

**MAGIC, FRIENDSHIP, AND MORAL CHOICE IN J. K. ROWLING'S "HARRY POTTER"**

**Maxammadjonova Dilso'z Doniyor qizi**

Namangan State Institute of Foreign Languages

1st-year Master's student

Email: dilsuzmaxammadjonova@gmail.com

Tel: +998933857117

Scientific Supervisor: **Umrzaqov Islom**

Associate Professor, Namangan State Institute of Foreign Languages

**Annotation**

This article explores the major themes of magic, friendship, moral choice, and love in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series through the symbolic image of the cupboard under the stairs. The study interprets the cupboard as a representation of neglect, isolation, and the formative conditions of moral identity. By comparing Harry Potter's ethical development with that of Voldemort, the article emphasizes Rowling's central argument that morality is shaped by personal choice rather than background or suffering. Special attention is given to friendship as a source of emotional freedom and love as the most powerful force governing the narrative. The article concludes that love, sacrifice, and conscious moral decisions are the primary forces that ensure the triumph of good over evil in the series.

**Key words**

Magic world, cupboard as a beginning, identity and moral development, friendship as freedom, good and evil as choice, love as the strongest power, moral development, horcrux, death, spell

**Annotatsiya**

Mazkur maqolada J. K. Rowlingning Harry Potter asarlar turkumida sehr, do'stlik, axloqiy tanlov va muhabbat mavzulari tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda zinapoya ostidagi shkaf obrazi beparvolik, yolg'izlik va axloqiy shakllanishning ramziy ifodasi sifatida talqin etiladi. Harry Potter va Voldemort obrazlarini qiyosiy tahlil qilish orqali muallif axloqiylikning kelib chiqish emas, balki shaxsiy tanlov natijasi ekanini asoslaydi. Shuningdek, do'stlikning ma'naviy ozodlik manbai, muhabbatning esa asarda eng kuchli va barqaror kuch sifatidagi o'rni yoritiladi. Maqola muhabbat, fidoyilik va ongli axloqiy qarorlar yaxshilikning yovuzlik ustidan g'alabasini ta'minlovchi asosiy omillar ekanini xulosa qiladi.

**Kalit so'zlar**

Sehrgarlar dunyosi, shkaf - boshlanish, o'ziga xoslik va axloqiy rivojlanish, do'stlik - erkinlik, yaxshilik va yovuzlik - tanlov, sevgi - eng kuchli kuch, axloqiy rivojlanish, "Horkrux", o'lim, afsun

**Аннотация**

В данной статье анализируются основные темы магии, дружбы, нравственного выбора и любви в серии произведений Дж. К. Роулинг «Гарри Поттер». Особое внимание уделяется символическому образу чулана под лестницей, который интерпретируется как метафора пренебрежения, изоляции и формирования нравственной идентичности

главного героя. Сопоставление образов Гарри Поттера и Волан-де-Морта позволяет раскрыть ключевую идею автора о том, что нравственность определяется не происхождением, а личным выбором. В статье также рассматривается дружба как источник духовной свободы и любовь как высшая и наиболее действенная сила повествования. Делается вывод, что любовь, жертвенность и осознанные моральные решения являются основными факторами победы добра над злом.

### Ключевые слова

волшебный мир, шкаф как начало, идентичность и нравственное развитие, дружба как свобода, добро и зло как выбор, любовь как сильнейшая сила, нравственное развитие, крестраж, смерть, заклинание

In the world of literature, true metamorphosis rarely begins in the light. The Harry Potter novels begin not with magic, but with confinement. Harry Potter lives at Number Four, Privet Drive, where he is forced to sleep in “the cupboard under the stairs<sup>1</sup>” This small, dark space represents his emotional neglect and social invisibility within the Dursley household. The cupboard reflects a life without affection, comfort, or recognition. At the same time, the cupboard acts as a symbolic threshold. In literature, such spaces often mark transition and transformation. Before Harry enters the magical world, he must first exist in a place that denies his value. Rowling uses this contrast to emphasize that Harry’s journey begins from hardship, not privilege. By establishing this stark contrast between confinement and liberation, neglect and destiny, Rowling masterfully underscores a central thesis: the most powerful magic often stirs not in palaces, but in the smallest, darkest corners, where the human spirit first learns to dream of a door.

Identity and Moral Development. Harry’s early identity is shaped by absence – he grows up without love or belonging. The Dursleys’ decision to confine him suggests an attempt to erase his difference. Rowling normalizes this neglect when she writes, “Harry was used to spiders, because the cupboard under the stairs was full of them<sup>2</sup>”. The line highlights how cruelty becomes routine. However, the cupboard does not define Harry’s moral character. Instead, his resilience develops against the background. Rowling contrasts Harry with Voldemort, who also experiences abandonment. While Voldemort responds with fear and control, Harry responds with empathy and restraint. This contrast shows that suffering alone does not create evil; response and choice matter more. For example, at the end of the novel there was one precious speech of Harry’s empathy towards Voldemort. Harry offers Voldemort a chance for remorse – the only thing that could save his shattered soul. It’s your one last chance,” said Harry, “it’s all you’ve got left. I’ve seen what you’ll be otherwise... Be a man... try... Try for some remorse...” “Voldemort’s mouth hung open, emitting silent screams”. “Of all the things you’ve broken, that was the most precious,” said Harry<sup>3</sup>. Harry's final words are not boastful or hateful. They are explanatory and pitying. He acts as a witness, explaining the magical and moral truths Voldemort ignored: the power of sacrificial love, the protection it grants, and the tragic state of Voldemort's own mutilated soul. The final duel is won not with a curse of hatred, but with the Disarming Charm – the signature spell of the "good" side –symbolizing the rejection of the deadly magic Voldemort represents.

<sup>1</sup> Rowling, J. K. Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone. Bloomsbury, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Rowling, J. K. Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone. Chapter 2, “The Vanishing glass” 19-20. Bloomsbury, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Rowling, J. K. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows 605-610

Friendship as Freedom. Harry's escape from confinement is completed through friendship. At Hogwarts, his relationships with Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger provide emotional support that sharply contrasts with the isolation of Privet Drive. Friendship offers Harry a sense of belonging that the cupboard never allowed. Rowling emphasizes that friendship grows through shared struggle. Harry observes, "There are some things you can't share without ending up liking each other"<sup>4</sup>. This statement reflects the series' belief that trust and loyalty are built through experience, not comfort. There is also an ultimate test. They live together in a tent, isolated and hunted. Tensions explode (especially after Ron leaves due to the Horcrux's influence), but their shared mission and deep bond ultimately bring them back together. Hermione's steadfast research and planning, Ron's return to save Harry, and their shared grief and determination are the culmination of their friendship<sup>5</sup>. Friendship also plays a moral role. The trio's loyalty repeatedly counters fear, secrecy, and division. In this way, friendship becomes the opposite of the cupboard – open, supportive, and life-affirming.

Good and Evil as a Choice. One of the key messages of the series is that morality is shaped by choice rather than background. Harry's childhood could have led him toward bitterness, yet he consistently chooses compassion. Dumbledore explains this idea clearly: "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities"<sup>6</sup>. The cupboard reinforces this message by showing that hardship does not excuse cruelty. Voldemort and Harry both experience emotional absence, but only one chooses domination. Rowling presents evil not as a result of suffering, but as a refusal to love or connect. And on the choice of what is right and what is easy. Dumbledore once said "Remember, if the time should come when you have to make a choice between what is right and what is easy, remember what happened to a boy who was good, and kind, and brave, because he strayed across the path of Lord Voldemort"<sup>7</sup>. By these wise words he wanted to explain the moral struggle not as a grand battle, but as a series of personal choice, defining "good" by everyday courage.

Love as the Strongest Power. Love is the most powerful force in the Harry Potter series. Its absence is strongly felt in the cupboard, while its presence is embodied in Lily Potter's sacrifice. Harry survives because his mother chose love over fear. Dumbledore explains, "Love as powerful as your mother's for you leaves its own mark"<sup>8</sup>. This love protects Harry even when he is unaware of it. Unlike magic based on power, love operates quietly and cannot be controlled or destroyed. And after Sirius's death, Harry is consumed by guilt and anger. Luna finds him alone and offers unique comfort, talking about seeing her dead mother and validating his pain and she said "I think I can see them too...". She makes him feel less alone when he feels most isolated<sup>9</sup>. By placing Harry in a loveless space early in the series, Rowling highlights how essential love is to moral strength and survival. "Love as the Most Powerful Magic of All"<sup>10</sup>. Rosen argues that Rowling's thesis – that love is the strongest power – is not a sentimental add-on but the structural and moral engine of the entire plot. She meticulously traces how "love magic" operates by its own rules, distinct from wand-based magic. It is Sacrificial, It requires selflessness and often death like Lily, Dumbledore, Harry and Snape.

The cupboard under the stairs is a simple but meaningful symbol in Harry Potter. It represents neglect and isolation, but also the starting point for growth. Through Harry's movement from confinement to connection, Rowling emphasizes that friendship offers freedom, love provides protection, and goodness is a matter of choice. Love and friendship between them saves what they have and protect. In the end, Harry prevails not because he is the most powerful

<sup>4</sup> Rowling, J. K. *Philosopher's Stone* 179

<sup>5</sup> Rowling, J. K. *Deathly Hallows* 304-310

<sup>6</sup> Rowling, J.K. *Chamber of Secrets* 333

<sup>7</sup> Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* 511

<sup>8</sup> Rowling, J. K. *Philosopher's Stone* 216

<sup>9</sup> Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* 719

<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth Rosen "Harry Potter and the Narrative of Destiny" 2010

wizard, but because he is the most loved and the most loving. He is protected by his mother's ancient sacrifice, guided by his parents' and mentors' care, sustained by his friends' devotion, and fueled by his own capacity to love others enough to die for them.

The final battle is won not with a spectacular duel, but with Harry's conscious choice to walk to his death out of love – a choice that then shields every defender of Hogwarts. It is ultimately Dumbledore's thesis, proven true: "Love as powerful as your mother's for you leaves its own mark... to have been loved so deeply... will give us some protection forever."<sup>11</sup> This idea is the heart of the entire books. The magical world of Harry Potter begins not with spells, but with endurance – and from that small, dark cupboard emerges a story centered on compassion, courage, and human connection.

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<sup>11</sup> Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Bloomsbury, 1997.