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Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone Mini Analysis

The Harry Potter books are quite possibly the most widely recognized books for children and adolescents being published today. The first book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, serves as our introduction to Harry, Hermoine, the Weasleys, and a great deal of the supporting cast. The book primarily takes place at Hogwarts, a 7 year boarding school for wizards. This book follows our protagonist Harry Potter through a journey of self-discovery - finding out about himself, his talents and his parents, and sets the foundation for the next 6 books admirably. We see grand sweeping themes about friendship (as Harry bonds with Ron and Hermoine), mentoring (as he develops a relationship with Dumbledore and Hagrid), boundaries, relationships, personal strengths, and of course, the popular good vs evil that no supernatural children's book should be without.

The depth of the characters, character development, and relationships in this book lead me to see many similarities to the 1989 drama *Dead Poets Society*. In this book, we follow a group of 7 students at Welton boarding school. The first theme that is markedly similar is the tight bonding of friends. The two primary characters in *Dead Poets Society* are Todd Anderson, a shy, reserved boy who is portrayed as living in the shadow of his older brother (who was made out to be an outstanding student or athlete and well known at the school), and Neil Perry, an

intense, outgoing leader. The boys form a close friendship, are roommates, and find that they share an interest in poetry, as well as bonding with their new teacher, Mr Keating - a young, passionate teacher of english. We see the friendship of the boys progressing throughout the movie, and they become a very tight-knit group, very similar to the friendship that grows between Harry, Ron and Hermoine. The depth of this friendship can be shown when Charlie refuses to give out any information on the other boys, despite being beaten by the headmaster. There are obvious similarities with both stories taking place in a boarding school - in *Dead Poets Society* we see Todd and Neil finding acceptance from their friends and Mr Keating in a way that did not exist in their homes - neither boy had close emotional ties with their parents, but they found emotional belonging from their friends. In the same way, Harry had no emotional tie with his aunt or uncle - and formed a very close bond with Hermoine and Ron, as well as a lasting relationship with Hagrid. Additionally, we see throughout the series that Harry continually seeks information about his parents, alluding to the desire for a relationship that didn't exist.

The last similarity I see in these two pieces of media is in the rebellion against the established set of rules. Harry and his friends have no problem breaking school rules, sneaking out after curfew (to engage in forbidden Wizards Duels with Malfoy), or ignoring Filch. In the same way, the boys from *Dead Poets Society* view the school rules as merely inconveniences - to be tolerated or broken as the occasion requires. The boys form the titular society and frequently sneak out to enjoy each other's company, explore poetry, meet girls, and generally live life to a fuller standard than is expected and forced upon them in the rigid regime of Welton.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerers Stone has rapidly become a new classic of children's literature. It has gained praises for being so interesting and engaging that it, by itself is encouraging increased literacy - children want to read it, and are reading it at incredibly early ages. In addition, it and its sequels contain many admirable themes and characters - through the books, we can teach children about their own inner strength, the power of friendship, and the joys of learning. When all of these things are wrapped up in such an enjoyable story, it can only be considered a classic.

WORKS CITED:

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Scholastic, 1999. Print.

Weir, Peter. *Dead Poets Society*. Touchstone Home Entertainment, 1998. DVD.