

To Lose My Mind And Find My Soul.¹ The Masculine and Feminine in Films Set in the Forest

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Abstract: In the past few years, there has been a proliferation of films and television series around the world that are set in forests. These stories' structures often differ depending on the gender of the protagonist: If the protagonists are men, the forest is usually a site of horror, but when the protagonists are women, the forests become sites of transformation. Looking at Maureen Murdock's *The Heroine's Journey*, Joseph Campbell's *The Hero's Journey*, and Catherine Addison's model for how the forest is represented in classical literature, this paper considers how the internal journey of female characters is reflected in or resonates with the woods. Films discussed range across multiple genres (drama, survival, crime, horror, science fiction) and include *Leave No Trace*, *Deliverance*, *The Grey*, *Destroyer*, *Zone Blanche*, *The Ritual*, *The Hallow*, *Without Name*, *Dans la forêt*, *The Blair Witch Project*, *The Forest*, *Mad Max: Fury Road*, *Annihilation*, and *Aeon Flux*. The temptation to talk about these films in dichotomies, such as Hero/Heroine, Masculine/Feminine, illustrates our need for new terminology to reflect even newer ways of thinking about the complexity of gendered protagonists in stories.

Keywords: Masculine - Feminine - Forest - Transformation - Heroine - Hero

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Introduction

Maybe it's because I grew up in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, on a fourth-generation farm that was as much forest as field. Or that I grew up with family who were named for the nature surrounding them: Branch, Hazel, Myrtle, Forrest. Or maybe it's because while my grandfather ploughed the fields and felled trees, my grandmother took me deep into the woods to hunt for edible plants and mushrooms and sometimes even arrowheads, when the creeks overflowed, giving up their treasures. Or maybe it's that the earliest fragments of stories I remember hearing were "over the river and through the woods"² and Little Red Riding Hood.

For whatever reasons, the forest has always been an integral part of my life. Which may be why I've been particularly attuned to what seems to be a proliferation of films and television programs in the past few years that place their protagonists in the shared roots and entwined canopies of forests. I am particularly struck by how these stories' structures change depending on the gender of the protagonist as he or she encounters the forest. I began to see a pattern: if the protagonists are men, the forest is often a site of horror or malevolence, but when the protagonists are women, the forests become more complex places, sites of transformation.

Terror, Error and Refuge

Forests have figured in the stories of humans for thousands of years, filtering through to modern audiences as fairytales, folktales, and myths.³ These traditional stories create a dichotomy between forest and town, wilderness and civilization. In broad strokes, the town is the site of control, logic, rationality, cultivation, and safety. The town becomes a reflection of reason and intellect, the male imposition of orderliness. The forest on the other hand is portrayed as mysterious, uncontrolled, irrational, primal, and therefore dangerous. The taming of this wilderness is in effect at the heart of the frontier myth of the United States, contributing to the development of the American (male) ideal of rugged individualism.

In "Terror, Error and Refuge: Forests in Western Literature,"⁴ Catherine Addison suggests it is more fruitful to branch beyond a simple dichotomy or binary way of thinking about the forest. She posits three significant ways in which forests are represented in classical storytelling:

- 1) Uncivilized or dangerous, such as in Little Red Riding Hood or *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*;
- 2) Confusing or unfixed, such as in Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* or the beginning of Dante's *Inferno*;
- 3) Safe or sheltering, such as in Robin Hood or the ending of the film *Fahrenheit 451* (UK 1966) or even the writings of John Muir.

The fact that the forest is often linked to the feminine in psychological and literary symbolism makes it a natural fit with The Heroine's Journey.

Journey or Path

In his book *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* (1949), Joseph Campbell popularized the notion of a predominant basic story structure underlying many cultures. This monomyth, as he called it, has become known over time as The Hero's Journey and designates an archetypal story of a (usually) male protagonist who sets out on a journey or quest. This structure and its aspects have been influential not just in psychotherapy, mythography, and narratology, but also in the creation of new stories, especially in cinema, as popularized by George Lucas and Christopher Vogler, though by no means limited to them.

In 1990, Maureen Murdock published *The Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholeness* as a response to Campbell's male-centric story structure. Interestingly, both Campbell's and Murdock's story structures are represented by circular diagrams. In Campbell's case, this helped distinguish his story structure from the commonly used linear diagrams for story structures, such as the inverted checkmark often associated with three act structure in film. Those linear diagrams indicate a clear starting point and a clear ending point, a story with a set beginning, middle and end. Though diagramed as a circle, Campbell's monomyth is actually linear as well, detailing a series of external tasks or steps towards an identified external goal. The circular diagram is perhaps more apropos to Murdock's Heroine's Journey, a story often described in terms of the cyclical nature of women's quest for wholeness through healing.

As more people have joined the conversation sparked by the introduction of The Heroine's Journey, Murdock's ideas have been expanded and expounded upon. Perhaps in an effort to differentiate even more from Campbell and his Heroes, some of these subsequent writers have begun adjusting the nomenclature to The Heroine's Path. This seems an important distinction. When I think of journey, there is an implied destination and an active pursuit of that destination. Path is a gentler term, more rooted to the landscape, implying a process of discovery that comes from paying attention to the world around us, of encountering the world moment to moment, letting it guide us.

The Hero's Journey builds around a task or goal. Something known and aimed for in the external world. The Heroine's Path is more about the discovery of self, the embracing of emotion and identity, the internal world. That's not to say that a Hero's Journey is devoid of an internal character arc – in fact that was one of the selling points for The Hero's Journey in film storytelling – but their primary understanding of success or failure is rooted in the external. Any internal growth, if present, is secondary. On The Heroine's Path, the internal growth is the primary consideration, the measure of success that then may become reflected in a larger world or community through interconnection.

The Hero's Journey and The Heroine's Path mirror the Hollywood distinctions of high concept stories (typically genre) and low concept (character driven). A high concept film story is usually built around external goals that incorporate very specific plot points within an established structure, whereas a low concept story grows more organically from the unique traits of the main character, creating a looser and arguably less predictable structure. The most memorable Hollywood films are often some combination of the two (genre elements and character driven), as demonstrated by the double plot line nature of many films: The Primary Plot, sometimes referred to as the A Story or Action Line, and

the Subplot or B Story. The Primary Plot is usually an external conflict whereas the Subplot is more likely to be concerned with the internal life of the protagonist, often reflected in some sort of emotional relationship, such as a heterosexual romance. However, because of the standardized approach to screenplay story structure in Hollywood, these films are almost always centered around male protagonists and lean heavily on the Action Line or The Hero's Journey to anchor the narrative events.

A significant problem with The Hero's Journey, then, is that the female characters are secondary, primarily there for the enhancement or refinement of the male protagonist's goals. Some storytellers have tried to remedy this by simply making the "hero" in their story a woman. Whether intentional or not, *Alien* (UK/USA 1979) is a perfect example of a female protagonist in a male role, doing exactly what a male protagonist would do. Murdock and others (including me) argue that we need to see The Heroine's Path as more than just using Campbell's model with a female protagonist or simply fulfilling the B Story's need to dimensionalize the Hero with an internal life through a relationship.

Mad Max: Fury Road incorporates important aspects of The Heroine's Path, and though the film includes an external quest (to find The Green Place), that quest is actually fulfilled by envisioning the old world in a new way. Furiosa ultimately cannot escape her situation or world, she needs to change it. She has to return to – and transform – the Citadel to make it better for everyone. [We'll sidestep the issue that Max, a man, is the one who points out to her the need to go back; other than that moment, Furiosa drives the narrative.] In the process, Furiosa fulfills several key steps in Murdock's Heroine's Journey, such as gathering allies, healing the mother/daughter split, and integrating the masculine and feminine. This centering of Furiosa and her agency, relegating Max to the more secondary role usually reserved for women in The Hero's Journey, is partly why there was online backlash to the film from men who wanted their Max to be the one driving, giving orders, and the better shot. Incorporating aspects of both The Heroine's Path and The Hero's Journey, *Fury Road* primarily takes place in a desert wasteland, but it's the promise of sanctuary in the Green Space that motivates Furiosa. In that sense, the film represents the forest or green space as refuge, safe and sheltering, an example of Addison's third way in which forests are represented in literature. Let's look more closely at the intersection of Addison, Campbell, and Murdock's ideas in other films and how that might shift how we think about these stories.

Terror and the Site of Horror

When John Muir wrote of going into the woods to lose his mind, he of course did not mean to go insane, but rather to loose his mind: to let it go, shut it off and simply be in the moment, to be in the forest, to be connected to the larger world. But many of the recent film stories have situated the forest as a place where one's grip on sanity is tenuous at best. Films like *The Blair Witch Project* (USA 1999), *The Other Side of Sleep* (Ireland/Netherlands/Hungary 2011), *Without Name* (Ireland 2016), and *Dans la forêt* (France/Sweden 2016) center on characters whose hold on reality is slipping. From there it's a short jump to full on horror, whether rooted in the natural world, such as *Deliverance* (USA 1972) and *The Grey* (USA 2012), or the supernatural one, as in *The Hallow* (UK/USA/Ireland 2015),

The Forest (USA 2016), and *The Ritual* (UK/Canada 2017). Addison would describe these representations of the forest as more primal, at odds with civilized life, "... a place where we are watched by the wild beast, the fugitive and the shapeless monster; it is the breeding ground of terrors and the mirror of the unconscious." (Addison, p. 120).

In *The Ritual*, a group of male friends take to the woods to scatter the ashes of one of their friends. After an injury requires them to find a shortcut back to civilization, they enter the forest. Things do not go well. The trek takes longer than they expect due to getting lost, haunting nightmares, getting impaled on trees, and being served up as a sacrifice to a god-like mythological creature.

The forest as a site for terror is not limited to films in the horror genre. One of the more controversial films to depict the forest as horrific and dangerous is 1972's *Deliverance*. Here we find another group of city men embarking on a journey through forested wilderness only to encounter a hostile terrain and even more hostile humans. The film is known for its (still) shocking portrayal of male rape, but even more than *The Ritual*, the film can be analyzed for its portrayal of masculine insecurities and tensions.

The Grey is in some ways an old-fashioned survival tale of man against nature, as a group of oil men survive a plane crash only to find themselves stranded in the Alaskan wilderness, specifically within the territory of a pack of grey wolves. As the men try to escape the wolves' territory, the wolves and bitter cold slowly pick them off until only one is left to face the alpha wolf. In terms of its Primary Plot line, the film ends at what is often referred to as the "all is lost" moment (or the end of Act II in three act structure). However, there is an emotional conclusion to the film resulting from its streamlined use of B Story. As a result, the film is more about the male protagonist's emotional journey, and the Primary Plot line, while taking up more screen time, is the less important journey and therefore uncompleted. While Addison does not analyze the role of gender, I find it interesting that a number of these stories are set in motion by the intrusion of the masculine into the forest. The male protagonist in *The Hallow* is a surveyor as is the protagonist in *Without Name*, both men in effect trying to quantify the landscape around them. The men in *The Grey* have inadvertently ended up in a wolf pack's territory, but even before the plane crash, the oil drilling has disrupted the natural order. The men in *Deliverance* and *The Ritual* begin their journeys confident in their rationality and the imposed order of their excursion plans only to end up in uncharted territories literally and figuratively. These stories have set ups or elements we often associate with The Hero's Journey, but ultimately fall short. It raises the question of whether horror films are a failed Hero's Journey. In these films, that failure is perhaps an inability to deal with emotions or identity, and having more interest in the masculine façade than authenticity.

Error and the Site of Confusion

Though *The Blair Witch Project* is a horror film, much of its terror is the result of a forest that cannot be navigated. Not because of physical obstacles like ravines or fallen trees or outcroppings of rock, but because the characters are led astray and disoriented – they no longer know which direction is which or how far they've traveled or where they've

traveled. Even time can seem extended or compressed. This type of confusion is linked to Addison's second aspect of forest representation, "... a place of wandering, or error. 'Errare' means 'to wander', a concept invested with moral danger within [John Bunyan's] allegory of a life journey for which there is only one correct path ('rectus' meaning both 'right' and 'straight'—the opposite of 'erroneous,' 'mistaken' or 'astray')." (Addison, p. 123.) In this sense the forest is almost an expression of the trickster archetype.

The men in *The Ritual* become lost once they enter the forest, their shortcut no longer the quickest route back. The student filmmakers in *The Blair Witch Project* cannot find their car and discover after hours of walking that they've been going around in circles. The forest in *Without Name* becomes increasingly disorienting, though its male protagonist never really becomes lost per se except in the most interior of ways.

The Forest presents a near perfect manifestation of the disorienting forest, where the planned or anticipated path becomes lost to the protagonist. Sara goes to Japan's Aokigahara Forest to find her twin sister who has disappeared and is presumed to have committed suicide. The Aokigahara Forest is an actual place, sometimes referred to as the "Sea of Trees," and because of rich deposits of magnetic iron in the soil, compasses are basically useless. "Japanese spiritualists believe that the suicides committed in the forest have permeated Aokigahara's trees, generating paranormal activity and preventing many who enter from escaping the forest's depths."⁵

Sara is sure her sister is alive, and sets out on a quest to rescue her. However, she quickly becomes disoriented in the forest, beginning to doubt and distrust her male companion. The forest ultimately tricks her into killing him and then herself, but ironically her quest is successful because her sister finds her way out of the forest and is rescued. Though a female protagonist, Sara's quest is not following a Heroine's Journey, and the forest is ultimately a site of horror for her, making her story more like the films in the previous section.

Annihilation (UK/USA 2018) is another film that adheres to the idea of the forest as Error, though the difference here is that the team knows that the forest will likely be disorienting. Multiple expeditions have been lost, and in a last ditch effort to try to reach the source of the anomaly known as "The Shimmer," the scientists send in an all-woman team. They have been prepped for gaps in time and memory, but even with preparation, the reality is still troubling. Equipment and memories are all malfunctioning, and the team is quickly isolated and disoriented. However, they do not lose focus of their mission and continue to study the various phenomena that they encounter as they move towards what they believe is the center of the zone.

Refuge and the Site of Transformation

Though in Addison's model the third type of representation of forest is as refuge, I would argue that the incorporation of The Heroine's Path in forest stories deepens and expands this category to include the notion of transformation. In *Annihilation*, this idea of transformation is literal, but we can see it implied more covertly in other films as well.

As the team work their way deeper into "The Shimmer" they discover multiple indicators of transformation, such as plants mutating into the shape of animals and eventually humans.

The integration at the heart of *Annihilation* is less about reconciling the masculine and feminine and more about the integration of human with alien, the Self with Not-Self. Lena and her husband are no longer sure of their identities by the end of the film. At one level, *Annihilation* operates as a statement about marriage where each partner transforms the other and themselves to the point that they are both themselves and no longer themselves. But the film is also a thought experiment for the incomprehensibility of transformation. Lena and her husband understand better than anyone what is happening but this is little comfort. They no longer recognize themselves even though they know their selves are familiar. This is not exactly the refuge Addison suggests, but it is the inner discovery of self that Murdock proposes.

Leave No Trace (USA/Canada 2018) and *Destroyer* (USA 2018) use the forest and forest imagery to reveal transformation as well. These are films that reflect both Murdock's ideas of reconciling identity and Addison's idea of refuge.

The opening of *Leave No Trace* portrays the forest as literal refuge: Will and his 13-year-old daughter Tom live in a secret rustic camp within wooded public land. When they are discovered, social services workers try to integrate them into society, finding Will a job at a tree farm and a house for them to live in. However his PTSD as a vet makes it impossible for him to adjust back into society, and he leads Tom into a more remote forest. After Will is injured, Tom finds a small community living in campers among the trees. As Will heals physically, Tom heals internally, differentiating from her father. As a result, she discovers who she is, ultimately choosing to stay in the community when Will is well enough to leave. The world portrayed in *Leave No Trace* is in some ways the classic juxtaposition of forest and civilization, though the forest is not a site of horror but rather refuge. Ultimately, while Will returns to the wild, Tom finds a home that is a hybrid of forest and civilization. If we think of the town or civilization as the masculine desire for order and the forest as feminine, the ending environment in *Leave No Trace* reconciles the masculine and feminine. The film starts in rustic forest, then civilization, then highly controlled nature (the tree farm), and finally the blend of forest and civilization, a place Tom can call home and where she is part of a community. The environments and Tom's choices reflect her growth and coming into her own identity.

In *Destroyer*, though the trek through the forest actually happens earlier in the chronology of the story (occurring prior to the "present day" of the film), its position at the end of the film as a type of flashback indicates its importance as an illustration of transformation in the main character.

While *Leave No Trace* is an example of a young girl's transformation through a character driven story, *Destroyer* builds its Heroine's Path within the crime genre, a Neo-noir that asks what happens when years later the femme fatale looks back to the moment a "good man" was corrupted. Erin is a former undercover cop who sees a way to avenge her partner's death and make right the bad decisions of her younger self. Through the course of the film, Erin has to reconcile her masculine and feminine sides, make peace with her identity, and try to connect to her teenaged daughter. There are obstacles at every step, and Erin is immersed in the bleak landscapes of L.A. That's why the forest scene is so powerful – it is a breath of fresh air, a memory that is an unknowing gift from her daughter. One good memory. The forest becomes refuge, even though it holds certain dangers, such as the unexpected snowstorm, and yes, Erin is already damaged but not so much that the da-

mage has overwhelmed her. The forest is where Erin is her best, strong and capable, able to keep her daughter safe despite all that's wrong. As a result, this scene becomes an emblem of her salvation, of making peace with who she was and who she is. Her daughter's one good memory is now hers, the thing that reassures her that she is worthy of redemption. Other films that see the forest as a site of transformation connected to The Heroine's Path include *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Australia 1975), *The Other Side of Sleep*, *The Hallow*, *Without Name*, and *Dans la forêt*. In the last few moments of Season 1, even the 2017 French TV show *Zone Blanche* makes us see the forest surrounding Villefranche as something even more mysterious than we realized, as a site for Laurène Weiss' transformation. Interestingly most of these films also disrupt their genre conventions. And this is not to say there cannot be transformation in the Hero's Journey, but any transformation is the result of achieving or encountering the goal. In the Heroine's Path, the transformation is the goal itself, to understand one's world or one's self better.

Full Circle

By now it should be evident that these categories are not mutually exclusive; films can rest comfortably in more than one type of representation. Also, there are exceptions to the general notion that forest-set horror films, whether Hero's Journey or not, center on male protagonists and that the transformation associated with The Heroine's Journey is always a female protagonist. Sara in *The Forest* and Heather in *The Blair Witch Project* are protagonists in horror films that are closer to The Hero's Journey than the Heroine's Path. Through young Tom's eyes, *Dans la forêt* centers the story on his father's transformation in reconciling the masculine and the feminine. While at first it could seem closer to a Hero's Journey, it actually owes more to the Heroine's Path (though imperfectly) as Tom's father initiates an external journey, a quest; but the goal is cloudy, ultimately to simply go deeper into the woods, until he in effect encounters himself and is accepted by his son's embrace. Interestingly, the film is shot like a horror film, suggesting perhaps that transformation for men is basically a horror story.

Here's where we begin to see more clearly the problems of duality or dichotomies and the challenges with nomenclature when discussing story aspects such as these. Is the forest a site of horror for male protagonists or for the masculine? Is the forest a place of transformation for female protagonists or for the feminine? Is the mind masculine and the soul feminine? Little Red Riding Hood is in third person, distant, removed, as if we are observing the story from outside, separate. "Over the river and through the woods" is intimate – it is us – told in first person, but also first person plural, which implies a connectedness.

Hero / Heroine, Male / Female, Masculine / Feminine, Imposition / Interconnectivity.

Would we be better served to think in terms of a spectrum instead of a dichotomy? If so, what words would we use?

In the film *Aeon Flux* (USA 2005), the city Bregna is walled off from the surrounding forest. At the end of the film, the wall has been broken through, and there is no longer something separating the city from the forest, civilization from nature, masculine from

feminine. The final images are in the rubble of the wall, in the area where both and neither exist. This is perhaps the space we are yearning for.

Notes

1. “And into the forest I go, to lose my mind and save my soul,” attributed to John Muir, considered the Father of the United States National Parks system.
2. “The New-England Boy’s Song about Thanksgiving Day” is a poem by Lydia Marie Child published in 1844 and put to music. Though the original poem does not make “wood” plural, subsequent sung versions often do.
3. In 1928, Alexander Porteous published *The Forest in Folklore and Mythology*, which surveys this tradition from cultures around the world.
4. “Terror, Error and Refuge: Forests in Western Literature,” Catherine Addison, *Alternation*, Volume 14, Issue 2, Jan 2007, p. 116 – 136, Centre for the Study of Southern African Literature and Languages.
5. “Aokigahara Suicide Forest” *Atlas Obscura*, <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/aokigahara-suicide-forest>, accessed April 16, 2019, 12:00pm

Filmography:

Aeon Flux (USA 2005, Karyn Kusama)
Alien (UK/USA 1979, Ridley Scott)
Annihilation (UK/USA 2018, Alex Garland)
The Blair Witch Project (USA 1999, Daniel Myrick & Eduardo Sánchez)
Dans la forêt (France/Sweden 2016, Gilles Marchand)
Deliverance (USA 1972, John Boorman)
Destroyer (USA 2018, Karyn Kusama)
Fahrenheit 451 (UK 1966, François Truffaut)
The Forest (USA 2016, Jason Zada)
The Grey (USA 2012, Joe Carnahan)
The Hallow (UK/USA/Ireland 2015, Corin Hardy)
Leave No Trace (USA/Canada 2018, Debra Granik)
Mad Max: Fury Road (Australia/USA 2015, George Miller)
The Other Side of Sleep (Ireland/Netherlands/Hungary 2011, Rebecca Daly)
Picnic at Hanging Rock (Australia 1975, Peter Weir)
The Ritual (UK/Canada 2017, David Bruckner)
Without Name (Ireland 2016, Lorcan Finnegan)
Zone Blanche (France/Belgium 2017/2019, Mathieu Missoffe)

Resumen: En los últimos años y alrededor del mundo, ha habido una proliferación de películas y series de televisión que toman lugar en bosques. Las estructuras de estas historias a menudo difieren según el sexo del protagonista: si los protagonistas son hom-

bres, el bosque suele ser un lugar de horror, pero cuando los protagonistas son mujeres, los bosques se convierten en sitios de transformación. Mirando el trabajo de Maureen Murdock en *El viaje de la heroína*, Joseph Campbell en *El viaje del héroe*, y el modelo de Catherine Addison sobre cómo se representa el bosque en la literatura clásica, este artículo considera cómo el viaje interno de los personajes femeninos se refleja o resuena en el bosque. Las películas discutidas abarcan varios géneros (drama, supervivencia, crimen, horror, ciencia ficción) e incluyen *Leave No Trace/Sin dejar huella*, *Deliverance/La violencia está en nosotros*, *The Grey/Infierno blanco*, *Destroyer*, *Zone Blanche*, *The Ritual*, *The Hallow*, *Without Name*, *Dans la forêt*, *The Blair Witch Project*, *The Forest*, *Mad Max: Fury Road/ Furia en el camino*, *Annihilation* y *Aeon Flux*. La tentación de hablar sobre estas películas en dicotomías, como Héroe/Heroína, Masculino/Femenina, ilustra la necesidad de determinar una nueva terminología para reflejar formas más nuevas de pensar acerca de la complejidad de las historias más allá del sexo del protagonista.

Palabras claves: Masculino - Femenino - Bosque - Transformación - Héroe - Heroína

Resumo: Nos últimos anos, tem havido uma proliferação de filmes e séries de televisão em todo o mundo cujas histórias se passam em florestas. As estruturas dessas narrativas muitas vezes diferem dependendo do gênero do protagonista: se os protagonistas são homens, a floresta é geralmente um ambiente de terror, mas quando os protagonistas são mulheres, as florestas se passam a ser locais de transformação. A partir da análise de obras como *The Heroine's Journey* de Maureen Murdock, *The Hero's Journey* de Joseph Campbell, e o modelo desenvolvido por Catherine Addison sobre como a floresta é representada na literatura clássica, este artigo considera como a jornada interior de personagens femininas se reflete em ou ressoa com a floresta. Os filmes discutidos abrangem vários gêneros (drama, sobrevivência, terror, crime, ficção científica), e inclui títulos como *Sem Rastros* (original: *Leave No Trace*), *Amargo Pesadelo* (original: *Deliverance*), *A Perseguição* (original: *The Grey*), *O Peso do Passado* (original: *Destroyer*), *Zone Blanche*, *O Ritual* (original: *The Ritual*), *A Maldição da Floresta* (original: *The Hallow*), *Without Name*, *Na Floresta* (original: *Dans La Forêt*), *A Bruxa de Blair* (original: *The Blair Witch Project*), *Floresta Maldita* (original: *The Forest*), *Mad Max: Estrada da Fúria* (original: *Mad Max: Fury Road*), *Aniquilação* (original: *Annihilation*), e *Aeon Flux*. A tentação de se referir a esses filmes em dicotomias como Herói / Heroína, Masculino / Feminino, ilustra a necessidade de uma nova terminologia para refletir até mesmo formas contemporâneas de se pensar sobre a complexidade dos aspectos de gênero nos protagonistas das histórias.

Palavras chave: Masculino - feminino - floresta - transformação - herói - heroína

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