

Salve Regina University

## Digital Commons @ Salve Regina

---

Pell Scholars and Senior Theses

Salve's Dissertations and Theses

---

2002

### Harry Potter: An Archetypal Hero's Journey in Four Books

Caitlin CP Burrows

Salve Regina University, cburrows@salve.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.salve.edu/pell\\_theses](https://digitalcommons.salve.edu/pell_theses)



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

---

Burrows, Caitlin CP, "Harry Potter: An Archetypal Hero's Journey in Four Books" (2002). *Pell Scholars and Senior Theses*. 125.

[https://digitalcommons.salve.edu/pell\\_theses/125](https://digitalcommons.salve.edu/pell_theses/125)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Salve's Dissertations and Theses at Digital Commons @ Salve Regina. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pell Scholars and Senior Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Salve Regina. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@salve.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@salve.edu).

## Harry Potter and the Archetypal Hero's Journey in Four Books

By Caitlin C.P. Burrows

All stories told in myths, be they Greek, Norse or Celt, are retellings of the same small number of stories, just in different languages and different settings. Joseph Campbell, one of the foremost mythology scholars in the 20th century establishes the archetypal 'monomyth' of the hero in his book The Hero with a Thousand Faces. According to Campbell, the 'archetypal myths' are, to name three, the Creation Myth, the Virgin Birth and the Hero's Journey. The stories I will be focusing on is the archetypal hero's story, in the version told by J.K. Rowling in her series of books, beginning with Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, currently the most popular piece of young people's literature. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, as well as the other books in the series, deals with the archetypal hero's journey as it describes the adventures of the character Harry Potter.

The archetypal hero's story follows a more or less standard sequence of events. Starting from relatively obscure origins, he begins his heroic deeds with:

- 1) The initiation: The young hero about to enter puberty must survive a ceremonial act that transforms him into someone able to understand the problems and responsibilities entailed with adulthood.
- 2) The task: To save the kingdom or win some sort of reward, the hero must perform some sort of task, be it physical or mental.
- 3) The quest: The hero searches for someone or something which, when found, will restore the well-being of the kingdom.
- 4) The journey: The hero has to seek information of truth through a dangerous journey that often includes a descent into the underworld.
- 5) The fall: The hero descends from a higher state to a lower state of being that usually involves spiritual defilement and a loss of innocence. Usually, the fall results in the hero's expulsion from paradise and a sentence for defiance.
- 6) Death and rebirth: The most common of all archetypal situations, which reflects the influence of the life and death cycle (Schafer 162 - 163).

When the hero's journey ends, the hero will return to his or her normal life. Or, as Campbell says, "Then comes the problem of either staying with that [your consciousness in the hero's world] and letting the world drop off, or returning with that boon and trying to hold onto it as you move back into your social world again" (Campbell II 129).

J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter follows this sequence in his journey in Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. Harry starts off living what he accepts to be a normal, everyday life. When he turns ten, he finds out more about his past, and, more importantly, his future. He learns where his parents came from and how they died. He goes on to face challenges and various adversaries, aided by the forces of good in the world of wizards and witches of present-day England.

Harry Potter is, himself, a classic archetypal hero, and understanding his archetypal forebears will explain much of his appeal to young readers who are excited by the pleasures and perils of heroism better than older people (Schafer 160).

Before he went on to kill the Minotaur, Theseus, for example, was living a relatively obscure life as the son of Aegeus, king of Attica. Often, the archetypal hero is put in danger as a baby and is adopted by 'normal people' or animals. Either by choice or by chance, the hero is suddenly and unexpectedly either pulled out or chooses to leave his everyday life into a great adventure, one of which he does not know the ending.

The archetypal hero then goes through several particular stages. He will journey into a dark world where he meets different forces or individuals that he has to deal with. At one point of his journey, he will meet a teacher who will give him the information necessary to achieve his goal. It is only until after this point in time does he fully know what his goal is going to be.

After his goal is discovered, the archetypal hero is tested to his limits. He reaches a crucial happening that culminates his experience. Campbell refers to this as a "supreme ordeal." From this, he "gains his reward" and is changed forever because of this experience. Usually, he

gains new powers and starts to use them. Finally, the archetypal hero emerges to his society with his new skills bringing an advantage to his society, which somehow restores that society.

In the Sorcerer's Stone, Harry Potter lives with his relatives, Uncle Vernon, Aunt Petunia and their son Dudley. According to archetypal myth, the Dursleys are known as the 'usual people.' The usual people are more than happy and content with staying 'in bounds.' Popular belief, or what is considered normal gives them every reason to fear even the slightest step into the unknown and unexplained (Campbell 78). "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 with anything strange or mysterious because they just didn't hold with such nonsense" (Rowling I 1).

Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia spoil Dudley rotten and treat Harry very badly and Harry accepts this as the normal, ordinary, everyday life, even though he thinks this is not quite far. We first meet Harry Potter living in a cupboard under the Dursleys' stairs. He does not know anything about his parents and is not allowed to ask. He was told they died in a car accident, giving him a lightning bolt-shaped scar in the middle of his forehead.

He occasionally finds himself doing things not typical for any normal English boy. For example, a boa constrictor somehow understands what Harry is saying and later Harry makes the glass disappear on its enclosure at the zoo, letting it escape. These stand as premonitions of the powers he will be aware of and will use to good effect in his later role as hero.

In the archetypal hero's story, the hero often shows skills above and beyond the normal skills of his or her age. He either discovers the skill himself, Harry being able to understand the snake at the zoo, for example, or his skill is discovered by other people. In the Sorcerer's Stone, Harry learns about Quidditch, a sport played on brooms. Later on in the book, Harry wins the position of Seeker for Gryffindor. Normally, first year students are not allowed the position. Harry discovered his remarkable skill by accident when chasing Draco Malfoy in their levitation class, something he was not supposed to do at that moment. Draco had just taken

something that did not belong to him and took off on his broom. Harry chased after him was caught by Mrs. McGonagall, the teacher, who happens to be Gryffindor's House advisor.

In the Goblet of Fire, there was an age limit placed on prospective participants of the Tournament, due to the potential danger of the events. Only students who are sixteen or seventeen years old (sixth and seventh years) can try to enter. Hopeful competitors would write their names on a slip of paper and place them in the flames of the goblet. The goblet was charmed, preventing anyone underage from entering their names. When it was thought the goblet had finally selected all the champions, the goblet suddenly revealed Harry's name as the second champion to represent Hogwarts, recognizing his talent, even though nobody had entered Harry's name.

At the age of eleven, these premonitions come into fruition when he begins to find out where he came from and the awesome responsibilities and enormous expectations of him. He was born of a witch mother and wizard father, James and Lily Potter. A year and three months after he was born (Halloween, 1981), an evil wizard, Voldemort, killed them and tried to kill Harry, too. Voldemort failed, but his power left Harry with a lightning bolt scar in the middle of his forehead. The lightning bolt is a "primal symbol of fear produced by Zeus. Harry has been marked as an outsider who has to fulfill some quest to explain his mark. Marking people for death is an ancient ritual" (Schafer 127).

The pain and power of the mark itself, and the consequences it foreshadows becomes a fearsome symbol (127). "That Harry's scar is a lightning bolt thrown his way by warring deities makes him an even more victim/hero entangled in a destiny he cannot escape" (127). "There was somethin' goin' on that night he hadn't counted on - I dunno what it was, no one does - but somethin' about you stumped him, all right" (Rowling I 57). The myths agree that an extraordinary capacity is required to face and survive such experience. "The infancies abound in anecdotes of precocious strength, cleverness and wisdom." One example of this is the story of Hercules. Hercules was the son of Zeus, but not of Hera, his wife. Hera disliked Hercules so much she sent two serpents to his crib to kill him. The infant Hercules strangled them (Campbell, 327). Here, we begin to realize that the lightning bolt also testifies to the power that

Harry has. In Campbell's monomyth, the tendency has always been to endow the hero with extraordinary powers from the moment of birth or even conception (319).

Harry's power was also recognized by Dumbledore, (who we would later recognize as the headmaster of Hogwarts Academy for Witches and Wizards, a wizardry school). When Harry was a baby, he was taken from the wizard world where he was in danger and placed in the 'normal world.' In the prologue of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, Dumbledore explains his reasons for leaving baby Harry with the Dursleys. "It would be enough to turn any boy's head. Famous before he can walk and talk! Famous for something he won't even remember! Can't you see how much better off he'll be, growing up away from all that until he's ready to take it?" (Rowling I 13).

Since Voldemort's attack on Harry, nobody has seen or heard from him since. The Dursleys (who J.K. Rowling contrives to fit into both the 'normal' people and farm animal category) reluctantly raised Harry after finding him on their doorstep.

Despite the lengths the Dursleys went through to cover up what they consider to be Harry's weird and abnormal past (anything from hiding letters addressed to Harry to moving to a remote cottage in a secluded location), the message from the (good) wizards and witches was finally made clear to Harry. Harry was marked for a special role in that community. Harry's life is never the same again. The wizards and witches send Hagrid, a giant-like but gentle man and the school's caretaker to take him from the Dursleys and bring him to Hogwarts. On the way, they stop at Diagon Alley, the street of stores known only to the wizard community to buy school supplies with the gold picked up from Gringott's the wizard bank, that was Harry's inheritance from his parents, At that point, Hagrid had also been the one to bring baby Harry to the Dursleys.

If someone is called upon to 'become a hero' and refuses to answer that call, their life just takes a consistent negative spin. Walled into boredom, hard work, or "culture," the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved (Campbell 59). His flowering world becomes a wasteland of dry stones and his life feels meaningless (59).

All he can do is create new problems for himself and await the gradual approach of his disintegration (59).

“Because I have called, and ye refused . . . I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.” “For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and they prosperity of fools shall destroy them” [Proverbs, 1: 24 - 27, 32] (59).

In Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone, no matter what the Dursleys did (hiding Harry’s letters from Hogwarts, hiding in a remote cottage in the middle of nowhere), they could not get away from Hagrid or Hogwarts. They could not get Harry away from his destiny. In the second book, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, the Dursleys tried (and failed) to prevent him from going back to school. He had to be rescued from his room by his friends.

When Harry was in Diagon Alley, he and Hagrid stopped at a pub called the Leaky Cauldron. While Harry was there, he notices that all the patrons are constantly whispering about him, a fact that he finds very strange.

According to the archetypal hero story, Hagrid can be seen as a herald. The herald or announcer of the adventure is often “dark or terrifying, judged evil by the world; yet if one could follow, the way would be opened through the walls of day into dark where the jewels glow” (Campbell 53).

The unknown region is filled with both danger and treasure. In the archetypal myths, it can be represented by anything: a forest, a castle, an underground cave . . . In Harry’s case, the unknown is Hogwarts. “No matter what form the unknown takes, it will always house fluid and ever-changing beasts, unimaginable torments, superhuman doings and impossible delights” (58).

There, Harry meets the school’s headmaster, Albus Dumbledore for the first time. The reader, of course, has met Dumbledore only briefly in the book’s prologue. Because of his long

beard and moon shaped eyeglasses, Dumbledore is reminiscent of Merlin from the King Arthur legends (Schafer 57). He guides Harry like Merlin counseled Arthur. Harry and Arthur undergo quests and tests of mental and physical agility. Extremely powerful, he is the only wizard that Voldemort fears, apart from Harry. Like, Harry, he is not afraid to say Voldemort's name (57). "Call him Voldemort, Harry. Always use the proper name for things. Fear of a name increases the fear itself" (Rowling I 298).

By not mentioning Voldemort's name, the other wizards hope this will prevent him from appearing to menace them (43). Not speaking the names of dark forces is a common strategy used by good characters to pretend evil villains do not exist (43). Harry's name, however, is often said because he is famous and every wizard of every age knows who he is (44). He is often regarded by the wizard people as something of a miracle because he is the only Potter to survive Voldemort's attack (44).

Harry's parents are seen as martyrs because they died while fighting evil. His parents' deaths progress Harry from anonymity to acclaim because during his attack, Harry usurped some of Voldemort's powers, forcing him into exile (44).

Harry, along with his school friends Ron and Hermione learn about the mysterious Sorcerer's Stone. The Sorcerer's Stone transforms anything into gold and produces the Elixir of Life. Anyone who drinks this elixir becomes immortal. The Stone currently belongs to one Nicholas Flamel, but it was stolen. Harry, Ron and Hermione set out to return the Stone to its rightful owner and prevent it from falling into the wrong hands. (Voldemort's hands. He hoped to steal it). There is a real camaraderie there, much like that shown by King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table or Robin Hood and his Merry Men (51). The three friends are connected by their friendship, faith and sense of wonder with each other. Most importantly, their teamwork is essential to conquer adversaries, although ultimately, Harry must face the final adversary, Voldemort, by himself.

Harry also had to go through a series of tasks in the fourth book, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. Again, he had help but again, at the very end, he must do the tasks and



ultimately face Voldemort himself. In this book, Hogwarts Academy is involved in a Triwizard Tournament with two other wizard schools. The Triwizard Tournament has three separate events. Harry and another student are selected to represent Hogwarts.

Ron Weasley is Harry's best friend. He is also his confidante and source of advice about all things wizard-like. He shares characteristics with Harry, which include bravery and loyalty. However, Ron is not as strong, sensible or courageous as Harry. Ron encourages Harry to be impulsive, and they share many a detention and demerits for their misbehavior.

Hermione Granger defies critics who suggest that Muggle-born students are incapable of being wizards and witches. She is the ideal example of the intellectual resilience and even studies during vacations (53). Her genius allows her to resolve problems creatively and resourcefully, using her schoolbooks and her lessons. Mr. and Mrs. Granger remain on the edge of the wizard world like most Muggles. Unlike the Dursleys, who do not want anything to do with the wizard world, they are supportive of their daughter's magical gifts. They encourage Hermione to study at Hogwarts, and they even accompany her on trips to Diagon Alley shops to buy school supplies (53).

Hermione's sense of right and wrong is more acute than the other characters', and she is often considered shrill and annoying by the other characters, sometimes even by her best friends, because of her lecturing and disapproving tone (53). Her inconsistent behavior shows her insecurities about belonging at Hogwarts, especially after messages about all Muggle-born students (53) will be exterminated. She tries to hide her uneasiness by focusing on her studies and earning top grades. Sometimes, her talents prove to be crucial to Harry and Ron. She justifies breaking rules only to prevent crimes.

"Hermione is symbolic of a woman warrior, the Joan of Arc who fights for causes she believes in regardless of reality; the name Hermione resembles the word 'heroine'" (53). Campbell maintained that the mythical hero must become integrated as a part of a group and realize his or her role in a particular society. Harry accepts his position as Hogwarts' crusader against evil and Gryffindor's Seeker of victory.

The archetypal hero is aware there is a constant presence of evil, but they consciously choose not to go along with it. Like the archetypal hero, Harry is also aware of the presence of evil. He, too, consciously chooses not to go along with it. In the first book, when he first arrives at Hogwarts, he goes through a selection ceremony in which he puts on the Sorting Hat that decides which of the four “houses” (student teams) he will belong to for the next seven years of his schooling.

The first thing Harry thinks when he puts on the Hat is, “Not Slytherin” (Rowling I 121). Although he did not know it then, Voldemort was an alumnus of Slytherin. However, he was fully aware of Slytherin House’s reputation. The Sorting Hat asks, “Not Sytherin, eh? Are you sure? You could be great, you know, it’s all here in your head, and Sytherin will help you on your way to greatness, no doubt about that – no? Well, if you’re sure – better be GRYFFINDOR!” (Rowling I 121).

The house “animal” (mascot) of Slytherin is the serpent. “The serpent, the rejected one, is the representative of that unconscious deep wherein are hoarded all of the rejected, unadmitted, unrecognized, unknown or undeveloped factors, laws and elements of existence” (Campbell 52). The creature that lives in the (hidden) Chamber of Secrets turns out to be a Basilisk, also known as the King of Snakes. It is a snake-like creature that kills people instantly by looking at them. It represents the temptation to sacrifice goodness and become wholly evil (Schafer 69).

While snakes symbolize evil, they can also symbolize good. The serpent was a symbol of healing to the ancient Greeks. The staff of Ascleten, the god of medicine has a snake twisted around it (Kronzek 207). Because the snake sheds its skin, it is also seen as a symbol rebirth and renewal (207).

Harry’s resistance of the ‘dark side’s call’ is shown in other ways as well. Later on in the book, when Harry stays at Hogwarts over Christmas vacation, he finds something known as the Mirror of Erised (Mirror of Desire) in one of the school’s chambers, appearing to be an unused

classroom. The inscription of the mirror reads: "Eerised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi" (207) or, what is later explained as "I show not your face but your desire." Although he did not know it at the time, Harry's heart's desire is to see his parents, so when he looks in the mirror, he sees an image of James and Lily Potter. Ron's heart's desire, however, is to be head boy of Gryffindor and win the House Cup and the Quidditch cup, so when he looks in the mirror, he sees himself wearing the head boy's badge and holding the House Cup and the Quidditch cup.

Harry has gone to the mirror three times: twice by himself and once with Ron. The first time, when Harry would have liked to stay there forever, he eventually decided to leave and go back to bed.

Harry did not exactly know how the mirror worked until Dumbledore explained it to him: "It shows us nothing more or less than the deepest, most desperate desire of our hearts. You, who have never known your family, see them standing around you. Ronald Weasley, who has always been overshadowed by his family, sees himself standing there alone, the best of all of them. However, this mirror will give us neither knowledge or truth. Men have wasted away before it, entranced by what they have seen, or been driven mad, not knowing if what it shows is real or even possible" (213).

The one time Harry was under the lure of the mirror by himself, he decided under his own volition, without interruption, to leave the mirror.

Much later on in the book, Harry and his friends were trying to stop the Sorcerer's Stone from falling into the wrong hands. After getting in huge trouble (and losing 150 points for Gryffindor, thus dampening their chances for winning the House Cup), Harry wanted to go back for the Stone. When his friends protest, telling him he will get into even more trouble, or possibly expelled, Harry bursts out,

"SO WHAT? Don't you understand? If Snape gets hold of the Stone, Voldemort's coming back! Haven't you heard what it was like when they were trying to take over? There won't be any Hogwarts to get expelled from! He'll flatten it, or turn it into a school for the Dark Arts! Losing

points doesn't matter anymore, can't you see? D'you think he'll leave you and your families alone if Gryffindor wins the house cup? If I get caught before I can get to the Stone, well, I'll have to go back to the Dursleys and wait for Voldemort to find me there, it's only dying a bit later than I would have, because I'm never going over to the Dark Side! [keep in mind that nobody had asked Harry to go over to the Dark Side at that point.] I'm going through that trapdoor tonight and nothing you two can say is going to stop me! Voldemort killed my parents, remember?" (Rowling I 270).

Even though nobody has even asked him to go over to the Dark Side, he adamantly refuses to. This shows how determined he is to avoid "crossing over." Just as he fiercely rejected the Sorting Hat's invitation to be placed in Slytherin, even more strongly, he restates his feeling against the Dark Side.

By the end of the book, Harry has faced various foes such as a ferocious three-headed dog guarding the Sorcerer's Stone, whom J.K. Rowling has playfully named Fluffy. Fluffy is an allusion to Cerberus, a three-headed dog with a serpent's tail. Each of his three heads are the symbols of the three stations into which the year was once divided, is crowned with writhing serpents (Bonfonte 128). He guards the River Styx, the most dreadful of the three streams of Tartarus, the Underworld (128). He is also known as the Hound of Hades. Cerberus was so horrible to look at that it was said anyone who looked at him was turned to stone (Cotterell 29).

Harry, along with Ron and Hermione, has also endured various trials (such as a huge plant known as the Devil's Snare and playing a giant game of chess, in which the stakes were life itself). Each task was geared towards each of the trio's specific talents. (For example, Ron's forte was the giant chess game). As mentioned earlier, while they helped him as much as they could, eventually it would be Harry who had to face the final task [Voldemort] himself. In mythology, the best known examples of the 'difficult tasks' motif are the twelve labors of Hercules and Psyche's quest for Cupid, her lost lover.

Harry learns that Voldemort has taken possession of the body of one of his teachers and that he was not able to kill Harry because Voldemort does not understand the concept of being

so powerful. "Your mother died to save you. If there is one thing Voldemort cannot understand, it is love. He didn't realize that love as powerful as your mother's for you leaves its own mark. Not a scar, no visible sign . . . to have been loved so deeply, even though the person who lived is gone, will give us some protection forever" (Rowling I 299).

After his first year at Hogwarts, Harry returns to the Dursleys thinking he will have some fun with Dudley this summer, because they do not know Harry is not allowed to use magic outside of school. After reading a letter from the school, the Dursleys now know they are not going to wake up as "fruit bats," and Harry had lost his only weapon. Before the letter, Harry would often scare Dudley by mumbling some random words, making him think they were the words to some sort of spell. That would make Dudley leave him alone.

Over the summer, Harry is warned not to return to Hogwarts, because he is in great danger. The person warning him took great lengths to make sure he did not return to the school, some involving magic, which got Harry in trouble with the Ministry of Magic, the people that regulate a wizard's magic and prevent Muggles from learning about the wizards. The Ministry of Magic sent a sternly worded letter to Harry, thinking he was the one who created that magic. Uncle Vernon found the letter.

Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia tried to prevent Harry from being 'abnormal' by barring his windows and locking up his magic supplies. They even tried to prevent him from going back to school and Harry's friend Ron had to rescue him. He remained at the Weasleys' for the rest of the summer.

Harry misses the train going to Hogwarts and it was later discovered that the person warning him took measures insuring that Harry missed it.

When he arrives at school, he soon learns that during the founding of Hogwarts one of the founders, Salazar Slytherin, left the school, disagreeing with the decision to teach magic to Muggle-born students. According to legend, Slytherin secretly built the Chamber of Secrets,

which supposedly houses a monster only Slytherin's heir can control. The “grave danger” Harry was warned of was that the Chamber had been opened.

When Harry, Hermione and Ron were discussing the situation, Ron says, “I always knew Salazar Slytherin was a twisted old loony. But I never knew he started all this pure-blood stuff. I wouldn't be in his house if you paid me. Honestly, if the Sorting Hat had tried to put me in Slytherin, I'd've gotten the train straight back home . . .” (Rowling II 152).

Harry never told Ron and Hermione that he was almost sorted into Slytherin that first year. He can still remember what the Sorting said to him a year ago: “You could be great, you know, it's all here in your head, and Slytherin would help you on your way to greatness, no doubt about that” (Rowling II, 153).

‘But Harry, who had already heard of Slytherin House's reputation for turning out Dark wizards, had thought desperately, not Slytherin!, and the Hat had said, “Oh, well, if you're sure . . . better be Gryffindor” (Rowling II 153).

The new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, Gilderoy Lockhart, started a dueling club in the school “to train you all in case you ever need to defend yourselves as I myself had done on countless occasions” (Rowling II 189). At the first meeting, the students are paired up and Lockhart explains the rules: “When I count to three, cast your charms to disarm your opponents - *only* to disarm them - we don't want any accidents . . . (191). Harry is paired up with Draco, and at one point in the battle, Draco conjures up a snake. Lockhart steps in and tries to take care of it. Instead of vanishing, the snake got mad and looked like it was about to attack another student, Justin Finch-Fletchly. Harry shouted at it to leave him alone. “And miraculously - inexplicably - the snake slumped to the floor, docile as a thick, black garden hose, its eyes now on Harry” (194).

Instead of looking pleased, Justin was angry and scared. Everyone else just looked frightened.

Harry then learns he is a “Parselmouth,” he can talk to snakes. This is why he could understand the boa constrictor at the zoo in the first book and how he was able to disarm the snake during the duel. The founder of Slytherin House, Salazar Slytherin was famous for that exact talent. That is why Justin and everyone else reacted the way they did when they heard Harry.

“He’d see Justin in Herbology and he’d explain that he’d been calling the snake off, not egging it on, which (he thought angrily, pummeling his pillow) any fool should have realized” (Rowling II 197). Unfortunately, Herbology was cancelled because of a snowstorm. Sensing how much it was bothering him, Hermione advises Harry to go and find Justin.

Hoping to find Justin there, he decides to check the library. Instead, he comes across Justin’s friends and fellow Hufflepuffs and they are all talking about Harry and how the recent unfortunate events must have been his fault: “He’s a Parselmouth. Everyone knows that’s the mark of a Dark wizard. Have you ever heard of a decent one who could talk to snakes? They called Slytherin himself a Serpent-tongue. Remember what was written on the wall? *Enemies of the Heir. Beware.* Potter had some sort of run-in with Filch. Next thing we know, Filch’s cat’s attacked. The first year, Creevey, was annoying Potter at the Quidditch match, taking pictures of him while he was lying in the mud. Next thing we know – Creevey’s been attacked” (199).

Harry decided to step forward and talk to them when they started speculating that the only reason Harry was attacked by Voldemort in the first place was because He Who Must Not Be Named did not want to compete with another Dark Lord.

Unable to convince Justin’s friends that he was, in fact, telling the snake to back off and not siccing it on him, he stormed out of the library.

On his way back to his dorm, he came across Justin “lying on the floor, rigid and cold, a look of shock frozen on his face, his eyes staring blankly at the ceiling” (202)

Justin was brought to the hospital wing and Harry was brought to Dumbeldore's office. While waiting to speak to the headmaster, Harry came across the Sorting Hat. Given the recent events, Harry wanted to see whether or not he had, in fact, been placed in the right house. Harry puts the hat on. "You've been wondering whether I put you in the right House, but I stand by what I said before - you would have done well in Slytherin" (206).

During Harry's confrontation with Tom Riddle (Voldemort), Tom tells Harry how much they are alike. "There are strange likenesses between us, after all. Even you must have noticed. Both half-bloods, orphans, raised by Muggles. Probably the only two Parselmouths to come to Hogwarts since the great Slytherin himself" (Rowling II 321).

The literary representation of passivity and assertiveness underscores the idea that obtaining and wielding power influences whether an innately good person will be tempted by wickedness or rendered ineffective by withstanding such enticements or if an already flawed person will become more damaged (Schafer 223).

Harry meets Voldemort again in the second book; this time he has taken the form of himself when he was a student of Hogwarts (Tom Riddle). Once again, he tries but fails to destroy Harry, and once again he does not understand why. "Twice - in your past, in my future - we have met. And twice I failed to kill you. How did you survive?" (Rowling 316). "How is it that you - a skinny boy with no extraordinary magical talent - managed to defeat the greatest wizard of all time? How did you escape with nothing but a scar, while Lord Voldemort's powers were destroyed?" (Rowling II 313).

Harry's "armor" against Voldemort was and still is his mother's love. The archetypal hero usually has help from some "good mother." "Time sealed her away, yet she is dwelling still, like one who sleeps in timelessness, at the bottom of the timeless sea" (Campbell 111). When Harry faces Voldemort, she is once again able to protect him, even in death.

According to Campbell, a hero is not a hero if he is afraid of death in any way; the first condition is reconciliation with the grave (356). According to Dumbledore in the first book, to



the well-organized mind, death is but the next great adventure (Rowling I 297). Although Harry's parents are dead, they are far from forgotten. They help Harry in some way throughout his adventures. Harry's quests in the four books have centered around his seeking vengeance for his parents' deaths.

It is because of his mother's love for him that Voldemort did not kill him when he was an infant, and it was because of his mother's love for him that Voldemort failed to kill Harry in his numerous attempts.

In the Sorcerer's Stone, Harry receives something that used to be his father's when he was a student about Hogwarts: an Invisibility Cloak. As the series progresses, Harry learns more and more about his parents. For example, in the Sorcerer's Stone, Harry learns that Professor Snape does not like Harry because when he was a schoolmate of James Potter, James saved his life, placing him in his debt. Snape did not like James Potter, and he did not like the fact that he is in the debt of someone he does not like.

In the Prisoner of Azkaban, Harry is back at the Dursleys. This year, he is old enough to take trips to the village of Hogsmeade with his friends, provided his parent or guardian signed a permission slip. The Dursleys were expecting a weeklong visit from Aunt Marge, Uncle Vernon's sister. She too, dislikes Harry and enjoys mistreating him whenever she visits. She does not know about Harry's "abnormality" and Uncle Vernon was determined to keep it that way. She is under the impression he goes to St. Brutus's Secure Center for Incurably Criminal Boys. Uncle Vernon wants him to behave and to keep up the charade. The only way Harry would go along with this is if Uncle Vernon signed his permission slip. "But if you sign my permission form, I swear I'll remember where I'm supposed to go to school, and I'll act like a Mug - like I'm normal and everything" (Rowling III 21).

Harry put up with Aunt Marge's abuse and for the most part was able to control himself (once he made a wine glass she was holding explode) until the last night of her visit. The last night at dinner, Aunt Marge started in on criticizing Harry's parents. She started talking about their death and saying how good and kind Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon were to take in such a horrible boy like Harry. (Because she does not know about Harry's "abnormality," she thinks Harry's parents were killed in a car crash). Harry was no longer able to control himself when

she speculated that the reason they were killed was because they were drunk. Harry cast a spell on her, making her blow up like a balloon and ran out on the Dursleys. "She deserved it. She deserved what she got. You keep away from me. I'm going. I've had enough" (30).

Harry catches a train into Hogsmeade and stays there until the start of another school year at Hogwarts. He learns his parents named Sirius Black to be his godfather. He also learns that his father was an "Animagus" – a wizard that can change into an animal. James Potter's 'animal' was a stag named Prongs. It is with his father's aid that he is able to defeat the Dementors: creatures that are able to suck out every good memory a person had. If they do this long enough, it will reduce the person to something soulless and evil and they will be left with nothing but the worst experiences of their life (187).

Harry learns about the Dementors in his Defense Against the Dark Arts class. At various times in the book, Harry has visions and they are so bad he passes out. Harry does not know what they are until they gradually come into focus for him: every time he is around a Dementor, he has visions of Voldemort attacking his parents: "*Not Harry, not Harry, please not Harry!*"

*"Stand aside, you silly girl . . . stand aside, now . . . "*

*"Not Harry! Please . . . have mercy . . . have mercy . . . "* (179).

Whenever Harry had these visions, they are usually about his mother. One time, however, he had visions of his father for the first time. "I heard my dad. That's the first time I've ever heard him – he tried to take Voldemort himself, to give my mum time to run for it" (240).

*"Lily, take Harry and go! It's Him! Go! Run! I'll hold him off –"* The sounds of someone stumbling from a room – a door bursting open – a cackle of high-pitched laughter (240).

The only weapon a wizard has against a Dementor is a Patronus spell. "The Patronus is a kind of positive force, a projection of the very things that the Dementor feeds upon – hope, happiness, the desire to survive – but it cannot feel despair, as real humans can, so the Dementors can't hurt it" (237). Harry recruits the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher to show him how to produce a Patronus, and gradually improves as the novel progresses. During the climax of the book, Harry finally manages to produce a Patronus in the shape of Prongs, which

drove the Dementors away. Harry thought at first that his father had come back. Dumbledore says to him, "An easy mistake to make. I expect you'll be tired of hearing it, but you do look extraordinarily like James. Except for the eyes . . . you have your mother's eyes" (427). "You know, Harry, in a way, you did see your father last night . . . You found him inside yourself" (428)

"You think the dead we loved ever truly leave us? You don't think that we don't recall them more clearly than ever in times of great trouble? Your father is alive in you, Harry, and shows himself more plainly when you have a need of him. How else could you produce that particular Patronus? Prongs rode again last night" (427 - 428).

Throughout the novels, at the end of each adventure, Harry learns something new about himself, making him more and more mature. As Harry grows, he becomes more and more ready to learn new pieces of information revealed to him by both Dumbledore and Voldemort and establishes a record of victories over the dark side.

At the end of a hero's story, the hero always returns to his 'normal life' after the trial is over. In Campbell's monomyth, "The final work is that of the return. If the powers have blessed the hero, he now sets forth under their protection. If not, he flees and is pursued" (Campbell 246).

In the four books, Harry has always left Hogwarts to go back to the Dursleys, his 'normal life,' unpleasant as is. In the third book, Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, Harry eventually learns he has a godfather: Sirius Black, who offers Harry a place to live instead of the Dursleys. Harry does not live with Sirius at the end of the book because Sirius had to go into hiding and stay there. He was wrongly imprisoned, escaped and is still on the run. If Harry went to live with Sirius Black, he would not have fully fulfilled the archetypal hero's story. Living with Sirius Black would not have been Harry's normal life.

Likewise, this is why Harry was not allowed to straight from Hogwarts to the Weasleys', like Ron wanted. At the end of the fourth book, Ron tells Harry that his mother asked Dumbledore for his permission, but he said Harry had to go back to the Dursleys, "at least at

first . . . she said Dumbledore's got his reasons. I suppose we've got to trust him, haven't we?" (Rowling IV 717 - 718).

Harry does not use magic when he is not at Hogwarts. This is to ensure he goes back to a normal life when he leaves the school at the end of the school term, like the hero goes back to his normal life at the end of his journey. In Campbell's monomyth, "At the return threshold the transcendental powers must remain behind; the hero reemerges from the kingdom of dread" (Campbell 246). It is also a school rule: Hogwarts strictly forbids any student from using magic when they are not at school. This is to prevent the students from getting themselves into trouble or from being discovered by the "Muggles."

While the reader sees Harry is a hero, Harry himself has no idea he is a hero. The only time anyone ever implies him being a hero was in the Goblet of Fire. The second event in the Triwizard Tournament came in the form of a puzzle Harry had to solve: "*Come seek us where our voices sound. / We cannot sing above the ground, / And while you're searching, ponder this: / We've taken what you'll sorely miss. / An hour long you'll have to look, / And to recover what we took. / But past an hour the prospect's black / To late, it's gone, it won't come back*" (Rowling IV 463).

After solving the puzzle, Harry learns that mermaids had taken friends or family members of the competitors (in Harry's case, they had taken Ron). Not only do they have to rescue their friends, they first have to figure out how to breathe underwater for a long period of time. He is the first to reach where the hostages were being held.

When Harry was in the process of rescuing Ron, he sees the little sister of another competitor and that particular competitor was nowhere in sight. The problem was not the charm she chose, It was the fact that on her way to rescue her sister, she was attacked by water demons and had to abandon the task.)

Taking the poem seriously, Harry rescues both the little girl and Ron, going over the specific amount of time. Hearing this, Ron immediately criticizes him: "Harry, you prat, you

didn't take that song seriously, did you? Dumbledore wouldn't have let any of us drown! It was only to make sure you got inside the time limit!" (Rowling IV 503).

During the last event, Harry finds himself reaching the Triwizard Cup at the same time as the other competitor from Hogwarts. They were in the process of deciding who should take it: "You should've gotten more points on the second task. You stayed behind to get all the hostages. I should've done that" (633). Harry disagrees. "I was the only one who was thick enough to take that song seriously!" (633).

Returning to his normal life does not mean the end of his adventures, however. At the beginning of each successive book, he returns for another school year at Hogwarts. More importantly, he returns for another series of adventures. (When I first wrote this, there were only four books in the series. As I'm revising it now, there are seven: one for each year Harry spent at Hogwarts.)

Although Harry does have what he has been told is a strong connection to the "dark side," he continually chooses not to go along with it. This is, perhaps, one of the greatest pieces of evidence that Harry is a hero. "It is in our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities" (Rowling II 333).

## WORKS CITED

- Bonfonte-Warren, Alexandra. Mythical Beasts: Traditions and Tales of Favorite Fabled Creatures. New York: Metro Books, 2000
- Campbell, Joseph. The Hero with a Thousand Faces. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. New York: Bollington Foundation Inc., 1949.
- Cotterell, Arthur. The Encyclopedia of Mythology. London: Lorenz Books, 1999.
- Kronzek, Allan Zola and Elizabeth Kronzek. The Sorcerer's Companion: A Guide to the Magical World of Harry Potter. New York: Broadway Books, 2001.
- Rowling, J.K. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. New York: Arthur A. Levine Books, 1997.  
(Rowling I)
- Rowling, J.K. Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. New York: Arthur A. Levine Books, 1999. (Rowling II)
- Rowling, J.K. Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban. New York: Arthur A. Levine Books, 1999. (Rowling III)
- Rowling, J.K. Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. New York: Arthur A. Levine Books, 2000.  
(Rowling IV)
- Schafer, Elizabeth D. Exploring Harry Potter. Osprey: Beacham Publishing Corp., 2000.