

**DARK LANDSCAPES AND DESTRUCTIVE FORCES: SUBVERSION OF THE
WARRIOR-HERO ARCHETYPE IN THE MYTH-DESTROYING
TERRAIN OF THE VIETNAM WAR**

by

ELIZABETH ANNE SIMPSON

*submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of*

MASTER OF ARTS

in the subject

ENGLISH

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF K I SCHERZINGER

JUNE 2002

ABSTRACT

The United States of America entered the conflict in Vietnam with a clearly defined conception of what shaped the character of the heroic warrior: a popular understanding influenced by the Puritan heritage, the myth of the frontier and other socio-cultural forces that defined the parameters for national self-evaluation in the 1950s and 1960s. In this study, the construct of the warrior-hero in its American setting is firstly dealt with in terms of conventional myth structure, through a critical investigation of the character of Natty Bumppo as he appears in James Fennimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer*. An analysis of Michael Cimino's film, *The Deer Hunter* ; Stanley Kubrick's film, *Full Metal Jacket* ; and Gustav Hasford's novel, *The Short Timers* , then details the progressive process by which the character of the mythic warrior-hero began to unravel when the realities of the war in South-east Asia were confronted.

KEY WORDS: Vietnam War, myth sequence, myth structure, archetype, mythic warrior, hero, Deerslayer, Deer Hunter, Full Metal Jacket, Short Timers, Men's studies.

DECLARATION

I declare that

DARK LANDSCAPES AND DESTRUCTIVE FORCES: SUBVERSION OF THE WARRIOR-HERO ARCHETYPE IN THE MYTH-DESTROYING TERRAIN OF THE VIETNAM WAR is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE
(MRS E A SIMPSON)

DATE

DEDICATION

Dedicated to the memory of the fifty-eight thousand who died so senselessly in the service of a misplaced mythic ideal.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to:

Professor K I Scherzinger for her guidance and unfailing encouragement, particularly when I lost sight of the light at the end of the tunnel.

Mr Dawie Malan for his diligent support, direction and interest in my subject of research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Title Page	i
Abstract	ii
Declaration	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vi
INTRODUCTION	1.
CHAPTER 1	6.
Configuring the Traditional American Frontier Hero: <i>The Deerslayer.</i>	
CHAPTER 2	19.
The Popular Romance Quest Myth in Crisis: <i>The Deer Hunter.</i>	
CHAPTER 3	39.
Destructive Forces and Dark Landscapes: <i>Full Metal Jacket</i> and <i>The Short Timers.</i>	
CHAPTER 4	63.
'... strange hells within the minds war made'	
WORKS CITED	69.

INTRODUCTION.

In his book *American Myth and the Legacy of Vietnam*, John Hellmann wrote with reference to *The Deer Hunter* and *Apocalypse Now*:

Each of the films takes a hero who is a version of the national archetype and sends him on a quest in which the aberrant, fragmented, hallucinatory Vietnam experience inverts or subverts the cultural assumptions carried by the familiar structure of a popular genre.

(Hellmann, 1986:203)

Hellmann's book was first published in 1986 at a time of resurgent American¹ interest in a conflict that had culminated, in the spring of 1975, in the collapse of South Vietnam. The era of the 1980s proved to be a time of catharsis as Americans began trying to come to terms with the war they had lost, and veterans attempted to voice (through a plethora of memoirs, novels and films) the pain of the psychological scars they carried as a result of both the war itself and the years of national rejection they had suffered since their return. Many had answered the call of a youthful President John F. Kennedy's rhetoric to: 'Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country' (Kovic, 1977:9), only to return from Vietnam to be confronted with feelings of alienation from country, family and friends alike (Lomperis, 1987:34).

Veteran Ron Kovic, paralysed from the chest down by a bullet that severed his spinal cord, expressed the sentiments of many of his former fellow combatants when he stated at The Asia Society Conference in 1985:

Fifty-eight thousand killed because they [the United States government] lied to us, because they used us, because they fed us with all this crap about John Wayne and being a hero and the romance of war and everything we watched on television. They set up my generation, they set us up for war. They made us believe that war was going to be something

glorious and something beautiful The bands were playing.
Everybody told us to go.

(Lomperis, 1987:30)

Kovic's outburst highlights the attitude of not only the government of the day, but also of many Americans during the Vietnam era who saw war as a glorious testing ground where innocent boys could assert their right of passage to manhood by becoming warrior-heroes. What shaped the character of the warrior-hero was already clearly defined in the minds of many Americans. Their understanding of this term was bound to and influenced by their Puritan heritage; the myth of the frontier and other socio-cultural factors that delineated the parameters for self-evaluation in the 1950s and 1960s. However, as Hellmann has implied, what these potential heroes encountered in Vietnam was a complete reversal of their expectations – 'an ironic anti-myth ... that dissolve[d] into an utter chaos of dark revelation' (Hellmann, 1986:102).

The Vietnam engagement, the origins of which can be traced back to a colonial war with France that started in 1945 (Fitzgerald, 1989:79) only realized an escalation of American troop involvement in 1965 (Dittmar and Michaud, 1990:314), and continued until the fall of Saigon in April 1975 (Dittmar and Michaud, 1990:330). In an historical sense, therefore, the Vietnam conflict (a state of war was never officially declared) might be described as an American war of recent history and the literature and film that derived as a consequence of the conflict has thus been limited to that produced approximately within the last twenty-five years because, as Catherine Calloway has intimated: 'It was not until American withdrawal from Southeast Asia that Vietnam became a credible subject for authors and film-makers' (Calloway, 1991:139).

Calloway's article cites a fairly comprehensive list of primary sources for literature and films, critical sources, bibliographies (both primary and secondary sources), book-length studies of Vietnam War literature and film and a number of doctoral dissertations (most unpublished) on Vietnam War literature. Examination of many

of these cited works, as well as close readings of numerous memoirs and serious novels produced as a consequence of the conflict, reveals a common theme – the part played by cultural, romantic and religious myths in American perceptions of the conflict. John Hellmann's book *American Myth and the Legacy of Vietnam*, for example, is described as one 'which examines Vietnam War literature as it fits into the myth of the American frontier hero' (Calloway, 1991:147). Hellmann's work focuses on the American symbolic landscape and how, in Vietnam, this dissolved into a nightmare version of assumptions and values of previous American myths (Hellmann, 1986:102). In a study of best sellers, popular articles, memoirs, serious novels and films, he places emphasis on the motif of revolt against the immediate father (in the guise of contemporary society) in order to seek communion with the cultural father (the American mythic ideal), by entering the frontier in Vietnam. For the youthful protagonist, however, what results is an 'ironic anti-myth' as his quest 'dissolves into an utter chaos of dark revelation' (Hellmann, 1986:102).

On a related theme Graham Everett, in his doctoral thesis entitled *The American National Character and the Novelization of Vietnam*, suggests that each war (he examines representative novels from early American wars, World War I, World War II and Vietnam) produces literary works that present the American soldier from different perspectives based on varying interpretations of what he terms an 'American national character'. In his study of Vietnam War novels he sees soldiers in this conflict not only encountering the horrors of the war and the limitations of the military machine, but also facing the loss of self-restraint as they become victims of violence. He concludes that the construct of the national character could not hold together because it was an 'incomplete' construction – 'incomplete because it excludes Americans on the basis of race and gender' (Everett, 1994:337).

My own dissertation takes from both Hellmann's and Everett's hypotheses the concept of a national character in the guise of the archetypal warrior-hero, and

pursues this manifestation in terms of conventional myth structure as described by Northrop Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* and John Vickery in *Myth and Literature: Contemporary Theory and Practice*. By examining the theory of American frontier mythology, as formulated by Richard Slotkin in *Regeneration Through Violence* and *Gunfighter Nation*, it then shows how the forces operative on an expanding American frontier served to shape the myth of a distinctly American version of the conventional archetypal hero. A close scrutiny of the character of Natty Bumppo, as he appears in James Fennimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer*, provides a study of the American mythic hero prior to his encounter with the Vietnam War.

Chapter two of the dissertation investigates socio-cultural forces of the 1950s and 1960s – the political slogans and ethos of the new Kennedy administration and what came to be known as the 'John Wayne syndrome' – as described by historian Loren Baritz in *Backfire*. Based largely on Susan Faludi's contemporary work entitled *Stiffed: The Betrayal of Modern Man*, a third influencing factor that subsequently led to a re-evaluation of the character of the hero (namely the prominence given to the question of what constituted masculinity) is also analysed. This revised version of the hero is then applied to the characters of Michael and Nick in Michael Cimino's film *The Deer Hunter*². Drawing again on Baritz and Faludi, as well as Francis Fitzgerald's acclaimed analytical and documentary account of the war, *Fire in the Lake*, chapter three traces the systematic breakdown in the formula for the character of the mythic hero. A study of Stanley Kubrick's film, *Full Metal Jacket*³, and Gustav Hasford's novel, *The Short Timers*, details the progressive process by which the character of the mythic warrior-hero began to unravel, until what eventually materialised was a completely inverted version of the original myth.

Although this dissertation takes from Hellmann and Everett the essential element of the warrior-hero / national character as its basis for study, it adds an extended dimension by offering a possible explanation for the subversion of this archetypal

character. I will argue that the character of the warrior-hero fails not, as Graham Everett suggests, because it excludes Americans on the basis of race and gender but because, in Vietnam, the formula by which the hero was measured underwent a systematic breakdown, effectively resulting in a completely inverted version of the original myth.

John Hellmann, in his analysis of the final scene of *The Deer Hunter*, points to the themes of closure and regeneration. Closure, he implies, is effected by bringing the surviving characters together in the bar and having them propose a toast to the departed Nick, while their rendering of 'God Bless America' suggests a sense of regeneration. I propose, on the other hand, that in Vietnam there could be no closure, a fact that is frequently alluded to in much of Vietnam literature. Vietnam was, after all, a war America lost; it was a war where its veterans, like Ron Kovic, felt betrayed by a government they considered had lied to them; but most of all it was a war that subverted a national myth – the myth of the archetypal warrior-hero. Under these circumstances closure could not be realised.

NOTES.

1. The terms 'America' and 'American' are used throughout this dissertation. Their usage is intended to mean 'from the United States of America', as opposed to the sense of encompassing the whole of the North American continent, including Canada and South America.
2. All references in this dissertation to *The Deer Hunter* relate to the 1978 film released by Universal. Director: Michael Cimino. Screenplay: Deric Washburn. Cast: Robert DeNiro, John Savage, Christopher Walken. Distribution: EMI Films Inc.
3. All references in this dissertation to *Full Metal Jacket* relate to the 1987 film released by Warner Brothers. Director: Stanley Kubrick. Screenplay: Stanley Kubrick, Michael Herr and Gustav Hasford. Cast: Mathew Modine, Lee Ermey. Distribution: Swank Motion Pictures.

CHAPTER 1.
Configuring the Traditional American Frontier Hero:
The Deerslayer.

Richard Slotkin, in *Regeneration Through Violence*, notes that:

The mythology of a nation is the intelligible mask of that enigma called the "national character". Through myths the psychology and world view of our cultural ancestors are transmitted to modern descendants, in such a way and with such power that our perception of contemporary reality and our ability to function in the world are directly, often tragically affected.

(Slotkin, 1996:3)

In order to understand the process of myth making in America, it is first necessary to define the theoretical foundations upon which subsequent reasoning will be constructed. This chapter defines these underlying principles, attempts to show how the romantic convention myths of Europe came to be reconciled with the American experience and, finally, shows how the concept of the 'hero' in particular has been reformulated by successive stages of an expanding American society to ultimately produce what Slotkin calls the 'archetypal hero of the American frontier' (Slotkin, 1996:268-269).

The term 'myth' has wide and varied definition in both its classical and contemporary sense. In classical Greek mythology, myths were identified as fictitious stories that served to explain how something came to exist. Filled with apocalyptic imagery, they invariably involved supernatural beings, or at least supra-human beings, who remained ageless in the chronology of time (Raglan, 1979:244). In its modern significance, however, the term 'myth' has been the subject of innumerable interpretations and derivations by both anthropologists and critics alike. John Vickery has recognised that, even amongst critics, there was a tendency to 'extend and alter' the sense of the term subject to the needs of their own discipline, while using myths to provide concepts and patterns that

could be used to interpret works of literature (Vickery, 1966:ix). Roland Barthes, for example, sees myth as 'a second order semiological system' (Barthes, 1974:114) as opposed to being a story (such as the stories of Ancient Greek mythology), although he does acknowledge that myths give expression to popular ideas of the time.

To explain his conception of the term 'myth' Barthes, in his article 'Myth Today' (included in a collection of his essays entitled *Mythologies*), uses as an example a picture on the cover of *Paris-Match* that shows a young Negro in French military uniform saluting the French flag. The implication, and subsequently the myth that the picture appears to endorse, is that French colonialism is accepted even by those who it is purported to suppress. How he arrives at this conclusion is, however, not as important as the aspect of dependence of interpretation on the context in which the picture is received. While Barthes was writing the pieces included in *Mythologies*, France still had several colonies in Africa, and this proved to be the topic of many political and moral debates. Seen in this light it is understandable that the picture could have been interpreted as an endorsement of the myth that French colonialism was accepted as good even by the colonized. However, the same photograph in a different context might give rise to a very different interpretation. If, for example, it were to be included in a photographic exhibition, and placed next to one depicting the inferior living conditions of African soldiers in the French army as opposed to their white counterparts, the received notion might be that of exposing the effects of French imperialism on the people whom it subjected to its rule. The point here is that interpretation of myth is largely dependent on the circumstances under which it is received. In other words, myth has to be placed in context. The question of context later becomes important when considering the American myth of the frontier hero.

However, despite its many and varying definitions, in terms of the origin of myth the still most commonly accepted theory of myth interpretation is the ritual theory, which defines myth as a narrative linked to rite – 'the myth describes what the

ritual enacts' (Rahv, 1966:111). With the passing of time the practice of the ancient rite dies out, but the often 'misunderstood and transformed record passes into myth and symbol' (Hyman, 1966:54) to be handed down from one generation of a particular cultural group to the next, peppering the literature with certain controlling ideas and images called 'archetypes'.

Northrop Frye, in *Anatomy of Criticism*, has identified the central myth of literature with the quest-myth, which follows a distinct pattern or plot that Frye calls a 'mythos' (Frye, 1973:52). It is with Frye's 'mythos of summer' or 'romance quest' (Frye, 1973:186) that this dissertation is essentially concerned. The form of this plot involves the progressive movement of the hero through the three main stages of separation, initiation and return (Frye, 1973:187); stages that will inform the fulcrum of my argument concerning the hero and his metaphorical journey of self-realization in the myth-destroying terrain of the Vietnam War.

Elaborating on the three main stages of the quest or major adventure of romance, Frye (1973:198-202) distinguishes six isolatable phases. The first details the birth of the hero, which usually occurs in mysterious circumstances as *his true paternity is often concealed*. The second phase revolves around the innocent youth of the hero, usually set in a pastoral or Arcadian world where he is overshadowed by parents and surrounded by youthful companions. The third phase involves the normal quest theme in the form of a call to adventure. In the fourth phase (often forming part of the stage of initiation) the central theme is one of maintaining the integrity of the innocent world against the assault of experience, and the central image here is that of the beleaguered castle. The fifth phase presents as one of reflective experience where the world is similar to that of the second phase, but where the mood is one of contemplative withdrawal rather than youthful preparation. The final phase involves the return of the hero and his reintegration into the social group of his culture. This phase is generally filled with images of comfortable beds or chairs around fireplaces, or warm and cosy spots. The romance quest pattern described above is thus a familiar plot

formula ascribed to in the traditional mode of Romance literature, which generally presents an idealized world where 'heroes are brave, heroines beautiful and villains villainous' (Frye, 1973:151), and each of the phases is, to some extent, identifiable in the works under study in this dissertation.

However, because myth is invariably linked to rite, the movement from boy to man in the quest-romance involves initiation rituals, usually called 'puberty rituals' (Eckert, 1966:162). In his chapter entitled 'Initiatory Motifs in the Story of Telemachus', Charles Eckert describes the ritual sequence that a hero undergoes, a process that sees his transformation from boy to man (Eckert, 1966:161). This transformation process progresses through four phases that include the nocturnal theft of young boys by older men; the removal of the initiates to a place of dark, menacing seclusion (either literal or metaphorical), which they endure for a period of time; the phase of their active physical initiation and finally their return to the group. During the ritual process the initiate is transformed from 'a womanish boy to a heroic slayer of men' (Eckert, 1966:167), and this process can be identified in both James Fennimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer* and Gustav Hasford's *The Short Timers*. In the latter case, however, the ritual process can also be identified as one of the contributing factors leading to the eventual undermining of the heroic status of the protagonist, because it is while enduring the rigors of basic training that the 'other' side of the recruits' characters is both nurtured and begins to emerge.

In respect of characterization in the romance quest, Frye defines an archetype as a 'typical recurring image' in literature that serves as a communicable symbol helping 'to unify and integrate our literary experience' (Frye, 1973:99). The hero of romance literature presents as a typical archetype because, irrespective of his setting or the pattern of his adventures, he appears to display certain archetypal characteristics common to all heroes of romance. Frye further explains that characterization in romance follows a general dialectic structure informed by the quest of the plot:

Characters tend to be either for or against the quest. If they assist it they are idealized as simply gallant or pure. If they obstruct it they are caricatured as simply villainous or cowardly. Hence every typical character in romance tends to have his moral opposite confronting him.

(Frye, 1973:195)

In any quest involving conflict this structure of diametric opposites becomes operative. The character who is in favour of the quest Frye calls the 'protagonist or hero', while the character who proves to be against the accomplishment of the prescribed task is termed the 'antagonist or enemy' (Frye, 1973:187).

Arguably, the distinction between protagonist and antagonist might not be quite as simple as Frye's definition implies. When a romance tends towards the tragic mode (as much of Vietnam War literature does) the hero becomes isolated from his society (Frye, 1973:35) and hence becomes a tragic protagonist engaged in a conflict against representations of darkness and evil. In such a case Herbert Weisinger theorizes that:

... there comes a point [in the course of the conflict] where the protagonist and the antagonist appear to *merge* into a single challenge against the order of God; *the evil which the protagonist would not do, he does, and the good which he would do, he does not* (my emphasis)

(Weisinger, 1966:154)

The developing argument of this dissertation attempts to show how the character of Joker, in both Hasford's *The Short Timers* and Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*, follows the course of the tragic protagonist. However, contrary to Weisinger's theory that 'after shame and suffering [the tragic protagonist] emerges triumphant as the symbol of the victory of light and good over darkness and evil' (Weisinger, 1966:154), I propose that this act of 'closure' is never effected for Joker in *The Short Timers* and is made only partially possible in Kubrick's film.

John Winthrop, aboard the *Arbella* on its epic voyage to the New World, told his fellow Puritans that they were the 'Chosen People', entrusted with the task of establishing a new civilization and creating a 'City upon a Hill' that would serve as a moral example to the rest of the world (Baritz, 1998:26). Encapsulated in these words was the seminal idea that would ripen into the original American myth – a myth that described the world as starting up again under fresh initiative through, what Richard Slotkin has termed, the 'Puritan model of the heroic quest' (Slotkin, 1996:39).

In leaving their native land, the Puritans saw themselves as escaping a 'sin-begotten humanity' and engaging on a 'spiritual journey' to a New World that offered redemption and salvation to a Chosen People. In the eyes of the founding fathers, therefore, theirs was a divine mission or quest that would not only lead to the salvation of the human race, but would also be a western pilgrimage completing the 'great circle', a theory Hellmann bases on the work of J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur (Hellmann, 1986:5). Hellmann hypothesizes that civilization began in the Far East and experienced a westward movement through Europe to America. The advancing American frontier he sees as an expansion towards the Pacific – an expansion that would eventually come full-circle again on the Asian continent. This concept formed the basis of what would later come to be known as Kennedy's 'New Frontier' initiative in Vietnam.

In their migration to the New World, the colonists brought with them mythologies derived from the cultural history of their home countries, but 'new circumstances forced new perceptions, new self-concepts and new world concepts' (Slotkin, 1996:15), and out of this was born what R.W.B. Lewis has called the 'American Adam' – a 'new kind of hero, the heroic embodiment of a new set of ideal human attributes' (Lewis, 1955:5) who, in turning away from civilization to nature in the wilderness of a new land, was regaining a lost innocence. The colonists needed to identify with a new type of frontier hero 'whose character and experiences would express their own sense of history, of their relationship to the American

land, of their growing away from Europe' (Slotkin, 1996:189). Essentially what this meant was the creation of a new 'prototype' based on their common understanding of the traditional romantic hero. He was still the stalwart character of the universal archetypal myth – the representation of 'many cultures over long periods of time' (Slotkin, 1996:9), but his character was now also being influenced by new experiences in his relationship with the American land and the American wilderness. As a product of a newly emerging American mythology, he thus manifested as a new symbolic figure or 'cultural archetype' complete with a new set of values gleaned through his interaction with the frontier for, as historian Fredrick Jackson Turner has noted, 'the frontier [was] the line of most rapid and effective Americanisation' (Turner, 1935:3-4).

In a series of essays (that were later collated into a book entitled *The Frontier in American History*) Turner repeatedly stresses both the importance of the frontier in 'developing the stalwart and rugged qualities of the frontiersman' (Turner, 1935:15) and the notion that this westward expansion was a process that transformed a desolate and savage land into a modern civilization. Turner's thesis remained uncontested for almost two generations but, in the late 1970s, there emerged a new generation of western historians who exposed a less heroic portrayal of white settlement. New scholars such as Richard White, William Cronon and Patricia Limerick downplayed the mythology of a heroic frontier, and instead unmasked the hegemonic imperialism linked to a national and international capitalist economy that pervaded the westward expansion. In the light of these new historiographies, the narrative of heroism and the heroic myth could be called into question. However, for the purposes of this dissertation the dominant frontier myth (while problematic and contested by contemporary standards) should, like Barthe's Negro saluting the French flag, be placed in context. American involvement in the Vietnam War extended from approximately 1965-1975 and therefore falls outside of the period when new historiographies began to question the myth of a heroic frontier. Consequently, the notion of the 'hero' and the heroic myth associated with the frontier of the Old West should be

linked to Turner's popular thesis (as that was the instrument of measure that held sway at the time of the Vietnam War), rather than associating them with the profound historiographical shift that began in the late 1970s.

Inherent in this new Adamic character and the freedom that the opening up of the frontier offered him, was the success myth of the American Dream. David Mogen has described the American Dream as 'our belief in limitless possibilities' (Mogen, 1989:26) existing beyond social and political restraints. The frontier represented the demarcation between civilization and the unknown wilderness, but it was also the gateway to success, offered through the potential to acquire seemingly unlimited land and resources. According to Turner, the frontier allowed men to:

... escape from oppression or inequalities which burdened them in the older settlements... Among the pioneers one man was as good as his neighbor. He had the same chance; conditions were simple and free. Economic equality fostered political equality.
(Turner, 1935:274)

In addition it offered the promise of adventure, and in so doing satisfied the 'call to adventure' theme of the archetypal quest-myth. If, as Richard Slotkin has suggested, 'myths are stories drawn from society's history' (Slotkin, 1992:5), then the moulding of this new Adamic hero and all he stood for in the newly emerging white American society was set to be the formative new myth of an archetypal American cultural hero or frontier archetype, who would find his way into literature through the legend of Daniel Boone.

Slotkin describes how, in the late eighteenth century, schoolmaster John Filson took the legend of an historical character, Daniel Boone (with whom he was personally acquainted), and immortalized him in 'The Adventures of Daniel Boone', which first appeared as an appendix to Filson's book, *The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucke*, published in 1784. In the fictional Boone, Filson created a character 'who was to become the archetypal hero of the

American frontier' (Slotkin, 1996:268) by drawing on the experiences of the legendary hero's career and presenting them in a sufficiently realistic manner to allow the public to identify with this fictional character and all he represented. More importantly, though, it was a tale 'constructed in such a way that it could grow along with the culture whose values it espoused, changing and adjusting to match the changes in the evolution of that culture' (Slotkin, 1996:269). A society's culture, after all, is not a static entity, but something that constantly changes with the passage of time. Consequently the concept of the 'hero' in a changing culture needs to be given sufficient leeway, not only to grow within that changing culture, but also to change in accordance with shifting interpretations of the concept of a frontier. All the protagonists in this study (Natty Bumppo in *The Deerslayer*, Michael in *The Deer Hunter* and Joker in *Full Metal Jacket* and *The Short Timers*) are identifiable with the basic archetypal hero myth of the romance quest. However, in each case, the culture of which they are a part has had a profound effect on their behavioural patterns.

The character of Daniel Boone, as created by Filson, bears strong resemblance to the archetypal hero of the romance quest. Like his literary descendent, Natty Bumppo, Boone is depicted as a hunter and trapper lured by the spirit of adventure to the threshold of Kentucky. As the embodiment of an initial state of innocence, he undergoes a series of initiations and captivity that fills him with greater insight, finally allowing him to return with new wisdom to become the warrior chief of his people (Slotkin, 1996:303). In a final battle he is plunged into a world of misery and despair, but emerges with renewed strength to ultimately lead his people to peace. By 1830, and as a consequence of the emergence of this new role model, 'the popular literature of the United States and Europe had generated several stereotyped images of the frontier hero, Daniel Boone' (Slotkin, 1996:466), not least of these being James Fennimore Cooper's Natty Bumppo, hero of his *Leatherstocking Tales*.

In Natty Bumppo, Cooper created a character that saw 'a blending of the literary conventions of English Romance fiction ... with the popular literature of New England and the new West' (Slotkin, 1996:468). Bumppo was essentially created in the mould of the mythic hero of the popular romance quest, but he was also the culmination of America's frontier character in communion with uncivilized nature.

The setting of *The Deerslayer* evokes the Arcadian imagery described in Northrop Frye's idealized world of the romance mode. It is a novel whose action is typically centred in a forest surrounding a body of water in the form of Lake Glimmerglass, thus adhering to the water symbolism that pervades the romance mode. Cities are alien in this pastoral setting, although images of habitation include Muskrat Castle, the Hutter's home, which stands on a stockade island in the middle of the lake (Cooper, 1987:39). The world of *The Deerslayer* typifies the metaphorical organisation of the more desirable apocalyptic imagery, in contrast to the less desirable presentation of a world of demonic imagery (Frye, 1973:139). This distinction will later become important, as the idealized world of the typical mode of romance in *The Deerslayer* and the first half of *The Deer Hunter* implodes into the myth-destroying terrain of Vietnam. The transition from one mythic landscape to another more sinister, marks a shift from apocalyptic to demonic symbolism that culminates, in *Full Metal Jacket* and *The Short Timers*, in the once romantic but now ruined city of Hue as an example of demonic imagery:

... the world of the nightmare and the scapegoat, of bondage and pain and confusion, ... the world also of perverted or wasted work, ruins and catacombs, instruments of torture and monuments of folly.

(Frye, 1973:147)

Like his historic cousin, Daniel Boone, Natty epitomizes the archetypal hero of the mythos of romance. At the beginning of the novel he is portrayed as an innocent youth still overshadowed by parents and family:

The sight brought back to his mind a rush of childish recollections He bethought him of his mother, whose homely vestments he remembered to have seen hanging on pegs

(Cooper, 1987:43)

He is surrounded by youthful companions in the guise of Hurry Harry – ‘Both these frontiersmen were still young, Hurry having reached the age of six or eight and twenty, while Deerslayer was several years his junior’ (Cooper, 1987:21) – and Chingachgook, whom Cooper describes as ‘yet too young to lead in war’ (Cooper, 1987:135).

Presenting Leatherstocking as a youth on the verge of manhood, the novel recounts his initiation into Indian fighting, as well as ‘his moral testing and awakening’ (Slotkin, 1996:496). Slotkin also indicates that: ‘the stages of Deerslayer’s initiation are marked by changes in his name and totem animal’ (Slotkin, 1996:499). His given name, Natty Bumppo, is a symbol of his white Christian heredity. This is followed by the Delaware names of ‘Straight-tongue’ for his honesty, ‘Pigeon’ for his fleetness and ‘Lap-ear’ for his skill as a tracker. Once he has killed his first animal he is given the name ‘Deerslayer’ and finally ‘Hawkeye’ when he kills his first Indian. In this final act of initiation (which takes place at night in the secluded forest, as is customary in the mode of romance) he is reborn as the archetypal American hero – ‘the fully-fledged fictional Adam’ (Lewis, 1955:104).

From this point onwards, the novel satisfies a number of myth themes peculiar to the emerging American mythology. These include the Captivity Myth, in the capture of Tom Hutter and Harry March by the Hurons and the rescue of Hist by Chingachgook and Hawkeye. When Judith presents Natty with Killdeer, the gift of this mythic weapon not only ‘marks his achievement of heroic stature’ but is also an analogy with the Arthurian legend of kings and knights being presented with their legendary weapons by the Lady of the Lake (Slotkin, 1996:501). The

presentation of Killdeer further alludes to another association in the new American mythology: the link between the frontier hero, his weapon and his masculinity. Leyland Person concludes that Killdeer is 'an embodiment of Natty's developing character' (Person, 1998:91) as he increasingly identifies himself with and becomes dependent upon the weapon. He eroticises the rifle as he caresses the lock and breech, observing that without the use of such a weapon he is no more than a 'miserable trapper, or a forlorn broom and basket maker' (Cooper, 1987:442). Just over a century later this summation will be repeated in the familiar Marine Corps Rifleman's Creed: 'This is my rifle. There are many like it but this one is mine. My rifle is my best friend. It is my life. I must master it as I master my life' (Hasford, 1983:22). Emphasis on an association between the frontier hero and his masculinity is a feature that becomes more fully developed in the twentieth century through a powerful cultural icon in the persona of Hollywood's John Wayne.

The most commonly accepted theory of myth interpretation is the ritual theory, where 'the myth describes what the ritual enacts'. In literature Northrop Frye identified the central myth as that of the 'quest-myth' (and for the purposes of this dissertation, the 'romance quest' in particular), which follows the progressive movement of the hero through the three stages of separation, initiation and return. Linked to the quest-myth of romance are initiation rituals whereby the initiate is transformed from 'a womanish boy to a heroic slayer of men'. Both the romance quest-myth and its accompanying initiation rituals can be identified in early American literary works such as James Fennimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer*. Apart from adhering to the general principles of the romance quest-myth, *The Deerslayer* also demonstrates themes and values peculiar to the then newly emerging American frontier mythology in which the basic archetypal hero became assimilated into the perceptions and requirements of the changing American frontier. Just as society's culture is not a static entity but constantly changes with the passage of time, so the image of the 'hero' is a myth that has changed in accordance with shifting interpretations of the frontier concept. In the

next chapter I will demonstrate how the new cultural archetype, the 'American Adam', became the reformulated 'frontier hero' of the 1960s as he was assimilated into and cast in the heroic mould of that culture.

CHAPTER 2.

The Popular Romance Quest Myth in Crisis:

The Deer Hunter.

The America of the 1960s generated a new kind of mythic hero whose character was fine-tuned by the political slogans and ethos of the new Kennedy administration; John Wayne, Hollywood's greatest hero of the Old West and World War II; and what Susan Jeffords has termed 'the traditional images of manhood' (Jeffords, 1991:219). This chapter examines these influencing factors and the role they played in moulding a new version of the romantic hero with whom many young soldiers going to Vietnam might initially have identified. In an analysis of Michael Cimino's 1978 film, *The Deer Hunter*, I will show how the vision created by this new superman character both evolved and came into crisis through its engagement with the Vietnam War.

John F. Kennedy came to power in 1960, riding on Presidential campaign slogans that called attention to an improved military's ability to contain the advance of Communism on the 'frontiers' of the Third World (Slotkin, 1992:489). As a combat veteran of World War II, Kennedy projected a vision of the President as a heroic figure already qualified for power by his own deeds in battle. In *One Brief Shining Moment* (his 1983 memoir of and tribute to the late President) William Manchester, history professor at Wesleyan University and John F. Kennedy's official biographer, states that:

Jack's valor lay ... in saving his crew and bringing them back safely through Japanese waters, 150 miles from U.S. bases. He had been decorated for "extremely heroic conduct", when, "unmindful of personal danger", he had rescued PT 109's men on the night of August 1-2 1943. His citation ended: "His courage, endurance, and excellent leadership contributed to the saving of several lives and was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

(Manchester, 1983:24)

The image created here is of the fatherly officer delivering those under his command from the hands of the enemy, and it is an image that resonates in a similar situation where Michael, in *The Deer Hunter*, effects the successful escape of himself, Nick and Steven from their Vietcong captors. Thus, as Richard Slotkin has intimated, Kennedy's campaign 'identified him with the heroes of the combat film through invocations of his wartime heroism ("P.T. 109") and with the heroes of the Frontier Myth' (Slotkin, 1992:497).

After his assassination Kennedy also came to be identified with the myth of chivalric knighthood, and the epitaph of his administration became 'Camelot'. When the President was pronounced dead at Parkland Hospital, Senator Ralph Yarborough is reported to have turned aside and whispered: 'Excalibur has sunk beneath the waves' (Manchester, 1983:273). This was followed several days later by Jacqueline Kennedy who, in an audience with Theodore H. White, created what became the Myth of Camelot. Historian and biographer, Sarah Bradford, remarks that 'she [Ms Kennedy] was determined not only that Jack should not be forgotten, but that he should be remembered in the heroic light in which she now saw him' (Bradford, 2001:382). Ms Kennedy recalled for White her dead husband, as a small boy, 'sick most of the time, reading history, reading the Knights of the Round Table, reading Marlborough' (Bradford, 2001:383). This she linked to Jack's love for the musical *Camelot* and, in particular the song he loved most, which ended:

Don't let it be forgot
That once there was a spot
For one brief shining moment
That was known as Camelot.

Putting these two memories together, Jackie Kennedy irrevocably linked the Arthurian legend to modern-day America through a myth that later came to be attributed to the Kennedy administration. The fact that John Kennedy was a

penny-pinching womaniser (a trait Manchester frequently alludes to in *One Brief Shining Moment*, and which is identified more overtly by Sarah Bradford in her biography of Jacqueline Kennedy) was largely forgotten after his assassination in 1963 because, as Manchester is quick to point out: 'What the hero was and what he believed are submerged by the demands of those who mourn him. In myth he becomes what they want him to have been ...' (Manchester, 1983:276). And both his widow and the nation wanted him to be a hero who had died a hero's death. Placed on this pedestal, he would become the example for others to follow.

Thus as a role model, John Kennedy appeared to project all the values and virtues of a romantic hero of the Arthurian legend – prowess, loyalty, generosity, courtesy and a desire for glory. Coupled with this he also appeared to espouse the characteristic traits of the American hero, described by Hellmann as 'innocence, a desire to "do good", a conception of the world as a battleground between the forces of Light and Darkness ... and an absolute faith in American righteousness and "mission" ' (Hellmann, 1986:14). Kennedy thus manifested as another 'King Arthur', presiding over his royal court as the respected leader whose function was to direct his 'knights' in a battle against darkness and evil. He was a figure with traits that his 'subjects' wished to emulate – subjects such as Vietnam combat veteran and author, Ron Kovic, who always 'wanted to be a hero'. When Kennedy was assassinated, Kovic remembered experiencing a great sense of loss, as though he 'had lost a dear friend' (Kovic, 1977:71). A year later, while in Marine boot camp, Kovic recalled: 'Like the young president had said, they would have to bear many burdens, many sacrifices He would not let his president, or his family or any of them down' (Kovic, 1997:86). Like many of the combatants sent to Vietnam, Kovic took the values and virtues of his president as his own in a symbolic re-creation of the romantic hero of the quest myth venturing forth to defend his country on a new frontier.

According to a bulletin of the Superintendent of the Census, the western frontier had officially closed in 1890 (Turner, 1935:1). In his campaign for the White

House in 1960, however, John Kennedy resurrected the Myth of the Frontier as part of his campaign slogan, resulting in his administration being labelled the 'New Frontier' administration. As Slotkin has indicated, this was not just an 'advertising ploy' but 'was designed to suggest the kind of "heroic" action that could be expected of the new President'. Slotkin goes further to suggest that Kennedy, like Roosevelt before him:

... saw the United States as standing on the edge of a "frontier", facing a new world of vast potential for either unlimited progress or unlimited disaster – "the frontier of the 1960s, a frontier of unknown opportunities and paths, a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats".

(Slotkin, 1992:490)

Not only did Kennedy envisage this new frontier as a new version of the American Dream, but it also formed an integral part of his foreign policy as a counteroffensive against Communism on the 'frontiers' of the Third World. Francis Fitzgerald wrote: 'the idea that the mission of the United States was to build democracy around the world had been a convention of American politics in the 1950s' (Fitzgerald, 1989:108). The Kennedy administration cultivated this notion, effectively invoking the Myth of a City upon a Hill where democracy was being offered to the Third World (and more specifically Vietnam) 'as a means of positioning America on the right side of the moral divide' (Baritz, 1998:99).

America, at the beginning of the 1960s, was thus riding on a new fervour of nationalism, fired by a Democratic administration that reinvented old myths in new forms – the Myth of a City upon a Hill, the Myth of the Frontier and the Myth of the American Dream - all of which I will show to be central concerns of *The Deer Hunter*. Not only did this administration have as its figurehead a man who appeared himself to be a reincarnation of the romantic hero, but it also created programmes such as the Peace Corps and the Special Forces (including the Green Berets), political instruments closely identified with Kennedy-style heroism. In this connection John Hellmann notes that

[t]he Peace Corpsman and the soldier were symbolic links in the nation's frontier heritage. The Green Beret, an elite combination of the Peace Corpsman and the soldier, became the quintessential symbol of this renewal.

(Hellmann, 1986:44)

It was envisaged that the Peace Corps would work directly with village counterparts on local projects in Vietnam, while the primary task of the Green Berets was 'to train the mountain people to fight the guerrillas' (Baritz, 1998:109).

The championing of the Green Berets by President Kennedy saw a resurrection of the frontier hero, with southeast Asia now presenting as 'the frontier where a resurgent American character was once again on the move' (Hellmann, 1986:46).

John Hellmann draws the following analogy between the earlier version of the western hero and the Green Beret:

The western hero was not only self-reliant but also self-restrained, a chaste "saint with a gun"; similarly, the Green Beret was a man skilled in "hand-to-hand combat" whose "courtesy, deportment and other such traits must be excellent". But the Green Beret took the paradox of the *genteel killer* (my emphasis), the death-dealing innocent, far beyond the previous incarnations of the western hero, for he spent much of his time engaged in the missionary work of the Peace Corpsman

(Hellmann, 1986:47)

Hellmann's summation, however, satirically resonates in the words of Crazy Earl in *The Short Timers*, whose character endorses a complete inversion of the traditional romantic hero and all he stood for:

We are jolly green giants, walking the earth with guns. The people we wasted here today are the finest individuals we will ever know. When we rotate back to the World we're gonna miss having somebody around who's worth shooting.

(Hasford, 1983:93)

When juxtaposed, these two descriptions of the Green Beret create very different and contradictory images of a military force that was supposedly promoting itself as a moral example to the rest of the world, as the Myth of a City upon a Hill implies. Hellmann's presentation of the character of the Green Beret epitomizes the mythic version of the hero that the American public wanted him to be – a stylish warrior of the upper classes who displayed the values and virtues of a romantic hero of the Arthurian legend. War, however, is not a gentleman's game, and the irony and vulgarity inherent in the term 'genteel killer' is brought out by the words of Crazy Earl in the second quotation. Reverberating in mythic properties of the supernatural, Hasford's text alludes to the American forces as 'jolly green giants' (a description that also has connotations of comic-book characters) who, by their sheer might and technological weaponry, hoped to extend and establish a worldwide democracy with themselves as undisputed leaders. They could, by no stretch of the imagination, be considered Peace Corpsmen as theirs was not a peaceful mission. Killing (and usually by any means available) is the business of war, and America was in Vietnam to conduct precisely that type of business. Crazy Earl's cynical description of the Vietnamese as 'the finest individuals we will ever know' is endorsed by the suggestion that this made them 'worth shooting'. The notion that Hasford appears to be attempting to extrapolate here is that killing is not a value judgement to be made for or against individuals, but an unhealthy necessity in the business of war and, as such, should not be shrouded in raiments of apparent respectability.

Michael, in Cimino's *The Deer Hunter*, embodies Hellmann's version of the new frontier hero and all he supported. Resplendent in the virtues of his Leatherstocking antecedent, he is self-reliant and able to survive in the wilderness, using his deadly arts only to kill in self-defence. He is the stylish warrior of the Arthurian legend who displays prowess, loyalty, generosity and courtesy, values that American society had come to expect of their heroes through the myth that had been created around the memory of John F. Kennedy.

Michael is thus portrayed as the 'genteel killer', a protagonist who, like the myth-defining Natty Bumppo, becomes like an Indian to fight the Indians.

However, as Hasford has implied, in the reality of war killing is not a noble or elegant art to be indulged in by stylish warriors. Thus Joker in *The Short Timers* is presented as the complete antithesis of the perceived hero as he manifests in Michael. Joker is a cynical character, an embodiment of that described by Leonard Engel in the individual of the 'new order' - symbolised by compromise, selfishness and anonymity 'revealing characters who have sold out and have no respect for themselves, anyone else, or anything' (Engel, 1988:26). He is motivated to kill, not only in self-defence, but by the fact that war is the business of killing; a business that can turn men into obsessive executioners. Consequently, in *The Short Timers*, Joker kills without compunction, first the woman sniper and later Cowboy.

America in the 1960s saw a marked division between those Susan Faludi has termed the 'future missile builders' and the 'future cannon fodder' (Faludi, 2000:292). The former group were the 'boys deemed smart enough to be prospective engineers, mathematicians, or scientists in the cold war' and by virtue of this advantage were able to avoid the draft. The latter were their 'less promising brothers', who subsequently formed the majority of those drawn in by the draft net to serve in Vietnam. This latter group, like Michael Vronsky and his friends in *The Deer Hunter*, were invariably of a working-class background, carried on a wave of patriotism to defend their country against the onslaught of Communism. They were also frequently the sons of World War II veterans, who felt duty-bound to complete 'the mission their fathers and their fathers' fathers had laid out for them, defeating a vile enemy and laying claim to a contested frontier' (Faludi, 2000:16), an assumption that shaped their own expectations for self-evaluation.

In *Stiffed: The Betrayal of Modern Man*, Susan Faludi gives an insightful account of what constituted the traditional images of manhood, how they were received by the baby-boomers of the post-World War II era, and how these values were eventually broken down by, amongst other influencing factors, the engagement with the conflict in Southeast Asia. Boys growing up in the 1950s were brought up in a patriarchal society on 'a culture of *Father Knows Best* and *Leave it to Beaver*, of Pop Warner rituals and Westing-house science scholarships It was a father-son Eden' (Faludi, 2000:24). The sons of that era looked up to their fathers as the heroes of Korea and World War II – heroes who had themselves experienced the rite of passage to manhood through the experience of war. The myth passed down from father to son was that war would make men of them just as it had done their fathers, but if they failed to become soldiers, failed to answer the call to arms in defence of their country, then they could not assume that male identity. Those who did go to Vietnam, whether by draft or choice, thus went on their fathers' terms, ascribing to a paternally endorsed masculine paradigm of 'a common mission, a clear frontier with an identifiable enemy, a shared brotherhood and a call to protect a population of women and children' (Faludi, 2000:299).

The veterans of Korea and World War II had, however, come of age through a very different paradigm. They were the offspring of Depression-era parents, where fathers were often unable to 'provide for them or guide them into manhood'. As Faludi has further indicated, boys of the 1930s and 1940s thus came to be:

... placed under the benevolent wing of a vast male-run orphanage called the army and sent into battle ... [where] firm but kindly senior officers acting as surrogate fathers watched over them as they were tempered into men in the heat of a heroic struggle against malevolent enemies.

(Faludi, 2000:18)

Under these circumstances, such men emerged from their mission to manhood firmly believing that their sons would enjoy the same experience if they too trod the same path. A precedent had thus been set, and the 1961 inauguration of a youthful John F. Kennedy provided their means to an end.

In his acceptance speech for the presidential nomination, Kennedy promised a 'New Frontier' and a new set of challenges based on a determination to harness the Communist threat (Bradford, 2001:176). He was also, as Faludi argues, selling a 'government-backed programme of man-making' (Faludi, 2000:25). He was offering the new generation of baby-boomers the chance to retrace the steps of their fathers by becoming embroiled in their own war, thus allowing them to experience their own rites to manhood in the same way their fathers before them had done. Bathed in the aura of the Camelot Myth that surrounded Kennedy after his death, the new challenge would also offer them the opportunity to uphold the image of brave knights riding into battle to conquer the forces of darkness and evil. Vietnam, however, proved to be a very different kind of war to any America had ever fought before. There was no clear frontier – 'no landings, no frontlines, no ultimate objectives' (Faludi, 2000:29) – and the enemy often equated with trembling women and children in grass huts. This was not the passage to manhood through the experience of war as their fathers had promised them, and they felt betrayed.

The betrayal, though, ran deeper still. The 'kindly' officers who were to act as 'surrogate fathers' did not materialize. Instead they were replaced by the William Calleys and the Ernest Medinas (invidious 'heroes' of the My Lai massacre), and boot camp was presided over, not by a stern but fatherly Sergeant Stryker as portrayed by John Wayne in the 1949 film *Sands of Iwo Jima*, but by the likes of the sadistic drill sergeant, Gunnery Sergeant Hartmann / Gerheim, as he appears in Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* and Hasford's *The Short Timers* respectively. 'All the elements of the old formula for attaining manhood had vanished' (Faludi, 2000:30), and this betrayal of expectations would prove to be one of the factors

responsible for the unravelling of the traditional image of the mythic hero as he engaged with the war in Vietnam.

Loren Baritz comments on how astonishingly often 'American GIs in Vietnam approvingly referred to John Wayne not as a movie star, but as a model and a standard' (Baritz, 1988:51). This stemmed from the fact that, over the years, Wayne had gained the status of a cultural icon. Tobey Herzog, in William J. Searle's book *Search and Clear*, describes Wayne as:

... representing traditional American values of patriotism, courage, confidence, leadership and manliness. Over the years, the man and his screen character had become one and the same – a mythical figure. The name John Wayne was invoked as a verbal shorthand to describe the character of the American warrior-gentleman and to represent for young American males the elements of manhood.
(Herzog, 1988:18)

John Wayne began his career in Hollywood with a series of B-Western roles, moving into a spate of wartime action films between 1942 and 1945. However, it was not until post-World War II that his persona of cowboy / soldier became fully developed (Slotkin, 1992:521). Even in his earliest roles Wayne manifested as an authentic representative of the Old West, who perpetuated the American mythic experience inherent in Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* – he was a loner with a six-shooter or a superior rifle, he knew what he was doing, did not need to depend on others, could deliver the goods and, most importantly, he could 'bring home the bacon' (Baritz, 1998:51); the latter attribute attesting to the prevailing attitude in a patriarchal society where the male was viewed as the sole breadwinner.

As Richard Slotkin (1992:514) has pointed out, Wayne saw no active service in the military but did contribute to the war effort as a civilian entertainer of the troops overseas and through his performances in numerous films favourably depicting the World War II conflict, the most notable of these being *The Longest*

Day (1962) and *The Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949). Wayne's performance in the latter led General Douglas MacArthur to declare: 'You represent the American serviceman better than the American serviceman himself' (Slotkin, 1992:514), a remark that acknowledges just how far myth can overreach experienced reality. MacArthur's comment implies that Wayne represented the prototypical American serviceman, displaying all the qualities that were to be expected in subsequent clones of this prototype. He was the template of expectation, the mythic archetype that formulated the code by which genuine American servicemen should be judged. It is, therefore, not surprising that the figure of John Wayne achieved mythic status, becoming a cultural icon and hero whom many boys growing up in the 1950s wished to emulate.

The John Wayne character, embodying an American male ethos of toughness, courage, patriotic duty, honour and glory, was a template of reverence described in countless memoirs and novels by Vietnam veterans. Growing up in the small town of Perkasio, Pennsylvania in the 1950s, William Erhart remembers spending his boyhood watching countless John Wayne and Audie Murphy war movies, playing war and acting out 'the most daring and heroic deeds' (Erhart, 1995:7). Philip Caputo, when confronted by Marine Corps recruiters in *A Rumor of War*, imagines himself in the Marines 'charging up some distant beachhead, like John Wayne in *The Sands of Iwo Jima*, and then coming home a suntanned warrior with medals on [his] chest' (Caputo, 1977:6). Ron Kovic was similarly motivated by John Wayne movies and Marine Corps recruiters peddling the image Wayne had created. Kovic recalls:

In the last month of school, the marine recruiters came and spoke to my senior class It was like all the movies and all the books and all the dreams of becoming a hero come true. I watched them and listened as they stood in front of all the young boys, looking like statues and not like real men at all As I shook their hands and stared up into their eyes, I couldn't help but feel I was shaking hands with John Wayne and Audie Murphy.

(Kovic, 1977: 73-74)

This passage reveals how Kovic and other veterans like him had, before their encounters with the realities of the war, embraced the fictive aspect of a myth. As he judiciously points out, they did not appear to him as 'real men'. These recruiters were the embodiment of a fictitious image, emblazoned on the imaginations of impressionable young men, of what war was all about and of the type of men who fought it. Here Kovic displays a confusion that was common among many prospective recruits of the era in that he is unable to separate myth from reality. Hollywood, through characters played by John Wayne and Audie Murphy, had created the myth that war was all heroism and glory. As starry-eyed teenagers would soon discover, however, war was in reality devoid of such foolish notions, and could better be described in more realistic terms of fear, pain and death.

Psychiatrist Robert J. Lifton, a leading authority on the diagnosis and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder amongst Vietnam veterans, identified the adoption of this illusionary image as a syndrome he called 'the John Wayne thing' or simply 'John Wayneism' (Lifton, 1974:219). The 'John Wayne Syndrome' is described by Richard Slotkin as a 'soldier's internalisation of an ideal of superhuman military bravery, skill and invulnerability to guilt and grief, which is identified at some point with "John Wayne" not necessarily with a specific Wayne film or group of films, but Wayne as a figure of speech, signifying the supposed perfection of soldierly masculinity' (Slotkin, 1992:519-520).

Wayne thus created a legend, a superhuman mythic hero who became a central symbol of American warrior masculinity in the 1960s. In *The Deer Hunter*, Wayne's presentation of the Green Beret as a character type pervades this film, with the character of Michael Vronski being depicted as a superhuman warrior in the same spirit as was Mike Kirby in Wayne's own film, *The Green Berets*. However, as Jacqueline E. Lawson postulates, 'the first firefight – the actual combat experience – debunked the myth, purveyed by the impostor hero John Wayne, that dying for one's country is an ennobling experience, the ultimate act

of patriotism, the rite of passage to manhood' (Lawson, 1988:32). Later I will show how the illusionary notions of honour, courage and maleness created by Wayne, as part of his rendition of the mythic hero-warrior, crumbled in the hostile environment of Vietnam, and how John Wayne became first a mildly comic figure and finally an object of utter derision in Hasford's *The Short Timers*.

Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter*, divided as it is between the pastoral idyll of the American frontier wilderness setting and the savage jungles of Vietnam, demonstrates how the Vietnam War brought about an 'awful inversion of American assumptions and values' (Hellmann, 1986:102), through its transition from the symbolic frontier of Clairton to the nightmare inversion of the mythic landscape in Vietnam. In so doing, cracks begin to appear both in the representation of the definitive American hero and in the notion of the Vietnam War as being just another romantic adventure in the American frontier experience.

In his examination of the film, Louis J. Kern notes:

The very title *The Deer Hunter* resonates with the power of the traditional mythic consciousness in its echo of Cooper's *The Deerslayer*. The protagonist, Michael (Robert DeNiro), a member of a middle-American, working-class, ethnic community, embodies the heroic qualities of the macho Hemingway hero. His power resides in his closeness to nature, in his savage instinctual skill as a woodsman, and in the purity of his devotion to a masculine code of honor.

(Kern, 1988:41)

He thus suggests that Michael, like his prototype Natty Bumppo, exhibits all the qualities inherent in the character of the archetypal American hero and Indian fighter, to become a mythic figure in the American romantic tradition.

Like Leatherstocking, Michael is an outsider (he is seen as a solitary figure in the hunt and always stands removed from his friends at other social gatherings) who reveres nature – ‘One shot is what it’s all about. A deer has to be taken with one shot. Two is “pussy”’, he tells Nick before the hunt. Michael’s words echo those of Natty Bumppo who, in response to Harry’s suggestion that he prove his manhood by killing a deer, replies ‘... there is little manhood in killing a doe, and that, too, out of season’ (Cooper, 1987:21). This display is not just a masculine code of self-control, but establishes that both men respect nature by refraining from needless and sloppy killing and, in so doing, demonstrates in them a degree of moral manhood common to the heroic archetype they represent. Michael carries this code of honour with him into Vietnam where, like Natty in his confrontation with the Indian who renames him ‘Hawkeye’ (Cooper, 1987:124), he does not kill just for killing’s sake. He is nevertheless capable of cool and calculated annihilation of the enemy, a trait he demonstrates when he, Nick and Steven escape from their insidious Vietcong captors.

In keeping with the code of the romantic hero, Michael also demonstrates the qualities of loyalty and grace under pressure. Throughout the film there is a strong sense of rapport between Nick and Michael, to the extent that Nick reveres Michael as a father figure and protector. Both Nick and Steven become totally reliant on Michael’s strength of character when they are captured and, in keeping with Faludi’s thesis that officers were father-figures, it is Michael who, like John Kennedy in his rescue of the crew of P.T. 109, initiates their escape and sees them safely returned to American lines. Before going to Vietnam, Nick makes Michael promise that he will not leave him ‘over there’. It is the latter’s loyalty to Nick and the memory of this promise that forces Michael to return to a collapsing Saigon in an attempt to bring Nick home. Ironically it is his obsession with the code of ‘one shot’ that finally brings about Nick’s death.

In *The Deer Hunter* there can also be demonstrated many of the tropes lent to the construction of the romantic hero archetype by the American culture of the

1960s. Kennedy invoked the old Puritan Myth of a City upon a Hill through his dreams of omnipotence in Vietnam, and this myth is played out in the character of Michael as he wills Steven, Nick and himself to freedom out of the grasp of their NLF captors. Leonard Quart's interpretation of the scene suggests that 'Michael's controlled, heroic act exhibits the sort of hubris – the overweening sense of national self-confidence and invulnerability - that brought American troops to Vietnam in the first place' (Quart, 1990:161).

Throughout the film the Myth of the Frontier is evoked, from the hunt sequences in the first section, to the conception of the Vietnamese being akin to the Indians, with Vronsky 'being linked to Cooper's frontier hero's ability to wrest the land away from [them]' (Quart, 1990:163). The Myth of the American Dream is kept alive at the close of the film by the friends' rendition of 'God Save America', which serves to offer a message of hope and promise of renewal despite the tragedies brought upon them by their engagement with the war in Southeast Asia.

The emphasis placed on manhood by the culture of the 1960s and the idea that war is the realm of 'real' men is acknowledged in *The Deer Hunter* by the casting of mature actors in roles that, in the sad reality of war, usually fall to teenage boys. Leo Cawley is quick to point out that men the age of Robert DeNiro 'are far too old to withstand the rigors of jungle war. But this use of overage stars depicts war as the business of "real" men, mature men rather than the star-crossed adolescents who actually fight it' (Cawley, 1990:76). The image created by the use of mature actors also has links to Faludi's conception of the father-son relationship that was the expectation of recruits for their officers. In order to sustain credibility with the audience, the character of Michael (as a father-figure to Nick and Steven) had to be played by an actor who supported an image of maturity, and the simplest way to create a visual sense of maturity is via the physical age of the actor who plays the part. In casting DeNiro in the role of

Michael, Cimino had found an actor who evoked these images of both physical and emotional maturity.

The John Wayne myth does not escape the scrutiny of Michael Cimino either. Castigating Stanley for leaving his hunting boots behind, Michael comments: 'All he [Stanley] has got is that stupid gun he carries around like John Wayne'. Even Michael, himself, carries the aura of 'John Wayneism' about him. Resplendent in his Green Beret uniform and displaying the almost immortal superman traits needed to 'get the bad guys', he manifests as a character in true John Wayne tradition.

The Deer Hunter essentially satisfies Frye's mythos of the romance quest, as the hero (Michael) and his companions progress through the three stages of separation, initiation and (in the case of Michael and Steven, but not Nick) return. The setting of the first part of the film (and particularly the hunt sequence) is a contemporary variation of the Leatherstocking Tales. Clairton is a Pennsylvanian steel-foundry town adjoining an Arcadian world of rustic wilderness, where the deer hunt plays out in scenes of forests, mountains and lakes, reminiscent of Natty Bumppo's world in *The Deerslayer*. The musical score that introduces the hunt scene is one of majestic and reverent choral music, testifying to the grandeur and innocent beauty of this Arcadian world. It is the world of the innocent youth of the hero, the term 'innocent youth' being used here in the sense that the hero and his friends have not yet experienced the horrors of war. A similar score punctuates the scene of Nick's funeral, but here it has satirical connotations. War has ensured a loss of innocence and the beauty of the Arcadian world has been replaced by one filled with pain, suffering and death. Nick is dead, Steven a hopeless cripple (both mentally and physically) and Michael scarred permanently by his experiences.

Following the pattern of the established quest theme Michael, Nick and Steven answer their call to adventure by enlisting to serve in Vietnam – 'Serving God

and Country Proudly' reads the banner in the wedding hall. Unlike *Full Metal Jacket* and *The Short Timers*, the initiation sequence in *The Deer Hunter* does not begin with initiation rituals in boot camp. From the peace and solitude of the deer hunt, the scene abruptly switches in a burst of napalm to the thick of combat in Vietnam as the hell and purgatory suggested by the foundry fires, at the beginning of the film, now becomes a reality.

The central image of Frye's quest of romance is that of the beleaguered castle which, in Cooper's *The Deerslayer*, manifests in the form of Muskrat Castle, the Hutter's home built in a stockade in the middle of Lake Glimmerglass. In *The Deer Hunter*, however, the beleaguered castle becomes an ironically inverted image, metaphorically depicted by the Vietcong prison on the river with its rat-infested, underwater bamboo cages in which Michael and his friends are incarcerated by their Vietnamese captors. This becomes the setting for the initiation of the hero where 'a struggle between a heroic good guy, who like Bumpo embodies the virtues of a purer age, and a group of Vietcong barbarians' (Quart, 1990:162) is played out. Michael displays the strength that carries both Steven and Nick through the horrors of their captivity and the demonic game of Russian roulette forced on them by their NLF captors. It is Michael who, in this instance, maintains the integrity of the innocent world against the assault of experience by remaining the 'genteel killer' as he calmly orchestrates their escape in a kill-or-be-killed scenario.

On his initial return to Clairton, the mood is one of contemplative withdrawal when Michael cannot bring himself to attend the 'welcome home' party organized for him by his friends. Like the spectre-figure of the Green Beret at the wedding reception (whose only utterance is a satirical monosyllabic 'Fuck') Michael conjures up images of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner. Haunted by his experiences in Vietnam and the knowledge that he has deserted Nick, Michael's guilt becomes the albatross hung about his neck. Reflective experience and the dilemma of his culpability leave him unable easily to reintegrate into society and,

like the Mariner, he is both compelled but unable conclusively to explain his experiences.

A maimed Steven suffers a similar fate, and it is not until the final scene, following Nick's funeral, that both Michael and Steven are finally reintegrated into the social group of their culture, although the mood here is one of uneasy reconciliation. This scene signifies the final phase in the romance quest mythos as defined by Frye, where the friends gather in the warmth and companionship of John's bar to share a meal and toast the memory of Nick. According to Michael Klein, this scene of reunion is a 'concluding sequence [that] is strongly affirmative ... reminiscent not only of Second World War films but also war films set in Korea' (Klein, 1990a:9). It is a scene that, albeit it an uneasy reaffirmation of their patriotism, suggests closure and healing, and is common to the romance quest mythos. The irony is that for Nick there has been no closure, as he has killed himself in a game of Russian roulette in Saigon.

Nick, therefore, becomes the problematic element in a consideration of *The Deer Hunter* as a story in the American romantic tradition. For the character of Nick the plot is one of romance tending towards the tragic mode. Cast in the role of the antithetical hero, he serves as a rebuttal to Michael's romantic hero image. He does not show the same strength of character and is neither self-reliant nor able to survive without the support of Michael, whom he reveres as a father-figure/protector role model. Nick (played by Christopher Walken) is psychologically destroyed by the war. From the window of the Saigon hospital where he is recuperating from his wounds, he witnesses the scene of rows of body bags being loaded onto plastic coffins. These become reminders of the unspeakability of the horror he has witnessed and he too (like all veterans haunted by their experiences in Vietnam) now embodies the spirit of the Ancient Mariner, doomed forever to attempt to explain and re-explain with no relief the horror of that experience. Whereas, however, the Mariner is able to verbally recount his tale of woe, Nick, by contrast, is trapped in an inner world of anguish

and pain, unable to articulate (even to the doctor who questions him in the hospital) the horrors he has encountered. This finally brings about in his complete mental collapse and he goes AWOL, drifting into the Saigon criminal underworld, becoming a drug addict and a professional Russian roulette player. Effectively he has become the tragic protagonist, isolated from his society and engaged in a conflict against inner representations of darkness and evil.

Nick's descent into the Saigon underworld also marks a shift from apocalyptic to demonic symbolism. Like the ruined city of Hue in *Full Metal Jacket*, the fall of Saigon is recounted in scenes that are suggestive of demonic imagery. Chaos, fires, the sound of explosions and fleeing refugees attest to a 'world of the nightmare and the scapegoat, of bondage and pain and confusion' (Frye, 1973:147), images that also describe the inner world of torment that haunts Nick. As Leonard Quart suggests, Michael's final attempt to locate Nick with the aid of the cynical Frenchman, in a scene where they sail down a river with fires ablaze, is just 'one more metaphor of Vietnam as purgatory' (Quart, 1990:166). This scene in *The Deer Hunter* contrasts sharply with the edenic image of Natty Bumppo paddling down Lake Glimmerglass in *The Deerslayer*. Nick's world is no longer one of regeneration and renewal that the romantic mode suggests: his world has become one of tragedy and self-destruction, and he eventually forfeits any hope of personal closure by falling victim to his obsession with a deadly game of chance.

The concept of the archetypal romantic hero is a notion that changes and adjusts with the evolution of a culture. Nowhere was this more evident than in the America of the 1960's era where the character of the traditional American hero was reformulated and readjusted by contemporary forces, both social and political. Old myths in new forms were resurrected by the Kennedy administration to justify their involvement in Southeast Asia. Kennedy offered the coming-of-age baby-boomers of the 1950s the opportunity to prove their manhood by helping to stem the tide of Communism in the jungles of Vietnam. Hollywood added John

Wayne to the equation, and the result was the image of an immortal, superhuman man-warrior that shaped the expectations for self-evaluation of the sixties generation who went to Vietnam.

The representation of this new type of romantic hero is evinced through the character of Michael Vronsky in *The Deer Hunter*. Brave, loyal – a chaste ‘saint with a gun’ – he manifests as the ‘death-dealing innocent’ in a world turned upside down by a new and insidious war. Michael Vronsky is the superhuman man-warrior whom adolescent soldiers going to Vietnam aspired to be. The Vietnam conflict, however, was not a Hollywood set where everybody got up, dusted himself off and went home at the end of the day. The reality of the Vietnam War was an unimaginable hell that ‘debunked the myth purveyed by the impostor John Wayne’ (Lawson, 1988:32). All the old standards by which the romantic hero had been measured began to crumble in this new and hostile environment. Cracks began to appear in the traditional representation of the mythic hero, exemplified by a consideration of the character and plight of Nick in *The Deer Hunter*. For Nick, like so many other Vietnam combatants and veterans, there could never be closure as the romantic tradition suggests.

In the next chapter I will present an argument as to how and why the cultural assumptions that created this superhuman man-warrior fell apart. The progressive degeneration and ultimate subversion of the traditional American hero of the romance quest myth will be illustrated through an examination of Stanley Kubrick’s *Full Metal Jacket* and the book on which it was based, Gustav Hasford’s *The Short Timers*.

CHAPTER 3.

Destructive Forces and Dark Landscapes: *Full Metal Jacket* and *The Short Timers*.

The perceived reality of the Vietnam War experience superseded any myths about war and heroism created by American culture in the 1950s and 1960s, and many of the defining forces that served to shape the character of the traditional hero now proved to be the causal elements in his demise. Part of the subversive process revolved around the hero's initiation into a psychology of slaughter, orchestrated mainly by his engagement with the American military establishment, but fuelled by the hostile environment into which he was thrust once he arrived in country, the attitude of moral superiority he had inherited from his Puritan forefathers, and the internal conflict of conscience (as to what constituted the 'Self' and what constituted the 'Other') that such an attitude implied. The course followed in this undermining process and the ultimate result, as it manifested in the character of the hero, can be illustrated in Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* and Gustav Hasford's *The Short Timers*.

What Robert J. Lifton has termed a 'psychology of slaughter' (Lifton, 1974:42) was not a new phenomenon either in American history or in American writing when that country became embroiled in the conflict in Vietnam. Slotkin (1996:510-511) cites Robert M. Bird's *Nick of the Woods* (1837) where the protagonist, Nathan Slaughter, is described as a 'Boone-like Quaker turned killer [who] becomes a hunter of Indians, murdering them by stealth, and mutilating their corpses by carving a cross on their breasts'. American history and White encounters with the Native Americans are peppered with accounts of massacres perpetrated by both sides. Richard Slotkin describes Puritan soldiers who 'often behaved precisely like their Indian enemies – burning the villages of the enemies; slaughtering not only the warriors but also the wounded, the women, and the children; and selling their captives into slavery' (Slotkin, 1996:55). Such incidents were surpassed only by the mad massacres of the Pequot and Narragansett

tribes in 1637 and 1675 respectively (Slotkin, 1996:83/85), and later by battlefield atrocities and attacks on native civilians at Sand Creek in 1864 and Wounded Knee in 1890 (Slotkin, 1992:117).

Historian Raymond Aron differentiates between the so-called 'limited warfare' of the eighteenth century, fought by professional soldiers, and the ethos of twentieth century warfare where 'soldier and citizen have become interchangeable' (Aron, 1954:9). In the latter case the type of warfare is described as 'all-out' or 'total war', characterized by the use of any weapons considered appropriate and advantageous to the cause of the belligerents. As Fredrick Sallagar has intimated: 'It is a war in which no holds are barred' (Sallagar, 1969:3). His sentiment best describes the ideology of the type of warfare employed in the Vietnam conflict. Not only did America drop four times more bombs in Vietnam than they had dropped all over the world during World War II (Baritz, 1998:164), but their technological superiority was boosted by their unbridled use of napalm and the defoliant, Agent Orange. Officially the target was not the civilian population (Baritz, 1998:165), but the clumsy B-52 bombers often fell short of their targets, while Agent Orange and napalm were not selective about whom they affected.

The baby-boomers of the 1950s had been schooled by their fathers (veterans of World War II and Korea) into the belief that war was, among other things, 'a calling to protect a population of women and children' (Faludi, 2000:299). Now they were thrust into a conflict where women and children had become targets too, an attitude reinforced by the character of the war they fought – 'This war was not like others. You could never identify the enemy Any Vietnamese could be one' (Baritz, 1998:291). Because of the difficulty the soldiers of this new war experienced in differentiating between soldier and civilian, women and children now came to be considered as the enemy too. Eventually it became a case of history repeating itself, with the atrocity of Wounded Knee devolving into incidents like the My Lai massacre.

Early on the morning of March 16, 1968, three platoons from Charlie Company of Task Force Barker, 11th Brigade of the Americal Division, swept through the tiny hamlet of My Lai 4 engaging in a killing frenzy that lasted most of the day and left in its wake approximately three hundred and forty-seven dead civilians – women, children and old men (Baritz, 1998:293). While this atrocity was not an isolated incident in the Vietnam conflict it proved to be the most publicized, and serves as an example of the military's then resurrected concept of 'total war'. '... [D]estroy Pinkville and everything in it kill everything that moves' was the order reported to have been issued by Captain Ernest Medina, commanding officer of Charlie Company, at a briefing session the night before the attack on My Lai (Magnuson, 1969:22). With this order he gave voice to the military's draconian policies, in Vietnam, of the 'free-fire zone' – where every civilian is targeted – and the 'search-and-destroy mission' – on which every one and everything can be 'wasted' (Lifton, 1974:41). Lifton goes on to explain that such an atrocity-producing situation is rooted in the process of basic training, where the recruits undergo a 'masculine initiation rite' in order to attain 'manly status'. The acquisition of this status, Lifton concludes, becomes 'inseparable from what is best called the *machismo of slaughter*' (Lifton, 1974:44).

If viewed in the context of myth and ritual, the experience of boot camp should have formed an integral part in the moulding of the romantic hero in Vietnam War literature. Theoretically it was here that adolescent boys would undergo initiation rituals that marked the beginning of their progress from boy to man. In practice, however, boot camp was a dehumanising, dispassionate and demented experience whereby recruits were inducted into the 'dark side of the military' and reprogrammed from 'social to sociopath' (Rasmussen and Downey, 1991:181). Former West Point graduate, Colonel Joseph Adamczyk, recalls his own military training as follows: 'In 1968 when I went to West Point, society lived by the myth of West Point toughness the physical harassment, the verbal denigration, the deprivation' (Lipsky, 1999:81).

Joker, in Hasford's *The Short Timers*, suffers a similar experience:

Beatings, we learn, are a routine element of life on Parris Island. And not that I'm-only-rough-on-'um-because-I-love-'um crap civilians have seen in ... Mr John Wayne's *The Sands of Iwo Jima*. Gunnery Sergeant Gerheim and his three junior drill instructors administer brutal beatings to faces, chests, stomachs, and backs. With fists. Or boots – they kick us in the ass, the kidneys, the ribs, any part of our bodies upon which black and purple bruises won't show.

(Hasford, 1983:7)

The homophobic, sado-masochistic Gerheim calls the recruits 'maggots', 'scumbags', 'little pieces of amphibian shit' and 'ladies' (Hasford, 1983:4), while verbal denigration frequently also takes the form of reference to their sexual orientation and the degradation of women. When Joker requests that Cowboy remain his bunkmate, Gerheim shouts: 'You queer for Private Cowboy's geer? You smoke his pole?' (Hasford, 1983:10). Gerheim's comment highlights the intolerance the military establishment afforded homosexuality, which they regarded as deviant behaviour and an aberration of normal sexual practices. Allusions to homosexuality were aimed at shaming recruits into adopting a heterosexual stance as being the preferred option of 'real men'. In military terms, masculine and feminine were regarded as opposed and polarized states, and it was unacceptable to present any alternative sexuality.

Susan Faludi similarly highlights the traditional sex roles still commonly assumed in the 1960's era: that the business of war was exclusively a male domain and the role of women was that of support – 'women ... made the coffee, licked the envelopes, and shared their beds [while] only men could go to war' (Faludi, 2000:307-308). Seen in this light, Gerheim's invitation to Joker: 'I like you. You can come over to my house and fuck my sister' (Hasford, 1983:4), is an indication of the attitude promoted by the military towards women: that they existed exclusively for the comfort and pleasure of men. Irrespective of familiar

relationships, and reduced to a level of pure animal instinct, women existed for the sole purpose of being fucked. In military terms one was either the 'fucker' (the male of the species and consummate fighter and protector) or the 'fucked' (the perceived vulnerable and tenuous opposite – the female). Faludi sums up this prevailing attitude: '... like the frontiersman and the Indian fighter, [men] were making the frontier safe for female settlers, and it was a job they imagined only they could do' (Faludi, 2000:307).

Putting Gerheim's remarks into perspective, Michael Pursell (quoting George Gilder from his book *Sexual Suicide*), argues that '... when you want to create a group of male killers, that is what you do, you kill the women in them. That is the lesson of the Marines' (Pursell, 1998:221). The formula of the military was that only 'real men' could become soldiers (Baritz, 1998:22) with the result that in boot camp the objective became the destruction of any allusion to the feminine side of their characters.

Sex roles in the 1960s did not differ markedly from those found in myth structure. In the structure of the quest myth the world of the hero is generally a male-orientated domain, where the hero's 'feminine counterpart ... sits quietly at home waiting for the hero to finish his wanderings and come back to her' (Frye, 1973:197). What sets myth apart from reality, however, is the psychological means used to achieve the same end. Recruits were inducted into the military of the 1960s via violence and degradation of their feminine side, while the instruction of traditional initiates in the sequence of myth involved 'little more than a retelling of myths which contain the knowledge without which one is not a man' (Eckert, 1966:164). While the aim of both rites of passage was to transform boy into man, one relied for its effect on an imminent fear of being destroyed by the gods (Eckert, 1966:164), whereas the other employed tactics that psychology scarred the initiates for life and effectively turned them into crazed killers.

The purpose of the Marine Corps basic training was to mould boy-heroes into cohesive units of robot-like killers. In the process they succeeded in destroying in the recruits any semblance of the romantic cultural hero. When, at the conclusion of the first part of *Full Metal Jacket*, a deranged Pyle shoots Hartmann and then kills himself in the pristine, aseptic lavatory, it is a stark reminder of how regimentation and abuse serve to create a 'deadly human machine' rather than a 'mythic warrior' (Rasmussen and Downey, 1991:184). Pyle, who has already irreversibly descended into his own heart of darkness – eyes rolled high and mouth in a ghastly grin – declares: 'I am in a world of shit'. His face holds a terror more potent than anything physical that awaits the other recruits in Vietnam for he is already a manifestation of the 'Other' that they are destined to become.

The shooting of Gerheim / Hartmann symbolically represents the death of the 'father', but this act is merely a *de facto* formality. Recruits entered basic training believing that they were being 'placed under the benevolent wing' of the military, to be nurtured into manhood by 'kindly senior officers acting as surrogate fathers' (Faludi, 2000:18). This was a myth endorsed by their own fathers and Hollywood's image of a kindly but stern Sergeant Stryker in the John Wayne film, *Sands of Iwo Jima*. Instead they encountered sadistic drill sergeants and self-serving career officers. Ron Kovic, in his memoir *Born on the Fourth of July*, remembers his own initiation into the Marines on Parris Island:

What was going on here? he thought. What was happening? It wasn't anything like he thought it would be. Why did they have to push them and shove them and kick them and scream and shout? ... He kept thinking over and over again that this day, this place, the screaming shouting voices in his ears, in all their ears, roaring like thunder were like angry hate!

(Kovic, 1977:78-80)

Kovic's experience is mirrored by that of the recruits on Parris Island in *The Short Timers* and *Full Metal Jacket*, where Gerheim / Hartmann systematically moulds

them into instruments of death. After Leonard shoots the drill sergeant, Joker recalls Gerheim's previous insistence that 'it is a hard heart that kills, not the weapon' (Hasford, 1983:31). Gerheim is no surrogate father tempering adolescent boys into manhood, but a sado-masochist who transforms ordinary men into obsessive executioners far removed from any notions of a romantic hero.

Faludi has described the young men from Charlie Company (perpetrators of the My Lai massacre) as 'boys looking for direction from elders who offered none. They were aspiring dutiful sons in a world without fathers' (Faludi, 2000:324). This description infers a lack of leadership that was prevalent in the field combat units during the Vietnam War. Based on independent analyses, and an exhaustive 1970-study of the leadership by the Army War College, Susan Faludi has concluded that, after World War II, the army had remodelled itself along corporate lines turning its officers into managers as opposed to leaders (Faludi, 2000:319). Senior officers attempted to 'co-ordinate' the war rather than participating alongside their troops. At My Lai, for example, Faludi records that:

... senior officers were floating safely above the bloodbath in clean hierarchical lines: Lieutenant Colonel Frank A. Barker at one thousand feet, Colonel Oran K. Henderson at fifteen hundred feet, Major General Samuel W. Koster at two thousand.
(Faludi, 2000:336)

They were invisible men in control ships playing at war like a modern-day video game, descending only 'to engage in an "action" that would give them the necessary badges and medals for advancement' (Faludi, 2000:338).

Careerism replaced the ethic of the officer (Baritz, 1998:303) and tours of duty in Vietnam were manipulated to award them significant recognition in order to achieve promotion. Because of the nature of the war itself – 'total lack of order or structure, the feeling that there was no genuine purpose, that nothing could be secured or gained and that there could be no measurable progress' (Lifton,

1974:38) - the only standard by which achievement could be measured in such a situation, given the absence of other goals or criteria for success, became the counting of enemy dead. Thus 'kill ratios' and 'body counts' became the index of success for officers seeking promotion, and these were often falsified (at My Lai the exact number of dead could never be clearly established) to justify actions and appease aggressive and ambitious officers (Baritz, 1998:296-297). In *The Short Timers*, Captain January tells Joker to 'get me some good body counts. And don't forget to calculate your kill ratios' (Hasford, 1983:61).

Such practices changed the whole ethic of the war and destroyed any sense of loyalty and respect for officers. Caring was no longer the job of the officer, and the GIs felt abandoned. Subsequently they tended to turn on even junior officers. 'Fragging' – defined as attempts to murder commanding officers by using a grenade (Baritz, 1998:314) – became a frequent recourse for retaliation. In *The Short Timers*, Cowboy, after appointing Joker to lead the squad, warns him to 'never turn your back on Mother. Never cut him any slack. He fragged Mr Shortround [the former commanding officer]' (Hasford, 1983:173). As Faludi has concluded: '...they were boys looking for direction from elders who offered none. They were aspiring dutiful sons in a world without fathers' (Faludi, 2000:324). This changing paradigm of the combat experience consequently brought with it a change in the character of the combatants. Set adrift without leadership or direction, the 'heroes' began to display the animal instinct for survival, and moralism deteriorated into a pattern of purposeless destruction.

In *Fire in the Lake*, her acclaimed analytical and documentary account of the Vietnam War, Frances Fitzgerald describes the American forces:

Like an Orwellian army, they knew everything about military tactics, but nothing about where they were or who the enemy was. ... Their buddies were killed by landmines, sniper fire, and mortar attacks, but the enemy remained invisible, not only in the jungle but among the people of the villages – an almost metaphysical enemy who inflicted upon them heat, boredom, terror and death,

and gave them nothing to show for it – no territory taken, no visible sign of progress except the bodies of small yellow men.
(Fitzgerald, 1989:464)

Phillip Caputo describes the terrain of the Vietnamese countryside (as seen from the air) in evocative images suggestive of the American wilderness:

An unbroken mass of green stretched westward, one ridgeline and mountain range after another, some more than a mile high and covered with forests that looked solid enough to walk on. It had no end. It just went on to the horizon.
(Caputo, 1977:77)

At ground level, however, this apparently innocuous and scenic terrain became a hostile 'green furnace' where, as Joker observes,

[h]umping in the rain forest is like climbing a stairway of shit in an enormous green room constructed by ogres for the confinement of monster plants Thorny underbush claws our jungle utilities Limp sabres of elephant grass slice our hands and cheeks. Creepers trip us and tear at our ankles Insects eat our skins, leeches suck our blood, snakes try to bite us, and even the monkeys throw rocks ... our real enemy is the jungle.
(Hasford, 1983:149-150)

The sensual apocalyptic imagery, peculiar to the myth of romance and inherent in the Arcadian setting of Cooper's *The Deerslayer*, has given way to the demonic imagery that infests the aggressive jungle conditions in the myth-destroying terrain of Vietnam. In such a hostile environment it is, therefore, not surprising that the persona of the romantic hero too should devolve into a perverted representation of his 'Other' self.

If the physical attributes of this alien territory were stark reminders of American vulnerability, the type of warfare that pervaded the conflict and the degree to which the jungle environment favoured both this type of warfare and the enemy

emphasized the point. The Vietnamese conflict was a guerrilla war marked by tactics of insurgency and counter insurgency. Michael Herr has pointed out that

[t]he ground was always in play, always being swept. Under the ground was his, above it was ours. We had the air, we could get up in it but not disappear in to it, we could run but we couldn't hide, and he could do each so well that sometimes it looked like he was doing them both at once ...

(Herr, 1979:19)

Guerrilla warfare is a type of warfare that favours those who are indigenous to the country in which the war is being fought. They do not need to fight set battles unless they choose and they can afford to wait, testing the opposition's patience and will – 'Guerrillas do not need to win; they simply must avoid losing. Conventional forces must win' (Baritz, 1998:174). Until Vietnam, America had always fought in the conventional style of warfare, with clear battle lines marked by the taking and holding of military strongholds. The art of guerrilla warfare, with its hit and run tactic, was a style therefore unfamiliar to the American forces of that era, and the feeling of constant uncertainty that it created in the mind impacted profoundly upon the psychological state of the individual ground soldier.

Coupled with this, was the added disadvantage that the distinction made between soldiers and civilians tended to be blurred. As Fitzgerald has stated:

... unarmed peasants actively and voluntarily cooperated with the Front troops, giving information, carrying supplies, laying booby trapsIn many regions "the Viet Cong" were simply villagers themselves; to "eliminate the Viet Cong" means to eliminate the villages, if not the villagers themselves, an entire social structure and a way of life.

(Fitzgerald, 1989:468)

Not being able to easily identify the enemy became justification for what Faludi has called 'a certain mythology about Vietnam' (Faludi, 2000:333). Part of the

myth was that nobody could be trusted because, as the story went, apparently 'friendly' villagers would often lure unsuspecting companies into a trap. The seemingly innocent and friendly child, who accepted gifts of sweets and canned goods from the grunts, often did so with a 'claymore [mine] clapped to his chest' (Faludi, 2000:333), while the mamasans who did the laundry in base camps by day could become active Vietcong infiltrators by night. It was common knowledge that villagers, whether voluntarily or by coercion, concealed Vietcong fighters in an extensive underground network of tunnels that often linked one village to the next (Fitzgerald, 1989:179). The tunnels not only acted as hiding places for the guerrillas while they played their waiting game, but also served as vast storerooms for food and arms caches that underpinned the Vietcong support mechanisms. These tunnels became the enemy's first line of defence and the Americans would only discover them when directed to them by informers or prisoners (Fitzgerald, 1989:179). The state of constant uncertainty created by this situation had a profound psychological impact on the ground troops.

The American frontier hero traditionally operated in a landscape reminiscent of Cooper's *The Deerslayer*, where the terrain was synonymous with the pastoral setting of the mode of romance. The jungles of Vietnam proved to be a subverted nightmare of this idyllic Arcadian setting, where the 'hero' had to live by his wits while contending with other aberrant forces that manifested in the unfamiliar type of warfare and the intangible enemy. This apparently hostile environment impacted upon the character of the 'hero', becoming one of the influences that brought about the emergence of his 'Other' self.

When John Winthrop declared the Puritans to be the 'Chosen People' destined to found a 'shining City on a Hill' as a moral example to the rest of the world, he effectively invoked the dichotomous Manichean myth of light versus darkness / good versus evil. This declaration cast America as the 'redeemer nation' leading the 'Forces of Light' against their enemies, the 'Forces of Darkness' or 'agents of Satan' (Hellmann, 1986:6). Although the term 'Forces of Darkness' was first

assigned by the Puritan dissenters to the monarchies of Europe, it was later adopted as a term to describe the native inhabitants during the westward push across the American continent and, even later still, the Vietnamese during the Vietnam conflict. As Loren Baritz has posited, the Myth of a City on a Hill set an American dogma because it fixed 'the limits of thought for Americans about themselves and about the rest of the world [by offering] a choice about the appropriate relationship between us and them' (Baritz, 1998:29).

The cultural arrogance that led the American establishment to consider itself as morally superior, also led it to treat the Vietnamese as less than human. Because they did not understand local customs, the sight of same-sex Vietnamese holding hands, for example, resulted in their being labelled as 'disgusting little perverts' who had no regard for human life and who simply lived in shacks and filth – 'if the Vietnamese did not act like human beings, then they did not have to be treated as such' (Fitzgerald, 1989:465). Psychiatrist Dr John Bjornson, who served in Vietnam with the Army 8th Field Hospital, testified at the Winter Soldier Investigation (held at Detroit, Michigan between 31 January 1971 and 2 February 1971):

... the gooks, the Vietnamese, are inferior, which is constantly drummed into our heads. It's a kind of programming There's a tremendous kind of racist unconscious that I guess we all have, and again this is programmed, it is reinforced. The Vietnamese are inferior, and this has been mentioned many times.

(Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Inc., 1971)

Fitzgerald too cites the testimony of Scott Camille, also given at the Michigan Winter Soldier Investigation:

And when you shot someone you didn't think you were shooting at a human. They were a gook or a Commie and it was okay, [be]cause like they [the American officers] would tell you they'd do it to you if they had the chance.

(Fitzgerald, 1989:465)

The perception encouraged by the military in Vietnam was that the Vietnamese people (both Vietcong and Vietnamese peasants alike) were unlike the 'Self' (the Americans) in every respect – physically, culturally and morally. Assigned the role of the 'Other' they were often regarded as less than human and, with this prevailing attitude, it appeared morally acceptable to a percentage of the fighting forces to kill, maim and mutilate both soldiers and civilians alike. In *The Short Timers*, the members of Lusthog Squad not only kill the woman sniper but subsequently mutilate her body, taking pictures and souvenirs as if she were a tourist attraction rather than a human being. However, as another witness at the Winter Soldier Investigation, Steve Pitkin, observed: 'You will look at them as animals and at the same time you're just turning yourself into an animal, too' (Fitzgerald, 1989:465).

Joseph Conrad, in *Heart of Darkness*, recognised that within men there is a primitive instinctive force that remains permanently in the heart of each individual. So-called 'primitive' behaviour was accepted as entirely natural in the 'natives' in Conrad's novel because they were 'prehistoric men' believed to be centuries behind Europeans in evolutionary growth (Conrad, 1987:73). Thus Marlow is restrained by his European culture, a culture that theoretically places him centuries ahead of the savages. By contrast, Kurtz has left behind all pretensions of European superiority and therefore is no longer bound by the restraining influences of his culture – 'he had stepped over the edge, while I [Marlow] had been permitted to draw back my hesitating foot' (Conrad, 1987:118).

African scholars have since levelled accusations of racism at Joseph Conrad. Chinua Achebe, in an essay entitled 'An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*', refers to Conrad as 'a thoroughgoing racist' (Achebe, 1988:8). Regardless of whether or not his should be considered a racist attitude, Conrad's writing does reflect colonialist perception of darker races in the nineteenth century. As Francis Fitzgerald concludes in her citation of the work of

French ethnologist and psychologist, Otare Mannoni, 'the colonial impulse is nonetheless present in varying degrees within most Westerners and will tend to emerge when the situation permits' (Fitzgerald, 1989:371). Based on her argument, therefore, Conrad's colonialist mentality, despite its racist overtones, goes a long way towards understanding and explaining the American soldier's perception of Orientals as a dichotomy of 'Self' and 'Other'.

For the Americans in Vietnam (like the colonialist Marlow) the 'Other' was regarded as being synonymous with everything that was unlike them and thus everything that was negative within themselves. However, the distinction made between 'Self' and 'Other' cannot be quite so clearly differentiated, since the violence and sadism that was latent beneath the myth of the frontier began to resurface in Vietnam and the Americans became the Kurtz of Conrad's novel, pushed over the edge into an abyss of primitive behaviour. Paul Meadlo, in the firsthand account of the My Lai atrocity as published in *Time*, recalls:

And so he [Calley] walked over to the people, and he started pushing them off [into the ditch] and started shooting. We just pushed them all off and just started using automatics on them. Men, women and children.

(Magnuson, 1969:20)

Richard Slotkin considers this to be the point of cross-over between sanity and civilization, and barbarism and savagery – '[i]nstead of protecting women and children from "the horror", they had themselves *become* "the horror" '(Slotkin, 1992:585). Mai Lai was not an isolated incident in the conflict but it was the most publicised, and therefore serves as a good example to illustrate the inversion of the traditional war / Western movie scenario where, instead of rescuing women and children from rape and slaughter, the Americans became the savage 'Other' by indulging in practices they found so abhorrent in their Vietnamese enemy.

By declaring themselves as the 'Chosen People', the Puritans invoked a Manichean binarism through a distinction between 'Self' and 'Other'. They

effectively drew a circle around the 'Self' and created an illusion of closure by shutting out or marginalizing the 'Other', whom they envisaged as being totally unlike themselves – physically, culturally and morally. As history was to once again prove, however, closures are not as closed or complete or stable as they might first appear. Constant slippages began to occur between what closure is considered to both include and exclude, as the excluded 'Other' returned to threaten the limits of that closure. In Vietnam the primitive side of the grunts' nature began to manifest itself, and the emergence of this dark side upset the traditional concept of the romantic hero. The surfacing of the primitive instinct in Joker and the other members of Lusthog Squad, and subsequently the part it plays in the subversion of the mythic hero, are demonstrable both in *Full Metal Jacket* and *The Short Timers*.

Stanley Kubrick based his 1987 film, *Full Metal Jacket*, on the novel, *The Short Timers*, by Gustav Hasford. Although the film closely follows the storyline of the novel (the screenplay was written by Kubrick, Hasford and Michael Herr) the two do differ in certain important respects. Hasford served as a combat correspondent in Vietnam and his novel, therefore, gives the impression of being a first-hand experience of the Vietnam War. By contrast, *Full Metal Jacket* is a fictional film about a fictionalised war experience made fifteen years after American troops left Vietnam (Reaves, 1988:233) and, added to this, Kubrick is considered by several critics to have brought his own agenda to the interpretation of Hasford's novel (Castle and Donatelli, 1998; Doherty, 1989; Gilliat, 1987). While Kubrick focuses heavily on the boot camp sequences, as the process that turned men into monsters, Hasford emphasizes the emergence of the recruits' barbaric nature once they have arrived in Vietnam. For this reason, *The Short Timers* manifests as a far more harrowing and realistic interpretation of the process by which the cultural hero is subjugated, pointedly giving credence to a lack of closure in its conclusion. Despite this criticism, Kubrick adds an air of authenticity to his interpretation of Hasford's novel by having the character of Sergeant Hartmann played by actor Lee Ermey, who himself was a former

marine drill instructor and who contributed almost one hundred and fifty pages of marine jargon and insulting language for use in the script (Cahill, 1987:36).

Adhering to Frye's 'romance quest myth' the plot of both *Full Metal Jacket* and *The Short Timers* initially follows the progressive movement of the hero through the main stages of separation and initiation. The third stage of the quest myth (that of the return of the hero) is not a feature of either of these works, although the possibility of return is implied at the end of *Full Metal Jacket*. Return insinuates closure, but lack of closure is a recurring theme throughout most Vietnam literature. Steffen Hantke, using Larry Heinemann's *Paco's Story* as his example, postulated that the root of this radical displacement is the 'complete breakdown of one's former identity' (Hantke, 2001:67), a process initiated in boot camp.

The Marine Corps Recruit Depot is situated at Parris Island, South Carolina – 'constructed in a swamp on an island, symmetrical but sinister like a suburban death camp' (Hasford, 1983:3). In this place of dark and menacing seclusion, the recruits undergo initiation rituals designed to strip them of their former identities and transform the 'womanish boy[s] into heroic slayer[s] of men' (Eckert, 1966:167). The first ritual involves the symbolic shaving of heads, as they lose their long, effeminate civilian hair to the Marine barbers. This procedure not only strips them of their civilian identity and makes them appear as clones of one another but, as Paula Willoquet-Maricondi implies, it also

[e]stablishes the recruits' identity as boys – babies – rather than men: with their heads shaven they resemble infants. This image is reinforced in the scenes [in *Full Metal Jacket*] where they appear in white underwear and T-shirts: they are reminiscent of babies in diapers. The neatly lined bunks remind us of incubators in a hospital nursery. These "babies" are not yet fully "born" into a World of War.

(Willoquet-Maricondi, 1994:16)

Rebuilding of their identity begins with a one-dimensional renaming process – the Texan is called ‘Cowboy’, the company ‘comedian’ acquires the name of ‘Joker’ and the overweight, clumsy boy becomes ‘Gomer Pyle’. Later in the combat arena, these names take on more sinister overtones as they describe the hardened monsters the recruits have become – ‘T.H.E. Rock’, ‘Crazy Earl’, ‘Baby Cakes’, ‘Snake’, ‘Rafter Man’ and ‘Animal Mother’.

The process of masculinization involves the eradication of any element within the new recruits that might resemble the ‘Other’, including their feminine side. They are assaulted with verbal obscenities and learn to speak in extreme terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’: ‘If you ladies leave my island,’ roars Hartmann in *Full Metal Jacket*, ‘if you survive recruit training, you will be a weapon, you will be a minister of death, praying for war. But until that day you are pukers ... You are not even fucking human beings’. In this statement Hartmann differentiates between the ‘us’, the ‘ministers of death’ who form his ‘beloved corps’, and the ‘them’, the ‘pukers’ whom he equates with the female of the species and to whom he assigns a non-human status. Similarly he engenders racial hatred when he yells ‘Niggers, wops, gooks and greasers. Here you are all equally worthless’, thus debasing the value of any life form that is not classified as the ‘us’. Consequently, through their lectures and the rituals, prayers and chants they learn by rote, the new recruits are ‘educated in national chauvinism, racism and sexism’ (Klein, 1990b:30). Everything that is unlike themselves (including both women and the Vietnamese) is confined to the inferior position of the ‘Other’ and, since the ‘Other’ is not considered human then it is perfectly acceptable to kill them without compunction - ‘What do we do for a living? / Kill, kill, kill’ is repeated over and over again during their indoctrination into the ‘psychology of slaughter’. The Marine Corps did not aim to produce ‘genteel killers’ or facsimiles of the Western hero – the ‘chaste saint with a gun’. The objective of the Marine Corps was to produce ‘gook-hating’, misogynistic, robot-like killers’ (Klein, 1990b:31) who were ‘wedded’ to their weapons.

The weapon is an important symbol in the mode of romance as it represents the totem emblem of the hero's manhood (Slotkin, 1996:501). In *The Deerslayer*, Judith presents Hawkeye with Killdeer, not only to mark the attainment of his manhood, but also to symbolize his achievement of heroic stature. The reader later finds him tenderly caressing the lock and breech of the rifle (as he would a new bride) in an erotic display of the union between himself and his weapon. Michael, in the scene before the hunt in *The Deer Hunter*, is similarly observed meticulously cleaning and caressing the weapon that is a symbol of his masculinity. However, the relationship between the recruits and their weapons in *Full Metal Jacket* and *The Short Timers* is perverted to the extent of being almost obscene. Hartmann, in *Full Metal Jacket*, orders the recruits to give a girl's name to their rifles and to sleep with them every night 'because this is the only pussy you people are going to get'. Their rifle is a symbol of their masculinity and a weapon of technological power that only they can control. In the patriarchal order into which they are being indoctrinated, 'control' means control of the 'Other' - both control of their weapon (the female) and control of the enemy through the use of that weapon. This ideological conditioning, however, disintegrates in the scene of Pyle's suicide. Pyle, whom we have previously seen tenderly talking to and lovingly cleaning his beautiful and smooth rifle, 'Charlene', shoots Hartmann for attempting to remove the weapon, and then turns the gun on himself. The perverted and infertile unity between the recruit and his rifle has not only replaced the normal fertile sexual union between two people, but it has also culminated in murder and suicide (Willoquet-Maricondi, 1994:15).

Once the hero arrives in Vietnam he does, in a sense, engage with nature (the jungle), which is in keeping with the mode of romance, but here nature is an inverted world by comparison with the aesthetic Arcadian world in *The Deerslayer*, and the barbaric side of the recruits' innate characters (so carefully nurtured in boot camp) now erupts into a full-blown display of savage behaviour, as is graphically depicted by Gustav Hasford in *The Short Timers*. They now lack all semblance of the code of moral manhood common to the heroic archetype.

Unlike Hawkeye and Michael, all respect for nature has been lost as the members of Lusthog Squad, out of boredom, douse rats with lighter fluid and set them alight in a sport they call a 'rat race' (Hasford, 1983:68). When the game is over, Mr Payback picks up one of the dead rats and, with the comment: 'Ummm ... love them crispy critters', bites off the tip of its tale and eats it (Hasford, 1983:70).

From this point onwards they descend deeper and deeper into the abyss of primitive behaviour, and their actions become progressively more and more bizarre and contrary to those one would expect of the archetypal hero. There is Captain January who, because his wife shows an interest in his work, plans to send her a dead 'gook' as a souvenir (Hasford, 1983:62) and Alice, who carries around with him a blue canvas shopping bag filled with 'gook' feet, on which is printed 'I shall fear no evil, for I am the evil' (Hasford, 1983:154). They even resort to cannibalism when Rafter Man, following a fire-fight, slices off the flesh of the dead Corporal Slavin and eats it (Hasford, 1983:74). Their actions indicate a decisive movement away from the image of the Green Beret as a 'chaste saint with a gun' and towards one who exudes all the perceived evil embodied in the 'Other'. After the killing of the woman sniper and the mutilation of her corpse it is Rafter Man who experiences an epiphany of self-realization:

Then, as we're moving out, Rafter Man sees a reflection of his face in the jagged teeth of a shattered window, sees the new smile upon his face. Rafter Man stares at himself for a long time and then, dropping the carbine, Rafter Man just walks off down the road ...

(Hasford, 1983:121-122)

This is the point at which Rafter Man realizes that he has become a full embodiment of the 'Other', a role for which he was so meticulously groomed during recruit training.

In his novel, Hasford also satirizes many of the icons that went towards informing the character of the archetypal mythic hero in the Vietnam era. Joker describes Captain January as 'the kind of officer who chews a pipe because he thinks a pipe will help make him a father figure' (Hasford, 1983:57), but Captain January is later revealed to be planning to send his wife a dead 'gook' as a souvenir. When Joker encounters the colonel, who castigates him for wearing the peace symbol on his lapel, the colonel begins in what Joker terms an 'excellent Fatherly approach' (Hasford, 1983:137). The same colonel later shows Joker the body of a lance corporal that he carries around with him in his jeep: 'In the lance corporal's neck are punctures – many, many of them. The poge colonel grins, bares his vampire fangs, takes a step towards me' (Hasford, 1983:139). Neither of these men display the fatherly traits that recruits came to expect of their officers.

However, it is Hollywood and the figure of John Wayne that are most satirized by Hasford. Both Kubrick and Hasford allude to the Vietnam War as a movie by including, among other things, numerous references to this central symbol of male heroism. Initially Hasford merely ridicules the Hollywood icon by having Joker refer to him as 'Mr' John Wayne, in a display of mock respect. When viewing John Wayne's film *The Green Berets*, Joker conjures up a ludicrous description of Wayne as 'a beautiful soldier, clean-shaven, sharply attired in tailored tiger-stripe jungle utilities, wearing boots that shine like black glass' (Hasford, 1983:38). This image he juxtaposes with that of the Marine audience, who are 'bearded, dirty, out of uniform' and sit with muddy jungle boots propped onto the seat in front of them. At the close of the film the 'Marines roar with laughter 'because it is the 'funniest movie [they] have seen in a long time'. With this Joker concludes that 'the end of the movie is as accurate as the rest of it' (Hasford, 1983:38), a comment that ridicules both the image of the war as it is portrayed by Hollywood and the image of its most famous warrior.

Young recruits going to Vietnam went there with preconceived ideas about what to expect. These notions were kindled by Hollywood's representation of war through the figure of John Wayne but, as Ray Zimmerman asserts with respect to *The Short Timers*:

By the time the recruits have experienced the war itself, the mildly comic figure of John Wayne is reduced to an object of utter derision The men finally associate the name of John Wayne with absurd acts of mock heroics or self-destructive (even psychotic) behaviour in the combat zone.

(Zimmerman, 1999:78)

The tone becomes even more cynical when the squad encounters the sniper in their assault on the Citadel. At one point Cowboy exclaims, 'This ain't real. This is just a John Wayne movie' and he proceeds to assign each soldier a part. Joker is given the part of Paul Newman; Crazy Earl will be Gaby Hayes; Alice, Ann-Margaret; Animal Mother, a rabid buffalo and Cowboy, a horse. The part of the Indians will be auditioned for by 'the little enemy folks' (Hasford, 1983:98-99). The irony is that Vietnam was not a Hollywood set where the 'dead' picked themselves up at the end of the day and went home. Vietnam was an 'ironic anti-myth in which an archetypal warrior representative of the culture embarks on a quest that dissolves into an utter chaos of dark revelation' (Hellmann, 1986:102).

Finally, while the ending of *Full Metal Jacket* is still suggestive of closure, that of *The Short Timers* debunks any such assumption. In the final sequence frames of the film the surviving grunts are seen departing Hue to the strains of the Mickey Mouse Club theme. This suggests a move away from Vietnam and back to Hollywood, and a return to the World. The Marines have sustained and lived up to the Marine tradition by killing the sniper. They have killed the enemy but, in this instance, it is not via an act of barbarism but a mercy killing. Thus they have, to an extent, retained their heroic stature through a show of empathy with the plight and pain of the sniper.

The conclusion of *Full Metal Jacket* also points to the reluctance of the cinema industry to follow through with the subversion of the myth. Hollywood, after all, is in the business of making and sustaining myths, since film may be regarded as a 'genre space ... in which the concrete work of contemporary myth-making is done' (Slotkin, 1992:234). The industry generally likes to base its movies on a successful resolution of the problem and, as such, would be unlikely to subscribe to open-ended and indecisive conclusions that ultimately could serve to undermine any perception of its integrity.

The ending of Hasford's bitter novel, however, is not so affirmative and shows that nihilism knows no depth. Not only does the narrator, Joker, reject the sacred Marine oath of never to leave his wounded behind, but he shoots Cowboy under questionable circumstances (in the film version the Marines rescue the wounded Cowboy and drag him to safety before he dies). Unlike the killing of Mr Shortround, which is overtly acknowledged by Cowboy as a 'fragging', the shooting of Cowboy, in what at first appears to be an act of mercy, is shrouded in more sinister overtones: 'Everyone hates my guts, but they know I am right. I am their sergeant; they are my men. Cowboy was killed by sniper fire, they'll say, but they'll never see me again; I'll be invisible' (Hasford, 1983:178).

Initially Joker and Cowboy share an intimate relationship similar to that shared by Michael and Nick, and Hawkeye and Chingachgook. In the end, however, Joker kills his 'friend' and, in the aftermath of the shooting, experiences a euphoria that he summarizes in the statement: 'I have never felt so alive' (Hasford, 1983:179). This statement throws into question the notion of whether or not the killing of Cowboy was actually an act of mercy, or whether Joker has in fact become the irreversible 'Other' by turning on his best friend and killing him in just another instance of 'fragging'. In addition, the ending of the novel (unlike the film) does not indicate that the grunts will be recycling back to 'the world' in the near future

(or if ever). The indication is that they have become trapped in the perpetual, cyclical and open-ended world of the un-dead. Ray Zimmerman proposes that:

Like the werewolf of the legend [at the end of the boot camp section of the novel Hasford describes the recruits as 'young werewolves'], the recruits have been consigned to a cursed non-life, unable to properly rejoin society even at the end of the war.

(Zimmerman, 1999:81)

For these soldiers there can be no closure as they have become the irreversible 'Other'.

The sixties generation who went to Vietnam, went with preconceived notions of heroism and what constituted it. Like Philip Caputo, in *A Rumour of War*, they imagined themselves charging up some distant beachhead, like John Wayne in *The Sands of Iwo Jima*, and then coming home suntanned warriors with medals on their chests. This image was to rapidly dissipate as they were indoctrinated into a 'psychology of slaughter' during the rituals of Marine training.

Stanley Kubrick's film *Full Metal Jacket* and the book on which it was based, Gustav Hasford's *The Short Timers*, chronicle the experiences of a squad of Marines as they pass through basic training and are shipped to Vietnam. Film and book, up to this point, parallel each other fairly closely. Kubrick, however, selectively documents the heroic deeds of the members of Lusthog Squad – the mercy killing of the woman sniper; the insistence of the squad members on rescuing the wounded in the battle of Hue and the rescue of Cowboy. These incidences point to a reluctance on the part of Hollywood to relinquish the image of the hero; an image they have so carefully nurtured through their portrayal of the Western hero and the soldier-hero of World War II. Even in Hollywood's latest war epic, *Saving Private Ryan* (Paramount Pictures, 1998), director Stephen Spielberg still slavishly adheres to the industry's portrayal of the hero. Despite his realistic sequences depicting the maiming and death of the soldiers, he still

permits the hero to die a hero's death, Hollywood-style, having successfully accomplished the mission and located the elusive Private Ryan. Hollywood is in the business of making and sustaining myths and, most of all, in creating the fantasy of successful conclusion. The members of Joker's squad are therefore allowed to march out of Hue, at the conclusion of *Full Metal Jacket*, as the heroes Hollywood would like them to be and, more importantly, as heroes who have successfully completed their mission.

Hasford's novel, however, is the brutally explicit story of Corporal Joker and his battle-hardened company. In this story there are no illusions about the heroic status of the protagonists – Joker murders the sniper in cold blood and the squad butcher her corpse, while the killing of Cowboy is morally questionable. At the end of the novel, members of the squad have totally embraced that dark 'Other' entity, and in so doing have forfeited the possibility of closure. They have effectively become the Kurtz in Conrad's novel – men who have stepped over the edge into an abyss from which there is no return.

CHAPTER 4.

'... strange hells within the minds war made'

Northrop Frye charges that, in the idealized world of the romance, 'heroes are brave, heroines beautiful and villains villainous' (Frye, 1973:151). Many of the combatants sent to Vietnam initially cast themselves in the role of the romantic hero of the quest myth, venturing forth to defend their country against the evil forces of Communism. Not only were they encouraged to envisage themselves as the saviours of the free world, but the social system of which they were a part also expected them to display the bravery and courage of superhuman man-warriors by fulfilling their mission with the same degree of wartime heroism popularly understood to have been shown by John F. Kennedy.

Once in Vietnam, however, they were confronted by the realities of a war that, together with the unrealistic expectations imposed upon them by their society and the draconian rules of the military establishment they represented, saw the telescoping of the roles of hero and villain. Recast now as tragic protagonists, they were set to fulfil Weisinger's prophecy that 'the evil which the protagonist would not do, he does, and the good which he would do, he does not' (Weisinger, 1966:154), a task that translated into atrocities like the My Lai massacre. In the dark jungles of Vietnam, characters like Joker and the other members of Lusthog Squad in Hasford's *The Short Timers* take on the persona of their more sinister 'Other' selves, thus not only subverting the original myth but also, by descending into the abyss of dark revelation from which there was no return, forfeiting any possibility of positive resolution.

In the preface to the Winter, 1988, special issue of *Genre*, entitled 'The Vietnam War and Postmodern Memory', Gordon O. Taylor refers to the notion of Vietnam as a 'post-modern' war (Taylor, 1988:389). This labelling not only alludes to its fragmentary nature – of having so many different meanings for so many different people (Beard-Meyers, 1988:535-536) – but also implies intangibility, multiplicity,

unresolvedness and lack of closure. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War the unresolved nature of the conflict has been repeatedly highlighted in American society. Many ex-combat personnel, for example, rotated back to the World to become embittered veterans like Ron Kovic, suffering both rejection by and feelings of alienation from the society of which they had once been a part. Some were so psychologically scarred that they (like Nick in Cimino's *The Deer Hunter*) chose to opt out of mainstream society altogether. When the subject of the Vietnam War was raised, even those who (like the spectre-figure of the Green Beret at the wedding in *The Deer Hunter*) appeared to have escaped relatively unscathed preferred the company of other veterans, because they felt that the horrors which remained buried deep in their minds could only be understood by someone who had shared a similar experience. In a poem entitled 'Strange Hells' (which is included in an anthology selected and introduced by P.J. Kavanagh) Ivor Gurney gives an account of a particular bombardment and charge across No Man's Land during the Great War. Ironically, the Gloucester soldiers of Gurney's poem are able to 'quite put out this hell', but it is the 'strange hells' of memory, of the '... hells within the minds war made' that foregrounds the issue of social and psychological readjustment that has to be made by returning veterans of all wars where the armies have been comprised of citizen soldiers. Nowhere was this more clearly visible than in those combatants returning from Vietnam for whom, like a festering wound, the traumatic memory of their experience did not readily heal.

Referring to Larry Heinemann's *Paco's Story*, Steffen Hantke suggests that: 'at the root of this radical displacement ... is a complete breakdown in one's former identity' (Hantke, 2001:67). For combatants sent to Vietnam that identity revolved around the mythic ideal of being a hero, and when the notion of the hero was destroyed so too was the final phase of the myth; a phase that required the successful reintegration into the social group of the culture. Both Kubrick and Hasford stop short of having their characters return to the World, thus circumventing the problems of possible rejection and feelings of alienation.

Cimino, on the other hand, allows the return of Michael and Steven but, notably, it is not to accolades and social gratitude that the myth dictated, thereby signalling a further erosion of expectations and lack of resolution.

Frye (1973:198-202) identifies the final phase of the romance quest as involving the return of the hero and his reintegration into the social group of his culture. This had been successfully achieved in previous foreign wars (World War I, World War II and the Korean War) by parades and celebrations afforded to returning servicemen. Vietnam, however, was conducted very differently with ex-combatants returning home in 'unnoticeable dribbles while the war still went on' (Lomperis, 1987:27). Lomperis cites William Erhart's poem 'Coming Home' to highlight the cruel disillusionment felt by veterans at the 'non-event of coming home':

...
 No brass bands;
 no flags,
 no girls,
 no cameramen.
 Only a small boy who asked me
 what the ribbons on my jacket meant.
 (Lomperis, 1987:27)

By not affording them the status of returning heroes and, in some cases, by going so far as to pointedly label them 'just a bunch of baby-killers and murderers' (Lomperis, 1987:28), American society created a haunted Vietnam generation with feelings so deeply buried as to defer the healing process. Even twenty-six years after the cessation of the conflict, the Vietnam War still 'seems to be haunting America more than any other localized event in its recent history' by refusing to fade into 'something that eventually becomes truly and irreversibly past' (Hantke, 2001:63), thus attesting to its apparent irresolution of closure.

This dissertation has shown that just as the 'conclusion' of the war itself ironically resists resolution and closure, so too does the definition of the hero. Born out of

the colonists' encounter with the New World was the 'American Adam' – a 'new kind of hero, the heroic embodiment of a new set of ideal human attributes' (Lewis, 1955:5). This frontier prototype further evolved with the emerging culture of the 1950s and 1960s into an archetype symbolized, through the prevailing concepts of masculinity, in the characters played by Hollywood's John Wayne. The John Wayne character, embodying the all-American male ethos of toughness, courage, patriotic duty, honour and glory, would perish in the dark jungles of Vietnam, but the definition of a hero merely shifted with the changing goal posts of time, developing into a new cultural archetype complete with a new set of values.

Although the chapter of the dissertation may now be irresolutely closed, the subject still remains infinitely unresolved. What initially became an inquiry into the undermining of the concept of the hero through his encounter with the Vietnam War has, during the course of the research, opened up other avenues for advanced critical investigation. One of the more promising subjects for further possible research could revolve around the theme of the changing identity of the hero, juxtaposed against the military's intolerance of the shifting paradigms of masculinity, and how this situation is captured in American film and literary works.

The limits of this dissertation might be extended, in future research, to trace the ways in which the masculine-dominated image of the hero has, in recent years, been largely reformulated into a more human representation of the male identity. One of the survivors of the My Lai massacre, Michael Bernhardt, acknowledged in an interview with Susan Faludi: 'All these years I was trying to be all the stereotypes [of manhood] and what was the use?' (Faludi, 2000:607). In the changing society that has unfolded since the era of the 1950s and 1960s, the image of the hero as a hard, isolate, stoic killer, who never marries or belongs to a family, has undergone a transformation and, as Faludi concludes, Bernhardt could now 'begin to conceive of other ways of being "human", and hence, of

being a man' (Faludi, 2000:607). This changing paradigm of the hero is illustrated, for example, in the 1990 academy award-winning film *Dances with Wolves*. The film breaks with the code of masculinity that the Western traditionally portrays and represents the hero as one who escapes to nature and the family in a spirit of intimacy between human beings, thus offering a more holistic human identity for men to live by.

Inconsistent with the changing image of the hero, however, is the continuing homophobia expressed by the American military establishment. In *Full Metal Jacket* and *The Short Timers*, Sergeant Hartmann / Gerheim uses the stigma of homosexuality as a weapon of manipulation, highlighting the simple syllogism by which the military operated during the Vietnam era: 'Soldiers are real men. Queers are not real men. Therefore, a soldier cannot be a queer' (Shilts, 1993:34) – a syllogism echoed in the current 'don't ask, don't tell' policy of the U.S. Military. In his book, *Conduct Unbecoming*, Randy Shilts documents the ongoing witch-hunt conducted by the military authorities to rid themselves of gays and lesbians. Even though, with the passing of time, civil laws became more tolerant of homosexual practices, the military remained as rabid as ever (Shilts, 1993:295). This insensate persecution of and the lingering stigma attached to homosexuality by the United States Military provides one of the themes for the 2000 film, *American Beauty*. The film portrays one of its characters as a repressed homosexual who chooses to commit murder rather than risk the possibility of having his secret exposed - a secret that would lead to the shame of a less than honourable military discharge.

This dissertation has shown that what constitutes the character of the hero is a shifting perspective in the chronology of time. James Fennimore Cooper began his series of Leatherstocking Tales with *The Pioneers* (1821) and concluded with *The Deerslayer* (1841). In each of these novels Cooper's frontiersman, Natty Bumppo, became the protean form of a tradition: a new American born out of the virgin wilderness. In *The Deerslayer*, Bumppo is presented as a youth on the

verge of manhood, and as such he is representative of all the mythic ideals associated with the mode of romance in its new American setting. Almost one hundred and twenty-five years later this image of the archetypal American hero was to crumble under the onslaught of the Vietnam War. Michael Vronski, in Cimino's *The Deer Hunter*, embodies both the mythic ideal of the wild huntsman and the image of the hero in a new age, and as such bridges a divide between old and new. In *The Deer Hunter*, however, cracks begin to appear in the traditional representation of the mythic warrior (as exemplified by the character and plight of Nick) and, in *Full Metal Jacket* and *The Short Timers*, all residual evidence of that tradition disappears as Joker and the Lusthog Squad embrace the dark side of their inner natures. The Vietnam experience shattered the old mythic ideal, but in its wake was born a more holistic human identity that would be the configuration of a newly emerging heroic concept. The irony is that the traits exhibited by the contemporary version of the hero strongly resemble those the military fought so hard to suppress in the warrior-heroes they sent to Vietnam.

Works Cited.

- Achebe, C. 1988. *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays 1965-1987*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Aron, R. 1954. *The Century of Total War*. New York: Doubleday.
- Baritz, L. 1998. *Backfire: A History of How American Culture Led Us Into Vietnam and Made Us Fight the Way We Did*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Barthes, R. 1974. *Mythologies*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Beard-Meyers, K. 1988. 'Fragmentary Mosaics: Vietnam War "Histories" and Postmodern Epistemology'. *Genre*, 21(4): 535-552.
- Bradford, S. 2001. *America's Queen: The Life of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Cahill, T. 1987. The Rolling Stone Interview: 'Stanley Kubrick'. *Rolling Stone*, 27 August: 29-36.
- Calloway, C. 1991. 'American Literature and Film of the Vietnam War: Classroom Strategies and Critical Sources'. In: M.J. Gilbert (ed.) *The Vietnam War: Teaching Approaches and Resources*. New York: Greenwood. 139-159.
- Caputo, P. 1977. *A Rumor of War*. New York: Rinehart & Winston.

- Castle, R. and S. Donatelli 1998. 'Kubrick's Ulterior War' (motion picture review). *Film Comment*, 34(5): 24-30.
- Cawley, L. 1990. 'The War About the War: Vietnam Films and American Myth'. In: L. Dittmar and G. Michaud (eds.) *From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. 69-80.
- Coleridge, S.T. 1976. 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere'. In: R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones (eds.) *Wordsworth and Coleridge: Lyrical Ballads*. London: Methuen. 9-35.
- Conrad, J. 1987. *Heart of Darkness and Typhoon*. Craighall: Ad Donker.
- Cooper, J.F. 1987. *The Deerslayer*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Cronon, W.M. and T. Gitlin (eds.) 1993. *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Dittmar, L. and G. Michaud (eds.) 1990. *From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Doherty, T. 1989. 'Full Metal Genre: Stanley Kubrick's Vietnam Combat Movie'. *Film Quarterly*, 42(Winter): 24-30.

- Eckert, C. 1966. 'Initiatory Motifs in the Story of Telemachus'. In: J.B. Vickery (ed.) *Myth and Literature: Contemporary Theory and Practice*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 161-169.
- Engel, L.W. 1988. 'Sam Pekinpah's Heroes: Natty Bumppo and The Myth of the Rugged Individual Still Reign'. *Literature Film Quarterly*, 16(1): 22-30.
- Erhart, W.D. 1995. *Vietnam-Perkasie: A Combat Marine Memoir*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Everett, G. 1994. 'The American National Character and The Novelization of Vietnam'. PhD thesis. Stony Brook: State University of New York.
- Faludi, S. 2000. *Stiffed: The Betrayal of Modern Man*. London: Vintage.
- Fitzgerald, F. 1989. *Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam*. New York: Vintage.
- Frye, N. 1973. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Gilliatt, P. 1987. 'Heavy Metal'. *American Film*, 12(Sept): 20-22.

- Hantke, S. 2001. 'The Uses of the Fantastic and the Deferment of Closure in American Literature of the Vietnam War'. *Rocky Mountain Review*, **55**(1): 63-82.
- Hasford, G. 1983. *The Short Timers*. New York: Bantam.
- Hellmann, J. 1986. *American Myth and the Legacy of Vietnam*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Herr, M. 1979. *Dispatches*. Berkshire: Picador.
- Herzog, T.C. 1988. 'John Wayne in the Modern Heart of Darkness: The American Soldier in Vietnam'. In: W.J. Searle (ed.) *Search and Clear: Critical Responses to Selected Literature and Films of the Vietnam War*. Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press. 16-25.
- Hyman, S.E. 1966. 'The Ritual View of Myth and the Mythic'. In: J.B. Vickery (ed.) *Myth and Literature: Contemporary Theory and Practice*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 47-58.
- Jeffords. S. 1991. 'Tattoos, Scars, Diaries, and Writing Masculinity'. In: J.C. Rowe and R. Berg (eds.) *The Vietnam War and American Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press. 208-225.

- Kavanagh, P.J. (ed.) 1990. *Selected Poems of Ivor Gurney*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kern, L.J. 1988. 'MIA's, Myth and Macho Magic: Post-Apocalyptic Cinematic Visions of Vietnam'. In: W.J. Searle (ed.) *Search and Clear: Critical Responses to Selected Literature and Films of the Vietnam War*. Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press. 37-54.
- Klein, M. (ed.) 1990a. *The Vietnam Era: Media and Popular Culture in the US and Vietnam*. London: Pluto Press.
- Klein, M. 1990b. 'Historical Memory, Film, and The Vietnam Era'. In: L. Dittmar and G. Michaud (eds.) *From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. 19-40.
- Kovic, R. 1977. *Born on the Fourth of July*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Lawson, J.E. 1988. '“Old Kids”: The Adolescent Experience in the Non-Fiction Narratives in the Vietnam War'. In: W.J. Searle (ed.) *Search and Clear: Critical Responses to Selected Literature and Films of the Vietnam War*. Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press. 26-36.

- Lewis, R.W.B. 1955. *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lifton, R.J. 1974. *Home From the War. Vietnam Veterans: Neither Victims nor Executioners*. London: Wildwood House.
- Limerick, P., C. Milner and C. Rankin (eds.) 1991. *Trails: Towards a New Western History*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Lipsky, D. 1999. 'War and Peace'. *Rolling Stone* [online], November (826): 70-90. Available from: [wysiwyg://bodyframe.107/http://globalvg](http://www.rollingstone.com/story/0,119173,119173,00.html). [Accessed 7 September 2000].
- Lomperis, T. 1987. *"Reading the Wind": The Literature of the Vietnam War*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Magnuson, E. 1969. 'My Lai: An American Tragedy'. *Time*, **94**(23): 17-26.
- Manchester, W. 1983. *One Brief Shining Moment*. London: Michael Joseph.
- Mogen, D., M. Busby & P. Bryant (eds.) 1989. *The Frontier Experience and the American Dream: Essays on American Literature*. Texas: A & M University Press.

- Person, L.S. 1998. 'The Historical Paradoxes of Manhood in Cooper's *The Deerslayer*'. *Novel*, **32**(1): 76-98.
- Pursell, M. 1998. 'Full Metal Jacket: The Unravelling of Patriarchy'. *Literature Film Quarterly*, **16**(4): 218-225.
- Quart, L. 1990. 'The Deer Hunter: The Superman in Vietnam'. In: L. Dittmar and G. Michaud (eds.) *From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. 159-168.
- Raglan, F.R.R.S. 1979. *The Hero: A Study of Tradition, Myth and Drama*. New York: Meridian Books.
- Rahv, P. 1966. 'The Myth and The Powerhouse'. In: J.B. Vickery (ed.) *Myth and Literature: Contemporary Theory and Practice*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 109-118.
- Rasmussen, K. and S.D. Downey 1991. 'Dialectical Disorientation in Vietnam War Films: Subversion of the Mythology of War'. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, **77**(2): 176-195.
- Reaves, G. 1988. 'From Hasford's *The Short Timers* to Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*'. *Literature Film Quarterly*, **16**(4): 232-237.

- Rowe, J.C. and R. Berg (eds.) 1991. *The Vietnam War and American Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sallagar, F.M. 1969. *The Road to Total War*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Searle, W.J. (ed.) 1988. *Search and Clear: Critical Responses to Selected Literature and Films of the Vietnam War*. Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.
- Shilts, R. 1993. *Conduct Unbecoming: Lesbians and Gays in the U.S. Military*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- Slotkin, R. 1992. *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*. New York: Macmillan.
- Slotkin, R. 1996. *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Taylor, G.O. 1988. 'Preface: The Vietnam War and Postmodern Memory'. *Genre*, 21(4): 389-392.
- Turner, F.J. 1935. *The Frontier in American History*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Vickery, J.B. (ed.) 1966. *Myth and Literature: Contemporary Theory and Practice*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

- Vietnam Veterans
Against the War, Inc.
1971. *Winter Soldier Investigation* [online] Available from:
http://Jefferson.village.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Winter_Soldier/WS_01_Hatfield.html. [Accessed 26
September 1997].
- Weisinger, H. 1966. 'The Myth and the Ritual Approach to Shakespearian
Tragedy'. In: J.B. Vickery (ed.) *Myth and Literature:
Contemporary Theory and Practice*. Lincoln:
University of Nebraska Press. 149-160.
- White, R. 1991. *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A History
of the American West*. Norman: University of
Oklahoma Press.
- Willoquet-Maricondi, P.
1994. 'Full-Metal-Jacketing, or Masculinity in the
Making'. *Cinema Journal*, **33**(2): 5-21.
- Zimmerman, R. 1999. 'Gruntspeak: Masculinity, Monstrosity and Discourse
in Hasford's *The Short Timers*'. *American Studies*,
40(1): 65-93.