Harry Potter vs. Voldemort

Or

The Common Man vs. Depression

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**Abstract**

Suicide and literature are two things that go hand and hand. An author’s thoughts can be constantly found within the words the write, their mental state often creating the stories their mind writes. One example is none other then the Harry Potter Series written by J.K. Rowling. When Rowling began writing Harry Potter she admits to being deep within the confines of depression, the theme is evident throughout the book. From Harry’s lightning shaped scar, to Hogwarts, to dementors to Voldemort the evidence and battle of depression is a constant. As many know Rowling is still alive, having finished the series while creating a new life, bring up the question “Is it possible that Harry Potter saved her life.” It is hypothesized that when one is able to put thought to paper their mental state at the time is included allowing one to work through their emotions and feelings. The action allows an author to rest their weary mind and further enjoy life. This leaves one last question “Harry Potter vs. Voldemort or The Common Man vs. Depression?” This paper will go on to analyze the Harry Potter Series, Rowling’s mental state at the time, as well as provide background information on suicide and depression.

**Introduction**

 Harry Potter vs. Voldemort or Harry Potter vs. Depression; in fact they are one in the same. The book series that has captivated the childhoods of people worldwide is simply a person’s battle with depression and how to deal with it. Literature as a whole is a suicide prevention method. As a species human beings identify with events in the world aligning themselves with the happenings of everyday life and enjoy things that are entertaining. This is why a person can find comfort in a book. A book becomes a world to escape into, where identifiable characters live: a world that can save a life.

 Unknown to most people, when a particular book becomes wildly popular it is usually because the population can identify with the words on the page (Douglas Fisher). This is why Harry Potter is so well known and liked. People can identify with him, feel sorry for him, and take his adventure on themselves. Harry’s story is identifiable because characters die whether you like it or not (the same as in real life), there are fights with friends, and the trials of everyday life are shown consistently. Harry Potter is realistic showing the trials with depression, a war that is waged by many people.

**Depression**

In a given year, within the United States, depression can affect nineteen million people. Ten to twenty five percent of all woman and five to ten percent of all men will be diagnosed with clinical depression making depression the leading disability in the United States. (Major Depression) Though the numbers dealing with depression are high, only one third of those who are depressed are actually treated, leaving the other two thirds to face depression on their own, with no treatment. Clinical depression can last for weeks, months, or years, and has a daily impact on a person’s life. (All About Depression)

 Through different studies and tests, doctors have discovered that genetics play a part in depression and that it can be inherited; such as receiving green eyes from a mother. Though genetics can play a role in depression it is not the only cause. Stress, death of a loved one (a major point in the Harry Potter series), alcohol, substance abuse, bullying and the diagnosis of a potentially fatal disease, such as cancer, can send a person into a saddened state and eventually depression. Clinical depression is the gateway to suicide and often looked at as one of many causes for suicide.

**Suicide** *I think suicide is sort of like cancer was 50 years ago. People don't want to talk about it, they don't want to know about it. People are frightened of it, and they don't understand, when actually these issues are medically treatable. -*[*Judy Collins*](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/j/judycollin263885.html)*.(Brainy)*  One million. Thirty thousand. Eighth. Sixteenth. Third. These are the numbers associated with suicide. Every year over one million people commit suicide and over the past few years suicide has increased to rates higher than ever. Thirty thousand of these deaths belong solely to the United States. When you add in the ten to twenty million other people, worldwide, who attempt suicide you are faced with the eighth leading reason for the death of men, the sixteenth leading cause of death for women and the third overall cause of death for people between the ages of ten to twenty-four. Suicide, one little word, simply means death by one’s own hand and one more person that cannot make a difference. (Dryden-Edwards)

 Suicide is often dealt with at a distance. The idea of death or one wanting death prematurely being a terrifying idea, this gives a person thinking of committing suicide the final excuse to be pushed over the edge. Douglas Fisher, a literature teacher, notes, through real life experience, that students with suicidal tendencies show it in their day to day life. In fact most students tell that they are going to commit suicide either verbally or in their writing before they actually commit suicide and to be on the lookout for the “red flags”. (Fisher) These red flags often begin with the causes of suicide: depression, loss of a loved one, bullying, and substance abuse are four of the causes. (Dryden- Edwards)

**JK Rowling**

*“Depression is the most unpleasant thing I have ever experienced. . . . It is that absence of being able to envisage that you will ever be cheerful again. The absence of hope. That very deadened feeling, which is so very different from feeling sad. Sad hurts but it's a healthy feeling. It is a necessary thing to feel. Depression is very different.” ―* [*J.K. Rowling*](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/1077326.J_K_Rowling)In the past two thousand years there have been many books/series that have been permanently etched into people’s minds, favorite books to curl up in bed with on a stormy day. A book series that has changed the world, uniting countries far and wide, is The Harry Potter Series. The seven book series follows a young boy named Harry Potter through his seven years of schooling at the famous wizarding school of Hogwarts; Harry is forced to deal with trolls, murderers and Lord Voldemort, an evil wizard. As the series advances the darkness in each book grows. The story starts with J.K. Rowling, the author of the series, a woman who is an inspiration. Because of her writing and because she went through and admitted to having a disease that plagues twenty percent of people world: depression.

Rowling started writing when she was six years old and continued into adulthood. Rowling’s mother passed away in 1990, from multiple sclerosis, which she admits seeped into everything she has written. Rowling later went on to Portugal to teach English. There she married and divorced her first husband, and gave birth to her first child, a daughter named Jessica. After her marriage fell apart she moved back to England, running on strictly adrenaline. Rowling stated in an interview “We were as skint as you can be without being homeless and at that point I was definitely clinically depressed.” (JK Rowling Speaks Out . . .) The depression became so bad that she thought she would lose her daughter, thinking that one day she would wake up and find her daughter dead.(JK Rowling Speaks Out . . .) Rowling’s life changed drastically when she published Harry Potter, becoming one of the most beloved authors of all time. It was all because of a young wizard named Harry and his battle with depression.

**Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone**

*Never wondered how you got that mark on yer forehead? That was no ordinary cut. That's what yeh get when a powerful, evil curse touches yeh--took care of yer mum an' dad an' yer house, even--but it didn't work on you, an' that's why yer famous, Harry." –Hagrid (Philosopher’s Stone)*

The Harry Potter series in short is a reflection of the battle with depression, allowing Rowling’s state of mind to seep into the books. Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s stone in America, is the series and Harry’s first battle in the war against depression. This book begins with Professor Albus Dumbledore, headmaster of Hogwarts and one of the strongest wizards in history, on the night of Halloween after Harry’s parents have been murdered and he has defeated Voldemort. At the age of one Harry becomes the only person in history to ever survive being hit by the killing curse. He then leaves Harry with his mother’s sister, and her family, who abuse Harry for eleven years. The battle with depression becomes clear within the first chapter with Harry, representing the average person, and Voldemort, representing depression. The death, of his family, and abuse, from his aunt, uncle and cousin, are two causes of depression. Harry goes through ten years of his life, the first year of his life being spent with his parents, being called a freak and nuisance by his relatives. On his eleventh birthday Harry receives his first chance of hope in the muggle post, a letter addressed to “Mr. H. Potter the cupboard under the stairs, 4 Privet Drive, Little Whinging, Surrey.” (Philosopher’s Stone)His aunt and uncle immediately tear up the letter, prompting owls to begin dropping new letters at the house forcing the Dursleys to move to an island in the middle of a stormy sea. This move represents the banishment of hope, with the storm, and the isolated feeling of depression, being on an island in the middle of the sea. Soon after the move the door literally comes crashing down. Hagrid, the game keeper of Hogwarts and later professor of care of magical creatures, arrives. He proceeds to tell Harry that he is, in fact a wizard, and that his parents did not die in a car crash, as his aunt and uncle told him, instead they perished defending him from Voldemort. This disrupts everything Harry has ever known and the age of eleven, is a crucial point in a person’s life. It is around this age that depression can infiltrate a person. Having everything a person believes ripped away can send a person into a depressive state. Hagrid then takes Harry to Diagon Alley, the first piece of the magical world Harry is exposed to. It is later when they go to get Harry’s wan that Ollivander, a wand maker, tells Harry that the wand chooses the wizard not the other way around; an analogy that a person does not chose depression. Mr. Ollivander is quoted saying “It's curious that you should be destined for this wand when its brother gave you that scar.” The wand that chooses Harry is made of holly, is eleven inches long and has a core of phoenix feather. It is then that the Ollivander tells Harry that the phoenix that gave Harry’s wand its core had only given two feathers, one to Harry’s and one to Tom Riddle’s, also known as Voldemort, making the wands twins. This symbolism gives the connection between a person and depression; a wand, which is supposed to last through out a wizard’s life, and the core that connects Harry and Voldemort, shows the connection between a person and the depression they must battle throughout their life. After Diagon Alley, Harry is taken to King’s Cross Station, where he must board the train to Hogwarts, the Hogwarts Express. (Philosopher’s Stone)

On platform nine and three quarters, this is reached by running through a wall where Harry meets the Weasleys. They are a family of gingers that take Harry in. Their youngest son, Ron Weasley, becomes Harry’s best friend. Once upon the train Harry and Ron sit together and form the beginning of a necessary friendship. They are later joined by Hermione Granger; a bushy haired girl who later becomes Harry’s other best friend. These two friends are in fact a necessity for Harry, showing that no one can battle depression by themselves. In the war of depression help is needed, whether it is medication, doctors, friends/ family who give love and understanding or literature. Hermione represents enlightenment or the knowledge of what is going on and what has to be done to overcome depression; while Ron represents the loyalty of a good friend or family member who stands by Harry and does whatever is necessary to help Harry defeat Voldemort/ depression. Once arriving at Hogwarts Harry meets Draco Malfoy a pureblood, someone with pure blood or has no muggle, non-magical, blood in his family line. Draco Malfoy, a recurring character, represents another cause of depression suicidal thoughts, and bullying. Draco Malfoy, who is very proud of his pure blood heritage and treats anyone who is not pureblood as if they are dirt he is forced to walk on, has a particular dislike for Harry after he refuses to befriend him. (Philosopher’s Stone)

Upon arriving at Hogwarts Harry discovers that you can be sorted into four possible houses, Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff, Gryffindor, and Slytherin. Each house has its own unique qualities and serves as the student’s family, while at Hogwarts. Harry is sorted into Gryffindor, the home the brave, along with Ron and Hermione. Later in the school year Harry is put on the Gryffindor quidditch team, a sport played on brooms similar to soccer. This shows that anyone can have depression, even the football quarterback who so many envy, showing that anyone can put on a smiling mask. As Harry’s year at Hogwarts progresses Harry comes across the mystery of the Philosopher’s Stone. It is a stone filled with magic that can give a person immortality while in their possession. It is while Harry is in search of the stone that he comes across the Mirror of Erised, a mirror that shows you what you want most in life. Harry sees himself with his parents. While Harry is staring in to the mirror, professor Dumbledore finds him and explains the mirror to him, saying “The happiest man on earth would look into the mirror and see only himself, exactly how he is.” Dumbledore than hides the mirror telling Harry that "It does not do to dwell on dreams and forget to live, remember that."(Mirror) No one is truly happy with their life and everyone wants’ something different than what they have and when you are clinically depressed you spend your time on what can happen instead of focusing on living on the now. (Philosopher’s Stone)

Near the end of the year that Harry believes the stone is in trouble and goes in search of the stone with Hermione and Ron. After their journey through Hogwarts’ dungeons, Harry finds himself alone facing Professor Quirl, the Defense Against the Dark Arts professor, who reveals that Voldemort has bonded with him, Voldemort’s face had emerged in the back of Quirl’s head, reinforcing that anyone can put on a mask and hide depression underneath. Harry then learns that Voldemort wants the stone to live forever, or depression wanting to stay forever eventually killing a person, which is demonstrated when Quirl tries to take the stone from Harry, is killed by the love people had for Harry.(Philosopher’s Stone) Harry then proceeds to pass out and wake up in the hospital wing of Hogwarts, where Dumbledore tells him “I placed an enchantment on the mirror, hiding the stone inside of it and allowing the mirror to transfer the stone to anyone who wanted to find the stone but not to use it.” (Mirror)

Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone shows a person who begins to doubt/ have an identity crisis. In the book Harry goes from knowing who he is to having his whole world turned upside down which can be classified as a life changing event. Major life changing events as well as bullying/ abuse, are all causes of depression, which Harry suffers from. Meanwhile the second book shows the battle with one’s self.

**Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets**

*“It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.” ~Albus Dumbledore, (Quote)*

The book begins with Harry back at his aunt and uncle’s house where the first piece of magic of the year shows up, a house elf by the name of Dobby. A house elf in the magical world is a small creature, with scrunched up skin, a long nose and floppy ears. They are forced to serve wizarding families and punish themselves if they do wrong; much like a person, who suffers from depression or suicidal thoughts tries to harm themselves if they do something wrong. This pain helps relieve the person of guilt and allows them to feel an emotion in the process. After a series of incidents Harry is locked in his room by his uncle, and Ron is forced to rescue Harry, along with his twin brothers Fred and George. This symbolizes how depression can lock us in at any time and those we love can pull us out. Ron is the youngest of six boys, followed only by his only sister and the youngest of the Weasley clan Ginny Weasley, Ron’s parents make a total family of nine. All nine Weasleys play a crucial part in Harry’s life as the books go on, to the point where Harry becomes an almost adopted son. (Chamber of Secrets)

Harry’s year at Hogwarts gets off to a difficult start when Harry finds a message written on one of the castle walls “The chamber of secrets has been opened enemies of the heir . . . beware.” At this point in the book the audience has not been made aware of what the Chamber of Secrets is. There have however, been several obstacles, including the sealing of the passageway to platform nine and three quarters, where the train to Hogwarts resides, the writing on the wall, as previously mentioned, a cursed bludger, a ball used in quidditch, that tried to kill Harry. A practice duel also ends with Harry talking a snake out of attacking a student. This reveals that Harry is a parcelmouth, a rare ability that allows Harry to talk to snakes, an ability that Voldemort shares with Harry furthering the link. It is prior to this show of ability that we learn more about Hogwarts and its founders, Godric Gryffindor, Rowena Ravenclaw, Helga Hufflepuff and Salazar Slytherin, the last being the creator of the chamber of secrets and a parcelmouth himself. It is also well known that Salazar was a pureblood who believed muggleborns were not worthy of learning magic. The students of Hogwarts begin to associate Harry with the message on the wall; enemies of the heir . . . beware, and assume Harry is the heir in the message. All of these obstacles are a symbol of a bad day in the battle with depression, keeping a good mood despite the bad things that happen in order to overcome it. Because Harry is believed to be the heir of Slytherin he is outcast by everyone, except Ron and Hermione. This allows Harry to pull away from those around him, a sign of depression. (Chamber of Secrets)

It is a few weeks later, when Hogwarts is at risk of being shut down that a new message appears on the walls of Hogwarts “Her body will lie in the chamber forever.”(Chamber of Secrets) Harry and Ron, who see the message and overhear the professors talking, find that the person taken is Ron’s younger sister, Ginny. Harry and Ron then proceed to find the Chamber of Secrets, the biggest piece of symbolism in this book. The chamber is cold, dark, damp and the home to a monster that can destroy people, much like the human mind. The human mind, during depression, is not right. It twists words, assigns blame to others and has the ability to tell one that death and pain are easier than fighting, essentially destroying a person from the inside out. This part of the book is crucial; Harry is forced to confront the beast in the chamber, the part of his mind that wants him to give up. Professor Dumbledore’s phoenix, Fawkes, brings Harry a sword in order to fight the monster much like one would use an anti-depressant to fight off the unwelcome thoughts. Harry is able to defeat the monster and whisk Ginny away to safety. At the end of the book Harry returns to number four Privet Drive, with one more battle in the war of depression won. (Chamber of Secrets)

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets shows the feeling of having to keep depression a secret in fear of being different, shunned or outcast by a person’s peers. The Chamber within the book is much like a person’s mind which hides a person’s depression or in this case a basilisk. A basilisk is a snake with the ability to kill just by looking into its eyes, or how a person’s thoughts can eventually drive them toward suicide if the depression becomes bad enough. The third book continues this theme by showing how memories and self-doubt can hurt a person.

**Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban**

*"Dementors are among the foulest creatures that walk this earth. They infest the darkest, filthiest places, they glory in decay and despair, they drain peace, hope, and happiness out of the air around them... Get too near a Dementor and every good feeling; every happy memory will be sucked out of you. If it can, the Dementor will feed on you long enough to reduce you to something like itself...soulless and evil. You will be left with nothing but the worst experiences of your life." —*[*Remus Lupin*](http://harrypotter.wikia.com/wiki/Remus_Lupin) *to* [*Harry Potter*](http://harrypotter.wikia.com/wiki/Harry_Potter) *(Dementors)*

We find Harry at the Dursley’s house, where Harry is again being ignored. This time Harry’s uncle’s sister is coming to visit. It is during this time that Marge, Uncle Vernon’s sister, makes snide comments about Harry’s parents and Harry uses accidental magic, blowing Marge into a human balloon. This translates into the harm a person, with depression, sometimes wishes to do to either a bully or tormenter. Harry then runs away from Privet Drive, where he lights his wand and the night bus, a magical bus for wizards. He travels to the Hogs’ Head which guards the entrance to Diagon Alley. Harry stays there for the remainder of the summer, when the Weasleys meet up with him. The night before the students head off to school, Arthur Weasley informs Harry that a man named Sirius Black has escaped Azkaban Prison, a wizarding prison, and may be after Harry. This particular prison is where the worst of the worst the wizarding world has to offer is sent. The prison sits on an island in the middle of the sea; this can be compared to a person’s mind during depression. Azkaban is where the darkest thoughts a person has during depression are kept. Azkaban/ a person’s mind keeps them from other people and can slowly drive a depressed person insane. (Prisoner of Azkaban)

 On the train, as they are on their way to Hogwarts Harry, Hermione and Ron learn more about Azkaban and its guards: Dementors. Much like the causes of depression, Dementors are easily one of the most horrible things in the world; they are able to suck every good thought away, leaving you with only your worst memories to focus on. Earl DeMott, a teacher at Tallwood High School speculates that Dementors are no more than a person’s most horrible thought, ghostly and airy but truly made up in one’s mind eventually driving a person crazy. (DeMott) It is on the train that the trio meets Remus Lupin, the new defense against the dark arts teacher. Unknown to them he was, one of Harry’s father’s friends. (Prisoner of Azkaban)

 Throughout the year Harry stays relatively free of trouble, until Hogsmeade weekend, when students are allowed to venture outside the Hogwarts grounds to the town near Hogwarts. Harry is unable to attend with Ron and Hermione because he did not have his permission slip signed. At this point Harry is confronted by Fred and George Weasley where he is given what is called the Marauder’s Map, a map that reveals the location of everyone at Hogwarts, when tapped with a wand and the words “I solemnly swear that I am up to no good,”. When a person admits their true intentions a pathway is shown. Harry then sneaks down to Hogsmeade where Harry learns, underneath his invisibility cloak, that the mass murderer, Sirius Black, betrayed his parents and killed Peter Pettigrew. He was another friend of his father’s, and was in fact his godfather and his father’s best friend. This is the past coming back to haunt him. (The Prisoner of Azkaban)

A few months later Harry, Ron and Hermione are led down to the whomping willow, a tree that bashes whatever comes near it. It is then that a scraggly black dog comes out of nowhere and drags Ron under the whomping willow, and Harry and Hermione must fight their way below as well. Once in a secret chamber under the willow the trio is cornered by none other than Sirius Black and Remus Lupin, who have taken Ron’s pet rat hostage. It is then revealed that Remus is a werewolf and Sirius Black is an animagus or a wizard who turn can into an animal. After a spell is can cast it is also revealed that Ron’s pet rat is none other than Peter Pettigrew. The true story of the night the Potters were betrayed is then told exposing Peter as the traitor and Sirius as an innocent victim. At this point in time a happy ending is all but insured when the small group realizes that it is a full moon and Remus changes. Pettigrew escapes as well as Sirius who promises to keep in touch with Harry. (Prisoner of Azkaban)

The Prisoner of Azkaban shows how harmful dark thoughts can be, and how isolation and withdrawing from the world can send someone further into depression. The Fourth book goes on to show the trials that must be faced while a person is waging war inside the mind.

**Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire**

*Numbing the pain for a while will make it worse when you finally feel it. ~ Albus Dumbledore. (Quote)*

 After spending the summer with the Dursleys, Harry is retrieved by the Weasley family. They take Harry to the burrow, the Weasley family home. The following day Harry and the Weasley clan go to the quidditch world cup, similar to the World Cup or the Super Bowl. Quidditch is the same to Harry as writing would be for a person with clinical depression; a way to relieve stress and somewhat fit in with the world. The world cup is attacked the night of the match. Death eaters, Voldemort’s followers and causes of depression, raid and cause distress among the attendees. Only when the dark mark, a symbol left by Voldemort when he killed, was shot into the air did the death eaters scatter. (Goblet of Fire)

Harry, Ron and Hermione continue to Hogwarts, with no interruptions on the train. Everything going as planned until the welcoming feast at Hogwarts. During dinner Headmaster Dumbledore announces the Tri-wizard Tournament; a tournament where of age wizards, seventeen years or older, could compete. Two other wizarding schools join Hogwarts throughout the school year, each submitting students, and each having only one champion; the one who overcomes all. (Beauxbatons- Fleur Delacour, Durmstrang- Viktor Krum and Hogwarts- Cedric Diggory & Harry Potter, who is not of age) Accusations of cheating are shouted in the hall, while Harry has no idea how his name was submitted. This symbolizes the accusations and stereotypes that come with depression and how a clinically depressed person does not know how they have reached that point. Harry is forced to participate in the tournament. Ron, his best friend gives him the cold shoulder; Harry begins to isolate himself, a classic sign of depression. He is forced throughout the book to go through three challenges; facing a dragon, finding a way to breathe under water in order to save Ron, and finally a maze. These three challenges represent trials a person with depression may face. Their inner demons (the dragon), their fears (the water), and their way out of depression (the maze) are significant challenges. (Goblet of Fire)

The maze leads Harry and Cedric to a graveyard, where Voldemort is waiting in a weak form, Cedric is killed and Voldemort is resurrected, using Harry’s blood. This move by Voldemort is used so that he is able to hurt Harry. When Harry is trying to escape Voldemort that a duel is started and a thread connection is formed between Harry’s and Voldemort’s wands. This forms a connection to the dead, allowing those who Voldemort had killed to help Harry escape. (Goblet of Fire)

Upon returning to Hogwarts with Cedric’s dead body, Harry tells the news of Voldemort’s return. The Ministry of Magic does not believe Harry or Dumbledore and Harry is forced to return to Privet Drive. (Goblet of Fire)

In order to defeat depression certain battles must be waged to win the overall war. At some point in that war a person battling depression goes from victim to fighter.

**Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix**

*Well -- it's just that you seem to be laboring under the delusion that I am going to -- what is the phrase? -- come quietly. I am afraid I am not going to come quietly at all, Cornelius. I have absolutely no intention of being sent to Azkaban. I could break out, of course -- but what a waste of time, and frankly, I can think of a whole host of things I would rather be doing.~ Albus Dumbledore (Order of the Phoenix)*

Readers join Harry in a park, trying to avoid his relatives. Unfortunately he is soon joined by Dudley, his cousin who is a bully. The two are shortly joined by a group of Dementors. Harry quickly casts a patronus charm, a spell made of good memories that chases Dementors away, saving their lives. After Harry and Dudley arrive home, Harry is sent a letter saying that he is expelled for using magic outside of Hogwarts. Soon after the letter comes Harry is whisked away from his relatives to his godfather’s house. At this point in the book the reader discovers that Harry has gone all summer without any news. The reader also discovers that Dumbledore has formed an organization called the Order of the Phoenix, a group meant to stop Voldemort. Harry’s expulsion is revoked after a trial takes place. (Order of the Phoenix)

Harry goes into his fifth year of Hogwarts with the wizarding paper, The Daily Prophet, smearing his name. The paper claims that Harry is lying about Voldemort’s return. This symbolizes how quite a few people view depression. Many view depression as a contagious disease, an excuse or a cry for attention. Arriving at Hogwarts, the students are made aware of the newest addition to Hogwarts’ staff. Dolores Umbridge, the new defense against the dark arts teacher and undersecretary to the minister of magic. Umbridge has been sent by the Ministry of magic to supervise Dumbledore and Harry, because of the fear of the unknown. Much like a misinformed person, the ministry of magic fears depression and doesn’t wish to acknowledge it. (Order of the Phoenix)

Dolores Umbridge, as well as the ministry, are determined to keep the students untrained by giving them menial bookwork. Society as a whole frowns upon people with depression, looking with disapproving eyes while trying to sweep the problem under the rug. As the year continues Harry is forced to stand up and take action, forming a defense group named Dumbledore’s Army, the DA. Harry is forced to step up and take the leaders position and help teach the DA defense. The problem of depression cannot be swept under the rug to be forgotten. Over twenty percent of the population suffers from depression, with more cases going unreported without treatment. Harry represents the person who speaks up and admits to having depression. Realizing that depression/ Voldemort will not be forgotten, it will fight back. This is the turning point in the series. For the past fourteen years of his life Harry has been a victim. When Harry takes charge of the DA he makes the choice to fight. Once the choice is made all that is left is gathering the knowledge, gaining the courage and attacking the problem. (Order of the Phoenix)

In the middle of the book it is revealed that Harry has a connection with Voldemort. Each can see the other’s thoughts. Voldemort uses the opportunity to plant a fake memory in Harry’s mind. Sirius, Harry’s godfather, has been taken by Voldemort. Harry and the members of the DA rush to Sirius only to realize that it was a trick. Harry and the DA had been led to the Hall of Prophecy’s within the Department of Mysteries. Awaiting is a prophecy concerning Harry and Voldemort. "The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches ... born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies ... and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not ... and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives ... the one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies ..." Neither can live while the other survives; a person with depression cannot live normally. Depression can consume every part of a person’s life, taking away the desire to live, until the person becomes an empty shell of themselves. (Order of the Phoenix)

Death Eaters corner Harry and the DA. As a fight over the prophecy, the knowledge to defeat depression begins. The fight ends when Voldemort tries to take full control of Harry. Harry is able to force Voldemort out, with the love he has. The book ends with the Ministry of Magic acknowledging Voldemort is back. (Order of the Phoenix)

In the Order of the Phoenix Harry goes from being a victim to being a fighter, showing that if a person truly wants to overcome depression they must be willing to fight. No matter the trials put before them.

**Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince**

*We must try not to sink beneath our anguish, Harry, but battle on~ Albus Dumbledore (Half Blood Prince)*

Harry is found riding the trains, when Dumbledore comes and takes him to a muggle neighborhood in search of a lost professor. Dumbledore does not reveal to Harry why the professor is needed, but that Harry must befriend the professor none the less. After the Professor agrees to come back to Hogwarts, Dumbledore takes Harry to the Burrow where he remains for the rest of the summer. (Half Blood Prince)

The year at Hogwarts progresses more calmly then most years. Professor Dumbledore takes Harry on journeys through his memories, showing Harry Voldemort’s past. In order to defeat depression a person must know what depression is, just as Harry must know Voldemort’s history. In-between the trips trouble rears its head; a Hogwarts student is nearly cursed to death, Ron is poisoned, and death eaters go after Harry. Depression does not rest, and will use any opportunity to gain an advantage. (Half Blood Prince)

It is near the end of the book that Dumbledore tells Harry how Voldemort survives; Horcruxes. This is only found out through a memory belonging to the professor found at the beginning of the book. A Horcux is an item with a piece of one’s soul sealed inside. A Horcrux can only be created when one splits their soul, only made possible by killing. Envy can make a person feel inferior, whether it is the object that does something they cannot, or the person wants it but does not have it. This stems to looks, material objects, skills and abilities. A person comes to find themself inferior instead of being grateful for what they have. Envy is the one of the roots of depression. (Half Blood Prince)

Harry and Dumbledore go in search of a Horcrux, a locket Voldemort has hidden in a cave. The locket is found in a basin. Dumbledore is forced to drink the liquid in order to obtain the locket. The liquid forces the professor to relive his worst memories. With envy and greed comes depression as well as bad memories, forcing a person to hit rock bottom, literally in Dumbledore’s case. (Half Blood Prince)

With the locket retrieved, Harry and Dumbledore return to Hogwarts where they find Draco Malfoy waiting for them. Dumbledore hides and binds Harry, forcing him to watch silently as death eaters gather on the impenetrable grounds of Hogwarts. When depression overcomes a person to the point of suicide, there is little another person can do to stop it. Professor Severus Snape is among them, revealing that he is a traitor. Snape kills Dumbledore. Harry, freed of the spell when Dumbledore dies, races after the death eaters as they make their way through the halls of Hogwarts, only to meet the resistance of the DA and order of the Phoenix. Depression cannot when fully when there is something left to fight for. Several members of both groups are injured. No one escapes the clutches of depression, whether it is the person themselves or a loved one, depression affects everyone. The book ends with Dumbledore’s funeral and Harry returning to Privet Drive one final time. (Half Blood Prince)

A Horcrux represents everything a person is not but wants to be. Overcoming the greed and accepting who they are is one of the biggest battles in defeating depression. It takes admitting something is wrong and that help is needed in order to defeat depression. In Half-Blood Prince Harry learns why Voldemort is as he is and why darkness and sorrow drive him. Depression feeds on a person’s worst memories and will take anything in order to ruin a persons day and eventually there life.

**Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows**

*Tell me one last thing," said Harry. "Is this real? Or has this been happening inside my head?"*

 *Dumbledore beamed at him, and his voice sounded loud and strong in Harry's ears even though the bright mist was descending again, obscuring his figure.*

 *"Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?" ~ Harry Potter and Albus Dumbledore ( Quote)*

Harry is removed from his aunt and uncle’s home and to the burrow. Not long after arriving Harry, Ron and Hermione leave, hiding from the world in the search of Horcruxes. Harry, Ron and Hermione must infiltrate the Ministry of Magic, now under the control of Voldemort, to obtain one of the Horcruxes. Depression does not know age or status. Depression can take control of anyone. Harry Ron and Hermione retrieve the Horcrux and leave. (Deathly Hallows)

With the whereabouts of the four remaining Horcruxes unknown, Harry, Ron and Hermione are forced to keep moving. A person battling depression may stay on the move in order to keep their minds away from depressing thoughts. The Horcrux, which contains part of Voldemort’s soul, begins to spread upsetting thoughts to Ron. The thoughts become particularly bad for Ron, who has his whole family to lose. A person who battles depression often has a bad mood, that mood can seep into/ influence the people around said person. Ron then proceeds to leave the trio; much as a family member may leave to avoid the negativity.(Deathly Hallows)

Harry and Hermione go several months without Ron exploring several different places where Horcruxes could be, until they decide on Godric’s Hallow. Godric’s Hallow is the place where Harry tried to kill Harry when he was an infant. Godric’s Hallow is the root of the depression, where everything began. Harry and Hermione visit the graves of Harry’s parents. Closure, an important step in defeating depression, allows a person to move on with their life. (Deathly Hallows)

Harry and Hermione are rejoined by Ron. The rejoined trio goes after the fourth Horcrux, and successfully obtains it. After obtaining the Horcrux Voldemort is notified and the Final Battle begins. (Deathly Hallows)

The final battle takes place at Hogwarts, Harry’s home. Depression takes root within a person’s mind and affects their home life more than any other aspect. During this battle, a memory is revealed telling that part of Voldemort’s soul is within Harry, making him a living Horcrux. In order for Voldemort to parish, Harry must die. Clinically depressed people often believe the world will be better without them and welcome death with open arms. In order for a person to defeat depression a part of them must die. Grudges, bad memories, the deaths of loved one must be released so that they may focus on living. This part of Harry dies. Harry himself does not die; he comes back fully capable of defeating Voldemort, with the love and support of those surrounding him to encourage him. Voldemort dies and all Harry is left with is a lightning shaped scar. (Deathly Hallows)

**Conclusion**

Harry Potter is, most simply, a battle with depression. Evidence is shown throughout the book. The scar lightning scar on Harry’s forehead being one of the biggest. The scar is a constant reminder of the war he must fight. In his adult years of the things he lost; relationships, a normal childhood a family. The scar’s shape, a lightning bolt is very reminiscent of the old cartoons, how the clouds, lightning and thunder would gather and crash around one’s head (DeMott). Next thing is Hogwarts: a castle, something that is splendid and grand on the outside but on the inside is drafty and cold. This translates into the façade a person suffering from depression uses as a disguise and protection from people who might ridicule or chastise. In the books Hogwarts was one of the strongest and safest places in the wizarding world. During the final battle Hogwarts is nearly destroyed, allowing people to see its secrets. (JK Rowling)

The creatures in the books are no different. In the first book, a dead unicorn is found and at this point Harry is told that Unicorns are among the purest of creatures. The unicorn, white and pure represents a child’s mind before depression (Philosopher’s Stone). Dementors are horrible, ugly, dark creatures which drain a person of every happy thought. Dementors are very simply the thoughts that come to a person while they are under the influence of depression. A boggart is a creature that prefers small dark spaces, and is able to turn into the thing that frightens you most. A boggart is that small thought in the back of a person’s mind which holds a person back and keeps the person from battling with depression (Prisoner of Azkaban) House elves are slaves to wizards much like a person battling depression is a slave to their mind. Much like a person susceptible to suicidal thoughts, house elves will punish themselves if they do something even slightly wrong. (Chamber of Secrets)

Causes of depression are also evident in the book, the most obvious one being the death of a loved one. The second is bullying, mainly from Draco Malfoy, on blood status which is just as easily translated into how much money a person has. Remus Lupin and the werewolf gene represent and illness that cannot be cured. Though manageable the condition keeps Remus from participating and living his life. This is the same as a terminal illness, it effects every aspect of Remus’ life.

The people that accompany and help Harry in the war on depression are very much like the people a person would find in anyone’s life. Ron is Harry’s best friend and follows Harry everywhere, helping him whenever he can. Much like anyone with a friend who suffers from depression Ron does become put out with Harry, but always comes back and continues to stand by him no matter what. Hermione is Harry’s second best friend and represents enlightenment. Hermione provides knowledge about what is going on and helps Harry find out who he is. The Weasley family represents the dysfunctional family that surrounds everyone. The Weasley family continually supports Harry, much like the family of a person suffering from depression. Albus Dumbledore represents the Doctor, the one who knows what is wrong with Harry and how to stop depression but must let Harry figure it out. Dumbledore allows Harry to come to him when he’s ready not pushing him.

In this book there is not one person or family who was not affected by Voldemort. The very much is to be said in the real world, depression affects everyone, even if a person doesn’t realize it.

 Depression is a war with many battles and stays with a person throughout their life, being a resilient illness. Depression is an illness, one that can destroy a person’s mind, where it is located, but “just because it is happening in your head doesn’t mean it’s not real.” Depression is real, it’s not just a figment a person’s mind created, it’s not an excuse it is an illness, one that is treatable.

The Harry Potter series is a worldwide franchise and a beloved series. Inspiring many children and adults to believe that magic can happen and you can escape the world for as long as it takes you to read the book.

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