

J.K Rowling's Hero Harry Potter as a Hero Archetype

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The idea of Monomyth or Hero's Journey is a term used by renowned mythologist Joseph Campbell in his famous book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. In his study Campbell treasures that heroic adventure myths have similar stages and journeys even though they have come from diverse culture and from different parts of the world. He also designates several archetypal characters that appear in these stories represent the prevalence in everyday reality. Accordingly the heroic paths of the Hero's also have commonness in their deeds and causes. In his book, Campbell expositis the various stages of the Hero's Journey which consists of the journey of the main character that he follows throughout a story and elucidates various archetypes. He divides the Hero's Journey into three main stages and splits each of the three stages of the hero's journey into seventeen steps which is the path that he designs for the hero in order to pass and to fulfill his journey.

The heroic paths of universal heroes are designed in Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. He classifies the three main stages of journey typically as follows: "Departure, Initiation, and Return" (Campbell ix). The three classifications of stages contain five, six and six stages respectively. Departure deals with the Hero's departure from the familiar world to ventures into the darkness of unknown world and also states Hero's adventure earlier time to the quest. It includes five stages namely, The Call to Adventure, Refusal of the Call, Supernatural Aid, The Crossing of the First Threshold and The Belly of the Whale. The next juncture is Initiation that deals with where the Hero is subjected to many trials in which he must prove his talent and character to overcome the tasks which he has to concur. He also undergoes many adventures along the way to fulfill his quest. Here the Hero has to deal with many trials in order to fulfill his ultimate quest by accomplishing his journey. Initiation consists of six steps namely The Road of Trials, The Meeting with the Goddess, Woman as the Temptress, Atonement with the Father, Apotheosis, The Ultimate Boon. Return is the third and final stage in the Hero's Journey. After the hero accomplished his quest, he must return with the boon that he has received in order to bestow to his society and followers. It consists of six steps namely Refusal of the Return, The Magic Flight, Rescue

from Without, The Crossing of the Return Threshold, Master of the Two Worlds, Freedom to Live.

Prestigious author J.K. Rowling's hero, Harry Potter, follows the same mythological heroic path as outlined by Joseph Campbell. Campbell develops the universal pattern of heroes' journey and named Monomyth and most commonly known as the Hero's Journey. In his study of the hero archetypes, he has discovered that all stories basically tell the same tale but they are retold and presented with different search motifs in all over the world: "The Monomyth (Hero's Journey) refers to the basic elements of myth, the archetypal qualities of all legends and heroes, which transcend individual cultures and specific periods of time; the Monomyth is universal and timeless" (Indick 6). Campbell states, "man celebrates the tales of heroes and their deeds in order to explain his or her own place in the universe" (Campbell 11). According to Campbell's perspective, the hero is someone who has sacrifices his life in order to save someone or something which bestow more values to his society or his people. Hero's Journey pattern can be applied both to the collection of seven books about Harry's life, as well as to each individual book in its own right.

Departure

One of the first stages of the hero's "Departure" that Campbell describes is "The Call to Adventure". The Hero's Journey typically begins with an insight into the Hero's ordinary world. In *Sorcerer's Stone*, Harry's normal existence is disrupted when he receives his call to adventure. This call is received when the letters addressed to him are received: "He had no friends, no other relatives — he didn't belong to the library, so he'd never even got rude notes asking for books back. Yet here it was, a letter, addressed so plainly there could be no mistake: Mr. H. Potter The Cupboard under the Stairs 4 Privet Drive Little Whinging Surrey (SS 34). Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon hide the letters away from Harry. However, the letters continue to reach Harry where he is officially called to adventure.

The next step, Campbell describes as "The Refusal of the Call". In heroic myths, the hero initially refuses the call. When this refusal to adventure arises, the hero possibly undergoes many obstacles and often manages to answer or may continue to decline the call to adventure: In *Chamber of Secret* once again Uncle Vernon refuses the call to adventure on behalf of Harry when he locks up Harry in his home. The house elf Dobby warns Harry and asks not to return to Hogwarts and tries to protect Harry from untold horrors but Harry does not know why it is unsafe to go back to Hogwarts. Finally, with the help of Ron and his brothers he escapes from Vernon's protection.

The next step in the typical Hero's Journey is one Campbell describes as "Supernatural Aid". Mentor or often elderly figure provides special tools to the hero in order to achieve the adventure ahead, such as an amulet of weapon and advice: "This supernatural aid comes in the form of a mentor in order for the hero to get past certain obstacles. They

give amulets and talismans (advice) to him so he possesses insight into what their duties entail and how to conquer them. The mentor stands by the hero's side at the beginning, because he needs to protect his ultimate destiny" (Campbell 69-71). In *Prisoner of Azkaban*, Harry acquires a unique magical object, the Marauders' Map from Ron's brothers Fred and George which reveals where everyone is located at Hogwarts that helps Harry in the moral conflict between Voldemort. Throughout the series Dumbledore teaches Harry everything about the knowledge of the dark Lord Voldemort.

The next step is "The Crossing of the First Threshold". The hero has to cross the threshold between the world he is familiar with and the world which he is unknown. Often this involves facing a threshold guardian in order to continue his journey as Campbell describes: "cross the first threshold, encountering a threshold guardian whom he will either defeat or befriend" (Campbell 77). In *Half Blood Prince*, Harry learns from the prophecy and attains the knowledge to defeat Voldemort. He crosses the threshold into the world of the hero when he and Dumbledore adventure to the hiding place of the locket Horcrux. This journey illustrates to Harry the deep magic with which Voldemort protects the pieces of his soul. Dumbledore eventually dies because of the curse laid upon the potion. Harry and Dumbledore mortally fight against the potion which nearly kills them and forces Harry to experience the mortal pain: "Dumbledore screamed; the noise echoed all around the vast chamber, across the dead black water. 'No, no, no, no, I can't, I can't, don't make me, I don't want to. . . .' 'It's all right, Professor, it's all right!' said Harry loudly, his hands shaking so badly he could hardly scoop up the sixth goblet-ful of potion" (HBP 572).

The next step in the Hero's Journey is one Campbell describes as "The Belly of the Whale". According to Campbell, "the initiation of the hero into the world of adventure, where he must face death and be reborn before his journey can continue. The site is generally a temple, a cave or another womb-like location, or a dreamscape of fluid, ambiguous forms" (Campbell 91-92). At the end of *Chamber of Secrets*, Harry has to descend into evil places in order to recover needed information to solve the chamber mystery. This comes when Harry faces dangerous spiders in the cave where they try to kill Harry and his friends. Eventually they escape from death with the help of Ron's wild flying car where Harry was very close to death.

Initiation

One of the first aspects of the hero's "Initiation" that Campbell describes is "The Road of Trials". Even if the hero escapes the belly of the whale, he still must conquer The Road of Trials. Campbell states that, "the hero has to survive countless trials and tribulations... he actually realises that he has a small supernatural aid that is helping to push him over the edge and to continue on his passage" (Campbell 97). From these obstacles the hero learns to realise him and transfers from childish behaviours to self-reliance. In *Goblet of*

Fire, being a underage wizard, Harry confronts with fellow wizarding students and wins the Triwizard Tournament. Campbell further states that the hero must “survive a succession of obstacles and, in so doing, amplifies his consciousness” (Campbell 92). Throughout Harry’s journey he encounters with number of hurdles with Voldemort and his followers and learns from these trials what he must do in order to face Voldemort and end the trial by defeating him in the final battle.

The next step Campbell describes as “The Meeting with the Goddess” where the Goddess guides the hero and provides him the means for success in his trials. Harry’s true Goddess is the one who safely guide him pass through the grave dangers posed before him: “The meeting with the goddess is the final test of the talent of the hero to win the boon of love, which is life itself enjoyed as the encasement of eternity” (Campbell 118). The goddess serves as a guide to the hero and assists him. The goddess may show the hero the way to his final destination or she may provide him with an amulet to help him on his journey. Harry’s mother, Lily Potter is the main Goddess figure in Harry’s journey; she sacrifices his life for her loving son Harry and protects him from the evil Voldemort once and for all.

The next step Campbell describes as “Atonement with the Father” where the father provides the hero with an initiation. At the initiation, the father tends to shatter the ego of the hero. The hero must put his self aside and do what is right for the mankind. James Potter is Harry’s biological, the ideal and unattainable father. He is perceived primarily as exceptional at school but his bullying attitude towards Snape makes him normal. He is a trained wizard and a member of the Order who sacrifices his life while fighting with Voldemort to protect his wife and son. Harry is very much attached with his parents but he becomes the cause of their death. Harry’s biological relationship and attachment with his father makes him feel worse in the memory of his father throughout his life. This could be considered Atonement with the Father. Harry has a righteous sense of atonement for his father’s death. By killing Harry’s father Voldemort makes him as his arch enemy and marks him his equal.

The next step Campbell describes in the Hero’s Journey is “Apotheosis”. It represents the realisation of the essence of life and the glorification of an individual to a divine level. This is where the hero comes to enlightenment and experiences death and reaches the god like state. Before Harry starts his journey, he is the one who is destined to do great things. Moreover, he is the one ever escapes from Voldemort’s killing curse and also, reducing him almost to “mere shadow and vapor” (SS 293). Harry completes this phase when he defeats Voldemort in the final battle. Throughout Harry’s journey, there are lots of encounters, tests and trials where Harry achieves recognition of his true ability. He faces death many times and conquers it through acceptance of his fate and finally realises his self and defeats the evil Voldemort thus fulfilling as Campbell states in this phase.

Campbell names the next step as “The Ultimate Boon” when the Hero faces the biggest and most dangerous challenges for which the previous tests have prepared the hero.

The *Harry Potter Series* always revolve around Harry's confrontation with Lord Voldemort that comes at the end by the victory of the hero Harry, thus considered as The Ultimate Boon. Campbell states, it is "the means for the regeneration of his society as a whole" (30). Harry's final battle against Voldemort gives Harry a chance to achieve his boon. He attains it by defeating Voldemort, whom the whole wizard society fears ever. Even the highly trained wizards are afraid to call Voldemort by his name; they only call him as "He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named" (SS 85); those fears are shattered by Harry.

Return

One of the first aspects of the hero's "Return" that Campbell describes is "Refusal of the Return". "Having gained the Ultimate Boon the hero wants to stay in the place where they have found bliss and enlightenment" (Campbell 199). Harry returns home at the end of all novels except at the final book in the series, *Deathly Hallows*. Each book typically ends with Harry's one year school life at Hogwarts and thus he has to face the uneventful existence to Number Four Privet Drive at the Dursleys household. Harry never feels happy in living with the Dursleys; therefore he always refuses to return because he dreads the idea of having to live with his unloving Uncle, Aunt and Cousin again. To Harry, Hogwarts is his home and the magical society is his family, and he never wants to return to his uncle but always desires to remain in the magical school of Hogwarts.

Campbell's next step in the Hero's Journey is "The Magic Flight". This is the stage where the hero encounters some final obstacles and struggles in order to bring back the elixir to his society. Once the hero has received his blessings, he has to return and share what he attains from his journey with his society. In *Chamber of Secrets* Harry saves Ginny from Voldemort and destroys one of the Horcrux that has been protected by him. Harry and Ginny escape from the chamber with the help of Fawkes the phoenix and he shares his experience with Dumbledore about the Diary's behaviour that reveals the intention of Voldemort over creating Horcruxes. In general, Harry undergoes many adventures from the beginning by facing the obstacles of Voldemort. He attains the boon of knowledge how to kill Voldemort. Finally, he achieves the boon by defeating Voldemort and returns with the elixir of life. His return brings back the peace among the magical community and he shuts away the fear of Voldemort once for all.

The next stage is described by Campbell as "Rescue from Without". In this step a stranger from nowhere comes to rescue and saves the hero therefore he can bring back the hero to the ordinary world. He may be an unexpected source for the hero. As Campbell defines, "The hero may have to be brought back from his supernatural adventure by assistance from without. That is to say, the world may have to come and get him. For the bliss of the deep abode is not lightly abandoned in favor of the self-scattering of the awakened state" (207). In *Half Blood Prince*, Ron saves Harry to get rid of the locket Horcrux. The

locket tightens its chain around Harry's neck and tries to drown him. Ron pulls him out and safely delivers him to solid ground and rescues Harry from grave danger.

The next step is termed "The Crossing of the Return Threshold" by Campbell. For completing a hero's journey, the hero has to return to his real world after accomplishing his adventures of the magical world: "The returning hero, to complete his adventure, must survive the impact of the world" (Campbell 225). Harry crosses the return threshold almost from the beginning to the end. After completing his adventures on every school year he ends up with the Dursleys. This may be a difficult task for Harry; since he has to accept "the passing joys and sorrows, banalities and noisy obscenities of life" (Campbell 218). Whenever Harry crosses the return threshold by experiencing a sense of realisation where he eventually comes to understand that the two worlds are almost one.

The next step Campbell labels "Master of the Two Worlds". Once the hero crossed the return threshold, he will become what Campbell calls the "Master of the Two Worlds" where he has to receive the vision and understand the two worlds. At the end, Harry is willing to sacrifice himself to vanquish Voldemort thus realizing the difference between good and evil and he has succeeded in the new world and returned to the old world as a different and matured person. Harry eventually belongs to both the known and to the unknown world. Harry fulfills his final quest of defeating Voldemort and becomes the most powerful wizard in the world and thus he is able to pass freely from the muggle world to the wizarding one. At this point the hero is portrayed as a unique master who can cross back and forth between the two worlds. At the end of the final battle between Harry and Voldemort, Harry achieves a sense of balance between the two worlds and he is comfortable in both the inner and outer worlds.

The last stage Campbell describes in the Hero's Journey is "Freedom to Live". The hero enters into this step after mastering over the two worlds that leads the hero to gain freedom from the fear of death. It is evident from indication of the prophecy that states "*EITHER MUST DIE AT THE HAND OF THE OTHER FOR NEITHER CAN LIVE WHILE THE OTHER SURVIVES*" (OoP 841). In fact, Harry bears the purpose of vanquishing evil and keeps the hope alive that good always wins over evil. He enters into the magical world with a purpose and therefore he never lives with complete freedom at the Dursley's household. Throughout his journey, he has conquered the fears of death whenever he approaches Voldemort and his Horcruxes. At the end of the final battle, he returns with freedom to live by threshing Voldemort once for all.

The Harry Potter Series is a portrayal of Hero's Journey. As previously stated many critics, like Christopher Vogler, John Granger and Lynne Milum have discussed that this series follows many aspects that Campbell mentioned in his book. Harry fulfills many of the criteria required to be called a Heroic Journey. In his journey, he acquires self-knowledge, wisdom and matures during his trials; from that readers are able to "identify with Harry's

experiences and recognize parallels in their own lives” (Schafer 130). As a hero, Harry is a potential representative of Campbell’s Monomyth. Readers can understand this series following the Monomyth narrative pattern if they relate directly some incidents in the *Harry Potter Series* to Campbell’s Monomyth pattern. As a hero, Harry’s journey has been central to human history throughout the centuries. Humankind is attracted to such narratives because of the archetypes that occur in them and because each one is about humanity, about the struggles and triumphs that are parts of everyday existence.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone:</i>	SS
<i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets:</i>	CoS
<i>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban:</i>	PoA
<i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire:</i>	GoF
<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix:</i>	OoP
<i>Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince:</i>	HBP
<i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hollows</i>	