Quest and Genre in Jim Dodge’s *Stone Junction*

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This thesis comprises a close reading of Jim Dodge’s novel *Stone Junction* (1999), an examination of whether the monomyth framework can be applied to protagonist Daniel Pearse’s quest, a categorisation of the novel as fully or partially belonging to certain genres, comparisons between genre features, and an analysis of the correlations between the genre and monomyth elements.

The monomyth, a tool for analysing myths presented by Joseph Campbell in his seminal work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), consists of stages of initiation, separation and return, each of which is composed of subsections. Starting and ending points of each of the monomyth’s stages and subsections are identified in *Stone Junction*, as are the positionings of genre features. The genres considered are Bildungsroman, Künstlerroman, Magic Realism, Mystery Fiction, Detective Fiction, the Crime Novel and the Road Novel.

All monomyth stages occur in *Stone Junction*, whereas some subsections are absent, incomplete or do not appear in chronological order. However, this is not found to significantly reduce the applicability of the monomyth theory to the novel. All the above genres, too, occur in *Stone Junction*, with the exception of Künstlerroman. Some genre features are present throughout, while others are distinguishable in some parts. No one genre feature or monomyth component is found to dominate, and each element is observed to contribute in its own distinct way to the novel. *Stone Junction* owes much of its strength to the way Dodge has combined the genre features with the monomyth framework.

**Keywords**

Twentieth-century American literature; genre; monomyth; Dodge, Jim
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1. Introduction

1.1. Aims and Methods

My aim is to do a close reading of Jim Dodge’s *Stone Junction* (1999), and examine whether the monomyth framework presented by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* (1949/1956) can be applied to protagonist Daniel Pearse’s quest in the novel. Campbell’s work defines the monomyth, the “standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero” and divides it into three discrete stages and seventeen subsections (1949/1956: 30). I will also endeavour to categorise the novel as belonging fully or partly to the literary genres of the Bildungsroman, the Künstlerroman, Magic Realism, Mystery Fiction, the Detective Novel, Crime Fiction, and the Road Novel. Finally, I examine if and how these genres interact with each other, and complete a final analysis on whether my categorisations contradict or support my views on the monomyth in *Stone Junction*.

I chose *Stone Junction* firstly because I find it to be a riveting and surprisingly overlooked novel, and secondly because I have a personal interest in countercultures and their portrayals in fiction. Thomas Pynchon’s appraisal on the back cover of the novel encapsulates some of the reasons I enjoy *Stone Junction*. For Pynchon, it is “American storytelling as tall as it is deeply felt, exuberant with outlaw humour and honest magic. … like being at a non-stop party in celebration of everything that matters” (Dodge 1999). For me, part of *Stone Junction’s* greatness is that it also possesses a mythical quality, at the heart of which lies Daniel Pearse’s heroic quest, hence I felt that an analysis of the novel using Campbell’s monomyth theory would be a worthwhile undertaking.

1.2. On *Stone Junction*

Jim Dodge, poet and novelist, born in 1945, grew up “an Air Force brat” and worked as “an apple picker, a carpet layer, a teacher, a professional gambler, a shepherd …, a woodcutter and … an environmental restorer” (Wild 2002) before taking up the post of Professor at Humboldt State University’s Department of English (Writers On The Edge,
Inc. 2002). He currently lives a reclusive existence at a “secluded North Californian ranch” (Thorpe 2011). Dodge “burned out a bit” writing *Stone Junction*, his third and, to date, final novel, first published in 1990, and the experience came close enough to making him “crazy” that he “got scared” (Wild 2002).

Even though very little seems to have been written about the novel, the critical response to *Stone Junction* appears to have been for the most part positive. David Mattin, writing for *The Guardian* (2002), heralded it as “remarkable for its breadth”. For Mattin (2002), Dodge’s “sweeping take” on “real America”, in combination with the “humanity” of all the characters, “lends this book a particular kind of majesty”. Pynchon (1997: vii), in his introduction to the work, states that he regards it as “an outlaw epic for our own late era of corrupted romance and defective honour”. *Time Out*’s review, quoted on the back cover of the novel, heralds it as an “irresistible kaleidoscope of manic, tragic, and exquisitely funny Americana”, which parallels Mattin’s analysis (Dodge 1999).

Michelle Slung’s review in *The New York Times* was the only one I have been able to find with any negative criticism of the work. Slung found it marred by Dodge’s “occasional kitchen-sink mentality and his tendency to gonzo inscrutability” and found the narrative sometimes “distractingly cluttered with the monologues of offstage characters” (1990). However, Slung’s (1990) review ends positively, stating that the work is a “rollicking, frequently surprising adventure-cum-fairy tale” with “a sweetness about it” and an “indigenous American optimism”. Slung (1990) describes the work as a “post-psychedelic coming-of-age fable that’s part Thomas Pynchon, part Tolkien, part Richard Brautigan, a story that owes as much to *The Once and Future King* as it does to *Huckleberry Finn*”. In short, for her, it is a simultaneous “quest and … caper, as well as a Bildungsroman”. This, for me, is an accurate description of how multifaceted *Stone Junction* is.

*Stone Junction* comprises four sections: *Air*, *Earth*, *Fire* and *Water*. *Air* commences with sixteen-year-old pregnant orphan Annalee Pearse punching a nun. Later, clutching the newborn Daniel, Annalee absconds from the Greenfield Home for Girls and hitches a lift with singing trucker Smiling Jack Ebbetts. Taking pity on the destitute Pearses, Jack offers them the use of his ranch in California. Returning three years later, he proposes that she run the ranch as a safe house for a generous fee. Daniel
is educated by his mother and their outlaw guests, learning diverse, esoteric and often illegal skills. Aged five he decides not to attend school. Alchemist Shamus Malloy, on the run owing to a foiled uranium-235 heist, is one of their guests, and Annalee immediately falls for him. Soon the arrival of the authorities forces all three to flee from the ranch. They successfully evade the law with assistance from Shamus’s associates. The existence of outlaw organisation AMO (signifying “Alliance of Magicians and Outlaws” or “Alchemists, Magicians, and Outlaws”) is revealed to the Pearses and they are then recruited. On his twelfth birthday, Daniel demands that Annalee tell him the identity of his father. She refuses and in a fit of rage Daniel destroys his birthday cake. The Pearses relocate to Berkeley, California, to run a forgery operation. Annalee becomes embroiled in Shamus’s plot to steal plutonium and agrees to plant a bomb as a diversion. The night before the theft Daniel is seduced by a stranger calling herself Brigit Bardo. The bomb explodes prematurely, killing Annalee and severely injuring Daniel, who falls into a coma. Volta, head of the AMO, magically summons Daniel out of his coma to tell him of his mother’s death, and offers him legal and educational support.

*Earth* commences with Daniel waking up from the coma for a second time and being immediately arrested. An AMO-commissioned attorney promptly arrives and helps Daniel to evade a jail sentence. Daniel is then assigned his first teacher under Volta’s auspices, Wild Bill Weber, who trains Daniel in the art of meditation. Daniel experiences visions in the wilderness and starts to come to terms with the death of his mother, vowing to help track down her killer. His next teacher, underdressed marijuana farmer Mott Stocker, trains Daniel in drug consumption and production, as well as free love. It becomes apparent that Daniel has an unusual sexual dysfunction: he is capable of making love to the same woman only once. His next teacher, William Rebis Clinton, trains him in the art of cracking safes. This is followed by a long period of training with professional gambler Bad Bobby Sloane, whom he eventually beats at a guessing game of his own invention using his nascent magical powers. The final teacher Volta assigns him is master of disguise Jean Bluer. At the end of this period of training, Daniel, feeling neglected by Volta, attacks him and then resigns from AMO, but changes his mind shortly thereafter. Volta asks Daniel to steal the Diamond, a giant jewel possessing magical powers, from a closely guarded military base, and bring it back to
him. Volta trains Daniel in the art of invisibility, a skill he himself used to be capable of. Daniel learns swiftly, and before long his vanishing skills have exceeded those of Volta.

*Water* begins with the story of Gurry Debritto, a freelance assassin, who is later revealed to be Annalee’s killer. Daniel and Volta again fight, although this time the altercation starts with Volta slapping Daniel, perceiving him as arrogant about his new skill. Jennifer Raine alias Brigit Bardo reappears in the plot as a resident of a psychiatric hospital. Daniel steals the Diamond and eventually absconds, deciding not to return it to Volta. Later on, he has a change of heart and vows to return it after he has spent more time trying to understand its power. Volta attempts to track him down but is unsuccessful. The authorities are in pursuit, headed by agent Paul-Paul Dredneau, who has decoded AMO’s radio communications and knows the identity of the Diamond thief. Debritto tracks down and tortures Dredneau, extracting from him the identity of the Diamond thief. Volta makes an offer to exchange the Diamond for the identities of Annalee’s killer and the plutonium heist informer. Daniel refuses the proposal. His willpower is being sapped by the Diamond, which is rapidly increasing in weight. Volta starts to wind down his division of the AMO. Meanwhile Guy Debritto dies after being chemically tortured by AMO agent Charmaine McCloud.

At the start of *Fire* Daniel, now hitchhiking, is picked up by Jennifer Raine alias Brigit Bardo, who has escaped from a psychiatric hospital. His growing magical powers enable him to see an invisible scar on Jennifer’s back, as well as her imaginary daughter Mia. Jennifer and Daniel make love twice in the desert, after which Daniel proposes to her using the Diamond as a wedding ring. They then consummate their marriage, upon which Daniel becomes a god and disappears. Mia also vanishes, but the Diamond remains. Shamus forces Volta to disclose the identity of the plutonium plot informer. Shamus shoots Volta dead, but when about to die he slashes Shamus’s neck. Shamus later dies of his wounds. Jennifer throws the Diamond into the Mississippi River and becomes sane.
2. The Monomyth

2.1. Introduction

Campbell’s 1949 work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* is a detailed anatomy of the hero quest, as found in myths from many countries. The concept of the monomyth is widely held to be influential, and has had a considerable impact on popular culture, from Hermann Hesses’s *Siddharta* to the films *Star Wars* and *The Matrix* (Jones 2012). Campbell (1949/1956: 30) divides the monomyth into three stages: “separation – initiation – return”. At the Separation or Departure Stage, according to Campbell (1949/1956: 30, 36), a hero “ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder”, then, during the Initiation Stage, a period of trials and victories, “fabulous forces are … encountered and a decisive victory is won”, and in the subsequent Return Stage the hero “comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man” hence reintegrating with society. In parts of the novel the resemblance to the stages and subsections of the monomyth are very clear, sometimes even surprisingly so, yet in others the resemblance is tentative or non-existent. Many of the subsections of the monomyth seem to correlate to more than one part of *Stone Junction*. In these cases I attempt to ascertain which are the most likely positionings.
Campbell (1949/1956) divides these stages into subsections as follows:

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<th>Separation or departure stage</th>
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<td>(2) “Refusal of the Call,” or the folly of the flight from the god.</td>
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<td>(3) “Supernatural Aid,” the unsuspected assistance that comes to one who has undertaken his proper adventure.</td>
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<td>The stage of the trials and victories of initiation</td>
<td>(1) “The Road of Trials,” or the dangerous aspect of the gods.</td>
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<td>The return and reintegration with society</td>
<td>(1) “Refusal of the Return,” or the world denied.</td>
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<td>(6) “Freedom to Live,” the nature and function of the ultimate boon.</td>
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2.2. Separation Stage

Campbell (1949/1956: 30) defines the Separation Stage as a journey from “the world of common day” into a “region of supernatural wonder”. In the first subsection of the stage, The Call to Adventure, an “unsuspected world” is revealed and the hero is drawn into “a relationship with forces that are not rightly understood” (Campbell 1949/1956: 51). There are three ways in which alchemist Shamus Malloy’s initial appearance at the AMO safe house (Dodge 1999: 25) could represent The Call to Adventure. Firstly, Shamus brings the unsuspected world and unknown forces characteristic of this stage into the Pearses’ world in the form of alchemy. Secondly, Shamus is in part responsible for the death of Annalee Pearse because of her involvement in his uranium heist. Thus, he is the “carrier of the power of destiny” whose presence is a characteristic of this subsection (Campbell 1949/1956: 52). Thirdly, Annalee rapidly falls in love with Shamus (25). Annalee has been bored with her routine and has started to feel inappropriate urges towards her son. Hence, she is finding it hard to sustain a “psychic rhythm” of her own at this stage in the narrative (24). The change represented by Shamus’s arrival in Annalee’s life cannot but affect the ten-year-old Daniel’s life.

An alternative reading could be that the later flight from the safe house of Shamus and the Pearses marks the commencement of The Call to Adventure (29). Daniel’s life up to this point, while unconventional, has a certain domestic stability in that he has always lived in the same house. This stability resembles Campbell’s concept of the world of common day. The transition from a settled life (albeit in a safe house) bears similarities to Campbell’s (1949/1956: 51) assertion that, during this subsection, the “familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand”. Another argument for the departure from the safe house representing the start of the Call to Adventure is presence of imagery representing this subsection in *Stone Junction*. Whether this is a coincidence or a conscious decision by Dodge is not known. “Typical of the circumstances of the call”, according to Campbell (1949/1956: 51–52) are “the dark forest, the great tree, the babbling spring, and the loathly, underestimated

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1 Subsequent references to the novel are given by page number in brackets.
appearance of the carrier of the power of destiny”. Rushing from the cabin, Shamus and the Pearses find themselves “battling a passage through the ferns and gooseberries and redwood suckers” (30). Their flight takes place at night, hence this correlates to Campbell’s dark forest. They collapse at the top of Seaview Ridge, “huddling against the trunk of an ancient bay laurel” (30) which bears a resemblance to the great tree.

The existence of the AMO is revealed soon after the flight from the safe house (35). The Pearses finding out about this organisation corresponds to The Call to Adventure in that the AMO represents an unsuspected world. The existence, but not the identity, of the AMO could be extrapolated from Smiling Jack Ebbetts’s offer to make Annalee hostess of the safe house, so this juncture represents another likely position in the work for the commencement of The Call to Adventure (11).

Another potential starting point for The Call to Adventure phase is the invitation of Elmo Cutter (“one of Volta’s field men”) to the twelve-year-old Daniel and his mother to join the AMO (42). This is the only of my proposed starting points that incorporates both an explicit invitation and Daniel’s affirmative response to the call and thus is the best candidate for the positioning of The Call to Adventure in the work. However, Jack Ebbetts’s proposition to Annalee, and Shamus’s arrival and flight from the ranch all constitute important steps on the path to Daniel’s departure on the first stage of his heroic quest.

The second subsection in the Separation Stage, Refusal of the Call, also named “folly of the flight from the god” by Campbell (1949/1956: 59), is not evident in the work. The pace of the protagonist’s fugitive existence leaves little time for him to be “[w]alled in boredom, hard work, or ‘culture’” (Campbell 1949/1956: 59). There are occasions when Daniel is immersed in his work. He is, for instance “particularly fond” of printing forgeries during his time in Berkeley, where their orders are “steady enough to keep them busy but not enough to be a burden” (54). Daniel’s year of meditation training passes “quickly” as his time is “greased by routine” and there is sufficient diversity in his routine to save him from boredom (89–90). Daniel twice expresses dissatisfaction with his current situation (95, 167). Nevertheless, at no stage of the novel does he seem overly bored or in a hopeless situation where he has no choice but to “create new problems for himself and await the gradual approach of his disintegration” (Campbell 1949/1956: 59).
In the third subsection of the Separation Stage, Supernatural Aid, the “first encounter of the hero-journey” occurs. The hero meets a “supernatural helper” (Campbell 1949/1956: 72), a “protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) – who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass” (Campbell 1949/1956: 69). Campbell’s description corresponds closely to Volta’s first encounter with Daniel. Volta is present at Daniel’s bedside as he wakes up from his coma for the first time (77). Because Volta’s own story up until this point is covered in the pages before Daniel awakes (71–77), it is evident that he possesses magical powers. The presence of this supernatural helper implies the hero’s continuing advance into a region of supernatural wonder.

The protagonist’s hero journey starts with The Call to Adventure, and, even though he has previously met other characters who have assisted him, there are no other serious candidates for the role of supernatural helper prior to Volta’s appearance. Smiling Jack Ebbetts, for example, is in his late thirties, and there is no evidence that he possesses magical powers of any description (7).

Excepting the timing of Volta’s appearance in the hero’s journey, all the details match: Volta is an old man, and the protection he provides Daniel with, while not taking the form of physical amulets, keeps Daniel safe from harm for much of the rest of the novel. This protection takes the form of both real-world help and supernatural assistance. The first occasion on which this real-world protection is enacted is the appearance of an AMO-hired attorney immediately after Daniel’s second awakening and arrest (86). The dragon forces Volta offers protection against are law enforcement and the murderous Shamus Malloy. Campbell’s (1949/1956: 72) description states that the supernatural helper provides advice. Volta gives a great deal of advice to Daniel during their first encounter. Daniel is told to be “very careful” about what he says, to follow the lawyer’s instructions, and that it would be beneficial if his faked amnesia, also Volta’s idea (78), “proves intractable” (80). Volta mentions that AMO has “some uniquely talented teachers” who might help Daniel to “transform potential into ability” (80).

The supernatural helper is portrayed by Campbell (1949/1956: 73) as “[p]rotective and dangerous, motherly and fatherly at the same time”, characteristics which can all be attributed to Volta. Volta replaces Daniel’s mother as the main parental
figure in his life, and can thus be perceived as motherly or fatherly. After his initial predominantly protective attitude towards Daniel, Volta acts at times in a threatening fashion, corresponding to the dangerous aspect. The two spar verbally and even physically during many of their encounters. Two examples of this are their confrontations during the invisibility training (239) and at the end of Daniel’s training period with Jean Bluer (202). During the latter confrontation Volta announces to the protagonist that he is not his father, suggesting that he perceives something in Daniel’s behaviour towards him that indicates that Daniel sees him in this way (203).

Campbell (1949/1956: 73n) makes detailed reference to Hermes Trismestigus, regarded as “the patron and teacher of all the arts, and especially of alchemy” in the Supernatural Aid chapter of The Hero With A Thousand Faces. All teachers involved in Daniel’s training are managed by Volta from the offset, and in this way he could be said to be a patron of the arts (80). Hermes is said by Campbell (1949/1956: 73n) to be “the master of the ancient mysteries of initiation” and represents a “coming-down of divine wisdom into the world”. Not only does this correspond to Volta’s role, but the name “Hermes Trismestigos” [sic] is used as a secret identity by Volta (338). Volta’s part in Daniel’s initiation as a magician is confirmed much later in the story when he trains Daniel to disappear (214–241). Volta is also responsible for introducing the powers of the magical Diamond to Daniel (205). The period of Supernatural Aid continues until shortly before Volta’s death owing to his regular two-way psychic connection with Daniel. This link exists from the time of Volta’s entering into Daniel’s coma (81) until his vision of Daniel’s apotheosis (406).

Volta’s protection of Daniel continues as the court fails to convict him and orders that he be “placed in the guardianship of his aunt and uncle” until the age of seventeen (88). Daniel has no living relatives and the invention of these fictional characters is another of the many ways in which Volta continues to help Daniel. The figure of the threshold guardian is introduced by Campbell in the fourth subsection of the Departure Stage, The Crossing of the First Threshold. The role of this “custodian” is to “bound the world in the four directions – also up and down” (Campbell 1949/1956: 77). Beyond this is “darkness, the unknown, and danger; just as beyond the parental watch is danger to the infant and beyond the protection of his society danger to the member of the tribe” (Campbell 1949/1956: 77–78). Daniel is assigned a meditation
teacher, Wild Bill Weber, whose role corresponds to the threshold guardian (88). Because Daniel’s new home at his ostensible aunt and uncle’s 1400-acre ranch is a new and unfamiliar location for him (88), it correlates to the “regions of the unknown” that Campbell (1949/1956:79) states are characteristic of this subsection. Such regions are “free fields for the projection of unconscious content”, making them suitable for the kind of intensive introspection Wild Bill encourages in Daniel (Campbell 1949/1956: 79).

Wild Bill and Daniel head deeper into the wilderness, travelling to a location identified as “Nameless Lake” by local tribes (99). Due to being literally spellbound, this location can be classed even more decisively than the ranch as a region of the unknown. The journey from familiar setting to uncharted wilderness may represent for Daniel “a passage beyond the veil of the known into the unknown” (Campbell 1949/1956: 82). This phase of the novel could well be short, comprising the crossing alone. In an alternative interpretation of the work Jennifer Raine could be considered the custodian, the desert setting for her and Daniel’s lovemaking (399) may constitute unknown regions, and Daniel’s apotheosis (406) could be considered his crossing of the threshold. One clue to this being the case is the use of the word “threshold” in this sequence: “as he was swept across the threshold” (406). Were this part of the novel to correspond to The Crossing of the First Threshold, it would constitute the first deviation from the hitherto chronological progression of the hero’s quest in Stone Junction. A third possibility is that the threshold referred to at this stage of the novel corresponds to the world division of Campbell’s Master of Two Worlds subsection, part of the Initiation Stage.

The Belly of the Whale, also referred to as “passage into the realm of night,” is the final subsection of the Separation Stage (Campbell 1949/1956: 36). Campbell (1949/1956: 90) states that the hero, rather than “conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died”. Campbell (1949/1956: 91) goes on to claim that the Belly of the Whale motif “gives emphasis to the lesson that the passage of the threshold is a form of self-annihilation … here, instead of passing outward, beyond the confines of the visible world, the hero goes inward, to be born again”. Having fasted and meditated in a cave near Nameless Lake for three days, Daniel enters into a trance and experiences what he describes as visions
The second vision starts with Daniel “floating just under the surface of Nameless Lake” (105). Here, he imagines himself on the verge of death: “He wasn’t dead, but had barely enough strength to lift his left hand out of the water” (105). Daniel is now living an ascetic and even self-annihilating life. The visions experienced by the protagonist at this juncture are what Campbell defines as being swallowed into the unknown. The visions conclude with the distraught Daniel rocking “back and forth, arms around himself” (106). Finally, starting to grieve for his mother, he breaks down in tears (106). This correlates to the rebirth characteristic of The Belly of the Whale. This phase ends when Daniel returns to the camp following his seclusion in the cave (106).

During Daniel’s invisibility training he experiences a sequence of visions of death which, it is later revealed, are premonitions of Volta’s demise (222–227). The occasions on which Daniel successfully vanishes and subsequently reappears could also be classed as rebirths. Thus this phase in the work could also be considered a potential positioning for The Belly of the Whale. Other candidates for the Belly of the Whale in the work are the point at which Daniel’s heart stops for a moment after the explosion (71) and his subsequent awakening from the coma (77). A final potential instance of the Belly of the Whale is the vision of his own burial that Daniel experiences while staying at Two Moons (310).

During the Separation Stage of Stone Junction the protagonist passes through all of Campbell’s subsections except that of Refusal of the Call. Daniel’s progression through the subsections of the Separation Stage seems to be in strict chronological order, except for the final parts, Crossing of the First Threshold and The Belly of the Whale, where there are some potential positionings that diverge from the sequence that Campbell proposes. Daniel clearly starts this phase of the novel in the world of common day, and finishes in a world of supernatural wonder, regardless of which interpretation of the final subsection is adhered to. The Separation Stage conforms rather strongly to the first 113 pages of the novel in my edition.
2.3. Initiation Stage

Campbell (1949/1956: 30) describes the Initiation Stage as taking place in the region of supernatural wonder, where “fabulous forces are … encountered and a decisive victory is won”. This stage is also referred to by Campbell (1949/1956: 36) as the stage of “the trials and victories of initiation”. Campbell (1949/1956: 36) defines the first subsection of the Initiation Stage as The Road of Trials or “the dangerous aspect of the gods”. He outlines this subsection as follows: “the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials … The hero is overtly aided by the advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper whom he met before his entrance into this region” (Campbell 1949/1956: 97). The majority of this description seems to apply to Stone Junction. The protagonist survives trials, and is helped by the advice, amulets and secret helpers of Volta. However, the idea of the dream landscape seems not to conform to the setting of most of Stone Junction. Nameless Lake, however, could be described as a dream landscape. The lake cannot be found on the map, and, excepting members of the Nomlaki tribe, Wild Bill is supposedly the only person who can see it (99). Otherwise, the world that Daniel exists in during his waking hours is very much that of contemporary North America, with genuine place names and realistic descriptions of modern life. The characters in the novel, however, often have a dreamlike quality to them, from their names to the stories they tell and their actions. Alternatively, the dream landscape could represent Daniel’s mental state as opposed to the exterior world.

Many of the challenging experiences the protagonist is subjected to are trials. These take the form of both specific events and longer-term situations. Some of the specific events include: Wild Bill Weber’s ambush of Daniel (108), Wild Bill’s awarding of the golden turtle to Daniel (112), and Mott Stocker’s commanding Daniel to cut out his tongue (125). The sexual encounters Daniel experiences in his quest to reach orgasm more than once with the same woman could also be classed as trials (127, 134 and 152). The time Daniel spends with teachers assigned to him by Volta could be considered longer-term trials. For instance, his time training as a safecracker with Willie Clinton (150–157), as a gambler with Bad Bobby Sloane (158–193), and as a master of disguise with Jean Bluer (194–202), all conform to this description. Volta’s financial
neglect of Daniel could also be considered to be a trial (139). In all of these periods winning and losing constitute essential components of Daniel’s life. His participation in the failed plutonium heist rather early on in the work could be considered a trial (70–71), as could his difficult start in life (3, 6). In other words, Daniel’s trials undoubtedly start early in the work and finish with his apotheosis. Nevertheless, the supernatural helper, a central feature of this subsection, does not appear until Daniel’s awakening, so I posit that The Road of Trials phase of the novel must start at this point.

The protagonist is aware that his teachers are working for Volta, but is not privy either to their reports to him or to the exact nature of their cooperation, so although not secret agents as such, there is secrecy apparent in their actions. There are regular transcripts in the work of telephone conversations between Volta and the teachers, for instance Wild Bill Weber (113–115). Thus the reader is aware of the extent of the cooperation and of facts unknown by the protagonist. There are also characters, such as Charmaine McCloud, whose main actions are kept secret from the protagonist. Volta’s movements often contain an element of surprise, such as when he appears at Daniel’s cabin a day after Daniel mentions to Wild Bill that he wants to talk to him (92). Even though there are no characters whose membership of AMO and whose connection to Volta are complete secrets from the protagonist, there are many who can be described as secret agents.

The next subsection in the Initiation Stage is that of The Meeting with the Goddess (Magna Mater), otherwise known as “the bliss of infancy regained”. Jennifer Raine, at this juncture a fugitive from a psychiatric institute, represents the Goddess. Daniel makes love to her for the third time (405) in what could be described as “a mystical marriage ... of the triumphant hero-soul with the Queen-Goddess of the World” (Campbell 1949/1956: 109). This occurs towards the end of the narrative and immediately precedes Daniel’s apotheosis (405–406). It is clearly a mystical marriage because it is preceded by Daniel’s marriage proposal (403), because the Diamond is used as a wedding ring (404), and because of the vows they exchange (404–405). The mystical marriage is hinted at earlier on in the novel when Daniel makes a humorous marriage proposal to the Diamond itself, and ponders eroticism, marriage and conjunction (332). At this point, Daniel feels an erotic charge from the Diamond following a long period of diminished sex drive (332). The phase ends with the
immediate apotheosis of Daniel following their lovemaking (406). There is a blissful quality to Daniel’s state of mind during his time with Jennifer, which corresponds to the bliss Campbell refers to in his definition of the subsection.

In the novel the next phase, Woman as the Temptress, takes the form of Daniel being tempted to disappear with the Diamond, which becomes apparent in the closing stages of the story. Daniel cannot resist this temptation, and as he succumbs to it over and over again the Diamond increases in weight (388, 395). As the Diamond’s weight increases, his own seems to decrease, implying his growing separation from reality: “Daniel felt lighter and lighter, … despite the Diamond in his sack that seemed to be gaining an ounce every fifteen minutes, lighter and lighter until he thought he might actually rise with the moon” (395). After making love to Jennifer for the first time, Daniel realises that the Diamond’s weight has increased at an alarming rate: “Daniel didn’t smile when he picked up his possibles sack. Something wasn’t right. The Diamond had doubled in weight” (400). The Woman as Temptress phase ends with Daniel’s apotheosis as this marks the point at which he finally succumbs to temptation (406). An alternative positioning of this phase is the “obsessive carnal desire” that Daniel uses as a strategy for distracting himself from his feelings of grief while in the wilderness (103). His fantasies are centred on Brigit Bardo, whose face he remembers “a hundred times a day, and her mouth a thousand” (103). In the Buddhist tradition, the Bardo is an intermediate state between life and death. This suggestion of the allure of a different realm of existence may foreshadow the temptation of disappearing forever that Daniel later experiences. Volta warns Daniel about this temptation before the invisibility training begins (208). Daniel’s fantasies come to a halt after his final vision, so I posit that this phase ends here (106).

The fourth subsection of the Initiation Stage is the Atonement with the Father. Campbell (1949/1956: 245) states that this is the hero’s “recognition by the father-creator”. Campbell (1949/1956: 136) posits that the “mystagogue (father or father-substitute)” is to “entrust the symbols of office only to a son who has been effectually purged of all inappropriate infantile cathexes”. It is not completely clear what kind of inappropriate infantile desires Campbell is referring to here, but, judging by the psychoanalytical grounding of The Hero With A Thousand Faces, I assume that it is an incestuous desire for the mother. It is not clear whether the protagonist has harboured
any inappropriate sexual urges towards his mother. During a vision, Daniel imagines someone, “a man he didn’t recognise”, making love to his mother, “her back arched with pleasure” (225). On seeing this, Daniel runs away. It may be that this running away from the sight of his mother sleeping with an unknown man signifies the protagonist’s refusal to accept that his mother could connect to a man other than her son. The vision could also be interpreted in another way, as the moment of his own conception, bearing in mind that the identity of his father is unknown. The former reading seems not to hold true, as Daniel accepts, much earlier, Shamus’s bond with his mother, and even seems to admire him. As Shamus rants poetically about precious metals, mining and refining, both Annalee and Daniel are “taken by his passion and eloquence” (27). Thus the latter reading, although still somewhat far-fetched, seems more probable, especially bearing in mind that the vision is one of life, death and rebirth (225). So it seems that these infantile desires, if I have interpreted them correctly, are not a concern in the novel.

According to Campbell (1949/1956: 136), the “traditional idea of initiation combines an introduction of the candidate into the techniques, duties, and prerogatives of his vocation with a radical readjustment of his emotional relationship to the parental images”. The techniques correlate to the technique of becoming invisible as taught by Volta and the duties and prerogatives correspond to the task of stealing the Diamond, so it does seem that Daniel is entrusted with these symbols of office by Volta.

Daniel becomes aggressive towards Volta, quarrelling with and even fighting him (202, 221, 239), signifying a readjustment of his relationship to this father figure. A similar readjustment takes place during the protagonist’s youth, so it could be argued that this subsection actually begins as early as Daniel’s twelfth birthday, when upsetting his previously harmonious relationship with his mother, who may be acting as a father-figure, he loses his temper with her (48). The former interpretation seems more likely, both because the relationship is with a male rather than female figure of power and because the power struggle between Daniel and Volta takes place over a longer period than that between Daniel and his mother. The role of the son Campbell (1949/1956: 136) describes is one whose “just, impersonal exercise” of his powers “will not be rendered impossible by unconscious (or perhaps even conscious and rationalized) motives of self-aggrandizement, personal preference, or resentment”. In the novel this corresponds to Volta’s attempt to rein in Daniel’s arrogance (239).
Campbell (1949/1956: 137) states that the hero son is “the twice-born” and that he has “become himself the father”. This correlates to Stone Junction in that Daniel learns to disappear, a skill that Volta has previously possessed. In this respect, the protagonist thereby takes up his symbols of office and becomes Volta. However, Daniel becomes a god, leaving reality, and hence never takes up the role of AMO leader as might be expected, so The Atonement of the Father is never completely enacted in the novel. Daniel’s apotheosis could correspond to Campbell’s (1949/1956: 136–137) idea that, at this stage, the “invested one” has been “divested of his mere humanity and is representative of an impersonal cosmic force. According to Campbell (1949/1956: 136–137), the son becomes “competent, consequently, now to enact himself the role of the initiator, the guide, the sun door, through whom one may pass from the infantile illusions of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ to an experience of the majesty of cosmic law, purged of hope and fear, and at peace in the understanding of the revelation of being”. If this is what Daniel becomes, it is not evident in the novel as, following his apotheosis, Daniel’s actions are not revealed to the reader. In the novel the protagonist’s final transformation into the father-figure takes place during Daniel’s apotheosis, which is made explicit in the text: “He was Hermes, Thoth, Mercury; the Prophet Hermes Trismestigos” (406).

The protagonist experiences the next part of the Initiation Stage, Apotheosis, a mere ten pages from the end of the novel and never returns to the mortal plane. The statement that he “was a god” immediately precedes the list of gods’ names (406). That he experiences apotheosis is hence undeniable. Pynchon (1997: xi) also agrees with this literal interpretation in his introduction to the novel. Daniel’s transformation into Hermes Trismestigos (402) immediately precedes Volta’s death (412), perhaps indicating that, in some way, Daniel has taken on Volta’s role, albeit in a different dimension.

The final subsection of the Initiation Stage is that of The Ultimate Boon. In the novel this corresponds to the protagonist’s theft of the Diamond (266). Pynchon (1997: xi), in his introduction, acknowledges Dodge’s use of the quest structure in this part of Stone Junction, and categorises the protagonist’s mission of stealing and returning the Diamond as a “metaphysical Quest”. Daniel carries out the supposedly near-impossible theft effortlessly, which corresponds to Campbell’s (1949/1956: 173) declaration that
the adventure is accomplished with ease. This, for Campbell (1949/1956: 173), signifies that the hero is “a superior man, a born king”. The teachers assigned to Daniel unanimously praise his skills. Bad Bobby Sloane, for instance, a man “generally regarded as probably the best all-round card player in the United States” (159) tells Volta that Daniel “whipped me bad” (190–191). According to Campbell (1949/1956: 173), in cases where “the usual hero” would face a test, the elect “encounters no delaying obstacle and makes no mistake”. This correlates to Daniel’s undetected theft of the closely guarded Diamond. The gods guarding the Ultimate Boon may be “oversevere, overcautious” (Campbell 1949/1956: 182). The nature of the authorities guarding the Diamond corresponds to that of the gods of Campbell’s monomyth. The Diamond, stored in an underground vault on a military desert base, is guarded by four machine-gun crews, and four independent alarm systems which, when triggered, summon an entire company of airborne marines (254–255).

Daniel’s presence in a dream landscape, his survival of trials and the assistance he receives from the supernatural helper constitute clear evidence for the existence of The Road of Trials phase in *Stone Junction*. The Meeting with the Goddess and Woman as Temptress phases also clearly occur in the novel, which is evident from Daniel’s mystical marriage to Jennifer Raine and his blissful state of mind in the former phase, and his being tempted to disappear in the latter. There is also unambiguous proof for at least the partial presence of the Atonement with the Father phase, which takes the form of Volta entrusting Daniel with the symbols of office, the readjustment of their relationship, and Daniel’s competence to enact his new role. As noted, the Apotheosis phase of the novel, in which Daniel becomes a god, is unmistakable. The final phase of the Initiation Stage, The Ultimate Boon, is characterised by the Diamond theft and the “elect” nature of the protagonist. More general features of the Initiation Stage are also evident. *Stone Junction’s* hero encounters the fabulous forces which constitute the Initiation Stage in the form of the magical Diamond. The decisive victory corresponds to the theft of the Diamond. In this way, the pivotal events of the Initiation Stage occur out of chronological sequence, as do the majority of the other phases. I do, however, feel that I have identified such an abundance of the features of this stage and its subsections in *Stone Junction* that it largely conforms to Campbell’s monomyth.
2.4. Return Stage

At the Return Stage the hero “comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man” (Campbell 1949/1956: 30). The return from the adventure does not occur in *Stone Junction*, since Daniel does not come back to the world after his apotheosis. The first phase of the Return Stage, the Refusal of the Return, commences with Daniel’s statement to Volta that the Diamond is his responsibility and that Volta does not need to see it (279). This clear implication that Daniel has absconded with the Diamond and will not be returning it to Volta as he had initially promised to is seemingly understood without hesitation by Volta, who says “[y]ou lost him” to himself (139). However, according to Campbell (1949/1956: 193), the norm of the monomyth requires that “the hero shall now begin the labor of bringing back the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess, back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds”. As Daniel fails to return the Diamond to the kingdom of humanity, this phase remains incomplete. This failure to return is, according to Campbell (1949/1956: 193), common, even in the case of legendary beings: “the responsibility has been frequently refused. Even the Buddha, after his triumph, doubted whether the message of relaxation could be communicated”. One crucial aspect in which the monomyth template cannot fully explain the hero’s journey in *Stone Junction* is that Daniel and Volta never intend for the Diamond to be brought back to benefit humanity. Rather, it is intended to be delivered to Volta to satisfy his curiosity, and thereafter returned to the elements. The act of disposing of the Diamond is however framed as being beneficial to mankind. This phase remains incomplete because of the protagonist’s apotheosis (406).

The second Return Stage subsection is that of The Magic Flight or the “escape of Prometheus” (Campbell 1949/1956: 36). Campbell (1949/1956: 197) states that, if the trophy has been attained “against the opposition of its guardian … then the last stage of the mythological round becomes [sic] a lively, often comical pursuit”. The pursuit in the novel starts with the delayed realisation by the military that the Diamond is missing (269). The authorities in *Stone Junction* are the guardians of the Diamond, and their pursuit of Daniel is both lively and in parts comical. This is evident when Daniel
disguises himself firstly as Isiah Kharome, flamboyantly-dressed bowling evangelical preacher (268), and later as a mid-nineteenth-century trapper (386). Other examples of the comical aspects apparent during this pursuit are Daniel’s slapstick-like fight with the Tindell brothers (359), many of his interactions with Wally Moon (e.g. 318), and his farcical trickery at Jackrabbit Pizza (372–376). This trickster aspect of Daniel indicates that he is on the path to becoming Hermes Trismestigos himself, a role hitherto performed by Volta. The flight, according to Campbell (1949/1956: 197) “may be complicated by marvels of magical obstruction and evasion”. These marvels include the Jackrabbit Pizzeria episode (367) and Daniel’s violent encounter with the Tindell brothers (359). Campbell (1949/1956: 201) describes a “well-known variety of the magic flight”, in which “a number of delaying obstacles are tossed behind by the wildly fleeing hero”. This corresponds to the misleading of Gurry Debritto by the AMO through the use of coded radio messages (351–352). Finally, this phase of the novel comes to a conclusion with the end of Daniel’s flight, that is, his apotheosis.

The subsequent subsection of the monomyth is the Rescue from Without. Daniel's reluctance to return with the Diamond accords to Campbell’s (1949/1956: 207) proposal that the “bliss of the deep abode is not lightly abandoned in favor of the self-scattering of the wakened state”. The protagonist nevertheless changes his mind, first realising that he wishes to dispose of the Diamond (350), then deciding that he might seek out Volta and Wild Bill Weber and return the Diamond to them (385). Volta fails to bring Daniel back, even with the help of his associates (281). This phase is never brought to a conclusion as, despite the efforts of the AMO, the rescue never transpires.

The subsequent phase, corresponding to Campbell’s (1949/1956: 36) subsection The Crossing of the Return Threshold or “return to the world of common day”, is never reached in Stone Junction. There is a tentative intention on Daniel’s part to return at two stages (285, 325), and there are repeated efforts to encourage him to return (278, 324), but to no avail. This phase, too, is never concluded.

The penultimate subsection of the Return Stage, Master of the Two Worlds, does not correspond to any section of Stone Junction as Daniel never appears to “pass back and forth across the world division” (1949/1956: 229). Daniel, weakened by the Diamond and seemingly under its spell does, nevertheless, realise that it is a door, which coincides with the idea of the world division in Campbell’s theory (325).
Subsequently, Daniel becomes a god, and it is clear he will never return (406). Campbell (1949/1956: 229) describes the Master of Two Worlds as follows: “The Cosmic Dancer … gaily, lightly, turns and leaps from one position to another”. This is in stark contrast to the helpless situation Daniel finds himself in towards the end of Stone Junction.

The sixth and final subsection of the Return Stage is entitled Freedom to Live and is also known as “the nature and function of the ultimate boon” (Campbell 1949/1956: 36). This phase, like the previous one, never occurs in the novel as Daniel becomes a god and does not return to the world with the ultimate boon.

Daniel begins the task of returning with the boon but the Refusal of the Return phase never reaches completion. The subsequent phase, The Magic Flight, is the only complete phase of the stage apparent in the novel, and is characterised by Daniel’s lively, comical flight, which features magical obstruction and evasion. The Rescue from Without phase is incomplete due to Volta’s failing to bring Daniel back. The Crossing of the Return Threshold phase is also incomplete, although features of it, such as Daniel’s tentative intention to return, have been identified. The final two phases of the Return Stage, the Master of the Two Worlds and Freedom to Live phases cannot be said to occur in the novel: Daniel never succeeds in controlling his passage across the world division, and he never returns to the world after his apotheosis. On the whole, the Return Stage of Campbell’s monomyth framework is difficult to apply to Stone Junction due to the fact that the hero does not return to the world and bestow the boon on society. However, features of most of the subsections of this final stage are clearly apparent in the novel, even if they do not occur in chronological order.

2.5. Conclusion

Campbell’s monomyth structure seems to be a versatile tool for analysing not only myths but also fiction. Nevertheless, it is challenging to correlate all the stages and subsections of the monomyth to this particular novel. The correlations are very apparent in the initial phases of Stone Junction, but the similarities lessen as the novel proceeds, and by the end of the novel some elements of the monomyth are altogether absent. The beginning of the Separation Stage of the monomyth corresponds relatively closely to the
events at the beginning of Daniel’s quest in *Stone Junction*, but Campbell’s scheme soon ceases to be chronologically applicable to the work. Nevertheless, the main elements of this first stage, notwithstanding the Refusal of the Call subsection, are present in the novel. The Initiation Stage, too, correlates for the most part to phases in *Stone Junction* but the order of its subsections does not. In the Return Stage, only one complete subsection, The Magic Flight, can be said to fully correspond to a phase of Daniel’s quest in the novel. The remaining subsections of the Initiation Stage are either totally absent from *Stone Junction* or incomplete.

As a whole, I would claim that the protagonist’s heroic quest in *Stone Junction* conforms to the monomyth structure due to the considerable number of elements they have in common, even though they often occur in a radically different order. Campbell himself was highly aware that the monomyth could take many forms, which gives me the confidence to persevere with my argument. Campbell (1949/1956: 246) states that:

> The changes rung on the simple scale of the monomyth defy description. Many tales isolate and greatly enlarge upon one or two of the typical elements of the full cycle …, others string a number of independent cycles into a single series (as in *The Odyssey*). Differing characters or episodes can become fused, or a single element can reduplicate itself and reappear under many changes.

It would be fascinating to ascertain whether Jim Dodge was consciously aware of the monomyth when he wrote *Stone Junction*. Perhaps he was aware of it and decided to follow Campbell’s structure, or maybe he used the monomyth framework subconsciously. Alternatively, it is possible that he followed the structure of one of the myths that Campbell analysed. Bearing in mind some of the more striking resemblances between *Stone Junction* and the monomyth, it seems highly unlikely that the majority of the work conforms to the monomyth out of mere coincidence.
3. Genre

3.1. Introduction

Now I will attempt to classify *Stone Junction*, or phases of it, as belonging to certain literary genres. The novel arguably possesses features of many genres but I limit my analysis to the Bildungsroman, the Künstlerroman, Magic Realism, Mystery Fiction, Detective Fiction, Crime Novel and the Road Novel, which seem to me to be the most conspicuous genres in *Stone Junction*. Additionally, I will analyse the interplay between the genres, and examine whether categorisations of *Stone Junction* as belonging to particular genres contradict or support the views I have presented on the monomyth in the novel.

Murfin and Ray (2003: 190) posit that although “identifying genre may be a helpful step in analyzing a work”, this “does not account for or explain all the elements of that work, as was once commonly assumed”. In recent history, suggest Murfin and Ray (2003: 190), “authors no longer feel bound to follow the conventions governing the composition of works in their chosen genre”. Furthermore, contemporary North American novelists do not seem to feel restricted to one genre alone, and seem to enjoy blending and transforming different styles. James Werlock (2006: xiii) describes the genre patchwork in the modern American novel thus: “most of the old forms survive, given new twists or blended with one or more older forms”. Dodge does not restrict himself to one genre for *Stone Junction*, but blends elements of several. Some genres seem to be apparent throughout the novel, while others make briefer appearances.

3.2. Bildungsroman and Künstlerroman

According to Murfin and Ray (2003: 39), the Bildungsroman is a novel that “recounts the development (psychological and sometimes spiritual) of an individual from childhood to maturity, to the point at which the protagonist recognizes his or her place and role in the world”. A slight variation on this holds that the development can extend “from infancy—or even from before that… —to early adulthood” (Ballock 1991: 64). The period of the protagonist’s life recounted in the novel corresponds to the latter
definition, as Annalee Pearse, pregnant with Daniel, appears on the first page (7). Many features of *Stone Junction* conform to Murfin and Ray’s definition of the Bildungsroman. The vast majority of the novel closely follows protagonist Daniel Pearse’s life from before his birth to his apotheosis (406), at which stage he is in his twenties. Alternatively, it could be argued that the entire work is a Bildungsroman, as the consequences of Daniel’s development are evident throughout the ten pages after he has vanished. Daniel develops both psychologically and spiritually, as I will demonstrate later.

There are two potential places or roles in the world that Daniel seems to recognise in *Stone Junction* which constitute significant stages in his development. The first of these is his recognition that he is a magician. This is not an instantaneous revelation but a gradual realisation which takes place in stages, such as the first occasion he successfully uses his psychic skills to win money (190), and his mastering of the art of vanishing for the first time (227). The second role or place in the world Daniel recognises occurs during his apotheosis, at which stage he discovers himself to be a god. At this stage he feels “joyously released” and it is stated that he had “made it back” (406), implying that this is his natural place in the world. Much of Murfin and Ray’s definition of the Bildungsroman thus closely correlates to features of *Stone Junction*, but the concept of development deserves further analysis due to the vagueness of the concept.

Critics adopt differing definitions of the protagonist’s development in the Bildungsroman. For Barton and Hudson (1997: 23), the protagonist usually “acquires a new awareness of the ways of the world” but often “decides to take up a position somewhat outside the societal norm”. This corresponds to Daniel becoming a god, a position far beyond the norms of conventional society. However, Daniel is positioned outside conventional society long before this. There is an implication by Barton and Hudson that the archetypal protagonist in the Bildungsroman belongs to mainstream society at the beginning of the text and takes up a final position outside conventional society. This differs from the protagonist’s position in *Stone Junction* as he lives outside mainstream societal norms from the outset.

Some scholars limit works classed as Bildungsromans to those in which the entire plot is centred on the “process of the hero’s education”, whereas others require
merely the “presence of the hero’s development and emergence” in the novel (Bakhtin 1987: 20). *Stone Junction* seems to be positioned somewhere between these two conceptions of the Bildungsroman, as the plot consists of more than Daniel’s education. His education is nevertheless crucial, and were one to remove the sections of the novel featuring it, there would be very little remaining. The Diamond theft, for instance, could not take place without this element, as the powers he utilises to commit it are taught to him by Volta during his final period of apprenticeship.

Although the training of Daniel as an AMO adept is an essential component of the novel, he states, during his first apprenticeship, that he is neither aware of being trained nor of the purpose of the training (109). Volta speaks only of AMO’s teachers helping Daniel undergo a transformation of “potential into ability” during their first meeting (80). Daniel’s role in the AMO thus seems nebulous until Volta tasks him with learning to become invisible and stealing the Diamond. Daniel’s premature separation from his mother clearly has an impact on his development, particularly in terms of the learning opportunities available to him. Until the point of her death he lives with her, and the separation occurs long before a young person would usually consider leaving home. On Daniel’s awakening from his coma, Volta immediately assumes the role of father figure and the task of educating Daniel, which had previously been Annalee’s responsibility.

Barton and Hudson (1997: 23) claim that protagonists in Bildungsromans often serve as first-person narrators. The narration in *Stone Junction* is written in the third person, leaving the reader with a more limited perspective as to the protagonist’s inner world than is usual in works narrated in the first person. Few of Daniel’s thoughts are revealed to the reader by the narration. As such, it is often challenging to analyse his development in detail. There are, nevertheless, other opportunities to observe the protagonist’s progress in the novel, as for instance through his words and actions, and the utterances of other characters. Daniel has a wilful aspect to his personality and this is revealed in part by his determination to find the identity of his father (49–50). It is also indicated when he makes important decisions about his and his mother’s futures, as when choosing, for instance, to live in a city as he is offered a choice of different opportunities in the AMO (53). Both of these instances occur at a young age and seem to be permanent characteristics in him which do not change over the course of the novel.
Daniel’s later fights with Volta could also be interpreted as evidence that he wishes to be in control of his own destiny and not at the mercy of his teacher’s whims.

During the Pearses’ time in Berkeley, Daniel works as a forger. This could equally be interpreted as responsibility or irresponsibility, depending on the reader’s point of view. His sense of responsibility or lack thereof could indicate either maturation or a refusal to mature. Considering that he is surrounded by other outlaws, the former explanation seems to be the most plausible. Daniel takes an active role in outlaw society, and, even though the exact function of the forgery he and his mother complete is not fully explained, it seems likely that their actions as forgers are morally sound in the eyes of the AMO. For society at large, on the other hand, it could be argued that his actions are illegal and immoral. The same argument could be put forward about his keenness to take responsibility for other actions, including his enthusiasm to help his mother with the bombing: “I’m almost fourteen. I need to be responsible for myself” (64). Daniel’s moral sense typically seems to align to that of the AMO. Both Daniel and the AMO have misgivings about the plutonium heist. His doubts are revealed when he reminds his mother, suffering from last-minute anxiety, that she can still opt out of planting the bomb (69). A sympathetic dimension to Daniel’s character is evident when he takes pity on a mistreated mule, preventing Mott from shooting it (117). Soon after, he shows restraint in his drug consumption after “that first obliterating trip”, thus implying a desire to take responsibility even while working for the intoxicated Mott in surroundings in which drug consumption is encouraged (126).

One way of ascertaining Daniel’s psychological development is a consideration of the opinions expressed about him by other characters. When Volta brings him out of his coma, he informs Daniel that his contacts consider him to have “special qualities which should be developed and refined” (80). Volta keeps a close eye on Daniel’s progress, asking each of his teachers in turn how they feel about him. Before Wild Bill takes Daniel on, Volta tells him: “He’s got a ferocious mind, and, for one so young, not completely at the expense of subtlety. He strikes to the meat, but he’s impulsive, of course – youth again – yet remarkably self-possessed. He’s held himself together through some hideous blows” (86). This indicates that Daniel is reasonably well-balanced and resilient. After the training, Wild Bill refers to Daniel as “a little too dazzled by oblivion” (114), informs Volta of his adolescent hormonal surges and reports
that he has “had a solid dose of the alchemical salts; an infusion of outlaw spirit might be timely – though it might be wise to have a tempering influence near at hand” (115). This suggests that Daniel’s outlaw spirit needs encouragement.

For Baldick (1991: 27), the development of the hero or heroine takes them through a “troubled quest for identity”. The identity quest takes Daniel from the realisation that he has magical powers to become aware of his own divinity. Daniel’s quest seems troubled as there is a hollowness to his existence. As a young child, he never forms friendships with his peers. Indeed, children of his own age are wholly absent from the narrative of his childhood. He is for the most part portrayed as a learner who at times does not know the real purpose of his training. Aside from his teachers, Daniel has very little meaningful contact with others. He has barely any contact with mainstream society, and many of these encounters are fleeting. In Berkeley he avoids school, and when he subsequently moves to San Francisco on the trail of his mother’s killer, he keeps his distance from his peers, inventing a cover story to keep his true identity secret (140). Considering abandoning up his training while waiting for Jean Bluer, he reflects: “He had no family, no lovers, no close friends” (193). He does eventually find a lover in the form of Jennifer Raine, but this relationship, while it is seemingly the most meaningful romantic encounter of the novel, is extremely short-lived. His earlier encounter with Jennifer Raine in the guise of Brigit Bardo (67), as well as his other sexual encounters, are also rather brief.

One element of Daniel’s psychological development is the change in his libido. This aspect is first emphasised during the long period of introspection in which he studies meditation with Wild Bill Weber in the wilderness. He passes through an adolescent stage of “obsessive carnal desire” at this point (103). Charmaine suggests that Daniel treats his sexual dysfunction as a psychological rather than a physical issue (132). The protagonist recovers from this problem when he succeeds in making love to Jennifer Raine for the second time but then suddenly vanishes. It is challenging to ascertain whether the sexual dysfunction and other psychological disturbances Daniel experiences, such as his period of dreamlessness, are accounted for by his head injury, by the loss of his mother, by the process of going through puberty, or by his normal psychological development (103). However, the fact that he undergoes change, for
whatever reason, signifies psychological development, hence the novel can be considered a Bildungsroman.

When fleeing with the Diamond, Daniel understands his situation and the world better. The narrative at this stage reveals much more of Daniel’s inner world to the reader than it does at earlier phases of the novel. Daniel’s improved comprehension of himself and the world around him corresponds to both his psychological development (Murfin and Ray) and to the concept of acquiring new awareness of the ways of the world (Barton and Hudson). Daniel’s realisation that he “owed Volta an explanation” for absconding indicates that he is starting to feel more responsible for his actions (320). In the same passage he realises he is becoming too involved with the Diamond to be rational: “He felt like he was too close to see clearly, yet he couldn’t back away”. This reveals that his self-awareness is increasing, but also that he is addicted to vanishing with the Diamond, which clouds his awareness (320). Daniel begins to criticise himself, confronting not just the direct but also the indirect and tragic consequences of his actions, such as the murder of the Tindells at the hands of the CIA: “He couldn’t allow himself any more foolishness. No more fun. Frivolity was fatal. He winced recalling his righteousness with Volta: The Diamond is my responsibility now. Dumb. The only thing he could honestly claim responsibility for was the dangerous indulgence of mindless whims” (383). Then, after a long phase in which he drifts around the country, he becomes more decisive (385):

He needed a new identity for the trip. He needed to head east… He needed to decide how to travel. This time he wouldn’t compromise anyone’s safety by letting them see him vanish, or by revealing anything about the Diamond

This decisiveness, which is much like the wilfulness of Daniel’s portrayal earlier in the novel, may represent a strengthening of this trait as he matures.

Daniel’s spiritual progress could be equated to his progress on the path of becoming a magician and a god. There is a foreshadowing of the spiritual dimension that emerges later in the novel with Johnny Seven Moons’ statement that “walking naked in warm spring rain” is “one of the highest spiritual pleasures available to human creatures” (23). Walking naked in the rain with Annalee and Johnny, Daniel feels
momentarily that “the world was perfect”, suggesting a feeling of completeness which could be compared to spiritual enlightenment (24). However, the narrator does not frame the experience as being explicitly spiritual for Daniel in the way that it is for Johnny. It is, however, clearly a pivotal occurrence in his early life and is described as “the most memorable lesson for both Annalee and Daniel” (23).

The first obvious sign that Daniel is expected to grow spiritually is his intensive meditation training with Wild Bill, which significantly is his first apprenticeship. Wild Bill tells him that the most important thing is to “get your mind dialed in on Top Dead Center, focus down for depth, and put the needle right through the zero” (90). At this stage, Daniel is unaware as to what he is being trained for. The many visions Daniel experiences, mainly during his apprenticeship with Wild Bill, represent important steps on his spiritual path in that they later turn out to be premonitions (106). The blossoming of Daniel’s magical powers is apparent from his astounding victory over Bobby in their Nomlaki Stone Gambling match (188 - 190). When Daniel disappears for the first time he can be said to have achieved another important spiritual goal on the path to enlightenment (229). While on the run with the Diamond, Volta assesses him as “emotionally ragged and spiritually lost – dangerously so” (328). The power of disappearing alone is not, then, according to his teacher, sufficient to make him spiritual. He needs, Volta implies, to use his powers ethically and maintain an emotional balance. Volta tries to warn Daniel repeatedly that he should not allow himself to be seduced by the prospect of becoming permanently invisible.

Daniel’s later realisations about himself and his powers indicate that he is approaching a point at which he spiritually finds himself (383, 385). That Daniel is capable of seeing both Jennifer’s daughter Mia and the Diamond’s spiral flame represents his spiritual growth as these are invisible to others (398). His understanding of the nature of the Diamond increases as he nears his apotheosis, also implying spiritual growth (385). While on the run, Daniel remembers his naked walk in the rain with his mother and Johnny Seven Moons with fondness: “how safe he’d felt, how complete” (387). This implies that he is suffering from a feeling of incompleteness at present. This could contradict the Bildungsroman framework of development in that Daniel seems to feel that he is becoming less complete as he grows up. On the other
hand, this may be a representation of the loss of childhood innocence being an essential and inevitable dimension to growing up and becoming an adult.

I would consider the entire novel to conform to the Bildungsroman genre as its protagonist clearly undergoes both psychological and spiritual development. Alternatively, the novel could be argued to include a long phase in which the Bildungsroman genre dominates. This phase would start at the beginning of the novel, and conclude with Daniel’s apotheosis, at which point he finally finds his place in the world as he becomes a god (406), signifying the absolute peak of his spiritual enlightenment. Ironically, the protagonist’s final revelation about his place in the world occurs simultaneously to his permanent disappearance from the world.

Another method of revealing whether Stone Junction can be categorised as a Bildungsroman is to examine how closely it corresponds to an example of the genre. Jerome Buckley’s exposition of an archetypal Bildungsroman plot is summarised by Thomas Jeffers (2005: 52):

A sensitive child grows up in the provinces, where his lively imagination is frustrated by his neighbors’ — and often by his family’s — social prejudices and intellectual obtuseness. School and private reading stimulate his hopes for a different life away from home, and so he goes to the metropolis, where his transformative education begins. He has at least two love affairs, one good and one bad, which help him revalue his values. He makes some accommodation, as citizen and worker, with the industrial urban world, and after a time he perhaps revisits his old home to show folks how much he has grown. No single Bildungsroman will have all these elements, Buckley says, but none can ignore more than two or three.

The protagonist of Stone Junction can certainly be perceived as sensitive, and this side to his personality is apparent in his early life. One instance of this is his soothing of wounded fugitive Dolly Varden (18), and another is his sensitivity to his mother’s feelings (59). He clearly grows up in the provinces. There is, nevertheless, little evidence to show that Daniel has a particularly lively imagination, nor evidence to the contrary. What is more, there is no evidence of any intellectual obtuseness frustrating Daniel. Belonging to an outlaw family, the social prejudices apparent are
likely to be opposed to those that might be found in more conventional surroundings, but they constitute prejudices nonetheless. Daniel is not depicted as passive vessel into which his teachers pour knowledge. His thirst to learn is apparent almost from the beginning of *Stone Junction*, and the safe house guests find his “eagerness and aptitude” irresistible (21). This enthusiasm could be interpreted as a hope for a different life. Daniel never expresses any desire to move away from home, but nor does he express at any stage any strong attachment to the ranch. Although his life in the metropolis is different from his previous existence, Daniel still lives with his mother and still conceals himself from the authorities. Although Annalee does at one stage feel she needs to spend some time apart from her son, Daniel never expresses any desire to part from her (24–25). His separation from his mother is solely due to her having been murdered. Daniel does not attend school but is taught by outlaw visitors at the ranch, which could be considered to be schooling. The Pearses move to a metropolis does not mark the beginning of Daniel’s “transformative education”, which occurs after the bomb explodes. There is no evidence for the move to the city being the result of any hopes for a different life away from home. He can be said to have only one love affair. Daniel’s involvement with Jennifer Raine towards the end of the novel has a depth and a passion which is at odds with its brevity. However, there seems to be little revaluing of values as a result of Daniel’s encounter with Jennifer as there is such a short interval between their initial meeting and his transformation into a god. Daniel could be said to find his place in the industrial urban world, albeit as a criminal. He could also be perceived as a citizen accommodating to the industrial world, but as an outlaw rather than as a member of mainstream society. There is no “old home” to visit as Daniel childhood home has been destroyed in a fire, nor are there any “folks” there to show his progress to.

The order of Daniel’s narrative does not correspond to the order suggested by Buckley. In this sense, then, there is little similarity between the archetypical Bildungsroman and *Stone Junction*. Yet, while it is not a canonical Bildungsroman, the evidence is strong that much of the novel contains the core features of the genre according to the definitions I outlined at the beginning of this section.

A category of the Bildungsroman, the Künstlerroman, meaning “novel of the artist”, examines, according to Murfin and Ray (2003: 231) “the development of the
artist from childhood to the point when the subject realizes his … artistic potential and mission”. Typically, the Künstlerroman depicts “the struggles of sensitive protagonists to overcome bourgeois values and other obstacles, thereby realizing their creative potential (Murfin and Ray 2003: 231). The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines the artist in the Künstlerroman as a “painter, musician or poet” and states that whereas in the Bildungsroman the hero “often dreams of becoming a great artist but settles for being a mere useful citizen”, works of this type usually end on “a note of arrogant rejection of the commonplace life”. Although Daniel is not, in a strict sense, an artist, the discourse surrounding being an outlaw in Stone Junction portrays outlaws, specifically members of the AMO, as artists of a sort and their crimes as works of art. As the nature of the organisation is revealed to the Pearses for the first time, Shamus tells them of one potential meaning of the abbreviation: “Another faction, small but vocal, insists AMO has always stood for Artists, Myth-singers, and Outriders” (35).

Many characters can be considered artistic. Daniel’s mother, for example, is a singer in a band, spends time in bohemian circles, and is attracted to poets (54). Skills possessed by some of the central characters can also be considered arts. Volta, a trapeze artist at the age of fourteen, is hailed “a master of the aerial arts” by critics (71). Other skills involving an element of creativity, such as forgery and disguise, can be considered arts without further consideration, but others, while not seeming to constitute art, are classed as art by certain characters. Safe cracking, for instance, is framed in this way by William Clinton, who asks Daniel whether he understands that “opening locks is an art” (151). However, in the case of safe cracking, the word is used as a synonym for learned skills in general rather than creative powers. It would be difficult to argue that some of the other skills Daniel learns could be considered arts in the sense of creative endeavours, such as gambling or the production of drugs.

Wild Bill tells Daniel that he is being prepared for life as an AMO adept, which he describes as “one who has mastered a particular art” (110). Daniel asks him about his potential and Bill replies: “I have a strong hunch that you’d make one helluva thief” (110). Once again, art is used here in the sense of a learned skill. Later on, Daniel’s role is clarified: in the short term Daniel is assigned the task of being a Diamond thief (206), and it is possible that if he accomplishes this, he may be considered as a possible candidate for the AMO Star Council, if only he follows the same career trajectory as
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Volta (77). Magic is framed in the novel to be a learnt skill, and there is no evidence in the novel to suggest it could be considered a creative art. Daniel tells Volta that disappearing is “magic”, to which Volta responds, “emphatically”, with “It’s not. Vanishing is a tool, a technique, another manipulation of appearance. Magic is the expropriation of the real” (208). Disappearance, then, is framed by Volta as another act of theft rather than a magic trick.

The artistic potential and mission which Daniel could potentially accomplish are never realised in Stone Junction, nor is he presented as an artist in any traditional sense, so it cannot be classed as a Künstlerroman. I would argue, however, that Stone Junction can be said to contain elements of the Künstlerroman due to the fact that some of Daniel’s skills, such as disguise and forgery, can be classed as creative arts.

Daniel’s development from embryo to master criminal is a crucial constituent of Stone Junction, but the inner workings of his psyche are seldom revealed. The main evidence for his development lies in the skills he learns and his coming to an understanding of himself and his place and role in the world during his apotheosis. My claim is that the Bildungsroman element is present in Stone Junction, and critics seem to concur. Michele Slung’s (1990) review of Stone Junction classifies it as both “coming-of-age fable” and “Bildungsroman”, and describes Daniel’s time with the AMO as an “apprenticeship” during which he becomes a “wizard-in-training”. In his introduction to the novel Pynchon (1997: x) categorizes it as “a sort of magician’s Bildungsroman”.

3.3. Magic Realism

According to Murfin and Ray (2003: 242), Magic Realism is “Fictional prose … characterised by a mixture of realistic and fantastic elements. Realistic details and esoteric knowledge are intertwined with dreamlike sequences, abrupt chronological shifts, and complex, tangled plots. Magic realists also frequently incorporate fairy tales and myths into their works”. The fantastic aspect of Stone Junction is absent at the beginning. Indeed, the novel could easily be mistaken for a realistic novel for the first seventy pages. Fantastic elements appear for the first time in Volta’s back story (71), which immediately precedes Daniel’s own first-hand experience of magic (77). After this, Daniel encounters the supernatural regularly. This revealing of fantastic elements
has the effect of catching the reader unaware and emphasising the difference between the real world and the magical one. Esoteric knowledge plays a crucial role in the novel and comes across as the skills of vanishing, telepathy and divination.

For Hegerfeldt (2005: 132), Magic Realist fiction frequently plays on “the opposition between real and fake magic”. This opposition is evident in *Stone Junction*: “Volta realised his magic was hollow, a magic of distraction and mechanical deceit, a manipulation of appearances that could never produce the substance he sought” (72). Daniel’s visionary experiences, which for the most part can also be classified as premonitions, are dreamlike sequences, (105, 106, 224, 226, 227, 228 and 310). The plot, while relatively straightforward for the first two thirds of the novel, becomes harder to follow from the point that the Gurry Debritto back story begins (233). New characters are introduced and the first two readings of the novel, at least in my experience, can be somewhat confusing. There is, however, little in the way of abrupt chronological shifts. Fairy tales and myths, both the invented such as Nameless Lake (99–113) and the pre-existing such as Atlantis or the Hour of the Wolf (257) are present in the novel.

The representation of the supernatural in *Stone Junction* varies. For much of the novel it is portrayed as unusual and extraordinary. Daniel’s first attempt at vanishing, for instance, makes him “severely disorientated” (228). He experiences a “terror” that is “reflexive, powerful, total – ‘cellular’ as Volta had called it” (228). He does, however, seem to want the magic to become a part of his everyday life. He is “irked at himself for being surprised” by the sensations he feels on disappearing (228). By his second attempt the experience becomes easier to manage: “Though startled, Daniel managed to form an image of himself falling. He could control the fall with the image, but his grip was shaky” (228). By his third attempt, the process is almost instinctive: “The third time was the charm. The instant he merged with his image on the mirror’s surface, Daniel imagined himself falling with a concentration so powerful and precise that the terror never really began” (229). His return this time, however, is “wrenching”, he feels a “searing pain” then a “rush of melancholic exhaustion” (229). While Daniel is learning to vanish he plays down the difficulty of becoming invisible. This seems to be out of
pride and self-delusion. Just before Daniel is kicked in the head by a startled deer (249), he thinks to himself: “Jump out. Jump back. Simple” (248). This suggests that his expression of pride is unwise.

The way magic is portrayed in *Stone Junction* seems to be at odds with some definitions of how it is depicted in works of Magic Realism. Magic realist texts are, for Spindler (1993: 78), those in which “the supernatural is presented as normal and ordinary, in a matter-of-fact way”. Although Daniel is at times nonchalant about his magical powers, the narration never suggests that they are normal or ordinary. *Stone Junction* does, however, conform to Murfin and Ray’s notion of the genre as one in which reality and fantasy are simply blended. *Stone Junction* has been categorised in one review as at least partially belonging to the genre of Magic Realism. David Jays’ review classifies the novel as “magic realism meets campfire yarn” (Jays 2004).

3.4. Mystery Fiction

Works of Mystery Fiction are categorised by Murfin and Ray (2003: 278) as “Popular fictional narratives with plots revolving around puzzling or frightening situations that create and even exploit a sense of uncertainty, suspense, or fear in the reader or audience”. The word *mystery* can connote “baffling problems” or “enigmas demanding a solution or explanation”. Mysteries are further described as “fictional works concerning any type of perplexing mystery, criminal or otherwise, and which may or may not involve a detective, deductive reasoning, or the other hallmarks of detective fiction” (Murfin and Ray 2003: 100).

*Stone Junction* could be said to belong to this genre since there are two puzzling situations which dominate the novel: the hunt for Annalee Pearse’s murderer and Daniel Pearse’s theft of and subsequent escape with the Diamond. The protagonist of *Stone Junction* is a perpetrator of many other crimes, but none of them can be said to dominate the narrative in the way that the Diamond theft does. Daniel is a victim of one crime, his mother’s murder, which injures him and leaves him orphaned. This assimilation of opposing roles of criminal and victim in one character may have the effect of complicating the reader’s attitude to him: he is neither purely victim nor purely perpetrator, but alternates between the two roles.
Mystery Fiction encompasses both Detective Fiction and the Crime Novel (Murfin and Ray 2003: 278). Daniel Pearse’s (and others’) hunt for Annalee’s killer, I would argue, can be categorised as Detective Fiction. Daniel’s theft of the Diamond and his time as a fugitive corresponds to the Caper Novel, a subgenre of the Crime Novel.

3.4.1. Detective Fiction

Detective Fiction features “a crime (in most cases, a murder) that is solved by the protagonist, a detective, through the use of deductive reasoning from a series of clues” (Murfin and Ray 2003: 100). In Stone Junction the protagonist’s mother is murdered, and Daniel, acting as a paid investigator, engages in deductive reasoning. However, he is not officially a detective, nor does he ultimately solve the murder. Nevertheless, I feel the novel can be considered a work of Detective Fiction due to the number of features it has in common with this genre. Thomas Pynchon (1997: x) seems to concur with this reading in his introduction to the novel, in which he classifies Stone Junction’s “second plotline” as a “whodunit” where the protagonist “must solve the … question of who murdered his mother”. This plotline is clearly secondary to the Diamond theft, but it is nevertheless an essential component of the novel as it explains much of Daniel’s motivation for becoming attached to Volta as a substitute parental figure and adds a layer of suspense to the novel.

Volta and, it is implied, the AMO, promise to investigate Annalee’s death soon after Daniel is telepathically summoned from his coma (79). The detective fiction component of Stone Junction could be said to commence at this point. Since these initial investigations are not fruitful, Daniel decides to look into his mother’s death (92). Independently of this, Volta then tasks Daniel with investigating her murder, offering him logistical help and some financial support (137). Deductive reasoning is apparent in Daniel’s ponderings (145–147). The reasoning, as well as the phase in which Daniel is involved in tracking down his mother’s killer, are comparatively short.

Daniel is not, strictly speaking, a detective, but he is dedicated to finding his mother’s killer and receives money for doing so. Although well-motivated, his efforts do not meet with success, and an attempt to work undercover fails immediately (143). The killer is revealed to be Gurry Debritto, but this is not the result of Daniel’s, Volta’s,
or the AMO’s detective work (234). It could be said that the detective fiction component of *Stone Junction* concludes with the disclosure of the murderer’s name. Volta does, however, independently discover the identity of the murderer and uses his knowledge of this to attempt to lure Daniel out of hiding. It could be argued that Volta, too, acts as a detective, and that the period for which he plays this role could be said to constitute a second instance of detective fiction in the novel. However, the fact that Volta is not the protagonist means that this reading would to some extent contradict Murfin and Ray’s definition of detective fiction.

“Characterization, setting, and description”, Murfin and Ray (2003: 100) posit, “often taken a backseat in detective fiction to the twists and turns of the plot, in which clues and ‘red herrings’ alike are introduced to the reader as the detective comes across them”. This element is clearly present in *Stone Junction*, as in the repeated misleading of the reader to suspect Volta of orchestrating Annalee’s killing. Dodge is compared in Pynchon’s (1997: x) introduction to the novel to great detective fiction writers: he is “sure footed as Chandler” and he has “twists as elegant as Agatha Christie”. The Detective Fiction phase of *Stone Junction* is short but elegantly and confidently written, and adds excitement and pace to the latter part of the novel.

### 3.4.2. The Crime Novel

The Crime Novel is a “type of mystery” which is “heavily influenced by detective fiction” (Murfin and Ray 2003: 101). The difference between Detective Fiction and the Crime Novel is that although both involve “a crime or crimes”, the crime novel focuses on “the criminal, rather than a detective (though a detective may be involved), and on his or her psychological state, rather than on the crime solver’s investigation and efforts to identify the criminal and solve the crime through logical, deductive reasoning” (Murfin and Ray 2003: 101). Crime is a central motif of *Stone Junction* from the outset. From Annalee’s assault of a nun on the first page through Daniel’s upbringing as an outlaw and his training in various illegal activities to the unlicensed burial of Volta on the penultimate page, criminal behaviour binds the novel together. Daniel himself is portrayed as a multi-talented criminal who is trained to crack safes, disguise himself, forge and produce drugs. Additionally, the majority of the characters Daniel comes
across before the escape phase of the novel see themselves as outlaws, normalising this criminality. In these respects, *Stone Junction* can be said to be a Crime Novel.

In his introduction Pynchon (1997: xi) understandably describes the mission to steal and return the Diamond as “an elaborate techno-caper”. Michelle Slung (1990), too, characterises the novel as, at least partly, a caper. The section of *Stone Junction* that commences with the plot to steal the Diamond (205–209) and concludes with Daniel’s final vanishing (406) could be argued to belong to the category of the Caper Novel, and this constitutes the most pivotal criminal act in the novel. This part of *Stone Junction* has many features in common with the Caper Novel, “One of the newer forms [of crime fiction], centered on the commission of some type of crime or scam, usually outrageous and frequently humorous. Will it succeed, and will the scoundrels get away with it?” (Seattle Mystery). The theft of the Diamond can certainly be said to be outrageous when one considers the difficulty of the task. The humorous component correlates to the many comical aspects in the escape phase of the novel, as noted in the second chapter of this thesis.

3.5. The Road Novel

In *The Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Fiction* the defining theme of the Road Novel is held to be “the technologized escape from the constraints of civilization to the freedom of the open road” (Shaffer 2011). Shaffer (2011) also maintains that the Road Novel can include “chance encounters and roguish characters”. In considering whether *Stone Junction*, or parts thereof, belong to this genre, I reflect on whether the protagonist is escaping constraining civilization and moving towards freedom as well as on how dominant the technologized aspect is. I also examine whether chance encounters and roguish characters are evident.

Changes of location are apparent throughout the plot of *Stone Junction*, but are not overly prominent. Daniel moves around the country from a young age. The Pearses’ nomadic life comes to a halt for a few years as they settle down at Smiling Jack Ebbetts’ ranch. After the Pearses’ escape from the ranch they could be considered somewhat rootless until they move to Berkeley. After Daniel wakes from his coma, he changes location each time he is assigned a new teacher. His apprenticeship periods with Wild
Bill Weber and Bad Bobby Sloane each last eighteen months. In the periods in which he has been assigned a teacher Daniel is generally based in one location, with two exceptions. Wild Bill Weber and Bad Bobby Sloane take Daniel to different locations as a part of the training. However, Wild Bill’s training period incorporates travel on foot in the wilderness, so cannot be strictly considered to bear similarities to the Road Novel. In fact, Daniel’s time training as a gambler with Bad Bobby includes road journeys from one gambling location to another, but the travelling itself does not dominate the narrative and is not all completed with the use of cars. Additionally, during his time with both of these teachers, Daniel is not attempting to escape constraining civilization.

The road itself is not central to the plot, excepting the phase in which Daniel, bearing the Diamond, flees from the AMO and the authorities. The point at which Daniel is delivered to his getaway car by helicopter may represent the beginning of the Road Novel phase of Stone Junction (267). The end of the phase is the protagonist’s apotheosis (406), at which stage he stops travelling. In the Road Novel phase Daniel uses a car to escape from the authorities and the AMO rather than the constraints of civilization. He inhabits a society that is somewhat different from that inhabited by the archetypal Road Novel protagonist. He lives his life in secret locations, surrounded by outlaws, hence it seems that he is never constrained by civilization and indeed he manages to escape its constraints before he is even born. His role is closer to that of a fugitive than a freedom seeker.

The technologized aspect, the car, holds symbolic meaning in the Road Novel phase of Stone Junction. Daniel has his getaway truck crushed by Aura Wreckers under the pretence that it is possessed by demons (331). His real reason for destroying the vehicle is his worry that the police and the AMO are on his trail. The car is the setting for Daniel’s seduction of Jennifer Raine, an act which seems to satirise North American perceptions of the car as a site of teen dating, love-making and rebellion out of the reach of the parental gaze (396–398). Their subsequent naked drive could be said to take this mockery further (401–403). Their nakedness apparently represents freedom, hence they are doubly free.

The identities of the drivers of the vehicles also seem to be significant in the Road Novel phase of Stone Junction. Aside from occasional pauses to rest, and the lending of his truck to Wally Moon (311–320), Daniel drives continuously from the
point at which he commences his automotive getaway until the point he commissions Aura Wreckers destroy his truck (331). After this, he starts to hitchhike. There is no vehicle for the authorities to chase and Daniel is unaware of his final destination. This, in a sense, constitutes a surrender as Daniel has less control over his own movements. His directionless flight from the authorities parallels his mother’s hitchhiking at the beginning of the novel. While hitchhiking, Daniel meets for the first time a number of members of mainstream society. Before this phase in the narrative he is somewhat sheltered in that the majority of the people he interacts with are other outlaws. At this point the people who he comes into contact with are taken from a much broader section of society. Although the cars Daniel travels in are not driven by him, I consider this part of *Stone Junction* to be Road Novel-like because of the dominance of the car, the road and the journey.

Fortuitous encounters, such as the one that takes place between Daniel and Jennifer Raine, abound in *Stone Junction*, both in the section that can be classed as a Road Novel, and in the rest of the work. The fortuitous encounters during the Road Novel phase of *Stone Junction* mostly occur while Daniel is hitchhiking. These include drivers Eli Boyd (332), Ernie and Irma (339), Kenny Cooper (342) and Emmett and Elwood Tindell (387). Other encounters occur during this phase but are not connected to hitchhiking, including Carl the pizza waiter (367) and his employer Max Robbins (373). Of these, the Tindells and Max Robbins could be easily classed as roguish and Daniel’s interactions with them conclude with him conquering them. He is eventually picked up by Jennifer Raine, a fortuitous meeting in the sense of Daniel finally finding love, but fatal in the sense that this is his final journey before he vanishes into the Diamond (397). There is a palpable sense of hope apparent throughout the time he spends with Jennifer. The dominance of the road towards the end of the period he travels with Jennifer adds a sense of hope to the narrative during a phase of extreme uncertainty. As Ann Brigham (2013: 15) rightly posits, for “writers, directors, protagonists, scholars, and audiences, the road endures as a realm of possibility and promise”.

During the Road Novel component of the novel Daniel attempts to find himself and understand himself while also trying to discover the secrets of the Diamond. Prior to his training in the art of vanishing and his subsequent theft of the Diamond, Daniel is
rootless and lacks a definite identity. Yet when in possession of the Diamond he has both a role to play, and a responsibility. He is, nevertheless, directionless for most of the Road Novel phase. His process of self-discovery starts long before the Road Novel phase of *Stone Junction* commences, but his progress on the road journey outweighs that made previously. The important progress Daniel makes takes the form of his having certain important revelations about himself and the Diamond. This increase in the speed of Daniel’s self-discovery parallels the increase in speed of travel which occurs as the novel nears its end.

Like the Mystery Novel and Detective Fiction elements of *Stone Junction*, the Road Novel phase only constitutes a small part of the work. However, its position at the end of the novel has the effect of adding excitement to the final phase.

### 3.6. Genre Interplay

It is clear that *Stone Junction* cannot be categorically classified as belonging to a single genre, and that a diverse range of genres, many of them indispensable in terms of how they contribute to the plot, is evident in the novel. The Bildungsroman element, arguably present throughout, is manifest in Daniel’s psychological and spiritual development as well as in the criminal skills he masters. The pervasive crime motif unites genre features of Bildungsroman and Mystery Fiction, as well as categories of the latter: Detective Fiction, the Crime Novel, and its respective subcategory, the Caper Novel. The Road Novel genre element is linked to the crime motif because Daniel’s possession of the stolen Diamond is the motivation for his road journey. Although there is no direct link between Magic Realism and the crime motif, the AMO connects the two due to its involvement in both crime and magic. However, the Künstlerroman, due to a lack of evidence for Daniel’s artisthood, cannot be considered to be a major genre component and thus I will omit it from my analysis from now on.

Like the Bildungsroman dimension, the Magic Realism aspect of *Stone Junction* constitutes a crucial element which underpins the novel in its entirety. The fantasy aspect, which permeates the novel from the point at which Volta is revealed to be a magician for the first time (70), transforms the novel into a more complex work, without which it would have a profoundly different character. Daniel’s dual realisations
concerning his place in the world can be classed as magical, which connects the Bildungsroman and Magic Realism genre elements.

The Detective Fiction element adds suspense to part of the first half of the novel. This section overlaps with the Caper Novel genre element, which takes the form of the Diamond theft and the ensuing chase and serves a purpose similar to the Detective Fiction section for part of the second half of the Stone Junction. Before the identity of Annalee’s killer has been revealed, the Caper Novel genre element emerges, which has the effect of maintaining the suspense. The focus thus moves from the secondary murder plot to the primary theft plot. The humorous quality of the Caper Novel element moderates the somewhat bleak aspect of this part of the novel and returns the focus to the criminal aspect of Daniel’s character following his spell as a detective. During the Caper Novel genre section the Road Novel genre element emerges alongside it, which increases the pace of Daniel’s maturation in both psychological and spiritual terms in the final part of the novel.

In a section of the novel spanning from the emergence of the Diamond plot (205) to the moment of Daniel’s apotheosis (406), several genres of shorter duration are evident in addition to those that underpin the whole work. In my edition, the Caper Novel element begins on page 205, the Detective Fiction element concludes on page 234 and the Road Novel element commences on page 267. Detective Fiction, the Caper Novel and the Road Novel are characterised by tension and action, and their incorporation has a marked impact on the end of Stone Junction. In fact, at one stage a total of five tiers of genres is apparent (267–406). The layering of multiple genres contributes a dynamism to this part of the novel, and their abrupt and simultaneous cessation serves to foreground the climactic nature of Daniel’s apotheosis.

The Bildungsroman, Mystery Fiction, Detective Fiction, the Crime Novel, the Caper Novel and the Road Novel are genres that conventionally rely on reasonably realistic settings. In Stone Junction, however, these genres are all coloured by Magic Realism, which has the effect of creating an unusual and compelling hybrid. The inclusion of elements of Magic Realism challenges reader preconceptions about these customarily realistic genres as well as adding a layer of fantasy to the novel.

All the genres I have identified in Stone Junction, whether components of the novel for longer or shorter periods, have vital roles to play, and the removal of any one
would have a marked impact on the novel. Were the Bildungsroman or Crime Novel genre elements absent from the novel, the reader would find it more difficult to relate to Daniel and his path in life. Were the Magic Realism genre elements removed, the intrinsic strangeness would be missing from the novel. Were the Mystery Fiction, Detective Fiction, Caper Novel or Road Novel elements absent from *Stone Junction*, I believe it would lack in pace and tension. Some of the properties resulting from combinations of genres seem to be essential to the novel. The combination of Detective Fiction with the Crime or Caper Novel, for instance, creates a tension in Daniel’s character. Interestingly, had this combination of genres been suggested to me prior to my analysis of *Stone Junction*, I might have found it hard to imagine that such genres might coexist in the same novel.

In my view, none of the genres present is significantly more important than the others, and no single genre can be said to definitively characterise *Stone Junction*. Since working on this thesis I have come to understand how limiting it might be for an author to be restricted to a sole genre, and how much a carefully chosen blend of genres might enrich a novel. This however calls for an accomplished author, and it comes as no surprise to learn that Dodge found writing *Stone Junction* challenging. It would be interesting to discover whether he consciously decided to incorporate these genres into *Stone Junction*, and whether there are more that have escaped my attention.
4. Conclusion: The Monomyth and Genre

I will first comment on the genre features of *Stone Junction* that can be viewed in relation to the entire monomyth framework, and then examine some specific instances, one monomyth stage at a time.

Since it concentrates on the hero’s completion of certain deeds, Joseph Campbell’s monomyth structure does not define the trajectory of the protagonist’s psychological and spiritual development in the same fashion as the Bildungsroman genre. However, many features of the novel I have posited as being characteristic of the Bildungsroman genre closely correlate to components of the monomyth framework. Daniel’s progression through the Separation, Initiation and Return phases of the novel, each of which propels him through his heroic quest, corresponds to his development as a Bildungsheld. This affiliation between the monomyth and the Bildungsroman is not restricted to *Stone Junction*, since there is a broader connection: as Baldick (1991: 27) posits, the Bildungsheld is taken through a “troubled quest for identity”.

The fantastic dimension of Magic Realism can be equated to the supernatural and mythical elements that permeate the monomyth. I have not emphasised these elements in my analysis of the monomyth in *Stone Junction* as my intention was to use Campbell’s framework as a tool for analysing the structure of the novel rather than for determining the dominance of the fantasy element. There are, nonetheless, many central elements in the novel which clearly have a magical aspect, and Murfin and Ray (2003: 242) state that the works of magic realists “frequently incorporate fairy tales and myths”. The Diamond (corresponding to the monomyth’s boon), Nameless Lake (a supernatural landscape), Volta as a Supernatural Helper, Daniel’s inner journey in the Belly of the Whale and Crossing the First Threshold phases, his attainment of divinity at the Apotheosis phase, and his and others’ clairvoyant, psychic and disappearing skills are all unquestioningly presented as magical in the novel. Nevertheless, a narrative could be said to conform to the monomyth structure even without incorporating any magical elements whatsoever.
There is an obvious correlation between the Mystery Fiction and the monomyth dimension of the novel because the elements of uncertainty and suspense are pivotal to both. Were there, for instance, no trials to undergo or boon to recover, the novel would suffer from a lack of ambiguity and suspense.

What is more, Shaffer (2011) notes a general resemblance between the Road Novel genre and the quest narrative. For him, the Road Novel is “the automotive version of the journey narrative, borrowing elements from [the] ... noble quest”. This also holds true in the case of Stone Junction: elements of Daniel’s inner and outer journey can be explained both by the Road Novel genre and the monomyth structure. In Stone Junction this Road Novel genre element is, like the Caper Novel aspect, most apparent during the Magic Flight phase.

The Separation Stage, characterised by the hero’s journey from the world of common day to the world of supernatural wonder, correlates to the fact that further on there is a deeper, magical dimension to the world of Stone Junction than was apparent at the start. In this respect, the Magic Realism aspect of the novel is closely intertwined with the first stage of the monomyth. The initial subsection of the Separation Stage, The Call to Adventure, is defined by Campbell (1949/1956: 51) as a period in which the “familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand”, a description which is parallel to the maturation process of the Bildungsheld. The unknown world and unknown forces characteristic of this phase of the novel can be said to introduce a dimension of mystery, hence also forming a connection with the Mystery Fiction and Detective Fiction genre elements of the novel.

The Initiation Stage corresponds to Daniel’s development as a Bildungsheld. His experiences during The Road of Trials phase in particular correlate with the educational aspect of the Bildungsroman. His education as a criminal also parallels the Crime Novel component of Stone Junction. Daniel undergoes trials during all of his criminal actions. His investigative work in the Detective Fiction section of the novel could also be said to constitute a trial. This phase of the novel can also be linked to Magic Realism due to the presence of fantasy elements such as the dream landscape of Nameless Lake. Daniel’s maturation as a Bildungsheld incorporates his awakening sexuality, which corresponds to features of both The Meeting with the Goddess and Woman as the Temptress phases.
of the novel. The former phase also strongly relates to Magic Realism, as it incorporates Daniel’s mystical marriage to Jennifer Raine. The latter phase, which includes Daniel’s episode of adolescent angst in the wilderness, can be compared to the hero’s development in the Bildungsroman, as can the development of his relationship with Volta in the Atonement with the Father phase. The final stage of the Bildungsroman, in which the protagonist recognises his place in the world, correlates with the Apotheosis subsection of the monomyth. His transformation into a god in this phase also evidently is similar to Magic Realist genre elements. The Initiation Stage’s final phase, The Ultimate Boon, can, due to its explicitly mystical nature, also be connected to the Magic Realism element of the novel. Daniel’s success in stealing the Diamond, which constitutes the boon in my interpretation of the monomyth, corresponds to the pinnacle of his development in terms of the Bildungsroman. The Diamond theft is both a heroic act and a Caper Novel-style crime, which correlates to Pynchon’s view that the novel is a metaphysical quest and a techno-caper.

As discussed in the first chapter, the Return Stage is never fully realised in Stone Junction, thus the main correlations between the Bildungsroman genre features and the monomyth framework of the novel apply principally to the first two stages of the quest. There are, however, some elements of the Return Stage present in the novel, such as The Magic Flight phase, which, due to its comical chase dimension, corresponds closely to both Caper Novel and Road Novel genre elements.

Both the monomyth and genre analyses have been worthwhile, but neither approach has been more analytically conclusive than the other. Certainly some genre elements appear only briefly in the novel, and some phases of the monomyth are absent or incomplete, but it would be difficult to argue that either element is more dominant. The novel owes much of its strength to the combination of the monomyth framework with the genre features I have identified. There are indications that the author consciously used features of these genres and the monomyth structure, and it would be interesting to have these suspicions confirmed or denied by Dodge himself. A novel as complex as Stone Junction could conceivably be analysed with reference to other genres and analytical frameworks, and I hope that future research will be undertaken from a wide range of perspectives.
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