

Tribhuvan University

Heroine's Journey and the Fashioned Body in David Frankel's *The Devil Wears Prada*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and social Sciences

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Arts in English

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April 2025

Letter of Approval

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my thesis supervisor Dhruva Bahadur Karki, PhD. This work would not have been possible without his valuable guidance, constructive criticism, sincere suggestions and constant encouragement despite his busy workload.

I would also like to thank my external supervisor Asst. Prof. Maheshwor Paudel sir for his guidance and suggestions. I am very thankful for his approval of this thesis paper in its present form. My special thanks go to my teachers of Central Department of English and my friends for their motivation and support in preparing this thesis. They have been integral part of my academic journey.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family for supporting me emotionally and financially. I would like to thank them wholeheartedly for understanding my difficulties while undertaking this research and continuously supporting through my difficulties.

April 2025

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Abstract

This research examines the character development of the protagonist in the movie, The Devil Wears Prada in light of the heroine's journey model. This paper shows how the movie presents its protagonist, Andrea as a modern day heroine. Andrea goes on a journey of self-actualization in the movie. The journey of the character does not follow the conventional model, that is, the hero's journey as proposed by Joseph Campbell, which is more prominent in modern storytelling and filmmaking. Instead, this research borrows the concept of the heroine's journey put forward by authors like Maureen Murdock and Victoria Lynn Schmidt. The plot follows Schmidt's idea of Containment, Transformation and Emergence in which the heroine emerges as a self-actualized person. The backdrop of our protagonist's journey is not some ancient fantasy land or a magical world but she is a modern woman navigating the modern world of fashion. This study analyses the unique feminine journey in the movie which is primarily an introspective and cyclical journey rather than a physical and a linear one which we generally see in a traditional hero's journey. This study ultimately contributes to a deeper understanding of storytelling by emphasizing the heroine's journey as a distinctive approach to character development in modern storytelling.

Keywords: heroine's journey, feminine hero, modern-day heroine, self-actualization, contemporary cinema, modern storytelling

Introduction

This research analyzes the protagonist Andrea's journey in *The Devil Wears Prada*, directed by David Frankel. Andrea Sachs (played by Ann Hathaway) undergoes a transformation from being a meek, aspiring journalist to a confident assistant of the famous editor-in-chief, Miranda Priestly (played by Meryl Streep), of the fictional fashion magazine, *Runway*. This journey is a heroine's journey in modern terms. The movie is based on the novel of the same name by author, Lauren Weisberger. Since the cinematic plot revolves around a character learning to maneuver through the fashion world as an assistant to the editor-in-chief of a fashion magazine, the value of dress and fashion is central to the character's journey. Andrea/Andy's transformation comes along with the change in her choice of clothing and lifestyle decisions as she immerses herself into her journey. She goes on a journey of self-discovery.

As Andrea excels in her job, she fails to maintain her personal life. She cannot maintain the relationship with her boyfriend, Nate. Andrea becomes so attached to her job that she breaks up with Nate to go to Paris for Fashion Week with Miranda. The unfashionable Andy is plunged into every bit of the fashion world. Andy's journey shows how the modern workforce dictates one's way of life. At the end of the movie, Andrea quits her job at *Runway* to work for a smaller magazine. And she emerges as a completely different person by the end of the movie. The character development Andrea has in the movie is a Heroine's journey. This paper examines the Heroine's journey, Andrea has in the movie. By the end of the movie, Andrea comes out as a strong feminine version of the Hero.

This movie follows the modern template of a Heroine's Journey which differs from the traditional notion of a Hero's Journey. Hero's Journey, proposed by Joseph Campbell, is a very popular and effective template for storytelling and many authors and filmmakers have followed this template in their books and movies. On the other hand, many women authors

and critics saw a huge under-representation of women and strong feminine journey in Campbell's model. This led to the birth of the Heroine's Journey model, initially as a response to the Hero's Journey and later a proper storytelling tool for authors and filmmakers. Maureen Murdock could be considered as the pioneer of this concept while authors like Victoria Lynn Schmidt carried the idea of the Heroine's Journey forward. *The Devil Wears Prada* follows the model of a Heroine's Journey. There are some glimpses of the Hero's Journey but the way the characters end up clearly indicates that the narrative is more of a Heroine's Journey.

The film charts Andrea's quest for self-discovery within the vibrant and fashionable milieu of New York City. The narrative places the audience in her shoes, navigating the complex and often hostile world of high fashion. The film underscores the intricate relationship between fashion and identity within the contemporary urban culture. Through Andrea's interactions with the fashion industry, viewers gain insight into how fashion significantly shapes modern culture. The setting of the movie, a fashion magazine, seemingly looks mundane and underwhelming but the journey of the primary character is no less than that of a classic epic quest. This research examines the movie's narrative as an adventurous journey of a young heroine and the transformation it brings in her life by the end. The journey also prompts the questions regarding body, identity, and socio-cultural placement of an individual in modern society. The proposed research, therefore, will prove that Andrea is the modern-day feminine heroine.

Literature Review

The Devil Wears Prada is often praised for its witty and clever writing. It is often considered as one of the best-written screenplays of the 21st century. Many researchers have examined the linguistic aspect of the movie from different perspective. In their paper, "Women's Language Features Fount in Female Character's Utterances in *The Devil Wear's*

Prada Movie”, Tika Oktapiani, M. Natsir, and Ririn Setyowati analyze the “women’s language features, those are: lexical hedges or fillers, tag question, rising intonations on declaratives, empty adjectives, precious color term, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words and emphatic stress” (Oktapiani et. al 212). They analyze each utterance of the female characters in the movie on the basis of Lakoff’s theory about women’s language features. From their observation and examination Oktapiani et al. came to the conclusion that the movie and its female characters mostly follow the women’s language features. They concluded, “From ten features of women’s language, only nine features can be found in this research. They are lexical hedges or fillers (7), tag question (3), rising intonations on declaratives (2), empty adjectives (3), precious color term (1), intensifiers (10), super polite forms (4), Hypercorrect Grammar (0), avoidance of strong swear words (3) and emphatic stress (3)” (Oktapiani et al. 218). The women use majority of the language features associated with women’s language features. The researchers found that women in this movie used intensifiers most frequently, that is, ten times, in the movie.

Similarly, Tri Puspa Juwita, Dyah Sunggingwati, and Nita Maya Valiantien contracted the language features of women and men in the movie. They expanded upon the previous linguistic examination of the movie to show how different people express themselves in the speech act according to their gender. In their paper, “The Differences between Men and Women’s Language in *The Devil Wears Prada Movie*” Juwita et al. concluded, “male characters in *The Devil Wears Prada* movie performed four out of six men’s language features. They were: asked to gain information, the using of swearing and taboo words, explicit command and ungrammatical form, and minimal response” (Juwita et al. 50). They further write, “The women character showed seven out of ten women’s language features. They were lexical hedges or fillers, avoidance of strong swear words, empty adjectives, intensifiers, tag questions, precise color terms, and super polite forms” (Juwita et

al. 50). Juwita et al. observe that the movie mostly follows conventional conversational patterns. The male and female characters of the movie speak according to their gender.

Similarly, Ayu Ratri and Priyatno Ardi's linguistic approach to the movie is more concerned with the power dynamics of the characters. They examine how powerful people assert their dominance on others through impoliteness. In their paper, "Power and Impoliteness in *The Devil Wears Prada*", Ratri and Ardi state, "[T]he purpose of exercising power through impoliteness in order to appear as superior was frequently used by Miranda and Emily" (Ratri and Ardi 48). As per Ratri and Ardi's observation, two of the major characters, Miranda and Emily often resort to impoliteness in order to exert power and domination on others. They strategically use impoliteness as means to demonstrate the power dynamics present in the modern corporate world. This strategy is mostly employed by Miranda.

The movie, being a female-led piece of media, has many underlying and overt feminist tones and themes. It directly deals with multitude of women's issues like a woman's identity, relationships, and sense of belonging in the modern world. In her paper entitled "An Analysis of *The Devil Wears Prada* from the perspective of new feminism", Liu Yan writes, "This movie constructs the new images with strong self-consciousness that modern females subvert tradition through different angles, asserting a new value orientation that women can rely on themselves to realize the independence, equal rights and free marriage. It tells a story about finding and losing, missing and getting" (Yan 64). For Yan, the two lead characters Andrea and Miranda perfectly reflect the new face of modern female who stand on their own and make their own way. She further writes, "By showing the different experiences of two leading heroines about career, marriage and love, it has set up a New Feminism model with more humanity, kindness, senses, stableness and maturity" (Yan 64). In Yan's view, the movie

shows the multiple faces of new women in the new world. In Yan's assessment, this is the perfect face of new feminism.

Since its release in June 2006, *The Devil Wears Prada* has become a cultural phenomenon. The movie was well-received by the critics and the audience. Critics praised the movie's slick writing, directing, and performances, especially that of Meryl Streep. In appreciation of Meryl Streep's portrayal of the titular, Miranda Priestly, A.O. Scott of The New York Times writes, "With her silver hair and pale skin, her whispery diction as perfect as her posture, Ms. Streep's Miranda inspires both terror and a measure of awe" (Scott 1). Streep's portrayal of a sadistic and perfectionist editor-in-chief of the fashion magazine has inspired many more girl-boss characters in movies produced afterwards. Miranda is seen as a perfect modern-day anti-heroic female character. Many see Miranda as a feminist icon and her confidence and ambition as a challenge to the patriarchal institutions in a mostly male-dominated capitalist corporate structure.

The character of Miranda Priestly has been an iconic character. It has been copied, mimicked, and frequently referenced in popular culture. For many, Miranda is the perfect mixture of a ruthless villain and an inspiring ambitious lady. In her article dubbed "A Lovable Bossy Lady: The Characterization of Miranda Priestly in *The Devil Wears Prada*", Tian Ye opines, "Miranda Priestly is a woman who has multiple faces. At Elias-Clark, she is the editor-in-chief of Runway and the great lady of American fashion. At home, she is the wife of a nice man and the mother of two daughters. At a five-star hotel in Paris, she is an autocratic customer. Miranda's changing faces offer the readers intriguing windows into her life" (Ye 557). For Ye, Miranda is not just a sadistic villain who enjoys the suffering of her employees, but a fully realized character with depth and personality. Miranda is a multidimensional and nuanced character. Ye further writes, "The things she does are contradictory and ironic. Miranda is strict with her employees but is kind to her twins. She intends to behave

gracefully but she cannot help criticizing her employees. She dislikes immoral people and behavior but she has done the same things as they have. She values her privacy and yet she intrudes on others” (Ye 568). Miranda is not a run of the mill heroic or a villainous character. There are multiple layers to her characterization. It is a well written modern female character. Miranda perfectly encapsulates the nuances of a modern career woman.

Majority of critics praise the movie for its sharp screenplay, strong performance, and slick direction. Over the years, *The Devil Wears Prada* has been referenced in pop-culture in multiple ways, be it the dialogues, characters, or its scenes. There is a strong consensus among the film critics that it is an influential piece of filmmaking. However, celebrated critic, Roger Ebert was not impressed with the movie when it came out. Ebert praised Meryl Streep’s portrayal of Miranda Priestly. In his review of the movie for ABC 7 News, Ebert asserted, “Meryl Streep hits all the right notes for the cold cunning dragon-lady... too good for the movie” (Ebert 3:09-3:14). For Ebert, Streep’s stellar performance could not save the movie from being a mediocre movie. He further claims, “This movie is based on a bestselling novel and maybe it got lost in translation. It’s so flimsy it almost seems like an after-school special for girls who still shop at the GAP” (4:24- 4:34). He claims that the movie did not deliver on its storytelling aspect despite having good performances from the cast. Ebert gave the movie only two stars out of four.

Much of the existing scholarship and criticism on the film predominantly focuses on its script, performances, and direction. Nevertheless, the plot and character development equally merit scholarly attention. This proposed research will diverge from previous studies by concentrating on the protagonist, Andrea, and her evolution throughout the narrative, framing it as a Heroine's journey. The paper analyzes Andrea's quest for recognition and self-identity, arguing that she epitomizes a modern heroine within the urban workplace. It will

elucidate how Andrea's immersion in the contemporary fashion world serves as a profound journey of self-discovery and transformation.

Analysis

One of the most celebrated and sought-after narrative structures in the literature and filmmaking for the past few decades is that of the Hero's Journey proposed and popularized by Joseph Campbell. Campbell's influential work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* has become a classic piece of writing for those who seek to write as well as analyze narratives of all kinds. From his study and observation of myths, legends, and stories from all around the world, Campbell created a narrative structure that inspired writers and critics alike. In discussion of Hero's journey, Campbell writes, "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man" (Campbell 28). Campbell's Hero is the one who goes out into the world and fights battle, both internal and external. By the end the Hero returns a changed man.

Maureen Murdock is a Jungian psychotherapist and a former student of Campbell. She is an accomplished author and educator and has made significant contributions to the field of psychology. Her work is influential in terms of understanding modern women's experience. Her seminal work, *The Heroine's Journey: Women's Quest for Wholeness* is, in part, a response to the lack of proper representation of women and their journey in Campbell's work. Regarding the feminine journey, Murdock writes,

My desire to understand how the woman's journey relates to the journey of the hero first led me to talk with Joseph Campbell in 1981. I knew that the stages of the heroine's journey incorporated aspects of the journey of the hero, but I felt that the

focus of female spiritual development was to heal the internal split between woman and her feminine nature. I wanted to hear Campbell's views. (Murdock 2)

Murdock critiqued Campbell's representation of the heroine in his model. She contended that the traditional hero's journey did not fully encompass the unique path that female protagonists navigate in their stories. Campbell's interpretation fell short in this regard. Campbell himself dismissed the need for a distinct feminine journey, stating, "In the whole mythological tradition the woman is *there*. All she has to do is to realize that she's the place that people are trying to get to. When a woman realizes what her wonderful character is, she's not going to get messed up with the notion of being pseudo-male" (2). Feeling that Campbell's work while important and influential, could not address the feminine external as well as the internal transformation Murdock authored *The Heroine's Journey: Women's Quest for Wholeness* in 1990. Murdock talks about her book as something that was inspired by Campbell's work. However, the idea of an exclusively feminine journey can be traced to the storytelling tradition of every culture around the world. Murdock aimed to assess the contemporary world and see how women fit into the modern professional and storytelling world while dealing with their inner feminine selves.

According to Murdock, "The model of the heroine's journey is derived in part from Campbell's model of the heroic quest. The language of the stages, however, is particular to women, and the visual model appeared to me in a very feminine way. It emerged out of my back" (3). What makes Heroine's Journey different from the classical Hero's Journey is the nature of the quest itself. A Hero's Journey mostly shows an external quest and adventure of our masculine or pseudo-male Hero whereas a Heroine's Journey is more of an internal and introspective journey where our Heroine goes on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment. Many critics believe that the Heroine's journeys and quests are not given the due respect they deserve in the storytelling traditions around the world, as Maria Tartar writes

in her book, *The Heroine with the 1001 Faces*, “Heroines share a crusading spirit, and the goals of their missions (often marital rather than martial) pale by comparison with the shining glory bestowed on heroes. Still, the rebel and her cause are often right there, in plain sight, though not necessarily where the heroic action has traditionally been located” (Tartar 20). The nature of masculine heroism has been glorified at the expense of countless Heroines’ journeys. Even in modern fiction, movies, and pop culture, the Heroine’s journey is not as prevalent as the Hero’s Journey. Heroine’s journey is seen as less serious and lacking in substance by the so called intellectual crowd.

Murdock’s work was celebrated as a response to Campbell’s Hero’s Journey model and expanded upon by subsequent writers and theorists. Murdock’s model was more of a psychoanalytical text falling into more of a self-help genre. However, it is a vital tool to understand and analyze myths and fiction from a feminine point of view. Victoria Lynn Schmidt expands upon the Heroine’s journey model in her book, *45 Master Characters: Mythic Models of Creating Original Characters*. She writes, “THE FEMININE JOURNEY is a journey where a hero must go deep inside herself and change throughout the story. This hero awakens in Act I and moves toward rebirth.” (Schmidt 199). In Schmidt’s eyes, a feminine journey is a cyclical one. Explaining the Heroine’s Journey, Schmidt further writes, “Her journey starts by questioning authority, then gaining the courage to stand up for herself and finally embodying the willingness to go it alone and face her own symbolic death. The nine-stage process is represented in three acts mirroring classic story structure” (217). Schmidt’s nine stages are divided into three conventional acts. The first act is called Containment while the remaining two acts are called Transformation and Emergence. In the story, the Heroine goes on an essentially circular journey but the character in the beginning returns to the same world with much more clarity and vision.

The movie, *The Devil Wears Prada*, is a prime example of a modern-day Heroine's Journey narrative. It chronicles the protagonist, Andrea's, voyage into the fashion world and her simultaneous inner journey. The narrative and visual elements of the film collectively depict this transformative journey to the audience. Here, Murdock and Schmidt's model of the Heroine's journey comes in handy when it comes to understanding the nature of the quest Andrea has in the movie. The plot and the conflicts in the movie are directed, edited, and visualized in such a way that they serve the narrative journey of a Heroine. The fashion industry backdrop further enriches this representation; even Andrea's wardrobe choices symbolize her progression through different stages of her journey. By the film's conclusion, Andrea fulfills her external journey by departing from the company and completing her internal journey through self-realization, introspection, and empowerment. The aspect that makes *The Devil Wears Prada* a Heroine's journey is the introspective nature of the journey taken by the protagonist and the thematic emphasis of reconciliation instead of retribution and revenge.

The film opens with a distinct visual cue that the protagonist, Andrea Sachs is a young career woman, who is early in her journey in a bustling and glamorous New York City. Her introduction in the movie is given in such a way that she stands out from other women. The screenplay by Aline Brosh McKenna underscores Andy's initial lack of awareness of fashion and style. As the narrative unfolds,

MUSIC UP

FDE IN

STEAM ON THE MIRROR

...wiped off by ANDY SACHS, 20's, pretty but not glamorous, smart but green, hair up in

a towel, brushing her teeth. We intercut ANDY getting ready and...

... we see three or four other GIRLS getting ready too (McKenna 1).

From the very beginning, the screenplay juxtaposes the protagonist with other women of her age and social standing in New York, a city known for glamour and fashion. The first act in the heroine's journey plot is called containment. Here, the heroine is happy and contained in her own made-up perfect world.

Andy's journey begins when she is shown getting ready for a job interview for the post of assistant to the editor-in-chief of a fashion magazine, *Runway*, without even knowing the editor-in-chief; Miranda Priestly. This is the beginning of the journey which Schmidt calls "the illusion of the perfect world" (219). For Andrea, her nonchalant approach to her life and a self-contained world she has constructed around her in a big city is an illusory "perfect world". As the script further shows, "A drawer filled with about forty lipsticks slides into frame... One of the GIRLS carefully applies shiny lip gloss with a brush... ANDY puts on cherry Chapstick...A lacy thong floats through the air... one of the GIRLS pulls it up her glossy legs... A comfy cotton pair of Jockey bikinis is tugged out of a pile... ANDY pulls them on." (McKenna 1). The script makes it clear that Andrea is not someone who gives attention to things like fashion, style or even eating conventions that the young women of her age are very concerned about. This illusion shatters as soon as she goes for her job interview, setting the stage for the transformative journey that lies ahead.

Andrea has a tough time in magazine's office. She is mocked for her fashion choice and her style. She eventually secures the job but she is unaware that her life is about to change in a drastic way. Initially, she does not realize that she has put herself into a world of trials and tribulations. This is only the beginning of a long journey ahead which eventually leads her to a path of hardship.



Fig. 1. *The Devil Wears Prada* (8:16)

She still tries to feel safe in her own life with her boyfriend, Nate and two other friends, Doug and Lilly. After the job interview, Andrea hangs out with her small group of friends. “ANDY is with two of her friends, DOUG and LILY. DOUG is built like a linebacker and very sweet. And her boyfriend, NATE, great looking, no vanity. He’s the kind of guy who had his own radio show in college and played intramural rugby.” (11). Andrea, who feels safe and relaxed with her friends, isn’t too concerned or serious about her newfound job, although the audience is acutely aware of the possible turn of events for her. As Victoria Lynn Schmidt posits, “In order for the reader to believe the hero wouldn’t be better off returning here when things get tough later on in the story, this world has to be set up as a negative place the hero can’t function in. She may try hard to explain away the bad things that happen to her, but sooner or later, she’ll run out of excuses” (219). For Andrea’s character growth, her comfort zone, where she feels content, must be portrayed as a space that has the potential to hinder her progress.

The conversation between Andy and her group shows that they are not taking her work seriously. They joke about Andy’s lackluster fashion sense and her unserious approach towards the job she just landed;

NATE. Wait. You got a job at a fashion magazine. Well, what was it, a phone interview? (ANDY laughs, smacks him playfully.)

ANDY. Don't be a jerk.

DOUG. Miranda Priestly is famous for being unpredictable.

ANDY. Okay, how is it that you know who she is and I didn't?

DOUG. I'm actually a girl.

LILY. That would explain so much.

DOUG. Seriously, Miranda is a huge deal. I bet a million girls would kill for that job.

ANDY. Yeah, great. The thing is I'm not one of them.

LILY. You have to start somewhere, right? (10:18- 10:47).



Fig. 2. *The Devil Wears Prada* (10:21)

These exchanges clearly show that none of the characters are too serious about their work, especially Andrea's. For the group, her job is seen as a temporary position before she transitions to something else. This is encapsulated in the scene where Andy proposes a tongue-in-cheek toast: "To jobs that pay the rent" (11:15-11:17). This shows the complete lack of seriousness she has towards her work which is shown to be a tough task. In order to move the heroine towards the direction of her transformation, the heroine must be given some tough tasks and reality checks so that she gets motivated towards embracing her quest. As Schmidt

writes, “This “perfect world” must be shown as the negative place it is in order to motivate the hero to wake up. She must endure her quest for something better throughout the story because it’s clear she can’t function in her current world” (219). Gradually, Andy starts to realize that the way she live and conducts is not going to help her in her work. The very next day, she is called to the office at 6:15 in the morning. She is asked to bring coffee for Miranda. “ANDY, carrying a Starbucks tray loaded with coffee drinks and snacks, races up the street, sloshing coffee on her shoes. Her phone rings. EMILY Where are you? ANDY. I’m almost there, yeah. (She runs faster) ANDY. Shoot!” (12:23- 12:30). In the office, Emily briefs her about Miranda’s strict and demanding nature. Andrea begins to feel the pressure of her job and understands that she has a long way to go in her professional growth.

The Devil Wears Prada serves as a narrative of transformation and character development, as well as an exploration of the fashion industry's impact on modern trends, styles, and culture. The film frequently underscores the pivotal role the fashion industry plays in shaping contemporary society. Sociologist and fashion historian Elizabeth Wilson writes in her book, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, “Dress in general seems to fulfill a number of social, aesthetic and psychological functions; indeed, it knots them together, and can express all simultaneously” (Wilson 3). On a basic level, dress has been seen for its practical use throughout history. In the movie, our protagonist, Andy is seen wearing clothes for their functionality only. She does not seem to care that much about any other purpose of her dress besides its basic practical use. But she is unaware that her freedom of choice and freedom from trends is not free of outside influence. Wilson claims, “Even the determinedly unfashionable wear clothes that manifestly represent a reaction against what is in fashion” (5). Andy who seems to think she is beyond trends and fashion is directly or indirectly influenced by the fashion industry. She is not independent of the fashion industry.

In a scene, Miranda taunts her employees for not being able to put up a decent run-through for the magazine's next issue. She finally settles on a skirt, for which she needs a belt. Jacelyn presents two options stating, "Here, It's a tough call. They're so different" (22:42-22:47). This makes Andy giggle as both the belts look same. This offends Miranda and she asks, "Something funny?" (22:54-22:56). Andy replies, "No, no, no. It's just....It's just that both of those belts look the same to me. I'm still learning about this stuff, so...." (22:59- 23:10). This response further offends Miranda and she goes on an extensive monologue about fashion and fashion industry's role in shaping modern culture.



Fig. 3. *The Devil Wears Prada* (23:22)

This... stuff? Okay. I understand. You think this has nothing to do with you. You go to your closet and select, say, that lumpy blue sweater because you're trying to tell the world that you take yourself too seriously to care about what's on your body. What you don't know is that your sweater is not blue. It's not even sky blue. It's cerulean. You also don't know that in 2002, De La Renta did a collection of cerulean gowns, Yves St. Laurent showed a cerulean military jacket, Dolce did skirts with cerulean beads, and in our September issue we did the definitive layout on the color. Cerulean quickly appeared in eight other major collections, then the secondary and department store lines and then trickled down to some lovely Casual Corner, where you no doubt

stumbled on it. That color is worth millions of dollars and many jobs. And here you are, thinking you've made a choice that exempts you from the fashion industry. In truth, you are wearing a sweater that was selected for you by the people in this room.

From a pile of “stuff” (23:11- 24:28).

Miranda explains to Andy that even the people like Andy who thinks of themselves as beyond fashion are directly impacted by the fashion industry. They might think that they are not influenced by current trends and advertisements but the industry finds them anyways. As Elizabeth Wilson argues, “Fashion, in a sense is change, and in modern western societies no clothes are outside fashion; fashion sets the terms of all sartorial behavior” (3). Even the self-proclaimed un-fashioned bodies are fashioned by the modern fashion industry. At this stage Andy’s illusion of choice is shattered when Miranda revealed the underlying impact of the fashion industry on all sartorial decisions.

The next stage of the heroine’s journey, according to Schmidt is “The betrayal or Realization” (225). At this stage, the heroine feels betrayed and realizes that her way of life is not good enough for her quest. She needs to endure a long journey. Schmidt writes, “This stage sets the stakes and provides the hero with motivation to change her world. The system she has tried to work within doesn’t reward her efforts like she expected. She’s played the game by all the rules and has lost anyway; her world falls apart” (225). In the movie, Andrea still tries to go on with her life as per her convenience. She still does not care about the seriousness of the tasks at hand. She says to Nate, “Know what? I just have to stick it out for a year. One year. And then I can do what I came to New York to do” (25:31- 25:38). Andy aspires to be a journalist but she refuses to take the first hard step into the tough world of a fashion magazine. Later when she meets her father for a dinner, Andy gets a call from Miranda. Miranda called Andy for finding a way out from Miami to New York because her twin girls have recital in their school which she does not want to miss but her flight got

cancelled due to bad weather. Andy tries to be a good assistant and searches all the ways possible to help Miranda get out of Miami but she fails. This becomes one of the major setbacks for her.

Next day in the office, Miranda says, “The girls’ recital was absolutely wonderful. They played Rachmaninoff. Everyone loved it. Everyone except me, because, sadly, I was not there.” (30:20-30:32). Andy is apologetic but Miranda is unhappy with her. She further says,

Do you know why I hired you? I always hire the same girl. Stylish, slender, of course, worships the magazine. But so often, they turn out to be...I don’t know, disappointing. And... stupid. So you, with that impressive resume... and a big speech about your so-called work-ethic... I thought you would be different. I said to myself, “Go ahead. Take a chance. Hire the smart fat girl.” I had hope. My God, I live on it. Anyway, you ended up disappointing me more than... More than any other silly girls (30:35- 31:29)

Miranda is disappointed with Andy and Andy feels betrayed. In her mind, she did everything she could to be a good employee. This makes her realize that she will not always be appreciated for her efforts. Andy is visibly upset as she comes out of Miranda’s office holding her tears back and does not even go to her desk to which Emily asks, “Excuse me, where do you think you’re going?” (31:47- 31:50). Andy goes straight to Nigel’s office. This is the moment of harsh realization for Andy. As Schmidt states, “The betrayal has come so close to home the hero can’t ignore it. It is staring her in the face, and she must deal with it. She realizes her life is different from what she thought it was, and there’s no knight in shining armor to come to the rescue” (224-225). Andy realizes that her efforts are not enough to survive in this new journey. She tries to find an ally so she goes straight towards Nigel’s office.

Nigel Kipling is Fashion director in *Runway* magazine. He is one of the trusted employees of Miranda. He is passionate about his job. In a moment of despair, Andy tries to get some guidance from Nigel.

ANDY. She hates me, Nigel.

NIGEL. And that's my problem because... Oh wait, no. It's not my problem.

ANDY. I don't know what else I can do because if I do something right...it's unacknowledged. She doesn't even say thank you. But if I do something wrong, she is vicious.

NIGEL. So quit.

ANDY. What?

NIGEL. Quit.

ANDY. Qui...

NIGEL. I can get a girl to take your job in five minutes. One who really wants it.

ANDY. But no, I don't wanna quit. That's not fair. But I... You know, I'm just saying that... I would just like a little credit for the fact that I'm killing myself trying.
(32:09- 32:49).

This is the stage of the journey characterized as the stage of "The Awakening" (231). In this stage the heroine has some sort of awakening and she tries to prepare for the journey ahead. She is still having some resentment but eventually she comes to realization. As per Schmidt, "She may first respond to the betrayal in a passive way or she may rage for all the time she has lost, but soon she decides to do something about it" (231). In the movie, Andy also first tries to make excuses for her own lack of enthusiasm but Nigel pulls her back to reality. Schmidt further writes, "If she is lost in the passive response, another character can bring her back on track, but it's her decision to act that creates a turning point, sets up the main goal,

moves the story forward” (231). Here, Nigel is the one who brings Andy back to the track with his honest opinion about Andy’s situation.



Fig. 4. *The Devil Wears Prada* (33:33)

Nigel is not satisfied with Andy’s lack of enthusiasm towards her job and constant complaining. He says,

Andy, please. Be serious. You’re not trying. You’re whining... You want me to say poor you, Miranda is picking on you? She’s just doing her job. Wake up, six. Don’t you know that you’re working at the place that first published some of the major artists of the century... Halston, De La Renta, Lagerfeld. And what they did, what they created was greater than art, because you live your life in it... Well not you, obviously. But some people. This is not just a magazine. It’s a shining beacon of hope for, oh, I don’t know, say a young boy growing up in Rhode Island with six brothers, pretending to go to soccer practice when he was actually at sewing class and reading *Runway* at night under the covers with a flashlight (32:49- 33:51).

Nigel truly cares about his job and fashion so he does not feel pity for Andy as she doesn’t seem to care about the fashion world or the magazine. Nigel feels like Andy is not putting the necessary efforts required for the job. This makes Andy think about what she could do to move forward.

In the movie, Nigel is what Susanna Liller calls, a “Mentor” (Liller 35). In her book *You Are a Heroine: a Retelling of the Hero’s Journey*, Liller writes, “Mentors provide support in a multitude of ways. Maybe they offer you a safe place to stay, or they encourage your efforts. Or they give you a sign or message that helps guide you on your way. Their words are comforting”(35). Mentors guide the heroine to her ultimate goal. In the movie, Nigel helps Andy excel in her job. When the whole office is indifferent and unsupportive towards Andy, Nigel is the one who gives her support and guidance until the end. A heroine journey needs a mentor in her journey and Nigel plays that role with style for Andy. This marks the end of the first act of the narrative.

Now the second act begins. This act is characterized as the act of Transformation. Andy awakes to the fact that she needs to take action. Therefore, she asks Nigel for help. Nigel reluctantly helps her find some nice dress and give her makeover. Andy is ready to go under physical transformation first. She now wants to take drastic steps. According to Schmidt, “This stage is a reversal of sorts. The whole direction of the hero’s life will be forever changed by her decision in this stage of the game” (Schmidt 232). This change surprises her colleagues and her friends as well. Even Miranda is impressed to see Andy take her job seriously as the script suggests, “And just then she looks up and sees ANDY, The transformed ANDY. And her reaction of approval is tiny, but it’s there” (McKenna 42). Andy dresses nice and does her job with great enthusiasm and efficiency. Everybody around her starts noticing the changes in Andy’s behaviors as well.



Fig. 5. *The Devil Wears Prada* (37:20)

Now that Andy has taken her steps towards her quest, she has to face obstacles and judgments. She cannot conduct her life as usual. Schmidt writes, “Now that the hero has made a life-changing decision, she has to face the changes that come with it” (237). Schmidt characterizes this stage as “The Descent- Passing the Gates of Judgment”(237). At this stage, the heroine has to be strong to face and deal with expectations and judgment that comes with her choices. In one scene, Andy leaves her friends in the restaurant to meet a fashion designer on behalf of Miranda in a party. In the party, Andy meets Christian Thompson, described as “a great-looking, sophisticated man in his 30’s who has an air of mischief” (46). Christian appears in the movie as a charming and mischievous character in the movie. He is introduced as someone who is going to have an important role to play in Andy’s journey. As Andy embarks in her journey, she starts encountering different characters and circumstances that affects her. Andy has some small chats with Christian. Both of them get along quite well as they talk about different things. Christian has a distinct charm and confidence that impresses Andy.



Fig. 6. *The Devil Wears Prada* (42:27)

ANDY. Hi.

CHRISTIAN. (Extends his hand) Christian Thompson.

ANDY. Christian Thompson? You're kidding. You write for like every magazine I love. I actually reviewed your collection of essays for my college newspaper.

CHRISTIAN. Did you mention my good looks and my killer charm? (42:18-42:34).

Christian Thompson plays an important role in Andy's character development later in the plot as well. Andy's career seems to be going quiet well until she accidentally entered Miranda's personal space. After that, Miranda demands Andy to bring her twin daughter the unpublished manuscript of the new Harry potter book. This made Andy almost quit the job until Christian Thompson comes to her rescue and provide her the manuscript through his connections.

Miranda is impressed by Andy's determination.

Again, Andy starts having good time in the office. However, her personal life starts to fall apart. She even misses her boyfriend's birthday because of her obligations towards her job. At the same time, Emily Charlton, Miranda's second assistant, falls sick and Miranda has to attend the Paris Fashion Week. Miranda decides to take Andy with her instead of Emily. Andy is tasked to pass this news to Emily but before she could even tell Emily about Paris, Emily gets into an accident and breaks her legs. In the hospital, Emily is upset with Andy that

she said yes to the Paris offer. She says, “Do you know what really just gets me about this whole thing? Is that, you’re the one who said... that you don’t really care about this stuff. You don’t really care about fashion, you just wanna be a journalist. Oh, what a pile of bollocks!” (1:11:59- 1:12:13). She further says, “Face it Andy, you sold your soul the day you put on that first pair of Jimmy Choos” (1:12:16- 1:12:18). Emily judges Andy for being selfish. Andy tries to explain her side but Emily shuts her down. Emily feels betrayed and does not want any further explanations from Andy.



Fig. 7. *The Devil Wears Prada* (1:11:56)

Later in the movie, her friend, Lily also questions her integrity and honesty when she sees Andy with Christian Thompson alone in the corner of an art gallery. Lily angrily tells Andy, “You know, the Andy I know is madly in love with Nate... is always five minutes early... and thinks, I don’t know, Club Monaco is couture. For the last 16 years, I’ve known everything about that Andy. But this person? This glamazon who skulks around in corners... with some random, hot fashion guy? I don’t get her” (1:14:59- 1:15:21). Lily feels like Andy has changed for worse. She does not approve of the lifestyle Andy has crafted for her. Andy tries to explain her but Lily is not convinced. She gets angry at her.

This is exactly what happens at this stage of the journey. The heroine has to face the challenges that come along her journey. She will be judged and mocked for her choices.

Schmidt writes,

The hero faces one of her fears, an obstacle that has much more at stake than mere self-doubt. She may want to turn back on her journey. She tries to use her weapons—manipulation, blackmail, her sexuality, her troubled past and wounds—but they don't work. One by one, she passes the gates of judgment, faces a fear, and loses a weapon in the process. She is stripped of all the external devices she thought would save her.” (237).

She is bound to be judged. She might try to explain her way out of it but the world will still point its fingers at her. Her previous coping mechanisms do not work out at this stage. For example, Andy tries to clear her side of the story to Emily, Lily, and later, to Nate but everybody judges her negatively. Responding to Andy's Paris trip, Nate says, “You know, I wouldn't care if you were out pole-dancing all night... as long as you did it with a little integrity. You used to say this was just a job. You used to make fun of the Runway girls. What happened? Now you become one of them” (1:16:11- 1:16:24). Everyone is questioning Andy's choices. But she is determined and trusts her own judgment. Thus, she asks Nate for a break in their relationship. At this stage the heroine's own judgment and instincts is the most important thing that guides her forward in her journey. Schmidt states, “Ultimately the hero must give up all control and completely surrender herself and all of her weapons on the descent” (239). Andy breaks all her relationship and friendship and heads to Paris with Miranda. She thinks that she needs to continue on her journey. Andy has to make tough calls moving forward. As Susanna Liller writes, “It's a courageous woman who leaps. She moves into unknown territory. It can be frightening or, at the very least, uncomfortable. Women who respond to the idea/nudge/Call/push to leave the path and make the Leap are Heroines”

(Liller 25). For Liller, a strong heroine is the one who makes her own decision despite all odds. No matter how uncomfortable it might get, the heroine ultimately makes the choice to move forward with her journey.



Fig. 8. *The Devil Wears Prada* (1:1738)

Andrea clearly makes the choice to prioritize her job over her relationship and friendship. This is a moment of success and fame for her. She feels like she is winning. Although the victory is temporary, Andy feels a sense of security for the moment. As Schmidt writes, “After facing her fears and possibly the villain as well, the hero comes to terms with what just happened, and she feels she handled everything well. She gains a false sense of security. Somehow, she stuck things out. She thinks this is the end of her journey and takes it easy for a moment” (Schmidt 244). Schmidt calls this stage “The Eye of Storm” (244). She characterizes this stage as a momentary calm in a chaotic journey.

Andrea is happy to be in Paris. She enjoys the privilege and connections she gets from her association with Miranda. She has a nice conversation with Nigel where Nigel praised Andy’s style and tells her that he is going to be appointed as president at James Holt, a famous fashion designer’s brand because of Miranda’s reference. He is so happy about this opportunity. He exclaims, “I’m so excited, though! For the first time in 18 years... I’m going to be able to call the shots in my own life. Oh, my God! I’m going to be able to come to Paris

and actually see Paris” (1:25:29-1:25:45). Andy congratulates him and they have a little toast for celebration. In Andy’s mind, everything seems to be going perfectly at the moment.



Fig. 9. *The Devil Wears Prada* (1:25:59)

After that, Andy goes for a dinner with Christian Thompson. The two have some drinks, flirt, and roam around the streets of Paris. This feels like a success for Andy. Andy feels like everything is going positively for her and people around her. As Schmidt writes, “She gets a small taste of success, however false, which will later fuel her motive to succeed again, knowing how wonderful success feels. She feels safe for the time being” (244). This success is temporary. The calm is temporary.



Fig. 10. *The Devil Wears Prada* (1:27:30)

Andy and Christian exchange kisses. Andy is drunk and is not fully in control of her body. The two spend the night together at Christian's hotel. The next day, Andy wakes up pretty late. When she wakes up, she realizes that she is late. Andy starts getting ready. All of a sudden, she stumbles into what looks like a magazine cover. Christian also appears in the scene. The two have a conversation about it,

ANDY. What the hell is this?

CHRISTIAN. What does it look like? It's a mockup.

ANDY. Yeah. Of...?

CHRISTIAN. Of what American Runway will look like...when Jacqueline Follet is the new editor in chief.

ANDY. They're replacing Miranda?

CHRISTIAN. Yeah. And she's bringing me to run all the editorial content. You're really surprised? Jacqueline's a lot younger than Miranda. She has a fresher take on things. Not to mention that American Runway is one of the most expensive books in the business. Jacqueline does the same thing for a lot less money (1:29:30-1:30:05).

Andy is devastated to know that people are replacing Miranda behind her back. She feels like everything is lost. She starts to see the true color of the corporate world. Here, Christian Thompson is the face of the villain that is the cruel and mischievous world of business. This is the beginning of the next stage of the journey, that is, "Death" (247). This death is symbolic. The heroine loses all her power and hope she gained previously. Schmidt writes, "All of a sudden, the villain comes back and everything does an about-face. She thought it was all over, that she could go back to her life a new person, but now things are starting all over again" (247). The heroine tries everything to make things normal but she is unable to do so.

In the movie, Andy tries to inform Miranda about the plans to replace her but she does not get time to properly talk to Miranda. Andy, being a loyal and empathetic person, tries to save Miranda from the betrayal she is about to face from her own employers. However, the announcement for James Holt's fashion brand's global expansion in which Nigel was promised the position of president. Miranda does the announcement for this new venture,

Rumway and James Holt share many things in common. Chief among them, a commitment to excellence. And so it should come as no surprise... that when the time came for James to choose the new president... of James Holt International... he chose from within Runway family. And it's my great happiness today to announce to you all... that that person is my friend... and long-time esteemed colleague, Jacqueline Follet (1:33:51-1:34:44).

Andy is totally surprised by this announcement. She feels sad for Nigel. Andy realizes that Miranda already knew about the plans to replace her with Jacqueline as editor in chief and Miranda threw Nigel under the bus to push Jacqueline out of her way to remain in charge.



Fig. 11. *The Devil Wears Prada* (1:35:11)

Andy looks at Nigel and feels sorry for him. Nigel says with a great pain in his voice, "When the time is right she'll pay me back" (1:35:08-1:35:10). Andy asks, "You sure about that?" (1:35:15). Nigel replies, "No. But I hope for the best. I have to." (1:35:17-1:35:24). For

Andy, this is the moment of ultimate death. She loses all hope. She sees Miranda for who she is. Miranda is part of the world that is ruthless. Andy sees the world for what it is. As Schmidt writes, “This stage is like a reversal, and it ends with a dark moment where all seems lost. The villain can still be societal” (Schmidt 247). Here, the cruel business world emerges as the ultimate villain and Andy feels lost.

Finally, the narrative enters its third and final act. This is the act of emergence. Here, the heroine emerges as a transformed person. She is self-reliant as well as supportive character. The idea of taking and giving support is one of the key aspects of Andy’s journey. She gets help from Nigel when she felt betrayed. She even got support from Christian. A heroine is not necessarily a lone warrior like that of a hero’s journey. As Schmidt states, “The female journey includes the relation between the individual and the group. The hero goes through her own awakening and comes out willing to accept help from others. She can’t be betrayed again because she has her own strength and self-realization that can’t be taken away from her” (251). At this stage Andy comes to the realization that she is her own person and nobody can dictate her life, neither Miranda nor Christian nor even Nate for that matter.

In the end, the heroine learns to accept others and be a bigger person. She sees everyone as a unique entity. Despite her cruelty, Andy does not see Miranda as villain. She accepts her as a product of her environment. She understands that she herself may never want to be Miranda but she accepts Miranda for what she is. “She accepts others as they are and embraces the female aspect of supporting one another. She begins to see the oneness that we all share together.” (251). The idea of accepting others for what they are and supporting others continues later as well when Andy offers to give all her dresses from Paris to Emily despite Emily being rude and mean towards her. Andy giving away the designer dress to Emily and moving on with her life also symbolizes her rejection of the world of high fashion

and acceptance of the people around her for who they are. Later, Andy and Nate also accept each other once again by the end of the movie.

Now that Andrea understands that the world is cruel and mischievous, she comes to realization that she cannot just be a slave to the world around her. She cannot be Miranda. In the car, she talks to Miranda about her betrayal of Nigel for her own gain. When Miranda says, “I never thought I would say this Andrea, but I really... I see a great deal of myself in you. You can see beyond what people want, and what they need... and you can choose for yourself.” (1:36:56-1:37:19), Andy replies, “I don’t think I’m like that. I... I couldn’t do what you did to Nigel. I couldn’t do something like that” (1:37:20- 1:37:35). Miranda reminds Andy that she already did something like that.

MIRANDA. You already did. To Emily

ANDY. That’s not what I...No, that was different. I didn’t have a choice.

MIRANDA. Oh, no, you chose. You chose to get ahead. You want this life, those choices are necessary.

ANDY. But what if this isn’t what I want? I mean, what if I don’t wanna live the life the way live?

MIRANDA. Oh, don’t be ridiculous Andrea. Everybody wants this. Everybody wants to be us. (1:37:34-1:38:17).

This scene makes Andy realize that she is going down a dark path. She is slowly becoming Miranda. The scene represents the idea of them becoming similar person through costume and visuals. Andy wears a black top with the neckline similar to Miranda’s costume. This shows Andy’s path of becoming Miranda. The costume design and the framing of the scene emphasize this similarity which terrifies Andy.



Fig. 12. *The Devil Wears Prada* (1:37:11)

The idea of becoming Miranda terrifies her. Now she has to make the choice. Outside the car is the world of glamour, lights, and camera. Miranda gets out wearing her sunglasses. Andy also gets out but she doesn't follow Miranda. She quietly moves away.

She leaves Miranda without saying a word. This is the stage of rebirth for our heroine. As Schmidt writes, "The hero has learned to set boundaries, take action, and listen to her own inner voice. She has reclaimed her identity and her weapons and realizes she is the creator of her own fear. She has found her courage, used her brains, and won her own heart. The three combined are needed to attain her goal" (254). The next scene shows Andy walking away confidently, "We see ANDY, walking up the street in the dusky light. She has never looked more beautiful. She is serene. And she is free. The wind blows through her hair. She smiles. Her phone rings. She looks down, Sees the name MIRANDA. ANDY doesn't break stride for a moment as she tosses the ringing phone into the nearest fountain" (104). Andy takes a strong step towards her freedom and self-actualization. She does not want to remain tied to a ruthless world of fashion. Although she has a feeling of appreciation for Miranda, she does not want to become Miranda. This scene shows her reclaiming her own identity. Andy takes a bold step towards her freedom.



Fig. 13. *The Devil Wears Prada* (1:38:49)

Andy endured quest where she was judged, mocked, and put down. But now she is her own person. She learned a lot from this journey. The tension between ambition and integrity is resolved in the end. Andy knows distance she can go without compromising her integrity. Schmidt writes about this stage as,

She takes the final steps to show her transformation. Where she once cried, she now laughs. Where she was once hesitant, she is now eager. Where she was shy and unsure, she is now bold. Where she was tough and unfeeling, she is now caring and considerate. Where she was once soft, she is now a hard fighter. She now embodies the opposite of her former coping strategy (255).

The timid, clumsy, and fearful Andrea finally becomes a confident, beautiful, and strong woman who takes charge of her own life. Now, Andy's journey is completed. She comes back to the world where she began her journey from. But this time, she is a transformed person. This is a final stage of the journey; a return to the perfect world. After returning from Paris, Andy meets up with Nate to apologize. The two decide to re-kindle their relationship.

NATE. I flew up to Boston while you were gone. Interviewed at the Oak Room.

Andy. And?

NATE. And you're looking at their new sous-chef. I'm moving up there in a couple weeks.

ANDY. That's great, I... congratulations... Don't know what I'm going to do without those late night grilled cheeses.

Nate. I'm pretty sure they have bread in Boston, may even have Jarlsberg. We might be able to figure something out.

Andy. You think?

Nate. Yeah. (1:40:26- 1:41:09).

Both Andy and Nate decide to leave the past behind. Andy returns to her former world with better vision, clarity, and confidence. Victoria Lynn Schmidt calls this stage “a smaller climax where the hero returns to the perfect world and sees it for what it is. Through her experience, others are changed and may even be forced to face their fears. She was once like them but now lives a better life.” (257). Andy tries to meet Nate where he is at in his life. She is not judgmental and resentful. Nate is also happy to see Andy back into his life. As Schmidt writes, “Most often, the person she was closest to prior to her awakening will be the one most influenced by her transformation” (257). After this, Andy goes to give a job interview after that. She goes for the interview in a smaller newspaper.

EDITOR. Your clips were excellent. That thing on the janitor's union... that's exactly what we do here. My only question is... Runway? You were there for less than a year. What the hell kind of blip was that?

ANDY. Learned a lot. In the end, though, I kind of screwed it up.

EDITOR. I called over there for a reference, left word with some snooty girl, next thing you know I got a fax from Miranda Priestly herself ...saying that of all the assistants she had, you were by far her biggest disappointment. (ANDY takes a deep breath...)

EDITOR. And that if I don't hire you I'm an idiot. (ANDY, stunned)

EDITOR. You must have done something right. (1:41:41- 1:42:25).

Andy feels proud and satisfied after this. She feels like her work and efforts was being appreciated. Although she ends up in a smaller place than before, Andy is happy. This shows that a feminine journey does not necessarily go in a linear progression.

Andy's journey might have ended in the exact place where it started but the transformation and character growth it brings is more essential in a heroine's journey. As Schmidt claims, "Female stories do have endings, women do attain goals, and they do make concrete changes in their lives and characters, but sometimes a hint of a life beyond the linear line, one that continues around into a circle, can be seen in this final stage of the journey" (258). When Andy sees her old office, she calls Emily to give her all the dresses she had from Paris. Emily happily accepts Andy's offer. In the very last sequence of the movie Andy comes face to face with her former boss, Miranda. Both the characters have a moment of appreciation and approval in the end. As the scene unfolds,

Something catches MIRANDA'S eyes. ANDY, watching her. They look at each other. And then ANDY nods her head -- in thanks, in salutation, and in farewell... But MIRANDA does not react. She gets into the car. ANDY shakes her head. That's MIRANDA. She smiles, then turns and starts to walk down the street. MIRANDA gets in, sits back in her seat. Through her window she can see ANDY, a bounce in her step, walking away... And MIRANDA, alone, where no one can see her, finally breaks into a real smile. (108).

There is a sense of closure in this scene. The two main characters have a sense of appreciation and approval of one another despite having differences. Both of them are not antagonistic towards one another.



Fig. 14. *The Devil Wears Prada* (1:44:48)

This is the conclusion of Andy's journey. She comes full circle to her origin. Her journey is more of an internal one than a physical journey with physical rewards. Unlike a masculine Hero's quest, her quest is that of inner transformation. As per Schmidt, "Whereas the masculine hero "gets the girl" or an external reward in the end, the feminine hero gets something internal, a reward of spirit that continues on" (258). In the movie, Andy gets that inner peace and vision for her career. Finally, Andy becomes her true self. She gains her freedom on her own term. Susanna Liller writes, "The last milestone on the Heroine's Journey is the Freedom to Live. The Heroine has released, healed or integrated some aspect of herself (a belief, relationship, assumption or misperception) that has kept her from becoming her true self. She now has the freedom to be who she really is" (Liller 8). The heroine might have some temporary distractions but the ultimate conclusion of her journey is self-actualization.

Conclusion

The Devil Wears Prada concludes on a positive note, marking the culmination of the protagonist Andrea Sachs's journey of self-actualization and reconciliation. Throughout the narrative, Andrea follows the path of a Heroine's Journey, as outlined by Victoria Lynn Schmidt. Andrea's journey explicitly follows all nine stages of the Heroine's Journey,

highlighting her growth and transformation. The narrative structure and visual presentation of Andrea's experiences reflect these stages. By the film's end, Andrea achieves a profound realization of her worth, underscoring her internal and external transformations. This journey embodies the essence of the contemporary Heroine's Journey, emphasizing self-discovery, empowerment, and reconciliation with one's true self. In the beginning, she exhibits a lack of confidence in her ability to navigate the fashion industry's demands. Her initial discomfort with her role at *Runway* and her sense of being an outsider are understandable. However, as she is exposed to the challenges and pressures of her job, Andrea begins to adapt and develop new skills.

A crucial turning point in her journey is her decision to take her job seriously, despite her initial reservations. This shift in attitude is evident when she starts paying attention to her appearance and the demands of her role, seeking guidance from colleagues like Nigel. Her efforts to blend into the fashion world signify her growing confidence in her abilities. Andrea's increased self-reliance is also reflected in her interactions with Miranda Priestly. Initially intimidated by Miranda, she gradually learns to anticipate Miranda's needs and handle high-pressure situations with composure. This newfound self-reliance is further demonstrated when Andrea makes tough decisions, such as navigating the complex dynamics at *Runway* and eventually choosing to prioritize her own values and ambitions over the demands of her job.

By the film's conclusion, Andrea's transformation is evident in her assertiveness and clarity of purpose. Her journey ends in pivotal moments that cement her growth in confidence and self-reliance. Departing from her work on her own terms is a decisive act that underscores her confidence and autonomy. Throughout the narrative, Andrea evolves from a naïve and insecure newcomer to a self-assured and decisive individual. This transformation is not merely external; it reflects a deep inner change. Her acquired assertiveness is

demonstrated when she stands up for her values and choices, even in the face of pressure from her formidable boss, Miranda Priestly. Her story aligns with the stages of the Heroine's Journey, as outlined by Victoria Lynn Schmidt, emphasizing the heroine's realization of her own worth and potential. By embracing her true self, Andrea exemplifies the journey of modern heroines who balance professional aspirations with personal integrity.

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