

2016

Harry Potter's heroics: crossing the thresholds of home, away, and the spaces in-between

Mary D. Reding
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd>

 Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Reding, Mary D., "Harry Potter's heroics: crossing the thresholds of home, away, and the spaces in-between" (2016). *Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. 15068.

<https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/15068>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and Dissertations at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.

**Harry Potter's heroics: Crossing the thresholds of home, away,
and the spaces in-between**

by

Mary D. Reding

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Major: English (Literature)

Program of Study Committee:
Susan Yager, Major Professor
Michael Bailey
Gloria Betcher

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2016

Copyright © Mary D. Reding, 2016. All rights reserved

DEDICATION

To my mother, who read me stories,

My father, who made them up,

My brother, who will read them someday,

And my partner, who made the study of them possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
NOMENCLATURE	v
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2 HAGRID	13
CHAPTER 3 THE WEASLEYS	23
CHAPTER 4 DUMBLEDORE	39
CHAPTER 5 HOME AND AWAY	54
REFERENCES	68

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Susan Yager, and my committee members, Michael Bailey and Gloria Betcher, for their guidance and support throughout the course of this research.

In addition, I would also like to thank my friends, colleagues, the English Department faculty and staff for making my time at Iowa State University a wonderful experience. I would also like to thank every teacher who encouraged my love of books and reading.

NOMENCLATURE

SS	<i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone</i>
COS	<i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i>
POS	<i>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</i>
GOF	<i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i>
OOTP	<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i>
HBP	<i>Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince</i>
DH	<i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows</i>

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the release of the final installment and the conclusion of a nearly two-decades-long literary and cultural experience, fans and scholars alike have been able to leisurely enjoy and critically examine J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. The popularity¹ of the boy wizard has largely been attributed² to the adherence of his adventures to the structure of the "Hero's Journey," a comprehensive and cyclical narrative construction described by mythographer Joseph Campbell in 1949. This construction, Campbell believed, served to illuminate the persistent and perennial attraction of heroic tales to humanity. Campbell formulates his hero's journey, or hero cycle, in a structuralist fashion, using stock elements or archetypes to produce a narrative structure that is replicable indefinitely, and which appears in a vast number of stories and mythologies across the world. Campbell's construction is not unique, however. A remarkably similar narrative schema, comprised of a series of functions born of archetypes found in Russian folktales, was published by Vladimir Propp in his seminal work *Morphology of a Folktale* in 1928. Like Campbell, Propp believed his work to be universally applicable, and to explain the widespread appeal of certain hero stories.

Campbellian and Proppian archetypal constructions offer insight regarding the nature, causes, and success of Harry's journey. Harry's heroics are in direct alignment with his ability to traverse liminal space: to move back and forth between his home world

¹ Critics Joan Acocella, Barbara Comber, Alan Jacobs, Charles W. Kalish, and Alison Lurie each explore the phenomenon of this popularity in detail.

² Campbellian connections to the Potter narrative are drawn by numerous critics such as Heather Arden, Sharon Black, Deborah De Rosa, Lisa Hopkins, Maria Nikolajeva, and Alessandra Petrina, to name a few.

and the otherworld in order to achieve mastery of both. The mechanisms by which this preeminence is achieved lie at the heart of the hero cycle, in the initiation paradigm. This paradigm involves a series of actions and guide figures that prepare the hero for “departure into the land of trials.”³ The effects of this combination – liminal space and initiation paradigm – are twofold. Together, they serve not only to illustrate the trajectory of Harry’s hero journey, but also to provide insight about how Rowling enables readers to experience that journey for themselves. Rowling employs the basic tenets of space theory, as outlined by preeminent French philosopher Gaston Bachelard and applied by children’s literature specialist Jerry Griswold to great effect: she imbues the spaces between worlds and movement across them with characteristics that engender a strong sense of topophilia, a connection to and love of place. This connection, ultimately, has enchanted audiences the world over, allowing readers, through these repetitive initiations, to penetrate the depths of the Muggle and Wizarding worlds alongside their hero, becoming masters of both and heroes themselves.

The following chapters are organized in accordance with the initiation paradigm, ordered by guide figure from least sophisticated to most, and from earliest position in the *Potter* chronology to last. Because Rowling matches her guide figures with specific types of liminal travel, these chapters familiarize readers with the guide character and the traits that make him or her particularly well-suited to the post. Next, these chapters explore the transportation modes and thresholds to which that guide initiates Harry and his readers. Subsequently, they will examine the themes, abilities, and heroic progression represented by these liminal structures. Lastly, these chapters explore how space theory may be

³ Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 81.

applied to these in-between places and methods of crossing them to reveal how the spaces function in the series. A final chapter will detail the qualities and characteristics of the two worlds linked by these liminal spaces. Rowling's careful construction of the dichotomous worlds of home and away demonstrate the extent of Harry's heroic mastery and provide insight into the series' wild success.

Throughout Harry's journey, his ability to cross thresholds and move between worlds is facilitated by wizards and witches much older, more experienced, or more knowledgeable than himself. In almost all of these cases the guide, a character that Campbell terms the "Supernatural Aid,"⁴ and Propp names the "Donor,"⁵ is an authority figure that fills an ongoing mentoring role in Harry's life. The frequency with which Harry meets such figures indicates his hero status. According to Campbell, "For those [heroes] who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure (a little old crone or old man) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass."⁶ The transferal of the "amulets" of skills and knowledge from the mentor to Harry must occur in order for Harry to "pass the dragon forces," gaining access to the deeper realms of the magical world. As Campbell states, in addition to teaching, the guide figure also protects, guarding Harry against danger while he masters the knowledge or ability the guide bestows.

Harry's need for protection, as well as guidance and instruction, is a natural product of his young age. The wisdom and experience of Harry's guides, as well as their allegiance to the side of good, help him to cross thresholds – performing magic and

⁴ Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 57-59.

⁵ Propp, *Morphology*, and Hunter, "Folktale Structure."

⁶ Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 57.

overcoming obstacles – he would be unlikely to do if left to his own devices. Once Harry masters whatever skill the guide is intended to teach, the guide withdraws, returning later to teach him something new, retiring completely only when the thresholds Harry must pass are beyond their ken. This mentorship cycle continues into the final installment of the series, until Harry must kill Lord Voldemort on his own, without the protection of a guide. At the crucial moment Lord Voldemort attempts to use this fact to demoralize Harry, reminding him that he “crouched and sniveled behind the skirts of greater men and women.”⁷ In this instance, Voldemort assures himself of his own power and superiority by comparing his insistence upon solitary, independent, and self-guided learning with Harry’s continuing dependence upon his guides. Yet this distinction is what defines Harry as the hero and the Dark Lord himself as the villain. In this way, Rowling situates Harry as the underdog, in need of the direction and support of wiser, more experienced witches and wizards in order to succeed.

It is through Harry’s novice status that young readers are able to connect and identify with him. As the series follows Harry’s maturation in a bildungsroman style from childhood to adulthood, it also follows the equivalent of one fictional year in Harry’s life to the publication schedule of one or two years per book release. This realistic timeline allows audiences who identify with Harry as a heroic protagonist to grow up with him, accept his magical abilities and shortcomings as their own, and take part in his progression of learning.⁸ Accordingly, Maria Nikolajeva explains, “[Harry] has a number of helpers who come to the rescue when his own magical powers prove insufficient; as in

⁷ Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, 738.

⁸ It is possible that this experience may in fact be particular, even singular to the generation of an age with Harry during the decade-long *Potter* phenomenon.

fairy tales, the adult wizards appear stronger than the hero himself. Thus, although empowered, the child is not given full control.”⁹ Both Harry and the reader must trust their guides to compensate for any deficiencies, rescuing them from the dangers of ignorance by teaching them the fundamentals of Wizarding child- and adulthood. As Nikolajeva reasons, through this mentoring process Rowling empowers Harry and his audience to navigate the Wizarding world with increasing agency. In order to progress through the initiation and reach new depths of understanding, Harry and reader must rely upon the strength and control of their guides. Through these roles, Rowling provides Harry with three distinctive and influential prototypes. With each guide, the author supplies Harry and reader with a separate source of inclusion, magical knowledge, and social modeling.

To begin, Rubeus Hagrid exemplifies a practical, physical sensibility. The gentle giant teaches Harry and reader the physical fundamentals necessary to navigate between the Wizarding and Muggle worlds. Whether shuttling Harry across liminal thresholds via flying motorbike, or tapping the bricks to Diagon Alley, Hagrid introduces Harry to the basics of magical liminal mobility. Hagrid and the transportation modes to which he initiates Harry and readers become representative of feelings of comfort, safety, and physiological capability. They become the foundation upon which the ability to master successive modes and thresholds is based.

In turn, The Weasley family presents a source of cultural and relational awareness: including Harry in their family dynamic, and demonstrating for him typical Wizarding behaviors, traditions, and social cues. Weasley patriarch Arthur and matriarch Molly

⁹ Nikolajeva, “Romantic Hero,” 127.

introduce Harry to various transportation modes, initiating him to liminal passage by way of King's Cross Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$, floo powder, portkeys, and the visitor's entrance to the Ministry of Magic. Acting as surrogate parents to Harry, the Weasleys care for, guide, and teach him as if he is one of their own, equipping him with the skills to traverse liminal space in times of danger, or instances of "scariness."¹⁰ Their children, specifically those boys closest in age to Harry – Fred, George, and Ron – likewise initiate Harry to modes that fall within the realm of Wizarding childhood, mischief, and fun: rescuing Harry from the Dursleys in a flying Ford Anglia. Through these modes, Harry and readers are able to experience the feelings of adolescent companionship and "aliveness."¹¹

Finally, in Headmaster Albus Dumbledore, Rowling delivers an intellectual and philosophical leader capable of guiding Harry through deeper realms of magical and spiritual knowledge. With Dumbledore's tutelage, Harry is able to achieve true mastery of travel through liminal space. First by broomstick, then Apparition, and finally metacognition, Dumbledore prepares Harry for the day Harry will be on his own, divested of his guides and forced to go on alone. The modes to which Dumbledore, in his wisdom, trains Harry – knowing full well that Dumbledore himself will die before their work together is through – engender sensations that belie Harry's eventual transcendence of worlds and liminal boundaries, culminating in ultimate heroic enlightenment.

¹⁰ A term adopted by Griswold to describe the scary feelings that endear a space to young readers. Griswold, *Feeling Like a Kid*, 31.

¹¹ Another term Griswold uses to explain feelings that engender topophilia: in this case the fictional potential for inanimate objects to animate, or come alive. Griswold, *Feeling Like a Kid*, 103.

As the guide figures initiate Harry and the reader into increasingly complex components of the Wizarding world, they simultaneously introduce both to increasingly sophisticated means of traversing liminal space, making new levels of access into and out of that world available to them. These specializations are integral to Harry's development and understanding. During this process, the social position and attitudes of these guides shape Harry's own. It is no accident that each character occupies, in his or her way, socially liminal space. Their situation as both insiders and outsiders in the Wizarding community makes movement within and without more readily viable. Unlike other, more neutral or antagonistic characters, the supernatural guides lead the hero and the reader toward an easier movement between, and eventual transcendence of, the magical and non-magical worlds.

Rowling provides not only aides for Harry, but also thresholds across which they usher him and modes of transportation with which to navigate the space between and beyond. The most obvious methods of movement for Wizards (and conceivably Muggles) between the Muggle and Wizarding worlds are the different modes of transportation such as the Hogwarts Express, broomsticks, winged creatures, the Weasley's Ford Anglia, Hagrid's flying motorbike, and the process of Apparition.¹² Despite many fantastical elements, at their core, many of these modes are taken from the real world of Rowling's readers: travel by train, car, and motorcycle are all feasible and realistic to modern audiences. Even the more fantastical modes such as flying broomstick and Floo Powder, though potentially disturbing to Muggles, are made familiar to readers on a cultural and practical basis. After both Harry and reader are introduced to a mode, it is often

¹² The ability to appear and disappear at will.

mentioned and/or used several times, acclimating them to the concept and operation of that mode within the context of the Potterverse. This familiarization makes the fictional functionality of these modes seem not only conceivable, but reasonable, and even ordinary. As both Harry and his readers become habituated to these transportation modes, the fantastical becomes practical.

Often, in congruence with the hero cycle sequence, guide and transportation mode are presented early in each book. In each instance the movement across thresholds, through liminal space, is a movement from the non-magical Muggle world to the magical Wizarding one. This direction is consistent with the necessity, as described by Campbell and Propp, that the hero leave the world of safe mundanity and enter a world of trials. Likewise, the instigation of this travel, which Campbell terms “the call,” is nearly always a matter of one of the guides entering the Muggle world to retrieve Harry, bringing him to and across the thresholds of the Wizarding world. Of this type of sequence, Campbell explains:

Whether small or great, and no matter what the stage or grade of life, the call rings up the curtain, always, on a mystery of transfiguration – a rite, or moment, of spiritual passage, which, when complete, amounts to a dying and a birth. The familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand.”¹³

In Harry’s case, this pattern of outgrowing occurs repeatedly, and requires that he answer “the call,” learning new concepts and passing new thresholds with corresponding frequency. The thresholds he passes are nebulous and porous. The lack of definition

¹³ Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 42-3.

permits multiple elements of liminal space to fall under the definition of “threshold.” In this thesis all methods of movement between the magical and non-magical worlds – modes of transportation, and portals or entryways (the latter being most consistent with conventional notions of a threshold) – will be recognized as “thresholds.”

Once defined, the question of liminal space in the *Potter* series becomes one of function: what purpose do these spaces serve within the narrative, and what is their meaning? A potential answer to these questions may be found in Jerry Griswold’s charming monograph, *Feeling Like a Kid: Childhood and Children’s Literature*, in which the author distills the tenets of literary space theory into succinct applications for young readers. “Five themes recur in classic and popular works of Children’s Literature,” Griswold asserts. “These five themes or qualities in literature, looked at in a different way, can be seen as feelings or sensations prevalent in childhood.”¹⁴ The feelings and sensations Griswold describes are *meant* to be embodied – made manifest – through the use of fictional space and spacial relations. These ideas, simplified and reiterated in relation to their applicability to children’s literature, directly reflect those of Gaston Bachelard. The phenomenon of space theory, the philosopher argues, is a matter of reality projected on fiction as an association between physical and metaphysical spacial conception. “Space that has been seized upon by the imagination,” he explains, “cannot remain indifferent space subject to the measures and estimates of the surveyor. It has been lived in, not in its positivity, but with all the partiality of the imagination.”¹⁵ Both Griswold and Bachelard take pains to define the effects of imaginary space upon readers. They are in agreement that, once space is conceptualized by a reader, the reader then

¹⁴ Griswold, *Feeling Like a Kid*, 1-3.

¹⁵ Bachelard, *Poetics*, xxxii.

takes some small measure of ownership of that space. The “feelings” and “sensations” inspired by space serve to ascribe further meaning and significance to that space. The act of a reader ascribing sentimental meaning to imaginary fictional space conceivably results in an increased attachment to, or interest in, that space. By imbuing the worlds and the space between them with emotional significance, Rowling encourages readers to take imaginary possession of, and feel a certain affinity for, them all.

Through Harry’s movement across liminal space, the reader is able to connect with him, and experience the Muggle and Wizarding worlds alongside him. In this way, Harry’s hero journey becomes the reader’s own. As Harry moves from the ordinary and mundane to the new and fantastic, so too, do his readers. According to Campbell such movement between worlds entails certain danger. “The adventure is always and everywhere a passage beyond the veil of the known into the unknown; the powers that watch at the boundary are dangerous; to deal with them is risky; yet for anyone with competence and courage the danger fades.”¹⁶ This danger stimulates action indicative of heroic qualities, the first in a series of trials which the hero must overcome. In the case of the *Potter* stories, this series of trials not only lasts from the beginning of the saga to the end, but also repeats in cyclical fashion throughout each of the seven installments. With each installment, as Harry’s passage between worlds becomes increasingly skillful, frequent, and fluid, so too, does that of the reader. For both, the barriers between the two worlds begin to blur.

This separation, or lack thereof, between the Muggle and Wizarding worlds lies at the core of many of Rowling’s metaphorical themes. It also provides one of the most

¹⁶ Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 68.

compelling foundations for substantiation of the connection between Campbell's theories and the *Potter* stories. The dichotomy of home world versus *otherworld* creates the structural variance necessary for a hero to move from the known to the unknown. In the *Potter* stories, however, Rowling subverts or, one might argue, transcends this one-dimensional paradigm. Shira Wolosky advocates this theory, declaring:

Most books of magic take place in an entirely separate world, to which ordinary people – if there are any – are somehow transported... In *Harry Potter*, however, Rowling builds a magic world that not only exists alongside the ordinary one but also within it, so that the two constantly mingle with each other.¹⁷

As Wolosky suggests, the two worlds exist not separately, but alongside one another, in a state of intermingling, a *mélange* of the magical and mundane. Potter critics Nicholas Sheltroun, John Kornfeld, and Laurie Prothro concur with this assertion, and expand upon it in their work, each in turn exploring the coexistence and permeability of the Wizarding and Muggle worlds.

The implications of this concomitance for Harry and his readers are manifold. Harry's ability to journey from home to away, and back again becomes more frequent, the means varied, and the spaces familiar. As the barriers dissolve – thresholds are passed and liminal spaces are crossed – the unknown becomes known. Mastery and transcendence of both worlds and the spaces between them become conceivable and achievable. As this thesis will conclude, it is this imaginary mastery of worlds, of conceptual space, that ultimately endears the *Potter* stories to readers. As the Muggle and Wizarding worlds become known, and readers take ownership of those known, what

¹⁷ Wolosky, "Magic of Harry Potter," 3.

Bachelard would term “felicitous spaces,”¹⁸ they likewise develop affectionate, even loving and nostalgic feelings for those spaces. Like Bachelard, I “seek to determine the human value of the sorts of space that may be grasped, that may be defended against adverse forces, the space we [the readers of *Harry Potter* stories] love.”¹⁹

¹⁸ Bachelard, *Poetics*, xxxi.

¹⁹ Bachelard, *Poetics*, xxxi.

CHAPTER II

HAGRID

With the introduction of half-giant Rubeus Hagrid, Rowling provides Harry with one of his first and most influential paternal guides. Hagrid lives as gamekeeper in a hut on the fringe of the Hogwarts grounds. Expelled from Hogwarts, his wand snapped decades earlier for crimes he did not commit, Hagrid is capable of performing magic only with the remnants, secreted in a pink umbrella. Though by his own admission Hagrid is “not supposed ter do magic, strictly speakin,’”²⁰ he not only performs magic on a regular basis, but eventually becomes a Hogwarts professor, in charge of teaching the Care of Magical Creatures course. The results of Hagrid’s expulsion are compounded by the fact that he is, in fact, half giant. Of Hagrid’s physical stature, Rowling writes,

He was almost twice as tall as a normal man and at least five times as wide. He looked simply too big to be allowed, and so wild – long tangles of bushy black hair and beard hid most of his face, he had hands the size of trash can lids, and his feet in their leather boots were like baby dolphins. In his vast, muscular arms he was holding a bundle of blankets.”²¹

This striking depiction marks Hagrid as an outsider in the Muggle world, where his size and wildness seem “too big to be allowed” in comparison with a “normal man.” Rowling also implies in this passage, however, that despite the wizarding penchant for eccentricity, Hagrid’s dimensions, half-blood status, and association with other giants – such as half-brother Grawp – are beyond the norm in the Wizarding world as well.

²⁰ Rowling, *Sorcerer’s Stone*, 59.

²¹ Rowling, *Sorcerer’s Stone* 14.

At this moment of introduction, Rowling's physical description also firmly roots Hagrid in the tradition of supernatural guides. It is Hagrid who brings infant Harry out of the Wizarding world and into to the (comparative) safety of the Dursleys' home in the Muggle world. According to this tradition, Campbell explains, "The supernatural helper is masculine in form... some little fellow of the wood, some wizard, hermit, shepherd, or smith, who appears, to supply the amulets and advice that the hero will require."²² As gamekeeper, Hagrid is, literally, a "fellow of the wood." It is Hagrid's job to care for the various magical creatures that occupy the school and its environs. Subsequently, Hagrid makes his home in a hut on the edge of the Hogwarts grounds, adjacent to the forbidden forest. The solitary location of Hagrid's hut conjures images of a reclusive, hermit-like cabin. Literally, Hagrid inhabits the space between Hogwarts and the wild, which parallels his figurative genetic position between civilized wizards and un-tame giants. In physical description, occupation, and dwelling-place Rowling positions Hagrid in socially liminal space, making him recognizable as a fitting and ready aide for Harry.

Similarly, in Campbellian-cycle fashion, Hagrid's role in Harry's life begins and ends in a parallel construction. At crucial junctures it is Hagrid who physically conveys Harry via magical flying motorbike across liminal space, to the thresholds of the Wizarding and Muggle worlds. As Hagrid performs this function in the beginning – toting the infant Harry from the ruins of the Potter home in Godric's Hollow to the Dursleys' doorstep – so he does in the end: taking Harry on his final motorbike ride away from Number Four, Privet Drive. Though Hagrid only borrows the motorbike, Rowling admitted in an early

²² Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 59.

interview with Rosemary Goring that she derived the material inspiration for his character from the appearance of biker gang members. “Hagrid, the enormous Keeper of the Keys,” the author says, “[is] modelled on the Welsh chapter of Hells Angels who'd swoop down on the town and hog the bar, ‘huge mountains of leather and hair.’”²³ Her inspiration provides an unmistakable connection to the method by which Hagrid transports Harry to and from the Dursleys. However, perhaps in an example of Rowling’s trademark tongue-in-cheek humor, Hagrid’s rough exterior does not match his soft interior. Hagrid’s warmth implies his purpose. In both motorbike instances Hagrid’s actions are meant to bring Harry out of danger, to a new place of safety. In this way, Hagrid quite literally physically protects Harry, conveying him across the perilous liminal space between worlds to a secure location, and shielding him from harm in-transit.

Harry’s first entry into and final exit from the Muggle world are made on this motorbike. Not only does this movement provide a clear narrative symmetry, it also indicates the clandestine nature by which Harry is forced to move in and out of Wizarding society. The motorbike, a product of both Muggle technological invention and magical enhancement, is in clear violation of wizarding law. The unlawful nature of the bike is congruent with the fugitive status of its true owner, who is identified upon first introduction:

“Hagrid,” said Dumbledore [...] “And where did you get that motorcycle?”

“Borrowed it, Professor Dumbledore, sir,” said the giant, climbing carefully off the motorcycle as he spoke. “Young Sirius Black lent it to me.”²⁴

²³ Goring, “Harry’s Fame.”

²⁴ Rowling, *Sorcerer’s Stone*, 14.

In this way, Rowling slyly uses Hagrid to plant the connection between the motorbike and a character to whom Harry and readers will later be introduced to as a Wizarding criminal. The wrongfully accused Sirius Black spends the entirety of his presence within the *Potter* series as an outlaw. Together, Hagrid and Sirius share the experience of incarceration in Azkaban, the high-security wizard prison. As Harry's godfather, Sirius wills all his property – including the motorbike – to Harry upon his death, making Harry the involuntary owner of an illegal vehicle. The motorbike is a Muggle creation illegally tampered with by magic, and becomes a liminal transportation method of a transgressive sort, representative of Harry's initiation into a subculture of covert, illicit activity within the Wizarding world as a criminal outsider, living on the fringe. Harry's initiation by motorbike secures his status outside the bounds of law-abiding Wizarding society (and far beyond the Muggle one). Harry's status as 'The Chosen One' sets him apart from the rest of Wizard kind. Eventually because of this Harry, like Hagrid and Sirius, will become a true fugitive, running from both Voldemort and the corrupt Ministry of Magic. Like his mentors, Harry's ability to move between worlds is hindered by the necessity to do so in secret.

One might find the need for secrecy signified by the bike ironic, considering the less-than-stealthy volume, the "roar," of its magically enhanced exhaust. However even the improvements made to the bike can be interpreted as significant to Harry's heroic narrative. When Hagrid first crosses the liminal divide transporting baby Harry, the motorbike is impressive, but nothing like what it will become when they make their way back across that space. As they mount for the final journey, Hagrid tells Harry that "Arthur [Weasley]'s done a bit o' tinkerin' [...] It's got a few tricks up its handlebars

now.”²⁵ As well as the addition of a sidecar in which Harry, no longer an infant, must ride, Arthur soups up the bike with defensive and offensive magic, which may be triggered by a large, purple button. This button, when pushed during the frantic escape from Voldemort and his Death Eaters, causes “A wall, a solid brick wall, [to] erupt out of the exhaust pipe... a great net [to] burst from the bike’s exhaust... With an unmistakable bellowing roar, dragon fire [to] burst from the exhaust, white-hot and blue...”²⁶ These magical improvements to the motorbike mirror Harry’s own magical development. As an infant at the beginning of his hero cycle, traveling into the Muggle world, Harry is completely vulnerable and unskilled. As a trained, nearly adult wizard, Harry leaves the Muggle world with significantly more tools – offensive and defensive – in his arsenal. Like the upgraded motorbike, Harry is better equipped to defend against antagonistic forces on the return journey. His parallel trips between worlds with Hagrid on the motorbike follow the hero’s journey rites of passage – separation, initiation, acquisition of power, and return – with remarkable precision.

The motorbike transportation method, however, is only the first of several which Rowling uses to project Harry and his audience repeatedly and progressively deeper into the magical world. In her article “Wizardly Challenges to and Affirmations of the Initiation Paradigm in Harry Potter,” Deborah De Rosa argues that throughout this hero cycle Harry undergoes a repetitive initiation process. And, as the motorbike journey proves, Hagrid is often an integral part of this process. De Rosa claims “Hagrid continues to physically nurture Harry throughout the series.”²⁷ De Rosa’s choice of the term

²⁵ Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, 54.

²⁶ Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, 57.

²⁷ De Rosa, “Initiation Paradigm,” 167.

“nurture” here is significant. Not only does Hagrid transport and protect Harry, he also cares for Harry emotionally. Hagrid often performs the functions of a surrogate parent: baking Harry a birthday cake, buying him gifts for holidays,²⁸ keeping tabs on him so he does not get into too much trouble, and guiding him through Wizarding rites of passage such as buying a wand and his first wizard’s robes.

Hagrid takes up this parental mantle immediately upon his formal introduction into Harry’s life: as he breaks down the door of the “hut on a rock” to which the Dursleys believe they have escaped. In this moment, Hagrid introduces himself to Harry as, “The Keeper of the Keys,” a title which is also notably the title of the chapter.²⁹ The literal meaning of this name quickly becomes apparent as Hagrid reveals the doorway into the Wizarding world equivalent of London’s busiest street: Diagon Alley. Named with an example of the kind of wordplay for which Rowling has become famous, Diagon Alley, a twisting, turning cobblestone street lined with magical shops, is a yearly rite of passage for young wizards in need of Hogwarts school supplies. Because Harry has no parents to perform this duty, and his aunt and uncle would be disinclined (not to mention incapable), the task falls on Hagrid. Obviously well known and accepted by the crowd filling the Leaky Cauldron, Hagrid is able to pass through the first barrier to the portal – the crowd of magical beings – with ease. Hagrid is recognized and greeted by Tom the Bartender, asked about his business and whether he would like his regular drink. In this sense, Hagrid is able to model entrée into the Wizarding world as an insider.

²⁸ For example, Hagrid gives Harry Hedwig, Harry’s pet snowy owl, a flute, and a family photo album.

²⁹ The complete title Hagrid provides is: “Keeper of Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts.” Rowling, *Sorcerer’s Stone*, 48.

However, once past the welcoming interior of the Cauldron, Hagrid's role is reversed. In the forgotten, derelict courtyard beyond the bar, Hagrid's outsider status is reinforced. To activate the magic that reveals the hidden portal to the Wizarding world beyond the courtyard, a wizard or witch must use a wand to perform a complicated tapping pattern. The snapping of his wand significantly compromises, or at least complicates, Hagrid's performance of this magic. Nicholas Sheltroun claims possessing and operating a wand represents identity and membership within the magical community. Subsequently, he argues that the ability of a wizard or witch to use a wand to pass through the brick portal is equivalent to the possession of a "passport to qualified status in wizarding society."³⁰ In short, knowledge of the portal's existence, possession of a wand with which to activate the portal, and the ability to perform the magic that will actually open it, are all necessary for inclusion in Wizarding society. These assertions corroborate the theory that this space between worlds, the Leaky Cauldron and brick wall beyond, function as a means of initiation. In this instance, the initiate reflects the mentor, simultaneously separating and including him in the inner depths of Wizarding society in a dichotomous pattern. Dustin Kidd clarifies this cultural distinction: "Those who are at the fringes of society, by virtue of economic disadvantages, cultural differences, or moral displacement, are least likely to follow the norms of the society. Their behaviors are sanctioned against when they diverge from the social mainstream—they are at or beyond the boundaries of the social group."³¹ By Kidd's standards Harry's initiation to Diagon Alley through the Leaky Cauldron portal is compromised by Hagrid's combination of "cultural" half-blood, and "morally displaced" wand-snapped status. Hagrid's relegation to the "fringe" or "boundaries" of

³⁰ Sheltroun, "Harry Potter's World," 49-51.

³¹ Kidd, "Pop Culture," 70.

wizarding society ultimately limits his ability to initiate Harry into the inner sanctum of that world.

Rowling illustrates Hagrid's limitations as a guide on several occasions. Often Hagrid brings Harry to the threshold of one world or the other, but no further, leaving Harry to find another guide to take him across, or fend for himself. For example, Hagrid provides Harry with an Hogwarts Express ticket, but fails to include the necessary instructions as to how to actually *reach* the train, stationed at Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$. As an uninitiated young wizard on his first trip to King's Cross, Harry has no idea how to find the correct platform, which is hidden beyond the invisible barrier between platforms nine and ten. Stranded and at a loss, Harry muses that, "Hagrid must have forgotten to tell him something you had to do, like tapping the third brick on the left to get into Diagon Alley."³² Thus, Harry recognizes that his giant friend is not infallible. Hagrid's ability to help Harry complete his hero's journey does have limitations which will have to be compensated for either by Harry himself, or by another, more capable and sophisticated guide.

Similarly, Hagrid uses the motorbike to bring baby Harry to Privet Drive, but it is Professor Dumbledore who leaves Harry with note and basket on the Dursleys' doorstep. On the return trip Hagrid loses control of the bike, and the pair must rely on Harry's quick spellwork to fend off Voldemort and his Death eaters in order to get to safety. Once again, the motorbike trip with Hagrid illustrates how Harry's hero narrative has come full circle. Rowling acknowledges the parallel journeys and Harry's corresponding growth through Hagrid's dialogue as they prepare to leave Privet Drive, as Hagrid says, "You're

³² Rowling, *Sorcerer's Stone*, 91.

with me, Harry. That all righ’? We’ll be on the bike... An’ the last time yeh was on it, Harry, I could fit yeh in one hand!”³³ With these words Hagrid indicates that once again, he and Harry will make the passage together, and that they will do so on the motorbike. Additionally, Hagrid acknowledges that physically, Harry has grown from an infant who could be carried “in one hand” to an adult who has a right to choose whether or not he wants to do so. With this speech, Hagrid emphasizes Harry’s development from powerless dependent to qualified and capable adult. The evolution illustrated by Hagrid’s words is enacted by Hagrid’s limitations. When Harry’s passage by motorbike moves beyond Hagrid’s scope it is Dumbledore who takes over in the beginning – actually bringing Harry to the (literal) threshold – and Harry who must do so in the end.

As the first, and least formally-trained, aide figure, Hagrid’s assistance is of a primarily material nature. Hagrid’s physicality and profession are aligned with this specific type of liminal travel, to which he initiates Harry. Often, the movement is literal, with Hagrid himself physically transferring Harry across the necessary space. In several of these instances, Hagrid actually carries Harry in his arms. Most notably, it is in Hagrid’s arms that baby Harry is removed from the ruins of his family home in Godric’s Hollow after Voldemort’s attack. And it is again in Hagrid’s arms that the adult Harry – presumed dead – is carried out of the Forbidden Forest after once again surviving Voldemort’s killing curse. The feelings of safety and security Hagrid’s arms inspire are reinforced by the spaces he occupies. The small, spare, fire-lit Hut-on-the-rock in which Harry and reader meet Hagrid is echoed by Hagrid’s own cozy gamekeeper’s hut. The feelings that Hagrid arouses in these moments – as he physically transfers or cares for

³³ Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, 4.

Harry, or his presence fills a small space – exemplify Griswold’s ideas on the concept of spacial “snugness.” “Snugness,” Griswold explains, “seems a pleasurable feeling especially sought in childhood... the snug place is a refuge and haven for associated with sensations of comfort and security, with ease and well-being.”³⁴ Hagrid’s primary purpose, his features, dwelling-place, and physicality, all support this idea. In Hagrid these elements combine to generate feelings of comfort, safety, refuge, and ease for Harry and young readers. As they begin their journey, learning to cross liminal space within the Potterverse for the first time, Hagrid provides a reassuring presence, stimulating feelings of “security” and “well-being.” These feelings, combined with a knowledge of the basics of liminal space travel, prepare Harry and reader for new guides to take over when Hagrid leaves them at the threshold.

³⁴ Griswold, *Feeling Like a Kid*, 5-6.

CHAPTER III

THE WEASLEYS

In the case of Platform 9¾, the wizards and witches that take over for Hagrid, helping Harry to move beyond the threshold barrier, happen to be the members of the Weasley family. The lively, redheaded Weasleys are what is known in the Wizarding world as “pure-bloods.”³⁵ Upon first meeting them, even naïve Harry is able to recognize that “The Weasleys were clearly one of those old wizarding families.”³⁶ As a result of their magical lineage the seven Weasley children have been raised fully immersed in magical culture: enjoying the kind of practical, everyday experience of wizardry that Harry’s Muggle upbringing did not afford him. Equivalent in age to Harry, youngest Weasley son Ron is a natural friend and foil. Whenever Harry is at a cultural loss Ron is able to step in with a general knowledge of everyday objects like wizard’s chess, famous magical musicians, and quidditch trivia. It is Ron, along with his twin brothers Fred and George, who initiate Harry to the liminal transportation modes of the Hogwarts Express and Ford Anglia. In both cases, they move Harry away from the Muggle world, of which Ron, Fred, and George have no working knowledge, and into the Wizarding world, where they are in their element. In these instances the Weasley boys share small but important things with Harry, acclimating him to cultural norms, initiating Harry into the satisfying realm of Wizarding childhood that Harry has missed out on during his exile with the Dursleys. The twins, like Ron, initiate Harry into the magical world of teenage mischief and rebellion.

³⁵ A “pureblood” wizard is defined by a magical lineage on both the maternal and paternal sides, as opposed to a “half-blood,” with one magical and one non-magical parent, or a “mudblood,” a witch or wizard born of two Muggle parents.

³⁶ Rowling. *Sorcerer’s Stone*, 99.

This initiation begins with a powder blue Ford Anglia. The vehicle, a product of Muggle-obsessed Arthur Weasley's tinkering, is in strict violation of wizarding law. The illegality of the car, however, does not stop his sons Fred, George, and Ron from driving it to Number Four Privet Drive in order to stage a nighttime rescue of Harry from the Dursleys in *Chamber of Secrets*. The car is used once again immediately after the daring escape, when Ron and Harry find themselves unable to pass through the barrier at Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ and decide (however misguidedly) that the Anglia is their best way to reach Hogwarts. Upon arrival the Anglia lands amidst, and is subsequently beaten up by, the School's Whomping Willow tree. Upon release, the vehicle drives away of its own volition, into the Forbidden Forest. In both instances, Molly and Arthur are naturally displeased to discover their sons' public use of their prohibited automobile. Arthur's unenthusiastic discipline quickly gives way to curiosity and he inquires about the car's performance. Molly yells at Ron through a Howler,³⁷ "You could have died, you could have been seen!"³⁸ Both Harry and Ron are punished upon arrival at Hogwarts for their illicit entrance. In both cases, the Ford Anglia moves out of a certain sense of need and urgency to get Harry and company away from the Muggle world and into the Wizarding one, from the Dursleys to the Weasleys, and from London to Hogwarts. In both cases, there is a tangible element of rebelliousness and fun.

As Harry and Ron fly the Anglia to Hogwarts, following the school train, both Harry and reader feel a profound sense of contentment. Harry decides that this method is "Surely the only way to travel – past swirls and turrets of snowy cloud, in a car fully of

³⁷ A magical voice recording delivered via the animated mouth of a crimson envelope. Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets*, 65-85.

³⁸ Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets*, 30.

hot, bright sunlight, with a fat pack of toffees in the glove compartment.”³⁹ The happy and companionable feelings that this crossing of liminal space produces corroborate Jerry Griswold’s theory of “Aliveness.”⁴⁰ Not long after this blissful moment, the Anglia shows signs of sentience, driving off of its own accord into the Forbidden Forest. This phenomenon – of non-human creatures and objects acting in a distinctly human-like manner – is, Griswold demonstrates, yet another means of endearing space to children. “Call it personification if you like, but a thing (albeit moving) is animal-like, alive, conscious, and companionable.”⁴¹ Certainly, the companionability evoked by the presence of Fred, George, and Ron during the flights between the Muggle and Wizarding worlds are compounded by the stolid presence of the trustworthy vehicle. And later, the Anglia does indeed appear to fully animate itself, returning to rescue Harry and Ron in the Forbidden Forest. The car, like the Weasley brothers, conveys the sense that whenever Harry and his readers are at a loss, in a sticky situation beyond their solitary capabilities, there are friends – human or no – ready to come to their aid.

The Weasley children initiate Harry into the world of adolescent fun and friendship, which in the Weasleys’ case often equates to (relatively) harmless rule-breaking. The initiation in each instance is not between and mentor and student, but instead between a child raised in the Wizarding world and a child raised in the Muggle world. This construction is not surprising, as Rowling presents Fred and George as the models for rule-breaking at Hogwarts School. By the Weasleys’ example, rule-breaking behavior becomes normalized, and the reader often does not object when, as the series

³⁹ Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets*, 71.

⁴⁰ Griswold, *Feeling Like a Kid*, 103.

⁴¹ Griswold, *Feeling Like a Kid*, 114.

progresses, Harry goes on to perform a significant share of rule-breaking himself, though in most cases for causes more noble than comedic.

A similar normalizing process occurs by way of the second transportation medium through which the Weasley boys initiate Harry to the ways of Wizarding adolescence: the Hogwarts Express. Though the initiation process truly begins on the Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$, an additional process for new Hogwarts students occurs on the train itself. The Hogwarts Express is a steam engine, the sole purpose of which is to convey students between Kings Cross Station and Hogwarts School for the school terms and holidays. According to Margaret Oakes, “The Hogwarts Express seems to operate just like an ordinary Muggle train, aside from the fact that it has a platform invisible to most of the travelers at London’s King’s Cross station.”⁴² If the train is, in fact, an enchanted Muggle-made object, then like the car, it too would violate Wizarding law. Regardless, the train provides the most literal form of geographical movement between worlds. The initiation is unique in that it does not involve an older and wiser mentor figure formally initiating the younger and less experienced student; instead, the students initiate one another. Though after the train ride a more official ceremony sorts students into their Houses, it is interesting to note that, as with Harry, Ron, and Hermione, the students have already begun to form friendships, which eventually become House alliances, on their own. For many Muggle-born students, the first ride on the Hogwarts Express is their first point of immersion into Wizarding student culture: the students who have lived in the Wizarding world from birth, such as Ron, initiate those who have not, like Harry, into childlike concerns such as chocolate frog cards, Quidditch teams and players, and rumors

⁴² Oakes, “Hi-Tech, Low-Tech,” 122.

about spellwork. Harry in turn tells Ron about his life in the Muggle world with the Dursleys. At this moment, while “Both boys marvel at the technical novelty of the other’s world,”⁴³ they simultaneously acknowledge the metaphorical liminal space between their childhood environments as they travel across the corresponding physical liminal space. Because this movement happens to be from Muggle world to the Wizarding one, the cozy compartments aboard the Hogwarts Express provide not only a means of moving to Hogwarts school and back again, but also an informal point of initiation into the secret world of Wizarding children.

As their children initiate Harry into what it means to be a rebellious teenaged wizarding, parents Molly and Arthur Weasley give Harry a sense of what it means to be part of a Wizard family. Acting in many ways as surrogate parents to Harry, Molly and Arthur welcome him to stay at their home numerous times for the Christmas and summer holidays.⁴⁴ Like Hagrid, Molly and Arthur protect and nurture Harry in the Campbellian sense consistent with the aide or guide figure. According to Campbell, “The helpful crone and fairy godmother is a familiar feature of European fairy lore.”⁴⁵ Molly, though not a crone, certainly serves as a kind of godmother to Harry. Her character is symbolic of nurturing motherhood, and is the most patent manifestation of this prototype within the *Potter* series. The quintessential homemaker, “Molly Weasley... keeps her family and house in order through cute and funny magical means – making the dishes wash themselves in the sink and using enchanted clocks to keep track of her children’s

⁴³ Sheltroun, “Harry Potter’s World,” 57.

⁴⁴ For the remainder of the summer after his rescue in *COS*, before the Quidditch World Cup in *GOF*, over the Christmas holiday in *HBP*, and finally as Harry waits for his ‘trace’ to lift in *DH*.

⁴⁵ Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 59.

schedules and her husband's whereabouts."⁴⁶ Molly goes to great lengths to include Harry in this family dynamic, knitting for him a "Weasley [Family] Sweater,"⁴⁷ and even insisting that Harry is "as good as" a son.⁴⁸ On Harry's seventeenth birthday she and Arthur give Harry with a "traditional" wizard's watch to celebrate his coming-of-age.⁴⁹

It is also Molly who introduces Harry to the trick of the Platform 9 ¾ barrier. This is perhaps one of the most emblematic liminal portals: a clear-cut example of a permeable barrier between the Muggle and Wizarding worlds. Not only is the platform literally a seminal initiatory boundary a young wizard will first cross upon coming-of-school-age at eleven, it is also located in the busiest Muggle city in the stories. On the interactive companion site to the series, released in March of 2012 and dubbed *Pottermore* – so named for the bonus *Potter* material that did not make it into the series itself – Rowling elaborates,

King's Cross, which is one of London's main railway stations, has a very personal significance for me, because my parents met on a train to Scotland which departed from King's Cross station. For this reason, and because it has such an evocative and symbolic name... I never knew the slightest indecision about the location of the portal that would take Harry to Hogwarts, or the means of transport that would take him there.⁵⁰

The author herself visualizes the platform as a "portal," and situates it in a location laden with personal symbolism and power. These choices are, once again, consistent with the

⁴⁶ Kornfeld & Protho, "Home and Family," 190.

⁴⁷ Rowling, *Sorcerer's Stone*, 202.

⁴⁸ Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix*, 124.

⁴⁹ The watch in fact first belonged to Molly's brother Fabian, increasing its value in this sense as a family heirloom. Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, 114.

⁵⁰ Rowling, "King's Cross Station" *Pottermore*.

criteria for hero's threshold.

Because Hagrid unwittingly leaves this hero helpless, without the knowledge necessary to navigate that threshold, Harry is forced to reveal his ignorance and ask a stranger for assistance. In this instance, it is Molly Weasley who provides it. "Not to worry," she says, in answer to Harry's timid query. "All you have to do is walk straight at the barrier between platforms nine and ten. Don't stop and don't be scared or you'll crash into it, that's very important. Best do it at a bit of a run if you're nervous."⁵¹ Harry's first solo trip from one world to the next takes a significant amount of coaching from Mrs. Weasley. Harry watches three of her elder sons cross the barrier, and then repeats her advice in his mind as he makes his own attempt. Through this process, Mrs. Weasley empowers Harry to enter the Wizarding world of his own accord; his ability to do so a sign that he is indeed of age, and ready to begin attending the magical school. In contrast, young Ginny Weasley must hold her mother's hand in order to enter the Wizarding portion of the station. While Ginny must wait another year, Harry and Ron have proven readiness to proceed with their magical training, and Molly is the one to help them do so.

While it may be considered presumptuous to assign certain Wizarding rites of passage – such as entrance to Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ – to specific gender roles, it is not inappropriate in Harry's case to acknowledge that the two means of movement beyond magical thresholds to which Mrs. Weasley introduces Harry are particularly motherly in form. As she shuttles her children to the station on their first day of school, guiding them across the barrier, so too, does Mrs. Weasley show them how to travel via "floo powder." A

⁵¹ Rowling, *Sorcerer's Stone*, 93.

glittering black dust kept in a flowerpot on the kitchen mantelpiece,⁵² floo powder enables the wielder to travel to any fireplace connected to the Ministry-approved Floo Network. The connections of this transportation mode to notions of hearth and home are undeniable, as are the advantages to the busy mother of a large family. As Margaret Oakes argues, floo powder is the Wizarding equivalent of a Muggle minivan. “The solutions here,” she explains, “fit the situations: Floo powder, the fireplace-to-fireplace mode, is quick, direct, and well suited to family groups.... We turn a key in a car; they throw green powder into a fireplace and shout out their destination (a much faster but somewhat less comfortable mode of transportation).”⁵³ It is fitting then, that Mrs. Weasley uses this mode to run family errands, travelling from the Burrow to Diagon Alley in order to buy her children and Harry school supplies. In like fashion to her direction at the platform, Molly does not actually physically transport Harry across the hearth threshold, but instead stands back and provides verbal guidance, allowing Harry to perform the actions necessary for the movement on his own. This point is vital, because it shows Molly’s consistency in both cases of allowing Harry and her children to cross the necessary thresholds independently as a process of learning and making their own mistakes. And Harry does indeed make a mistake when, in his haste, his shout into the fireplace flue is muffled, and he lands himself in the seedy Knockturn Alley instead of the safer destination of Diagon Alley. Not only does Molly teach Harry to cross liminal space thresholds, she does so in a manner that ensures self-sufficiency. Harry shows evidence of this autonomy when he learns that the Floo Network not only moves bodies but also permits communication with others via the glowing embers in the fireplace grate.

⁵² Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets*, 47-48.

⁵³ Oakes, “Hi-Tech, Low-Tech,” 120-122.

The evolution of Harry's skill operating the Floo Network indicates his increasing mastery of movement beyond thresholds and between worlds.

As Molly performs the many functions of a mother, and as such helps Harry cross liminal space, so too, does Arthur perform many functions of a father. Acting as guardian and guide in the fourth volume, *Goblet of Fire*, Arthur includes Harry on a family trip to the Quidditch World Cup, and in the next volume, *Order of the Phoenix*, he conveys Harry to a trial for underage sorcery at the Ministry of Magic.⁵⁴ In both instances of travel between Wizarding and Muggle worlds, Arthur subsequently introduces Harry to new portals between the magical and non-magical realms. Arthur's significance in regard to the connection between magical and Muggle worlds, however, extends beyond initiation into the methods of passage between them. Indeed, Arthur's hobby and profession are rife with inherent contrariness that directly links him simultaneously to both the inner echelon of the Ministry of Magic and the fringes of Muggle society. In fact, as Ron explains to Harry, his father "works in the most boring department [of the Ministry]... [in] the Misuse of Muggle Artifacts Office."⁵⁵ In spite of his job, or more likely because of it, Arthur Weasley cherishes an overwhelming fascination with Muggle technology and customs that both Harry and readers often find comical. Fred tells Harry that his father is "crazy about everything to do with Muggles; our shed's full of Muggle stuff. He takes it apart, puts spells on it, and puts it back together again. If he raided our house he'd have to put himself under arrest."⁵⁶ Though Fred's terms bring to mind visions of a

⁵⁴ Where, as he is not a true blood-relation to Harry, Arthur is forced to wait outside the courtroom, indicating that his paternal position only reaches so far, according to wizard law. Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix*, 121-156.

⁵⁵ Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets*, 30.

⁵⁶ Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets*, 31.

doddering amateur tinkerer – puttering around his shed, toying with the remnants of Muggle electronics piecemeal – what Arthur is doing is in fact *illegal*. His cherished pastime must be performed clandestinely, because it literally brings together elements of the Muggle and Wizarding worlds in a way that is considered undesirable and potentially dangerous. Arthur’s enchantment with the Muggle world is necessary, Nicholas Sheltroun argues, to the reader’s conceptual construction and understanding of the two dichotomous worlds. “Rowling addresses the issue of familiarity with technology,” Sheltroun explains, “in how she depicts the Wizarding community’s reaction to Muggle technologies. This is best seen through the Weasley family’s response to technology.”⁵⁷ As patriarch of the Weasley family, Arthur’s affinity for Muggle technology and culture is representative of the position of the family as a whole in regard to Muggles, and touches upon one of the central themes of the series. Unlike Voldemort and his followers, “You’d never know the Weasleys were pure-bloods, the way they behave.”⁵⁸ Arthur and the Weasleys do not concern themselves with ethnic purity and corresponding normative behaviors. On the contrary, they are often scorned for their ready acceptance of Mudbloods like Hermione Granger, and half-breeds like Remus Lupin and Rubeus Hagrid. Wizards such as Lucius Malfoy fear the co-mingling of the magical and non-magical worlds that wizards such as “Muggle-loving fool Arthur Weasley” encourage.⁵⁹ Because of Arthur’s attitude of acceptance and inclusion, Harry is exposed to an environment conducive to the blending of Wizarding and Muggle culture. In this way, the

⁵⁷ Sheltroun, “Harry Potter’s World,” 55.

⁵⁸ Draco Malfoy. Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets*. 222.

⁵⁹ Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets*, 51.

Weasleys become ideal guides for Harry: their position in socially liminal space facilitates their movement across physically liminal space.

It is fitting then, that if Molly introduces Harry to means of liminal travel for familial and educational purposes, Arthur introduces him to the same for purposes related to government and society. When Britain hosts the Quidditch World Cup, Arthur is able to procure tickets via work connections, and invites both Harry and Hermione to join him and his children for the event. The arrangement of a Wizarding affair of such magnitude, Arthur explains to Harry, is significantly complex:

It's been a massive organizational problem... The trouble is, about a hundred thousand wizards turn up at the World Cup, and of course, we just haven't got a magical site big enough to accommodate them all. There are places Muggles can't penetrate, but imagine trying to pack a hundred thousand wizards into Diagon Alley or platform nine and three-quarters. So we had to find a nice deserted moor, and set up as many anti-Muggle precautions as possible. The whole Ministry's been working on it for months.⁶⁰

In this speech, Mr. Weasley outlines the many logistical complications associated with moving wizards and witches between magical and non-magical spaces. There are no Wizarding venues large enough to hold the volume of magical folk, and so that volume must spill over into the non-magical realm. This spillage is one of the first examples of the Wizarding encroachment upon the Muggle world, a phenomenon that persists, growing more frequent and more dangerous as the Potter series progresses, and exemplifies the permeability of the boundaries between those worlds. In addition, Arthur

⁶⁰ Rowling, *Goblet of Fire*, 69.

also conveniently explains why the portals and modes of transportation Harry has learned up to that point are not sufficient for the task at hand. In short, Arthur provides both Harry and readers reason for and motivation to learn new methods of liminal movement.

Travelling to the Quidditch match, that movement is achieved by means of a magical object called a portkey. Arthur leads his motley crew to the crown of Stoatshead Hill to “catch” the portkey – a “manky old boot”⁶¹ – that will transport them to the desired location. As they make the trek Arthur explains to Harry that portkeys are “objects that are used to transport wizards from one spot to another at a prearranged time... they can be anything...unobtrusive things, obviously, so Muggles don’t go picking them up and playing with them...stuff they’ll just think is litter...”⁶² The inexhaustible supply and mobility of portkeys make them a convenient option for wizards and, apparently, an unintentional one for Muggles. With the portkey, Rowling introduces the potential for concurrent Muggle movement across thresholds. Mr. Weasley acknowledges that though Wizards take preventative measures, there is a possibility that an undiscerning Muggle may happen across one. Rowling does not clarify at this point whether the magic is such that the Muggle, if touching the right object at the right time, may be accidentally transported by the key, or whether the danger is just that the unsuspecting person might misplace the object. The initiation here is more complex: not only must a wizard or witch know about the general existence of portkeys, and understand how they operate, he or she must also know exactly what form the particular portkey they plan to use will take, and at what time(s) it may be activated. This increased

⁶¹ Rowling, *Goblet of Fire*, 71.

⁶² Rowling, *Goblet of Fire*, 70.

level of sophistication parallels Harry's increasing ability to move and operate within the Wizarding community.

Arthur facilitates this expansion – Harry's growth in mobility – through the interior strata of his new world, with a trip to the Ministry of Magic. Summoned for the crime of misusing underage sorcery, Harry must appear in wizard court, standing trial before the full Wizenagamot.⁶³ As an ongoing paternal presence, and an employee at the Ministry, Arthur is a natural candidate to help Harry make his way to the Ministry offices hidden, like Diagon Alley, in the heart of London. Carol Nemeroff suggests that these Wizarding portals secreted in the nooks and crannies of Muggle life make Harry's magical and non-magical worlds more tangible for readers, stating "It is not surprising that many of us would prefer to live in Harry's world, or at least take comfort in imagining that it exists just around a corner."⁶⁴ The defunct telephone box that serves as the Ministry's visitor's entrance, with its broken glass and inoperable handset, is exactly the sort of prospect Nemeroff describes. The red boxes are iconic, known for being ubiquitous around the city, and the perfect item to make every reader stop, and wonder if the next one is *the* one that – if they are able to recognize it, push the correct sequence of buttons, and receive their visitor's pass – will transport them beyond the threshold of the Muggle world and lower them into the Ministry of Magic.

According to Campbell, this descent from London pavement to Ministry atrium is yet another hallmark step of the hero's journey. Beyond the threshold the hero enters an unfamiliar, often dark, and potentially dangerous place. "The idea that the passage of the magical threshold is a transit into a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the worldwide

⁶³ The wizarding equivalent of a supreme court, or ruling body.

⁶⁴ Nemeroff, "The Magical World," 135.

womb image of the belly of the whale. The hero, instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold is swallowed into the unknown.”⁶⁵ Harry’s Ministry journey follows these criteria in several aspects. To begin, the movement is downward, similar in movement from theoretical throat to esophagus. Because the Ministry is underground it is void of natural light and uses magic to mimic the weather outside. Many of the halls are lined with sleek black stone,⁶⁶ particularly those of the Department of Mysteries and the courtroom to which Harry is led for his trial, where he faces the very real danger of being found guilty for breaking wizarding law. In this instance, Harry has Arthur to direct him through the impenetrable maze of hallways and elevators.

Later, in *The Order of the Phoenix*, Harry returns to the Ministry of his own accord, applying the knowledge and power his guide has bestowed and learning to pass the threshold of his own volition. As with the floo powder, Harry begins to operate independently of his guides. Instead, Harry himself becomes the guide, leading his friends as they break into the Ministry on two separate occasions. On the first occasion, Harry mimics the steps that Arthur taught him, cramming himself and his friends through the visitor’s telephone booth. However, in this episode the group moves into the most secret of Ministry inner sanctums, the Department of Mysteries. Named for its reputation as an ultra-high security clearance division, the Department of Mysteries is alleged to be accessible only to top-security clearance officials and Unspeakables. What goes on in the department is a matter of speculation. However, Professor Dumbledore reveals to Harry that “There is a room in the Department of Mysteries, that is kept locked at all times. It contains a force that is at once more wonderful and more terrible than death, than human

⁶⁵ Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 74.

⁶⁶ Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix*, 121-151.

intelligence, than forces of nature. It is also, perhaps, the most mysterious of the many subjects for study that reside there.”⁶⁷ Harry and his friends actually enter several of the Department’s most secret rooms, such as the storied Hall of Prophecy. By breaching these rooms, which most qualified adult wizards will never be allowed to enter, Harry proves that he is in the process of achieving a mastery of the Wizarding world that few will ever reach. Rowling reinforces this concept in the final volume, *Deathly Hallows*, when Harry, Ron, and Hermione succeed in discovering and passing through the regular Ministry employees’ entrance. Impersonating various Ministry officials by means of the Polyjuice Potion, the trio manages to steal a Horcrux, crucial to defeating Voldemort, from under the nose of several Death eaters, dementors, and the Senior Undersecretary to the Minister of Magic, Dolores Umbridge.

These Ministry moments create a special atmosphere of what Jerry Griswold terms “Scariness.”⁶⁸ In each of the aforementioned scenes, Harry enters the Ministry because he or someone he cares about is in danger. These high-stakes situations – whether a trial, an attempted rescue, or a daring theft – become associated with heightened feelings of apprehension, fear, and nervous excitement. Griswold explains that, without scariness and these feelings associated with it, the heroic stakes cannot be raised. “Whether threatening or pleasurable, scariness confirms the experience of *living*.... Being frightened is stimulating and thrilling because it wakes up a more vivid self in response.”⁶⁹ In Harry’s case, the “more vivid self” is one that is willing to put him in life-threatening situations in order to save a life or continue a quest. The reader

⁶⁷ Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix*, 843.

⁶⁸ Griswold, *Feeling Like a Kid*, 31.

⁶⁹ Griswold, *Feeling Like a Kid*, 49.

associates crossings of liminal space with feelings of scariness, and in turn with the possibility of heroic action.

CHAPTER IV

DUMBLEDORE

Headmaster of Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry, Albus Dumbledore is characteristic of what Campbell describes and readers of children's fantasy literature have come to expect from a supernatural guide in the *Potter* series. These expectations are satisfied in large part by the way Rowling combines cultural liminality, magical ability, and archetypal ideal. Recognition is certainly also owed in large part to the Headmaster's similarity to predecessors Campbell cites in his text, such as J.R.R. Tolkien's Gandalf the Grey and Merlin from the Arthurian cycle. Lisa Hopkins elaborates upon these connections, declaring that, "First, there are the obvious similarities between Merlin and Dumbledore (who is indeed a member of the Order of Merlin). Both are much older and wiser mentor figures who guide the young hero toward fulfilling his potential; both can perform formidable magic; and Dumbledore, like Merlin, is involved in arranging the young hero's fosterage."⁷⁰ Not only does Dumbledore physically resemble Merlin (and Gandalf), with pointed hat, billowing robes, long white beard, and advancing, even preternatural age, he is also the person who arranges for Harry's fosterage and years of safety at the Dursleys' house. He organizes Harry's first crossing of the threshold between worlds, performing the magic that protects Harry as long as he remains welcome under his aunt and uncle's roof, and whose letter is the catalyst for Harry's first departure from that (relatively) safe space.

As Hopkins points out, like his literary predecessors Dumbledore possesses magical abilities so prodigious they are unrivaled in either world. Dumbledore's preeminence in

⁷⁰ Hopkins, "Narratives of Destiny," 63.

the wizarding community is such that he is elected Chief Warlock on the Wizengamot and Headmaster of Hogwarts School, could be Minister of Magic had he any desire,⁷¹ and is also the only person in the world that “Lord Voldemort was ever afraid of.”⁷²

Dumbledore is among the outstanding witches and wizards who appear on chocolate frog cards. His own card reads: “Considered by many to be the greatest wizard of modern times, Dumbledore is particularly famous for his defeat of the Dark Wizard Grindelwald in 1945, for the discovery of the twelve uses of Dragon’s blood, and his work on alchemy with his partner, Nicholas Flamel...”⁷³ It is certainly no coincidence that Rowling positions the “greatest wizard of modern times” as Harry’s most influential mentor. Dumbledore’s magical supremacy makes him the ideal guide for Harry, capable of initiating Harry into the most sophisticated realms of magic.

Dumbledore’s unrivaled combination of superior Wizarding powers and position as Head of Hogwarts School position him not only as an influential grandfatherly figure to Harry, but also as a figurehead of the protagonistic forces for good. As the “spiritual centre”⁷⁴ of Hogwarts, Dumbledore models ongoing public support of minority and oppressed races such as house elves, giants, goblins, centaurs, Muggle-borns, and half-bloods. He learns Mermish, and agrees to pay house-elves wages. Sarah Quartey suggests that, as a character, Dumbledore exemplifies “social justice leadership.”⁷⁵ She bases this idea on several moments in the series when Dumbledore acts as an example to Harry and all Hogwarts students, urging them to overcome differences, work together for

⁷¹ Rowling, *Sorcerer’s Stone*, 34-5.

⁷² Rowling, *Sorcerer’s Stone*, 56.

⁷³ Rowling, *Sorcerer’s Stone*, 92.

⁷⁴ Hennequin, “Legends of Saints,” 69.

⁷⁵ The operational theoretical definition of which Quartey uses to support her claims taken from the work of Dr. George Theoharis. Quartey, “Social Justice.”

acceptance and peace, and focus on personal choices.

“Essentially,” Quartey states, “Dumbledore is concerned with the individual. The metaphorical issues of race, class, ability, and achievement that J.K. Rowling constructs in the world of Harry Potter carry little or no importance for Dumbledore. In this way, Dumbledore expresses to youth and adults alike that what society perceives of them is of no matter as long as they are fighting for or doing what is right and good.”⁷⁶ This is not to say that Dumbledore is unconcerned with such matters, simply that he believes they may be transcended by virtue of good choices. In addition to his formal roles in Wizarding education and government, the headmaster’s position as founder of the Order of the Phoenix⁷⁷ and namesake of Dumbledore’s army of students opposing Dolores Umbridge situates him as a social leader. Rowling repeatedly places Dumbledore in positions where he is able to teach and influence not only Harry, but also large groups of wizards and witches, young and old. In this way, “Dumbledore [becomes] the mentor of an entire youth movement in J.K. Rowling’s universe.”⁷⁸ The reach of this universe extends beyond Harry’s fictional surroundings to include his readers and fans. Through the mentorship of Albus Dumbledore, Harry, friends, and readers internalize social justice themes. This ability, among his many others, makes Dumbledore the most powerful and influential guide on Harry’s journey. The knowledge and skills Dumbledore imparts allows Harry and his readers to penetrate the most arcane and obscure depths of the magical world.

⁷⁶ Quartey, “Social Justice.”

⁷⁷ The clandestine group created to combat the evil spread by Voldemort.

⁷⁸ Quartey, “Social Justice.”

First, however, Dumbledore exhibits tremendous patience. Readers ultimately learn that, from the beginning, Dumbledore has been developing a plan for Harry based upon his suspicions about the plans of Lord Voldemort. This patience is most clearly evidenced through Dumbledore's insistence that Harry's childhood experience, both at the Dursleys⁷⁹ and at Hogwarts, be as normal as possible before Harry is forced to perform the duty for which Dumbledore believes he is destined. To this end, Dumbledore makes certain allowances for Harry, turning a blind eye to rule-breaking in order to encourage Harry's growth, safety, and happiness. One such instance that will become pivotal not only to Harry's extracurricular involvement, but also to his ability to move freely between worlds as an underage wizard, avoiding the trace,⁸⁰ is his early possession of a broomstick.

To readers of the *Potter* stories, broomsticks are most likely to be the transportation mode synonymous with magic and witchcraft. In the series Harry is first introduced to the idea of travel by broomstick as he passes a display of them in a Quidditch shop along Diagon Alley. "Similar to bicycles in our culture, they [broomsticks] are used more for recreation and sport, as the practicality of travel by both of these methods is severely restricted because of their potentially unpleasant exposure to the elements and unwieldiness for large group travel."⁸¹ Harry's first experience with a broomstick, however, is strictly controlled. First-year students at Hogwarts are not allowed to bring

⁷⁹ "It would be enough to turn any boy's head. Famous before he can walk and talk! Famous for something he won't even remember! Can't you see how much better off he'll be, growing up away from all that until he's ready to take it?" Rowling. *Sorcerer's Stone*, 13.

⁸⁰ The Wizarding equivalent of a tracking device in spell form that alerts Ministry of Magic members when magic is performed in the vicinity of an underage wizard. Rowling, *Half-Blood Prince*, 43-63.

⁸¹ Oakes, "Hi-Tech, Low-Tech." 122.

their own brooms to the school. Instead, they are trained in an outdoor classroom by a teacher, Madame Hooch. During his first lesson, Harry distinguishes himself by taking to flight with relative ease. Unlike his classmates Ron, Neville, and Hermione, Harry commands his broom effortlessly, and uses it to confront nemesis Draco Malfoy. This episode earns him the recognition of Professor Minerva McGonagall, who then declares that she “shall speak to Professor Dumbledore and see if we can’t bend the first-year rule”⁸² in order for Harry to play the position of Seeker⁸³ on the Gryffindor House team. At the next morning’s breakfast Harry receives a parcel containing a new Nimbus 2000 racing broom. Though the note attached is from Professor McGonagall, the reader understands that the permission and broom are courtesy of the Headmaster.

By bending his own school rules and allowing Harry the broom, Dumbledore allows Harry’s inherited skill at Quidditch to flourish. Harry’s innate talent is explained when Hermione discovers that Harry’s father James was also a Gryffindor House seeker. After his Nimbus is broken Harry is given another, better broomstick – a Firebolt – by his godfather, Sirius Black. Through this ongoing chain Harry’s travel by broomstick is initiated by several people, on several levels: by Madame Hooch, Professor McGonagall, the legacy of Harry’s father, and the gift of his godfather Sirius. However it is Dumbledore who enables the process to begin by providing the initial broom and permitting Harry to use it. After having been initiated into broomstick use, Harry goes on, on several occasions, to use his broomstick to move between worlds, for example, when

⁸² Rowling, *Sorcerer’s Stone*, 152.

⁸³ Often the smallest and fastest player on a Quidditch team, whose sole purpose is to spot and catch the golden snitch. Because the snitch is worth 150 points, its retrieval often decides the outcome of a match. The Seeker, therefore, is a particularly important position. Rowling, *Sorcerer’s Stone*, 180-193.

he flies, along with other members of the Order of the Phoenix, away from the Dursleys' house to Grimmauld Place. A similar scenario occurs again in *The Deathly Hallows*, when different modes of transportation are combined to convey several fake Harrys, a couple of whom are placed on broomsticks to confuse would-be attackers.

It is important to note that early on, Harry's broomstick travel is limited to the Quidditch pitch, or Hogwarts grounds. Only when he has become a highly proficient flyer is he able to use a broomstick to travel between worlds, often under adverse weather or battle conditions. It should also be noted that the most elite sport in the Wizarding world, Quidditch, is played on broomsticks. Often younger and less accomplished wizards (Neville Longbottom and Ron Weasley, for instance) are depicted as inept on a broomstick. The only exception appears to be Hermione Granger, who prefers to read about Quidditch rather than participate. The initiation paradigm presented by broomstick travel is a combination of aptitude, recognition of that aptitude by McGonagall, permission, supply, and encouragement from Dumbledore. Harry's initiation to broomstick travel is one of the first, and most consistently useful to him.

Like travel by broomstick, Apparition provides a convenient means for primarily individual travel. Officially titled "Apparition" for movement *toward* a place, and "Disapparation" for movement *away* from a place, this transportation mode is simply Rowling's version of the magical ability to disappear and reappear at will. In the Wizarding world, Apparition is permitted only after testing and licensing by a Ministry official, and the process is facilitated by Hogwarts School, similar to a Muggle driver's license. Upper-level Hogwarts students such as Percy Weasley, Ron's older brother, may have such permission, but it is not easy to achieve – the puckish Weasley twins, Fred and

George, take great delight in reminding everyone that even their brilliant brother Charlie had to take the test twice.⁸⁴ Apparition is perhaps the most complex and elite transportation method used by wizards. Use of Apparition is highly regulated by the Ministry of Magic. Students at Hogwarts begin their Apparition lessons in a controlled environment, with instruction by a Ministry-approved official. The process of learning to Apparate is viewed by the Wizarding community as a rite of passage. Apparition is a formal step into the world of the fully trained or qualified adult wizard. Initiation into use of this mode of transportation allows young wizards the power to travel nearly anywhere they can imagine. The sensation of Apparition, as Harry describes, is highly unpleasant, like “being squeezed through a thick rubber tube; he could not draw breath, every part of him was being compressed almost past endurance and then, just when he thought he must suffocate, the invisible bands seemed to burst open.”⁸⁵ If Apparition is used incorrectly the consequences can be ghastly, painful, and even life-threatening, resulting in what is called splinching, the event where a wizard or witch loses parts of his or her body, leaving those parts behind during the Apparition or Disapparation process.

For those who have not come of age, Apparition is still possible with the aid of a fully qualified wizard. In this case – the most important, complicated, and symbolic of transportation modes between one world and another – Headmaster Albus Dumbledore initiates Harry into the mode. In the beginning of *Half-Blood Prince*, Dumbledore performs “Side-Along-Apparition”⁸⁶ with Harry. When Harry asks Dumbledore about

⁸⁴ Oakes, “Hi-Tech, Low-Tech.” 123.

⁸⁵ Rowling. *Half-Blood Prince*, 554.

⁸⁶ Apparition performed by one wizard or witch with a partner who is unable, either by law or physical impairment, to Apparate on his or her own. Rowling, *Half-Blood Prince*, 57-8.

whether he will be allowed to perform magic in the event of an attack the Headmaster responds:

“I do not think you need worry about being attacked tonight.”

“Why not sir?”

“You are with me,” said Dumbledore simply.⁸⁷

Like the motorbike and the Ministry visitor’s telephone box, this instance of travel through liminal space provides a meaningful narrative parallel. The fact that Dumbledore, Harry’s most magically powerful and developmentally influential mentor and father figure, introduces him to this form of movement between worlds is indeed significant. By this time, Harry is just shy of seventeen, the age when he will be considered an adult in the Wizarding world and eligible for an apparition license. It has already been made clear that Dumbledore has singled Harry out as special, due to the circumstances surrounding Harry’s survival of Lord Voldemort’s killing curse. As the school year progresses, Dumbledore invites Harry to the Headmaster’s tower office for private lessons whose purpose is to discover a means of defeating Lord Voldemort. Near the end of the story, Dumbledore finds a Horcrux hidden in a seaside cavern and uses Side-Along-Apparition bring Harry to the site. On the return trip, however, Dumbledore is gravely weakened. Harry understands he must perform Side-Along-Apparition himself to get them back to Hogwarts safely. Harry tells Dumbledore:

“I can Apparate us both back.... Don’t worry....”

“I am not worried, Harry,” said Dumbledore, his voice a little stronger despite the freezing water. “I am with you.”⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Rowling. *Half-Blood Prince*, 57-8.

In a mirror reversal, Dumbledore repeats the words he used to reassure Harry, to tell Harry that Dumbledore himself is reassured by Harry's presence and ability. What Harry does not yet know at this point is that Dumbledore is already dying. The Headmaster knows that he will soon be killed, and so passes the metaphorical wand to Harry, trusting that the transfer of knowledge and power are sufficient, and that Harry will be able to carry on their work alone. Though he has not completed his formal Ministry-approved training, and though he is not legally of age, Harry performs the Apparition, crossing the space between the seaside cave and the Hogwarts astronomy tower, proving Dumbledore correct.

It is at this point – upon Harry's successful mastery of the most complicated liminal travel mode, and the death of his most sophisticated mentor and guide – that Harry moves forward in the initiation paradigm. With Dumbledore gone, Harry must figure out how to defeat Lord Voldemort and how to navigate the final liminal space alone. Successful movement to this space finally distinguishes Harry as Master of the Two Worlds in Campbellian fashion. In order to protect his allies, weaken Voldemort, and enter this new space, Harry realizes he must sacrifice his life. Even though Dumbledore is gone, Harry himself invokes the memory of the Headmaster as a model for his actions. As he prepares for his own death, Harry makes contingency plans, including trusted friends in his exit strategy as he believes Dumbledore did/would do. Walking through the Forbidden Forest toward his fate, Harry tells himself "This was crucial, he must be like Dumbledore, keep a cool head, make sure there were backups, others to carry on."⁸⁹ Though Harry accepts his death, and fulfills this final liminal crossing-over alone, he is guided by his ideas of

⁸⁸ Rowling. *Half-Blood Prince*, 578.

⁸⁹ Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, 696.

what Dumbledore would do. Even though the Headmaster is not physically there to guide Harry through the process, Harry acts as he believes his mentor would have done. He approaches Voldemort and his death confident that he is prepared, and like Dumbledore, has put the necessary fail-safes in place. Voldemort completes the “*Avada Kadavera*” and Harry enters a new and uncertain state in a new and unclear location.

The true nature of this state is a point of debate among Potter readers.⁹⁰ The dispute rises from the question of whether at this point the narrative Harry dies or enters a coma-like unconsciousness. Rowling admitted in an interview with Oprah Winfrey⁹¹ that her plan for Harry from the beginning has been based upon the life of Christ. To help readers follow along during this scene, Rowling employs the technique of narrative direction within the dialogue, when Harry asks Dumbledore outright if he is dead. To this, Harry and reader are told that, “on the whole,” he is not.⁹² In light of these two pieces of authorial evidence, we may accept that, for the purposes of this argument, Harry enters a death-like state for a brief time, but his body remains alive, physically and mentally capable of reanimation. During this time it is unclear where, exactly, Harry goes.

The answer to this question – where Harry goes when he is struck by Voldemort’s curse – is the location of the final liminal space into which Harry is initiated. It is also yet another example of Rowling’s penchant for illustrating Harry’s progression through the hero cycle via narrative symmetry. After Harry is struck by Voldemort’s killing curse he reawakens to white mist, a high dome, bright sunlight, and Albus Dumbledore. When

⁹⁰ John Killinger, in particular, has written much on the subject. Killinger, “A World Divided.”

⁹¹ Winfrey, “Brilliant Mind.”

⁹² It is, of course, Dumbledore who answers this question. Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, 707.

Harry asks Dumbledore where they are, Dumbledore demurs, returning the question. Harry answers that his surroundings look “Like King’s Cross station. Except a lot cleaner and empty, and there are no trains as far as I can see.”⁹³ Train stations are naturally liminal space, between a traveller’s point of origination and destination. In this version of King’s Cross, Dumbledore explains, Harry would be able to either go “back,” to where his body lies in the Forbidden Forest, or “on,” wherever that may be.⁹⁴ With Rowling’s Christian symbolism in mind, “back” is clearly meant to mean the earthly world of humanity, Wizard and Muggle-kind. Where “here,” or “on,” may be are not as clear. Philosophers John Granger and Gregory Bassaham use the overt Biblical connections to theorize⁹⁵ about the nature and location of this *other* King’s Cross:

According to th[e] view [of John the evangelist], human reason and logic, our capacity to engage in critical reflection and rational thought, are possible and reliable because through the right use of our minds, we are participating in the divine logos. As Rowling has remarked in an interview, it wasn’t a coincidence that Harry’s fateful encounter with Dumbledore was at King’s Cross... In this reading, the way-station King’s Cross is a real “place,” namely, logos-land or heaven. (Hence, for example, Harry’s ability to create objects there and his apparent semi-omniscience.)⁹⁶

Granger and Bassham combine Rowling’s admission with rhetoric and scripture to conclude that Harry’s white and misty imaginary version of King’s Cross is the *Potter* manifestation of heaven. However, the authors’ use of the term “way-station” presents a

⁹³ Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, 712.

⁹⁴ Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, 722.

⁹⁵ Critics Rebecca Ingalls, Leanne Simmons, Andrea Stojilkov, Anastasia Apostolides, and Johann-Albrecht Meylahn explore similar themes, contextualizing Harry’s hero narrative with Biblical themes.

⁹⁶ Granger, “Just in Your Head,” 193-5.

direct conflict with their hypothesis. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a waystation is “a stopping point on a journey: a minor station on a railroad.”⁹⁷ By this definition, the possibility that this imaginary King’s Cross is Heaven is unlikely. Heaven is not commonly understood as “minor,” nor as a mere “stopping point on a journey,” but as the final (preferable) destination of life’s journey. For these reasons, this space would be more consistent with the Christian concept of Limbo. Based on the Latin word “limbus,” meaning “hem or border,”⁹⁸ Limbo is a place where some souls go after death to await judgment. Neither Heaven nor Hell, but in-between borderland from which travel to either place is possible, Limbo is a much more likely and serviceable prospect.

Limbo is also, by both etymological and hermeneutical definitions, a literal liminal space made manifest. Harry enters the space between life and death, and finds himself in a space between Heaven and earth, or at least between “back” and “on.” One might argue that upon entrance of this space Harry proves that he is not only master of two earthly worlds, but he is also able to transcend both and access a space *beyond*. In their conversation Harry and the former Headmaster carry out the pattern of debriefing that Rowling uses throughout the series. However in this instance, in addition to the explication, Dumbledore congratulates Harry on his ability to perform the necessary tasks and cross the liminal space independently. Harry, Dumbledore explains, has proven himself worthy where Dumbledore himself had failed to do so. Only by both destroying Voldemort’s horcruxes, and gaining possession of the Deathly Hallows without falling prey to the temptation of using them for personal gain, can one be able to defeat the Dark Lord. Dumbledore tells Harry, “You are the worthy possessor of the Hallows... You are

⁹⁷ *Oxford English Dictionary*, “Waystation.”

⁹⁸ *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, “Limbus.”

the true master of death.”⁹⁹ In so doing, he not only acknowledges Harry’s moral superiority but also declares that Harry has achieved a mastery of death and, thus, insinuates that Harry has also achieved mastery of life – a life to which Harry must soon return. It is at this point that both Harry and reader understand there is no question: upon his return, Harry’s success is certain.

As Harry prepares to depart, he makes one final inquiry, asking Dumbledore if their conversation has occurred “All in my head?”¹⁰⁰ To this, Dumbledore replies, “Of course it is happening inside your head, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?”¹⁰¹ With this playful vaguery, Dumbledore further obscures the nature of the space in which they meet. Where the ambiguity before lay in the material location of the space, an additional layer of obscurity is added, whether the space is physical or metaphysical. With this new question, Harry’s heroic mastery of worlds achieves a whole new dimension. Joseph Campbell recognizes this new dimension as a spiritual and physical omnipotence. He traces this pattern through the mythopoeics of several religious figures: Krishna, Buddha, and Jesus. Comparing the moment of heroic metaphysical transcendence to the resurrection of Christ in the Bible, Campbell explains that this instance is “The Paradox of the two worlds in one... Not only do we have here a masterly passage, back and forth, across the world threshold, but we observe a profounder, very much profounder, penetration of the depths.”¹⁰² Like Christ, Harry performs a “masterly passage, back and forth, across the world threshold.” At this point Harry no longer even needs to perform the magic; he is able to move between the physical world and the

⁹⁹ Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, 720.

¹⁰⁰ Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, 723.

¹⁰¹ Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, 723.

¹⁰² Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 197.

imaginary inner afterlife of his own accord using only the power of his mind. As master of death, Harry, like Jesus, achieves the “profounder penetration of depths” necessary to also become master of that world, and what is beyond.

Between these modes of liminal space-crossing Dumbledore exemplifies a truly fascinating point of connection: the phenomenon of “lightness.” There are several working definitions, according to Griswold, that may provide the sensation of spacial “lightness.” Lightness, he explains, may mean a character possess the ability of independent flight. In Harry’s case this ability manifests two ways, broomstick and Apparition. It may mean the character is graced with a sense of agility or nimbleness, as evidenced by Harry’s knack for evading his cousin Dudley’s beatings, or for catching the Snitch in a game of Quidditch. The term may also be interpreted as a form of *enlightenment*, precisely like the state Harry achieves as he transcends the physical world and becomes Master of Death.¹⁰³ The relativity between, and subtext behind, the liminal modes and spaces to which Dumbledore initiates Harry, in terms of “lightness,” combine to not only imbue the crossings with the utmost importance, but also signify to the reader that the ultimate depths have been reached. Harry has mastered the most complex modes of liminal space passage, and in doing so achieves enlightenment and completes his hero cycle.

¹⁰³ Griswold, *Feeling Like a Kid*, 75-100.

CHAPTER V

HOME AND AWAY

In order for liminal space to exist there must be both consciousness and spaces for the consciousness to exist within and between. The existence of these separate spaces is essential to the successful heroic narrative. A hero, according to both Campbell and Propp, must complete a long and complex cyclical journey involving numerous stock or archetypal elements and performing an equally numerous series of specific actions. During the course of this journey the hero moves between spaces, travelling from a known space to the unknown, and back again. Campbell describes the known space most often simply as the “home world.”¹⁰⁴ This home world is the world of common, everyday mundanity. The unknown space, however, he calls by several names: the “foreign world,” “otherworld,” “land of trials,” or “fateful region of treasure and danger.”¹⁰⁵ This world is the world of the new, strange, and fantastic. The juxtaposition of these two worlds Campbell believes, is necessary to the process of hero-making:

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.¹⁰⁶

This construction, Campbell claims, is universal and incontrovertible within the tenets of heroic mythology. Rowling follows this paradigm closely in the *Potter* series, to great effect. One might even argue that the *Potter* stories center upon this paradigm, the

¹⁰⁴ Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 42-8.

¹⁰⁵ Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 48.

¹⁰⁶ Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 23.

existence and juxtaposition of a “world of common day” from which the hero must “venture forth” into a world of “supernatural wonder.” Historian Richard A. Spencer elaborates on these ideas. Rowling’s home-world and otherworld composition, he argues, may be compared to those present in Greco-Roman histories.

The magical worlds of Harry Potter and Greco-Roman antiquity share at least three essential characteristics: the presumption of at least two realms of reality, the seen (which is knowable) and the unseen (which is both powerful and mysterious); a spectrum of varied beings who populate those worlds; and the blurring of distinctions between space and time.¹⁰⁷

This comparison corroborates Campbell’s proposed archetypes of the known and unknown worlds quite closely. Indeed, much of Rowling’s world-building depends upon the simultaneous separation and coexistence of the known Muggle and unknown Wizarding worlds. And, as the examples in this analysis have proven thus far, much of Harry’s character growth and development depends upon his ability to navigate between these worlds with increasing fluidity and skill. As both Harry and reader learn to perform this navigation, they slowly come to understand the porous nature of the two worlds, the increasing and undeniable “blurring of distinctions” between the two spaces, and in the spaces in-between them.

However, as Lisa Hopkins points out, Rowling adheres to these preexisting paradigms often only so that she may defy or invert them. Often, Rowling knowingly invokes a well-known literary pattern or trope, then defies expectation, altering the pattern, or turning the trope on its head. Often this transposal creates a sense of novelty,

¹⁰⁷ Spencer, “The Two Worlds,” 181.

originality, and surprise. Hopkins explains that, with setting as well as character, “It seems indeed as if paradigms are being evoked only in order that they may be disabled”

¹⁰⁸ If that is so – and it certainly seems to be in light of the vast majority of Potter traits where heroics of character are involved – then it would be prudent to be on the lookout for where a similar inversion may take place in regard to the otherworldly paradigm. A potential indicator may be found in Harry’s changing perceptions of where he belongs, in which world he feels at home, and which he does not. The reversal begins as soon as the first world is introduced.

The Muggle world is, according to Rowling’s timeline for the series, based on the real world of Britain and Scotland in the 1990’s.¹⁰⁹ It is also the world in which Rowling begins the *Potter* saga. Commencement in this world familiarizes readers with Harry and his surroundings. The urbanity of London and surrounding areas – the mundanity of suburban sprawl, tedium of ordinary workdays, ubiquity of schoolyard bullying and neighborly window-peeping – orient the action firmly in the everyday and commonplace. Readers understand that the world they have entered is quite like their own. Edmund Kern reiterates these impressions, insisting, “Harry’s world is not so different from our own... Harry lives in what is clearly the United Kingdom in the late twentieth century. His surroundings in Little Whinging are not unlike what millions of other people encounter in similar places on a daily basis.”¹¹⁰ However, despite this exposition in the

¹⁰⁸ It may be significant to note that, in this instance, Hopkins is referring to Harry’s connections to heroic Arthurian tradition. Hopkins, “Narratives of Destiny,” 67.

¹⁰⁹ Rowling outlines this timeline for audiences during a 2007 interview with James Runcie. Runcie, “A Year in the Life.”

¹¹⁰ Kern, “Imagination,” 188.

“pale of society,”¹¹¹ from the beginning, the reader understands that something else is trickling into the Muggle world from a place more mysterious and fantastical.

Subsequently, the reader assumes that whatever action occurs in this world is merely preparation, provision for whatever is coming from the otherworld.

Rowling makes no effort to simulate equality in regard to treatment of the magical versus the non-magical worlds. John Kornfeld and Laurie Protho recognize this disparity in depiction, and describe the difference between worlds in Platonic terms. “The contrast between the Muggle and magical worlds,” they assert, “recalls Plato’s allegory of the cave, in which the prisoners see only their pale shadows that the fire casts on the wall.”¹¹² From the outset, the Muggle world is designed as a mere shadow of the world that lies beyond. By this comparison, Muggles live in ignorance, unaware that their world and abilities represent only the merest fraction of what is possible. Psychologist Carol Nemeroff appears to agree with this notion, stating that, once readers are introduced to it, “Harry’s [Wizarding] world is vivid and attention-grabbing. It feels more real than the Muggle world. Coming back to the everyday world of Muggle experience feels pale and lackluster in comparison.”¹¹³ The mundane familiarity of the Muggle world is constructed as a dreary and lifeless foil to the excitement and whimsy of its Wizarding counterpart. To Harry and his readers, the Muggle world is not presented as the one in which a young witch or wizard would want to remain. If the mundane familiarity is not enough to convince Harry and his audience that the Wizarding world is where they want to be (as

¹¹¹ Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 48.

¹¹² Kornfeld & Protho, “Home and Family,” 191.

¹¹³ Nemeroff, “The Magical World,” 135.

opposed to the Muggle world), Rowling's addition of Harry's highly unpleasant Muggle relatives, the Dursleys, tips the metaphorical scale in the magical direction.

By situating Harry's experience in the Muggle world with an unloving, even neglectful and abusive home life, Rowling begins to invert the conventional otherworld paradigm. Traditionally, the home world is representative of love, comfort, and safety, a place the hero is reluctant to leave. In Harry's case, however, life in the Muggle world with the Dursleys is antithetical to this effect. Harry is so miserable with his aunt, uncle, and cousin that he daydreams some unknown set of relatives will come to claim him, whisking him away. By representing the Dursleys as abusive and miserable for Harry, Rowling indicates that theirs cannot be Harry's true home. Debra De Rosa, in particular, makes a compelling argument that

By opening each novel with Harry's departure from the less-than-ideal life with the Dursleys, Rowling emphasizes that Harry's shared experiences at Hogwarts School, although filled with mystery and apparent danger, represent a return to a safer environment in which Harry can experience, to a degree, the physical and psychological state of carefree childhood.¹¹⁴

Though readers have not yet been introduced to Hogwarts at this early juncture, Number Four Privet Drive has already become the antithesis of desirable home-space. It is clear that Harry is destined for some alternate, more welcoming and extraordinary environment. In their article "Happily Ever After: Harry Potter and the Quest for the Domestic," Ximena C. Gallardo and Jason C. Smith explore the function and meaning of "home" in the *Potter* series. The authors postulate that Rowling establishes the Dursleys'

¹¹⁴ De Rosa, "Initiation Paradigm," 163.

home as the “bad home,” filled with abuse, intolerance, and bourgeois suburban sensibilities, from which Harry “must escape.”¹¹⁵ Many Potter critics agree with this assessment,¹¹⁶ since the good home, or home world, is indicated by the (relative) safety from abuse, freedom to pursue healthy relationships, and ability to experience some measure of childhood as described by De Rosa. It is telling that Rowling infuses this space with none of the hallmark feelings that engender a love of place. For Harry and his readers, the Muggle world and the Dursleys’ house in particular bears no quality likely to produce topophilic sentiment. Number Four Privet Drive is not snug or cozy. There are no instances in which Harry experiences feelings of lightness or aliveness within its walls. In short, according to the precepts of space theory, the house bears no resemblance to an actual home. However, if the Muggle world and the Dursleys’ house within it represent the antithesis of home, from which Harry must escape, he must then be presented with an alternative option.

Rowling indeed provides an alternative, and delivers hints about the nature of it almost immediately. With “shooting stars over Kent,” “flocks of owls” and hordes of men and women wearing “funny robes” and “pointed hats” swarming Muggle areas, and the arrival of Minerva McGonagall, Rubeus Hagrid, and Albus Dumbledore on tidy Privet Drive, Rowling gives her audience a preview of the potential home-world substitute while simultaneously setting a precedent of porousness.¹¹⁷ Try as the Dursleys might to deny the existence of magic and those able to perform it, “Magic penetrates the tidy, compulsive Dursley world,” Shira Wolosky explains. “Not only the Dursleys’ own

¹¹⁵ Gallardo, et. al. “Happily Ever After,” 103.

¹¹⁶ Kornfeld, Lavoie, and Wolosky, in particular.

¹¹⁷ Rowling, *Sorcerer’s Stone*, 1-14.

lives, but the entire non-magical world has lost its boundedness against the uncanny.”¹¹⁸

The unknown world begins spilling out into the known one, and so continues the inversion process. By demonstrating the ease with which one world penetrates another Rowling illustrates that the illusion of separation between them is just that: an illusion. Just as Vernon Dursley is unable to prevent magic, wizards, and Hogwarts letters invading his home, so too, the Wizarding community is unable to maintain complete magical secrecy from Muggles.

The express purpose of the International Statute of Secrecy, first imposed in 1692,¹¹⁹ is to protect the Muggle and Wizarding communities from one another, effectively hiding wizards and witches in plain sight using Muggle-repelling charms and spell-working precautions. However, the coexistence of these two communities alongside and within one another, and the constant intermingling of magical and non-magical lineages, prevent any real possibility of absolute separation. In her introduction to a recent collection of essays, which take a historiographical approach to the *Potter* texts, Nancy Reagin ruminates upon the logistical problems involved in preventing the comingling between the magical and non-magical worlds. Citing the constant influx of Muggle-born witches and wizards to magical schools and subsequently magical society, she writes:

The Wizarding world is a “half-blooded” one: its people, culture, and institutions are descended from Muggles... The fact that our modern world and the Wizarding world have common roots shouldn’t surprise us. For many centuries, author J.K.

Rowling tells us, wizards and witches lived side by side with Muggles in villages

¹¹⁸ Wolosky, “The Magic,” 7.

¹¹⁹ Rowling, “King’s Cross Station.”

and towns across Europe, often intermarrying or socializing. They must have often shared knowledge and values, because they were – in most respects – part of the same culture.¹²⁰

What Reagin presents here is in effect, a chicken-versus-egg argument. Rowling does not offer any insight in regard to the origin story of Muggles and wizards within the series. A wizard or witch may be born of Muggle parents; such an occurrence is, to the reader's knowledge, random and unpredictable. Likewise, a witch or wizard may be born of wizarding parents, and yet possess no magical power. Therefore, a Muggle-born magical child, like Harry's friend Hermione Granger, will inevitably expose the magical world via manifestation of his or her power. The Muggle parents, at least, then become exceptions to the Statute of Secrecy law. Similarly, a witch or wizard with a pure magical lineage who fails to manifest any magical power, such as the Dursleys' neighbor Mrs. Figg, may choose to live among Muggles, where he or she will not be singled out for lack of magical ability. Like the permeability of magical and non-magical space, the interchange of magical and non-magical people further blurs the line between worlds. According to Reagin, however, the world of Muggles is, in essence, "our" own. By making the two worlds accessible not only to one another but also to the readers, Rowling prepares Harry and his audience to make the mental shift and invert the traditional home-world paradigm.

This muddling and distortion of the Wizarding, Muggle, and audience boundaries is precisely what allows the inversion to occur. As Harry and his audience realize that the magic is and has been surrounding them the entire time, and as they progress through the

¹²⁰ Reagin, "Introduction," 2.

first years at Hogwarts, the boundaries begin to lift, and the fantastic becomes the everyday. The cyclical journey outlined by Campbell and Propp is repeated, sometimes in several stages, within each installment. With each movement the mysterious and uncanny become a bit less so. In an effort to provide some clarity on this point, Giselle Liza Anatol explains:

In the Wizarding world he [Harry] finds acceptance among people of his own magical kind...on one hand Rowling depicts Hogwarts and its environs as a space of difference, inhabited by the Other, and quite separate from the “real” and flawed British sphere; on the other hand, however, this sphere also serves as an accurate reflection of British reality.¹²¹

As Anatol says, though the Wizarding world *should* be, by standards of normalcy dictated by “British reality,” considered Other, it is the world in which Harry “finds acceptance” because he is “among people of his own kind.” In actuality it is the Muggle world in which Harry finds himself a social other, and outcast. Naturally, he is more likely to experience positive sensations and associations that enable one to feel at home in a world that is accepting of his uniqueness and abilities than in a world that will shun him for them. These feelings of acceptance are the mechanisms by which Rowling triggers the home-world inversion.

If acceptance and belonging are the feelings that stimulate a sense of topophilia within Harry and his audience for the Wizarding world, then at no place within that world should the sense be stronger than Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. In Hogwarts, Rowling provides Harry and readers with a tangible structure in which all the

¹²¹ Anatol, “Fallen Empire,” 167.

necessary components for a love of place may reside. According to Bachelard the house, or perhaps in the context of *Harry Potter* the term *house* may be more accurately described instead as *dwelling-place*, possesses “one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories, and dreams of mankind.”¹²² Put simply, the dwelling-place acts as both a vessel and a conduit for memory. The dwelling-place a writer describes in his or her work – very likely some idealized form of “home” – will not be the same dwelling-place the reader identifies in the work. Both writer and reader imprint upon the conceptual, imaginary space their own memories and recollections of past dwelling-places. On this point, Bachelard elaborates:

Very quickly, at the very first word, at the first poetic overture, the reader who is “reading a room” leaves off reading and starts to think of some place in his own past. You [the writer] would like to tell everything about your room. You would like to interest the reader in yourself, whereas you have unlocked a door to daydreaming. The values of intimacy are so absorbing that the reader has ceased to read your room: he sees his own again.¹²³

This idea is of the utmost importance in regard to *Harry Potter* because it explains how the dwelling-places Rowling creates within the series are able to function in the imaginations of readers. According to Bachelard’s theory, though Rowling’s readers may never have encountered a space such as Hogwarts, their minds will conceive the castle in a realistic manner in spite of unrealistic or fantastical elements because they will imagine that space with the collective memory of dwelling-places created by memories of those stored in their subconscious. Rowling’s words act as the trigger for these memories, the

¹²² Bachelard, *Poetics*, 6.

¹²³ Bachelard, *Poetics*, 14.

poetic image of the space providing resonance for the reader. The resulting reverberations of the reader's imagination construct an individualistic understanding of the dwelling-place described. In short, Rowling's Hogwarts is very different from that of her readers. Having provided the image, she must then turn it over to the imaginations of her readers, which will manifest and project individualized versions of Hogwarts according to their own subconscious conceptions and memories. From this onerous moment onward Hogwarts is indeed, the reader's home.

Rowling does not leave her audience without guidance, however. As usual, she uses Harry's thoughts and feelings to provide narrative direction for readers. John Kornfeld and Laurie Prothro describe how Harry's feelings for Hogwarts develop. In so doing, they also describe how a readership that identifies with Harry may develop a similar mindset:

In moving from the Muggle to the magical world – by coming to Hogwarts – Harry also moves emotionally from a place of isolation and loneliness to a sense of community and belonging. After one year at Hogwarts, Harry knows what home can mean, and back at the Dursleys' for the summer holidays, he longs for it.¹²⁴

As an orphan whose only alternative support system actively alienates him, the sense of belonging Hogwarts offers Harry is tangible and intense. Chantel Lavoie also describes this sensation, claiming that Hogwarts

offers [Harry], finally, somewhere to belong. Over the summer in Chamber of Secrets, Harry's longing for Hogwarts "was like having a constant stomachache"

¹²⁴ Kornfeld & Prothro, "Home and Family," 194.

– a familiar symptom of homesickness. Returning to Gryffindor dormitory in *Prisoner of Azkaban*, although aware that a murderer intends to seek him out at Hogwarts, Harry “felt as if he was home at last.”¹²⁵

Harry’s topophilic sensations for Hogwarts are so strong that that he experiences physiological manifestations of homesickness, and is even willing to put his life on the line in order to return. One could make the argument that the power of Harry’s feelings overwhelm his good sense and instinct for self-preservation. Though the intensity of his feelings are sufficient for many readers to experience corresponding sensations, Rowling herself reinforces these feelings for *Potter* fans outside the texts, referring to Hogwarts as not simply a fictional place, but a safe haven that readers might return to again and again should they wish. Rowling admits that for many years visiting Hogwarts provided her with a means of “escape”¹²⁶ from the real world, and encourages *Potter* fans to think of the castle likewise. During an emotionally charged speech at the final *Potter* film premiere in 2011, Rowling reassured fans that, though the series has drawn to a close, “Hogwarts will always be there to welcome you home.”¹²⁷ I am convinced that this brand of extra-textual reinforcement – Rowling’s insistence that Hogwarts is, in fact, a place the reader can tangibly psychologically experience – strengthens the reader’s topophilic impulse in a definitive and significant way, and is a key factor in the success of the series.

The potency of Harry’s feelings for his school, the passion with which he and his readers experience a love of Hogwarts and those inside it, is of the utmost importance, as it provides the impetus for his ultimate act of heroism. When Harry walks into the

¹²⁵ Lavoie, “Safe as Houses,” 45.

¹²⁶ Runcie, “A Year in the Life.”

¹²⁷ Rowling, “Deathly Hallows Premiere Speech.”

Forbidden Forest planning to give himself up to Voldemort in order to save his friends and family, he is making the ultimate sacrifice. Like his mother before him, Harry is willing to trade his own life for those of the ones he loves. Harry's actions remain consistent with Rowling's admission¹²⁸ that the trajectory of his character is loosely based on the life of Jesus. According to Campbell, the act of self-sacrifice serves as the ultimate means of atonement:

The meaning [of self-sacrifice] is very clear; it is the meaning of all religious practice. The individual, through prolonged psychological disciplines, gives up completely all attachment to his personal limitations, idiosyncrasies, hopes, and fears, no longer resists the self-annihilation that is prerequisite to rebirth in the realization of truth, and so becomes ripe, at last, for the great at-one-ment.¹²⁹

Atonement is a crucial step in the hero cycle, Campbell claims, and necessary to realization of the final stage. Only after the hero undergoes this self-annihilation is he then able to exceed his "personal limitations." Once the sacrifice is complete Harry, like Jesus, is able to transcend all previous limitations – even death – and become the true master of worlds. It is no coincidence that this is the point at which Harry also becomes master of liminal space.

Only after Harry has endured his atonement, crossed every threshold, and mastered each of the liminal space travel modes presented by his guides, do his abilities finally surpass them all. Not only is he able to move back and forth between worlds effortlessly, he is also able to physically and metacognitively move beyond them into pure liminality: the space between life and death, reality and imagination. This "freedom

¹²⁸ Winfrey, "The Brilliant Mind."

¹²⁹ Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 205.

to pass back and forth across the world division, from the perspective of the apparitions of time to that of the casual deep and back – not contaminating the principles of the one with those of the other – is the talent of the master.”¹³⁰ It is at this point – when Harry has achieved complete magical supremacy – that he and his readers are finally able to complete the hero cycle. Harry’s victory earns him the “freedom to live”¹³¹ without fear, secure in the knowledge that his actions have achieved safety and happiness for both Muggle- and Wizard-kind. With their hard-won freedom Harry and his readers are finally able to follow their feelings of topophilia, which urge them to choose the Wizarding world as their true home.

¹³⁰ Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 196.

¹³¹ Campbell, *Thousand Faces*, 206.

REFERENCES

- Acocella, Joan. "Under the Spell: Harry Potter Explained." *The New Yorker*. 31 July (2000) 74.
- Anatol, Giselle Liza. "The Fallen Empire: Exploring Ethnic Otherness in the World of Harry Potter." *Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays*, ed. Giselle Liza Anatol. Westport, CT: Praeger (2003) 163-178. Print.
- Apostolides, Anastasia and Johann-Albrecht Meylahn. "The Lived Theology of the Harry Potter Series." *HTS Theology Studies* 70.1 (2014) 1-6.
- Arden, Heather, and Kathryn Lorenz. "The Harry Potter Stories and French Arthurian Romance." *Arthuriana* 13.2 (2003) 54-68.
- Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. 1964. Print.
- Black, Sharon. "The Magic of Harry Potter: Symbols and Heroes of Fantasy." *Children's Literature in Education* 34.3 (2003) 237-47.
- Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero With a Thousand Faces 3rd Edition*. Novato, CA: New World Library (2008) Print.
- Chappell, Drew. "Sneaking Out After Dark: Resistance, Agency, and the Postmodern Child in JK Rowling's Harry Potter Series." *Children's Literature in Education* 39 (2008) 281-293. DOI 10.1007/s10583-007-9060-6.
- Comber, Barbara, and Helen Nixon. "The Harry Potter Phenomenon." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 44.8 (2001) 746-48.
- De Rosa, Deborah. "Wizardly Challenges to and Affirmations of the Initiation Paradigm in Harry Potter" *Harry Potter's World: Multidisciplinary Critical Perspectives*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman. New York: Routledge (2003) 163-184.
- Gallardo, Ximena C. and C. Jason Smith. "Happily Ever After: Harry Potter and the Quest for the Domestic." *Reading Harry Potter Again: New Critical Essays*, ed. Giselle Liza Anatol. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger (2009) 91-108. Print.
- Goring, Rosemary. "Harry's Fame," Scotland on Sunday. 17 January 1999. Interview. <http://www.accio-quote.org/articles/1999/0199-scotlandsunday-goring.html>
- Granger, John, with Gregory Bassham. "Just in Your Head? J.K. Rowling on Separating Reality from Illusion." *The Ultimate Harry Potter and Philosophy*:

- Hogwarts for Muggles*, ed. Gregory Bassham. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons (2010) 185-197. Print.
- Griswold, Jerry. *Feeling Like a Kid: Childhood and Children's Literature*. Baltimore, MA: John's Hopkins University Press (2006). Print.
- Hall, Jordana. "Embracing the Abject Other: The Carnival Imagery of Harry Potter." *Children's Literature in Education* 42.1 (2011) 70-89.
- Hennequin, Wendy M. "Harry Potter and the Legends of Saints." *Journal of Religion and Pop Culture* (2013) 25.1 67-81.
- Hopkins, Lisa. "Harry Potter and Narratives of Destiny." *Reading Harry Potter Again: New Critical Essays*, ed. Giselle Liza Anatol. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger (2009) 63-76. Print.
- Hunter, Joel B. "Folktale Structure as the Key to the Success of the Harry Potter Series." (2014) Web. 28 Jan 2016. <http://www.joelhunterphd.com/folktale-structure-key-success-harry-potter-series/>.
- Ingalls, Rebecca. "Harry Potter and a Landscape of Moral Uncertainty." *Poroi* 7.1 (2011) 28.
- Jacobs, Alan. "Harry Potter's Magic." *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* (January 2000) 35-8. Web. 28 Jan 2016. <http://www.firstthings.com/article/2000/01/harry-potters-magic-28>
- Kalish, Charles W., and Emma C. Kalish. "Hogwarts Academy: Common Sense and School Magic." *The Psychology of Harry Potter: An Unauthorized Examination of the Boy Who Lived*, ed. Neil Mulholland. Dallas, TX: Benbella Books Inc. (2006) 135-152.
- Kern, Edmund M. "Imagination, History, Legend, and Myth." *The Wisdom of Harry Potter*. New York: Prometheus Books (2003) 179-222. Print.
- Kidd, Dustin. "Harry Potter and the Functions of Pop Culture." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 40.1 (2007) 69-89.
- Killinger, John. *The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Harry Potter*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press (2009) Print.
- Kornfeld, John, and Laurie Prothro. "Comedy, Conflict, and Community: Home and Family in Harry Potter." *Harry Potter's World: Multidisciplinary Critical Perspectives*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman. New York: Routledge (2003) 187-202. Print.

- Lavoie, Chantel. "Safe as Houses: Sorting and School Houses at Hogwarts." *Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays*, ed. Giselle Liza Anatol. Westport, CT: Praeger (2003) 35-50. Print.
- Lurie, Alison. *Boys and Girls Forever: Children's Classics from Cinderella to Harry Potter*. New York: Penguin Books (2003) Print.
- Mills, Alice. "Harry Potter: Agency or Addiction?" *Children's Literature in Education* 41.4 (2010) 291-301.
- Nemeroff, Carol. "The Magical World of Muggles." *The Psychology of Harry Potter: An Unauthorized Examination of the Boy Who Lived*, ed. Neil Mulholland. Dallas, TX: Benbella Books Inc. (2006) 135-152. Print.
- Nikolajeva, Maria. "Harry Potter – A Return to the Romantic Hero." *Harry Potter's World: Multidisciplinary Critical Perspectives*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman. New York: Routledge (2003) 125-140. Print.
- Oakes, Margaret J. "Flying Cars, Floo Powder, and Flaming Torches: The Hi-Tech, Low-Tech World of Wizardry." *Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays*, ed. Giselle Liza Anatol. Westport, CT: Praeger (2003) 117-130. Print.
- Oxford English Dictionary. "Waystation." *Oxford University Press*. Web. 15, Feb. 2016. <http://www.oed.com>
- Oxford Latin Dictionary. "Limbus." *Oxford University Press*. Web. 15, Feb. 2016. <http://www.oxfordscholarlyeditions.com/page/the-oxford-latin-dictionary>
- Petrina, Alessandra. "Forbidden forest, enchanted castle: Arthurian spaces in the Harry Potter novels." *Mythlore* 24.3-4 (2006) 95.
- Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of a Folktale*, trans. Laurence Scott. Austin: University of Texas Press (1968) Print.
- Quartey, Sarah. "Harry Potter: Social Justice Theory Absorbed by a Generation." *Stanford Static*. 6, March 2012. Web. Feb 15, 2016. <https://stnfrdstatic.wordpress.com/2012/03/06/harry-potter-social-justice-theory-absorbed-by-a-generation/>
- Reagin, Nancy R. "Introduction." *Harry Potter and History*, ed. Nancy R. Reagin. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc. (2011) 1-5. Print.
- Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. New York: Scholastic (1998) Print.
- Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. New York: Scholastic (1999) Print.

- Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. New York: Scholastic (1999) Print.
- Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. New York: Scholastic (2000) Print.
- Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. New York: Scholastic (2003) Print.
- Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. New York: Scholastic (2005) Print.
- Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. New York: Scholastic (2007) Print.
- Rowling, J.K. "King's Cross Station: Platform 9 ¾" *Pottermore* (2012). Web. 16 Jan 2016. <https://www.pottermore.com/writing-by-jk-rowling/the-hogwarts-express>.
- Rowling, J.K. "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part II: Premiere Speech." London July 7, 2011. Web. 31 Jan 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QnyKZe6VBA>.
- Runcie, James. "J.K. Rowling, A Year in the Life." IWC Media. 30 Dec (2007). Interview.
- Sheltrown, Nicholas. "Harry Potter's World as a Morality Tale of Technology and Media." *Critical Perspectives of Harry Potter 2nd Edition*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman. New York: Routledge (2009) 47-64. Print.
- Simmons, Leanne. "The Perils of Shape-Shifting: Harry Potter and Christian Fundamentalism." *Pastoral Psychology* 62.1 (2013) 53-68.
- Spencer, Richard A. "The Two Worlds of Magic: Beings, Materials and Resources." *Harry Potter and the Classical World: Greek and Roman Allusions to J.K. Rowling's Modern Epic*. Jefferson, NC: Macfarland & Company, Inc. (2015) 180-245. Print.
- Stojilkov, Andrea. "Life (and) Death in Harry Potter: The Immortality of Love and Soul." *Mosaic* 48.2 (2015) 133-148.
- Winfrey, Oprah. "The Brilliant Mind Behind Harry Potter." October 1, 2010. CBS. Interview. <http://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/The-Brilliant-Mind-Behind-Harry-Potter>
- Wolosky, Shira. "The Magic of Harry Potter." *The Riddles of Harry Potter: Secret Passages and Interpretive Quests*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan (2010) 1-17. Print.

Wolosky, Shira. "Foucault at School: Discipline, Education and Agency in Harry Potter." *Children's Literature in Education* 45.4 (2014) 285-297.