
Harry Potter And The Human Desires

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone by J.K Rowling follows the adventure of eleven-year-old Harry Potter, who gets accepted at Hogwarts wizarding school and unravels the mystery of his parent's death and his nemesis, Lord Voldemort. The children's fantasy story is littered with deep allegories of human behavior and personality. It showcases that human desires influence their behavior and are the fundamental motivations for all human actions. Rowling incorporates a few of the common human wishes and explains how even the most innocent desires can turn dangerous. In this essay, I will discuss the desires that motivate the characters - Harry Potter, Ronald Weasley, and Lord Voldemort, and how they represent human responses to desires.

Harry Potter's greatest desire is to meet his family. In society, a family is a place where one is most comfortable and is supported by people they love. It is the most important influence in life.

Harry, an orphaned boy, has never known his wizard parents and was placed under the care of his muggle relatives – Mr. and Mrs. Dursley who, though barely fed, clothed, and sheltered him, never loved him or treated him right. They spoiled their son, Dudley, but Harry was stuck living in a closet under the stairs. "The room had no sign at all that another boy lived in the house, too". Harry never felt he belonged there and doesn't have the right influence he needs. The extent of his longing isn't clear until Harry stumbles upon the Mirror of Erised and sees the reflection of his parents and extended family, whereupon he was filled with "a powerful kind of ache inside him, half joy, half terrible sadness".

Though it is innocent for Harry to be able to interact with his dead family, Rowling warns how intense, emotional urges can be dangerous. Harry soon grows obsessed with the Mirror's reflection, ignoring everything else in his life. If Professor Dumbledore didn't discover and warn him about the Mirror, Harry would've wasted away his days, staring at his fallen family and eventually going insane. Because his desire cannot be fulfilled as long as he lives.

Ronald Weasley, Harry's best friend, treats Harry as a part of his family, and having his mother make Harry a "Weasley jumper"- a family tradition, provides some comfort.

Ron is the youngest son of the Weasley family and has always been overshadowed by his 5 older brothers, each one excellent in their own way, and he worries he won't measure up to them. Though his parents expect good things from him too, he thinks it won't matter, "because they did it first". Being friends with Harry, a celebrity, and Hermione, an intellect, doesn't help his cause. Thus, his reflection in the Mirror, is not of his family like Harry expected, but himself, winning awards and achieving things like his older brothers:

"I am [head boy] - I'm wearing the badge like Bill used to – and I'm holding the house cup and the Quidditch cup – I'm Quidditch captain, too!".

Ron's desire is to have his abilities acknowledged equally and to be the best among his family. But unlike Harry, he doesn't feel compelled to return to stare at the reflection, though his wish is most suited to be obsessive, because he doesn't want to risk punishment and embarrass himself in front of his brothers and also because he thinks he cannot achieve it. While Harry's

yearning for his family is due to his strong emotions, Ron's desire sprouts from his self-doubt. He's skeptical about the reflection and has "a bad feeling about it".

Ron signifies the insecurity humans feel at some point in their lives- the underlying emotion that shapes self-image and behavior. Any insecure person would try to overcome their self-consciousness and this is reflected in Ron's desire. While most insecurities result from past traumas, rejection, and more, Ron's is rooted in his family's situation.

The Weasleys come from a long line of wizarding families, earning them a high status in the wizarding world. However, they do not have much money. Ron grew up wearing hand-me-downs and even had to use Charlie's old wand. He's greatly insecure about his family situation, his ears turning red whenever Draco Malfoy picks on him or when he feels embarrassed.

Ron's wish for acknowledgment is similar to Lord Voldemort's thirst for power as both can bleed to greed. Yet it is Voldemort's actions that are prime examples of how intense emotions can ultimately lead to bad choices.

Decades earlier, Voldemort wanted to gain power and turned "as bad as you could go." Those who stood up to him were horrible killed – including Harry's parents. However, unable to kill Harry, Voldemort loses his powers and disappeared.

Years later, reduced to "mere shadow and vapor", he takes over the body of Professor Quirrell and goes after the Philosopher's Stone that can "produce the Elixir of Life, which will make the drinker immortal" in order to restore his powers. Also, having a brush with death, he now seeks immortality.

The concept of immortality is often present in a religious context, a promise in the afterlife. However, scientists too have been searching for it. Life-extending substances made of telomerase, an enzyme that extends cell life, nanotechnology, and anti-aging supplements are the real-life counterparts of powerful stones. These advances result from the human desire to stay young forever, slow down the aging process and longevity. In fact, the pursuit of longer life is one of the health care goals. Preindustrial times have seen countless death from lack of proper treatment and medicine. The need to prevent such deaths by drinking an elixir and live longer may represent immortality. Voldemort, in the magic world, reflects a twisted version of this need.

In contrast to Harry and Ron, Voldemort takes drastic actions to meet his goal. His greed for life and power was so strong, he killed unicorns – pure creatures, to stay alive even with the price of a "cursed life".

To conclude, Rowling's novel shows how humans have different motivations in life and different ways to respond to them. Harry's wish to meet his dead parents cannot be fulfilled and Dumbledore understands how dangerous such a wish could be. Ron's wish to be the best among his siblings, though attainable, is ignored because of his self-doubt. Finally, Voldemort's desire for power and eternal life is attainable but terrible, yet he still takes cruel measures to achieve them. The difference in actions between the three characters represents many humans. Some understand the gravity of their wish, others give up due to insecurity, and some resort to drastic methods to get what they want.

