



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hugvísindasvið

The Harry Potter Septology:

A Heroic Epic in the Mythological Sence

Ritgerð til BA prófs í ensku

Melkorka Edda Sigurgrímsdóttir

September, 2012

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Abstract

Within the confines of this essay the Harry Potter novels are to be explored and analyzed in accordance with the categories of Campbell's formula of the mythological hero: The *Departure*, *Initiation* and *Return*. These three categories each have a few subcategories which explain the details of the journey of the hero. *Departure* describes the separation of the hero from normality, *Initiation* entails the occurrences during the hero's journey and *Return* discusses the various manners of the return of the hero. On the journey with the hero are various figures who serve their role as protectors, mentors, ogre aspects and mother goddesses. Examples of mythological tales that fall into the same categories of the formula show that the categorization and formula logic is in accordance with other myths and legends; Herakles' twelve labors are compared and contrasted with Harry's tasks in the novels. Harry's transformation from boy to hero is shown in literary critic Northrop Frye's five narrative stages. Harry as the hero is portrayed as a force of good while his enemy Voldemort is the epitome of evil. A light is shed on these aspects of Harry and Voldemort, and how that relates to other myths. The idea of myth will also be stretched beyond the walls of the formula as Frazer's work will be portrayed, describing aspects of the soul, death and resurrection. Voldemort's and Harry's opposite views on death are mirrored in the Deathly Hallows and the Horcruxes. Harry's last task in HPDH also holds significance as it demonstrates self sacrifice, a noble act of a true hero, resurrection and the gift of love.

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Abbreviations:

HPPS	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone
HPCS	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets
HPPA	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban
HPGF	Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
HPOP	Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix
HPHP	Harry Potter and the Half-blood Prince
HPDH	Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows

INTRODUCTION

The heroic epic is a popular concept in mythology. The tasks, risks, and personal development are all aspects of the hero's mythological tale. The hero is the savior of the people, undertaking tasks that others do not risk, often times sacrificing himself in the process. The heroic image has been portrayed in various literary works ranging from the epic tale of *The Lord of the Rings* to the children's book *The Neverending Story*. Therefore a book series riddled with magic, mystery and adventure, such as *the Harry Potter Septology*, is highly likely to have aspects of the mythological hero on its pages. The plotline of the *Septology* follows a well documented formula of myth that Joseph Campbell has devised in his work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* which is shown to exist in all hero myths. Harry's journey and transformation throughout the seven novels throws into sharp relief aspects of the Campbell mythological formula. Combining Rowling's *Septology* with the work of Campbell allows us to decipher whether or not Harry Potter is indeed a hero in the mythological sense.

All kinds of heroic mythological tales are known throughout the world. A similar theme and purpose is in each culture. The mythological hero defeats the enemy and saves the world/people. As a rule, he is kept in obscurity until he is ready to cross the threshold. In every tale he is aided by magical agents and protectors. As the tale progresses the hero goes through transformations and psychological strains. In the end if the hero has been able to prove true he is rewarded. The tale of Harry shows the main character in the light of the mythological hero. Harry crosses into the wizarding world aided by magical agents. He undertakes the tasks set for him, grows from a boy to a man, and in the end he is rewarded that which was taken from him in the beginning: love.

ELEMENTS OF THE MYTH OF THE HERO.

The heroic epic has a formula to it in every mythology/religion that has the same theme. The hero saves the day/world from a threat and is rewarded. But what of the details of the heroic epic: The magical agents that help him in dangerous times; the gods, goddesses and protectors that assist; the psychological impact of the transformation of the hero? These are aspects that Joseph Campbell has studied closely and they hold true to the heroic tale in myth. In *The Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology* Robert Graves describes mythology as a study of the heroic or religious legends that are so farfetched that they cannot possibly be true (Introduction, V). As such, Harry Potter, a wizard from Britain, who becomes a hero, can be viewed a perfect subject to assess within the formula logic.

Harry proves himself to be a hero repeatedly throughout the *Septology*. He has heroic qualities and traits and therefore conforms into Campbell's formula as a mythological hero. The formula is discussed in Joseph Campbell's *A Hero with a Thousand Faces*. It identifies three elements of the hero myth: *Departure*, *Initiation* and *Return* (30). The *Departure* describes the occurrences at the start of the hero's journey. Within that category are the smaller categories: "The Call to Adventure", "Refusal of the Call", "Supernatural Aid", "Crossing of the First Threshold" and "the Belly of the Whale" (Campbell, 36). These categories represent the hero's discovery of his tasks, the various figures that will assist him through his ordeals and the entering of a new world (Campbell, 49-95).

The second category of the formula is *Initiation*, it is categorized into: "the Road of Trials", "the Meeting with the Goddess", "Woman as the Temptress", "Atonement with the Father", "Apotheosis" and "the Ultimate Boon" (Campbell, 36). These categories explore the tests and trials that the hero undergoes, as well as his change of outlook, the father and mother aspects and the gift received upon completing his task (Campbell, 97-192).

The last category of the formula is the *Return*. It consists of: "The Refusal of the Return", "Magic Flight", "Rescue from without", "the Crossing of the Return Threshold", "Master of the Two Worlds" and "Freedom to Live" (Campbell, 37). These categories represent the hero's views upon the completion of his task, the various outcomes according to the manner of departure, the concept of living in the

two worlds and the ultimate gift to receive, “freedom to live” (Campbell, 193-243, 245-46).

DEPARTURE

The hero steps out of his protective sphere urged forward by fate and, whether ready or not, crosses a threshold into a world of wonder. The beginning of the hero's journey, his protectors and mentors and his passing into another world are the first elements of Campbell's formula, *the Departure* (Campbell, 49). The first subcategory and the start of the hero's journey is “the call to adventure”. According to Campbell, the hero, during the time of his youth, must remain in obscurity until the protective figure releases him. The hero is shielded from the “other world” until ready. He is then called upon by destiny and urged across the threshold into the “other world” (Campbell, 326, 58). Jan De Vries, author of *Heroic Song and Heroic Legend*, describes the first years of the hero humiliating and secretive (De Vries, 210). After Harry's parents die he is placed in the care of his aunt and uncle by Dumbledore, his future headmaster (Rowling, HPPS, 23). Harry, however, must endure humiliation from his relations as well as his peers at school while he resides there (Rowling, HPPS, 30-32). When he receives his letter of acceptance Harry leaves the misery and humiliation behind and steps into a new world.

The “call to the adventure” is the first subcategory (Campbell, 49). The hero is brought from his sanctuary of protection and brought forward to fulfill his destiny (Campbell, 58). In the *Septology*, Bartemius Crouch Jr. in the disguise of Mad-Eye-Moody places Harry's name in the goblet of fire and he “calls” Harry “to the adventure” of the Triwizard Tournament (Rowling, HPGF, 586). Similarly Voldemort chooses Harry as his enemy and “calls” Harry “to the adventure” that is the *Septology* (Rowling, HPOP, 742). However, “the call to adventure” can sometimes be refused or simply ignored.

The second subcategory, “The refusal of the call”, describes the negative reaction to the request. The hero however is meant to cross into the “other” world and when he fails to do so he becomes trapped in his own world (Campbell, 59-60, 63). Fate, however, forces through and pulls the hero from his prison. The “refusal” in the *Septology* is not made by Harry, but by his uncle, Vernon Dursley. In HPPS Vernon does everything that he possibly can to prevent the letters from getting to Harry. He therefore represents “the refusal of the call” as he tries his best to block Harry's way to

the wizarding world. The letters however keep arriving for Harry in the most bizarre manner. They even follow Harry after the family has left the house even though they tell no one where they are going (Rowling, HPPS, 44-52). The magical power of the letters is an example of the power of fate, forcing the hero from his imprisonment. The call is refused again by Vernon in the second novel when he locks Harry in his bedroom and tries to prevent him from returning to Hogwarts yet again. The magical flying car and the Weasleys riding it then represent the force of fate, for they have come to force the hero from his cage and into the “other” world (Rowling, HPCS, 21).

Legends tell of a Persian city that was turned to stone along with all of its inhabitants. The people had refused the call of Allah and therefore brought forth his anger, becoming prisoners in their own city (Burton, 164-67). The tale of Kamar al-Zaman describes a similar situation. A prince defies his father when asked to marry. The prince is then punished and imprisoned until he accepts a wife (Burton, 213-28). The hero therefore in a true heroic tale must be broken from the cage of self, where he has found sanctuary in the corrupt selfishness of his own mind (Campbell, 64). Whether willing or forced, the hero is always sent to the threshold of the other world. He is however not sent through without assistance.

The third subcategory “supernatural aid” portrays the protective figures and powers that assist the hero through the aid of magical objects (Campbell, 69). Harry often receives help when undertaking difficult challenges. The more prominent characters that aid him through the *Septology* are Dumbledore and Hagrid. Both of them provide Harry with some sort of help or magical object. Hagrid serves as a protector, in the beginning, when he rescues Harry from the Dursleys and takes him to Diagon Alley to purchase his school supplies (Rowling, HPPS, 56-70, 81). One of the objects purchased there is Harry’s wand which becomes his chief aid against foes (Rowling, HPPS, 96). Similarly Hagrid gives Harry the flute that puts Fluffy, a monstrous three-headed dog, to sleep (Rowling, HPPS, 216). Dumbledore, however, serves the role of mentor as well as protector. He assists Harry in his first year and supplies him with his father’s invisibility cloak (an important device for later challenges) as well as teaches Harry the functions of the mirror of Erised which proves necessary when Harry confronts his foe and the murderer of his parents for the first time, the dark wizard Lord Voldemort. In the last novel Dumbledore gives Harry and his friends, Ron and Hermione, the most important implements of victory: the Put-Outer, the Golden Snitch

and the children's book *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* (Rowling, HPPS, 218, 231, 314, HPDH, 106-7).

As the hero enters into another world the next subcategory takes effect: "the crossing of the first threshold" (Campbell, 77). Upon the thresholds to the unknown are the threshold guardians. Their purpose is to guard the gateway and prevent the hero from passing through. In order to succeed the hero must find a way around them (Campbell, 77, 82). The trap door in the third floor corridor can be likened to the world unknown. Fluffy, acts as a threshold guardian to the Philosopher's Stone in the same way as the Greek mythological three-headed dog, Kerberos, does for the Greek underworld (Rowling, HPPS, 175; Kerényi, 179). An example of a threshold guardian can be found in Celtic mythology, where the hero Cú Chulainn slays the hound of Culann and later reconciles for his crime by guarding the kingdom of Ulster (Gillon & Hollier-Larousse, 232).

Harry crosses many thresholds one of which is the threshold of Diagon Alley from the muggle world into the wizarding world. The barrier at King's Cross serves the same purpose (Rowling, HPPS, 81, 104, HPCS, 318). As the hero crosses it seems he disappears into darkness and appears to have been "swallowed" up (Campbell, 90). In such situations the hero can die, but only to be reborn again for the real hero never truly dies (Campbell, 90, 93).

Harry displays this trait of the hero when he is taken by a portkey from the maze of the Triwizard Tournament into Voldemort's midst. There he is ensnared by Voldemort's followers, tied up and surely doomed to die. He is however able to escape. Harry also appears to be near death after having been bitten by a poisonous basilisk in the Chamber of Secret. He is then saved by Dumbledore's pet phoenix, Fawkes, who heals him with the power of his tears (Rowling, HPGF, 551-54, HPCS, 321). Harry, like most heroes, has the ability to endure.

INITIATION

After the hero, protectors and mentors have been introduced, the entering of the “other world” commences. Once there the hero is challenged with all kinds of tests and trials. The first subcategory in *Initiation* is the “Road of Trials” which entails the difficulties that are to be overcome by the hero in order to succeed. The hero must therefore be able to persevere through ordeals that others have failed in. The magical aids given to the hero in the beginning serve their purpose at that time (Campbell, 97). The trials that Harry must go through range from: a get-away from the caretaker Filch during nighttime wanderings to surviving the many traps and ensnares of Voldemort and his followers (Rowling, HPPS, 172-73, HPCS, 169, HPPA, 178-79).

The tasks and trials that Harry has to endure are quite reminiscent of the Greek hero Herakles’ labors. The demigod is forced to undertake twelve challenging labors in order to gain access to Mount Olympus. Similarities can be seen between the two heroes in the “Hound of Hades” labor. Both heroes need to get past a threshold guardian (a three-headed-dog) and both pass through into the unknown (Rowling, HPP, 296-97; Kerényi, 180). Both heroes walk the same path of the mythological hero and both display abilities of speed and courage. Harry is built small and is fast, especially on a broomstick. Herakles, also fast, is able to chase the Hind of Keryneia to the ends of the earth (Rowling, HPPS, 27, 163; Kerényi, 148). Herakles displays great strength while Harry displays great power (Kerényi, 134; Rowling, HPPA, 411). Upon completing twelve labors Herakles is free to rejoin his father Zeus on Mount Olympus (Kerényi, 203-4). He then receives peace after decades of battling monsters. Harry, however, upon defeating Voldemort, receives freedom and love (Rowling, HPDH, 603-7).

The love that Harry finds in the *Septology* is with his friend Hermione and the Weasley family, in particular Molly Weasley and Ginny Weasley, which portrays the second sub category, “the meeting with the goddess”. According to Campbell the Goddess embodies the aspects that the hero greatly desires. She is a promise of better times and represents motherly qualities such as love and kindness (Campbell, 113). Harry, being deprived of a mother, finds these qualities in Molly Weasley and she becomes a sort of part-time substitute mother. Molly is the epitome of love and affection and cares for him as if he were her own.

The goddess can also be represented as the lover of the hero. Molly's daughter, Ginny, seems to fit into that role. She becomes his wife, the mother of his children and Harry finds a new family with her, something he has been longing for ever since his parents died (Rowling, HPPS, 231, HPDH, 603-7). As Campbell states, the last task of the hero is winning the love of the goddess (118). Campbell however also mentions a negative effect to the goddess aspect. It suggests that the goddess has both sides of the spectrum of good and evil. She can be caring and loving but also terrible and frightful (Campbell, 115). The negative goddess aspect can therefore be seen in the devout follower of Voldemort, Bellatrix Lestrange. She is merciless and terribly powerful, striking fear into the hearts of wizards, killing and torturing those who cross her (Rowling, HPDH, 374-77).

An example of the universal mother goddess can be found in Japanese mythology. As stated in the *Kojiki* (712 AD), the goddess Izanami begins as a goddess of good power creating the earth with her husband Izanagi. However after conceiving the fire god and dying from childbirth she descends to the underworld and becomes evil. (Katz, 55-58). The good aspect, however, can be seen in Gaea the universal mother of Greek Mythology who is represented as the earth and nature (Gillon & Hollier-Larousse, 89).

In addition Campbell puts forth the idea that the goddess can be interpreted as the world or life of the hero. The essence of the goddess is then the fabric of the hero's life. The feminine aspect of life has both good and evil sides. The evil one is portrayed as the next subcategory: "woman as the temptress" (Campbell, 111, 120). This subcategory portrays the image of worldly temptations tempting the hero off of his path of glory into sin. The hero however must master his desires and keep true to his ultimate goal (Campbell, 120-21). This can be seen in Rowling's first novel, during the second meeting of Harry and Voldemort. Harry receives an opportunity to join Voldemort, who offers Harry the chance to live in return for allegiance, but defiantly refuses (Rowling, HPPS, 316). In Indian mythology the Buddhist Gautama Siddharta, while attempting to receive illumination, is tempted by the demon of death, Mara, who sends his daughters to lead Gautama off the path of enlightenment. Gautama however feels no sexual desire and is able to resume his meditation and receive enlightenment undisturbed (Katz, 44).

Another concept of the temptress is the awakening of the hero to the fact that the faults, temptations and bad decisions are his own responsibility. At such times the hero

may feel revolted. This can be connected to repressed sexual feelings and feelings of guilt (Campbell, 122). The Celtic hero Cú Chulainn is tempted by a roasted dog from his enemies, the three sorceresses of Medb. Having given in he is immediately punished and his power diminishes greatly (Gillon & Hollier-Larousse, 233). The priests of the Syrian goddess Astarte of Hierapolis castrated themselves in her name in order to become purified, become worthy and rid themselves of sexual desire (Frazer, 311). Although there are no guilty sexual desires to be found in the *Septology*, Harry does have to deal with guilt. He blames himself for the death of his godfather, Sirius (Rowling, HPOP, 723).

As with the mother goddess aspect, the father aspect also plays a significant role in the hero's adventure. The father is portrayed as an image of perfection which the son must strive to achieve. The son then attempts to overthrow his father, take over his responsibilities and receive the goddess or even the world. A battle between father and son is then inevitable. The aftermath is "Atonement with the father" (Campbell, 129-30). When the son has proven his worth he becomes the father (Campbell, 136-37).

Though Harry never battles with his father he tries very hard to live up to the image he has of his father. He believes that he sees his father while battling dementors. Harry, however, realizes later that what he thought to be his father is in fact his future self and understands that he, himself, has the power to overcome the dementors. Harry becomes a seeker on the Quidditch team like his father and has a great desire to join the same cause that his father follows; defeating Voldemort and his followers. Harry also assumes responsibility of the task that his father failed to complete. He in a sense becomes his father and rises above him by completing that task (Rowling, HPPA, 411, HPPS, 165, HPOP, 91, HPDH, 596).

Just as the mother goddess aspect has a dark side, the father figure can have an "ogre aspect". At those times when the father is a threat, the mother goddess becomes a figure of protection (Campbell, 130, 137-38). The "ogre aspect" can be seen in stories of Greek mythology. The Titan, Cronus, consumes his children for fear of being overthrown by them. Rhea however protects her last son Zeus against his father (Gillon & Hollier-Larousse, 91). Voldemort essentially does the same as Cronus. Cronus tries to eradicate a future enemy, Voldemort exercises certain precautions in the hope of removing the threat of being overthrown (Rowling, HPHP, 477). During his encounters with Voldemort, Harry is protected by the sacrifice his mother

performed (Rowling, HPPS, 321). She therefore is the image of protection when Harry faces Voldemort.

Harry sees the “ogre aspect” in his father when he glimpses Snape’s memories during an Occlumency lesson. He realizes that his father bullied Snape and Harry’s reverence for him lessens somewhat. Harry then looks to the memory of his mother seeking reassurance (Rowling, HPOP, 570-71). Campbell’s “ogre aspect” is therefore present but mild in the *Septology*, as the father is out of the picture. If the “ogre aspect” is overcome by the hero, he is acquainted with his father and receives understanding and acceptance (Campbell, 146-48). Understanding and enlightenment comes to the hero in the next subcategory “Apotheosis”.

“Apotheosis” is an awakening of the hero when something that was not clear before has been clarified. The hero’s understanding of the situation may bring difficulties but it is the hero’s duty to release all fear and accept the situation (Campbell, 151). The Buddhist Gautama Siddhartha received enlightenment at the end of seven days of meditation. He discovered the suffering of the world and how to bring it to an end (Katz, 44). In Harry’s case an important truth is realized and he accepts his fate. Harry’s mind is continually invaded by Voldemort throughout his fifth year at Hogwarts. Harry, not having been told that he shares a part of Voldemort’s soul, thinks it merely has something to do with his scar. He is told part of the truth that Voldemort had put a bit of his powers into Harry when he attempted to kill him. Because of his connection to Voldemort Harry is seen as a liability (Rowling, HPCS, 333, HPOP, 729-30).

In the chapter “The Lost Prophecy” following Sirius’ death, Dumbledore shows Harry the prophecy, made by Professor Trelawny, which he witnessed before Harry’s birth. Trelawney, while making the prophecy, speaks in a harsh voice that is quite unlike her own:

“The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches ... born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies ... and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not ... and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives ...” (Rowling, HPOP, 741)

Examples of prophecies and oracles are well known in the world of mythology. The Pythia from Greek Mythology was seen as a medium of the god Apollo and when she relayed information from him it was as if he entered her and spoke through her (Parke,

73). Like Pythia, Trelawney goes into a trance and speaks in a voice that does not fit her personality. It therefore can be interpreted that at that moment she is a medium for the voice of another. The prophecy in the *Septology* serves the purpose of sealing fate for the young hero. However the prophecy does not act alone for the enemy has made the mistake of selecting his nemesis. Voldemort was only able to attain the first half of the prophecy and was therefore ignorant of the fact that there was another boy who fit the description too, Neville Longbottom (Rowling, HPOP, 742). Voldemort therefore makes the decision to come after Harry and thus Harry is singled out and chosen, urged on by the power of the prophecy or fate.

The prophecy in the *Septology* is not revealed until the fifth novel. The vital information that it holds is kept from Harry for the better part of his adolescent years as Dumbledore does not consider Harry to be able to handle the concept of death approaching at such a young age. He however deems Harry at age fifteen, to be ready to know that he must defeat Voldemort. This is Harry's first "apotheosis". It is not revealed to Harry that he is meant to die until the seventh novel. Therefore Harry's second enlightenment comes to him upon solving the riddle of the golden Snitch. As he realizes that he must die along with Voldemort to eliminate the threat, Harry is able to accept his fate and he surrenders (Rowling, HPOP, 739-41, HPDH, 564). Harry's reward, love, which is granted to him after his tasks, is the essence of the last sub-category in *Initiation*, "the Ultimate Boon".

After completing the tasks the hero is awarded not with jewels and treasure but with that which the hero has always wanted. The boon given to the hero is in accordance with his status (Campbell, 189). The Mirror of Erised shows clearly what Harry wants. As Dumbledore remarks in HPPS: "It shows us nothing more or less than the deepest, most desperate desire of our hearts. You, who have never known your family, see them standing around you" (Rowling, HPPS, 231). The object of Harry's desire is a family with which he can receive love and affection, gifts that were taken from him as a toddler. He receives this boon upon completing the ultimate task of defeating Voldemort. He finds love in the form of a red-haired girl, Ginny, and they create a family together (Rowling, HPDH, 603-7). Harry's wife, Ginny, and their three children Albus, Lily and James are his "ultimate boon" of love.

R E T U R N

The third and final category of Campbell's Formula is *the Return*. This describes the hero's return, the manner of his return and the implications (Campbell, 193). First of its subcategories is "the refusal of the return", which entails that the hero is to return to the normal world with a trophy, however sometimes the responsibility is refused (Campbell, 193). In Harry's case his trophy can be seen as himself. He must return to the Dursleys every summer where he is protected by his mother's blood which creates a magically protected environment at Privet Drive as long as Harry can call it his home (Rowling, HPOP, 736-37).

Unfortunately Harry is very reluctant to return home after each school year. He is fed up with his relations and even leaves early for Hogwarts (Rowling, HPPA, 30). Harry is maltreated at his aunt and uncles and therefore resents staying with them (Rowling, HPPS, 28-30). He frequently stays with the Weasleys and at the Leaky Cauldron (Rowling, HPCS, 33, HPGF, 49, HPPA, 41). Harry is therefore keen on returning to his school after each summer at Privet Drive for more exciting adventures at Hogwarts. The adventures though are not without risk and can at times involve a get-away.

The second subcategory, "The Magic Flight" describes the occurrences if the trophy is taken by the hero without permission from its guardian/s. A pursuit is then usually inevitable. This involves the guardian/s trying to prevent the escape with modes of obstruction (Campbell, 197). The flight from Gringotts in HPDH is an example of a "magic flight" as is the flight from The Ministry of Magic after attaining a horcrux from Umbridge, the flight from the cave of Infi where the fake horcrux was hidden, the flight from Aragog's lair after acquiring essential information about the Chamber of Secrets in HPCS and the flight from Voldemort in HPGF (Rowling, HPDH, 434-38, 219-20, HPCS, 538-39, HPGF, 580-81). The "magic flight" can also be found in the Snorra-Edda. The god Wotan escapes from a mighty giant, Suttungr. Suttungr's daughter, Gunnlöð, allows Wotan to drink the precious mead of knowledge made from the blood of Kvasir. Wotan then turns into an eagle and leaves but Suttungr, furious at being robbed, pursues him (Sturluson, 92).

Of course there are times when forces of an ill nature prevent the hero from escaping and render him helpless. The next subcategory, "Rescue from without", describes the hero rushing into a task ill prepared and the challenge proving too difficult. At such

times the hero is rescued by way of magical assistance (Campbell, 207). Dumbledore rescues Harry from Quirrel in the first novel when Harry faints from the exhaustion of keeping Quirrel away. Harry also faints when overpowered by dementors and is rescued by his future self and brought up to the castle by Snape. Most importantly Harry is brought back to the world of the living by an unknown source of power in HPDH when he sacrifices himself for the good of wizardkind (Rowling, HPPS, 319, HPPA, 411-412, HPDH, 580). As Harry crosses from magical to muggle world he passes from the “other world” into the “normal world” and in doing so he crosses thresholds.

The hero must at the end of his adventure experience “the crossing of the return threshold”. As the hero returns back from adventures full of magic and mystery he is to settle into a normal life again. It can be challenging for the hero to drop right back where he left off, knowing what he knows and seeing what he has seen. None can fully understand what ordeals he has faced. Upon his return the hero is alone (Campbell, 217-18). The Dursleys remain rigidly ignorant of Harry’s affairs in the wizarding world and He cannot confide in them. Harry is therefore alienated after crossing the threshold and the two worlds remain separate. However, at the end of each summer, Harry crosses over again.

The next subcategory “The Master of the Two Worlds” describes how the hero passes between both worlds continuously, becoming their master in the end. In the end of the sixth novel Harry makes the decision not to re-enter the wizarding world, but to fulfill his task and pursue the horcruxes. He remains under cover as a muggle and he, Ron and Hermione camp out in muggle populated areas (Rowling, HPPH, 606, HPDH, 224). In the final novel a war rages between Voldemort’s followers and those who stand against them. This war between the corrupt and the just is so ferocious that the barriers between the two worlds begin to crumble as incidents occur that would normally seem unacceptable to the Ministry of Magic.

As Voldemort has planted a man, Thicknesse, in the place of the Minister, he is able to control the Ministry. Voldemort then uses his power to throw forth a new order where muggles and half-blood wizard folk are inferior to pure-blood wizards and are ruled by them. Voldemort therefore does not care if he disrupts the harmony of the two worlds by revealing to muggles that wizards and witches exist. He intends on rising above them all. Consequently Voldemort generates the muggle-born registration act

which places the pure blood witches and wizards above muggle-borns and muggles (Rowling, HPOP, 198, HPDH, 12, 133, 205-8). Harry must therefore rectify this conversion of the two worlds to restore order to both.

The two worlds are a known ideal in mythology. The *Kojiki* says that the Japanese Kami are unable to pass between the two worlds of heaven and earth (Gillon & Hollier-Larousse, 404) a magical mirror is used as a medium between the two worlds (Gillon & Hollier-Larousse, 409, 413). Similarly the Hindu fire god, Agni, was thought to be a medium between heaven and earth, gods and the people (Katz, 30). After mastering the two worlds, the hero seems to have completed his trials. Upon completing everything that he is entrusted to do, all the tasks, all the death defying challenges, riddles and mysteries as well as his self sacrifice, Harry is able to achieve the “freedom to live”.

The last subcategory is the last part of the hero’s journey, “freedom to live”. As Campbell states: “The effect of the successful adventure of the hero is the unlocking and release again of the flow of life into the body of the world” (Campbell, 40). After the victory over Lord Voldemort, the hold that the death eaters have on the Ministry of Magic loosens and the power falls into just hands. The ministry ceases its headhunt for Harry and he gets to lead a normal life again without deadly pursuit.

The death of the enemy has great effect. The hero is granted the joys of life and freedom, the balance has been restored and murder, fear and devastation have been for the most part eradicated. After being held down for many years, frightened and oppressed by Lord Voldemort and his followers, not only Harry Potter but all wizards are allowed to breath freely once more.

TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE HERO

The character, Harry Potter, goes through extreme transformations from being a Nobody who gets pushed around by bullies into a magical hero, equipped with great power, who saves wizard- and mankind. The stages in which Harry moves through are explored in Maria Nikolajeva's article "Harry Potter- A Return to the Romantic Hero" (Nikolajeva, 126). Nikolajeva discusses Northrop Frye's five consecutive stages which entail the level of greatness of the character. The lowest stage is the ironic narrative, next to lowest the low mimetic narrative, the middle is the high-mimetic narrative, next to highest the romantic narrative and the highest is the myth narrative (Frye, 33-34). Nikolajeva places Harry in the romantic stage, the high mimetic stage and the ironic stage as well as professes that Harry Potter is a character too complicated to place (Nikolajeva, 126). But Harry also fits into the myth narrative stage. As the article was printed in 2003 Nikolajeva had yet to enjoy the benefits of the final two novels of the *Septology*. As such she was unaware of the transformation the main character would go through, as the last two novels change the storyline from the aim it was portraying in 2003, where Dumbledore seemed to be the savior. The death of Dumbledore, who is the leading powerful wizard, needs to be taken into account as it alters the rank of Harry and he rises towards the status of a god in the final novel.

The lowest stage describes a character which is beat down, trodden on and unable to stand up to people. Adults as well as children are easily able to walk over him (Frye, 33-34). Harry starts out as a skinny little eleven-year-old boy who knows nothing at all about magic and finds his existence miserable and bleak. He is bullied in particular by his nephew Dudley and his thug-like friends as well as his adult guardians Petunia and Vernon Dursley (Rowling, HPPS, 67). Therefore in the beginning Harry can be associated with the ironic narrative stage. As he learns more about magic, his past, Voldemort and himself, he is able to move from this pitiful stage straight to the high mimetic stage.

The high mimetic stage entails that the main character, though revered above others, is not invincible but merely human and able to get hurt (Frye, 33-34). Harry displays human emotions, weaknesses and receives multiple injuries throughout the *Septology*. He has to grow back the bones in his arm after Lockhart, a professor at Hogwarts, accidentally removes them. That same arm is later pierced by a basilisk fang (Rowling, HPCS, 173, 320, HPGF, 22). However as Harry grows older, he is able to rise above some of the grown-ups around him and in doing so enters the romantic narrative stage.

This stage portrays the main character as superior to other humans but not to gods (Frye, 33-34). As soon as Harry enters the wizarding world he realizes that he is famous and admired by the first magical person he sees at the Leaky Cauldron. As he goes through Diagon Alley and enters Gringotts he also discovers that he is rich. Upon arriving at Hogwarts he is revered by his peers beyond other children by the members of his house Gryffindor as well as the rest of the school (though perhaps not Slytherin). The professors however treat him like any other student (Rowling, HPPS, 79, 85, 133-34, 146-47). Harry is therefore superior to his equals (humans) but not to adult witches and wizards (gods). Therefore he cannot fall into the category of the myth narrative stage until he becomes greater and more important than Dumbledore.

As Harry begins to be able to best his professors he moves gradually from the romantic narrative stage to the myth narrative stage. There he portrays awesome powers; the ability to defeat over a hundred dementors, overcoming obstacles through bravery that other wizards are incapable of as well as the will to sacrifice himself for the good of others. Harry even becomes an unofficial professor, teaching his peers Defense against the Dark Arts when their current professor is unqualified for the job. He is then sealed as a main character in a myth narrative in the final two novels when he does something no adult has achieved: He retrieves the remaining horcruxes (the locket, cup, diadem and Nagini), destroys them and defeats Voldemort, (Rowling, HPPA, 411, HPOP, 348, HPDH, 595-96, HPCS, 322, HPDH, 216, 307, 434).

After the death of Dumbledore, Harry is meant to step in his place as the most powerful. It is mentioned in the *Septology* that Harry, not Dumbledore, is equipped with weapons meant to defeat Voldemort (Rowling, HPOP, 744). Harry rises above Dumbledore in greatness by that notion alone. Dumbledore is also flawed as he shows acts of temptation and displays characteristics that entail a hunger for power and domination. At a young age he conspires with his friend Grindelwald to seek the deathly hallows and put the muggles in their "rightful place" (Rowling, HPDH, 456). Dumbledore can therefore no longer be seen as a god as he has shown aspects of basic human flaws. This puts Harry in the godly status as he is able to rise above Dumbledore when he proves himself to be selfless and without greed willing to sacrifice his own life to stop Voldemort. Harry therefore displays the traits of a god. He brings hope and peace to witches and wizards, destroys the enemy and brings the dark times to an end.

THE HERO AND THE ENEMY

What sets the hero above the rest is his ability to be good and just and to avoid the corruption and greed that sometimes accompanies power. As soon as he falls into such a pit he is no longer the hero but the villain. In Christianity the Christian God and the Devil are complete opposites of the spectrum of good and evil. Similarly in Teutonic mythology the God of Mischief, Loki, portrays the corrupt and malicious god while Baldur is portrayed as the good and just god. The three supreme gods of Hinduism; Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, also represent different sides of the spectrum. Brahma and Vishnu are benevolent but Shiva is seen as the destroyer (Katz, 16, 23).

Harry Potter and Lord Voldemort represent this theme in the *Septology*. Their different natures can be seen by their reactions to their invitation to Hogwarts. They are shown as individuals who are given the same opportunity. In both cases Dumbledore offers them a chance to study magic and leave a place of misery. However their reactions to the invitation are quite different. Harry's first response is bewilderment, happiness and immense gratitude whereas Voldemort's reaction is commanding, ungrateful and power hungry (Rowling, HPPS, 67, 92, HPHP, 253-54). This shows the opposite theme of good and evil that is to be presented at the end when they meet in battle not as boy and man but as equal enemies.

However despite them being on opposite sides there are similarities between the two. The paths of Voldemort and Harry are entwined by their wands which each hold a feather from the tail of the same phoenix making them brother wands. (Rowling, HPPS, 96) The hero and the villain are also connected through the bond of their souls. They are descended from the same forefathers, the Peverell brothers as well and as fate would have it they also share the same blood. (Rowling, HPDH, 349).

Campbell mentions the idea of the supernatural gift being endowed in the hero at a very young age or even at birth (319). Therefore the hero does not become a hero in a sense but was always meant to be a hero and the magical powers lay dormant within until ready to resurface at the time of glory. The blood in Harry's veins, protected by his mother's sacrifice from infancy, and his ability to love is his magical gift. It is what Harry is able to wield in battle against Voldemort. When Voldemort extracted Harry's blood from his body and used it to fashion himself a body of his own, Voldemort took that protection of love into him and created a further bond between the two. He made it so that as long as one was alive so was the other, until the bond

was broken. When Harry is hit with the killing curse the second time he is protected through this connection of his mother's blood which now runs in both wizards' veins. Voldemort's last remaining soul fragment however, maimed and torn beyond recognition, has meek protection and is destroyed, along with its owner (Rowling, HPDH, 568-69).

Kindness and love are notions that the evil villain cannot possibly understand. If the villain were to grasp the concept he would cease to be evil for the enlightenment of such a concept would bring guilt. Villains, in the strongest sense of the word, are therefore unable to feel guilt or remorse. Voldemort is no exception:

"That which Voldemort does not value, he takes no trouble to comprehend. Of house-elves and children's tales, of love, loyalty and innocence, Voldemort knows and understands nothing. Nothing. That they all have a power beyond his own, a power beyond the reach of any magic, is a truth he has never grasped." (Rowling, HPDH, 568)

The idea of the triumph of good over evil is very strong in the novel as it is in myths. It is prevalent in Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. These religions mention a grand savior that saves the people from devastation. Harry serves that role in the *Septology*. He is the complete opposite of Voldemort, for where Voldemort feels greed Harry feels selflessness. This is apparent in their opposite views of death. Harry, bravely accepts his fate and is able to meet death without a backward glance, Voldemort however flees from it. The term *Vol de Mort*, in fact, means "flight of death" in French. This is essentially what has been ingrained into Rowling's villain. Terrible as he is, he has weaknesses and fears like others. He fears death and does whatever he can to prolong his existence in the world. The methods in which he attempts to elude his death are the elixir of life, produced from the philosopher's stone but more importantly, the splitting of the soul.

HALLOWS AND HORCRUXES

After killing Harry's parents, Voldemort also tries to kill Harry. The killing curse however backfires, taking from Voldemort a fragment of his soul and attaching it to Harry. The reason for this is the magical aid of Harry's mother's love. Serving her role as the image of magical protection, she dies to save her son. Harry is, as mentioned before, protected by her lingering sacrifice which resides in his blood. The spell consequently forces the killing curse in the opposite direction and it hits Voldemort (Rowling, HPDH, 550-51).

What Voldemort has done prior to this incident is break apart his soul extracting five pieces from his body. Each of the pieces he preserves in an object special to him, something that represents power: the first in his old diary, the second in Voldemort's ancestors' ring, the third in the diadem of Rowena Ravenclaw, the fourth in the locket owned initially by Salazar Slytherin and the fifth in the cup of Helga Hufflepuff. The sixth fragment of a soul left in Voldemort's body then splits in two when hit with the killing curse and one of the pieces attaches itself to Harry. Voldemort later breaks apart the last remaining seventh of his soul and places it in his pet snake Nagini (Rowling, HPHP, 467-68, 470, 472, 473, HPDH, 470). The soul fragment in Harry naturally becomes a part of him and integrates into his system. He is then able to talk to snakes as Voldemort does and finds he has a connection with Voldemort's thoughts and feelings.

The soul is thought to be extracted from the body during a short period of time, like during sleep or a trance (Skeat, 47). The fragment of Voldemort's soul that Harry is carrying does just that. Harry has a series of dreams in the novels. During one of them he is in the form of a snake and attacks Mr. Weasley (Rowling, HPOP, 408-10). Since Harry has a part of Voldemort's soul in him, it seems relevant that the fragment would return to its master when the body hosting it is temporarily weakened as it is during sleep. Similar ideas can be seen in Shamanism. The shamans believe that everything has a soul and they are able to send their own soul out to communicate with other souls (Morningstar, 104). When Harry sees himself as a snake, killing Mr. Weasley, he has an outer body experience. Harry's soul is linked to all pieces of Voldemort's soul, including his snake Nagini and so Harry feels as if he is physically present.

The feelings and thoughts of Voldemort is also something that Harry is able to feel. When felt those thoughts and emotions cause him physical pain. Harry is therefore

greatly inconvenienced by this force of evil living inside of him. Voldemort likewise gains no favor by placing his soul fragment into Harry. When the soul is stripped into pieces it can be assumed that it weakens the owner. Voldemort's soul, for instance, in the end, is a maimed, tattered fragment that is portrayed as a hideous and discarded infant (Rowling, HPDH, 566, 578). The seven horcruxes, including Harry, having been destroyed leave Voldemort with merely an eighth of a soul left. Voldemort is therefore left in a much weakened state and Harry is able to defeat him.

It is evident that the role of the soul plays an important part in the *Septology* as it does in many known mythological legends. In African mythology the soul is thought to have the ability to be transferred into animals and even plants (Gillon & Hollier-Larousse, 473). A West African account tells of a king who kept his soul in a bird. Therefore when the queen shot the bird the king died as well (Leonard, 319-21). Similarly a Hindu account tells of a magician named Punchkin who had his soul extracted from his body and kept in a parrot. If the parrot was killed the owner would instantaneously die but if the parrot was safe the owner would be immortal (Frere, 12-16). Another legend tells of the King of Ceylon who removed his soul and kept it in a box during battles. If he was slain during battle he was able to survive through the power of his boxed soul (Bastian, 304). The Kojiki states that the Japanese Kami are also able to extract their souls from their bodies and keep them in inanimate objects (Gillon & Hollier-Larousse, 404).

Another view can be seen in an Egyptian tale where the soul and life essence was thought to be in the heart which could be separated from the body, yet keeping the owner alive. (D'Orbiney, Wilson, 23). Another account from the western Riviera tells of a sorcerer called Body-Without-Soul who kept his soul in an egg, which was in an eagle, which was in a dog, which was in a lion (Andrews, 213). There are other examples from Slavonic, Teutonic, Roman and Celtic accounts to name a few. These myths usually involve a procession of guardians that guard the soul, ranging from large to small, such as a whole island to a mere egg (Frazer, 595-97). All of them have the same theme: the soul is lodged in the smallest animal or object and as long as it is kept safe and whole so is the owner, but if destroyed or killed the soul dies and therefore the owner as well. Of course Rowling takes the concept of the soul extraction one step further with the idea of splitting the soul into numerous pieces in order to gain immortality.

In mythology however, immortality is reserved for gods, goddesses, deities and demons. The fascination with eternal life reaches across many different mythologies. Ideas of immortality can be seen in the Indian legend of the twin deities, the Ashvins. They were thought to be able to give the gift of eternal life to mortals (Katz, 31). A Mesopotamian legend tells of the hero Gilgamesh who sought the plant of immortality. After passing various threshold guardians, such as lions and scorpion men, Gilgamesh came to the goddess Ishtar and requested the gift of immortality. The goddess however warned Gilgamesh that eternal life was reserved for the gods and advised him to enjoy the life he had been given, yet she let him proceed (Meissner, 9). Gilgamesh was able to attain the plant of immortality at the bottom of the cosmic sea. It was however stolen from him by a snake. Gilgamesh therefore remained a mortal man (Jensen, 116-273).

The deathly hallows in the *Septology* are also connected to death but in a slightly different way. The legend says that the Peverell brothers elude death when they conjure a bridge across a deadly river. Death pretending to be happy grants them three gifts: the invisibility cloak, the elder wand and the resurrection stone. The legend of the Deathly Hallows has the core message of accepting death not finding ways around it, for death takes each brother in the end. The first two brothers lose their life while the third brother gives it up willingly. The third brother consequently embodies the moral of the legend (Rowling, HPDH, 330-32). Therefore the hallows represent the acceptance of death whereas the horcruxes represent the flight from death. Harry follows in his ancestor's footsteps when he gives himself to death for the greater good.

SACRIFICE AND RESURRECTION

The hero, as described by De Vries, is the idea of strength, courage and the ability to defeat all opponents in order to win fame (180). The mythological hero however is the idea of selflessness. For the hero completes all his tasks and is then faced with the force of death. De Vries states that the path of all heroes ends in a tragic early death (De Vries, 183). He however sees this as a weakness in the hero, a frail human aspect, to die. The hero demonstrates great strength during his battles. When faced with death the weakness of fear, however, does not take over but acceptance is made. This would seem to be the most courageous act performed in the hero's trials. The hero therefore is not weak but strong in his will, and in that sense, stronger than the enemy. The true hero then is able to accept death bravely and release all fear. The death of the hero most often means the release of a malevolent force for the benefit of the people left behind in the world of the living (Hubert & Mauss, 9). The hero, however, upon proving himself willing to die can be rewarded with the gift of life again and is resurrected. Harry Potter follows this same path of the hero to the very end. He sacrifices himself in order to save wizard and man-kind.

When a sacrifice is performed, the object, animal or person being sacrificed becomes a vessel of spiritual energy and has become sacred. Any impurities that resided in the soul are therefore expelled (Hubert & Mauss, 9). The act that Harry performs when he enters the Forbidden Forest and presents himself to Voldemort is exactly this. When Harry sacrifices himself the soul fragment clinging to him is destroyed and Harry is sent into the other world where he receives information from Dumbledore on how to defeat Voldemort. (Rowling, HPDH, 567-69).

A self sacrificing hero can be found in Teutonic mythology. The Norse god, Wotan, sacrifices himself and hangs on a tree for nine days and nine nights, after being gutted by a spear. After his sacrifice he is awarded the gift of wisdom. He thusly acquires knowledge from the "other world" during his absence from the normal world (Turville-Petre, 42). The resurrection of the hero or god often times follows the sacrifice. The hero is then rewarded for his sacrifice with the gift of life again. In Japanese mythology the god O-kuni-Nushi is killed by his jealous brothers and then resurrected by his mother and the goddess Kami-Musubi (Gillon & Hollier-Larousse, 409). A Celtic deity, Bran the Blessed, possesses a cauldron that was thought to have the power to bring the dead back to life. As a further example Bran sacrificed himself for his people (Gillon & Hollier-Larousse, 231).

The ancient Egyptians buried their gods under the sand hoping to preserve them. The art of embalming was later discovered and the pharaohs of Egypt, seeking immortality, put the method to use. It was thought that if the body could remain whole the soul could remain with it and the pharaoh could be resurrected (Frazer, 224; Maspero, 108-11, 116-18; Moret, 219). Similarly the heroic god Attis, from Western Asian mythology, was killed and later resurrected. The resurrection of the god gave hope to the people that they too would be able to achieve life after death (Frazer, 309).

What Harry Potter, as the opposite of Voldemort, is able to do is accept death and “greet” it “as an old friend” (Rowling, HPDH, 332). As well as portraying the enemy, Voldemort represents the frightened part of us that deviates from the divine plan. He has no respect for life, taking it as he sees fit much the same way as a child may disrespect the life of an insect. Harry Potter has respect for life and as such he is granted life in the end, Voldemort, however, who leaves corpses in his path without a backward glance, is granted no more than a quick death. One might call it Karma (Katz, 46).

CONCLUSION

The *Harry Potter Septology*, with its main character as the hero, fits into each of Joseph Campbell's seventeen subcategories. The beginning of Harry's adventure has examples that conform to the first category *Departure*. Harry has mentors and protectors who provide him with magical aid. He then crosses into a world unknown where threshold guardians and trials reign supreme. *Initiation* holds evidence of Harry's similarity to heroism in myth, where the events that pass in the novels hold some sort of task that tests the hero's will and bravery. Harry also deals with aspects of the mother goddess and the "ogre father" and receives illumination. Having passed every test, task and trial he is rewarded in the end with love. The *Septology* also conforms to the last category *Return*. Harry frequently refuses the return to normality, he is rescued from danger and he passes between magical and muggle world, mastering them in the end. When all is completed Harry receives freedom from pursuit and is able to live a mostly normal life in the magical world with his wife Ginny and their three children.

The plotline follows the formula throughout each novel, forming the *Septology* as a whole into a mythological heroic epic. The many mythological examples serve the purpose of showing the similarities between legends of myth and the *Septology*. Other mythical aspects from the seven novels are rich in the history of various religions such as concepts of the soul, immortality, sacrifice and resurrection.

Extraction and preservation of the soul in living beings as well as objects is a very prevalent mythical ideal, shown in many examples of different myths and legends. Voldemort's horcruxes serve the purpose of preserving his soul and he therefore retains immortality. The deathly hallows, ironically, portray power over death but are meant to bear the purpose of accepting death. On these opposite sides are the ability to accept death and the flight from it. Voldemort represents the former and Harry the latter. The magical protection of blood and love is important for Harry as it is the only weapon that will defeat Voldemort. Harry, being able to accept death, sacrifices himself for the good of wizardkind and earns life once more.

Throughout his years at Hogwarts Harry undergoes major transformations and shows growth from boy to hero with Frye's five narrative stages. In the *Septology* Harry is portrayed from the age eleven to seventeen. The transformation he undergoes in that time is epic, changing Harry into a godlike figure, a great savior, able to defeat the

enemy and save the people. The other characters in the story fulfill their parts as mentors, goddesses, father aspects, obstacles and threshold guardians forming the *Septology* into a mythological heroic epic, allowing young readers to be swept into a world of magic and myth, wondrous to behold.

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