"Gender Variations of the Monomyth in Contemporary Fantasy"

An Honors Thesis

by

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on applying two major models of the hero's journey to a singular contemporary fantasy novel, *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms* by N.K. Jemison, where the novel is a contemporary vehicle for analysis of antiquated theories. The first part of the thesis focuses on applying Joseph Campbell's monomyth to the protagonist (Yeine Darr) and her journey, while criticizing gendered aspects of the monomyth. The second part of the thesis applies Susan Lichtman's Great Goddess model to *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms*, and also identifies complications with using a female-focused hero's journey model. The third part of the thesis suggests a resolution called Monomyth+ to create a ubiquitous monomyth while maintaining the foundation of Campbell's original theory.

Introduction

Much of my thesis focuses on relatively old material. Campbell himself has been dead for thirty years (Campbell xi), and the struggle for gender equality predates anyone alive today. Structuralism gave way to post-structuralism half a century ago; however, all of it is still significant and has an impact on today's society. "Though we are told we live in a post-structuralist world, there is much about the structuralist enterprise that has survived and contributes today to furthering our understanding of human cognition" (Sangster 1). When we look at the monomyth, we are not taking an abstract look into narrative patterns in stories written by faceless machines. Theories like the monomyth exist because of people. Even if the elements of the hero's journey are meant to be applied to fiction, "Examples might be multiplied, *ad infinitum*, from every corner of the world" (Campbell 48).

Whatever the relation between life and art, history indicates that one cannot thrive without the other. When considering a novel, real life issues are inserted either by the writer, whose intention it may be to call attention to a problem, or by the reader, who may be searching for an answer in what she believes to be a role model. The hero is not an abstraction. He or she acts as a model for the everyday person to imitate, or to sympathize with. The heroes' problems stem from ours, and how they overcome their problems gives us guidance.

And, when the hero is given so much attention and significance, one could only hope to find heroes that represent or stand for oneself. It is discouraging when a character cannot fulfil the criteria of having completed a hero's journey simply because her status of woman inherently means that she cannot, or that her journey is just "different." The

days of “separate but equal” have long since passed, and the female hero deserves an equal role to her male counterpart, instead of the latter being the model for the woman to apply to herself, as described by Creed:

> discussion and analysis of hero myths have historically been produced in relation to the male. These narratives invariably draw upon masculinised spaces (exterior, outside domains), masculinised tests of courage (battle, combat), masculinised obstacles (the enemy as “other”), masculinised desire (for the femme fatale, forbidden woman), masculinised victories (saving the kingdom/preserving the status quo) and masculinised rewards (power, fame). (15)

In this system, the woman is always at the disadvantage. Although Creed suggests that the best way to fix the solution is to create a new system entirely, I believe that we can analyze what doesn’t work and fix it.

Literature Review

My thesis falls into the larger discussion of structuralism. Outlining the structure of a story or myth is nothing new, but the discussion continually evolves and generates new content. For example, Campbell published his ideas on the monomyth in 1949, and, in the decades since, writers like Lichtman and Creed have criticized what they perceived to be flaws, and then posited their own version of the hero's journey. This flowing discussion is hardly limited to the hero's journey, but covers several aspects of narrative and form. One of the more famous structuralists is Vladimir Propp. Propp's work is largely grounded in the idea that, "…in order to establish what constitutes a genre, one has to demonstrate that there is a constant repetition of functions in a large body of tales" (Propp ix). By examining these patterns of repetition in narrative storytelling, Propp laid the groundwork for discussing stories in terms of the organized forms of structuralism. Although many other authors added to the discussion, one of particular importance is Carl Jung. Although his work was originally intended for use in psychology, literary analysis often has a strong psychological backing to support it, and structuralism is no different. Of particular importance, "The collective conscious and archetypes, as mentioned earlier, are part of Jung's theory of personality and what makes up the underlying forces of the human mind" (Darowski and Darowski 29). Although his work was firmly grounded in archetypal patterns, there are many theorists that go against the idea, with one such example as the theories of Levi-Straus. "In Lévi-Strauss' structuralism there are no archetypes, no 'heraldic and emblematic substantialism,' as with Jung" (Sangster 186). I do not mean for my thesis to inherently promote any specific form of structuralism, but to exist within the larger context of people looking for patterns.

My research focuses on the hero's journey, and some of the problems that exist in the current models used to examine narrative structures.

In short, N.K. Jemisin's *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms* is the first novel of The Inheritance trilogy, and it is the baseline for my comparison of the different models of the hero's journey. It is a contemporary work of fantasy by an American female author, and follows the story of Yeine Darr, an orphan who leaves her home at the behest of her maternal grandfather, Dekarta Arameri, emperor of the very many kingdoms that constitute their world. Along the way, she searches for information surrounding her mother's death, and finds more than she can initially handle. She is legitimized by her grandfather in order for her to be a viable sacrifice so that the next Arameri head can be chosen. As a result of her mother's negotiations with the gods, Yeine had been bestowed with the soul of a goddess before her birth. To prevent the goddess's return, Yeine is murdered before she can be sacrificed. Her divine soul causes her resurrection, and ultimate rise to power as a goddess herself.

The application of the monomyth as described in Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* to Jemisin's *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms* was the original focus for my thesis, which eventually branched out to include a conversation on gender roles and a critique of the sexism in Campbell's monomyth. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* is a book split into two parts, with the most relevant for my thesis being The Adventure of the Hero. The monomyth consists of three chapters or overarching sections: Departure, Initiation, and Return. Each section has five or six sub stages (for a total of seventeen), and each of which is described in detail in the larger thesis when they are applied to Yeine Darr's journey.

Bill Moyers' interview with Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth*, was used to help supplement Campbell's theories. The book is, essentially, an edited transcript of a PBS interview, though, as editor Betty Flowers says, "…the book has its own shape and spirit and is designed to be a companion to the series, not a replica of it" (Moyers ix). In the interview, Campbell expands on his views of myth and mysticism, though its use in this thesis largely focuses on understanding Campbell's view of the female role in myth, and the relations between father and son.

Susan Lichtman's book, *Life Stages of Woman's Heroic Journey: A Study of the Origins of the Great Goddess Archetype*, outlines a tripartite model of a female hero's journey, which consists of the life stages of Virgin, Mother, and Crone. Virgin, the first overarching life stage, has three parts: The Original Virgin Birth, The Adventure of Choice, and Sexual Initiation. The three stages for the Mother stage are The Transformation of Conception, Birth as Threshold, and The Maternal Warrior, and, finally, the three stages for the Crone life stage are The Reconciliation of Female Heritage, the Repository of Experience and Wisdom, and Mistress of Life and Death. Her work is the basis for the second major comparison of a hero's journey used in my thesis, and, thus, each stage is discussed in-depth as it is applied to Yeine Darr's heroic journey.

Mary Kirk's article on "Vision of The Possible: Models for Women's Heroic Journey Applied to Madrone's Path in The Fifth Sacred Thing" was my original inspiration for researching models other than Campbell's monomyth. In her article, Kirk applies two models of the female hero to a character named Madrone in Starhawk's *The Fifth Sacred Thing*. The two models used by Kirk are Susan Lichtman's *Life Stages of Woman's Heroic Journey: A Study of the Origins of the Great Goddess Archetype* and

Pearson and Pope's *The Female Hero in American and British Literature*. This exposure to Lichtman's model ultimately served as the inspiration to discuss her model in terms of *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms*. Kirk's article, highlights the necessity of differentiating from Campbell's monomyth because "…women don't fit Campbell's model for the heroic journey" (Kirk 48). Her analysis, while critical, is not particularly antagonistic. In her first endnote, Kirk says, "I have profound respect and appreciation for Joseph Campbell's immense contributions to understanding world mythology. In fact, he is the reason that I became interested in the questions explored in this thesis. However, Campbell was not a feminist…" (Kirk 68). Her article invites discussion of the roles of women in literature and invites new perspective on established myths.

Annis Pratt discusses common themes by female authors in *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction*. In my thesis, her expertise is vital to the discussion of rape and the trauma associated with it (Pratt 24-29), as Yeine's rape is significant to the development of her character. Pratt covers a plethora of other archetypes in her book, from puzzlement in Love between Men and Women (Pratt 82) to Single Women and Sex (Pratt 118). Though I used only one of her archetypes in my discussion of the female hero's myth, many more are applicable. Pratt's focus on women's fiction is especially applicable, as Jemisin is a female writer.

Barbara Creed's "The Neomyth in Film: the Woman Warrior from Joan of Arc to Ellen Ripley," and Mary Gergen's "Feminist Reconstructions in Psychology: Narrative, Gender, and Performance," were both used in my thesis to a smaller extent than some of the other feminist critiques. Creed's article focuses primarily on the application of female heroic models to different characters in movies. Her work was part of a larger collection,

Women Willing to Fight: The Fighting Woman in Film. Creed discusses her term, neomyth, to describe the structure of the heroine's journey. She goes on to define the neomyth by saying that it is "...divided into three parts and consists of eight main structures" (Creed 20), which is similar to Campbell's tripartite main structure. Creed challenges the current status of the woman hero by saying "...in a phallocentric world, the heroic journey has become thoroughly masculinized. There are no formal narrative structures to use as a template for the mythic journey of the female hero" (Creed 17). In a structuralist fashion, Creed challenges the lack of existing forms to analyze the role of the female hero in narratives. Creed also addresses the Campbell's monomyth directly by saying "Although Campbell refers to both male and female heroes...his focus is predominately on the male figure. Woman does not fit comfortably into the structures of the hero's mythic journey as set down by Campbell" (Creed 18). Her neomyth is written in response to this lack of a suitable structure for discussing the female hero. "Although this paper focuses on the cinema, the neomyth can equally be applied to the female hero of myth and legend, literature, popular culture and the arts" (Creed 19-20).

Gergen also directly criticizes the monomyth. Although I used only a small part of her book in the discussion of the monomyth, Gergen's eight-chapter book discusses male/female relations, woman's development, and the development of women's narratives. In reference to Campbell's work, Gergen says, “The monomyth is the hero's myth, and the major Manstory. (I wonder, where is the woman in this story? She is to be found only as a snare, an obstacle, a magic power, or a prize.)” (Gergen 57).

I used Virginiae Blackmon’s article on the Oedipus complex to criticize Campbell’s use of discredited Freudian research within his monomyth, and I specifically

reference that "…historical data now prove incestuous behaviors are extremely rare in all societies worldwide. Psychiatrists have dismissed much of what Freud had to say on the subject" (Blackmon). The article itself covers the mythological basis of the complex, wherein "…Oedipus becomes king of Thebes and marries the widow of the former king—his biological mother, Jocasta" (Blackmon). In addition, Blackmon defines and discusses Sigmund Freud's use of the theory in psychoanalysis. Essentially, "Freud believed all male children deal with aggression toward their fathers and dream of making love to their mothers at some point in their development" (Blackmon). Blackmon also discusses the modern take on Freud's Oedipus complex. A significant section of Campbell's work focuses on the idea of the Oedipus complex, and Blackmon's article provides context for analyzing the impact of the monomyth.

Many others discuss the discredited aspect of Freud's research on the Oedipus complex. One example that goes into detail of Freud's criticisms is found in Jess and Gregory Feist's *Theories of Personality*: "…the current trends in neuropsychoanalytic research neither confirm nor even mention Freud's psychosexual stage theory, especially its more controversial elements of Oedipal conflicts, castration anxiety, and penis envy" (Feist and Feist 57). Essentially, Feist and Feist suggest that there are two main reasons that Freud is critiqued: he does not understand women, and he is not a scientist. "Given his upbringing during the middle of the 19th century…a tendency to exaggerate differences between women and men, and his belief that women inhabited the 'dark continent' of humanity it seems unlikely that Freud possessed the necessary experiences to understand women" (Feist and Feist 59). Given that the main point of contention for universal nature of the monomyth is that it imperfectly applies to women, and also given

that Campbell frequently cites Freud to support his theories, and Freud is here criticized on the basis of not understanding women, then it is logical to conclude that the grounding of the monomyth in Freud's theories is at least partially responsible for its crumbling foundation.

Campbell's Monomyth

Since 1949, the leading source for describing the hero's journey has been Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, where he describes the varying stages of the monomyth. Even today, his analysis and interpretations have continuing merit, as scholars continue to reflect back on his words and apply his theories to literature. However, Campbell's work has not been without its criticisms. One of the major criticisms is that Campbell's monomyth has lost some merit because it is founded in discredited Freudian theory. In fact, "…the current trends in neuropsychoanalytic research neither confirm nor even mention Freud's psychosexual stage theory, especially its more controversial elements of Oedipal conflicts, castration anxiety, and penis envy" (Feist and Feist 57). This is a valid criticism when serious scholars do not even mention these aspects of Freud's work---aspects which Campbell relies on heavily in his research. In addition, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* tells the story of a *hero*, or a male protagonist: "The monomyth is the hero's myth, and the major Manstory. (I wonder, where is the woman in this story? She is to be found only as a snare, an obstacle, a magic power, or a prize.)" (Gergen 57). So, while it does not altogether omit women from the analysis, it does create a gendered and skewed version of their tales. His work is not entirely antiquated, but it does show its age. Still, it has many merits for its use in analysis. Campbell's description of the hero's journey from his *The Hero with a*

Thousand Faces has applications for contemporary fantasy, in this case N. K. Jemisin's *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms*, but falls short in a few key stages (The Meeting with the Goddess, Woman as Temptress, and Atonement with the Father) because the monomyth is gendered to describe the journey of a heterosexual male, while Jemisin's protagonist is a heterosexual female.

The Call to Adventure

Yeine Darr, the protagonist of *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms*, begins her journey mostly the same as her male counterparts. "This first stage of the mythological journey--- which we have designated the 'call to adventure'---signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown" (Campbell 48). In Yeine's case, the summons for her adventure comes in the form of an invitation to the capital of the empire in which she lives: "One month after my mother died, I received a message from my grandfather Dekarta Arameri, inviting me to visit the family seat. Because one does not refuse an invitation from the Arameri, I set forth" (Jemisin 4). Yeine identifies strongly with her homeland, and is often criticized for what others consider to be her savage nature. Moving from her place of strength to pursue this summons places her far out of her element into what Campbell describes as the "zone unknown" (48).

However, the nature of her departure from her homeland shows a feminine obedience to a patriarchal structure. While a hero may quest for honor or glory, Yeine sets out to obey a social summons from her old grandfather, who just happens to also be what is essentially an emperor. This does not seem to be a fault of the monomyth, and, instead, is a result of Jemisin's narrative. Mary Gergen, social psychologist and author of

Feminist Reconstructions in Psychology: Narrative, Gender, and Performance, writes, "In general, the cultural repertoire of heroic stories requires different qualities for each gender. The contrast of the ideal narrative line contrasts the autonomous, ego-enhancing hero, singlehandedly and singleheartedly progressing toward a goal, with the long-suffering, selfless, socially embedding heroine...lacking the tenacious focus demanded of a quest" (58). This tendency for an author to portray a female hero is more likely the result of societal implications, rather than any explicit sexism by the author. In this way, the society in which the author lives shapes the author's perceptions and world view, which, in turn, impacts the female heroes the author writes. Jemisin, an American writer, depicts Yeine in a way that shows the influence of the author's society. Mark Kirk, a professor with a doctorate in Women's Studies, writes, "As Campbell says, our stories reflect our cultural beliefs, and U.S. American women live in a limited and limiting culture based on spiritual systems that place women in inferior positions" (67). Yeine is forced to obey the summons because she is an inferior position, and has no feasible alternative in that lower status.

Refusal of the Call/Supernatural Aid

At this point, Campbell's theory of the monomyth splits into two paths: the Refusal of the Call and Supernatural Aid. "For those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass" (Campbell 57). Yeine fits into the latter category, as she states, "Because one does not refuse an invitation from the Arameri, I set forth" (Jemisin 4). Refusing the call

is simply not an option for Yeine, though traveling to the capital at her grandfather's behest ultimately proves to be just as dangerous, if not more so.

Fortunately, Yeine is not without help. Once she arrives in Sky, the palace where her maternal family resides, she is offered help by the Enefadeh, which are essentially three gods bound to the service of her family: "Perhaps I should not call them gods, since no one worships them anymore....There must be a better name for what they are. Prisoners of war? Slaves? What did I call them before---weapons?" (Jemisin 14-15). This help is offered after she is told to submit to receiving a sigil on her brow. On her first night there, T'vril informs her,"The Enefadeh are the reason we wear the blood sigils, Lady Yeine. No one may pass the night in sky without one. It isn't safe" (Jemisin 18). In addition, Virane explains the use of the mark as it "[k]eeps the Enefadeh from killing you, among other things" (Jemisin 42). While still so vague as to be nearly meaningless, it does identify the Enefadeh as one of the primary dangers in Sky. Later, it is revealed that the mark gives her other abilities, such as the power to control the Enefadeh, but it also enslaves her, in turn. The master sigil, held by the head of the Arameri family, has power over those below him: "The master sigil outranks all the rest; whoever wears it has absolute power over us, the rest of the family, and the world" (Jemisin 163). Sieh places his own sigil on Yeine: "I will mark your brow with a sigil,..One that cannot be seen. It will interfere with the sigil Viraine intends to put on you. You will look like one of them, but in truth you'll be free" (Jemisin 38). The sigil placed by Sieh prevents the controlling influence that would otherwise make her helpless to act against the head of the Arameri family, or anyone else who outranks her. With this

new mark, given to her by divine forces, Yeine can not only survive in this competitive environment, but she can also keep her freedom.

The Crossing of the First Threshold

Yeine continues her journey in keeping with Campbell's monomyth. The next stage is Crossing the Threshold, and,"[w]ith the personifications of his destiny to guide and aid him, the hero goes forward in his adventure until he comes to the 'threshold guardian' at the entrance to the zone of magnified power" (Campbell 64). Before she even made it to face the guardians, Yeine is rejected at the threshold: "At the gates of Sky (the palace) I was turned away, though not for the reasons I'd expected" (Jemisin 5). However, it soon becomes apparent that she is not truly being rejected. When she is granted an audience with her Grandfather, she is legitimized: "'Granddaughter,' he said and the titters stopped. The silence was heavy enough to hold in my hand. He was head of the Arameri family, and his word was law" (Jemisin 9). This acceptance is symbolic for her crossing the threshold from being an outcast to being part of the most powerful family in the world.

After being accepted into the fold, Yeine still has to face the real threshold guardians: the Enefadeh, and, in particular, Nahadoth. Yeine is startled to note that"Behind me rose an inhuman howl, like the voices of a hundred wolves and a hundred jaguars and a hundred winter winds, all of them hungry for my flesh. Then there was silence, and that was most frightening of all" (Jemisin 24). As Campbell wrote about the guardians, "...to deal with them is risky; yet for anyone with competence and courage the danger fades" (Campbell 68). At this juncture, Yeine still lacks the competence because she does not understand the nature of the Enefadeh, and she has not been marked with a

sigil. Later, when she is marked and knows how to handle the Enefadeh, she can use them to her advantage.

The Belly of the Whale

The next phase occurs slightly out of the traditional order for Yeine Darr. The next phase is typically the Belly of the Whale. "The idea that the passage of the magical threshold is a transit into a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale. The hero, instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died" (Campbell 74). For Yeine, instead of occurring when crossing the threshold into Sky, this stage occurs much later, towards the end of the novel, although this difference results from Jemisin's storytelling, rather than from Yeine's status as a woman. After all, the experience itself is no different for Yeine than it would be for a male hero. As Campbell states, "...the physical body of the hero may actually be slain..." (Campbell 77). Yeine's physical body is killed with a knife:

> I blinked, not sure what had happened. Something made me look down. There, poked through the bodice of my ugly dress, was something new: the tip of a knife blade. It had emerged from my body on the right side of my sternum, just beside the swell of my breast. The cloth around it was changing, turning a strange wet black.
>
> Blood, I realized. The stone's light stole the color even from that.
>
> Lead weighed my arm. What had I been doing? I could not remember. I was very tired I needed to lie down.
>
> So I did.

And I died. (Jemisin 344)

The knife penetrating her may be a phallic symbol, but she is not the first hero, female, male, or otherwise, to be killed with a knife. Practically speaking, the assassination had to be quick and clean, and there are only so many ways a character in a fantasy world can be killed. There is always a certain tragedy and beauty in the silent and sudden stabbing of a beloved character, which would be lost with the use of a blunt object, like a cudgel. Given the author's world-building and the necessity of Yeine's death, the use of a knife bears no more gender significance than any other weapon of choice. Similarly, the fact that her death occurs so late in the novel is also not determined by either her sex or gender, but rather occurs there because her death leads to culmination in her apotheosis.

The Road of Trials

Before her death, Yeine experiences a number of hardships, typical of the hero's next stage, The Road of Trials. "Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials" (Campbell 81). For Yeine, these ambiguous forms are found in every living soul she encounters, from the servants to the Enefadeh. Yeine has no way of knowing if the people she meets are enemies or potential allies. The promises of the Enefadeh and their protection ultimately proves to be self-serving, as the Enefadeh seek her death for their own needs.: "...if the Arameri did not kill me, I had no illusions about the Enefadeh. I was the sheath for the sword they hoped to draw against Itempas, their sole means of escape" (Jemisin 198). Even Viraine, one she cautiously regards as an ally, ultimately ends up betraying her and by killing her, saying only "It was necessary"

(Jemisin 345). All around her, the alignments and roles of people shift, often without warning.

The Meeting with the Goddess

The next stage, Meeting the Goddess, is where Yeine's path takes a distinct divergence from Campbell's monomyth. Yeine does meet with the major goddess figure of her world, but the meeting does not satisfy the same impulses or needs outlined in the monomyth. Campbell originally intended for this to be part of the phase of reconciling one's Oedipus complex:

> The mystical marriage with the queen goddess of the world represents the hero's total mastery of life; for the woman is life, the hero its knower and master. And the testings of the hero, which were preliminary to his ultimate experience and deed, were symbolical of those crises of realization by means of which his consciousness came to be amplified and made capable of enduring the full possession of the mother-destroyer, his inevitable bride. With that he knows that he and the father are one: he is in the father's place. (Campbell 101).

As Virginiae Blackmon writes in the *Salem Press Encyclopedia of Health*, it is important to note, in terms of the Oedipus complex, that "...the idea that the incestuous relations between children and adults are the result of (unconscious) desire on the part of the child is now discredited" (Blackmon). The basis for the self-actualizing hero replacing his father and marrying this mother figure of a goddess is outright antiquated, even if it does still find a place in old myths and other literature.

Instead, for Yeine, Meeting the Goddess has entirely different connotations. The story is largely told through flashback as a conversation between Yeine and the goddess Enefa as Yeine comes to terms with the events leading up to her death. For her struggles, Enefa grants Yeine her divinity, and, in essence, Yeine assumes the place of the goddess, but not in a way that makes her subservient or lesser than the male figures. When she joins Nahadoth and Itempas in their divinity and frees the three Enefadeh from their slavery, Yeine notes, "Out of Three had the universe been formed. For the first time in an age, Three walked again" (Jemisin 360). Itempas had never been subdued, Nahadoth is restored through his freedom, and Yeine replaces Enefa to form the trinity. She is an equal part, neither stronger nor subservient. She gains all the power of Enefa, but maintains her identity. Most importantly, however, she does not fulfil Campbell's idea of the goddess/woman being subdued into a mastered, secondary position. The replacement does not entail any Electra connotations, and she has equal power and status as her male counterparts. Instead, Yeine's evolution demonstrates a reward for her suffering, and as the culmination of her acceptance of what happened.

Woman as the Temptress

The next phase is Woman as Temptress, where the role of women takes a turn from revered goddess to something darker: "Where this Oedipus-Hamlet revulsion remains to best the soul, there the world, the body, and woman above all become the symbols no longer of victory but of defeat" (Campbell 102). The woman gained in the previous phase reminds the hero of some kind of wrongdoing. At this stage, "No longer can the hero rest in innocence with the goddess of the flesh; for she is become the queen of sin" (Campbell 102). This dark transformation seems contradictory to a universal

myth. Campbell states that the monomyth is meant to stand for everyone: “The whole sense of the ubiquitous myth of the hero’s passage is that it shall serve as a general pattern for men and women, wherever they may stand along the scale” (Campbell 101), yet it is antiquated in its portrayal of women’s roles, and the conjugal implications of the temptress seem misplaced in a woman’s journey. Women are no more sublime or devilish than their male counterparts, but, in Campbell’s theory, “‘woman’ is an encounter on the ‘real’ hero’s journey” (Kirk 47). The gender of this trial is specific and deliberately chosen. Substituting the opposite, male as tempter, only then serves to objectify the opposite sex. This can be due, in part, to the fact that Campbell analyzed existing, ancient myths, which have a preponderance of male heroes, but his theories fall short when analyzing contemporary women.

For example, in the case of Yeine, a heterosexual female, she finds temptation not in a member of her own sex, but in male divinity. This is the only connection between her experience in the stage and the way Campbell describes it: the heroine does covet a god. Succumbing to her desires does not indicate that she has taken the place of her mother, as would occur in the Electra complex (in the way that Campbell intended for this stage), but actually a state of understanding and enlightenment. Instead of the figure of temptation acting as a trial to be overcome, her union with Nahadoth shows a progression of Yeine’s character. After the god is weakened, a mortal’s expectations would alter him completely: “‘It isn’t just your eyes,’ Kurue said, ‘It’s your expectations, your fears, your desires. You mortals want him to be a monster and so he becomes one...’” (Jemisin 275). Truly being with Nahadoth requires Yeine to clear herself of any desires or expectations, which Yeine accomplishes almost perfectly. Her understanding leaves Nahadoth almost

entirely unaltered, save for the color of his skin (Jemisin 305). Yeine still has room to develop, but she is vastly improved from the beginning of the novel.

Atonement with the Father

The last stage or trial before Yeine's development is complete is Atonement with the Father. If not immediately obvious, this stage is also gendered, and thus falls short of describing a "ubiquitous" (Campbell 110) myth. Although Campbell states that the hero is "...only to find, in the end, that the father and mother reflect each other, and are in essence the same" (Campbell 110), it does not change the fact that certain preconceptions of motherhood and fatherhood exist, in part because these generalizations make understanding between the writer and his or her audience happen more quickly. The idea of sameness is lost because of the connotations of the gendered terms. Campbell can imply that they are the same, but he chose to posit atonement with the *father*, or, in the general sense, the parent with the same sex as the hero. In addition, Campbell implies that sons and daughters have different motivations for rivalries with their parents (hence the need for atonement at all), as "...the son against the father for the mastery of the universe, and the daughter against the mother to *be* the mastered world" (Campbell 115). This disparity between purpose based solely on sex is dissatisfying because it implies dominance of one sex over the other, which hardly fits the idea of woman as hero.

Yeine comes to understand both her maternal and paternal figures. One of Yeine's motivations through the novel is discovering the cause of her mother's death, and, in doing so, Yeine uncovers a side to her mother that she never knew. "Perhaps I was still young enough to see her through the worshipful eyes of childhood, but the ways I'd heard my mother described since coming to Sky simply did not fit my memories....That was

another woman, with my mother's name and background but an entirely different soul" (Jemisin 122). Yeine's coming to terms with her mother's dual-identity does not mean she supplants her and takes her place. Rather, it shows her progression as a human being as she comes to understand the complicated events that led to her existence. Coming to an understanding of her mother is Yeine's form of atonement, as she is finally at one with what happened to her, and the thoughts no longer plague her. The mystery of her death is solved, and she can move on.

Her father is only a minor character, associated almost entirely with solving the mystery of her mother. The character that serves as Yeine's paternal figure is actually her maternal grandfather, whom Yeine originally suspects of murdering her mother. The mistrust, however, is mutual, and so is their grief at not realizing their mistakes sooner. When Yeine is about to walk into her own death, the truth is revealed that neither of them murdered Kinneth, Yeine's mother. "Dekarta nodded, then gazed at me for a long, silent moment before speaking. 'I'm sorry,' he said very softly. An apology that covered many transgressions" (Jemisin 340). This reconciliation almost comes too late, but Yeine is finally at peace knowing that the animosity between her and her grandfather was only the result of a misunderstanding.

Ultimate Boon and Apotheosis

Despite gender divergence, Yeine Darr still reaps the same rewards as her male counterparts. Usually, the Ultimate Boon and the Apotheosis are considered to be separate stages. In Yeine's case, they are one and the same, as she gains ultimate power through her newfound divinity. "Like the Buddha himself, this godlike being is a pattern of the divine state to which the human hero attains who has gone beyond the last terrors

of ignorance" (Campbell 127). This represents Yeine's final transformation, as the novel ends shortly after her ascension. *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms* is primarily told through flashback, in a dreamlike dialogue between Yeine and Enefa, as Enefa's soul had been housed in Yeine's body. Once Yeine's mortal body dies, Enefa tells her,"Your body must change. It will no longer be able to bear two souls within itself; that is an ability only mortals possess. I made your kind that way, gifted in ways that we are not, but I never dreamt it would make you so strong. Strong enough to defeat me, in spite of all my efforts. Strong enough to take my place" (Jemisin 354). Once she is given the gift of divinity, she has almost unlimited power to change the world in her image.

What she does with this power is of more significance. Campbell states that"...instead of thinking only of himself, the individual becomes dedicated to the whole of *his* society, The rest of the world meanwhile (that is to say, by far the greater portion of mankind) is left outside the sphere of his sympathy and protection..." (Campbell 133-134). This conflict is something that Yeine almost immediately addresses. After freeing the Enefadeh from their slavery, her dying grandfather asks, "What of us, Goddess Yeine? What of your human kin?" (Jemisin 371). To this effect, she eliminates the threat to her home nation of Darre, names a new heir for the Arameri line, and ultimately restores balance.

Criticisms

The last third of the monomyth is classified as the return, which is omitted from Yeine's tale. Instead of returning to Darre, Yeine and her divine friends "...left Sky and Itempas and the mortal world behind..." (Jemisin 373). Ultimately, this omission has little impact on gender divergence from the monomyth, as not every hero goes through the

monomyth in the same order. Still, its application for a female hero is imperfect, for more reason than not matching up exactly. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* falls short of describing a ubiquitous myth because woman is "...positioned as an 'obstacle' in his path, a trial or temptation to be overcome" (Creed 19) in a few of the key stages, including Woman as Temptress and The Meeting with the Goddess, and also because his supporting evidence for character motivation, including many of Freud's theories, has been largely discredited. To be more specific, many of the stages, especially Atonement with the Father, focus on either the struggle with or the resolution of the Oedipus complex. As discussed earlier, the Oedipus complex is no longer validated by research: "…historical data now prove incestuous behaviors are extremely rare in all societies worldwide. Psychiatrists have dismissed much of what Freud had to say on the subject" (Blackmon). Then, there is also the overarching theme of woman's role and place in society. Campbell's writings are not any more sexist than the culture in which he lived, but the end result is that the monomyth is not for the female hero. The monomyth shows its age, and, instead, a newer model should be used to describe a woman's journey.

Lichtman's Model of the Great Goddess

In order to compensate for the gendered stages of the monomyth, it is important to explore the facets of a distinctly feminine heroine's journey to determine if that alternative is more applicable for a woman hero. Contrast is essential to narrow down which of the many models for the hero's journey will result in complete and equal coverage for all heroes. In this case, many believe that a female hero's journey will serve to complement Campbell's monomyth. There are a few models for a female hero's journey, including Susan Lichtman's *Life Stages of Woman's Heroic Journey: A Study of the Origins of the Great Goddess Archetype.* Of some of the popular female hero's journey models, Lichtman's Great Goddess model seemed to be the most applicable and accessible for comparison against the monomyth. For instance, the Great Goddess model is similar to Campbell's journey in that they are both tripartite. While Campbell's outline focuses on the Departure, Initiation, and Return of the hero, Lichtman's is separated into the life stages of Virgin, Mother, and Crone. In her introduction, Lichtman states that she chose to "...employ virgin, mother, and crone as biological markers, not to limit woman to biology but to use biology as a source and resource for understanding the potential of woman's mind and body" (Lichtman xii-xiii). Because of the parallelism, if not for theme, the structure makes for a simple and effective comparison to Campbell's monomyth, particularly as compared against another possible model proposed by Maureen Murdock in *The Heroine's Journey*, which has ten main categories (rather than three) and has somewhere in the area of seventy unique stages (as opposed to Campbell's monomyth and Lichtman's model, which have seventeen and nine, respectively).

The Original Virgin Birth

Unlike the monomyth, Lichtman's Great Goddess model more thoroughly applies to Yeine's character and her development in all nine stages of the Great Goddess model. Virgin, the first overarching life stage, has three parts: The Original Virgin Birth, The Adventure of Choice, and Sexual Initiation. The first stage of woman's journey, then, is The Original Virgin Birth. For the woman's journey, it is important to note that "[t]o see the virgin state as a state of initiation into the mysteries of the female body is a definition more worthy and more relevant to women than one based on property or marital rights, or upon the integrity of the hymen" (Lichtman 22). In the state of The Original Virgin Birth, before the onset of menstruation, girls typically know little about the state of their own bodies. Unfortunately, Yeine is nineteen when *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms* begins, and well past the onset of menses, which means that any information about her virginal life is indirect at best.

To compound the issue, little is known to the reader about Yeine before the events of novel takes place. Although the majority of the novel is told through flashback, few of the instances go further than Yeine receiving the summons to head to the capital. She and other characters recount her past, which does illuminate some of the mystery surrounding her birth. Like most characters who are not involved in ironic prophecy, Yeine was born from a woman. One of the first passages of the novel is associated with her birth: "My people tell stories of the night I was born. They say my mother crossed her legs in the middle of labor and fought with all her strength not to release me into the world. I was born anyhow, of course" (Jemisin 3). Part of Yeine's motivation for exploring the palace of Sky is to uncover the mystery surrounding her mother's strange behavior and ultimate

murder. Ultimately, it turns out that Yeine's mother, Kinneth, made a deal with the Enefadeh that alters her birth state. Sieh explains, "We cured your father...That was your mother's price. In exchange she allowed us to use her unborn child as the vessel for Enefa's soul" (Jemisin 158). Because of the deal she made, Kinneth fights against her own daughter's birth.Yet, Yeine is brought into the world, unique in her possession of two souls. For Enefa, this might be considered a rebirth, though she has no direct control or influence over Yeine's body. For Yeine, this is the prelude for her hero's journey.

Being born seems to be a rather generic prerequisite for heroism, but Lichtman places distinct emphasis on the transition between life stages. As such, this state of innocence is supposed to herald a transition to a new life stage. She compares her description of the journey with the monomyth:

> Joseph Campbell writes that the beginning of the hero's adventure involves a descent into unknown or unfamiliar surroundings. The hero descends in response to a call that beckons him from his safe world of daylight into a night world of mystery and danger. So too does the beginning of a woman's journey toward self actualization commence with a descent initiated by a call to traverse worlds and begin her own heroic adventure. This call for woman is the onset of menses. (Lichtman 23)

Before menstruation, then, is the time before the call that the hero or heroine must answer. Exploring this time allows for a unique understanding of the massive transition the call must allow. For a woman, according to Lichtman, the call to action occurs as her body continues to develop.

The Adventure of Choice

As might be expected, the onset of menses leads to the next stage for the Virgin, which is the Adventure of Choice. Even less is known about Yeine in this life stage, which emphasizes the protagonist becoming empowered before her sexual initiation. If a female hero's journey utilizes life markers as important milestones, then the inclusion of the onset of menstruation makes sense, as "The singular psychological import of the first menstruation and nocturnal emission (traditionally considered pubertal markers) is undeniable..." (Gilmore and Meersand 126). Puberty, be it menstruation or other markers in adolescent development, is a time of both physical and psychological development, where adolescents are in a stage of delicate transition. Lichtman further explains, "To see the onset of the menses as an empowering rather than debilitating occurrence is to confer the gift of decision-making to a young woman. The responsibilities inherent in her choices must be made clear so as to allow her the power of choice" (Lichtman 29). Yet, even in the events of the story, Yeine frequently acts as if she does not have a choice in her fate. When she answers her grandfather's summons, she states, "Because one does not refuse an invitation from the Arameri, I set forth" (Jemisin 4). Denying the summons is seemingly a thought that never crosses Yeine's mind, and is never proposed as an alternative. However, as the story progresses, Yeine begins to act with more purpose, rather than blindly following orders. During her time in Sky, she makes conscious effort to unveil information about her past and the events surrounding her mother's death. Instead of following the course set before her, and instead of dying because she believes she has no other choice, she uses her life as a sacrifice to help the Enefadeh and the Arameri. Though they had planned to use her life all along, her knowledge of their plight

lets her adjust the terms of her arrangement to better suit her own wants. When Sieh offers her homeland protection in exchange for her sacrifice to free the Enefadeh, she says, “I want that and one thing more....I want to win this contest” (Jemisin 166), Though the terms are ultimately failed, Yeine has begun to exert control over the circumstances in her life.

Her real empowerment comes after her sacrifice. At that point, as a goddess, Yeine has considerably more power to exert over the people around her. She does much to change the political structure that caused her death, and to change the power dynamic of the gods. Freed from her mortality, Yeine frees the Enefadeh of her own volition, and then enslaves Itempas in turn (366). With the loss of the Enefadeh, Dekarta wonders what will become of the country, as they lost a great deal of influence and strength. Yeine then names his heir for him: her distant cousin T’vril, and extends her grandfather’s life to see her will enacted (373). Yeine breaks the narrative at this point to say,“There was much more to be done, but those were the parts that mattered” (Jemisin 373), summarizing the first important events of her divinity, where she finally has the power of choice.

Sexual Initiation

The final stage of the Virgin life stage is the sexual initiation, which is relatively self-explanatory. One distinction that Lichtman takes care to note is that the sexual initiation of the female hero is distinct from what is typically found in past stories: “In contrast to this powerlessness in these traditional fairy tales is a mythic tradition in which the female remains the hero of her own adventure journey, even after the appearance of a male lover” (Lichtman 32). Some females in literary history disappear into the sidelines

once she has sex or otherwise gives herself to the male, but it is important that, for the female hero, "...self possession is hers alone..." (Lichtman 34).

In Yeine's case, her sexual initiation was rape. Though it technically occurs before the events of the novel take place, her rival forces her to recount the terrible experience. In Yeine's home culture of Darre, the women are systematically raped once they come of age. Scimina says, "Now a girl just survives alone in the forest for a month, and then comes home to be deflowered by some man her sponsor has chosen....the girl must either defeat him in public combat and therefore control the encounter, or be defeated..." (Jemisin 155). Yeine is nineteen at the start of the story (Jemisin 4), and she says that "Six years had passed since that night" (Jemisin 157), making her around thirteen-years-old when forced to undergo the initiation into adulthood. Her grandmother, her sponsor, "...chose the strongest of [the] male warriors..." (Jemisin 157). It was never her grandmother's intention for Yeine to emerge victorious, but Yeine somewhat manipulates the competition. She fights through the rape "[e]nough to satisfy the requirements of the ritual" (Jemisin 157), and says, "Then I stabbed him in the head with a stone knife I had hidden in my sleeve" (Jemisin 157). Though the rape was largely out of her control, Yeine manages to recover from the trauma and go on to become a heroine. She does not fade into obscurity, but instead sets out to shape her own destiny. Certainly, she cannot control every aspect of her life. Like many things in Yeine's life, the timing of her trauma was out of her hands; she could only influence in what manner they occurred. Just as her death was inevitable, so is her having to face the warrior initiation ritual, and just as she controls what happens when she dies, she acts against the norm for her initiation to emerge with some sense of victory. Though she is forced to do these things

somewhat against her will, she mostly manages to retain her sense of self, and redefines what she cannot preserve.

The warrior initiation ritual seems out of place in Yeine's society. Annis Pratt suggests in her *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* that, when a woman hero exists in a patriarchy and believes in "erotic freedom" (Pratt 24), "[n]ot only is the feminine Eros discouraged, but its opposite, rape, is proffered as a substitute" (Pratt 24). Part of the reason that Yeine's own ritual was particularly difficult is because she was vying for a leadership position, which indicates that the Darre society acknowledges female leadership as legitimate. How, then, does a society at least partially run by women condone systematic rape? Perhaps, in part, it is followed because it is simply tradition, but Yeine discusses it both in terms of experience and as a proving. Yeine says, "It taught me to do whatever was necessary to get what I wanted" (Jemisin 156), and was also necessary to be marked as *ennu,* as "No one would follow me if I let some man use me in public and then crow about it all over town" (Jemisin 157). For whatever reason it occurs, "The event of 'rape,' in that it involves the violation of the self in its psychological and physical integrity, thus becomes central to the young woman's experience..." (Pratt 24). The trauma helped to shape Yeine into the woman that stands strong against the gods and the Arameri and emerges victorious. The novel does not describe if she struggled with the trauma, only saying that "They made me *ennu* two years later" (Jemisin 157). The influence, however, inevitably shaped her character, revealing, at least, a ruthlessness in her.

After Virgin, the next life stage for Lichtman's model is Mother. This stage focuses less on the individual, and more on what the individual can do for her society:

"To be a mother, in this sense, is to accept personal responsibility for the present as well as for the future; it is a commitment to a society or social group to improve the condition of its humanity, and to ensure its perpetuation for another generation" (Lichtman 44). Despite the term *Mother*, it does not mean that women have to give birth to a physical child. Though a child is also a perfectly acceptable way for the woman to be considered a Mother, the female hero's efforts can also be put towards creating something else to help society: "...lesbians, homosexual and heterosexual women, women who adopt, women who choose to give birth, women who are forced to give birth, women who choose to remain childless can all achieve motherhood if motherhood means nourishing and investing in the present for better survival in the future" (Lichtman 44). The three stages for this life stage are The Transformation of Conception, Birth as Threshold, and The Maternal Warrior.

The Transformation of Conception

The Mother is a transition from focusing on the individual, to the individual's focus on society. This is what is meant by The Transformation of Conception, where the act of conceiving transforms the woman from the individual to the societal focus. "In terms of the hero's journey, the virgin begins the descent into self, but the mother continues the process of self development by enriching the personal dialogue begun by the virgin between desire and self-denial" (Lichtman 45) because "[u]nlike the virgin, the mother exists within and for her social group whose very survival is dependent upon propagation and cooperation" (Lichtman 45). During the events of the story, Yeine does not produce a child, and therefore does not satisfy the traditional requirements of motherhood. However, she does change her focus from the individual to the betterment

of society. When she knows that she must sacrifice herself, she agrees to use her death to help the Enefadeh. This willingness seems to be exactly what Lichtman describes when the woman must choose between desire and self-denial. She strongly desires to live and frequently laments that she must die: "...I lay on the bed and trembled and wept and might have continued to do so for the rest of the day--- one-sixth of my remaining life..."(Jemisin 198). However, she acknowledges that she needs to die for the betterment of society. The Arameri require her death for the next heir of the empire to be named, and the Enefadeh need her to release Enefa's soul, and she agrees to both.

Birth as Threshold

The next stage, Birth as Threshold, sees the completion of Yeine's attempts to create a better world. When her sacrifice fails to be the proper means, she uses her newfound divinity to reshape the world into what she thinks will be a better place (freeing the Enefadeh, naming a new successor to the Arameri throne, enslaving Itempas, and so on, as discussed in the Adventure of Choice). Yeine's investment in securing a better future for everyone, humans and divinity alike, indicates that she recognizes the importance of the society around her. As Lichtman points out, "The creation of objects and systems points to a recognition of necessity's outliving one individual lifespan" (Lichtman 49). In helping her kin, Yeine says, "The amount of relief I felt surprised me. Perhaps I had not left my humanity so very far behind after all" (Jemisin 370). Although her lifespan is now presumably infinite (unless she is slain like Enefa), it seems that some of her mortality stuck with her, as she still found it necessary to help them in the first place. Therefore, her transition to divinity and lack of a terminate lifespan does not mean that Yeine loses sight of the values of the society she was once a part of. She still remains

bonded enough to her society that she sympathizes with them, and places distinct importance on protecting her countrymen, which fulfils this part of the Mother life stage. "In terms of the hero's journey, motherhood becomes the link between the individual and society. She alone must concede the importance of social context and must balance the needs of the group with the autonomy of the individual" (Lichtman 50). Even at the expense of her life, Yeine was willing to help everyone around her secure a better future.

The Maternal Warrior

The final stage or aspect of the Mother is the sense of sacrifice explained in The Maternal Warrior. "Through maternity or motherhood, women learn the nature of self sacrifice for the betterment of the larger social group, and if they are successful, they teach that nature to their children" (Lichtman 55). Though Yeine was saved through divine intervention on behalf of the goddess's soul inside of her, she still shows the commitment and resolve to go through with the sacrifice to help others. It is unknown whether or not her children, (in this case, humanity, as it is the progeny that she attempts to secure a better future for) heed her lesson, as the book ends shortly after Yeine enacts her will. Their appreciation, or lack thereof, does not undermine what Yeine was willing to do for her people. She still went through with the ultimate sacrifice for the success of her people, her family, and the gods themselves.

The final life stage of the Great Goddess model is Crone, and Lichtman describes it as having three sub-stages, including The Reconciliation of Female Heritage, the Repository of Experience and Wisdom, and Mistress of Life and Death. Despite her youth, Yeine does manage to fulfil some of the criteria for these categories, but not all.

The Reconciliation of Female Heritage

The first stage, The Reconciliation of Female Heritage, is particularly ill-fitted. Lichtman describes the worth of the female hero at this point in these terms: "Her ability to recall experience and history became a hallmark for her wisdom and worth to her society" (Lichtman 64). At nineteen-years-old, Yeine has little history, experience, and wisdom to impart on humans or gods. Certainly, she undergoes a dramatic transformation over the course of a few days, but she is hardly revered for her wisdom. As wisdom is an abstract concept, the definition used largely determines her aptness. In one definition proposed by Roger Walsh, “Wisdom is deep accurate insight and understanding of oneself and the central existential issues of life, plus skillful benevolent responsiveness” (Walsh 282). Yeine’s death and rebirth would certainly give her a unique perspective on life, and she seems to act (mostly) benevolently when reshaping the world, but regardless of whether or not she has actually ascertained any wisdom in her short life, the point remains that others view her knowledge as having little worth, and her wisdom is neither revered nor appreciated. If anything, her human kin seem to treat her with disdain, though it is almost certainly due in part to the relationships she built before her death. When approaching her grandfather, she notes that “He lifted his chin and regarded me imperiously” (Jemisin 371). Perhaps she will be respected later, but it is equally likely that Yeine could be hated for taking the gods from their enslavement. As Dekarta points out, “Without the gods, every nation on this planet will rise up to destroy us. Then they’ll turn on each other” (Jemisin 371). Instead of leaving humanity in a stable and secure state, she may simply cause massive unrest.

Repository of Wisdom and Experience

Similarly, the second stage, the Repository of Wisdom and Experience, does not fit very well for Yeine, for almost exactly the same reasons. Because she has not lived long enough to gain experience, she lacks the wisdom required to be revered for her life experiences. However, she does manage to fit one of the criteria for this stage: "As the repository of wisdom and experience, the crone also dispenses laws that govern the relationships between people" (Lichtman 69). Even if she is not respected for her age, her authority and power are respected in the sense that she is a deity. When she outlines how the Arameri are going to govern, at least in the immediate future, the people question her judgment (as in Dekarta's protests about the stability of the empire), but still go through with her will. She creates laws, or at least guidelines, for the Arameri, and they respect her authority.

Mistress of Life and Death

The final stage, Mistress of Life and Death, seems to fit Yeine the best, only because her transformation into a goddess requires her human form to die. Her ultimate resurrection serves to help her reach her full potential, which is in line with Lichtman's guidelines: "In the myths of woman's self actualization, this transformation or rebirth is symbolized by the death and resurrection of the female hero" (Lichtman 72). In part, this also applies to Enefa, whose soul was stored in her body for safe-keeping. Although Enefa relinquishes the body, her spirit was still born again, even if the resurrection was only temporary. For Yeine, whose resurrection is more permanent, the death/rebirth is more symbolic."This sense of transformation allows the passage from death (crone) to birth (virgin); without this transformation, death ceases to have purpose for the natural

world..." (Lichtman 71). The diction and terms that Jemisin uses to refer to Yeine's resurrection indicate that her divinity is a form of rebirth. As she resurrects, she notes, "As with any birth, there was pain" (Jemisin 357). Though her new form is "...less a *body* than an *embodiment*..." (Jemisin 357), Yeine successfully (if inadvertently) crosses the threshold between life and death, and has a considerable amount of influence over that boundary, as evidenced by her extending Dekarta's life and ending Kurue's. Kurue, though a fellow deity, died easily at her hands. As she strokes her hair, Yeine notes "I let it trail through my fingers as Kurue fell to the floor, dead" (Jemisin 370). Killing seems to be easy enough for humans, but killing a goddess demonstrates a certain level of power and control over life and death. Similarly, killing humans is a simpler task, but saving one from death is another thing entirely. Both her ability to kill a god and save a mortal demonstrate her control as Mistress of Life and Death.

At first glance, it may seem that Lichtman's Great Goddess model is a better fit for Yeine, and, by extension, the female hero. However, there are several issues to consider, most of which revolve around the central question of "Are male and female heroes so different that they need their own journeys?" While Lichtman explores and outlines the idea of a female hero's journey largely in contrast with Campbell's monomyth, as evidenced by her directly comparing the two, "Joseph Campbell writes that the beginning of the hero's adventure involves a descent into unknown or unfamiliar surroundings....So too does the beginning of a woman's journey toward self actualization commence..." (Lichtman 23), a lot of the ideas contained within the overarching theme correlate with Campbell's. The sense of a hero's sacrifice, for example, is important to both, as is the hero sharing his/her boons/knowledge with the society that he/she came

from. Largely, this is because the qualities of a hero are not gender-specific. Readers expect a hero of either sex to be brave, self-sacrificing, virtuous, and a plethora of other noble adjectives. Men can be compassionate heroes, just as women can be courageous. The distinction and differentiation of male and female heroic journeys is largely unnecessary, and categorizing them only serves to create more of a sexist divide.

Criticisms

Campbell's monomyth has already been criticized for its sexist themes, but there are also prejudiced ideas in models for the female hero. Lichtman's model, for example, focuses heavily on a heterosexual female. It may be a bold claim, considering that Lichtman takes special care to include all kinds of women in the Mother stage, but there is distinct emphasis on the heterosexual female during her sexual initiation. Lichtman states, "In contrast to this powerlessness in these traditional fairy tales is a mythic tradition in which the female remains the hero of her own adventure journey, even after the appearance of a male lover" (Lichtman 32). By specifying the appearance of a male lover, Lichtman is then excluding the possibility of a female lover. This could easily have been avoided simply by excluding the word *male*. In addition, the stage of sexual initiation entirely fails to acknowledge other sexual orientations, and indicates that a woman cannot be a hero if she is not sexually initiated. Though it is not said directly, an asexual woman, or a woman who otherwise lacks the desire for sex, simply cannot be a hero, even if she manages to slay a dragon or save the world, as she has failed her sexual initiation.

Having a distinctly male or distinctly female hero/heroine's journey is simply not necessary, and ultimately serves to alienate heroes by forcing them into arbitrary roles,

and exclude others altogether. The qualities of a hero do not change depending upon whether or not a hero has ovaries or testicles (or neither or both), and so there should not be separate heroes' journeys. Instead, there should be one singular, true, androgynous monomyth. By emphasizing heroic qualities, rather than making amendments per gender, the focus is kept on what is important: on what makes a hero.

Monomyth+

Some may consider it necessary to start from scratch to create an all-encompassing monomyth to describe a wider range of heroes, or to make significant changes to an existing model of the hero's journey to the point it would be almost unrecognizable. However, Campbell's original version has a good foundation and, with some small improvements, might serve well as a ubiquitous way of examining a story. The three main areas of weakness for a ubiquitous monomyth are Atonement with the Father, Woman as Temptation, and Meeting with the Goddess, as they are all gendered in some way, and have certain connotations about gender roles that are somewhat limiting to prospective heroes.

Removal of the Oedipus/Electra Complex from Atonement with the Father

One step towards adjusting the monomyth to be more ubiquitous would be to remove any hints of the Oedipus/Electra complex, which would mostly affect Atonement with the Father, as that stage focuses on resolving the complex of a male-oriented hero's journey to come to peace with his same-gendered parent. This struggle is emphasized in the development of the hero: "…there is a new element of rivalry in the picture: the son against the father for the mastery of the universe, and the daughter against the mother to *be* the mastered world" (Campbell 115). Although Campbell does not explicitly name the struggle here, this rivalry is embedded in the Oedipus/Electra complex, as the son wants to replace the father, and the daughter wants to be the mother, and, by extension, the son wants to master the mother, and the daughter wants to be mastered by the father. Such implications are uncomfortable for obvious reasons, but, thankfully, "...the idea that the incestuous relations between children and adults are the result of (unconscious) desire on

the part of the child is now discredited" (Blackmon). Still, in his interview with Bill Moyers, Campbell says, "You know what the Freudians say, that the first enemy is the father, if you are a man. If you are a boy, every enemy is potentially, psychologically associated with the father image" (Moyers 93), which is further evidence that Campbell grounded his work in Freudian theory. Campbell further clarifies the role of the father in the lives of his children by saying, "When the child outgrows the popular idyll of the mother breast…it passes, spiritually, into the sphere of the father--- who becomes, for his son, the sign of the future task, and for his daughter, of the future husband" (Campbell 115). Again, there are overtones of the Oedipus complex, but it is important to remember the implications of the many assumptions at play. By assuming those strict mother/daughter father/son gender roles, the stage is somewhat limiting even as far as sexuality is concerned, implying that sons seek to emulate their fathers while daughters want to marry a husband, let alone the complications if either child should one day assume a different gender.

Although there is no easy, one-step solution, the essence of this stage can be adapted for new purposes. Because it is so firmly grounded in discredited Freudian theory (as explained earlier), any changes that would be done would have to be massive revisions that completely change the essence of the stage. However, it is impossible to deny a narrative significance to reconciliation with parental or guardian figures, and, as such, simple removal of the stage would deny an important step for heroes' psychological growth.

Rather than have the stage's foundation in the Oedipus complex, the stage can focus on healthier relationships between parents/guardians and children. Instead of

"Atonement with the Father," the stage could be called "Reconciliation with Parents/Guardians." Not only would this new title remove the necessitation of coming to terms specifically with the assumed same-sex parent (where heroes are assumed to be male, and thus must come to terms with their fathers), but it would also allow for the inclusion of non-traditional familial structures, as are often found with orphaned or abandoned heroes. The focus changes from understanding the hero's place within an incestuous structure, and instead focuses on the hero's journey towards achieving self-actualization. "Self-actualizing people can accept themselves the way they are….In a similar fashion, they accept others and have no compulsive need to instruct, inform, or convert. They can tolerate weaknesses in others and are not threatened by others' strengths. They accept nature, including human nature…" (Feist and Feist 291). By accepting their own natures and the natures of those around them, heroes can develop psychologically, with the ultimate reconciliation acting as a milestone to show their development.

In Yeine's case, her reconciliation occurs with her grandfather, Dekarta, at the end of the novel. One of Yeine's strongest motivators for staying in the capital was her desire to find out who murdered her mother. Just as Yeine believes that Dekarta may have been responsible, Dekarta is equally suspicious of Yeine. Although it is too late to undo the damage that has already been wrought on their relationship, they finally come to a kind of understanding. Dekarta says, "Now I see that you are innocent, and by killing you I only destroy what remains of her," (Jemisin 339), and apologizes as Yeine steps forward, prepared to die for him, the rest of the Arameri, and the Enefadeh.

Removal of Male/Female Superiority from Meeting with the Goddess

Although the Meeting with the Goddess has a few different significances, including awe and respect, Campbell's stronger emphasis is on the more derogatory idea of possession of a womanly figure (the goddess) that is later corrupted, rather than the respect that may otherwise be present for a higher power of any gender. Certainly, there are minor undertones of revering the immortal being, but the true emphasis is on possession of the female figure. As such, the basic premise of the stage needs to be revised for an androgynous monomyth. Instead of focusing on the "mystical marriage…of the triumphant hero-soul with the Queen Goddess of the World" (Campbell 91), or worse, for a female hero, "…When the adventurer, in this context, is not a youth but a maid, she is the one who, by her qualities, her beauty, or her yearning, is fit to become the consort of an immortal" (Campbell 99), it is better to focus on the fulfilment of a spiritual connection and remove any trace of sex from the equation. In both instances that Campbell provides, the woman becomes mastered by a male force. Arguing a contrary position to include a female mastery would only alienate both sexes. Therefore, focusing on the spiritual aspect is the better alternative, as it removes the idea of mastery/superiority altogether (regardless of sex), and replaces it with another step towards the hero becoming a self-actualized being.

Removing sex from the Meeting with the Goddess and changing the essence of the stage removes the connection between Meeting with the Goddess and Woman as Temptress, as the male hero is originally supposed to witness the corruption of the revered female figure, but instating the purpose of self-actualization draws new connections between stages. Now, this new stage, Meeting with a Higher Power, is

connected with the Reconciliation with Parents/Guardians (formerly Atonement with the Father) through the common goal of self-actualization. Religion and spirituality can be powerful factors towards human improvement:

> As stated earlier, in defining the constructs of religion and spirituality, Hill et al. (2000) argued that both involve a search for the sacred. They described 'search' as an attempt to identify, articulate, maintain, or transform. It can be inferred that as an individual performs these steps, he begins to break his boundaries and grow and by doing that, he is actively and willingly creating a process of change and therefore involving his personal growth initiative. (Ivtzan et al. 920)

It is important that the stage have some concrete foundation, and, once again, self-actualization seems to be a more cohesive goal. Ultimately, the hero works his or her way towards apotheosis, and this moment in the hero's journey, the Meeting with a Higher Power, helps the hero undergo a revelation that advances their understandings of the world so that the hero is prepared for the final stages of the journey.

Yeine's case is unusual as the novel begins with her speaking with the goddess Enefa, and the entire plot is revealed through their discourse in Yeine's dying moments. When taken chronologically, as in, assuming the moment that Yeine and Enefa meet in relation to the plot's events, rather than according to what the audience is told first, Yeine meets Enefa towards the end of her journey, directly before her apotheosis and the reception of her boon. When Yeine finally reaches this point as she recalls the events of her life, Enefa simply says, "And here we are," (Jemisin 353). This succinct summation reveals the perhaps self-evident but never-the-less essential premise that all of Yeine's

prior experiences, the many trials she has gone through and the boundaries she has crossed, have led to this single moment of her death. Speaking with this goddess has revealed to her everything she has ever known and helps her to come to terms with what has already come to pass, and what has yet to happen. Yeine says, "I carry the truth within myself, future and past, inseparable" (Jemisin 344), marking that she has come to this long-awaited understanding. Enefa's last words to Yeine are "Thank *you*. And farewell," (Jemisin 354), which indicates that the understanding is mutual. As Enefa and Yeine re-lived Yeine's life, this time with their added discourse, the mortal girl and the slain goddess not only come to terms with the events, but also gain an appreciation for each other. Enefa respects the woman that Yeine has become, and Yeine is almost a completely different woman from the girl that left Darr. Her quest for knowledge, both worldly and spiritually, leads to her self-actualization which culminates in her ultimate apotheosis.

Removal of Sexist Language

Simpler revisions to remove sexist language would easily allow for better coverage for all heroes. Instead of "Woman as the Temptress," for example, the stage could be renamed "Facing Temptation." In this version, the object of the temptation is not strictly male or female, or even a person at all. Overcoming temptation is a theme in many journeys, with one famous instance being Orpheus's temptation to look back upon Eurydice as they leave the underworld. In this way, it does not forbid the woman being presented as a temptation, as she is for some heroes, but it opens the door for other interpretations and sexualities that are equally as valid. A heterosexual female hero, such as Yeine Darr, may now have her sexuality properly discussed in terms of the hero's

journey. Though it is a simple revision, it does have vast implications for potential changes in meaning, but it also holds the same core principles at the heart of Campbell's original theory, while eliminating the somewhat blatant sexism that otherwise exists. Originally, the idea was that "[n]ot even monastery walls, however, not even the remoteness of the desert, can defend against the female presences" (Campbell 104), as if women had an inexplicable power over men, but, in the revised version, all genders can face their own sources of temptation equally without demonizing the others.

In this way, Yeine's journey does not change much from the way it was described earlier. Because she only pursues men in *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms*, as she has sex with T'vril and Nahadoth, it can be assumed that she is a heterosexual female, and, as such, would not affected by a "Woman as Temptress." However, I already discussed this part of her journey in the corresponding section of my analysis on Campbell's monomyth, so there is no need to go into detail here. In essence, one of the ways to make Campbell's model fit for a female hero was simply to reverse the gendered implications of the stages. Rather than reverse the implications, it is better to remove the gendered terms entirely. In this way, the essence of the stage is maintained, where the heroes still struggle against temptation (which may include a man or a woman as a temptation figure), but the wording of the stage is changed so that it is inherently androgynous, rather than implied.

Conclusion

At first, my thesis started simply as an application of the monomyth to N. K. Jemisin's *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms*, where I analyzed the journey of young Yeine Darr. The majority of the application went smoothly, but there were some major obstacles that I faced where the monomyth either simply did not apply to Yeine because of sexist wording, or where it was hard for me to reconcile the monomyth's roots in Freudian psychology. In an attempt to find a better fit for Yeine's hero's journey, I turned to Lichtman's Great Goddess model, but was ultimately disappointed in how it compared to the monomyth. I liked the foundation of the monomyth, and looking for an alternative model just because of a few flaws seemed extreme.

I never intended for this thesis to be harshly critical of Campbell's monomyth. The flaws or criticisms found in my analysis could be written off by many as simply a product of the time, where Freudian psychology was more accepted and the perception of women differed from today's views. Rather than write it off or excuse these flaws, I propose the Monomyth+ to expand on the existing foundations of Campbell's monomyth and to revise it to apply to heroes from all walks of life, not just heterosexual males. Because Campbell largely references classical or other comparatively ancient heroes, it is easy to see why the monomyth was so deeply rooted in the idea of that strong male hero, but the simple fact remains that the hero's journey should be ubiquitous, and part of that goal requires the monomyth to be androgynous.

This series of revisions is only one possible way to edit Campbell's monomyth to create an androgynous model for the hero's journey. Revising the monomyth in these ways may not create a perfectly ubiquitous monomyth, but it is a step in the right

direction. Without similar steps, male and female heroes will continue to be needlessly polarized, when all the necessary components to heroism are the same, regardless of gender.

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