

5-2015

A Blend of Genres: The Enchanting Power of the Harry Potter Series

Kayla Pawek

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/honors_theses



Part of the [Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Pawek, Kayla, "A Blend of Genres: The Enchanting Power of the Harry Potter Series" (2015). *Honors Theses*. Paper 77.
http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/honors_theses/77

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csbsju.edu.

A Blend of Genres:
The Enchanting Power of the Harry Potter Series

An Honors Thesis
College of Saint Benedict/St. John's University
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for All College Honors
and Distinction
in the Department of English
by
Kayla Pawek
May, 2015

A Blend of Genres: The Enchanting Power of the Harry Potter Series

Approved By:

Scott Richardson, Professor of Classics

Jessica Harkins, Associate Professor of English

Rachel Marston, Assistant Professor of English

Matthew Harkins, Chair, Department of English

Emily Esch, Director, Honors Thesis Program

Introduction

Once upon a time, in a faraway land called Suburbia, there lived a little girl. She was a happy little girl, one who had loving parents, a warm bed to sleep in, and a collection of Polly Pockets that made all the other children jealous. She loved to ride her bike, and she loved to play with friends, but most of all, this little girl loved to read. When she was only 8 years old, she fell in love for the first time. It was a confusing, emotional experience for someone so young and inexperienced in the ways of life, but his influence over her was undeniable. He was tall and scrawny, he had messy black hair and bright green eyes that looked just like the little girl's. His name was Harry.

~~~

This is my love story. And yes, the boy that captured my heart is none other than Harry Potter, the fictional hero of J.K. Rowling's imaginary world. Even though this complex relationship began before I developed any real interest in boys, 14 years later I am still caught in its formidable grip.

My love of reading did not begin with the Harry Potter series, however. For as long as I can remember, books have been my most consistent form of entertainment and fulfillment. I loved books long before I could actually read them; the cardboard and cloth books of my infancy were always more exciting than my actual toys. Of course, the kinds of books I cherished were remarkably unoriginal: I loved the *Berenstein Bears*, *Clifford*, and all stories written by Dr. Seuss. As I grew up and began to read on my own, I quickly devoured the *Junie B. Jones*, the *Magic Treehouse*, and the *Nancy Drew* series. Books fascinated and enchanted me. At a young age, I developed the uncanny (though useful) ability of tuning out all the noise of my surroundings because I was so focused on the book in my hands. Each

trip to Target was the same: I begged to look through the book section and I would inevitably walk away with one or two new items to add to my collection.

But even for an avid book lover like me, the Harry Potter series changed the game. For the first time in my life, I learned what true patience required. When I first started reading the series in second grade, the first four books were already published. Consistent with my past reading habits, I sped through the first four at a remarkable pace. As soon as I finished the fourth book, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, I was forced to wait. It was 2001, I was in third grade, and the fifth book would not be released until 2003. At first, I handled the delay with ill grace: I grumbled and complained, wanting nothing more than to learn what happened next. Sure, I busied myself with reading other series, like *Anne of Green Gables* and the *Hardy Boys*, but Harry and his friends were never far from my mind. When the wait got to be too much, I coped with the agony the only way I knew how: I read the first four books a second time. And then I read them a third time. With the turn of every page, I became more immersed in Harry's world. Reading this series soon became a visceral experience: I laughed with Harry, I cried with Hermione, and I felt Neville's acute desire to be accepted.

On the morning of the release of the fifth book, my parents, to my delight, drove me to Barnes and Noble before the sun rose to pick up my pre-ordered copy. I read all throughout that day and into the early hours of the next morning. I stopped only to eat, visit the restroom, and, begrudgingly, when my mom forced me, to go to bed. When I finished *The Order of the Phoenix*, the same waiting game began again. Over the next four years—from 2003 to 2007—this became my ritual; I repeatedly read and re-read the series cover to cover until the next book was released. When it finally was, I wouldn't sleep until it was

complete. The waiting never got any easier, but my love for the story and the characters only managed to increase. The seventh and final novel was released on a bright July morning in 2007; it was the summer before my freshman year of high school. When I finished the book a mere 30 hours after I purchased it, I felt satisfied but empty. I had, after all, poured more than seven years of emotion into the series. The true blow, however, came after the release of the final film the summer after my high school graduation: the series was done for good. Just as I did as a child, I still deal with the loss by re-reading. To this day, the Harry Potter series continues to be a source of comfort, nostalgia, and enjoyment. I pick up one of the seven books when I am home for the holidays, when I need something light to read in the summer, or when I simply need a break from the demands of college life.

Though the series has technically come to an end, my love still grows. Harry will always be in my life.

My Harry Potter love story, though a bit intense, is not unique. I am certainly not the only child to experience the series in such an intimate way. Because millions of other children enjoy the Harry Potter series, it is no surprise that the final book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, was the fastest selling book in both the United Kingdom and the United States (Rowling, par. 7). Though the series initially struck modest success in Britain, Rowling's home country and first place of publication, the popularity of the series expanded quickly. Now translated into 77 languages, the books reach millions of fans all across the globe (Rowling, par. 9). What I find most noteworthy, however, is the diversity of the Harry Potter fan base, and most particularly the wide range of ages of the series' readers. For every child that loves the series, there seems to be an adult that is just as enchanted. I distinctly remember how members of all ages in my own community adored

the books: my teachers would be just as excited for the new releases as I was, and my best friend's mother always borrowed my new copies the day after I finished them. This is where my fascination took a scholarly turn: How can a children's story continuously charm people of all ages? How can experienced adult readers enjoy reading the series over and over again and still gain something from it?

The books have had resounding success, and the momentum and enthusiasm have not subsided even now that the series has ended. In fact, the popularity of the series seems to have only increased since its completion in 2007. Because of the creation of the *Pottermore* website, new films, and theme parks, the Harry Potter story now dominates all elements of the commercial market: print, media coverage, film, merchandise, and the Internet. Though this all-encompassing presence contributes to the success of the series, the adoration of Harry's story would still continue to thrive without it. There is a unique magic within the story itself that creates this immense fan base. While this magic is difficult to quantify and define, its powerful presence is obvious: how else could a series captivate both children and adults so completely?

I cannot explain all the nuances of this magic, but some of the series' allure can be directly attributed to its basis in the genres of both folktale and myth. There are particular features within folktales that appeal to young readers, with the most prominent being the youth and innocence of the hero, the existence of two worlds within the story, the obvious and comforting distinction between good and evil, and the inevitable happy ending. Folktales use common character types that are easy for children to recognize, such as the

villain who might take the form of an evil stepmother, or the donor<sup>1</sup> who might appear as a wise advisor. These components educate young readers on the realities of life, while keeping them simultaneously enchanted and immersed in the story. The Harry Potter series includes these elements of the folktale genre, which contributes to its ability to capture the attention of children.

In addition to the folktale feel, the Harry Potter narrative also reflects distinct features that are commonly present in myth. These features include a hero on the verge of adulthood who is blessed with unique abilities, a force of evil that threatens not only the hero but also the order of the universe, and an acknowledgment of higher powers. Because myths are widely read and understood by an adult audience, these mythic components draw those readers into Harry's story as well. Not only are both genres represented at some point during the series, but Rowling also seamlessly applies the features of the folktale and myth alongside one another so that both genres are simultaneously present throughout the story.

In the following chapters, I will analyze the presence of the specific features of folktale and myth within the Harry Potter series. To begin, I will address the elements of the folktale genre. Next, I will compare the plot functions of famous folklore scholar, Vladimir Propp, to Rowling's plot functions in the Harry Potter books. Then, I will discuss the elements of the genre of myth that are also present in the series. Finally, I will compare renowned mythic scholar Joseph Campbell's structure of the heroic journey to Rowling's narrative. This analysis will prove the simultaneous application of the folktale and myth

---

<sup>1</sup> "Donor" is a term used by Propp to describe a character who gives the hero something useful. This gift could be a magical object or it could be knowledge. Even though Riddle (Voldemort) is the villain, giving Harry useful information also ironically makes him the donor.

genres, which ultimately allows the Harry Potter series to move beyond a simple children's story to one that makes the mythic tradition more accessible to young readers. This blend of genres also gives adults (who may fondly remember the folktales of their youth) the space to recall the folktale genre that encompassed the reading of their childhood. The presence of both myth and folktale do much to explain the popularity of the series: to state it simply, they are well written. Rowling uses the structural components of both genres; these generic structures exist beneath the narrative of each individual book as well as underneath the arc of the series as a whole. And with all deep literary allusion, these structures trigger expectations in the reader and send her "back" to a text and time she has experienced before.

## **Chapter One: Elements of the Folktale**

What is it about Harry Potter that makes children enjoy reading? Despite being labeled as children's stories, the books are not easy reads; they have characters with difficult names, they contain obscure spells and potions, and they are very long. There are, of course, many reasons why children from a variety of backgrounds may enjoy the series, but one fundamental quality resides at the center of this enchantment: it is the elements of the folktale within the story of Harry Potter that might contribute to its appeal to children.

When the term "folktale" is used, specific stories often come to mind. I, for example, think immediately of the story of Paul Bunyan and his blue ox, Babe. I also think of stories such as "Cinderella," "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves," or the tales of the Arabian Nights.<sup>2</sup> In general, folktales are stories that revolve around a young hero who sets out on an adventure to another realm either to change his own life or to improve the lives of his family or village members. On his journey, the folktale hero will encounter some sort of villain (often presented as a witch or an evil relative) and some sort of helper (usually a wise, old advisor or a fairy godmother). After overcoming the struggles of the adventure world, the hero returns to a better life. Though the details of the folktale hero's story might slightly deviate from this model, the overall structure of the folktales remains the same. Cinderella, for example, dreams of attending the Prince's ball in order to escape her harsh world as the servant of her cruel stepmother. In order to enter the magical realm of the

---

<sup>2</sup> Many of these stories are also classified as fairy tales, fables, or legends. While some sources define fairy tales and folktales as different types of stories, others use the terms interchangeably. Distinct definitions of these numerous terms are not necessary because they are used to describe the same kind of story: fairy tales, folktales, legends, and fables all tell of young heroes who journey into a magical realm to save their families or themselves. For the sake of clarity, I will only use the term "folktale" when discussing stories of this nature.

royal palace, she enlists the help of the birds of the woods, who dress her in a fancy gown. Cinderella soon gains the love of the Prince and they marry (*Grimm's Complete Fairy Tales* 71–77). On her journey to find happiness, Cinderella, the heroine, encounters evil in the form of her stepmother and help in the form of animals. As in other folktales, Cinderella must leave her home in order to find adventure. In addition to that feature of the folktale, the story focuses on Cinderella's immediate family and no other people are affected. Similarly, the Harry Potter series contains the basic elements of classic folktales, and it is these features that may account for the series' visceral attraction in children.

Myths, on the other hand, stem from the same oral tradition as folktales, and many plot and character elements intermix between the genres because of this shared history. For the purpose of my analysis, however, there are distinctions between the two genres that I plan to emphasize. David O'Hara and Matthew Dickerson discuss some of the differences between the two genres in their book *From Homer to Harry Potter: A Handbook on Myth and Fantasy*. They explain that the renowned author J.R.R. Tolkien viewed "myth, legend, and [folktale] as part of a continuous whole, which he called the Literature of Faerie," with myth at one of the spectrum and folktale at the other (26). Dickerson and O'Hara highlight a few of the distinctions between the genres. The first is the geographical space in which they take place: myths tend to occur in a celestial realm, whereas folktales tend to take place in a small village or kingdom. Another difference is the significance of the hero's actions: the actions of the mythic hero affect the entire universe, whereas the actions of the folktale hero affect only the village or the central characters. The final distinction resides in the individual characters of the story: mythic characters are god-like, while folktale characters are simple or common (27). There are four components of the genre of

myth that the Harry Potter series embodies: the hero is an adult (or on the verge of adulthood) and is exceptional in some way, the villain threatens the well being of the world and not only the hero, and higher powers are often acknowledged. Rowling's ability to simultaneously apply the general characteristics of both folklore and myth in her story is remarkable and I will discuss these components in more detail throughout this analysis. I will begin, however, by focusing on the elements of the folktale that appear in the series.

There are four specific features of the genre of folktale that are often present. These components include a young, innocent hero; the presence of two separate worlds; a force of evil that threatens only the hero and his central characters, as well as an obvious distinction between good and evil; and finally, a happy ending. Arguably, it is these elements that are responsible for appealing to young readers around the world. Though the content of folktales differs from region to region and from culture to culture, there are universal folktale qualities that allow the stories to fall into the same genre. The Harry Potter series simultaneously adheres to and challenges these four components of the folktale genre.

The first element of the folktale in the Harry Potter series is the youth and innocence of the hero. The characteristic youth of the hero in folktales is not accidental: it makes sense that a child is more likely to connect with a hero who is of a similar age than with one who is older, possibly the age of his parents. In contrast, myths rarely focus on younger characters. In most cases, the classic mythical figures, such as Achilles, Odysseus, or Heracles, are men who are old enough to have wives and children of their own. The youngest characters who appear in myth are teenagers on the verge of adulthood, whose stories involve having a lot of responsibility thrust on their shoulders. Children do not care

about the burdens of marriage or raising a family because they are not close to that place in their life. In contrast, folktales deal with children who are struggling with an evil stepmother or parent, or children who are trying to figure out their place amongst their siblings and their peers. These problems are much more relevant and important to a child.

The youth of the folktale hero also draws attention to his humble and innocent nature. In his book entitled *The Uses of Enchantment*, Bruno Bettelheim, an Austrian child psychologist, explains that the humanity of the folktale hero is important: folktale heroes are not only young, but they are ordinary humans with ordinary problems (41). Heroes of folktales often find difficulty in their relationships with others: parents belittle or underestimate them, siblings are more favored in the eyes of parents or other adults, or friends try to compete with the hero to be recognized for abilities or intelligence. These relational struggles are all ordinary situations that young readers can see in their own lives, which thus provide the opportunity for those young readers to deeply engage in the folktale. Mythic heroes, however, are exceptional and anything but ordinary, with the most notable of them being demigods. Mythic heroes often deal with burden of saving the world from destruction, which is a dilemma not even on the radars of young readers.

Harry represents a unique combination between the mythic and folktale hero. Similar to the mythic hero, he has immense burdens placed upon him: he is, after all, responsible for defeating the evil wizard Lord Voldemort and saving the entire world from his tyranny. Like the folktale hero, however, Harry is only a child when he begins his adventure. Although he is 11 years old when Hagrid, the gamekeeper for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, gives him his official Hogwarts acceptance letter, Harry was

just one year old when he defeated Voldemort for the first time.<sup>3</sup> The readers do not know why Harry has the ability to conquer Voldemort until much later in the series, but it is made clear from the beginning of the first book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, that Harry believes he is just an ordinary child.

Mistreatment by pseudo-parents or siblings is a common theme in folklore. Because of his parents' early death, the orphaned Harry is sent to live with his aunt and uncle, Petunia and Vernon Dursley. When the readers meet Harry for the first time, he is a humble boy who is mistreated by his relatives: his aunt and uncle shout at him, his cousin chases after him, and he is forced to sleep in a broom cupboard under the stairs. Harry is often neglected and always belittled, and he certainly is never treated as a member of the family. Likewise in "Cinderella," the Grimm brothers point out the evil in Cinderella's new family: "The [stepmother] had brought two daughters into the house with her, who were beautiful and fair of face, but vile and black of heart. Now began a bad time for the poor stepchild" (*Grimm's Complete Fairy Tales* 71). Much like for Harry, Cinderella's "bad time" encompasses scorn and abuse at the hands of her relatives. These similar beginnings demonstrate how Harry's childhood closely resembles the childhood of the common folktale hero.

Even though readers soon learn that Harry possesses incredible talent, his perfect humility and level of normalcy align him with the folktale hero. Furthermore, by giving him the common fears and insecurities of early adolescence, Rowling makes it possible for

---

<sup>3</sup> On one Halloween night, just one year after Harry's birth, Lord Voldemort appeared at the house where Harry and his parents, James and Lily, were living. His goal is to kill Harry because of a recent prophecy that alludes to Harry as the source of Voldemort's future demise. Lily and James are murdered trying to protect Harry, but his mother's sacrifice prevents Voldemort from murdering Harry. This defeat results in Voldemort's temporary destruction.

young readers to understand and sympathize with Harry. When a mysterious letter arrives for Harry, his family is surprised that anyone would be writing to him. When they refuse to let Harry open his letter, more continue to arrive. So many letters come that Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon take Harry and his cousin, Dudley, to a little shack on the sea in the hopes that the letter sender will lose track of them. When Hagrid appears that night and informs Harry that he is a wizard, Harry demonstrates his truly humble nature. Even after hearing about his parents and his remarkable past, Harry cannot help but think that Hagrid is wrong: "Harry, instead of feeling pleased and proud, felt quite sure there had been a horrible mistake. A wizard? Him? How could he possibly be?" (*Sorcerer's Stone* 57). Instead of relishing his newfound fame as the boy who defeated Voldemort, Harry worries that he will not live up to his past. He also worries about very ordinary things, such as whether he has enough money to pay for his school supplies, will make any friends at school, or will be able to do any magic. These concerns are not the concerns of a proud and arrogant hero, but of a modest, young boy who frets about fitting in.

Once at Hogwarts, Harry quickly finds himself facing many dangerous hurdles, which aligns his experiences with the average folktale hero who similarly must face trials. In the first book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Harry and his friends, Ron and Hermione, go deep within the castle and face many obstacles in order to rescue the sorcerer's stone from Lord Voldemort. Against all odds, they survive the ordeal. When the headmaster, Albus Dumbledore, visits Harry in the hospital wing a couple days later, Harry asks why Voldemort is trying to kill him in the first place. Dumbledore refuses to answer the question because he believes Harry to be too young to understand. He says, "Alas, the first thing you ask me, I cannot tell you. Not today. Not now. You will know, one day ... put it

from your mind for now, Harry. When you are older ... I know you hate to hear this ... when you are ready, you will know" (*Sorcerer's Stone* 299). As in the general folktale, Harry's youth early in the series prevents him from appreciating the overall severity of his situation. As the series progresses and Harry ages, however, he becomes more like a mythic hero because it is necessary for him to understand the depth and magnitude of the journey ahead. As each year at Hogwarts comes to a close, Harry faces yet another danger. More often than not, that danger is Voldemort manifest in various forms. Each time, Harry escapes and succeeds in delaying Voldemort's plans.

Harry's youth allows him to be a folktale hero, but soon his adventures take a more serious turn, forcing him to mature quickly despite his young age. In the fourth book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Harry watches Voldemort murder his friend, Cedric Diggory. Cedric's death costs him many things, his innocence being the primary casualty. In the next book, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Voldemort tricks Harry into coming to the Ministry of Magic to rescue Sirius Black, his godfather. Instead of retrieving the prophecy as Voldemort wanted, members of the Order of the Phoenix come to rescue Harry and his friends. It is during this battle between the Order of the Phoenix and the Death Eaters that Sirius is killed. When Harry returns to Hogwarts, wracked with grief, he has an important conversation with Dumbledore. In this scene, Dumbledore finally answers the question that Harry asked him five years before. Dumbledore begins the conversation with a comment about age:

Harry, I owe you an explanation ... an explanation of an old man's mistakes. For I see now that what I have done, and not done, with regard to you, bears all the hallmarks of the failings of age. Youth cannot know how age thinks

and feels. But old men are guilty if they forget what it was to be young ... and  
I seem to have forgotten lately... (*Order of the Phoenix* 826)

Harry's youth and Dumbledore's age emphasizes Harry's heroism as folktale in nature; Harry is the young hero and Dumbledore is his wise advisor, lending help throughout Harry's journey. At this point in the series, however, Harry has moved beyond simply a folktale hero and is becoming a mythic hero. All of his encounters with Voldemort so far have not only threatened Harry's life but have also threatened the safety of others. In the fourth and fifth books, the murders of Cedric and Sirius illustrate how Voldemort's destruction is beginning to affect more than just Harry. Harry's youth aligns him with the folktale hero, but Voldemort poses a threat to all wizards who stand in his way, making Harry's grand duty to thwart him align Harry with the mythic hero as well.

Harry faces much more than the typical eleven-year-old, but he maintains his youthful humility. One of the most interesting dynamics within the series is the relationship between Harry and Dumbledore. Dumbledore is Harry's quintessential mentor, his wise advisor, and an important father-figure; he teaches Harry about his past, guides him with a firm yet gentle hand, and believes in Harry's ability perhaps more than any other character. In one particular scene, Dumbledore recollects the events of Harry's first year at Hogwarts, which draws attention to Harry's humble nature. Dumbledore explains why he left Harry in the care of the Dursleys, even when he knew that Harry would be mistreated at their hands. He says, "You arrived at Hogwarts, neither as happy nor as well nourished as I would have liked, perhaps, yet alive and healthy. You were not a pampered little prince, but as normal a boy as I could have hoped under the circumstances" (*Order of the Phoenix* 837). This statement alone reinforces one folktale element of Harry's

heroism: his circumstances were extraordinary (though the readers did not know this for a long time), yet he was a normal, modest boy.

Harry, like the heroes of folktales, lives the beginning of his life under the protection of adults, particularly Dumbledore, who are only trying to shelter him from his horrible destiny. Even though Dumbledore helps Harry navigate the difficulty of Voldemort's constant attention, he often chooses to withhold critical information from Harry:

Dumbledore has a plan that involves him, but he does not bother to trust Harry enough to divulge his knowledge. At the end of book five, the readers partially learn why Dumbledore has such difficulty confiding in Harry and his reason directly relates to Harry's youth.

Dumbledore explains to Harry,

... You rose magnificently to the challenge that faced you, and sooner—much sooner—than I had anticipated, you found yourself face-to-face with Voldemort. You survived again. You did more. You delayed his return to full power and strength. You fought a man's fight. I was ... prouder of you than I can say ... I decided not to answer [your question of why Voldemort tried to kill you in the first place]. Eleven, I told myself, was much too young to know. I had never intended to tell you when you were eleven. The knowledge would be too much at such a young age. (*Order of the Phoenix* 837–38)

Dumbledore fears that Harry's youth will prevent him from understanding and being able to carry the burden of the truth. In a critical admission, Dumbledore tells Harry, "young you might be, but you had proved yourself exceptional" (*Order of the Phoenix* 839). Harry's youth is pronounced, but it does not stop him from becoming a truly remarkable hero.

Again, his youth characterizes him as a folktale hero, but Harry's willingness and ability to

face grave dangers in order to protect not only himself but also others characterizes him as mythic hero; Harry seeks to bring justice for all wizards facing the tyranny of Voldemort, unlike Cinderella, a traditional folktale hero, who works against an evil stepmother and stepsiblings who are hindering only her.

In fact, it is Harry's youth that allows him to become an exceptional hero. Though his anger sometimes leads to recklessness, Harry never fully succumbs to the vices of his older counterparts (which is what Dumbledore fears). Though he is young, Harry often demonstrates the maturity of an adult. For example, Sirius, Harry's godfather, is driven by hatred, passion, and recklessness. He risks exposure just to see Harry play Quidditch, to avenge his best friend's death, and to see Harry off to school. Sirius also hates Severus Snape<sup>4</sup> because of an old grudge that they held against one another back when they were classmates at Hogwarts. Snape, like Sirius, also suffers from the vice of excessive anger. Though he is able to put aside his loathing of James Potter to protect Harry during his time at Hogwarts, Snape makes no effort to treat Harry kindly; he sees too much of James in his features to move sincerely beyond his old grudges. The hatred of both Sirius and Snape influences Harry as well and fuels the dislike for Snape that Harry already holds. Unlike with Sirius and Snape, however, Harry's youth ultimately allows him to look beyond his hatred and grudges to recognize Snape's heroism. In an altogether different example, Harry's aunt and uncle suffer from the vice of yearning to be better than everyone they

---

<sup>4</sup> Severus Snape is an old classmate of James Potter (Harry's father), Remus Lupin, and Sirius Black (Harry's godfather). Because of their mutual love for Lily Evans, Harry's mother, James and Snape loathe one another. Sirius, as best friend of James, chooses to also loathe Snape on principle. When James dies at the hands of Voldemort, Snape's master, Sirius' hatred truly solidifies. When Harry enters Hogwarts, he inadvertently takes his father's place and immediately picks up a hatred for Snape (which only intensifies after he meets Sirius).

know. This incessant need to feel superior leads them to neglect Harry, a young child who has done nothing to them and who does not know he is different. But, in the final book, Harry parts ways from his relatives on good terms, particularly from his bullying cousin, Dudley, because he is able to forgive their mistreatment of him. Though Harry experiences vices of his own, specifically anger, his youth (and therefore his ever-changing impressions and opinions) permits him to not allow those vices to define him. Without those vices truly hindering his development, Harry is able to fully embrace and thrive in his role as the hero.

Dumbledore, as the character who wrestles with the most crippling vices, recognizes Harry's unique ability to not let his vices get the better of his moral character. Dumbledore's vices, as Harry and the readers become aware in the seventh book, are more pronounced than any other characters'. In his youth, Dumbledore suffered from extreme vanity and lust for power. In the final installment of the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Harry is able to meet the now-dead Dumbledore and confront him, asking why he would keep such secrets from him—powerful secrets that Dumbledore knew would help Harry find the Horcruxes and the Deathly Hallows.<sup>5</sup> Dumbledore replies by saying, "Can you forgive me? ... Can you forgive me for not trusting you? For not telling you? Harry, I only feared that you would fail as I had failed. I only dreaded that you would make my mistakes. I crave your pardon, Harry. I have known, for some time now, that you are the better man" (*Deathly Hallows* 713). As Dumbledore's plea demonstrates, he neglects to tell Harry more information because he fears that Harry will suffer from the same vices and

---

<sup>5</sup> The Deathly Hallows are three ancient objects: a clock of true invisibility, a resurrection stone that brings people back from the dead, and the elder wand, the most powerful wand ever made. It is rumored that the person who possess all the Hallows becomes the master of death. Dumbledore knows where all the Hallows are, but he does not tell Harry anything, which forces Harry to figure out the mystery of the Hallows on his own. This wastes precious time in the battle against Voldemort.

weaknesses that he himself fell prey to. Though many readers feel betrayed by Dumbledore's lack of trust, I see the reservation as wise: Dumbledore's distance allows Harry to come to terms with his destiny on his own time and allows him to grow from an insecure boy to a man who embodies a keen sense of humility and sacrifice. Like Cinderella and other folktale heroes, the adults around Harry underestimate him because of his innocence and youth, but that is exactly that innocence and youth that allows Harry to prove his own abilities and grow into a man without becoming corrupted by the vices of adulthood along the way.

In her article "A Paradox: The Harry Potter Series as Both Epic and Postmodern," Mary Pharr illustrates the significance of Harry's age perfectly. She explains,

Epic protagonists always have a degree of isolation thrust upon them with their power, but rarely do they feel its force as early as does Harry... Rowling melds the fairy-tale and bildungsroman traditions here into the epic, making Harry a sympathetic and fantastic emblem of our time. Both modern and postmodern fantasy has accelerated the role of children in universal events. In the new millennium, Harry's youth makes him a representative of not just the pull between the glorious daydreams and the real-life angst of his younger readers, but also a symbol of the old readers' hope for a hero to appear amid contemporary chaos from the least likely of populations. (17)

Though Pharr focuses on epic characters, I think the connection can also apply to all mythic heroes who feel the weight of such imposing, life-altering burdens. The primary burden referenced in this passage is the "isolation thrust upon" these characters. For instance Achilles, the epic hero of Homer's *Iliad* and mythic hero of Greek mythology, experiences

this isolation acutely when he deliberately removes himself and his men from the Trojan War to take a stance against Agamemnon's injustices. Knowing his divine nature and supreme prowess in battle, Achilles is forced to watch his fellow Greeks die in combat as he wrestles with the decision that being the ultimate hero of the war will cost him: his life. Harry also feels this burden of isolation, but the young age at which he begins his journey makes a large contribution to what allows the Harry Potter story to be so compelling. Harry knows that Voldemort is hunting him, and he also knows that Voldemort will never cease until one of them has killed the other. Knowing (at age 15, no less) that he must soon face his death, Harry largely struggles in silence: his classmates do not have to face the promise of imminent death and therefore cannot understand Harry's trials. The trial of acknowledging death is much more mythic in nature, but Harry experiences the normal isolations of childhood, too; his remarkable story and his tendency to befriend similar misfit children make him an easy target for bullies and scorn. The young readers who might not connect with the older heroes of the classic myths are able to understand the mythic hero because of its presentation as a folktale hero. Harry is a normal, modest boy who embarks on an adventure that is thrust upon him at a young age. His youth and unassuming demeanor also make him an easy hero for young readers to appreciate and rally behind.

In addition to the nature of Harry's character, there are three more elements that characterize the folktale genre. The second feature critical to a folktale is that the story takes place in two distinct worlds. This element of the folktale is perhaps the most congruent to the structure and components of myths. In *From Homer to Harry Potter: A Handbook on Myth and Fantasy*, the authors explain that each myth—Greek myths in particular—takes place in two worlds: the world of men and the supernatural world

(Dickerson and O'Hara 38). Almost every folktale that comes to mind illustrates this split: the hero negotiates two worlds; the first is the home and the second is the realm where his adventures occur. For example, the young hero of the folktale typically first learns that there is a problem—his crops are being destroyed by a giant, his parents do not want him anymore, he must go find a bride, etc.—and then he must head to another place to rectify the situation, whether it be to another kingdom, to a dream world, or to the nearby woods. Bettelheim explains that folktales purposefully take place in a different world or realm: the separate worlds allow the hero (and the child reading the folktale) to experience suffering and anxiety in a place far from the safety of home so that the comfort of the home is not tainted by the events of the adventure (62). The second world is different, but not so different that a child could not understand it at some level. The physical boundary between the world of home and the world of the adventure is important because it allows the hero to return completely from the unknown world, a step that is crucial to the hero's development in the folktale (and also in the myth).

The Harry Potter series, in agreement with this feature of the folktale, has two distinct worlds: the world of the Muggles<sup>6</sup> and the Wizarding world, more particularly the world of Hogwarts. At the beginning of the series, the physical boundaries that separate the two worlds are very clear. Harry's first real encounter with the Wizarding world only happens when he and Hagrid cross the threshold behind the Leaky Cauldron, a bar and hotel in London visited by only wizards. Stepping foot into Diagon Alley<sup>7</sup> is the first bit of

---

<sup>6</sup> Wizards use the term "Muggle" to refer to a person who does not possess the ability to practice magic. Harry's relatives, the Dursleys, are Muggles.

<sup>7</sup> Diagon Alley is a hidden street in London that is home to many magical shops that only witches and wizards can access. This is where Harry must buy his magical supplies in preparation for his time at Hogwarts.

proof that Harry has access to another world. Similarly, Harry has to cross the boundary of the brick wall at King's Cross Station that separates him from Platform 9  $\frac{3}{4}$ . Boarding the Hogwarts Express does not literally take him to another dimension, but the lack of Muggles makes Harry (and the readers) feel as though he is in a completely different world. For the remainder of the series, those particular physical boundaries remain.

The two worlds of magic and non-magic soon begin to blur, however, because Harry must negotiate his relationship to both. As his heart becomes more attached to the magical world, it begins to creep into his non-magic life with the Dursleys. When he returns to their home each summer, it becomes increasingly difficult for Harry to keep himself away from the magical world. In addition to wizards, certain magical creatures are able to cross the borders from one world to another, even though the larger borders are more imagined than the physical ones of Diagon Alley and Platform 9  $\frac{3}{4}$ . Hedwig, Harry's pet owl, is able to carry letters back and forth between Harry and his friends, for example. In the second book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, a house elf named Dobby is able to appear in Harry's house, and in the fifth book, dementors<sup>8</sup> are able to find Harry and his cousin Dudley in their Muggle neighborhood. The easy ability for creatures to flit between the Muggle and Wizarding worlds forces Harry to acknowledge the blur between his two different lives. Although Harry is strictly forbidden from performing magic in the Muggle world, his encounter with the dementors in book five, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, requires his use of magic in the Muggle world to save the souls of himself and his

---

<sup>8</sup> Dementors are hooded creatures that guard Azkaban, the wizard prison. They feed on happy memories, which allows them to mentally torture the prisoners while also keeping them locked up. The most severe punishment for a wizard who breaks the law is the Dementor's Kiss, which is when a Dementor lowers his hood and sucks the soul out of the transgressor, making him an empty shell of a human.

cousin, Dudley. This breach of the rules suddenly exposes Harry to the vulnerabilities of the Muggle world that he once believed to be safe from the evil powers of the Wizarding world: if dementors are searching for him and are able to find him, then surely Voldemort is also hunting for him in the Muggle world. Harry quickly learns that his worlds are converging, that he is in part actively participating in that convergence, and that he must maintain constant vigilance now that the worlds are blending.

The physical divide between the two worlds stays consistent, but Harry's emotional experiences in each world do not. Almost as soon as Harry becomes aware of the Wizarding world, he is eager to toss aside his place in the non-magic world. When he meets his godfather, Sirius Black, in the third book, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, he gets so excited at the prospect that he might not have to return to the Muggles: "Of course I want to leave the Dursleys! Have you got a house? When can I move in?" (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 379). Harry's experience in the second world is normal for heroes in the folktale as well as in myth. For one thing, the second world is enchanting; it has a powerful lure over the hero, sometimes making it difficult for him to return to his home in the first world. Cinderella, for example, finds nothing but pain and suffering in her primary world but then experiences love and joy with her prince in the second world. She returns home after the ball because she must but ends up going back to the second world in order to live happily ever after. Harry's story follows the same pattern as Cinderella's: he begins at home in the non-magic realm and he experiences only neglect and despair at the hands of his aunt and uncle. When he enters the Wizarding world, his life is transformed into one of meaning and friendship, but he also experiences pain, loss, and sorrow in this world. This is different from the emotional experience of Cinderella, who finds only happiness in the world of her

prince. Though Harry returns to his non-magic home every summer for his protection, he finally leaves the Muggle world forever to take his place in the Wizarding world. Harry chooses to reside permanently in the world where he knows both joy and pain instead of the world where he knows only neglect.

The Harry Potter series also challenges this feature of the folktale, however. Instead of moving between two worlds, Harry actually moves among three. Initially, Harry moves from the world of Muggles to the world of Hogwarts, which adheres to the standard trope of the folktale realms. Harry plunges into yet another world when he enters into the Forbidden Forest in the first book. In the Forest, he is not protected as he is at home with the Dursleys or in the halls of Hogwarts. He also encounters even more strange beasts, such as unicorns, centaurs, and, most significantly, the soul of Voldemort himself. The Forest represents the realm in which Harry often travels when he is battling Voldemort—it is a realm that does not often have a physical boundary but exists anywhere outside of protection. Though Harry runs into danger in his other two realms—the dementors appear in the Muggle world, and he encounters many enemies while at Hogwarts—the true danger is more palpable and threatening in the third realm. In the third realm, the danger is different because it is primarily physical: Harry's life is in direct danger in this world. The third realm also seems infinitely more terrifying because Harry is often completely alone while facing the mental and emotional anxiety that comes with facing death so intimately. Unfortunately, Harry is forced to enter this world in each book. Harry experiences the danger and the vulnerability in this world when he meets Voldemort in the first book, when he enters the Chamber of Secrets in the second, when he fights the dementors in the Forbidden Forest in the third, when he goes to the graveyard in the fourth, when he and his

friends head to the Ministry of Magic in the fifth, and when he and Dumbledore go to the cave in the sixth, but he *stays* in the third realm while looking for Horcruxes in the seventh. Though it is difficult to thrive in the dangerous third world, Harry (and also Ron and Hermione to an extent) does so in order to put an end to Voldemort's reign.

A fourth world also exists. In the final book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Harry meets Voldemort in the Forbidden Forest. The time spent in the Forest can be considered the third world because he does not have any protection. Hogwarts, too, can be considered now part of the third world because the enchantments that shelter the students have been broken by war. When Voldemort kills Harry in the Forbidden Forest, he enters the fourth world of a sort of purgatory—he exists in a space between life and death, but away from the mortal world. This space is what Dickerson and O'Hara would call the “supernatural world.” A journey to the land of the dead is an adventure that appears in the most famous myths: characters such as Odysseus, Aeneas, and Orpheus all visit this realm during their quests. Including this realm in Harry Potter is another way in which Rowling complicates the folktale nature of the dual worlds while simultaneously incorporating dashes of myth. Traveling to this fourth world is significant because it is in this space where Harry sees Dumbledore again, who is dead, and finally learns all there is to know about his journey. He leaves the fourth world only to return to the danger of the third world, but this time with the essential knowledge he needs in order to defeat Voldemort for good.

Though the Harry Potter series has two worlds like the traditional folktale and myth, Rowling complicates this pattern by adding other possible worlds and by blurring the lines between those worlds. According to the patterns of myth and folktale, the hero must return to the normal world at the end of his journey. Harry does this, but in a slightly

less obvious way. Harry technically leaves the non-magical world for good when he leaves at the beginning of the seventh book, and so the normal world that he returns to is now the regular Wizarding world. This “normal” world of magic is different from any world Harry has ever known because it is not Hogwarts, where teachers and the castle protect him, and it is no longer like the third world that was plagued by Voldemort and his cronies. This new world, as briefly portrayed in the Epilogue to the series, is a blend of all three: he lives a quiet life with his new family as a wizard in a world that contains both magic and non-magic folk. In this sense, he has returned home. The second world of the traditional folktale is still there, however. Now the second world is the supernatural world, the world that Harry will not return to until the final adventure of his death.

The third element that is critical to the folktale is the existence of a particular force of evil that directly threatens the hero and his world. This feature is also present in myth, but at a much more significant level. Dickerson and O’Hara argue that folktales and myth reside on opposite ends of one continuous spectrum. The difference between the two, which applies to this feature of folktale and myth, is that the actions of the mythic hero affect the entire world whereas the actions of the folktale hero affect only a small group of people (26). The same can be said for the forces of evil that plague the myth or the folktale: the evil in myth seeks to destroy the foundations of the world, whereas the evil in the folktale seeks to destroy the livelihood of the hero alone. In addition to the existence of a force of evil, the folktale draws a distinct line between who or what is good and who or what is evil. According to *The Uses of Enchantment*, folktales are designed to show good and evil right next to one another so that the child hearing the story might see the difference between the two forces. In addition, the duality of good and evil, both within the story

and/or within a character, is always acknowledged (Bettelheim 8–9). The force of evil is critical to the folktale because without it the hero has no way to transition from his life as a child into life as an adult.

In the Harry Potter series, the folktale form of evil is present from the beginning. The first chapter of the first book alludes to the danger that haunts Harry specifically when Dumbledore and Professor McGonagall leave him on his aunt and uncle's doorstep as an infant. As the story fast-forwards to present time, another evil emerges: Harry's relatives, who are neglectful and mean-spirited. Indeed, Dumbledore best sums up Harry's life with the Dursleys at the beginning of the sixth book, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, when he says to them: "You did not do as I asked. You have never treated Harry as a son. He has known nothing but neglect and often cruelty at your hands" (*Half-Blood Prince* 55). Whereas the mistreatment of the Dursleys is an evil that Harry is able to escape, he immediately faces another form of evil when he begins his education at Hogwarts. On his journey on the Hogwarts Express, Harry meets Draco Malfoy, a young wizard who comes from a family of prejudiced supporters of Voldemort.<sup>9</sup> When Harry refuses to acknowledge Malfoy as a friend, Malfoy instantly responds with a threat: "I'd be careful if I were you, Potter... Unless you're a bit politer you'll go the same way as your parents. They didn't know what was good for them, either. You hang around with riffraff like the Weasleys and Hagrid, and it'll rub off on you" (*Sorcerer's Stone* 109). Harry and Malfoy's relationship only worsens throughout the series, and they remain enemies. Another evil that Harry

---

<sup>9</sup> There are certain families in the Wizarding world who believe that wizards who come from pure wizarding families are superior to wizards who come from half-Muggle or all Muggle families. (It is possible for a Muggle to be accepted into the wizarding world if the individual possesses a talent for magic—Hermione is this type of Muggle-born witch.) The Malfoy family is pureblood and believes themselves to be better than wizards of "lesser" blood status.

encounters right away is the hatred of Professor Snape. As Harry leaves his first dismal Potions lesson with Snape, “[his] mind was racing and his spirits were low ... *why* did Snape hate him so much?” (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 139, emphasis in original). Harry is not yet aware why Snape holds such anger towards Harry, but Harry will soon reciprocate the hatred. While Snape’s hatred is not evil, it clouds Harry’s judgment and makes him see all of Snape’s actions as inherently evil. The misunderstanding between Harry and Snape only intensifies as the story progresses, which exacerbates their poor relationship. With both Malfoy and Snape, their type of evil is folkloric in nature because it appears to threaten only Harry. Of course, the most threatening evil is Voldemort, who continually tries to kill Harry during the seven books.

In keeping with the folktale pattern, the good and the evil are clearly defined at the beginning of the series. It is obvious who is good—Harry, Dumbledore, Hagrid, etc.—and it is obvious who is evil—Snape, Malfoy, and Voldemort. The scope of evil is also consistent with that of the folktale: Snape, Malfoy, and Voldemort all seem to be after only Harry and his friends, Ron and Hermione. The evil affects only the hero and his close relations. Voldemort’s evil, however, is more pervasive than the evil of Snape and Malfoy. While Voldemort is explicitly after only Harry in the first few books, he was a threat to all wizards in the time before his downfall. The impact of the force of evil changes quickly, however. Everything shifts at the end of book four, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, when Voldemort returns to a human body and begins killing random people. This shift moves the force of evil from folktale to myth because Voldemort is no longer a distant threat that chases Harry’s heels but a real presence that looks to bring the Wizarding world and the Muggle world under his command. At the end of the series, Harry is no longer responsible

for only saving himself but for saving the entire world from the tyranny of Voldemort. Dedalus Diggle, a wizard who helps the Dursleys move to safety in the final book, demonstrates this shift when he says to Harry, “[G]ood luck. I hope we meet again. The hopes of the Wizarding world rest upon your shoulders” (*Deathly Hallows* 41). Harry has become a mythic hero in the sense that he must save the Wizarding world from Voldemort, but he is still a folktale hero because Voldemort is also after Harry’s life and therefore Harry needs to look after himself. The complex nature of Voldemort’s intimate yet cosmic evil provides a beautiful example of Rowling’s ability to combine the genres of folktale and myth.

Not only does the scope and impact of the evil change, but the evil becomes more complex as well. When the lines between the good and the evil are drawn in the beginning, Harry (and the readers) believes that those lines will stay the same. And certainly, to an extent, some do. For example, the Weasleys, Hagrid, and Hermione all remain firmly on the side of good. Similarly, Voldemort and some of his Death Eaters, such as Bellatrix, remain firmly on the side of evil. There are characters in the middle, however, who flit back and forth between the two. Harry himself feels the pull of evil early in the series, in the second book particularly, when he learns of all the special connections that he and Voldemort seem to share. Fearing his similarities with Voldemort, Harry finally professes his fear to Dumbledore after his face off with Voldemort (in the form of Tom Riddle) in the Chamber of Secrets. Dumbledore assuages his fears and explains to Harry just how different he is from Voldemort:

“Listen to me, Harry. You happen to have many qualities that Salazar Slytherin prized in his hand-picked students. His own very rare gift,

Parseltogue—resourcefulness—determination—a certain disregard for rules,” he added, his mustache quivering again. “Yet the Sorting Hat placed you in Gryffindor. You know why that was. Think.”

“It only put me in Gryffindor,” said Harry in a defeated voice, “because I asked not to go in Slytherin. . . .”

“*Exactly*,” said Dumbledore, beaming once more. “Which makes you *very different* from Tom Riddle. It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.” (*Chamber of Secrets* 333, emphasis in original)

Though this conversation with Dumbledore helps placate Harry’s worries, he continues to fear his connection with Voldemort as the series progresses. When his connection with Voldemort becomes even more pronounced in book five, Harry begins to fear that he actually is becoming a bad person because of their affiliation. The readers know that Harry is not bad, but this confusion illustrates how Rowling intentionally blurs the line between what is considered good and evil.

In addition to Harry’s fluctuation, other characters in the series shift between good and evil. In the seventh book specifically, everything changes when Dumbledore’s past is brought to light and Harry, along with the rest of the Wizarding world, begins to question Dumbledore’s morality. The Malfoys, traditionally believed to be completely evil, end up leaving Voldemort’s ranks in order to save their family. Though they do not help anyone, their ability to love each other separates them from the heartlessness of Voldemort and his followers. Finally, the most drastic transformation occurs in Snape, whom Harry loathes for

killing Dumbledore. Harry learns, via Snape's memories, that Snape loved Harry's mother and has been protecting Harry ever since her death.

The Harry Potter series acknowledges the necessity for a clear divide between good and evil in certain ideas (house elves should not be enslaved<sup>10</sup> and Muggles are not inferior to wizards), but it complicates this folktale pattern by blurring the line between good and evil within most characters. This new ambiguity between good and evil is greatly significant because it reminds readers that, as Sirius says in the film of the *Order of the Phoenix*, "the world isn't split into good people and Death Eaters—we've all got both light and dark inside of us" (1:15:35). The ambiguity of the nature of evil creates complexity and adds depth to the traditional folktale's over-simplified definitions of good and evil. Rowling uses this trope of the folktale and complicates it so that it becomes more mythic in nature.

The final feature of the folktale is the happy ending. The tendency toward happy endings is vastly different from myths, which often have tragic endings. Bettelheim explains that, "[folktales] are loved by the child not because the imagery he finds in them conforms to what goes on within him, but because ... these stories always result in a happy outcome, which the child cannot imagine on his own" (123). While Bettelheim refers specifically to the importance of the happy ending in regards to child readers, the same can be said for adult readers. A happy ending comforts the reader (regardless of age) by allowing him to imagine that his life will work out just fine, despite how difficult it may seem; if Harry can survive his numerous troubles, then so can the reader.

---

<sup>10</sup> House elves are creatures that are forced to serve wizarding families. They are enslaved for life and cannot own a wand. Hermione is particularly against the enslavement of house elves and tries to begin the "Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare." Most wizards do not even think about this enslavement because it has become so natural to them.

Again, the Harry Potter series both acknowledges and challenges this feature of the folktale. Rowling hints from the very beginning of the series that Harry will find his happy ending; after all, the first chapter of the first book is titled “The Boy Who Lived” (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 1). The endings of the first three books follow this pattern: Harry and his friends are safe and happy after their ordeals saving the Sorcerer’s Stone, going into the Chamber of Secrets, and rescuing Sirius from the dementors. But, as usual, the end of book four modifies the pattern. Harry returns from the graveyard alive, but he is tormented by the death of his classmate, Cedric Diggory, and by the return of Voldemort. Overall, Harry is not happy at the end of that battle. The sense of loss and grief expands with the next two books as well. At the end of the fifth book, Harry loses his godfather, the only parental figure he has left. At the end of the sixth, Harry loses Dumbledore, his steadfast mentor and friend. The sixth book also ends with a feeling of hopelessness and fear: Harry knows that he cannot return to the safety of Hogwarts next year but must go out in search of the Horcruxes in the hopes that he can defeat Voldemort.

By complicating the traditionally happy ending of the folktale, Rowling’s series embody a perfect blend between the folktale and myth genres. While books four through six do not have happy endings per se, the series does in fact end on a considerably bright note. Harry defeats Voldemort and saves both the Wizarding world and the Muggle world from his cruel reign. This optimistic ending is characteristic of the genre of folklore. Rowling is careful to point out, however, that not everything is perfect at the end, even though the battle is won: “Happiness would come, Harry thought, but at the moment it was muffled by exhaustion, and the pain of losing Fred and Lupin and Tonks pierced him like a physical wound every few steps” (*Deathly Hallows* 746). There is undeniable happiness at

the downfall of Voldemort, but there is also the inescapable tragedy of the loss of so many brave friends. The tragedy of widespread casualties is more characteristic of myth. In the well-known myth of Oedipus, for example, Oedipus is able to save the city of Thebes, but can only do so by exiling himself to live in squalor. Similar to the grief and suffering of Oedipus', Harry's raw grief after the battle at Hogwarts reminds readers what many myths demonstrate so completely: sometimes horror and evil are necessary in order to bring what is good and just. By providing a happy ending only after the realistic ramifications and damages of war, Rowling seamlessly combines the genres of folktale and myth.

The existence of these four elements of the folktale is significant because it potentially contributes so much of the appeal of the series to young readers, as so many folktales have done before this series. The complication of these features is also important, however. This complication creates space for the other genre—myth—to work alongside the folktale and create a new kind of story. Before I turn to the mythic components present in the story, however, I will look at how the Harry Potter series not only includes overarching elements of the folktale genre but adheres to the traditional structural pattern of the folktale as well.

## **Chapter Two: The Folktale Structure**

In addition to the four general characteristics of the folktale that the Harry Potter series contains, the actual structure of the story follows the typical folktale pattern with extraordinary faithfulness. I find the close structural following of the folktale remarkable because the Harry Potter series, though it contains larger elements and themes of the folktale, never struck me as a folktale in the first place. Vladimir Propp, a Russian scholar of folktales, made noteworthy strides in the field of folklore when he published his influential work *The Morphology of the Folktale* in 1928. In this critical work, Propp analyzes hundreds of Russian folktales and breaks them into 31 common structural components. His analysis is criticized for not taking the context or the oral tradition of the folktale into account, but no other work examines folktales with nearly as much detail and nuance as *Morphology*. Propp's structural analysis still continues to provide a significant starting point for additional research on folklore. In the introduction to a 1968 translation of Propp's *Morphology*, folklore scholar Alan Dundes references two other studies that show how Propp's structure might work when analyzing folktales of other cultures (Dundes 3). Propp's analysis shows a common structural pattern that works for many different stories, and his findings hold up very accurately to other European folktales. Rowling constructs the Harry Potter story in a manner remarkably similar to Propp's construction of the typical folktale, which demonstrates that the series can be classified as a folktale and therefore can potentially help explain why many children are so drawn to it.

To begin, Propp asserts that each folktale starts with an initial situation, in which "the members of a family are enumerated or the future hero (e.g. a soldier) is simply introduced by mention of his name or indication of his status" (Propp 12). After the initial

situation, there are 31 different plot functions that occur in the common folktale. Some of the most important functions include: leaving home, villainy, receipt of a magical agent, struggle between the hero and villain, defeat of the villain, and recognition and marriage of the hero.<sup>11</sup> While each Harry Potter book deviates slightly from Propp's outline, Rowling adheres to his functions so well. Though some functions do not appear intermittently throughout the books, each function appears at least once in the series.<sup>12</sup> It is important to note, however, that Rowling is not attempting to follow a specific folklore recipe when creating the Harry Potter story. What is striking is that she is using her own recipe for plot and character development that is surprisingly similar to the recipe Propp found for Russian (and, by extension, European) folktales. This close following to Propp's structure is striking because it illustrates that Rowling's series works to draw in readers in similar ways as the classic folktales of childhood, which might explain the timeless appeal to the series as a whole.

The most obvious place to begin analysis using Propp's structural functions is with the first book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Since this is the shortest and least complex of the novels, the Proppian analysis is relatively straightforward. The initial situation introduces Harry as a young boy living with his aunt, uncle, and cousin. While it does not seem important, this initial situation marks a pattern for the remainder of the series: Harry always begins at his aunt and uncle's home. The first function, absentation, is the death of Harry's parents, even though it happened ten years prior to the beginning of

---

<sup>11</sup> For a complete list of each function (as outlined by Propp), see the Appendix.

<sup>12</sup> Though I will only be discussing a select few of the books, a complete structural analysis of each book is listed in the Appendix.

the story. This is one of the most defining moments of Harry's life because it casts him out of the Wizarding world and into the tyrannical clutches of his relatives.

When the mysterious letter from Hogwarts arrives, Harry gets a glimpse of the world that he has left. But his aunt and uncle, refusing to allow a wizard to live in their home, try to keep the letter away from him. This marks the second function: an interdiction or warning. By ordering Harry not to read the letter, Harry's interest is piqued and days of struggling for the letter ensue. Soon enough, the interdiction is violated (function three) because Hagrid comes and gives Harry his own copy of the letter. At this point there is no turning back: Hagrid and Harry enter the Wizarding world to buy Harry's school supplies, which effectively introduces Harry to life without the Dursleys. According to Propp, this is the moment where the villain usually enters the story and begins gathering information. Though the villains in this book, Professor Quirrell and Voldemort, actually do make an appearance at Propp's designated moment, everyone is unaware of their sinister nature. Hagrid, for example, introduces Harry to Professor Quirrell without realizing that Voldemort's soul is lurking underneath Quirrell's turban. This is a slight deviation from Propp's functions because the villains are in disguise not only from Harry, the hero, but from the readers as well—their evil machinations are not obvious until the very end of the book. This deviation is significant because it demonstrates that the Harry Potter series is possibly more than a folktale. These differences create space for the genre of myth to appear.

The remaining majority of the book maintains a stunning faithfulness to Propp's structural outline. Functions 1–22 all appear throughout the book in an almost perfect order. It is surprising that Rowling's writing so naturally adopts the plot functions that

Propp found in actual Russian folktales that he presented nearly eighty years prior to the publication of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. By instinctively using the style of folktales, Rowling potentially serves as an example of how readers might absorb the structure and functions of folktales and use it to shape their understanding of narrative. What is also interesting is that a few of Propp's functions are completely missing from the first book. Functions 23 through 26—unrecognized arrival of the hero, false hero presents unfounded claims, difficult task is proposed to the hero, the task is resolved—do not appear at all. Harry does not arrive unrecognized at any point in the series, so therefore function 23 does not exist. There are also no false heroes within the story to present unfounded claims, so function 24 becomes irrelevant. Similarly, there is no difficult task proposed to the hero and therefore Harry cannot solve it, which means that functions 25 and 26 are also not present. Finally, Harry is only 11 years old at the end of the story and thus cannot fulfill the final function: to marry and ascend the throne. The absence of these functions is not critical to defining the Harry Potter series as a folktale, however. It is important to remember that Rowling does not need to adhere to Propp's structure at all; the fact that she does it naturally is remarkable in the first place. Rowling's instinctive grasp of Propp's functions illustrates the wide use of these structural elements in what one might define as the quintessential "story" today.

Propp actually addresses the event of missing functions, particularly in relation to the sequence of the functions. He explicitly explains, "it is necessary to say first of all that by no means do all tales give evidence of all functions. But this in no way changes the law of sequence. The absence of certain functions does not change the order of the rest" (Propp 9). It is important to remember that this is only one book of the series, so, because the

story is not over, the missing functions might appear later. Perhaps this lack of functions signifies that this particular chapter of the story is more simplistic than the others that contain more functions. This simplicity would make sense given the smaller size of the book and the relatively direct plot. Arguably, the first installment of the series *has* to be less complex in order to draw in readers and slowly ease them in to the story.

Whereas it may be acceptable for Rowling to leave out a few functions, Propp makes it clear that the order of the functions is important. Propp does not, however, make it clear *why* the function order matters. Perhaps he did not see a deviation from his order in the all the Russian folktales he studied, which, if that is the case, signifies that Rowling is putting her own modern spin on the classic folktale. In book one, Rowling challenges this fundamental principle: the functions of the *Sorcerer's Stone* are somewhat out of Propp's particular order. For example, the fifteenth function, spatial transference, happens after function eleven. This is critical because Harry needs to be transported to another realm, the third world so to speak, so that he can confront Voldemort and Professor Quirrell. In order to be tested by the donors (functions 12–14), who in this case are the professors of Hogwarts, particularly Dumbledore, it is essential that Harry move into the next realm. Another example of Rowling shifting the sequence of functions occurs a bit later in the story. Function 30, where the villain is punished, appears between functions 18 and 19. When Harry fulfills function 16 (struggle between the hero and the villain), he and Professor Quirrell burn when their skin comes into contact. Harry, already branded by Voldemort's evil curse 10 years prior, is still protected by the charm that his mother cast when she died to save him (function 17). Quirrell, however, has no such protection: his skin burns so much after each touch that he dies. This is the defeat of the villain—function 18—

and it is also the punishment of the villain, function 30. Professor Quirrell's punishment is death, but Voldemort is also punished because he no longer has a body to occupy and must flee. Finally, function 27 (recognition of the hero) is also out of place because it is fulfilled after functions 28 and 29. The recognition of the hero occurs after function 28 when the villain is exposed—the students learn that Professor Quirrell was trying to steal the stone—and after function 29 when Madam Pomfrey gives Harry a new “appearance” (or just patches him up) in the hospital wing. This recognition happens in the penultimate scene of the story when Dumbledore gives Harry, Ron, Hermione, and Neville house points in honor of their successes.

In all three of these cases, Rowling alters the sequence of the functions and by doing so she creates her own unique structure for the Harry Potter series. Her remarkable faithfulness to the functions of traditional folktales allows her to use these effective conventions of past literature along with creative plot twists to build a tale that is both modern and entirely her own. Similar to the absence of particular functions, it does not matter that Rowling shifts the sequence of some functions because the effect of the story is the same. For example, a child does not care that Harry was transported into the third world before the donor tests him; the fact that Harry enters the third world and then is able to leave unharmed is more important. The happy endings in folktales, as another example that is discussed in Chapter One, are significant in their own way (regardless of how the plot reaches it) because the happy endings tell the child that the risks they take and the trials they encounter will pay off in the end; this positive reinforcement of the child provides hope that the future will be just fine. Though this novel is significantly less complex than the other novels in the series, Rowling's ability to use so many of Propp's

functions demonstrates how she takes a modern story and implements the popular features and plot structure of the traditional folktale in order to appeal to young readers.

Much like book one, the second book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, is a less complex version of the typical folktale: book two has one more function than book one and also slightly deviates from Propp's rigid order. Though a novel is arguably more complex than the classic folktale simply by its length, the first two books of the Harry Potter series may be classified as less complex only because they do not include all of Propp's functions. Using two similar plot structures (that challenge Propp's sequence) for the first couple books allows Rowling to establish her own plot structure that she can complicate in the following, more intricate novels. The third book, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, for example, complicates Propp's folktale plot functions much further. For the first time in the series, Rowling astonishingly includes almost every single plot function; only the last function—where the hero marries and ascends the throne—is missing (which is, of course, understandable given Harry's young age of 13). Even though every function is present, this book is particularly tricky to map out because Rowling adds the impressive challenge of having Harry and Hermione travel back in time during a small segment of the plot. The time travel makes it more difficult to decide when Rowling fulfills certain functions, but it also adds rich complexity to Propp's static functions. The 21<sup>st</sup> function of the pursuit of the hero by the villain,<sup>13</sup> for example, is relatively simple: Professor Lupin, who has turned into a werewolf, pursues Harry and his godfather, Sirius Black. Another wolf calls to Lupin during the original sequence of events, but the next

---

<sup>13</sup> Though Professor Lupin is not technically a villain, his change to an animal can, in this particular case, represent villainy because the werewolf is directly hoping to harm Harry and Sirius.

function, though it happens next in the story, is not technically fulfilled until later in the story when the readers realize that it was in fact Hermione (travelling from the future, of course) who made the other wolf call to distract him. Another example of this playful restructuring occurs when Harry defeats the dementors that come to attack him and Sirius. During the original event, Harry sees a mysterious figure across the lake that casts the spell to eradicate the dementors. Harry, in a moment of delirium, believes this unknown figure to be the spirit of his dead father. Though the readers understand that the dementors are somehow vanquished, it is not until Harry and Hermione travel back in time and Harry casts the spell to get rid of them that readers realize just how Harry defeated them. This realization alone fulfills the 18<sup>th</sup> function—victory of the hero. Rowling's use of 30 out of the 31 functions is impressive enough, but the use of time travel allows Rowling to give Propp's long-standing functions a modern twist that is appropriate for her contemporary story.

The different kinds of villainy presented in book three challenge the simplistic notion of villainy presented in the traditional folktale, which actually allows the series to incorporate more of the genre of myth. One of the main differences between book three and the first two is that there are multiple villains throughout the book. The first villain is Sirius Black, the madman who sold Harry's parents to Voldemort. After an exciting confrontation between Sirius, Lupin, and Harry and his friends, they learn that it was Ron's pet rat, who is actually a human named Peter Pettigrew, that handed the Potter family to Voldemort. As soon as this story comes to light, Pettigrew becomes the villain. But when they are all headed up to Hogwarts to turn Pettigrew in, the full moon appears and Lupin transforms into a werewolf. Though Lupin isn't the villain, he becomes the present danger

and they all have to run away from him. While running from Lupin, a pack of dementors come across Harry and Sirius. The dementors then become the danger, and, arguably, another type of villain. Finally, when Harry and Sirius defend themselves against the dementors, Snape finds them and takes them back up to the castle. This is the last kind of villain—one who desperately hangs on to an old grudge and doubts the truth. Though these shifting forms of villains make it more difficult to analyze the structural functions of this particular book, it adds to the complexity of the tale and makes it more enjoyable to read. Now that the first couple books are written and most of the necessary background information is given, Rowling can begin using the later books to complicate the story and fiddle with the plot structure she established in books one and two.

In addition to the complicated nature of villainy in book three, the sequence of the functions is also tweaked. What makes the sequence of book three much different from those of books one and two is that the order of the functions is much more complex in this book; there are no longer merely two or three functions that are out of place, but many more. For example, the beginning three functions—absentation, interdiction, and violation of the interdiction—are switched around for the first time in the series. The initial situation remains the same: Harry is living at his aunt and uncle's house in the summer, anxiously awaiting the beginning of a new school year. But instead of beginning with an absentation, the story begins with the interdiction. Uncle Vernon makes Harry swear that he will behave in the presence of his visiting Aunt Marge; otherwise Uncle Vernon will not sign Harry's school form. Harry accidentally violates this order when he causes his aunt to inflate and float away. It is only after this disaster that Harry leaves home and runs off to the sanctuary of the Wizarding world, which is function 1 or absentation.

Arguably, the Harry Potter folktale has more of an impact on the reader *because of* the many changes in plot functions, which allows the story to be more dynamic and allows Rowling to complicate future books even further. For example, there are a few more minor shifts in function sequence before another large one: function 28 appears much earlier than in Rowling's previous books, this time between functions 12 and 13. Function 28 is where the villain or the false hero is exposed. In this case, Pettigrew plays both the role of the villain and of the false hero. Having this function appear after the 12<sup>th</sup> function, the one in which the hero is tested, is critical because it shows that Harry is tested with the information about his parents' true killer. Harry cannot pass the ultimate test (function 13) unless he believes the truth. Another function that appears completely out of order is function 14, where the hero receives a magical agent. Instead of coming into play between functions 13 and 15, it occurs between functions 25 and 26. In this story, the magical agent that helps the heroes (both Harry and Hermione) is the time-turner, a device that allows the user to go back in time. Since function 25 represents a difficult task that is proposed to the heroes and the particular difficult task in this story is going back in time to save both Sirius and another innocent creature, Buckbeak, it makes sense that the magical agent is given right after the task is ordered. And it certainly has to be given to the heroes before function 26 (the completion of the task) is fulfilled. While there are other functions out of Propp's order, Rowling creates a new order that makes sense in terms of the plot of this particular story. The functions are slightly out of order in the first couple books, which permits Rowling to create her own pattern for shaping the plot. By drastically restructuring her own pattern, she is effectively suggesting that not everything is as it has seemed to be throughout the first two books. For example, Harry can no longer simply trust what he

hears other people say—Sirius is not the villain people believe him to be. Harry's mind is also opened to the possibility of time travel, which is a plot device that the reader has not yet experienced. Restructuring the pattern of her story as a folktale, she creates the possibility for more complexity within the genre of folklore in general.

As the books progress and the plot becomes more complex, Rowling continues to play with her unique sequence of plot functions. The sixth book complicates the sequence quite a bit simply because there are two different story lines operating in tandem to one another. The order goes completely out the window with the seventh book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, however. There are two initial situations in this book: the first is the gathering of Voldemort and his cronies, where they discuss their plans for attacking Harry and overthrowing the Ministry of Magic, and the second is Harry at his aunt and uncle's house for the last time, waiting for his chance to leave forever. Instead of absention, the first function, villainy (function eight) occurs first. Voldemort's initial action of killing the Hogwarts Muggle Studies professor, Charity Burbage, marks the first of many acts of villainy that will appear in this book. Starting with this villainy is an appropriate way to begin the final installment of the series because it represents the numerous innocent deaths that will happen in the battle to come; this function repeats itself throughout the remainder of the book.

After the villainy, function one happens right on cue: Harry leaves the safety of his aunt and uncle's home for the final time. Instead of function two following, Rowling jumps straight to function 15, spatial transference, because Harry and his friends have to fly through the air to arrive at the safe homes scattered around the London countryside. Throughout the entire series, function 15 never happens where it does in Propp's tales—

that is between functions 14 and 16—but this is the first time it occurs so far ahead of schedule. During this spatial transference, Harry and Voldemort meet face to face. They do not officially duel, but they do briefly struggle with one another; this fulfills function 16. Soon after this order of events, Rowling jumps to function 14, where Dumbledore, through the medium of his legal will, give the heroes (particularly Harry, but Ron and Hermione as well) special magical agents. These objects will help them succeed in their task to defeat Voldemort for good. Next Rowling jumps to function 11: departure. Harry, Ron, and Hermione are forced to flee from Ron's home during a wedding because Voldemort's followers come searching for Harry. From this moment on, they are on the run. This messy jumble of functions symbolizes the messiness of the plot and also reflects the messiness of the Wizarding world in this book. Harry, Ron, and Hermione never knowing where to turn next characterizes book seven; therefore, as Harry's confidence and control unravels, so does the sequence of the functions.

At this point in the story, functions actually begin to repeat themselves; Rowling uses this repetition to reflect the distressing, overwhelming reality of Harry's task to find all of Voldemort's Horcruxes to ultimately defeat him. Functions two and three (interdictions and violations of the interdictions), for example, happen often: Ron tells Harry and Hermione to stop using the word "Voldemort" and they do so until Harry accidentally slips, which gets them caught by Death Eaters; Ron's brother, Bill, warns Harry never to make deals with goblins, which Harry does and ends up being double-crossed; and, most importantly, the fighters in the final battle tell Harry not to give himself up to Voldemort, but Harry does and ends up losing his life for a brief moment. Functions 12 and 13 (tests and passing the tests) also occur repeatedly. They find the locket at the Ministry;

they journey to Godric's Hollow and manage to stay alive; they get the Cup; they make it to Hogwarts, etc. The entire book is filled with Voldemort trying to gain information and receiving bits and pieces, which fulfills functions four and five (reconnaissance and delivery of information). Along the journey, Harry, Ron, and Hermione encounter a couple false heroes (function 24), namely Bathilda Bagshot and Xenophilius Lovegood. In time, they learn their true nature and the false heroes are exposed (function 28). Most importantly, they are able to locate and destroy all the Horcruxes.<sup>14</sup> Finding the Horcruxes fulfills function 14 again, and destroying them gets Harry, Ron, and Hermione one step closer to liquidating the original problem of Voldemort's existence (function 19). Function 16, the battle between the hero and the villain, occurs another two times later in the series, too. The first is when the entire castle is battling Voldemort's Death Eaters, trying to keep them distracted while Harry, Ron, and Hermione search for the final Horcrux. The second, and arguably more important, battle is when Harry and Voldemort duel by themselves after Harry returns, alive, from the Forbidden Forest. Not only do the functions appear out of order, but a few critical functions also repeat themselves. This repetition and disorderly sequence show how Rowling applies the traditional folktale functions in a modern way to create a different kind of folktale. As the series progresses, the sequence of the functions becomes more convoluted, which reflects how the plot itself is becoming more twisted and obscure.

---

<sup>14</sup> Horcruxes are magical items that conceal and hold a fragment of a soul. The Horcruxes in this story contain shards of Voldemort's soul specifically. The Horcruxes ensure that Voldemort's spirit lives on in case his mortal body is killed; it is the closest attempt of immortality that the Wizarding world has ever seen. In order to completely kill Voldemort, however, Harry, Ron, and Hermione must locate the Horcruxes and destroy them and then kill the living Voldemort last.

Finally, there is one more critical component that book seven contributes to the series' application of the folktale functions: the *Deathly Hallows* includes function 31, the marriage of the hero. The fact that Rowling includes this function is important because it demonstrates that Harry has finally moved beyond childhood and achieved what he has always dreamed of having: a family of his own, living without the fear of Voldemort. This is the quintessential folktale ending and it accurately represents the folktale features that the Harry Potter series uses so effectively. This is the only book in the series in which all of Propp's functions are fulfilled. This fulfillment implies that the functions are always present, but that certain significant bits of information are released only at the proper moments. It takes seven books and a lot of character development before Rowling chooses to incorporate specific functions of the story. The seventh book is by far the most complex, but the series as a whole is remarkably simple: Harry learns who he is by meeting great friends, surviving magnificent struggles, and creating a new family.

Again, though the series ends with Propp's final function, Rowling is not trying to follow any sort of preordained sequence of functions in her books. It is incredible that she is able to incorporate every single element of the folktale, while playing with the format in order to bring a modern spin to the traditional folktale at the same time. This chapter demonstrates how well Rowling works with this time-honored structure of folklore to create a series that uses classic functions of the folktale—such as leaving home, encountering obstacles, surviving the struggles, and returning happily home—while also complicating the known traditions to make room to include the second genre of the series: myth. In the next chapters, I will shift my attention to some common features and structural patterns of myth.

### **Chapter Three: Elements of Myth**

The folktale nature of the Harry Potter series is remarkable because it speaks to so many young readers. Classic features of the folktale, such as the young, humble hero, the existence of two worlds, the clear division between good and evil, and the happy ending might possibly appeal to the subconscious mind of children. Perhaps even more importantly, the Proppian structure of the folktale, which Rowling inadvertently modifies to better suit her modern story, enables the plot to grab and hold the attention of these young readers. What astounds me, however, is that not only children are infatuated with Harry's story: adults are just as intrigued and enthusiastic. Since many readers move beyond the folktale as they grow older, how does Rowling manage to capture the imagination of adults as easily as she does children?

As with the enjoyment of children readers, the explanation for the adult fascination with the series may also boil down to one simple reason: adults might be drawn to the mythic components that the Harry Potter books contain. Dickerson and O'Hara paraphrase the great novelist, C.S. Lewis in *From Homer to Harry Potter: A Handbook on Myth and Fantasy* in an attempt to shed light on why mythic tales are so popular. They explain that, according to Lewis, myths are for readers of all ages. Myths "not only reveal truth about our experience, but actually add to our experience" (Dickerson and O'Hara 37). While I think that part of this is true, I disagree with Lewis' assertion that myths appeal to people of all ages. Certainly there is a similar magic to myth that is also found in folktales; this magic brings seemingly impossible situations to the surface and appeals to a vast audience. Most myths, however, might be too dark for young readers. Of course, there are a few myths that might excite a child, like the story of young Heracles, for example. In that particular case,

Heracles is a child who has the renowned gift of incredible strength. Because of this strength, he fights and defeats many monsters. While those elements of his story might appeal to a young child, the end of the story—when he is sent into madness and kills his children, when his own wife accidentally gives him a cloak that burns his skin, and when, refusing to die in shame, he has his own body burned on a pyre—might not. Similarly, Odysseus might initially appear to be an amazing hero who encounters beasts like Scylla or the Cyclops, but children might not care about his battle with the suitors to save his wife, son, and aging father. While some of the content is similar—magic and battles with great beasts can appear in both genres—folktales generally pertain to questions that arise in one's youth, such as fitting in with peers, and myths generally pertain to questions that arise in one's adult life, such as marriage and running a household.

To begin, there are three general features typically found in traditional myths. The first element of myth is that the hero is an adult or on the verge of adulthood and is blessed with exceptional gifts. Next, in myths the force of evil threatens the whole world and not just the hero or the central characters. Finally, myths generally acknowledge the existence of higher powers.

First, the hero of myth is usually an adult (or on the verge of adulthood) and he possesses incredible talent or skill in some form; though mythic heroes are far from perfect, their exceptional gifts set them apart from the modest, average folktale heroes. All of the classic heroes are adults: Heracles has children and a couple different wives, Odysseus has a kingdom and a family, and Achilles has a child, too. Perhaps more significant than their age, however, is their god-like nature. Indeed it is true that many of the mythic heroes are half divine. For example, Achilles' mother, Thetis, is a goddess, and

Heracles and Perseus are sons of Zeus. In the rare case that a hero does not have divine blood, he often has a particular gift. Renowned mythic scholar, Joseph Campbell comments on this feature in his famous book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Campbell explains, “The composite hero of the monomyth is a personage of exceptional gifts. Frequently he is honored by his society, frequently unrecognized or distained” (29). The mortal Odysseus, for example, has the gift of cunning intelligence and master of language. His gift earns him the love of the goddess, Athena, but earns scorn in other works of literature, including Virgil’s epic *The Aeneid* and Sophocles’ drama *Philoctetes*.

The heroes of the Harry Potter series—Harry in particular—seem to align naturally with the heroes of folktales because of their youth, but certain traits of these heroes are also similar to traits of the mythic hero. Some of the other character types, including the wise advisor, the evil stepmother, and the evil adversary, also logically fulfill the qualities of those folktale archetypes. On the other hand, a few of the characters could also find a place in a mythical story as well. The most obvious character to fit the genre of myth is our hero, Harry, who, though extremely young and ordinary, has proven to possess extraordinary abilities. As chapter one illustrates, a significant part of the magic of Harry’s story comes from his youth. Harry, though so young and just learning the ways of magic, has many unique abilities and tackles problems more mythic in nature (such as serving as the hero of a cosmic battle) than the average folktale hero. A critical element to his age, however, is that he does in fact grow up throughout the series. At the beginning of the seventh book, he turns 17 years old, which technically qualifies him as a legal adult in the magical world (though 17 is still so young). More importantly, however, is Harry’s remarkable maturity, which he was forced to develop so quickly and at such a young age. Though he experiences

many hardships during the course of his childhood—mainly learning to live with mean relatives and then coming to terms with who he is and who his parents were in the Wizarding world—Harry’s troubles really begin when he reaches late adolescence. When Harry is just 14 years old, he sees one of his classmates murdered by Voldemort, and it forces him to grow up quickly. At the beginning of book five, Harry is 15 and angry that he has been stuck with his aunt and uncle for so long without any contact from the Wizarding world. When a couple dementors suddenly attack him and his cousin, Dudley, he reflects on his age and how he is sick of being considered a child:

Up and down he paced, consumed with anger and frustration, grinding his teeth and clenching his fists, casting angry looks out at the empty, star-strewn sky. Dementors sent to get him, Mrs. Figg, and Mundungus Fletcher tailing him in secret, then suspension from Hogwarts and a hearing at the Ministry of Magic – and *still* no one was telling him what was going on ... Why was he still trapped here without information? Why was everyone treating him like some naughty kid? (*Order of the Phoenix* 42–43, emphasis in original)

At this point in his life, Harry knows that he has had to deal with more than any other student at Hogwarts and he is furious that Dumbledore insists on keeping him in the dark. The information that Harry desperately craves demonstrates how he can qualify as a mythic hero: information promotes agency, and Harry wants nothing more than to help defeat Voldemort (which soon becomes evident in the book). These are telltale signs that Harry is growing up: he wants to be kept in the loop with the adults and he feels he has earned it. This individual struggle with his age is representative of his unique position

occupying both the folktale and myth genres; as the folktale hero he is too young to be entrusted with full responsibility by the adults in the story, but as the mythic hero he has already conquered more than anyone had ever expected of him.

Harry begins his journey as a child, but by the end he learns that his death is both inevitable and necessary, which is a lesson that all mythic heroes must learn. By the end of his fifth year at Hogwarts, Harry has lost not only his classmate, but his godfather, Sirius, as well. Naturally, Harry reacts with uncontrollable anger, blaming everyone but himself for Sirius' death and smashing as many of Dumbledore's prized possessions in the meantime. But soon he moves beyond this childish display when Dumbledore explains why Harry must face Voldemort. Knowing that he must be the one to finish Voldemort for good truly sobers him up; much like the year before, Harry is forced to grow up. Dumbledore acknowledges Harry's maturation in the next book, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, because he trusts Harry to accompany him to Voldemort's cave and hunt for a Horcrux. Finally, Harry's transcendence into adulthood is complete after he handles every difficulty and death that the seventh book brings. When he views Snape's memory in the Pensieve, Harry learns that he must die in order to bring Voldemort to his weakest form. His thoughts after hearing his fate reflect his maturity: "Would it hurt to die? All those times he had thought that it would happen and escaped, he had never really thought of the thing itself: His will to live had always been stronger than his fear of death. Yet it did not occur to him now to try to escape, to outrun Voldemort. It was over, he knew it, and all that was left was the thing itself: dying" (*Deathly Hallows* 692). Though Harry is afraid, he knows he must make the sacrifice in order to save everyone else; this is the ultimate demonstration of maturity. This knowledge of sacrifice is consistent with some of the well-known mythic

heroes. Achilles, for example, sacrifices his life in order to obtain honor. Hector, too, sacrifices himself, but for the sake of duty. His acceptance of this unfair fate proves that he has grown into an adult and that he is ready to take his place as a mythic hero by making the final sacrifice.

Another sign of Harry's status as a mythic hero is his possession of a few gifts. Readers learn in the first book that he is very good at flying; he is also the best in his class in the subject of Defense Against the Dark Arts. Even more rare is his ability to speak to snakes and his ability to see into Voldemort's mind, which are gifts that Voldemort himself inadvertently gives to Harry on the night he first tries to murder him. According to Dumbledore, however, Harry has an even more rare and precious gift. During their discussion after Sirius' death, Dumbledore tries to explain this power to Harry:

There is a room in the Department of Mysteries ... that is kept locked at all times. It contains a force that is at once more wonderful and more terrible than death, than human intelligence, than forces of nature. It is also, perhaps, the most mysterious of the many subjects for study that reside there. It is the power held within that room that you possess in such quantities and which Voldemort has not at all. That power took you to save Sirius tonight. That power also saved you from possession by Voldemort, because he could not bear to reside in a body so full of the force he detests. In the end, it mattered not that you could not close your mind. It was your heart that saved you.

*(Order of the Phoenix 843–44)*

This power that Dumbledore describes is more, however, than having a heart and being able to love. This power also refers to Harry's keen sense of humanity. It is Harry's ability to

feel emotions such as grief, love, fear, and joy that give him an edge over Voldemort, who has no humanity left within him. Harry's willingness to save his godfather and to protect his friends gives him an impenetrable strength of will that no dark force will ever breach. In a sense, this humanity is something that Harry has in common with the classic heroes. Though Achilles is part divine, he chooses to fight in the Trojan War knowing that he will die. But it is his grief for his friend Patroclus that spurs his fighting and finally pushes him to help the Greeks, even though he still harbors a grudge against Agamemnon. In other words, he chooses to act on his humanity. Because Harry has been fighting battles on a similar cosmic level as in most myths despite his youth and has some unique powers at his disposal, he can definitely be considered a mythic hero.

In addition to Harry, however, there is another main character who possesses the characteristics of a true mythic hero: Dumbledore. Dumbledore is the quintessential mythic hero primarily because of the grand battles (both literal and metaphorical) that he fights throughout his life. He has many, many years of mistakes and heartbreak behind him, which makes him the perfect mentor for Harry. Dumbledore's power, sort of like that of Odysseus and Hector, comes from his impressive wisdom. Dumbledore also has a commanding presence, one that convinces people to side with him and do his bidding. Dumbledore, more than any other character in the series, occupies a position of such high esteem within the Wizarding community that makes him almost god-like. According to Bruno Bettelheim in *The Uses of Enchantment*, the danger that these god-like mythic heroes present is that they compel a child to act like and emulate the hero. He explains that, "the myth presents its theme in a majestic way; it carries spiritual force; and the divine is present and is experienced in the form of superhuman heroes who make constant demands

on mere mortals” (Bettelheim 26). While this does not seem to be a problem with Harry, simply because he is a modest mythic hero, adult readers might experience this idolization with Dumbledore’s character. The adults in the story are not immune to this idolization, either. It is common knowledge that Cornelius Fudge, the Minister of Magic, pesters Dumbledore each day asking for advice, and nearly the entire Wizarding community wants him to be Minister. As Bettelheim cautions, however, the “constant demands” that these mythic heroes make cannot be ignored. Rowling draws attention to Dumbledore’s flaws in the book seven so as to remind readers that all heroes, even the ones put on an impossibly high pedestal, have flaws. Dumbledore is very much aware of his own issues and this is evident in how little information he gives Harry; Dumbledore wants Harry to follow his own path so as to make his own mistakes. Rowling uses this relationship between Harry and Dumbledore to illustrate that mythic heroes are just like the average readers of those myths: they make mistakes and should not be blindly worshipped or imitated.

Rowling challenges the trope of the mythic hero even further in regards to Dumbledore. It seems that Dumbledore can do no wrong, until, of course, he starts spouting the unpopular idea that Voldemort has returned. In this case, the Wizarding world is afraid of the power of the truth. They try to stifle Dumbledore the only way they know how: they diminish his credibility by removing all of his privileges and titles. When the community learns that Dumbledore was correct all along, they look to him for guidance in the difficult climate. This back-and-forth behavior demonstrates that Dumbledore is rather like a god: the people blame him in the face of trouble, but they depend on his leadership when the situation becomes truly hopeless. This god-like status, therefore, also elevates Dumbledore to occupy the same realm as the traditional mythic gods, such as Zeus or Athena, in

addition to the role of popular heroes such as Achilles. Rowling makes Dumbledore a character who is very familiar with his weaknesses, particularly his lust for power. By playing with the traditional mythic hero, Rowling is also putting her own twist on the folktale archetype of the wise advisor. Dumbledore is both superhuman *and* human. This portrayal gives Dumbledore a humility that many of the classic heroes do not have. Odysseus, for instance, does not doubt his ability to coerce people and never has any reason to be humble. Dumbledore's humility allows him to nurture and protect Harry from experiencing and suffering from his same vices. This element of myth—the adult, gifted hero—is present in arguably the two most important figures of the series: Harry and Dumbledore.

Another feature of myth that can be found in the Harry Potter series is that Voldemort resembles the grand force of evil found in most myths: he not only threatens the life of the hero but he also threatens the livelihood of the entire Wizarding community. As I explain in chapter one, the impact of the evil changes as soon as Voldemort comes to life again in the fourth book, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. In the beginning of the series, books one through the middle of four, it seems that Voldemort's only goals are making himself immortal and killing Harry. In the first book, Voldemort seeks the Sorcerer's Stone both to get himself a body of his own and to become immortal. In both the third and fourth books, Voldemort does not seem to be part of the picture, at least until Harry realizes that the whole point of the Triwizard Tournament is to deliver him into Voldemort's clutches.

In the second book, however, Rowling hints at one of Voldemort's past goals. During Harry's second year at Hogwarts, an unknown monster from the Chamber of Secrets, doing the bidding of the Heir of Slytherin, periodically attacks innocent students. Hermione asks

their History of Magic professor about the legend behind the Chamber of Secrets in hopes of learning more about the heir's plans. Professor Binns explains that, "Slytherin<sup>15</sup> wished to be more *selective* about the students admitted to Hogwarts. He believed that magical learning should be kept within all-magic families. He disliked taking students of Muggle parentage, believing them to be untrustworthy" (*Chamber of Secrets* 150, emphasis in original). This passage is important because it describes why some students who come from wizard families, such as Draco Malfoy, feel they are superior to students like Hermione who come from Muggle families. This prejudice is deeply rooted within the Wizarding community, particularly within ancient magical families. Professor Binns continues the story by saying that Slytherin built the Chamber of Secrets within the castle "so that none would be able to open it until his own true heir arrived at the school. The heir alone would be able to unseal the Chamber of Secrets, unleash the horror within, and use it to purge the school of all who were unworthy to study magic" (*Chamber of Secrets* 151). This horror comes true 50 years prior to this book, when the Heir of Slytherin released the monster and killed one of the Muggle-born students.

At the end of the second book, Harry finds himself face to face with a young Voldemort and tries to stop him from unleashing the monster and killing Ron's sister, Ginny: it is in this confrontation where Voldemort begins to take on the primary quality of a mythic villain—he seeks destruction of a whole group of people. Voldemort shares his story with Harry, telling him how he was the one who opened the Chamber 50 years ago.

---

<sup>15</sup> Salazar Slytherin is one of the four founders of Hogwarts. The other three include Godric Gryffindor, Helga Hufflepuff, and Rowena Ravenclaw. The legend of the Chamber of Secrets says that he put a monster in a hidden chamber within Hogwarts, so that his heir might one day release it and purge the school of Muggle-born students. This is the same type of prejudice that I reference earlier in regards to the Malfoy family (see footnote eight).

He says that, while he could not open the Chamber a second time, “I decided to leave behind a diary, preserving my sixteen-year-old self in its pages, so that one day, with luck, I would be able to lead another in my footsteps, and finish Salazar Slytherin’s noble work” (*Chamber of Secrets* 312). As Voldemort himself admits, one of his main ambitions, at least while he was a student, was to rid the Wizarding world of Muggle-born witches and wizards. In the Chamber, Voldemort goes on to say, however, “that killing Mudbloods<sup>16</sup> doesn’t matter to me anymore[.] For many months now, my new target has been—you” (*Chamber of Secrets* 312, emphasis in original). This demonstrates that, at least for the first few books, Harry’s suspicion that Voldemort is only after him is correct. Voldemort’s single focus on Harry’s demise makes the story appear more like a folktale: the force of evil is interested only in destroying the hero. His prior inclination towards wiping out all Muggle-born wizards, however, alludes to his mythic goal of total domination over the world and not just Harry. Voldemort’s desire to capture Ginny in order to obtain a body and lure in Harry also shows that he has no issue with compromising the lives of others to fulfill his wishes; this makes him appear more like a mythic villain than a folktale villain.

As the series progresses, however, it becomes clear that Voldemort never truly abandoned his obsession of controlling the Muggle-born wizards, which aligns him with the mythic hero. When he takes over the Ministry of Magic in the seventh book, a new statue is built to acknowledge the new regime. When Harry examines it, he

... realized that what he had thought were decoratively carved thrones were actually mounds of carved humans: hundreds and hundreds of naked bodies, men, women, and children, all with rather stupid, ugly faces, twisted and

---

<sup>16</sup> Mudbloods is a foul name for people who are Muggle-born. This name refers to both non-magic Muggles and witches and wizards who come from all-Muggle families.

pressed together to support the weight of the handsomely robed wizards.

“Muggles,” whispered Hermione. “In their rightful place.” (*Deathly Hallows* 242)

The words on the new statue are also telling: “Magic is Might” (*Deathly Hallows* 242). In addition to the physical representations that flaunt the Ministry’s new goal, the actions of the Ministry also confirm it. Muggle-born students are no longer welcome at Hogwarts, and the Muggle-born witches and wizards that have already finished schooling are forced to register under the Muggle-Born Registration Committee, where their wands are taken from them. With order crumbling, some of the more prejudiced witches and wizards take the new anti-Muggle atmosphere to heart. Though Voldemort does not openly control the actions of the Ministry of Magic, his Death Eaters take over the logistics of running the government and use his Muggle-elimination policies. Voldemort’s belief that Muggles are inferior to wizards and his willingness to act on that belief demonstrate that he is interested in more than simply neutralizing Harry—he wants to rule over all people, wizards and Muggles alike.

Harry can also be seen as blend between a folktale and mythic hero. Later in the book, by means of a secret radio broadcast for the supporters of the Order of the Phoenix and Harry’s cause, Harry, Ron, and Hermione learn just how bad the situation has become:

A Muggle family of five has been found dead in their home. Muggle authorities are attributing the deaths to a gas leak, but members of the Order of the Phoenix inform me that it was the Killing Curse—more evidence, as if it were needed, of the fact that Muggle slaughter is becoming little more than a recreational sport under the new regime. (*Deathly Hallows* 439)

Innocent people are dying all over England because of Voldemort's reign, and many honest wizards and witches live in constant fear of being discovered as Muggle-born. Now, more than ever, it is critical that Harry, Ron, and Hermione stop Voldemort before more senseless killings occur. At this point, Harry is responsible for not only saving himself from Voldemort but for also saving the lives of hundreds of Muggle-born wizards and for preserving the acceptance of Muggle-borns in the Wizarding community. Because Voldemort's actions threaten both Harry and everyone else, Voldemort becomes a perfect blend between a folktale and mythic villain. In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell addresses the difference between the two types of heroes. He explains

Typically, the hero of the [folktale] achieves a domestic, microcosmic triumph, and the hero of myth a world-historical, macrocosmic triumph. Whereas the former—the youngest or despised child who becomes the master of extraordinary powers—prevails over his personal oppressors, the latter brings back from his adventure the means for the regeneration of his society as a whole. (Campbell 30)

By finding and destroying all the Horcruxes and then finally killing Voldemort, Harry remedies the threat to his own life *and* the threat to the entire Wizarding and Muggle communities. With this action, Harry situates himself directly between the folktale hero and the mythic hero. Voldemort's duplicitous form of evil is another illustration of Harry's split position as the hero.

The third feature of myth present in the Harry Potter series is the acknowledgment of a higher power. In the case of the ancient Greeks and Romans, the citizens, whether they were mortals or demigods, always made sure to sacrifice to the gods. They believed that

the gods determined their prosperity or their doom, depending on how faithfully they were worshipped. In classical myths, the gods manipulated the humans in order to achieve their own goals. The goddess Aphrodite, for example, started the Trojan War by abducting Helen of Sparta and presenting her to Paris of Troy all because Paris deemed her the most beautiful goddess. The other two goddesses, Athena and Hera, then chose to side with the Greeks during the war that followed in order to enact revenge on Paris and his people. The mortals were almost always merely pawns in the eyes of the gods. In some cases, however, the gods favored chosen mortals. Athena loved Odysseus, Zeus loved many beautiful human women, such as Europa and Io, and Hera grew to love Heracles. Regardless of the relationship between the gods and the humans, myths make it clear that the gods cannot be denied acknowledgment. Moving beyond simple acknowledgment, the higher powers often play a legitimate role in the stories.

In the Harry Potter series, the acknowledgment of a higher power is rather obscure. Instead of observing the mythical gods and goddesses of the ancient civilizations, the Harry Potter series recognizes the presence of a higher deity in more of a Christian sense. Though Rowling does not actually explicitly show this recognition (there is no church-going and no prayer), she spreads small hints throughout the books that the witches and wizards do observe some form of religion. The most obvious nod towards a belief in the supernatural occurs in the seventh book when Harry finds himself in a strange purgatory-like place after Voldemort kills him. Harry silently assesses this new space: "He lay in a bright mist, though it was not like mist he had ever experienced before. His surrounds were not hidden by cloudy vapor; rather the cloudy vapor had not yet formed into surroundings" (*Deathly Hallows* 705). In addition to the strange mist, everything in the room is white, and fresh

clean robes magically appear when Harry needs them (705–6). In this space, Harry has a conversation with Dumbledore, which is something he could not do if he was still in the living world because Dumbledore is dead. Here Dumbledore serves as more than the wise advisor: he serves as a god-like figure. Dumbledore no longer “exists” in life, yet Harry can still talk to him. Throughout the books, Rowling makes it clear that Dumbledore is both revered and feared by all wizards; they recognize that he has a sort of divine knowledge and supernatural presence. After Dumbledore’s death, Harry wrestles with what he knows about Dumbledore and what Dumbledore decided to leave out; he feels frustration with Dumbledore and questions what his true intentions were. This questioning and struggling reflects a common relationship with the Christian God, at least in my experience. A deity is never fully understood, though humans desperately want to understand.

In addition to his mere presence, Dumbledore, like most gods or deities, definitely has an ultimate plan for Harry. He does not need to inform Harry of this plan and simply knows that Harry will do what Dumbledore expects: he will sacrifice himself to kill the Horcrux that hides in his soul. Harry is not comfortable with this plan at first, but after much reflection and learning experiences, Harry accepts that Dumbledore’s plan—for Harry to die at the hands of Voldemort in order to make Voldemort as vulnerable as possible—is necessary and good for the rest of humankind. Harry realizes that Dumbledore, the God-like figure, is a more trustworthy and knowledgeable guide regarding Harry’s life than even Harry himself.

Whereas Dumbledore represents a deity that is more Christian, it is important to note that the realm of his influence reflects the distinct sphere of the gods and goddesses of classical mythology. The space of the Wizarding world, particularly the Ministry of Magic in

book five and Hogwarts in book seven, closely resembles supernatural sites where war takes place, such as Olympus or Hades. The gods and their respective sides—Dumbledore and the Order of the Phoenix versus Voldemort and the Death Eaters—fight cosmic battles for control in cosmic arenas. The world-altering battles that the two sides fight in magical places demonstrate the series' natural foundation in myth.

By also making Dumbledore, a supernatural figure, present throughout the entire series—both in a literal and metaphorical way—Rowling echoes the general feature of myths where the deity is present and active in the plot. Though this higher power resembles the Christian God and not the gods of classic myth, the effect is the same: the Harry Potter series fulfills this component traditional to myth. In addition to following the general elements of classic myth, the Harry Potter series observes a structural pattern typical of the genre of myth. Similar to Propp's structure of the folktale, a specific formulaic structure for the mythic hero's journey exists as well—it was noticed and explained by Joseph Campbell, a well-known scholar of mythology. As the next chapter will explore, Rowling's Harry Potter series follows the general pattern of this structure while also complicating it to suit her particular story.

## **Chapter Four: The Structure of Myth**

While the Harry Potter series contains so many of the features relevant to myth, it can also be analyzed using the common structure of myth. Joseph Campbell, famous scholar of mythology and medieval literature, published his first original authorial work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, in 1949 to vast critical success. In this book, Campbell defines the monomyth, which the Joseph Campbell Foundation describes as “a universal pattern that is the essence of, and common to, heroic tales in every culture” (par. 19). This pattern refers to the structure of myth, which Campbell organizes into 12 different stages of the heroic journey. The 12 stages consist of: the ordinary world; call to adventure; refusal of the call; meeting the mentor; crossing the threshold; tests, allies, enemies; approach; ordeal, death, and rebirth; reward, seizing the stone; the road back; resurrection; and return with elixir.<sup>17</sup> These 12 stages stem from the main three components that form the common myth: “The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: *separation—initiation—return*” (Campbell 23, emphasis in original). The hero’s journey is divided into two worlds: the Ordinary World and the Special World. Stage five, Crossing the Threshold, marks the transition from the Ordinary World into the Special World, and stage ten, The Road Back, marks the transition from the Special World back into the Ordinary World. Entering the second world marks the *separation*, living and surviving tests presented in the second world forms the *initiation*, and coming home to the first world represents the *return*. The existence of two worlds within traditional myth recalls the two-world structure of the folktale as well. These structural features of myth—the 12 stages; the separation, initiation, and return phases;

---

<sup>17</sup> Campbell’s visual representation of the heroic journey can be found in the Appendix, along with the structural analysis for each book in the Harry Potter series.

and the two distinct worlds—are important features that define myth, and, as such, need to be present in some way in the Harry Potter series in order to call the series mythic.

To see how whether the Harry Potter series adheres to the genre of myth, I analyzed each book using Campbell's structure of the hero's journey. The results were surprising. While Rowling sticks to Propp's functions of the folktale incredibly well, she never wavers from Campbell's structure of myth. As with Propp's structure, the first book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, is most easily analyzed using Campbell's method. The Ordinary World in book one could not get any more ordinary. This Ordinary World is the realm in which the readers first meet Harry; it is the world in which Harry lives with his aunt, uncle, and cousin. In fact, the normalcy of this ordinary world is mentioned in the very first two lines of the book: "Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much. They were the last people you'd expect to be involved in anything strange or mysterious, because they just didn't hold with such nonsense" (*Sorcerer's Stone* 1). This normal world is the world of the Muggles, or non-magic folk, and it is the world that Harry has occupied for all of his living memory. The call to adventure happens when a mysterious letter arrives for Harry, which invites him to attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The mentor that Harry meets is initially Hagrid, the school gamekeeper, who comes to deliver Harry's letter to him personally.

In this particular book, the most critical moment is when Harry fulfills stage five (the separation) and crosses the threshold into the magical world. This transition into the Special World initially happens when Hagrid takes him to Diagon Alley, a magical road of shops only seen and used by wizards, to buy his school supplies. This threshold marks the

beginning of a completely new life for Harry, one that will be at the same time more rewarding and frightening than the events of the ordinary world Harry has experienced thus far. What is remarkable about Rowling is that she fulfills all 12 stages of the mythic hero's journey, but she also challenges Campbell's notion of the two worlds. She does this by creating multiple ordinary and special worlds within each book and throughout the series. At first, the Muggle, non-magic world represents the ordinary world and Hogwarts represents the special world. But as Harry's first year gets underway, he decides to enter yet another special world (which I will discuss later): the world under the trapdoor.

Another important moment in book one is the initiation into the magical world. Stage seven, the approach, is when the initiation truly begins. In this stage, Harry, Ron, and Hermione learn about the Sorcerer's Stone, where it is hidden in the castle, and who might be after it. The events and trials of life in the special world (Hogwarts) prime Harry for his experience in the third world to come. These events include some triumphs, such as learning to play Quidditch and successfully using Harry's invisibility cloak; and the events also include disappointments or failures, such as when Harry, Ron, and Hermione are caught in Hagrid's hut after hours and are given detention. When they decide to go beneath the trapdoor to stop Voldemort from retrieving the stone, however, they leave the safety of Hogwarts and enter into territory designed to protect the stone (the third world). Even though they are still technically in Hogwarts, they have left the protection of the professors and other students because no one knows they are in the bowels of the school. It is in this world where Harry encounters Professor Quirrell and Voldemort, where Quirrell dies, and where Harry learns that Voldemort has not left the world as he originally believed.

Soon after his confrontation with Voldemort in stage eight, Harry heads back to the ordinary world, which fulfills the final step of return. This time, however, the ordinary world is not only the Muggle world but the world of Hogwarts as well. Hogwarts can be considered an ordinary world because, at this point in Harry's education, he feels more at home at Hogwarts than he ever did at the Dursleys' in the non-magic world. Stage ten, the road back, refers to his reentrance into Hogwarts after his experience with Voldemort beneath the trapdoor. The final stage, returning with elixir, refers to Harry's return to the Muggle world with the happy knowledge that he will soon leave for Hogwarts again. In this case, therefore, Rowling complicates Campbell's idea of the ordinary and the special worlds because what was once the special world (Hogwarts) becomes one of Harry's ordinary worlds as soon as he leaves the other special world (the realm beneath the trapdoor). Coming back to both the now-ordinary world of Hogwarts and the old ordinary world of his aunt and uncle's home represents the final step: return. The return is arguably the most important part of the heroic journey; without returning to the ordinary world, Harry cannot apply the knowledge he learned in his confrontation with Voldemort and he cannot continue his education as a wizard in preparation for meeting Voldemort again.

In the beginning of the second book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Harry's ordinary world technically begins at the Dursleys' again (because this is how every book begins). Because none of the stages described by Campbell apply to Harry's life in the Muggle world in this particular story, the ordinary world can instead begin when his second year at Hogwarts starts. Hogwarts is an ordinary world because this is the world where he will spend the majority of the next six years. Though she sticks to Campbell's structure in this book as well, she adds a little tweak at stage four, when Harry meets his

mentor. In this case, the mentor actually appears in the form of the villain, Tom Riddle,<sup>18</sup> even though neither Harry nor the reader is aware of this twist at the time. As Riddle explains during their confrontation in the Chamber of Secrets, he feeds Harry information about the Chamber in order to meet him at last: “I knew I must find out more about you, talk to you, meet you if I could. So I decided to show you my famous capture of that great oaf, Hagrid, to gain your trust” (*Chamber of Secrets* 311). Even though Riddle does not have Harry’s best interests at heart, he can still be considered the mentor because he was willing to give Harry the information about the Chamber of Secrets that Harry craved. Rowling’s ability to fiddle with the entrance and role of the villain allows her to add her own unique twists to Campbell’s classic structure, which echoes her playful use of Propp’s functions. Meeting Riddle sets Harry apart from his classmates, marking a metaphorical separation. Through their interactions, Harry is figuratively plunged into the special world as he tries to figure out the mystery of the Chamber of Secrets.

Like *Sorcerer’s Stone*, *Chamber of Secrets* provides a literal threshold for Harry to cross from the ordinary world into the special world. Since the ordinary world of this book is the world of Hogwarts, the special world is again buried deep beneath the school’s floors in the Chamber of Secrets. It is here where Harry survives Riddle’s tests and learns who his enemies and his allies are. It is here where Harry seizes the “sword,” or, more appropriately, the prize: he is able to kill the monster, he is able to save Ginny Weasley, whom Riddle takes into the Chamber to kill, and he is able to kill the memory of Riddle by stabbing Riddle’s own bewitched diary—these tests and triumphs form the step of

---

<sup>18</sup> Tom Riddle was Voldemort’s given name. It was also the name of his Muggle father, who abandoned him before his birth. Ashamed of his Muggle name, Tom shed it in favor of a new one: Lord Voldemort.

initiation. Though Harry and the readers are unaware of the significance of his actions at the time, Harry's ability to destroy the diary and the memory of Riddle that lies within it leads Dumbledore to the discovery of Voldemort's Horcruxes, which Harry and Dumbledore will begin to track down in book six. When Harry is finally able to leave the Chamber of Secrets, he moves out of the special world and back into the ordinary world, the world of Hogwarts. While the final stage, return with elixir, can still be considered Harry's return to the Muggle world, I think the more appropriate example of this stage is when Harry returns from the Chamber with the diary that will lead to Voldemort's ultimate defeat—this is the third step, return. Rowling's ordinary world has completely changed in this book because now what is truly ordinary is life at Hogwarts, whereas life with the Dursleys in the Muggle world is nothing but a temporary delay in his adventures. This delay is important not only because it acts as a space for Rowling to recap the adventures of the previous book, but also because it demonstrates that Harry, no matter his success, never loses his humble nature.

In addition to adding a third world, Rowling continues to complicate Campbell's two worlds by playing with the boundary between these worlds. In book three, *Harry Potter in the Prisoner of Azkaban*, the threshold between the ordinary and special worlds is literal: Harry, Ron, Hermione, Sirius, Pettigrew, Lupin, and Snape all leave the grounds of Hogwarts and travel to the Shrieking Shack for the ordeal. Everything changes, however, in book four, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. In this book, the boundary between the two worlds is metaphorical, which distinctly moves the Harry Potter series away from the folktale, where the boundary between the two worlds is primarily physical (such as a dark

forest). The Goblet of Fire places Harry in the Triwizard Tournament<sup>19</sup> even though he did not enter his name for selection. This is the call to adventure (stage two), which Harry adamantly tries to refuse (stage three). When he is forced to compete, Harry inadvertently crosses the metaphorical threshold because competing in the tournament means facing three very difficult tasks without the help of anyone. Moving into the Tournament represents the first step, separation, because it literally isolates Harry from his other classmates, particularly Ron who is jealous of Harry's fame. In this special world—the world of the Triwizard Tournament—Harry undergoes many tests that are both physically and mentally demanding, he learns who his true friends and enemies are, and he ultimately finds himself approaching Voldemort yet again. To get to stage eight, the stage of ordeal, death, and rebirth, Harry grabs the Triwizard Cup (which turns out to be a portkey<sup>20</sup>) at the end of the third task and finds himself in a graveyard. All of the struggles that Harry has endured to this point and in the graveyard represent his initiation (the second step). This portkey represents the literal agent Harry must use in order to cross the physical threshold of distance to yet another special world, but Harry is already in the special world of the tournament before his transportation. In this case, Rowling again complicates Campbell's insistence on two worlds and adds a third. Unlike in the first book when there is a third world, Harry returns from the second special world (the graveyard) not into the ordinary world of Hogwarts but into the first special world of the tournament. The transitional stage (stage ten, the road back) that brings Harry back to the ordinary world of Hogwarts

---

<sup>19</sup> The Triwizard Tournament was an ancient tradition in which the three schools of magic, Hogwarts, Beauxbatons, and Durmstrang, select one champion who participates in three tasks. Whichever champion has the best score by the end of the tournament wins the Triwizard Cup and eternal glory. The tournament is reinstated in this book.

<sup>20</sup> An ordinary object that is bewitched to physically transport the person who touches it.

without the tournament is reached only when Harry learns who Professor Moody really is: Barty Crouch, Jr., a Death Eater that was in disguise as Moody and who was working to hand Harry to Voldemort. Harry can only truly fulfill step three of myth—return—when he is able to recognize the false Moody for the villain he is.

Another feature that the fourth book alters is the final stage—return with elixir; this deviation allows Rowling to break slightly from the strict confines of Campbell's mythic heroic journey and use that space to include the folktale genre. In the first three books, the elixirs that Harry returns from his ordeals with are objects of sorts. In book one, he returns with the sorcerer's stone; in book two, he returns with the decapitated diary of Tom Riddle; and in book three, he returns with a godfather, who represents the parent that Harry has always so desperately yearned for. In book four, however, Harry's elixir is literally his life. For the fourth time, Harry faces Voldemort and escapes. But Harry's escape can hardly be called a victory: during his time in the graveyard, Harry watches his friend, Cedric Diggory, be killed by Voldemort and he also watches Voldemort take human form. His return from the graveyard, even though he is alive, does not give Harry happiness because he cannot escape the events that took place there. From that time on, he feels quite a bit of shame, anger, and fear. This less than satisfying ending also illustrates the series' shift in tone from the typically happy and restorative endings of folktales to the more tragic and sorrow-filled endings of many myths.

In the fifth and sixth books, the boundary between the ordinary world and the special world is also metaphorical. In both of these books, the ordinary world is, again, Hogwarts, but the special world is where Harry moves into the unknown: the concern for Sirius' safety in book five and the adventures into the depth of Voldemort's past in book six.

In book seven, however, Rowling manages to shift what defines the ordinary and special worlds a final time. In *Deathly Hallows*, the first ordinary world, that of the Muggle life that Harry lived with his aunt, uncle, and cousin, returns. Harry returns there once more so that the protection that Dumbledore cast upon the house continues to work. When Harry leaves his relatives' home for the final time, his journey to the Wizarding world does not represent the crossing of the threshold. Instead, Harry finds himself in another element of the ordinary world: not at Hogwarts, but at the home of his best friend, Ron. Ron's home, the Burrow, holds many of the same sentimentalities for Harry that Hogwarts does; at the Burrow he feels loved and he feels safe. By playing with what Harry sees as the ordinary and special worlds, Rowling is able to vary and complicate the traditional hero's journey and use these worlds to illustrate different phases and lessons within Harry's maturation and education.

When Harry, Ron, and Hermione are forced to flee from the Burrow because of the Death Eaters coming to capture Harry, they have to cross the threshold and enter into the special world, which they remain in for almost all of this book. This crossing of the threshold fulfills step one, separation, because Harry, Ron, and Hermione are forced to separate from Ron's family and set out on their own to find and destroy Voldemort's Horcruxes. Here Rowling blends the forms of boundaries found within the series into one: the threshold that Harry, Ron, and Hermione cross is *both* literal and metaphorical. It is literal in the sense that they must leave the Burrow, a tangible place. It is metaphorical in the sense that they leave the Burrow and head into the unknown. The physical place of the unknown does not look any different: they are living in the same world, the same country that they have always resided in. Instead, the unknown of this special world comes from

the tasks that they must complete: they need to find the Horcruxes to defeat Voldemort, but they do not know what they are or where to look. The level of uncertainty and fear that come from crossing this threshold represents the unique phase Harry, Ron, and Hermione are at in their lives: they are leaving the safety of their childhood and heading into a truly dangerous world. While the threshold of crossing into the special world always signifies a transition into danger, the danger in book seven feels more real because Harry, Ron, and Hermione are isolated from the rest of the Wizarding community.

In this special world of the unknown, Harry, Ron, and Hermione face numerous tasks and meet many allies and many enemies; it is easily the most difficult journey that they have taken thus far. They lose heart and they often lose sight of their purpose along the way, but they are able to get back on track and keep fighting. Rowling throws yet another curveball, however, when she appears to add a third special world. Near the end of their search, Harry, Ron, and Hermione find themselves back at Hogwarts. They need to cross a physical threshold to get into the castle because the guards stationed on the grounds are Death Eaters looking to capture Harry. They enter Hogwarts through a hidden tunnel, which makes it appear as though they are entering another special world. As it turns out, the world of Hogwarts is not what it used to be; it is not the typical ordinary world that Harry once knew because it is not safe. While he is there, Harry has to avoid the Death Eaters and Professor Snape, his old enemy who has become headmaster of the school. When Voldemort's army appears, the castle becomes a literal battleground. Hogwarts clearly is not the old ordinary world, but it is not another special world, either: it simply represents the continuation of the battle.

Instead, the third special world appears when Harry dies at Voldemort's hands and lands in King's Cross, the purgatory-like space that chapter three discusses. Though Harry is safe from Voldemort in this world, he is not safe from his own fears. Here, Harry must face Dumbledore and confront him for all the lies that were spoken and all the information that was withheld from Harry. Though the tests and struggles that Harry, Ron, and Hermione endure on their hunt for the Horcruxes is part of their initiation, this scene in King's Cross is Harry's true initiation because it is in this space where Harry learns all the facts he needs in order to finally defeat Voldemort. Once Harry has faced all of his fears and even withstood his own death, he leaves the purgatory space and returns to the ordinary world. This return to the ordinary marks the most critical return in the series because it is only after this return that Harry has all the tools he needs to conquer Voldemort permanently. As Campbell explains, "*The return and reintegration with society*, which is indispensable to the continuous circulation of spiritual energy into the world, and which, from the standpoint of the community, is the justification of the long retreat, the hero himself may find the most difficult requirement of all" (29, emphasis in original). Harry is unsure of his return, knowing that he will face even more fear and death in life, but this return is absolutely essential. Without his return, the side of good might be disheartened and unable to finally defeat Voldemort. Harry needs to return to bolster the Wizarding world and end the struggle with Voldemort for good; by returning he fulfills all stages of the journey of the mythic hero. Even though battle ensues when Harry returns, it is different in nature because Harry no longer has fear. He defeats Voldemort once and for all and the world can really become ordinary again. Though he returns to the Wizarding world, he does not return to the Muggle world. This permanent distance from the Muggle

world is acceptable because he has found his true place among people of his own kind; he does not belong in the Muggle world.

Rowling manages to completely shift the two orderly worlds that Campbell categorizes, but this shift adds to the complexity of the plot and therefore to the magic of the story. Unlike the structure of the folktale that Propp outlines, Rowling does not alter anything but the two worlds in regards to Campbell's mythic structure. In each book, every element of the hero's journey is present and she does not change the sequence of the stages. She adds her own twist on the two worlds throughout the series, blurring the lines between what readers might deem ordinary and special. Overall, this complication is necessary, especially in the later books, because she is dealing with such a complex and intricate plot. Additionally, complicating Campbell's two worlds allows Rowling to explore Harry's maturation more deeply and it helps the reader see how Harry truly evolves into a mythic hero. Even though Rowling alters the designation of the ordinary and special worlds, the integrity of the overall mythic structure remains intact. This careful adherence to Campbell's structure of the hero's journey demonstrates that the Harry Potter series is as firmly rooted in the genre of myth as it is in the genre of folklore.

## **Conclusion**

The first time I read the Harry Potter books, I remember caring only about how the characters fared at the end. I always completed the first reading of each book in the same manner: as soon as the fates of Harry and his friends were called into question, I read hastily—almost frantically—until I could be reassured that they were safe again. Books four and five were particularly traumatic; I distinctly remember being angry with Harry for putting himself so willingly into such dangerous situations. For the majority of the series (definitely for the first five books, anyway) I certainly never bothered to question why I was fascinated by the story or why I felt particular emotions toward specific characters: I was firmly on Harry's side, was fiercely protective of Hermione, and was ardently determined to despise Snape.

As a child who was blessed to grow up with the series, and therefore forced to wait numerous years between publications of the newest books, my reading style naturally shifted when books six and seven were released. By this time in my life—nearing the end of the middle school years—my instinctual reactions to characters changed: for example, I started sympathizing with Malfoy and started to regard Dumbledore with mistrust. While immersed in these first readings, however, I was unaware of this shift in my perspective; the shift, after all, did nothing to decrease my obsession for the series. Analyzing my irrational love for the series in this project has given me the unique gift of beginning to understand how the Harry Potter series both built upon and expanded my understanding of the power of genre. As an eight-year-old, I was drawn in to the story by the magic, by the humble nature of Harry, and by the clear divide between good and evil—I found comfort in reading about a child like me who was trying to find his place in the world and who

sometimes felt the world had too many expectations of him. As I matured and my life became more complicated, I found solace in Harry's similarly changing life: the people he believed to be friends or enemies eventually changed, just like mine did, and he was forced to realize, as I was forced to learn, that his knowledge of the world is truly minimal. My love for the Harry Potter series increased because different elements of the story, first the folktale and then the mythic, appealed to the different stages of life I was facing as a reader during each re-read. In all phases of life, however, the ultimate comfort of Harry's story remains the same: if Harry can survive the troubles he faces, then so can I.

By grounding the story in the four general components of folklore—the young, innocent hero; the two distinct worlds; a force of evil that threatens only the livelihood of the hero; and the existence of a happy ending—Rowling creates the potential for the Harry Potter books to appeal to young readers who might struggle with the same, painful difficulties of growing up as Harry. By firmly planting the story in the three general elements of myth—an adult hero (or one on the verge of adulthood) who has exceptional gifts; an evil that threatens the cosmic order; and an acknowledgment of higher powers—Rowling provides the opportunity for adults to find Harry's tale accessible because those adults might better understand the larger, cosmic burdens placed on Harry's shoulders.

Rowling's ability to weave both Vladimir Propp's structure of the folktale and Joseph Campbell's structure of the myth so seamlessly into the story arguably contributes to the allure of the Harry Potter series (as evidenced by an immeasurable readership that encompasses readers of all ages and that continues to grow despite the conclusion of the series) as well as to its literary value. While the series seemingly presents a conundrum for those with sophisticated literary tastes (yes, it is great that children are reading, but Harry

Potter is not great literature because it is rooted in fantasy, magic, etc.) in fact, the Harry Potter story provides an incredible opportunity: it opens the world of myth to children. Young readers, delighted by the story, are exposed also to the themes and structures of myth that undergird the majority of world literature. Developing a childhood relationship with this language of story builds, as my own experience has shown me, a bridge that can be traversed again and again.

## **Appendix: Structural Analysis of the Texts**

### **I. Analysis of the Folktale Structure Using Vladimir Propp's Functions**

For the purpose of clarity, I have listed the functions in the order they appear in the primary texts instead of in the "correct" order that Propp outlines in his *Morphology of the Folktale*. Listing the functions in this order more clearly demonstrates how Rowling deviates from Propp's outline by altering the function sequence.

#### **Book One: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone**

- $\alpha$  - Initial Situation: Neglected, 11-year-old Harry lives with his Aunt Petunia, Uncle Vernon, and cousin Dudley in a non-magic neighborhood on the outskirts of London. He has been living here every since his parents died when he was just one year old.
1. Absentation – Harry's parents die long before the story begins, leaving him under the care of his neglecting aunt and uncle.
  2. Interdiction – 10 years later, Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon are constantly giving him interdictions never to do certain things, such as talk back to them, to make messes or noise, or to talk about his parents. They give one interdiction, however, that really sets the plot moving: they forbid Harry from possessing and reading the mysterious letter that shows up on their doorstep addressed to him.
  3. Violation of Interdiction – After a few days of more letters arriving for Harry, Uncle Vernon temporarily moves the family to an abandoned hut on an island in the middle of a lake, hoping to evade the sender of these letters. Hagrid, the gamekeeper of Hogwarts, finally comes to find Harry to give him his letter. Directly going against his relatives' wishes, Harry opens the letter and learns the truth about his parents' death and his background of being a wizard.
- \*The villain of the story is supposed to enter here. Professor Quirrell, the main villain in this book, does enter the plot at this point, though the readers are unaware of it at the time.
4. Reconnaissance – Quirrell spends most of the book trying to gain information about what he seeks: the sorcerer's stone. On the day that Harry meets him (when he and Hagrid journey into Diagon Alley to buy his school supplies after Hagrid tells Harry about his wizarding heritage), Quirrell tries to break into Gringotts and steal the stone. He also spends most of his time at Hogwarts searching for its hiding place and for ways in which to get past the obstacles guarding the stone.
  6. Trickery – Quirrell tries to deceive everyone at Hogwarts when he lets the troll into the school. He hopes it will create a diversion so that others will run into their towers while he goes to the trapdoor to learn more about how the sorcerer's stone is hidden.
  7. Complicity – Unfortunately, this diversion is successful in part. Harry, Ron, and Hermione, who suspect that Professor Snape is trying to steal the stone, are completely distracted by the troll. Snape, however, is able to see through Quirrell's rouse.
  8. Villainy – Quirrell tries to kill Harry on a couple different occasions: first during the Quidditch match where he jinxes Harry's broom, and second when he crosses his path in the Forbidden Forest and tries to attack. The act of villainy that sets the plot

in motion, however, is when Quirrell descends beneath the trapdoor to steal the stone.

5. Delivery of Information – Though Quirrell obtains a lot of information throughout the text, he finally receives the information he needs from Hagrid (who spilled the secret on how to put the three-headed dog to sleep), and he finally lures Dumbledore from the school.
  9. Mediation (the Hero Intervenes) – Harry, believing that it was Snape who went to steal the stone, tries to decide whether it is up to him to protect the stone and thwart Snape. Harry decides to tell the headmaster, Albus Dumbledore, what he knows about Snape's plans.
  10. The Seeker Agrees to or Decides Upon Counteraction – Harry, Ron, and Hermione learn that Dumbledore has left the premises, so Harry decides that they must be the ones to stop Snape.
  11. Departure – Harry, Ron, and Hermione head to the third floor corridor (where the trapdoor is located) to begin their mission.
  15. Spatial Transference – When Harry, Ron, and Hermione descend beneath the trapdoor, they move into another realm, metaphorically speaking. They are leaving the safety of Hogwarts to a space where no one can protect them or find them if anything goes amiss.
- \*The donor/provider typically enters here. Since the literal donor of the magical agent (the stone) is the mirror of Erised and Dumbledore bewitched the mirror to do his bidding, then, by extension, Dumbledore is the donor.
12. The First Functions of the Donor (The Hero is Tested) – Harry, Ron, and Hermione have to pass various challenges put in place by Hogwarts professors to protect the stone.
  13. The Hero's Reaction – Harry, Ron, and Hermione withstand the tests. Together, they get through the obstacles of the deadly plant, the flying keys, the enchanted chessboard, the troll (which was already defeated for them by Snape, they believe), and the logic puzzle. Harry, however, faces the mirror (and Voldemort and Quirrell) alone.
  14. Provision or Receipt of Magical Agent – Although the stone appears to have fallen into Harry's possession by chance, it was directly transferred to him by the power of the mirror because Harry did not desire to use the stone for personal gain.
  16. Struggle Between the Hero and Villain – Quirrell (and Voldemort, whose spirit is possessing Quirrell's body) and Harry fight for the stone.
  17. The Hero is Branded – Technically, Voldemort has already branded Harry: he has the lightning-shaped scar on his forehead. Harry does receive many burns and injuries from the battle, though.
  18. Victory of the Hero – Harry not only stops Voldemort from acquiring the stone, but he (inadvertently) kills Quirrell in the fight, resulting in Voldemort's loss of a physical body.
  30. The Villain is Punished – Quirrell is punished because he loses his life in his struggle against Harry; all of his skin melts at Harry's touch. Voldemort is not punished in the sense that he is brought to justice, but he is punished in a way because he loses the body he has been possessing.
  19. The Initial Misfortune is Liquidated – Though Harry has already acquired the stone via the mirror, he officially can claim it because he successfully protected it against

Quirrell and Voldemort. The donor's (Dumbledore's) cleverness allows Harry to retrieve the stone in the first place.

21. Pursuit of the Hero by Villain – Voldemort's soul, now without a body, tries to attack Harry once more, though he has no hope of obtaining the stone in the form of a spirit. Voldemort's soul then flees.
  22. Rescue of Hero from Pursuit – Harry falls to the floor of the room unconscious from Voldemort's final efforts. Dumbledore finds Harry some time later and rescues him from beneath the trapdoor, bringing him back into the world of Hogwarts and thus the world of safety.
  20. Return of the Hero – Harry returns to Hogwarts and to his friends when he awakens a few days later in the hospital wing after Dumbledore's rescue. After a few days of rest, he can return his normal life as a student.
  28. The False Hero or Villain is Exposed – As Dumbledore informs Harry, everyone in the school learns about how Quirrell tried to steal the stone and how Harry, Ron, and Hermione stopped him. The students do not know about Quirrell's connection to Voldemort, however.
  29. The Hero is Given a New Appearance – Harry's appearance does not change in any measurable way, but Madam Pomfrey, the school nurse, heals him of his injuries.
  27. The Hero is Recognized – Harry, Ron, and Hermione are all recognized by Dumbledore at the school's end-of-term feast for their accomplishments.
- Missing Functions – 23, Unrecognized Arrival of the Hero; 24, A False Hero Presents Unfounded Claims; 25, A Difficult Task is Proposed to the Hero; 26, The Task is Resolved; and 31, The Hero is Married and Ascends the Throne.

*Book Two: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

α – Initial Situation: Harry has returned from his first year at Hogwarts and is living with his aunt, uncle, and cousin again, anxiously waiting for his second year at Hogwarts to begin.

1. Absentation – Harry's aunt and uncle force him to remain in his room during an important dinner party that they are having at their house.
2. Interdiction – Harry is told that he needs to stay in his room during the dinner, making sure that he makes no noise. Since their guests, the Masons, are not even aware of his existence, excessive noise on his part would make Uncle Vernon's business deal less likely to be accepted. A very loud house elf, named Dobby, appears unexpectedly in Harry's room and orders Harry not to return to Hogwarts for his second year because of the dangerous things that are expected to take place.
3. Violation of Interdiction – Harry violates the second interdiction by refusing to remain with his aunt and uncle for another whole year. Dobby, to persuade him to remain with the Dursleys, makes so much noise and ends up exposing Harry's existence to the Masons. This violates his aunt and uncle's first interdiction to be silent.

\*Another interdiction occurs: The Dursleys, in their anger with Harry's behavior for the dinner party, refuse to let him go back to school as a punishment. This interdiction is violated when Ron and his two brothers, Fred and George, turn up at Harry's aunt and uncle's home in a flying car and break him out of his room.

\*Here the villain is supposed to appear. The readers soon get an introduction to the villain: Mr. Malfoy, Draco's father, slips an old diary into Ron's sister, Ginny's, cauldron

when the families cross path at the bookstore in Diagon Alley. This diary contains the memory of sixteen-year-old Tom Riddle (Voldemort), though neither the readers nor the characters in the story are aware of it. As such, quite a lot of plot happens before the villain makes himself known.

4. Reconnaissance – The memory of Riddle that lives within the diary spends most of the novel trying to gain information about Harry.
5. Delivery of Information – Ginny provides information about Harry to Riddle through the pages of the diary by means of her journal entries.
6. Trickery – By acting sympathetic to Ginny's fears and trials, Riddle earns her trust and begins to manipulate her thoughts and actions.
7. Complicity – Ginny allows Riddle to enter her mind so voluntarily that he ends up possessing her in order to do his bidding. Under his influence, Ginny unknowingly opens the Chamber of Secrets, unleashes Slytherin's monster, and attacks a few students, including Hermione.
8. Villainy – In addition to possessing Ginny and committing all the atrocities listed above while controlling her, Riddle finally takes Ginny into the Chamber of Secrets to drain the life from her body and give his own memory enough life to release Slytherin's monster on his own.
24. A False Hero Presents Unfounded Claims – Throughout the story, Gilderoy Lockhart, the Defense Against the Dark Arts professor, boasts about all of his accomplishments and all of the knowledge he has. Around the time that Ginny is taken, he announces to the other faculty that he has known where the entrance of the Chamber of Secrets was all along.
9. Mediation (the Hero Intervenes) – When the misfortune of Ginny's disappearance is announced, Lockhart (since he apparently knows where the Chamber is located) is sent to find her. Harry and Ron go to find Lockhart to tell them what they know about the Chamber and the monster within it.
10. The Seeker Agrees to or Decides Upon Counteraction – Harry and Ron, upon finding Lockhart and learning that he intends to flee Hogwarts, force Lockhart into going to the Chamber. They choose to accompany him to make sure that Ginny is rescued.
11. Departure – Harry, Ron, and Lockhart head out to find the Chamber, which they locate in Moaning Myrtle's bathroom.
15. Spatial Transference – After opening the entrance to the Chamber, Harry, Ron, and Lockhart descend into it. Much as in book one, this descent represents the transition from the safe world of Hogwarts to the unsafe world of the Chamber, where they have no protection from the inhabitants of the rest of the castle.
28. The False Hero or Villain is Exposed – When they make it into the antechamber, Lockhart informs Harry and Ron that he did not actually perform the famous deeds that he claims he has done; instead, he modified the memory of the wizards who did those deeds and took the credit. He steals Ron's wand and attempts to wipe Harry and Ron's memory, but the horrible condition of Ron's broken wand causes the charm to backfire, resulting in Lockhart's loss of his own memory. The force of the charm causes a section of the tunnel to fall between Harry and Ron, forcing Harry to continue on his own. Though the rest of the Wizarding world remains ignorant of Lockhart's true nature, he exposes himself to Harry and Ron.

12. The First Function of the Donor (the Hero is Tested) – When he finally enters the Chamber, Harry meets Riddle. Riddle tests Harry with the information that he is in fact Lord Voldemort, though in the form of a memory.
  13. The Hero's Reaction – Harry argues with Riddle, stands up to him, and defends Dumbledore when Riddle insults him. This defense of Dumbledore signifies that Harry passes the tests because Fawkes, Dumbledore's phoenix, appears.
  - \*The donor enters here. In this case, the donor is again Dumbledore. He arrives in the form of Fawkes, however.
  14. Provision or Receipt of Magical Agent – Fawkes brings Harry the Sorting Hat, with the sword of Gryffindor tucked inside. It initially seems as though the sword appears accidentally, but it is actually Harry's courage and devotion to Dumbledore that causes the sword to appear directly to him.
  16. Struggle Between the Hero and Villain – Riddle releases Slytherin's monster, which turns out to be a Basilisk, which is a giant serpent that can kill as easily as looking into the eyes of its victim. Fawkes blinds the Basilisk, but Harry has to fight it. By fighting the Basilisk, Harry in turn is fighting Riddle.
  17. The Hero is Branded – During their struggle, Harry stabs the roof of the Basilisk's mouth with the sword of Gryffindor. At the same time, one of the Basilisk's fangs stabs Harry's arm, leaving a sort of brand on his arm that represents this fight.
  18. Victory of the Hero – Harry defeats the Basilisk, so, by extension, he beats Riddle. Victory is truly Harry's, however, when he takes the Basilisk fang that was lodged in his arm and stabs the diary multiple times, effectively killing the memory of Riddle.
  30. The Villain is Punished – By stabbing the diary, Harry kills the memory of Riddle. As Harry, Voldemort, and the readers will learn later in the series, Harry actually kills a Horcrux (a bit of Voldemort's soul) when he stabs the diary, which leaves Voldemort even more vulnerable than before their encounter. In the same sense as book one, Riddle is not punished in the sense that he is put to justice for his crimes, but he is punished because he loses another piece of his soul.
  19. The Initial Misfortune is Liquidated – By stabbing the diary and killing the memory of Riddle, Harry saves Ginny's life. She soon returns to consciousness.
  20. Return of the Hero – Fawkes lifts Harry, Ron, Ginny, and Lockhart from the Chamber. They return to the protection and safety of the world of Hogwarts.
  29. The Hero is Given a New Appearance – Again like book one, Harry is not given a completely new appearance, but Madam Pomfrey ensures that he is good as new when she heals his many wounds.
  27. The Hero is Recognized – Dumbledore gives both Harry and Ron special awards for services to the school. Additionally, the hard work of Madam Pomfrey and Professor Sprout pays off when they create and administer the mandrake potion that wakes all the students who were petrified by Slytherin's monster. They are recognized as well.
- Missing Functions – 21, Pursuit of the Hero by Villain; 22, Rescue of the Hero from Pursuit; 23, Unrecognized Arrival of the Hero; 25, A Difficult Task is Proposed to the Hero; 26, The Task is Resolved; 31, The Hero is Married and Ascends the Throne.

Book Three: Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

- α – Initial Situation: Harry has returned to his aunt and uncle's home after completing his second year at Hogwarts. Harry receives a letter from Hogwarts informing him that third-year students are allowed to enter the village of Hogsmeade on certain weekends if a parent/guardian is willing to sign a permission form. Harry is nervous about asking his uncle.
2. Interdiction – Harry asks Uncle Vernon if he would be willing to sign a permission form for school. Uncle Vernon says that he will only if Harry is on his best behavior while Vernon's sister, Marge, is staying with them.
  3. Violation of Interdiction – Angry at Marge's taunts about his dead parents, Harry accidentally inflates her body; she floats away from the Dursleys' house. This violates the agreement that Harry had with Uncle Vernon.
  1. Absentation – Fearing that the magic he used to inflate Marge will result in his expulsion from Hogwarts, Harry flees his aunt's and uncle's home.
- \*The villain, Sirius Black, enters the story here. Harry sees him in the form of a great black dog as he is leaving the Dursleys'.
4. Reconnaissance – Sirius tries to gather information about Harry and Peter Pettigrew (though neither Harry nor the readers are aware of the existence of Peter Pettigrew until much later). Sirius sees Harry outside of the Dursleys' home, when he watches Harry play Quidditch, and when he sneaks into the castle to find Pettigrew.
  5. Delivery of Information – Sirius' sneaky attempts to learn about Pettigrew and Harry pay off, especially when he befriends Hermione's cat, Crookshanks, who becomes his ally and helper.
  6. Trickery – As an Animagus, Sirius can transform his appearance into a dog at will. This disguise tricks the dementors – the guards of Azkaban prison – and it also fools Harry, Ron, Hermione, and all the other residents of Hogwarts. Unfortunately, it does not fool Pettigrew, who Sirius is really after.
- \*A significant amount of the book passes before the story reaches the remaining functions. It is during this time that Sirius is doing his reconnaissance work.
8. Villainy – When Harry, Ron, and Hermione are coming back to the castle after visiting Hagrid one evening, Sirius, in the form of a dog, runs at Ron, grabs his leg, and drags him through a tunnel that begins at the base of a large and violent tree.
  9. Mediation (the Hero Intervenes) – Harry and Hermione, not knowing who the dog is, rush in pursuit. Their goal is to save Ron.
  7. Complicity – Even though their only objective is to save Ron, they are actually complying with one of Sirius' greatest desires: to meet Harry.
  10. The Seeker Agrees to or Decides Upon Counteraction – Harry and Hermione agree to counteract Sirius' act of villainy instantly; they immediately dart after Ron and Sirius without a second thought. This function occurs simultaneously with function 9.
  11. Departure – When Harry and Hermione are finally able to slide into the tunnel beneath the big tree's violently swinging branches, they depart from the world of Hogwarts and head towards the unknown.
  15. Spatial Transference – This happens when Harry and Hermione continue through the tunnel in the hopes of finding Ron. They are leaving the familiar landscape of Hogwarts and enter an area without safety and protection.
- \*The donors – both Sirius and Lupin – appear here.

12. The First Functions of the Donor (the Hero is Tested) – When Harry and Hermione reach the end of the tunnel, they find that they are in the Shrieking Shack, an abandoned house located in Hogsmeade that is rumored to be haunted. They also learn that the black dog was Sirius in disguise. When Lupin turns up, they learn the truth about Sirius and how Harry’s parents were betrayed. Unlike what they believed, it was Pettigrew who was responsible for his parents’ murder, not Sirius.
28. The False Hero or Villain is Exposed – The true villain, Pettigrew, is exposed both literally and metaphorically. Sirius and Lupin explain the truth about Pettigrew’s past to Harry, but they also meet him personally; Pettigrew could transform into a rat, and, as it turns out, was hiding with Ron and the Weasley family as their pet for the last twelve years.
13. The Hero’s Reaction – Harry finally understands who betrayed his parents; he believes the story of Sirius and Lupin. When he learns that Sirius and Lupin want to kill Pettigrew, he shows mercy. He suggests taking Pettigrew up to the castle, so that the truth can be known by the whole Wizarding world.
- \*While walking back up to the castle, Lupin sees the full moon. He transforms into a werewolf. Instead of Sirius being the villain, Lupin becomes the new danger; everyone must run from him.
21. Pursuit of the Hero by Villain – Lupin, as the werewolf, pursues both Harry and Sirius (who has become a kind of hero).
- (22). Rescue of Hero from Pursuit – Hermione, as she travels in time, calls out to Lupin using a werewolf howl and leads Lupin away from Harry and Sirius.
- \*After Lupin runs away from Harry and Sirius, they encounter another villain: the dementors that were stationed on the grounds of Hogwarts that come to take Sirius’ soul (since Sirius is a prisoner on the loose).
16. Struggle Between the Hero and Villain – Harry repeatedly tries to ward off the dementors using the Patronus Charm, but to no avail.
17. The Hero is Branded – Since Harry’s strength is so depleted at this point, both he and Sirius end up unconscious, which can be considered a metaphorical brand.
- (18). Victory of the Hero – Harry, as he travels in time, conjures the Patronus Charm and saves the unconscious forms of both Sirius and himself from the dementors.
20. Return of the Hero – While unconscious, Snape finds Harry and Sirius and brings them up to the castle. This marks Harry’s return to the safety and protection of Hogwarts. Ron, Hermione, Lupin, and Sirius are brought back as well. Pettigrew managed to escape throughout the ordeal.
24. A False Hero Presents Unfounded Claims – Snape, having “rescued” everyone, explains to Dumbledore that he has caught Sirius, the escaped criminal. Since Snape did not hear the true story, his claims are unfounded. He is also a false hero because he did not do any rescuing – Harry and Hermione, as they travelled back through time, did this.
25. A Difficult Task is Proposed to the Hero – When Harry, Hermione, and Ron awaken in the hospital wing, Dumbledore comes in and informs them that Sirius has been caught and the dementors are preparing to take his soul. After hearing Lupin’s account of the story, however, Dumbledore believes that Sirius is innocent. He asks Harry and Hermione to travel back through time and save Sirius and Hagrid’s hippogriff, Buckbeak.

14. Provision or Receipt of Magical Agent – Hermione tells Harry about her time-turner, which has allowed her to take so many classes throughout the year. They use it to travel back in time.
26. The Task is Resolved – Harry and Hermione complete the task and fulfill the functions that appear in parentheses (functions 22 and 18).
19. The Initial Misfortune is Liquidated – Harry and Hermione save Sirius and Buckbeak. Even though the Wizarding world still believes that Sirius is guilty, Harry learns the truth, which is all that matters.
23. Unrecognized Arrival of the Hero – Harry and Hermione return from their mission without anyone seeing them except for Dumbledore. This is critical because it creates the illusion that Sirius mysteriously escaped without the help of anyone.
27. The Hero is Recognized – Though Dumbledore does not formally recognize Harry, Ron, and Hermione in front of the school, he privately acknowledges the heroics of their actions.
29. The Hero is Given a New Appearance – Again, Harry, Ron, and Hermione are simply healed of their wounds by Madam Pomfrey in the hospital wing.
30. The Villain is Punished – Technically, the true villain, Pettigrew, is not punished; he escapes the clutches of Sirius and Lupin and flees to rejoin Voldemort. Lupin, however, is punished for his actions as a werewolf: he is forced to resign from his post as Defense Against the Dark Arts professor.

\*Functions marked in parenthesis denote events that happen while Harry and Hermione travel through time.

Missing Function – 31, The Hero is Married and Ascends the Throne.

#### Book Four: Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

α – Initial Situation: Harry is at the Dursleys' house after his third year at Hogwarts. He does not stay there long, however, because the Weasleys invite him to join them for the Quidditch World Cup.

1. Absentation – Harry leaves the Dursleys' house to go stay with Ron and his family.
  2. Interdiction – This occurs when Harry, Hermione, and the Weasley family are at the Quidditch World Cup. After the match, Voldemort's Death Eaters arrive and wreak havoc on the campsites. Mr. Weasley orders Harry, Ron, and Hermione to run back to the portkey and stay out of trouble.
  3. Violation of Interdiction – In the chaos of the event, Harry gets separated from Ron and Hermione and cannot find his way back to the portkey. Though Harry cannot follow orders, he is able to witness a strange man cast Voldemort's Dark Mark into the sky.
- \*The villain is supposed to enter here. When Harry, Ron, and Hermione head back to Hogwarts for their first year, Professor Moody makes a grand entrance. Though the characters and the readers are unaware, Moody is the villain/false hero of the story.
24. A False Hero Presents Unfounded Claims – The primary false claim is that Moody is a good guy. He is falsely understood to be a professor, but he actually has very sinister plans in mind. This function happens throughout the book, because Moody pretends to be Harry's advisor and supporter.
  8. Villainy – Moody, as the villain, illegally enters Harry into the Triwizard Tournament. The Hogwarts community does not realize that it was Moody who entered Harry, but

this sets the plot in motion and signifies his ultimate act of villainy: leading Harry to Voldemort.

10. The Seeker Agrees to or Decides Upon Counteraction – Harry agrees to compete in the Tournament. This function is a bit of a stretch because Harry does not have any choice in the matter; Ministry of Magic officials decide that Harry must compete.
11. Departure – The departure is metaphorical. As soon as Harry agrees to compete, he leaves the comfort and enjoyment of simply being a spectator to the Tournament and instead must put himself in harm's way. He is also distanced from a metaphorical home for some time because Ron, his best friend, won't speak to him out of jealousy.
4. Reconnaissance – Similar to function 24, Moody spends the majority of the book as the professor of Defense Against the Dark Arts, but he is, in reality, gathering information on the Triwizard Tournament and on Harry.
5. Delivery of Information – While the false Moody (Barty Crouch, Jr.) searches for information, he receives bits and pieces at multiple stages in the book. He learns, for example, what each task will entail (this will help the false Moody help Harry advance), and he learns what his father, Barty Crouch, is doing (which allows the false Moody to murder him).
6. Trickery – Moody pretends to have Harry's best interest at heart; he gives him a lot of practical advice and covers for him when he needs it.
7. Complicity – Harry completely falls into Moody's trap and actually believes that he, as a professor, is looking out for him. It is not only Harry who believes Moody's rouse, however; Dumbledore and all of the staff members believe Moody's intentions to be good.
- \*The donor who appears before the three tests (the three tasks of the Tournament) is Moody.
12. The First Functions of the Donor (the Hero is Tested) – Harry goes through the three tasks of the Triwizard Tournament. In these tasks, his mind, his body, and his courage are all tested. Though the donor (Moody) doesn't test him, many hostile creatures seek to challenge him.
13. The Hero's Reaction – Harry miraculously withstands all of the intended Triwizard Tournament tasks.
9. Mediation (the Hero Intervenes) – In the final task, Moody puts a spell on one of the contestants, who tries to stop the others (except Harry) from advancing. Harry intervenes and rescues his fellow contestants. At the end, Harry and Cedric, the other contestant from Hogwarts, choose to take the prize together.
14. Provision or Receipt of Magical Agent – The magical agent in this case is the Triwizard Cup. When Harry and Cedric take it together, they don't realize that it is the magical agent.
15. Spatial Transference – Because the Triwizard Cup is a portkey, Harry and Cedric are literally transported through the air. They land in the graveyard of Voldemort's father.
17. The Hero is Branded – Readers find out that Harry is brought to the graveyard in order to participate in the spell that gives Voldemort his own body to inhabit. Harry's forearm is sliced open so that his blood can be used for the spell. The cut acts as a brand.

16. Struggle Between the Hero and Villain – Harry comes face to face with Voldemort again, though this time Voldemort has his own body. They duel.
  18. Victory – Harry “wins” the duel because he is able to distract Voldemort and get back to the Triwizard Cup (which transports him back to Hogwarts). It is not a complete victory, however, because Voldemort is now fully alive and more threatening, and Cedric was killed in the process of their reunion.
  20. The Hero Returns – The Triwizard Cup transports Harry and Cedric’s body back to Hogwarts, which happens in the same way that they are transported to the graveyard. Harry also happens to be fleeing from Voldemort. Though Propp makes a distinction between the two forms of return, the form becomes negligible in this case.
  19. The Initial Misfortune is Liquidated – Harry’s misfortune at being placed in the Triwizard Tournament is resolved because he was able not only to win, but he was able to escape his encounter with Voldemort alive.
  21. Pursuit of the Hero by Villain – Though Voldemort cannot pursue Harry, Moody immediately removes Harry from the scene and takes him up to his office. Though Harry doesn’t recognize the danger at the time, Moody takes him up to kill him because Voldemort was unable to do so.
  22. Rescue of Hero from Pursuit – When Harry realizes Moody’s intentions, he tries to escape but isn’t able to. Fortunately, Dumbledore, McGonagall, and Snape come to his rescue.
  28. The False Hero or Villain is Exposed – Snape gives Moody a truth potion to make him confess his true identity. Instead of being the real Moody, Barty Crouch, Jr., took a potion throughout the whole book to make himself look like the real Moody.
  30. The Villain is Punished – Barty Crouch, Jr., is kept under lock and key and is given the dementor’s kiss (meaning his soul was sucked from his body). Voldemort, however, is not punished because he was not caught.
  27. The Hero is Recognized – Dumbledore and some of Harry’s friends recognize that Harry overcame remarkable obstacles in the graveyard. Cedric’s parents thank him for bringing back the body.
  29. The Hero is Given a New Appearance – Madam Pomfrey, again, heals his wounds. The cut on his arm goes away after her care.
  23. Unrecognized Hero Returns Home – Harry is unrecognized in the sense that the rest of the Wizarding world (except Dumbledore and a select few others) does not believe that Voldemort has returned to life. Instead, they believe that Harry is a raving lunatic who is making up ridiculous stories about his interactions with Voldemort.
  28. The False Hero or Villain is Exposed – This function is repeated. Instead of the false hero being exposed, Voldemort, the true villain is exposed. This happens when Dumbledore tells the students of Hogwarts that Voldemort murdered Cedric. Some people believe him, but most do not.
- Missing Functions – 25, A Difficult Task is Proposed to the Hero; 26, The Task is Resolved; and 31, The Hero is Married and Ascends the Throne

*Book Five: Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*

α – Initial Situation: Harry is at his aunt and uncle’s house again, anxiously waiting for his fifth year at Hogwarts to begin. Because he saw Voldemort return shortly before his

return to the Dursleys' home, Harry is desperate for news. One evening, Harry and his cousin Dudley run into a couple dementors that try to attack them. They have to perform magic to fend them off, which results in trouble with the Ministry of Magic.

1. Absentation – Harry is finally allowed to leave the Dursleys' house and return to the magical world because a group of wizards comes to retrieve him in the middle of the night. Harry is taken to Sirius' house, Grimmauld Place, for the remainder of the summer.

\*Almost the entire book passes before the other functions are fulfilled.

4. Reconnaissance – Throughout the book, Voldemort and his Death Eaters are looking for a secret weapon (which is a prophecy that contains vital information) that they believe will help them finally defeat Harry. Harry (and therefore the reader) catches glimpses of this snooping a few different times, when he continues to see a strange door at the end of a hallway in his dreams. The most prominent time that Harry witnesses the reconnaissance is when he is in the mind of Voldemort's snake and sees the snake attack Mr. Weasley.

2. Interdiction – After Harry witnesses the attack of Mr. Weasley, Dumbledore orders him to take Occlumency lessons with Snape so that he might close his mind against Voldemort.

5. Delivery of Information – Voldemort learns all he can about the secret weapon, but he can learn everything he needs to know only if Harry comes to the Ministry to take it for him. Voldemort's plan then becomes to lure Harry to the Ministry.

3. Violation of Interdiction – Angry that Dumbledore is ignoring Harry and curious about what is beyond the door that he continues to dream about, Harry decides to keep his mind open to Voldemort.

6. Trickery – Aware that Harry can see into his mind, Voldemort takes advantage of their connection and plants an image of his torturing Sirius in Harry's head. This forces Harry to come to the Ministry of Magic to save Sirius, which is exactly what Voldemort wants.

7. Complicity – Harry completely falls for this trick because he did not do what Dumbledore warned: he did not close his mind to Voldemort. He wants to rush off to the Ministry to save Sirius immediately.

10. The Seeker Agrees to or Decides Upon Counteraction – Hermione, thinking like Dumbledore, believes that Voldemort put that image in Harry's mind as a trap. She urges Harry to check first at Grimmauld Place to see if Sirius is there before running to the Ministry. Harry, very reluctantly, agrees.

9. Mediation (the Hero Intervenes) – Kreacher, Sirius' servant, tells Harry that Sirius is not at home. Assuming that Sirius was indeed taken by Voldemort, Harry rushes to action. He and five other friends decide to leave Hogwarts to rescue him.

11. Departure – Harry, Hermione, Ron, Ginny, Neville, and Luna all leave for the Ministry.

15. Spatial Transference – The six friends travel to the Ministry by flying on the backs of Thestrals, which are like magical flying horses.

\*The donor usually enters here. Initially, Voldemort and his Death Eaters are the donors because they need to lead Harry to the prophecy (the "weapon" that the book refers to) in order to possess it themselves. Later, Dumbledore and the other members of the Order of the Phoenix assume the role of the helpers because they come to aid the six teenagers.

12. The First Functions of the Donor (the Hero is Tested) – Harry and his friends are first tested with the difficult task of getting into the Ministry of Magic undetected and finding the place where the prophecy is hidden. Unfortunately, Sirius is not there. Voldemort tricked Harry.
14. Provision or Receipt of Magical Agent – Having reached the prophecy, Harry takes it down from the shelf. The Death Eaters appear and try to take it from him, promising Harry that he and his friends will die if he does not hand it over.
13. The Hero's Reaction – Harry and his friends pass all of the Death Eaters' initial tests because they find the prophecy. When the Death Eaters threaten to kill them, they try running away and fighting them. Finally, when they are about to die, Harry hands the prophecy over to Lucius Malfoy, one of the Death Eaters.
16. Struggle Between the Hero and Villain – At the moment that Harry hands over the prophecy, the Order of the Phoenix appears and everyone begins fighting.
19. The Initial Misfortune or Lack is Liquidated – Amid the battle between the Order of the Phoenix and the Death Eaters, Lucius drops the prophecy and it shatters. This ensures that Voldemort never gets this weapon that he desperately wanted.
8. Villainy – Bellatrix, one of the most vicious Death Eaters, kills Sirius, who arrived with the other members of the Order of the Phoenix to save Harry.
23. Unrecognized Arrival of the Hero – During the fight, Dumbledore appears to lend a hand to the Order of the Phoenix. He defends Harry later, making him a kind of hero.
21. Pursuit of the Hero by Villain – Harry, in a rage against Bellatrix for killing Sirius, rushes after her in the hopes of killing her. As he is standing over her, Voldemort appears. Angry that Harry escaped from him in the graveyard at the end of book four, Voldemort is ready to kill him.
22. Rescue of Hero from Pursuit – Dumbledore arrives at the last second and begins to duel Voldemort in place of Harry.
16. Struggle Between the Hero and Villain – This function repeats here. Instead of the Order of the Phoenix battling the Death Eaters, now Dumbledore (and ultimately Harry) battles Voldemort.
17. The Hero is Branded – When Dumbledore out-performs Voldemort in the duel, Voldemort takes a final stab at victory by possessing Harry. Harry is metaphorically branded because he experiences the pain and horror of being possessed by a force as evil as Voldemort.
18. Victory of the Hero – Voldemort, by possessing Harry, hopes to entice Dumbledore into killing Harry in order to kill Voldemort, but Dumbledore doesn't comply. Instead, Harry's strength of mind defeats Voldemort because it forces him to leave his body.
28. The False Hero or Villain is Exposed – As Voldemort leaves Harry's body, officials from the Ministry of Magic walk in. The Ministry employees see that Voldemort has actually come back to life, a fact which they had been ignoring since book four. They also see the Death Eaters for who they really are, including Lucius Malfoy who had pretended to be a friend to the Minister since the original fall of Voldemort 14 years before.
27. The Hero is Recognized – Having recognized that Voldemort has returned, the Ministry finally recognizes that Harry and Dumbledore had been telling the truth for about a year. Suddenly, Harry is recognized for his acts of valor both in the graveyard a year before and at the Ministry that night.

29. The Hero is Given a New Appearance – Harry’s physical appearance is not altered after this battle, but he is given a metaphorical makeover in the sense that Wizarding world no longer sees him as a lying lunatic.
30. The Villain is Punished – Voldemort is never caught, so he is technically never punished. Since the prophecy was smashed, however, he was thwarted. All of the Death Eaters that the Ministry officials were able to catch were sentenced to Azkaban prison.
20. Return of the Hero – Harry and his friends return to Hogwarts to finish the school year. Harry also returns to his metaphorical position as the hero of the Wizarding world, since they now believe his story.
25. A Difficult Task is Proposed to the Hero – When they return to the school, Harry has a long conversation with Dumbledore about what happened at the Ministry. He is able to hear the full prophecy because Dumbledore had a whole copy. In the prophecy Harry learns that he must be the one to kill Voldemort or Voldemort will surely kill him. Learning how to accomplish this task is the true task of the remainder of the series (and was ultimately the true task up to this point as well, though neither the readers nor Harry know it).
- Missing Functions – 24, A False Hero Presents Unfounded Claims; 26, The Task is Resolved; and 31, The Hero is Married and Ascends the Throne.

*Book Six: Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*

- α – Initial Situation: Harry spends a short amount of time with his aunt and uncle in the summer before his sixth year at Hogwarts. Dumbledore comes to retrieve him two weeks into the summer holidays and together they visit Horace Slughorn, an old professor whom Dumbledore is trying to persuade to return to Hogwarts.
1. Absentation – Harry leaves the Dursleys’ home.
- \*There are many villains in this particular book, though they all appear at different times and in varying degrees of evil. For the purposes of this analysis, the villain of the book is Draco Malfoy, Harry’s archenemy.
4. Reconnaissance – From a conversation that Harry overhears on the train to Hogwarts, Harry suspects that Malfoy has joined Voldemort’s Death Eaters and has been given an assignment. The readers know, from the second chapter, that Malfoy is in charge of killing Dumbledore. For the majority of the book, Malfoy is attempting to gather as much information about Dumbledore as possible. He also finds the old Vanishing Cabinet that resides in the Room of Requirement and tries to mend it.
5. Delivery of Information – Malfoy’s allies, the Death Eaters, help him learn what he needs to know about the Vanishing Cabinet. They find a second cabinet in a sinister store on Knockturn Alley, so Malfoy tries to mend them and create a sort of portal. He also manages to learn a lot about Dumbledore, whom he is trying to avoid killing outright. For example, he learns that Dumbledore likes mead, so he tries to send him a bottle of poisoned mead for Christmas.
6. Trickery – Malfoy, in his fear of actually killing Dumbledore, uses many different messengers to hide his true intentions. He has Slughorn give the bottle of mead to him, and he bewitches Katie Bell, another student, to give him a cursed necklace. He also hoodwinks Madam Rosmerta, one of the bartenders in a nearby town, to do his bidding.

7. Complicity – Though Dumbledore never falls for the tricks, the messengers certainly do. Madam Rosmerta has no choice but to submit to Malfoy's will because he has placed her under the Imperius Curse. But Katie Bell, the carrier of the cursed necklace, accidentally touches it and must be hospitalized. Likewise, Professor Slughorn, who unknowingly possesses the poisoned mead, gives it to Ron to drink, who is then poisoned.
  2. Interdiction – While Draco is contemplating and attempting his task of killing Dumbledore, Harry becomes very interested in his old Potions textbook. The textbook's previous owner put many notes in the margins; he changes the potion steps to make them more effective, and he makes his own spells. Ron and Hermione warn Harry that he is becoming too fascinated with the book and should not just perform random spells without first knowing what they will do. This is the first interdiction. In addition to the book, Harry also becomes obsessed with Malfoy's strange behavior and soon believes that Malfoy is plotting to commit some evil act. Bringing his fears to Dumbledore, Dumbledore tells him not to give any thought to Malfoy. This is the second interdiction.
  3. Violation of Interdiction – Harry, despite Dumbledore's admonitions, cannot let go of his obsession with Malfoy's behavior. One afternoon he chooses to follow him in order to learn more about his plans. They duel and Harry uses a spell that he found in the Potions book, which ends up gravely wounding Malfoy.
  9. Mediation (the Hero Intervenes) – This function occurs in relation to yet another part of the plot. While Malfoy is doing his plotting and Harry is obsessing over Malfoy and the Potions book, Harry is taking private lessons with Dumbledore. Together they are going through old memories and trying to learn about Voldemort's past and his motivations. Harry learns about Voldemort's Horcruxes, which are objects that Voldemort used to hold and protect bits of his soul. About halfway into the story, Dumbledore gives Harry the task of extracting a memory from Professor Slughorn; this memory is crucial to their plan regarding how they will defeat Voldemort. Finally, with the help of Felix Felicis (a potion that makes the drinker lucky), Harry is able to extract the memory from Slughorn.
  10. The Seeker Agrees to or Decides Upon Counteraction – When Harry and Dumbledore view Slughorn's memory, Dumbledore asks Harry to accompany him to retrieve a Horcrux that Dumbledore thinks he has found. Before they leave, however, Dumbledore tells Harry that he can only come if he promises to obey any order that Dumbledore might give him, even if that includes leaving Dumbledore and saving himself. Harry agrees to the stipulation, and they prepare to leave.
  11. Departure – Harry and Dumbledore leave the Hogwarts grounds and head to Hogsmeade, the nearby village.
  15. Spatial Transference – When they get to Hogsmeade, they apparate to a small island in the middle of a dark sea. From there, they swim to a cave hidden in the wall of a large cliff. These two forms of transportation (flying and swimming) enable them to get to the Horcrux.
- \*The donor of the story enters here. In this case, the donor is Voldemort because Harry and Dumbledore are trying to take his Horcrux and must enter into his territory to do so.
12. The First Functions of the Donor (the Hero is Tested) – Harry and Dumbledore get to the cave but then must figure out how to open it and then how to get to the Horcrux.

They use their blood as passage (which they give to the cave wall), and they use a small boat to get to the Horcrux, which is located on a small island in the middle of a little lake. Once they are on the island, Dumbledore must drink the potion that the Horcrux is hidden beneath. And then, to get out of the cave, they use fire to distract the Inferi (dead bodies bewitched to do Voldemort's bidding). It is important to note that both Harry and Dumbledore are the heroes of this story.

13. The Hero's Reaction – Harry and Dumbledore are able to withstand the tests, though Dumbledore is severely weakened by the potion that he had to drink.
14. Provision or Receipt of Magical Agent – Harry and Dumbledore get the Horcrux, or what they believe to be the Horcrux anyway. The Horcruxes represent the most powerful and significant magical agents that Harry encounters throughout the series because they are the tools that will allow him to finally defeat Voldemort for good.
15. Spatial Transference – Harry and Dumbledore have to travel again in order to get back to Hogwarts. They swim from the cave, they apparate to Hogsmeade, and they fly on broomsticks back to the castle.
8. Villainy – While Harry and Dumbledore are gone from the castle, Malfoy uses the repaired Vanishing Cabinet and transports a group of Death Eaters into the castle. They cast Voldemort's Dark Mark, hoping that Dumbledore will return to the castle as soon as he sees it so that Malfoy can fulfill Voldemort's orders and kill him. (The Dark Mark typically means that a murder has been committed.)
20. Return of the Hero – Harry and Dumbledore (who are both the heroes) return to the castle to discover why the Dark Mark was cast above the grounds.
23. Unrecognized Arrival of Hero – When Harry and Dumbledore fly to the astronomy tower of Hogwarts, no one knows that they are coming. Hearing voices on the stairs, Dumbledore orders Harry to put the Invisibility Cloak over him and then he freezes Harry so that he cannot move or speak. Malfoy appears, with a slew of Death Eaters following in his wake. Though Dumbledore is recognized to have returned home, neither Malfoy nor the Death Eaters know that Harry is there too, disguised and watching.
8. Villainy – Dumbledore recognizes that Malfoy cannot kill him, so he tries to offer him protection. When the other Death Eaters appear, however, he knows he has lost. In a stunning moment, Snape, whom Dumbledore has trusted for 15 years, kills him and Dumbledore's body falls from the astronomy tower. Snape is now the villain, not Malfoy.
17. The Hero is Branded – Dumbledore is metaphorically branded when Snape hits him with his killing curse.
16. Struggle Between the Hero and Villain – The guards whom Dumbledore stationed at Hogwarts and a few of Harry's friends whom he told to keep watch, have been dueling with the Death Eaters since Malfoy let them into the castle using the Vanishing Cabinet. Harry, while running after Snape and Malfoy, witnesses the struggle. In this case, the struggle is between the good side (the Order of the Phoenix and the professors of Hogwarts) and the bad side (Voldemort's Death Eaters).
21. Pursuit of the Hero by Villain – In this case, this function is inverted. Harry, enraged by the murder of Dumbledore, goes pelting after Snape and Malfoy, who have run through the front doors of the castle towards the gates of the grounds. Harry, the hero, rushes in pursuit of Snape, the villain.

22. Rescue of the Hero from Pursuit – This function is also inverted. Harry, since he is the one in pursuit, is not rescued. Snape, the villain who is being pursued, rescues himself by using a very strong shield charm. This ensures that none of the spells Harry casts in his direction will touch him. The Death Eaters, including Malfoy and Snape, are able to get away.
28. The False Hero or Villain is Exposed – Though Snape's true villainous nature is not exposed to the rest of the students (that the readers know of, anyway), Harry informs his friends and the other professors of Hogwarts that Snape was the one who killed Dumbledore.
29. The Hero is Given a New Appearance – While Harry is, as usual, mended by Madam Pomfrey, it is Dumbledore who gets the new appearance. His body, mangled and broken from the fall from the astronomy tower, is put back together and is embalmed for his funeral. Dumbledore also gets a new appearance in the sense that he now appears in a portrait in the headmaster's office, like all deceased headmasters before him.
27. The Hero is Recognized – Harry is technically not recognized for his actions with Dumbledore in the cave because no one was supposed to know that he accompanied Dumbledore. Dumbledore, on the other hand, is recognized by the entire Wizarding community as one of the greatest wizards ever to live.
25. A Difficult Task is Proposed to the Hero – Though Harry learns this is the course of his private lessons with Dumbledore, it is now explicitly stated that his task is to hunt for the remainder of Voldemort's Horcruxes and destroy them. He also finds out at the end that the Horcrux they found in the cave was actually false, so Harry now has to find that same Horcrux again. He, Ron, and Hermione acknowledge that they will not return to Hogwarts for their seventh year but will instead begin hunting for the Horcruxes.

\*It is important to note that two of the functions—15, Spatial Transference; and 8, Villainy—are repeated once. It is also important to note that function 18, Victory of the Hero, does not happen in this book. This is the first (and last) book in the series where this function is excluded. This signifies that, unlike the previous five books, the adventure to Voldemort's cave that Harry and Dumbledore embarked on is metaphorically not yet complete. This adventure will continue through the next book and will not be completed until Harry finds and destroys all the remaining Horcruxes.

Missing Functions – 18, Victory of the Hero; 24, A False Hero Presents Unfounded Claims; 26, The Task is Resolved; 30, The Villain is Punished; and 31, The Hero is Married and Ascends the Throne.

### Book Seven: Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows

α – Initial Situation: Harry is at the Dursleys' home for the last time. The protective spell that Dumbledore placed on the house when Harry first arrived 16 years earlier breaks the minute that Harry turns 17 (this is when he comes of age as a legal adult). When this protection breaks, Voldemort can find the home and nab Harry. So, while Harry is stuck at the Dursleys', the Order of the Phoenix is trying to figure out how to get Harry out safely, and the Death Eaters and Voldemort are trying to decide how to capture Harry.

8. Villainy – This book is loaded with villainy, but the very first scene of the novel begins with murder. Voldemort and his followers capture and then murder Charity Burbage, the professor of Muggle Studies at Hogwarts. Then, readers learn that Voldemort’s Death Eaters abduct many other people, including Ollivander, the wandmaker, Luna Lovegood, Dean Thomas, and Griphook, the goblin. As one of the major premises in the book, Voldemort also encourages his Death Eaters to purge the Wizarding world of Muggles, so he is indirectly responsible for this villainy as well.
4. Reconnaissance – Throughout this first scene, Voldemort is trying to learn when Harry is being moved from the Dursleys’ house. He is gathering information about Harry in the entire book.
1. Absentation – The first absentation occurs when Harry is removed from the Dursleys’ home, breaking the protective spell and effectively breaking him from his “youth.”
15. Spatial Transference – Because Harry is still underage, he cannot disapparate from the Dursleys’. Harry and the wizards that come to collect him fly through the air to various safe houses across Britain, using a combination of brooms, thestrals (a type of flying horse), and an enchanted motorbike.
10. The Seeker Agrees to or Decides Upon Counteraction – Harry, Ron, and Hermione spend the remainder of the summer at the Weasleys’ home. There they confirm their plans of not returning to Hogwarts for their final year of school and instead travelling and searching for Voldemort’s Horcruxes, hoping to destroy them and finally defeat him for good. This correlates to another absentation: Harry, Ron, and Hermione “leave” the safety of Hogwarts and head out into the dangerous world.
- \*The donor enters here in the form of Dumbledore, who chooses to bestow possessions on Harry, Ron, and Hermione.
14. Provision or Receipt of Magical Agent – The most significant magical agents that Harry, Ron, and Hermione receive are the Horcruxes that they find along their journey. At this point in the story, however, they receive objects from Dumbledore’s will. Harry receives the snitch he caught in his first Quidditch match, Ron receives Dumbledore’s deluminator (a rare object that captures and releases light), and Hermione receives one of Dumbledore’s books, *The Tales of Beedle and the Bard*.
11. Departure – Death Eaters arrive in the midst of Ron’s brother’s wedding, forcing Harry, Ron, and Hermione to make a quick departure. They cannot go back because they know the Death Eaters are watching Ron’s family in the hopes that Harry will show himself at some point. From this point on, they are on their own.
4. Reconnaissance – While Voldemort is still working on capturing Harry and promoting his new aim to rid the Wizarding world of Muggles, Harry, Ron, and Hermione begin their search for the Horcruxes.
5. Delivery of Information – They learn, through the help of Dobby and Kreacher (house elves), that Dolores Umbridge possesses the locket, which is one of Voldemort’s Horcruxes.
9. Mediation (the Hero Intervenes) – Harry, Ron, and Hermione enter the Ministry, hoping to get the Horcrux. This marks the beginning of their adventure.
14. Provision or Receipt of Magical Agent – They find the Horcrux—it is a locket that Dolores Umbridge, a Ministry official, is wearing around her neck. They grab it and run.

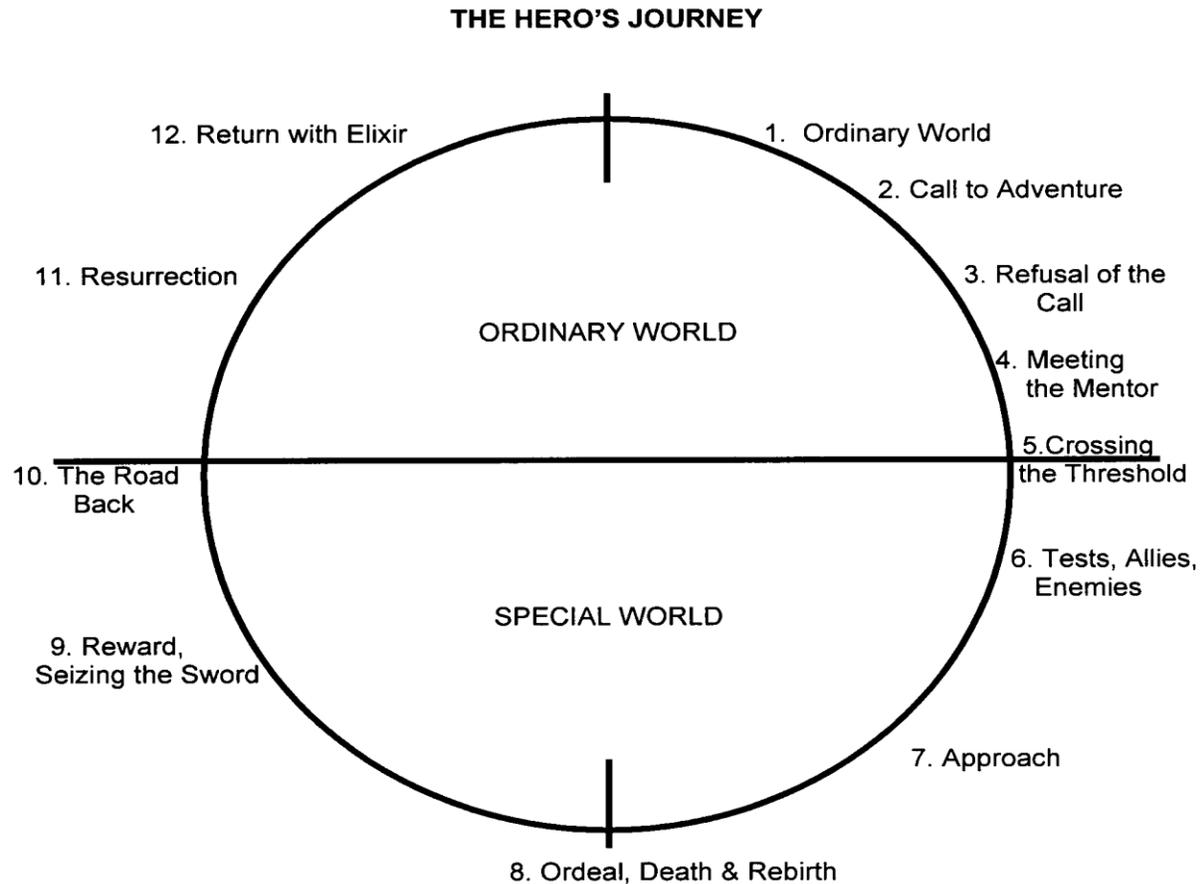
21. Pursuit of the Hero by Villain – The Death Eaters learn that Harry, Ron, and Hermione have entered the Ministry, so they chase them through the whole Ministry and end up finding their hiding place at Sirius' old home.
22. Rescue of Hero from Pursuit – They escape the Death Eaters, but have to find a new place to stay. They use an old tent and make camp in a random forest.
4. Reconnaissance – Harry, Ron, and Hermione continue trying to gather new information about where they might find more Horcruxes.
11. Departure – Upset that they have not made much progress, Ron becomes angry and leaves Harry and Hermione. This is devastating for Harry and Hermione's moral and willingness to keep searching.
6. Trickery – Throughout this whole book, Voldemort is operating almost entirely on deception. Though the population knows that he has returned, they have no idea where he is. There is a part in the book that discusses this: instead of simply coming out and declaring himself the ultimate ruler, he creates an air of mystery and fear because people do not know when he will turn up. In this way, he manages to deceive most of the Wizarding community. He uses deception particularly well in this next part of the book. He disguises his snake, Nagini, in the body of the dead Bathilda Bagshot.
7. Complicity – When Harry and Hermione journey to Godric's Hollow to speak with Bathilda, they both fall for Voldemort's deception. Fortunately, Harry is able to see through the disguise before the snake is able to capture them and they are able to escape unharmed.
28. The False Hero or Villain is Exposed – The largest "false hero" of the story is Dumbledore because it is in this book that the Wizarding community learns of his dubious actions he took in his youth. Harry finds his autobiography at Bathilda's home and takes it to read when they get back to the tent. Harry feels betrayed by the Dumbledore he used to know because he wishes that Dumbledore would have trusted him with the secrets of his past.
6. Trickery – Harry takes the night watch at the tent, a silver doe appears near their campsite. Harry (and the readers) learns later that Snape sent the doe to lead Harry to the sword of Gryffindor.
12. The First Functions of the Donor (the Hero is Tested) – Harry, Ron, and Hermione are never simply given things in this book; they are always tested before they can retrieve or use the objects they are searching for. This test of the sword is arguably the most important test because without it they cannot hope to destroy the Horcruxes.
13. The Hero's Reaction – Harry follows the doe, even though it would probably be smarter not to do so. When he sees the sword lying at the bottom of the pool of water, his obvious reaction is to jump in, regardless of the danger.
14. Provision or Receipt of Magical Agent – Thanks to the help of Ron, who appears out of nowhere to help, they are able to get the sword.
2. Interdiction – Ron warns Harry and Hermione not to use Voldemort's name. The Death Eaters made it taboo so that they can track and find any person who uses the name.
4. Reconnaissance – They head to visit Xenophilous Lovegood to learn about a weird symbol that has been cropping up.

24. A False Hero Presents Unfounded Claims – Xenophilous Lovegood is a false hero because he pretends to be supportive of Harry and his mission to defeat Voldemort, but he tries to sell Harry to the Death Eaters in order to get his daughter, Luna, back.
5. Delivery of Information – During their conversation, they learn about the Deathly Hallows. Harry puts most of Dumbledore’s plans together and learns that acquiring all the Deathly Hallows in addition to destroying all the Horcruxes will help him defeat Voldemort.
3. Violation of Interdiction – When Harry is figuring out the mystery of the Hallows, he gets a bit too excited and accidentally says Voldemort’s name. Some Death Eaters show up and catch Harry, Ron, and Hermione.
29. The Hero is Given a New Appearance – When Hermione realizes that they are about to be captured by the Death Eaters, she sends a stinging jinx at Harry’s face to disguise his true identity. The Death Eaters think they see a scar, so they take them to the Malfoy home to have Draco Malfoy identify him.
8. Villainy – While Harry and Ron are in the dungeons at the Malfoy home, Bellatrix tortures Hermione to try and get information.
15. Spatial Transference – Through luck and a magic mirror, Harry contacts a stranger who has been watching over them. The stranger, who is Dumbledore’s brother, sends Dobby the house elf to rescue Harry, Ron, Hermione, Luna, Dean, Griphook, and Mr. Ollivander (the last three were prisoners of the Malfoys for a long time). They manage to escape and fly through the air towards Ron’s brother Bill’s home.
4. Reconnaissance – Harry, based on Bellatrix’s hysterical reaction to seeing the sword of Gryffindor (it was supposed to be in her vault at Gringott’s bank), figures that there might be a Horcrux in her vault. Harry, Ron, and Hermione make plans and gather information so that they can break into the vault and retrieve the Horcrux.
12. The First Functions of the Donor (the Hero is Tested) – Harry, Ron, and Hermione have to pass through many obstacles in order to get into Bellatrix’s vault.
13. The Hero’s Reaction – Harry, Ron, and Hermione are able to withstand the tests.
14. Provision or Receipt of Magical Agent – They acquire the Horcrux.
21. Pursuit of the Hero by Villain – Though the guards at Gringotts are not villains, they try to stop Harry, Ron, and Hermione from leaving with the Horcrux. They chase them throughout the bank in the effort to stop them.
15. Spatial Transference – To escape the guards of Gringotts, Harry, Ron, and Hermione jump on the back of the dragon that is also guarding the vault. They release the dragon from the chains that bind him and they fly away on his back. After learning that Voldemort has located the Elder Wand (the third Hallow), Harry realizes that they have to head back to Hogwarts to find the last Horcrux. Harry, Ron, and Hermione go to Hogsmeade to try and find a way into the castle.
21. Pursuit of the Hero by Villain – The Death Eaters who are watching the town of Hogsmeade hear Harry, Ron, and Hermione arrive, so they chase after them.
22. Rescue of Hero from Pursuit – Dumbledore’s brother, Aberforth, comes out of his pub in Hogsmeade and brings Harry, Ron, and Hermione inside. He distracts the Death Eaters and gets them to disappear.
20. Return of the Hero – With the help of Aberforth, Harry, Ron, and Hermione are able to enter Hogwarts unseen. This essentially marks their return home because Hogwarts is the only home that Harry believes he ever had.

12. The First Functions of the Donor (the Hero is Tested) – Harry, with the help of Ron, Hermione, Professor McGonagall, and the Gray Lady (the ghost of Ravenclaw Tower), is able to locate another Horcrux. He believes it is in the Room of Requirement.
21. Pursuit of the Hero by Villain – Seeing Harry sneak off to the Room of Requirement, Draco Malfoy follows him and hopes to catch him. He and his cronies, Crabbe and Goyle, chase Harry, Ron, and Hermione through the Room of Requirement.
13. The Hero's Reaction – Harry, Ron, and Hermione are able to escape the Room of Requirement.
14. Provision or Receipt of Magical Agent – Harry acquires the Horcrux.
16. Struggle Between the Hero and Villain – While Harry is looking for the Horcrux, the rest of the castle prepares for battle. As they find the Horcrux, the battle begins. This battle is not between Harry and Voldemort but between the side of good and the side of evil.
17. The Hero is Branded – While the battle rages, Harry, Ron, and Hermione search for Voldemort, knowing that his snake, Nagini, is with him. They need to find the Nagini and kill her because she is the last Horcrux. When they finally find Voldemort, they see Nagini kill Professor Snape (whom Voldemort believes to be one of his most loyal followers) on Voldemort's orders. Snape is branded by the snake's bites and branded metaphorically by death for his service to Voldemort.
25. A Difficult Task is Proposed to the Hero – Throughout the book Harry, Ron, and Hermione have to endure difficult tasks. The whole book is arguably one huge task: find the Horcruxes and finally defeat Voldemort. The biggest task, however, happens after Nagini bites Snape. Voldemort leaves Snape to die and Harry runs to him. Snape gives Harry his memories, and Harry learns that Snape was working to protect Harry and defeat Voldemort ever since Voldemort murdered Harry's mother, whom Snape loved. While Harry is viewing Snape's memories, he also learns that part of Voldemort's soul lives within Harry: Harry is the final Horcrux. Because of this revelation, Harry must die and Voldemort must kill him. This is the biggest task: Harry needs to meet Voldemort and willingly allow himself to be killed.
27. The Hero is Recognized – Through these memories, Harry begins to see Snape for the hero that he truly was. Though Snape is not recognized formally by anyone other than Harry, this is still a critical step for Harry.
26. The Task is Resolved – Harry meets Voldemort and intentionally dies. His death at the hands of Voldemort kills the Horcrux that hides within him.
23. Unrecognized Arrival of the Hero – While he is "dead," Harry speaks with Dumbledore and learns that he is able to return to the world of the living because Voldemort took his blood three years ago, which tethers Harry to life. He returns to life but lets everyone believe that he is still dead so that he can revive at the proper moment.
19. The Initial Misfortune is Liquidated – Voldemort brings Harry's body up to the castle to let the Wizarding community see that their fight is over and that Voldemort has won. It is during Voldemort's speech when Neville kills Nagini, the final Horcrux. Killing Nagini means that all Horcruxes have been destroyed and it is only Voldemort's current form that needs to be defeated.

16. Struggle Between the Hero and Villain – After Nagini is killed and pandemonium ensues, Harry reveals that he is alive and begins to fight with Voldemort. They have a final duel.
  18. Victory of the Hero – Harry wins the duel and Voldemort is finally defeated for good.
  30. The Villain is Punished – Voldemort is never truly punished for his actions because he is never tried in court or locked in prison. His death is his punishment.
  27. The Hero is Recognized – Harry is recognized by the entire Wizarding community as the hero who defeated Voldemort.
  31. The Hero is Married and Ascends the Throne – In the Epilogue, readers learn that Harry marries Ginny and has three children. Though there is no throne for him, his conquering of Voldemort puts him on the metaphorical throne of being one of the most revered wizards to have ever lived.
- \*In this book, Rowling uses every single function outlined by Propp—this is the first time in the series where Rowling does this, and ending on the final function wraps up the series as a folktale quite nicely. Certain functions are also repeated often in this book, which is also the first time in the series where Rowling does this. The repetition demonstrates the true complexity of the plot.

## II. Analysis of the Mythic Structure Using Joseph Campbell's Heroic Journey



### Book One: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

1. Ordinary World – Harry's Muggle life with the Dursleys'. He doesn't know who he really is and he continues to live in neglect.
2. Call to Adventure – The letter arrives, showing that someone knows that Harry exists and even knows where he sleeps (the cupboard under the stairs).
3. Refusal of the Call – Harry wants the letter, but the Dursleys' refuse to let him read one. Technically this is not the same as Harry refusing the call, but it can still work. When Hagrid arrives for stage four, Harry cannot believe that he is worthy to be a wizard—this is more of the classic refusal.
4. Meeting the Mentor – Hagrid appears and tells Harry who he really is.
5. Crossing the Threshold – Harry goes to Hogwarts, finally leaving the Muggle world. The barrier in this stage is physical: Harry enters Diagon Alley through a secret entrance in the Leaky Cauldron (a bar and hotel that only wizards can see).
6. Tests, Allies, Enemies – Harry goes through many tests of character (potions lessons, the troll encounter, Quidditch, etc.) and along the way makes many new friends (Ron, Hermione, Neville, Hagrid, etc.) and makes a few enemies as well (Malfoy, Snape).
7. Approach – Harry, Ron, and Hermione begin to learn about the Sorcerer's Stone and begin to suspect Snape of trying to steal it. The approach lasts up until they decide to go down the trapdoor and stop Snape.

8. Ordeal, Death, and Rebirth – Their journey under the trapdoor is certainly an ordeal. Ron metaphorically dies, Harry also metaphorically dies (collapses unconscious), and Quirrell literally dies. Harry and Ron and Hermione are reborn—they come out from under the trapdoor. Harry is also reborn because he has learned from his encounter with Voldemort and again survives when he is not supposed to.
  9. Reward, Seizing the Sword – Harry technically gets the stone before he is reborn and before Quirrell dies, but the death of Quirrell and the flight of Voldemort solidify Harry's retrieval of the stone.
  10. The Road Back – Harry reawakens in the hospital wing.
  11. Resurrection – Harry receives recognition from Dumbledore in front of the whole school, restoring Harry's popularity and Gryffindor's good standing. They end the year with a bang.
  12. Return with Elixir – This might be a bit of a stretch, but Harry is able to return to the Muggle world for the summer only because he knows that he will soon be back at Hogwarts. Knowing his true identity is its own form of elixir for Harry.
- \* This journey can also be applied in two other ways: Harry enters a special world when he enters the forest and ultimately comes across Voldemort's path, and he enters a special world when he goes beneath the trapdoor. Those two segments in the story can be considered separate journeys of Harry the hero. I chose to apply the analysis to the overall journey presented by the entire text of the book.

*Book Two: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

1. Ordinary World – Because Harry is now used to the world of Hogwarts, I am considering his time there as time spent in the "Ordinary World." The Muggle world might be an extension of the Ordinary World because it is also a normal experience for Harry. So in the second book, Harry is in the Ordinary World while he is on Privet Drive with his family and when he is at Hogwarts.
2. Call to Adventure – This is more difficult to distinguish. The call to adventure begins as soon as Harry starts to hear the strange voice.
3. Refusal of the Call – Harry does not really ever "refuse" the call to adventure, but his not telling Professor Dumbledore that he can hear the voice shows his fear and hesitation: he thinks something is wrong with him.
4. Meeting the Mentor – Though it is a bit twisted, the mentor could easily be the Tom Riddle whom he meets and talks to in the diary. Tom shows him how he framed Hagrid, which ends up giving Harry a lot of information and desire to figure out what really happened fifty years earlier.
5. Crossing the Threshold – This happens when Ginny is taken into the chamber. Harry, Ron, and Lockhart cross into the special world as soon as they go beneath the school. Harry physically enters the chamber when he uses Parseltongue to open the door.
6. Tests, Allies, and Enemies – Harry finally gets to see the memory of Riddle in the flesh (but only because Ginny is dying). Initially, Harry views Riddle as an ally but soon discovers who Riddle actually is: Voldemort. Riddle taunts him with information and threats of death, but Harry stays true to Dumbledore and therefore is sent his major ally: Fawkes and the sorting hat and sword.

7. Approach – The approach includes everything involving the confrontation with the Basilisk. This could be a combination of the events after Fawkes appears to Harry and ending with Harry stabbing the Basilisk in the mouth.
  8. Ordeal, Death, and Rebirth – Though the encounter with the Basilisk is certainly an ordeal, the biggest confrontation or triumph is when Harry takes the Basilisk fang and stabs the diary. This kills the memory of Riddle (death), and it also brings Ginny back to consciousness (rebirth).
  9. Reward, Seizing the Sword – The ultimate reward is saving Ginny, but defeating Voldemort yet again is another huge victory for Harry. Killing the monster that was petrifying the students is also significant.
  10. The Road Back – Harry and Ginny make their way back through the collapsed tunnel towards Ron and Lockhart. Fawkes carries them all back up to the school.
  11. Resurrection – This occurs when Ginny is brought back into the ordinary world. This could also be when the people who were petrified are returned to consciousness. It is this that allows Harry and Ron to reconnect with Hermione.
  12. Return with Elixir – When Harry returns from the chamber, he brings back the sword of Gryffindor, as well as the old diary of Riddle. This allows Dumbledore to discover Voldemort’s ultimate secret (which the reader doesn’t know until book 6). Another form of elixir could be that Harry has restored his good reputation and popularity because he is no longer suspected of the actions done by the Basilisk.
- \* The other way of looking at this could be the journey that Ron and Harry make into the Forbidden Forest to “follow the spiders.” The Forest could certainly be considered another Special World. Or, one could analyze this book in a manner similar to how I analyzed the first book: the Ordinary World being the home that Harry shares with his Muggle family and the Special World being that of Hogwarts and all it has to offer.

*Book Three: Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

1. Ordinary World – Harry is beginning his third year at Hogwarts.
2. Call to Adventure – Arthur inadvertently gives Harry this call to adventure when he tells Harry not to go looking for Sirius despite what he might hear.
3. Refusal of the Call – Harry initially refuses the call because he certainly does not go looking for Sirius (though he might want to). As he gains more information later in the book, he struggles with not going after Sirius more and more.
4. Meeting the Mentor – While struggling with the new presence of dementors at Hogwarts, Harry becomes close to Professor Lupin. Lupin is Harry’s most obvious mentor in this book.
5. Crossing the Threshold – Harry, Ron, Hermione, Pettigrew, Sirius, Lupin, and Snape all cross the threshold when they adventure into the Shrieking Shack.
6. Tests, Allies, and Enemies – The time spent in the Shrieking Shack reveals who all of the allies and enemies really are. Metaphorical tests of trust and explanation occur when Sirius and Lupin go through the whole story and show Harry who Pettigrew really is.
7. Approach – This occurs when they are leaving the Shrieking Shack to head back up to the castle. They think they are all in a good place, and then Lupin transforms into the Werewolf.

8. Ordeal, Death, and Rebirth – The ordeal is being chased by the Werewolf and being attacked by the dementors. The death is when the dementors knock out Harry and Sirius. The rebirth is when Harry (as he is time travelling) defeats the dementors and saves himself and Sirius.
9. Reward, Seizing the Sword – Harry and Hermione save Sirius and Buckbeak when they go back in time. Setting the captives free is the biggest reward gained from this adventure. Harry also meets his godparents, whom he will become very close to in the future.
10. The Road Back – Harry and Hermione race back to the hospital before their time in the past is up. They have to do it without being seen and they almost do not make it.
11. Resurrection – This is when Ron, Harry, and Hermione are all healed and life returns to normal.
12. Return with Elixir – Harry’s metaphorical elixir is Sirius’ installation as a father figure in his life. Sirius becomes a regular mentor and correspondent, which is something that Harry desperately wants all along.

*Book Four: Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*

1. Ordinary World – Harry returns to Hogwarts expecting a normal fourth year.
2. Call to Adventure – Harry’s name is put into the Goblet of Fire by an unknown foe and he is inadvertently selected to participate in the Triwizard Tournament.
3. Refusal of the Call – Harry tries to back out of the tournament; he does not want to compete. He is forced to compete, however, because the Goblet of Fire chose him.
4. Meeting the Mentor – Professor Moody is Harry’s mentor in the Triwizard Tournament, even though Harry does not realize that Moody is actually the villain in disguise who is trying to orchestrate Harry’s success in order to transport him to Voldemort at the end.
5. Crossing the Threshold – Harry literally crosses the threshold into the room behind the Great Hall when his name comes out of the Goblet of Fire. This is where he receives the command that he participate, it is where he interacts with the other contestants, and this is where he receives his instructions for the first task. Technically this happens before he really discovers that Professor Moody is his mentor.
6. Tests, Allies, and Enemies – Harry literally goes through three tests. Along the way, he has both allies—his friends, Moody, sometimes the other contestants—and enemies—sometimes his friends, Moody (though we do not know this), and the other contestants.
7. Approach – When Harry and Cedric are in the maze, they choose to grab the Triwizard Cup together. They are both transported to the graveyard, where they try to figure out what is going on before Voldemort and the Death Eaters arrive.
8. Ordeal, Death, and Rebirth – This stage begins when Cedric is killed. Voldemort is then literally reborn when Pettigrew completes the spell. Harry’s duel with Voldemort is the ordeal.
9. Reward, Seizing the Sword – The reward for Harry’s bravery is that he gets to see a shade of his parents when his wand and Voldemort’s wand connect. The other reward is that those shades are able to distract Voldemort, which allows Harry to head back to the Portkey (the Triwizard Cup).

10. The Road Back – Harry grabs Cedric’s body and they are transported back to Hogwarts, where he must confront Moody (yet another attempt on his life).
  11. Resurrection – Harry is finally absolved of the immediate threats on his life when he escapes both Voldemort and Barty Crouch, Jr. This could also literally refer to Voldemort’s resurrection as an evil force.
  12. Return with Elixir – Harry’s return with elixir is literally returning with his life: there is not much of a happy ending to this particular book.
- \*In this book, there could be many different heroic journeys because there are four distinct special worlds: the dragon ring of the first task, the black lake of the second task, the maze of the third task, and the graveyard where he encounters Voldemort. The overall journey I have outlined could be seen as complete circle with little curves to accommodate the other individual journeys he takes.

*Book Five: Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*

1. Ordinary World – Harry begins his fifth year at Hogwarts after a difficult summer (he and Dudley were attacked by dementors, he faced a hearing at the Ministry and was almost expelled). He has been struggling with the death of Cedric and the fact that the entire Wizarding World does not believe that he saw Voldemort return.
2. Call to Adventure – Harry has been having weird dreams throughout the year. They have all been of him wandering through a dark hallway towards a strange door. This dream finally changes right before Christmas, where he envisions himself as a snake that bites and critically injures a sleeping Mr. Weasley. This is the call to adventure because he finally tells someone (Dumbledore and McGonagall) about them. He is spurred to action because he is trying to save Mr. Weasley.
3. Refusal of the Call – Harry does not refuse the call necessarily. He is intrigued by his dream and wants to figure out what is on the other side of the door that he keeps seeing. But by notifying his professors, Dumbledore decides that these visions are dangerous and need to be stopped. Dumbledore commissions Professor Snape to teach Harry the art of Occlumency, where he will learn to close his mind to Voldemort. Harry initially tries but eventually refuses to follow Dumbledore’s wishes (and the wishes themselves could be considered the call to adventure too, because Harry is confused why visions that clearly helped Mr. Weasley would need to end).
4. Meeting the Mentor – Sirius is the most prominent mentor in this book. Harry gets to spend time with him over the summer and, because Mr. Weasley was transported to the Wizarding hospital, he was able to spend time with him over Christmas. These snapshots are when we really get to see how important Sirius is to Harry: he is the parent that Harry never had. Though this relationship develops throughout book four and the beginning of book five, it is after Mr. Weasley is attacked that we really see Harry begin to lean on Sirius as a confidant.
5. Crossing the Threshold – Harry stops practicing his Occlumency and Voldemort learns about the connection that their minds share. The vision that Voldemort plants in Harry’s mind of him torturing Sirius for information is really the tipping point for Harry. Harry wants to save him and can think of nothing else.
6. Tests, Allies, and Enemies – Hermione tries to warn him that Voldemort might be playing tricks with Harry’s mind (which is, of course, what is actually happening), so she

convinces him at least to check to see if Sirius is at home before he rushes off to the Ministry. He goes into Umbridge's office to use the fireplace, but Sirius' servant says that he is not there. Umbridge catches Harry and his gang, and a whole series of tests ensue. His enemies (Malfoy, Filch, Crabbe, Goyle, et al.) make things difficult, but he and his friends manage to escape. They head to the Ministry. Another test is actually getting to the Ministry without being seen, which they accomplish.

7. Approach – I think the approach is when they are in the Ministry and trying to figure out where to go. They head straight to the corridor of Harry's dreams and then find the Hall of Prophecy, where his vision led him. Their encounter with the Death Eaters informs them that Sirius was never there and that Voldemort planted the vision in Harry's mind to get him to come. This seems to be the end of the Approach, and the story moves towards the Ordeal.
  8. Ordeal, Death, and Rebirth – Harry and his friends fight the Death Eaters to the best of their ability. Soon, it becomes a full battle when the members of the Order of the Phoenix arrive. Sirius is murdered, which sparks the true ordeal: Harry's confrontation with Voldemort. Dumbledore and Voldemort duel and the whole ordeal is about to come to an end when the Minister of Magic walks in and spots Voldemort. This is a metaphorical rebirth because it is the first time in fifteen years that Voldemort is seen—his presence and the fear that he instills in the whole Wizarding World is reborn.
  9. Reward, Seizing the Sword – There is not much of a reward except that the Wizarding world has to acknowledge finally that Voldemort has returned. Another benefit is that Harry was able to stop Voldemort from hearing the prophecy that he so desired. There were also many Death Eaters that were arrested. But for Harry, Sirius' death overshadows all the good that came from the ordeal.
  10. The Road Back – Harry and his friends return to the school in low spirits.
  11. Resurrection – The most literal resurrection that occurs is Dumbledore replaying the prophecy for Harry to hear. In their conversation, Dumbledore finally tells Harry almost everything he needs to know about how his parents died. The prophecy explains that Harry and Voldemort are fated to go against one another and that “neither can live while the other survives.” Harry learns that he is the one who has to stop all of this.
  12. Return with Elixir – The book finishes very darkly; there is not anything happy about the experience that Harry and his friends just had. But the only thing that Harry has is a renewed sense of purpose: Voldemort has now wronged him yet again and Harry is not happy. His relationship with Dumbledore is now on better terms, as it had been rocky that whole year. Other than those small things, however, there does not appear to be too much “elixir” at the end of this particular journey.
- \*This book is more straightforward when analyzed using Campbell's method. There are a couple other “Special Worlds” that Harry enters, such as the when he goes to the Ministry for his hearing, St. Mungo's Hospital, and the Forbidden Forest, but those appear to be less important than the other Special Worlds in previous books.

*Book Six: Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*

1. Ordinary World – Harry begins his sixth year at Hogwarts.

2. Call to Adventure – Harry notices Malfoy’s strange behavior, which intrigues him. Acting on instinct, Harry tries to learn more about what Malfoy is doing. Another call to adventure is the potions book that Harry finds. He uses the magical spells and the potions advice that the previous owner of the book (the Half-Blood Prince) creates and gives.
3. Refusal of the Call – Harry wants to investigate Malfoy, but Dumbledore discourages this. Harry tries to stay away and tries not to think about it, but he finds that he cannot. Another refusal of the call is when Harry is forced to hide the potions book after he almost kills Malfoy from one of its spells.
4. Meeting the Mentor – The mentor in this book is Dumbledore. Harry begins taking private lessons with him, in which they go through old memories to try to learn more about Voldemort. These lessons occur simultaneously with the Call to Adventure and the Refusal of the Call.
5. Crossing the Threshold – Harry crosses the threshold as soon as he starts learning about Voldemort’s past. The transition from real life to past memories represents a literal threshold that Harry and Dumbledore continue to cross. The knowledge that they gain from the memories, however, represents a permanent threshold: they cannot unlearn what they have realized.
6. Tests, Allies, and Enemies – Harry is given one large test: he must obtain a very important memory from Slughorn. After using all of his resources and allies, he finally passes that test. Malfoy is also going through tests: he is trying to fix the vanishing cabinets and he is trying to kill Dumbledore. Through both, Malfoy uses his allies and creates many enemies.
7. Approach – Harry finally obtaining the memory from Slughorn is the beginning of the approach. It confirms the existence of the Horcruxes and gives their mission validity. Harry and Dumbledore leave for the cave.
8. Ordeal, Death, and Rebirth – The ordeal encompasses their time in the cave, from entering, to drinking the potion, to fighting the Inferi, and to leaving. They literally fight death when they battle the Inferi, and Dumbledore is forced to re-live his sister’s death when he drinks the potion. The rebirth is a bit more vague. Dumbledore finishing the potion can represent a rebirth, but their exit from the cave is the most literal rebirth.
9. Reward, Seizing the Sword – Their reward is gaining the Horcrux and making it out of the cave alive.
10. The Road Back – The road back is long and difficult because Dumbledore is extremely weakened. When they arrive back at Hogwarts, Malfoy, the Death Eaters, and Snape confront them.
11. Resurrection – Snape resurrects his “true” allegiance when he sides with the Death Eaters and kills Dumbledore. The return also marks the metaphorical resurrection of Malfoy’s schemes, which was a strain of the narrative that had been put off during Harry and Dumbledore’s adventure. Snape also informs Harry that he is the Half-Blood Prince, which is another way that an earlier plot is resurrected.
12. Return with Elixir – At the end of the day, Harry is at least grateful that he has the Horcrux, which means that their efforts were not wasted. But then he realizes that the locket was a false Horcrux. He is reminded of how his elixir has to be the continued hunt of

the Horcruxes because that is the only way that he (and many other members of the Wizarding world) will be able to survive.

*Book Seven: Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*

1. Ordinary World – In this case, the ordinary world is not Hogwarts but is instead Privet Drive at the Dursleys' house and the time that he spends at the Weasleys' home. This ordinary world does not seem threatening, even though the whole Wizarding community is in turmoil, because they are surrounded by family and are distracting themselves with the happy occasion of a wedding and the normalcy of life moving from day to day. Conversely, the Special World is where they go when they do not go back to Hogwarts: it is all the spaces that they go to when they are on the hunt for the Horcruxes.
2. Call to Adventure – Harry, Ron, and Hermione are aware of their call to adventure throughout the entire book, arguably for a vast majority of the series. But the call to adventure comes when they are at the wedding and the Death Eaters arrive. They have to leave immediately without knowing how the rest of the family and guests handled the attack.
3. Refusal of the Call – It takes them awhile before they really begin their hunt for the Horcruxes. Initially, they are running. After the wedding, they flee to a coffee shop so they can talk some things through. But Death Eaters find them there and they do not know how. They run again and try to focus on where to stay and how to stay safe. They do not technically refuse the call, but they delay it while they worry about their safety. The fear of the reality of their vulnerability takes them by surprise and they need to spend a little bit of time coping with it.
4. Meeting the Mentor – After they leave the wedding, they soon arrive at Grimmauld Place. I still consider it to be a part of their ordinary world because it is a familiar place where they feel safe and comfortable. Here they meet many different types of mentors. Kreacher, the house-elf, is a mentor in a sense because he provides them with a lot of information about the missing locket Horcrux. Lupin also shows up and offers to be a mentor, though they deny him. Harry's mother is a form of a mentor when they read part of the letter that they find in Sirius' room – she provides information. Since Dumbledore is the ultimate mentor and has already given them the tools they need, the other mentors that they will meet along the way are only lenders of information.
5. Crossing the Threshold – Leaving Grimmauld Place to break into the Ministry represents the threshold from familiarity and relative security to life on the run. This is where the hunt for the Horcrux becomes dangerous: people are desperate to catch them and when they do, they will not be kind or merciful.
6. Tests, Allies, and Enemies – The trip to the Ministry represents the first real test in the special world. Many will follow, such as their encounters with Bathilda, Xenophilius, the Death Eaters at the Malfoy Manor, and their adventures at Gringotts and Godric's Hollow and the forests that they camp out in.
7. Approach – This happens when they decide to head back to Hogwarts to continue their search for the Horcruxes. Their move to Hogsmeade, their encounter with Aberforth, their transport to Hogwarts, and the reconnaissance that they do there all lead up to the battle with Voldemort and the Death Eaters.

8. Ordeal, Death, and Rebirth – The minute that Voldemort “speaks” to the people within Hogwarts, the ordeal begins. The Ordeal encompasses everything from the entrance of the Death Eaters to the battle to when Harry is killed. Many deaths happen on both sides, but the most significant is that of Professor Snape. Voldemort also dies a little bit too, when Harry, Ron, and Hermione destroy the cup and the diadem (two Horcruxes). There are only metaphorical rebirths: Harry comes out of the Pensieve with the truth about his destiny, and Voldemort believes himself “reborn” when he kills Snape and imagines that he is now the true owner of the Elder wand. The Ordeal ends in Harry’s death.
9. Reward, Seizing the Sword – Harry’s reward for willingly dying is an encounter with Dumbledore in a purgatory-like space. Harry receives all of the information that he needs to return to life and to finally finish Voldemort. He is also set at ease with the Dumbledore that he admires – he acknowledges Dumbledore’s ugly past, he learns why Dumbledore withheld the crucial information from him, and, most importantly, he understands that Dumbledore cared for him immensely and spent the remainder of his life trying to rectify the damage that he did with Grindelwald.
10. The Road Back – Harry realizes that he has to go back to the real world. He recognizes that the choice will not be easy and that he very well may die again, but he chooses to go back anyway. Then he finds himself back on the floor of the Forbidden Forest and tries to keep himself looking as though he is dead. He endures the torture of Voldemort (both physically and mentally, though he cannot feel the physical torture because of the act that allowing his death does [it has the same affect as his mother’s death had, the same protection]). He stops himself from assuaging Hagrid’s profound grief when he is lying in his arms.
11. Resurrection – Harry reenters the ordinary world when he leaves the Forbidden Forest and is seen by his allies and enemies. Harry literally comes back to life when he jumps out of Hagrid’s arms – this is his resurrection. It is also the resurrection of the battle: chaos ensues and Voldemort and Harry actually duel this time.
12. Return with Elixir – Harry’s return from the forest with his life is a certain type of elixir. The death of Voldemort, however, is the main elixir. This provides unthinkable relief to those whom he has pursued and tortured, whose family members he has killed or has had killed, and all of those who lived in fear because of him. That elixir brings new life to the Wizarding world, including the new lives that Harry and Ron and Hermione are able to later create.

### *The Harry Potter Series as a Whole*

\* Trying to analyze the whole series is very tricky. The only way to see this series is as a large circle that is filled with, at minimum, seven different loops. Each little loop represents the holistic journey of each separate book. The following is an attempt to analyze the series as one large journey of Harry, the main hero.

1. Ordinary World – Harry begins the series thinking that he is a Muggle; he is just an ordinary person who happens to live with neglectful relatives.
2. Call to Adventure – Harry learns that he is a wizard and his whole world shifts. He begins his journey to Hogwarts unsure of how to begin and where to turn. But for the first time, he is around people who do not all think that he is a waste of space.

3. Refusal of the Call – Overall, Harry does not refuse any call. He sometimes feels apprehension before he is required to demonstrate that he is a wizard. He does not think he is qualified: he is “just Harry.”
  4. Meeting the Mentor – He begins meeting mentors as soon as he gets to Hogwarts. These mentors include: Hagrid, Dumbledore, McGonagall, Lupin, Sirius, Snape, Moody, Hermione, and Mr. and Mrs. Weasley. Sometimes Voldemort serves as a mentor because he supplies information to Harry and inadvertently shows him his inner thoughts.
  5. Crossing the Threshold – Harry’s primary threshold is when he learns the truth about who he is from Hagrid: he is a wizard. It is this knowledge that sends him into the Wizarding world to buy his school supplies, that permits him to enter Hogwarts, and that brings the story of his relationship with Voldemort to the surface. His transition to life as a wizard marks his descent into the first special world.
  6. Tests, Allies, and Enemies – Harry learns to navigate the world of Hogwarts and the life as a target of a sociopathic killer through many different tasks. He deals with confrontations with annoying peers (Malfoy, Crabbe, Goyle, etc.), he deals with love and heartbreak, he deals with friends, he deals with classes, he deals with sports, and he deals with being an orphan. He also deals with the harrowing tasks presented to him in the fight for the Sorcerer’s Stone, in the Chamber of Secrets, in the rescue mission of Sirius and Buckbeak, and in the three tasks of the Triwizard Tournament. He also has many allies throughout the series: Ron, Hermione, Hedwig, Neville, Hagrid, his classmates in Dumbledore’s Army, and many others.
  7. Approach – The encounter with Voldemort in the graveyard introduces the approach. I would say, however, that the real approach happens when Sirius is killed at the Ministry and Dumbledore finally trusts him with the information contained in the prophecy (that he has either to kill Voldemort or to be killed by him). This information primes him for the true ordeal (the final confrontation and battle with Voldemort, including Harry’s death and resurrection) that happens in the seventh book. Everything from Sirius’s death to the memories that Harry and Dumbledore search through to Dumbledore’s death prepares Harry for the final encounter.
- \* Steps 8 through 12 can be virtually copied from the analysis of the seventh book. The categories of Meeting the Mentor (step 4) through Approach (step 7) encompasses a vast amount of time and many different little journeys. Though those individual steps are important (Campbell lists many in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*), I feel as though they are all designed simply to build up to the true fight that lies in the seventh book.

## References

- Berndt, Katrin, and Lena Steveker, eds. *Heroism In The Harry Potter Series*. Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2011. Print.
- Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment*. New York: Knopf, 1975. Print.
- Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. New York: Bollingen Foundation, Inc., 1968. Print.
- Campbell, Lori M. *Portals Of Power: Magical Agency And Transformation In Literary Fantasy*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 25 Aug. 2014.
- Dickerson, Matthew, and David O'Hara. *From Homer to Harry Potter: A Handbook on Myth and Fantasy*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006. Print.
- Dundes, Alan. Introduction. *Morphology of the Folktale*. By Vladimir Propp. Ed. Louis A. Wagner. Trans. Laurence Scott. 2nd ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968. Print.
- Grimm's Complete Fairy Tales*. New York: Fall River Press, 2012. Print.
- Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Dir. Chris Columbus. Danielle Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, and Emma Watson. Warner Brothers Pictures, 2003. DVD.
- Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part I*. Dir. David Yates. Danielle Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, and Emma Watson. Warner Brothers Pictures, 2011. DVD.
- Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part II*. Dir. David Yates. Danielle Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, and Emma Watson. Warner Brothers Pictures, 2011. DVD.
- Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. Dir. Mike Newell. Danielle Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, and Emma Watson. Warner Brothers Pictures, 2006. DVD.

*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. Dir. David Yates. Danielle Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, and Emma Watson. Warner Brothers Pictures, 2009. DVD.

*Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Dir. David Yates. Danielle Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, and Emma Watson. Warner Brothers Pictures, 2007. DVD.

*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. Dir. Alfonso Cuarón. Danielle Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, and Emma Watson. Warner Brothers Pictures, 2004. DVD.

*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Dir. Chris Columbus. Danielle Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, and Emma Watson. Warner Brothers Pictures, 2002. DVD.

Homer. *The Iliad*. Trans. Rodney Merrill. USA: The University of Michigan Press, 2009. Print.

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc., 1998. Print.

Joseph Campbell Foundation. "About Joseph Campbell." *Joseph Campbell Foundation*. Joseph Campbell Foundation, 2012. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.

Pierce, Tamora. "Fantasy: Why Kids Read It, Why Kids Need It." *School Library Journal* 39.10 (1993): 50. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 25 Aug. 2014.

Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of the Folktale*. Ed. Louis A. Wagner. Trans. Laurence Scott. 2nd ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968. Print.

Richardson, Donald. *Stories of the Greeks and Romans*. 2nd ed. New Rochelle: Melissa International Publications, Ltd., 2000. Print.

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1999. Print.

---. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 2007. Print.

---. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 2000. Print.

---. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 2005. Print.

---. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 2003. Print.

---. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1999. Print.

---. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1997. Print.

Rowling, J.K. "The Books." *JKRowling.com*. TM Warner Brothers Entertainment, Inc, 2012.

Web. 15 Dec. 2014.

Zipes, Jack. *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly*

*Peter to Harry Potter*. New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.