

MAPPING THE MONOMYTH: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HEROIC ARCHETYPES IN THE NOVELS OF KALKI KRISHNAMURTHY

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Abstract

This research paper examines the heroes journey in Kalki Krishnamurthy's historical novels Ponniyin Selvan, Sivagamiyin Sabadham and Parthiban Kanavu as a metaphor for their psychological journey, using Joseph Campbell's Monomyth as a framework. Situated at the intersection of comparative mythology, and modern Indian literary studies, Kalki's achievement has been discussed in relation to nationalism, translation, gender, and popular reception, sustained Campbell-based structural analysis of his historical fiction remains comparatively scarce. The title implies that Kalki's historical novels can be read through the lens of Campbell's "monomyth" because his novels follow universal patterns of storytelling that allow the journeys of his characters to relate to people from all over the world. Using the three macro-stages of Departure, Initiation, and Return and the seventeen-stage pattern elaborated in The Hero with a Thousand Faces, the article argues that Kalki does not mechanically reproduce the monomyth; instead, he pluralizes it across messengers, princes, dancers, monks, spies, and sovereigns. The findings show that Ponniyin Selvan disperses heroic agency between Vandiyathevan's adventurous mobility and Arulmozhi Varman's ethical kingship, Sivagamiyin Sabadham converts the hero's journey into a tragic cycle of art, war, and renunciation, and Parthiban Kanavu gives Campbell's "return with the boon" a dynastic and political form through Vikraman's restoration of Chola autonomy.

Keyword: Monomyth, Tamil historical fiction, Comparative Mythology, Individuation, wholeness

1.INTRODUCTION

Kalki Krishnamurthy's historical novels transform Tamil historical memory into popular narrative without reducing history to chronicle. Written for serial publication and later read as major works of twentieth-century Tamil fiction, *Parthiban Kanavu*, *Sivagamiyin Sabadham*, and *Ponniyin Selvan* construct the Pallava and Chola past through intrigue, romance, disguise, espionage, ethical choice, and dynastic aspiration. *Sivagamiyin Sabadham*, serialized between 1944 and 1946, and later published in two parts namely "Paranjothi's journey", "The Siege of Kanchi", "The Monk's Love", "Shattered Dream" dramatizes the Pallava- Chalukya conflict, the invasion of Vatapi, and the fate of the dancer Sivagami. *Parthiban Kanavu*, presents the dream of a vassal Chola king whose son Vikraman seeks independence from Pallava overlordship. *Ponniyin Selvan* was serialized in *Kalki* magazine from 1950 to 1954 and then published in five volumes namely "The New Tide", "The Whirlwind", "The Killer Sword", "The Crown", "The Supreme Sacrifice" in 1955; the novel's modern reputation rests on its significant plot, memorable dialogue, and portrayal of tenth-century Chola succession politics ("Emperor Rajaraja Cholar"). Together, these novels show how Tamil historical fiction can turn regional pasts into emotionally charged structures of quest and return.

The present study is highly essential because Campbell's monomyth offers a structural vocabulary for analyzing Kalki's recurring narrative movement from departure, through trial, toward restoration. Campbell famously describes the "standard path of the mythological adventure as "separation—initiation—return," the nuclear unit of the monomyth, and summarizes it as a movement in which the hero leaves the world of common day, encounters marvelous forces, wins a decisive victory, and returns with power to bestow a boon on others (Campbell 23). Kalki's novels are not myths in a narrow religious sense; they are historical romances shaped by colonial modernity, Tamil print culture, and nationalist memory. Yet their heroes repeatedly leave familiar spaces, cross political or moral thresholds, undergo tests, encounter figures of guidance and temptation, and return with a gift that is never merely private. Campbell's theory therefore becomes useful not as a universal template imposed from outside but as a heuristic for describing how Kalki organizes heroic transformation.

The knowledge gap is that Kalki scholarship has rarely made Campbell's full seventeen-stage structure central to the analysis of these novels. Existing studies and discussions have addressed Kalki's place in Tamil novel history, the challenges of translating Tamil historical fiction into English, the representation of women in *Ponniyin Selvan*, and the broad social and historical value of his novels (Hema; Nirmaladevi; Wajindram and Balan). Recent scholarship has also applied the monomyth to various literary and popular-cultural texts, including Indian mythological fiction such as Amish Tripathi's *The Immortals of Meluha*, showing the continuing appeal of Campbellian analysis in South Asian contexts (Kawde). However, focused structural comparison of *Ponniyin Selvan*, *Sivagamiyin Sabadham*, and *Parthiban Kanavu* through Campbell's complete framework remains limited. This article responds to that gap by treating Kalki's three historical novels as a connected field in which the hero's journey is repeated, fractured, gendered, politicized, and sometimes refused.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CAMPBELL'S MONOMYTH AND ITS SEVENTEEN STAGES

Campbell's model begins with three macro-stages that together define the heroic cycle. Departure describes

the hero's movement away from ordinary life into danger, mystery, or vocation; Initiation describes the tests and transformations undergone beyond the threshold; Return describes the difficult reintegration of the transformed hero into the social world (Campbell 23, 45-221). Campbell's model is not simply a plot formula; it is also a symbolic account of growth, crisis, and renewal. The hero's outward journey mirrors inward transformation, and the return matters because the hero's experience must become a boon for the community. This final communal emphasis is especially relevant to Kalki, whose historical heroes are rarely isolated adventurers; they are bound to dynasties, kingdoms, arts, temples, friendships, and collective futures.

The Departure phase contains five stages that define the hero's break from ordinary order. The Call to Adventure is the summons that draws the hero toward a task, crisis, or unknown world; it often arrives through accident, message, threat, or destiny (Campbell 45). Refusal of the Call occurs when the hero hesitates, evades, or misunderstands the summons, thereby revealing fear, attachment, or moral confusion (Campbell 54). Supernatural Aid refers to assistance from a protective figure, mentor, charm, disguise, or providential helper given to one who has accepted the adventure (Campbell 63). Crossing the First Threshold marks entry into the zone of danger, where familiar rules no longer fully apply (Campbell 71). Belly of the Whale signifies a deeper symbolic enclosure, disappearance, or rebirth, in which the hero seems swallowed by the unknown before re-emerging transformed (Campbell 83).

The Initiation phase contains six stages in which the hero is tested and remade. The Road of Trials is a sequence of ordeals through which the hero's courage, intelligence, loyalty, or endurance is refined (Campbell 89). Meeting with the Goddess represents the encounter with plenitude, grace, love, or a figure who embodies the desired wholeness of the quest (Campbell 100). Woman as Temptress, despite its gendered and dated phrasing, is best understood analytically as the moment when desire, power, illusion, or attachment threatens to divert the hero from the larger vocation (Campbell 111). Atonement with the Father names confrontation with a supreme authority, ancestral law, king, father, or symbolic power that the hero must understand,

reconcile with, or transcend (Campbell 116). Apotheosis is the stage of illumination, enlargement, or release from narrow identity (Campbell 138). The Ultimate Boon is the gained object, wisdom, victory, freedom, or social good that gives the quest its value (Campbell 159).

The Return phase contains six stages that make the hero's transformation socially consequential. Refusal of the Return occurs when the hero resists re-entry into ordinary life or refuses the responsibilities attached to the boon (Campbell 179). Magic Flight is the often dangerous escape from the special world with the boon, sometimes pursued by enemies or consequences (Campbell 182). Rescue from Without occurs when the returning hero needs external help to re-enter the human world (Campbell 192). Crossing of the Return Threshold is the passage back into society, where the hero must translate extraordinary experience into ordinary political, ethical, or communal terms (Campbell 201). Master of Two Worlds describes the ability to move between inner and outer, private and public, sacred and political, or adventure and governance (Campbell 212). Freedom to Live is the final liberation from paralyzing fear, obsessive desire, or unresolved conflict; it allows the boon to circulate beyond the hero's personal story (Campbell 221).

For Kalki, the usefulness of this framework lies in flexible mapping rather than rigid one-to-one correspondence. The novels often distribute Campbellian functions among several characters: a messenger may perform the Departure, a prince may undergo the ethical Initiation, a woman may function as both mentor and sovereign intelligence, and a renunciant may enact the Return. This distribution is not a flaw in the model; it is the most revealing point of contact between Campbell and Kalki. Tamil historical fiction in Kalki's hands converts the single hero's quest into a networked heroic system in which dynastic history itself becomes the object of return.

3. PONNIYIN SELVAN: DISPERSED HEROISM AND THE ETHICAL RETURN OF KINGSHIP

Ponniyin Selvan most clearly revises Campbell's monomyth by splitting the heroic role between Vandiyathevan, the adventurer, and Arulmozhi Varman, the ethical center of kingship. The Call to Adventure belongs first to Vandiyathevan, who is assigned by

Aditya Karikalan to deliver messages to Sundara Cholar and Kundavai while the Chola court is threatened by conspiracies around succession. His mission through Chola country, his arrival at Kadambur palace, and his overhearing of the Pazhuvettaraiyars' secret support for Madhurantakan establish the initial threshold between ordinary military service and a larger realm of political danger. Vandiyathevan's call is not mystical; it is epistolary, political, and kinetic. The hero begins as a messenger, but the message opens into history. "Vandhiya Thevan stated that, "My time has come. I am going to have experiences that are denied to the lesser mortals- His intuition was almost shouting at him" (*Ponniyin Selvan* 1:12)

Vandiyathevan's Departure develops through disguise, evasion, and repeated threshold crossings. His meetings with the characters Azhwarkadiyan Nambi, Nandini, Sendhan Amudhan, and Kundavai create a pattern of Supernatural Aid in secular form: instead of gods and charms, he receives intelligence, shelter, political interpretation, and strategic direction. Nandhini stated once that "Of all the men I have seen, you are the only one who is really brave. You have the courage to speak your mind. They don't have the guts to speak their mind. But you are different. You are bold" (*Ponniyin Selvan* 3:112).

Azhwarkadiyan is a spy rather than a sage, but his function resembles Campbell's protective helper because he enlarges Vandiyathevan's understanding of the invisible network behind visible events. After understanding the continuous help of Azhwarkadiyan in his journey, Vandhiya Thevan mentions that, "How does this man know everything? He never asked about my work or my problems. Without getting excited this man always gets these things done. This man is a Vaishnavite. And yet it looks like espionage runs in his blood. I became a spy by sheer force of necessity. That is why I land myself into trouble quite often" (*Ponniyin Selvan* 3:163). Kundavai's instruction regarding his mission on Sri Lanka to bring Arulmozhi back gives the quest its true shape. The First Threshold is therefore not one gate but a series of gates: Kadambur, Thanjavur, Pazhayarai, the sea route to Lanka, and the disguised entry into enemy surveillance.

The Initiation phase in *Ponniyin Selvan* is organized around the Road of Trials that Vandiyathevan undergoes and the moral poise that Arulmozhi embodies. Vandiyathevan is pursued, suspected, imprisoned, accused of treason, and repeatedly forced to improvise. His capture in Lanka, escape with Poonguzhali's help, meeting with Arulmozhi, and return through storm and political uncertainty reproduce the trial structure with striking clarity. At the end of the novel, while Senior Pazhuvettaraiyar asserts his final words, he mentions that "If I am asked to name one person who saved out Empire from catastrophe I would name this valiant young man, the Prince of Vallam, prince Vandhiya Thevan...Vandhiya Thevan was the only one who could not be lured by that evil (Nandhini). (*Ponniyin Selvan* V: 506)".

The journey of Vandhiya Thevan from the secretive messenger to his ultimate state is one of great psychological development. By the end of the novel the need for artifice is gone and he has been fully integrated within the center of Chola power. Vallavaraiyan Vandhiya Thevan was not longer entering the city in disguise; nor was he hiding himself from people. He rode through the city gates (*Ponniyin Selvan* V: 582). His commitment to integrity only deepens this transition from shadow to sunlight: Prince, I learnt the hard lesson of speaking only the truth from you. I have even taken a vow to speak only the truth. (*Ponniyin Selvan* V: 521). Thus, the metamorphosis of the character Vandhiya Thevan signal the end of the hero's journey, a transition from the archetype of the 'trickster' to a man of absolute transparency and sovereign power.

Yet the novel's deeper initiation belongs to Arulmozhi Varman. In Lanka he is already beloved for military ability and public compassion, and his association with the river Ponni and the guardian figure Mandakini Devi gives his arc a mythic aura without removing it from historical fiction. The apparent death in the storm and rescue by Mandakini resemble the Belly of the Whale: Arulmozhi disappears from the public world, is thought lost, and re-enters the narrative with renewed symbolic force.

Kalki complicates Campbell's "Meeting with the Goddess" and "Woman as Temptress" by giving women decisive political and moral agency rather than limiting

them to archetypal functions. Kundavai is not simply a goddess figure in the romantic sense; she is the mind that clarifies the quest, reads the conspiracy, and directs Vandiyathevan toward the larger good. Poonguzhali functions as liminal guide across water, especially in relation to Lanka and the storm-world that tests both Vandiyathevan and Arulmozhi. Nandini, by contrast, occupies the dangerous place Campbell calls temptation, but Kalki's characterization is far richer than the label suggests. Her beauty, grievance, intelligence, and association with the Pandya revenge plot tempt men not merely sexually but politically: she exposes the vulnerability of masculine ambition, dynastic guilt, and unresolved violence. The result is that Kalki converts Campbell's gendered archetypes into a field of female power.

The Atonement with the Father in *Ponniyin Selvan* is displaced from a single father-son confrontation to the crisis of dynastic legitimacy. Sundara Chola's illness, Aditya Karikalan's guilt and impetuosity, Madhurantakan's contested claim, Mandakini's hidden past, and Arulmozhi's restraint together create a symbolic "father" in the form of Chola history itself. Aditya's journey to Kadambur to confront Nandini leads not to reconciliation but to death, making his arc a failed or tragic monomyth. Vandiyathevan's false accusation after Aditya's murder intensifies the trial, while Arulmozhi's refusal to seize the throne demonstrates apotheosis as ethical self-mastery rather than triumphalist coronation. The Ultimate Boon is not immediate personal sovereignty; it is the stabilization of the Chola realm through sacrifice, truth, and rightful succession.

The Return in *Ponniyin Selvan* is therefore paradoxical because the most heroic act is a refusal of power. Arulmozhi returns to Chola political life with the capacity to become king, yet he resists the crown in order to prevent civil rupture and honor a larger conception of dharma. Vandiyathevan also returns from suspicion into social integration through pardon and marriage to Kundavai. Mandakini's sacrificial death, Nandini's disappearance, and the exposure of the conspiracy clear the field for a future that the novel associates with the later greatness of Rajaraja Chola. Campbell's Freedom to Live appears here as the freedom of the polity to continue; the boon is historical continuity rather than a

magical object. *Ponniyin Selvan* thus transforms the monomyth into a collective drama in which the hero's journey culminates in ethical restraint, not conquest.

4. SIVAGAMIYIN SABADHAM: ART, WAR, CAPTIVITY, AND TRAGIC RENUNCIATION

Sivagamiyin Sabadham offers a more tragic and polyphonic version of the hero's journey because no single character completes the cycle without loss. Paranjothi receives the clearest initial Call to Adventure when he comes to Kanchi seeking religious instruction under Thirunavukkarasar but instead saves Sivagami and Aayannar from a mad elephant. This accidental rescue draws him into the political and military world of Mahendravarman, Narasimhavarman, Naganandhi, and Pulakeshin. His Refusal of the Call is minimal; he is less resistant than bewildered, caught between piety, art, espionage, and war. His early imprisonment and escape through Naganandhi's assistance begin a Departure that is morally ambiguous because the helper himself is a manipulator.

The novel's First Threshold is Paranjothi's journey beyond Kanchi toward the Chalukya domain under the pretext of learning the secret of Ajanta dyes. Naganandhi's coded message and Mahendravarman's disguised intervention as Wajrabahu transform the journey into a maze of espionage. Paranjothi crosses into enemy territory, is captured by Pulakeshin's soldiers, and survives because Mahendravarman has altered the conditions of the plot through disguise and intelligence. Campbellian Supernatural Aid is here secularized into royal strategy: Mahendravarman appears almost magically in disguise, not as a god but as a politically brilliant ruler who protects the novice hero while testing him. Paranjothi's initiation into history begins when he realizes that the world of art and devotion cannot be separated from statecraft.

Narasimhavarman's hero's journey runs beside Paranjothi's and is shaped by love, obedience, war, and delayed return. His Call is double: he is called by love for Sivagami and by royal duty to defend Kanchi. Mahendravarman's opposition to the romance is the symbolic father-conflict, especially because Narasimhavarman must accept that his desire as lover cannot override his obligation as prince. The Siege of

Kanchi intensifies this conflict when Pulakeshin's army surrounds the city and Mahendravarman's intelligence outwits the invader. When Sivagami is carried to Vatapi and humiliated into dancing to save Pallava captives, Narasimhavarman's private love becomes a public vow of vengeance. She stated that, "I will not leave Vatapi until the Pallava Prince Narasimhavarman (Mamallan) destroys the city and rescues me (*Sivakamiyin Sapatham* I 289)". The beloved is no longer merely the Meeting with the Goddess; she becomes the embodied honor of the Pallava world.

Sivagami's own arc is central because Kalki makes the apparent object of rescue into a heroic subject of vow, endurance, and renunciation. Her captivity in Vatapi resembles the Belly of the Whale: she is enclosed in the enemy capital, separated from Kanchi, and forced to perform under coercion. Yet she converts humiliation into agency by vowing not to leave Vatapi until Narasimhavarman destroys it and rescues her. This vow is her Call, her Refusal of easy Return, and her Ultimate Boon in one condensed act. When Narasimhavarman and Paranjothi secretly attempt to rescue her, she refuses because a private escape would not redeem the public humiliation of the Pallavas. In Campbellian terms, she rejects premature return because the boon has not yet been achieved.

The Road of Trials in the second half of *Sivagamiyin Sabadham* extends over nine years and culminates in the Pallava attack on Vatapi. Narasimhavarman's initiation is historical and martial: he becomes king, forms alliances, and moves from youthful lover to ruler capable of avenging Kanchi. Paranjothi becomes a commander and participates in the campaign, but his experience of war leads to spiritual revulsion. Naganandhi, who loves Sivagami and resembles Pulakeshin, functions as a dark double of the hero: he crosses thresholds, uses disguise, and seeks power, but his journey bends toward manipulation rather than renewal. The death of Pulakeshin and the fall of Vatapi provide the external victory, but Kalki refuses to let victory equal fulfillment.

The Return in *Sivagamiyin Sabadham* is marked by shattered expectation rather than triumph. Sivagami is reunited with her aged father but learns that Narasimhavarman is married to the Pandya princess Vanamadevi; she then turns toward devotion to

Ekambareswarar at Kanchi. Paranjothi, disturbed by the human cost of war, renounces violence and becomes Siruthondar, a Saivite saintly figure. These endings enact Campbell's Return in ethically altered forms: Narasimhavarman becomes master of the political world but not of romantic fulfillment; Sivagami gains freedom through renunciation; Paranjothi converts martial initiation into spiritual return. The boon is not happiness but painful knowledge: art, love, and kingship are all vulnerable to history.

5. PARTHIBAN KANAVU: DYNASTIC DREAM AND THE POLITICAL BOON

Parthiban Kanavu is the most compact Campbellian quest among the three novels because its structure moves clearly from paternal dream to exile and restoration. The Call to Adventure is given by Parthiban to his son Vikraman: the Cholas must regain the glory lost under Pallava suzerainty. Parthiban's refusal to pay tribute to Narasimhavarman triggers the battle in which he dies, and before dying he receives the promise of an enigmatic monk who vows to help Vikraman fulfill the dream. The Old man mentioned about the war to Ponni by saying,

Emperor Narasimha Varma wanted to avenge those, and was preparing for a war for a long time. After about six years, he marched north with his army. He wrote to King Parthiban, asking him to join his forces. Our king wrote back, agreeing to march with his army, but on one condition – Chozha kingdom would be free from that point on, and would not pay tribute to the Pallavas. Chozha's Tiger flag would receive equal treatment from the Pallavas. Narasimha Pallava did not pay heed to this. He started his march north without responding to this message. Our king also stopped paying tribute to Pallavas from that point on. That is the reason for this war, Valli (*Parthiban Kanavu* I:23).

The father's death turns political aspiration into inherited destiny. Vikraman's heroic journey begins before he is fully able to understand it, making the dream itself the monomythic summons. Vikraman's Departure unfolds through youthful anger, betrayal, arrest, and exile. His plan for revenge is undermined by his uncle Marappa Bhupathi, and Narasimhavarman sends him away to a distant island. This exile is Campbell's First Threshold and Belly of the Whale

combined: Vikraman is removed from the Chola homeland, symbolically swallowed by distance, and forced into maturation outside the political world he wishes to transform. The mysterious monk's continuing influence functions as Supernatural Aid, though the novel later reveals that this apparently ascetic helper is Narasimhavarman himself. Kalki thus gives the mentor role a political twist: the enemy king secretly becomes the guardian of the hero's vocation.

The Initiation phase tests Vikraman's understanding of enemy, love, and sovereignty. When he returns after three years, he longs for his missing mother and the unknown woman he had seen before exile. He discovers that his mother has been abducted by the Kapalika cult and that the woman he loves, Kundavi, is the daughter of Narasimhavarman, the very ruler against whom his inherited dream is directed. The Meeting with the Goddess is therefore inseparable from political contradiction. Kundavi is not merely romantic reward; she is the bridge between Chola aspiration and Pallava authority. The hero's temptation is not simply love but the possibility that private desire might dissolve inherited duty.

The Atonement with the Father in *Parthiban Kanavu* occurs through two father figures rather than one. Parthiban is the biological father whose dream calls Vikraman forward, while Narasimhavarman is the symbolic father-opponent who disciplines, exiles, protects, and finally empowers him. The revelation that the monk is Narasimhavarman radically alters Vikraman's understanding of power. The enemy is not a mere tyrant; he is a ruler who honors a promise to a dying adversary and helps establish an independent Chola kingdom at Uraiyur. Vikraman's apotheosis lies in this recognition: maturity means seeing sovereignty not as vengeance alone but as legitimate order ratified even by a former overlord.

The Ultimate Boon in *Parthiban Kanavu* is the restoration of Chola autonomy, sealed by Vikraman's marriage to Kundavi. This ending gives Campbell's Return a dynastic shape. Vikraman returns not with a magical elixir but with a kingdom, a bride who unites rival houses, and a future-oriented dream that the novel projects toward the later age of Rajaraja Chola I. The novel's final gesture, which states that Parthiban's dream passes from father to son and is realized centuries later,

makes the boon transgenerational rather than immediate. Freedom to Live becomes the freedom of a people and dynasty to imagine a future beyond subordination.

6. COMPARATIVE DISCUSSION: KALKI'S PLURAL MONOMYTH

Across the three novels, Kalki's most distinctive contribution is the pluralization of the heroic function. Campbell often writes as if the monomyth can be traced through a single central hero, but Kalki's historical imagination distributes heroic labor across several agents. Vandiyathevan moves, Kundavai interprets, Arulmozhi renounces, Mandakini sacrifices, and Nandini exposes the violence hidden beneath dynastic honor. Paranjothi renounces after war, Narasimhavarman returns as ruler, and Sivagami transforms captivity into vow. Vikraman inherits a dream, but Narasimhavarman secretly ensures its fulfillment. Kalki's heroes are therefore not solitary conquerors; they are nodes in a historical network.

This networked heroism also modifies Campbell's Return by making the boon political, ethical, or cultural rather than magical. In *Ponniyin Selvan*, the boon is dynastic stability and the moral preparation for Rajaraja's later greatness. In *Sivagamiyin Sabadham*, the boon is tragic knowledge about the costs of vengeance, the fragility of art, and the possibility of spiritual renunciation after violence. In *Parthiban Kanavu*, the boon is restored Chola self-rule and a future historical imagination. These returns are not simple happy endings. They are compromises with history, and their power lies in Kalki's refusal to separate heroic glory from sacrifice.

Kalki's women especially challenge a narrow application of Campbell's gendered stages. Kundavai, Nandini, Sivagami, Poonguzhali, Mandakini, and Kundavi cannot be reduced to goddess, temptress, mother, or bride. They are strategists, victims, guides, avengers, witnesses, and makers of historical consequence. Campbell's "Woman as Temptress" is therefore useful only when critically revised: in Kalki, temptation often means the seduction of power, revenge, dynastic fantasy, or private fulfillment at the expense of public duty. The novels reveal that female agency is not an accessory to male

heroism but one of the central mechanisms through which history moves.

7. CONCLUSION

This article has argued that Campbell's monomyth illuminates Kalki's historical novels most effectively when used flexibly and critically. *Ponniyin Selvan* maps Departure, Initiation, and Return across Vandiyathevan's adventures and Arulmozhi Varman's ethical kingship, culminating in a boon of political stability rather than immediate personal rule. *Sivagamiyin Sabadham* turns the hero's journey into a tragic pattern in which Narasimhavarman's victory, Sivagami's vow, and Paranjothi's renunciation reveal the costs of war and the limits of romantic fulfillment. *Parthiban Kanavu* offers the clearest dynastic monomyth, as Vikraman moves from inherited dream through exile and recognition toward the restoration of Chola autonomy.

The findings show that Kalki's historical fiction neither merely follows nor simply rejects Campbell's pattern. Instead, it regionalizes the monomyth by placing heroic transformation inside Tamil political memory, Pallava-Chola history, temple culture, espionage, and serial narrative suspense. The Campbellian cycle helps clarify Kalki's repeated movement from summons to trial to return, but Kalki's novels enrich the theory by demonstrating that a hero's journey may be collective, gendered, tragic, and transgenerational. In these works, the hero returns not only with victory but with historical continuity, ethical restraint, and the burden of remembering what sacrifice has made possible.

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