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COMIC BY CAMERON COHAN, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

The Heroine's Journey is for everyone

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The hero's journey is usually a physical one. Joseph Campbell's "Hero's Journey" involves a call to adventure, travel, tests of strength, a reward and a return home at its most basic level. It is driven by movement from one place to another and the retrieval of physical objects. It

may venture into the psychological pain of being away from home but does not usually solve any larger emotional problems of the hero. When questioned on the need for a "Heroine's Journey," Campbell declared it unnecessary, as a woman's role in the popular mythological journey is to be the home that the hero returns to. The woman of many a classical story is an is-

land; an idea for the hero to be motivated by.

So, what does this have to do with real life? A typical story arc has nothing to do with the real world, right? Wrong. We are all shaped by the media we consume. Myths are the roadmaps to base our lives after. If a man is taught that a woman is supposed to be an unmoving island, he will treat her as such. He will not see her as a 3D person with real desires and motivations. Women in media need to be as fleshed out, flawed and ever-changing in media as men have been.

Enter the "Heroine's Journey". First proposed by Maureen McDock, it involves a descent into psychological healing. Just as the Odyssey represents the hero's journey, the ancient Sumerian myth of Inanna is a representation of the heroine's journey. Sometimes called Ishtar, the goddess Inanna represented love, fertility, grain, war and physical transformations including sex changes, facial differences and disguises. She was as multifaceted as any human woman to say the least. Over the course of her journey, Inanna passes through seven gates of the underworld, each of them taking something from her. Her descent is characterized by the loss of her protections and power until she is at her most bare. She faces both the physical and psychological challeng-

es of letting go of what people see and expect of her.

Inanna's journey into the depths of the underworld (her psyche) is about letting go. By the time she makes her ascent back up to the real world, she has realized the emotional weight of her shed armor. She has released the version of herself that other people want and is left with her true self. She completes the cycle and travels beyond the archetype of the hero's journey.

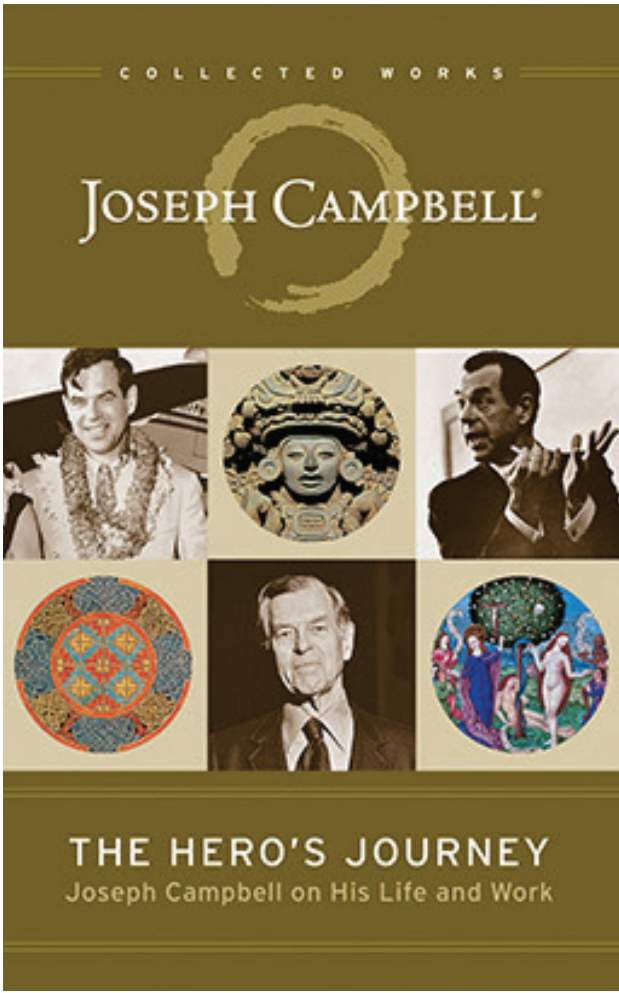
The hero's journey is one that most women have already taken. The danger and adventure that men are taught to yearn for is a woman's daily experience. Her femininity is constantly being scrutinized and judged and tested visibly and physically. She is tested by random strangers in dark parking lots or bars or just being alone in public. There is a danger to existing as a woman, and everyone has an opinion on womanhood that they are all too eager to share.

With yet another recent adaptation of the epitome of the hero's journey (the Odyssey) being brought back into cultural relevance, the idea of women as exclusively passive is once again being upheld. In Christopher Nolan's "The Odyssey," women are treated as mere accessories to the plot. In most conventional renditions, Penelope's strategic outmaneuvering

of Odysseus forces him to reveal his identity. In Nolan's Odyssey, she simply believes that he is her husband based on a physical totem. Even the goddess Athena — who originally played a much larger role as the hero's mentor — gets sidelined. On the other hand, if you are looking for media that follows the heroine's journey, I would recommend "Barbie" (2023), "Lady Bird" (2017) or "Brave" (2012) as a palate cleanser. After all, life imitates art, so we should be careful to choose art that upholds realistic portrayals of women.

If you are looking for more meta media that addresses this issue, I would recommend the songs "The Hand" by Annabelle Dinda and "Draw Me a Person" by Kate Couriel. Both of these songs cover the feeling of frustration of society's treatment of men as the default and women as the afterthought.

The hero's journey is a tired one. It does not suit the complexities of a modern world. It teaches men that their greater purpose is to do and not to feel. The heroine's journey is one of both external and internal movement. It is arguably more broadly applicable to all people, regardless of gender. The heroine's journey is a more useful model for navigating life's challenges because the "default person," or everyman, is not a man.



The cover of Campbell's "The Hero's Journey." In his biographical work Campbell denied the need for a "heroine's journey." BOOK COVER COURTESY OF BRILLIANCE PUBLISHING

The frat party trap and how to disassemble it

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At a big school like the University of Connecticut, frat parties exist year-round in the limelight of many students' lives, drawing large and eager crowds night after night despite living in infamy for sweaty and predatory environments. It's a curious phenomenon, but not a harmless one at all. There is a central pattern to a frat party: the allure which draws young women in and the subsequent aggression, often by a masked actor. It is much like a trap, but like any trap, it can be disassembled.

It's well worth mentioning that the parties themselves are less than desirable. First, you locate a list of phone numbers and arrange a ride from a pledge, who, if you're lucky, only narrowly avoids a life-threatening car crash a couple of times. When you arrive, you follow a line of people down rickety stairs into a basement that's dis-

tastefully humid and smells like a White Claw's armpit. "Hey, do you want some sky-blue or acid-green or piss-yellow liquid from a mysterious bowl? Are you sure?" A drunk man bumps into you and spills his beer all over you. Hopefully not down your back, but I've been so unlucky before. You suddenly have to use the bathroom and worry there will be a long line but are pleasantly surprised. That is until you realize it's because someone has puked all over it. You cave and pee in the woods like everyone else. If the party is not yet shut down, you take your chances with another ride from one of the pledges, or rebelliously — maybe because it's February and you're freezing in the tube top you felt compelled to wear — call an Uber home. If this seems kind of ridiculous, that's because it is.

Then, we have to ask ourselves what convinces us to go to these parties in the first place. In my experience, the largest takeaway from at-

tending a frat party is a sense of validation. The feeling gained, however fleeting, is that you are pretty, popular, desirable, fun-loving, laid-back and whatever other traits society says you need to be. But, as nice as it might feel in the moment, it is a hollow feeling. In the end, chasing validation only strips us of our own innate power and yields to those who grant it to us.

This dynamic is not accidental. Frat parties depend on it, because how else could they ensure steady attendance every week to such a deeply uninviting event? In this way, frat parties are traps and it's hard to deduce what their end goal is. They are infamous for rape and sexual assault. This is not urban legend; it does happen at UConn. By their very design, frat parties are clearly unsafe and predatory environments for women. An event with secretive locations, which strangers have to transport you to lest law enforcement intervene, should strike you

as really, really creepy. The fact that intoxication of the partygoers — a demographic deliberately limited to women — is effectively a necessary component is equally off-putting. It is not a benevolent force which convinces young women to dress up, get drunk and corral themselves into a basement each weekend where a select in-group of men who hold authority can prowl through the crowd.

The way to break this pattern is remarkably simple: don't go.

Regardless of one's inten-

tions, attending a frat party not only proliferates them but contributes to societal acquiescence of their misconduct. It signals that it doesn't matter what goes on in the shadows at frat parties as long as people can say they've had a good time. There is much to be said, then, for refusing to attend, even if you incidentally find yourself to be safe. That choice tells fraternities, society and maybe most importantly yourself that it matters when something happens that is not okay. There is no party, after all, if no one goes.



Beverages being held together at a social event. Drinking at fraternity parties can lead to a number of dangerous occurrences. PHOTO COURTESY OF PICRYL