

The Character Development in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

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Studij: Dvopredmetni sveučilišni preddiplomski studij engleskoga jezika i
književnosti i njemačkog jezika i književnosti

Antonia Maslak

Razvoj lika u romanu *Harry Potter i kamen mudraca* J.K. Rowling

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Mentorica: izv. prof. dr. sc. Biljana Oklopčić

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Sorcerer's Stone***

Bachelor's Thesis

Supervisor: Dr. Biljana Oklopčić, Associate Professor

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Abstract

J. K. Rowling's novel *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* follows the seminal story of three eleven-year-old children named Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, and Ronald Weasley. Together, these three go from being complete strangers to the best of friends through all sorts of adventures they come across at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The adventures, both big and small, range from sneaking out of their dormitories past curfew, over rescuing Hermione from a loose troll in the ladies' bathroom, to saving the day by stopping Him-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named from rising again and ultimately defeating him. Even though the adventures changed each of the named individuals for the better, it is their friendship that went through the biggest and greatest change. In the first chapter, the paper provides a detailed overview of the general notion of character development, which serves as a theoretical basis for the analysis. The changes happening in the novel follow a pattern called *The Hero's Journey* which allows all fantasy novels to be original and yet familiar at the same time. Being the main character and prime example of the *Hero's Journey* pattern, Harry Potter allows for an in-depth analysis of each individual stage of the *Journey*. Further analysis sheds light on the character development of the other two important characters, Ron and Hermione, as well as their friendship, which experiences various obstacles during their time at Hogwarts. The conclusion ultimately provides a brief insight in the most important and memorable events and experiences that shaped the novel's characters.

Key words: character development, fantasy literature, hero, J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

Introduction

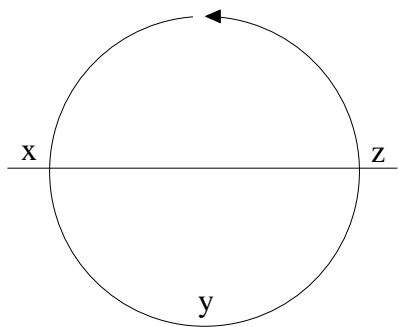
The topic of this paper is the character development in the novel *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling. The three main characters, Harry Potter, Ronald Weasley and Hermione Granger, are analysed and discussed. Out of the three, only Harry represents the archetypal hero figure associated with Joseph Campbell's *Hero's Journey* narrative pattern and this is why only he is analysed according to the pattern. The other two characters are analysed separately and in their own frame and course of development.

The paper is divided into five chapters: The Character Development in Fantasy Novels, The Development of Harry Potter, The Development of Ron Weasley, The Development of Hermione Granger, and The Development of the Friendship between the Protagonists. The first chapter provides the theoretical framework of the thesis. It brushes off briefly on archetypes and character development in general and goes into an in-depth examination of Campbell's *Hero's Journey*. The chapter explains in detail what happens with the hero at each stage of the *Journey*. The second chapter provides an analysis of Harry Potter's development. The chapter is divided into two subchapters: Summary and The Application of the Hero's Journey Pattern. The first subchapter provides a brief summary of Harry's development throughout the novel. In the second subchapter the theoretical framework from the first chapter is applied and Harry is analysed according to the mentioned pattern. This subchapter is further divided into another three chapters to provide a better overview of the development and its stages. The three subchapters are named after the terms Campbell used when he described the pattern: Separation, Initiation, and Return. These three subchapters concisely present the application of the pattern throughout the hero's development. The third chapter gives insight into the development of Ron Weasley and the fourth chapter gives insight into the development of Hermione Granger. Finally, the fifth chapter provides an explanation of the development of the friendship between the protagonists and conveys the lessons from the novel that concern the topic of friendship.

1. The Character Development in Fantasy Novels

An important component of a fantasy novel is the character development, which happens throughout it. Modern fantasy genre is based on folklore, myths and legends, and fairy tales. Its focus is on retelling old and already known stories, rather than coming up with innovations and putting emphasis on novelty. “Even the most inventive and original fantasy tends to look back to an earlier epic tradition, or to what might be considered eternal truths. Archetypes, defined by . . . [the] dictionary as the ‘original pattern or model,’ are vital to fantasy” (Tuttle 25). Some instances of archetypes involve “the wise old woman, the witch, the divine child, the young hero (or heroine) sent on a quest, helpful animals, a walled castle, the wasteland, the dying king, shape-shifting tricksters, dragons, unicorns [etc.]” (Tuttle 26). If these recognisable characters are managed well, they are authentic and convincing, familiar and unique at the same time. However, if the author does not have the right skill set, or if they are careless, the characters will appear to be caricature-like or even clichés. Luckily, “[Rowling] is particularly notable for her ability to control the complex plot and to deliver it with an excellent sense of pace, for her attention to detail, for her sense of humour and for the addition of some fizzing magic which turns the familiar into the spectacular” (Eccleshare 8).

In order to develop, the characters in fantasy novels must undergo some changes. This happens through the narrative pattern known as *the Hero's Journey*. The narrative pattern was introduced by Joseph Campbell, an American mythologist, writer, and lecturer. The following graphic illustration depicts the process:



The pattern is in fact a cycle. The upper half of the cycle represents the real world and ordinary life, while the lower half represents the imaginary or fantasy world, in which the hero ventures. “The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation—initiation—return” (Campbell 28), with *x* marking the separation, *y* marking the initiation, and finally *z* marking the return.

Figure 1: The Hero's Journey

Campbell explained the pattern as follows: “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” (Campbell 28). According to Campbell, there are 17 stages of the Journey, but to make it simpler, only the more common twelve are going to be discussed in the following paragraphs. These include: The Ordinary World, The Call to Adventure, The Refusal of the Call, The Meeting with the Mentor, The Crossing of the Threshold, The Tests, Allies and Enemies, The Approach to the Inmost Cave, The Ordeal, The Reward, The Road Back, The Resurrection, and The Return with the Elixir.

The first stage of the Journey is The Ordinary World. The story usually starts with a common person living in the ordinary world. The hero-to-be is introduced in order for the reader to associate with his circumstances or problems. The hero is presented in an environment that shows his background and history. An opposition in his life is causing a commotion and stress. The second stage is The Call to Adventure. In this stage, the hero receives a call to action which can happen in various forms such as an explicit threat to himself, his loved ones, the wellbeing of his community, or the status quo in general. The Call to Adventure can be manifested in a more or less dramatic way, such as the sound of a gunshot or plainly a phone call. No matter what it is, it consequently rattles the peace of the hero’s Ordinary World and poses a test or a quest for the hero to face and engage in. The next stage is called The Refusal of the Call. Due to the fear of the unknown that needs to be overcome, the hero feels deeply insecure because of the arising personal doubts that make him question himself as to whether or not he has what it takes to meet the challenge. Initially, the hero refuses the call and consequently ends up suffering in a way. The posed problem may seem too much for him to manage and the safety of the Ordinary World may be much more appealing than the dangerous path that lies before him. Thus, the Refusal of the Call is a natural choice that again contributes to the reader connecting with the cautious hero. The fourth stage of the Journey is The Meeting with the Mentor, which is an important turning point. At this stage, the hero is in great need of counselling and he meets a Mentor who provides him with guidance and something important that he requires. It could be a very important object, understanding of the challenge, a valuable piece of advice, practical preparation, or even courage and belief in oneself. No matter what the Mentor contributes with, it rids the hero of his hesitation and concerns and provides him with power and fortitude to embark on the quest.

In the following stage, The Crossing of the Threshold, the hero is prepared to go on his quest, which can be emotional, physical or spiritual. He crosses the threshold and enters a new world with foreign rules and principles. Regardless of the way in which the threshold manifests itself, it represents the hero’s obligation to the journey and whatever it brings along. The sixth

stage includes The Tests, Allies and Enemies, in which the hero is put on trial during which he gains allies and, naturally, enemies as well. Both of these, each in their own way, help him prepare for bigger troubles that lie ahead. Every difficulty that the hero encounters reveals something new about his character and helps the reader connect even more with him. At the next stage, The Approach to the Inmost Cave, which can symbolise an actual place where danger lurks or an inner struggle, the hero must prepare for the battle. The hero usually finds himself questioning everything once again. He contemplates upon his journey and what still awaits him. This short pause shows the reader the importance of the calamity which the hero needs to face, making the suspense bigger in expectation of the final trial or the Ordeal, which is the following stage. Whether the Ordeal is an actual physical trial or a deep internal critical situation, the hero must confront it in order to survive or to save his world. At this point, he needs to use all the knowledge and abilities he obtained thus far and in the Approach to the Inmost Cave to be able to conquer this key obstacle. The hero is reborn, yet for the price of a “death.” This figurative rebirth gives him the knowledge needed to fulfil his fate or to arrive at the end of the Journey. This is the key point at which everything the hero values is put at risk. If he fails, he will either die or his life will change forever. If he succeeds, his Journey continues with the stage called The Reward. Aside from being changed into a stronger person as a result of the victory, the hero is rewarded for confronting death. The reward may come in the form of something materially valuable or powerful, a secret, wisdom, or even making peace with someone he holds dear to his heart.

Now, the hero takes The Road Back, which is the tenth stage. He returns home to his ordinary world. However, the Journey does not end here. The hero must now choose between his personal aspiration and the higher cause. The eleventh stage, which is also the climax, is called The Resurrection. This is where the hero has his final and the most serious and potentially deadly trial in which he confronts death once again. The conclusive fight symbolises something much more important than the hero’s existence and its result brings about major aftermath concerning the ordinary world and those that are a part of it. Failure will result in bringing them pain, which accentuates the gravity of the responsibility the hero needs to bear. Finally, the hero will beat the enemy and come out of the battle as a resurrected winner. The last and the twelfth stage of the Journey is The Return with the Elixir. The hero returns to the Ordinary World as a transformed person. Now that he has been through a lot, he became a better person, he acquired many new skills and knowledge and he underwent many dangerous risks, among which is death as well. However, now he hopes to make a fresh new start in life. His coming back can be followed by

hope for those who were left in the Ordinary World. It could also bring a solution to his troubles, or even a different point of view that he can contemplate about. The Elixir, or the reward, may be literal or symbolic. No matter what it is, it symbolizes transformation, achievement, and authentication of his Journey. The Return also brings resolution for other important characters. Those who doubted the hero will be exiled, the adversaries will be punished, and the allies will be given a prize. Finally, the hero returns to where he started the Journey, but obviously and naturally nothing will ever be the same as it was.

2. The Development of Harry Potter

2.1. Summary

Harry Potter is an orphan who lives with his aunt Petunia and uncle Vernon – the Dursleys. They have a son, Dudley Dursley, who is a spoiled brat and bullies Harry. “Dudley’s favourite punch-bag was Harry, but he couldn’t often catch him” (Rowling 20). Petunia and Vernon do not really care about Harry and treat him as if he were a pest or something of that sort. He was told that his parents died in a car crash, which he believes during the first three chapters of the book. “Don’t ask questions – that was the first rule for a quiet life with the Dursleys” (Rowling 20) and that is why at first he did not know any details concerning his parents’ death. He has no real bedroom of his own. One morning “Harry got slowly out of bed and started looking for socks. He found a pair under his bed and, after pulling a spider off one of them, put them on. Harry was used to spiders, because the cupboard under the staircase was full of them, and that was where he slept” (Rowling 20). The clothes he wears are not new, they are Dudley’s hand-me-downs. It is safe to say that the Dursleys do everything that is in their power to make Harry feel unwanted and unwelcome. The photographs on the walls of the house show only Dudley: “the photographs showed a large, blond boy riding his first bicycle, on a roundabout at the fair, playing a computer game with his father, being hugged and kissed by his mother. The room held no sign at all that another boy lived in the house, too” (Rowling 19). To avoid getting in trouble, Harry knows it is best to be obedient and to ignore all the insults. However, before he found out who he really is, he was content with the way his life was because he did not know a better one. He is humble. In fact, Harry feels even thankful for what he has when he meets the boa in the zoo because, apparently, the snake has it worse than him:

Harry moved in front of the tank and looked intently at the snake. He wouldn’t have been surprised if it had died of boredom itself – no company except stupid people drumming their fingers on the glass trying to disturb it all day long. It was worse than having a cupboard as a bedroom, where the only visitor was Aunt Petunia hammering on the door to wake you up – at least he got to visit the rest of the house. (Rowling 25)

After Rubeus Hagrid comes to his rescue – as it seems to Harry – he still cannot believe that what is happening is in fact true:

Harry woke early the next morning. Although he could tell it was daylight, he kept his eyes shut tight.

“It was a dream,” he told himself firmly. “I dreamed a giant called Hagrid came to tell me I was going to a school for wizards. When I open my eyes I’ll be at home in my cupboard.”

There was suddenly a loud tapping noise.

“And there’s Aunt Petunia knocking on the door,” Harry thought, his heart sinking. But he still didn’t open his eyes. It had been such a good dream. (Rowling 49)

Besides finding out that he is a wizard, he also learned that his parents left him a small fortune. The interesting thing is that Harry never boasts with his money. He remains humble even after discovering that he is a celebrity in the world of magic and feels important for the first time in his life. As a matter of fact, he wants to earn his reputation even though the reputation he already has is more than good enough: “Harry left the changing room alone some time later, to take his Nimbus Two Thousand back to the broomshed. He couldn’t ever remember feeling happier. He’d really done something to be proud of now – no one could say he was just a famous name any more” (Rowling 165). As the novel progresses to its end, Harry, a boy who has spent all his life trying to avoid trouble, comes to a realisation that getting in trouble and taking risks is exactly what it takes to achieve the greater good. With the help of his friends and his determination, he grows courageous and defeats Voldemort.

2.2. The Application of the Hero’s Journey Pattern

2.2.1. Separation

As the main character of the novel, Harry represents the hero archetype. The first stage of the Journey, The Ordinary World, includes the first and the second chapter of the novel, *The Boy who Lived* and *The Vanishing Glass*. In these two chapters, which provide some background information as to how Harry ended up with his foster parents, the reader also gets to know Harry Potter. He is an ordinary boy who seems like the opposite of a hero in the beginning of his

journey: “Harry had always been small and skinny for his age... [He] had a thin face, knobby knees, black hair, and bright green eyes. He wore round glasses held together with a lot of Scotch tape” (Rowling 20). The only thing that made him stand out at that time was “a very thin scar on his forehead that was shaped like a bolt of lightning” (Rowling 20). Rowling insists on such a characterization because the reader usually identifies more easily with ordinary characters. On the other hand, Harry’s foster family is represented as his binary opposite, which causes him only stress in life. The second stage of the Journey, The Call to Adventure, encompasses the third and fourth chapters of the novel, *The Letters from No One* and *The Keeper of the Keys*. In this novel, the Call manifests itself in form of a letter – or rather letters – for Harry. Even though Harry’s foster parents desperately try to prevent him from reading them, the letters persistently keep coming. As it becomes known in the fourth chapter, those are acceptance letters from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. On Harry’s eleventh birthday, there is a strong, loud knock on the door of the shack in which the Dursleys tried to hide from the letters. The door is broken down and Hagrid comes to inform Harry that he is a wizard, which introduces the third stage of the Journey or The Refusal of the Call and the fourth stage or The Meeting with the Mentor. At first, Harry does not believe him: “‘Hagrid,’ he said quietly, ‘I think you must have made a mistake. I don’t think I can be a wizard’” (Rowling 47), but Hagrid manages to reassure him. However, Harry himself does not refuse the call, but the Dursleys do. They are strongly opposed to the idea of Harry going to Hogwarts and his being a wizard in the first place. The reason why they are against it might be that they do not like the possibility of Harry being happy about anything. Luckily, Hagrid is there to defend Harry and he leaves the Dursleys no other choice than to let him go. The Meeting with the Mentor stage progresses into the fifth chapter, *Diagon Alley*, where Hagrid, as Harry’s mentor, provides him with the necessities he needs for his education and stay at Hogwarts. This is where they buy Harry’s wand, his books, and even his pet owl, Hedwig. At this stage, Hagrid guides Harry and dispels his insecurities, which puts Harry at some ease. It is important to clarify that Harry has more than one mentor, however Hagrid is the only one mentioned here since he is the first one Harry meets. Nevertheless it is undeniably crucial that Harry has a mentor as soon as possible because he is not only a child, but also a layman in the world of magic, which puts him in a desperate need for a guide. Also, Hagrid fits as his first mentor because he does not know everything and his silly nature makes him much more affable than Dumbledore, for example.

2.2.2. Initiation

The sixth chapter, *The Journey from Platform Nine and Three-Quarters*, marks the fifth stage of the Journey, The Crossing of the Threshold. In this case, the nature of Harry's quest is physical; he actually goes into another dimension, or rather to a new world. "There is no magical wardrobe à la C.S. Lewis that transports Harry and the other wizards to a distant, separate world. When he passes through platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ he does so at the real King's Cross Station" (Campbell 164). This world has its own set of rules and values which are at the same time authentic but also completely foreign to Harry. "Through her detailed descriptions, J. K. Rowling vividly creates an immersive, persistent, alternate world through which we can explore possibilities that the natural laws of our non-magical world do not allow" (Sheltrown 47). In the same chapter, the next stage, The Tests, Allies and Enemies, begins. Harry meets Ron and Hermione, his future allies, and Draco, his future enemy, on the train to Hogwarts. At his new school, he goes through various tests including: dealing with professor Snape's criticism in the eighth chapter, *The Potions Master*, retrieving Neville's Remembrall in the ninth chapter *The Midnight Duel*, saving Hermione from the Troll in the tenth chapter, *Halloween*, playing Quidditch for the first time and winning in the eleventh chapter, *Quidditch*. The twelfth chapter, *The Mirror of Erised*, marks the seventh stage of the Journey or The Approach to the Inmost Cave. At this stage, Harry comes across a strange, large mirror, which did not reflect reality. In the mirror, Harry saw himself standing beside his parents: "The Potters smiled and waved at [him] and he stared hungrily back at them, his hands pressed flat against the glass as though he was hoping to fall right through it and reach them. He had a powerful kind of ache inside him, half joy, half terrible sadness" (Rowling 153). This is an important point in the novel because Harry's greatest desire is revealed: being with his family. He becomes slightly obsessed with the mirror and continually ventures to see it. At one occasion, Dumbledore finds him looking at the mirror and he gives him an important piece of advice – not to forget to live, but also not to give up on his dreams – which gives Harry hope and courage to continue his journey. The thirteenth chapter, *Nicolas Flamel*, the fourteenth chapter, *Norbert the Norwegian Ridgeback*, and the fifteenth chapter, *The Forbidden Forrest*, serve as the rising action part of the plot, right before the climax. In these three chapters, the three friends manage to gather some crucial information that guides them further through the Journey. For example, they find out that someone has been killing unicorns for their blood, which is known to keep someone from dying, and this raises their suspicions that Voldemort is, in fact, back. Prototypically, the Ordeal stage happens next, but in this case,

Rowling took the liberty to do it in reverse. The Ordeal is actually the eleventh chapter, *Quidditch*. This is the first real trial Harry is put to and it serves as a reassurance of his being a hero. He almost chokes to death in his chase after the Golden Snitch. The ninth stage, The Reward, takes place in the same chapter with the Golden Snitch serving as Harry's material reward and with praise as a spiritual reward.

2.2.3. Return

The stages in this part of the Journey are out of the prototypical order. First comes the Resurrection. After that comes the Return with the Elixir and then the Road Back. The Resurrection stage begins with the sixteenth chapter, *Through the Trapdoor*. At this stage, Harry, the hero, and Ron and Hermione, his trustworthy allies, go on their most important quest so far. They find out how to get past Fluffy, the giant, three-headed, dog guarding the trapdoor in the restricted area of the school. However, this is just the first of the series of tests that await them and each was installed by a different professor and adapted for their different skillsets so that every one of them can solve something. At this point, each of them is ready to set aside their good manners and do whatever it takes for the sake of the greater good, especially Hermione. This is best shown when Neville tries to stop the trio from going out of their dormitory past curfew:

“You can't go out,” said Neville, “you'll get caught again. Gryffindor will be in even more trouble.”

“You don't understand,” said Harry, “this is important.”

...

“I won't let you do it,” he said, hurrying to stand in front of the portrait hole. “I'll – I'll fight you!”

...

“Neville,” she said, “I'm really, really sorry about this.”

She raised her wand.

“Petrificus Totalus!” she cried, pointing it at Neville. (Rowling 198)

The first test, planted by professor Sprout, takes place right after they go through the trapdoor. There is a room filled with tangling vines that are trying to wrap themselves around Harry, Ron, and Hermione and trap them. Luckily, Hermione, who paid attention in Herbology classes, recognises the plant as the Devil’s Snare and remembers how to kill it. Harry solves the second test. In a room full of flying keys that were charmed by professor Flitwick, Harry, Ron and Hermione fly on broomsticks among the keys trying to find and catch the key that unlocks the door leading them to the third test. Harry spots the key they need and manages to seize it. The journey continues with the third test in the next chamber where there is a giant chessboard with enormous chess-pieces, transfigured by professor McGonagall to come to life. Since chess is something that neither Harry nor Hermione are very good at, Ron tells them what to do. He takes place of a black knight, Harry takes place of a bishop and Hermione replaces a castle. During the game, his courage emerges when he realises that he needs to sacrifice himself in order for Harry to checkmate the king. The fourth test, planted by professor Snape, is solved by Hermione. Surprisingly, this test is about logic and not magic. In Hermione’s words: “A lot of the greatest wizards haven’t got an ounce of logic, they’d be stuck in here forever” (Rowling 207) and luckily, that is not the case when it comes to her. Now, Harry can go and face Voldemort. He enters the chamber where he finds professor Quirrell and the Mirror of Erised. As mentioned before, the mirror showed that Harry’s biggest desire is to be with his family. This is important because it is the reason why Harry obtains the Sorcerer’s stone. Dumbledore enchanted the mirror and hid the stone inside of it. He allowed the mirror to transfer the stone only to someone who has no intention of using it and Harry wanted to simply find it:

What I want more than anything else in the world at the moment, he thought, is to find the Stone before Quirrell does. ... He saw his reflection, pale and scared-looking at first. But a moment later, the reflection smiled at him. It put its hand into his pocket and pulled out a blood-red stone. It winked and put the Stone back in its pocket – and as it did so, Harry felt something heavy drop into his real pocket. Somehow – incredibly – he’d gotten the Stone. (Rowling 211-212)

At this stage, Voldemort tempts Harry, the Hero, to save his life and join him. Naturally, Harry refuses, beats him, and faints. After that, the Return with the Elixir stage begins. After facing death, Harry wakes up in the Hogwarts’ hospital wing. The status quo is restored. He succeeded, removed the threat, and emerged as a courageous hero, bringing a new hope for everyone. Harry,

Ron, and Hermione receive a reward for their bravery. Their house, Gryffindor, gets extra points on account of their bold and fearless doings, consequently winning Gryffindor the house cup. This adventure changed Harry for good, especially because he got to see that his sacrifice and selflessness were worth it; he risked his life for the greater good and it paid off: “It was the best evening of Harry’s life, better than winning at Quidditch, or Christmas, or knocking out mountain trolls... he would never, ever forget tonight” (Rowling 222). The last stage, the Road Back, plays off in more of an announcement of what is yet to come in the character’s lives until the story continues in the next novel. The last chapter finishes on the platform nine and three-quarters. The characters just got back into the Ordinary World and are saying their goodbyes until the next school year when new adventures await them.

3. The Development of Ron Weasley

Ron Weasley comes from a big, loving, and poor family. He is the second youngest of six brothers and a sister, which is why he is used to being overshadowed by his older brothers. Still, this bothers him quite a lot because whenever he does something he can be proud of, it is not really exciting because one or more of his older brothers had already done it. In his own words: “You could say I’ve got a lot to live up to ... Everyone expects me to do as well as the others, but if I do, it’s no big deal, because they did it first. You never get anything new, either, with five brothers” (Rowling 75). Ron wants to prove himself because he is neither an excellent student like his brother Percy, nor a good Quidditch player like Fred and George. At the beginning of the novel, he meets one of the antagonists in the novel, Draco Malfoy who “is disdainful ... of those individuals and families who don’t have money or worldly goods or a big house. Ron Weasley is the usual target of ... [his] prejudice against the poor” (Granger 65). When they meet, he mocks Ron for his poverty: “No need to ask who you are. My father told me all the Weasleys have red hair, freckles, and more children than they can afford” (Rowling 81). At this point, Ron does not stand up for himself. He keeps quiet. This could be because he knows better than to talk back to Malfoy, but it could also be a sign of cowardice. However, when trouble arises, Ron gathers enough courage just in time to save Hermione from the troll:

[He] pulled out his own wand – not knowing what he was going to do he heard himself cry the first spell that came into his head: “Wingardium Leviosa!” The club flew suddenly out of the troll’s hand, rose high, high up into the air, turned slowly over – and dropped, with a sickening crack, onto its owner’s head. The troll swayed on the spot and then fell flat on its face, with a thud that made the whole room tremble. (Rowling 130)

At this important turning point in the novel, instead of Harry, Ron takes the spotlight and proves himself to be a hero too. As the plot moves on, Ron encounters Malfoy’s mocking on account of his poverty again. This time “Ron dived at Malfoy just as Snape came up the stairs. ‘WEASLEY!’ Ron let go of the front of Malfoy’s robes” (Rowling 144). Even though his reaction is rash, Ron finally stands up to the bully and defends himself. “‘I’ll get him,’ said Ron, grinding his teeth at Malfoy’s back, ‘one of these days, I’ll get him’” (Rowling 144). When he looked in the Mirror of Erised, “‘Ronald Weasley, who has always been overshadowed by his brothers, sees himself standing alone, the best of all of them’” (Rowling 157). He may not have

become a Quidditch captain as he desired, but in the end he proves himself as a loyal friend and an excellent chess player who showed great bravery:

“I think,” said Ron, “we’re going to have to be chessmen.”

He walked up to a black knight and put his hand out to touch the knight’s horse.

...

“This wants thinking about ...” he said. “I suppose we’ve got to take the place of three of the black pieces ...”

Harry and Hermione stayed quiet, watching Ron think. Finally he said, “Now, don’t be offended or anything, but neither of you are that good at chess –”

“We’re not offended,” said Harry quickly. “Just tell us what to do.”

“Well, Harry, you take the place of that bishop, and Hermione, you go there instead of that castle.”

“What about you?”

“I’m going to be a knight,” said Ron. (Rowling 204-205)

4. The Development of Hermione Granger

One of Harry's friends at Hogwarts is Hermione Granger. Despite being a muggle-born, she is a very talented young witch of outstanding wits. At the beginning of their school year, she is strongly opposed to breaking the rules in fear of getting expelled:

“I can't believe you're going to do this, Harry.”

A lamp flickered on. It was Hermione Granger, wearing a pink dressing-gown and a frown.

“You!” said Ron furiously. “Go back to bed!”

“I almost told your brother,” Hermione snapped. “Percy – he's a Prefect, he'd put a stop to this.” (Rowling 115)

Harry and Ron find her annoying at the beginning of the novel. She always tries to draw attention to herself in class to show off her knowledge and plays a know-it-all when Ron and Harry do something wrong. However, it is them who save her with their own wits and spells from the troll that went wild. Hermione represents an exemplary role model especially for young girls. She is an excellent student and a true friend. “The novels present Hermione's ambitions as individually motivated, but her knowledge is never applied to serve only her own good” (Berndt 169). She thrives for knowledge and even though she is a witch who, of course, does magic, knowledge is her actual super power. Guided by discipline and good manners, she knows when she needs to put those aside. “Hermione's ardent striving for knowledge finds its counterpart in her determined attempts to support those who are close to her” (Berndt 169). Just as Harry has to do something that opposes his usual behaviour while trying to stop the thief from stealing the Sorcerer's Stone, Hermione also finds that it is necessary to break some rules and expose oneself to danger in order to save the day:

“Oh, come off it, you don't think we'd let you go alone?”

“Of course not,” said Hermione briskly. “How do you think you'd get to the Stone without us? I'd better go and look through my books, there might be something useful...”

“But if we get caught, you two will be expelled, too.”

“Not if I can help it,” said Hermione grimly. “Flitwick told me in secret that I got a hundred and twelve per cent on his exam. They’re not throwing me out after that.”
(Rowling 197)

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Hermione is muggle-born, which means her parents are not wizards. This fuels her motivation to become a prolific witch because she does not want to be underestimated on the account of that sole fact. In the end, she becomes confident as a person and also as a friend, unlike at the beginning, when she was an unlikable, socially awkward girl who had nothing but her knowledge.

5. The Development of the Friendship between the Protagonists

At the beginning of the novel, Harry, Ron, and Hermione are total strangers. They meet on the train to Hogwarts. Harry and Ron get on well, but Hermione seems to annoy them because she is trying too hard to show off how smart she is. As mentioned before, even though all three characters significantly change for the better, their friendship undergoes the greatest change. In the beginning, Ron and Hermione hate each other:

“Whatever house I’m in, I hope she’s not in it,” said Ron. (Rowling 80)

and

Hermione was now refusing to speak to Harry and Ron, but she was such a bossy know-it-all that they saw this as an added bonus. (Rowling 121)

and

“It’s no wonder no one can stand her,” he said to Harry as they pushed their way into the crowded corridor. “She’s a nightmare, honestly.”

Someone knocked into Harry as they hurried past him. It was Hermione. Harry caught a glimpse of her face – and was startled to see that she was in tears.

“I think she heard you.”

“So?” said Ron, but he looked a bit uncomfortable. “She must’ve noticed she’s got no friends.” (Rowling 127)

Luckily, with time, they all manage to grow fond of each other. When the troll goes loose in Hogwarts, Harry and Ron save Hermione, which is a major turning point in their relationship: “But from that moment on, Hermione Granger became their friend. There are some things you can’t share without ending up liking each other, and knocking out a twelve-foot mountain troll is one of them” (Rowling 132). As time passes and different opportunities for mischief come and go, Hermione goes from being strongly opposed to breaking the rules and being reluctant to help to realising she needs to make certain sacrifices for the sake of their friendship. When it is time to go and face danger in order to restore the status quo, they all face it together and do their best to help each other.

The novel sends three important messages about friendship to the young readers. It shows that the popular group is not always the best option when it comes to choosing friends and that it is important not to be influenced by others when making that choice, just as Harry boldly stood up to Draco:

“You’ll soon find out some wizarding families are much better than others, Potter. You don’t want to go making friends with the wrong sort. I can help you there.” He held out his hand to shake Harry’s, but Harry didn’t take it. “I think I can tell who the wrong sort are for myself, thanks,” he said coolly. (Rowling 81)

Another important lesson from the novel is that friends like each other for who they are. Harry, Ron, and Hermione welcome each other’s strengths and talents because they know that each one of them contributes to their friendship with something unique and that is one of the reasons why they make it through the Resurrection stage of the journey. The third message, or lesson, is that it is alright to disagree. As Dumbledore says at the end of the novel: “It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends” (Rowling 221). Even though at this point he refers to Neville, who is not discussed in this paper, it can also be applied to Hermione, because she did try her best to stop Harry and Ron from being reckless on multiple occasions. She did not pretend to be fine with all of their decisions; she spoke up about her concerns when it mattered while having their best interest in mind.

Conclusion

Even though *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* is the first novel in the *Harry Potter* series, leaving room for further development, it does in fact feature the complete pattern of a typical *Hero's Journey*. However, the pattern can only be applied to Harry Potter as he is the representative of the hero archetype in the novel. Although the stages of the Journey are not in the prototypical order in this particular novel, the pattern is fully applied nevertheless.

Each of the three analysed characters undergoes development throughout the novel. Harry goes from being a poor, self-conscious boy to a true hero. Ron changes from being an ever overshadowed coward to a brave and loyal friend. Hermione transforms from being a bossy know-it-all who always follows the rules to someone who is ready to break the rules for the sake of the greater good. Even though the three protagonists experience change on an individual level, their friendship undergoes the biggest change. Harry, Ron and Hermione start out as complete strangers and adventures mixed with mischief bring them together making them best friends.

Finally, the novel also sends important messages and conveys valuable lessons about friendship to its readers. Firstly, the popular group of people may not always be the best one to choose from. Secondly, true friends accept each other the way they are. And thirdly, true friends do not chastise their friends for speaking up against them out of concern.

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