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**Mythical Rudiments and Prototypes in the Potter Series and its Cinematic
Adaptation**

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Mythic themes and epitomes are present in the Potter series (Mills 7-8; Ramaswamy 127-221). *Sorcerer's Stone* familiarizes us to the *hero*, known as The Boy Who Lived and later, The Chosen One. Harry is the *child*, a naive and *orphan*; many tales have a child brought up by individuals who do not love him or her. Vernon is a *shadow father*, Aunt Petunia is a *terrible mother* (as is Aunt Marge), and Dudley and associates are *bullies*. Professor McGonagall serves as nurturing *mother* figure, *wise woman*, and unattached *maiden*. Dumbledore, as *wise old man* and *mentor*, always knows what is best. Rowling's characters fit other epitomes. The Weasleys fill the role of *surrogate family*; Mrs. Weasley is the *good mother* and Mr. Weasley is the stern but loving *father figure*. We meet the *tricksters*, Fred and George, and Ron who will become the *loyal companion*. Ginny Weasley develops from a *damsel in distress* in *Chamber of Secrets* to a *shield maiden* in *Order of the Phoenix*. In Diagon Alley and on the Hogwarts Express, Draco Malfoy is set as a *rival* and *bully*, along with Crabbe and Goyle. Hermione is a mixture of *wise woman*, *loyal companion*, and *shield maiden* who helps in the mission and battles. Neville Longbottom and Luna Lovegood are *scapegoats*. Most Hogwarts scholars are either on the side of good or evil, shown through the individuality of the four houses and the sorting. Adult characters fit inside recognized categories also. Professor Lupin is a *shapeshifter* and *scapegoat*, as is Sirius. They serve up as *father figures* and *mentors* to Harry. Tonks is one more *shield maiden*, prepared to fight not only dark magic but civilization for her love for Lupin. Rita Skeeter is a *gossip*, spoil the truth. Cho Chang is the *temptress*, even *traitor*. Lily is cast as *holy mother* who puts aside Harry by her love. Mrs. Black is another *terrible mother*, as are childless surrogates Bellatrix Lestrange and Dolores Umbridge. Peter Pettigrew is the final *traitor*; his actions resulted in the death of Harry's parents and the return of Voldemort.

Supernatural places are symbolic too. Number 4 Privet Drive is a *wasteland* for Harry, while the Burrow and Hogwarts are *safe havens*. Number 12 Grimmauld Place served up as both in different books/films. Harry's journeys take him to *underground* places, dark or dismal: the trap door in *Sorcerer's Stone*; the basilisk home in *Chamber of Secrets*; the tunnels, Shrieking Shack and Forbidden Forest in *Prisoner of Azkaban*; the cemetery in *Goblet of Fire*; the Department of

Magical Mysteries in *Order of the Phoenix*; the cave in *Half-Blood Prince* and the crypts at Gringotts and cells at Malfoy Manor in *Deathly Hallows*. There are peripheral nods to *ascent* and *descent* and *light* and *dark*. Voldemort's Dark Mark lights the sky. Dumbledore expires falling from the height of the Astronomy Tower, and all the students lift their lighted wands in a salute, which dispels the Dark Mark. Fred and George exit Hogwarts in a spray of fireworks; Harry's wand chooses him at Ollivander's with a



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rupture of light. As in many myths, light and dark, refuge and danger, upper and lower sites offer extra meaning.

Along with character and place, supplementary mythic elements emerge. Metals have special meaning or authority. Substance made with *goblin's silver*, such as Godric Gryffindor's sword, are permanent and absorb the powers of any target. The Winged Key in *Sorcerer's Stone* is made of plain *silver*. In wizarding money, galleons (made of gold) have the most value, pursued by sickles (silver) and knuts (bronze). *Leprechaun gold* appears the same as regular gold, but disappears after time. Several of the horcruxes are made all or partially of *gold*, counting Helga

Hufflepuff's cup, Salazar Slytherin's ornament, and Marvolo Gaunt's ring. The colors of these metals are also part of the house colors for Gryffindor (*gold*) and Slytherin (*silver*). Green is usually the color of life and earth, and red is the color of blood and death, but Rowling upturned these. Green is linked with Voldemort; the assassination curse that gave Harry his scar and the liquid that hid the locket Horcrux are green. Red is linked with Dumbledore; Fawkes is red, as is the fire that frees Dumbledore and Harry from the Inferi. Doniger and Granger are amid authors who have written about symbolic meanings behind and within the Potter series. It seems reasonable that Rowling, a great reader and naturally educated, deliberately included mythic symbols, themes, and archetypes. These elements exceed the stories and may be partly accountable for the overwhelming popularity of the series.

Globalizing the Wizarding World through Myth

Mythology as a storytelling form crosses time periods, cultures and topography. From Norway to Eastern Europe and back to Greek and Roman times, Rowling inhabits her novels with an array of characters and creatures that span early and modern times and places. She formed her own versions of these, changing them to fit her vision. Filmmakers changed these further as they grasped them on the screen. The series provides a global tour of tradition with references from Great Britain and beyond. Carol Rose includes background for some of Rowling's beings. Centaurs are familiar from Greek mythology, but few booklovers documented giant spider Aragog (*Chamber of Secrets* 270) as a dip to a creature from Japanese folklore (Rose 344). Rowling played with diverse versions of dragons from around the world (Rose 103-107) when she explained the Chinese Fireball, Hungarian Horntail, Swedish Shortsnout, and Common Welsh Green in *Goblet of Fire* (326), Norbert the baby Norwegian Ridgeback in *Sorcerer's Stone* (235), and the Peruvian Vipertooth in *Fantastic Beasts and Magical Creatures*. Differences of the basilisk have been part of stories from Roman times through Chaucer and Shakespeare (Rose 41). Elves, rascals, fairies, pixies, ogres,



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leprechauns, boggarts, banshees, and trolls reside in Scottish, Welsh, Gaelic, French tales and those from other times and places. Werewolves are recognizable from European folktales. Versions of the legend can also be found in ancient Greek and Roman times (Rose 391), as well as stories from Norway and Denmark (Baring-Gould 108-110) and Slavic stories (Pilkington and Pilkington 313). Rowling represents two versions: Remus Lupin's angst-filled werewolf, and Fenrir Greyback, known for his savage assassination of children (*Half-Blood Prince*, 393). The name Fenrir attaches the character to a specific werewolf from Norse legends, offspring of Loki and a giantess, who ultimately kills Odin (Lindow 111-114). While Lupin's werewolf is a troubled creature, worried about inflicting harm on others (*Prisoner of Azkaban*, 352-353), Greyback takes pleasure in his situation and tries to contaminate as many individuals as possible. He was the source of Lupin's bite and evolved to assault even when the moon was not full (*Half-Blood Prince* 334-335). Slavic tales explain men-wolves who carry out cruel actions under spells, counting one who murders his own daughters and baby grandsons (Pilkington and Pilkington 307-309) and one who kills his faithless wife and her child by her second companion (316).

Rowling associated references from dissimilar cultural legends when bringing her account of these characters to the wizarding world. Another example of Rowling's nod to global mythology is the veela (her spelling). First came in *Goblet of Fire* as the Bulgarian National Team Mascots at the Quidditch World Cup, the lovely female beings perform a dance that approximately hypnotizes Harry, Ron and most other males into behaving in potentially life-threatening ways (102). Vila exists in many legends. Thomas Keightley explains them as "mountain nymphs, young and beautiful, clad in white with long flying hair" (492). To evaluate a beautiful woman to a Vila was the highest admire (Keightley 494), alike to Rowling's description of Fleur Delacour's striking and strange manifestation (*Goblet of Fire* 253). Nancy Arrowsmith describes the Vily of Yugoslavia as firewood spirits. Those near the Hungarian edge have slightly darker complexions, and die if they lose a single hair; those near the coast have iron teeth, goat's feet, and wear gold caps (261). As per Ace and Olga Pilkington's translations of Slavic folktales, vila can take non-human forms, such as a horse (250), are healers (245; 270); and can achieve great feats (233). Rusalki are similar beings; always female, they are supernatural creatures associated with moisture and water, as well as woods.

Rowling comprised bits from the different myths, and pinches them for her own devices. In spite of the legends' imageries that these creatures live in water environments, Fleur cannot manage to free her sister Gabrielle undersea during the second job of the Triwizard Tournament because of the grindylows (*Goblet of Fire* 504). Again, Rowling is both conscious and choosy in what and how she references folklore. Rowling



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seems backwards to antique mythology and more recent events. Gellert Grindelwald, the most awful Dark Wizard before Voldemort, stole the Elder Wand from Gregorovitch, and started his invasion of Europe, till he was congested by Dumbledore and incarcerated in Nurmengard. His motto for his awful deeds was, “For the Greater Good.” With these references, she calls to mind the trope of the cowardly nature of power. By *Deathly Hallows*, it is obvious that Dumbledore himself was lured by Grindelwald’s quest for power. All along with plot of the story points connected to pureblood, Rowling makes sure that readers recognize World War II evils and events.

In spite of Rowling’s disparities on symbols, there is a thread that connects them crosswise cultures and centuries. Whether Jung’s idea of a cooperative comatose, or anthropologists’ belief that all humans started from one place and traveled, there appears to be no geographic or historical age to limit Rowling’s references. Harry’s world is well-known to all.



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