Aalborg University

Kicking the Door in From the Side:

An analysis of Robin Hobb's *Farseer Trilogy* as a Catalyst for Sidekicks in the Fantasy Genre

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English, Master Thesis

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10th November 2022

Abstract

The hero is at the center of the arena of storytelling. This is especially true for the fantasy genre, which has derived from the myth and the Epic. The hero cannot make it through their journey on their own, however, and is often joined by a helper or sidekick. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze and discuss the role of the sidekick and hero from an archetypal vantage point. I will examine how these roles have changed, using the *Farseer trilogy* (1995-1997) by Robin Hobb as a turning point to new interpretations of the hero and the sidekick.

I will first contextualize the fantasy genre in its many-faceted form, by using Brian Attebery, John Clute, and Farah Mendlesohn. With this in mind, I will then use Lord Raglan and Otto Rank in order to define the hero archetype as well as Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey to provide another perspective on the myth's hero. Using these definitions, I will analyze the two characters FitzChivalry and Verity from the *Farseer trilogy* as heroes. Following this, I will discuss their roles as well as define FitzChivalry as a sidekick using the definition of Ann Cameron and Ron Buchanan. The discussion of Verity and FitzChivalry as heroes in relation to both Rank and Raglan as well as Campbell will include a discussion of FitzChivalry as a sidekick. I will discuss how he both conforms and deviates from the hero archetype and the sidekick role. Instead of performing one role, Hobb creates a new dynamic and role for FitzChivalry wherein he is both a sidekick and a hero.

On the background of FitzChivalry as a dynamic sidekick-hero, I will use Kristian Frisk to put a sociological perspective on the representation of the hero and how it has changed since the 1950s and the publishing of Rank, Raglan, and Campbell's theories. I have found that FitzChivalry as a dynamic sidekick-hero role mirrors a changing perspective of the hero, and opened up a new type of hero within the fantasy genre. Hobb has created a sidekick-hero with FitzChivalry, which mirrors the perspective of heroic actions mattering more than the birthright of being marked for greatness. Christopher Voegler's definition of the self-sacrificial hero has a higher impact than that of the hero archetype, though it has not disappeared from the fantasy genre. FitzChivalry is with his sidekick-hero dynamic thus a turning point between the hero archetype and the self-sacrificial hero.

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Introduction

"'Not all men are destined for greatness,' I reminded
him. 'Are you sure, Fitz? Are you sure?'"
- FitzChivalry and the Fool
Robin Hobb, *Royal Assassin*

The arena of heroes in the stories of our cultures grows larger every year. Several types of heroes exist within the realm of fiction. These heroes include the tragic hero, such as Romeo from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet; the Byronic hero, such as Heathcliff from Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights; and what is known as the epic hero, such as Perseus. The epic hero derives from myth and thus has a long history. Where heroes such as the Byronic hero have arisen over time, the epic hero has been prevalent for centuries. In this thesis, I am interested in the epic hero and the archetype-style criticism as it relates to cultural patterns and how we as humans express ideals. It is a reflection of culture and prevalent themes throughout our history as storytelling humans. The myth is a narrative linked with rituals, it is a narrative of culture and tradition (Raglan 117). I am interested in how the epic hero, or the hero archetype, has evolved in the past decades within the fantasy genre. The universality and ideals of archetype-style criticism mirror the fantasy genre and how it reflects the ideals of the author.

The fantasy genre has been looked down upon as unserious or literature for children for decades (James and Mendlesohn 10-11). This was not always so, as the genre has its roots in several genres which have served important social functions, such as the Epic (12; Mendlesohn 3). The fantasy genre has since evolved into a more popular genre today, albeit still condemned by some as children's fancy. Within the fantasy genre, the hero lives on in many shapes and sizes, however, they are not alone on their journey. Sidekicks and helpers assist the hero as they fight to save the day, providing a team to be reckoned with in their various worlds.

While the hero has been centered in the novel for many years, within the past century the sidekicks and the helpers have come more into focus. In the 1950s, post World War II, J.R.R. Tolkien published the *Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955), featuring a sidekick who was arguably the most heroic character. Following this release, a new generation of fantasy writers were born, trying to emulate the universe that Tolkien had written. In the 1990s a second generation of fantasy writers was born, beginning to expand borders that had previously gone untouched for a long time. One of these borders is the idea of who a sidekick can be and whether they can be the hero too.

In Robin Hobb's *Farseer trilogy* (1995-1997), we follow FitzChivarly, the illegitimate son of the previous King-in-Waiting for the Six Duchies. He is trained to be an assassin and to be loyal to his King: he is trained to be a sidekick. Throughout the series, Fitz meets several threats, such as Regal, his half-uncle, who desires the crown, as well as the Outislander raiders who wreak havoc on the Six Duchies. His uncle Verity, the new King-in-Waiting, is the man who in the end saves the Six Duchies, however, not without the help of FitzChivalry. FitzChivalry, the boy raised to be a sidekick, is the narrator of this story, not the typical hero Verity. With this, Hobb asks whether a sidekick can be the main character. In this thesis, I in turn ask whether a sidekick can be a hero, and what this does to the dynamic of the character.

The traditional hero has been stepping aside for a larger interest in the minor characters, such as the sidekick and other odd characters. This decrease in the elevation of the hero is an interesting development which is rather recent in written history. With the opening of who can be a hero, new possibilities and dynamics are created. The new perception of the hero is reflected in contemporary fantasy fiction.

I will begin with contextualizing the fantasy genre and its history, as well as a few of its definitions. To demonstrate the change of the hero and the sidekick, I will first define the hero archetype by using Otto Rank and Lord Raglan's definition of the mythic hero archetype and Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey as a heroic story type. These definitions will allow me to reflect on the cultural reflections of the hero and sidekick. I will not be using Vladimir Propp's character types as these have a literary focus, as opposed to the mythic and cultural reflections of Rank, Raglan, and Campbell. Using these, I will analyze FitzChivalry and Verity on the basis of the hero archetype as well as the Hero's Journey.

A discussion of FitzChivalry and Verity and their roles as sidekick, hero, helper, and catalyst qualities will follow the two analyses. I will use Ann Cameron and Ron Buchanan's definitions of the sidekick to define it and apply this to Fitz, as well as discuss how he deviates from being a typical sidekick. Finally, I will discuss what makes a hero and in order to do so, I will use Kristian Frisk's article "What Makes a Hero? Theorising the Social Structuring of Heroism" to connect how changes in our societal definition of this have impacted the fantasy genre. The *Farseer trilogy* will be used as an example of a turning point, with Fitz in the lead of a new perspective on sidekicks and heroes.

The Fantasy Genre

In this section I will be giving a brief history of the fantasy genre and its definitions. The *Farseer trilogy* is a fantasy series, and I will with this section provide context for the many-faceted genre which characterizes the trilogy. The fantasy genre and its definition has been under debate by many theorists, such as Tzvetan Todorov, Rosemary Jackson, Kathryn Hume, W. R. Irwin, and Colin Manlove (James and Mendlesohn 1). They agree that the "construction of the impossible" is what fantasy is about, however, they depart from there (James and Mendlesohn 1). The fantasy genre is much like the old part of town, where the houses are built up each other's walls, leaning on each other, yet each one has its own color and interior. This as opposed to the romance genre, where each house is built to neatly to follow the design of the one next to it. While there might be some different colors or different interior design, the romance genre closely follows a formula. The fantasy genre, on the other hand, is so many different things, that the only likeness between two ends of the street is the mortar used to build it. The earlier mentioned theorists have primarily worked with texts from the 19th and early 20th century, and thus they are far from contemporary. Some more contemporary theorists within this genre who have contributed to the task of defining fantasy include Brian Attebery, John Clute, and Farah Mendlesohn.

Attebery, an American professor of English, is widely acknowledged for his work with the fantasy genre in his book *Strategies of Fantasy* (1992). In this book, Attebery discusses the origins of the fantasy genre and the disdain with which it has been treated (and still is). The fantasy genre has "generally been excluded from the canon of great literature" (Attebery ix) and heralds an "other" within literary genres, which Attebery likens to the "noncanonical literary category: women's writing" (ix). Both have been othered by literary critics through many years. Attebery theorizes that this has happened due to the development of genres from history and romance to the emergence of the realistic novel:

> "Whereas once upon a time (I use the phrase advisedly) storytelling was divided into things that were true – history – and things that weren't – romance – now the division comes at quite another point. Once the realistic novel was invented, it claimed kinship to history and denied its ties to romance. […] Accordingly, the more history-like a novel seemed, the more highly it was regarded, and the less incentive writes had to exploit the romance-like potential of the form." (x)

This hierarchy of genres within literary criticism has crushed the fantasy genre beneath its boot despite having its origins in several different significant genres, such as the romance, the fairy tale and the Epic (James and Mendlesohn 12; Mendlesohn 3). The Epic, for example, is

a "a long narrative poem which tells large tales, often incorporating a mixture of LEGEND, MYTH and folk history, and featuring HEROES whose acts have a sig-nificance transcending their own individual happiness or woe." (Clute 319). It had a social function within the ancient Greek society, wherein it created history and culture. It held a critical and acclaimed function in other words, and the modern fantasy novel has adapted the ideal that the hero holds in society into its genre. The Romance and the narrative obstacles which they contain have been adopted over time by the fantasy genre as well (Barron 17). The Greek Epic can be connected with the Romance quest, as they follow a similar narrative of obstacles to be conquered (Frye 190; 198; Innes 13). However, the goal differs: the Romance's quest finds deeper intellectual meaning and love in the obstacles (Barron 20; 17; Innes 15). Another genre which the fantasy genre today has absorbed aspects of is the picaresque journey. This genre depicts a hero of often low class and lives by their wits within a society that is corrupt, yet its plot devices can be traced to the Epic (Innes 17). This has influenced the fantasy genre in its portrayal of the protagonist as a low-class citizen who is pulled into a heroic journey. As mentioned, however, the fantasy genre is many-sided and while the modern fantasy novel may often include the elements mentioned, they are not always used.

It is thus no wonder that the fantasy genre is so hard for theorists to agree upon a definition of it. Attebery begins his book by giving two definitions of the fantasy genre:

> "1. Fantasy is a form of popular escapist literature that combines stock characters and devices – wizards, dragons, magic swords, and the like – into a predictable plot in which the perennially understaffed forces of good triumph over a monolithic evil.
> 2. Fantasy is a sophisticated mode of storytelling characterized by stylistic playfulness, self-reflexiveness, and a subversive treatment of established orders of society and thought. Arguably the major fictional mode of the late twentieth century, it draws upon contemporary ideas about sign systems and the indeterminacy of meaning and at the same time recaptures the vitality and freedom of nonmimetic traditional forms such as epic, folktale, romance, and myth." (1)

These two definitions both define the genre as well as paint two different pictures of what the fantasy genre is seen as. The first definition is a formula and is often expected from non-fantasy readers, wherein it is associated with "a popular storytelling formula that is restricted in scope, recent in origin, and specialized in audience and appeal." (2). Attebery described this as "essentially a commercial product, with particular authors or publishers' lines serving as brand names for the consumer." (2). It is a relatively negative view of the genre, which is pushed into its very simplest form. It is a simple description of formula, which ignores the

many facets of what fantasy can be. The fantasy as a formula is thus relatively simple in description, however, it has a social function for the readers who consume it. This discussion of the social function of this subject will not be included in this thesis.

Fantasy as a mode, is "a way of doing something, in this case, of telling stories." (2) and story-telling is the act of taking a stance or position on the world, while also portraying it (2). Attebery writes that "fantasy and mimesis are the fundamental operations of the narrative imagination (xii)" (3) and uses fantasy and mimesis as a sort of scale of storytelling. Fantasy is on one hand a place where characters can do anything - fly, metamorphosis, become immortal, etc - while mimesis is where characters are limited to the experiences of the real world (3). However, putting it on a binary spectrum where fantasy lives on one side, mimesis on the other, is incorrect too. The two are not opposites, as one includes the other. Fantasy without mimesis would result in a non-recognizable story completely alien to a human, while mimesis without fantasy would be a report of perception of an actual event (3). Therefore the two exist in an endless loop, co-existing in various levels of fantasy:mimesis.

The border of when literature is defined as fantasy literature within this fantasy:mimesis loop, is when the impossible and wonder take the known into a new light and circumstance – when the known becomes fantastical. Attebery quotes C.N. Manlove in relation to wonder, defining it as connecting with "the "contemplation of … strangeness" (*Modern Fantasy* 7)" (16) and evoking an emotional response (16). Through the defamiliarization of our known world, for example, winged fairies dancing in a flower field, the known flower field is induced a sense of wonder and seen in a new light. The fairies represent an impossible and introduce a possibility to create new "awareness and a pattern for meaningfulness." (17). This defamiliarization can take the shape of anything from world-building to the characters' abilities and produces an impossible world through which our world can be understood. Defamiliarization like this is a broad definition and is related to a "fuzzy set". This term is a mathematical term that describes a set of numbers, symbols, shapes, etc. that have varying degrees of membership to the defining factor. Attebery's definition of fantasy parallels this term, where the works within the genre belong, yet with varying degrees of similarities (James & Mendlesohn 1-2).

John Clute, a Canadian author and critic with a specialization in science fiction and fantasy literature, writes in *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (1999) that this fuzzy set, or similar approaches, might be the best way to define fantasy as a genre: "As Brian ATTEBERY has indicated through his description of fantasy as a "fuzzy set", it may be that fantasy is inherently best described and defined the rough prescriptive and exploratory example." (Clute

337). In this encyclopedia, Clute defines various terms and formulas within the fantasy genre as well as the term Fantasy. He builds on Attebery's fuzzy set to define fantasy, and thus includes "... entries on material which many critics and readers might not consider pure fantasy," (337). The definition of fantasy within this encyclopedia also reflects this.

Clute defines a fantasy text as "a self-coherent narrative" (338). This self-coherency is what sets it apart from for example surrealism, which has elements of fantasy within, but is not seen as belonging to the "fantasy genre". Fantasy thus becomes "a way to tell stories about the fantastic" (338) and spans over the wide selection of texts that are defined as fantasy. He describes it as what could be described as a grammar, in which the conversation of awareness is shared between the author and the text (James and Mendlesohn 2). The fantastic can come in the forms of texts with a setting in this world, as well as what Clute calls the "otherworld". The "otherworld" is a wider term for a "secondary world", which is "an autonomous world or venue which is not bound to mundane reality" (847), coined by J.R.R. Tolkien. Clute uses "otherworld" as a term to include "any sort of autonomous impossible world, including FAERIE and WONDERLANDS" (738, capitals in original), though the term is used interchangeably with Tolkien's "secondary world". When set in a secondary world, the world is made of "the impossible" while the story can be possible – on the other hand, a setting in this world leads to an impossible story (338). Thus, the fantastic is included in either setting, story, or both in a deliberate, self-coherent way, making the text a story about the impossible/fantastic.

Finally, Farah Mendlesohn is a British literary historian, who has decided not to try to define fantasy. She opens in the introduction of her book, *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (2008), by saying "This book is not about defining fantasy." (Mendlesohn xiii). Instead, she "want[s] to reach out for an understanding of the construction of the genre; specifically, I wish to consider its language and rhetoric, in order to provide critical tools for further analysis." (xiii). This is, despite her wishes otherwise, also a definition of fantasy, albeit it is with a different lens – a form. In order to reach this understanding of the construction of the genre, Mendlesohn relies on the "consensual construction of disbelief" between the reader and the author (xiii). This is tied with the readers' expectations of the fantastic employed within the text, as the fantastic is a dialogue of the impossible. Mendlesohn argues that the readers' expectations of the fantasy text are mirrored in the literary techniques used by the author, which thus creates the dialogue of the fantastic (xiii). Attebery's argument of how the fantasy author creates the fantastic within defined frames is in accord with this dialogue: "narrative devices that establish a relationship between the fantasy world and our own while at the same

time separating the two" (Attebery 66). However, the understanding of "the broad brushstrokes of plot or the decoration of device is less fundamental to comprehending the genre; all of these may be tweaked or subverted while still remaining firmly within the reader's expectation of the text." (xiii). The lens with which Mendlesohn defines fantasy is a form made within a certain 'aesthetic' in its construction of disbelief or the fantastic. She does not mention a social function, despite its roots within the myth which has a large social function (Raglan 141-143). The focus on the construction of the fantasy genre ignores the social function of its roots, however there is an overlap between the two. Mendlesohn's focus on the aesthetic construction correlates with the 'entertaining aspect' of the social function. Where Raglan's definition of the myth and its function is largely social, the aesthetic or form of it compares to Mendlesohn's definition of the construction. A storyteller is, no matter the purpose, a teller of stories. I will expand on Raglan's view of the myth and the storyteller in the following section.

Mendlesohn lists four categories of the fantastic based upon literary strategies employed by the author to create a construction of disbelief. These four categories consist of the portal-quest, the immersive, the intrusive, and the liminal fantasy, and are determined by "the means by which the fantastic enters the narrated world." (xv). The categories have each their rhetorical structures and are each their mode, which is influenced by Clute's *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* in relation to the grammar or template of wrongness, thinning, recognition, and healing/return (Mendlesohn xiv-xv; Clute 338-339). The four categories/modes use different emphasizes on these templates (Mendlesohn xv). Hybrids of these categories do however appear, which Mendlesohn uses to test her "rule": "where authors move from one category to another within the text, they invariably assume new techniques; the cadence shifts, and both metaphor and mimetic writing take on different functions to accommodate the new category" (xv). This understanding of fantasy differs from the view of Lord Raglan's view of the myth, which will be expanded upon later.

In this thesis, I will focus on the category of the portal-quest fantasy, as it is relevant to the *Farseer trilogy*. Both the portal and the quest fantasy have a character who "leaves her familiar surroundings and passes through a portal into an unknown place" (1) and are tied together in Mendlesohn's categorization of fantasy. This allows the readers to be a "companion-audience" who follows the protagonist through explanations and decoding (1). Mendlesohn observes that this reader position is common in children's fantasy, and can have an infantilizing constructed position to some, but is not necessarily so (1).

The portal fantasy's similarity to the quest fantasy also comes to show in the theme of entry, transition, and exploration. The two structures differ in the entry, as quest fantasies emphasize transition and exploration, however, the rhetorical strategy of positioning the reader/protagonist as unknowing is adopted in both (2). A protagonist in the quest story does experience a sort of "entry" though not as direct as a portal. It is often a transition from a normal life where the fantastic is unknown or indirect in its contact with the protagonist to direct contact (2). Thus, the entry and/or transition follows the same logic as a portal fantasy. This definition puts the reader in the position of the protagonist, creating understanding between text and reader through the 'new world' which is experienced. Mendlesohn writes that the origins of this lies "in [the] epic, in the Bible, in the Arthurian romances, and in fairy tales." (3) and follows the characters from beginning to middle to end as a result of these sources (3). With this idea of the "sequenced adventures" comes transitional journeys and the followed destiny (3).

While the contemporary quest fantasy has changed from its origins in the Epic, the biblical stories, and fairy tales, elements remain. One of these is the assumption of the quest as a process to find an object or "token of reward", however, the real reward is "moral growth and/or admission into the kingdom, or redemption." (4). This moral growth and token of reward also relate to Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey and the boon with which the hero transitions into something more, as well as the Rank-Raglan hero archetype where the hero wins a kingdom. These two hero types, the traditional hero archetype and the journey of transition, provide a way to analyze and classify what is or what has been a hero. The two can also be seen in several fantasy stories, including the *Farseer trilogy*. However, both hero types have been disrupted and hybridized by Hobb and this disruption is what I will discuss in this thesis.

The Hero Archetype

Lord Raglan (1885-1964), also known as FitzRoy Richard Somerset, and the Austrian psychoanalyst, Otto Rank (1884-1939), have both written and discussed the hero archetype. Lord Raglan, who was a British soldier, author, and anthropologist, wrote the book *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama* (1936), wherein he lists 22 attributes which the hero archetype often encounters in their life or circumstances. Before he lists these attributes, Lord Raglan writes about his understanding of history and myth as the basis for these. He argues that anyone who has studied myth has "realized that a myth is not merely an untrue story" (Raglan 117), however, the explanations of the myth are not always right.

Raglan classes these in three groupings: “firstly that a myth is a statement of historical fact clothed in more or less obscure language” (117), “secondly that it is a fanciful or speculative explanation of a natural phenomenon” (117), and finally that a myth is “a narrative linked with a rite” (117). The first two of these three are dismissed by Raglan, while he agrees with the third. The myth is “nothing but the form of words which is associated with a rite” (126), and when the rite fades away, the words of the myth remain (125-126). This is exemplified through the handshake when parting by Lord Raglan, where “The handshake is the rite; and the expression “good-bye”, which is a shortened form of “God be with you”, is the myth” (127).

This myth is linked with the traditional narrative while denying any basis in history or in philosophical speculation (141). The reasoning for this is given by Lord Raglan in five points:

> “1. That there is no other satisfactory way in which they can be explained. As the whole of this book is intended to establish this proposition, I shall not refer to it in particular here.
> 2. That these narratives are concerned primarily and chiefly with supernatural beings, kings, and heroes.
> 3. That miracles play a large part in them.
> 4. That the same scenes and incidents appear in many parts of the world.
> 5. That many of these scenes and incidents are explicable in terms of known rituals.” (141).

He argues that the storyteller has been a teller as its name implies, instead of a story inventor. With these retellings, the story alters and the original myth is lost: “It is pretty certain that every old story has passed through a series of vicissitudes, and it is clearly impossible to reconstruct the original form by the aid of taste alone.” (144-145). The myth has a social function for Raglan, but a ritualistic one (143). He sees the myth as a precursor for history, folk-lore, and literary tales (144), thus a way to understand the world for the people and a way to understand the past. Through its social function and the telling of stories, a construction of an aesthetic is created, which overlaps with Mendlesohn’s non-definition of the fantasy genre. The storyteller is a teller of stories, which includes an entertaining and aesthetic element.

With these arguments on the myth in mind, Lord Raglan took “a dozen heroes whose stories are narrated in sufficient detail” (174) and thus “arrived at what appears to be a pattern” (174). This pattern is written as followed:

"(1) The hero's mother is a royal virgin;
(2) His father is a king, and
(3) Often a near relative of his mother, but
(4) The circumstances of his conception are unusual, and
(5) He is also reputed to be the son of a god.
(6) At birth an attempt is made, usually by his father or his maternal grandfather, to kill him, but
(7) He is spirited away, and
(8) Reared by foster-parents in a far country.
(9) We are told nothing of his childhood, but
(10) On reaching manhood he returns or goes to his future kingdom.
(11) After a victory over the king and/or a giant, dragon, or wild beast,
(12) He marries a princess, often the daughter of his predecessor, and
(13) Becomes king.
(14) For a time he reigns uneventfully and,
(15) Prescribes laws, but
(16) Later he loses favour with the gods and/or his subjects, and
(17) Is driven from the throne and city, after which
(18) He meets with a mysterious death,
(19) Often at the top of a hill.
(20) His children, if any, do not succeed him.
(21) His body is not buried, but nevertheless
(22) He has one or more holy sepulchres." (174-175)

This list is used as a sort of checklist, wherein every attribute produces a point towards being the hero archetype. Thus, the checklist is a spectrum, rather than a direct definition of the hero archetype. The checklist has, as mentioned, been derived from a selection of stories Raglan has found, followed by a reapplication of the checklist to the hero stories (Raglan 174).

While Raglan only accepts the mythical hero, historical figures can also check the list of the hero archetype pattern. Francis Utley (1907-1974) for example, has analyzed the American president Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) as a Raglan hero in *Lincoln Wasn't There or Lord Raglan's Hero* (1965). Utley writes that "... he [Lincoln] nevertheless scores the amazing total of 22 points - as overpowering a score as Oedipus." (4). Thus, the Raglan hero

archetype can be used on both mythical and historical figures, despite Raglan not accepting the historical.

Related to Lord Raglan's 22 attributes of the hero archetype, is Otto Rank, who lists a similar, albeit shorter, list of attributes for the hero archetype. Otto Rank worked closely with Sigmund Freud for 20 years of his life, before diverting his path. His book *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (1922) was written and released in his years of being a Freudian, and thus the Freudian concept of the Oedipus complex is included in its core understanding. In the book, he explores the Hero archetype on the basis of several myths and legends. Rank claims that:

> "Nearly all prominent civilized nations, including Babylonians and Egyptians, Hebrews and Indians, Persians, Greeks and Romans, as well as the Germanic peoples and others, have left us literatures in which, early on, they glorify national heroes— mythical princes and kings, and founders of religions, dynasties, empires, and cities— in many poetic tales and legends." (1)

The national heroes of all these tales and legends contain fantastic features and Rank finds several similarities across cultures within these (1).

Rank discusses the reasoning of these similarities in the introduction of his book, giving several theories. The first of these is the "idea of people", which "assumes the existence of elemental ideas" (1). This assumption entails that the hero myth is a fundamental structure within human mentality. The second explanation is "the original community", claiming that the tales originate from Indo-European peoples and thus traveled with the human race across the globe. Thus it retained many of the original traits, but developed in different directions. This theory was applied and further advocated and then implemented on the hero myths (1-2). The third theory is the theory of "conceptual migration", in which myths originate from certain peoples, and are borrowed and are "accepted by other peoples through oral tradition (commerce or travel) or through literary influences" (2).

While these three theories differ, Rank references Ehrenreich, who states all three theories as "equally relevant" (3). He also adds: "... Frazer (1919) has recently formulated his view of this problem: he considers that borrowing (imitation) and independent origin are equally likely when there is a common strand in folklore ("popular imagination")." (3). Thus, there is not one explanation for the common strand of the hero myth, but the three theories are wrapped and intertwined with each other.

Rank references Freud's dream interpretation and its uses in relation to the psyche. He links the relationship between dream and myth and uses them in relation to human

imagination structures (5-6). One of these myths made from the human imagination structures, is the hero archetype, which Rank identifies in 12 different points, as opposed to Raglan's 22. This "standard legend" of the hero was derived from a cursory review which "reveals a series of uniformly common features, and building from these basic elements it seems appropriate to construct a standard legend, as it were." (47). These common features are written as:

> "The hero is the child of very distinguished parents, and usually the son of a king. His origin is preceded by difficulties, such as sexual abstinence, prolonged infertility, or secret intercourse of the parents due to external prohibition or obstacles. During or before the pregnancy, a prophecy, in the form of a dream or oracle, warns against his birth, usually threatening harm to the father. Therefore the newborn child, usually at the instigation of the father or his representative, is doomed to be killed or exposed. As a rule, he is surrendered to the water, in a box. He is then saved by animals, or by lowly people (herders), and suckled by a female animal or a lowly woman. After he has grown up, he finds his distinguished parents in a variety of ways. He takes revenge on his father, on the one hand, and is acknowledged, on the other, achieving greatness and fame." (47).

These features are much like the Raglan attributes of the hero archetype, though condensed to a much shorter list. Rank also emphasizes the importance of the severance to the hero's parents as a child, and underlines Freud's work with the child's severance from their parents (48-49). Both versions of the hero archetype use an emphasis upon the birth of the hero. Raglan's hero archetype has 8 points concerning the surroundings and circumstances of the hero's birth, both pre-pregnancy and the direct consequences thereof, namely the attempt of murder upon the newborn child and the prevention of this. Rank also emphasizes this early stage of the hero's life/pre-birth, only using a few points to describe the hero after reaching adulthood.

Through the Raglan and Rank patterns of what makes a hero myth, the hero archetype emerging from the two is very similar. By combining the two patterns, I would propose the Rank-Raglan hero archetype:

> A hero born of distinguished parents or royalty, the mother being a royal virgin, where the hero's conception is unusual or difficult. An attempt at the hero's life is made at their birth, usually by the father or maternal grandfather. The hero is thus "spirited away", usually through the transport of water, and raised by lowly foster-parents far away. As the hero reaches adulthood, they return to their kingdom, where

> they take revenge on the person/people who tried to kill them and/or defeats a giant, dragon, or wild beast. Thus, the hero marries royalty and becomes "king" as they achieve greatness and fame. The hero finally falls from their throne, meeting a mysterious death where after they are not buried, however, they receive some form of holy monument.

This combination highlights the points in which the two agree, while including points that Rank does not include about the hero's life beyond the unspoken childhood. The lack of details about the hero's later life in the Rank hero archetype results in an unbalanced story for his hero archetype. Thus, the inclusion of Raglan's attributes past the hero's childhood assures a more balanced archetype than the focus which Rank's hero archetype provides. In relation to the fantasy genre this hero myth provides a reflection of who we see as a hero. The myth is closely related to the ritual and can be seen as a symbolic mirror within said ritual (Raglan 150), which much relates to the fantasy genre. The hero archetype becomes a myth which is repeated within the fantasy genre as a symbolic mirror of ideals.

The hero archetype according to both Raglan and Rank is focused upon the hero's life and is very mechanical. It emphasizes the hero through a list of circumstances and external actions made by the father or the revenge upon the father. Another approach to what makes a hero, is the Hero's Journey.

The Hero's Journey

The Hero's Journey is a concept introduced by Joseph Campbell, an American professor of literature, in his book *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* (1949). Campbell is not the first to identify this journey, nor is he the last to explore it, however, according to Lily Alexander, he popularized it (Wolf 11). Alexander identifies the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep as another who had previously taken up the Hero's Journey, albeit under a different name. Van Gennep was "the first scholar who brought attention to the phenomenon later signified as ThJ [the Hero's Journey]" (Wolf 12) in his book *The Rites of Passage* (1909).

The Hero's Journey and its narrative structure has inspired a variety of stories, both written and filmed (12). Moreover, it has been proved to be "pivotal to many realms of human existence and to a range of disciplines, including anthropology, psychology, education, social studies, and the scholarship on ritual and religion" (11). In a similar vein, Carol Pearson and Katherine Pope have stated that the "heroic archetype and its subpatterns, or stages, are repeated in the various disciplines that deal with human experience" (3). The hero archetype and the Hero's Journey are thus intertwined with humanity, in both our myth

and the stories we tell through written word and screens, as well as how we perceive ourselves and our own story (Wolf 11).

Campbell, in his book, bases the Hero's Journey upon the monomyth and understands it through this as well. This understanding touches upon the subject of dreams and myth in relation to the dynamics of the psyche. He mentions several theorists, Freud, Rank, and Carl Jung in-between, as developers upon the field of dream and myth interpretation within psychoanalysis (Campbell 255). In this vein, he argues that mythological figures and symbols are "not only symptoms of the unconscious [...] but also controlled and intended statements of certain spiritual principles, which have remained as constant throughout the course of human history as the form and nervous structure of the human physique itself." (257). He agrees with the theorists, to some extent, that the human psyche is closely related to the libido (257-258).

The aforementioned monomyth is the idea of a single story or narrative structure repeated with human culture and myth. Campbell proclaims the following:

> "... it will be always the one, shapeshifting yet marvelously constant story that we find, together with a challengingly persistent suggestion of more remaining to be experienced than will ever be known or told." (3).

Like its name suggests, it is one basic story, which is repeated in the human psyche in several fields: "religions, philosophies, arts, the social forms of primitive and historic man, prime discoveries in science and technology, the very dreams that blister sleep, boil up from the basic, magic ring of myth." (3). According to Campbell it is the very building blocks of function within mythology and rites of change or passage, which carries the "human spirit" forward, as a counter to "other constant human fantasies that tend to tie it back" (11). That is, it serves a function of change within society. The Hero's Journey is thus a story told under many guises, all leading towards a change within the hero and/or society.

The hero's journey, as a story told under many guises, also opens the possibility of applying yourself to the hero's journey. It has been used as a self-help guide, such as Carol S. Pearson's *The Hero Within: Six Archetypes to Live By* (1986), where the hero (the reader), applies the journey and archetypes so that a change may be implemented upon their lives. The reader and the hero thus become one, which can be mirrored in the fantasy genre. It becomes a way to relate to the fantasy genre for the reader, and the heroic change and the archetypes of the fantasy story become a relatable and known factor, as opposed to the unknown magical elements.

This method is not far from Lord Raglan and Otto Rank's hero archetype derivation. However, where Lord Raglan and Otto Rank's archetype stemmed from chosen myths and cannot proclaim that their archetype is universal from such a selection, Campbell does claim the Hero's Journey monomyth as being universal. Part of Campbell's reasoning for this is that the whole of the Hero's Journey is not needed to be a Hero's Journey:

> "Many tales isolate and greatly enlarge upon one or two of the typical elements of the full cycle (test motif, flight motif, abduction of the bride), others string a number of independent cycles into a single series (as in the Odyssey). Differing characters or episodes can become fused, or a single element can reduplicate itself and reappear under many changes." (246)

Campbell allows a pick and choose method with the Hero's Journey in this, thus achieving an incredible vagueness in what a Hero's Journey is. This method of achieving a universal definition is an approach which I would argue is too vague. However, the Hero's Journey remains impactful despite this claim of universality as a monomyth. Thus, it cannot be denied that it is part of the mythic hero and their journey, albeit not as universal.

The Hero's Journey itself consists of three parts: departure, initiation, and return. These three parts contain steps within themselves, which makes up a circular journey which the hero must go through. The circular structure allows several journeys or transformations to take place for the hero, so that when one journey ends, another can begin. The three parts thus become part of an endless circle of possible journeys of change or transformation.

The first part, departure, begins with the Call to Adventure. This is where the hero comes upon an "unsuspected world" by chance, and this unexpected world draws the hero into "a relationship with forces that are not rightly understood." (51). This call includes a herald or "announcer of the adventure", who is often a dark, loathly, or terrifying figure (53). At this first stage signifies that the hero has been "summoned by destiny" and thus "transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown." (58). This call can be refused in Refusal of the Call, which ends in an adventure converted to its negative. The hero will lose their significance and their "flowering world becomes a wasteland of dry stones and his life feels meaningless […] Whatever house he builds, it will be a house of death…" (59). In other words, the hero becomes a victim to be saved instead of the hero that transforms to being the key to saving victims.

For the hero that does not refuse the call, they are met with a protective figure. This protective figure is the Supernatural Aid, who "… provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass." (69). Following this meeting, is the Crossing of

the First Threshold. This threshold leads into the new world, beyond which lies "darkness, the unknown, and danger" (77-78). However, at the threshold awaits the "threshold guardian" who stands for the "limits of the hero's present sphere, or life horizon" (77). This guardian symbolizes the world the hero knows and is both protective and destructive. However, it is only by defying the guardian that the hero can pass beyond the boundaries and thus begin his journey (82).

Passing the first threshold, the hero enters the Belly of the Whale. This stage acts as a rebirth, through "the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale" (90). The hero is, in other words, swallowed into the unknown and must undergo change in order to be reborn. To undergo this change during the crossing of the threshold, the hero must go through a self-annihilation of ego:

> "The hero whose attachment to ego is already annihilate passes back and forth across the horizons of the world, in and out of the dragon, as readily as a king through all the rooms of his house. And therein lies his power to save; for his passing and returning demonstrate that through all the contraries of phenomenality the Uncreate-Imperishable remains, and there is nothing to fear." (p. 93)

This self-annihilation of ego and the change it implements in the hero allows them to be victorious and is thus reborn as a new person. This reborn hero has the ability to save, as they do not give into the despair of the unknown of the ego.

Following the rebirth from the Belly of the Whale, the second part, Initiation, begins. This part opens with the Road of Trials. Much like its name implies, this stage consists of a series of trials for the hero. These trials are overcome by the help of the supernatural aid and the advice and instruments the aid has provided:

> "The hero is covertly aided by the advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper whom he met before his entrance into this region. Or it may be that he here discovers for the first time that there is a benign power everywhere supporting him in his superhuman passage." (p. 97)

The hero is put to the test through the Road of Trials, and they are aided through helpers, be it the supernatural aid or other benign powers. However, the hero also encounters their opposite in these trials. This opposite is "his own suspected self" and they must "put aside his pride, his virtue, beauty, and life, and bow or submit to the absolutely intolerable" (108). Through this, the hero finds that the opposite is not of a foreign matter, but the same species or "flesh" as themselves (108). Thus, the hero must encounter themselves through

these trials and set aside own bearings in order to carry on the transformation the Hero's Journey has set them on.

Past the Road of Trials comes the Meeting with the Goddess. This Goddess is found at the "edge of the earth, at the central point of the cosmos, in the tabernacle of the temple, or within the darkness of the deepest chamber of the heart." (109). Campbell writes that the Goddess, or Woman, is reduced to inferior status by "deficient eyes" while the hero can "take her as she is, without undue commotion but with the kindness and assurance she requires" and this becomes "the king, the incarnate god, of her created world." (116). The Goddess thus becomes another thing to conquer and results in the winning of the "boon of love", which Campbell describes as being "life itself enjoyed as the encasement of eternity" (118). The Goddess and the boon of love are divine in Campbell's description, and the hero achieves a "mastery of life" through the "mystical marriage" between the hero and the Goddess (121).

With this "mystical marriage", the hero is placed in the same place as their father (121). This begins the next stage, Atonement with the Father. Here the hero "knows that he and the father are one: he is in the father's place" (121). Prior to this succession of the father's place, the father has the role of an "ogre"; he is assigned a role in the reflex projection of the hero's ego and the world (129-130). To gain adulthood the hero must escape the idolization of the nursery/childhood and shift their point of view to that of the father and the world (129-130). The atonement is the "abandonment of that self-generated double monster – the dragon thought to be God (superego) and the dragon thought to be Sin (repressed id)" (130). The abandonment is thus the release of the attachment to the ego, and the hero must have faith in the "father's mercy" in order to let go and consequently the "ogres" will dissolve (130). Simultaneously, the hero can "derive hope and assurance" from the woman, or the Goddess, and thus offered help through the abandonment of ego (130-131). With the atonement, the hero becomes the father, and the Goddess becomes the mother, thus upholding status quo of the world while initiating the hero into adulthood. The hero understands the father, becomes him, and thus understands the world and its tragedies (148).

As the hero understands the world, the Apotheosis follows. This stage is the culmination or climax of the journey. Here the hero reaches divinity by annihilating the fear and ignorance within themselves (150-151). By surpassing this fear and ignorance, the hero gains new qualities:

> "Having surpassed the delusions of his formerly self-assertive, self-defensive, self-concerned ego, he knows without and within the same repose. What he beholds without is the visual aspect of the magnitudinous, thought-transcending emptiness

> on which his own experiences of ego, form, perceptions, speech, conceptions, and knowledge ride. And he is filled with compassion for the self-terrorized beings who live in fright of their own nightmare." (165-166)

The hero surpasses their own fear and ignorance and gains compassion towards others. Through this they rise and reach divinity. As they reach divinity the Ultimate Boon is introduced in the next stage. This boon is what Campbell calls the "bringing together of the two great symbols of the meeting with the goddess and the fire theft" which "reveals […] the status of the anthropomorphic powers in the realm of myth" (173). The boons are thus, not the ends in themselves, but embodiments of "indestructible life", also known as the Ultimate Boon (173). This "indestructible life" is the "life energy" which the hero gains and can present to the society from whence they came. The Ultimate Boon is shaped to the hero and the circumstance, allowing the hero divinity and the ability to save (189).

When the hero has gained the Ultimate Boon, the final part, the Return begins. This is where the hero is called back to their society and journeys back. The first stage is Refusal of the Return. This is where the hero is called upon to return with the gifts they have earned through their journey to their community. However, in this first stage, the hero refuses to leave, as the stage title indicates (193). Another possibility is the Magic Flight. This stage, as opposed to the refusal, is invoked in the case of the hero stealing the Ultimate Boon against the will of the guardian of said boon. In that circumstance, the hero is often chased by the guardian and may be "complicated by marvels of magical obstruction and evasion" (196-197). The flight is followed by the Rescue from Without, where an outside influence assists the hero in their flight from the guardian (207). This rescue can also come in the form of a "jealous" society, which fetches the hero from their journey to gain the effects of the boon (207). During this journey back to society, the hero is reborn into the world from whence they came (216).

As the hero returns, they cross the threshold back in the Crossing of the Return Threshold. The two worlds on either side of the threshold are distinct from each other and "different as life and death, as day and night", yet "the two kingdoms are actually one." (217). Thus the two worlds are the same, despite their differences, and the hero gains the freedom to pass from one world to the other in the Master of the Two Worlds, after crossing back (229). The hero can, in other words, freely move between the worlds while "not contaminating the principles of the one with those of the other" (229), which is the sign of a master according to Campbell (229). Finally, with this ability and the ultimate boon, the hero reaches Freedom to Live:

> "Powerful in this insight, calm and free in action, elated that through his hand should flow the grace of Viracocha, the hero is the conscious vehicle of the terrible, wonderful Law, whether his work be that of butcher, jockey, or king." (p. 239)

The hero holds the law with their insight and ability to save, while also being an agent of change that is not fearful of this (243). They have gone through a journey of change and have brought this change with them in their being, becoming the savior of their society through this change.

The Hero's Journey is thus, as aforementioned, a journey of transformation and change and the hero is the person who goes through this journey. However, much like Rank and Raglan, Campbell dismissed the idea of women being the hero. The archetype of a male hero has changed today, and female heroes have been written in manyfold. Campbell's Hero's Journey allows more space for a female hero than the Raglan-Rank hero archetype, however, in Maureen Murdock's *The Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholeness* (1990), she writes of her encounter with Campbell:

> "I wanted to hear Campbell's views. I was surprised when he responded that women don't need to make the journey. "In the whole mythological tradition the woman is there. All she has to do is to realize that she's the place that people are trying to get to. When a woman realizes what her wonderful character is, she's not going to get messed up with the notion of being psuedo-male"" (Murdock 16-17)

The Hero's Journey is thus male centered according to Campbell and therefore caters to a male experience.

Campbell's Hero's Journey and Rank and Raglan's hero archetype have similarities and differences. While their idea of collecting myths and stories and deriving a pattern out of it are similar, their selection and application are of different matters. Campbell applies a one-fits-all and pick-and-choose method, while Rank and Raglan are more aware of the limitations of their archetype. Campbell's Hero's Journey centers on transformation and change, thus having character development of the hero in focus. On the other hand, the Rank-Raglan hero archetype centers the character itself. Rank-Raglan's hero archetype emphasizes the birthright of the hero and their mark for greatness. Campbell's journey opens up for more heroes and different interpretations. I will in this thesis apply these two hero types on the *Farseer trilogy* and how the characters follow and differ from these.

Fitz, Verity, and the Hero Archetype

The *Farseer trilogy* consists of the three books *Assassin's Apprentice* (1995), *Royal Assassin* (1996), and *Assassin's Quest* (1997). They follow the boy FitzChivalry, who is the

illegitimate son of the previous King-in-Waiting, Chivalry. FitzChivalry, or more commonly known as Fitz, is the narrator, and apprenticed to an assassin and raised to be loyal to the King and the Farseer line of his family. Fitz is not presented as a hero, but a helper in the shadows, despite being the main character. He remains the main character and narrator of the series and in this section, I will analyze him in relation to the Rank-Raglan hero archetype and how he deviates from it. Verity, Fitz's uncle and the King-in-Waiting, has Fitz's loyalty and becomes his helper, and I will thus analyze him as a hero. Following this I will discuss their differences and how Fitz presents more as a sidekick instead of a hero archetype.

Fitz the Non-Hero

Fitz, is the main character and a illegitimate son of the royal bloodline Farseer in the series. The Rank-Raglan hero archetype identifies the hero as being of notable birth and having "distinguished parents" (Raglan 174; Rank 47), however, Fitz's mother is of common blood and not a "royal virgin" (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 3-4). His father is the crown prince of the Six Duchies, which makes Fitz the child of *a* distinguished parent, and not distinguished parents. His father, crown prince Chivalry, further denounces his claim to the throne after Fitz's existence is revealed and thus never becomes king, albeit still of distinguished lineage (*Assassin's Apprentice* 19). No information is given on whether his birth included any sort of difficulty, nor is it revealed whether the maternal grandfather tried to kill Fitz as a baby. Fitz is the narrator and does not remember his life before being turned over to his paternal family: "My memories reach back to when I was six years old. Before that, there is nothing, only a blank gulf no exercise of my mind has ever been able to pierce." (*Assassin's Apprentice* 2). The most unusual thing about his conception is the surprise Chivalry's family and servants show at him conceiving a "bastard" outside his apparent devotion to his wife (*Assassin's Apprentice* 18-19). Thus, the entirety of the surroundings of Fitz's birth does not follow the Rank-Raglan hero archetype.

The event following the birth and the attempted murder of the hero is the "spiriting away", usually by water. Fitz is not "spirited away" from his mother, but his existence is unknown to his paternal family, which is where the power to influence lies. He is raised by his lowly mother, thus not a foster parent, but only until he is six years old before he is left with prince Verity, his uncle, at an outpost (*Assassin's Apprentice* 3-6). His maternal grandfather does make an attempt to be rid of him this way, however not by taking his life. Instead, he shifts the responsibility for Fitz from the maternal family to the paternal family. Fitz is thus still a child when he returns to the seat of the kingdom where his paternal family rules, and therefore does not wait until adulthood like the Rank-Raglan archetype.

Fitz's life after he arrives at the Farseer keep, Buckkeep, and the training he goes through is described throughout *Assassin's Apprentice* as well, thus his childhood is not an unknown factor as on Raglan's list. His age at the end of *Assassin's Apprentice* can be estimated as 14 and by the end of the *Farseer trilogy*, he is but a year or two older. Throughout the series, Fitz gives his uncle Verity his loyalty and supports his ascent to the throne instead of his own (*Royal Assassin* 653; 660) and is trained from the beginning to avoid fame as an assassin (*Assassin's Apprentice* 79). Fitz does however win over Regal, his half-uncle who is trying to take over the throne and become king (*Assassin's Quest* 745- 746; 751). Because of him Regal is defeated and thus saves the Six Duchies from the tyranny he would have brought. Fitz thus defeats the person who tried to kill him, which is the first point on the Rank-Raglan hero archetype that fits.

After the defeat of Regal, Fitz does not marry a princess nor anyone. His love interest, the common girl Molly, is left to herself as Fitz travels with his wolf brother Nighteyes (*Assassin's Quest* 756). He cannot fall from his throne either, as he never had the throne, and neither does he meet a mysterious death. Instead, the reader is told of his present in small snippets, such as the endings of *Assassin's Apprentice* or *Assassin's Quest* where he lives with Nighteyes and a boy (*Assassin's Apprentice* 459; *Assassin's Quest* 753). Fitz does not fit the Rank-Raglan hero archetype and is not a hero by this definition. The defeat of Regal is the closest Fitz comes to getting a point in the hero archetype, yet this is still a single point out of several. Fitz is thus not an archetypal hero.

This is unusual in that Fitz is the narrator and main character of the *Farseer trilogy*. Instead, he takes on the role of a helper or sidekick, which will be discussed later. The main character of the *Farseer trilogy* does not fit into the Rank-Raglan hero archetype yet remains the character which Hobb has chosen to lead this story. This provides a new perspective of a hero story for the reader. Through Fitz, the reader gains empathy for the sidekick and relates to the sidekick and the various obstacles they go through. Fitz as a main character as opposed to a typical hero provides answers to questions of what the hero's sidekick endures and experiences. Hobb asks whether the main character can be a sidekick or helper and remain relevant, whether a sidekick can be a hero in this series.

Verity as the Hero Archetype

Verity, Fitz's uncle, is however a contender for the hero archetype. He is originally second in line to the throne of the Six Duchies, but after Fitz's father, Chivalry, denounces his claim, Verity becomes "King-in-Waiting" (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 20). As the trilogy is narrated by Fitz and contains his memories, things such as the childhood of his

father and uncle are unknown (*Assassin's Apprentice* 1-2). The circumstances of Verity's birth, such as whether someone tried to kill him and whether his conception was unusual or difficult, are unknown. The reader does know that Verity is the son of King Shrewd and his first wife, Queen Constance, making him the child of distinguished parents.

There is no "spiriting away" Verity mentioned during the *Farseer trilogy,* nor is there anything about him being raised by "lowly foster parents". Instead, he is raised to be the second son and he feels more comfortable being direct than diplomatic like Chivalry:

> "'Damn, Chivalry,' he said absently. 'This is his kind of a knot, not mine. Fitz, you sound like your father. And were he here, he'd find some subtle way to handle this whole situation. Chiv would have had it solved by now, with one of his smiles and a kiss on someone's hand. But that's not my way, and I won't pretend to it. [...] It seems simple to me. And I'm not going to make it into a diplomatic dance.'" (*Assassin's Apprentice* 162).

After Verity becomes King-in-Waiting, the Outislanders raiders begin raiding the shores of the Six Duchies and turn the victims into almost zombie-like beings called Forging:

> "'They were like marionettes,' I told Chade. 'Like wooden things come to life and acting out some evil play. And if they had seen us they would not have hesitated to kill us for our horses or our cloaks, or a piece of bread. They…' I searched for words. 'They aren't even animals any more. There's nothing coming out of them. Nothing. They're like separate things. Like a row of books, or rocks or…'" (*Assassin's Apprentice* 190).

It becomes Verity's duty to use his magic, called the Skill, to keep the Outislanders away from the Six Duchies' shores, and it is also these raiders that are his "giant" or enemy to overcome later (Rank 47; Raglan 174). He is not destined to rule at first, and it is with the new responsibility that his fulfillment of the Rank-Raglan hero archetype beings.

For Verity, the order of the points is different than in the Rank-Raglan hero archetype description. The threat of the Outislanders shows up in the middle of the first book with the new threat of Forging, and soon after Verity is tasked with keeping them at bay with his Skill. This tears on him greatly and makes him seem like an older and more worn man than he is (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 339). However, this threat is not taken care of before he is promised to the princess of the Mountain Kingdom, Kettricken. The two of them are wed in *Assassin's Apprentice*, while Verity is still King-in-Waiting (452). Thus, Verity marries royalty as the Rank-Raglan hero archetype describes, albeit before the enemy is defeated.

After Verity and Kettricken's marriage, Verity continues to use his Skill to keep the Outislander raiders at bay. This continues until Kettricken proposes finding the Elderlings, ancient beings of myth (*Royal Assassin* 407-410). They believe the Elderlings can help them dispose of the Outislander raider threat and thus Verity decides to travel to their last recorded location to ask for help: "I [Verity] must do this. I. In so many other ways I have failed the Six Duchies." (411). Therefore, Verity leaves Buckkeep and the Six Duchies to find these powerful beings of myth. Before King Shrewd's death, Regal, the youngest half-uncle to Fitz, is declared King-in-Waiting (675) and Verity is not regarded as King. This is due to the widespread belief of him being dead. Instead, it is only when he comes back as an Elderling, Verity-as-dragon, that his place as King is acknowledged and is thus included in Fitz's description of the events (*Asssassin's Quest* 753). After Verity-as-dragon rids the Six Duchies of the invading Outislander raiders, defeating the enemy, Fitz writes that "the story" says he was "carried off by the Elderlings, to feast with them in great honor and then sleep beside them in their magic castle until such a time as Buck shall need to call on him again" (750). This is of course not the entire truth within the *Farseer trilogy*'s world; however, it underlines the greatness and fame Verity gains as well as his title of King. The legend of his slumber until Buck (a duchy within the Six Duchies) should need him also falls into place with meeting a mysterious death without burial as in the Rank-Raglan hero archetype.

Verity fulfills several points for the Rank-Raglan hero archetype, yet he is not the narrator. This creates a distance to who is the hero of this story, as opposed to the empathy and intimate relation the reader creates with Fitz who is the narrator. Hobb provides an example of a hero whose story is not told and asks whether the hero has to be the most important figure within a story. Verity as a hero is not the main character, proving an example of a hero who is distant and unrelatable to the reader.

Verity the Hero Archetype and Fitz the Sidekick

Where Fitz does not fit the Rank-Raglan heroic archetype (almost) at all, Verity checks several points, though none of his birth and the circumstances surrounding this. Verity is more of a hero than Fitz according to the Rank-Raglan hero archetype points. Rank and Raglan put great emphasis on the birth and the circumstances of this in their hero archetype model, making the points surrounding it sizeable. However, while the origin of the Rank-Raglan hero archetype is detailed, it is not imperative to being a hero. I would argue the most important part is the saving of the country or defeat of the enemy, as this is what establishes the character as a hero to the people. This is also what warrants the hero's status as King, thus making the cause a heroic deed and the effect the status as King. In order to keep the status

quo of society, the hero would have to be of distinguished birth. Verity's birth and purpose is at first to be the second son and he is raised this way. He has a responsibility to the people of the Six Duchies but not the same as Chivalry, the first-born son and heir to the throne. When Chivalry renounces his claim, Verity is thrust into this responsibility as King-in-Waiting. His high birth does thrust him into responsibility, which he fulfills, however, it is when he becomes King-in-Waiting he takes on a larger role and this thus becomes important to the defeat of the enemy. Thus, being born to distinguished parents can make a difference in this archetype, but the circumstances of the hero's birth does not make a big difference. Verity can with this be defined as a hero according to the Rank-Raglan hero archetype.

Fitz, who only has the defeat of an enemy in common with Verity, cannot be defined as a hero according to Rank-Raglan. In addition, Fitz's obstacle or enemy is Regal, who is not the 'most threatening' to the Six Duchies, but an 'additional villain'. While he is main villain within the first book, *Assassin's Apprentice*, he is swept to the side by the threat of the Outislander raiders. Regal acts as a threat, yet mostly due to ignorance and a desire for power in the course of *Royal Assassin* and *Assassin's Quest*. The Outislander raiders and the Forging are a more immediate threat as they hold the power to eradicate the entirety of the Six Duchies. Fitz helps with this threat as well but in the form of killing the Forged citizens (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 341). It is tasks of this kind that Fitz helps both Verity and King Shrewd with – tasks which are best done in the cover of darkness – fitting to his apprenticeship as an assassin "'It's murder, more or less. Killing people. The fine art of diplomatic assassination. Or blinding, or deafening. Or a weakening of the limbs, or paralysis or a debilitating cough or impotency." (*Assassin's Apprentice* 80). As a helper who works in the shadows, Fitz does not fit the hero archetype.

The helper role that Fitz occupies includes several different tasks throughout the *Farseer trilogy*. One of these, is as mentioned, the killing of Forged citizens so that they do not cause further harm upon the Six Duchies (*Assassin's Apprentice* 341). Fitz is also tasked with espionage while undercover as Verity's dog-boy on a political trip (*Assassin's Apprentice* 143) as well as letting Verity "ride along" on his missions into the different regions of the Six Duchies:

> "'Today? Today I have to hunt. I dare not neglect that duty, even for this.'
>
> 'They need not exclude ach other. Take me with you, today.'
>
> I stared at him blankly for a moment, then nodded assent" (*Royal Assassin* 289).

Fitz also claims himself to be a King's Man: "I could not understand the intensity of his question, but I knew the answer. 'Of course I would.' And more quietly, 'I am a King's

man" (*Assassin's Apprentice* 351). Though he does not know what this means in his initial proclamation, he lets Verity tap on his strength through the Skill on several occasions (*Assassin's Apprentice* 351-352; *Assassin's Quest* 64). These are all not the actions of a typical hero. Killing Forged citizens and being a dog-boy are not the actions of a hero but a sidekick/helper. Fitz is a support to Verity through his Skill and collection of information and proclaims this as well with his declaration of being a King's Man repeatedly.

Thus, we can question whether Fitz fits the characteristics of a sidekick instead. While the Rank-Raglan hero archetype does not specify a sidekick, the examples given do many times have a helper or sidekick. Several of the ancient Greek heroes have helpers, such as Perseus, as well as King Arthur (Merlin) and Robin Hood (Little John). Ann Cameron, an American author, has in her book *Sidekicks in American Literature* (2002) described the function and characteristics of sidekicks in American literature. Cameron writes that the term "sidekick" could originate from the pickpocket's term "sidekicker" or the cardplaying term "kicker" (1). Generally, it is help from a companion who "kicks to the side to protect the flanks" (2). The sidekick and the derivations of the word are "associated with rather shady experiences [...] and, therefore, it is not unexpected that many sidekicks have a roguish quality [...] that contrasts with the heroic or chivalric quality of the master or hero figure." (2). These "shady experiences" are in correlation with Fitz's apprenticeship as an assassin, which is widely agreed to be a "shady" profession. This profession also contrasts Verity's more heroic and chivalric profession as King-in-Waiting and the responsibility of taking care of the country.

Sidekicks also play a "subservient role" to the hero due to "perceived inequalities of power, class, money, knowledge, gender, age, skill, race, or nationality, or strength" (2-3). This difference in roles can also be seen in Verity and Fitz's relationship. Verity is King-in-Waiting, born to power and responsibility, while Fitz is born out of wedlock and of lesser status and thus power than Verity. Fitz is also younger and more impressionable as well as less skilled in matters of Skill and knowledge. His aptitude in these areas increase as he grows and learns under the tutelage of Chade, Burrich, and Verity. However, he never reaches the skills nor level of his tutors within the different trades, thus Fitz deviates from the hero in this as well and has a subservient role in relation to Verity, the hero.

The sidekick's loyalty to the hero is also highlighted by Cameron several times. Sidekicks have a "willingness" to "contribute to the well-being of the protagonist" (98) as well as being a "loyal and trustworthy companion" (157). Fitz proves time and time again his loyalty and devotion to Verity and the Farseer line, both through his duties and his actions.

He calls himself a "King's man" and lends his strength the Verity (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 351), he tries to save King Shrewd and Kettricken for Verity's sake (*Royal Assassin* 653) and renounces any claim he might have for the throne when confronted about it due to his loyalty to Verity and the Farseer line:

> "'Chivalry,' I said. 'As you have said, I bear his name. Almost. Duke Brawndy. You are a man hard-pressed. I know what you have risked in speaking to me, and I will be as blunt with you. I am a man with ambitions. But I do not desire the crown of my king.' [...] 'To King Shrewd I am pledged. To Queen Kettricken, and the heir she carries, I am loyal." (*Royal Assassin* 659-700).

Fitz is thus wholeheartedly loyal to Verity and helps him in his many endeavors to keep the Six Duchies safe.

Cameron writes that despite the inequalities of power and position, the sidekick serves a purpose to the hero. One of these is being the "voice of common sense when confronted with the idealism of the hero." (Cameron 1). While Fitz does not provide much direct advice to Verity, he does act on the orders of Chade and Shrewd in order to help the Six Duchies in various ways. On occasion, he gives advice to Verity, such as a guard for the Queen-in-waiting Kettricken and how Verity can help her get comfortable at Buckkeep (Hobb *Royal Assassin* 249-250). He serves as a servant to Verity and performs more practical duties, like bringing him food as he Skills from his tower (*Assassin's Apprentice* 346-347), as well as helping Verity on his quest by sending the Elderlings after Verity-as-dragon (*Assassin's Quest* 740). This is in accordance with what Cameron writes:

> "The sidekick is the subsidiary of the protagonist. [...] He or she is often a servant or functionary character who performs routine duties from serving food to carrying messages [...] The sidekick is a sounding board for his or her companion, providing a touchstone for the protagonist's dreams and delusions." (Cameron 157).

The sidekick can be a servant or another form of practically inclined character, which Fitz is. He performs the practical tasks for Verity to succeed. He gives up on his own wants in order to take care of Verity and his Queen and heir (Hobb *Assassin's Quest* 221), as well as providing a more pragmatic view of how Verity's goals can be fulfilled. Thus, Fitz does the "dirty work" as a loyal King's man and assassin (Cameron 12). Cameron's version of the sidekick is a minor character as well, which applies well to her description of the servant. Fitz, however, is not a side character, but the main character, thus deviating from the sidekick Cameron describes.

However, despite Verity being the hero of the two, it is Fitz who is the narrator and protagonist. This implies Fitz is important enough and his story is relevant despite being a sidekick. Ron Buchanan writes in his article ""Side by Side": The Role of the Sidekick", that the sidekick is "crucial to the story's development" (15). The sidekick can be many things, supporting the hero through various means. This can take the shape of a static personality or function, or an evolvement to support the hero (15). Fitz evolves and grows throughout the series, mostly after his meeting with Chade and his beginning apprenticeship (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 76-80). Fitz's growth as both a person and his skills in assassination and deception help Verity throughout the books. When his Skill is discovered, Fitz also uses this for Verity's sake. Fitz's second ability, the Wit through which he communicates with his wolf Nighteyes, is also used in order to help Verity, however, it is mostly used to protect Fitz in his endeavors to help Verity. Nighteyes' role as Fitz's sidekick and helper will be discussed later.

Fitz's help also includes bringing Verity a clearer view of reality. When Verity is not eating on grounds of not having appetite whilst using the Skill, Fitz convinces him to eat (*Assassin's Apprentice* 344) and while Regal is sucking the life out of King Shrewd and taking over the rule of the Six Duchies, Fitz shows Verity that King Shrewd and Kettricken have to leave Buckkeep (*Royal Assassin* 653). Buchanan writes that the sidekick "provide[s] for his/her [the hero's] every need" (23) and occasionally "must bring the hero(ine) back into the realm of reality" (22) and Fitz provides for Verity's needs both in his view of reality and through practical means. This underlines what Cameron writes of the sidekick being a "subservient" role (2-3) who does the "dirty work" (12) for the hero – the sidekick's relation to the hero "benefits for the hero(ine)" (Buchanan 23). Cameron and Buchanan agree on the function of the sidekick and Fitz thus fulfills these characteristics. He provides support and loyalty to the hero, Verity. He suffers under these terms, but he prevails nonetheless because of his loyalty to the hero. Fitz is Verity's sidekick in the *Farseer trilogy* according to Cameron and Buchanan and does not fulfill the Rank-Raglan hero archetype. He becomes exactly what he unknowingly claims to be in *Assassin's Apprentice*: a King's man. This status as sidekick is against the typical division of narration and importance. Fitz is the narrator, yet he is the sidekick, often deemed unimportant in the larger scale of things. However, within the *Farseer trilogy*, Fitz the sidekick is influential, the narrator, and important to the story. The sidekick's influence on the hero is put into the center.

Fitz as the center and narrator implies importance. He has relevance to the story and to the sidekick character. Other sidekick narrators such as John Watson in Sherlock Holmes

have been seen in literature, however, his job has been to make a human link between humanity and the baffling intelligence of Sherlock Holmes. John Watson's function as narrator is one of linking the detective to being accepted (Buchanan 20) Fitz, on the other hand, does not tell Verity's story in the *Farseer trilogy* – he tells his own:

> "But each historical event I consider only awakens my own personal shades of loneliness and loss. I fear I will have to set this work aside entirely, or else give in to reconsidering all that has shaped what I have become. And so I begin again, and again, but always find that I am writing of my own beginnings rather than the beginnings of this land." (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 2).

Fitz's championing of Verity while at the Mountain Kingdom (*Assassin's Apprentice* 397-398), as well as his loyalty while Verity is on his quest to find the Elderlings, is another way of creating acceptance for Verity in world as well. He thus fulfills another part of the sidekick role, while being the protagonist of the *Farseer trilogy*.

A number of deviations occur in relation to the Rank-Raglan hero archetype within the *Farseer trilogy*. Verity, the hero, begins as the second son, but is thrust into the responsibility of being King-in-Waiting. This is a small deviation, but a variation of the Rank-Raglan checklist. A larger deviation from the norm, is Verity's role in the background, while his nephew, the illegitimate son, takes on the role of narrator in the foreground. Fitz is the sidekick to his uncle, his devoted nephew and King's man, yet is in the foreground of the story. He is the narrator, and this sets him in the light of importance instead of the typical hero that would have been placed there in the usual story. These variations of the typical or the norm, result in a question of whether Fitz has another set of heroic qualities or whether the Rank-Raglan hero archetype is no longer needed in the fantasy genre. These heroic qualities are described in the Hero's Journey and will be analyzed and discussed in the following section.

Fitz, Verity, and The Hero's Journey

The Hero's Journey, outlined by Campbell, gives way to define a hero based upon a heroic journey instead of a birthright and heroics. Campbell's Hero's Journey focuses on a story type instead of a character type, like the Rank-Raglan hero archetype. The character's journey emphasizes the transition or the change within the hero. Character development and the change it can implement on society are thus at the center instead of a birthright mark for greatness as the Rank-Raglan hero archetype. In this section, I will analyze both Fitz and Verity in relation to the Hero's Journey. I will also discuss how these two journeys intersect and whether or not more than one hero exists within the trilogy, as well as Fitz's role as

sidekick versus hero after the analysis. Fitz as the narrator implies the importance or relevance of his story/journey, whether he can be defined as a hero or not, and I will therefore begin with the analysis of his Hero's Journey.

Fitz's Hero's Journey

Fitz begins the narration of his memories in *Assassin's Apprentice* with his introduction to a new world and a new way of life at the doors of Verity, where his maternal grandfather leaves him (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 3-5). This could be the crossing of a threshold, however, it does little more than put Fitz in new surroundings. This leaves Fitz in an "unknown world", which coincides with the Crossing of the First Threshold, however, darkness and danger does not await him yet (Campbell 77-78). Instead, he is welcomed into the stables by Burrich and cared for by him. He learns of his trade as Stablemaster as a child would do and takes his first steps with the Wit. Yet his Wit powers are pushed aside by Burrich and he is forbidden from using it (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 43-44). He is prevented from taking any steps onto a journey until he comes across King Shrewd. It is King Shrewd that begins to implement significant changes for him at Buckkeep, allowing him to begin his journey. King Shrewd strikes a deal with Fitz to be loyal to him and he would make sure his needs are met:

> "'Now you are mine,' he said, and made that claiming of me more important than any blood we shared. 'You need not eat any man's leaving. I will keep you, and I will keep you well. If any man or woman ever seeks to turn you against me by offering you more than I do, then, come to me, and tell me of the offer, and I shall meet it. You will never find me a stingy man, nor be able to cite ill-use as a reason for treason against me" (*Assassin's Apprentice* 54-55).

This promise and the deal that is struck between Fitz and King Shrewd lead to Fitz's training and following upbringing and learning of the Skill, becoming the Call to Adventure. Fitz does not understand the implications of what he will do at this point in time, making it a "relationship with forces that are not rightly understood" (Campbell 51). King Shrewd is the announcer of this adventure, though he is not a dark or loathly figure, albeit terrifying in the knowledge that he holds the key to how Fitz's future will be shaped, as well as the power of a King to back up any decision he makes (53). It is not a grand Call to Adventure, but a subtle one. This almost arbitrary Call to Adventure made by King Shrewd is not one made for the hero of a story but is shaped more for the sidekick or helper. It is a vague Call, but a Call nonetheless, made for the sidekick with a Hero's Journey.

Fitz's Supernatural Aid is split in two. One does not come after the Call to Adventure, but before King Shrewd proposes his deal. Instead, he is introduced immediately after Fitz's arrival in the form of Burrich. The stablemaster is thus not a reward for answering the call, but he is a protective figure who teaches Fitz various things that lead to his survival in the upcoming years, such as how to treat animals and the need to keep his Wit hidden (Campbell 69; Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 44). Burrich also has the Wit, though he uses it differently than Fitz, and this supernatural element is what he uses to save Fitz from his bodily death in *Royal Assassin* while his soul is bound to the wolf Nighteyes (*Royal Assassin* 747-750).

The other Supernatural Aid appears in the shape of the Fool. The Fool is King Shrewd's jester and sprouts rhymes without seeming reason. He is known to not speak to others than King Shrewd; however, he begins to speak with Fitz not long before he is sent off on his first assignment (*Assassin's Apprentice* 139-141). The Fool talks in riddles often and claims them premonitions of the future that can help Fitz if he understands them. These premonitions act as warnings of what is to come, and it is later revealed that the Fool is the White Prophet (*Assassin's Quest* 398). The Fool is there to help Fitz on his journey and "provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass" (Campbell 69). He does this with both his prophecies as well as advice that helps Fitz realize his full impact on the safety of Verity and further the Six Duchies (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 140; *Assassin's Quest* 561-562).

After the Call to Adventure, Chade presents himself as a teacher for the assassin trade. He represents a new life which Fitz will be included in and introduces Fitz to his new life:

> "'You are the King's man now. And you must begin to understand, now, right now, that that is the most important thing about you. He feeds you, he clothes you, he sees you are educated. And all that he asks in return, for now, is your loyalty. Later he will ask your service. Those are the conditions under which I will teach you. That you are the King's man, and loyal to him completely." (*Assassin's Apprentice* 78-79).

In this, Chade introduces him to the life he will now have and the loyalty that is expected of him in this new world. He goes on to explain what he will teach him as an assassin, laying clear the destructive skill of murder and deception that will be taught (80). Chade paints a dark future of "nasty, furtive, polite ways to kill people" (80) for Fitz, that Chade is part of himself. He showcases Fitz's present and future with this and shows himself as a destructive force to a moral compass, but at the same time, he shows himself as protective: "And I'll make sure of one other thing, for that was the stipulation I made with King Shrewd: that you know what you are learning, as I never did when I was your age."

(80). He makes sure Fitz knows exactly what is going on and he further asks Fitz's permission to continue to involve him in the new world that awaits. Through all this, Chade becomes the Threshold Guardian, showing himself as destructive and protective. He represents the new world Fitz will enter and acts as a guardian of this world, should Fitz not accept the terms.

The actual Crossing of the First Threshold does not happen for a while after the Threshold Guardian, Chade, introduces himself. Fitz spends this time training and it is not until his first mission out of Buckkeep that he crosses the threshold. What initially begins as a mission to listen and report at another keep in the Six Duchies (144), turns into a mission to the village Forge where the villagers have been "Forged" as it is later known (186-190). These give Fitz his first experience with the work of his trade, both through espionage and a motivator in the shadows. He enters a world of the "unknown", "danger", and "darkness" with this event, having to begin his active duties as assassin (Campbell 77-78). It is also here he listens to his own instincts and defies Chade's, the Threshold Guardian, wishes of investigating the Forged villagers (Campbell 82; Assassin's Apprentice 189). Chade is a symbol of the known world at this point, where Fitz has to defy his orders to save them from the Forged villagers as only he can sense there is something wrong with them. This is thus the Crossing of the First Threshold for Fitz.

Having entered this new world of being an assassin's apprentice, Fitz enters the Belly of the Whale as he is sent to the Mountain Kingdom as a part of Verity's wedding procession. Campbell writes that the Belly of the Whale acts as a rebirth (90) and this rebirth of the hero's person includes a self-annihilation of ego (93). Fitz's rebirth takes the shape of poisonings, wherein he almost dies several times because of misconceptions of reality and points of view. These are partially due to the deception performed by Regal, who wishes to marry Kettricken himself and gain the throne. However, Fitz learns and survives these attempts on his life whilst saving Verity from the same fate (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 396-401; 428 ;446-449). Fitz's change of view happens in relation to the picture painted by Regal as a power-hungry prince, but also his own realization of what Regal means to do with him. Before this, Fitz has relied on Regal not being brash and hateful to move so actively, however, here he learns of Regal's true disdain towards him and King-in-Waiting Verity. This is also put into perspective by the court Mountain Kingdom and the dynamics of nobles acting as workers within the walls and their honest ways (391). The new sense of reality his almost deaths and the revelation of enemies to him and his Kings Shrewd and Verity is commented upon by present narrator Fitz:

> "I do not think this was heroism. Nor do I think it was petty spite wreaked on one who had always bullied and belittled me. It was the act of a boy becoming a man, and doing what I had sworn to do years before I knew the cost of such an oath." (*Royal Assassin* 7).

Here he reflects on that act being one of transformation into a man. Fitz is reborn through his encounters with death and now knows the true meaning of the oath he made with King Shrewd. His sacrifice and intended self-annihilation equips him with the ability to rescue Verity. Verity in turn makes sure he does not die from his use of the Skill, and Fitz survives the endeavor and is reborn. While this event leads to a rebirth of Fitz and provides him with perspective and growth, and the act is one of a boy becoming a man, it does not mean Fitz becomes a man after this. Instead, I would argue it is but a step in the direction of "becoming a man" where Fitz remains a child but is now capable of committing the acts of a man at intervals. Fitz's rebirth in the Belly of the Whale thus follows the trend of his journey being more muted than grand calls or changes that would be more typical of a Hero's Journey.

Fitz's journey throughout *Assassin's Apprentice* follows the first part of the Hero's Journey, Departure, and follows into the second part, Initiation. The Road of Trials includes several trials that the hero must go through, and this is also where the hero encounters his opposite. The opposite is of the "same flesh" as the hero (Campbell 108) and Fitz's opposite could be interpreted as Regal. Prince Regal, the half-brother to Chivalry and Verity and son of King Shrewd's second wife, is a part of the royal bloodline Farseer like Fitz. However, his blood is recognized as legal as his mother is of noble birth, whereas Fitz is an illegitimate son to an ordinary mother out of wedlock. This makes them opposites despite their shared blood. Regal also hungers after power, using every chance he can to get rid of Verity and King Shrewd and become King-in-Waiting. Fitz, on the other hand, does not want this type of power and repeatedly shows his loyalty to Verity and King Shrewd, even when a chance at this power is offered (Hobb *Royal Assassin* 659-700). It is after the poisoning and close encounter with death in the Mountain Kingdom that Fitz opens his eyes to who Regal is and the conflicting interests in power they have, which find them on opposite sides.

The trials Fitz must go through include his ventures with the ships that fight off the Outislander raiders, while he also lets Verity "ride along" through the Skill (*Royal Assassin* 353; 364). Fitz also meets Nighteyes, a wolf pup in captivity, whom he bonds with through the Wit and becomes his companion and helper (*Royal Assassin* 99-107). The Fool speaks riddles to Fitz throughout the books, giving hints of the future and advice through these

(*Assassin's Apprentice* 140-141; *Royal Assassin* 224-225) Simultaneously, King Shrewd slowly falls more and more under Regal's influence, which finally leads to his death before Fitz can save him (*Royal Assassin* 684). Fitz sacrifices his own personal life and wants to save King Shrewd and Kettricken, setting aside his own bearings for the sake of the Farseer line. However, the demise is blamed upon Fitz, and he ends up in a cell and eventually, his body dies there, taking him to the "edge of the earth" (*Royal Assassin* 744; Campbell 109).

Much like the Supernatural Aid, Fitz meets the Goddess in his journey before the "edge of the earth" (Campbell 109). The Goddess is made inferior by "deficient eyes" and only the hero can see her as she is and become "the king" of "her created world" (116). Fitz has a love interest in the local candlemaker, Molly, whom he meets soon after arriving at Buckkeep (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 32). While Fitz is more than willing to marry Molly, King Shrewd does not want this (*Royal Assassin* 389-390) and his duties to King Shrewd and Verity often leave Molly behind: "'No! Because you [Fitz] put your king before your woman … or your love, or your own life.'" (*Royal Assassin* 478). Thus, Molly does not give Fitz "the boon of love" and leaves to take care of their unborn daughter herself (*Royal Assassin* 631; *Assassin's Quest* 216). This means that while Fitz can see her worth and loves her, he does not become "the king of her world" (Campbell 116). Therefore, the person Fitz meets at the "edge of the earth" after his body dies is not her but Lady Patience, his father's wife. Fitz meets her for the first time in *Assassin's Apprentice*, much like Molly (212). Patience is the one who takes his dead body from the cells and prepares, buries, and mourns him while his soul shares Nighteyes' body through the Wit (*Royal Assassin* 751-752). Patience is also the one who brings him apples to eat while Fitz is in the cells, taking care of him as much as is possible (*Royal Assassin* 698). Through these, Patience ensures that Burrich and Chade can find his body and bring his soul back to it (*Royal Assassin* 747-749). This is all done out of love, the boon of love, ensuring Fitz's life and thus a master of life that conquers death (Campbell 118; 121).

This love is a mother's love, and Patience treats Fitz with the same dignity as she would a son while burying him, his end much like his father, Chivalry. The mystical marriage with the Goddess ensures the hero's place with the father, and with his death and burial, Fitz is placed in the same ending. However, Fitz's end is not his bodily death, though he is granted the same honor in his death by Patience. Molly and Fitz's relationship, despite the lack of the boon of love, also ensures that Fitz is placed where his father stood. Molly carried Fitz's child, Nettle, and Fitz has to leave her and the child be, as his duties come first and he cannot do right by them while his duties come first (Hobb *Royal Assassin* 477; *Assassin's*

Quest 221). He thus abandons his child, much like Chivalry, however in different circumstances and reasonings. Instead, it is Burrich who takes care of Molly and the child instead, stepping in as a husband and surrogate father:

> "'I [Burrich] had thought of another way. I do not know what you [Molly] will think of it. We will still have to travel away from here, find a town where we are not known.' He looked at the floor abruptly. 'If we wed before we got there, folk would never question that she [Nettle] was mine…'" (*Assassin's Quest* 710).

Burrich stepping up to help Molly is partially due to his duty to Chivalry and, through this, Fitz. He is a King's man, much like Fitz, but bound to Chivalry (*Assassin's Apprentice* 441). Burrich's duty to Fitz and his sworn allegiance brings Burrich to Molly and he takes the role of husband and father in Fitz's place. Burrich also took the role of father for Chivalry, when Fitz came to Buckkeep, making 'history repeat itself'.

Fitz's Meeting with the Goddess and the mystical marriage is thus in a two-way split. Patience is the mother, the Goddess who helps Fitz, while Molly is the Goddess whom he abandons for his duties but ensures his Atonement with the Father. While he travels to find Verity, he understands his own position in relation to duty to the Farseer line and duty to Molly, he understands Chivalry's decision to leave Buckkeep. Previously, at Chivalry's death, Fitz expresses animosity against him, seeing him as an unfair father: "'He got me on some woman. When he found out about me, he left. A father. He never cared about me.'" (*Assassin's Apprentice* 129). However, at this point he comes to understand his father and why he acted like he did. This realization comes at the same time as he comes to understand Burrich and recognizes him as his symbolical father:

> "And tell him I did not die outside some shepherd's hut, but keeping my oath to my king. That will mean something to him, it may pay him back for all that he has done for me. He taught me to be a man. I don't want that left unsaid" (*Assassin's Quest* 617).

Fitz and Burrich become the same role, where Fitz is the biological father, Burrich is the acting father. He also understands Chivalry's actions as a father. By accepting Burrich as acting father and letting his Supernatural Aid and father figure be his child's father, he reaches Atonement with the Father – both Chivalry and Burrich.

Following this realization, Fitz finds Verity in the midst of making a stone dragon, and they get attacked by Regal's coterie (his supporters with the Skill). This is where the Apotheosis, the climax of Fitz's Hero's Journey, happens. It begins with the Fool prophesizing his death and the realization that the Fool advises him to act like there is no

tomorrow in order to succeed (*Assassin's Quest* 617-618). When Fitz comes to this realization, he surpasses his own fear and gains courage and peace for what is to come – he annihilates the fear and ignorance within himself (Campbell 150-151). As Regal's coterie attacks and he succeeds in protecting Verity, he also gains compassion for Regal, and spares him, though not without influencing him to be loyal to Kettricken and her child with the Skill (Hobb *Assassin's Quest* 746; 750). Fitz surpasses his fear and ignorance and succeeds in his endeavor of saving (Campbell 150-151; 165-166). In succeeding in ensuring Verity's success and Kettricken's survival, Fitz gains the Ultimate Boon, which for him is two parted within this trilogy. While Verity completes his dragon, Fitz gives another stone dragon, Girl-on-a-dragon some bad memories, which gives him some peace (Hobb *Assassin's Quest 714-716*). At the same time, in ensuring Verity's success, he is granted peace from his duties to the Farseer line. By sacrificing some of his memories to Girl-on-a-dragon, Fitz is granted a form of eternal or "indestructible" life, in that these stone dragons are eternal beings (Campbell 173). With the Ultimate Boon parts, Fitz helps save the Six Duchies, Verity's Queen and heir, as well as himself and Nighteyes. However, the short-lived peace from his painful memories does not come without cost, as is warned by Kettle when he gives these memories to Girl-on-a-dragon (Hobb *Assassin's Quest* 716). Fitz truly crave to become one of these stone beings himself: "We dream of carving our dragon." (*Assassin's Quest* 757).

With this, the Initiation part is complete, and the final part, the Return, begins. This is where the hero is called back to their society, however, this is not what happens to Fitz. The events following Verity's completion of Verity-as-dragon are known to Fitz through his dreams as he travels (*Assassin's Quest* 747), however, he does not return to Buckkeep. Instead, it takes him years to even go back to the region: "I was six years in finding my way back to Buck. One we spent in the Mountains. One was spent with Black Rolf. [...] I had thought I would never return to Buck again. But we did." (*Assassin's Quest* 756). Fitz lets Molly and Burrich believe he is dead, while he lives near Forge in a cottage with a boy that was brought to him (756; 753-754). He does not seem content with his life, albeit this is what he chose. Fitz describes himself as "an old man, trapped in a young man's scarred body" (756) and Skills out in lonely despair (756-757). While he does return to the region of the society he once lived in, he does not connect with them. Therefore, Fitz is not a Master of the Two Worlds as he does not move freely between them (Campbell 229). Without this, he does not reach the Freedom to Live and the insight nor the state of "calm and free in action" that this entails (Campbell 239).

Fitz thus has a Hero's Journey, wherein he encounters both helpers and an opposite. The Departure and Initiation parts are both completed; however, he does not have a Return. Fitz's Return lacks and his Journey is therefore incomplete. He tackles trials and transitions from boy to man, as the Hero's Journey's purpose is, he does not find peace (Campbell 11). It can thus be discussed whether Fitz's journey is over, despite the things he has learned throughout his Hero's Journey. Having an incomplete Hero's Journey opens up for the possibility of further stories and transitions. Hobb has continued writing about Fitz and his later life in two sequel series, *The Tawny Man* trilogy (2001-2003) and *Fitz and the Fool* trilogy (2014-2017), thus recognizing that Fitz's story and character has not seen the end of his journey.

Verity's Hero's Journey

Verity, who fulfilled the Rank-Raglan hero archetype, also has a Hero's Journey. However, the reader does not know all the details of this as Fitz is the narrator and he narrates his own experiences. Some parts of the Hero's Journey are thus missing or lack detail. This analysis is based upon what we do know from the information Fitz is given and recounts in his narration of the events.

Verity Farseer's Hero's Journey begins with Chivalry stepping down from being King-in-Waiting and this title is being given to Verity. This is where Verity encounters an "unsuspected world" of new responsibilities and expectations that he is not raised for nor ready for (Campbell 51). Fitz acts as the catalyst for this occurrence, as it is his appearance that prompts Chivalry to abdicate (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 19) and could be interpreted as an "announcer of the adventure", albeit he is neither a "dark, loathly" nor "terrifying figure" (Campbell 53). Verity's Call to Adventure could, however, also be placed later at the raiding of Forge and the first Forgeing. The first Forgeing also reveals an "unsuspected world" for Verity, wherein he must Skill and fight for the safety of the Six Duchies. The "announcer of the adventure" would in this case be the Outislander raiders, who are "dark, loathly and terrifying figures" (Campbell 53). However, I would argue the first Call to Adventure as more fitting, as this is where Verity receives his new responsibilities and duty to the Six Duchies. Without these, Verity would not have been in the same position of duty to act as he does later after the Forgeing and thus would not have this Hero's Journey.

The Supernatural Aid for Verity is Fitz, who helps him again and again throughout his Hero's Journey. Fitz begins his training to be an assassin for King Shrewd, but Verity gains Fitz's loyalty through other familial ways. Verity acknowledges Fitz as family and seems fond of him in a way Regal nor Shrewd do: "Then he said, 'Yes. My brother's dead.' He

granted me that, my uncle, that instant of kinship, and I think that ever after it changed how I saw him." (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 124). This earns his loyalty in another way than King Shrewd, however, the result ends in Fitz serving as a King's man to Verity. Fitz helps Verity at several points within the trilogy as a King's man, such as lending him Skill strength (*Assassin's Apprentice* 351), supporting him from afar as Verity travels to the Elderlings (*Assassin's Quest* 64), and lending his body to Verity to ensure an heir (*Assassin's Quest* 711). Fitz is thus a Supernatural Aid, whose support and help ensures Verity succeeds in his Journey and his quest to save the Six Duchies.

The Crossing of the First Threshold for Verity is around the first Forgeing. Following this incident, Verity must begin to Skill in order to confuse the Outislander raiders and keep them away from the Six Duchies' shores. The Skill is addictive and tears on the body (*Royal Assassin* 317) and this is the life that Verity must adopt in order to keep the Six Duchies safe. However, before he crosses the threshold to fulfill this duty, he meets the Threshold Guardian. For Verity, this is his father King Shrewd. Shrewd is both a protective and destructive figure, with power and the best interests of both Verity and the Six Duchies at heart (Campbell 82). He tries to prevent Verity from using the Skill constantly as he knows what the Skill can do with its addictive ways, however, this is not enough. King Shrewd represents the limits of Verity's life before the daily use of the Skill – his present world – or his "present sphere, or life horizon" (77).

Verity uses the Skill despite his father's objections and crosses the first threshold and into the Belly of the Whale. He is swallowed into the unknown by the Skill and the price he must pay for his use of it. A coterie is made for him, however, this is a plot to eliminate Verity by Regal. They almost succeed in this at the wedding of Verity and Kettricken, which is only thwarted because Fitz, the Supernatural Aid, gives his strength through the Skill as he lies dying (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 449). With the almost-death experience and the realization of what Regal has done to get to the throne, Verity must re-evaluate his situation. He stops Fitz from using all his strength on him, saving him, and the following winter is used to build fortifications against the Outislander raiders with Kettricken, thus releasing ego's hold on him (Campbell 93; Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 450; 457). Due to the abovementioned, Verity is reborn at the events of the wedding to Kettricken, passing through the Belly of the Whale.

The Departure of the Hero's Journey is thus through and is followed by Initiation, beginning with the Road of Trials. Verity's Road of Trials consists of struggles with his father's indecision and a desperation to find a way to fight the Outislander raiders. Fitz as a

helper supports him through some of this, as well as Kettricken who gives him hope and a map to where the Elderlings might reside (*Royal Assassin* 410-411). His journey to the Elderlings is mostly unknown to the reader, however, some encounters are known, such as an attack on his way to the Mountain Kingdom (*Royal Assassin* 514-515). The quest to find the Elderlings could be interpreted as a Hero's Journey in itself if Fitz had known what exactly had happened on this quest for Verity. However, with the knowledge we are given, this quest does not hold encounters that correlate to the other parts of the Hero's Journey. Thus, the quest itself is the Road of Trials for Verity. This quest to the Elderlings and his stay there changes Verity, and he has become old and weathered when Fitz meets him at the quarry: "He was old and thin, gray of both hair and beard. [...] He looked at me dully for a bit; then he slowly lifted his eyes to my face. For a time we stared at one another. His peering, near-blind gaze reminded me of Harper Josh." (*Assassin's Quest* 627). Verity is losing all life within him at this point and submitted to the making of a stone dragon with the Skill which will leave mortality and his relations behind.

Whether or not he has met an opposite on his Road of Trials is unknown, as Fitz narrates the trilogy. A potential opposite could be Regal, as they are from the same species, being royalty, yet Regal's intentions are to gain power and live in luxury, while Verity has power and sets it aside in order to save the Six Duchies. Regal is also weak with the Skill and needs his coterie to Skill properly, while Verity is strong and Skill carves an entire stone dragon with little help. However, despite being opposites in this, Verity does not see Regal as thus as he is focused on the enemy of the Six Duchies: the Outislander raiders. Verity's opposite could thus be the Outislander raiders, specifically the White Ship, as it is the leader of the raiders and seemingly the people capable of the Forgeings. The Farseer line is descended from the Outislanders (*Assassin's Apprentice* 1; 21-22), and Fitz mentions that the Forgeings might have been revenge for the effects of King Wisdom's (a previous Farseer) use of the Elderlings (*Assassin's Quest* 752-753). Thus the Outislander raiders are of the same blood as Verity, both in terms of their ancestry, but also in their willingness to fight for their people. The Outislander raiders are not met directly before Verity flies away as Verity-as-dragon, however, they have encountered each other through the Skill and Verity's use of this to defend the Six Duchies' shores from his tower (*Assassin's Apprentice* 360).

At the hidden quarry, where the Elderling statues lie, Verity meets his wife Kettricken once more as she travels with Fitz and others to find him. The quarry is much like the "edge of the earth" in that it is forgotten by most and hidden through its lack of maps (Campbell 109). Kettricken is the Goddess, coming to meet Verity and grant him the boon of love. The

boon of love is given to Verity through Kettricken by their union, ensuring Verity an heir for the throne. They ensure this union through Fitz's body, as he lends his body to Verity for this (Hobb *Assassin's Quest* 711). Verity thus ensures the continuation of his line and new life, achieving "mastery of life" through a "mystical marriage" with Kettricken, where his blood continues as an "encasement of eternity" (Campbell 118). With this mystical marriage, Verity completes his duty to the Six Duchies in ensuring an heir. He thus becomes a father, albeit through the vessel of Fitz, taking the same place as his father. This leads to Atonement with the Father. While Verity expresses some understanding for his father and his actions earlier, it is not until this 'mystical marriage' that he steps fully into the place King Shrewd held. Before this, he understands his duty to keep his kingdom safe but does not take a place as a father with a line to uphold. With Kettricken as the Goddess who becomes the mother, Verity becomes the father, and they uphold the status quo of the Six Duchies (Campbell 148).

Following this understanding comes the Apotheosis in the shape of Verity finishing his dragon. He "reaches divinity" in his new form as Verity-as-dragon, as he annihilates fear and ignorance (150-151). The annihilation of fear in his new shape is the invincibility and power he gains as the Skill being Verity-as-dragon, while he also understands he gives up his mortal self in order to save the Six Duchies (Hobb *Assassin's Quest* 699). His change is fueled by his compassion for his people who fear their Forged neighbors, gaining what Campbell describes as: "compassion for the self-terrorized beings who live in fright of their own nightmare" (Campbell 165-166). With this new divinity and shape, Verity also gains the Ultimate Boon as Verity-as-dragon. The boon is "indestrcutible life" and this comes in the shape of the immortal stone Skill being Verity-as-dragon is. This "indestructible life" and the powers of myth it entails is what Verity soon after offers the Six Duchies to save them from the Outislander raiders. Becoming a Skill being, means he has the "ability to save" and being made with and of the Skill, he has reached "divitnity" (Campbell 173; 189).

With this Ultimate Boon, Verity-as-dragon returns to the Six Duchies and fights against the Outislander raiders, both in the Six Duchies as well as the Outislander shores:

> "It was a summer of dragons for the Coastal Duchies. I saw it all, or as much as would fit into my sleeping hours. [...] I knew when Verity led the dragons northward, to purge all Buck and Bearns and even the Near Islands of Red Ships and Raiders. [...] Verity had always longed to bring the war to their shores, and did so with a vengeance." (Hobb *Assassin's Quest* 748-749).

Verity's fight is followed by Fitz through his Skill dreams; thus we know what happens despite Fitz being far away in the mountains while Verity-as-dragon turns the tide of

the war against the Outislander raiders (*Assassin's Quest* 747). However, from what is narrated by Fitz, we do not know whether Verity-as-dragon is reluctant or willing to return to the Stone Garden to sleep until someone wakes him to help once more. Therefore, we do not know whether a Refusal of the Return or a Rescue from Without are a part of Verity's Return in the Hero's Journey. Verity's Crossing of the Return Threshold is not possible in the physical sense as he is now Verity-as-dragon. He cannot return to a mortal body. However, he is reborn in his new form, and possesses the ability to be both alive and "dead" – he falls asleep in the Stone Garden with the others as they had before "I hoped they would all sleep well in the Stone Garden as they had before" (*Assassin's Quest* 749). In this way Verity is both a part of the mortal active world, as he is able to save the Six Duchies and fight for them, and the immortal divine world, as he is now a Skill being. Therefore, Verity becomes a Master of the Two Worlds in his own way.

This mastery of the two worlds and the ability of the Ultimate Boon results in the Freedom to Live, where the hero, Verity, can "hold the law" and an "ability to save" (Campbell 243). Verity can save the Six Duchies and "hold the law" of its borders and the safety of his people. As a Skill being, he is also freed from his addiction to the Skill, as it no longer burns his mortal body. Thus, Verity as gone through a journey of change, where this change of his being allows him to become the savior of the Six Duchies (243). He is written into the songs as a legendary savior on top of a dragon and concurrently "carried off by the Elderlings, to feast with them in great honor and then sleep beside them in their magic castle until such time as Buck shall need to call on him again." (Hobb *Assassin's Quest* 750). His true status as changed into a Skill being is overlooked, but his heroic deed is celebrated: "So the truth became, as Starling had told me, something bigger than the facts. It was, after all, a time for heroes and sorts of marvelous things to occur." (*Assassin's Quest* 750). With this Freedom to Live, Verity's transformation journey fulfills several aspects of the Hero's Journey. Despite our knowledge of his journey being flawed, as the *Farseer trilogy* is told from Fitz's point of view, many of the parts of his transformation and saving of the Six Duchies can be assigned to the Hero's Journey.

Sidekick or Hero: Fitz's and Verity's Journey

Fitz and Verity both have a Hero's Journey, albeit they differ in form and where (or whether) they end. Both characters have a Call to Adventure and journey through both the Departure and Initiation parts of Campbell's Hero's Journey. While the order of the different aspects of Hero's Journey does not always come exactly as described, such as Fitz's Supernatural Aid or Verity's meetings with the Goddess, they are part of their journeys. This

difference in the order means that we do not always realize the extent of the characters' influence, such as Kettricken as Goddess, before the moment in which they 'fulfil their role'. Campbell writes that the Hero's Journey is more of a guideline and parts can be exempt or changed:

> "Many tales isolate and greatly enlarge upon one or two of the typical elements of the full cycle (test motif, flight motif, abduction of the bride), others string a number of independent cycles into a single series (as in the Odyssey). Differing characters or episodes can become fused, or a single element can reduplicate itself and reappear under many changes." (246)

This notion also ensures that several tales and myths can fit under Campbell's Hero's Journey, despite focusing on only a few of the parts. I disagree with this universal one-fits-all approach, however, it does not negate the influence and certainty of the Hero's Journey's existence. I would argue, if these variations from the Hero's Journey do not veer too far from the journey, then they are reasonable variations. An important descriptor of the Hero's Journey is that it is a journey of change and transformation, wherein the hero battles past "personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms" (Campbell 19-20). Thus if the hero undergoes a change and transformation through their battles on their Hero's Journey, while still fulfilling several parts of the Hero's Journey, then I would argue it is a Hero's Journey. This approach is in accord with Campbell's notion of the Hero's Journey, yet it narrows the stories and heroes it can include.

This definition excludes characters who hold a helper role even if they embark on a journey with the hero of the Hero's Journey. An example of this would be Reepicheep from the Narnia books *Prince Caspian* (1951) and *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952) by C.S. Lewis. Reepicheep follows Prince Caspian and the youngest Pevensie children on their maritime journey in *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, as he seeks Aslan's Country due to a druid's song (10-11). Reepicheep undergoes several challenges on this journey with the Pevensies and Caspian, as well as a personal scuffle with Eustace. However, he does not undergo a change or transformation in *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. He remains the same adventurous mouse as in the beginning and thus does not qualify as a hero with a Hero's Journey. It can be argued he undergoes some change; however, it is only the ego of honor that is specified to be needed changed in *Prince Caspian* (111-112) and thus not enough to fulfill other changes within the Hero's Journey.

Another example would be Inigo Montoya from *The Princess Bride* (1987). Inigo Montoya holds the role of helper, first to the criminal Vizzini then the hero Westley, and is

on a quest of revenge. Inigo does not undergo a larger transformation throughout his quest, nor as he helps Westley with saving Buttercup, the love interest. He enacts his role as helper throughout, until he meets the man who killed his father. In the movie, his future as 'out of the revenge business' (The Princess Bride 01:31:52-59) leaves an opening for change past the story, however, he does not undergo a transformation otherwise. In this way, Inigo follows the journey of Westley and succeeds in his own quest for revenge yet undergoes no personal transformation except a satisfaction that his revenge has been completed. Inigo Montoya is in this way a helper, with a quest of his own, that does not include a personal Hero's Journey.

In relation to the *Farseer trilogy*, we know Verity has a Hero's Journey despite only being able to follow it through Fitz's narration. This narrative perspective where we do not know exactly what happens to Verity, means we also do not know his feelings nor thoughts upon the matters of the story. It drives a distance between the hero, Verity, and the reader, as opposed to the intimacy between the sidekick Fitz and the reader. Verity fulfills the criteria for several parts of the Hero's Journey and undergoes a change personally as well as a physical transformation to save the Six Duchies and battles his way towards this heroic deed. Fitz on the other hand is missing the entirety of the Return within the boundaries of the *Farseer trilogy*. He does battle past "personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms" (Campbell 19-20), as he grows up to understand his duties to both the Farseer line and Molly, as well as going through death and revival that surpasses normal human forms. Through this, he undergoes change and transformation in the first two parts of the Hero's Journey, thus it serves as a rite of passage for Fitz. The lack of the Return raises the question of whether his journey is incomplete or lacking altogether within the boundaries of the *Farseer trilogy*. Verity and Fitz's intersecting journeys and the roles they play in relation to each other can shed light on whether Fitz partakes in the Hero's Journey as a hero or if his role is mainly that of a helper/Supernatural Aid who also undergoes change.

The intersection of Verity and Fitz's journeys includes other characters that play different roles depending on who is focused upon. King Shrewd is Fitz's Call to Adventure, while he fulfills Verity's father and Threshold Guardian roles. At the same time, Chivalry plays the role of Fitz's father partially, while he is Verity's Call to Adventure. Several others, Burrich, Kettricken, Regal, and Chade, also play parts in both of their journeys but are a larger part of one of them. Chade, for example, has a larger part to play in relation to Fitz, as he is a helper and teacher, while Kettricken plays a larger part in Verity's journey as his Goddess. Burrich is a partial father role and Supernatural Aid for Fitz, but also joins Verity for parts of his journey to the Elderlings (Hobb *Royal Assassin* 428). These dual roles for the

characters allow an intersection of journeys. By playing more than one role, an element of mimesis is applied. In our world we would also play different roles to different people, such as a mother to one and a friend to another, which is emulated in this dual role taking. The parallel journeys of Fitz and Verity are thus made a possibility. However, it is Fitz and Verity's roles in relation to each other that define Fitz's hero or helper role.

Verity's role in Fitz's journey is not one of those specified by Campbell, such as the Supernatural Aid or the Goddess. Instead, Verity takes up the role of the 'society' that Fitz must save as part of his journey. The duty Fitz has to Verity and the Farseer line is continuously mentioned as a driving force behind Fitz's actions, and thus his journey, since his initial Call to Adventure by King Shrewd (*Assassin Apprentice* 54-55). Fitz's loyalty to King Shrewd and Verity begins his journey while also driving him through the different parts of the Hero's Journey, such as the Belly of the Whale and the Apotheosis. The marriage (and mystical marriage) between Verity and Kettricken would not have happened without Fitz's sacrifice and his growth is tied to this event. His Apotheosis is also tied to Verity in his protection of his King and his goal to save the Six Duchies. Fitz protects and helps Verity, and through his change and transformation, he is able to do this. Campbell writes that one of the tasks of the hero is to "teach the lesson he has learned of life renewed" (20), although this is in the context of the Return. Fitz's journey is however pledged to help and teach from his change and transformation, fulfilling this 'hero's task' despite his lack of a Return. He thus completes the tasks of a Hero's Journey hero, without gaining the boons of this, as he is not a Master of the Two Worlds he does not have the Freedom to Live.

The Freedom to Live and Master of the Two Worlds are some of the most important aspects of the Hero's Journey, as it is where the transformation of the hero comes to fruition. Following this logic, the lack of these in Fitz's journey would deny him the place of hero with a Hero's Journey. However, his journey could also simply be incomplete. Following the *Farseer trilogy,* Hobb has written four series within the same universe, wherein two of these center around Fitz as well. In the third and final installment of Fitz's life, Fitz ends up becoming one with the Fool in carving a stone wolf with the Skill. He receives the Ultimate Boon which Verity carved for himself through this, and further becomes a Master of the Two Worlds as well as having the Freedom to Live. As a stone wolf, Fitz receives the same peace Verity gains at the end of his Hero's Journey. In the context of the entirety of the series, the *Farseer trilogy* is only beginning of Fitz's Hero's Journey, giving him the status as hero in Campbell's definition. This would be a case of embedded Hero's Journeys, where Fitz's story within the *Farseer trilogy* is a threshold to cross. However, if the level of reading is limited to

the *Farseer trilogy*, Fitz has an incomplete journey, wherein the Return is missing, and thus does not make him a hero in Campbell's definition.

In Verity's journey, Fitz is a clear Supernatural Aid and helper. He is sworn to Verity through his oath to King Shrewd and the Farseer line, as well as growing fond and loyal to him as he grows up at Buckkeep. He becomes Verity's King's man (Hobb *Assassin's Apprentice* 351), as well as his coterie in relation to the Skill (*Royal Assassin* 365). Fitz is taught to report and serve the King through Chade, and this includes Verity and he is referenced as Fitz's King several times (*Royal Assassin* 752). Fitz lends his Skill strength more than once to save Verity (*Assassin's Apprentice* 449; *Assassin's Quest* 64), as well as lending his body for the sake of Verity and the Farseer line (*Assassin's Quest* 712). Verity would not have succeeded in his quest without help from Fitz. Fitz is the Supernatural Aid who through these actions "provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass" (Campbell 69). Verity is a hero with a Hero's Journey, and Fitz is Verity's Supernatural Aid and helper, with his own journey centered around being this for his uncle.

With Fitz's journey centered so heavily on Verity and Verity's heavy reliance on Fitz, the two could be seen as one hero split in two. Fitz is bound to Verity so thoroughly, that his own wants are second to Verity's, such as his love for Molly and their child. As a King's man, Fitz is Verity's to use as he can, and as his coterie, Fitz is there to support Verity in the Skill too. They are bound through blood, loyalty, and the Skill, resulting in Fitz always being Verity's first. Verity can focus on the Outislander raiders and their invasion because Fitz is supposed to take care of the second villain, Regal. Fitz does not succeed in this at first, which eventually brings him to Verity (and later the defeat of Regal). This reunion of the two proves vital to their success as well. Verity borrows Fitz's body to complete his mystical marriage with Kettricken and conceive an heir for the throne. In this way, they literally become interchangeable, as they switch their bodies.

The interchanging of their bodies also ensures Chivalry's heir by blood. Verity was never meant to rule, having been raised as a second son. Chivalry was meant to become King of the Six Duchies, but he renounced his claim. Fitz's name itself becomes a symbol of who he is – the son of Chivalry. As an illegitimate son Fitz is not born to rule either, however, he is the son of who was. Through borrowing Fitz's body, Verity ensures Chivalry's blood's succession, putting a grandson of Chivalry on the throne of the Six Duchies when the child is grown. The unborn child is thus born to rule, as opposed to Verity and Fitz. The joining of Fitz and Verity through Kettricken is thus what ensures the Six Duchies' future after the Outislander raiders have been defeated and Regal has been turned loyal to the unborn child.

Verity and Fitz are bound to each other in a way that could define them as one hero, split in two to take care of different threats. Following this notion, Fitz would lose half of himself when Verity sleeps as Verity-as-dragon. This loss could explain Fitz's lack of fulfillment in the last chapter of *Assassin's Quest*, as only half of him has completed his Hero's Journey.

Fitz, through this logic, is half a hero. He fulfills the Departure and Initiation of the Hero's Journey on his own, and the Return through his other half, Verity. The Verity-centered Hero's Journey enables changes in Fitz that are personal and remain after Verity-as-dragon begins his immortal sleep. In this, Fitz can be a hero in his own right or a sidekick with heroic qualities - through both his connection with Verity as a Supernatural Aid and the role he plays as Verity's 'other half'.

Whether Fitz is a hero or a sidekick with heroic qualities, Fitz has a clear sidekick/helper too: Nighteyes. The wolf is, much like Fitz to Verity, a loyal companion who acts for Fitz as Cameron describes the sidekick – a confidant, a messenger, an aide-de-camp (Cameron 1). Nighteyes protects Fitz's flanks in physical fights as well as when people from Regal's coteries try to use the Skill against him, and in this becomes the "sidekicker" who "kicks to the side to protect the flanks" (2). As a wolf, he also has the "roguish quality" that Cameron mentions as a feature (2). Fitz also possesses this roguish quality through his assassin status as well as his Wit, however, Nighteyes obtains an extra level of this as he is an animal and a predator. Nighteyes is saved from captivity by Fitz in *Royal Assassin* and the two bond through the Wit (99-107). With this bond and becoming brothers or pack, Nighteyes looks out for Fitz and contributes to his well-being (Cameron 98). He does this both through their fights with others, as well as providing Fitz an escape from his life at Buckkeep through hunting, which he prefers (Hobb *Royal Assassin* 228) and giving advice and encouragement (*Assassin's Quest* 483; Cameron 99).

Nighteyes is, through all this, loyal and trustworthy. He does not abandon Fitz at any point and provides the way to Fitz's survival of his bodily death in *Royal Assassin* (744). While Nighteyes is introduced as a wild cub, he remains static in personality soon after as he reaches wolf adulthood (Buchanan 15). His focus is hunting and his pack and provides wisdom through observations of this pack mentality, such as Burrich being the "Heart of Pack" for the animals of the Buckkeep stables (*Royal Assassin* 556). The acceptance of the Fool into their pack also provides Fitz with insight into their relationship at the time in *Assassin's Quest* (620; 663-664). Through all this Nighteyes shows himself to be a loyal and trustworthy companion, who works as a "sounding board" for Fitz and provides "a touchstone for the protagonist's dreams and delusions", bringing Fitz "back into the realm of

reality" (Cameron 157; Buchanan 22). Nighteyes proves himself as a needed and important sidekick to Fitz and accompanies Fitz throughout his journey which is "the most important task of the sidekick" (Buchanan 16).

In this Nighteyes is more of a traditional sidekick, in that he does not have his own journey, but acts as a helper for his hero, Fitz. Nighteyes could be seen as an extension of Fitz, in that he is bound to Fitz through their Wit bond and is the helper. The two also surpass bodily limitations, like Fitz and Verity, in that Fitz escapes his own body and shares Nighteyes' body. This ensures Fitz's survival and the two spend time together as one, until Burrich calls Fitz back to his own body. Fitz and Nighteyes also define themselves as brothers and a pack, and their idea of pack is being of one entity. This can be seen in different circumstances, but one of these is their view of one's kill as the pack's kill (Hobb *Assassin's Quest* 733). Fitz and Nighteyes thus define themselves as one through this definition of pack, even if they do not always agree.

This "line of sidekicks" of Nighteyes to Fitz to Verity, drives a threefold dynamic – Nighteyes as Fitz, Fitz as self, and Fitz as Verity. Nighteyes, through Nighteyes-Fitz, becomes Verity's Supernatural Aid and helper. At the same time, Nighteyes is Fitz's helper and highlights that Verity is Fitz's king, not his in *Assassin's Quest* (308), thus stating that he is not Verity's but Fitz's. This dynamic is also highlighted when Fitz and Verity switch bodies, as Nighteyes and their bond follow Fitz into Verity's body (*Assassin's Quest* 712). Nighteyes is bound to Fitz's "spirit" through the Wit and not his body. Fitz is split between Nighteyes and Verity, the Skill and the Wit, which is brought up as a problematic dynamic (*Royal Assassin* 751). The Wit is also described as a "taint" by Burrich, who, as Chivalry's King's man, does not want the "taint" of it in Chivalry's blood and heir (*Assassin's Apprentice* 43-44; 253). Witted people also have a general consensus of being dangerous in the Six Duchies (*Royal Assassin* 751; *Assassin's Quest* 28). However, despite the many factors disproving of the Wit within Fitz, he embraces it and enjoys it (*Royal Assassin* 266). It is the Wit that grants Fitz a helper, Nighteyes, and thus a place for himself and as a hero. In this, Fitz is a hero through his bond with Nighteyes and a sidekick through his bond with Verity. He is thus not 'just' a Supernatural Aid undergoing change, but a hybrid of hero and sidekick.

Fitz's three-fold dynamic has impact on his Hero's Journey, in that it reflects the three roles he plays. In relation to Verity, he is the Supernatural Aid, the helper, and does not have a journey, while he does have a Hero's Journey in his relation to Nighteyes. The third aspect of his three-fold dynamic is the result of him having and not having a Hero's Journey. It

reflects in his missing Return and in his unusual society (Verity) that is his quest's purpose to save, as well as the fulfilment of the Departure and Initiation aspects of the Hero's Journey. Fitz has to fulfil several definitions and in this he fulfils many as both sidekick and hero, however, the contradictory aspects cancel out. This gives us a multifaceted character who needs a new definition of what a hero can be as well how a Hero's Journey can look, as he is a hero, a sidekick, and a catalyst all in one. He has a Hero's Journey without the pay-off.

Sidekick or Hero: Fitz the Catalyst

The bond with Verity and the bond with Nighteyes are different halves of Fitz, but the dual bonds also ensure his status as "catalyst". Fitz is called Catalyst by the Fool several times, as well as by Starling (Hobb *Assassin's Quest* 456; 424), and his actions and decisions decide the course of fate for the Six Duchies – hence 'catalyst'. He must be in an influential position for this to be and Fitz is this because of several reasons. One of these is his status as an illegitimate son of royalty. In this position, he does the dirty work for King Shrewd and Verity, or even influences Lady Grace to tell her husband to man the watchtowers against Outislander raiders (*Assassin's Apprentice* 169). By being of the Farseer line, he is bound by duty and blood to them as well, even when he wishes he was not. His blood also provides him with the ability to Skill, which binds him to Verity as his coterie. Fitz helps Verity on his journey, which is what saves the Six Duchies from the Outislander raiders eventually. This status and journey that Fitz is born and raised into decide the outcome of the Six Duchies' fate. However, it is the Wit and his bond with Nighteyes that ensures his survival of this journey and his continued influence of the fate of the Six Duchies. Fitz is saved from death's grasp through his Wit bonds in *Assassin's Apprentice*, where his former Wit bond Nosy sacrifices himself for Fitz (458) and in *Royal Assassin* where Nighteyes shares his body with Fitz (*Royal Assassin* 744). He is thus influential on the powers that direct the Six Duchies as well as being provided a source of power that can see him through the challenges alive. Fitz becomes a part of Verity and Nighteyes, and thus earns a place as himself with these conflicting bonds.

As a catalyst with these dual bonds, Fitz becomes his own. This allows a deviation from a typical hero archetype or hero's journey, and answers why Fitz is important enough to be narrator despite not being a typical hero. Hobb has, through the medium of Fitz, created a sidekick-hero. The Fool is an indicator of his importance early on, as he speaks to him. It is established that the Fool does not speak with just anyone in Buckkeep, and it is later revealed he is the White Prophet, who holds the power to see futures (*Assassin's Quest* 389). With the Fool's attention, it is indicated Fitz is important. Fitz's actions affect the world, despite Fitz's

wishes to live in peace, and the Fool's naming of Fitz as "Catalyst" is another indicator of this.

A catalyst does not necessarily make a hero however, which is reflected in Fitz's partial role as Verity's other half and sidekick. Fitz's intricate relationship with the classic hero archetype and the hero's journey can be led back to Hobb's decisions as an author. Hobb's decision to make a character of this type, can be related to her relation to her characters. In an interview, Hobb says:

> "When you are writing, you have to love all your characters. If you're writing something from a minor character's point of view, you really need to stop and say the purpose of this character isn't to be somebody's sidekick or to come in and put the horse in the stable. [...] You have to write them as if they're not a minor character, because they do have their own things going on." (Thompson).

Hobb clearly sees her characters as individuals with their own lives, and this has led to the creation of Fitz – not the hero, but a hero nonetheless.

Fitz the Catalyst is this hero, an influential individual in Hobb's world. His influence is the moving factor in the events of the *Farseer trilogy*. He is a sidekick to Verity, a hero to Nighteyes, and a combination of the two in himself. His actions and his life are Hobb's way of making what might have been a side character the main character. It is a disruption of the traditional hero, promoting a new definition of what a hero can be.

What Makes a Hero?

In this thesis, I have discussed two ways to make a hero: a character type as the Rank-Raglan hero archetype and a story type that outlines a heroic journey as Campbell's Hero's Journey. Both are based upon myths, legends, and stories that were collected decades ago, however, we can see their outlines in the fantasy genre, such as Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955) or Neil Gaiman's *Stardust* (1997). Hobb's *Farseer trilogy* and Fitz deviate from the traditional Hero's Journey as well as disregarding the Rank-Raglan hero archetype for the main character. These deviations from a traditional hero are no longer a rarity. Hobb, however, was one of the first to implement these deviations within the Fantasy genre.

The stories Rank, Raglan, and Campbell discuss include a wide variety of tales, including heroes such as Robin Hood, King Arthur, and the heroes of Ancient Greece. The earliest of these, the heroes of Ancient Greece, such as Achilles or Perseus, are traditional heroes that are still remembered. Both of these had helpers in their corner while performing their heroic deeds. Perseus, who killed Medusa, had Hermes and Athena who provided him

with advice and artifacts so that he may survive and succeed in his endeavor. However, Hermes and Athena could not be classified as sidekicks, as they are gods of Olympus and are not reflections of Perseus nor do they accompany him to the island where Medusa resides. Achilles had Patroclus as a helper in the war against Troy and comes closer to a depiction of a sidekick than Hermes and Athena. However, Patroclus borrows Achilles' armor as Achilles refuses to fight and is thus killed as he is assumed to be Achilles. Patroclus is a loyal companion to Achilles; however, he dons the deeds of a hero as Achilles does not and dies as a result. His death inspires Achilles to seek revenge and he succeeds in this. Achilles as a hero comes to fruition after Patroclus' death, thus making Patroclus a helper on the way to Achilles' hero status instead of a sidekick/companion following Achilles on his journey.

Going forward in time to the fifteenth century, Robin Hood emerges. Raglan describes the tale of Robin Hood in his book, discrediting it as historical (45-53). It remains a tale well told and retold despite not being historical. A.J. Pollard writes that the original Robin Hood from the fifteenth century was "a stock character on which different adventures were hung" (2). These adventures featured "the hero, Little John, the sheriff, the monk, the king – in which the hero has various adventures, triumphing against the same set of villains in an infinitely changing set of circumstances. Plot lines, actions and incidents are endlessly repeated and varied." (3). Little John in these early cases was a "principal lieutenant" of the merry men, and acts as a sidekick to Robin Hood (3-4). Little John is a loyal supporter of Robin Hood in the adventures and has a role that reflects this, rescuing Robin or helping Robin steal and trick the Sheriff (5-7). In this, Little John's most important task is to accompany Robin Hood, the central character, making him an early sidekick (Buchanan 16).

In the mid-20th century, in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955), Frodo takes the One Ring to Mordor to destroy it, and through this follows the Hero's Journey. Samwise Gamgee follows along as Frodo's helper and sidekick, working as a servant and a friend. He plays a subservient figure to Frodo and willingly "contributes to the well-being of the protagonist" (Cameron 1; 98). When the hero, Frodo, wants to give up, Samwise acts as a driving force and is utterly devoted to Frodo, with Tolkien writing in one of his letters that "I think he would then have sacrificed himself for Frodo's sake" (Carpenter 348). Samwise, despite being a clear sidekick, is also described as the "chief hero" by Tolkien in another of his letters (Carpenter 178). This is an opinion that is generally shared between the fans of the series, and Samwise is regarded as a heroic sidekick.

These stories briefly outline the development of the hero's help. With this development of the hero's help, the hero themself has also developed. Where the Rank-

Raglan hero archetype has been derived from tales and myths into a man born to "distinguished parents" who goes on to save and become king, much like Perseus, the contemporary hero's parentage is no longer as important. Frodo is not of distinguished parentage, however, being raised by Bilbo Baggins from *The Hobbit* (1937) acquires some importance in relation to the adventurous and heroic traits of the Baggins. Where Perseus has helpers in the form of gods who support his endeavor, Tolkien's sidekick is heroic and steps in when the hero, Frodo, cannot, while also "rustic" in his "origin" and "romance" (Carpenter 261; 178). The sidekick has, by the 1950s, developed into having the ability to be heroic and succeeding in this, however, still distinctly a sidekick.

Kristian Frisk, a Danish academic, writes that the study of heroic actions was previously "characterised by an exclusive approach to heroism, where the title of hero was restricted to grand figures in history and myth" (90). Frisk divides the study of heroes by analytical focus and conceptual approach into four categories "*great men; hero stories; heroic actions*; and *hero institutions*" (89, emphasis in original). Rank, Raglan, and Campbell fit under the category of *hero stories,* which is an exclusive focus with a structural approach. This exclusive focus is, according to Frisk, a norm that changes around the 1950s to a more inclusive one, where groups of people are introduced to heroic status as hero institutions and heroic actions. These groups are "relatively mundane figures" and include people such as celebrities, soldiers, athletes, and first-aiders (90). The new groups of heroes are based around the heroic "deeds of ordinary people" (93) – heroic actions – and the hero institutions, which constitute of groups that are given "heroic status" through the linking of public recognition and a "web of cultural meaning, identity and power structures" (94). This opening into a mundane hero territory coincides with the publishing of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, matching Samwise Gamgee as a heroic sidekick to the *zeitgeist*.

The hero institutions are related to the "cultural hero-system", which describes a "mythical hero-system in which people serve in order to carn a feeling of primary value, of cosmic specialness, of ultimate usefulness to creation, of unshakable meaning" within their culture (Frisk 95; E. Becker 5). These cultural hero-systems are divided into degrees of heroism "from the "high" heroism of a Churchill, a Mao, or a Buddha, to the "low" heroism of the coal miner, the peasant, the simple priest" (E. Becker 5). In the 'low heroism' almost anyone can be made a hero, with a few heroic actions, be it saving people from a burning building or caring for the sick during a pandemic. This newer inclusion of the many under a heroic status needs a new definition. Christopher Vogler defines a hero as someone who "is willing to sacrifice his own needs on behalf of others, like a shepherd who will sacrifice to

protect and serve his flock. At the root the idea of Hero is connected with self-sacrifice" (Vogler 29). Selwyn Becker and Alice Eagly agree with this self-sacrificial core of the hero, considering the hero as someone who "take[s] risks on behalf of one or more other people, despite the possibility of dying or suffering serious physical consequences from these actions." (164). Where S. Becker and Eagly take their departure in real world examples, Vogler takes his in fiction, and arrive at the same conclusion.

This new definition of a self-sacrificial hero can be related to Hobb as well. As she publishes the *Farseer trilogy* in the 1990s, it becomes a middle ground between the definite sidekick with heroic qualities and the notion that a hero can come from anywhere. The lack of sidekicks as heroes before Hobb's series sets this as a literary innovation. Her voicing of a tiredness at helpers and other minor characters being sacrificed for the motivation of the hero also implies an innovative stance:

> "I've read too many stories and seen too many movies where the sidekick exists to take the arrow for the hero, or in many sad cases, the wife or the girlfriend is there to be raped or kidnapped or murdered simply to give the main character a motivation. I don't like those stories" (Thompson).

However, the idea of hero institutions and groups had been growing for some 20-30 years at this point, making Hobb's sidekick-hero main character a literary innovation that has been set up by the context of the time. Hobb is an 'early innovator' of the sidekick-hero in a time that slowly ripened for this idea. As established previously, Fitz has a partial Hero's Journey while deviating completely from the Rank-Raglan hero archetype. He is both a sidekick and a hero, a catalyst for events within Hobb's Elderling world, and thus a narrator. The traditional hero archetype that Rank-Raglan describes is thus set aside for a more inclusive hero, which Fitz reflects. Fitz shows over and over that he is willing to sacrifice himself and his own needs on the behalf of Verity and the Six Duchies. He shows self-sacrifice for his King's well-being despite the possibility of death – which he encounters several times. Fitz is not always at peace with the consequences of this and struggles with his sense of duty and the sacrifices that are needed, however, he still pursues the protection of his King and the Six Duchies (Hobb *Royal Assassin* 8; *Assassin's Quest* 476). In this way, Fitz can be defined as a hero from S. Becker, Eagly, and Voglers definition of a hero. He is self-sacrificial.

The heroic figure and its development can be seen as a reflection of the social structure within its time, creating a heroic figure that fits with "its needs" (Frisk 98). The Rank-Raglan hero archetype sets the hero as an almost mythological person and Campbell's

Hero's Journey was created on the basis of these mythological person tales as well. The Hero's Journey has, due to Campbell's loose definition, allowed an easier application process on contemporary heroes than the more specific Rank-Raglan hero archetype. However, both take departure in a distinguished and mythological hero (Frisk 93). The mythological aspect of the hero can also be related to "the chosen one" whom we see as "a person of unique talent, charisma and willpower" although it is a less "exclusive approach" to who can be a hero (93). Fitz is a 'chosen one' as the Fool foresees his coming and the influence he will have upon Hobb's Elderling world, but his hybrid hero-sidekick dynamic serves as a middle ground between the more exclusive and the more inclusive focus.

The expansion of the heroic concept does not exclude the traditional hero archetype but allows a variety of heroes within Fantasy literature. Contemporary novels such as Gaiman's *Stardust* make use of a more traditional hero archetype, as well as Christopher Paolini's *The Inheritance Cycle* (2003-2011). They do have elements of the contemporary fantasy heroes as well, such as a larger focus on the Hero's Journey than the specifics of the Rank-Raglan hero archetype, but they represent as traditional hero in contemporary times. Eragon for example, the main character of Paolini's series, is also flawed as a hero, which coincides with the less heroic hero that contemporary heroes represent (Frisk 93). Fitz as the emerging new hero type in the 1990s is also a deeply flawed character, and is not always good at his job as an assassin. He retains the relatable flaws of a sidekick that furthers the hero and is the hero in the same line (Buchanan 20).

Hobb choosing Fitz as her narrator and her sidekick-hero is related to her love for the minor characters and their stories. She mentions in an interview a trend of sidekicks being at the hero's disposal as their entire existence. Her motivation for creating Fitz, his journey, and his hybrid of heroics thus comes from a place of dislike to a trend. She challenged the heroic norm within the fantasy genre because she did not like them. As an author, her values will bleed through in her writing and Hobb herself is aware of this. Her reasoning to write is "not because I have answers, but because I have questions. And in a story, I can try out different answers to those questions." (Teitelbaum). A question she answers in the *Farseer trilogy* is what if our narrator and hero is not the traditional hero of it all.

The answer to that question has since been answered by others as well. A surge of characters who have previously been sidekicks or helpers have had their own Hero's Journeys and heroic actions told. An example of this would be Robin, originally from the Batman comics. While Robin has been a classic example of the sidekick for many years, much like Dr. Watson for Sherlock Holmes, even when Robin within the world of comics

became a hero in his own right in the 1990s. The Batman-Robin dynamic as hero and sidekick prevailed in mainstream media, even as Robin featured as a leader of superheroes within the animated series *Teen Titans* (2003-2006). Robin as a hero has since received another portrayal, which is based on both comics and the animated series in the live-action TV series *Titans* (2018). Another example of a sidekick/helper turned hero is Ahsoka from the Star Wars franchise. Ahsoka is originally Anakin Skywalker's padawan in the *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* series (2008-2020) but will be receiving her own series and story in 2023. These examples are of sidekicks who have gone on to become heroes with time, while still retaining their sidekick origins.

An example of sidekick heroes from the fantasy genre would be *Six of Crows* (2015-2016) by Leigh Bardugo. *Six of Crows* is a story about a band of thieves who embark upon a journey to steal. None of them are particularly heroic as they are criminals, but every one of them has a narrating role within the books. Inej, the leader's right hand, takes on the role of a sidekick, yet she undergoes change upon the journey as well as saving them on several occasions. She is also one of the narrators within the duology and is thus an example of a modern sidekick hero with a narrator role. Peter V. Brett's *The Demon Cycle* (2008-2017) also includes a variety of characters whose point of view are included in the story. One of these is Rojer, the fiddling sidekick. He is a sidekick and remains a sidekick throughout the series, however, he is a narrator as well. His point of view is deemed important enough to be included. These two examples within the fantasy genre are examples of character-driven storytelling, where the characters within are all deemed to be important and not minor, despite their functions within the story. It shows a focus on the character, whether sidekick or hero does not matter, instead it is an interest in their lives and their journeys throughout the story that matter.

Another example would be Merlin from the King Arthur tales. Merlin is famously King Arthur's helper, and in the TV series *Merlin* (2008-2012), he still takes up this role. However, despite his role as Arthur's helper, the series is about Merlin and how *he* takes care of and saves King Arthur. The entire fantasy series is based on the premise of this until finally, King Arthur dies. Merlin is immortal and ends up waiting for King Arthur's return, forever making him the sidekick and helper. Merlin as the protagonist and the hero, yet remaining King Arthur's sidekick/helper, provides a dynamic much like the one Fitz has: a hero to some, a sidekick to others, yet he possesses a journey, and he is an influential person at the same time as he fulfills these roles.

These examples provide both instances of contemporary fantasy sidekicks that are deemed heroic enough to be included as narrator, as well as characters that have previously been seen as only sidekicks/helpers that have become heroes in their own right in new interpretations of the same story. It follows a trend of thought that Pearson writes in her self-help book: "We *all* matter. Every one of us has essential contribution to make, and we can make it only by taking the risk of being uniquely our own selves" (xii). It provides a way for anyone to 'shine' as a hero and as someone who matters to the narrative, no matter where they come from. It is a chance for the everyday person to become a hero in their own way through this notion and the literature that has developed with it. Fitz is the beginning of what is a new hero and a new definition of heroism in literature: "True heroism is shown in stories when Heroes offer themselves on the altar of chance, willing to take the risk that their quest for adventure may lead to danger, loss, or death." (Vogler 32). Fitz is a hero with this definition. After the Fool's advice to act as if it will be his death, Fitz applies this to his actions (Hobb *Assassin's Quest* 616). He takes a risk that might lead to death for the sake of Verity and the safety of the Six Duchies.

Fitz as the sidekick-hero mirrors Pearson's notion of the individual's importance and the human desire to matter (xii). He is a more relatable heroic image, he fails at tasks, comes across as average and human, yet with the gifts (and burdens) of the Skill and the Wit. There is a relatability in flaws and failed tasks, and this makes the fantasy genre more mimetic while maintaining the wonder and impossibility that makes it fantasy. Hobb says in an interview:

> "When we come back to fantasy, I think we're actually coming back to the real bedrock of storytelling. Our national or international genre really is fantasy, if you think about the worldwide myths and legends and stories that we all know" (Thompson).

Her notion of fantasy as a cross-cultural human genre reflects the humanity she puts in Fitz and highlights this by making him the narrator. Fitz is half a hero, half a sidekick, half a catalyst within the *Farseer trilogy*. His self-sacrificial actions, even when they fail, and his strong sense of duty, despite all that urges him to leave them behind, make him a contemporary hero.

Conclusion

FitzChivalry is not a hero according to the Rank-Raglan hero archetype, as he does not fulfill any of the points on the checklist, with the exception of one. This is not enough to be a hero archetype and excludes him from this definition of a hero. On the other hand, his

uncle, Verity, is. Yet it is not Verity but Fitz who is the main character and narrator of the *Farseer trilogy*. Therefore, Fitz is a different hero than the hero archetype, if even a hero at all. Fitz as a character fulfills Cameron and Buchanan's definitions of the sidekick on several levels. He is subservient (Cameron 2-3), loyal to a fault to the hero, Verity (98; 157), and does his best to fulfill Verity's needs (Buchanan 23). The largest indicator of Fitz's deviation from the sidekick role is his place as narrator, main character, and the transformation he undergoes. This transformation he undergoes is in opposition to the static personality of the sidekick (15), as it is a trait of the hero.

Campbell's definition of the hero through the Hero's Journey sets this transformation of the hero in the center, as well as the journey which brings this change upon them. Verity has a Hero's Journey, despite it is only parts of it which is known to the reader through Fitz's narration. Fitz, however, does not have a full Hero's Journey. His journey is partial, as the final part, the Return, is missing and thus makes it incomplete. While Fitz does undergo a transformation, the final and arguably most important part is missing. It is a Hero's Journey without the pay-off. This gives him heroic qualities, albeit he remains the sidekick to Verity.

In opposition to his status as sidekick, Fitz has a sidekick himself: Nighteyes. For Nighteyes, Fitz is the hero to whom he is bonded, and he helps Fitz through various obstacles after they meet, much like Fitz helps Verity succeed in his journey. These two sides of Fitz enable a threefold dynamic in which Fitz is a hero to Nighteyes, a sidekick to Verity, and a combination in himself. Through this dynamic, he becomes the 'catalyst', as the Fool calls him. His actions and decisions have an indirect impact on the chain of events within the Six Duchies and the world of the Elderlings. This gives Fitz importance and provides a dynamic in which Fitz can become the hero.

With this threefold dynamic, Hobb created what was a new possibility for what a hero can be. By creating a character that is a sidekick and a hero, she has tied the events of a world to a new origin. Fitz as a catalyst and not a direct savior created a new character dynamic that is no longer centered so all-consumingly around the hero. This new perception of who a hero can be, is reflected in contemporary fantasy fiction. Sidekicks such as King Arthur's Merlin have been placed in the center of narrative and made heroes in their own right, instead of standing in the shadow of the archetypal hero.

This notion of a sidekick-hero within Hobb's *Farseer trilogy* is one of the first of its kind within fantasy literature and shows literary innovation. However, it is also a reflection of a society whose idea of a hero has been changing. The everyday hero of Frisk's hero institutions and a centering of heroic actions as the definition of a hero has provided a place

for this new type of hero. The average firefighter or the nurse has been attached to the idea of a hero with this development (Frisk 95). With this, a transformation of what a hero is has transpired, and Fitz is a turning point within the fantasy genre for this new definition.

This begs the question of what defines a hero, and Vogler's definition of self-sacrifice as the defining factor is a contender for this answer (29). It does not exclude the Rank-Raglan hero archetype, wherein the hero can be self-sacrificial, nor the Hero's Journey wherein the transformation of the hero allows them to save. The two heroes are seen within the contemporary fantasy genre in books such as *The Inheritance Cycle* by Christopher Paolini and *Shadow and Bone* by Leigh Bardugo. Vogler's definition allows sidekick-heroes such as Fitz to be defined as a hero too. Thus, the Rank-Raglan hero archetype and Campbell's Hero's Journey remain relevant, however, without the same weight they have held within the old myths and stories in their new varied forms.

The self-sacrificial hero is a reflection of a world where anyone can be a hero, it does not have to be a birth right to be marked for greatness. Everyone wants to be a hero and relate to the hero stories and the hero who is self-sacrificial first allows this. The *Farseer trilogy* depicts a turning point within fantasy for this hero in the 90s. Fitz provided a new perception and a new dynamic for the fantasy hero, wherein the sidekick suddenly receives the spotlight. He is depicted as a character with flaws and failures and no high social standing, yet he goes through a partial Hero's Journey, he has crucial influence on the world, and he is self-sacrificial for the sake of his King and the Six Duchies. Fitz is part hero, part sidekick, part catalyst – he is a contemporary fantasy hero.

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