is the same imbalance present in much other hero theory. Because, in Raglan's case, the male hero is bound to being the expression of his animus, we find his actions leaning heavily towards issues associated with masculinity. As Jezewski takes Raglan's research as a model from which to work, her female heroes seem to become reciprocally bound to the being the expression of the anima. Neither of these lists of traits allows for events or circumstances that would give the male and female heroes opportunity to fully explore both their masculinity and femininity.

As Raglan's masculine hero is bound to the expression and exploration of his masculinity, the brief encounters this hero has with characters that represent his anima are clearly peripheral to the main action. This main action could be anything from man meeting man in battle and man defying his father to man assuming power over a patriarchal kingdom. The male hero's mother and 'beloved' make brief appearances in the story but do not effect any change or growth in Raglan's hero. From this we can assume that what may have initially been a mythic attempt to integrate the energies of anima and animus has failed. The hero remains an expression of the animus and so a champion of the masculine rather than a champion of the human. Jezewski's female hero shows a similar pattern. The female hero stays at home, relies on physical attraction to get what she wants, is nurturing and needs protection. She is most bound to the expression of the anima and so is also left only half human.

However, there is something interesting in the female hero's seemingly docile list of traits; unlike the male hero, the female hero seems to be allowed a little more leeway because she is, at times, able to display traits associated with both the anima and (albeit minimally) the animus. Jezewski's female hero is comfortable with her feminine sexuality, she welcomes the role of mother, she is charming (diplomatic) and is able to assume a passive stance (characteristics which stem from the anima). However, she is also capable of assuming political power, of prescribing law (performing 'manly deeds') and adopting an active stance that may affect the public view of her negatively (characteristics which stem from the animus). Because of this, Jezewski's female hero

appears to allow more natural integration of anima and animus than does the male hero; certainly she is capable of far more flexibility of roles than he is.

As was suggested earlier, any active female hero already represents both anima and animus, the question is only how much of each we allow her to express. According to Jezewski's template, while the female hero's assumption of power (suggesting an active animus) does seem promising, she is never quite allowed to assume a wholly heroic role. She remains a damsel in distress who must, at the last, be rescued. Jezewski's female hero does not have the power to transform her world. The irony is that neither does Raglan's male hero. Raglan's hero's world remains largely unchanged because this hero has not achieved the integration of anima with animus that he should have, and so he does not think to challenge the power conventions within his society. He merely assumes power in his turn and begins the cycle all over again.

Coline Covington, in her article *In Search of the Heroine*, writes

The hero's story is one of individuation, a striving towards self-determination, and the struggle to know the world, to become conscious. ... According to Jung, "The heroes are usually wanderers, and wandering is a symbol of longing, of the restless urge which never finds its object, of nostalgia for the lost mother". ... The fact that the hero is male can be shown to be no accident. From the standpoint of the archetype of separation, he represents the first separation of the infant from the mother at birth, and so he assumes the form of something other- a male. (Covington, 1989:244)

This statement is problematic unless one, once again, is to replace the term 'male' with that of 'masculine'. Of course the hero must be masculine, if we are to understand that by masculine we mean active and strong (and allowed to leave the house). My argument has

been that women have not been allowed to express or explore those parts of themselves that are masculine but have been trapped in the single stifling arena of imposed femininity, and because of this, they have not been allowed to take up the mantle of the hero. The hero's story *is* one of individuation, or at least, that is how the quest must begin. But, at the end, the hero's story also becomes one of integration, of knowing oneself and the energies in one's own psyche (anima, animus and shadow), and then sharing that wisdom. Women must be allowed to own the masculine parts of themselves and men must be allowed to own the feminine, without having to feel that they have had to or should have to sacrifice the other. This is what Raglan and Jezewski both dismiss in their theories.

Challenging gender stereotypes is not easy, however, perhaps because it is very difficult to define for certain where natural behaviour ends and societal coercion begins. Certainly, in the case of the female hero the problem has been identified and an attempt has been made to address it. In the genres of fantasy and science fiction, female characters have been allowed to play increasingly active roles, roles which have, previously, been reserved for male characters. But the portrayal of active female characters has met with some resistance because there are feminists who are concerned about the popular portrayal of female heroism. Sarah Lefanu writes in *Feminism and Science Fiction* that

Attempts have been made to reclaim Amazons for women if not for feminists by taking the heroes of sword-and-sorcery tales and giving them breasts. While they tend to be less mighty in the mews than their brothers, they go in for the same sword wielding dragon-taming behaviour. ... The problem with these role-reversal stories - as with role-reversal societies - is that they do not necessarily challenge the gender stereotypes that they have reversed. (Lefanu, 1989:35)

For Lefanu these role-reversal hero(in)es have not dispelled the gender stereotypes under which female characters have had to labour for so long; I disagree with her. These characters have certainly had to assume some masculine traits, much as some of the male heroes being created today should have to assume feminine traits; I do not think that a violent female hero is an unbelievable proposition, or that a masculine female is improbable. I think these characters *can* challenge gender stereotypes. As Jessica Salmonson writes, ‘The very act of women taking up sword and shield, to a society like our own which is ruled by men, is an act of revolution.’ (Salmonson, 1979:14) However, if this female hero displays as little active anima as Raglan’s male hero, then yes, she fails to fulfil the criteria of a hero.

Continuing her argument against the ‘female heroes’ with which readers are presented in contemporary speculative fiction, Lefanu also suggests that

Women as protagonists do not necessarily interrogate the social and literary construction of women as gendered subjects. Creating a female protagonist simply seems to me an obvious stratagem a science fiction writer can adopt to offset the weight of books-for-men under which the reader sometimes feels herself squashed. My emphasis then, is not on female characters as simple protagonists; but on the *how* and the *why* and the *to what end*. (Lefanu, 1989:24)

Here I agree with Lefanu, merely presenting the reader with a female protagonist does not necessarily mean that the character is either a believable woman or a believable hero, or that the author is questioning social gender norms. The only flaw in Lefanu’s argument (when we view it in terms of the female hero) is that the female hero is not merely a protagonist. The hero is not bound, though I am loath to use that word, to the same conventions binding normal protagonists, he or she is bound rather to archetypal action

that transcends gender. And this is why female and male heroes have so much more in common (seemingly) than men and women, especially today when more realistic heroes (both men and women) are being created. Lefanu's expectations of the female hero do not correspond to those which one should have of the archetypal hero.

The weakness in Lefanu's argument is that she seems to admire female heroes who are involved in actions which affect only the female half of the human population; she writes that 'the constraints against which ... heroines strive are, quite specifically, those imposed upon women by men' (Lefanu, 1989:28). This merely limits the action of the female hero once again, to action within appropriate gender bounds. Certainly, the female hero must challenge the place in which her gender has been kept, but that cannot be the whole of her action; it is her place to benefit all people, men and women.

However, the value in Lefanu's argument is her suggestion that the reader be aware of how the female hero is presented to them. This is important because there is a certain caricature of the female 'hero' which seems to be appearing alongside the real female hero in speculative fiction. This character is, however, certainly not a male-hero-with-breasts, she is quite the opposite. Those same places in which we find the contemporary female hero often present the public with conflicting images and speculative fiction is no different. Because it has, until recently, been very much a men-only genre (Lefanu, 1989:2 and Russ, 1972:83), there is still a great call in speculative fiction for images with which to titillate a male audience; this has led to 'heroic' female images which are little more than pin-ups for male readers. If one takes a look at a few of these pictures of

female 'heroes' in contemporary comic books, one cannot argue that these heroes are meant to inspire women.

The first picture above features the protagonist from William Turner's *Fathom*. The subtext to the picture is, 'The Wetter the Better: What drooling fanboy wouldn't pay \$9 to see a live-action *Fathom* movie?' This character is supposed to be a female hero and yet the response she evokes is certainly not the spiritual awe an archetypal hero commands. She is a sex object, and blatantly so. Picture number two has wannabe *Dangergirl*, Valerie, daydreaming about being a hero. Her adventure is going along smoothly until she realises that she cannot possibly vanquish the villain, her breasts are too small. When they miraculously pop out into acceptable dimensions, she is able to continue. Picture three shows us Chaos Comics' Lady Death. Her pose is extremely titillating and her superhero costume could have been designed by *Playboy*. This female will hardly inspire women to heroism. The last picture, a page from *Darkchylde*, shows us a female 'hero' accessing her powers, which are so great that she bursts out of her clothing. These characters cannot be taken seriously as actual examples of female heroes. Lefanu is concerned about the female hero, but the danger is not in the threat of the female hero advocating masculinity over femininity (or her being a prop in someone else's adventure), it is rather in her becoming just another 'feminine' male fantasy.

Having glanced at these pictures, it is no wonder that speculative fiction critic, Eric Rabkin, can write that

An honest historian of science fiction must recognise that most science fiction still winds up depicting women exploited. The first dominant image is that of woman exploited through selflessness. As the ambient culture accepts a progressively clearer recognition that women focus their attention not only on the children but on the man with whom those children are begotten, selflessness takes on another face, that of the lovestruck female. This image, a perverse hypertrophy of the Victorian ideal of uncorrupted female sensibility, leads especially in our time of reliable female contraceptives to a recognition of female sexuality, the act of love

divorced from begetting. For some, the effort to imagine new roles for women sadly reduces to aggrandizing this sexuality, in effect expressing hostility against women for sharing with men a certain animal spirit and so casting women back into pornography and the status of sex object. Science fiction has done all this. (In Barr, 1987:14)

Women have been exploited in many arenas and that of science fiction is no different. Rabkin suggests that for many writers, an easy way to accommodate the ‘liberated woman’ is to focus on her ‘liberated’ sexuality. While sexual liberation has been an important issue for many feminists, this male fascination with female sexuality does not encourage liberation, but rather a disguised further constriction of female freedom. Female sexuality becomes just a sexual-tease for men, rather than a healthy expression of female appetite, as these pictures plainly show.

Considering the pictures above, Wector’s declaration that, ‘although women are among the most ardent hero-worshippers ... the cynical may suggest that no woman is ever a heroine to another woman,’ makes good sense. (Wector, 1963:476) These characters bulging out of scanty clothing are poor examples of heroes, not because of the emphasis on their erotic power, but because they display little else of note beyond their capacity to seduce. That these women are primarily good-looking and beautifully built does not signify the heroic, and women should not have to accept these caricatures as models of female heroism. These sirens are merely creations of a male imagination that would be horribly threatened by the real female heroes I discuss in Chapters Three and Four.

Salmonson writes that

They (male sword and sorcery writers) habitually depict women of peculiar thigh and mammary proportions (because) it has been escape fantasy for the least mature aspects of the male ego: escape into worlds where simpletons are rewarded for unprovoked violence and undisguised misogyny. ... The message is a fearful contribution to the culture-myth: men are heroic, if only in a roguish fashion; women are not. No literary arena is of necessity so steeped in prejudice or so rooted in its own repetition and inexperience, (but) fortunately the exceptions are becoming more common. (Salmonson, 1979:14-15)

Science fiction author and critic, Joanna Russ has also (like Rabkin and Salmonson) noted the tendency in speculative fiction to create such exploitative images of women and she is scathing of those authors who use these images. She writes that

In short, masculinity equals power and femininity equals powerlessness. This is a cultural stereotype that can be found in much popular literature, but science fiction writers have no business employing stereotypes, let alone swallowing them goggle-eyed. (Russ, 1972:84)

What Russ and Salmonson suggest is that the use of fantastic images of enticing women in speculative fiction signifies nothing more than an immature author producing for an immature male audience. This titillation of the male appetite does speculative fiction as a genre a disservice because speculative fiction is capable of so much more. Russ in fact, suggests that the writer of speculative fiction has no right to be accepting and perpetuating such obviously sexist notions; speculative fiction should challenge outdated and demeaning cultural norms.

That the real female hero is emerging in this genre, speculative fiction, does suggest, however, that a change is being made. As Salmonson writes, fortunately the exceptions to the sex object are becoming more common. And Cortiel, who has written a critique of Russ's work, writes almost thirty years after Russ's comment was made, that

Science fiction has ... changed dramatically since 1971 when Russ critically surveyed the then largely male-dominated field. (Cortiel, 1999:5)

Cortiel goes on to argue that feminist writers have focussed particularly on creating real women who are heroic, in the fiction they write. These authors are the ones who offer to the reader, and the world, a vision of the archetypal female hero. For them, and for those who choose to read this fiction, the pictures of female heroism offered above are ridiculous. While Lefanu seems more worried about female heroes having to assume too much masculinity and forfeiting their feminine strengths, patriarchal culture has found a more insidious way of undermining the female hero by exaggerating her 'femininity'. Fortunately, there are both readers and authors who are aware of this tendency and are attempting to counteract it.

What is interesting to note about the female characters appearing in comic books today is that they are, for the most part, strong women. These women are as well versed in kung fu and explosives as their male counterparts and are as active as the men too; perhaps this is why their sexual attributes are so exaggerated. Male readers would be threatened by a strong female who has harnessed her masculinity, so this must be offset by establishing her, unequivocally, as a feminine object of lust. The same focus on sex is not present in comic books about male heroes (consider *Green Lantern*, *Batman*, *Wolverine*, *Lobo* and countless others). Once again the issue becomes one of balance between the masculine principle and the feminine principle. Patriarchal society is threatened by the integration of both principles to produce whole human beings; how are men to maintain their

superiority if they cannot measure themselves against the Other? So the female hero who expresses both masculinity and femininity becomes an uncomfortable proposition.

In this case, then, if we allow women to harness the masculine energies within them, we should find more real female heroes appearing in the worlds we create and the world in which we live. Covington suggests that the hero is male because he moves away from home in an effort to become an individual in his own right, being 'other' than the mother, and that this leads to the longing for a home which is *right*, which keeps the hero wandering. I believe this journey is just as much a psychological process needed to be enacted by the female, perhaps more so because she is far more restricted by culture (or 'home') than the male hero. I disagree with Lefanu that this writing of female heroes into the roles of 'male heroes' could be detrimental to the gender debate; at the very least this action questions the stereotyping of women into normally docile or sexually explicit roles. However, if I understand Lefanu correctly, she is also arguing against the hero being only masculine, and with this I agree. We should find both masculinity and femininity within the hero.

In the past, because we have had to deal with static notions of men being masculine and women being feminine, the heroic constructs through which we had to explore ourselves were flawed (both the male heroic construct and the female 'heroic' construct). It is imperative that the hero manifest the energy of both the active animus and anima by the end of his or her journey, otherwise, because there is an imbalance of energies, the hero is unlikely to be able to transform his or her world and maintain that transformation.

I do not therefore believe that the heroic journey, or heroic abilities should be considered gender specific but that they are archetypal and are therefore available to both genders of the human race. I believe it is far more likely to be a case of

Both male and female heroes (beginning) the quest for wholeness and selfhood by risking the violation of conventional norms, including conventions about appropriate sex-role behaviour; both (learning) not to manipulate and restrain other people; and both (reaching) accommodation with the best qualities associated with men and women, integrating strength with humility, independence with empathy, rationality with intuition, and thought with emotion. Because society divides human qualities into categories of male and female, the symbols for the final state of wholeness usually are androgynous. (Pearson & Pope, 1981:15)

However, this necessary change within the heroic construct cannot come from the sun-god-hero type who has championed the masculine cause through history, it can only come from some unknown element able to operate outside the boundaries of that masculine stereotype. This is why the female hero is able to become the vehicle through which we can propose a new, more whole, heroic construct, one which does not elevate the masculine above the feminine or the feminine above the masculine. And if we allow her to assume a wholly heroic role in which she does face her dragons, integrate those uncomfortable aspects of her anima and animus and transform her world, she will, at the same time, transform our world's narrow concept of what a hero (and what a woman) should be. And as she does this, she will also free the male hero from that static behavioural pattern to which he has been bound.

With this in mind, I propose that the heroic standard discussed in Chapter One should be equally applicable to the female hero as it is to the male hero; the female hero must be

human, she must undertake a journey or quest (which can be both psychological and physical) and she must champion an ethic through which she reforms her world. This is no longer an impossibility due to patriarchal denigration of female agency; having realised that female weakness is a social myth, the damsel in distress may pick herself up, dust herself off and set about the liberation of society.

Drawing the Virtuous Sword

Bloodshed, battle, brute-strength and aggression are all evocative of the warrior-hero and the monster-slayer. These are the first two incarnations of the hero and both are lauded for their virile masculinity; lone male warriors pitted against horrible foes or outnumbered a hundred to one by their enemies stand fast and beat the enemy into submission. This heroic type is recognised particularly for its *fortitudo* – strength. *Fortitudo*, however, is not necessarily something displayed solely by men; women, able to access the aggressive activity of their masculinity, are just as capable of drawing their swords and enjoying the madness and mayhem of battle.

In progressive contemporary fantasy and science fiction there are an increasing number of female characters who have assumed the mantle of the warrior hero, despite Lefanu's dismissal of them. One need only consider a character like Ellen Ripley, from Ridley Scott's watershed science fiction film, *Alien*, to be convinced of this. And Ripley does not stand alone, instead, she appears in a league of female warriors: among them, Sarah O'Connor (*Terminator*), Xena (*Warrior Princess*), She-Ra (*Masters of the Universe*). These characters show that the heroic ethic, even at its most masculine, may be championed by women and implicit in their actions is their challenge of the patriarchal claim to heroic status. These female warrior heroes illustrate the fact that the two-dimensional masculine male hero is no longer the only champion people are able to imagine; that concept has become outdated and is being reworked for a contemporary

society in which women may also brandish weapons and fight to the death on behalf of their people.

Joanna Russ's indomitable assassin, Alyx, is one such character. Russ wrote five short stories, published in one volume as *The Adventures of Alyx* in 1983, in which Alyx first appeared. Each of these stories may be read alone; but if the stories are read together they take the form of an episodic journey from Alyx's awakening through to the consummation of her heroism. As such, each of the short stories, at its completion, represents a threshold crossed in the heroic monomyth Russ has constructed.

I Thought She Was Afraid Till She Stroked My Beard is the second story that Russ wrote concerning Alyx, but in the chronology of Alyx's heroic journey it represents the first part of the monomyth, the Departure. At the start of the story we meet a nameless young woman of seventeen who is married to a domineering and rigid man (who seems to be the norm rather than the exception to male behaviour in this world); Russ places her young woman in a world in which there are certain societal rules and accepted norms of behaviour. We are, however, told that 'Many years ago, long before the world got into the state it is in today, young women were supposed to obey their husbands; but nobody knows if they did it or not.' (Russ, 1983:31)

Russ's aside to the reader, 'but nobody knows if they did it or not', intimates that the reader must not accept the history with which they have been presented; there may well have been those who did act against the norm, but who have been lost to history because

of the History (his-story) Makers (the husbands and the men). Russ intends to present us with a woman who acts against the norm, but about whom we might never have heard, had it not been for Russ's account of an alternate history. Russ begins here to take the clay of history and mould for us the female hero who was and yet *has never been*, at least according to accepted history.

We meet this nameless young woman who is to become Alyx and we see that she is set to manual labour by her husband and is treated like a servant. She yearns for something alien to her world, something expansive and we are told that she goes about her work with 'her head full of pirates' (Russ, 1993:32). These pirates are rich in symbolic meaning: they are people (men and therefore representative of an active animus) who live outside society, who do not adhere to society's customs or niceties. They represent, for the nameless girl, a freedom, a rogue, violent freedom from the captivity and servitude to which she finds herself bound on land (an existence of enforced femininity). It is when real pirates enter the house of her husband that the Call to Adventure is sounded. The woman sees her husband 'rooked' by the pirates, sees that the pirates defeat him and knows that she no longer needs to stay with him. Campbell writes that

Whether dream or myth, in these adventures there is an atmosphere of irresistible fascination about the figure that appears suddenly as a guide, marking a new period, a new stage, in the biography. That which has to be faced, and is somehow profoundly familiar to the unconscious – though unknown, surprising and even frightening to the conscious personality – makes itself known, and what was formerly meaningful may become strangely emptied of meaning. (Campbell, 1991:55)

For this young girl, the pirates and more particularly the pirate captain will become her guides; because they represent a way of life outside the norm, in which they own their

actions and are subject to no other laws but those of the pirate, she is fascinated by the freedom they have and she must internalise the lessons they have to teach. It is also important to note that she has visions of pirates before the pirates arrive; the hero hears the call to adventure, but often the voice that sounds that call is one's own voice, that it is something 'profoundly familiar to the unconscious'. The young girl has externalised her animus, living as she has under the patriarchal assumption that a woman with an active animus is unnatural, and now she must travel with the pirates in order to re-internalise that active animus.

However, before the girl is able to follow her guides into that part of her psyche which they represent, she must first destroy that which has her bound. The girl's husband plays the part of the domineering and misogynistic patriarchy, he represents societal norms which do not allow women any freedom, any real life apart from the servitude which He believes She owes him. When the girl challenges her husband's treatment of her, his response serves as a summation of that society's attitudes towards women.

SHE: It is beneath my social class to do it and you know it.

HE: You have no social class; only I do, because I am a man. (Russ, 1983:31)

She must decide to break free of him and all he represents if she wants to claim her own life. When the girl sees the pirates defeat her husband, something within her sets.

He jumped to his feet; he cried, "What are you doing!" again and again in the silent kitchen; he shook her until her teeth rattled.

"Leaving you," she said.

He struck her. She got up, holding her jaw. She said, "You don't see anything. You don't know anything." ...

"You can't keep me," she said, and then she laughed; "no, no, you can't," she added, shaking her head, "you just can't." (Russ, 1983:32-33)

The girl's husband is the first dragon she must face in order to be free; there are others she must meet and battle against as she journeys on but this first one must be done away with before the journey may be undertaken. According to Pearson and Pope's discussion of the female hero, this first dragon which the girl defeats may be a representation of the myth of romantic love. They propose that

Women initially strive to fulfil society's ideals of wife and motherhood in order to gain the promised rewards – a sense of fulfilment, the love of one's family, and the respect of society. Each discovers the myths to be, in fact, unrealistic and destructive. (...And so) in the first stage (of the heroic journey), the hero exits...when she comes to realise that people she had previously seen as guides for her life – parents, husbands, religious or political authorities – are her captors. (Pearson & Pope, 1981:47-68)

In Russ's story, the girl realises as much. When her husband attacks her in order to prevent her from leaving, she defends herself and kills him. She destroys the dragon who has imprisoned her and is now able to undertake the heroic journey for herself. That the young girl actually kills her husband has a particular thematic resonance for Russ. Cortiel writes that

Beginning with the stories around Alyx, Russ's fiction develops androicide as the focussed representation of a revolutionary war. Taking the life of a member of the sex that has denied women the capacity to act opens new grounds for female characters in the existing archive of comprehensible and permissible story lines. In Russ's texts, androicide as a narrative device represents women's claim to agency, destroying as it does established gender-specific narratives in the handed-down set of basic storylines available to (genre) fiction writes. Women, who are conventionally supposed to *give* life, especially to male offspring, transcend this demand of patriarchy by taking the life of a grown man. Women, who are conventionally expected to help the male hero, become the heroes of their own stories, destroying precisely those characters in the story which would bar their access to heroism. (Cortiel, 1999:46)

When the girl kills her husband, she acts without hesitation and it is a revolutionary act in that this one act of androicide challenges the entire patriarchy according to which she may

previously have defined herself; in this one moment the girl changes from object to subject. She kills the male definition of her capability and is able to quest for a new definition that she herself will frame.

Once the girl has escaped her husband, 'she [zigzags] between the tree trunks and [flashes] over the lip of the cliff into the sea' (Russ, 1983:34); she dives into the ocean to join the pirates. This movement, the leap off the cliff into the ocean is a prime example of Frye's descent from a higher world into a lower world. This descent of the hero into a lower world where things are fluid and dreamlike usually represents some part of the hero's attempt to define his or her identity, to claim a reality from among the illusions with which they are presented. (Frye, 1976:97) The ocean becomes this place for the girl; she descends into Campbell's 'belly of the whale' as she descends into the hull of the pirate ship, and she learns something of her identity.

It is noteworthy that Russ chooses to have her protagonist discover herself surrounded by the ocean, which is 'the primordial element, the mother sea (as opposed to the male sky)' (Ferber, 1999:179). The ocean, because of its associations with the moon, cyclical time and fluidity (as well as the unconscious mind) is a particularly feminine element. And so the girl learns about herself while immersed in a world of vital, chaotic, powerful femininity. It is also interesting that it is here that Russ chooses to have her protagonist meet and internalise her animus, the masculine part of her unconscious; the male pirates have chosen the ocean as their element and it is here that the girl must meet them. So Russ has the girl engage with her animus at the same time as she is encased by anima.

According to Campbell's template, the girl, having heeded the Call to Adventure, is now ripe for her encounter with the 'Cosmic Mother' who will provide the hero with Supernatural Aid. He writes

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 amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass. ... The hero who has come under the protection of the Cosmic Mother cannot be harmed (because,) having responded to his own call, and continuing to follow courageously as the consequences unfold, the hero finds all the forces of the unconscious at his side. Mother Nature herself supports the mighty task. (Campbell, 1991: 69-72)

Russ accomplishes this meeting with the Cosmic Mother in a manner which places her protagonist in a very interesting position. Throughout *The Adventures of Alyx*, Russ identifies the hero *with* the Cosmic Mother, as though there is little, if any, difference between the active female hero and the active female principle personified in the figure of the Goddess. Effectively, what this serves to do is firmly identify the hero with the female and the feminine and it identifies the female and the feminine with active heroism.

It is important that it is before the girl actually encounters the pirates that she becomes aware of her connection with the Female principle, and it is just as telling that Russ does not choose to have her meet some externalisation of that principle. Russ intimates that active femininity is something with which her hero is already comfortable; this particular aspect of the anima has already been integrated into the hero's perception of herself and enables the hero to take on the other aspects of her psyche with which she may not be as comfortable. In 'Bluestocking', the first story in *The Adventures of Alyx*, Russ introduces

Alyx to the reader so that there can be no doubt as to this character's relationship with the Cosmic Mother.

This is the tale of a voyage that is of interest only as it concerns the doings of one small, grey-eyed woman. Small women exist in plenty - so do those with grey eyes – but this woman was among the wisest of a sex that is surpassingly wise. There is no surprise in that (or should not be) for it is common knowledge that Woman was created fully a quarter of an hour before Man, and has kept that advantage to this very day. Indeed, legend has it that the first man, Leh, was fashioned from the sixth finger of the left hand of the first woman, Loh, and that is why women have only five fingers on the left hand. The Lady with whom we concern ourselves in this story had all six fingers, and what is more, they all worked. (Russ, 1983:9)

Alyx is as the first woman was, before man took her sixth finger. If the sixth finger of the goddess represents women's agency, then Alyx, nameless as she is at this point in the story, is born with a capacity for agency that most other women are not. She is inherently capable of action because she '[has] all her fingers, and what is more, they all [work].'

This sixth finger is the 'amulet' the Cosmic Mother gives Alyx. Cortiel writes that

'Agency' signifies the power and the ability to effect changes in the process of human history, combined with the recognition by others that the agent is indeed the origin of that change...This concept builds on two premises: first, that the actions of an individual constitute their identity and second, that agency is prerequisite for human existence within the cultural context. If I am denied this capacity, I do not exist as part of society. (Cortiel, 1999:15)

Women, in this nameless young girl's world, do not exist as a part of society because they are not allowed agency. However, when Alyx is born with that amulet, the sixth finger, she signifies that the active feminine has been reborn and will reclaim agency for all women as Alyx *does* act, *does* change the course of history and is recognised to have done so; in short, as the young girl claims her heroic identity and assumes the responsibility of her heroism so the destiny of those around her changes, as much as her own destiny changes.

It is interesting that Joanna Russ extracts her hero from the linear temporality of patriarchal time. Russ publishes her stories in an un-chronological order, has elements in the stories which interrupt the linear flow of time, and even has her hero go up against the controlling Trans Temporal Authority in the 'last' story of Alyx's adventures. What Russ effectively does is have Alyx create a time apart from that of the patriarchy. This is important because it is another form of breaking the shackles which have bound Alyx in the past, which have bound women to patriarchal history and which have prevented women from being able to connect with possibly heroic ancestors. Feminist philosopher, Julia Kristeva writes that

In (the) second phase (of feminism), linked, on the one hand, to the younger women who came to feminism after May 1968 and, on the other, to women who had an aesthetic or psychoanalytic experience, linear temporality has been almost totally refused, and as a consequence there has risen an exacerbated distrust of the entire political dimension. ... This (more recent) current seems to think of itself as belonging to another generation – qualitatively different from the first one – in its conception of its own identity and, consequently, of temporality as such. Essentially interested in the specificity of female psychology and its symbolic realisations, these women seek to give a language to the intrasubjective and corporeal experiences left mute by culture in the past. ... It also means that, by demanding recognition of an irreducible identity without equal in the opposite sex and, as such, exploded, plural, fluid, in a certain way nonidentical, this feminism situates itself outside the linear times of identities which communicate through projection and revindication. Such a feminism rejoins, on the one hand, the archaic (mythical) memory and, on the other, the cyclical or monumental temporality of marginal movements. (Kristeva, :88)

When Russ establishes an arcane, mythical connection between her hero and the first woman, Loh, she establishes Alyx within monumental time – a woman's time in which the shared female experience creates an alternate temporality. And the fact that man's manipulation of woman's experience of time (manifested in the Trans Temporal Authority) is obviously countered in Russ's writing suggests that for her too, writing after

May 1968, 'there has arisen an exacerbated distrust of the entire political dimension' of time. Russ is part of this new approach to feminism and her refusal of linear temporality, together with her creation of an 'archaic (mythical) memory' for Alyx allows us to catch a glimpse of how monumental time may work *for* female authors and female readers. Russ's writing establishes Alyx as a character who moves in the current of women's time, as she defies the patriarchy which would have held her motionless in linear time. This further establishes Alyx's connection with the primordial feminine element.

As we return to the story, the young girl swims towards the pirate ship; she feels that part of herself that is the Cosmic Mother stir and it is because she has taken that first step on the heroic journey (performed that one irreversible 'act' of defiance against the norm – androicide) that she becomes aware of this aspect of herself.

She '[feels] something form within her, something queer, and dark, and hard, like the strangeness of strange customs, or the blackened face of the goddess Chance, whose image set up at crossroads looks three ways at once to signify the crossing of influences.'(Russ, 1983:30)

The girl, because she is acting against the norm, implicitly adopts another set of customs, in this case, those of the Cosmic Mother. Once her relationship with the Cosmic Mother has been established, the young girl is equipped to meet the Threshold Guardian and cross the First Threshold. Having crossed the first threshold, the hero is able to enter into her 'zone of magnified power' (Campbell, 1991:77) and then emerge from the 'belly of the whale' into the real world in which she must follow the quest set before her. For the girl, the first threshold is her immersion into the watery, oceanic world of the pirates. The threshold guardian whom she must encounter is the pirate captain and, having resolved

the issues which he represents, her rebirth into the world on land at Ourdh is her emergence from the belly of the whale (or the hull of the pirate boat).

The first figure, apart from her husband, that the girl encounters is the male pirate captain who is an externalisation of her animus. Although she is born with an active sense of female agency, the girl must still incorporate into herself the active energy of the animus; especially in a world in which the feminine and the masculine are so rigorously dichotomised it is important that the value of each be recognised and brought together in the hero, who may then attempt to restore balance to the world around her. For this reason, the threshold guardian is masculine and it is only as the girl learns from him that she can have access to her zone of magnified power (now having access to both masculine animus and feminine anima). In the story, the girl boards the pirate vessel, fights off the advances of a number of the pirates and is then taken aside by the pirate captain.

He recognised her at once, of course, and her look, and the pummelling she had left behind her, and the cracked knee, and all the rest of it. "So," he said, " You're a fighter, are you!" He took her hands in his and crushed them, good and hard; she smiled involuntarily. When she fenced with him (she insisted on fencing with him) she worked with a hard, dry persistence that surprised him. "Well, I have got your - and you have got my teaching," he said philosophically at first, "whatever you may want with that..." (Russ, 1983:35)

During her time aboard the pirate boat, there are four separate occasions during which the girl interacts with the pirate captain for a specific purpose. The first is the time during which she fences with the captain; in this interaction she becomes comfortable with the masculine animus and the activity it suggests regarding arms and finesse in battle. She quickly becomes as skilled as the captain.

On the second occasion the girl and the pirate captain enjoy a sexual interlude. However, before the captain is able to accept what the girl offers him, he asks her to wear a lacy nightgown (a gift from his store of loot). The nightgown represents a tame sexuality, the sexuality that the patriarchy has defined as being feminine; the captain cannot respond to the girl unless she adopts this role for him, he needs her to cover her nakedness. This interaction is more delicate than the first and explores the notion of sexual agency; the male pirate needs the girl to adopt the role of the docile female sexual object so that he may adopt his role of active sexual aggressor.

“It would look good on you,” he said. She said nothing. He laid down the nightgown and looked at her, bemused and wondering; then he reached out and tenderly touched her hair where it hung down to the point of her small, grim jaw.

“My, aren’t you little,” he said.

She laughed. Perhaps it was being called little, or perhaps it was being touched so very lightly, but this farm girl threw back her head and laughed until she cried, as the saying is, and then:

“Tcha! It’s a bargain, isn’t it!” said this cynical girl. (Russ, 1983:37)

The girl realises that, in order for her to claim her sexuality, she must play the game the captain has set before her; she dresses up and plants herself in his lap. Having seen through the bargain he proposes and, with conscious irony, adopting the role he wants her to play, the girl claims her sexual agency and gets what she wants from the captain. In this case the girl internalises the propensity for active, virile, sexuality represented by the animus; she will never again be the sexual object who dresses up for the man, but has claimed her right to be the sexual subject.

On the third occasion of particular interest to us, the pirate captain is about to go ashore and tells the girl that she may not accompany him. He forbids her, but she defies him;

‘she (does) go with him. She (appears), dripping wet and triumphantly smiling at the door of the little place he (has) chosen to discuss business in.’ (Russ, 1983:40) When the girl refuses to have her movements curtailed by a man, she accepts even more of her animus into herself, particularly the capacity for movement beyond the confines of a male-defined space. Interestingly enough, directly before the captain decides to curtail the girl’s movements, he notices her on board his ship, and his vision of her is probably what leads to his decision.

When he saw his woman squatting on the balls of her feet, a sliver of wood in her teeth, dealing out the cards to tell fortunes...he thought – or thought he saw – or recollected – that goddess who was driven out by the other gods when the world was made and who hangs about still on the fringes of things (at crossroads, at the entrance to towns) to throw a little shady trouble into life and set up a few cross currents and undercurrents of her own in what ought to be regular and predictable business. (Russ, 1983:39)

The captain defines the girl as ‘his woman’ and is alarmed to note in her that uncontrollable, shadowy, female agency of the Cosmic Mother. Because this threatens him and the supremacy of the male, he tries to assert himself and beat the girl back into her place. He cannot; the girl claims her right to movement and her right to animus. She follows him ashore and they fight. When the two return to the ship, the girl tells the captain that she is leaving; he becomes angry and locks her in his cabin; in a last-ditch attempt to prevent her movement, he locks her in the belly of the whale.

While the girl is here, and before her last confrontation with the captain, she comes across a hand-held mirror that the captain has given her (along with nightgown). For a number of reasons, the mirror is a peculiarly potent image to find at this juncture in the story. According to Frye, mirrors often appear at this point in the heroic journey because

they present heroes with an opportunity to view themselves and evaluate the identities before them. (Frye, 1976:117) What Russ does with this mirror is suggest an identity presented to the girl by the patriarchy; the girl can choose to adopt the identity defined by the lacy nightgown and the mirror, or she can choose to look elsewhere. Russ uses the mirror as a representation of the male gaze, and the problem of defining female identity in accordance with the authority of that gaze; the mirror signifies an identity assumed to please a male audience. However, as the girl watches herself in the mirror, Russ writes that

Women do not always look in mirrors to admire themselves, popular belief to the contrary. Sometimes they look only to slip off their rings and bracelets, to pluck off their earrings, to unfasten their necklaces, to drop their brilliant gowns, to take the colour off their faces until the bones stand out like spears and to wipe the hues from around their eyes until they can look and look at merely naked human faces, at eyes no longer brilliant and aqueous like the eyes of angels or goddesses but hard and small as human eyes are, little control points that are always a little disquieting, always a little peculiar, because they are not meant to be looked at but to look. (Russ, 1983:44)

Russ turns the mirror around and uses it as an instrument for deconstructing the identity presented to women by the patriarchy. Russ's hero is not drawn into the odd reflective world of the mirror either, she recognises the distortions in the surface and throws the mirror aside disinterestedly; instead, the girl picks up the sword left behind by the pirate captain and in that moment chooses the heroic path that she walks from then on.

The girl uses the sword to break down the door and as she steps onto the deck, she sees the ship is under attack. Taking up the sword, she enters the battle and does her share of killing. Her fourth and final interaction with the pirate captain occurs after the fighting is done.

“So,” she said, and shut her eyes.

He put his arm around her; he wiped her face. He stroked the nape of her neck and then her shoulder, but now his woman began to laugh, more and more, leaning against him and laughing until she was convulsed and he thought she had gone out of her mind. “What the devil!” he cried, almost weeping, “What the devil!” She stopped at that place in the scale where a woman’s laughter turns into a shriek; her shoulders shook spasmodically but soon she controlled that too. He thought she might be hysterical so he said, “Are you frightened? You won’t have to go through this again.”

“No?” she said.

“Never.”

“Well,” she said, “perhaps I will all the same.” (Russ, 1983: 44)

When the girl claims responsibility and refuses to feel shame for her actions, which are masculine rather than feminine, she integrates the animus into her psyche and claims agency in all the spheres over which the animus is meant to dominate. She is no longer able to access only active anima, but her own active animus too. The threshold guardian has taught the hero all he can; she crosses the first threshold and emerges from the ship. The emergence from the belly of the whale signifies the hero’s rebirth into the world and so it is here that the hero claims her identity; she emerges at the city of Ourdh and declares herself to the gatekeeper.

“My name,” she said, “is Alyx.”

“Never heard of it,” said the gatekeeper, a little annoyed.

“Good Heavens,” said Alyx, “not yet.” (Russ, 1983:45)

So Alyx completes the first part of the heroic monomyth, the Departure. The second part of the heroic journey, according to Campbell, is the Initiation of the Hero. In this part of the journey the hero undergoes The Road of Trials, The Meeting with the Goddess, Woman as the Temptress, Atonement with the Father, Apotheosis and is finally gifted with the Ultimate Boon. It is along the Road of Trials that the hero has all these other adventures, so the road itself does not present a particular stage.

In the second story of Alyx's journey, *Bluestocking*, Alyx is hired by a young woman named Edarra; Edarra needs Alyx to be her bodyguard and help her escape an arranged marriage. The most interesting aspect of this story is the manner in which Russ explores the two heroic adventures most fraught with inter-gender tension: the Meeting with the Goddess and Woman as Temptress. These are the two adventures in which it is almost implausible *not* to have a male hero as the protagonist, particularly because each episode deals with set 'feminine' archetypes and the male hero's response to these archetypes. When the hero is a woman, the archetypes themselves are not loaded with the same connotations and associations and because of this, the process that the female hero undergoes in each of these situations is different from that which a traditional, masculine, male hero would experience. Naturally, this serves to question the values accorded each of these archetypes by society and it also serves to question the validity of heroic experience when recorded from the perspective of only a male hero.

The goddess, according to Campbell, represents the 'totality of what can be known' (Campbell, 1991:116) and the male hero's ultimate adventure is his 'mystical marriage with the Queen Goddess of the world' (Campbell, 1991:109). Campbell writes that the goddess is

Mother, sister, mistress, bride ... she is the incarnation of the promise of perfection; the soul's assurance that, at the conclusion of its exile in a world of organised inadequacies, the bliss that once was known will be known again: the comforting, the nourishing, the "good" mother – young and beautiful – who was known to us, and even tasted, in the remotest past. ... The remembered image is not only benign however; for the "bad" mother too – (1) the absent, unattainable mother, against whom aggressive fantasies are directed, and from whom a counter-aggression is feared; (2) the hampering, forbidding, punishing mother; (3)

the mother who would hold to herself the growing child trying to push away; and finally (4) the desired but forbidden mother (Oedipus complex) whose presence is a lure to dangerous desire (castration complex) – persists in the hidden land of the adult's infant recollection and is sometimes even the greater force. (Campbell, 1991:111)

When the hero meets the mother goddess he is invited to master the implications of physical life - birth and death, love and rejection – and once he has faced her and made his peace with his mortality, he can move on to an encounter with the All Father. As we have already established, in these stories, Russ identifies Alyx with the goddess. Because of this, there is no real separation of the two figures and so, when Alyx encounters the goddess in *Bluestocking*, she merely confronts an aspect of her own femininity with which she is yet ill at ease. And this is very much representative of the difference between the male and the female protagonist in this situation: where the goddess must always be that incomprehensible 'Other' to the man (a mystery which he must untangle), to the woman, the goddess is accessible and comprehensible. For the female hero, the Meeting with the Goddess acts as the catalyst for an internal revelation within the hero, for the male hero, it is an uncomfortable encounter with an externalised anima.

In *Bluestocking*, Edarra and Alyx are the only hands on board the ship in which they escape Edarra's guardian. Alyx, however, assumes all the responsibility and allows Edarra no active role in the running of the ship. If one considers *Bluestocking* from the point of view of it being the tale of Edarra's heroic Departure, then Alyx should be the Cosmic Mother who helps Edarra break her bonds; instead, Alyx assumes the role of protector and in so doing, stifles Edarra's attempts to claim her own agency. Alyx becomes identified with that aspect of the goddess who is the 'mother who would hold to

herself the growing child trying to push away'. It is strange that Alyx, who has broken her own bonds, assumes this role with Edarra; certainly, in this case, Alyx becomes the mother who is a captor figure. We learn later that she adopts this role with Edarra because she abandoned a daughter of her own when she left her husband; Alyx overcompensates with Edarra for having being absent from her own daughter.

In this Meeting with the Goddess, Russ explores the myths associated with motherhood and what these myths may mean to a female hero. Alyx has to confront herself as a mother and must learn that 'mother' should not automatically mean having to assume responsibility for someone else. The term 'mother' should trap neither the child nor the mother into uncomfortable or restrictive sets of behavioural roles; if it does, there is something unhealthy about the relationship.

It is hardly coincidental that it is after a fight with Edarra (concerning Edarra's desire for action) that Alyx meets the goddess who appears as a sea-monster.

Now in the moonlight that turned the ocean to a ball of silvery waters in the midst of which bobbed the tiny ship, very very far from anyone or anything, she saw the surface part in a rain of sparkling drops and the huge, wicked, twisted face of the creature, so like and unlike a man's, rise like a shadowy demon from the dark, bright water. It held its baby to its breast, a nauseating parody of human-kind. (Russ, 1983:17)

Alyx kills the sea-monster with a fishing spear and her reaction to this action is interesting.

There was silence for a while. Then she said, "It's only an animal," and she made the mark of Yp on her forehead to atone for having killed something without the spur of overmastering necessity. She had not made the gesture for years...

"It's gone," said Alyx...

"It was an animal," said Alyx with finality, "that's all." (Russ, 1983:17-18)

When Alyx kills her husband, she shows no such remorse, she hardly pauses to consider what she has done and calls him an animal outright (p32). But here, having killed the sea-monster, Alyx is shaken by what she has done and feels the need to convince herself that she has acted rightly. The face of the monster is 'like and unlike a man's' because it is the face of a woman; the sea-monster is a female and a mother. What Alyx is faced with here is the parody of motherhood which she herself is enacting with Edarra; the sea-monster is the externalisation of what motherhood may mean to the female hero, a monstrous attempt to further curtail female movement and action (of both mother and daughter). It is unpleasant to have to face a part of oneself that one is unwilling to relinquish, and be forced to destroy it and this is what the goddess forces Alyx to do.

Pearson and Pope write that 'the myth of the perfect mother is an extension of the virginity myth; both images are asexual, both require selflessness, and both cast the woman in a scapegoat role' (Pearson and Pope, 1981:41). Russ takes this myth and recasts it, so that the myth of motherhood is represented by a vile sea serpent, which must be vanquished. Alyx must realise that being a mother enables her to empower her daughters; she should not have to live up to a sterile image of motherhood which only serves to inhibit both her and her daughters. The issues dealt with by male and female heroes are patently different here: where the male hero often deals with issues which are a hangover from his experience of his own mother (whether as erotic object or not), the female hero often may, as Alyx does here, have to deal both with her own behaviour as a mother and the implications that behaviour has for society, particularly for female children as daughters.

Campbell describes the goddess as being the round of life, as symbolising an awakening to the knowledge of both birth and death; it is interesting that Russ presents her ‘goddess’ in the same way. The sea-monster appears to Alyx carrying her baby, representing new life, but we are also told that, ‘the citizens [of Ourdh hold] monsters to be the souls of the wicked dead forever ranging the pastureless wastes of ocean to waylay the living and force them into watery graves’ (Russ, 1983:16). The Mother has tremendous responsibilities towards her children because she is able either to encourage her children to act independently of her, or she may choose to suffocate them until their lives are nothing more than a living death. She is either the door through which the children travel or the door behind which they are trapped. This is why the Meeting with the Goddess is a salient episode in the heroic journey; the hero must become acquainted with the implications of both life and death through the goddess, but the ‘life’ and ‘death’ with which they become acquainted may alter even as the gender of the hero is altered.

Were the hero male, he would now have earned access to ‘the totality of what can be known’; he would have learned something more of his anima and his relationship to it and would have garnered the wisdom of birth and death from the goddess. What the female hero learns from this episode is that she exists in a kind of vacuum, a living death, as she adopts the roles the patriarchy sets before her; the female hero learns from the goddess to exorcise that part of the archetype or myth that keeps her trapped in set behavioural patterns. The female hero is thus also gifted with a new understanding of life and death, apart from patriarchal dominance. When Alyx destroys the sea-monster she

frees both herself and Edarra from the constraints of a guilty and dictatorial motherhood. The morning after she kills the monster, Alyx begins to train Edarra in sword craft, thus acknowledging Edarra's right to agency. Alyx spends much of *Bluestocking* internalising this lesson.

The male hero becomes aware of his mortality, and therefore begins to understand more of his possible immortality, through his meeting with the goddess; he then chooses to walk the path from the flesh (albeit sacred flesh) of the mother to the spirit of the father. At this point in the heroic journey, the hero becomes the target of his enemies and is beset by temptations which attempt to prevent him from reaching the All Father. This episode is entitled Woman as Temptress. Campbell argues that it is because woman has been so irrevocably associated with the sins of the flesh that she has come to be the temptress, the one who seduces man from the path of heroic purity. This archetype is particularly misogynistic because it neither takes into account the fact that the role of the seducer may be played by a man, nor that the protagonist attempting to walk the pure heroic path may be female. Woman as Temptress is treated in an interesting manner in *The Adventures of Alyx*.

Because this is an episode during which the hero is tempted sexually (as representative of all the temptations to which the physical body is susceptible), it is an episode which focuses primarily on the sexuality of the hero. In the past, active female sexuality (as opposed to the docile sexuality expected of wives, mothers and sisters) has been cast in the role of the voracious Temptress and *Femme Fatale*. That role, however, no longer

works in the modern world where one is as likely to encounter unscrupulous ‘Hommes Fatales’ as one is their female counterparts, both in fiction and in real life. As well as this change, there has also been an important shift in the way active female sexuality is viewed. It is no longer judged to be monstrous or threatening but a normal, natural function of a female human being, neither more nor less potentially hazardous than male sexuality.

When Russ casts Alyx in the role of the hero, she causes an awkward problem in the heroic monomyth: if the active hero is female, what is the effect, if any, of the issues associated with the Temptress on this hero? Russ deals with this problem summarily. Alyx is comfortable with her sexuality and the issue of illicit sexual temptation does not arise; Russ creates a world in which sexual intimacy is an accepted part of behaviour, not a tool used for the subjugation of one gender by the other. Russ effectively subverts the issues associated with the Woman as Temptress when she suggests that for a female hero who sports a healthy view of her own sexuality (not tainted by the self-serving notions of the patriarchy), those issues would simply not arise. *Bluestocking* concludes with Edarra and Alyx both having had sexual encounters, with none of the ado associated with Campbell’s temptations of the ‘putrid flesh’. Russ sidesteps the Woman as Temptress stage in the heroic monomyth and ‘the omission itself (speaks) volumes’ (Campbell, 1991:38). Russ implies that the measuring of heroic capability according to what has been the self-righteous (and gender discriminatory) imposition of arbitrary moral codes on society is ridiculous and unworthy of debate.

The next step for Alyx, as for any hero beyond the reaches of the Temptress, is Atonement with the Father. In this stage the hero meets God and he or she is confronted with the truth of eternity and existence. In the story *The Barbarian*, Alyx is approached and then hired by a strange, fat man who appears to know many things and much about Alyx herself. She has met the man before, though the details of that meeting are not divulged to the reader.

“Ah!” he said, “you remember when you saw me last and you assume that a man who can live thirty years without growing older must have more to give – if he wishes – than a handful of gold coins. You are right. I can make you live long. I can ensure your happiness. I can determine the sex of your children. I can cure all diseases. I can even” (and here he lowered his voice) “turn this table, or this building, or this whole city to pure gold, if I wish it.”

“Can anyone do that?” said Alyx, with the faintest whisper of mockery. (Russ, 1983:50-51)

Through a series of twists and turns, Alyx follows the man through the story until, nearing the end, he adds to his initial claim of omnipotence.

“It is I, little one,” he said, “who made everything your eyes have ever rested on. Apes and Peacocks, tides and times” (he laughed) “and the fire and the rain. I made you. I made your husband...” (Russ, 1983:63)

He also boasts the power to destroy the world. This man claims the mantle of god but he reveals himself to be an arrogant, spoilt, and insensitive god who enjoys the power of his position while he plays with the lives of the creatures he claims to have made. When Alyx kills him and turns off the machines that he has used to run the world, however, she finds that the world runs perfectly well after the death of its god.

She took the candle in her unsteady hand and stood over the body of the fat man, a phantasmagoric lump on the floor, badly lit at last. Her shadow loomed on the wall. She leaned over him and studied his face, that face that had made of agony and death the most appalling trivialities. She thought:

Make the world? You hadn't the imagination. You didn't even make these machines; that shiny finish is for customers, not craftsmen, and controls that work

by little pictures are for children. You are a child yourself, a child and a horror, and I would ten times rather be subject to your machines than master of it.
(Russ, 1983:67)

She later tells her husband something of the battle once she has returned home.

“I fought all night,” she added, “with the Old Man of the Mountain,” for you must know that this demon is a legend in Ourdh; he is the god of this world who dwells in a cave containing the whole world in little, and from his cave he rules the fates of men.

“Who won?” said her husband, laughing...

“I did,” said she. “The man is dead.” She smiled, splitting open the wound on her cheek, which began to bleed afresh.

“He died,” she said, “for two reasons only: because he was a fool. And because we are not.” (Russ, 1983:67)

As Russ uses Alyx to demythologise the numerous myths against which women measure their behaviour, so too does she use Alyx here to demythologise the ‘god’ who is the closed system into which Ourdh, and humanity has written itself. Alyx destroys the god who enjoys a position of power over mankind, who demands the performance of certain tasks and threatens punishment if we refuse to obey. The god Alyx destroys is the arrogant, patriarchal deity mankind has adopted, sans creativity and mercy; he is a creature from whom the hero will learn little wisdom. In this story, Russ writes the god into a number of roles: he becomes representative of technological advancement with no sensitivity toward nature and of the patronising ‘developed’ world against that of the barbarian. This god comes to represent knowledge without wisdom and Russ suggests that the hero is better able, through her own activity, to choose her fate, to be a Destiny rather than submit her fate to such an arbitrary ruler; Russ undermines any system of authority that society has blindly adopted and demands that her readers question these institutions and myths as her hero does.

This destruction of the god creates an interesting dynamic in terms of the heroic monomyth, however, because it is the wisdom gained from the All Father which enables the heroes to free their society from whatever it is that the society fears. Once the hero has met the All Father, he or she undergoes an Apotheosis; the hero achieves supreme enlightenment and liberation from all worldly concerns and, once free, chooses to look back at his or her people and assume responsibility for them. The hero chooses to bring his or her people to the enlightenment he or she has achieved.

Russ approaches the Apotheosis in much the same way as she deals with Alyx's meeting with the All Father; her female hero does not 'suffer' the loss of self that Campbell suggests is a prerequisite for the hero at this point in the story. Instead, Alyx remains remarkably unchanged throughout her adventures in that she is always thoroughly *Alyx*, sure of herself, able to act and acting. Russ refuses to let her hero be distracted by anything esoteric; Alyx kills 'god' and now shows no interest in developing the spiritual tendencies that Campbell clamours for. She still takes on the task of helping her people, but she does so in a very practical, physical manner. This lack of spirituality in Alyx (and her blatant scorn and scepticism at times) makes her more trustworthy, because she is an active female hero who refuses to surrender her control to anything else. During the hero's apotheosis, he or she is meant to take on the traits of the All Father deity, who is Truth. Alyx, having killed the god of Ourdh, chooses not to take on any of his traits and instead, champions herself and her way of doing things. This implicit trust in herself is the ethic this female hero upholds. And that is the Ultimate Boon she will bring to the rest of humanity.

During the story which follows *The Barbarian, Picnic on Paradise*, Alyx is brought from the past into the future (by a large corporation called the Trans-Temporal Authority) to help a group of people, tourists, travel from point A to point B. These people need to escape a battle that is being fought and have become so soft in a future where almost everything is synthetic (including human interactions and feelings) that they need a guide from the past, where people really *lived* in order to survive. *Picnic on Paradise* is a particularly complex story but one of the elements most important to our discussion of this stage in the hero's development is that, through her journeying with the characters she meets and her experience of the relationships that develop, Alyx comes to care for these people. Because of this, when the time comes for her to choose her next step, that step is to attempt the liberation of all people (and all times) from the insidious grasp of the Trans-Temporal Authority. Alyx's Apotheosis has little to do with the adoption of 'godlike' traits, but she does act, without questioning the necessity of the action, on behalf of humanity.

The Trans-Temporal Authority, having brought Alyx into the future, feel that they can use her to their own advantage, once the mission for which they initially needed her is completed.

“They also tell me,” she went on, “that I am going to teach my special and peculiar skills in a special and peculiar little school, for they seem to think our pilgrimage a success, despite its being full of their own inexcusable blunders, and they also seem to think that my special and peculiar skills are detachable from my special and peculiar attitudes. Like Iris's hair. I think they will find they are wrong.” (Russ, 1983:162)

What Trans Temp do not realise is that Alyx is a hero, that she is neither biddable nor malleable; she will champion her ethic and they will have to pay the price. This is ironic because Trans-Temp have the reputation of having created a Trans-Temporal Cadre of Heroes and Heroines; they have found their first hero, and she will prove to be their largest problem.

The last stages of the hero's journey are not as clear cut in *The Adventures of Alyx* as they could be, perhaps because we do not have the satisfaction of a linear 'ending' to the story. Alyx, having chosen to rebel against Trans-Temp moves backwards and forwards in time, enlisting the help of others and leading a rebellion against this corporation. This movement of hers begins in *Picnic in Paradise* and continues in the last story, *The Second Inquisition*. In this way she accomplishes all the last stages of the heroic journey: The Magic Flight, Crossing of the Return Threshold, Master of the Two Worlds and the Freedom to Live. Alyx becomes Master of the Two worlds as she moves back and forth in time, and she earns the Freedom to Live because she battles against that which tries to impose control on humanity; she is always the champion of what is human, of personal freedom.

Russ's heroic monomyth is wonderful and complex and what she reveals about female heroism is tantalising. Alyx is a remarkable Warrior hero because she acts physically without hesitation and uses a clean violence to achieve her ends; she is steadfast and has the absolute integrity of a picklock, murderess and assassin. There are no complex jealousies or petty shadows in Alyx, she owns her actions and does not belittle herself

with small insecurities or the interrogation of her motives. She is willing to kill and die for her cause, and her cause is herself. She is a female warrior who recognises her worth and values her freedom above all else, and this is why she is heroic.

C.L. Moore's Jirel of Joiry is, like Alyx, a powerful female warrior hero. Jirel commands the area of Joiry, in a country which seems to have parallels to medieval France, and Moore describes her thus

Jirel was a brave woman and a savage warrior, and the most reckless of her men-at-arms. There was not a man for miles who did not fear and respect Joiry's commander. (Moore, 2002:72)

Jirel of Joiry is a knight who constantly risks her own life to save that of her men, she is skilled in combat, does not hesitate to shed blood and is more than the match of any warrior brought up against her. Jirel is an aggressive, active, female hero who, like Alyx, never pauses to question her right to this activity.

Like Russ, Moore writes Jirel's adventures as a series of short stories in which Jirel completes a task per story. It is particularly interesting that both Russ and Moore have chosen to explore the hero as they do. Both have written the adventures of their heroes as separate short stories and neither of them has published their stories in a chronological order, which would delineate the hero's journey through Campbell's monomyth. In this way, as has already been discussed in relation to *The Adventures of Alyx*, the authors remove their female heroes from the constraints of patriarchal time and therefore of patriarchal authority. Julia Kristeva's suggestion that women experience time in a more mythical, cyclical manner is therefore borne out in the adventures of Alyx and Jirel, who

represent women's agency as female heroes, and whose lives are presented in a non-linear fashion by the two authors.

However, while we are still able to see that Alyx struggles through the stages of Campbell's monomyth, Jirel undergoes no such process in her adventures. Moore has claimed for her hero complete freedom from the imposition of any patriarchal linear development or time because, when we meet Jirel for the first time, she is already a fully developed hero. Jirel displays certain skills and abilities that she would have gained during her travels through the heroic monomyth, but, apart from that, there is little connection between her escapades and the stages of the monomyth. We meet Jirel when she already is the Commander of her men and her own region of 'France'. She is already recognised as a hero by her society and is using her skills to benefit that society. Moore's fully developed female warrior is free to explore and revel in heroic action without the encumbrance of first having to measure her own strengths and weaknesses.

The fact that Jirel is a fully developed hero when we meet her is interesting for another reason, apart from that of bypassing the linear development of the monomyth. Because of Moore's technique, the reader is forced to accept Jirel's heroic status immediately on entering the first short story, even though Jirel is a woman and the story was first published in 1969, for a (male)⁹ audience who would have been unused to, if not totally opposed to, female heroism. Moore presents her readers with a character who is unequivocally heroic and the intimation is perhaps that a masculine, aggressive female

⁹ See *Feminism and Science Fiction* by Lefanu, 1989, page 2 and *Future Females* by Barr, 1991, pages 9 and 42.

hero may have been easier to accept for the predominantly male audience of science fiction at the time of first publication.

The male audience of science fiction would have had very clear notions both of how the hero of science fiction should behave and how the female character should respond to that behaviour. In 1971, two years after the first publication of 'Jirel of Joiry', Sam J Lundwall writes in 'Science Fiction: What It's All About' that

The woman in science fiction remains what she was, a compulsory appendage ... even though women usually are present in the space ships, they are generally treated like some kind of inferior creature. ... By her obvious ignorance ... she would give the hero opportunity to launch into long explanations ...[and] she would be abducted by some horrible green monster with lots of fangs, which lovingly wound its tentacles around her appetising form. (Lundwall, 1991:9)

What Lundwall writes of the female character in SF is completely untrue of Jirel. This is why it illuminates some of the difficulties C.L. Moore would have encountered in presenting Jirel to the SF readership. And perhaps this is why we do not see Jirel becoming a hero. It would have been too much to expect a largely male audience to be drawn into, and find plausible, the development of a female character into a heroic figure. However, because there is never a hint of stereotypically feminine weakness or hesitation in Jirel, and because she is presented from the first as a masculine hero, her position is not open to questioning. Jirel is always a plausible hero.

'Jirel of Joiry' is the first story that Moore published introducing the character Jirel. In the story, Jirel follows the evil wizard Giraud from Joiry through a portal to a magical

realm which is ruled by an evil and autocratic sorceress, Jarisme. Moore opens 'Jirel of Joiry' with a magnificent tableau of Jirel storming Giraud's castle. This scene fills the reader's mind with Jirel and establishes her unequivocally as the hero whose adventures will be followed.

Over Guischarde's fallen drawbridge thundered Joiry's warrior lady, sword swinging, voice shouting hoarsely inside her helmet. The scarlet plume of her crest rippled in the wind. Straight into the massed defenders at the gate she plunged, careering through them by the very impetuosity of the charge, the weight of her mighty warhorse opening up a gap for the men at her heels to widen. ... Jirel of Joiry was a shouting battle-machine from which Guischarde's men reeled in bloody confusion as she whirled and slashed and slew in the narrow confines of the gateway, her great stallion's iron hoofs weapons as potent as her own whirling blade. (Moore, 2002:3)

In this scene Jirel is the epitome of the aggressive action which the hero is meant to encapsulate. There is nothing soft or gentle about her here because it would be wholly inappropriate for a hero to display those kinds of traits in the heat of battle. Instead, Jirel displays an active and healthy animus, which encourages her action. Moore heightens this sense of aggression and movement by linking Jirel's action to that of the 'great (male) stallion' Jirel rides. The stallion becomes particularly evocative of bestial masculine ferocity and that it and Jirel work in unison is a potent display of Jirel's power and potential. Moore uses language and movement which is particularly masculine in this opening scene in order to establish Jirel as the active, masculine warrior hero. Jirel's storming of the gates seems evocative of the thrusting motion of the male, and her brandishing of the sword seems also to encourage phallic comparison. That Moore establishes Jirel's masculinity here becomes very important later in the story.

Jirel and her men storm Guischarde in order to capture the wizard, Giraud. He, however, disappears, and the frightened men follow a bloodthirsty Jirel on a search through the castle. When Jirel finds the portal through which Giraud has disappeared she does not hesitate to follow him alone, regardless of what may lie on the other side. Once through the portal, Jirel finds herself in a strange forest. Michael Ferber, in his *Dictionary of Literary Symbols*, says of forests that they are, 'dark, labyrinthine, and filled with dangerous beasts. ... It is there that one loses one's way or path.' (Ferber, 1999:78) Jirel enters Jarisme's realm and the immediate suggestion is that this is a dangerous place where the rules of reality have been altered so that one is likely to become lost, perhaps ensnared by that which lurks within and behind the dark foliage. Jirel's movement into the forest is also evocative of Frye's descent from an upper world (that of Guischarde's tower) to a lower world (Jarisme's forest). This movement suggests that Jirel has moved into a realm in which identity is fluid, and in which she will meet with cruelty and a restriction of action. (Frye, 1976:129) These are all things she will meet in Jarisme's realm.

Jirel, however, suffers no disorientation at all from her displacement to this other-world. The change of setting from Joiry to ominous ensorcelled forest does not even cause her to break her stride or pause to get her bearings; instead, her only reaction is: 'Magic, she told herself, and gave up trying to understand' (Moore, 2002:26). Jirel, because Moore presents a developed a hero, is no newcomer to situations such as this one and her reactions are a testament to her heroic experience.

As she travels through the forest, Jirel hears the sound of sobbing and comes across a smoking tree which has been blasted by some or other weapon. She turns aside to find a strange, charismatic woman bent on the destruction of a dryad who is lying at her feet.

This is Jirel's first encounter with Jarisme.

“Oh mercy, mercy, Jarisme! Let me die!”

“When I have finished. Not before. Life and death are mine to command here, and I am not yet done with you. Your stolen magic...”

She paused, for Irsila had slumped once more upon the moss, breath scarcely stirring her. As Jarisme's light-dealing hand rose for the third time Jirel leapt forward. Partly it was intuitive hatred of the lazy-eyed woman, partly revolt at this cat-and-mouse play with a dying girl for a victim. She swung her arm in an arc that cleared the branches from her path, and called out in her clear, strong voice, “Have done, woman! Let her die in peace!” (Moore, 2002:13)

With this exchange Moore establishes the dynamic that will play itself out through the story. Jarisme is the equivalent of Campbell's Queen Goddess of the World who holds power over life and death (Campbell, 1991:113), but her flippant use and enjoyment of her power also marks her as the Ogre Tyrant whose autocracy must be challenged by the hero. Jirel is that hero who is Jarisme's antithesis and who, having come from a different world, is not subject to the Ogre Tyrant's rules. Jarisme is described later in the story as having literally become a goddess and, as such, her assumption of the power of the Queen Goddess of the World is consolidated. We are shown Jarisme standing before creatures that she has summoned from various dimensions and we are told that

In one caught breath, all voices ceased. Silence fell upon them like a blow. Jarisme was no longer priestess, but goddess as she fronted them in that dead stillness with exultant face and blazing eyes. And in one motion they bowed before her as corn bows under wind. Alien things, shapeless monsters, faceless, eyeless, unrecognisable creatures from unknowable dimensions, abased themselves to the crystal floor before the splendour of light in Jarisme's eyes. (Moore, 2002:30)

During his or her meeting with the Goddess, the hero is meant to come to know the truth about life and death, which are the spheres over which the Goddess holds sway. However, in Moore's presentation of the Goddess, we have someone who uses her power over these two aspects of existence in order to inflict pain and extract subservience from all who come into her sphere of influence. This is the Queen Goddess of the World who has assumed corrupt power beyond that which she should wield. This is why she becomes tantamount to the Ogre Tyrant against whom the hero must pit his or her strength, and Jirel is the only one who will be able to topple Jarisme from her throne.

It is no mistake that the arch-villain against whom Moore pits the strengths of her hero is a woman. In doing this, Moore explores the type of power which female characters have been allowed to wield in past speculative fiction, through Jarisme, and she suggests an alternative to it through Jirel. Powerful women in speculative fiction, if in no other genres, have posed a threat to the omnipotence of the male hero and so it is natural that they should have been cast in the role of the evil villain; that which threatens the good hero must be bad. The 'good' women in speculative fiction are always weak and serve only as foils for the hero and morsels for the monsters, as Lundwall has suggested.

Ironically enough, however, the power which the villainous female wields is almost always that of the *femme fatale*. In accordance with patriarchal role division, the only power which the female character has had, is that of her sexuality; she has rarely been able to escape having to use herself as an objectified sexual secret weapon. Moore presents Jarisme as the arch-villain seductress and, as she pits a female hero, Jirel, against

Jarisme, Moore makes her argument through the juxtaposition of the two characters, that the female character may successfully wield power other than that of the *femme fatale*.

What may be a by-product of this battle of female hero vs female villain are the interesting erotic undertones which are present in the scenes in which the two characters confront each other. Jirel, who represents masculinity, is the partner who will bring balance to Jarisme's femininity, and Jarisme, whose power lies in the seduction of the *femme fatale*, seems to be trying to seduce Jirel the way she would a male hero. These erotic undertones are unlikely to be an oversight on Moore's part and so Moore's exploration of the relationship between Jirel and Jarisme takes on something of the titillating. Jarisme and Jirel both consciously choose roles which tantalise the other, and the power struggle between them becomes an expression of the erotically charged battle between feminine and masculine for dominance. That we meet Jirel when she is thrusting herself through the crowds at Guischarde is an erotic, masculine image and Jirel's reaction to Jarisme seems charged with that same masculine eroticism. Jirel sees Jarisme for the first time and Moore's description of the feminine sorceress is seductive.

Above the dying girl a tall woman stood. And that woman was a magnet for Jirel's fascinated eyes. She was generously curved, sleepy-eyed. Black hair bound her head sleekly, and her skin was like rich, dark, creamy velvet. A violet robe wrapped her carelessly, leaving arms and one shoulder bare. ... But it was the face that held Jirel's yellow gaze. The sleepy eyes under heavy drooping lids were purple as gems, and the darkly crimson mouth curled in a smile so hateful that fury rushed up in Jirel's heart as she watched. (Moore, 2002:9)

Jirel's reaction to Jarisme is the same as her reaction to her male lover in 'The Black God's Kiss'; there is a powerful reaction to both these characters, which Jirel initially decides is animosity, but later becomes aware is actually attraction. There is a mutual

attraction between Jarisme and Jirel which plays itself out through the story; this attraction has much to do with the fact that both women are powerful and are placed in direct opposition to each other. Whether Moore introduces this erotic element to titillate her male audience, or whether she means to suggest that this attraction between the masculine and the feminine (even though they are represented by two women) is a natural by-product of conflict, the erotic charge adds something to the relationship between the two women.

The *femme fatale* is an interesting creation that deserves particular attention. Mary Anne Doane writes of the *femme fatale* in *Femme Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* that

To masquerade (i.e. to adopt over the top feminine behavioural patterns) is to manufacture a lack in the form of a certain distance between oneself and one's image. If, as Moustafa Safuaon points out, "...to wish to include in oneself as an object the cause of desire of the Other is a formula for the structure of hysteria," then masquerade is anti-hysterical for it works to effect a separation between the cause of desire and oneself. In Montrelay's words, "the woman uses her own body as a disguise." The very fact that we can speak of a woman "using" her sex or "using" her body for particular gains is significant – it is not that a man cannot use his body in this way but that he doesn't have to. The masquerade doubles as representation; it is constituted by a hyperbolisation of the accoutrements of femininity. *A propos* of a recent performance by Marlene Dietrich, Silvia Bovenschen claims, "...we are watching a woman demonstrate the representation of a woman's body." This type of masquerade, an excess of femininity, is aligned with the *femme fatale* and, as Montrelay explains, is necessarily regarded by men as evil incarnate: "It is this evil which scandalises whenever woman plays out her sex in order to evade the word and the law. Each time she subverts a law or a word which relies on the predominantly masculine structure of the look." (Doane, 1991:26)

That the *femme fatale* is aware of her own image and the effect that image has on men is very important as we continue to watch Moore's Jarisme. Jarisme has definitely constructed the persona she plays out, but Moore suggests that perhaps even in

consciously adopting the role of the seductress, the female character may forget that it is only a role she has chosen to play. The danger in playing the *femme fatale* is that one may eventually confuse one's own identity with one's disguise. Moore also shows that while this may have been the template of feminine power, the *femme fatale* may, in the end, erode feminine power, rather than channel it. Because the *femme fatale* is a role particularly fashioned according to the stipulations of the male gaze, it always signifies power condoned by the patriarchy, rather than genuine female agency. These two problematic elements of the *femme fatale* are examined by Moore; we realise that it is because Jarisme is pitted against a female hero that Moore is able to explore these flaws. Jirel may be masculine, but, because she is also a woman, her gaze *is* slightly different from that of a male hero and, because of this, the dynamic between hero and *femme fatale* is changed.

At their first meeting, during the episode with Irsla, the dying dryad, Jarisme becomes aware of Jirel and the challenge to her power that Jirel represents. At this early stage in the proceedings, however, Jarisme chooses not to take up Jirel's challenge and disappears, leaving Jirel and the dryad alone. As Irsla dies, she offers Jirel a crystal token that is carried by each of Jarisme's subjects, as well as the information that should Jirel want to destroy Jarisme, she need only break the crystal token in Jarisme's presence. This offering of Irsla's can be likened to Campbell's Supernatural Aid; Jirel receives a talisman from a creature of the other-world which will protect her from the machinations of the Ogre Tyrant whom she has been sent to destroy.

After this episode, Jirel wanders Jarisme's realm searching for the sorceress. Irsila's talisman acts as a compass which leads Jirel to Jarisme's magic tower. Once Jirel has found Jarisme's tower, she enters and is eventually led to a door which opens onto a staircase. There are many doors and openings in this story by Moore, and the implication seems to be that there are numerous thresholds which the hero may choose to cross, any one of them leading to any number of possible pathways over which Jarisme holds sway. Jirel must, however, choose to cross the one threshold which will take her directly to Jarisme.

Moore uses the construction of Jarisme's tower to interesting effect in this story. The tower that is the base of Jarisme's operations is the reflection of a phallus. This serves to remind the reader that, while Jarisme's power is feminine in nature, she only has that power because of the male gaze. Jarisme has power because of the patriarchy and what it decides is acceptable feminine power, hence the feminine power housed in a phallic construction. Within the tower, however, the numerous doors and thresholds also have a particular significance. Doane writes that, 'for Luce Irigaray, female anatomy is readable as a constant relation of the self to itself, as an autoeroticism based on the embrace of two lips which allow the woman to touch herself without mediation' (Doane, 1991:22). The meeting of door and threshold recalls for us 'the embrace of the two lips', and that each door births a different world heightens this sense of feminine eroticism. These twisting labyrinths and worlds that open and close also signify the multiplicity of feminine eroticism even though it may be housed in the phallic tower. Moore suggests that

Jarisme's power is held in check by the narrowness of the phallus, where it would be capable of far more, if Jarisme were to give up the façade of the *femme fatale*.

Jirel steps through the threshold of the door that leads onto the staircase and follows the stairs as they wind down into the depths of Jarisme's strange tower. This movement recalls for us Campbell's descent of the hero into the Belly of the Whale, as it does Frye's descent to a lower world from a middle world. It is here that the hero is faced with various identities and has to choose which identity they will assume for the rest of their journey. At this point in *The Adventures of Alyx*, Alyx is faced with a mirror which reflects her own face and we are made aware of how identity is often made up purely of that which we find reflected back to us from various surfaces. The same image is used here as Jirel finds herself in a chamber at the bottom of the stairs, a chamber which is all reflective surfaces.

An arched opening ended the passage. Through the arch poured a blaze of dancing white luminance. Jirel paused, blinking and trying to make out what strange place she was entering. The room before her was filled with the baffling glitter and shimmer and mirage of reflecting surfaces so bewilderingly that she could not tell which was real and which was mirror, and which dancing light...She could see her own image looking back at her from a dozen, a score, a hundred moving planes that grotesquely distorted her and then flickered out again. (Moore, 2002:24-25)

In Pearson and Pope's work on the female hero they break the heroic journey into three parts, which are very similar to those that Campbell identifies. For them the first stage of the hero's journey is the Exit from the Garden (as Eve left the garden of Eden and chose agency without the restriction of a patriarchal God, so does the female hero leave the garden within which she has been kept captive). This stage is much the same as

Campbell's heroic Departure. What is interesting in Pearson and Pope's work, however is that the last step in the female hero's exit from the garden is called 'Shattering the Mirror'. This image of the mirror is recognised as being absolutely crucial in the female hero's journey and specifically in her bid for self-liberation. The mirror is used as a symbol which represents the fact that women have been taught to mistrust their perceptions of themselves and the world around them and rely instead on reflections (Pearson and Pope, 1981:104). In order to liberate themselves, female heroes must destroy the need to have their perceptions verified through reflections of any kind (be they those of mirrors or those of the personal approval of other people), hence the need to shatter the mirror.

In *The Adventures of Alyx*, Alyx throws the mirror aside with little concern, but in Moore, the mirrors are used to interesting effect. Jirel is surprised by the mirrors, and the dancing lights and seems to be bewildered but, before the mirrors are able to take on the symbolic depth of an exercise in personal identity, they cease to reflect Jirel. Jirel's identity is not the one in question in this story; instead, the mirrors begin to focus on Jarisme. That the mirrors switch from reflecting Jirel to reflecting Jarisme is noteworthy. In juxtaposing the reflections of the two women, Moore shows us the difference between the power of the hero and that of the *femme fatale*. These two women are either side of the coin of female power and so they operate as peculiar complements to each other; where Jirel has chosen one path, Jarisme has chosen the other and the consequences of this choice are what Moore investigates.

Then (Jirel) saw Jarisme in her violet robe watching her from a hundred identical golden couches reflected upon a hundred surfaces. The figure held a flute to its

lips, and the music pulsed from it in perfect time with the pulsing of the sorceresses' swelling white throat. Jirel stared round in confusion at the myriad Jarismes all piping the interminable monotones. A hundred sensual, dreamy faces turned to her, a hundred white arms dropped as the flute left a hundred red mouths that Jarisme might smile ironic welcome a hundredfold more scornful for its multiplicity. ... Jirel blinked as the chaos resolved itself into shining order, the hundred Jarismes merging into one sleepy-eyed woman lounging upon her golden couch (Moore, 2002:25)

The suggestion in this passage is that Jarisme is as captivated by her own image as she expects the hero to be. Throughout this short story Jirel confronts various creatures which seem to reflect Jarisme, and here, in the chamber of mirrors, there are hundreds of Jarisme's reflections; while the hero is a unified, whole entity, Jarisme is broken into pieces by her own vanity and desire for power. She is caught in her desire to have herself reflected in the surfaces of a hundred different worlds and a hundred different creatures and a hundred different mirrors so that she dazzles herself with her own magnificence, and is literally blind to the threat that Jirel poses. It is also interesting that Jirel is dazzled by a flashing light when she is confronted with her own image, where Jarisme's images are composed of sensual faces and red mouths and white arms. Where Jirel's reflection is clean and unified, Jarisme allows herself to become a caricature of sensuality and revels in the reflections she sees instead of realising this vanity is what will weaken her.

Jarisme is presented to us through a bombardment of images of herself, images that are particularly physical and sensual (that of a sleek cat, a gliding purple serpent, a lazy-eyed woman). These images emphasise the erotic nature of Jarisme's power but also indicate that Jarisme has lost the ability to distinguish between her body and her disguise. That Jarisme is so often described as 'lazy-eyed' and 'sleepy-eyed' indicates her inability to

see clearly. The *femme fatale* is meant to appropriate the power of the male gaze and subvert it by consciously presenting it with the object of its desire; Jarisme doesn't do this. Instead, she has become intoxicated with the sensual power she has and forgets that once it was only a role she chose to play; Jarisme becomes trapped by the world's response to her vanity. Moore shows us here the danger of assuming the role of the *femme fatale* in order to have power; because it is a power condoned by the patriarchy, it is a duplicitous power.

It is particularly important that Moore offsets Jirel's indifference to the images reflected back to her with Jarisme's gluttonous need for self-reflection. The hero is an individual who champions her own heroic ethic and has no need for approval. Because of this she cannot be broken down or split; the hero who has battled to forge her own identity away from the glaring eye of the patriarchy is not someone who can be shattered by reflections and illusions. Jirel is not threatened by the episode with the mirror, but Moore conveys a wealth of information about the petulant and power-hungry sorceress and about the nature of the power that has been allowed to female characters in the past.

Once the mirrors have faded to show only one Jarisme and Jirel, Jarisme welcomes Jirel to her tower and the battle between Jirel and the Tyrant Queen Goddess draws to its conclusion. Before Jirel is able to destroy Irsla's talisman, thereby destroying Jarisme, however, Jarisme inflicts upon Jirel a punishment which she claims is 'the simplest, and the subtlest, and the most terrible of all punishments, the worst that could befall a human

creature.’ (Moore, 2002:20) Jarisme has gathered an audience to watch her punishment of Jirel and she tells them

“It is our purpose to attempt a reversal of this woman’s physical and mental self in such a way as to cause her body to become rigidly motionless while her mind – her soul – looks eternally backward along the path it has travelled. You who are human, or have known humanity, will understand what deadly torture that can be. To be frozen into eternal reflections, reviewing all the futility and pain of life, all the pain that thoughtless or intentional acts have caused others, all the spreading consequences of every act – that, to a human being, would be the most dreadful of all torments.” (Moore, 2002:31)

Jarisme casts a spell which twists Jirel around so that Jirel is forced to view her own past, and eventually is forced to view the one scene against which her entire consciousness fights. The scene, which Jirel does not want to face, is described in the second story that the reader reads (‘The Black God’s Kiss’), and the consequences of the actions within the scene are resolved only in the third story (‘Black God’s Shadow’). This is important because Jarisme intends to inflict upon Jirel the pain of her past. However, because of the unchronological manner in which Moore presents Jirel’s adventures, we find out afterwards that Jarisme’s punishment was doomed to fail all along; Jirel has dealt with the actions that would otherwise have tormented her. It is in the nature of the hero that she must own her actions and be under no illusions as to both her capabilities and the consequences of her actions. Jirel may have acted in a way that caused pain to both herself and others but, as a hero, she would then have made, and has made, what restitution she felt was necessary. Jarisme, because she does not see clearly, cannot recognise that her punishment will not work against the hero who has reconciled herself to her past actions.

By forcing Jirel to look back and remember the time when she lost the man dearest to her heart, Jarisme's spell reminds Jirel of her own heroic strength and this gives her the strength she needs to break the spell.

Vividly she was back again in the past, felt the hardness of the cold flags against her knees, and the numbness of her heat as she stared down into a dead man's face. Timelessly she dwelt upon that long-ago heartbreak, and within her something swelled unbearably. That something was a mountain of emotion too great to have name, too complexly blending agony and grief and hatred and love – and rebellion...She was aware of nothing but that overwhelming emotion. And it was boiling into one great unbearable explosion of violence in which rage took precedence over all. ... Exultation was welling up in her, for she knew that her own violence had melted the spell by which Jarisme held her. (Moore, 2002:33)

Jarisme seeks to trap Jirel in perpetual reflections, but the hero is never caught by reflections, she is aware of reality around her and is able to recreate that reality with unashamed violence and passion. As well as this, Jirel, who owns her past completely, cannot have that used against her. The hero is a person at peace with her weaknesses and her strengths. She cannot be offended by having herself revealed to herself; because she has fought so long for individuation, the hero knows everything about herself. The punishment that Jarisme seeks to inflict upon Jirel would, however, be the most painful punishment for Jarisme herself to undergo. Because Jarisme has lived a life of disguise and has been caught up in illusions, she has no idea what true self would be revealed to her. For this reason, for Jarisme to be revealed to herself would be a terrifying thing. Because Jarisme has been caught in the trap of the male gaze and the identity it constructs for her, her power is an illusion. At some level, Jarisme must be aware that she knows herself very little, and that her past actions would haunt her, otherwise she would not invent this particular punishment for Jirel. As Moore reveals Jarisme's greatest fear to us,

and as she shows how little horror that fear has for the hero, Moore presents her indictment of the *femme fatale* and the illusory power the role has allowed women.

When Jirel emerges from the spell, she breaks Irsila's talisman and destroys Jarisme. The talisman is thrown at Jarisme's feet and seems to effect an explosion which destroys Jarisme and the tower in which her power was housed; Jarisme is destroyed by a talisman which was created by her own power. This, once again, serves as a reminder that the power of the *femme fatale* is a duplicitous power that will eventually undermine the woman who wields it. The realm over which Jarisme ruled remains, but it is free from the clutches of the tyrant. In destroying Jarisme, Jirel also manages to defeat the wizard, Giraud, who has been hiding behind Jarisme's skirts throughout the story. Having completed her quest, which was to kill Giraud, Jirel is free to return home, which is what she promptly does. This movement back to her world reflects Frye's ascent from a lower world, and the ascent to a higher world, suggesting that Jirel returns to a place in which identity is unified and justice is served.

Jirel is a female hero who has agency; she is able to act with aggression and also to be moved by tenderness (when we see her strive to free her lover from the Black God). Because of this, Jirel is a balanced hero (displaying both active anima and active animus). Through Jirel, Moore shows us what real female agency is, as opposed to the illusory 'agency' of Jarisme, and what action that may allow the female character. It is also important to note that Jirel is a powerful, and plausible female warrior, because she bears arms and kills with as much bloodlust as any other warrior. As Moore compares Jirel to

Jarisme, she invites the reader to make a comparison between the clean power of the hero and the deceptive, seductive power of the *femme fatale*; Jarisme is a very interesting character in that she is a powerful woman, but is trapped by the myth the patriarchy has sold her, that her only power lies in her sex.

That Moore hints at the erotic in the exchanges between these two women reflects the particular power of the *femme fatale*, but it also serves to foreground the connection between these two women and the reason for their fascination each with the other. Jirel and Jarisme are very alike in their ruthlessness and power but the difference which Moore needs to foreground for us is that Jirel, who has an active animus and an active anima is a whole hero who has no need to hide her identity, where Jarisme has only the illusion of active femininity trapped by the masculine definition of her power. It is because Jirel is a whole hero that she is not seduced by Jarisme, that she is not trapped by illusion and disguise. Moore presents her readers with a believable female warrior and her indictment of the role that powerful women have had to play is very effective. Either way, Moore's greatest success with these stories, and 'Jirel of Joiry' in particular, is the creation of a startling female warrior hero.

It is with the creation of characters like these that the role of the warrior is won back for women. Because Russ and Moore are able to write women who are unafraid to shed blood and throw themselves into aggressive and violent action, and make them believable, these authors demand recognition of women's capabilities in this arena. Whatever experimentation they may have been undertaking has been successful, and they

have produced female heroes who walk the round of the monomyth, and institute the restructuring of their societies through the boons they win. The instances in which the female hero's journey differs from that of the male hero are telling in so much as the authors may have had feminist agendas in which their heroes have been pitted against the Ogre Tyrants particular to the feminist cause. But these say as much about the stereotyping of the male hero as they do about the frustrations of the female hero; both have been expected to behave in a manner which has left them incomplete as human beings. Lefanu's argument against the female warrior cannot stand against these two characters; Alyx and Jirel are warriors. And they liberate other female warriors by example.

Wielding the Sceptre of Dominion

Taliesin who riddles his clan out of war with a neighbouring king and Odysseus who tricks Cyclops on the island are both examples of the culture hero; they are witty, vigorous and creative. Culture heroes are the embodiment of human *sapientia*, or wisdom. This is translated into various traits and abilities which allow the heroes to use their minds and intellects to unravel the uncomfortable situations in which they or their societies find themselves.

Campbell suggests that where the warrior hero wields the sword of virtue, the culture hero wields the sceptre of dominion: he or she overthrows the existing regime and introduces a new system in its place; and so the culture hero wields the sceptre of dominion as the founder of the new world. The culture hero, like the warrior hero, presents a challenge to the *status quo* and threatens the rule of the Ogre Tyrant, but he or she does so through the introduction of new philosophies, inventions, scientific theories or the arts. Examples of the culture hero in 'real life' may be people like Martin Luther, Lucy Stone, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Theresa, Amelia Earhart, Saint Patrick, Valentina Tereshkova and Marie Curie.

Because this heroic type is not particularly violent, it is almost natural that female characters have been more easily able to assume the role of the culture hero. Readers are certainly more likely to encounter heroic female healers, saints and herb women than they are characters like Alyx and Jirel in (even) speculative fiction. Perhaps it is because the culture hero allows more 'passive' characters to walk the heroic path that women have

been more readily allowed to express this kind of heroism. However, it may also be because some of the roles encompassed by the culture hero rely on mysticism and a spiritual or otherworldly wisdom. Women, often associated with the mystical and the mysterious, are therefore more naturally cast in these roles. Donovan writes that

The witch (is) the quintessentially irrational woman who has mysterious powers beyond the scope of scientific rationality. She therefore (symbolises) the *other* marginal world that the rationalists fear and wish to subdue. (Donovan, 2001:44)

Women have long been aligned with the magical and mystical powers of the irrational universe. They are the witches who reflect a power other than that of physical strength or reason, a power to be reckoned with. Because of this, it is no surprise that most of the significant female characters in speculative (and other) fiction have been sorceresses, healers and priestesses. Examples of these may be Jessica and Alia (Bene-Gesserit in Frank Herbert's *Dune*), Tenar (Le Guin's *Tombs of Atuan*), Morgana le Fay (in Arthurian legend) and Branwen (in the Welsh saga, *The Mabinigion*).

In this chapter I have chosen to look at one healer, and one priestess. I feel that these two roles allow us to explore two facets of the culture hero: however, while the one is more practical and the other more spiritual, both heroes display the human wisdom (wit) and compassion associated with the culture hero. Through this, it is possible to recognise that while the witch is an archetype reflecting the arcane power that women (or men) may wield, her strengths come in different guises; the healer and the priestess are both manifestations of the witch.

The two culture heroes I discuss in this chapter are Snake and Oaive. In McIntyre's novel *Dreamsnake*, McIntyre presents us with a healer named Snake who must learn to harness her ability to heal; this is what leads to the salvation of her society. And in Tannith Lee's *The Winter Players*, Lee introduces the reader to a priestess named Oaive; it is Oaive's exploration of the arcane mysteries surrounding her 'religion' which lead to the redemption of her society. In both cases, the female heroes fulfil their destinies, destinies which are marked by the strengths of the witch archetype.

Vonda McIntyre's character, Snake, in the SF novel *Dreamsnake*, is a brave and strong woman, and certainly a fine example of the culture hero. *Dreamsnake* is set in a far distant, post-apocalyptic future. The Earth is made up of large tracts of barren, radioactive wasteland, deserts (in which nomadic tribes live) and a few green, mountainous areas in which there are small settled towns. The overall impression McIntyre makes is one of strange desolation in which humanity has found isolated pockets to survive. This is, however, not a completely hopeless picture; McIntyre writes into this future a body of people who call themselves healers. These are the doctors of the future and, because they travel from place to place healing different people, they serve as the thread which binds the isolated groups of humans to each other; McIntyre's hero is such a healer.

In *Dreamsnake*, the healers have learnt to genetically modify creatures and plants. They have specifically modified certain species of snake so that, when the snake strikes, it releases medicines and vaccines rather than venom. With these snakes, the healers travel

the land in order to help people wherever there is a need. The healers each have three snakes, one of which must be a dreamsnake, used to ease pain. The dreamsnakes are a very rare breed that is alien to the earth and we are told that the healers have only a few of them, and fewer as time passes because the healers cannot get the snakes to breed, and neither can they clone them. The protagonist of the novel has been honoured with the name, Snake, because she has been able to genetically create four dreamsnakes and because she shows such promise with the other serpents. Her name signifies the respect her teachers have for her abilities, as it reveals to us her potential greatness. That the character is named after the technique of healing adopted by the healers, also suggests that the character is synonymous with healing, and that she will have a great effect on the practice of healing in this world.

The snake is an equivocal and powerful symbol, and McIntyre uses it to full effect, drawing on its significance as she explores the thematic concerns of the novel. The first facet of the snake as a symbol is its association with healing. The caduceus, which is the staff of the Greek god Hermes (god of healing among other things) is made up of two serpents twined about a rod. This symbol appears on a number of sanatoriums in the ancient world and signifies a place of healing. The snake's link with healing is particularly obvious in the novel, but becomes richer when one considers that the snake is also often connected with numerous ancient cults of the Goddess. (Graves, 1975:387-389) So the symbol of healing is meshed with a symbol of feminine power and mystery. McIntyre does the same in the novel when she names her female protagonist, Snake.

Snake comes to be imbued with a powerful, ancient significance that harks back both to the mysterious ability of those able to heal and the feminine mystique.

The second important facet of the snake as a symbol is its association with power. In the Judeo-Christian myth of creation, the serpent tempts Adam and Eve (primordial Man and Woman) to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. When Eve succumbs to temptation, she defies the command of God, who explicitly forbade her and Adam from eating the fruit. The serpent here is Satan, an angel who has himself defied God's law. The snake thus becomes a symbol of power that runs counter to the existing norm, for good or evil. Snake, the character, therefore also has the potential to overthrow the existing *status quo* and present an alternative pattern of being to her society. Joseph Campbell writes that, 'stated in direct terms: the work of the hero is to slay the tenacious aspect of the father (dragon, tester, ogre king) and release from its ban the vital energies that will feed the universe.' (Campbell, 1993:352) If this is the task of the hero, it is made quite explicit in McIntyre's Snake, whose very name suggests that she will be challenging the 'father' or the system which 'he' perpetuates.

That McIntyre names her hero Snake suggests that we can expect of the hero the same virtues and strengths of which the snake has become a symbol. It is also important to recognise that an investigation of the symbolic significance of the snake presents us with a neat summary of the thematic concerns of the novel.

The novel begins with Snake in the middle of her year's practical medical experience, after having completed her instruction at the healer's station. She has decided to travel

into the desert where no healers have gone, regardless of the dangers or the superstitions of the tribespeople she may encounter. As she journeys, her path begins to reflect the stages of the heroic monomyth and we recognise that Snake's actions have taken on a greater significance.

Initially Snake attempts to heal a young boy in one of the desert tribes. They are an honourable, good people, but they are unfamiliar with healers and have only been exposed to the dangerous serpents of the desert. Because of this, the boy's parents overreact and kill Grass, Snake's dreamsnake, believing that the dreamsnake will hurt their son. Campbell writes that

This is an example of one of the ways in which the adventure can begin. A blunder – apparently the merest chance – reveals an unsuspected world, and the individual is drawn into a relationship with forces that are not rightly understood. As Freud has shown, blunders are not the merest chance. They are the result of suppressed desires and conflicts. They are the ripples on the surface of life, produced by unsuspected springs. The blunder may amount to the opening of a destiny. (Campbell, 1993:51)

When Grass is killed, Snake is forced to walk a path that is different from the one she was on; the world chooses its hero and forces her into a new relationship with the elements around her. An unexpected world is revealed to Snake in that she realises that with Grass gone, she is crippled as a healer. This situation foreshadows the eventual position of all healers; because the healers cannot breed the dreamsnakes or create or clone them and the alien offworlders (where the snakes come from) refuse to give any more snakes to the healers, they will eventually all be similarly crippled. Disease will wipe out the remnants of humanity. The Call to Adventure is sounded with Grass's death, and the hero, without knowing it, responds. Snake, instead of carrying on with her year's

experience, turns back to the healer's station and begins her journey into the cycle of the monomyth.

As she leaves the desert tribe, Arevin, a friend she has made among these people, stops Snake.

“I hoped you would not leave before ... I hoped you would stay, for a time ... There are other clans, and other people you could help-”
“If things were different, I might have stayed. There's work for a healer. But...”
“They were frightened-”
“I told them Grass wouldn't hurt them, but they saw his fangs and they didn't know he could only give dreams and ease dying.”
“But can't you forgive them?”
“I can't face their guilt. What they did was my fault, Arevin. I didn't understand them until it was too late ... I'm crippled,” she said. “Without Grass, if I can't heal a person, I can't help at all. We don't have many dreamsnakes. I have to go home and tell my teachers I've lost one, and hope they can forgive my stupidity. They seldom give the name I bear, but they gave it to me, and they'll be disappointed.”
(McIntyre, 1989:22)

Snake is very upset by the death of her little dreamsnake and she can think of no other course but to return home. It is important that Snake realises that some of the fault for Grass's death lies with her. Her acknowledgement of her limitations suggests a capacity for heroic growth. As Pearson and Pope write

As with the male, the journey offers the female hero the opportunity to develop qualities such as courage, skill, and independence, which would atrophy in a protected environment. Such qualities do not spring full-blown from the head of the hero, but are developed in response to the demands and challenges of the experience. (Pearson & Pope, 1981:8)

The hero cannot afford to be arrogant in the face of her failure because that would close her off from the experience, and the lesson she must learn. Had Snake adopted an

arrogant denial of her culpability at this point, she would have to suffer more humiliation before beginning her heroic quest, in order to render her open to the experience.

That the tribe reacts to Snake's serpents as they do is also significant in terms of the heroic monomyth; their fear, distrust and hatred of snakes becomes interesting when viewed in the light of Campbell's observations regarding serpents. He writes

The disgusting and rejected frog or dragon of the fairytale brings up the sun ball in its mouth; for the frog, the serpent, the rejected one, is the representative of that unconscious deep ... wherein are hoarded all of the rejected, unadmitted, unrecognised, unknown or undeveloped factors, laws, and elements of existence. ... The herald or announcer of the adventure, therefore, is often dark, loathly, or terrifying, judged evil by the world; yet if one could follow, the way would be opened through the walls of day into the dark where the jewels glow. (Campbell, 1993:52-53)

The snake and the dreamsnake represent wisdom unfamiliar to these people. And though they are afraid of the snakes, it is the snakes that could offer them longer lives and less pain; the medicine of the dreamsnake is the 'sun ball' or the 'glowing jewel' that these mistrusted serpents bring. And Snake herself is also the rejected serpent who offers healing to those who will accept her. This encounter between Snake and the desert people is an important one. The disgusting serpent is rejected at the beginning of the adventure, but is recognised later as the hero and the sun bringer.

Snake answers the Call to Adventure. She leaves Arevin's tribe and begins her return journey across the desert. As she travels, Snake passes an area of the desert which is made up of huge tracts of melted stone, pitted with craters. A young woman, Jesse, has fallen into one of these craters, breaking her back, and Snake is asked to heal her. The woman's partners, Alex and Meredith, are desperate for the aid only a healer can offer

them. However, Snake cannot heal Jesse and, because Grass is dead, she can also not ease Jesse's inevitable death. The interaction that takes place between these three women, Snake, Jesse and Meredith is of vital importance. Through her interactions with Jesse and Meredith, Snake gains both personal wisdom and practical information, both of which will guide her journey. However, it is the practical information she gets from Jesse, and the opportunity Jesse offers Snake, that identify Jesse as Snake's agent of Supernatural Aid.

When Meredith asks of Snake what she can do to help Jesse, Snake replies

“I can't force the body to heal itself.”

“Can anyone?”

“Not ... not anyone I know of, on this earth.”

“You're not a mystic,” Meredith said. “You don't mean some spirit may cause a miracle. You mean off the earth people may be able to help.” (McIntyre, 1989:36)

With this exchange, Snake recognises that there may be a way in which to redeem herself. If she can get to the offworlders and persuade them to give her another dreamsnake, she may be able to help Jesse and she may not have to return home in disgrace. Even though the offworlders have refused healers before, it is a chance that Snake must take. With the talk of the offworlders, comes the need to travel to Centre; Centre is the one large city left (on earth) and it is here that the offworlders conduct their affairs. As it turns out, Jesse's family is politically important in Centre and they may be willing to help Snake, who has helped Jesse. However, Jesse dies before the journey to Centre is even begun. She leaves Snake a last message.

“You keep going,” Jesse whispered.

“What?”

“To the city. You still have a claim on them.”

“Jesse, no-”

“Yes. They live under a stone sky, afraid of everything outside. They can help you, and they need your help. They’ll all go mad in a few more generations. Tell them I lived and was happy. Tell them I might not have died if they had told the truth. They said everything outside killed, so I thought nothing did.”
(McIntyre, 1989:53)

Jesse is Snake’s ‘supernatural principle of guardianship and direction’ (Campbell, 1993:73) because it is she who points Snake in the direction of Centre. However, it is also she who nudges Snake into a recognition of her responsibilities as a healer.

Snake knew she could not return to the healer’s station. Not yet. Tonight had proved that she could not stop being a healer, no matter how inadequate her tools. If her teachers took Mist and Sand [Snake’s other serpents] and cast her out, she knew she could not bear it. She would go mad with the knowledge that in this town or that camp, sickness or death occurred that she could have cured or prevented or made more tolerable. She would always try to do something. She had been raised to be proud and self-reliant, qualities she would have to set aside if she returned to the station now. She had promised Jesse she would take her last message to the city, and she would keep the promise. She would go for Jesse, and for herself. (McIntyre, 1989:56)

Snake is coming to realise what it means to be a healer, and also that she can be nothing else; her teachers have named her aptly. The agent of supernatural aid gives the hero a talisman which helps the hero to undertake the heroic journey, and points the hero in the direction of her destiny. In Jesse’s case, the talisman she offers Snake is Snake’s recognition of her calling.

However, McIntyre seems to invest more in Snake’s interaction with Jesse than just the offer of supernatural aid. Snake emerges from this encounter sure of her identity as a healer, having claimed that role consciously. She reminds us of the hero who has emerged from the Belly of the Whale. When Snake is confronted with Jesse, she is confronted by her worst fear: a patient who will die, and whose death she cannot ease. In

this way, Jesse also represents the Threshold Guardian in Snake's journey; Jesse forces Snake to confront her worst fears and emerge having gained access to her zone of magnified power. When Snake learns that she is a healer, regardless of her lack of dreamsnake, she crosses the first threshold into heroic being and claims her heroic identity (that of a healer). Snake, having had to take care of Jesse with nothing but her own compassion and mundane abilities (*sans* snakes), learns to access her zone of magnified power, a power of the heart. This is what makes her a true healer.

Snake is now ready to continue onto the next stage of the heroic monomyth, the Road of Trials. Campbell writes

The hero, whether god or goddess, man or woman, the figure in myth or the dreamer of a dream, discovers and assimilates his opposite (his own unsuspected self). ... One by one the resistances are broken. He must put aside his pride, his virtue, beauty and life, and bow or submit. ... The ordeal is a deepening of the problem of the first threshold and the question is still in balance: Can the ego put itself to death? (Campbell, 1993:108-109)

For Snake, who relies on scientific method and the abilities of her serpents, it is strange to realise that healing is more dependent on human courage and compassion than anything else. Snake must put aside her fears of failure and learn that the gifts she already has enable her to heal sickness that medicines cannot fix; in a world where science is expected to hold all the answers, Snake has to revert to fallible human sensitivity and compassion. Her trials during this stage of her journey reflect this, as did her meeting with the threshold guardian.

The first of the trials that the hero undergoes is that of her Meeting with the Goddess. It is interesting to note that McIntyre explores much the same issues here as Joanna Russ does

through Alyx. Once again, the goddess is not an alien ‘other’ to the hero; the goddess merely embodies an aspect of the hero’s anima which she has, as yet, not explored. This exploration is done in both these cases by means of the relationship between mother and child. Where Russ explores Alyx’s adoption of the role of the forbidding mother to Edarra, McIntyre has Snake adopt a nurturing role with a little girl she discovers. Both authors have their heroes resolve issues necessary to their heroic development through the exploration of the mother role and what it means, both for the one adopting the role and the ‘child’ in question.

Snake’s next stop along the heroic journey is a town called Mountainside. She is invited to stay in the Mayor’s residence where she discovers a little girl hiding in the stables. The girl has been hidden there by her guardian, the stable-master Ras; she has disfiguring burn scars on her face and torso. Snake meets the stable-master, and his attitude to the little girl is horrifying.

“Melissa’s going to exercise Squirrel for me,” Snake told him. “I said she could.”
“Who?”
“Melissa.”
“Someone from town?”
“Your stable-hand,” Snake said. “The redheaded child.”
“You mean Ugly?” He laughed.
Snake felt herself flushing scarlet with shock, then anger.
“How dare you taunt a child that way?”
“Taunt her? How? By telling her the truth? No one wants to look at her and it’s better she remembers it. Has she been bothering you?” (McIntyre, 1989:124)

Snake also realises that Ras has been beating the little girl, and abusing her sexually. She speaks to the Mayor who suggests that Melissa is unlikely to find love anywhere in Mountainside; he says that ‘appearances are important and they’re what people believe’ (McIntyre, 1989:153). Melissa has been rejected, and then abused by the people who are

meant to care for her. When Snake enters Melissa's life, however, a change is about to take place; the Mother Goddess enters the heroic monomyth and commands the attention of both characters. It is very important that, although Snake cannot heal Melissa with medicines, when she adopts the young girl she begins the process of psychological healing that Melissa needs. Campbell describes this in his *Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

The mythological figure of the Universal Mother imputes to the cosmos the feminine attributes of the first, nourishing and protecting presence. The fantasy is primarily spontaneous; for there exists a close and obvious correspondence between the attitude of the young child toward its mother and that of the adult toward the surrounding material world. (Campbell, 1993:113)

During this episode, Snake becomes Melissa's mother, and she is the first nourishing presence the little girl has felt. As Snake becomes comfortable with this role, that of the Mother, and as the relationship between the two characters develops, the Meeting with the Goddess is accomplished; her energies are made explicit in Snake's actions.

At this point it is interesting to take into account Pearson and Pope's observations regarding the female hero's relationship with the mother figure. They write that

When women are portrayed as heroes ... their journeys do not conform to traditional theory. The female hero does initially leave the childhood home, and she often rejects her mother when she begins to search for fulfilment through romantic love. At some point, however, as we have seen, she becomes disillusioned. Rejecting both the man she finds and the idea of being a helpmate, object or symbol in his heroic journey, she elects instead to develop within herself the qualities society has seen as male. To the degree that the traditional male mode of heroism is assumed by the author to be the pattern of human heroism, her journey will end at this point. In a large number of works, the female hero goes one step further: Having discovered the powerful father within herself, she reconsiders her original repudiation of the mother. Her quest becomes a search for her true, powerful female parent. The reconciliation with the mother allows the hero to develop within herself human qualities such as nurturance, intuition and compassion, which the culture denigrates as female. By extension, she is able to develop positive, sympathetic affiliations with other women. The hero comes to

understand that neither “male” nor “female” qualities are positive when isolated from their complements. (Pearson & Pope, 1981:177)

And so the female hero, in her Meeting with the Goddess, seems particularly open to the experience of communion with the Mother. She learns about her own feminine potential and re-evaluates that power and does come to nurture better relationships with the women around her. Russ’s Alyx learns to encourage Edarra’s freedom in her encounter with the Mother goddess and Snake learns the healing potential of the nurturing Mother. In both cases, the lesson is hero-specific. In Snake’s case, it is vital that she begins Melissa’s healing through her own compassion and sensitivity and not through any science. As Campbell suggests

The goddess ... requires that the hero should be endowed with ... the “gentle heart” ... she (can) be comprehended and rightly served, but only by gentleness. (Campbell, 1993:118)

The second of the trials that the hero undergoes is called Woman as Temptress by Campbell. In this stage, as has been previously discussed, the male hero is meant to withstand the seduction of the Temptress and emerge with his virtue intact and unsullied. Most female authors of heroic tales use this particular trial to undermine the assumption that female sexuality must find expression in an (evil) temptress who is out to get the pure, protesting male hero. This is usually accomplished through a role reversal or the expression of healthy sexual appetites on the parts of both the male and female characters. McIntyre explores this heroic trial in a particularly interesting manner because her female hero plays the ‘temptress’ to a young man who is the blushing almost-virgin.

In the future that McIntyre creates, every person has learned to control their reproductive capabilities in order to prevent unwanted pregnancy. Gabriel, the son of Mountainside's Mayor, has failed to learn biocontrol and so he is treated as a dangerous outcast, someone who cannot be given love lest it lead to physical complications. During her interactions with Gabriel, Snake realises that it is only because Gabriel has been taught by someone practicing outdated methods that he has suffered as he has. She suggests that he find a new teacher. But, apart from this, Snake also begins to help Gabriel overcome his fear of his own sexuality. The two of them enjoy a number of sexual encounters in which Snake's desire and compassion overcome Gabriel's timidity and shame. The woman who is the 'temptress' is also, in this case, both healer and hero. McIntyre presents a world in which sexuality is healthy and in which neither gender is constrained by societal taboos. She subverts the myth of evil female sexual voracity by highlighting the healing that takes place between Snake and Gabriel, and by switching the roles we expect from each gender. Snake emerges from this encounter having set Gabriel on the path to healing. Once again, she has had to rely on herself rather than medical science. She is now ready for her following trial, Atonement with the Father.

Snake and Melissa continue from Mountainside on to Centre, where their requests for dreamsnakes are coldly rejected. Even Jesse's family refuses to let Snake into the city or offer her any real aid. Dejected, Snake and Melissa turn back towards the healer's station. On their way home Snake and Melissa are accosted by a crazy man who tries to steal Snake's dreamsnake; he is unaware that Grass is dead. Snake learns from this crazy that there is a place to the south called the broken dome, where a man named North has a

number of dreamsnakes. He uses the dreamsnake venom as a pleasure drug, and he has a small following who do his bidding for the drug. Snake, because she walks the heroic path, is once more led by destiny to discover a way in which to redeem herself and liberate her world. Snake and Melissa follow the crazy to the broken dome, where they meet North. This encounter with North serves as Snake's next trial, Atonement with the Father.

In the Atonement with the Father stage, the hero meets the Father God, the terrifying deity who holds both the power to smite humanity or show them mercy and grace. The Father God is the ultimate Ogre Tyrant who holds all of destiny in his hands, and it is only as the hero confronts the god that he or she learns that god is beneficent (Campbell, 1993:129-130).

The traditional idea of initiation combines an introduction of the candidate into the techniques, duties and prerogatives of his vocation with a radical readjustment of his emotional relationship to the parental images. The mystagogue (father or father-substitute) is to entrust the symbols of office only to a son who has been effectively purged of all inappropriate infantile cathexes – for whom the just, impersonal exercise of the powers will not be rendered impossible by the unconscious (or perhaps even conscious and rationalised) motives of self-aggrandisement, personal preference, or resentment. Ideally, the one invested has been divested of his mere humanity and is representative of an impersonal cosmic force. (Campbell, 1993:137)

This is what Snake has learned to be during her previous trials; having been stripped of her pride and her 'learning' by the death of Grass, Snake has had to discover that healing is far more than tools and techniques. She has, however, surrendered herself to the call to heal, and she has done so with no expectation of status or respect. Snake still expects to be cast out as a healer.

In *Dreamsnake*, North plays the part of the tyrannical Father God. It is interesting that McIntyre, like Russ and Moore, undermines the patriarchal tyranny of the god. In Russ, Alyx kills the god; in Moore, Jarisme defies the god; and, in McIntyre, Snake topples the god from his position of power. None of these heroes seeks atonement with the father at all; rather, they deny his claim to any power. It is the female hero's prerogative to defy the 'man' who sits atop the patriarchal hierarchy, and she does this because the author presents the Father as Ogre, rather than as a fair and benevolent force. To Snake, this particular Ogre-god is personally offensive.

That North had set himself up as a minor god, requiring tribute, using the power of the dreamsnakes to enforce his authority, angered Snake as much as anything else she had heard. Or, rather, offended her. Snake had been taught, and believed very deeply, that using healer's serpents for self-aggrandisement was immoral and unforgivable. While visiting other people she had heard children's stories in which villains or tragic heroes used magical abilities to make tyrants of themselves; they always came to bad ends. But healers had no such stories. It was not fear that kept them from misusing what they had. It was self respect. (McIntyre, 1989:231)

In this case, the god, who is meant to teach the hero impersonal and righteous use of power, is merely a petty tyrant himself.

North discovers Snake snooping around his dome and throws her into a pit full of dreamsnakes, while he and his followers disappear to enjoy the drugs they have at their disposal. It is while she is here, among the dreamsnakes, that North unwittingly bestows upon the hero The Ultimate Boon. (The Ultimate Boon is the knowledge or gift the god gives to the hero, which the hero must take back to his or her people so that they may benefit from it.)

When Snake eventually wakes up in the pit, she is aware that night has fallen and is surprised that North is willing to leave the dreamsnakes in such a cold environment; the healers have always assumed the cold would be bad for the snakes. However, alone with the snakes, and in an environment in which they seem at home, Snake watches the serpents and realises that there are snakes of a maturity that the healers have never seen. There are tiny hatchlings too. It is here that Snake learns the secret of the dreamsnake.

Before her hand could move, if it would move, she saw the serpents. Because many more than one remained. Two, no, three dreamsnakes twined themselves around each other only an arm's length away. None was the huge one; none was much bigger than Grass had been. They writhed and coiled together, marking the frost with dark hieroglyphics that Snake could not read. The symbols had a meaning, of that she was sure, if only she could decipher them. (McIntyre, 1989:253)

Snake watches the movements of the snakes on the frosted ground and what she reads in these hieroglyphic patterns, is the breeding behaviour of the dreamsnakes. Snake realises that the snakes are breeding, in the cold and not in pairs, but in triplets. The healers' attempts to get the snakes to breed have failed because they have assumed the dreamsnakes to be like earth's snakes. This new knowledge of the snakes' habits will enable the healers to breed more dreamsnakes and enable more healers to go out into the world and save lives, and, the more healers there are, the less likely it will be that people like Melissa and Gabriel will be hurt. The dreamsnakes will allow healers the opportunity to do the work they have been called to do, and this Ultimate Boon will save humanity.

When Snake comes to her senses, she catches a number of the wild dreamsnakes and climbs out of the pit to find Melissa and North. Snake finds North's followers all lying in the sun in a drug-induced stupor. She sets the dreamsnakes they have been using free;

when North tries to stop her, he is bitten by one of the serpents and falls to the ground, unconscious. Snake has toppled North's empire. McIntyre describes North's broken dome as an alien garden of Eden, with lush alien plants growing in abandon and spilling out onto the terrestrial desert. It is here that Snake defies the rule of the tyrant god who has held earth at his mercy and claims the wisdom he has closeted for herself. This situation is reminiscent of that in Judeo-Christian mythology. In the case of Snake and North, however, that Snake defies North's tyranny and takes power into her own hands is a good thing. What McIntyre consciously suggests is that the snake's action ultimately leads to the freeing of man and woman from tyrannical godhead: her subversion of the Judeo-Christian myth suggests a further liberation of women from sanctified religious oppression by the patriarchy. In McIntyre's myth, serpent and woman are one, and it is Snake who is righteous, not the god, North.

Northrop Frye writes in *The Secular Scripture* that

The closer romance comes to a world of original identity, the more clearly something of the symbolism of the garden of Eden reappears, with the social setting reduced to the love of individual men and women within an order of nature that has been reconciled to humanity. (Frye, 1976:149)

It is interesting that it is at this point in Snake's journey that McIntyre makes explicit her connection of Snake with the garden of Eden. The hero's quest is almost complete; the hero has had her encounter with the father god and claimed the Ultimate Boon. Her identity is whole and her heroic ethic is fully developed; she is about to set her world right. Having defeated the god who held paradise in his selfish grasp, the hero may now return Eden to her people. So McIntyre has Snake discover a real (albeit alien) garden of

Eden, and has her hero emerge victorious from this Eden as she reconciles alien nature with that of earth, through the dreamsnakes.

Having defeated North, however, Snake must now escape from the god's domain. Snake finds Melissa, who is also drugged and unconscious and she tries to carry her daughter out of North's compound. This flight from North's alien garden of Eden signifies Snake's return to her own world but, because she and Melissa are both so weak, this return to the world is very difficult. Usually at this stage in the heroic tale, the hero is usually offered aid from his or her own world and there is a Rescue from Without. In this case, Arevin (from the desert tribe), has been trailing Snake for some time and arrives at this particular moment to help Snake escape from North. He helps Snake and Melissa get clear of North and then he helps Snake revive her daughter.

With Arevin's help, Snake returns to her world, bringing with her the wisdom she has gained, the knowledge of the dreamsnakes' breeding habits, and the gift of a number of snakes.

At the successful completion of her heroic quest, Snake speaks to Arevin thus:

“Arevin, I wish Grass were still alive. I can't pretend that I don't. But my negligence killed him, nothing else. I've never thought anything but that...if Grass hadn't died, I'd never have started home when I did.”

Arevin smiled slightly.

“And if I hadn't come back then,” Snake said, “I never would have gone to Centre. I never would have found Melissa. And I never would have encountered the crazy or heard about the broken dome. It's as if your clan acted as a catalyst. If not for you we would have kept on begging the city people for dreamsnakes, and they would have kept on refusing us. The healers would have gone on

unchanging until there were no dreamsnakes and no healers left. That's all different now." (McIntyre, 1989:276)

The hero has come the full round of the heroic monomyth. Snake has earned the Freedom to Live as a healer; no one can deny her this now.

Snake is a culture hero because she achieves her goals through steadfastness, courage, compassion and wisdom. She has the humility to realise her own limitations, and has the courage to take responsibility for her mistakes. She undertakes the heroic quest, during which she learns about herself, and discovers an ethic that makes her a fine healer. When she completes the heroic quest, the changes she produces in her world have nothing to do with battle or bloodshed. Instead, they have more to do with knowledge and wisdom, and a new way of approaching the world. This new way of approaching the world is the vital gift of the culture hero to her society; she has overcome the tyrant Holdfast and instituted a new regime in the place of his outdated system. She now holds the sceptre of dominion and surrenders it to her people. These changes which the culture hero institutes will have far reaching consequences and are completely separate from her as a figure. Snake has discovered something of great significance, and it is that discovery that will be important, not the healer who made it. This is the essence of the culture hero. McIntyre, like Russ and Moore, has written a female hero who is as heroic as any male hero could be; we are never tempted to doubt either Snake's integrity or her ability.

The second culture hero that we will look at is Tannith Lee's priestess, Oaive, in her book *The Winter Players*. The figure of the priestess is different from that of the healer because she relies on resources and powers more removed from the practical world. But this is

also a part of the culture hero's portfolio, as it were; the culture hero is able to access supernatural beings and spiritual wisdom to aid him or her in his or her quest. It is interesting to note the different strengths that are encompassed by the culture hero type, and to see them represented by Snake and Oaive.

Lee opens her book with a description of her lonely hero. While this makes the reader sympathetic to Oaive, it also forces the reader to acknowledge the isolated position of the heroic individual, which we are wont to forget in the foreknowledge of their inevitable final success.

Oaive learned early on that she was different. The children never added her to their games, and they were never rude to her. Even when she was a baby they looked at her as if she were full-grown. Neither was she given chores, as were other girls. She went to the shrine instead, to be instructed by the priestess. (Lee, 1988:8)

The role of priestess is also a familiar role for the culture-hero to play because the priestess, like the healer, is often responsible for the well-being of her people. This position of responsibility lends itself naturally to the possibility of heroic development because it sets the character apart from society and from the first demands of the character certain services. From the quotation we are able to recognize that Oaive is set apart from birth; she has her destiny mapped out, insofar as being priestess is concerned, before she is able to make any conscious choice of her own.

This seems to be a problem specific to characters who play the role of the priestess; Le Guin's Tenar, in her book *The Tombs of Atuan* is also trapped by the role that her society would have her play and the entire book is about Tenar's liberation from this restrictive

position. As Arha, the Eaten One, Tenar is expected to carry on the rituals of her community even though she finds them oppressive and frightening; it is in her move away from this imposition of power that Tenar frees herself, and her community which is similarly bound to ritual. For Oaive, the situation is similar; she too must realize that she has an identity apart from the relatively small one accorded her by her village and she must move to discover this heroic identity.

Oaive lives in a fisher village where she ministers to the people's needs and acts as guardian of their shrine. In the shrine are three holy Relics whose history has been lost in time, but the devotion of the people and their priestess to these Relics remains strong and faithful. When one of the Relics is stolen by a stranger, Oaive must undertake the journey to retrieve it. As she travels the path before her, Oaive accepts the responsibility of heroic action and, like Snake, Alyx and Jirel, she changes the history of her world.

Tanith Lee begins Oaive's story with the arrival of a stranger in the fisher-village; Oaive learns that the stranger means to visit the shrine and something within her feels that this meeting with the stranger will be auspicious.

A cold wind was stirring from the hillside. Oaive felt it pass like an omen. She had been trained to know such things, both external signs and those signs she felt within herself. From the moment the boy spoke of the stranger, she had been uneasy. A young man with an old man's hair, and a sword at his side...She would do nothing yet. Her instincts had warned her, well and good. Now she must wait and see. (Lee, 1988:11)

The woman who will become a hero feels herself on the brink of something; this appearance in Oaive's life of something new and unknown is the herald of the heroic

experience. She is being called to awaken. The mysterious stranger arrives at the shrine and forces himself past Oaive to steal one of the Relics, a small fragment of Bone. When she demands his name, he suggests she simply call him 'Grey' for his silver hair. He knocks her unconscious as he leaves, brushing aside her magic as though it were nothing.

When Oaive wakes up, we are told that, 'she felt a sense of failure and loss that was hard to bear. She needed to weep, to ask someone to aid her. But she was unused to shedding tears, or to seeking counsel or comfort. She was the priestess. She was alone' (Lee, 1988:21). Oaive calls the villagers together in order to discuss her plans to follow Grey and retrieve the Bone, but the people cannot understand her need for action.

They muttered sullenly. She was abandoning them. They did not understand her impulse, the importance of this deed to her. Naturally they had never seen the Bone, experienced the quickening that seemed awake in it. But it was more than this. It was not merely what had been stolen ... she could not really explain, even to herself, what impelled her to follow the thief. It was like breathing. She could do nothing else. (Lee, 1988:25)

The villagers react negatively to Oaive's offer to restore their Relic to them because they cannot comprehend her desire to leave them. As far as they are concerned, she is defying the tradition that they expect her to uphold. Because of this, she must act alone, with only her own conviction as support; she decides to follow Grey and the decision to act against the wishes of the elders signifies the beginning of Oaive's heroic journey. Grey's appearance and Oaive's compulsion to follow him sound Oaive's Call to Adventure.

Tanith Lee presents us with a priestess who has an active anima but a repressed animus. Oaive has never left home because she is bound to the role of nurturing the villagers; she

is expected to be selfless, self-sacrificing and gentle, which are all attributes of the anima. Oaive does not even expect love or human friendship in return for her sacrifice. However, when Grey enters Oaive's life he is, like Alyx's pirate captain, a representative of Oaive's externalized, masculine animus. He forces Oaive to leave the village and take the masculine aggressive action that she would never have taken in the past. It is through her interaction with Grey that Oaive is able to re-internalise the active attributes of her animus to balance the anima she represents.

Like Alyx, Oaive must bring both anima and animus into balance if she is to be heroic. An over-emphasis on the anima strips a person of their ability to effect change and take action. This is the antithesis of the heroic personality. It is interesting that both Alyx and Oaive, who come from relatively traditional, old-fashioned societies, are the heroes who are presented as having externalized their animus. Because they both come from societies which expect women to behave in certain manner, they have been unable to express whole personalities (with active feminine traits and active masculine traits). As they begin the heroic journey, their first task is therefore to claim their dissociated animus and become whole people, able to perform the tasks of the hero, who must have access to both generative forces within the human psyche.

Before Oaive can follow Grey, however, she has first to receive her talisman from the agent of Supernatural Aid. Interestingly enough, it is the shrine itself (and by implication the 'god' Oaive serves) that helps her.

She felt sure the violated shrine would have retained some evidence of (Grey's) coming, his wolf's going, however slight, to help her. Even if it were only a hair

from his sea-silver head. ... She went outside the courtyard, and studied the rough surface of the wall. In the angle between two blocks, a tiny scrap of grey cloth was caught, torn off by the sharp teeth of the stone. So I have you, she thought with grim triumph. Her heart beat fast, warming her. She was surprised by her determined hunger to catch and destroy him. (Lee, 1988:25-26)

The shrine acts as Oaive's agent of Supernatural Aid because, with the scrap of cloth that it has 'caught' for her, she will be able to track Grey's movements and follow him.

The next stage Oaive must successfully navigate is Crossing the First Threshold. As has been discussed, it is during this stage that the hero must choose her heroic identity from among those presented to her and she must confront the Threshold Guardian. Grey, who has forced Oaive to leave her village and enter the unknown, and therefore frightening, land 'beyond the mist', is the threshold guardian from whom Oaive must learn to access her zone of magnified power.

As Oaive travels, she finds that Grey has told villagers along the way that she is an evil witch that they should shun, and drive from their homes. Because of this, Oaive has no help from anyone along her journey.

Clever Grey.

She could guess his story, and the way he told it.

The wicked witch from the coast pursued him, for the sake of vengeance. Probably without cause. He had twisted the ears of her pet cat, or trodden on a toad. The witch was mad, evil, and had sly magics. Avoid and beware of her. She might only seem a young girl but that was just the guise she took on to fool you. Under it she was old and foul, with snakes for hair. (Lee, 1988:31)

This is the first identity with which Grey presents Oaive. She is disheartened by the fact that people see her as someone of whom to be afraid, but she does not take this identity to

heart. Instead, she continues to follow Grey and learns more about herself. As she travels, Oaive internalizes the capacity for movement beyond bounds, which is one of the active attributes of the animus. As well as this, the fact that Grey prevents Oaive from receiving any help along the way forces her to develop self-sufficiency. This independence, too, is an attribute of the masculine animus. Grey is already teaching Oaive something of her hitherto unused power.

Oaive follows Grey and when she eventually catches up to him, he is on a large boat in the middle of a lake; she takes a smaller boat and follows him. When Grey realizes that Oaive has caught him, he calls up a huge storm which capsizes her small boat. He does not, however, allow her to drown; Grey brings Oaive aboard his own ship; while Oaive is in the water, she hears a voice calling to her.

Fool. Stupid witch-fool. Someone cursed in her ear. Don't drown you damned and worthless girl. She tried to blot out this disturbing voice. The silence was more friendly. Fool. Listen, fool. The Relic. The Bone. I stole it from you. Are you going to let me take it after all? Oh, it's easy to drown, easier than making the effort to beat me. But you're going to, by the blood and soul in your body, you are. (Lee, 1988:45-46)

The threshold guardian is testing the strengths of the hero; she must prove worthy of his gifts in order for him to allow her access to her zone of magnified power, or to cross the first threshold. Campbell writes that

With the personifications 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. Such custodians bound the world in the four directions ... beyond them is darkness, the unknown, and danger; just as beyond the parental watch is danger to the infant and beyond the protection of his society danger to the member of the tribe. ... Thus the (hero) ... had to be cozened and urged on like (a child), because of (his) fear. (Campbell, 1993:78)

The hero must be able to confront the threshold guardian, because, if he or she cannot overcome the guardian, they will not be able to complete the tasks to follow. However, the threshold guardian, while he or she (or it) appears to be the hero's enemy, can also be the force which 'cozens' the hero on. In this case, it is only because of Grey's strange encouragement that Oaive splutters to life in the water and surfaces to face him.

When Oaive realizes what Grey has done, she begins to realize the part he plays in her adventure.

Oaive began to talk slowly, feeling her way with each sentence: "You could have stolen the Relic without visiting the shrine beforehand - yet you came, and in your fashion you told me what you meant to do. You realized I must go after you. You put trouble in my road - but I overcame it. Perhaps you knew I could. When I lost you, there was still a kind of guidance, as if I were *meant* to find you. ... You hired the gaudiest ship ... you summoned the storm and you could have been rid of me in it. Instead -"

"You should have mastered the storm," he said to her. Amazed, she watched his face grow bleak with anger. "You could have mastered it. The power's there in you, if only you had the brain to harness it."

"So you wished me to - *overcome* your magic? It was a test of me? You are disappointed that I failed. Why?" (Lee, 1988:48)

Grey tells Oaive that he has stolen the Relic for someone else; this person is Oaive's true enemy. The threshold guardian's task is to ready the hero for her ultimate confrontation, and this is what Grey does for Oaive. In the Belly of the Whale, once again, the hull of a ship, Oaive learns of her true potential. She is a powerful sorceress who must believe in her ability in order to overcome the evil with which she will be confronted; this is her true identity. And with this knowledge, Oaive is finally able to access her zone of magnified power and her own magical abilities are greatly strengthened. Grey teaches Oaive to claim her independent animus and introduces Oaive to her true potential; now the hero must emerge from the Belly of the Whale and continue with her quest.

As Oaive emerges from the Belly of the Whale, Lee employs an image which is particularly reminiscent of birth; in this case, Oaive's rebirth into the world. Oaive moves out of the Belly of the Whale, steps off the boat over the water of the lake, and flies with her feet just over the waves to the shore. This movement from the watery world of the boat and the lake to solid earth reflects Oaive's transition from a fluid, unsure identity to the definite identity of the hero.

Once upon the Road of Trials, the first stage through which the hero passes is her Meeting with the Goddess. In *The Winter Players*, Tanith Lee uses much the same technique as Russ uses in *The Adventures of Alyx*; Oaive is the goddess, as Alyx is identified with the goddess in Russ's work. It is important that Oaive becomes identified with the goddess because, as with Alyx, when acknowledged, the power of the anima allows the female hero to recognise certain strengths in herself as *strengths* rather than womanish weaknesses. Identification with the feminine principle (the goddess), lends the anima an arcane power that it might otherwise not be acknowledged to have. Oaive, although she does not yet have an active animus, displays a very active anima and it is the feminine power that she derives from this anima that supports her when she undertakes the heroic journey. For example, apart from the call to follow Grey, it is also her feminine need to protect her people that makes Oaive attempt the retrieval of the Relic (Lee, 1988:22-23).

Oaive is often referred to as a 'sea-witch' and is shown in sympathy with water. This identification of her with the ocean is important because of the ocean's association with the feminine; it is unknowable, mysterious and powerful. This ties Oaive to the unconscious, to intuition and all that which is identified with the feminine principle or the goddess. When we meet Oaive, she is also weaving cloth, and reads omens into the cloth when threads break. This image echoes that of the Fates, the three goddesses, Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos, who weave time and human destiny. This becomes an important association when the reader discovers later in the book that Oaive is able to weave time and destiny according to her will too. As well as these two indicators of Oaive's identification with the goddess, there is another woven into the novel. Oaive is the guardian of the shrine at which three Relics are kept, the most important of which is a Bone. Oaive's entire religion is based solely on the existence of the Bone and yet, we learn later that the Bone is from Oaive's own finger. Oaive is herself, the author of the religion she serves, she is the 'Goddess' who is worshipped.

This identification of Oaive with the Goddess is very important because it serves to emphasise Oaive's power, and the power of the feminine principle. However, one must not forget that it is through the healthy incorporation of the activity of the animus that Oaive's powerful anima is allowed practical heroic expression.

Lee skips the next stage of Campbell's monomyth (Woman as Temptress) and speeds her goddess Oaive onto Atonement with the Father. That Lee chooses to have Oaive bypass this particular stage of the heroic monomyth suggests, in a way different from those

employed by the other authors we have considered, that this issue of delinquent or evil feminine sexuality does not merit the attention of either a female author or a female hero.

The rest of Lee's novel is taken up with the issue of the hero's Atonement with the Father. Like the other three authors we have considered, Lee does not present a benign, fair Father God. In *The Winter Players* the god is represented by an evil spirit who has possessed the body of a dead sorcerer. This spirit wreaks havoc on the land and is viciously cruel; it is the female hero's task to overthrow the reign of this Ogre Tyrant who has assumed the position of god over the people. It is interesting that each of the female heroes we have met has been pitted against the Father God, who comes to represent all the evils of a stagnant and tyrannical patriarchal rule; the authors suggest that the natural nemesis of the male tyrant is the female hero. Not one of the female heroes seeks atonement with the god; instead, they each, in their turn, deny his authority and define their own realities. It seems that the female hero, more than the male hero, wrests from the world the right to self-definition and control of her own destiny. She cannot submit to the Father God.

An interesting aside at this point is that, given the Celtic names Lee uses in this book, the correct pronunciation of Oaive's name is 'eve.' In Scots Gaelic, the sound produced by a combination of the 'o', 'a' and 'i' is something like that in *keen*. (McKillop, 1998:xxvii) Oaive's name therefore recalls for us the Judeo-Christian character, Eve. Lee's connection of her character with Eve, recalls for us the same things that McIntyre's Snake does: Oaive becomes associated with the woman who subverted the rule of the

patriarchal Judeo-Christian God. Our Oaive, like Snake in *Dreamsnake*, can therefore be expected to do the same in Lee's story. This connection of Oaive with the Judeo-Christian Eve also emphasizes Oaive's association with the goddess and the feminine principle, as Eve is the mother of all women. Like Snake, Oaive therefore becomes imbued with an arcane feminine potential for the subversion of patriarchal rule, and this is what she does in this episode.

Oaive follows Grey to his destination, where Grey hands the Bone to an old sorcerer. The reader learns that the sorcerer was Grey's mentor once upon a time; but his body is now possessed by an evil spirit called Niwus. The spirit, on entering the body, bound Grey to its will and changed Grey's entire family into wolves, leaving Grey's kingdom derelict. The entire place is a dead winter-land in which Oaive hears nothing but the ghoulis mourning of the wind. Niwus reigns here and cares nothing for those who live within his realm. However, there is one thing which does pierce the consciousness of the evil spirit; the sorcerer says that Oaive's Bone has been calling to him, a distant threat that he can ignore no longer.

"Here it is," he said. "It's very powerful. I don't know why. Perhaps it is only because generations of priestesses have venerated it, and built up its power. You venerate it, do you not?"

Oaive caught back a cry. For it was more than veneration. It was like regaining her lost child, or a treasure from the sea.

"From the beginning of this second life of mine," he said, "I have sought the Bone and its magic. I do not recall the life I lived before this. I lost my memories when I lost my flesh. Now, I daily forget the memories of my spirit existence since I have flesh again. Yet, from the very first, it always seems to me, I sought the Bone and its magic. I know it. It is a sort of dread, and a sort of yearning. Presently and together we will bind it with spells. Then I shall grind it in powder. I shall eat it; its sorcery will pass into my blood, become part of me. I shall not have to fear or seek it any more. Its magic will be mine." (Lee, 1988:72)

Oaive refuses to help the sorcerer, because she recognizes his evil and the dread curse he would bring to bear on the rest of the world were he to gain more power. She can also not bring herself to part with the Bone fragment. With the Bone in her Hand, Oaive tries to escape Niwus. She slides into her mind, and a chanting fills her head; she hears the voices of all the priestesses of the shrine through the ages, and they call her to safety.

Abruptly ... she was running on a black road in a black mist, and something hopped before her – the Bone. She had let it fall and it had taken on life. It was leading her towards a place she could not see in the dark.

Oaive knew where she was, and how she had come there. She had travelled in time. And in place. In desperation, she had dared match her own power against Niwus, and that power had pushed her across geography and across centuries, to the one sanctuary that might protect and strengthen her – the site of the shrine. This was the era of the making –or discovery of the Relics. They were the source of the shrine's magic, as the shrine was the source of her magic. (Lee, 1988:80)

That Oaive travels through time is very interesting; like Jirel and Alyx, Lee has Oaive defy the constraints of patriarchal time. Julia Kristeva writes that, in considering time, 'we confront two temporal dimensions: the time of linear history, of *cursive time* (as Nietzsche called it), and the time of another history, thus another time, *monumental time* (again, according to Nietzsche).' (Kristeva, 1991:85) Where linear history creates certain boundaries within which large bodies of people define themselves (for example, Europeans defining themselves according to their shared history and art etc), monumental history allows the creation of different boundaries and therefore the definition of oneself according to different specifications (for example, European *women*). So that, 'insofar as they also belong to "monumental history", they will not be only European "young people" or "women" of Europe but will echo in a most specific way the universal traits of their structural place in reproduction and its representatives.' (Kristeva, 1991:85)

Kristeva suggests that women create a different mode of time for themselves because they are women. This means that women experience time differently from men, and it is this that the authors I have discussed use to their advantage; the characters are not bound to linear time, and their conscious fluidity within time allows them a freedom of movement that the male characters in these books rarely share. Kristeva writes that

As for time, female subjectivity would seem to provide a specific measure that essentially retains repetition and eternity from among the multiple modalities of time known through the history of civilizations. On the one hand, there are cycles, gestation, the eternal recurrence of a biological rhythm which conforms to that of nature and imposes a temporality whose stereotyping may shock, but whose regularity and unison with what is experienced as extrasubjective time, cosmic time, occasion vertiginous visions and unnamable jouissance. On the other hand, and perhaps as a consequence, there is the massive presence of monumental temporality, without cleavage, or escape, which has little to do with linear time (which passes) that the very word “temporality” hardly fits. (Kristeva, 1991:86)

Oaive shows this experience of time when she escapes from Niwus. And that it is through the shared experience of the priestesses through time that she is able to escape reflects what Kristeva has suggested; it is this shared experience of the women that enables Oaive to reach back through time, along the cycle of ritual and echo to reach a place of safety. It is the rhythm of life that all these women have shared that allows Oaive to access a time other than that of linear temporality because they have, together, created another time in which their experience constitutes an accessible monumental temporality. Lee has created a character who, like the Fates, weaves time; it is a power that Kristeva suggests most women share. Oaive experiences this movement in time, and she feels peculiarly safe.

Lee writes

(Oaive) did not feel any panic or bewilderment. She did not ask herself if, having entered the past, she could return to her present. This was because she had experienced, for the first time, and to the full, the might of her own sorcery. She

marveled. Grey had told her, if she would believe in herself, she could do all she must. (Lee, 1988:81)

While Oaive is in the past, she meets the people who will eventually be her villagers and she begins to teach them what will be the legacy passed from priestess to priestess. While she is with these people, she searches the surrounding area for the Relics, but they have not yet been found. Before she manages to find the Bone in this time, however, Oaive realizes that Niwus has managed to track her passage through time and both he and Grey have come for her. She pieces together the puzzle that is the Relics and her journey through time, and uses her knowledge to defeat Niwus, the evil Ogre Tyrant-God, in their final encounter.

When the three of them meet, Niwus causes Grey to become a wolf and commands it to attack Oaive. Oaive, however, calls Grey by his real name, Cyrdin, changing him back into a man. While this is happening, she freezes Niwus in time, giving Cyrdin time to draw his sword and kill Niwus. As the sword slices through Niwus, one of Oaive's fingers is cut and she loses a piece of bone. Niwus's ring falls to the earth, and Cyrdin loses a jewel from the cape he wears. These three items will eventually become the Relics. As Oaive and Grey reflect on what has just happened, Oaive comes to a realization.

“There is still the future,” she said. “Even though Niwus died here in the past, in the future he has yet to be. The wandering spirit will enter the priest's body, he will force you into bondage, he will curse your house. You will kill your father and run with the wolf pack. Then Niwus will send you to steal the Bone. With his sorcerous gift, he always sensed the Bone would destroy him, and, in trying to avoid destruction, he caused it. But, consider, the three of *us* have given the Relics to this people. It will all begin once more. In the future you will thief the Bone, and I will go after you. I shall confront Niwus and travel the Time Road, then we

shall fight him again in this cave – and again the Ring, the Jewel, the Bone will be left in the dust for the people to adopt. It is endless, Grey. We are caught in a wheel of time, turning forever.” (Lee, 1988:97)

Oaive and Grey contemplate what action to take, and it is here that the female hero, independent of the supposedly edifying effect of the god, undergoes her Apotheosis. When the hero undergoes the apotheosis, she gives up any self that she has cherished, and sacrifices all for the people around her; the hero is willing at this moment to give up her life for the redemption, the good of the human beings she has chosen to serve. Oaive knows that she must move through time to stop the spirit from entering the priest’s body; this is the only way to truly destroy Niwus and save Cyrdin and his people from the God Tyrant. However, if she does this, she knows she will lose herself to time.

“...we will never meet Oaive.”

“More than that,” she said, “we will never leave in this cave a Ring, a Jewel and a piece of Bone, since we will never have come here. *There will be no Relics.* Neither shall I have stayed among the copper-people to teach them my healing or prayer. There will be no shrine, no Ritual. In my future, what shall *I* be?” “Oaive,” he said, “it is too much. Everything on my side, and nothing for you...” She smiled. “I saw your face. I saw the light in it. If I ignored your happiness last time, I cannot any longer.” (Lee, 1988:98)

Oaive steps back into Time and changes the world’s history.

Oaive, unlike the other heroes we have dealt with, does not return to her world bearing a Boon, nor does she earn the Freedom to Live, or become Master of the Two Worlds; Oaive gives herself up and no longer exists as she was when we knew her in the future that eventually comes to pass.

On an initial reading, it may appear that the female hero, Oaive, has merely submitted, once again, to the patriarchy – persuaded by the myth of romantic love to give up her heroic endeavour. However, in the case of the priestess hero, like the saint, self-sacrifice is one of the primary virtues of the hero in question. It is not a question of submission of self to patriarchal or human society but a surrender of oneself to the cosmos in order to effect the redemption of the world. Joseph Campbell calls this person, ‘The Hero as World Redeemer’ and says, ‘The hero of yesterday becomes the tyrant of tomorrow, unless he crucifies *himself* today.’ (Campbell, 1993:353) Oaive, unless she ‘crucifies’ herself, knows that she will bring about a future containing the tyrant who has brutalized the people of Grey’s kingdom. And so, when she chooses to surrender herself, she becomes the world redeemer and eliminates the tyrant from world destiny. Her heroic action cannot therefore be contained by the small bounds of the myth of romantic love.

And so Oaive, the hero as we know her, ceases to be. But Tanith Lee does not leave her hero no reward. In the last chapter of the book the reader is shown a fisher village in which there are a number of witches who are allowed to marry and live full lives. Oaive is not set apart from the others in this village; she has friends and is happy. A stranger arrives in the village one day, a young man with grey hair. His name is Cyrdin and he tells this young Oaive that a woman who looks much like her appeared to him many years before. She left him a Bone fragment, and invited him to seek her out in the future; Grey and Oaive meet in this alternate future too, and are happy. Perhaps Tanith Lee does allow her hero the Freedom to Live, in a manner of speaking.

The existence of the bone fragment in this alternate reality reflects the strange paradox of Oaive's existence. This other young girl smiles at Cyrdin and denies that the bone is hers, holding up two whole hands to prove it, and yet it is her bone. It is hers, and it belongs to the Oaive who no longer exists. That the bone is still in this reality, however, acts as a reminder of the life that was given to facilitate this new time, this new world. Northrop Frye writes that

In ordinary life there are two central data of experience that we cannot see without external assistance: our own faces and our existence in time. To see the first we have to look in a mirror, and to see the second we have to check the dial of a clock. The night world progressively becomes, as we sink deeper into it, a world where everything is an object, including ourselves, and consequently mirrors and clocks take on a good deal of importance as objectifying images. The reflection of one's personality may take the form of a container where the hero's soul or life is kept. (Frye, 1976:117)

For Oaive, the priestess, the container in which her soul is kept is her fragment of bone. It is also the 'clock' that points out her existence in time. It is poignant that Oaive, having fought so hard to define her identity, must give up that identity, her self, to save the world. Having done this, she is catapulted back to the night world from which she began her journey, in which there is no real identity; she is left with only the fragment of bone to signify both her coming and going. Like Jesus in Christian myth who entered hell after His final victory as World Redeemer, so Oaive is left to the anonymity of the night world. The use of objects as a reflection of identity is an important technique used in romance to help the hero construct his or her identity and in Lee's novel, the emergence of the bone at this point in the history emphasizes Oaive's heroic identity, even when we are presented with an Oaive who is not our hero. A reader tempted to blanch at the

apparently easy romantic ending should consider the fragment of bone that facilitates this resolution.

Oaive's heroic ethic is one of compassion and self-sacrifice; she follows the heroic monomyth and her story is particularly heroic because of the end to which she is willing to commit herself. Oaive does not choose an easy path, and it is the strength she shows through the sacrifice she makes that is inspiring. She brings the gentle passivity of feminine anima into perfect balance with the aggressive activity of the animus, and it is this private balance that enables her to restore public balance to her world. The goddess takes it upon herself to heal the rift in time that the god has created, and her action will heal the world even as it must swallow her up. Tanith Lee writes a beautiful tale of heroic deeds.

Oaive is a culture hero because her actions change the course of her society and because that change is effected through magic and compassion, rather than warlike behaviour. And yet, even though she does not wield a sword or rush into battle her conflicts are forceful and powerful; she uses her mind and the magical power she has, and it is through the finality of her self-sacrifice that history is altered. Her heroism is different from that of Alyx and Jirel, as are the methods which Snake employs.

Both Snake and Oaive overthrow the Ogre Tyrant who has prevented their worlds from thriving and both introduce new systems which encourage the health and freedom of their people. Each of them is the founder of a new world and each may wield the sceptre of

dominion. What is interesting, however, is that neither character is shown assuming the power of the sceptre of dominion. These female characters, having toppled the patriarchal power structure, do not seek to replace the male Ogre with a female Ogre; the power is destroyed and the sceptre is either shared with their societies (as Snake does) or is refused (as Oaive does). These heroes have brought together the energies of the male and the female principles and, when balanced, neither seeks supremacy over the other. Likewise, the whole hero does not seek to have power over others, but seeks rather the introduction of a state of equilibrium in which no one seeks to subjugate anyone else.

The culture heroes may appear to be more passive than warrior heroes, but they are not. Indeed, these women are as heroic as the warrior heroes even though they may receive less glory and acclaim for their actions. The culture hero teaches that no matter what one chooses to do, if it is done with singleness of purpose and to the benefit of humanity, Fate may cast one in the role of the hero, one need not rush headlong into the fray brandishing a sword. Both Snake and Oaive each champion their own heroic ethic of selfless dedication to their quest and their 'art,' and ultimately bring about the salvation of their societies. They are superb examples of the culture hero.

Conclusion

Joanna Russ's Alyx lands at Ourdh and gives the gatekeeper her name. When he comments disdainfully that he's 'never heard of it,' Alyx expresses cynical surprise and replies, 'not yet.' Through their four novels, *The Adventures of Alyx*, *Jirel meets Magic*, *Dreamsnake* and *The Winter Players*, Russ, Lee, McIntyre and Moore express the same sentiment: each of these novels introduces a female hero into popular culture and when that culture responds disdainfully to female heroism, saying, 'never heard of it,' the authors respond, 'not yet!' The female hero may not have appeared (much) in speculative fiction or other forms of fiction before 1960, but when the Amazon re-emerges, as she has begun to do, she is a force that demands attention and will not abide being sidelined any longer. Russ, Lee, McIntyre and Moore, writing at different times in the last century have each of them written a female hero who is powerful, independent and has claimed her right to agency despite negative patriarchal influences on both author and character. These authors have created a space through which the Amazon has re-entered mass consciousness and they demand that the time has come for the public to acknowledge her.

Each of the heroes in the four novels reflects different aspects of the archetypal hero, of the Amazon; it is in considering the different virtues of all four of the heroes that we begin to appreciate the facets of the Amazon that these authors have brought to light. Russ's Alyx is an active, violent character that, having escaped a life of enforced submission, refuses to submit to anyone else ever again. This Amazon is independent and motivated by a deep desire to guard her personal freedom and so sets herself to liberating those who cross her path. Alyx defies any authority that is not her own and, in so doing,

asserts the human desire for personal authority and responsibility. One of the first active female heroes in fiction, Alyx is one of those characters to begin the process whereby the Amazon returns to the world.

Moore's Jirel is in much the same position as Alyx; the very first active female hero in speculative fiction, Jirel appears at a time when she is an anomaly in a male-centred genre and yet her heroism is neither denied nor ridiculed. Jirel is, like Alyx, a warrior hero and her relish of physical action and battle is astonishing in a female character. Jirel is also an active, independent character that refuses to submit her authority to anyone else. She is literally the 'knight in shining armour' who rescues her men from the clutches of an evil god and defies the definition of feminine power proposed by patriarchal authority in the author's world. Where Alyx's power demythologises the myths of feminine submission and passivity, Jirel's is used to demythologise the myth of the power wielded by the *femme fatale* (much the only active power allowed female characters prior to 1960). Jirel ridicules the seductive prowess with which women are meant to overcome obstacles and assert themselves. Instead, she claims her own masculinity, wields her phallic sword (as does Alyx) and battles against her foes in clean combat. Jirel reflects the true agency of the Amazon as opposed to the illusory agency of the *femme fatale*.

In *Dreamsnake*, McIntyre presents a hero who accepts personal responsibility for her actions, as have Alyx, Jirel and Oaive. Snake, being a culture hero, embodies heroic virtues other than those reflected by Alyx and Jirel; in Snake, the reader finds the heroic virtues of compassion and wisdom. This Amazon heals, where Alyx and Jirel do battle.

The same assertion of personal agency is present, however, as Snake is called to defy the rules of her culture and bring about the changes necessary for the redemption of her society. Snake, like the heroes before her, asserts the right to respond to reality according to her own instincts and, as she does so, liberates Melissa, Gabriel and the healers from their relative captivity. In the end it is through her independent action that the Amazon saves society regardless of whether she is warrior or doctor. Oaive, a priestess and culture hero, must, like Snake, Alyx and Jirel, undertake a journey in which she confronts parts of herself and realises that she has both the ability and the right to assert herself. Having accepted personal responsibility for her actions, she sacrifices herself to achieve the liberation of her society from an evil regime.

In each of the novels I have chosen to discuss, the authors make a particular point of connecting their heroes with an active female principle or goddess, and they pit this female principle against a stagnant male Ogre Tyrant, or god. Only Jirel does battle against a woman, and yet that woman, Jarisme, represents power condoned by an underlying patriarchal view of women. These heroes overthrow existing, corrupt power structures, explicitly making the point that patriarchal cultures have stifled a large part of society and female heroism in particular, for too long. The Amazon emerges in each of these heroes and she defies patriarchal culture, asserting her right to heroic action and authority: Alyx destroys a male god who plays at creating and destroying according to his own childish whim, Jirel dethrones the dark god and frees her lover's soul, Snake topples North's selfish and corrupt reign and Oaive destroys Niwus and frees her world from his

desolate rule. Patriarchal rule, the male Ogre Tyrant, cannot stand when confronted by the hero, and in these particular cases, the female hero.

It is also interesting to note that, apart from the unanimous defiance of a male god, or ruling patriarchal ideology, each of these heroes either undergoes or instigates a disruption of the 'space-time continuum.' This is a powerful thematic device used on the part of the authors. The authors have their heroes defy the authority of patriarchal linear time and what this suggests is that, while readers and women the world over may have been presented with a particular history – full of male heroes and masculine conquest – the female hero has the ability to reconfigure time; as each female hero in these novels reverts to the experience of time as a feminine cyclical force, always twisting and turning in upon itself, she changes history and enables female heroism to become a part of the past, as well as the present and future. This ability of the female hero to reconfigure history asserts the feminine authority of the Amazon over the male-centred reality that has oppressed her.

This insertion of each of the heroes into monumental time is also thematically important because it is that which has given and gives rise to myth. And myth is home to the archetypal hero. The authors have resurrected the archetypal female hero, the Amazon, in the actions of each of their heroes. This connection of their heroes with the archetypal hero is very important, because it is in myth that the soul-truths of humanity are told. If the female hero emerges out of myth-time, she belongs to part of the truth about humanity.

As Macleish writes,

There are seasons vaster and subtler than the cycles of the year. After a time of harmony the world begins to darken. ... In such afflicted epochs a mortal being is born (who) lives out a timeless destiny. If he is victorious in his life's battle, the world will brighten. If this mortal hero perishes, the darkness on our lives deepens. ... The stories of these enigmatic struggles are told in the symbols and wonder of legends. They are the true history of the world. (Macleish, 1984:i)

All heroic tales tell the true history of the world, a history that reveals to us the depth of our passions and fears and the human longing for life not overshadowed by death. And it is because they reveal to us this truth that we are mesmerised by heroes. When the Amazon is brought to us out of monumental time, she is one part of a numinous whole that teaches humanity about who we are and what our soul's purpose is. Lee, McIntyre, Russ and Moore bring the Amazonian archetype to life and allow her a space in which to reconfigure linear time to reflect the truth of female heroism and courage.

P.L. Travers suggests that there is no approaching the hero without some preliminary investigation into the mode that gives rise to him or her, and I must agree. We cannot begin to understand the power of the hero without wading into that out of which the hero emerges: myth. And myth is itself mysterious and enigmatic; it is notoriously difficult to define the boundaries of this term because it has meant many different things to various great thinkers through time. Joseph Campbell writes that

Mythology has been interpreted by the modern intellect as a primitive, fumbling effort to explain the world of nature (Frazer); as a production of poetical fantasy from prehistoric times, misunderstood by succeeding ages (Muller); as a repository of allegorical instruction, to shape the individual to his group (Durkheim); as a group dream, symptomatic of archetypal urges within the depths of the human psyche (Jung); as the traditional vehicle of man's profoundest

metaphysical insights (Coomaraswamy); and as God's Revelation to His children (the Church). Mythology is all of these. The various judgements are determined by the viewpoint of the judges. For when scrutinised 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. (Campbell, 1993:382)

These theorists have attributed varying levels of significance to myth, but they all agree that myth is able to reveal something about humanity, that it is myth's capacity for revelation that makes it fascinating. I hold with Travers, who agrees with Nietzsche's view of myth. She writes

Nietzsche, who in everything he did and wrote was deeply involved in the mythical process, said that myth was not merely the bearer of ideas and concepts, but that it was also a way of thinking, a glass that mirrors to us the universe and ourselves. (Travers, 1989:12)

And so, myth is this: a glass wherein we see ourselves, in the words of fairytale (which I believe is myth 'in small'), 'as we really are.' For the purposes of this thesis, then, myth is the repository of all the arcane knowledge and wisdom that humanity has come to know through the ages of its existence. And, as with most profound wisdom, it can best be expressed in symbols and pictures. To attempt any explicit expression of this wisdom is virtually impossible. And so myth does become a way of thinking, an exploration of ourselves and a wonderful star chart against which to measure our place in the universe. Each of the symbols and archetypal characters we meet in myth therefore has a vital revelatory role to play, and of the many, the hero is certainly the most central.

Jung writes of the archetypal hero that

The universal hero myth ... always refers to a powerful man or god-man who vanquishes evil in the form of dragons, serpents, monsters, demons, and so on, and who liberates his people from destruction and death. (Jung, 1964:68)

What Jung suggests is that, no matter where (or when) people are in the world, the fear of death and extinction drives much of humanity's actions. Because of this, all people share a desire for a hero who will play the part of the redeemer and do away with the darkness in which people feel they are trapped. This hero is then called up from the collective unconscious, which is shared by everyone, and this is why the hero myth follows much the same pattern no matter which culture one looks at. According to Jung, and many other theorists, this is then the ultimate task of the archetypal hero, whether a man or a woman: he or she liberates society from the pall of death (which is an ever-present threat in the forms of dragon, serpent etc). In this he or she comes to be God or Krishna or Buddha on earth; the hero, because he or she fights to overcome humanity's fear of death, represents Life at its most vital and most active, and this allies him or her with the God who animates all life.

This is why the heroic archetype is so powerful: it is imbued with all humanity's desperation to survive, with our desire for truth and greatness; the hero is a reflection of ultimate truth and carries the creative potential of life. Heroes are able to move us in the way they do because they battle against the causes of our fear. The hero is a symbol of hope.

Raymond Firth writes about the significance of the symbol, paraphrasing Bachofen, that

[Bachofen] argued that human speech is too poor to convey all the thoughts aroused by such basic problems as the alternation of life and death and the sublimity of hope. Only the symbol and the related myth can meet this higher need. The symbol awakes intimations; speech can only explain. The symbol plucks all the strings of the human spirit at once; speech is compelled to take up a single thought at a time. Into the most secret depths of the soul the symbol strikes its roots. ... The symbol aims inward; language aims outward. Only the symbol can combine the most disparate elements into a unitary expression. (Firth, 1973: 105)

And Rubenstein adds that

The symbol is ... complex, for within the apparent starkness and simplicity of its outlines is contained a multiplicity of meanings. The symbolic image is a condensation or synthesis of an entirely more elaborate and complex combination of meanings, both intellectual and emotional. As such it can have multiple – even exhaustive interpretations. It can be said, paradoxically, that it expresses in the simplicity of its form something which defies expression. (Rubenstein, 1998:28)

What Rubenstein and Firth write clearly describes the profound effect that the hero can have on the collective psyche of humanity. As a symbol, the hero is able to call up from the depths of our beings emotions of ecstasy and fear of which we are rarely consciously aware. One cannot explain the power of a symbol, because if one could, one would no longer need the symbol as a method of expression. The symbol is able to express what words cannot, and the hero is just such a symbol.

Because the archetypal hero is a symbol and evokes so many different feelings in us, it is impossible to discuss all he or she means to humanity, but the word 'hope' seems to offer a glimpse of it. The heroic archetype presents to us an example of human behaviour which is brave, righteous, active, self-asserting, faithful and noble in spite of a universe that seems bleak and unbearable; we are encouraged to enact the same patterns in our

own lives to overcome our fear of oblivion. The hero does show us that the face in the mirror, our own face, disguises that of the Eternal King buried within each of us.

Having said this, it is of particular importance that we understand the significance of the heroic archetype and the hero as a symbol so that we may fully understand the destructive potential of the following statement and the thinking which gives rise to it:

Foremost in the heroic configuration is virility, the essence of the masculine sex. The hero is undeniably *he*, the male of the species. Gender is an issue here ... the hero has no exact counterpart in the opposite sex. (Lash, 1995:5)

John Lash denies women heroism, and he is not the only theorist to do so. Asserting that the hero may only be male alienates women from the archetype because, although a woman may still indulge in hero worship, she cannot consider the possibility that she herself may assume any heroic role. She has no examples of female heroes to follow. Mary Daly writes that, 'symbols participate in that to which they point. They open up levels of reality otherwise closed to us and they unlock dimensions and elements in our souls which correspond to these hidden dimensions and elements of society.' (Daly, 1984:25) The hero is one of the most powerful symbols in myth and popular culture and, because of this, if this symbol has been used to tell us man is heroic and woman is not, a grave injustice is done to women (and to the hero).

In Chapter Two I discussed the reasons that have been given (by various theorists) as to why women cannot be heroes, and argued against them. There is no real reason for the fact that women have been denied the heroic role. What it comes down to, in fact, is the creation of a separate 'mythology', one which teaches women that they are not heroic and

gives them anti-heroic symbols and characters as role models for their behaviour. In this instance the ‘myth’ I speak of is a belief perpetuated by culture and accepted so wholly as truth by the masses as to almost reach the level of real myth. Examples of this kind of controlling myth are the ‘noble savage’ (often referring to ‘uncivilised’ Africa) and the ‘angel in the house’ (referring to the role of women).

Lucente writes of this kind of myth that

Traditionally, “myth” has been the term *par excellence* for falsehood, whether intentional or innocent, strategically invoked or blindly accepted ... Euhemeris (300 BC), following a line of Epicurean thought and anticipating Vico in certain important respects, reversed the Aristotelian values by locating myth’s truth not outside the realm of history, but precisely in history itself. Mythic tales were considered to originate as the allegorical versions of actual historical figures, used by a ruling class to legitimise “divinely” ordained authority ... The creation of myth in support of political and social ideology is a recurrent phenomenon and is one reason why subsequent interpretations of mythic discourse always carry the potential for demystification of prior norms and legitimation of current, authentically “knowledgeable” ideologies. (Lucente, 1981:26,28)

Lucente writes that myth is not to be trusted because it has, at times, been manipulated by the Ogre Tyrant to create beliefs which support the *status quo*. In this case, the revelatory function of myth is replaced by a desire to have myth prescribe behaviour (which suits the ruling party). But Lucente argues that if myth has been used in this manner, it is only a matter of time before the Ogre Tyrant is overthrown and the meaning of that same myth must be changed to suit a new ruler. This kind of myth, which holds meaning only in so much as it reflects the ideologies of the party or person in power, does not reflect truth, but most certainly falsehood (in that it is not the eternal truth which myth is supposed to reflect).

This kind of myth, which is created by a group of people to achieve a certain purpose, is different in quality from real myth. Real myth communicates truths which open the human soul, this other myth is used to keep human souls tacked to their ‘ordained’ place by whatever group happens to be making the rules at the time. In the case of women, the ‘gender myth’, which has been used to keep them in a position of subservience, has done untold damage. The ruling class (historically, most often a patriarchy) has created and perpetuated a myth of female inferiority; this gender myth enforces a rule declaring that women may only exhibit certain character traits, traits which fit them for very little in practical life. As Pearson and Pope suggest

From the moment of birth, when the conventional question is asked regarding the gender of the child, a female is constantly bombarded with social images, rewards and punishments that are designed to ensure that she does not develop any quality associated with the other half of humanity. She must, in other words, be “feminine” and restrict herself to a “woman’s place”. The classic doctrine of separate spheres and complementary qualities is succinctly summarised in Alfred Lord Tennyson’s *The Princess*:

Man for the field and woman for the hearth;
Man for the sword and for the needle she;
Man with the head and woman with the heart;
Man to command and woman to obey;
All else confusion.

(Pearson & Pope, 1981:18)

If one is to accept this doctrine as a blueprint for male and female behaviour, it is no wonder that Lash can argue that the hero is undeniably ‘he’. However, as Lucente suggests, because the creation of this kind of myth is reliant on the ruling ideologies of the time, any change in ideology can effect a demystification of these myths. At the moment, with the rise of feminist discourse and debate against the restrictive myth of femininity, the gender myth is in the process of being demystified. And this means that people are beginning to look at the denial of the heroic to women in a slightly different

way. As Pearson and Pope suggest, ‘the assumption that the male is subject and hero and the female is object and heroine injects patriarchal sex-role assumptions into the discussion of the archetypal hero’s journey: this confuses the issue and obscures the true archetypal elements of the pattern.’ (Pearson & Pope, 1981:4)

In this thesis I have argued that the dichotomy of masculine and feminine is destructive when masculinity is expected of the male alone, and femininity of the female. Both males and females are able to express traits associated with both femininity and masculinity; this means that male is not subject alone, nor female object alone. When we have extracted men and women from this set pattern which has previously had them bound, we shall see that there is indeed, little difference between the patterns which each walks, when they have chosen to step into the heroic monomyth. The archetypal hero’s journey transcends gender in so much as the function of the hero is not something which can be classified under the heading of masculinity (being aggressive, active, strong) nor under the heading of femininity (being compassionate, emotional, intuitive) alone. The hero must display both sets of traits if he or she is to successfully complete the quest.

As an example of this, we have seen, in looking at the heroic quest, that a large part of the hero’s quest is his or her coming to terms with the disparate parts of himself or herself, and bringing them into a unified whole. The brokenness of the hero’s identity or psyche reflects the state of the world, and as he or she achieves wholeness, he or she becomes able to redeem his or her world. In Jungian terms, the male hero journeys and meets the externalisations of his shadow (which is his own evil) and his anima; he must re-

internalise these archetypal forces. The female hero meets her shadow and her animus and must re-internalise them too. The anima is the feminine part of the male hero's psyche, previously repressed or denied, and the animus is the masculine part of the female hero's psyche that she has previously had to deny or oppress. This quest for wholeness (reflected in the hero's reintegration of these aspects of his or her psyche into his or her identity) is the most vital task of the hero. We therefore must recognise that the masculine and the feminine are given equal importance in the archetypal heroic quest.

Coline Covington writes in her article 'In Search of the Heroine' that

The concept of hero and heroine – and their different struggles – cannot be applied exclusively and respectively to men and women. Men can be under the influence of the heroine just as women can follow the path of the hero ... A further question arises as to why we cannot simply equate the 'masculine' (or masculine principle) with the hero and the heroine with the 'feminine' (or feminine principle). The problem in using these terms is that they connote not only a specific gender relationship but the very existence of such categories as 'masculine' and 'feminine.' The importance of hero/heroine is that it can be understood only within a spectrum, the aspects functioning in dynamic interdependence. Both aspects must be valued together. So rather than, for example, following the appeal that what we need is more of the 'feminine' to counteract what is regarded as an imbalance of the 'masculine' consciousness, I am suggesting that instead, we need to incorporate the hero/heroine spectrum. (Covington, 1989:252-253)

Covington suggests that there may be different issues with which each individual hero has to deal, the nature of which can be classified according to the traditional dichotomy of feminine (heroine) and masculine (hero). But she also denies that men should only have to repeat trials of a masculine nature, while women should only repeat those of a feminine nature. She suggests that both men and women have to confront problems which could demand of them the display of either masculine or feminine strengths,

regardless of the gender of the hero in question. The heroic individual, according to Covington, should not, then, be only masculine (hero) or feminine (heroine) but embrace the full spectrum of both principles.

Pearson and Pope, in their book *The Female Hero*, concur with Covington's views. They add that

Because society divides human qualities into categories of male and female, the symbols for the final state of wholeness are usually androgynous. Weston points out that the grail is often depicted with the phallic sword and that their proximity suggests erotic union. The sword and cup suggest a psychological ideal of the complete self, which is powerful, creative, fertile and alive because it is whole. Having found the grail, male and female heroes recognise that they are fully human and fundamentally alike. This humane and egalitarian heroic vision is the ethical foundation for the transformed kingdom. (Pearson & Pope, 1981:15)

The hero cannot therefore represent only masculinity, as Lash and others have argued. Because he or she is bound to champion humanity, the hero must display, in complement each to the other, both the masculine principle and the feminine principle. As soon as this premise is accepted, there is no reason that a hero should have to be male nor that a hero may not be female.

The hero is an immensely important symbol for all humanity and that women have been denied a female hero for as long as they have is unacceptable. But the female hero is there, waiting within the archetype to be recognised and brought into manifestation in the world. For the moment, however, fantasy, science fiction and popular culture are the only places where we will find her. As Marleen Barr suggests

The sense and substance of reality changes slowly. The new womanist world has been realised most fully in the world of fantasy, wishes and dreams; the existing world is still patriarchy's male ideal. For reality bound readers, the works of

speculative fiction's womanists and feminists serve as our time machines, test tubes, and windows to the future. They present possibilities which can help us to develop alternatives.' (Barr, 1987:81)

In the 'test tubes' of speculative fiction and popular culture, however, the Amazon has begun to appear and, where she does, women do recognise that there is a heroic path open to them. The Amazon does present possibilities which help women develop alternatives to the often unsatisfying lives they live and she does this because she reconfigures the myths patriarchy has used to define women. As Warner writes

We are living through a time of extraordinary female energy, and much of its prodigal imagination and intelligence is attempting to reconstitute, re-member that body which has been exploited and violated again and again for this cause and that cause, for politics and propaganda and pleasure, and dismembered to shape up to imposed signification. (Warner, 1996:333)

The Amazon reclaims the female body, and spirit, for women. She denies patriarchy the right to dismember women and create the female experience in accordance with male fantasy and she inspires women to do the same. The Amazon goes nova in that she presents the world with a new woman, with a new Amazonian archetype who defies all the patriarchal propaganda of the past. The Amazon demands that women define themselves and do so as any warrior would, with no apology to limited culture.

Larrington writes that

One of the most significant developments to emerge out of the contemporary feminist movement is the quest to reclaim that symbolising/naming power, to refigure the female self from a gynocentric perspective, to discover, revitalise and create a female oral and visual mythical tradition and use it, ultimately, to change the world. (Larrington, 1992:425)

The Amazon offers this to women. As Warner suggests, 'within the phallic dialectic of conquest and battle, the Amazon ... effectively provides women today with freedom of

speech.’ (Warner, 1996:175) This freedom of speech is a reflection of the right to speech, to a female forum for discussion, and the act of speaking out, of speaking at all, signifies a reclamation of women’s right to any action, of women’s right to agency in defiance of patriarchal culture. The Amazon, who refuses to remain passive and silent, demands her own space, and in her demand for space, makes way for other women to follow.

In the novels I have discussed, Alyx scratches and claws her way to freedom and accepts no man as her lord and master; she teaches the female reader that a woman can survive, through fighting and wiles, and stake a claim to independence, without relying on anyone else. Jirel claims for women the right to bear arms and defend their kingdoms; she is a raw and vital woman whose battle cry resounds through Moore’s writing. Snake teaches resourcefulness and courage in the face of insurmountable odds, and she shows the reader that the journey to faith in oneself, while it will be difficult, is essential if one is to heal the world around one. Oaive teaches that women may reconfigure time and history to save a sick society. Oaive shows that women need worship no one, they themselves are the god and goddess; an imposed hierarchical power structure can be dismissed when one claims one’s own right to agency and power. These women are Amazons who instil in the reader a relish for the independence and personal agency of the hero; these women inspire the reader as only the Amazon can.

The truth of the world is written in the myths and legends we are told; what the Amazon does is retell these myths from a gynocentric perspective which empowers women and liberates heroism from the narrow patriarchal concept of masculine prowess. In the

opening quotation of the conclusion, Macleish writes that ‘in such afflicted epochs’ a hero appears to do battle with the dark, on behalf of humanity; the Amazon has appeared in just such an afflicted epoch in order to do battle on behalf of women, and human heroism. Joseph Campbell writes that

The sword edge of the hero-warrior flashes with the energy of the creative source: before it falls the shells of the outworn. For the mythological hero is the champion not of things become, but of things becoming; the dragon to be slain by him is precisely the monster of the status quo: Holdfast, the keeper of the past. From obscurity the hero emerges, but the enemy is great and conspicuous in the seat of power; he is enemy, dragon, tyrant, because he turns to his own advantage the authority of his position. He is Holdfast not because he keeps the *past*, but because he *keeps*. (Campbell, 1991:337)

Before the sword edge of the female hero fall the shells of outworn and outdated sex-role assumptions, and in her activity she challenges the tyrant, Holdfast, the Patriarch who has denied her access to heroic action. Her creativity and striving force us to recognise that the hero may be female as well as male. In fact, the female hero forces us to recognise that the hero is something far greater than ‘male’ or ‘female’, ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’.

Restless, angry, often fierce, the woman hero forbids the presumption that women are innately selfless, weak, or passive. And where she differs from the male hero, she denies the link between heroism and *either* gender *or* behaviour. Permitted, like others of her sex, to love and nurture, to comfort, to solace, and to please, the heroic woman specifies these impulses as human, not just female, and endows them with a value that counters their usual debasement. Assuming a position equal to that of the male hero, she challenges the compulsions of aggressivity and conquest, subverts patriarchy’s structures, levels hierarchy’s endless ranks ... Insisting that our civilisation’s typical heroic figure – biologically male and culturally masculine – cannot alone represent the prototype of heroism, she clashes with the Titans. (Edwards, 1984:5,13)

Bibliography

Aldiss, B. 1986. *Trillion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction*. London: Victor Gollancz.

Barr, M. 1987. *Alien to Femininity: Speculative Fiction and Feminist Theory*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Campbell, J. 1993. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. London: Fontana Press.

Carlyle, T. 1840. *Heroes and Hero Worship*. London: Ballantyne.

Cixous, H. 1975. *La Jeune Née*. Paris: UGE.

Clute, J. and Nicholls, P. (eds). 1993. *The Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction*. Orbit: London.

Conway, D.J. 1997. *Celtic Magic*. Minnesota: Llewellyn Publications.

Cortiel, J. 1999. *Demand My Writing: Joanna Russ/ Feminism/ Science Fiction*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Covington, C. 1989. In Search of the Heroine. In Journal of Analytical Psychology. Vol. 34, pp. 243-254.

Daly, M. 1984. *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy*. London: The Women's Press.

De Beauvoir, S. 1997. *The Second Sex*. Parshley, H.M. (ed.) London: Vintage.

Doane, M. 1991. *Femme Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*. New York: Routledge.

Donovan, J. 2001. *Feminist Literary Theory: The Intellectual Traditions*. 3rd edition. New York: Continuum.

Edwards, L. 1984. *Psyche as Hero: Female Heroism and Fictional Form*. Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press.

Ferber, M. 1999. *Dictionary of Literary Symbols*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.

Firth, R. 1973. *Symbols: Public and Private*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

Fraser, A. 1999. *The Warrior Queens: Boadicea's Chariot*. London: Arrow Books.

Freedman, C. 2000. *Critical Theory and Science Fiction*. Hanover: University Press of New England.

Frye, N. 1971. *The Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Frye, N. 1976. *The Secular Scripture: A Study in the Structure of Romance*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Gage, M.J. 1980. *Women, Church and State: A Historical Account of the Status of Women through the Christian Ages; with Reminiscences of the Matriarchate*. Massachusetts: Persephone Press.

Goldberger, A. 1965. *Visions of a New Hero: The Heroic Life According to Andre Malraux and Earlier Advocates of Human Grandeur*. Paris: Biblioteque des Lettres Modernes.

Hamer, M. 1993. *Signs of Cleopatra: History, Politics, Representation*. New York: Routledge.

Hartnell, A. 2000. *Danger Girl: Delusions of Grandeur*. Canada: Cliffhanger Comics.

Joint Association of Classical Teachers. 1984. *The World of Athens: an Introduction to Classical Athenian Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jaeger, W. 1954. *Paideiai: The Ideals of Greek Culture I*. 4th edition. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Jezewski, M. 1984. Traits of the Female Hero: The Application of Raglan's Concept of Hero Trait Patterning. In New York Folklore. Vol. X: 1-2, pp. 57-73.

Jung, C.G. 1978. *Man and His Symbols*. Von Franz, M. and Freeman, J. (eds) London: Picador.

Kristeva, J. 1991. Women's Time. In *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*. Warhol and Herndl. (eds) New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. pp. 83-91

Lane, R. and Wurts, J. 2002. *In Search of the Woman Warrior: Role Models for Modern Women*. London: Vega.

Larrington, C. (ed.) 1992. *The Feminist Companion to Mythology*. New York: Pandora Press.

Lash, J. 1995. *The Hero: Manhood and Power*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Lee, T. 1976. *The Winter Players*. London: Beaver Books.

Lefanu, S. 1989. *Feminism and Science Fiction*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Le Guin, U. 1989. The Child and the Shadow. In *The Language of the Night*. Le Guin, U. and Wood, S. (eds) London: The Women's Press. pp. 49-60

Le Guin, U. 1989. Myth and Archetype in Science Fiction. In *The Language of the Night*. Le Guin, U. and Wood, S. (eds) London: The Women's Press. pp. 61-69

Le Guin, U. 1989. Is Gender Necessary? In *The Language of the Night*. Le Guin, U. and Wood, S. (eds) London: The Women's Press. pp. 135-147

Lucente, G.L. 1981. *The Narrative of Realism and Myth*. London: John Hopkins University Press.

MacKillop, J. 1998. *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Macleish, R. 1984. *Prince Ombra*. London: Pan Books.

Malory, T. 1986. *Le Morte Darthur*. Field, P.J.C. (ed.) Hong Kong: Hodder and Stoughton.

McCullum, P. (ed.) 2001. *Wizard : The Comic Magazine*. Vol. 123: December 2001. New York.

McIntyre, V. 1989. *Dreamsnake*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Moi, T. 1985. *Sexual/ Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*. London: Methuen.

Moore, C.L. 2002. *Black Gods and Scarlet Dreams*. London: Gollancz.

Morgan, E. 1978. Human Becoming: Form and Focus in the Neo-Feminist Novel. In *Feminist Criticism: Essays on Theory, Poetry and Prose*. Brown, C. and Olsen, K. (eds) London: Scarecrow Press. pp. 4-13

Norman, D. 1969. *The Hero: Myth/ Image/ Symbol*. New York: New American Library.

Pulido, B and Kaminski, L. 1999. *Lady Death vs Purgator: Black, White and Red All Over*. Canada: Chaos Comics.

Parrinder, P. 1979. *Science Fiction: A Critical Guide*. New York: Longman.

Pearson, C and Pope, K. 1981. *The Female Hero in American and British Literature*. New York: RR Bowker.

Queen, R. 1998. *Darkchylde: The Descent*. Canada: DC Comics.

Rabkin, E. 1981. Science Fiction Women Before Liberation. In *Future Females*. Barr, M. (ed.) Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press. pp. 9-25

Raglan, L. 1937. *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Redfield, J. 1975. *Nature and Culture in 'The Iliad': The Tragedy of Hector*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rolland, R. 1932. *L'Argent Suite: Oeuvres Completes*. Paris: Biblioteque des Lettres Modernes.

Rubenstein, A. 1998. *Bearers of Dreams: A Study of Archetypal Symbolism in Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Unpublished thesis. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Russ, J. 1972. What Can a Heroine Do? Or Why Women Can't Write. In *Images Of Women In Fiction: Feminist Perspectives*. Koppelman-Cornillon, S. (ed.) Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press. pp. 3-20

Russ, J. 1983. *The Adventures of Alyx*. London: The Women's Press.

Salmonson, J. 1979. *Amazons!* New York: DAW Books.

Segal, R. (ed.) 2000. *Hero Myths: A Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Storr, A. (ed.) 1998. *The Essential Jung: Selected Writings*. London: Fontana Press.

Suvin, D. 1979. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Travers, P.L. 1989. *What the Bee Knows*. Northamptonshire: Aquarian Press.

Waith, E. 1962. *The Herculean Hero in Marlowe, Chapman, Shakespeare and Dryden*. London: Chatto and Windus.

Warner, M. 1996. *Monuments and Maidens: the Allegory of the Female Form*. London: Vintage.

Wasserman, D. 1966. *Man of La Mancha: A Musical Play*. New York: Random House.

Wector, D. 1963. *The Hero in America: A Chronicle of Hero Worship*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Woodman, T. 1979. Science Fiction, Religion and Transcendence. In *Science Fiction: A Critical Guide*. Parrinder, P. (ed.) New York: Longman. pp. 114-148

Woolf, V. 2000. *A Room of One's Own*. London: Penguin Classics.

Appendix A

Lord Raglan's list of heroic traits is as follows:

- 1) His mother is a royal virgin.
- 2) His father is a king, and
- 3) Often a near relative of his mother, but
- 4) The circumstances of his conception are unusual, and
- 5) He is also reputed to be the son of a god.
- 6) At birth an attempt is made, often by his father, to kill him, but
- 7) He is spirited away, and
- 8) Reared by foster parents in a far country.
- 9) We are told nothing of his childhood, but
- 10) On reaching manhood he returns or goes to his future kingdom.
- 11) After a victory over the king and/or giant, dragon or wild beast,
- 12) He marries a princess, often the daughter of his predecessor, and
- 13) Becomes king.
- 14) For a time he reigns uneventfully, and
- 15) Prescribes laws, but
- 16) Later he loses favour with the gods and/or his subjects, and
- 17) Is driven from the throne and the city.
- 18) He meets with a mysterious death,
- 19) Often at the top of a hill.
- 20) His children, if any, do not succeed him.
- 21) His body is not buried, but nevertheless
- 22) He has one or more holy sepulchres.

(Raglan, 1937:212)