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Harry Potter: A Hero of Mythic Proportions

Katie L. Baker

bakekl24@mail.buffalostate.edu

Advisor

Karen Sands-O'Connor, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English

First Reader

Craig Werner, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English

Second Reader

Aimable Twagilimana, Ph.D, Professor of English

Department Chair

Ralph L. Wahlstrom, Ph.D.. Associate Professor of English

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Harry Potter: A Hero of Mythic Proportions

By

Katie L Baker

An Abstract of a Thesis
in
English

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Arts

December 2011

State University of New York
College at Buffalo
Department of English

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Harry Potter: A Hero of Mythic Proportions

This thesis argues that Harry Potter, the main character in the series of novels written by J.K. Rowling, is a mythic hero. A character in literature deemed a hero can only be a mythic hero by completing a series of events both predetermined and determined by the hero. Joseph Campbell's work *A Hero With a Thousand Faces* outlines these qualities a character must possess and the events he must complete in his life called the initiation, the departure, and the return of the hero. Using Campbell's seminal work as a critical perspective, I read the protagonist of the Harry Potter novels as a mythic hero. Starting life with nothing, he overcomes his circumstances while remaining virtuous and strong. His strength and virtue allow him to rid the wizarding world of evil, thus solidifying his status of a mythic hero.

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Approved by:

Karen Sands-O'Connor, Ph.D
Professor of English
Thesis Advisor

Ralph Wahlstrom, Ph.D
Associate Professor & Chairperson of the Department of English

Kevin J. Railey, Ph.D
Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

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Introduction

In movies, novels, and life, people are named as heroes. The heroes we determine and the heroes we recognize, however, may not qualify for a status of *mythic* hero. A mythic hero ventures forth on his journey, and the story that comes forth from the hero's path to greatness is the monomyth. One popular figure that does qualify is the main character in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. This thesis discusses the certain aspects and events that categorize Harry Potter as a mythic hero.

Myths of the past included many hero figures. Each of these heroes had certain aspects about them which determined their mythic status. Joseph Campbell outlined the traits and events which should be present in the life of the mythic hero in his book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* which covers the qualities a hero of a monomyth has. Campbell comments about the abundant appearance of the hero character in all cultures. "Throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, myths of man have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind" (1). Campbell then continues to cover a series of aspects that are involved in the mythic hero's travels and experiences.

Campbell explores the adventure of the hero, a necessary cycle in the life of a mythic hero. Included in the adventure is the departure which involves the call to adventure, the refusal of the call, the supernatural aid, the crossing of the first threshold, and the belly of the whale. Next is the initiation of the hero which involves the road of trials, the meeting with the goddess, the woman as temptress, atonement with the father, apotheosis, and the ultimate boon. The third part of the hero's travels involves the return which includes the refusal of the return, the magic

flight, the rescue from without, the crossing of the return threshold, master of the two worlds, and freedom to live. The novels of J.K. Rowling do not cover all parts of the hero's life, but the initiation of the hero is fully entwined within the pages of the seven works.

The Harry Potter series is relatively new and the publications of close readings or theoretical criticisms of the text are not as extensive as those of the "classics" we all know and love. In the publications that do exist on the topic of Harry Potter, Harry is often referred to as a "hero." However, not much is written that examines why Harry is considered a hero. To simply distinguish a character as a hero by referring to him as one is not enough. When viewing the texts closely, it is extremely evident why Harry is referred to as a hero and how his early journeys initiate him into the path of a hero. Campbell talks of clear and defined events that propel the hero. "The so-called rites of passage, which occupy such a prominent place in the life of a primitive society are distinguished by formal, and usually very severe, exercises of severance, whereby the individual is radically cut away from the attitudes, attachments, and life patterns of the stage being left behind" (11).

Chapter one of this thesis explores the aspects of a hero. Not just anyone can be a hero. There are predetermined factors and events that create a hero. Chapter two discusses the refusal of the call. More often than not, the hero refuses his initial call to adventure and the results of the refusal can be devastating to his journey. Chapter three shows the influence of the supernatural guide in the hero's path to destiny. Next, chapter four covers the first threshold the hero must cross in order to initiate his journey. Lastly, chapter five covers the belly of the whale; the place wherein the hero is rejuvenated so he can finish his battle against evil

When examining the texts of J.K. Rowling's series, very clear and concise events show that Harry Potter is a mythic hero. Covered in the novels is the process of the initiation of the hero which uplifts Harry's character to the status of a mythic hero.

Chapter 1-Aspects of a Mythic Hero

In his critical work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell outlines the aspects that a character must possess in order to be considered a mythic hero. Although society terms many different people who perform certain tasks heroic, a true mythic hero must fit into a certain mold. A hero must first be “the man of self-achieved submission” (Campbell 11). The hero is one of virtue and morality in all situations and these two aspects remain evident throughout all of the hero's struggles. He also exhibits an underestimated appearance that is the result of a humble and even terrible beginning of life (Campbell 10).

Harry Potter of the *Harry Potter* series shows these characteristics beginning with his own humble beginnings. In the collected work of essays based on the series, *The Psychology of Harry Potter*, Goodfriend comments on the terrible circumstances in which Harry Potter is brought up: “Harry is a great wizard. But often, greatness is bred from childhood strife and results in interpersonal loneliness and separation in adulthood” (89). Harry Potter is gifted, but it is not because he was brought up in an inspiring and caring world that fostered magical growth. Harry is forced to live with his Aunt Petunia, Uncle Vernon, and horrid cousin Dudley, otherwise known as the Dursley family. The obvious hate the Dursleys feel towards him is glaring. Their obvious disdain towards Harry is, unfortunately, a common occurrence, and it seems the Dursleys would rather choose to ignore Harry than recognize him as a member of their family: “The Dursleys often spoke about Harry like this, as though he wasn't there-or rather, as though he was something very nasty that couldn't understand them, like a slug” (Rowling 55). Harry's “family” chooses not to recognize him, and because of his magical abilities, he is treated as not only an outcast of the family but as a despised being who is intruding on their “normal” lives.

The terrors of Harry Potter's life is shown in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. As the Dursleys take their beloved son, Dudley, and a friend to the zoo, a less than perfect situation for Harry turns out to be one of the best days of his life:

Harry had the best morning he'd had in a long time. He was careful to walk a little way apart from the Dursleys so that Dudley and Piers, who were starting to get bored with the animals by lunchtime, wouldn't fall back on their favorite hobby of hitting him. They ate in the zoo restaurant, and when Dudley had a tantrum because his knickerbocker glory didn't have enough ice cream on top, Uncle Vernon bought him another one and Harry was allowed to finish the first. (Rowling 55)

Harry is thoroughly pleased with Dudley's outcasts and happy that he is not beaten, the small pleasures indulged by him on this trip paint a picture of his life circumstances. This glory does not last forever though, and as Harry is accustomed to, Dudley angers Harry which results in Harry making something magical happen; this time, the glass which holds in the snake in the reptile room disappears and the snake escapes. Although Harry causes this, it is not purposefully and no harm results. This does not deter the wrath of Uncle Vernon though: "Uncle Vernon waited until Piers [Dudley's friend] was safely out of the house before starting on Harry. He was so angry he could hardly speak. He managed to say, "Go-cupboard-stay-no-meals," before he collapsed into a chair, and Aunt Petunia had to run and get him a large brandy"(Rowling 55). Forced to live in a tiny closet the Dursleys consider a bedroom, Harry is not allowed to leave the cupboard of a room for the next several days. The space he must make his permanent residence in is so small, Harry cannot stand up straight. There is no room to move about and the only thing Harry can do all day is lay around in a tiny bed with no form of entertainment, or nourishment, for that matter.

Joseph Campbell sums up this time of the hero's life which is important to the hero's journey:

In sum: the child of destiny has to face a long period of obscurity. This is a time of extreme danger, impediment, or disgrace. He is thrown inward to his own depths or outward to the unknown; either way, what he touches is darkness unexplored. And this is a zone of unsuspected presences, benign as well as malignant: an angel appears, a helpful animal, a fisherman, a hunter, crone, or peasant. Fostered in the animal school, or, like Siegfried, below ground among the gnomes that nourish the roots of the tree of life, or again, alone in some little room, the young world apprentice learns the lesson of the seed powers, which reside just beyond the sphere of the measured and the named.

(Campbell 280)

Harry, confined not only in the tiny room but in the care of his abusive extended family, faces this period of strife in his life. His angel, as mentioned by Campbell, appears in his ability to perform magic when angry such as was mentioned beforehand when the "escaped" snake helped keep Piers and Dudley away from Harry.

Harry is able to put a name to his mystical abilities when he first finds out that he is admitted to Hogwarts. In order to inform Harry of his opportunity to attend Hogwarts, a letter is sent to him from Professor Dumbledore, the headmaster of the school. Uncle Vernon, showing his fear and hatred of Harry, does not allow Harry to read the mail which results in a house full of post, literally, from the magical school. In order to prevent Harry from attending the school (which in actuality seems like the perfect way to get him away), Vernon uproots his family to hide from the letters that mysteriously find Harry wherever he is. Even in hiding, knowing that some sort of magical power is watching, Harry is mistreated:

As night fell, the promised storm blew up around them. Spray from the high waves splattered the walls of the hut and a fierce wind rattled the filthy windows. Aunt Petunia found a few moldy blankets in the second room and made up a bed for Dudley on the moth-eaten sofa. She and Uncle Vernon went off to the lumpy bed next door, and Harry was left to find the softest bit of floor he could and to curl up under the thinnest, most ragged blanket. (Rowling 44-45)

Although Harry is the reason why Vernon moved to a shack in the middle of an island, he is not a factor in their preparations to deal with the raging storm. He is a forgotten member of the family. Hsien covers the treatment of Harry by the Dursleys in his article in the collection of essays *Harry Potter and Philosophy: An Examination of the Boy Who Lived*:

Moreover, even when acting in thoroughly “normal” fashion, Harry is still a living symbol of all the Dursley’s hate and fear. To minimize these symbolic reminders, Vernon and Petunia often resort to the absurdity of pretending that Harry doesn’t exist at all. So their living room is filled with pictures of Dudley, but contains “no sign” of Harry; when company comes for dinner, Harry is supposed to “be in his room, making no noise, and pretending he is not there” (Hsieh 27).

Although they put a lot of effort into avoiding Harry, he is the reason behind many of their less than normal behaviors. This hatred, and the behaviors based on hatred, show not only the humble and undesirable beginnings of Harry Potter but also the beginnings of a hero.

According to Campbell, mythic heroes often exhibit an underestimated appearance: “The heroes become less and less fabulous, until at last, in the final stages of the various local traditions, legend opens into the common daylight of recorded time” (271). Harry Potter is no exception to this rule. Described as an ordinary boy with glasses and hair that will not stay in

place, Harry does not exhibit the typical appearance of what many might consider a hero. He is not muscular and does not show any remarkable features other than the lightning shaped scar on his forehead. He does not stick out in crowd, which aligns with the assumption that a mythic hero is destined to be a hero even if he is not easily recognized as someone special or great by looks alone. “Ironically, the emphasis on Harry’s ordinariness means that his heroism seems to depend on chance and inheritance” (Hopkins 97).

Harry’s appearance is not the only aspect of him that is, at first glance, below par. Because he is the famous Harry Potter who defeated the infamous Lord Voldemort while only a tiny baby, he is assumed to know everything about magic and performing magic. Harry, brought up in the horrible household of the Durselys, knows pretty much nothing about magic: “Thus ignorance becomes Harry’s defining condition. He knows nothing about the magic world, not even what he himself is—a celebrated wizard” (Hopkins 25). Although naturally talented as a wizard, his knowledge base is quite small. Therefore, he is an unassuming hero figure again following in line with the expected aspects of the mythic hero.

Mythic heroes, as previously stated, are extremely human-like, although it is apparent to outsiders that they are destined to complete greater tasks than many humans ever will. Because heroes appear to be human-like, they are characters that readers can easily relate to:

One thing that makes the characters so compelling is that, for all their amazing magical abilities, they’re still stuck in the same social conundrums, feeling the same pressures and making the same social decisions, as us Muggles. They still struggle, and they live with the fact that they don’t always get their way. They mostly use their power with restraint, as you and I do. In fact, social order couldn’t exist unless they (and you and I) did.

(Franklin 170)

What also makes heroes easy to relate to is the fact that they choose morality when it is obvious that good or bad actions will each lead them to great things. Generally, the bad way even seems the easier route to take. Instead of bowing to evil which can seem like the easier route, the hero takes the more difficult option. This is a choice that anyone can choose to make—the path towards good or the path towards evil. A true hero always chooses the tougher path to goodness.

Joseph Campbell comments on the morality that the mythic hero must show. He states, "The hero is a man of self-achieved submission" (11). Involved in the submission of the hero is becoming the opposite of his evil counterpart who embodies vanity and self-service. The hero takes part in none of these atrocious behaviors though. Harry Potter shows many instances in which he puts virtue above himself resulting in supposed character flaws to those around him but, as Baggett argues, "That a character like Harry may have flaws doesn't mean he's not a hero or virtuous" (165). Harry, the human-like hero, does have character flaws, but the fact that he always chooses the way of morality above himself, his life, and his power, shows that he is truly virtuous, which is the life-saving quality of the hero: "Harry Potter shows how a young man vulnerable to all the fears that any of us ever experience can overcome those emotions and nobly press on to do what needs to be done" (Morris 21). No matter what Harry Potter experiences, he is constantly in a battle for the greater good, even when it seems that evil can manipulate him away from the path of virtue:

Harry exhibits are hardiness, the ability to experience positive emotion, and the use of active coping strategies. While all of these serve to transform Harry's grief into strength and personal growth, the most important of the resilience factors in hardiness, because it constitutes the core of Harry's belief system. Hardiness is to believe that life has purpose, one can influence the outcome of events, and that growth can be achieved from

both positive and negative experiences. (Goodfriend 94)

Harry Potter consistently shows his moral character even when finding himself in grave danger. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Harry knows that he must fight Voldemort and in that battle, he will probably not survive. He is searching for a way to defeat evil while being considered evil himself, due to inaccurate information given to the public by Voldemort's followers. In the midst of this grave danger, Harry still puts others safety before his own:

'There are a dozen places you might be now, Harry,' said Mr. Weasley. 'He's got no way of knowing which safe house you're in.'

'It's not me I'm worried for!' said Harry." (Rowling 82)

Harry would rather die than put his surrogate family, the Weasleys, in trouble. He disregards his own life, almost recklessly so, to make sure he is saving his loved ones from hurt or danger.

Harry explains his reasoning behind risking his life later in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*.

'Because,' said Harry before Hermione could answer, 'sometimes you've got to think about more than your own safety! Sometimes you've got to think about the greater good! This is war!'

'You're seventeen, boy!'

'I'm of age, and I'm going to keep fighting even if you've given up.' (Rowling 568)

Although others around Harry are ready to give in to evil, he keeps fighting the moral battle.

The situation seems desperate, but he does not cross over to the darkness that seems destined to take over. As Patterson argues, "Thus we can see that, according to Aristotle's criteria at any rate, Harry is a brave person. He knows what he must do, he chooses it for its own sake, and does so consistently. He has, as a trait of his character, the moral quality of bravery or courage"

(125).

Harry's morality is even apparent to the evil figure pervading the Harry Potter novels, Lord Voldemort. He knows that Potter is unable to allow the people he cares about to die.

Voldemort relays this morality, which he considers a weakness, to his followers:

'You sound like Lucius. Neither of you understands Potter as I do. He does not need finding. Potter will come to me. I know his weakness, you see, his one great flaw. He will hate watching the others struck down around him, knowing that it is for him that it happens. He will want to stop it at any cost. He will come.' (Rowling 654)

Voldemort tries to exploit Harry's morality, which allows Harry to fight for his friends above himself, believing that evil will conquer. Fortunately for the wizarding world, a moral hero always conquers.

Harry's actions for the larger battle of good versus evil allow him to survive an attack from Lord Voldemort that should have killed him. Campbell comments on the hero's ability to survive trying times because of the upstanding citizen he represents by describing his heroic actions: "Cultivating freedom from passion; forsaking conceit and power, pride and lust, wrath and possessions, tranquil in heart, and free from ego-he becomes worthy of becoming one with the imperishable" (Campbell 304). He is unable to understand what has happened, however, Potter comes into contact with a recently passed Dumbledore, who explains how morality saved Harry's life, thus reiterating Campbell's view on the hero's ability to survive:

'Without meaning to, as you now know, Lord Voldemort doubled the bond between you when he returned to a human form. A part of his soul was still attached to yours, and thinking to strengthen himself, he took a part of your mother's sacrifice into himself. If he could only have understood the precise and terrible power of sacrifice, he would not,

perhaps, have dared to touch your blood...But then, if he had been able to understand, he could not be Lord Voldemort, and might never have been murdered at all.'

'He was more afraid than you were that night, Harry. You had accepted, even embraced, the possibility of death, something Lord Voldemort has never been able to do. Your courage won, your wand overpowered his. And in doing so, something happened between those wands, something that echoed the relationship between their masters.'

(Rowling 710-711)

Here Dumbledore outlines Harry's virtue that was instilled in him at birth in that he was able to accept his death for the role it played in the quest for the greater good. Because he is able to cling to his virtue, he is able to defeat the evil Voldemort, thus saving humankind. This bravery is an aspect that Voldemort is never able to possess. Voldemort fights and kills for himself because he is afraid of not being himself. The fear of existing without power drives him to commit murder and destruction. On the contrary, Harry fights to save others. Because of this, he is able to save his own life because he sacrifices himself so that innocent wizards could live. His moral actions create stronger magic than the self-servient actions of Voldemort.

Joseph Campbell outlined these aspects of a true mythic hero: Morality, underestimated appearance, and human-like qualities. Harry Potter is true to all of these traits, thus embodying the first criterion of being a hero of mythic proportions.

Chapter 2-Refusal of the Call

More often than not, a hero does not initially accept his or her call to greatness. He or she instead decides to remain in his or her mundane path of life. Here, “wailed in boredom, hard work, or “culture,” the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved. His flowering world becomes a wasteland of dry stones and his life feels meaningless” (Campbell 49). The hero also experiences a never-ending and debilitating image of his nemesis: “The power that would destroy one’s egocentric system becomes a monster. One is harassed, both day and night, by the divine being that is the image of the living self within the locked labyrinth of one’s own disoriented psyche” (Campbell 50). In other words, the hero is asked to face the figure of evil, the opposite of his own humble representation of good. These “visions” do not stop until the hero accepts the journey he has been destined to proceed upon.

Harry Potter initially refuses the task set before him which, if accepted, will result in him becoming a mythic hero of the world. Although he does attend Hogwarts and accepts his position as a wizard, Harry Potter does not consider himself a hero destined to preserve good in the world by defeating the evil wizard Voldemort. Harry has many encounters with the Dark Lord but does not participate in the deadly battle that has been predetermined. Harry shies away from any battles that will end either his or Voldemort’s life even though this major battle is needed to complete the journey of the hero. Harry often does not want to partake in any dangerous behavior, which is unavoidable in the hero’s world, in the hopes that he and his friends will be saved from the imminent danger that arises from evil forces battling against the goodness of the hero. He does find himself in dangerous confrontations with Voldemort throughout his years at Hogwarts as he denies the journey of the hero waiting to be taken. This unwillingness to accept a full battle with Voldemort may result from the conversation Harry had

with Professor Dumbledore after his first confrontation with the weakened Voldemort in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*: “Nevertheless, Harry, while you may only have delayed his return to power, it will merely take someone else who is prepared to fight what seems a losing battle next time-and if he is delayed again, and again, why, he may never return to battle” (Rowling 298). After this conversation, Harry has many encounters with the Dark Lord but never elevates his anger to the point of a battle in which he intends to kill Voldemort until the last novel, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. This unwillingness to face the danger of evil head on shows Potter’s inability to trust in his own magical ability. He therefore is more interested in making sure his friends do not have to take part in a battle than actually participating in his own journey. As Campbell maintains, “The myths and folktales of the whole world make clear that the refusal is essentially a refusal to give up what one takes to be one’s own interests” (49). Harry feels that protecting his friends is his main concern since he has a special connection to the evil Voldemort, and it is obvious he has previously defeated this evil entity. Dumbledore, his protector, also seems to want to keep Harry from a battle with Voldemort, possibly because he realizes that Potter is not yet ready to accept his destiny and is, according to Campbell, a victim to be saved.

Dumbledore's influence in keeping Harry Potter away from battle is shown in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Harry finds himself in a confrontation with Tom Riddle who is the young Voldemort before he names himself the Dark Lord. Voldemort has trapped part of his soul in a diary he has kept, which allows him to store the image of himself in his childhood. Instead of goading Harry to defend himself, Dumbledore sends help in the form of a phoenix when confrontation arises: "A crimson bird the size of a swan had appeared, piping its weird music to the vaulted ceiling. It had a glittering golden tail as long as a peacock's and gleaming

golden talons, which were gripping a ragged bundle" (Rowling 317). Shortly after the phoenix appears, Voldemort begins his attack using a Basilisk, a dangerous snake creature, on Potter. Because Harry is unwilling to accept his hero role, he runs from Voldemort's attack: "The basilisk was moving towards Harry; he could hear its heavy body slithering heavily across the dusty floor. Eyes still shut, Harry began to run blindly sideways, his hands outstretched, feeling his way-Voldemort was laughing" (Rowling 318). Dumbledore's bird steps in to help the hero as he refuses the fight against evil:

Fawkes dived. His long golden beak sank out of sight and a sudden shower of dark blood splattered the floor. The snake's tail thrashed, narrowly missing Harry, and before Harry could shut his eyes, it turned-Harry looked straight into its face and saw that its eyes, both its great, bulbous eyes, had been punctured by the phoenix; blood was streaming to the floor, and the snake was spitting in agony. (Rowling 318-319)

The snake, a weapon of Voldemort, is defeated, allowing Harry to escape and continue on his path to accepting the hero's journey.

As the novels progress, so does Harry's willingness to take part in the hero's journey. In a later battle in *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*, he is still not yet ready to accept his role due to his fear of the similarities between himself and Voldemort despite the differences that Dumbledore points out to him frequently:

"I know!" said Harry impatiently. "I can love! It was only with difficulty that he stopped himself from adding, "Big deal!" (Rowling 509)

Harry's deep-seeded concerns about his capabilities to turn evil keeps him from fully becoming the hero he had been born to be. Dumbledore recognizes this fear and keeps Harry safe.

However, with Dumbledore's death, Harry shows progression towards the hero's path and exhibits a willingness to begin the journey. After Snape (an alleged Voldemort follower) kills Dumbledore, Harry begins to show a desire to battle against evil:

Harry flew across the entrance hall and out in the dark grounds. He could just make out three figures racing across the lawn, heading for the gates beyond which they could Disapparate-by the looks of them, one was the huge blond Death Eater and, some way ahead of him, Snape and Malfoy. The cold night ripped at Harry's lungs as he tore after them; he saw a flash of light in the distance that momentarily silhouetted his quarry. He did not know what it was but continued to run, not yet near enough to get a good aim with a curse. (Rowling 601)

Harry's contemplations regarding using a curse against a Death Eater show a change in him as he progresses towards accepting his role. Although he still does not yet enter into a direct battle with evil, he has shown that he is taking a step forward to accepting that he will enter into battle with Voldemort without any outside assistance and without the worry of protecting his friends from the consequences that come with battle.

Harry's need to protect others and accept his path do progress throughout the novels but he is still unwilling to accept his journey even in his last few adventures which are depicted in the novel *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. His friends want to discover the secrets that will result in the death of the evil Lord Voldemort, thus freeing the wizarding world from the grips of death and destruction the Dark Lord has manufactured. The secrets to evil's immortality are otherwise known as the Horcruxes and the journey to obtain them is quite dangerous.

"If we just do a bit of poking around-"

“No, said Harry flatly, “we’ve done enough poking around” (Rowling 247).

Harry is not yet ready to fully accept that he must meet Voldemort face to face and feels he must continue working to discover the secrets needed to defeat evil. Although he has shown previously that he recognizes the upcoming battle between good and evil, he continues to shy away from it and denies the task placed before him by destiny.

At one point in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the Order of the Phoenix (the wizard crusaders for good) want to transport Harry away from his surroundings to keep him safe from the Death Eaters (Voldemort’s evil followers) who are planning an ambush on Potter, as he is an imminent threat to Voldemort due to his ability to defeat evil time and time again. In order to remove Harry, they all plan to take polyjuice potion which will turn them into Harry look-alikes. Harry, refusing the task set before him, does not agree with this necessary action:

‘No!’ He said loudly, his voice ringing through the kitchen. ‘No way!’

‘I told them you’d take it like this,’ said Hermione with a hint of complacency.

‘If you think I’m going to let six people risk their lives-!’

‘-because it’s the first time for all of us,’ said Ron. (Rowling 49)

If Harry had not been forced into taking this task, he would not have returned to the wizarding world. In not returning, he would stay in the muggle society, therefore remaining in the boring world of humans that he despises. Harry believes that in not returning to Hogwarts, he can keep the people he cares about safe. He still feels the pangs of the possibility of becoming "bad" himself and that hinders his development into a hero. Although not fully accepting, Harry is forced into completing this part of his task and is therefore re-entered into the world of magic. This does not allow him to plummet into the adventures of a mythic hero though. He has not yet escaped the humdrum world of a hero who has refused the task set before him because he has

been unwilling to fully begin the task set before him by natural and predetermined circumstances. Harry remains caught in a game of cat and mouse, constantly hiding and avoiding any situations that may cause danger. Campbell describes this refusal: “It is a deliberate, terrific refusal to respond to anything but the deepest, highest, richest answer to the as-yet-unknown demand of some waiting void within: a kind of total strike, or rejection of the offered terms of life” (53). Deep down inside, Harry knows there will be a large battle between himself and Voldemort, but because of his concern for the safety of his friends, he refuses to enter into the danger of a meeting with his evil counterpart.

Once the Order of the Phoenix successfully transports Harry from his aunt and uncle’s house to the Weasley home (a safe spot located in the world of wizards), Ron, Hermione and Harry head off, deciding not to return to Hogwarts. They instead decide to start a quest to find and destroy the Horcruxes that keep Voldemort alive. This willingness to end Voldemort’s life hints at Harry’s willingness to finally take part in the destined battle between good and evil. Unfortunately, the trio of friends does not know where most of the Horcruxes are. So, instead of accepting the task of the heroic journey, they basically hide until Harry is able to decide that he can become the hero destiny has named him for. In Harry’s desire to stay stagnant, the others are forced into immobility as the fight against evil is not in Harry’s companions' cards:

Harry could not help wondering whether they had only agreed to come on what now felt like a pointless and rambling journey because they thought he had some secret plan that they would learn in due course. Ron was making no effort to hide his bad mood, and Harry was starting to fear that Hermione too was disappointed by his poor leadership. (Rowling 292)

Instead of an exciting, evil-destroying adventure, the world becomes mundane, repetitive, and unexciting as Harry, Hermione, and Ron simply move from place to place trying to stay hidden from Death Eaters. They move frequently but do not develop a plan that involves Harry confronting his nemesis. Although Harry has made an effort in accepting his “hero” task, he does not entirely engage himself in the journey. In the company of Hermione and Ron, Harry instead spends most of his time avoiding the action which would involve the defeat of Voldemort.

Because Harry refuses to accept his task and denies his role of a hero protecting the good of the wizarding world, he is often terrorized by the image of Voldemort. The latter is the opposite image of what Harry represents, and the former’s connection to his alter ego causes both physical and mental pain. The connection first begins when Harry goes to Ollivander’s shop before his first year at Hogwarts to get a wand:

‘Sorry,’ said Harry, ‘but what’s curious?’

Mr.Olivander fixed Harry with his pale stare. ‘I remember every wand I’ve ever sold, Mr. Potter. Every single wand. It so happens that the phoenix whose tail feather is in your wand, gave another feather-just one other. It is very curious indeed that you should be destined for this wand when its brother-why, its brother gave you that scar.’ (Rowling 85)

Voldemort had used the sister wand of the wand that chose Harry to try to kill him years ago. The deep connection between Harry and Voldemort terrorizes the former at various points throughout his adventures leading up to the acceptance of a hero’s journey. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the connection between Harry and Voldemort is strong: “He felt Voldemort before he saw him. Looking sideways, he stared into the red eyes and was sure they

would be the last thing he ever saw” (Rowling 62). The scar caused by the similar wands provides the source of pain that Voldemort causes in Harry: “Then the scar on his forehead burned like fire; as a Death Eater appeared on either side of the bike” (Rowling 60). This connection or similarity haunts Harry because he and Voldemort are essentially the same being. The two, although representing different ideals, are just decisions away from being the same person. If Harry had chosen to become one with his mirror image, his power would cross over to the evil entity. However, Harry fights against this image as it causes him much pain and apprehensiveness, allowing him to associate Voldemort’s evil yet attractive power with something he does not want.

The scar and the image of Voldemort do not always just cause pain to Harry though. At times, Harry embodies Voldemort in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*: “At once, Harry’s scar felt as though it had split open again. His true surroundings vanished: He was Voldemort, and the skeletal wizard before him was laughing toothlessly at him; he was enraged at the summons he felt” (Rowling 472). Instead of feeling simple pain at the connection of his nemesis, Harry lives Voldemort’s life as he slips unconsciously into the world of evil:

And then, out of nowhere, the pain in his scar peaked. As he clutched his forehead and closed his eyes, a voice screamed inside his head.

‘You told me the problem would be solved by using another’s wand!’

And into his mind burst the vision of an emaciated old man lying in rags upon a stone floor, screaming, a horrible, drawn-out scream, and a scream of unendurable agony.

(Rowling 84)

Harry lives the violent life of Voldemort and it scares him because he physically experiences being evil through his connection with the dark lord. This link further solidifies the terror Harry feels in being so closely incorporated in the opposite evils of his world or virtue.

Harry is also alarmed by the connection because it seems that Voldemort can manipulate Harry by planting images which destroy Harry's own plans to stop evil:

'Yeah, I do remember, thanks,' said Harry through gritted teeth; he did not need Hermione to tell him that Voldemort had once used this selfsame connection between them to lead him into a trap, nor that it had resulted in Sirius's death. He wished that he had not told them what he had seen and felt; it made Voldemort more threatening, as though he was pressing against the window of the room, and still the pain in his scar was building and he fought it: It was like resisting the urge to be sick. (Rowling 173)

This connection to Voldemort scares Harry because it drives him to recognize the very thin line between evil and good. The Horcruxes that Harry finds remind him of this "line" which causes more apprehensiveness in Harry. "Then a voice hissed from out of the Horcrux. "I have seen your heart, and it is mine" (Rowling 375). Harry's worst nightmare comes out of the Horcrux in the form of Voldemort's voice--Harry and Voldemort could very well be the same.

Fortunately for Harry, this image of his evil alter ego terrorizes him as he lies in wait, which keeps him from stepping over the boundary of good and evil. As Patrick argues, "The average person is naturally inclined to submit to the authority of a more powerful other even when blind obedience results in harm to others. The implication is that the average person is capable of committing extreme acts of evil when placed in the role of a subordinate" (229). Harry, however, is not the ordinary person. He is a destined hero and therefore refuses to submit

to this evil image and lifestyle realizing that if he submits to evil, innocent wizards and witches will be hurt.

The connection between Harry and Voldemort is another reason that the former refuses to accept his predetermined path. He is aware that he has a special power as a wizard. He is powerful and has previously defeated Voldemort while only a baby in a crib. Because of this awareness, he is afraid of becoming something darker. Voldemort's life as a child was similar to Harry's life as a child and Harry knows that he is one evil move away from becoming a new Lord Voldemort. According to Melanie Green in her essay "Resisting Social Influence," Harry and Voldemort both have different power types, but how they use it is what determines what time of person they are. She states how Voldemort is the master of coercive power: "Coercive power is the dark side of reward power. Instead of providing rewards, people with coercive power have the ability to deliver threats and punishment. The Death Eater's willingness to use Unforgivable Curses to kill and torture is a powerful source of influence throughout wizard society-so powerful that wizards fear to even speak Voldemort's name" (300). Harry realizes that Voldemort uses his magical abilities to produce evil acts, so he refuses to use Unforgivable Curses to save himself from crossing over to an evil path. This fear of becoming evil hinders his progression to becoming a mythic hero.

After refusing the task and dealing with the terrible images and upsetting lifestyles of evil, the hero finally accepts the task of the adventure of the hero. For Harry, this comes when he decides to take action in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Previously, Harry had taken the passive stance and wants the adventure to come to him as long as the initial risk is not overly apparent. When Harry finally accepts the journey and takes initiative, he becomes progressive in

his quest of learning about the Deathly Hallows, which will imminently allow him to destroy Voldemort:

‘But you said it, Hermione! You’ve got to find out about them for yourself! It’s a Quest!’

‘But I only said that to try and persuade you to come to the Lovegoods’!’ cried Hermione in exasperation. ‘I didn’t really believe it!’

Harry took no notice.

‘Dumbledore usually let me find out stuff for myself. He let me try my strength, take risks. This feels like the kind of thing he’d do.’ (Rowling 433)

Here, Harry finally realizes and accepts what is put before him. Finally willing to accept the task presented to him, he is able to march forward on the plan that had been destined for him, propelling him into the mold of the mythic hero. He realizes his own strength and decides that he can give his life and defeat Voldemort to keep the wizarding world safe. He finally comes to the conclusion that if he fights Voldemort, he will be performing a selfless act that will allow him to remain on the side of good, even in death. Although Harry refuses the biggest challenge set before him (fighting Voldemort until one of them dies), he does this because he believes he is protecting his friends, a community, and his own morality from a much deeper peril. As Harry grows and progresses into manhood, he realizes that he must sacrifice his own life in order to ever truly stand a chance in defeating evil. This realization propels him into officially accepting the heroic task set before him. With this growth and acceptance, he moves forward and ends up overtaking Voldemort while still remaining true to his moral self.

Chapter 3-Supernatural Guide

An aspect outlined by Joseph Campbell as a necessity on the track to becoming a mythic hero is the appearance of a supernatural aid that guides the hero through the dangers he will surely encounter on the paths to greatness. The supernatural guide provides protection, amulets of help, and general guidance through his own actions and through guiding others to help the hero: “For those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass” (Campbell 57). The guide is more than just a simple helper but rather a symbol of protection for the mythic hero and a savior in times of desperate need. As Campbell further explains,

What such a figure represents is the benign, protecting power of destiny. That it supports the present and stands in the future as well as in the past; that though omnipotence may seem to be endangered by the threshold passages and life awakenings, protective power is always and ever present within the sanctuary of the heart and even immanent within, or just behind, the unfamiliar features of the world. (59)

The guide is a leader and a promise of protection in the unfamiliar world experienced by the mythic hero as he accepts the task for which he is destined.

For Harry Potter, supernatural aid comes in the form of Albus Dumbledore, the very powerful wizard and headmaster of Hogwarts (the school of witchcraft and wizardry). Dumbledore is essential to Harry’s success as a wizard but is also critical to his survival in the fight against evil and darkness. When Harry’s parents are killed by Voldemort, it is Dumbledore’s decision to keep Harry with his aunt and uncle instead of a wizarding family.

Dumbledore does this in Harry's best interest. Dumbledore not only wants to keep Harry safe, but he also wants to keep him level-headed. As Harry reaches the age which is deemed appropriate for admission to Hogwarts, Dumbledore becomes the father figure and supernatural aid that Harry needs to remain safe.

Dumbledore begins to take on a more hands on role in Harry's life when the latter discovers he is a wizard and thus is allowed to attend Hogwarts. At school, they share a special relationship, unlike Dumbledore's relationship with any other student. According to Goodfriend,

Harry's last chance at a parental figure comes with his idol and distant mentor, Dumbledore. Throughout the years that Harry is at Hogwarts, Dumbledore looks after Harry, guiding him and protecting him. Whenever Harry is in trouble or his scar hurts, Ron and Hermione encourage him to seek Dumbledore. However, Harry hesitates, believing that Dumbledore either won't believe him or that Dumbledore would be disappointed in Harry for not having more control. It's clear that Harry does not want to disappoint Dumbledore, just like children avoid disappointing beloved parents. Harry has complete faith in Dumbledore's abilities and that Dumbledore can save him in any situation. (89)

Harry would be lost without Dumbledore, but he, at first, does not use, or possibly not recognize, this wizened wizard as a guide. However, as an aid should, Dumbledore is there to help Harry when needed while still allowing him to venture out on his own. When Harry finds himself in trouble, though, Dumbledore is the first to provide him with assistance. He seems to have a sixth sense that promotes the protection of Potter.

In *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Harry discovers the Mirror of Erised. This mirror allows the "looker" to see the deepest desires of his/her own heart. Harry discovers this mirror as he is looking for the sorcerer's stone which is hidden in the depths of the Hogwarts castle. Instead of finding the mysterious stone, Harry stumbles upon the mirror, unaware of its power and magic. In the mirror, Harry sees his deepest desire: his parents alive and well, showing love and admiration to their only child. Night after night, Harry returns to view his deceased loved ones, fantasizing about what life would be like if they were still alive, until one night, Dumbledore is in the chamber when Harry arrives. Dumbledore allows Harry to look into the mirror, but tells Harry that the mirror will be moved and that Harry should not go looking for it. Stewart comments on Dumbledore's actions to Harry: "There is no rule against spending one's life gazing into the Mirror of Erised. But, Dumbledore makes a clear point to Harry that this mirror and what it produces is a danger to be guarded against--the danger of a wasted life" (Stewart). Here, Dumbledore gives Harry knowledge and insight. This knowledge teaches Harry an important lesson. Because he accepts Dumbledore as his guide and heeds his warning, Harry is kept from the dangers of the mirror. This is the first instance in which Potter experiences the dark powers that can be created by magic. Dumbledore saves Harry from what would have been a wasted life of unfulfilled longing. The professor embodies the "teacher" quality which the supernatural guide often possesses (Campbell 60).

Harry is not always aware of the help Dumbledore is giving him. As the headmaster, Dumbledore can disguise the lessons he wants Harry to learn. Many times Dumbledore directs the professor's teaching so Harry will receive the skills he will need to battle Voldemort. Professor Lupin, a Defense against the Dark Arts professor in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, teaches Harry a powerful skill that becomes essential in Harry's growth as a hero:

‘Ready?’ said Lupin, who looked as though he were doing this against his better judgment. ‘Concentrating hard? All right-go!’ He pulled off the lid of the case for the third time, and the dementor rose out of it; the room fell cold and dark- ‘EXPECTO PATRONUM!’ Harry bellowed. ‘EXPECTO PATRONUM! EXPECTO PATRONUM!’ (Rowling 241)

This spell, practiced with Harry time and time again, is one of the most important keys to defeating Voldemort as it helps defeat dark magic. The need for the spell becomes apparent later when Harry is confronted with the dark power of the dementors: "White fog was blinding him. He had to fight...expecto patronum...he couldn't see...and in the distance, he heard the familiar screaming...expecto patronum....he groped in the mist for Sirius, and found his arm...they weren't going to take him" (Rowling 384). In order to defeat the dementors and remain safe from Voldemort, Harry must know this spell and be able to use it in challenging situations. Although he struggles with spell casting at first, through Dumbledore's orders, Harry receives the extra help from the Hogwarts professors which allows him to master this needed protection.

Another professor, Severus Snape, provides Harry with help, although reluctantly, on an order from Dumbledore. He provides Harry with private lessons on the art of Occlumency which allows Harry to block his dangerous connection with Voldemort:

‘The usual rules do not seem to apply with you, Potter. The curse that failed to kill you seems to have forged some kind of connection between you and the Dark Lord. The evidence suggest that at times when your mind is most relaxed and vulnerable-when you are asleep, for instance-you are sharing the Dark Lord's thoughts and emotions. The

headmaster thinks it inadvisable for this to continue. He wishes me to teach you how to close your mind to the Dark Lord.’ (Rowling 531)

Snape, who has made his disdain for Harry Potter clear, helps him on Dumbledore's word. The skills ordered to be taught to Harry are above what a normal student of that age would be taught, but are necessary for the hero to learn on his path to the hero's journey.

Despite the help Dumbledore clearly provides Harry with, the latter does not fully trust or recognize the professor as his supernatural guide. Dumbledore tries to explain himself and his protective actions in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, but Harry is not quite yet ready to listen:

‘I guessed, fifteen years ago,’ said Dumbledore, ‘when I saw the scar upon your forehead, what it might mean. I guessed that it might be the sign of a connection forged between you and Voldemort.’ ‘You've told me this before, Professor,’ said Harry bluntly. He did not care about being rude. He did not care about anything very much anymore.

(Rowling 826-827)

Harry's frustration that results from the refusal of his task leads him to not fully engage the skills his supernatural guide is providing him with. Despite Harry's unwillingness to fully trust Dumbledore, the headmaster does not give up his quest to help Harry. Dumbledore makes his intentions very clear later in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* as Harry questions his guide's decision to have him spend the first years of his life with the Dursleys, who did nothing short of making his life a living hell:

'My answer is that my priority was to keep you alive. You were in more danger than perhaps anyone but myself realized. Voldemort had been vanquished hours before, but

his supporters-and many of them are almost as terrible as he-were still at large, angry, desperate, and violent. And I had to make my decision with regard to the years ahead. Did I believe that Voldemort was gone forever? No. I knew not whether it would be ten, twenty, or fifty years before he returned, but I was sure he would do so, and I was sure too, knowing him as I have done, that he would not rest until he killed you.' (Rowling 835)

After these brushes with danger, Harry slowly and steadily learns to trust and rely on Dumbledore and continues to do so as he spends more time at Hogwarts. Goodfriend comments on the changes in Harry and Dumbledore's relationship:

Harry's relationship with Dumbledore changes from that of student to rebellious son to protégé. During his first years at Hogwarts, Harry avoids bothering Dumbledore with information. However, as their relationship deepens due to tragic events, Harry comes to trust and rely upon him. This transformation is not easy, and there are times when Harry is incredibly angry and rude to Dumbledore, but, by the time Dumbledore dies, Harry has started relating to him as a man. (99)

Throughout difficult times, including challenging run-ins with Harry himself, Dumbledore does not give up on his role as an aid to Harry which propels him along to his destiny. Harry questions Dumbledore's actions, but it is always proven that Dumbledore's decisions are well thought out to keep Harry's safety as a first priority. As time progresses, Harry begins to realize that his combative behavior with Dumbledore is unnecessary. Dumbledore is always watching out for Harry and pushing him along on his journey. Even when he cannot be there physically for Harry, Dumbledore provides him with material items to help

him face the challenges of the wizarding world. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Voldemort has regained most of his power and has secured control of the Ministry of Magic (the wizard and witch government). Even more disturbing than the overthrow of the government is the fear that he has instilled in a nation of magical beings which allows him to assert his control over them. Witches and wizards alike fear him. This intimidation makes them blindly follow him and commit the evil acts he wants due to their fear for their own lives should they not follow the dark wizard.

The only wizard Voldemort has ever feared is Dumbledore, but Dumbledore is now deceased. The times seem desperate and bleak. However, this does not stop Dumbledore from providing a supernatural aid to Harry which will enable him to continue Dumbledore's fight against Voldemort without Dumbledore being present. Dumbledore leaves Harry and his best friends, Ron and Hermione, items in his will that are beyond value and that guide Harry in the right direction in his quest to defeat Voldemort. These "gifts" are presented to the trio by the minister of magic:

The Last Will and Testament of Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore..." To Ronald Bilius Weasley, I leave my Deluminator, in the hope that he will remember me when he uses it. To Miss Hermione Jean Granger, I leave my copy of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, in the hope that she will find it entertaining and instructive. To Harry James Potter, I leave the Snitch he caught in his first Quidditch match at Hogwarts, as a reminder of the rewards of perseverance and skill. (Rowling 125-126)

These items, at first glance, may seem sentimental, and they also may appear useless. However, the items are a gift from a crafty, supernatural guide who has a life task of protecting and guiding

the mythic hero. Later in the journey to defeat Voldemort, these items become the keys that unlock the mystery of the Horcruxes which the three friends must destroy to end Voldemort's reign. Even from beyond the grave, Dumbledore serves as Harry's protector providing him with amulets of success and the information that will guide Potter down the correct path.

Giving Harry invaluable items to defeat the Dark Lord is not the only way that Dumbledore reaches out to guide Harry. He also remains true to the promise that he constantly told Harry while he was at Hogwarts. Dumbledore had promised that help would always be available if one would only ask. Although the source of the help and protection, at first, seem mysterious, it is constantly there to reassure Harry. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Harry finds evidence of Dumbledore's protection: "Dobby would never be able to tell them who had sent him to the cellar, but Harry knew what he had seen. A piercing blue eye had looked out of the mirror fragment, and then help had come. Help will always be given at Hogwarts to those who ask for it" (Rowling 483).

At first, Harry believes that this eye that appears to him in desperate times is his guide, Dumbledore, coming back from the grave to help in a time of need. Later, Harry finds out that it is actually Dumbledore's brother who is providing help. However, this help from the Dumbledore family came from a promise that Albus forced his brother to make. This promise was that he would protect Harry Potter. Campbell makes this point in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*: "Protective power is always and ever present within the sanctuary of the heart and even immanent within, or just behind, the unfamiliar features of the world. One has only to know and trust and the ageless guardians will appear" (Campbell 59). Although Dumbledore cannot physically be present to guide and help Potter through troubled times, Dumbledore assists Harry even if it means he must help him through supernatural means.

Dumbledore's presence in Harry's life is not only protective but also serves as a guide for Harry to follow. Harry learned through the fine example that Dumbledore set. Harry's love for Dumbledore and the guidance he provided allowed Harry to act as Dumbledore might in times of chaos in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*: "This was crucial, he must be like Dumbledore, keep a cool head, make sure there were backups, others to carry on" (Rowling 696). Instead of acting like an impulsive child as he once did, Harry knows he must heed Dumbledore's years of advice and mimic his actions. By emulating the behaviors of his mentor, Harry is able to remain safe and calm, which allows him to focus on the situation at hand.

Chapter 4-The Crossing of the First Threshold

A threshold must be crossed in order for the hero to enter onto the path that destiny has determined: “With the personifications of his destiny to guide and aid him, the hero goes forward in his adventure until he comes to the ‘threshold guardian’ at the entrance of the zone of magnified power. Beyond these guardians is darkness, the unknown, and anger” (Campbell 64). The guardian of the first threshold often assumes the figure of a monster, or the half-man. The monster is described as “a dangerous one-legged, one-armed, and one-sided figure-the half-man-invisible if viewed from the off-side. Unfortunately for the hero, the half-man cannot live in the world if the hero survives. The hero can also not live if the half-man survives” (Campbell 64-65). Thus, the first threshold and the encounter with the threshold guardian begin a journey that will result in the survival or death for the hero.

Harry Potter begins crossing the first threshold when he encounters Voldemort who symbolizes evil and darkness on the earth and is also the representation of the guardian of the first threshold. Voldemort is a foil to Harry Potter, as he is this moral and ethical opposite of. The latter falls on the side of goodness, while the former is the epitome of evil. These two polar opposites deflect each other and it has been prophesized in the wizarding world that they cannot coexist. Harry is fully aware that both Voldemort and he cannot survive in the world together. One must overtake the other, much as good must conquer evil, or vice versa. Harry knows his destiny is to conquer the evil Voldemort, but he is also aware that he may not survive this fight. Saving the wizarding world from corruption and evil may result in his demise. Harry embraces this would-be death sentence in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* and is willing to sacrifice himself for the safety of others, realizing that this will allow him to cross the final threshold in the departure of the hero. He remembers and chooses to accept the findings of the prophesy

stated years before he was alive that bears the message that he cannot live while Voldemort is still alive: “Neither can live while the other survives. Ron and Hermione, now talking softly behind him in the tent, could walk away if they wanted to: He could not” (Rowling 278). Harry knows that he, alone, must initiate the fight with Voldemort. He has known about the prophesy for years but refuses to see it as his own future until he becomes ready to accept the task of the hero. Although he had previously refused to accept that he must die to ensure that Voldemort can be killed, Harry comes to a realization that giving his life is worth saving the world from evil.

This act of crossing the first threshold makes Harry finally come to the conclusion that he needs to take action and not be a passive player in the hide and seek game he has been previously engaged in with Voldemort. This first full awareness occurs in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* as Harry is rescued from a dungeon and then a battle with the Death Eaters. Harry realizes that this whole battle he has been avoiding is close to happening and that he must do something to become an active participant in the situation:

Dobby would never be able to tell them who had sent him to the cellar, but Harry knew what he had seen. A piercing blue eye had looked out of the mirror fragment, and then help had come. *Help will always be given at Hogwarts to those who ask for it.* Harry dried his hands, impervious to the beauty of the scene outside the window and to the murmuring of the others in the sitting room. He looked out over the ocean and felt closer, this dawn, than ever before, closer to the heart of it all. And still his scar prickled, and he knew that Voldemort was getting there too. Harry understood and yet did not understand. His instinct was telling him one thing, his brain quite another. The

Dumbledore in Harry's head smiled, surveying Harry over the tips of his fingers, pressed together as if in prayer. (Rowling 483)

This is the first time Harry shows any connection or involvement in battle that must ensue. Here begins the transition of Harry from a scared bystander to a hero who pursues evil to destroy it.

Harry's experiences on the threshold show images of this half-man represented by the character of Voldemort. The first encounter Harry has with Voldemort reveals an evil "thing" that cannot even stand by itself. Instead, Voldemort must "live" by feeding off a host. By following his orders, the host sustains the parasitic Voldemort and allows him to move around freely. In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Voldemort chooses the weak to prey upon, and there is no one weaker than the stuttering Dr. Quirrell, a recent hire at Hogwarts as the Defense against the Dark Arts teacher. Ironically, Quirrell is teaching to defeat the Dark Arts, but he is unable to protect himself against the evil powers of Voldemort: "Where there should have been a back to Quirrell's head, there was a face, the most terrible face Harry had ever seen. It was chalk white with glaring red eyes and slits for nostrils, like a snake" (Rowling 55). Voldemort does not appear as a man at all but as a parasitic creature feeding off the energy of another man.

The second time Harry encounters Voldemort, he has progressed in form, but is still not able to complete magic in his own form. In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Voldemort shows his progression towards having his own power when he appears to Harry in a chamber hidden away in Hogwarts. He shows himself as a memory, or ghost of the past, in the form of Tom Riddle (Voldemort's childhood self). A tall black-haired boy was leaning against the nearest pillar, watching. He was strangely blurred around the edges, as though Harry were

looking at him through a misted window. But there was no mistaking him--“Tom-Tom Riddle?” (Rowling 307) When Harry views Tom, he is unsure of what is unfolding before his eyes: ““Are you a ghost?” Harry said uncertainly. “A memory,” said Riddle quietly. “Preserved in a diary for fifty years” (Rowling 307-308). Although Voldemort’s body is not present, he is able to project himself instead of feeding off of another human figure. However, he is still not powerful enough to commit his own acts of evil. Instead, through the projection of his young self, he finds the weak and inexperienced once again, to carry out his deeds:

“Haven’t you guessed yet, Harry Potter?” said Riddle softly. “Ginny Weasley opened the Chamber of Secrets. She strangled the school roosters and daubed threatening messages on the walls. She set the Serpent of Slytherin on four Mudbloods and the Squib’s cat.” “No,” Harry whispered. “Yes,” said Riddle calmly. “Of course, she didn’t know what she was doing at first. It was very amusing.” (Rowling 310)

Voldemort is still only able to manipulate and control instead of taking action with his own hands.

The half-man appears as a foreign being because his form embodies the evil acts the half-man has committed. Deavel writes, “Boethius concludes that just as evil diminishes a human being by causing him to lose his natural goal, happiness, so evil dehumanizes the evildoer. In other words, evil actions transform an evildoer from a human being into an animal” (151). Voldemort is unable to appear as a human because he has lived a life consumed by the evil actions that he has chosen.

Voldemort makes his initial appearance upon his return from an absence during which he committed the most evil actions a wizard could commit. Although Harry is able to view the half-

man, he does not initially force the crossing of the threshold. Instead, Harry learns more about what has caused Voldemort to become this evil creature that now guards the hero's passage across the threshold. Voldemort had used the unforgivable curses liberally, and took part in the murders of many innocent people and wizards. Because of these evil acts, he is unable to take on a human form. Not only is his appearance inhuman, but he also refuses to recognize that he is a human:

Voldemort and his Death Eaters don't want to acknowledge that they are human. The Death Eaters always cover up their faces when they appear to others. They apparently want to look like those other hooded deceivers and dementors. Voldemort is constantly trying to wipe away all traces of his humanity and appear as something more than human. (Deavel 141)

The Dark Lord would rather not appear human-like but would prefer to appear as something darker, which gives him the aura of being more powerful. His visage is the result of trying to appear superior to the human race and results in an image that erases any clues to his original life as a wizard.

Harry's perception of Voldemort progresses from his initial impression of Voldemort being nothing more than vermin feeding off a host to his becoming a self-sufficient being as Harry's experiences with Voldemort become more frequent and more personal. One of these confrontations occurs when Harry, Voldemort, and Dumbledore meet for a battle at the Ministry of Magic in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Dumbledore comments on Voldemort's lack of humanness as the latter begins a battle with the former. Voldemort voices his opinions

on death and Dumbledore comments on what power and the need to be evil has done to Voldemort:

‘We both know that there are other ways of destroying a man, Tom,’ Dumbledore said calmly, continuing to walk toward Voldemort as though he had not a fear in the world, as though nothing had happened to interrupt his stroll up the hall. ‘Merely taking your life would not satisfy me, I admit-’ ‘There is nothing worse than death, Dumbledore!’ snarled Voldemort. ‘You are quite wrong,’ said Dumbledore. (Rowling 814)

Here, Dumbledore hints at Voldemort’s inability to recognize his evilness and the effect it has had on him. The former implies that the latter would be better off dead than live the life of evil that is causing a physical alteration in his appearance because his soul is no longer intact.

Voldemort never does take on a fully human appearance. Instead, he is almost snake-like as shown in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*: “Voldemort stood up. Harry could see him, see the red eyes, the flattened, serpentine face, the pallor of him gleaming slightly in the semidarkness” (Rowling 653). In a true act of evilness, Voldemort divides his soul into seven pieces in order to allow himself to become invincible. By distributing his soul into secret Horcruxes which can only be destroyed by extremely powerful magic, Voldemort has thus protected his life. No matter what happened to him, he would be able to survive as long as the Horcruxes remained intact. This would allow him to live beyond the realm of normal human life spans and beyond the moral virtues of what an honorable wizard would deem respectable. This is how he is able to sustain his inhuman-like existence throughout Harry’s life, even when his killing curse, which was aimed at Harry, backfires and Voldemort is broken. The Horcruxes are also the reason why he appears snake-like and embodies the half-man character. The threshold

guardian, scary in appearance and evil in nature, must be destroyed several times in order to pass the threshold:

‘It should be, actually! But my point is that whatever happens to your body, your soul will survive, untouched,’ said Hermione. ‘But it’s the other way around with a Horcrux. The fragment of soul inside it depends on its container, its enchanted body, for survival. It can’t exist without it.’ ‘That diary sort of died when I stabbed it,’ said Harry, remembering ink pouring like blood from the punctured pages, and the screams of the piece of Voldemort’s soul as it vanished.’ (Rowling 104)

Voldemort’s “human” soul is no longer a part of him and is dependent upon another source of life to even be considered living. Because of this, he is not human as his appearance suggests, which makes the threshold a more challenging obstacle for Harry to cross.

The encounter with the guardian at the threshold not only signifies the battle with the half-man but it also takes place in a foreign and dangerous location for the hero. First, to encounter the threshold guardian, Harry must leave his familiar and safe environment for a more obscure and perilous area. Harry’s guide, Dumbledore, is also not there to protect him from evil. Without a supernatural guide who is afraid of Harry making mistakes, thus keeping the hero from his final battle, he is able to accept the task set before him. According to Campbell, the hero must leave his present sphere to one of “darkness, the unknown, and danger.” Instead of staying with his friends who offer a sense of security and protection, Harry must venture off to encounter the “deceitful and dangerous presences outside the normal traffic of the village” (Campbell 64). Harry confronts Voldemort in an area of Hogwarts known as the Dark Forest, whose access is forbidden to students attending the school. Known to be filled with magical and

dangerous creatures, it fulfills the criterion for the meeting that occurs between the hero and the threshold guardian.

Voldemort's appearance is intimidating, but as the guardian of the threshold, what he personifies is even more frightening: "Voldemort is most frightening because he is human. Although boggarts and dementors chill us because of the kind of creature they are, Voldemort chills us most because he is one of us and represents the possibility of choosing evil freely" (Deavel 136). Harry is one choice away from being evil, but Harry always chooses integrity and morality instead. Voldemort's appearance allows Harry to realize what evil does to one who chooses this path in life and helps him recognize that he must never move over to the dark side of the threshold guardian. "A physical transformation occurs in Voldemort that is both deforming and frightening, which seems to be the result of his evil actions. While Voldemort's deformities cannot ease Harry's suffering, they can provide some assurance that Voldemort is negatively affected by his misdeeds" (Weed 148). This constant reminder of the effects of evil allows Harry to cross the threshold; thus the journey of the hero on his quest to greatness continues. The representation of the half-man, Voldemort, keeps Harry focused on his efforts to defeat evil. Although Harry knows he may not survive his fight against evil, he realizes he must continue on to ensure that evil does not conquer the earth.

Chapter 5-The Belly of the Whale

The belly of the whale is another threshold the hero must encounter on her or his quest for greatness: “The idea that the passage of the magical threshold is a transit into a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale. The hero, instead of conquering or reconciling the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died” (Campbell 74). To onlookers it appears that the hero’s path has ended and that evil will conquer over good. However, the journey of the hero is not over. It is reaching an end, but that end is not an untimely death. Instead, it is the time when the hero becomes fully initiated into the journey of a mythic hero.

Harry Potter encounters this threshold when he first gives in to what he knows must happen; he embraces the prophecies that were previously preached about his conquering evil. He accepts his fate; one must die so the others can live. This prophesy was known by both Harry and Voldemort since their tumultuous beginnings as conflicting wizards, but here Harry decides that giving his life is what needs to be done to conquer evil. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Harry tries to give up his life. He does this thinking that by sacrificing his own life, Voldemort is now significantly weakened since Harry is one of the Horcruxes that is keeping Voldemort alive. As stated in "Voldemort, Boethius, and the Destructive Effects of Evil," good and evil cannot coexist: "Evil is parasitic on good" (Weed 149). With Harry being dead, Voldemort’s soul is gone and he can be killed without much effort. He does not have pure goodness to sustain him. Campbell states, “The hero of yesterday becomes the tyrant of tomorrow, unless he crucifies himself today” (303). Harry accepts that his life will be over, but he realizes that he must sacrifice himself in order to save his friends and his own morality: “Yet

it did not occur to him now to escape, to outrun Voldemort. It was over, he knew it, and all that was left was the thing itself: dying” (Rowling 692).

When Harry finally realizes that he must give his life to save others, he does exactly what he knows is needed in order to save the innocents that are fighting alongside him. He confronts Voldemort and in the “battle” that ensues, he seems to have offered up his own life to the evil Voldemort. Thus the hero enters the belly of the whale as he sacrifices his own self for the good of others. The belly of the whale is a “magical” threshold, though: “This popular motif gives emphasis to the lesson that the passage of the threshold is a form of self-annihilation. But here, instead of passing outward, beyond the confines of the visible world, the hero goes inward, to be born again” (Campbell 77). This threshold is invisible and meaningless to those not experiencing the magical world of the threshold. To Voldemort and other onlookers, Harry has died and they have become the victors. But, instead of dying, Harry enters a dream-like world in which he encounters his guardian and finally is able to understand the previous events of his life. At first, the belly of the whale feels like an after-life experience for Harry: ‘But... Harry raised his hand instinctively toward the lightning scar. It did not seem to be there. “But I should have died-I didn’t defend myself! I mean to let him kill me!’ (Rowling 708). Harry fully meant to sacrifice himself and expected to be dead.

In the dream-like world, Harry views symbols that represent his life and also comes into contact with his supernatural guide, Albus Dumbledore. At first, Harry views an image which represents his humble beginnings and what may have been had he been abandoned by Dumbledore: “He recoiled. He had spotted the thing that was making the noises. It had the form of a small, naked child, curled on the ground, its skin raw and rough, flayed-looking, and it lay shuddering under a seat where it had been left, unwanted, stuffed out of sight, struggling for

breath. Albus Dumbledore was walking toward him, sprightly and upright, wearing the robes of midnight blue” (Rowling 706-707). Here, Harry appears to have died as did his guide before him. Dumbledore had died previously at the hand of Voldemort. At first glance, Harry seems to have taken the same path, but that is the illusion of the belly of the whale.

Harry also notices the differences between life on Earth and the belly of the whale. ““I feel great at the moment, though,” said Harry, looking down at his clean, unblemished hands” (Rowling 712). It appears that the trouble of the world has left his body, physically and emotionally. Dumbledore also hints that the place Harry has arrived in, described by Joseph Campbell as belly of the whale, might be a preview of what life after death will be like. Harry views the belly of the whale as King’s Cross Station, but Dumbledore views it differently. Harry questions Dumbledore about this phenomenon:

“Well, where do you think we are?” asked Harry, a little defensively.

“My dear boy, I have no idea. This is, as they say, your party” (Rowling 712).

Harry is confused, not sure whether he has died or is still living. He is uneasy with this situation, but Dumbledore helps him realize why he has entered the theoretical belly of the whale. Although Harry is not aware of this step in the hero’s journey, he does gain valuable information that he can take back to earth when he continues on his path.

Harry learns about some of the events in life, clarifying the interactions that took place in his life with Dumbledore and the actions Dumbledore took in Harry’s life. He learns that Dumbledore was hard on him because he knew the thin line between good and evil and knew that Harry could have crossed that line easily:

‘I was afraid that your hot head might dominate your good heart. I was scared that, if presented outright with the facets and those tempting objects, you might seize the Hallows as I did, at the wrong time, for the wrong reasons. If you laid hands on them, I wanted you to possess them safely. You are the true master of death, because the true master does not seek to run away from Death. He accepts he must die, and understands that there are far, far worse things in the living world than dying.’ (Rowling 721)

Dumbledore feels guilty for his own transgressions and knows he must keep Harry from the same path so he did not end up like Voldemort. Dumbledore realizes greed could not be a part of Harry’s life. Albus’s revelation that Harry has made better decisions with the Hallows than he has, gives the latter confidence about his abilities to make the right decisions on Earth.

Dumbledore also expresses his feelings about Harry’s selflessness and the decisions he has made in his life:

‘Maybe a man in a million could unite the Hallows, Harry. I was fit only to possess the meanest of them, the least extraordinary. I was fit to own the Elder Wand, and not to boast of it, and not to kill with it. I was permitted to tame and use it, because I took it, not for gain, but to save others from it. But the Cloak, I took out of vain curiosity, and so it could never have worked for me as it works for you, its true owner. The stone I would have used in an attempt to drag back those who are at peace, rather than to enable my self-sacrifice, as you did. You are the worthy possessor of the Hallows.’ (Rowling 720)

Because of this confession of Harry’s worthiness, he is able to come to terms with what his real task is, which is to emerge from the safety of a supposed afterlife and defeat Voldemort. His

body no longer contains the partial soul of the Dark Lord, due to Voldemort's "killing" curse, and he now has the confidence to follow through on the task set before him.

Dumbledore helps Harry realize that Voldemort had attached a piece of his own soul to Harry's when he tried to kill him as a baby many years ago. Because of this, Harry has always felt that connection to Voldemort: "Precisely!" said Dumbledore. "He took your blood and rebuilt his living body with it! Your blood in his veins, Harry, Lily's protection inside both of you! He tethered you to life while he lives!" (Rowling 709) Harry learns that he cannot die while Voldemort is still living because of the connection of their blood: "He took your blood believing it would strengthen him. He took into his body a tiny part of the enchantment your mother laid upon you when she died for you. His body keeps her sacrifice alive, and while that enchantment survives, so do you and so does Voldemort's one last hope for himself" (Rowling 710). Therefore, what Harry thinks is the only way to defeat Voldemort, taking his own life, is actually the only way to clear his connection with the dark lord and end the chance of Harry dying with Voldemort.

In Harry offering his own life to Voldemort, he kills the evil portion of his soul which results in Harry's soul not only being clear but being his own for the first time since he was an infant:

'So the part of his soul that was in me...'

Dumbledore nodded still more enthusiastically, urging Harry onward, a broad smile of encouragement on his face.

'Has it gone?'

‘Oh yes!’ said Dumbledore. ‘Yes, he destroyed it. Your soul is completely whole, and completely your own, Harry.’ (Rowling 708)

After receiving this information from Dumbledore, Harry realizes his journey to being the hero he was destined to be has not ended, but only just begun. He must continue on in order to defeat Voldemort. Still apprehensive about a return to the tumultuous world of evil versus good, Harry remains unsure of his hero status and considers staying with Dumbledore who has been his guide and savior throughout the crucial years of Harry’s life. Dumbledore does not assent to this, though:

“I think,” said Dumbledore, “that if you chose to return, there is a chance that he may be finished for good. I cannot promise it. But I know this, Harry, that you have less to fear from returning here than he does” (Rowling 722).

With this information, Harry knows that all of his struggles, losses, and fears have not been sacrificed in vain. Dumbledore also exposes Harry’s strength against Voldemort by pointing out why he has always been able to overpower him and how his courage always gives him an advantage over evil:

‘He was more afraid than you were that night, Harry. You had accepted, even embraced, the possibility of death, something Lord Voldemort has never been able to do. Your courage won, your wand overpowered his. And in doing so, something happened between those wands, something that echoed the relationship between their masters. I believe that your wand imbibed some of the power and qualities of Voldemort’s wand that night, which is to say that it contained a little of Voldemort himself. So your wand recognized him when he pursued you, recognized a man who was both kin and mortal

enemy, and it regurgitated some of his own magic against him, magic much more powerful than anything Lucius's wand had ever performed. Your wand now contained the power of your enormous courage and of Voldemort's own deadly skill.' (Rowling 711)

Harry does have a chance to become the victor and to save the good in the world from the evil Voldemort. Dumbledore is able to make Harry realize that his life is not over and that his destiny has not yet been fulfilled. He explains to Harry the path set before him and encourages him to return to the world and fight the battle with evil so good can conquer.

Potter has entered the belly of the whale to gain some understanding about his life and the actions he has taken up until now. As Campbell explains, "Allegorically, then, the passage into a temple and the hero-dive through the jaws of the whale are identical adventures, both denoting, in the picture language, the life-centering, life-renewing act" (77). Harry is at first hesitant to leave the comfort of his supernatural guide and a life without pain:

Harry nodded and sighed. Leaving this place would not be nearly as hard as walking into the forest had been, but it was warm and light and peaceful here, and he knew that he was heading back to pain and the fear of more loss. He stood up, and Dumbledore did the same, and they looked for a long moment into each other's faces. (Rowling 722)

The realization that Harry must go back to Earth is always at the front of his actions, though. With Dumbledore's encouraging words, he knows that he must go back to end the rule of Voldemort once and for all: "By returning, you may ensure that fewer souls are maimed, fewer families are torn apart. If that seems to you a worthy goal, then we say good-bye for the present" (Rowling 722). The information Harry receives from his guide helps him reach an

understanding and helps him return to a world and situation that seem hopeless. He concludes that his actions will determine whether or not he will conquer evil and the decisions he has been making for the fight against evil will help him be the victor. Weed states, "The individual determines his character by virtue of the actions that he performs and so it is up to him either to better or worsen his character depending on the decisions that he makes and the actions he performs" (148-149). Harry realizes that giving his life is not the answer. He understands that he must return and continue to fight for good in order to defeat evil.

Harry, having acquired the knowledge of his greatness, then returns to the world to confront Voldemort for the last time. Harry's soul returns to his body and with the help of unlikely sources, he is able to move towards the defeat of evil. Narcissa Malfoy, a death eater and follower of Voldemort, is asked to check on Harry after Voldemort has cast his spell to kill him. Harry, already returned from the belly of the whale, has regained consciousness but is hoping to be perceived as dead. Narcissa asks quickly if her son, Malfoy, who is Harry's age, is alive. Harry whispers yes and this is enough to turn a supposed evil-follower into a soldier for good: "He felt the hand on his chest contract; her nails pierced him. Then it was withdrawn. She had sat up. "He is dead!" Narcissa Malfoy called to the watchers" (Rowling 726). As Harry is assured in his previously encountered dream-like world, he begins the process of conquering evil. Already turning a Voldemort follower by providing positive information, he is allowed to be brought into close quarters with Voldemort as he approaches the others to show them that their "hero" had "submitted" to the power of evil. Because of this, Harry, after defeating evil, is then able to continue on to become the hero he was always destined to be as he finishes his path to greatness. With this confrontation, all of Harry's fears of making the wrong decision are washed away:

‘You won’t be killing anyone else tonight,’ said Harry as they circled, and stared into each other’s eyes, green into red. ‘You won’t be able to kill any of them ever again. Don’t you get it? I was ready to die to stop you from hurting these people-‘ ‘But you have not!’ ‘-I meant to, and that’s what did it. I’ve done what my mother did. They’re protected from you. Haven’t you noticed how none of the spells you put on them are binding? You can’t torture them. You can’t touch them. You don’t learn from your mistakes, Riddle, do you?’ (Rowling 738)

With these last words, Harry is able to defeat Voldemort by a protection curse that causes the latter’s killing curse to backfire. Harry defeats the half-man, ridding the world of evil and protecting his friends.

Harry’s journey to the hero’s path is slow and steady. With guidance and self-realization within the belly of the whale, he is to overcome any apprehension that would not allow him to continue on his destined path. With a final push from his supernatural guide, Harry is able to propel himself out of the belly of the whale. With new found confidence and knowledge, the hero is able to fight evil and conquer it for the well-being of all that choose a path of righteousness.

Conclusion

Harry Potter's life follows the criteria for the departure of the journey of the hero. First, he receives the call to the adventure, which he initially refuses. His contact with his supernatural aid helps fine-tune his skills allowing him to become the most talented wizard he could be, which in return results in him becoming a prepared and successful hero. As he crosses the first threshold, he comes into contact with the half-man and realizes that the monster figure could have been him if he had not made the decisions he has. Finally, Harry enters the belly of the whale where he realizes what must be done to defeat evil in the world. Having found clarification in his life's purpose in the belly of the whale, Harry is able to defeat evil and save innocent people from an untimely death.

Although the Harry Potter books do not cover the initiation and return of the hero as outlined by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, it can be assumed, based on a slight glimpse into Harry's future, that all of these have occurred. The last novel, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, shows him bringing his children to King's Cross Station to show them off to Hogwarts for the first time nineteen years after his final encounter with Voldemort. The book ends with a simple statement which shows that Harry has defeated evil for good: "The scar had not pained Harry for nineteen years. All was well" (Rowling 759). Harry not feeling pain shows that Voldemort, the Dark Lord, no longer exists.

This ending supports the theory that Harry has accomplished the initiation and the return of the hero. As Campbell maintains, "Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials" (81). The fact that Harry has made it through a battle with Voldemort, and has continued on in life, hints to a successful initiation of the hero.

The hero's return, as covered by Campbell, also appears relevant in Harry's life: "The full round, the norm of the monomyth, requires that the hero shall now begin the labor of bringing the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may rebound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds" (Campbell 167). By having children and sending them to Hogwarts, Harry is passing on his knowledge and keeping up the expectation of humility and goodness. This willingness to raise his children in the same light as he defeated evil is shown in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* as he soothes his child's fear about being in Slytherin:

'Albus Severus,' Harry said quietly, so that nobody but Ginny could hear, and she was tactful enough to pretend to be waving to Rose, who was now on the train, 'you were named for two headmasters of Hogwarts. One of them was a Slytherin and he was probably the bravest man I knew.' 'But just say-' '-then Slytherin House would have gained an excellent student, won't it? It doesn't matter to us, Al.' (Rowling 758)

Harry shows his character by instilling the confidence in his children that it does not matter where they are: it just matters that they work hard and live a moral existence. Based on this interaction, it can be assumed that Harry has passed on his knowledge of fighting for the side of good and that has allowed the hero to complete his return with the sharing of what he has learned in his adventures.

Harry Potter is a modern day mythic hero. Although the term hero is indeed used without a second thought in many conversations about characters in literature, life, and media, Harry's life puts him on a different level. Harry Potter is a hero of mythic proportions.

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