

# A STUDY OF GOOD AND EVIL IN JK ROWLING'S HARRY POTTER SERIES

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## **Abstract**

The Harry Potter series has been an extraordinary distributing accomplishment for the phenomenal British author JK Rowling. The paper examines why Rowling's Harry Potter books keep on being so well known. The theme of "good vs evil" is probably one of the first characteristics of Children's Literature that impresses the readers the most. In terms of good and evil, fantasy stories and readings present an explicated version of realism in which the readers can comprehend the difference between them. As the primary audience of fantasy stories are children it requires to have good and evil characters for their classification. It is debateable that fantasy stories are inappropriate for children because they may be tempted to imitate the behaviour of these wicked characters. However, the evil present in fantasy serves as driving force for highlighting the good; without the demonstration of evil one cannot underscore good. Evil is the mirror in which good is reflected; for that reason, in the Harry Potter Series, Rowling uses Harry and Voldemort representing the nature of good and evil. This paper also argues Harry's and Lord Voldemort's moral choices in life, particularly the choice between good and evil. Moreover, the paper sheds light on the importance of sacrificial parental love which the writer considers as a moral philosophy to live by, and Rowling's own image of woman.

**Keywords:** Harry Potter, good and evil, children's literature.

## **Introduction**

Good clashing with evil is the principal subject of Harry Potter Series. Rowling uses this theme throughout the series and it is all about the external conflict between good and evil, the good Harry Potter and the evil dark Lord Voldemort. All through the series Voldemort endeavours to acquire power and attempts to kill Harry a few times however Harry attempts to keep down his power and controls him from executing his detestable demonstrations. It contains a theme of decision among great and wickedness. In that decision, the characters advance and develop through differing encounters and find things about themselves as well as other people. In every novel Harry and his companions progress through various unsavoury situations that lead towards a victory over evil. The researchers believe that the Harry Potter Series offers itself as a device for the creative mind in this manner helping the youngsters and grown-up to make their personal choices between good and evil.

The battle of good and evil is important part for some books and stories and it is clearly addressed in the Harry Potter books. The conflict between Harry Potter and Lord Voldemort. Harry defends the good Magic whereas Lord Voldemort is a supporter of the Dark and evil Magic. Harry himself appears as a real character in those situations but the Dark Lord mostly cannot be seen. He is substituted by other characters like, for example, Professor Quirrell. In his fight against evil Harry gets help of Professor Dumbledore who is "working tirelessly" against the supporters of the Dark Magic. He is a person one can trust in, a director who is concerned for his pupil's safety. He will never allow the Dark Magic to gain the upper hand as long as he can do something against it. Another example for the struggle of good and evil is the conflict between Harry and his schoolmate Malfoy, whose father was, and still is, a supporter of Lord Voldemort.

They are arch enemies ever since they met during their first year at Hogwarts. Not only does Malfoy try to hurt and denigrate Harry himself but also his friends Hermione, Ron and Hagrid. (Rowling 222)

Harry Potter Series deals with people decisions and choices, especially the choice among great and insidiousness. Choice is therefore a vital part in arriving at a bunch of individual qualities from which one settles on whether they are of fortunate or unfortunate person. Basically, the capacity of people to go with decisions permits people to foster a feeling of ethical quality in view of the qualities they pick. Shannon recommends that there are various components that lead to individuals turning out to be morally and ethically responsible. Two of these key elements are, firstly, that one need “to become aware of the embedded values in our way of life and to take responsibility for them by either affirming or rejecting them” (Shannon 43), which is a personal choice and secondly, that one needs to learn to make a decision which also involves learning “how to identify what is different about each part of the choice, how each part affects me, what are the consequences of my choice, and how to move beyond simple choice to reasons for the choice.” (Shannon 46)

Having perceived the significance of choice Rowling states in the earliest reference point of the series when Harry decides to be in Gryffindor as opposed to Slytherin. Dumbledore legitimately specifies the significance of choice in his proclamation in Office of Mysteries, “It is our choice, Harry, that show the thing we genuinely are, undeniably more than our capacities” (Chamber of Secrets 245). He also explains to Harry that his “mom had a decision” (Half-Blood Prince 262) when she bites the dust for him. Consequently, Rowling believes the perusers should comprehend that the decision of conciliatory love gives one triumph over death. In this way it is clarified that one can show his own qualities through the decisions one makes.

The choice of Rowling's characters is unique, for their decisions are focused on the conditions that completely change themselves over the span of the series. The choice is made by the characters, their activities, their thoughts; their convictions and a blend of these things make them great or wickedness. Their choice mirrors the individual qualities they hold and become more challenging to settle on and the results of those choices become more noteworthy, as the series continues on. There are outright qualities that can be as much for Harry concerning Voldemort. Harry's coach Dumbledore lets him know that an individual's decisions uncover who he truly is. Essentially, his determination of Gryffindor is an intentional decision uncovering his great person; he is never attracted to Slytherin where “Those cunning folk use any means to achieve their ends” (Sorcerer's Stone 118).

Similarly, Voldemort chooses to be evil, to kill and to harm, all the time knowing exactly what he is doing. In this example one can see how choice leads to determine values of good and bad. Choice of good and evil also sway on the morality line dividing right and wrong. Voldemort's ultimate choice is evil but he has no significant purpose being that side. He is not pitiable because he made conscious choices on who he wants to become. He purposely chooses evil; it is not something that happened to him or is imposed on him, he is not tricked into it. He does not regret of his choices but he desires to be. Voldemort has similar life as same as Harry but their choices are different. Weed observes that, “The individual determines his character by virtue of the actions that he performs and so it is up to him either to better or worse his character depending on the choices and the decisions that he makes and the actions he performs”(Weed 148-149). In the beginning of the series Rowling portrays the triumph of good Harry by making

his arch enemy Voldemort less than a human. When the series progresses, evil Voldemort reemerges after a long struggle against good will of Harry, he regains his bodily form in Goblet of Fire. The moment he comes to power, he starts his campaign with the idea of “purifying” the Wizarding world by killing muggle born people. This shows that Voldemort chooses to be ultimate evil though he faces defeat against good.

Rowling reiterates Voldemort and Harry as two ends of the moral spectrum, one good and the other evil: from the very beginning Voldemort and Harry are enemies. However, their pasts are remarkably similar. Voldemort himself remarks that “Both half-bloods, orphans, raised by Muggles. Probably the only two Parse mouths” (Chamber of Secrets 317). Dumbledore explains Harry that: “You can speak Parse tongue, Harry,” said Dumbledore calmly, “because Lord Voldemort who is the last remaining descendant of Salazar Slytherin can speak Parse tongue. Unless mistaken, he transferred some of his own powers to you the night he gave you that scar.

Moreover, characters in the Harry Potter Series are born with powers: such as the personal values they possess and then given a choice at some point to use these powers for good or evil purposes. Harry chooses to use his magical powers and the magical objects for good purposes. On the other hand, Voldemort chooses to use them for evil. There is a contrast to do with power between Harry, the leader of the good side and Voldemort the leader of the evil side. Voldemort wants to use his power to conquer and cheat death but Harry uses it in a good way to protect good from evil. Nikolajeva states, “Harry always takes the right side in the struggle between good and evil, leaving no doubt to the readers as to where their sympathies should be” (Nikolajeva 135).

Another example for the struggle of good and evil is the conflict between Harry and his schoolmate Malfoy, whose father was, and still is, a supporter of Lord Voldemort. They are arch enemies ever since they met during their first year at Hogwarts.[14] Not only does Malfoy try to hurt and denigrate Harry himself but also his friends Hermione, Ron and Hagrid. When he is bitten by Hagrid's creature Buckbeak he stages his hurt (Rowling 130-133) to get rid of Hagrid whom he does not like very much. In this way Malfoy is able to pester his enemy Harry indirectly. Their most obvious confrontation takes place on the Quidditch field. It is not only a normal fight of two players and teams to win the game but also the private fight of Harry and Malfoy. Therefore, Malfoy tries to influence and manipulate Harry by faking the appearance of a Dementor that shall frighten him to death. He does not shrink back from playing unfair to reach his goals. (Rowling 335) It is this scene in the Potter books where "the enmity between Harry and Malfoy is at its highest point ever" because Malfoy is angry that his plan to grass on Harry to Professor Snape has not worked. At this moment he has to admit his inferiority to his arch enemy but he will take advantage of his next chance to outdo Harry and to show the power of evil.

Rowling expresses that your life will be destroyed if you perform murder and that you must suffer to heal your soul. This indicates that she believes that, in some cases, the ethics of fear is required to control the behaviour of people who do not behave in ethically favourable ways. To me, this is an ethics that is full of contradictions. As an example, if feeling remorse is the method to be redeemed, you have an implicit ex ante justification for your evil acts, as you know that you may be redeemed in the end if you are willing to suffer a bit afterwards. A confusion of remorse with punishment is also reminiscent of the enslaved Dobby shutting his ears in the oven door or bashing his head against the wall.( Chamber of Secrets,) When he

disobeys he inflicts physical pain on himself, his behaviour is not corrected, only punished, and he really has no choice about it. For enlightenment to occur, a person needs to feel that he has done wrong (remorse) and change through a higher understanding of love (enlightenment), because he wants to change. The healing part of the process is thus not truly the remorse but the second step that causes one to understand and change one's behaviour.

Rowling's conception leaves a lot of ethical questions unanswered: can someone be considered evil if he never realized that he had the choice to be otherwise? Some facts in the book are actually not consistent with Rowling's idea that Voldemort had the choice to become morally good. Considering Voldemort's lack of love and unhappy childhood, (Half-Blood Prince) it is not surprising that he has a life marked by treachery, untruth and suffering. Rowling stated clearly in one interview that Voldemort was never loved by anyone. He had no knowledge of love because he may have never been in contact with it. Some may claim that Voldemort was cold and unemotional as a baby and that the problem here is not that he was not loved but that he was not receptive to love.

### **Conclusion**

The conflict between good and evil in the Harry Potter series happens on outer and inside levels. Notwithstanding the conflict between Lord Voldemort and Dumbledore's allies, there is an internal confrontation between many characters. It is quite significant that the presence of Harry Potter valuably affects many surfaces in work communication, and friendship with him helps his environment to turn the soul into good. Harry proceeds with Dumbledore's thoughts, who dedicated for what seems like forever to the right utilization of enchantment and inward development. There are internal conflicts within Potter, particularly given the troublesome times of growing up. The perspective and activities of the essential person impact the characters effectively associating with him: Sirius Dark, Remus Lupine, the mythical being Dobby, and many others, allowing them to win an inner victory of good over evil. The whole Harry Potter Series revolves around the defeat of evil and the exhibition of strong morals, something that good values. Throughout the series Harry Potter seeks to defeat the dark Lord Voldemort who uses his powers to oppress, kill, and annihilate muggles (humans with no magical powers) and wizards and witches with muggle blood in them. Lord Voldemort is seriously evil.

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