The Forked Road Of Narrative In The Hero's Journey

Volume II: An Exegesis

The Hero at the Crossroads

to accompany

Volume I: the Creative work

Cards for the Samurai (a novel)

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is entitled, *The Forked Road of Narrative in the Hero's Journey*. The Exegesis accompanying the creative work, *Cards for the Samurai*, is entitled *The Hero At the Crossroads*. It discusses perceived changes and abridgements to the hero-quest in literature and cinema. The research questions I seek to answer in the Exegesis, and by execution in the creative work, are:

Has there has been a shift, or abridgement in the hero-quest narratives of cinema and literature?

Is the role of the 'monster'—as I term the narrative impediments that the hero must face—becoming more important than the narrative resolution?

Are writers of quest novels—like myself—making the jeopardy more important than the 'grail,' or prize the hero seeks? Is this a result of audience, or reader expectations?

Are such perceived changes being guided by writers and screenwriters seeking a more economical narrative to the plodding hero-quest of old?

In the Exegesis I investigate how these perceived changes, or abridgments to the hero-quest may have come about. I question if it is because of incremental changes to hero-quest narratives that began with the original Grail re-tellings. I then trace incremental changes in hero-quests back to classical texts like *The Odyssey,* and to modern classics such as *Moby-Dick.* Examples from thriller, horror, and crime genres, as well as an historical overview, are used to see if the age-old narrative where the hero has to first defeat the monster, before attaining the 'grail,' or 'prize', is becoming pruned.

For answers to these research questions, and speculations, I engage with the theoretical hero-quest models of Joseph Campbell, and Vladimir Propp.

In the latter part of the Exegesis I discuss how my creative work uses the hero-quest as a narrative device in the light of these theoretical models. I discuss how I negotiated my way through the perceived changes and narrative conflicts of hero-quest narratives.

Ultimately in the Exegesis I suggest that there may be an inherent division, or bifurcation in the uniform models of theorists such as Propp and Campbell, and that writers of quest narratives—like myself—consciously, or unconsciously try to bridge this division. Along with examples from literature and modern cinema, and my own creative work, I detail the difficulties this perceived division poses not only for writers but readers and audiences.

DECLARATION

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree, or diploma in any university, or other tertiary institution, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published, or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In this thesis the creative work in Volume 1, the novel entitled, *Cards for the Samurai*, seeks to employ the two different types of narrative quest that I identify in the Exegesis. These are the *adventure-triumph model,* and the *sacrificial-redemptive model.* In the creative work I use them in tandem as an alternating and cascading sequence of events, rather than as one long narrative string sequence.

Cards for the Samurai does this by intertwining two quests in alternating paragraphs. The novel uses the memories of what happened to 'Nickie', the child protagonist, as an equal narrative counterpoint to what Nicholas the adult is experiencing. It attempts to integrate quite different narrative quests that the Exegesis of Volume 2 argues are inherent in the supposedly uniform theoretical models of Vladimir Propp and Joseph Campbell.

Additionally, but to a lesser degree, my creative work *Cards for the Samurai* is a departure from Australian multicultural fiction. Such fiction is more usually concerned with immigrants in conflict with the dominant culture as they try to negotiate identity. *Cards for the Samurai* bypasses this traditional and (in my view) perhaps more clichéd conflict mode in favour of an ironic hero who worships cultures and heroes outside his own immigrant experience, and Anglo-Australian culture.

The theoretical framework used in the Exegesis is a comparative analysis of a number of texts, novels, screenplays and their denouements, along with a historical overview. This is to ascertain the veracity of the claim of the changing role of the 'impediment,' in quest narratives where the narrative 'impediment', or the 'monster' as I define it, becomes more important than the 'grail' the hero seeks.

In the Exegesis, this comparative analysis and historical overview, of necessity, precedes discussion about my creative work and how I execute narrative resolution.

In the Exegesis *The Hero at the Crossroads*, I use the word 'hero' as shorthand to include 'heroine,' and not as something specifically gender related. I also use 'Grail' to mean both the Grail that occurs in Grail re-tellings, as well as the lower case 'grail' of modern parlance. This is the reward, or boon awaiting the hero, near the end of the hero's narrative sequence or journey. By 'monster(s)' or impediment, I also mean the jeopardy, obstacles, villains, and dangers the hero must confront. The term 'bifurcation' is used to mean, divergence, division, splitting, or branching off. It is not used in the sense of Bifurcation Theory of mathematics and physics.

Ultimately the Exegesis analyses whether there is a central fault, or misapprehension, in the respective theoretical models of Vladimir Propp and Joseph Campbell. It suggests that in these theoretical models there is a complex bifurcation. It argues there is a fork in the narrative road of hero-quests that has not only been underestimated and inadequately understood but that it also determines a writer's choices, and substitution of genres.

In part it explores whether Melville's hero-quest novel, *Moby-Dick* is the seminal work that bridges hero narratives of the past to the present. The Exegesis consists of four chapters and a conclusion. Chapter One, *The Acceleration of the Hero* asks: are modern hero narratives being abridged? Are certain narrative stages of the hero-quest being omitted, or combined, to accelerate the hero-quest narrative because of audience, or reader impatience?

Chapter Two, *The Hero Slows Down,* is an historical comparative analysis that investigates whether such an assertion is historically viable. It poses the question of whether such truncations were visible in early narratives.

Chapter Three, *The Dividing and Uniting Road of the Hero's Journey,* is an engagement with the theoretical underpinnings of these perceived abridgements, or changes in the hero-quest. It examines the supposedly uniform models of Joseph Campbell and Vladimir Propp, suggesting there is a bifurcation in their respective models, which writers—like myself—try to bridge. It contends that these theorists have perhaps glossed over this perceived divergence to maintain uniformity in their respective models.

Chapter Four, *The Writer as Hero,* closely focuses for the main part on my creative work in fiction. It discusses how I negotiate hero-quest narratives. I attempt to show how the suggested bifurcation operates not only in theory but in how I practice. The chapter discusses how the fork in the narrative road influences the choices I make in my novels, as well as the choice of genres. The main emphasis is on the current creative work, the novel, *Cards for the Samurai,* and how I resolved problems of the dual quest narrative in this work. Additionally I briefly detail how I resolved them differently in my previous published novel, *Medea's Children*.

The Conclusion, *The Road Ahead for the Hero or, the Road Behind*, summarises some of the arguments of the Exegesis and it acknowledges some of its limitations. At the same time it details what my contribution to the understanding of hero-quests, and narrative has been.

CHAPTER ONE: The Acceleration of the Hero

There have been various studies of the hero-quest, and of the narrative arc of the hero, but two of the most esteemed studies are those of Joseph Campbell's, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces,* and Vladimir Propp's, *The Morphology of the Folktale*. But despite differences in the theoretical methods used by these authors, and differences in their articulation and exposition, they detail the journey of the hero in similar ways. They describe in essence a journey that the hero undertakes in questing for the 'Grail' as being one where the 'Grail' is often guarded by 'monster(s),' or villains who must be surpassed. By 'Grail' I mean both the Grail that occurs in Grail re-tellings, as well as the 'lower case' grail of modern parlance — the reward or boon awaiting the hero, near the end of the hero's narrative sequence, or journey.

By 'monster(s)' I also mean the obstacles, villains, jeopardy, and dangers confronting the hero. They may be incarnated as demons disguised as damsels, such as the ones who tempt Sir Bors in *Le Morte D'Arthur*, where it was 'as though all the fiends of hell had been about him' (Malory 630). Or they may be inanimate, indeterminate but equally potent dangers, such as the Mount Doom of Tolkien's *The Return of the King*, the Third Part of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Others use different terms for the role of the monster such as, 'malevolent guardian', and 'precious object', rather than grail (Auden 81). But I see this as a matter of metonymy and preference.

Campbell outlines the narrative stages the hero must pass through on his journey as follows:

> Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape
> of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of
> trials (90).

By trials, Campbell means, dragon battles, monster battles, miraculous tests, and ordeals. Propp states: 'The Hero is transferred, delivered or led to the whereabouts of an object of search' (50).

Earlier models of the hero-quest journey equally outline the narrative stages the hero must traverse on the road to the grail, or ultimate prize, such as studies by Raglan in 1936, Otto Rank in 1909, and Edward Tylor in 1871. But once again, despite differences of articulation, even these earlier models appear to agree—regardless of their estimation of the grail, or description of the reward as object, princess, ideal, or conduit to self-realisation, perfection, or redemption—that in the narrative sequence it is always guarded by something ferocious, or fearful. It is often either a monster or some impediment, or villain(s). Additionally the object of desire, and the obstacle protecting it, has been seen as separate. And there are good reasons for this. It is because traditionally these two elements—monster, impediment, or 'villain,' as Propp calls it (63), or 'supreme ordeal,' as Campbell puts it (212), come before the grail. They appear in hero-texts and folklore as distinct stage-posts in the hero's narrative.

However, I suggest there appears to be a shift and an abridgement of this hero pattern. The twentieth century has altered this cosy relationship, or sequence, in surprising ways. Sometimes these narrative stages have been shortened or combined to such an extent that they have lost their uniqueness. I suggest novelists and scriptwriters now often favour grails, or boons reached through a more economical narrative. They amplify the role of the villain, monster(s), or obstacle, at the expense of the grail ahead. I suggest this is possibly to compensate for any future narrative disappointment readers may feel about the resolution.

I also argue that in modern cinema and literature, there may be some impatience, or dissatisfaction with the length of the traditional narrative sequence of the hero, particularly if it only leads to a grail that is vague, or an indefinable commodity, as it was in the early twelfth century Grail of Chrétien de Troyes *Le Conte du Graal,* which we know in English as,

Perceval: The Story of the Grail (Chretien & Trans. Bryant). In Chrétien it is simply described as a *tante sainte chose,* 'such a holy thing,' as Barber reports (Chrétien in Barber 91). The Grail was equally vague even later in the *Parzival* of Wolfram of the early thirteenth century, where it is stated, 'this was a thing that was called the Grail […] the perfection of Paradise,' but not stated what it actually is (Wolfram & Tran. C. Edwards 235).

I perceive writers now often not only amplify the monster and the hero's battle with the monster, but they also move the grail from behind the monster, so to speak, to the fore, to avoid such vagueness. It may also be to avoid any disappointment readers or audiences may feel about grail acquisition if the grail the hero pursues remains indistinct.

This suggested condensation, or abridgment is best seen in contemporary thriller genres and crime fiction, where murderers—the monsters of that genre—are amplified into serial killers as in Thomas Harris's novel, *The Silence of the Lambs*, and its 1991 filmed version of the same title. It seems single corpse murder mysteries no longer 'cut it' in narrative excitement. Now the narrative requires multiple murders, and murderers amplified into serial killers. The serial killer has become a genre in itself. I argue this amplification is also true of the horror genre found in cinema, whether we are dealing with *Godzilla*, or the alien of the, *Alien(s)* film series (*Alien*; *Aliens; Alien 3*). In these films, directors and script-writers apply the narrative template of the questing-hero consciously. In fact authors like Hiebert, Snyder, and Vogler have written guidebooks, or narrative templates for precisely this purpose, In such hero films, monster *and* grail become one. They are usually unified, whether physically in battle with the hero, or in a contest of wits, like in the sparring of Jodie Foster's character, Clarice Starling, with Hannibal Lecter in the film *The Silence of the Lambs*.

In Vladimir Propp's empirical scale where he describes thirty-one functions of the narrative sequence that he deduced from studying Russian folktales or wonder tales, he lists this stage, or 'function' as stage sixteen,

'The hero and villain join in direct combat' (51). But it is almost as if most of the next fifteen stages or functions that follow in Propp's model (52-65) which involve more hardship, impediment and/or monsters—before the hero gets the ultimate reward—are now often absent.

True, in Propp's scale of empirically deduced narrative functions, he does say that though the sequence he describes is unvarying, and not subject to interpolation, that some functions may be absent:

> The sequence of elements […] is strictly *uniform* [although] by no means do all tales give evidence of all functions. But this no way changes the law of the sequence. The absence of certain functions does not change the order of the rest (22).

But by any stretch of the imagination or examination of his thirty-one functions—discussed in detail in Chapter Three—this is more of an amputation than an abridgement. The narrative sequence that his scales describe, seems halved. I suggest the amplification of the monster, and this perceived condensation of the hero-quest, may actually go some way in explaining the emergence of the serial killer genre itself. Not just in Thomas Harris's novel *The Silence of the Lambs*, or its later cinematic adaptation, but wherever this form arises. By becoming bigger, the final monster becomes the grail the hero seeks, not a separate entity that must first be conquered. Again we need look no further than films like *Alien*, and its sequels, for justification. In this, the monster is the grail that must be killed – pure and simple.

I suggest writers are combining monster *and* grail, to make the grail readily visual and tangible. By doing this, it is no longer a supernal idea, or lofty fog, or chalice. It does not float ethereally before the hero as it often does in Grail romances, awaiting explanation. It does not arrive in a clap of thunder, as in the anonymous *The Quest of the Holy Grail* of the thirteenth century, dumbfounding all the knights present only to vanish, 'they knew not how or wither' (Trans. Matarosso 44). I suggest it is not surprising that

writers now prefer larger-than-life monsters to Grails that were eventually simplified to grails of booty in more secular ages. In particular, early novels such as Rider Haggard's, *King Solomon's Mines* come to mind. Why struggle all that way to get a cup, or mere diamonds, or a fleeting moment of insight, when one can get Godzilla, or at least slay Godzilla? The monster's death—that is the death of the final impediment—becomes essentially the quested object. Its annihilation means the narrative journey is neatly ended. There are no messy formless grails after the annihilation of the threat.

Perhaps now there is demand for more narrative clarity because formless grails belong more to the religious age from which original Grail tales were born. In our more secular world, its religious resonances no longer resound. Often this simply saves time, since the hero no longer has to 'grab the grail' and undertake the arduous return described by Campbell whereby:

> [...] the adventurer must still return with his life-transmuting trophy. The full round 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 (170).

Other than dispelling the mist of the indefinable, or non-tangible grail, it also dispels the mist of what some commentators call 'negative grails.' These belong to cynical or disillusioned literature of which, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land,* can be seen as a prime example. It certainly dispels the non-tangible grails of wider literature, where the grail boon, or reward, once seized, is explained as comprised of untouchables. Often these take the form of self-realisation, or ego-abnegation — the modern age's secularised stand-ins for the Grail's temporal, or spiritual import. It avoids the future grail being disappointing.

This is not to suggest 'ineffable' Grails, or 'grails' have been entirely abandoned. But they are more often the purlieu of authors working at what has been called, 'the high-art end of literature' (Frantzen in Collins 105). Patrick White for example, in *The Tree of Man* still echoes the now-faded spiritual importance of the original indistinct Grail. In *The Tree of Man,* its hero Stan Parker finally finds God, in a bit of spittle on the ground, just before he dies.

> Then the old man, who had been cornered long enough, saw through perversity perhaps, but with his own eyes. He was illuminated. He pointed with his stick at the gob of spittle.
>   "That is God," he said (476).

But without literary dexterity, I argue, such subtlety of the 'prize' in the traditional narrative sequence runs the risk of leaving both contemporary audiences, and readers, cheated, or mystified. Audiences, and readers may question why they have accompanied the hero on a journey. They may feel perplexed as to why they have lent so much emotional and intellectual support to the hero in the struggle against fantastic odds and creatures. This is particularly true if the ultimate boon, or grail is invisible, or insubstantial, or worse, private. In its wake it also creates the additional narrative problem of what to do after the grail has been seized, or sighted. Should the hero narrative end very quickly – as there is not much to be done afterwards? Because if it does not, whatever is done, realised, or achieved post its arrival, destruction, or seizure, may seem trite.

I suggest this has always been more of a problem for cinema, relying as it does strongly on visual revelation. Gore Vidal, in recounting his experience as scriptwriter on the Hollywood feature film *Ben-Hur*, recalled how the producers and studio informed him, that though the story of *Ben-Hur* was ultimately a story about the Christ—as it was billed—to them, everything in the script after the crucifixion seemed to be an anti-climax.

Consequently they asked Vidal if there was anything he could do to supply a narrative remedy (*An Evening with Gore Vidal*).

My own much more modest involvement in the film industry, *(Hidden History; Last Coming Out),* along with similar tales from script-writing colleagues, shows such anxieties over climaxes, grails, and resolutions were not uniquely visited on Mr Vidal. They remain ever-present vexations for producers and publishers, even when dealing with less grand stories than the Passion. It may perhaps be the reason why Dan Brown, in his own search for the Holy Grail in his immensely popular *The Da Vinci Code,* has an 'each-way-bet.' We are told in *The Da Vinci Code'*s resolution, that *yes*, the Grail is non-corporeal, an idea, perhaps to satisfy more poetic readers, *and* an object shaped like a small glass pyramid, that might have been found in a garage sale. Brown states:

> The beauty of the Grail lies in her ethereal nature. […] For some, the Grail is a chalice that will bring them everlasting life. For others, it is the quest for lost documents and secret history. And for most, I suspect the Holy Grail is simply a grand idea … a glorious unattainable treasure that somehow, even in today's world of chaos, inspires us (444).

But then it appears that Brown abandons such loftiness and grandness in the last page of his novel, just in case some found that weak:

> Directly before him hanging down from above, gleamed the inverted pyramid—a breathtaking V-shaped contour of glass. *The Chalice* […] There directly beneath it stood, the tiny structure. A miniature pyramid. Only three feet tall. The only structure in this colossal complex that had been built on a small scale (454).

One can almost imagine arguments, or persuasions that led to this 'each-way-bet' ending, possibly made by the author, or his publisher. It would be unfair though, to blame weak endings through grail attainment solely on the old Grail tales. In *The Iliad* for example, its inferred grail, or

prize, Helen, is attained after the ultimate withholding monster of Troy is reduced to ashes, as we later find out in *The Odyssey*. But by the time the monster of Troy, or its emblem, Paris, is destroyed, (assuming the Epic Cycle, and Homeric tales comprise one long hero narrative), do readers really care whether Helen went back to Greece or not? Maybe even the ancients did not. Famously—despite even her symbolic importance—she is only mentioned in Homer's writing approximately six times.

Similarly in *The Odyssey*, the trials of Odysseus are not really over when he conquers, slays, but more often evades, all the monsters, obstacles, and impediments that beset him. The 'grail' comes about not just when he attains his own grail of Ithaca, but when he slays the final monsters, or rather villains, Penelope's suitors. It is something other commentators have also seen to be weak as an ending, and unsatisfactory, after such struggles against monsters like Polyphemus. As Alberto Manguel states:

> Reflecting on what he regarded as the exaggerated protraction of the final events of the Odyssey, T. E. Lawrence, (writing as T.E. Shaw) observed, "Perhaps the tedious delay of the climax through ten books may be a poor bard's means of prolonging his host's hospitality (32).

Manguel is of course quoting from the introduction T.E. Lawrence wrote to his own translation of *The Odyssey* of 1932. Manguel mentions other critics discontented by the narrative structure of *The Odyssey*. He quotes Margaret Atwood as saying she 'found the story unsatisfactory' (188). Atwood goes on to explain in the introduction to her re-write of *The Odyssey,* entitled *The Penelopiad*, which Manguel also quotes, that:

> Two questions must pose themselves after any close reading of the Odyssey: what led to the hanging of the maids, and what was Penelope really up to? The story as told in the Odyssey does not hold water: there are too many inconsistencies (188-189).

But the purpose of this Exegesis is not so much to do with unsatisfying endings, or narrative terminations of the hero's journey in films. It is more concerned with why monsters, villains, or the impediment, now often appear to be the nub of the hero's narrative sequence, particularly in modern cinema.

I suggest that this shift in hero-quest narratives began earlier than the twentieth century, and that the tipping point came in 1851 with Melville's, *Moby-Dick*. Here, and perhaps for the first time, monster *and* the grail are truly one. Here, no longer are there difficulties as to what will happen or what is to be found once the whale is dispatched. For Ahab, both whale/monster *and* grail are identical.

This though is not the novel's only significant departure. Interestingly, *Moby-Dick* comes between *Frankenstein* of 1818, and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mister Hyde* of 1886. But the external monster of Shelley, and the divided monsters of self, in Stevenson's story are blended in *Moby-Dick*, for the first time. Here, the ultimate monster/grail is at once in the foreground *and* in the distance. But more significantly, and radically, the monster, the grail, *and* the hero, are made one when they are finally entwined. They are quite literally, blended by the waves that buffet them:

> Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquering whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee. Sink all coffins and all hearses to one common pool! and since neither can be mine, let me then tow to pieces, while still chasing thee, though tied to thee, thou damned whale! (565).

There is—despite the churning sea—less murk, and more narrative economy. The narrative has avoided the pitfalls of the vague and at times conservative epilogue that the hero-quest once led to. For Ahab, the monster, the hero and the grail become one, hence their importance. I suggest from Melville onwards, transubstantiation is not just a matter of

hero *and* grail*,* but often hero, grail *and* monster. They combine as a narrative remedy and substitute not only for what was possibly perceived as deficient, or 'old hat' in terms of narrative, but to reveal what the monster usurped or even swallowed. And that it is the trinity of monster, grail, *and* hero that constitutes humanity. W.H. Auden also noted this new exposition of the hero/grail narrative:

> Here the Precious Object and the Malevolent Guardian are combined and the object of the Quest is not possession but destruction. Another example of a Quest which should not have been undertaken, but it is tragic rather than evil. Captain Ahab belongs in the company of Othello not Iago (93).

But such a modern combination is not without its own problems and narrative critics. Sometimes the conflation, or ultimate blending of these elements in the manner of *Moby-Dick* is not always successful, or as palatable to modern readers, or viewers. They may prefer the more traditional narrative model. In the traditional model, the grail is guarded behind the monster, the seizure of which—after the monster's annihilation—necessitates a return and the full execution of Propp's scale of functions, and Campbell's cyclical model.

Occasionally this recombination may even be seen as an excessive reduction of the hero-arc and its narrative sequence. It is perhaps even a cynical one, in that the over-amplification of the monster, or the monster as hero/grail/villain becomes so big, it leads to the narrative arc becoming bent, even deformed, and unsatisfying. It is almost as if by hugely amplifying the odds, or impediments that comprise the monster, or the villain, writers have painted themselves into a corner. Their next step, or brush-stroke must be even bolder, to account for, or equal their narrative exaggeration. It is almost as if the breathless urgency in the combining of these elements and stages occasionally exceeds what readers and audiences are willing to empathise, or identify with.

Thomas Harris's last sequel to his Hannibal Lector series, *Hannibal,* the follow-up to his novel, *The Silence of the Lambs,* where Clarice Starling, the hero, still seeks Lecter's annihilation, is a case in point. In *Hannibal,* even though she is the hero, she too becomes a monster, a cannibal, even exaggeratedly—to perhaps equal the increasing exaggerations of the narrative—a cannibal gourmand.

> Dr. Lecter placed the browned brains on broad croutons on the warmed plates, and dressed them with the sauce and truffle slices […]
>
> "How is it?" Krendler asked […] speaking immoderately loud, as persons with lobotomies are prone to do.
>
> "Really excellent," Starling said. "I've never had caper berries before." Dr. Lecter found the shine of butter sauce on her lip intensely moving (*Hannibal* 473).

In *Hannibal*, the seduced Clarice Starling, and Hannibal Lecter finally elope to South America, in an implied romance where she becomes his attained grail, and he, hers. The two possibly end up as rather gruesome and permanent dinner companions. This example reveals how this amplification of the monster's role, and ultimately, the telescoping of the sequential narrative into the combined elements of not just monster, *then* grail, but, hero/monster *and* grail, is not always the answer to a discontent with the narrative resolution of the hero-journey.

Hollywood studios also considered the conclusion of Harris's novel *Hannibal,* unacceptable as an ending for the cinema version of *Hannibal.* The resolution of the tale in its literary form was considered too dark in that the hero becomes a monster, or *the* monster. By this I mean that Lecter combining, or conjoining with Starling, entirely eliminates redemption. *Hannibal's* director, Ridley Scott, states he had difficulties with the ending of the novel:

I couldn't take that quantum leap emotionally on behalf of Starling.
Certainly, on behalf of Hannibal – I'm sure that's been in the back of his
mind for a number of years. But for Starling, no. I think one of the attractions
about Starling to Hannibal is what a straight arrow she is. Universal, too was
wary of the ending. 'I said to Dino, [De Laurentiis, the producer] I'd really
like to talk to Tom [Harris, the author] to see how much license we've got'.
(Scott, Knapp & Kulas 199).

Consequently Scott asked author Thomas Harris if he could change
the ending. In Scott's changed Hollywood version, Starling is redeemed.
She retains her obstinate humanity by refusing to become like Hannibal, or
fall for him. And Hannibal Lecter is somewhat punished by his own
mutilation. In the film he quite literally *severs* himself from Clarice, the
hero, to whom he is handcuffed. By doing so, he distinctly retains his
identity of *just* monster and grail – having *literally* cut away from the hero,
to escape. In the narrative sequence that plays out, the combination of
monster *and* grail is allowed, without the hero subsumed by
monstrousness—so as to avoid viewer alienation.

Intriguingly, and quite unlike the novel *Hannibal*—where hero,
monster *and* grail combine, as in *Moby-Dick*—in cinema, usually the
monster must die, not flourish if it ever unites with the hero. Its death, along
with that of the hero, becomes the necessary sacrifice. This is not only to
eliminate the monster, but because the disassembly of their bodies by death,
is the very thing required to reveal the actual grail. And such heroism of
sacrifice to achieve this end is what hero narratives are ultimately about.
This perhaps, more than anything, is why Harris's ending to his novel seems
problematic, or at least did so to Hollywood, in that any semblance of heroic
victory or sacrifice, in the ending of Harris's novel *Hannibal,* is eliminated,
or at least subverted. Such an ending, at least in Harris's novel, is radically
different from the victory, or sacrifice model we have come to expect in
hero-quest stories, where hero, monster *and* grail amalgamate.

For example, the sacrifice model is readily apparent in Hollywood feature films, such as *Aliens 3*. The hero character of Ripley, played by Sigourney Weaver, commits suicide in a fiery furnace. This is to make sure the monster inside her that is about to emerge, dies as well – Ripley sacrificially saves mankind.

For further examples we need look no further back than Arthur Conan Doyle's story of 1893, *The Adventure of the Final Problem*. In this the hero, Sherlock Holmes, grapples with his grail and monster/nemesis, Professor Moriarty, a character often thought to be the first of literature's super-villains, perhaps even the serial killer's ultimate literary progenitor. Locked in combat, they plunge over the Reichenbach Falls. This seeming sacrifice by Holmes is presaged near the beginning of the tale when Holmes hints at his own up coming death, stating,

> "You have probably never heard of Professor Moriarty? [ ] The man pervades London, and no one has heard of him. That's what puts him on a pinnacle in the records of crime. I tell you Watson, in all seriousness, that if I could beat that man, if I could free society of him, I should feel that my own career had reached its summit…" [ ] But I could not rest. Watson, I could not sit quiet in my chair, if I thought that such a man as Professor Moriarty were walking the streets of London unchallenged." (560).

It is something corroborated by Watson, who reports,

> Again and again he (Holmes) recurred to the fact that if he could be assured that society was freed from Professor Moriarty he would cheerfully bring his own career to a conclusion.
> "I think that I may go so far as to say, Watson, that I have not lived wholly in vain," he remarked. "If my record were closed to-night I could still survey it with equanimity (567).

It is further emphasized in the dialogue Moriarty has with Holmes,

"You hope to beat me. I tell you that you will never beat me. If you are clever enough to bring destruction upon me, rest assured that I shall do as much to you."

"You have paid me several compliments, Mr. Moriarty [ ] . Let me pay you one in return when I say that if I were assured of the former eventuality I would, in the interests of the public, cheerfully accept the latter." (562).

The sacrifice by Holmes I believe is finally confirmed in the letter he entrusts to Watson, a letter that acts as a last will and testament, possibly even as a murder/suicide note, although Holmes demise is hardly that and for a grander purpose.

MY DEAR WATSON

[it said]:I write these few lines through the courtesy of Mr. Moriarty, who awaits my convenience for the final discussion of those questions which lie between us. [ ] I am pleased to think that I shall be able to free society from any further effects of his presence, though I fear that it is at a cost which will give pain to my friends, and especially, my dear Watson, to you. I have already explained to you, however, that my career had in any case reached its crisis, and that no possible conclusion to it could be more congenial to me than this. [ ] I made every disposition of my property before leaving England [ ] and believe me to be, my dear fellow…(570).

In the world of crime fiction, this amalgamation of hero, grail, and monster is also evident in Agatha Christie's *Curtain, Poirot's Last Case,* when again, hero, monster, murderer and grail, combine in the form of Poirot as murderer. Christie herself can be seen as an early proponent, if not champion of, the inflated role of villain, even perhaps that of the serial killer, in that most of her tales rarely rest on one murder. This is especially true of her later tales. *Murder on the Orient Express* for instance, depicts the murderers as the entire cast.

Interestingly, in Conan Doyle's *The Adventure of the Final Problem*, it is implied that Holmes and Moriarty, like Ahab and his whale, die by water, although as in the film *Alien 3*, and other tales it is not unusual for the

hero/monster/grail combination, to die by fire. Perhaps they are not only eliminated, but cleansed by it, not entirely dissimilarly to the pioneer work of this changing narrative sequence that can be seen in Melville's *Moby-Dick*, where hero, monster *and* grail, first combined. More interestingly, in both narratives—that of Conan Doyle, and Melville—it is not clear exactly who, or what has definitely perished. Such inexactness almost suggests by default, that they may still be alive. This admittedly faint suggestion perhaps echoes the vague, or inexact Grail of the past that proved to be problematic. Rather suddenly, the grail they have finally caught and struggled with vanishes much like in *The Quest for the Holy Grail*, 'we know not how or wither' (Trans. Matarosso 44). Ridley Scott can perhaps take heart in knowing the reading public found Conan Doyle's ending for his hero equally unacceptable:

> […] there was a massive public uproar which astonished Conan Doyle. More than twenty thousand people cancelled their subscriptions to the *Strand Magazine* […] Abusive mail arrived at the editorial offices by the sackload […] People wore black armbands in public mourning (Booth 190).

Consequently, Conan Doyle resurrected Sherlock Holmes in his later tale *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in 1901.

True, it can be argued that the imprecise nature of the actual Grail in its original re-tellings was perhaps a necessary narrative obscuration. Perhaps it was even a necessary reticence, or deference to its sacred or religious import, since these tales belonged to a more religious age. But in our secular age, where hero-quests and journeys are used more for entertainment in cinema and novels, its imprecise nature is deemed less appropriate.

Does all this really suggest though, that there is a perceivable shift in the hero-quest, in the hero's journey to the monster, or grail? Or merely that these changes, preferences and/or abridgements, and re-combinations in the narrative sequence sometimes come about for more reasons than just those

of time constraints? Do they come about for more reasons than audience boredom, and/or alienation, or our own secularity? Campbell states:

> The changes rung on the simple scale of the monomyth defy description. Many tales isolate or greatly enlarge upon one or two of the typical elements of the full cycle […] others string a number of independent cycles into a single series (as in the Odyssey). Different characters can become fused, or a single element can reduplicate itself and reappear under many changes (213).

A view that is at odds with Propp's scale that says the narrative sequence— certainly in what he applied it to, his study of folklore—never varies. Perhaps this perceived radical change, or abridgement, or shift has occurred because, as Campbell states:

> In the later stages of many mythologies, the key images hide like needles in great haystacks of secondary anecdote and rationalization; for when a civilization has passed from a mythological to a secular point of view, the older images are no longer felt or quite approved of […] To bring images back to life, one has to seek, not interesting applications to modern affairs, but illuminating hints from the inspired past (215).

Which is the reason why one must look beyond the changes being wrought to the narrative of the hero-quest and how it is applied, or preferred, in the modern novel, or Hollywood's adaptations. One must re-read and consult how these elements, or narrative stage-posts and motifs were used, not just in myth, or Grail re-tellings but also other classics. One must examine why the brakes are being applied to some stages of the hero's journey. One must examine why now it seems, sometimes skilfully, and sometimes recklessly, the accelerator is applied at full throttle.

CHAPTER TWO: The Hero Slows Down

How modern is this truncation of the narrative arc, whether we follow Campbell's cyclical model that allows change and re-ordering, or Propp's scale of thirty-one functions that allows no change, or re-ordering but permits abridgement? Can the perceived truncation, or re-combination of narrative functions, which often straddle both their theoretical frameworks, as manifested in thrillers, crime, horror, or cinema, really be said to be purely a contemporary, or modern phenomenon? Did it exist elsewhere, other than in the first unity of hero/ monster/grail of *Moby-Dick,* as argued here? More importantly, did this combination of hero/monster/grail exist significantly *before* the simpler model of the hero combining with Grail – familiar to us in Grail re-tellings?

The answer is surely 'yes', if we go as far back as the story of the Passion, or when we look at the New Testament's narrative arc and stages. I suggest this is because Jesus, as protagonist, can be described as both hero *and* 'monster.' He is certainly a hero to his followers and believers, while being a 'monster' to disbelievers, as well as to the Roman administration who perceive him as a trouble-maker. The crowd assembled before Pilate bays for his blood, 'crucify him, crucify him,' John 19.6 tells us. Their perception is that Jesus is a greater villain than Barabas, who is identified in Luke 23.19 as a murderer. Jesus even states of himself in John 7.1

> The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil

Clearly though, being disliked or hated does not necessarily mean Jesus as hero has also subsumed the narrative role or function of monster. But Jesus in his sacrifice certainly subsumes the role of monster or villain in that he subsumes all the sins of mankind. In fact they are literally impressed on his pliant body. What is being subsumed is a non-corporeal villain or monster, in effect the monstrosity of man, that Jesus as hero came to defeat,

or eliminate for the redemption of humanity. But Jesus is also the ultimate 'Grail', since as God, or Godhead, he embodies it. Indeed he refers to this tripartite embodiment:

> And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood [...] (Matthew, 26: 27-28).

Here in the story of the Synoptic Gospels—regardless of their various authors' viewpoints—can be seen the ultimate, and original conflation of hero/monster/Grail, if we look at the story of the life of Jesus and that of the Passion, through the prism of narrative. This is particularly true if we look at the theories of those dealing in models that outline the narrative stages of the hero, such as Propp, and Campbell.

No small wonder, that theorists such as Campbell, and Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, of 1922, who were looking for a narrative model that fitted the grand, epic, or religious narrative, were attracted to the narrative arc of the New Testament in their comparative analyses. They also saw in the New Testament's narrative the essential stages of the hero and his quest. They saw a model equally adhered to in the numerous religious narratives outside Christian experience. Some, like Phillips, in an article in *Atlantis,* have even seen in the narrative of The New Testament, the character of Jesus as being the original embodiment of the *Picaro* or picaresque hero of later Spanish literature. Lord Raglan in his own elucidation of the hero narrative—his being twenty-two stages, as opposed to Propp's thirty-one functions—was tempted to include the New Testament figure of Jesus as the ultimate example, only omitting it in deference to the religious sensitivities of Methuen, his publisher.

Even within the Synoptic Gospels there is an argument—put forward by Campbell—that not only the whole, but also certain scenes, encapsulate the tripartite narrative model of hero/monster/grail, as

resolution, and 'narrative transubstantiation.' He goes further, suggesting some individual scenes—embedded within the narrative as a whole—encapsulate the entire tripartite structure of the hero narrative itself. For evidence, Campbell quotes the Transfiguration of Christ from The New Testament where, on the mountain, the true nature of Christ is revealed:

> […] and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him […] While he yet spoke, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them: and a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.
>
> And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead (Matthew 17: 1-9 in Campbell 198).

Campbell goes on to state, 'Here is the whole myth in a moment: Jesus, the guide, the way, the vision, and the companion of the return.' This sentiment about narrative amalgamation echoed by Jesus himself, when he says:

> I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him (John 14: 6-7).

And later on: 'Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me' (John 14:11). Jesus takes 'ownership', as it were, of his narrative path and of all hero narrative paths, and their resolution. That is, if we accept Campbell's model that suggests the high point of the hero-quest narrative is the meeting with 'the Father,' or whatever God-like authority the father

figure represents, that must be encountered, defeated, or incorporated almost as if that figure is the final impediment, or monster itself. Campbell states:

> The problem of the hero going to meet the father is to open his soul beyond terror to such a degree that he will understand the sickening and insane tragedies […] validated in the majesty of Being.
> The hero transcends life with its peculiar blind spot and for a moment rises to a glimpse of the source. He beholds the face of the father, understands and the two are atoned (124).

Interestingly, this tripartite structure, or microcosmic encapsulation of the hero's narrative, or quest, or 'transubstantiation'—as I have used the term to reflect the incorporation of hero/monster/grail, for instance in the scene of the Transfiguration of Christ—despite its evident antiquity, has its most directly perceivable parallels in genres such as contemporary horror. In the horror genre, I suggest this recombination is becoming common. It is something that can be seen in Stephen King's *Carrie,* when the eponymous heroine, Carrie, is similarly transfigured in the denouement. Her 'mount' this time is a dais, or stage in a high school assembly hall. Then more significantly moments later, a church, where her telekinetic, 'divine,' or supernatural powers burst forth in revenge after she is maliciously drenched by a bucket of blood.

> She had gone in [to the church] only five minutes before […] but it seemed like hours. She had prayed long and deeply, sometimes aloud, sometimes silently. Her heart thudded and laboured. The veins on her neck and face bulged. Her mind was filled with the huge knowledge of POWERS and of an ABYSS. She prayed in front of the altar, kneeling in her wet and torn and bloody gown, her feet bare and dirty and bleeding […] Her breath sobbed in and out of her throat, and the church was filled with groanings and swayings and sunderings as psychic energy sprang from her. Pews fell, hymnals flew, and a silver Communion set cruised silently across the vaulted darkness of the nave to crash in the far wall. She prayed and there was no answering. No one was there - or if there was, He/It was cowering from her. God had turned

his face away, and why not? This horror was as much His doing as hers (198).

It is particularly true of vampire novels where notions of redemption, blood, and eternal grails, or notions of eternal life, whether for good or evil, can be paradoxical. In Anne Rice's novel *The Vampire Lestat*, the sequel to her enormously popular *Interview with a Vampire*, she directly mimics the New Testament scene of the Transfiguration of Christ, reported in *Matthew*. Lestat, at the Theatre Des Vampires, reveals his own superior 'divine' nature. Much as in the Biblical model, he as vampire, and eponymous hero of the novel, ascends his own 'mount,' the stage of the Theatre Des Vampyres, to demonstrate his powers:

> Before I even meant to do it, I had gone out on the stage. I was standing in the very centre, feeling the heat of the footlights, the smoke stinging my eyes. I stared at the crowded gallery […] It seemed the laughter was deafening, and the taunts and shouts that greeted me were spasms and eruptions, and quite plainly behind every face in the house was a grinning skull […] Insults were cutting through the din [...] Hundreds of greasy faces peered back at me from the gloom […] I threw out my arms. I crooked my knee, and I began turning […] effortlessly, going faster and faster […] and then gaping at the ceiling I willed my body upwards […]
>
>   In an instant I touched the rafters. […] Gasps rose from the audience […] Several persons were so startled that they rose and tried to escape into the aisles […] and something in my serious manner made them afraid. For one terrible moment, I felt their helplessness. And I felt their doom […] I raised my hands slowly to command their attention, […] and I let my voice grow louder and louder until suddenly people were rising and screaming before me, […] Pandemonium. Shrieks curses, all stumbling and struggling towards the doors [...]
>
>   I stood watching them in a ringing silence […] and I felt a strange coldness over all my limbs and it seemed as if my eyes were made of glass (151-154).

Rice in *Memnoch the Devil,* goes even beyond notions of transfiguration, having the hero/monster directly transubstantiate with the Grail itself. In *Memnoch the Devil,* the hero/monster Lestat finds himself courtesy of the Devil at the scene of the Passion. Lestat ascends up to Jesus on the cross, where Jesus speaks to him.

> "Lestat," He said, His voice so feeble and torn I could scarce hear it. "You want to taste it, don't you ... The blood. Taste it. Taste the Blood of Christy. .. The blood of God Lestat." He whispered. "Think of all the human blood that has flowed into your lips. Is my blood not worthy? Are you afraid?" Sobbing, I cupped His neck with both hands, my knuckles against the crossbar, and I kissed his throat, and then my mouth opened without will or struggle and my teeth pierced the flesh. I heard Him moan, a long echoing moan that seemed to rise up and fill the world with its sound, and the blood flooded into my mouth." (345).

Here one could say through transubstantiation, Lestat becomes God, and the God a vampire, or monster in resurrection. One could even infer Lestat has brought about the resurrection himself. Regardless of how far such inferences can be taken, it is clear that the transubstantiation of hero, monster/grail has taken place. Of this scene Maureen-Claude LaPerrière states in *Unholy Transubstantiation: Christifying the Vampire and Demonizing the Blood,*

> No vampire could ever have sucked from a purer or holier source. Even beyond transubstantiation, the vampire feeds at the ultimate fount, merges with the holiest of the holy, coupling with the true God. (128).

She also states.

> The emblem most often amalgamated with the vampire, which has afforded him sustenance as well as his raison-d'être as fearsome ghoul, is the blood. And because this substance, both as Jesus Christ's literal and transubstantiative blood, has been a mainstay of the Christian Church, the

vampire figure' s insertion within the paradigms of Christianity is a logical
extension. (5)..

But the argument advanced here is not so much whether the
protagonist, or figure of Jesus, fits the model of the hero and his quest, or
journey. This has been well canvassed by Dundes in *The Hero Pattern and
the Life of Jesus*. Nor is it about whether smaller scenes in the New
Testament, more contemporaneously employed, mimic its narrative whole.
It is more to say that the Biblical re-telling, or the exposition of the Synoptic
Gospels, provides us with an almost modern, or rather contemporary
narrative. It is quite similar to the truncation, or telescoping of the hero/
monster/grail combination that I have argued is increasingly contemporary
in genres such as horror.

If this is so, it creates a problem. It suggests the contemporary
narrative model of hero/monster/grail, is not so modern, or even
contemporary, if it existed as a primary narrative model nearly two
millennia ago in religious texts. But the problem is surely less that this
telescoping now appears less modern, but rather why this seeming
abridgement, or conflation seems to have been absent for so long? Where
did it go? Or rather, why did it change? Indeed, where, or why was it
supplanted, if it had sufficed as a standard narrative model? These targeted
questions lead back to Grail re-tellings.

Briefly, I advance a theory that suggests that popular Grail re-
tellings from Chrétien onwards, pioneered a narrative that *disaggregated* the
aggregated narrative stages of hero/monster/Grail represented in the
Gospels. Grail re-tellings turned them into a series of *sequential* narrative
adventures, where monsters, and obstacles must be removed or expunged,
before enlightenment (Godhead) or revelation, is separately attained. The
biblical model was subverted—one could say, even sacrilegiously. It was
turned into a narrative string sequence. The hero, monster, and Grail,

became not just separate stages, but separate entities dedicated to the *function* of their narrative stages.

This is not as startling or as radical as it sounds. It is more an amplification, or rather elaboration of what Campbell has already argued in *The Masks of God, Vol. 4. Creative Mythology*. Campbell's argument has been well-summarised by Sundel as:

> The collapse of the Roman Empire […] gave rise to an evolving cycle of myths over a long period […] that in Joseph Campbell's opinion paralleled the Homeric legends that developed in the wake of the fall of Crete and Troy. This was the Arthurian cycle [and] over the course of the next five to six centuries uncounted bards transformed Arthur into a misty, regional superpatriot […]
>
>   Chretien De Troyes reworked the tales to include new blood (already indicated by others) that is, a Round Table of Knights. He retired Arthur and brought forth a stable of young heroes: Lancelot, Tristan, Yvain etc. His inventions and/or additions to the Arthurian cycle included an ambiguous Legend of the Grail (211-212).

Or as Campbell himself says:

> Take the mystery of the Grail: For what reason, pray, should a Christian knight ride forth questing for the Grail when at hand, in every chapel, were the blessed body and blood of Christ literally present in the sacrament of the altar for the redemption and beatitude of his soul? The answer, obviously, is that the Grail Quest was an individual adventure in experience (*Occidental Mythology* 507-508).

Such a narrative realignment to reflect individual adventure in experience (with Knights perhaps as the new disciples?) seems at odds with the view that Grail tales were of great religious reverence. Particularly when their authors—for quite different reasons—with scissors and paste, re-ordered the narrative stages (and their combined, and we must assume sacred metaphors) into individual items and functions.

Around 1819, Thomas Jefferson re-ordered the New Testament his way, literally with a razor, into what we have today, *The Jefferson Bible: the Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*. In this version, Jefferson turns the story of the Gospels about the life of Christ into a strictly secular tale expunged of the divine, or supernatural. That was Jefferson's purpose. In this there are no miracles, and there is no resurrection. It ends when the tomb is sealed. Jefferson turned the Gospels into a strictly linear biography, thereby interpolating chronologically the Gospels to his satisfaction, without violating the unvarying trajectory of Propp's linearity.

Briefly summarised, we may simply be seeing the gradual end-result of the *re-amalgamation* of the narrative stage-posts that existed—as in the New Testament—*pre*-Grail re-tellings that later Grail re-tellings may have dissected, or *disaggregated*. They may have turned the hero-quest narrative into the 'soap opera' (I do not use the term pejoratively) of plodding stages that for some time has been the more familiar model. Some such as Uitti and Freeman, have a wider and even more generous view. They state:

> […] a new era opens in the history of European storytelling – an era whose effects are still very much with us. This poem reinvents the genre we call narrative romance; in some important respects it also initiates the vernacular novel (36).

Uitti and Freeman are of course referring to *Eric and Enide,* the first complete poem, in Chrétien's ultimately unfinished work. Others, like Barber (*History of a Legend*), infer the very incompleteness of Chrétien De Troyes' tale is the ultimate precursor—whether deliberately, or by accident—of today's intentional narrative 'cliff-hanger'. Such cliff-hangers have become commonplace in the sequential, or episodic 'hero' tales of television. Here the anticipated next stage of impediment, or danger in the narrative—whether constructed to occur after a commercial break, or the following week—is seen to be what an audience enjoys more, rather than too neat a resolution. Perhaps one can say Chrétien's cliff-hanger spawned a

huge succession of narrators, and sequential Grail narratives determined to finish what was broken off. It eventually gave rise to a sequential model, right through to the serialisations of Dickens. This is most evident in Dickens's, *A Tale of Two Cities*, where the overt Christian sacrifice of Sydney Carton as he goes to his own crucifixion, or scaffold, seems to partially re-integrate the older narrative model.

Regardless of how far this theory can be taken, I suggest that this cliff-hanger, may not have been deliberate. It may not have been the result of a case of 'writers' block'— to use a modern term. I suggest it may have been because Chrétien, in his *dis-aggregations* was unable to come up with a sufficiently grand conclusion, or elucidation of what the Grail was. Particularly when he was faced with the final stage—requiring separate and distinct elucidation or revelation in his disassembled episodic structure—as it hurtled towards the ultimate goal of salvation and enlightenment. The corner he had 'painted himself into' in terms of narrative and religious import, perhaps exceeded his own talents, and his own linear acceleration of the narrative. The last tile in his mosaic had to necessarily stay blank.

But it would be wrong to say that this re-amalgamation of narrative, this truncation of the stages of the hero narrative, reached some sort of apogee with *Moby-Dick*. I suggest *Moby-Dick* was simply the beginning of attempts to take back hero and monster to their 'religious,' if not exactly Biblical forms. But it is not entirely successful. I say this because even *Moby-Dick's* transubstantiation of, hero/monster/grail—that I argue is witnessed in Ahab's demise in his last desperate lunge at the monster with whom he becomes entwined—omits the narrative stage that would allow us to equate it with the narrative model of the Gospels. It omits its most essential element, empathy on the part of the reader, and compassion on the part of the hero. In *Moby-Dick*, Ahab's 'sacrifice' of himself—in his attempt to kill the monster—involves no real sacrifice at all. There is nothing of the tripartite empathetic, or *sacrificial-redemptive* model of antiquity. He does it solely for himself, for his own vainglory/satisfaction,

or desire to staunch the wounds of fate. It is not to save others, his ship, crew, or the planet. It is merely an amalgamation of the stages.

In a way, Ahab's, or Melville's failure to ascribe to him any more redemptive motive other than the final watery solution to his own obsession and desire, makes his end not just tragic, but comic. Gore Vidal in commenting on *Moby-Dick*, similarly picks up on its religious tenor, and its inadvertent comedy when he states:

> The highest art, which is comedy is grounded in obsession. With a bit of luck (a Roman Catholic education?) Melville might have created a masterpiece in Moby-Dick. As it is, we laugh - though not enough - at Captain Ahab (*Essays* 412).

One could suggest this omission of the *sacrificial-redemptive* component, or any 'care' for others, in the 'death' of Ahab in *Moby-Dick,* was perceivable to readers and audiences when faced with such an odd maritime tale. It may in part explain why its first readers were mystified by *Moby-Dick,* and why it was such a failure. Its importance, or reputation as a literary milestone was only seen years later. In fact, without the element of compassion, married to sacrifice for the sake of others, in *Moby-Dick* we simply have, not only the almost comical end of an obsessive character, but a denouement that is depressing. It is an end without redemption. No grail is achieved, despite the seeming amalgamation of the narrative stages of hero/monster/grail. There is no full transubstantiation through the familiar *sacrificial-redemptive* model. No greater good comes of it. It is possibly the reason its ending, or denouement is often felt to be not only depressing, but as Vidal points out, comic.

It may even be why the world of animation has so many comic characters that are wonderful *obsessives*, Ahab-like creatures, who are doomed to fail through their own selfishness rather than through stupidity. It can be seen in Warner Brothers' cartoons such as *Daffy Duck* (*The Essential Daffy Duck*) and in the form of other cartoon creatures like *Wiley E. Coyote*

whose grail, the Road Runner, always remains elusive. It may also be the reason why there are few if any, send-ups and parodies of The Passion, other than perhaps the film *The Life of Brian*. But *The Life of Brian*, is less a direct parody of the Passion, and its resolution, and more a careful construction of a character called Brian, mistaken as the Messiah, rather than an outright send-up of Jesus. Apparently, this was not done for religious reasons, or deference but because its authors were aware that this would not have been funny, Michael Palin states in an interview:

> We explored the idea of doing a comedy about Jesus … but the more we read about Jesus and the background to his life we were aware that there was very little to ridicule in the life of Jesus … so we got Brian in (*Friday Night, Saturday Morning*).

Interestingly the film *The Life of Brian*, followed on the heels of the other very successful film parody, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, where even in parody, the Grail is never attained. The narrative simply breaks off.

I suggest this *necessary* lack of humour in *successful* tripartite compassion models, rather than *failures* such as *Moby-Dick* is perhaps why the full 'transubstantiation' model of hero/monster/Grail, is more in evidence in horror/thriller/science fiction genres, more so than in comedy. It is particularly true of cinema features such as *Alien 3*. In *Alien 3*, Sigourney Weaver, playing the hero/protagonist Ripley, responds, 'No way...' making it clear she is about to sacrifice herself to the inferno, to kill the monster emerging from her. The script reads:

> Her face distorts in pain. Her chest bulges.
>
> RIPLEY
> It's too late.
>
> […] The alien embryo bursts out! She catches it! Ripley holds it, the tiny beast kicking in her hands!

RIPLEY

Goodbye –

Extends it above her head. Choking it – fighting – killing it […] still shaking the EMBRYO – she steps off the platform and disappears into the inferno. Down...down into the pure white flame. A moment of ecstasy. A moment of triumph. *Morse* on the gantry, sees Ripley fall.

MORSE

Those who are dead are not dead. They have moved up.

-- moved higher…

The flames engulf her. Ripples slowly disappear. Calm restored. Fade out (Giler & Hill 1991 Scene 178 92).

Such endings of sacrifice where true narrative re-amalgamation is witnessed are now increasingly common, not only in horror genres, and science fiction, but disaster films. For example, *Armageddon* is a film that concerns itself with an asteroid the size of Texas—clearly, a whale of an asteroid—which must be destroyed, before it destroys the earth. A feat accomplished by Bruce Willis's hero character, Harry Stamper, who blows it up with nuclear bombs, just in time to save not only his crew, but also the Earth, but at the loss of his own life. His Ahab-like entwinement here is for a greater good beyond himself. It is not because of a pathological hatred of rogue asteroids, or whatever it is such monsters or giant threats may represent. This amalgamation of stages appears increasingly common in such cinema genres, even though for cinema audiences—and possibly producers—it remains risky. It is risky in the sense that cinema audiences by and large, do not want, or accept the death of the hero easily. Happier endings are preferred—unless the death of the hero opens out—perhaps even religiously—to that 'something else' required for the continuation of the world, or life. Usually the final 'near death' experience is most often

used as a cheat and substitute for the sacrifice of 'crucifixion/resurrection,' particularly in action blockbusters such as the film, *The Raiders of the Lost Ark* (and its many spin-offs) where the hero must be retained for audience sentiment and possible sequels.

But to really see if among these numerous examples—most relating to some sort of horror, whether in thrillers, science fiction, or crime —there is an increasing truncation of the hero models provided by Campbell, and Propp, it is necessary to have a close look at their theoretical models. Chapter Three will examine how similar the theoretical models are, or indeed if there are differences between them other than metonymy. It examines whether, despite assertions as to malleability (Campbell), and assertions as to the unchanging sequence of the hero functions (Propp), the models are so very different. This comparison examines whether there is a misconception about the models and how they are used.

I contend there is a misconception that assumes a uniformity in them that may not exist. The authors have perhaps exaggerated the inherent uniformity of their respective models. I argue there is a bifurcation, or dichotomy in their purportedly uniform models that is not fully understood. It is a fissure, or division which writers like me often wrestle with in their creative work and try and bridge.

CHAPTER THREE: The Dividing and Uniting Road
of the Hero's Journey

In looking at theoretical models of the hero-quest in this Exegesis, I engage with the model of Joseph Campbell elucidated in, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and with Vladimir Propp's model expounded in *Morphology of the Folktale*. Campbell's in some ways—when summarised by him—is more eloquent. He reduces his three hundred and fifty page thesis to the following statement:

> The Mythological hero, setting forth from his commonday hut or castle, is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds, to the threshold of adventure. There he encounters a shadow presence that guards the passage. The hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go into the kingdom of the dark (brother-battle, dragon-battle; offering, charm), or be slain by the opponent and descend in death (dismemberment, crucifixion). Beyond the threshold, then, the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, some of which severely threaten him (tests), some of which give him magical aid (helpers). When he arrives at the nadir of the mythological round, he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward. The triumph may be represented as the hero's sexual union with the goddess mother of the world (sacred marriage), his recognition by the father-creator (father-atonement), his own divination (apotheosis), or again – if the powers have remained unfriendly to him – his theft of the boon he came to gain (bride-theft, fire-theft); intrinsically it is an expansion of consciousness and therewith of being (illumination, transfiguration, freedom). The final work is that of the return. If the powers have blessed the hero, he now sets forth under their protection (emissary); if not, he flees and is pursued (transformation flight, obstacle flight). At the return threshold the transcendental powers must remain behind; the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of dread (return, resurrection). The boon that he brings restores the world (elixir) (212-213).

Intrinsically in the summary of his model there are seventeen distinct stages spread over Three Parts. Part One Campbell calls, *Departure*. The

stages of this *Departure* are elucidated in Chapter One of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces,* as follows:

1. The Call to Adventure.
2. Refusal of the Call.
3. Supernatural Aid.
4. The Crossing of the First Threshold.
5. The Belly of the Whale (51-89).

Part Two Campbell calls *Initiation*. Its stages are elucidated in Chapter Two of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces,* as follows:

1. The Road of Trials.
2. The Meeting with the Goddess.
3. Woman as the Temptress.
4. Atonement with the Father.
5. Apotheosis.
6. The Ultimate Boon (90-169).

Part Three, Campbell calls *Return*. It comprises of sub-headings or stages of the hero's journey that he labels in Chapter Three, as follows:

1. Refusal of the Return.
2. The Magic Flight.
3. Rescue from Without.
4. The Crossing of the Return Threshold.
5. Master of the Two Worlds.
6. Freedom to Live (170-211).

In each of these three chapters, *Departure, Initiation* and *Return*, Campbell draws many comparative examples of hero-quests through the ages to illustrate his model – which it has to be said is a theoretical model. It was never meant to be a formula, or template for creators of literature, or cinema that it has often been reduced to, or mistaken for (Hiebert; Snyder;

Vogler). It was never intended as a guidebook for what *is* to be written but what *has* been written, to explain similarities of narrative in hero stages and constructs. Nonetheless, I believe it is a useful model for comparing one's own creative work in narrative hero-quests, or functions. It allows one to ascertain how far one's own work has deliberately, or inadvertently followed it, as well as to see if it has missed the mark. It is a theoretical model I often reflect on once I have finished my work, but further discussion about the model and my own work I have left to Chapter Four of this Exegesis.

Having elucidated in Campbell's own words what he means by his uniform hero model, it is now important to look at the other model I cite and engage with in this Exegesis, and consider as being of equal importance. This is to see if there are indeed similarities and/or divergences in these respective models in how they are applied in contemporary cinema, and literature. It is an attempt to see whether this second model is also flawed, or perhaps inadequately understood. It is the model of the Russian empirical theorist, Vladimir Propp. Propp elucidated his own hero trajectory, stages and components, or rather functions as he called them in his *Morphology of the Folktale,* published in Russian in 1928. This work remained fairly obscure until its English translation in 1958, some nine years after Campbell's seminal work.

The two scholars were apparently unknown to each other, Propp working within the empirical tradition, and Campbell more with the comparative mythic, and metaphoric. In Propp's model, elucidated in *Morphology of the Folktale,* he identifies thirty-one functions of the hero's journey as opposed to Campbell's seventeen. I have retained Propp's roman numerals to avoid confusion with Campbell's numbered stages. Propp's functions are abridged as follows:

I. One of the members of a family absents himself from home (26).
II. An interdiction is addressed to the hero (26).
III. The interdiction is violated (27).

IV.   The villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance (28).

V.   The villain receives information about his victim (28).

VI.   The villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or of his belongings (29).

VII.   The victim submits to deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy (30).

V111.   The villain causes harm or injury to a member of the family (30).

V111A.   One member of a family either lacks something or desires to have something (35).

IX.   Misfortune or lack is made known; the hero is approached with a request or command; he is allowed to go or is dispatched (36).

X.   The seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction (38).

XI.   The hero leaves home (39).

XII.   The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked etc., which prepares the way for his receiving either a magical agent or helper (39).

XIII.   The hero reacts to the actions of the future donor (42).

XIV.   The hero acquires the use of a magical agent (43).

XV.   The hero is transferred, delivered, or led to the whereabouts of an object or search (50).

XVI.   The hero and the villain join in direct combat (51).

XVII.   The hero is branded (52).

XVIII.   The villain is defeated (53).

XIX.   The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated (53).

XX.   The hero returns (55).

XXI.   The hero is pursued (56).

XXII.   Rescue of the hero from pursuit (57).

XXIII.   The hero, unrecognised, arrives home or in another country (60).

XXIV.   A false hero presents unfounded claims (60).

XXV.   A difficult task is proposed to the hero (60).

XXVI.   The task is resolved (62).

XXVII.   The hero is recognised (62).

XXVIII. The false hero or villain is exposed (62).

XXIX.   The hero is given a new appearance (62).

XXX.   The villain is punished (63).

XXXI.   The hero is married and ascends the throne (63).

Campbell's model of the hero-quest quoted here is not without its critics, notably Robert Segal, who takes issue with Campbell, stating in his introduction to, *In Quest of the Hero,* 'Campbell's [theory] can be faulted on various grounds' (xxii). Segal implies that Campbell is too general, too universalist, and not particularised enough; going on to say on the same page:

> Campbell, unlike either Rank or Raglan provides no set of hero myths to accompany his whole pattern. While he continually cites scores of hero myths to illustrate individual *part*s of his pattern, he does not apply his whole pattern to even one myth.

Campbell was also criticised by Robert Graves, who, when reviewing *The Hero with a Thousand Faces,* saw in it too much of a psychological mélange:

> Mr Campbell spreads his net wide for the myths of the New Hebrides, India, China, Ancient Greece and Iceland, Central America, Mexico and Rhodesia, products of utterly dissimilar civilizations. All that he catches goes into Freud's universal soup-kettle, along with dreams of nervous modern business-women and frustrated bobby-soxers, and comes out tasteless and denatured (698).

But despite Segal being one of Campbell's fiercest critics, 'I am no defender of Campbell,' (*American Academy of Religion* 461) he at the least defends Campbell's right to be a generalist, or a universalist, stating:

> Any theorist—of myth, religion, or anything else, is a universalist. To explain all cases of a category, one must seek the similarities among them, and either disregard lingering differences or else turn those differences into underlying similarities. If Campbell and Jung are universalists so are all non-psychological theorists of myth as well. Are Edward Tylor, James Frazer, Northrop Frye, Bronislaw Malinowski, Claude Lévi Strauss and Mirecea Eliade any less universalistic than Jung or Campbell? (463).

Or, as Elizabeth Nottingham reviewing Campbell's later works notes:

> Imaginative and informed syntheses, like that of Campbell, are not only
> valuable *per se,* but the very fact that they stimulate criticism makes the act
> as a challenge to further research and thus an instrument for the furtherance
> of science in the broadest sense (113-115).

I will turn to my criticism of Campbell's model later in this chapter, but believe it is indeed rare in the literature to find a refutation of Campbell's theoretical model *in toto* as a sequence. His critics for the main part are concerned about whether his aetiology for his hero model, and in his other works is Jungian, or not, or Freudian as some like Graves assert. Critical hesitations about his later theories in *The Masks of God* are more to do with how he explains the origin of religion, and metaphors, rather than with the arc or cycle of the hero-quest narrative he espoused in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. At the same time there is an acknowledgement, even by Campbell's critics like Segal, that there is paucity of secondary scholarly criticism about Campbell's work, stating, 'surprisingly little has been written about him' (*Joseph Campbell, An Introduction* ix). True, there has been more since Segal wrote that, mainly by Segal himself, but not an enormous amount.

This lack of refutation in scholarly criticism about the viability of Campbell's hero model, outside of the concerns of Segal, may perhaps attest to the veracity, durability, or usefulness of Campbell's model for writers of creative work. I say this because many writers acknowledge his influence, whether they look back on it reflectively—as I do—or use it aggressively as a template; something it was never meant for but not specifically excluded from. Writers and directors such as George Lucas of *Star Wars* fame, and novelist Richard Adams, author of *Watership Down*, are particularly vocal about their reliance on Campbell's theory (Bridgman 108-112; Campbell &

Moyers xiii). Others, such as fantasy writer Neil Gaiman, at the very least attest to a respect for his model:

> I like Campbell – but, I sort of met him second […] I think I got about half way through *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and found myself thinking if this is true — I don't want to know. I really would rather not know this stuff. I'd rather do it because it's true and because I accidentally wind up creating something that falls into this pattern than be told what the pattern is. (Gaiman in Ogline).

Propp in his insistence on the invariance of his sequential model in *Morphology of the Folktale* is also not without admirers, and critics, notably Lévi-Strauss. Lévi-Strauss sees in Propp much to admire but takes Propp to task for concentrating on folktales and fairy tales for the sake of empiricism. He implies that Propp's schemata could have been, or should have been, also applied to myth, stating:

> Propp is right: there is no serious reason to isolate folktales from myth … but first we must find out why […] it is the wonder tale, that Propp chose for testing his method. Should he not rather have used myths, the privileged value of which he recognizes several times? […] I believe that Propp's choice can also be explained by his lack of knowledge of the true relationship between myth and folktale (Structure and Form, in *Theory and History of Folklore* 176-177).

Other critics such as Alan Dundes in his introduction to the 2nd edition of Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale,* states:

> To what extent is Propp's analysis applicable to forms of the folktale other than the fairy tale? […] Another question concerns the extent to which Propp's analysis applies to forms of folk narrative other than the folktale. For example, what is the relationship of Propp's *Morphology* to the structure of the epic? (In this connection, it is noteworthy that the last portion of the *Odyssey* is strikingly similar to Propp's functions 23-31) (xiv).

Propp's applicability to the epic is further emphasised by critics like Barnes, who sees in *Beowulf* the full execution of the Proppian model. Barnes states:

> It now seems clear that the structural pattern we have extracted from *Beowulf* by applying Propp's theory describes the plot or sequence of dramatic action in the poem with rather surprising consistency (432).

Nonetheless, Propp rebutted Lévi-Strauss's criticism, treating it as an affront, replying—among other reasons—that Lévi-Strauss had no interest in empiricism. Propp states:

> The difference between my way of reasoning and that of my critic is that I draw abstractions from the data, whereas Lévi-Strauss draws abstractions from my abstractions (*Theory and History of Folklore* 76).

Clearly criticism of Campbell is that his theory is too vast, over-reaching, and too universalist. But with Propp it is the reverse, that his theory is too particularised, and overly-reliant on certain types of folktales when its applicability could be wider.

Propp's model is more elaborate than Campbell's, at least by the amount of functions he lists, and in part because of some of the algebra he uses to explain it. Consequently there have been attempts by scholars like Gilet, to condense Propp's stages, or functions, for their own anthropological interests in narrative. But I suggest that despite Propp's overall elaboration, his functions from I to XII, are similar to Part One of Campbell's model, Chapter One, of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, that he labels *Departure*, with sub-headings for stages 1-5. They both deal with the introduction of a problem that needs to be faced by the hero and his departure to lands and places where the problem must be confronted, and

solved. I suggest this is regardless of how they are expressed, labelled, or numbered by the respective authors.

Indeed, function XI in Propp's model, also titled *Departure*, appears identical at least in concept to Campbell's, 'Crossing of the First Threshold,' which is stage four in Campbell's Chapter One (71). The models though elaborated differently appear to be similar, on matters of metonymy. Similarly, functions XI to XX of Propp's model, are not so very different to the second part of Campbell's stage called *Initiation* that ends with the 'ultimate boon,' or grail as I have defined it for this Exegesis (*Hero with a Thousand Faces* 139). Both in functions X1 to XX of Propp, and in Part Two, Chapter Two of Campbell's model, *Initiation,* the monsters have been slain. The villain, or ultimate monster has been confronted and defeated. If that were the end of the hero narrative trajectory of both authors it would be concise.

But for me it leaves the problem that Part Three, the *Return* in Campbell's model of hero-quest narrative, and functions XX to XXXI of Propp's model, still require execution. The suggestion by both theorists is that for execution of the later stages of the narrative arc, the hero-quest begins *again*, but *differently*. For instance, Propp states: 'A great many tales end on the note of rescue from pursuit […] Then everything begins anew' (*Morphology of the Folktale* 58). Campbell writes: 'When the hero-quest has been accomplished […] the adventurer must still return with his life-transmuting trophy' (*The Hero with a Thousand Faces* 170). If the hero-quest *has been accomplished*, (my italics) as Campbell states, then whatever follows is a secondary tale or application even if it is required as he defends for 'The full round, the norm of the monomyth […]' (170).

My contention is that if hero-quests do sometimes begin again, leading to a new and more *ultimate* resolution—if it can be called that— then the models cannot be unilateral, or uniform. They are bifurcated. Two sets of narrative are being married to *appear* as one. They describe two forms of the hero narrative and not one with a mere secondary repetition, or

'move,' as Propp calls it (*Morphology of the Folktale* 59). To merely describe it as a 'move' I suggest is a vast understatement to reconcile the division of the two parts. It is something Propp was aware of. He states:

> This is perhaps clumsy and inconvenient, especially if one desires to compose a concise table of classification […] (103).

On the same page Propp goes further saying:

> In this manner the first half can exist as an independent tale. On the other hand, the second half is also a finished tale.

I contend that the full execution of the second and third parts of Campbell's theory, are the main construct of the 'high-art end of literature,' *the redemptive-sacrificial model*. The execution of the first parts of Campbell, and Propp I to XX, is the more *simple adventure model leading to triumph.* Impatience with the length and repetition of the last part of the respective theories sees modern and contemporary writers often trying to plait the *adventure model* with the redemptive-*sacrificial model*. They often omit functions XXI to XXX in the Propp model, and stages 1 to 4 that Campbell in his Chapter Three of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, labels *Return*.

I have argued that modern and contemporary writers, and screenwriters, often attempt to shorten the narrative, so as to make it more economical. But I also believe, that while they are doing this, they are trying to give it a resonance beyond that of the simple adventure model of parts one and two in Campbell, *Initiation* and *Departure*, and functions I to XXI in Propp. This is clearly instanced in the film *Alien 3,* when the protagonist, the heroic Ripley, in battle with the monster taken from her or that she has given birth to, wrestles with it and dies with it in a hero/monster/grail combination. Her 'apotheosis' as Campbell would call it, (*The Hero with a Thousand Faces* 126) is evident in her sacrificial death. The celestial fire

and light cleanses the world and the universe of monster and villainy – the problem she died to solve. There is no 'return,' or 'magic flight' of the Third Part of Campbell's model (172). The boon grail, or '*elixir*' as he calls it, is transubstantiated in death (213). The *triumph adventure model* in this bifurcation *leaps* to the *sacrificial-redemptive* model.

      In *Alien 3*, or the film *Armageddon*, similarly in the Proppian model—as I interpret it—function XVIII, 'The villain is defeated' (53) jumps to, function XXX, 'The villain is punished.'(63). In doing so, these science fiction space adventures achieve a neat, triumphal, adventurous end. But it is one that is married to a narrative abbreviation. It is one that is also married to the second cycle, the *sacrificial-redemptive* cycle of the respective models such films have deliberately bridged—but not entirely abandoned—to give them a seeming greater depth.

      If it appears I have overly relied on science fiction space adventures, it is in part because Campbell himself argued that in future, myths of the sacrificial must increasingly deal with heroes in outer space, something noted by Segal in his introduction to *In Quest of the Hero*.

> Relentlessly pitting religion against science, Campbell not only distinguishes religious hero myths from the rest of religion but also maintains that religious heroes are gradually being superseded by secular ones — most recently, by heroes whose adventures take them to outer space (xxviii).

      I perceive this abbreviation, or blending of the models is also common in literature, for instance in Melville's *Moby-Dick.* The combination of monster/hero/grail argued for in this Exegesis is basically its dramatic high point and end. Only Ishmael, the narrator, is left to execute the *Return* of Part Three of Campbell's model. Perhaps Ishmael is even the substitute for the presumed dead hero Ahab, when, in a coffin, Ishmael *returns* by being washed ashore. But even this plot extension past Ahab's monstrous watery entwinement, at the very most in Propp's model is only function XX, 'The hero returns' (55).

Others perhaps have perhaps not gone so far as to say the models are bifurcated. But they do point out that folktales are more aligned to adventure and morals, while myths belong to the sacred. Bascom states with initial emphasis:

> *Folktales are prose narratives which are regarded as fiction….* And they are not to be taken seriously. Nevertheless although it is often said that they are told only for amusement, they have other important functions, as the class of moral folktales should have suggested (4).

Bascom goes on to say:

> Myths are the embodiment of dogma; they are usually sacred; and they are often associated with theology and ritual. Legends are more often secular than sacred and their principal characters are human. They tell of migrations, wars and victories, deeds of past heroes, chiefs, and kings, and succession in ruling dynasties (4).

Avoiding arguments against generalists, or universalists, and their opponents who prefer the particularised view, while wrestling with the problem of classification of genres, Bascom goes on to suggest with prudence that:

> Myth, legend, and folktale are not proposed as universally recognised categories but as analytical concepts which can be meaningfully applied cross culturally (5).

If that is the case, then perhaps the argued for bifurcation and abridgement in this Exegesis, is merely the marrying of folktales, fairy tales—that is, stories of adventure and triumph—*with* sacrificial myth. Basically it is the wedding of different genres, hence the perceived division. Perhaps the theorists, Propp and Campbell, have combined two separate forms of narrative explanation into their one-size-fits-all, hero trajectories. I

would suspect there is no *monomyth* as Campbell called it, borrowing Joyce's neologism in *Finnegan's Wake*, but, (if I can be equally permitted a neologism,) more of a *stereomyth* if one looks at the narrative division in Campbell, and in turn, Propp's theory. I would propose this is precisely what modern, and contemporary writers attempt to 'edit,' into a shorter more uniform highway. It is the forked road of the hero's journey and trajectory.

Such a wedding of the two parts may more account for such perceived bifurcation, and elision, more so than any impatience, or fear of narrative length. It may even be why I perceive it as more common in horror, science fiction, and disaster films, since within these genres, legend, fairytale and myth often combine. Further, in the case of graphic novels, and cinema dealing with super-heroes, such genres are often difficult to separate. This can be clearly seen in the works of Neil Gaiman whose main characters are often immortal and sometimes (paradoxically) immortals who die, such as in Gaiman's *The Sandman* graphic novel series, and his later novel, *American Gods*.

Sometimes the reverse occurs, and myths are turned into legends as in the cinema feature *Troy*, Hollywood's version of *The Iliad*. In this, all the gods, elements of the sacred, and the supernatural, have been excised. It is a simple adventure.

Perhaps Propp himself in his initial insistence on the empiricism of his theory with folktales may have done himself a disservice. Maybe he 'accidentally' over-emphasised, or fell into the 'particularised' view, when his theory's applicability, pruned, or extended, does, or could—as Lévi-Strauss argued—take in myth.

The full, or part execution of *both* halves of Propp, or Campbell—as I perceive them and have argued—is what allows writers to incorporate other genres in their work, or to change paths. Some critics such as Christopher Sten appear to see this very attempt to weave two different strands, this bifurcation, even in *Moby-Dick*. Sten states,

Moby- Dick is an unusually ambitious work that brings together two epic traditions rather than one: the ancient or primitive national epic of combat or conflict, as in the Iliad or Beowulf and the modern universal epic of spiritual quest, of the search for a transcendent order or significance to human life as in the Divine Comedy or Paradise Lost. Though in Melville's treatment the two are in fact woven together to form a single story with each of the two major characters crossing the line into the other's epic territory, the first can be said to focus generally on Ahab and the second on Ishmael. (2).

In the following chapter of this Exegesis, I outline how I deal with this forked road in the hero's journey, and trajectory, in my own work, and how it allows me to change paths or genres within my scripts and novels.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Writer as Hero

My first novel, *Medea's Children*, has a young Greek boy growing up in a boarding house in 1960s Sydney, having explicit 'Lolita-esque' sexual adventures with handsome male boarders, one of whom he seeks for the rest of his life. More than anything *Medea's Children* is a re-write of *The Odyssey*, having a first person nameless narrator who executes the narrative in a fevered semi-mythical form, inverting myths of childhood innocence, and the migrant experience. As such I believe *Medea's Children* executes all seventeen stages of Campbell's hero trajectory, and I was familiar with Campbell's work before I wrote it, although not aware of Propp.

Briefly the problem of resolution I had with *Medea's Children* was how to end a tale of homecoming, and its *Odyssey* like implications, or replications, without it being anti-climactic. The story and its sexual adventures, monstrous impediments, and exaggerations needed a big finish. So I gave it it is a fairly fantastical, or sexually mythic end that I think suits the novelistic exaggerations of *Medea's Children*. The unnamed hero copulates with the bronze statue of the Unknown Soldier called, 'Sacrifice' in the War Memorial in Hyde Park, the statue having come to life (405-410). To me, any less grand an end would have made the narrator's story, or quest, simply one of adventure, a sentimental sepia saga about an immigrant in conflict with the Anglo-Australian experience.

The creative work, *Cards for the Samurai*, both in its concept and execution, posed problems of a different sort. I wanted to write another novel about the Greek-immigrant experience of Australia in the 1960s, but without a sonorous recourse to myth, or—as in *Medea's Children*—recourse to sex as metaphor. I wanted to write a softer novel that in a way is a celebration of the Greek immigrant experience, but not one of pure celebration.

I certainly wanted one that may distinguish itself from what I see as the sentimental sepia sagas of this genre of literature. But I didn't want to abandon nostalgia entirely, wanting a nostalgia that was tinged with irony and humour. To this end in *Cards for the Samurai*, I constructed a quest novel that has an ageing Greek-Australian hero, or anti-hero called Nicholas, living in self-imposed exile overseas.

Every year Nicholas received a birthday card, no matter where he was in the world [ ] left anonymously at whatever hotel Nicholas was staying in, regardless of the country or city he was visiting. And Nicholas liked to keep his itinerary a secret.

The ritual arrival of this single card, [ ] started on his forty-seventh birthday in London [ ].

The second time, on his forty-eighth birthday, [ ] at the Hotel Olympic on the Greek island of Kalymnos, and Nicholas was certain no one knew he was there. (1)

In his self-imposed exile, Nicholas keeps receiving these rather mysterious birthday cards each year from an unknown sender he calls 'the Postmaster.' They are in fact trading cards from a Japanese television series called *The Samurai*, about the derring-do feats of a Samurai in seventeeth century Japan that he used to adore as a child in the Sydney of the 1960s.

…whenever the cards arrived they made him remember how much *The Samurai* excited him in childhood. It always set off a firestorm of reminiscences. Nicholas thinking, *maybe that's what the Postmaster*—as he called whoever was sending them—*intended.*

….

But then again *The Samurai* wasn't just Nicholas's favourite television show in Australia in the 1960s. It was everyone's. (2).

These cards do indeed set off a cascade of childhood memories, for Nicholas while at the same time they act as the catalyst for Nicholas the adult to begin his quest and return to Australia. His quest (or quests) are to find 'the Postmaster' who is sending him the mysterious cards, to finish his 'novel,' and to catch up with friends and people he abandoned. As such, the framing device, or catalyst of Nicholas receiving mysterious cards is a way of setting up the dual quest narratives of the book. One is the contemporary quest of Nicholas to return and find his 'Postmaster.' The other is a way to 'recollect' how as a child called Nickie, his childish quest was to emulate and meet Shintaro, his Samurai hero.

These quests—both that of the younger Nickie, and the older Nicholas—move forward in time, but are of different periods, being blended, parallel narratives in distinct alternating paragraphs.

The narrative of young Nickie is set in the 1960s of Nickie's Japanese obsession that the adult Nicholas describes as a supposed golden period of Australian immigration.

> …[ ] it wasn't a tragic time [ ] because for most Australians it was a golden age [ ]. Golden, because industrial opportunity and wealth had come to sit on Australia's doorstep, (135).

Part of the intention of the narrative whole, whether it is in the paragraphs pertaining to Nickie's journey or Nicholas's, was to subvert the paradigm of working class immigrant industrial exploitation. The Japanese motif here of *The Samurai* television series, the cards, and young Nickie's past obsession with it, is a way of avoiding the usual conflicts of multicultural immigrant literature which places an immigrant—or sometimes indigenous—hero in conflict with, or opposition to, the main Anglo-Australian culture and experience. It is intended as an ironic way to stay outside of what I perceive as clichéd, by setting up and describing as an ironic idyll, the Greek—and Japanese—ghetto-like existence of the young

hero, Nickie. Perhaps it is a small attempt to subvert it, but not the main purpose of *Cards for the Samurai.* I say this even though the novel has very few Anglo-Celtic characters, and where they do appear, they are deliberately relegated to minor roles. In an ironic exposition that Rachel delivers as the novel begins to reach its climax, she even states as much;

'[ ] You were obsessed with that *shiksa* [ ]
Australian girl. The only Anglo in your book, other than imaginary Celia,
Jessie, Miss Mobbs, Salesmen, and a bunch of drunks... (249)

But the main narrative, the one that the adult Nicholas describes, is Nicholas's search through the remnants of memory that exist for him of this vanished age in the Sydney he has returned to. Seeking clues as to the identity of his correspondent, Nicholas visits sites suggested by a map that 'the Postmaster' has also sent him, or perhaps trapped him in.

I was aware though that these two separate but intertwined narratives, that of Nicholas's quest for the truth amid his nostalgia and Nickie's ascension to maturity, set me up with two distinct hero-quests that though blended, and alternating, required, within the novel, separate, and different resolutions.

Also, though by now well familiar with the models of Campbell, and Propp, when I began *Cards for the Samurai*, I did not want to use these models as formulas and templates, either as uniform models or—as I have argued earlier in this Exegesis—bifurcated ones. I wanted to write a novel organically without strict obedience to them. I wanted to see where the story would lead, and where the resolution of each of these distinct narratives would naturally end.

In *Cards for the Samurai*, the quest of the younger Nickie was by far easier to resolve. Nickie evolves through his childhood, and ultimately he does get to see his Samurai hero at the Stadium. But having grown and matured he realises he has been worshipping a false god of a fake imported

karaoke culture. His worship has been a denial of what he actually is, Australian and Greek – a part of cultures he has ignored, but one that he finally enters into with gusto:

> Back home, Nickie putting on the record player the Greek version of *Que Sera Sera* that sang, *What ever will be will be, the future's not ours to see,* which was a lie because now to Nickie it was obvious. […]
> While it played, Nickie jumping into the air, saying, not 'Hai, Ya,' but,
>   "*Oppa, Oppa,*" because he felt it was time to celebrate. Shirts, Biscuits and Handbags, coming down to see what the ruckus was about saying,
>   "What's got into you?" A question Nickie couldn't answer because nothing had gotten into him, but the reverse, something had come out.
>   After he put on another of Sluts' Greek records, joining him. Dancing in a line as if they were performing not in their living room but in public. And there was honesty to it, perhaps even integrity. It sure lacked the artifice of what Nickie had witnessed at the Stadium (180).

But regardless of having wanted to write a novel organically without recourse or overly relying on the models of Propp and Campbell, the resolution of the childhood narrative of Nickie—as I reflect back on it— *does* neatly take in Campbell's model, right through stages 1-6 of Part Two of his hero trajectory that he calls *Initiation* in his Chapter Two (90-139). But I wasn't precisely conscious of it. It does so, because Nickie finally does come face to face with the 'father' or 'God-like' figure that to him is Shintaro, the Samurai hero of the television series when he sees him at the airport, and finally in performance. But here as the narrative of Nickie resolves, he finds his God, or hero wanting, which begins Nickie on the road to his own 'apotheosis'. He begins to feel his own sense of superiority, his own sense of self, something that his teacher Miss Mobbs at first questions then confirms.

'What's brought all this about? Nickie you normally like oriental things.'
Nickie saying,

'Miss, do you think there just might be some things… to which we are unequal?'

'Not in your case Nickie.'

'Thank you Miss.' [ ] because he was forsaking the Orient, becoming what he always was, European, if not Australian (249).

His comfort, or *boon,* or grail, is his recognition of his more authentic Greek-Australian origins. So in a way, the childhood narrative of Nickie is neatly resolved *without* any recourse to Part Three of Campbell's stages, the *Return,* or stages XXI to XXXI of Propp, regardless of whether I consciously tried to employ either model, or not. Was I guided—as I have argued earlier many writers are—by a desire for a more economic narrative to the plodding hero-quest of old? I believe I was.

However, in *Cards for the Samurai*, it still left me with difficulties as to how I would resolve the larger narrative of the adult Nicholas. I was conscious that Nicholas simply finding his 'Postmaster,' or missing cards would not work in terms of narrative excitement.

At the same time I did not want a big, or exaggerated mythic, or almost religious finish, say in the style of *Medea's Children,* as I wanted *Cards for the Samurai* to be a less fevered, softer look at an age of immigration. I wanted an end that was satisfying enough, but not one that detracts from the actual body of the book where the period is often humorously re-created. Which is to say, I did not feel that the end had to be so dramatic to compensate for some of the episodic interludes that occur in both blended narratives. In my eyes I deemed them to be more important, since it is these episodes, or interludes, that resurrect the age and its attitudes. Sometimes I even compare the era Nicholas pines for—in ironic counterpoint—with eras to which it cannot compare.

> Nicholas thinking, [ ] *our freewheeling Newtown that in its small immigrant way anticipated the free love and flower power of San Francisco.*
>
> But maybe Nicholas was kidding himself a bit, because Newtown wasn't that exciting. *Then again*, Nicholas thought, *maybe it was, and still is* (166).

Which is to say I wanted the re-creation of the age—that is, of the immigrant 'sixties—to appear almost like a character itself, if at all possible, not just as the environment, or stage, framing and confining the immigrant characters who live, and in some ways perform in it. So what to do?

The resolution of *Cards for the Samurai* sees the adult Nicholas finally finishing his 'novel,' or memoir in Sydney, through which, or in which, he believes he has possibly identified 'the Postmaster.' He sends copies to all the people featured in his memoir in anticipation of visiting each of them.

He does this perhaps somewhat like Neddy Merrill, the hero in John Cheever's story *The Swimmer*, who goes over suburban fences, swimming all the pools of his acquaintances, perhaps just the pools of memory. I only say this in hindsight. It was not something I deliberately thought of, or planned at the time, and there is certainly no swimming involved, but as *Cards for the Samurai* begins to resolve itself, it does have a similar dream-like effect.

Nicholas visits by turn Karen, a girl featured in the early narrative of young Nickie; Disraeli, his childhood friend and aide-de-camp; his brother Paul, and finally Rachel, the young Nickie's nemesis, who now like Nicholas and all the characters, is middle-aged.

As Nicholas's quest hurries the narrative along, each character proves to be a disappointment. None of them have the full set of Samurai cards he seeks. Nor are they possessed of the full truth as to the identity of 'the Postmaster.' Karen disabuses Nicholas of any interest in *The Samurai* and is not interested in the book Nicholas has sent her:

Nicholas asking,

"Did you like it?" Karen saying,

"I just skimmed it," and then to the waiter, "I'll have a skim cap."
Nicholas saying,

"Me too."

"Skimmed?"

"Not a great reader, with two..." Nicholas saying,

"Jobs, kids, and shifts."

"Yes. And it's all about primary school and Japs, Postmasters, and
weird stuff I don't know much about and…"

"And?"

"We didn't meet till high school, remember? And I wasn't the
latchkey girl in the park, and I was never into Ninjas. Don't you recall
how we met? You and I met because we liked David Bowie. Not Japan."
(216).

Nicholas's brother Paul, also upbraids him for sentimental nonsense,
and inaccuracies about Newtown and the Greek immigrant experience:

On hearing his voice Paul turning and saying,

"Nickie. You're back." Nicholas saying,

"Yes, but I'm not sure if I ever went."

And Paul came up and briefly embraced Nicholas […] Saying,

"Why didn't you write?" Nicholas saying,

"I did, sent you a long letter." Paul saying,

"Oh, yes…that… er…book."

"You read it?"

"Course I read it." […]

Nicholas […] saying, "You didn't like it?" Paul saying,

"Like…has nothing to do with it…Did you mean it as a memoir or a
detective novel?"

"Neither."

"Glad to hear it. Shall we *just* call it a novel then?" The sarcasm in
Paul's voice rising.

"Isn't it?" Paul saying,

"Yes. But I wasn't sure if an adult wrote it, or a child. […] But even in novels… don't you think…there's a responsibility to be accurate to the times? Decimal currency had already come in by nineteen sixty-one and I don't dare mention the personalities, or the identity of the..." Nicholas saying,

"If there are any mistakes about the series, or some of the other stuff, they're all mine. I just shuffled bits."

"Who *else's* mistakes *would* they be?" (209-210).

Disraeli is also mystified as to where the full set of cards are and who 'the Postmaster' is:

"Well I'll be damned. I always, but always, had a complete set." Nicholas saying,

"Don't worry about it. Not as if the world has come to a stop." And it hadn't. But it was now clear that Nicholas's tormentor was neither Des nor his son, Joshua. Des saying,

"But it has," looking at the horizon to see if the world had stopped spinning on its axis. "Damned if I remember what I did with them."

"Know what Des? Maybe it was the Postmaster."

"Who? What are you on about Nickie?"

"Someone who gave me the excuse to see you."

"Don't need excuses Nickie. Or apologies." (201).

Finally it is Rachel—who first appears to him threateningly in a drunken dream and then as corporeal and real, when he physically visits her—who reveals the truth about 'the Postmaster.' She reveals why Nicholas has been perpetrating a hoax in an unreliable narrator way.

"The cards Rachel, do you have them?"

"Course I have the missing bloody cards. Said so," outside the weather now a cyclone.

"Can I…"

"Nickie, think me an idiot, some sort of dummy? What sort of patsy do you take me for Mister?" Her Americanisms still evident, her anger

rising. "You don't need to see the cards, no one does. Card seven, card nineteen, card sixty-five, oh brother, doesn't matter what's on them, does it? And there's no sender of maps, bullets, lipstick or Postmasters…except *you*. Not rocket science is it?" (234).

It is a hoax hiding in the gilded denial of the truth, the reasons behind Nicholas's asseverations about a supposed golden age. We find that there is no 'Postmaster,' and in a lingual trope, only a 'Past Master', and that the 'Past Master' is Nicholas himself recreating, or reinventing the past to expiate guilt. We find out that the young Nickie had not heroically tried to save the young Jessie from the ravages of her stepfather, and that she had not been killed as a youth. The adult Nicholas had in fact married her, and some years into their marriage, helped end her life with euthanasia. Rachel telling him:

"Nick, she was dying anyway."

"So?"

"Did we need to see you helping her?" Nicholas saying,

"Youth in Asia," making light of it, as if he was just talking about Asia's younger generation rather than anything of consequence, maybe just the place where he now resided. Rachel saying,

"Euthanasia…" giving it its correct spelling. "Then filming yourself giving her the pills, emotional as it was, made you accessory to…"

"That's what Jessie wanted. I couldn't watch her suffer any more."

"They charged you."

"They couldn't prove it." (232)

In a small way, Nicholas has been somewhat heroic, or has sacrificed himself and his future, by assisting Jessie's death to ease her pain and suffering, though he felt this perhaps wrong, or criminal. It is a feat he has been beating himself up about for many years. It is the very act that propelled his exile, and his somewhat glorious fabrication of the past as compensation.

Along the way to the resolution of the novel, some elements of the mythic and gothic are added because although I have stated I did not want a novel as fevered as *Medea's Children*, executing the full 'dual' bifurcated models of Propp and Campbell, I did want to give *Cards for the Samurai* more resonance than mere triumph. I did want to indicate a small level of the sacred, and of myth. This is most evident when Nicholas returns to the grave site for the final meeting with his dead father, where once again—as in *Medea's Children*—statues mysteriously come to life:

> Walking around that graveyard looking at names on tombstones, chiselled names now the only evidence that such people existed, Nicholas looking at the tombstones as teeth separating heaven from the earth.
>
> Again finding his Dad's not near the Greek section, but near the Italian vaults, near those houses and mausoleums as large as semis […] Mausoleums with corners and cornices guarded by stone angels, stone gorgons and plaster members of the Trinity, his friends and companions, the ones he called Guilt and Gloom, the darkest of the Muses.
>
> And much like the priests, the winged statues themselves seemed just frozen Ninjas, ready to spit forth and descend like Harrier Jump Jets, on anyone desecrating what they guard. Nicholas saying,
>
> "Hello ladies," looking up at the stone statues with wings […] "Glad you could come," even though they'd always lived there […] When suddenly Nicholas heard all of them say at once in a ghastly choir, in a voice hollow and half throttled, what everyone else said to him.
>
> "Hello Nickie." Nicholas responding,
>
> "Hello girlfriends. How goes the Post Office?" The statues echoing,
>
> "What took you so long?" […] repeating,
>
> "Nickie, Nickie, Nickie…" spinning round him, not like yo-yos, but the Andromeda Galaxy (226-227).

This in my view is stage 4 of Campbell's model, of the Second Part he calls *Initiation,* what he terms, 'Atonement with the Father' (111). In fact Nicholas's meeting, or conversation with his father at his grave and with Jessie at her grave, and his subsequent meetings with the characters from his

past, I see as the repeated amplification of this stage 4. The final monster that is killed, the lie has been telling himself, and others, about a mysterious and possibly malevolent Postmaster, when it is in fact himself.

However, having done so, having exposed Nicholas as 'the Past Master,' having revealed Nicholas to be hero, *and* both monster/grail—once the truth is out, courtesy of Rachel—I felt the narrative was over. So I chose to elide it by moving to stage 6 of Campbell's Third Part, *Return*.

Nicholas finally returns to Bangkok, as master not just of the past, but also of the two worlds that constitute past and present, even reality and fiction, now that he has given himself permission, or 'Freedom to Live,' as Campbell calls it (203).

I did not want to go into the full elaboration of *Return*. I did not want to have Nicholas participating in some coy 'Refusal of the Return,' involved in some 'Magic Flight,' or 'Rescue from Without' stages, as the narrative would have become overly long, and anti-climactic.

The climax and grail—the revelation and acceptance that he is the Postmaster, or Past Master/hero, and grail, and villain—has already been achieved. Was I again guided by a desire for a more economical narrative to the hero-quest of old? Once again I believe I was. But in this instance it was not just for reason of economy, but because I had already made the Jeopardy Nicholas has had to face more important than the grail, since I knew that Nicholas and hero/monster/grail are one. And once that had been articulated, I felt the story was over, so I allowed the narrative to naturally elide, and finish. We find him once again back 'home' in the Bangkok he has come from. This achieved with the final paragraph allowing it to elide, or omit both Campbell's stages of *Return*, 1-4 and Propp's, XXI-XXX, which I have argued earlier in the Exegesis, I see frequently omitted in the works of authors and scriptwriters.

And Nicholas took his leave, not just of his Mum and the nursing home and damaged memory, but also of Sydney.

Returning to where he now lives Thailand, on the beach, with his new wife, not, with Guilt, or that arch bitch Gloom, but a simple Thai woman who thinks Nicholas once lived in Japan, she's no rocket scientist herself, who often says to him,

"Mister, love you long time," what he as Nickie once said not just to someone he loved, and buried, but nations, and their representatives.

All the cards are now in place perhaps just waiting for someone else to shuffle them, perhaps just for another interpretation of a life, or a period, maybe for new Past Masters and new sets of predicates (239-240)

So, in a way, I feel I have combined or blended the perceived model of *adventure triumph,* and the *sacrificial-redemptive,* as I argue many writers now do with the less than uniform models of Propp and Campbell, whether it is for narrative economy or to amplify the role of the monster, the grail or the jeopardy. I believe I have done this with one big narrative excision or leap in the alternating quests of *Cards for the Samurai.*

It has allowed me to use a number of genres, the pseudo-autobiographical, the unreliable narrator, the comic, and in some small part, the mythic. It has also allowed me—as I have argued many writers do—to switch between genres when needed.

The dual narrative of *Cards for the Samurai* has allowed me to integrate or weave *the fairy tale* of Nickie's past with Nicholas's *sacrificial-redemptive* attempts to assuage the conscience and the guilt Nicholas feels as an adult.

Perhaps in my own way I have attempted to straighten the fork, or bump in the hero's bifurcated narrative, having omitted stages Propp and Campbell see as essential in what they maintain are uniform models, which I argue are not.

At the same time I believe I have successfully integrated the hero/monster /grail in the form of the adult character, Nicholas much in the same way I have perceived it has been done in my examples pertaining to Melville, horror, crime fiction and religious texts since Nicholas embodies

and subsumes all three roles or functions. But I leave it to others to assess if this has been successful, or further, if there is—as I have argued—a shift or abridgement of the hero-quest, which is what the Exegesis and my creative has explored.

CONCLUSION:

For the Hero, the Road Ahead or, the Road Behind?

The conclusion summarises some of this Exegesis's arguments in terms of how the theory of the bifurcated paradigms of hero-quest is being currently played out. It also summarises some of my speculations as to why this may be so. More importantly I question the validity, or usefulness of my interpretation or assertions. I do this by admitting its propositions are not definite proofs, or verifiable, but simply based on deductive and comparative observations leading to this interpretation. They are observations largely drawn from the research conducted in writing the creative component of this thesis, *Cards for the Samurai,* and they are also drawn from the research of this Exegesis component. As such I acknowledge its limitations.

At the same time I believe it advances the argument – that regardless of how verifiable this is, it is a contribution to the understanding of how hero sequences work *in toto,* albeit solely on the level of hero plot, which I believe has been unfairly ignored, or for too long treated as irrelevant, with only partial, or inadequate refutation.

I believe I have advanced the argument that the schemata of Campbell, and Propp, are some of the few tools practitioners like myself have that can be used professionally for examination, and execution, of their own works regarding hero-quest journey narratives.

Additionally, I trust I have pointed out that these theoretical works, regardless of the bifurcation argued for here, remain loose descriptive stencils—and the emphasis is on descriptive here—not infallible formula regardless of each theoretical author's claims to their immutability (Propp), or (Campbell's) more generous and 'mutable' metaphoric model.

I believe I have shown how perilous and fraught narrative hero-quests can be, when one interferes, changes, or amplifies functions in the hero sequence on the way to the grail, even if the changes are only slight.

Finally I wish to state that I believe this Exegesis is perhaps not so much about segmentation and narrative bifurcation, but about the utility of the models, regardless of claims as to their bifurcated nature and lack of true uniformity. Hopefully, it has contributed to the knowledge of how plots work in hero-quest narratives, and why the study of such plots, bifurcated or not, has much to teach us about how narratives operate.

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