

The Shadow of Adulthood: Darkness as a Sign of Maturity in J.K. Rowling's

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone
*and Harry Potter and the Deathly
Hallows*

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Introduction

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- Does the Harry Potter series become darker as it advances?
- Is darkness in Harry Potter solely related to danger, or does it have any other meanings?



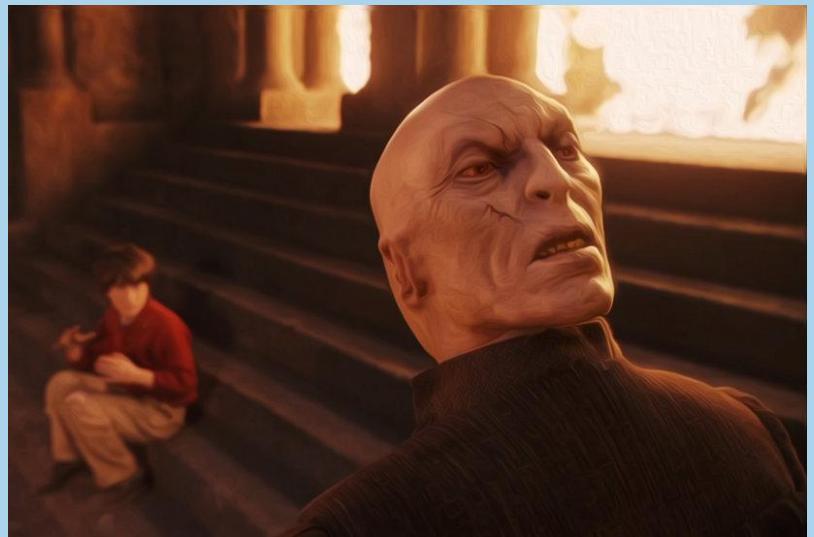
Night

“Last night Voldemort turned up in Godric’s Hollow. He went to find the Potters” (12, *Philosopher’s Stone*)



Source: Columbus, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, 2001

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Harry’s first encounter with Voldemort before he retrieves the Philosopher’s Stone.

Harry felt her turn on the spot; sight and sound were extinguished as darkness pressed in upon him; [...] Harry did as she asked. They half walked, half ran up the wide dark street thronged with late-night revellers and lined with closed shops, stars twinkling above them. (128-9, *Deathly Hallows*)



Source: Yates, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1*, 2010

He saw [...] dark shop fronts, and the mist line of black mountains beyond the village and the curve in the road ahead that led off toward Hogwarts, and light spilling from the windows of the Three Broomsticks (451, *Deathly Hallows*)



Source: Yates, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*, 2011

“Perched atop a high mountain on the other side, its windows sparkling in the starry sky, was a vast castle with many turrets and towers” (119, *Philosopher’s Stone*)



Source: Columbus, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, 2001

The storm raged more and more ferociously as the night went on. Harry couldn't sleep. [...] He lay and watched his birthday tick nearer, wondering if the Dursleys would remember at all, wondering where the letter-writer was now. [...] The whole shack shivered and Harry sat bolt upright, staring at the door. Someone was outside, knocking to come in. (48-9, *Philosopher's Stone*)



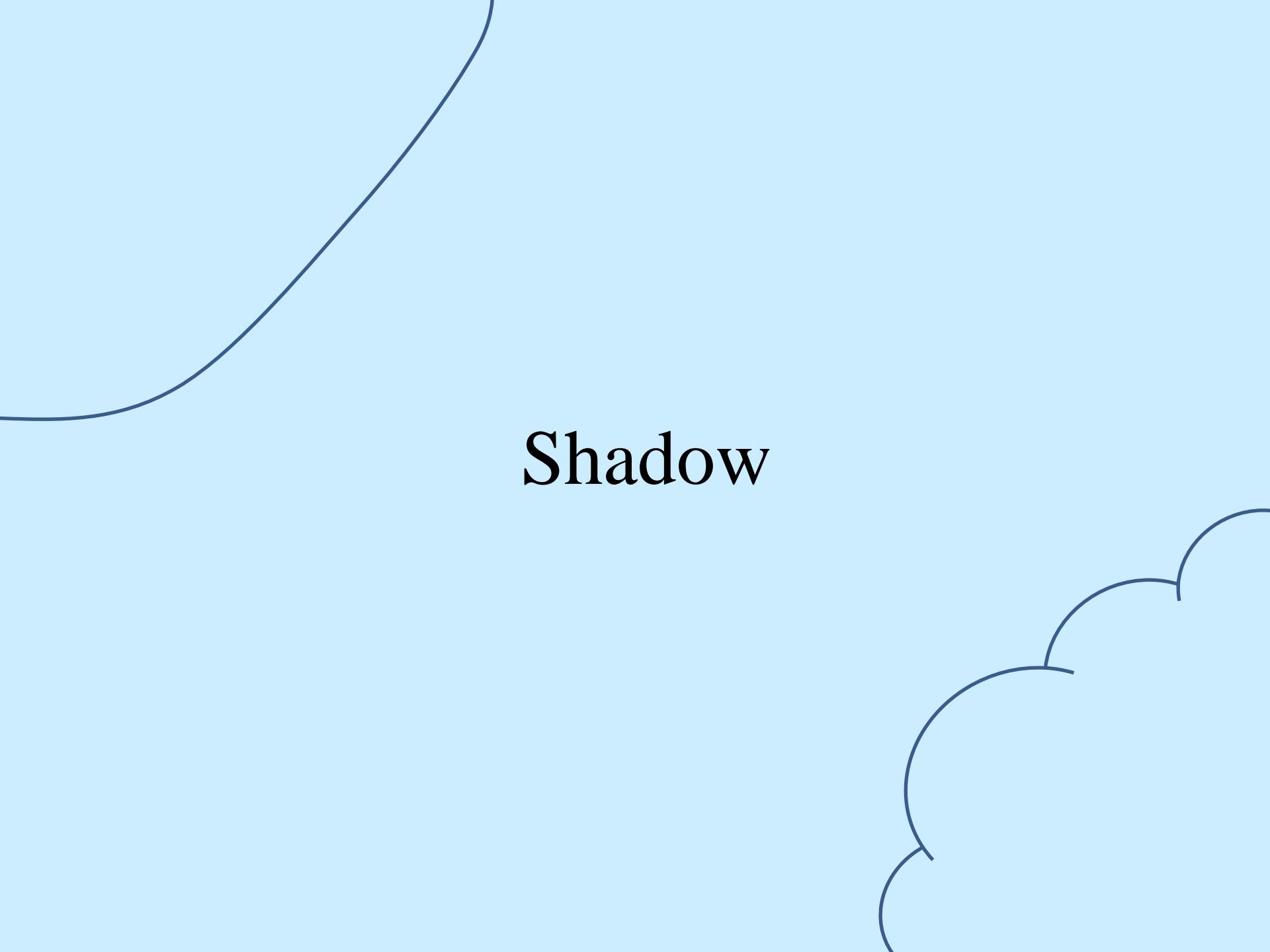
Source: Columbus, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 2001

“It was over at last— The sun rose steadily over Hogwarts, and the Great Hall blazed with life and light” (609, *Deathly Hallows*)



Source: Yates, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*, 2011

- Harry's journey begins the night of his parent's death.
- Harry's journey ends the night that he kills Voldemort.
- Positivism in childhood → Maturity in adulthood



Shadow

Harry felt as though his insides had turned to ice. He looked behind him. Sitting on one of the desks by the wall was none other than Albus Dumbledore. Harry must have walked straight past him, so desperate to get to the mirror he hadn't noticed him.
(228, *Philosopher's Stone*)



Source: Columbus, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 2001

A hooded figure came swiftly down the front steps of the castle. Clearly not wanting to be seen, it walked as fast as possible towards the Forbidden Forest. Harry's victory faded from his mind as he watched. He recognised the figure's prowling walk. Snape, sneaking into the Forest while everyone else was at dinner – what was going on? (242, *Philosopher's Stone*)



Source: Columbus, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 2001

The three of them listened. Something was slithering over dead leaves nearby: it sounded like a cloak trailing along the ground. Hagrid was squinting up the dark path, but after a few seconds, the sound faded away. [...] Harry had taken one step towards it when a slithering sound made him freeze where he stood. A bush on the edge of the clearing quivered ... Then, out of the shadows, a hooded figure came crawling across the ground like some stalking beast. Harry, Malfoy and Fang stood transfixed. (270-5, *Philosopher's Stone*)



Source: Columbus, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 2001

‘No, he’s not dead,’ said McGonagall bitterly. ‘Unlike Dumbledore, he was still carrying a wand... and he seems to have learned a few tricks from his master.’

With a tingle of horror, Harry saw in the distance a huge, batlike shape flying through the darkness toward the perimeter wall” (488, *Deathly Hallows*)

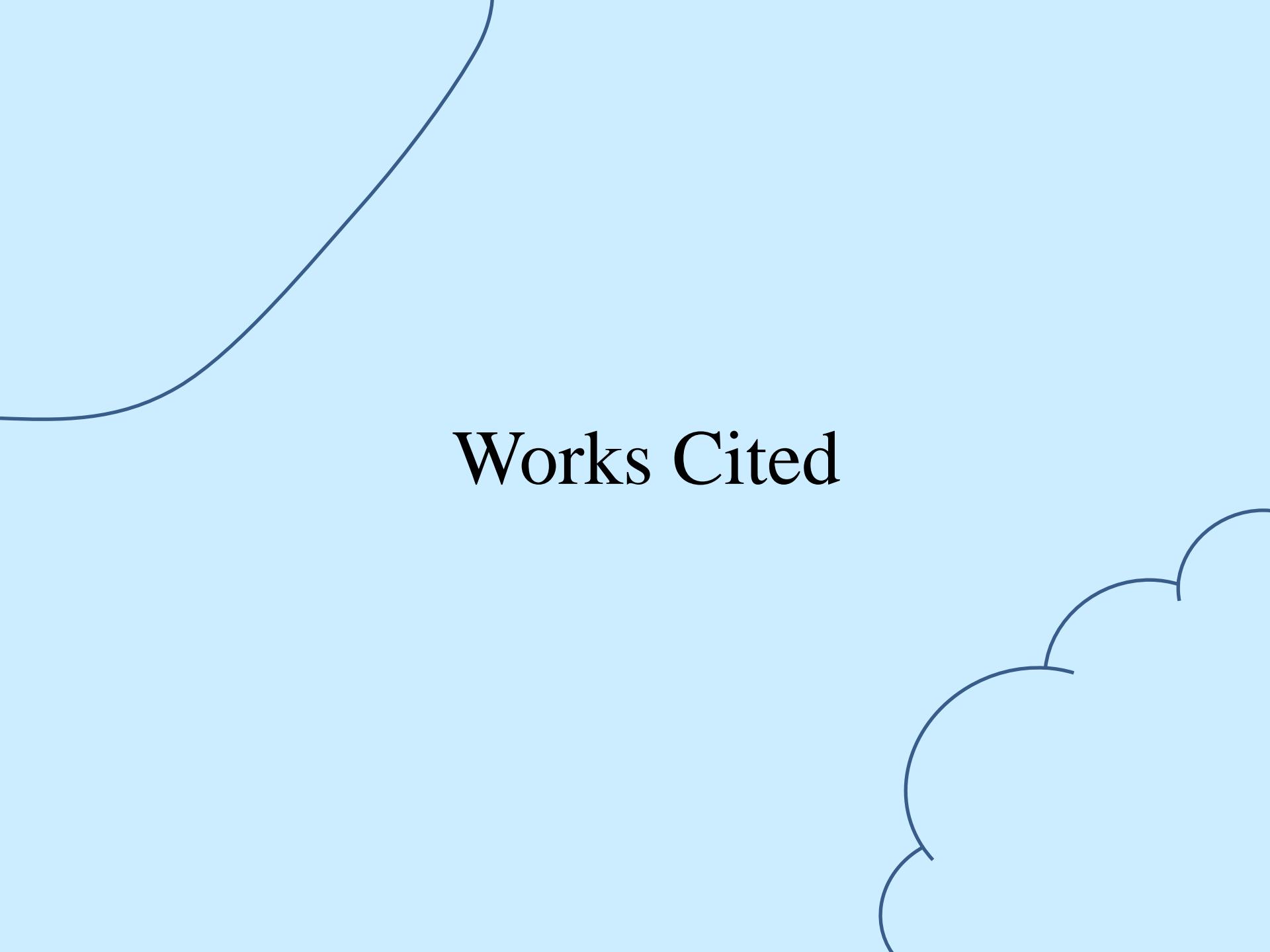


Source: Yates, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*, 2011

- Shadows = concealment, deception.
- Surrounded by shadows, Snape tricks everyone.
- When approaching and facing shadows we grow and mature.

Conclusion

- The characters evolve, mature and begin to act like adults, forcing the novels themselves to evolve and adapt.
- Break the dualist, black-and-white thinking typical of childish minds and uncover the rich tapestry of hues and nuances of which every character is comprised of.
- No true opposition between light and darkness, but a continuum, a range of endless possibilities of being.



Works Cited

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Thank you