

A WONDER WHOSE ORIGIN IS NOT KNOWN: THE IMPORTANCE
OF THE ORPHAN HERO IN OTHERWORLDLY FILM

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The purpose of this thesis is to explore the importance of the orphan hero in film and his resonance with the American people. It explores the orphan and the American identities, the archetypes found in myths, and the hero in American culture. The three heroes (Batman, Anakin Skywalker, and Harry Potter) represent certain aspects of orphan heroes: the capacity for sacrifice and the need to resist focusing on oneself. The type of hero each becomes has its source in the response he takes to his orphanhood. These young men suffered great loss early in their lives, but found the strength to sacrifice themselves for others, the ultimate sign of a hero.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the world has seen one crisis after another. Tyrants have been overthrown, floods and earthquakes have ravaged countries on both sides of the world, the major religions of the world are in turmoil, and nations once thought invincible have been brutally attacked. The institutions in which people once put their faith are gradually being undermined, and people are looking for something new in which to put their trust. At a time when the world seems to have been turned upside down, there has been a resurgence in the popularity of the superhero in American film and television. In this same time period, films such as *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars*, *Spider-Man I and II*, *Batman Begins*, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and the TV show *Smallville* were released and demonstrate (through box office and television ratings) the great popularity of the superhero.

There is another element that connects the above films and television show. The hero of each work is not only an extraordinary being, he is an orphan. The strong success and response these films have generated illustrate the need of the American people for a hero who freely accepts the burden of responsibility his powers bestow on him. That the hero who chooses to do so is an orphan makes his sacrifice all the more special. With his powers, gifts and lack of familial and emotional ties, the orphan superhero could do whatever he chooses with his life; even use his powers to achieve wealth and fame. Instead he accepts the role of guardian and protector, dedicating and sacrificing himself for a cause and a people for whom he cares. The superhero chooses a life of isolation so that no one else will have to face the pain and loneliness that shaped him.

The goal of this thesis is to discuss and demonstrate the resonance and significance of the cinematic orphan hero for the American people. This thesis will explore the influence of their orphanhood in the lives of the superheroes studied here: Batman, Anakin Skywalker, and Harry Potter. These three would not be the heroes they are had their parents lived. Their loss, the response each takes to it, the identity quest on which they embark, and their search for a family to replace that which they lost determines the path their life takes. Each is on a quest to fashion an identity in the face of his orphanhood, but that identity is ultimately sacrificed for those they protect. It is the goal of this thesis to argue that these three characters resonate with and reflect both the American culture and the loss of heritage and identity felt by the American people, as well as standing as models of sacrifice and loyalty.

The heroes this paper will discuss also commit themselves to a cause and, in the case of Anakin, a person for whom they would die. The orphaning of Batman, Anakin Skywalker, and Harry Potter left the 3 superheroes alone in choosing how to best to use their powers and skills. Although each ultimately chooses to sacrifice his life for others, it was not a decision that came easily. Their early loss, loneliness, and the pain and joy they feel influence the character and decisions of each and forge the superhero they would become.

As there is no preexisting theory on the orphan hero in American film, I will attempt to construct one using Carl Jung's and Joseph Campbell's theories of the hero, Eileen Simpson and Maxine Harris' theories of orphanhood, and Diane Pazicky's theory of the orphan discourse in early American history.

Batman, Anakin Skywalker, and Harry Potter all have their own film series, the importance and relevance of which are reflected the success of these films at the box office.

To date there are 5 films in the Batman series:

- *Batman*
- *Batman Returns*
- *Batman Forever*
- *Batman & Robin*
- *Batman Begins*.

Anakin Skywalker is the hero and villain of George Lucas' *Star Wars* trilogies. The films in these series are:

- *Episode IV: A New Hope*
- *Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back*
- *Episode VI: Return of the Jedi*.
- *Episode I: The Phantom Menace*
- *Episode II: Attack of the Clones*
- *Episode III: The Revenge of the Sith*

The Harry Potter films produced so far are:

- *Harry Potter & the Sorcerer's Stone*
- *Harry Potter & the Chamber of Secrets*
- *Harry Potter & the Prisoner of Azkaban*
- *Harry Potter & the Goblet of Fire*

The website <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/alltime/> lists the domestic grosses of the one hundred top-earning films (adjusted for inflation). *Star Wars Episodes* I, IV, V, and VI hold positions in the top 20, and *Episode IV* holds the second spot (#1 occupied by *Gone With The Wind*, a story that sees its heroine become an orphan as well). The remaining *Star Wars* episodes, the first *Batman* film, and *Harry Potter & the Sorcerer's Stone* also occupy positions on this list. From their success it can be assumed that these characters meet a certain need in American society. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the basis of that need and the ways these characters meet it.

The topics and questions this thesis will explore and attempt to answer include the mythology, psychology and journey of the hero using the writings of Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung as reflected in the above films; the influence of his orphanhood on the superhero's actions

and perspective as well as his decision to accept the burden of guardian to his society; how the orphan theories of authors like Pazicky and Harris are reflected in the lives of these superheroes; the ways in which the pain of his early loss continues to shape his life; why the orphan superhero resonates with the American people, serving as a mirror for our own cultural orphanhood and identity quest; and finally how the process of adapting source material into a film can increase the relevance of a work within a society and culture.

CHAPTER 2

THE HERO AND OTHER ARCHETYPES

Scholars such as Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung felt that there are certain universal and shared themes and events in the myths and heroic tales in the cultures of the world, and that the heroes of these tales shared certain qualities as well. Though heroes may appear to change with the times, the core of a hero remains the same, possessing the strength, focus, respect for life and the sacrificial nature vital for the mission they accept. The following section contains much background information on the character and characteristics of the fictional hero, for the purpose of connecting the three heroes discussed in this thesis to heroes of a more ancient time.

The telling sign of a hero, according to Campbell, is sacrifice. In an interview with Bill Moyers later published as *The Power of Myth*, Campbell noted that all heroes sacrifice themselves for a cause, a people, or an idea. By giving up everything important to him, putting the lives and dreams of others before his own, dedicating himself to a cause, the hero achieves salvation, both for himself and for those he serves. This sacrifice gains even more significance when the hero paying the price is an orphan, a person all alone in the world. Nothing forces the orphan in literature and film to devote his life to the protection of innocent people; that he does so speaks to the strength of his character and the depth of his heroism. Free of all constraints and ties, the orphan superhero forsakes his own dreams and life goals to ease the suffering of others.

Though Campbell described sacrifice as the sign of a hero; he observed that another quality was far greater. Joseph Campbell called compassion, which he defines as “suffering with” (Flowers 24), the most important quality a hero can possess. Campbell told Bill Moyers that “there is a mystical notion of the spiritual function of suffering in this world. The one who suffers is, as it were, the Christ, come before us to evoke the one thing that turns the human beast

of prey into a valid human being. That one thing is compassion.” (Flowers 144) A hero is a man or woman called to put aside his or her own desires and goals and take up the burden predestined for him or her. Most of the time the hero wants nothing more than to lead a normal life, as Odysseus’ attempts to avoid going to Troy in Homer’s *Odyssey* indicate, but the talents and gifts bestowed on the hero make him or her the only person capable of completing the task awaiting them.

In his work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell outlined the adventure or journey all heroes take, regardless of the culture or land that gave them life, arguing that their stories share certain universal characteristics and events. He found that the mythological heroes share many common traits, two of which are a mysterious birth and supernatural origins. The birth may also be the result of a sacred conception, as is the case of Jesus Christ and the Greek god Dionysus. Another common theme in myth is the virgin birth. The concepts of a union between a god and a mortal woman and a virgin birth appear in the myths and teachings of diverse cultures. Being born of a virgin was a common occurrence in Greek mythology. Athena, Dionysus, Aphrodite, Achilles, Perseus, Hercules, Helen of Troy, and Jason of the Argo were all the result of their mother mating with a god. Greek gods appear as objects or animals when mating with a mortal, otherwise the human would not survive. Perseus was conceived when the god Zeus came to the lady Danae in the form of a golden shower. Zeus came to Leda in the form of a swan and from that union Helen and Pollux were born. Catholicism also involves another virgin birth. The Catholic Church teaches that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, given life through the union of God and the Virgin Mary, a woman born without original sin. The Bible and the Catholic Church teach that every man is born with original sin, a sin that was inflicted on Adam and Eve for their disobedience. Mary, as the Bible states, was born without

the stain of original sin in preparation for her role as the mother of the Son of God. One of the heroes this paper will explore, Anakin Skywalker, was also born of a virgin, having been conceived by Midi-chlorians. According to a *Star Wars* Website, Midi-chlorians are the organisms that exist inside certain individuals and allow them to sense and tap into the power of the Force. One person discovered that he could manipulate Midi-chlorians to create new life, and in that manner was Anakin conceived, his mother never having been with a man.

In mythology, the hero must leave his home and people with whom he has spent his childhood to prepare himself to accept and fulfill his destiny. The orphan and the hero have “moved out of the society that would have protected them, and into the dark forest, into the world of fire, of original experience. The courage to face the trials and to bring a whole new body of possibilities into the field of interpreted experience... that is the hero’s deed.” (Campbell 49) In describing the requirements for a hero, Campbell said he must “seek the wisdom and the power to serve others” (Campbell xiv), sacrifice his personal desires, overcome the dark passions, accept and acquiesce with death, “participate in life courageously and decently” (Campbell 82), separate from his mother and seek his father. If he does not do these things, the hero may very well live an ordinary life, marry, have children, and die in peace. And within a generation or two he will be forgotten. But if he leaves his home and obeys the call of his destiny, he will live on and be remembered for all time, even though he didn’t leave any descendents behind.

While Campbell primarily explored the figure of the hero in myth and legend, the psychologist Carl Gustav Jung studied the phenomena of archetypes in the world’s mythology. In his studies Jung observed that certain characters, themes, and actions showed up repeatedly in myths and lore, regardless of the culture and traditions from which they came. Archetypes,

according to Jung, are representations of the collective unconscious, themes, elements, and characters that can be found in myths all over the world, regardless of the era or culture; what Boeree called the contents of the collective unconscious in his book *Introduction to C.G. Jung*. According to Jung, there are two levels to the unconscious in every human being. The first level is the personal unconscious, which “was basically identical to Freud’s conception of the unconscious. In this layer... lay the memories of everything the individual had experienced, thought, felt, or known but that was no longer held in active awareness, whether through defensive repression or because of simple forgetting.” (Hopcke 14)

The collective unconscious, in contrast, is the second layer of the unconscious, buried much deeper in one’s mind. Robert Hopcke, a psychotherapist focusing on Jung, states that the collective unconscious contains the “patterns of psychic perception common to all humanity, the archetypes.” (Hopcke 14) and “was considered by Jung to be the ultimate psychic source of power, wholeness, and inner transformation.” (Hopcke 14) Put more simply the collective unconscious contains all of the feelings and experiences once felt and known by all humanity. It contains our basic instincts, our primitive emotions, and all the figures that once were a vital part of the human existence.

The collective unconscious also contains the archetypes, each of which symbolizes a part of the human psyche. Jung observed that the numbers of archetypes in the collective unconscious are not fixed; new ones can be discovered or found by anyone. The archetypes Jung found in his work and studies include the Self, Ego, Persona, Shadow, Hero, Child, Mother, and Father. The archetypes of the Hero, Child, Persona, Shadow, and Self are prominent in the orphaned superheroes this thesis will examine, as this thesis will attempt to prove.

The hero, according to Jung's writings, is the self-aware being. Yet the path to self-awareness is difficult, and the hero must break from his home and parents to achieve it, and he must also leave behind his pride to assume the role of a hero. Jung wrote that if the hero "is to live, he must fight and sacrifice his longing for the past in order to rise to his own heights. And having reached the noonday heights, he must also *sacrifice his love for his own achievement*, for he may not loiter." (Jung 334-5) [emphasis in the original] Sacrificing oneself implies being more concerned for another than for oneself, so much so that the hero would die to save another. Hubris, which the Greeks defined as overweening pride, would not serve the hero well, and indeed has led to the downfall of many fictional heroes, Macbeth being a prominent example of this.

The hero is one who has defeated the Ego, defined as the way "one sees oneself, along with the conscious and unconscious feelings that accompany that view." (Hopcke 79) The Ego is also connected to the archetype of the Self, but it is the weaker side of it. Hopcke describes it as our self-awareness, but says that one who puts too much importance on the Ego risks the danger of becoming enslaved to one's desires, existing as an infantile individual. Some choose to focus on the incomplete image they have of themselves; satisfied to dwell on the surface of their existence.

If the ego is one's incomplete existence, then the Self is what Hopcke refers to as the "archetype of wholeness." (Hopcke 96) A hero is one who has discovered the Self, is sure of his own identity, and, having conquered his own ego and personal demons, is determined to use the gifts and powers given him for the good of others. He has a full awareness of his identity, having recognized and assimilated both sides of himself (the Persona and the Shadow). The result of this is the achievement of a wholeness without which he cannot proceed on his quest. "In examining

various heroic legends... Jung came across identical elements in the hero's story: his divine birth; his *nekylia*, or descent into the underworld; the heroic actions he must undertake ... the motif of defeat, death, rebirth. Jung saw within these common themes that the Hero could be understood as an archetype with the collective psyche and, moreover, that this archetype was the one most often identified with humanity's slowly emerging ego consciousness." (Hopcke 113)

By ego consciousness Hopcke means our own self-awareness. Yet this self-awareness, according to Hopcke, is hard won. The hero of myth will have to journey into the unknown to gain a greater sense of his identity and existence, often descending into the underworld itself.

The historical appearance of human consciousness, our awareness of being aware, has a touch of the divine to it, a magical 'something from nothing' with great, transformative effect, all of which comes to be reflected in the hero figure's supernatural parentage and his unusual birth. To become aware of the realm of shadowy darkness, the region of unconsciousness that lives beneath the bright sense we have of our selves, is like the hero's descent into the underworld, an unavoidable task fraught with danger, which must be accomplished in order to grow and prosper as individuals. (Hopcke 113-114)

This cannot be accomplished if the would-be hero remains in the place of his birth. The heroes this thesis will examine all depart from their home to pursue their destiny. On their journey they develop the skills and commitment necessary to the completion of their quests, though this attainment would be more difficult for one of the heroes studied here.

The hero is one who must live and function independently of others, surrendering himself to the call of destiny. He must decide for himself the proper steps to take in his life, and while he remains in the home of his mother and father he cannot do this. "The neurotic who cannot leave the mother has good reasons; the fear of death holds him there." (Jung 263) Leaving home is a necessary component to the growth of the hero, and each hero this thesis will discuss makes a journey that changes him. Yet, as Campbell argues in his book *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, the mythical hero's decision to leave to leave the home and mother is not one made

lightly. The call to adventure means the hero must not only leave his childhood but he must leave the only home and people he has ever known. The hero's journey often requires that he become a man, as the journeys and ordeals he endures temper him, burning away his youthful innocence. The dangers he faces help him to accept the inevitability of his own death, yet this comes with additional difficulties. Death is something many fear, and some fictional heroes chose to remain in an infantile state rather than face their own mortality. Anakin Skywalker is an example of this, his fear of change locked him in stasis, making it difficult for him to grow and mature.

In *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, Jung wrote that “the infantile individual is infantile because he has freed himself insufficiently, or not at all, from the childish environment, that is, from his adaptation to his parents. Therefore, on the one side, he reacts falsely to the world, as a child towards his parents, always demanding love and immediate reward for his feelings; on the other side, on account of the close connection to the parents, he identifies himself with them.” (Jung 275) Anakin Skywalker is an example of the infantile individual. He was so obsessed with having his every wish and desire met that it drove him to madness, and he lost everything and everyone he ever loved.

The archetype of the Child is the opposite of the hero, yet it is the figure that paves the way for him. It is often the result of a miraculous birth, and comes from obscure and mysterious origins. The Child “is potential future... [It] anticipates the figure that comes from the synthesis of the conscious and unconscious elements of the personality.” (Jung 164) The Child, sometimes referred to as the child god, has great power and the deeds it performs are wondrous or terrifying depending on the nature of the child in question. As Jung argued, although the child paves the way for the archetype of the hero, it is not without dangers. There is the risk that the individual may choose to linger in a childish, or infantile, consciousness, rejecting the path of maturity,

what Jung would call refusing the call of destiny. A person existing in this state has not yet achieved selfhood and, according to Jung, does not exist as a conscious man. “The separation of the son from the mother signifies the separation of man from the generic consciousness of animals, from that infantile archaic thought characterized by the absence of individual consciousness.” (Jung 263) This person “is not in a condition to live for himself and to find the place to which he belongs... He remains, as far as his emotional life is concerned, far behind himself.” (Jung 275) As long as a man remains in the home of his parents he is not free to live his own life or make his own decisions.

Whereas the Child is symbolic of the hero’s journey to fashion his identity, the Persona is the social outer face worn by someone whose search for identity has not yet achieved completion. Persona is the Latin word for “mask” and it is the mask we present to those around us. The Persona is not who a person truly is, but it is also a reflection of the true self. It is the surface identity, composed of what a person believes to be the positive aspects of the personality. Some believe that the Persona is who they really are, and they decline to further examine their conscious and unconscious minds. This refusal can lead to psychological problems. People who see the Persona as the true self eventually believe there is nothing more to them than where they stand in society and the work they do. It is a façade hiding the truth self.

Becoming the self requires the recognition of both one’s favorable *and* undesirable aspects. Jung believed that focusing on one and rejecting the other only leads to neurosis. According to the writings of Jung, an individual must admit that his darkness is a part of him; trying to ignore or repress it will only make it stronger. It is only by bringing one’s demons into the light of consciousness that one can defeat and gain power over them. Jung described the Shadow as the dark side of the personality, of the conscious and unconscious minds, containing

all the things people abhor about themselves. It houses our fears, prejudices, hatred, all those emotions existing within us that we are ashamed of. It is the savage, barbaric nature that emerges when we are threatened or angered. While the Shadow contains all that is barbaric in human nature, Jung believed that it must be recognized and assimilated if a person desires to be whole. To mature an individual must recognize his own darkness and unacceptable impulses. Trying to deny them only causes them to grow, until the Shadow reaches such a level of strength it can consume the individual it once depended on. At the point the darkness takes control, and the person is lost to their own fear and doubt, as is the case with Anakin Skywalker.

According to Jung there are two sides to the Shadow. One is the internal Shadow, the one described above, our own internal fears and negative emotions. The other side is the external Shadow and is often projected onto an individual or system one dislikes. Regardless of their internal or external nature, both types of Shadows can be controlled in exactly the same way and can contribute to the growth and maturity of the individual. Robert Hopcke, a Jungian psychotherapist, wrote that the “individuation process almost always begins with the humbling integration of the shadow into one’s conscious sense of self, ... To bring the shadow to consciousness depotentiates it,... deprives it of its power,... the individual’s coming to terms with the shadow, with his unknown face, is a very important step toward his maturity, psychic wholeness, individuation.” (Hopcke 84, 157) [Shadow is lowercase in the original.] To come to terms with the Shadow, the hero must examine his own fears and darkness, and this can be accomplished through what Jung referred to as the descent into the unconscious, symbolized in mythology by the hero’s descent into the underworld.

The hero’s journey “is inward—into depths where obscure resistances are overcome, and long lost powers are revived,” (Jung 29). It symbolizes, according to Campbell and Jung, the

hero's descent into the unconscious and the subsequent discovery of his identity and purpose. The descent is a common theme in Greek and Roman mythology, portrayed as a descent into the Underworld, where Hades/ Pluto, the god of the dead, reigns for eternity. Greek heroes such as Hercules, Odysseus, Theseus, and Orpheus all made journeys into the Underworld, and only two of those turned out well. The Roman heroes Aeneas and Dante also journeyed there and brought back lessons for the rest of humanity. In Greek mythology, heroes such as Hercules, Odysseus, and Orpheus all made descents into the underworld for the completion of a task. Each man received vital instructions there, and whether or not they heeded those instructions led to the success or failure of their quests. The Underworld is a symbol of the journey into the unconscious, the journey that is necessary if the hero is to achieve individuation. It is there in the Underworld the hero meets those he knew in life. He will learn valuable lessons and face his worst fears, but whether the result of the descent is good or ill, the individual who makes this journey does not emerge unchanged. He faces both death and his own darkness, and when he emerges he is no longer the same person he was before his descent. The hero who descends into his own unconscious emerges with a new awareness of his identity and his place in the world. The quest of the hero is the quest for one's true self, a journey all must make.

Joseph Campbell described "The hero's journey not as a courageous act but as a life lived in self-discovery." (Flowers xiii-xiv) The orphan hero, lacking parents, must create his identity without a knowledge of who he is or where he comes from. Even when the hero in mythology does have parents, his premature separation from them is often a necessary component of his destiny. He cannot become the hero he is born to be while he remains in the home of his parents, for both his mother and father have the power to control their son, keeping him in a position of child-like dependency.

Jung and Campbell both theorize that one derives one's identity from one's parents. It is Campbell's belief that people inherit their identity from their parents; he stated that the mother is "the one who nurses you and instructs you and brings you up to the age where you must find your father. Now, the finding of the father has to do with finding your own character and destiny. There's a notion that character is inherited from the father, and the body and very often the mind from the mother. But it's your character that is the mystery, and your character is your destiny. So it is the discovery of your destiny that is symbolized by the father quest." (Flowers 209) The superheroes this thesis will examine lose their parents before they are prepared to do so. Lacking the love and guidance of a mother and father, the child must parent themselves from then on, and shape their own identity despite their lack of self-knowledge and personal history. One's parents ideally communicate this knowledge to the child, preparing him or her to survive in the world outside the home.

According to Campbell and Jung the mother is the original source of love for her child. In *The Power of Myth* Joseph Campbell called the mother "really a more immediate parent than the father because one is born from the mother, and the first experience of any infant is the mother." (Flowers 207) Humans are born completely helpless, and for the first few years of life remain dependent on the mother for nourishment, care, and safety. Campbell and Jung theorized that it is the mother's role to protect her child until he or she is deemed ready to enter the outside world. Anthony Stevens, a Jungian scholar, wrote that "Of all the archetypal programmes activated at this time [the first 5 years of life], that mediating attachment to the mother is the most critical. Whether or not this primal relationship goes well will affect all later relationships with people, with society and with the world." (Stevens 77) Stevens believed it is the mother's duty to teach her child that the world and the people in it are good, and through her the child

comes to love and respect both. Receiving unconditional love from his mother, the child learns to value and cherish the world around him. When the mother is unsuccessful in rearing her child and in giving him enough strength to part from her, problems can arise. The childhood of Anakin Skywalker is an example of this. The love he held for his mother was so great that he was unable to break from her, and would not accept the inevitability of a life without her.

Jung and Stevens wrote that even when the mother is successful in rearing her child; it is not a guarantee that the child will smoothly make the transition to adulthood. He or she will still need a father to complete the process of maturation and aid him or her in achieving independence, strength, perseverance and selfhood. In mythology, when the father is absent, there is no one to teach the child this. The child must leave his home and seek out his father, symbolically turning inward for the knowledge and maturity to survive.

The Mother, as an archetype and an individual in mythology, is simultaneously the giver and devourer of life. It is she who gives life to the child, yet she has the power to quash the child's life force and opportunities. While she fosters growth, love, and attraction in the child she can also suppress growth and individuation, preventing her children in general and her sons in particular from forming separate lives and identities by keeping them too close to her. Her duty is to nurture her son until he develops a certain independent consciousness, at which point he is ready to leave her for the father. Jung wrote in *The Dual Mother* that "the development of consciousness inevitably leads not only to separation from the mother, but to separation from the parents and the whole family circle and thus to a relative degree of detachment from the unconscious and the world of instinct." (Segal 154) The embrace and presence of the mother and family symbolize a state in which the hero cannot remain if he is to grow and fulfill his promise. She offers love, but the father in mythology provides the keys to survival.

Just as the mother either fosters or suppresses growth, the father can dominate or liberate his son. The role of the father archetype is to protect the children under his care while simultaneously showing them the way to protect themselves. Anthony Stevens theorized that once the child is ready to begin the process of maturation and separation, when the child is ready to learn from him, the father replaces the mother as the parent of primary importance. It is his role, Stevens wrote, to teach the child the skills to survive in the world. The father must show the child how to be an adult, “his is the primary responsibility for facilitating the transition of his adolescent children from home to society. Through his contingent love he encourages the acquisition of skill which will be necessary for adult life, while at the same time representing to the child the values and mores prevailing in the adult group to which he or she will have to adjust.” (Stevens 119) Jung and Stevens felt that love from the mother combined with strength from the father enables the child to love life for all its joys and troubles.

Another common occurrence in myth is the death of an oppressive, tyrannical king or father at the hands of the hero. The act of killing is necessary for the growth of the hero, proof of the hero’s strength and worthiness to rule the lands formerly controlled by the tyrant king or god. In one of the earliest tales in Greek mythology, the Titan Cronus rules the universe. Cronus was the son of Uranus, the god of the sky and the ruler of the universe. When Cronus grew strong enough, he emasculated his father and ascended to the throne. He learned that one of his children was destined to defeat him and take his place as ruler, and to prevent this he swallowed each child after it was born. One escaped (due to the quick action of his mother) and was fostered in a cave by nymphs and until he was strong enough to face and defeat Cronus. Just as the mother can give life or devour it, the father can be benevolent or tyrannical. With either type of father, the child learns that he must connect with and break from him to make his own way in the world.

In leaving the father behind, the hero is called to fill the void left by the father's absence. As he is now without the man to provide guidance and restraint, the hero must take his father's place, carrying with him the wisdom and teachings of the father as he embarks on his journey.

The death of the father in myth is often a life-changing experience for the son. Now without an adult man in his life to whom he can look for guidance, the son must grow up and take his father's place in the family, though he may not feel ready for it. The orphaning of Batman, Anakin Skywalker, and Harry Potter profoundly affects the life, perception, and choices of each character. Deprived of biological parents and the models they provide at early and critical points in their lives, it would be easy for these three heroes to only consider themselves and satisfy their each and every desire, living as though they were the only person who matters. Anakin Skywalker does indeed give into this temptation, though even he returns to the path of the hero in the end. That each man in the end chose to give up his life and potential happiness for others is what makes him heroic. Characters like these are admirable because they have no definable reason to protect others, yet they chose to do so nonetheless. Campbell said the life of the hero is one of sacrifice, and that these orphans ultimately sacrifice themselves for the good of humankind is the core of their appeal.

CHAPTER 3

THE ORPHAN IN REALITY AND FICTION

The characters on which this thesis focuses are not simply heroes, they are orphan heroes. The way in which they are affected by the loss of their parents is consistent with much nonfiction and fiction discourse on orphans. Eileen Simpson, the author of *Orphans: Real and Imaginary*, analyzes fictional and historical orphans, as well exploring her feelings about her own orphanhood. She observed that “Orphans lose the historian of their early years,” (Simpson 17). She describes how “life in an orphanage suppressed individuality,” (Simpson 158) and “that the regimentation and routine did not provide a milieu stimulating to the development of a sense of self.” (Simpson 158) She mentions how Charles Dickens scolded his readers for not visiting orphanages to see how the children were treated. At a time when nobles visited a mental asylum for “a Sunday’s entertainment” (Simpson 158), orphanages were avoided. “Orphans provide no entertainment. They don’t cry, scream, shout, or behave bizarrely. Instead they observe visitors in searching silence” (Simpson 158), silently pleading to be taken home.

Having lost both her parents before the age of seven, and experiencing what she called her second orphaning after her husband died in his mid-fifties, Simpson refers to the loneliness and bleakness she felt after each death. After her husband died, she tried writing, tried finding the right subject, for “between my eyes and the book’s page I saw a moonscape, pitted, rocky, limitless. The figure wandering on its surface was me. Alone.” (Simpson 8) She remembers, after her father’s death, desperately wishing for him to come and take her and her sister home, but eventually she realized that he never would. Maxine Harris, the author of *The Loss That Is Forever: The Lifelong Impact of the Early Death of a Mother or Father*, writes that when one loses their parents after one is full-grown the effect, while devastating, is not all-consuming.

Adults who lose their parents most likely have a family of their own to love, someone who can comfort them and help them mourn and move on from the loss.

It is an entirely different case when a child loses his parents to death. According to Harris, during childhood one is completely dependent on the mother and father for love, shelter, and basic needs. She argues that the child is incapable of taking care of himself and of surviving on his own, yet his orphaning dictates that this is what he must do, unless a loving relative or adoptive parent is available to take him in. Even if this occurs, Harris concludes, the orphaned child's world will never be the same. Many of the people she interviewed for her study admitted to feeling as though their world had been ripped away. They said it was though the foundations of their life had disappeared; they had to face the awful truth that their parents would never be there to comfort them again, would never be there to tell them that everything would be alright. One man Harris interviewed lost his mother when he was sixteen years old. He remembered feeling as though he had died with his mother, for at sixteen he had not yet begun to separate from her and he was still very much in need of her. When she died he thought it was about him. Ten years later, at an AA meeting, he began to come to terms with his feelings. He asked why did it happen to him, but someone told him that his mother's death wasn't about it him, it was about her. With this Hugh realized he hadn't died with his mother, "he did not need to mourn for himself." (Harris 253)

The loss of a parent during one's childhood is life-altering, for the child must now move forward alone. Harris wrote that "When a parent dies young, the experience of loss and the creation of the self are forever merged." (Harris 305) According to her, the loss forces the child take his life in his own hands. There is no longer a mother or father to love, comfort, and provide for him. The child knows that he must make his own way, a knowledge Harris says can be both

thrilling and terrifying. The child is free, as Harris believes, to make the choices regarding his life, but without parents the child is unsure of how to do so. The parents died before their child was ready to learn all he could from them, while the child is still dependent on them for everything. When a person is orphaned during childhood, as Harris states, the world loses all security and familiarity, for “If a loved and needed parent can disappear forever, then nothing is safe, predictable, or secure anymore. Beyond the immediacy of personal loss, bereaved children must now make their way in a world marked by profound emptiness.” (Harris 6)

In his book on the hero’s mythological journey, Christopher Vogler wrote that “Fairy tale heroes have a common denominator, a quality that unites them across boundaries of culture, geography, and time. They are lacking something, or something has been taken away from them. Often they have just lost a family member. A mother or father has died, or a brother or sister has been kidnapped. Fairy tales are about searching for completeness and striving for wholeness, and it’s often a subtraction from the family unit that sets the story in motion.” (Vogler 90) These heroes, and others like them, are driven by the need to find what’s lacking in their lives, and if they are unable to find it, then they try to make up for its loss. They cannot fill the void left by their parents’ death and they can never erase the pain of their loss. What they can do, however, is fight back so that no one else will have to suffer the same pain and fate as they, even if it means denying the very thing they want and need, they companionship and understanding of another human being.

It is Maxine Harris’ argument that poor parenting can have the same effects as no parenting at all. She believes that if there is no responsible parent to guide the child and teach him or her values and skills necessary in adult life then there is the risk that the child will be out

of control. One man interviewed by Harris lost his father early in his life, after which he lived alone with his mother. According to Harris, Frank believed:

that the absence of a father gave him a sense that he could accomplish anything. There was no father to rebel against, no father to set limits. His mother adored him and she nurtured him in the belief that he could accomplish anything he set out to do. Because in his mother's eyes he could do no wrong, Frank also believes that... he could get away with anything... He could always charm his mother into complying with his wishes. (Harris 300)

Anakin Skywalker is a fictional reflection of this attitude. He has no father to teach him what he should and should not do. Shmi Skywalker, as shown in the film, is unable to discipline her child, so Anakin grows up knowing he can whatever he pleases, and no punishment will come to him, as the audience sees in *Episode I*. This will be clarified in the section on Anakin Skywalker.

For her study on the effects of orphanhood, Maxine Harris interviewed several people, men and women both, who lost parents as children or young adults. One woman interviewed said that she felt her world was over. After the death of his father, one man interviewed by Neil Chethik for his book *Fatherloss: How Sons of All Ages Come to Terms with the Deaths of Their Dads* said "It was like I lost my compass. I don't really feel like an adult. I'm looking for someone to light a fire under me. But there's nobody there." (Chethik 52)

Some of the people Harris interviewed said they felt proud of their accomplishments and triumphs, saying that they like who they became having survived an early loss. Harris observed that people had different reactions to the death of a parent. Some described feeling cheated, forever separated from others because of what they had gone through, that their loss made identity formation even more complicated. Others learned that they could love someone even though that person would not always be there. They felt it was better to love someone, despite the possibility that they could lose another loved one someday, than to never allow themselves to

feel love for another again. They decided they would rather face pain than a life spent alone, because feeling that pain would mean that they had loved another and were loved in return.

Many of the orphans Harris interviewed commented on feeling ill at ease socially after their parents died. They had not yet been taught how to interact and survive in the outside world; hence it was a frightening place to them. Without the example their parents would have provided, they were unsure of how and where they belonged in the world around them; it was easier to be self-reliant. For those who lost parents young, according to Harris, there was the temptation to remain in a state of independence, never becoming dependent on another human being again. In the minds of those who choose to remain independent in this way, depending on another is too painful. They could not bear the thought of losing someone else they loved, so they chose not to allow love to enter their lives. From the studies and films cited here one gains a sense of this. Loss is painful, but it is a pain that is part of life, and a sign that we loved another person. A life with love, even if that love leads to pain, is better than a life spent alone, but not everyone feels that way. Still others interviewed by Harris described feeling guilty, believing they failed their mother or father, and therefore had some responsibility in their own orphaning. Harris wrote that, as a result of the early death of a parent, “The young child learns that to love is to lose, or at the very least, risk losing the beloved.” (Harris 140)

In her study of orphans, Maxine Harris noted that several people she interviewed experience what is known as survivor guilt. This is characterized by the survivor blaming themselves for living when someone they loved died. They question how to go on with their life and enjoy themselves after this person has died. They find it difficult to enjoy themselves without feeling guilty for doing so, wondering how they can dare to have a life and pursue their dreams when a loved one is dead. To be cured of survivor guilt, Harris argues, an individual

must realize that they are not to blame for the death of another; it was nothing they did that caused this person to die. They must realize that it is permissible for them to live and enjoy a normal life, but it is difficult to reach this awareness without outside help.

Maxine Harris observed that the orphans she interviewed felt several distinct emotions when faced with the task “of creating the self. The first was anger. These individuals felt furious with the dead parent who had abandoned them” (Harris 119) and their “anger was then mixed with resolve, resolve... to use their own lives as a vindication of the parent who had abandoned his or her responsibilities by dying young.” (Harris 119) It doesn’t matter if the parents died or abandoned their child, either way the child is left without the love and security parents can provide. In one moment the world in which the child grew up is swept away, leaving him or her adrift and alone. If a parent can die young, according to Harris, then nothing in the world is secure or permanent. Seeing his or her parents die young, the orphan child can come to believe that nothing in the world is permanent or dependable. For this reason some orphans find it difficult to trust humanity and choose to spend their lives in isolation.

Harris’ argument, and one that seems to apply to the three heroes on which this thesis will focus, is that the loss of one’s parents while one is a child leaves the person in question without the traditional means of identity formation. The orphan superheroes this thesis will study face a life without the people who would have loved them the most and they must learn to love and live in the world without forming relationships, for as orphans they were deprived of the two people who could have taught them how to do so.

CHAPTER 4

AMERICAN CULTURE AND THE ORPHAN HERO

While the orphan hero is found in the works of other cultures (the novels of Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling and the Bronte sisters for example, as well as the mythology of Greece and medieval England); this figure seems especially prominent in America's comics, television shows and films; particularly those of the science fiction and fantasy genres. Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, Melville's Ishmael, Jay Gatsby, Superman, Batman, Spider-Man, Indiana Jones, Luke Skywalker, Anakin Skywalker, Tarzan and Captain America are all either full or half-orphans. The early loss of their mother or father left a profound and lasting impact on each hero. It is the aim of this thesis to explore the importance orphanhood assumes in the creation of the superheroes studied here: Batman, Anakin Skywalker, and Harry Potter. The tragedy, and the identity quest it inspires in each hero, determines the path their life will follow. The kind of superhero they become hinges on their search to form an identity while sacrificing that same identity for the sake of others, a sacrifice America's founders knew very well.

"Well-fed Americans", Fishwick wrote, "are starved for the pomp and ritual of older nations." (Fishwick 13) America differs from other nations in that it has no native mythology and lore. The mythology of other nations developed over time and had direct appeal to the members of their societies. The heroes of Greek myths were Greek, Rome had Romans to admire, and the British had legends such as King Arthur and Beowulf for moral examples. America as it exists today is less than three hundred years old and, with the exception of Native Americans, its inhabitants journeyed from other lands. The early Americans had to make their own heroes and myths, whereas the other cultures could trace theirs almost back to the beginning

of recorded history. Faced with the opportunity and the dilemma of self-creation, the hero the early Americans found, Fishwick writes, was the self-made man. Fiercely independent, individualistic, rugged, possessing a love and a mastery of the land around him and capable of “raising hell in their own particular fashion” (Fishwick 19), self-made men captured America’s imagination and heart. Abraham Lincoln is an example of this hero. Born in a log cabin in the backwoods of Illinois, this poor boy whose mother died before his tenth birthday rose up to become president of the United States. “Politicians capitalized on the self-made man theme. Nineteenth-century candidates for office talked fast to explain why they had not risen from a log cabin, if such advantage had been denied them.” (Fishwick 145) Having severed our ties to England, the people who would become Americans created and found heroes that faced the same challenges as they, mainly the difficulty of creating new lives in a strange land.

Diana Pazicky, in the first half of her book *Cultural Orphans in America*, focuses on the early life of the colonies and how the Puritans and pilgrims moved from depending on England to desiring freedom from her overly harsh rule. According to Pazicky the relationship between the colonists and their homeland was a complicated one, characterized by a guilt that was born out of loyalty and patriotism. The relationship between England and her citizens, she writes, was similar to that between a parent and child. England protected her children, governing them, providing for them, and demanding absolute loyalty in return.

Such a demand was not unusual, given the British mindset at the time. The English of the time looked on God and king as father and the land on which they lived as mother. “The family was of supreme importance to the English Puritans as a hierarchical model for social and political institutions and as the repository of religious values. Moreover, the Puritans regarded their children as the future of the faith and emigrated partly on their behalf.” (Pazicky xiv) The

Puritans immigrated to spread the British civilization, increase their empire's power, and give their children a better life. Unlike the pilgrims, who left England to escape religious persecution, the Puritans, according to Pazicky, left their homeland out of loyalty to their home country. The Puritans left England in accordance with their "parent's" wishes, but in leaving England, as Pazicky argues, they were also abandoning her, orphaning themselves in the name of obeying their parents, and Pazicky writes that the separation made the Puritans doubt the rightness of their mission. Being loyal to king and country required that they abandon king and country. They were both good and bad children. Separated from home and king, mother and father, Pazicky postulates that the Puritans began to suffer from an identity crisis and felt guilt at abandoning the country to which they owed their loyalty and that "the emotions of grief and desolation with which they reacted to separation from their metaphorical parents are characteristic of orphanhood." (Pazicky 9)

As time passed however, the pilgrims and Puritans began to think of themselves as Americans, not English. So now "orphanhood seemed to represent an opportunity for self-creation rather than a loss of identity." (Pazicky xv) As they became accustomed to self-rule the colonists came to resent the king's overly strict control. With the advent of the American Revolution, Pazicky observed, this difficulty of the colonists defining themselves only grew. In declaring, then winning, their independence they had severed their last connection to Mother England. Pazicky quotes Edwin G. Burrows and Michael Wallace who described the British Empire as a family, "a family in which England enjoyed the rights and duties of parental authority... while the colonies enjoyed the corresponding rights and duties of children." (Pazicky 51) From these and other writings Pazicky concludes that the colonists saw the familial relationship as "submissive and degrading." (Pazicky 52)

Another of Pazicky's sources is Thomas Paine, the author of the pamphlet *Common Sense*. Paine called Britain a monster and the members of her government parasites and wrote that "it is now the interest of America to provide for herself." (Pazicky 56) Paine argued that America did not need England to be the "parent" anymore, and in trying to hold on to their "parental" rights were taking those rights away from the colonies, which were now capable of governing themselves. He wrote that America now had a family of her own, and it was her duty, not England's, to take care of them. For children to be happy and live their own lives, as common sense and history tells us, the mother and father must recognize when to let them go. It seems that Paine and Pazicky feel that England was trying to hold onto a nation that no longer needed her, that America was ready to leave the protection of her "parent" and form her own national and cultural identity. The process that had begun when the Puritans and pilgrims arrived in the New World was nearing completion. The colony's victory in the Revolutionary War only made their independence official. The colonists, for all intents and purposes, had governed themselves for over a century, despite receiving decrees from and paying taxes to the monarchy.

Pazicky argued that "whatever shape the orphan assumes, the figure signals identity formation, not only individual but cultural." (Pazicky xi), calling orphanhood "the ultimate metaphor for identity issues. If a child never knew his or her parents, the loss entails personal history as well." (Pazicky xi) With her victory over the Mother Country, America was legally independent of England, having severed all ties of citizenship. Now that the new Americans were free to create their own identity and government, a difficult task faced them. The English were not the only citizens of the new country. As the colonies grew and immigrants arrived from countries other than Great Britain, it became necessary to fashion a common mythology, one that would unite the diverse peoples into one nation. Therein lay the dilemma. People of different

nations, traditions, languages, beliefs, religions, and races had come to one place to find a better life, and in doing so left behind the home and traditions they had known. Unfortunately the fledgling nation could offer no culture, lore, or tradition to replace the ones its people surrendered. New heroes, myths and legends would have to be found or, at the very least made, to unite the diverse peoples that made up the colonies; but the ones chosen would have to meet the needs and beliefs of all of the people living in the New World. Fishwick quoted Grant in his work that:

“American nationality was a thing of ideas solely, and not a thing of races. It is neither English nor Irish, nor Dutch, nor French; it is not Puritan nor Cavalier; it is not North nor South; our nationality is our self-government, our system of popular law [...] aside from the identity of our national principles we have no national identity, nor shall we for centuries.” (Fishwick 99)

Marshall Fishwick wrote that a “nation’s most pressing fears and ideals find their way into those media most readily accessible to the people.” (Fishwick 188) Fear is a part of life, and people need a positive example, a model, to help them overcome their fear. This model, whether a human or an idea, shows people how to do so. “[T]he hero emerges at a moment when men’s emotions are deeply stirred, and appeals to both the imagination and the reason.” (Fishwick 3) Heroes both actual and fictional stand as a beacon to the people who admire them; giving them a message of hope. Heroes and superheroes alike overcome their own shortcomings and personal demons to fight, and die if need be, for what they believe is right. America, which has been described as a nation without a culture, is on a never-ending quest to find its place in the world, and the quest of the orphan hero reflects this.

CHAPTER 5

ADAPTATION AND FILM

Of the three film series this thesis will examine, two are adapted from published works, specifically fantasy novels and comic books. *Star Wars* is the one film series that was not adapted from a work of literature; rather it sprang from the mind and imagination of George Lucas. According to Desmond and Hawkes, the authors of *Adaptation: Studying Film and Literature*, “most of the all time top-grossing films are adaptations.” (Desmond and Hawkes 2) The Website Box Office Mojo, which includes film news, reviews, release dates, etc also lists the top 100 American films, with box office totals adjusted for inflation. The address of this portion of the website is <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/alltime/adjusted.htm>. Of the films in the top ten, six are adapted works, five based on novels and one adapted from a fairy tale. *Star Wars Episodes I, IV, V and VI* are in the top 20, with *Episode IV* occupying the second spot. (*Gone With the Wind* is number 1.) The two Spider-Man films occupy positions 33 and 51. *Batman* occupies position number 47. *Star Wars Episodes II and III* hold positions 82 and 56, and *Harry Potter & the Sorcerer’s Stone* is number 65. Accompanying this list is the top one hundred American films not adjusted for inflation. Both Spider-Man films are in the top ten here, as are *Star Wars Episodes I, III, and IV* and *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*. All 4 Harry Potter films are in the top 40, along with the remaining *Star Wars* episodes and *The Lord of the Rings* films. *Batman, Batman Begins, and Batman Forever* hold positions 36, 67 and 85, respectively.

Desmond and Hawkes argue that adapted films come with a built-in audience and fan base, as the people who are fans of the book or comic go to see the film based on the desire to

see how close the film comes to their perception of the published work and to satisfy their expectations to see the world and characters they love done justice. While those who adapt a book into a film wish to satisfy the fan base, “*strict fidelity* is impossible.” (Desmond and Hawkes 34) [emphasis in original] No film can ever contain all the events and characters present in the source material, and the events and people included will not be exactly the same as they are in the adapted material.

Novels and comics have a feel and an emphasis that is different than films. The length of the work is controlled by the writer (and to some degree the publisher). More time and story can be devoted to exposition, secondary storylines and character development. For example, in Peter Jackson’s *The Lord of the Rings*, a few weeks pass between Frodo’s inheritance of the One Ring and his departure from the Shire, as opposed to the *seventeen year* gap between the two events in Tolkien’s books. The first book in the Harry Potter series spends several chapters on Harry’s life with his surrogate family, giving the reader a clear picture of the abuse and neglect Harry has lived with for ten years. The opening scene of *Harry Potter & the Sorcerer’s Stone* shows the infant Harry lying asleep on the doorstep of his aunt and uncle, the only blood relatives he has left after his parents’ deaths. The story then jumps forward ten years, to the part of the story leading up to his departure from his adopted family and his enrollment at Hogwarts.

While films may lack some events present in the book or comic, they may also contain action sequences nowhere to be found in the original material. In the conclusion of *Harry Potter & the Sorcerer’s Stone*, the spirit of Lord Voldemort, having been exorcised from the body he possessed, directly attacks Harry, rendering the boy hero unconscious. This scene, nowhere to be found in the novel, communicates to the filmgoer just how dangerous Lord Voldemort is, both to Harry and the rest of the wizarding community. If he can nearly kill Harry while an incorporeal

spirit, then Voldemort in possession of a physical body must be even more of a threat. The novels communicate this through other character's descriptions of Voldemort and his powers, but such descriptions take pages or whole chapters to communicate, whereas a few seconds of screen time make the same point.

To successfully translate a novel into a film some story elements must be changed to heighten drama and action, as well as eliminate confusion. In the original Batman comic story line, Bruce Wayne never knew the identity of the man who murdered his parents. Leaving the murderer unidentified works well in the comics because it assures the reader that Batman is never going to retire or go away. Unaware of the identity of the man who so abruptly destroyed his life, Batman sees the face of his enemy in every criminal he brings down. Denied the chance to get his revenge and because he lacks the capacity to forgive himself for his own perceived failure, Batman will never stop fighting those who plague Gotham. He will not retire until he has avenged his parents, and he can never avenge his parents because he doesn't know who murdered them. What is an essential storyline in the comics would only be frustrating in a film depicting this superhero. All except two of Batman films put a face and name on the murderer of Thomas and Martha Wayne, and one of those films (*Batman & Robin*) doesn't refer to or show the murder of the Waynes at all.

CHAPTER 6

THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE HEROES CHOSEN

The films revolving around each superhero reveal how his orphaning shapes the course of his life, determining what kind of man and hero he will become. As the focus of this thesis, I have chosen three of the most popular filmic narratives featuring an orphan protagonist. Batman, *Star Wars*, and Harry Potter “are at once compelling and systematic exaggerations of human experience, [they] offer their audiences what I would identify as myths distinctive contribution to life: the opportunity to enter a world of virtual experience and to do, vicariously, the *undoable*.” (Drummond 13) [emphasis in the original] As stated earlier, there is no shortage of orphaned superheroes and heroes. In addition to the three this thesis will discuss, Superman, Spider Man, Aquaman, Wolverine, Daredevil, Billy Batson/Captain Marvel, Robin, Blade, Frodo Baggins, Aragorn, Indiana Jones, Cyclops and Storm and Rogue of the X Men, the Flash, Peter Pan, Oliver Twist, Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer, Ebenezer Scrooge, King Arthur, Merlin, Luke Skywalker, the Incredible Hulk and Tarzan are all heroes who lost their parents early. While each character would provide a wealth of information, I chose to discuss only Batman, Anakin Skywalker/ Darth Vader, and Harry Potter. It is a goal of this thesis to explore the role the orphan state played in the creation of a superhero or a supervillain. Examined together Batman, Skywalker, and Harry Potter contain all the traits Campbell, Jung, Harris, Pazicky, and Simpson found in heroes and orphans alike.

To answer the question of why am I only writing about these three *men*, one answer can be found in the woman of science fiction and fantasy films. There are female superheroes, and even a few orphaned female heroes and superheroes. Storm and Rogue of the X Men, Electra,

Little Orphan Annie, Jane Eyre, Supergirl, Colette in *Les Miserables*, and Christine Daae in *The Phantom of the Opera* are all examples of women who lost one or both parents while still children. Despite the presence and popularity of female superheroes in comics and film, the most profitable superheroes are male. The Lara Croft and Underworld series were profitable, but not as profitable as the Spider-Man and Batman films. It was my decision to focus on orphaned male superheroes because of the higher quantity and popular reception of the films depicting them.

The goal of this thesis, as mentioned previously, is to show the importance and resonance the orphan superhero has for the *American* people, a topic which creates a possible complication for the inclusion of Harry Potter. Unlike Batman and Anakin Skywalker, Harry Potter is a British creation. J.K. Rowling, the author of the Harry Potter novels, is a British citizen and her characters are of European, English, Irish, Welsh, or Scottish descent. How then can it be argued that Harry Potter, as an orphan superhero, appeals to Americans and speaks to this nation's existence as cultural orphans? First of all, although the Harry Potter books are the works of a British novelist, the films based on them are American productions. If his character did not greatly appeal to the American people, then neither the novels nor the films featuring him would have sold as well as they have in America. As it is, *The New York Times* created a best seller list entirely for children's books so they could get Harry Potter out of the number one spot on the normal best seller list. Since the first Harry Potter book was published, the series has dominated the list, and the editors wanted to see something else there.

The orphan superheroes this thesis will examine (Batman/Bruce Wayne, Anakin Skywalker, and Harry Potter) lose their biological parents while still in infancy or childhood and the death's of each hero's parents is the defining factor of his life. Batman is born through the death of Bruce Wayne's parents; Anakin Skywalker's guilt and rage have their source in the

death of his mother. James and Lily Potter were murdered because they stood between Voldemort and his true target, the infant Harry. Had Harry not been a threat to the Dark Lord, his mother and father could still be alive. The circumstances of their orphaning, the psychological and physical response they take to their tragedy and the choices each character makes shapes the man and the hero he will become.

Batman is a superhero whose past and his own perceived guilt haunt him. Maxine Harris observed that some orphans blamed themselves for their parent's deaths because they were powerless to stop it, as Bruce Wayne was. The shock and sudden nature of the deaths uproot Bruce Wayne, and the fact that he is left alive leaves him with feelings of culpability in the deaths of Thomas and Martha Wayne. Batman's guilt torments him and he believes that he should have been able to do something to save his parents. Instead of seeking healing, he holds onto his guilt and will never forgive himself for what he sees as his failure. Batman's refusal to forgive himself means he will always be haunted by his loss. However, he uses his guilt and anger as a motivation to fight for Gotham City, swearing to himself that no one will have to suffer as he did.

What separates Batman from Anakin Skywalker is that the fallen Jedi does not think of the suffering of others and only focuses on his own. The deaths of Skywalker's mother and wife (the latter which he caused) push him over the edge into darkness and evil. Anakin Skywalker has awesome power, but his power could not give him what he wanted most, his family back. His life becomes about what he lost, and the loss destroys him. His loss is a wound that goes so deep it cannot be healed, not until Vader learns to look beyond himself and his own pain, a blessing made possible through the love of his son.

While Batman and Anakin are described as being haunted and wounded orphans, Harry Potter's most important quality is the one that unites all three: his willingness to sacrifice himself. The four Harry Potter films produced thus far show Harry sacrifice himself, and what he desires most, for a world that neither understands nor appreciates all he has given up. Each film shows Harry having to choose between what he desires and what he knows is right. The orphaned wizard wants nothing more than to have his parents alive again, to be accepted and embraced by the wizarding like every other magical child.

Harry has many opportunities to use his powers for his own benefit, but each time he declines to do so in favor of what is right. In the first film Voldemort offers to bring James and Lily Potter back to life in exchange for the sorcerer's stone, which will give the dark wizard a new body. Harry, as much as he wants and needs his parents back, knows that if this happens Voldemort will be free to resume his reign of terror, and refuses the thing he wants more than anything else. Denying Voldemort shows how strong and dedicated Harry is, because turning his back on the Dark Lord means turning his back on what he wants the most, a normal life with a loving mother and father. In *Harry Potter & the Chamber of Secrets* Harry wants acceptance from the wizarding community but instead finds his fellow students turning against him out of the mistaken belief that he is the last descendent of an evil wizard. He turns to Tom Riddle, the spirit of a young man who lives in a diary. Riddle's betrayal of Harry will be the worst of all, because Harry placed all his trust in his fellow orphan, only to find out that Riddle only sought his trust and friendship to destroy him.

In *Harry Potter & the Prisoner of Azkaban* Harry's given the chance to avenge the deaths of his parents. All that would involve is allowing others to kill the wizard who betrayed the Potters to Lord Voldemort. Harry loathes the treacherous wizard and knows that he deserves to

be punished (as he tells his friends) but he stops the other wizards from killing him. He knows that killing the traitor is not what his father, who was always loyal to his friends, would have wanted, and James Potter and the wizard who betrayed him were once friends. Harry therefore gives up his own desire for revenge for the sake of justice. *Harry Potter & the Goblet of Fire* shows the teenage wizard in more danger than he's faced thus far. He takes place in a magical tournament that only more practiced witches and wizards are allowed to participate in, for their own safety. The tournament proceeds until only Harry and one other student remain in the competition. The prize is a thousand gold coins and eternal fame and glory. Harry is moments away from reaching the prize when his competitor becomes in danger of losing his life. Harry forsakes the prize to save his rival, but this is not the last sacrifice he'll be called to make, and the latter is far worse. He manages to survive and returns to the wizarding community with the news of the Dark Lord's return, but as is so often the case with the heroes who tell the truth, no one believes him. Despite that he decides to fight for his home and people, though it may cost him his life.

CHAPTER 7

BATMAN AS A HAUNTED ORPHAN

Batman is one of the most enduring superheroes of the twentieth century, and he has shown no signs of losing his popularity six years into the twenty-first. Bob Kane created Batman in 1939, when the United States of America found itself at the close of the Great Depression and at the start of World War II. Superman had appeared in comics the year before, but the differences between the two superheroes are vast. Superman, despite the villains he confronts, maintains an optimistic view of life, an optimism that is nowhere to be found in Batman's stories. The trauma he witnessed forever altered him, creating a powerful Shadow side capable of carrying out his own personal war on the criminals and corrupt officials of Gotham City.

Batman's resonance with the American people is apparent through the large number of works depicting him and their success at the box office and in television ratings. To date, Batman has more films and television shows to his name than any other superhero. There have been nine feature length films, seven television shows and two fifteen chapter serials made about the Dark Knight. For this thesis, I will only focus on three of the five live action films featuring Batman: *Batman*, *Batman Returns*, and *Batman Begins*. These films focus on varied aspects of Batman yet collectively they place particular emphasis on the Shadow side of Batman's character.

The first film this thesis will examine is Tim Burton's 1989 film called *Batman*. This film depicts the night Bruce Wayne's parents died. A dark figure deliberately shoots Thomas and Martha Wayne, grins at Bruce, then disappears into the shadows. As this film reveals, thirty years pass before Batman discovers the identity of his parents' murderer, but by then it is too late for the superhero to leave his path behind. He has spent too many years obsessed with bringing his parents' murderer to justice. The need to avenge his parents defines him, and even after the

Joker dies Batman cannot abandon his mission. He has nothing else to live for, but there are still criminals out there, terrorizing and killing innocent people like his parents. Therefore he will keep fighting; and he will not stop until Gotham is free of all crime. He no longer has a choice in the matter.

The violent, sudden nature of his orphaning froze Bruce Wayne emotionally. Seeing his parents gunned down before him locked Batman in stasis, leaving him unable to move on or recover from his grief. He refuses to let go of his grief and anger because it was his grief and anger that led him to the path of the superhero. What separates Batman from the villains of Gotham City is that he used his pain and rage constructively. In *Batman Begins* the Dark Knight says to Rachel Dawes that “It is not who I am underneath, but what I do that defines me.” He takes his pain and uses it as a means to protect the people of Gotham, fighting so that no one else would share his fate. Losing his parents at such an early age profoundly affected Bruce. He found himself lacking the two people who should have loved him most, and he was unsure of how to go on without them. He will never allow himself to heal from his loss.

In his book entitled *Fatherloss* Neil Chethik wrote that “An adult distributes his love among several meaningful relationships – his spouse, parents, children, friends, colleagues – as well as his work and hobbies. The child, by contrast, invests almost all of his feelings in his parents... Only in childhood can death deprive an individual of so much opportunity to love and be loved.” (Chethik 41) In Burton’s film, Bruce Wayne *and* Batman always wear black, the color of mourning in Western culture. He will always grieve for his parents and for the relationship he could have had with them. On each anniversary of their deaths, Bruce Wayne goes to the alley and leaves two long-stemmed red roses. His parents’ deaths are shown in flashback as Bruce Wayne recalls the events of that night. A figure standing in the shadows shoots his parents dead

then fades away with these words “Have you ever danced with the devil in the pale moonlight?” This memory haunts Batman to this day, and he isn’t the person he would have been had his parents lived. He mourns not only for his lost parents but for himself, for the way his life might have been if he had had them near. In a sense, Bruce Wayne died with his parents. That one moment changed Bruce Wayne’s life forever, left him filled with such terrible rage and pain that he cannot remain the same. At that moment, Bruce Wayne knows what he has to do. He decides to spend his life avenging his parents, but he knows he cannot do this solely as Bruce Wayne, as an ordinary human. He needs to become a figure who would strike fear into the heart of Gotham’s criminal world “and though Batman will not prowl the streets of Gotham City for some twenty years yet, he is born that night.” (Zimmerman 31)

Tim Burton’s film comments subtly on the existence of the Dark Knight’s Shadow and Persona. Bruce Wayne is a man who gives his Shadow full expression. Bruce Wayne’s Shadow side is very strong, as it arose from the strong emotions of guilt, rage and grief. During his travels and the time he spent in prison Bruce Wayne was enslaved to his Shadow, controlled by the rage and pain he felt. In time he created the persona of Batman, an identity who takes the rage of Wayne’s Shadow and uses it to fight against the evil infecting Gotham. His Shadow and his Persona combine to make him a whole person, and the two identities of Bruce Wayne and Batman fuel one another.

Batman employs masks as props to comment on the truth of Wayne’s two identities. Bruce Wayne’s mansion is full of elaborate masks and costumes from diverse cultures. Masks speak of something hidden, that which cannot be known, and Wayne, like the antique masks he has collected, serves to hide the Batman persona. The identity of Batman provides an outlet for

Bruce Wayne's rage and guilt, and the identity of Bruce Wayne allows Batman to function and move without fear of detection through Gotham society.

In his interview with Bill Moyers, Joseph Campbell said that all heroes sacrifice their desires and dreams for the sake of their mission, and Batman is no different. In *Batman*, Bruce Wayne falls in love with Vicky Vale, a photojournalist new to Gotham City. Vale comes to love Bruce Wayne but is confused by him, and both feelings are magnified after she sees him witness a murder, his face filled with shock and confusion. Learning of his parents' murders, she comes to pity and love Wayne. They sleep together after their first date, after which Bruce Wayne begins to withdraw from and act coldly towards her. Frustrated by her inability to get close to him, she confronts him and asks why he won't let her in. He responds by telling her she got in. Bruce Wayne, like many of the orphans Harris interviewed, is reluctant, perhaps even unable, to enter into another loving relationship, because he fears being hurt again. In addition to his desiring not to be hurt anymore, Batman is so full of rage and grief that he doesn't have room for any other emotion. His Shadow fills him so as to make normal human activities impossible for him; all of his energy goes to the exercise of his mission. Nothing is left to him but this. He can have no normal life as long as there are still criminals out there terrorizing Gotham, ruining lives as his was ruined long ago.

In his study of the American hero, Fishwick includes a tale about General Robert E. Lee. A new mother brought her infant son to Lee for the general to bless. "What shall I teach him?" she asked. He took the infant in his arms, looked at him and his mother slowly, and said, "Teach him he must deny himself." (Fishwick 74) Batman rejects and denies himself all human pleasures and joys for the sake of carrying out his mission. Isolated in his castle, Batman avoids friendship and love because, as he knows, he simply doesn't have the ability to maintain them.

His need for vengeance fills him to the extent that he has left no room for any other emotion.

Also, the line of work he's in is a highly dangerous one, and he knows that any friends or loves of Batman would be targets for his enemies. He does not want to see anyone he loves hurt, so he simply avoids relationships.

In Burton's film, Batman tells Vale that he does what he does "Because no one else can." As the film says, Bruce Wayne, like the creature from which he drew his inspiration, is a great survivor. He survives the trauma of seeing his parents murdered to become the savior of Gotham City. A weaker individual may have gone mad or sunk into self-pity, but Batman turns his personal tragedy into a reason to fight back against crime and corruption in Gotham City. His story "is about experiencing tragedy not once but countless times in an eternal recurrence in memory and pain. It is about integrating the tragic into one's very being, until a single individual has become what all are potentially capable of being." (Oropeza 61) Although he knows the identity of the man who murdered his parents and sees the man receive justice, he still cannot find peace. The criminal society that created the Joker remains active, churning out men like him every day. Batman cannot rest as long as criminals still control Gotham, and his crusade consumes his life.

Bruce Wayne quickly perceives that, to successfully embark on his quest, he will have to change who he is. He knows that challenging the criminals will take more than Bruce Wayne; he has to find a symbol that will inspire great fear, one he can use against his enemies. The symbol he chooses, or the one that chooses him, is the animal he finds the most terrifying: the bat. In a scene from Nolan's film *Batman Begins* a young Bruce Wayne falls through a well in the grounds of his mansion while playing with a friend, plummeting into the caverns beneath. His father pulls him from the caves but not before the bats living within attack the boy. He's stricken

with terror, a terror that resurfaces the night he loses his parents. That night the Waynes go attend an opera. Part of the opera is set in a cave complete with bats. This act causes Bruce to have flashbacks about his own terrifying experience, and he asks his father if they can leave. Thomas Wayne, seeing how frightened his son is, takes his family out of the theater. It is when they walk back towards the El train that they meet Joe Chill.

Bruce Wayne's fear of the bat has many levels. He fears the bat because it's the creature that terrified him as a child, and because it is the creature connected with his parents' murders. He believes that if he had not been scared that night in the opera his parents would still be alive. The bat is therefore the embodiment of his fear and guilt, a reminder of his failure. When it came time for him to choose a symbol, an identity under which he could assume the role of a superhero, he adopted the form of the creature that terrified him more than any other. Under the tutelage of the League of Shadows Bruce Wayne learned the importance of embracing his fears, a lesson instrumental in the creation of Batman. If he is to strike terror into the hearts of criminals, there could be no better symbol than the one of which he is most frightened. He will make others know his fear, know that there is at least one man in Gotham who will no longer be terrorized.

The Germans have a word for which there is no proper translation in the English language, *doppelganger*. The closest our language can come for a translation is "double go-er". The *doppelganger* "is a creature's complementary figure or shadow, which reveals aspects of its character otherwise invisible." (Granger 38) [Shadow lowercase in the original] One's Shadow can be an animal figure and "allows us to see more clearly the outline of the true person." (Granger 38) Bruce Wayne's internal Shadow takes the form of a bat, and Bruce Wayne indeed shares certain characteristics with his animal counterpart. Both Batman and the animal he draws

his strength from are the stuff of nightmares, the bat itself is the animal associated with vampires, creatures of night who relentlessly pursue their prey. The bat and the Batman are two mysterious creatures who only emerge at, and blend into, night. The bat has been an object of fear and superstition for centuries, and Batman finds inspiration in this creature, using the power of fear to confront, control and manipulate his enemies.

While Batman's talent for controlling fear allows him to defeat his enemies, it also establishes a connection between them, with one important distinction. Batman does not and will not commit murder; no matter how much the villain in question may deserve it. Killing would make him no different than those he fights, and, as dark as he is, he will not sink to their level. His life was ruined by a senseless killing, and he will not ruin anyone else's by committing murder. Seeing the two people he loves the most taken from him instills in Batman a great respect for all life, making him determined never to inflict on another human being the pain he suffers every day. The source of his pain is his awareness that the true perpetrator of the murder remains beyond his reach. Currently unaware of the identity of his parents' murderer, Batman sees the man's face in every criminal he brings down, and his Shadow lashes out at them. Batman will not kill his enemies; he always stops just short of doing so. Batman, as a result of the pain and anger that fills him, is more brutal and savage than other superheroes. His violent method of dealing with criminals provides Batman with an outlet for his rage and self-hatred, an outlet for his Shadow side, and he can gain fleeting revenge upon the society that allowed his parents to die. Giving his darkness this small freedom keeps Batman's primitive Shadow side from dominating him completely, as the Shadows of the villains dominate them.

As was mentioned earlier, both Batman and the villains of Gotham were created by the same uncaring, crime-filled society. When Batman looks at the Joker, the Penguin, or any of

Gotham's common criminals he sees himself. He sees who he could be if he did not possess self-control, did not feel called to fight back against the criminal world that destroyed him. Whereas the bat is Bruce Wayne's internal Shadow, the villains he faces are his external Shadow. That Shadow can be treated the same way as the internal Shadow, but usually the only way a person can be rid of an external Shadow is through death, either of themselves or of their darker counterpart. "In the Jungian system 'the shadow' is a recurrent Gothic archetype of those untamable, violent, or sinister components of the human psyche with which we are able to cope only by denying their very existence and subsequently projecting them onto an external 'enemy'." (Oropeza 219) [Shadow lowercase in the original] Yet, contradicting Oropeza, Jung found that denying one's Shadow only makes it grow stronger, as the lives of Batman's enemies attest. They give into every whim, kill and wreak havoc without any discretion, and care nothing for the lives of those endangered by their actions.

The villain of Tim Burton's *Batman* is the Joker, played by Jack Nicholson. He is Batman's equal in intelligence and creativity (both make tools and weapons particular to their trades), but he is also Batman's opposite. Batman is obsessed and driven, but in full control of himself, but the Joker is insane, lacking any semblance of self-control or will power. He is a creature of impulse. He obeys every whim and desire, and his crimes speak of a malevolent humor and sadistic nature. Batman and the Joker are an equal match because of their vast intelligence and resourcefulness and because both "the Batman and the Joker have their origins in cruel twists of fate." (Uricchio and Pearson 198) When the audience first meets Jack Napier in *Batman*, he is indistinguishable from any other crime boss in Gotham City. Indistinguishable that is, until he meets Batman. Having one of his crimes thwarted by the Dark Knight, Napier runs into a chemical warehouse, but the police and Batman follow him there. Batman and Napier fight

on a walkway over a vat of boiling acid, and Napier falls over the edge. Napier survives the ordeal, but the acid leaves scars over his entire body and fixes his face into a horrid, permanent grin, and the combination of exposure to the acid and his appearance drive him mad. Now insane, his whole focus and methods change, and he becomes obsessed with getting Batman. The Joker finds pleasure in human misery and is determined to make as many people as possible share his fate. He is the reverse of Batman, a hero determined to spare people from his fate.

The Joker is Batman's external Shadow, his complete opposite. Whereas Batman dresses all in black, Napier wears brightly colored clothing, a green wig and paints his skin white and his mouth bright red. The crimes he commits after becoming the Joker are without reason, and he feels malicious glee in committing them. His goal now, besides killing Batman, is to destroy everything that's beautiful in Gotham City. He and his henchmen break into the Gotham art museum and break the statues and ruin the paintings Napier considers attractive. The only works of art he spares are those that are dark and abstract. He means to destroy everything Batman fights to protect, knowing it will draw his foe out. His mission eventually brings him into direct confrontation with Batman, whom he holds responsible for his appearance.

The final conflict between Batman and the Joker takes place in the bell tower of Gotham's cathedral, an ironically appropriate location (the bat is in the belfry). The Joker abducts Vicky Vale, knowing that she is Batman's and Bruce Wayne's love, and that the superhero will do anything to protect her. As he has her in his clutches, the Joker looks at Batman and asks "Have you ever danced with the devil in the pale moonlight?" With these words Batman realizes that the man standing before him is the one who killed his parents so long ago. In a sense Batman and the Joker created their own greatest enemy, their counterpart. Batman made the Joker when he chose not to save Napier from falling into the acid, but Napier

made Batman when he murdered Thomas and Martha Wayne. This is what Batman is referring to when he says to the Joker “I made you? You made me first.” Neither would exist without the other, and neither can be free as long as their counterpart lives.

The battle between these two Shadows must end, and, as James Iaccino wrote, the “only way Batman and the Joker can rid themselves of their ‘split-half’ is through death.” (Iaccino 107) The Joker falls to his death while trying to escape, but Napier has the last laugh. As Batman looks down from atop the cathedral, the camera pans down to the Joker’s broken body. Despite the great fall, one toy still works: the Joker’s laughing box. The box cackles endlessly as Napier lies dead in the street, his face still fixed in that awful grin. The laugh communicates the brutal truth: in death, the Joker’s problems are over. Batman, on the other hand, is still alive, still divided. Though the man who killed his parents is safely dead, it is too late for Batman to choose another path, to leave his crusade behind, as the final shot of this film illustrates. Batman stands in full costume, alone atop a skyscraper as the Bat Signal shines directly over his head. The division he experienced and maintained is too great now to ever be healed. Bruce Wayne will always be the Batman; he cannot abandon his war while the society ultimately responsible for the deaths of his parents runs unchecked. “Though, in elaborations of the origin, the Batman avenges his parents by apprehending the actual perpetrators, the metaphorical perpetrators they represent (the faceless thugs, the brutal hirelings, the crime bosses) still blight the urban landscape. Every encounter with a criminal, then, raises the spectre of that original encounter.” (Uricchio and Pearson 194) As much as he desires human companionship, Batman’s focus first and foremost is his crusade; he will sacrifice everything he values for the sake of his mission, even a life with someone he loves.

The next film this thesis will examine is *Batman Returns*, released in 1992. It is also directed by Tim Burton: and again stars Michael Keaton as the Dark Knight. This film has two villains: the Penguin and Catwoman, played by Danny DeVito and Michelle Pfeiffer. Each embodies a different aspect of Batman's Shadow, and consequently he feels a deep connection to each person. The Penguin is also an orphan, and so Batman feels sympathy for him as a man who lost his parents. His connection to Catwoman is deeper. The love he shares with her is the love of two people who understand each other completely but, due to their Shadow natures, can never be together as they wish to be. These two villains are what Batman would be like had he not won control over his darkness and anger. They act on their emotions, terrorizing a society they hate.

Like the Joker before him, the Penguin is a reflection of Batman's Shadow, his rage intensified and unrestrained. The Penguin's anger also has its source in his orphanhood but, unlike Batman, his orphaning was deliberate. Oswald Cobblepot was born deformed, with fins instead of hands and feet. His parents, two of Gotham's elite, could not stand the sight of their monstrous son and threw the baby in the sewers. After decades living in the sewers, Cobblepot was captured by a freak circus and given the name of Bird Boy. Upon his escape he returned to the sewers of Gotham, eventually emerging to begin his reign of terror. Both Batman and the Penguin are angry because of their abandonment, but Batman cannot be angry at his parents. Leaving him was not their intention or fault; therefore he directs his rage and pain at the criminal world that is the catalyst for their deaths. The Penguin's anger is just as great as Batman's, yet he lacks the moral compass and strength of will to direct it for a worthy cause. He blames his parents for the way his life turned out, and his rage only deepens when he finds out that his parents are dead. The deaths of the Cobblepots deny their son the revenge he was desperately seeking. With his parents beyond his reach, the Penguin transfers his rage to all the parents of

Gotham City. Though Batman is duty bound to stop the Penguin, he regrets the necessity of doing so. After his parents died, Batman took a vow to spend his life warring on all criminals, and thus he must stop the Penguin, regardless of his sympathy for the man. Batman has nothing but understanding and compassion for a man he might have called brother, had Cobblepot chosen a different path.

The second villain featured in this film is Catwoman, a former secretary named Selina Kyle. Oppressed and harassed at her secretarial job, Kyle's life changes when her boss Max Shreck murders her. Working late one night, Kyle discovers her employer's plan to steal power from Gotham. When she confronts him about it, he pushes her out of the window. She falls to her death but the neighborhood cats, which she fed and sheltered, restore her to life and leave her with catlike abilities. In his book *Jungian Reflections within the Cinema: A Psychological Analysis of Sci-Fi and Fantasy Archetypes*, James Iaccino compares Kyle's fall to the Jungian hero's descent into the underworld. Like so many heroes who made *that* particular journey, Selina Kyle does not return unchanged. Facing their death alters heroes, and when they return they have gained an entirely new outlook and understanding of themselves and the world around them. Sometimes they come back with special gifts, enhanced senses that they lacked before making the journey. Kyle is no different. As repressed as she was before her death, she's comparably liberated and assertive when she reawakens.

The day after her death and resurrection, Catwoman meets Bruce Wayne at Shreck's office, and the Dark Knight finds himself drawn to her. He has a deeper connection with her than with the Penguin because, like Batman, Catwoman suffers from a "difficulty with duality." The trauma of her death and resurrection create an alternate personality in the woman, and the presence of a second personality is one of the reasons she intrigues both Batman and Bruce

Wayne. In her Batman finds someone whose Shadow side is equal to his own and Catwoman “is attracted to Batman’s persona of Bruce Wayne and falls in love with him. She recognizes in Bruce a kindred spirit of the night and seeks the companionship that she was denied in her pre-Catwoman existence.” (Iaccino 110) Batman and Catwoman complement each other and can offer exactly what the other needs: love, kindness and understanding. Torn in two by the traumas they experienced, they find a peace, if only a temporary one, in someone who shares in their divided nature. Both understand what it’s like to be forced to hide your true self, your darkness, behind a mask of civility.

The most beautiful and symbolically poignant scene in Burton’s entire film occurs at a masquerade ball thrown by Max Shreck. In a room full of people wearing ornate costumes and elaborate masks, Bruce Wayne arrives wearing a simple tuxedo. He seeks Selina Kyle and easily spots her; she is wearing a black evening gown. Neither one wears a mask for the simplest of reasons: doing so would be redundant. Bruce Wayne and Selina Kyle are their masks, the false faces they have worn ever since they assumed the identities of Batman and Catwoman. Wayne and Kyle are merely their Personas, the faces that allow them to move unperceived through Gotham City. The shocks they endured made it impossible for them to remain as they were; Wayne and Kyle simply no longer met their needs. They need a second identity to voice their anger and pain, to do what Wayne and Kyle cannot, and punish those who made them who and what, they are. Once they make this transition, giving their Shadow side great power over their surface identity, they begin to see the consequences of their choices. Yet the masks are too firmly in place to be removed now, even if Batman and Catwoman wish they could be.

Both characters consider returning to their original identities, but their Shadows won’t allow it. Once unleashed, their darkness does not wish to be restrained again, and the two divided

individuals have no choice but to remain as they are. Before they come to the realization that they cannot leave their Shadows behind, each character considers the possibility of sharing a life together as Bruce Wayne and Selina Kyle, having fallen in love with someone who is just as tortured and divided as they are.

Batman and Catwoman are two people with incredibly strong Shadow sides that succeeded in splitting from their original identities. Their dual personalities simultaneously draw the two together and drive them apart. Their love “is destined to end in disaster for how can two split personalities establish a lasting bond when their shadow sides keep getting in the way?” (Iaccino 110) [Shadow lowercase in the original] Wayne’s Shadow side drives him to bring justice to all of Gotham’s criminals, and Kyle’s Shadow draws its strength and focus from years of being abused and neglected by the patriarchal society around her. Though they love each other, each represents a society the other hates. Catwoman is a criminal, and Batman is a rich and powerful man. As long as these characters remain divided, they cannot be together, but neither character can surrender their Shadow side, it is too deeply ingrained to be removed completely. Both Bruce Wayne and Selina Kyle could have the life and love they’ve always wanted but for their Shadows. Neither one can live without their dark side, for Batman leaving his life as a superhero behind would mean letting his parents’ murder go unavenged, as well as allowing more innocents to die. For Catwoman, surrendering her Shadow would be equivalent to surrendering to the patriarchal society she hates. She sees giving into her love for Bruce Wayne as a sign of weakness, and she will not be weak again. “The superhero continually vacillates between the human Persona and the Shadow side, never living a full existence in either one. The end result is a fragmented person who feels ambivalent about his (or her) superpowers since they prevent the complete expression of the more human identity.” (Iaccino 93) Both Batman and

Catwoman desperately want to be with each other but can never be, a tragedy made evident in the film's second, and final, unmasking.

After the Penguin dies, Catwoman emerges from the shadows. She's holding Max Shreck in her claws, ready to kill him as he killed her. Because he loves this woman, both in her identity as Selina Kyle and as Catwoman, Batman makes one last effort to turn her from her path, to help her leave her Shadow behind and be with him. Batman, having lived with and as his Shadow for thirty years, has had a lifetime to see and realize the consequences of making anger and vengeance the driving forces in his life. Gotham City does benefit from his decision to travel the path of a hero, but his decision comes at the price of his complete isolation and misery. Because Wayne loves her, he wishes to save Catwoman from that fate, so Batman does something he's never done before. He tears off his mask before her, not caring that Shreck will learn who he is. For the first time since his parents died, he loves another more than he cares about his mission, so he does the one thing he believes will save Catwoman. By tearing off his mask he is telling her that he will share all of himself with her, leave behind his old ways for her, and lastly that he loves and accepts her, both as Selina and Catwoman. He will not change anything about her, all he asks is that she let Shreck go and come home with him. He never was able or willing to do this before, neither as Batman nor Bruce Wayne, but he's never been with someone who understands and loves him as completely as Catwoman and Selina do. He is successful, but only for a short while.

For a moment Bruce reaches Selina, his love and honest words break through Catwoman to the woman she hides. Selina, in love with the man before her, reemerges and says "I would love to live with you in your castle forever... like in a fairy tale..." but then the Shadow of Catwoman resurfaces. The Shadow lashes out at her enemy, exclaiming "But I just couldn't

with myself, so don't pretend this is a happy ending!" Like Catwoman, Batman is aware of his Shadow and has made the choice not to fight it, but unlike her he takes no pleasure from his actions. She gains pleasure from indulging in her own darkness and animal passion, and her anger is still too fresh, still too great, for her to leave it behind. She kisses Shreck as she kills him, an act that both declares her love for, and her rejection of, Batman. She knows that Shreck will expose Batman's secret and use it to increase his own power. Killing him therefore, twisted as it may be, is a favor to Batman. She does not wish to see the man she loves used by Shreck, and Batman understands this even while he watches in shock.

Though Catwoman's actions reveal her love for Batman, they are also saying something else. By killing Shreck, it is clear that Catwoman remains enslaved to her impulses, she kills simply because that's what she wants to do. She prefers to be Catwoman, not Selina Kyle. At this stage in her life she cannot let go of her rage, nor does she wish to. The same thing that makes her hold onto her anger also makes her reject Bruce Wayne. She loves him, but she will not surrender to him. To go with him she thinks she would have to relinquish her independent nature, the very quality that defines her identity. If she gives that up, she believes that she would no longer be the woman Bruce Wayne fell in love with. "The fate (or curse) of these super characters is that the division between their shadows and personae run so deep that nothing can ever make them complete or fulfilled." (Iaccino 111) [Shadow lowercase in the original] Their divided natures make it impossible for them to be together, and in the end Batman has to let go of Catwoman, even though it's the last thing he wants to do. Yet their relationship, short-lived as it was, was not without benefit. In loving her Bruce Wayne learned to open himself up to another person, a feat which he hasn't been capable of for decades. Burton's film introduces the possibility of Batman's recovery, even if it is just a remote one.

The last film on Batman this thesis will cover is *Batman Begins*, directed by Christopher Nolan and released in 2005. It is unique among Batman films in that it goes back to the very beginning, showing the audience exactly how Bruce Wayne becomes Batman, the events and people that inspired and guided him on his journey to create and become the Dark Knight. It expands on the story of Wayne's childhood, showing the events before and after the murders and how their effects on the future superhero. This film portrays Joe Chill, a common thief, as the murderer of Thomas and Martha Wayne. Chill was only after money and jewels but when Bruce's mother started screaming he panicked and killed Bruce's parents. For years the only thing Bruce could think of was killing Chill, and he sees Chill's parole hearing as his opportunity. Armed with a revolver, Wayne goes to the courthouse for the purpose of shooting Chill, but the flunky of a mob boss Chill was set to testify against beat him to it. Denied his revenge and purpose, Bruce Wayne leaves Gotham and travels the world in search of a new one, praying all the while for death.

It is not death that finds Bruce, but a man who helps others to face it. Henri Ducard, also known as Ra's Al Ghul, is the leader of a secret society known as the League of Shadows. The League of Shadows is a group of warriors who will use any means to put an end to evil and corruption. Ducard sets out to recruit Bruce Wayne, Gotham's favorite son, recognizing in the boy the rage and hatred of evil he once felt.

Under Ducard's teachings, Bruce Wayne learns to confront his Shadow, guilt and anger, whereas he buried them before. Seeing that Bruce still blames himself for what happened to his parents Ducard shows him the importance of facing his own fears and Shadow. According to Jung "the shadow is a living part of the personality and therefore wants to live with it in some form. It cannot be argued out of existence or rationalized into harmlessness." (Jung) [Shadow is

lowercase in the original.] The name the League of Shadows is very fitting, for shadows are what its members become. Ducard tells Wayne that to fight fear he must become the source of fear. The warriors of the League surrender all their desires and goals for the purpose of their mission. They are shadows, forms without shape or substance, having forsaken everything that made them human. After undergoing extensive training with Ducard as his mentor, Bruce Wayne is ready to be initiated into the League, but there is still one more trial before him. He learned to control his anger, to redirect it for the purpose of defeating those who do evil, and has become a strong warrior under Ducard's watchful eye. He is in complete physical control of himself, but the most difficult journey lies ahead.

Jung described the hero's descent as one in which the hero faces his worst fears and learns to overcome them. If the mythological hero conquers his own fears, than any external attack no longer poses any danger to him. The hero who has faced his own death has broken through the grip of fear that death holds for most men. Having gained control over his body and his environment, Bruce Wayne still needs to face his fears, see the darkness that lies behind them and learn that he can use that same darkness and fear to his advantage. Before the final trial begins Ducard tells Wayne, who is still full of anger and pain over his parents' deaths, that "what you fear is inside yourself. You fear your own power. You fear your anger... the drive to do great or terrible things. Now you must journey inwards... Breathe in your fears. Face them. To conquer fear you must become fear. You must bask in the fear of other men. And men fear most what they cannot see... Embrace your worst fears. Become one with the darkness." Batman learns to confront and embrace his Shadow in this film, but he will not become one with it as Ducard advises. Doing so would make him no different than the one who murdered his parents, and murder is the one act he cannot bring himself to commit.

The final task Wayne must carry out before he can be inducted into the League is one in which he will have to demonstrate his commitment to justice. On Wayne's first day with the League a farmer was dragged into the League's headquarters. The farmer has been arrested for murdering his neighbor to get the man's land, and executing this criminal is Wayne's task. Yet Wayne swore to himself never to murder, never to commit the crime that ruined his life, and so he refuses to take the farmer's life. When Ducard sees that his pupil will not execute the farmer, he criticizes Bruce Wayne's compassion, calling it "a weakness your enemies will not share." The future superhero responds by saying "That's why it's so important. It separates us from them." In his training, Bruce Wayne faces his own fears and darkness and becomes a person of compassion, a virtue the other members of the League do not possess. They murder in the name of duty, but only Bruce knows the harm their actions cause. Having experienced first hand the misery the act of murder causes in the lives of those touched by it, Bruce Wayne will never inflict that pain on another. "The trauma that made him Batman had to do with a wanton waste of life. That same trauma that makes him go catch criminals will forbid his ever taking a life." (Uricchio and Pearson 19) Rather than follow the path of personal vengeance, Bruce Wayne flees from the League of Shadows, determined to go home to Gotham and fight the criminals terrorizing the city his father tried to save.

Like any hero who examines his fears, Bruce Wayne returns to Gotham a changed man. He gains a renewed sense of self and, for the first time, a sense of purpose. He is sworn to the cause of justice, and his training with the League of Shadows gave him the will power to bring it to the crime-infested city. While he possesses the will to fight crime in Gotham City, Bruce Wayne does not yet have the means to do so. In the time he spent with the League of Shadows, Bruce Wayne learned the importance of facing his worst fears, but he has not yet learned to take

them into himself, “to turn fear against those who prey on the fearful.” He has not fully examined his unconscious, merely scratched its surface. In a twist on the traditional hero’s journey and descent into the unconscious, Bruce Wayne must *return* home, not leave it, to make this descent. It is in the home of his father that Bruce Wayne will find the symbol under which he will fight and the tools he needs to carry out his mission of justice.

Joseph Campbell described “the hero’s journey not as a courageous act but as a life lived in self-discovery.” (Campbell xv) Discovering oneself entails recognizing ones favorable *and* unacceptable qualities, namely the Self and the Shadow. One cannot deny one’s darkness and savage emotion and expect to achieve full selfhood. Denying what we do not like about ourselves only leads to neurosis and to an individual remaining unfulfilled, as Jung believed. Campbell and Jung both saw the moment in which the individual succeeds in the integration of the Shadow and the Self as the moment when he achieves full awareness. Having faced his own inner demons and integrated them into his identity the hero is ready to face the demons that threaten from the outside, which is just what Batman does.

In *Batman Begins*, Henri Ducard tells Bruce Wayne that “To manipulate the fears in others you must first master your own.” Facing and conquering his own fear, Batman is able to conquer those who use fear as their greatest weapon. Bruce Wayne succeeds in becoming the Dark Knight because, to borrow another hero’s line, he knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men. It’s very appropriate that this hero goes by the name of the Shadow. The Shadow, like Batman, is a character in full control of his darkness, and both can use that darkness to inspire fear. It is only through recognizing one’s own darkness that one can see through the darkness of others, and that knowledge can be used to defeat those who do evil.

Batman is not the first character to live with a strong Shadow side. Robert Louis Stevenson's novella *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* tells the story of one man's attempt to eradicate his own Shadow nature. Jekyll couldn't face his own darkness and desired to be rid of it. A lifetime of thwarted ambition and repression had made Hyde strong, even stronger than Jekyll, and he acted on every brutal impulse that Jekyll didn't know he had. In the end, Jekyll had to kill himself to put an end to Hyde's reign of terror. He had tried to destroy his Shadow side, and his Shadow would not stand for that. It dominated him, and soon was strong enough to emerge in daylight, a territory that had formerly been Jekylls' alone.

Batman is very much like Dr. Jekyll, with one important distinction. He recognizes his own darkness as an essential part his nature, indeed as the very thing that drives him in his quest. The orphan boy's life, save for his first eight years, has been one of darkness. Consumed by grief, rage and guilt after the murder of his parents, Bruce Wayne becomes a creature of darkness, unleashing his Shadow side in his war on crime. It is no coincidence that the animal he takes as his symbol is the bat. From his early childhood this creature terrified Bruce Wayne, but he comes to recognize his connection to this animal that dwells in the darkness.

In *Beyond Good and Evil* (translated by Walter Kaufmann) Nietzsche wrote that "Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become the monster. And when you look long into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you." (Kaufmann 89) Through recognizing the part of his nature that terrifies him, Batman is able to take control of it. Campbell placed emphasis on the importance of recognizing one's darkness as part of becoming complete, noting that "by overcoming the dark passions, the hero symbolizes our ability to control the irrational savage within us." (Flowers xiii) Giving his Shadow power allows the Dark Knight to overcome his own grief and pain, if only for a short time. By unleashing them, acting

on them, Batman attains the power to conquer them. It is only in giving his darkness some power and freedom that Batman has no fear of being consumed by it, as Jekyll was. To deny your Shadow side is to risk being controlled by it, the only way to truly overcome it is to embrace it, loving and welcoming it as a part of your personality.

If a hero wishes to face his own fear, the only way he can do so is through an examination of his unconscious mind, where primitive emotions such as fear and hatred lie. In describing the hero's descent into his unconscious, Campbell noted that, once the hero leaves his familiar territory he "comes to a threshold... where a monster of the abyss comes to meet him." (Flowers 180) In facing the monster the hero is only left with two possibilities. The first is that the hero cannot control his darkness or the power of his unconscious, and therefore he is swallowed by the beast. Inside the belly of the whale, he is forced to face his own shortcomings before his eventual resurrection. The second possibility is that "the hero, on encountering the power of the dark, may overcome and kill it, as did Siegfried and St. George when they killed the dragon. But, as Siegfried learned, he must then taste the dragon blood, in order to take to himself something of that dragon power. When Siegfried has killed the dragon and tasted the blood, he hears the song of nature. He has transcended his humanity and reassociated himself with the powers of nature, which are the powers of life, and from which our minds remove us." (Flowers 181) Bruce Wayne finds in the bat the strength and secrecy necessary for the completion of his task, bringing justice to the streets of Gotham through the power of fear.

In connecting with his animal counterpart Batman overcomes the weakness and limitations of his human identity, becoming something more and less than human. The hero who emerges from the underworld, from the examination of his own unconscious mind, has overcome his flaws and weakness to develop a greater sense of himself and the world around him.

Transcending his own humanity gives Batman a great advantage. By facing and recognizing his Shadow he's no longer restrained or held back by fear. Robert Hopcke called the hero's descent into the underworld "an unavoidable task fraught with danger, which must be accomplished if we are to grow and prosper as individuals." (Hopcke 114) The orphaned Bruce Wayne, through examining his own fear and the fear that created his Shadow side of Batman, transcends his rage, guilt, and tragic origins to become something more than human, a dark figure able to strike back against the evil that forged him. "From the miserable plight of the orphan there emerges a god." (Jung 32)

CHAPTER 8

ANAKIN SKYWALKER AS A WOUNDED ORPHAN

While Batman took his guilt and anger at being orphaned and turned it into a reason to fight back against crime in Gotham, the next orphan this thesis will examine gave into his grief and anger and they came to control him. The *Star Wars* saga tells the story of Anakin Skywalker's fall and redemption, as the angry orphan evolves from a flawed human to a fallen angel, one who finds deep within the strength to sacrifice himself for the sake of the one person he truly loved, his only son.

When watching the *Star Wars* films in the order in which they were released, it seems at first glance that Luke Skywalker is the story's hero. When watching the films in story order from *Episode 1* to *Episode 6*, however, it is clear that it is not Luke but *Anakin* Skywalker who is the hero of Lucas' epic. In a published interview George Lucas stated that *Star Wars* has:

always been about the redemption of Anakin Skywalker. It's just that it's always been told from the son's point of view. When you put the story of the six films together ... it has a more interesting arc because you're actually rooting more for Darth Vader than you are for Luke. Until now, you didn't know what the problem really was, because Darth Vader is just this bad guy. You didn't realize that he's actually got a problem too. (Kline 219)

Anakin's unique existence as the chosen one was determined even before he was born. Anakin Skywalker, like Jesus Christ and many of the Greek gods, is a virgin birth. He was conceived by Midi-chlorians, the source of a Jedi's power and their link to the Force. His mother raised him alone and, as much as she loved him, failed to instill self-discipline or humility in her son, not to mention a respect for law and order. According to Anthony Stevens in his book *On Jung*, the love between a child and his mother differs from that between a child and his father. "For the mother, it is usually sufficient that her child *exists* [emphasis in the original]: her love is

absolutely and largely *unconditional* [emphasis in the original]. A father's love, on the other hand, is somewhat more demanding: it is *contingent* [emphasis in the original] love, conditional upon the adoption of certain values, standards and modes of behavior which are acceptable to him." (Stevens 81) The father in mythology and history is often the figure associated with instilling discipline and maturity in his children.

The quest for the father is the quest for maturity and selfhood, and Anakin is an example of what happens when there is no father to seek. He will have several father substitutes in his life, some positive and some negative. Unfortunately, because he becomes accustomed to getting everything he wants, the father figure he later chooses is not one who'll teach him to put aside his own selfish desires for a worthy cause, but rather one who flatters him and tell him what he wants to hear. Had there been a biological father to love and rear Anakin, he might have grown to be a more disciplined and less selfish individual. Lacking a father, however, harmed Anakin. Since there was no father, there was no one to teach him to put aside his own desires for allegiance to something greater than himself.

As events in *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace* reveal, Anakin Skywalker's self-centered view of life partially results from the treatment he received as a child. The relationship between Anakin and his mother reflects Anthony Steven's statement in *On Jung* about one's relationship with one's mother having the ability to influence all of one's future relationships. Between her incomprehension of how her son was conceived and the awe she holds for him due to his special talents, Shmi Skywalker allows Anakin to run their family and do whatever he pleases. His mother makes no attempt to hide from her son the fact that she views him as special, even miraculous, and her treatment of him influences Anakin's behavior.

As the only parent in Anakin's life, Shmi Skywalker has no choice but to try to fill the roles of both mother and father, a task she cannot perform. As much as she loves her son, she can't assume the traditional role of a father and adequately discipline Anakin, as evidenced in her surrender in the matter of the pod race. She fears for his life whenever he races, but she gives into him when he pleads to her for permission to enter the race. She loves him too much to refuse him anything he desires. The stronger person in their family, Anakin comes to occupy the seat of control and power that his mother should have held. This early taste of power shapes Anakin, making him want more and more. When he meets the boy, the Jedi Knight Qui-Gon Jinn senses how much strength and potential Anakin has in the Force. Part of the bet he makes with Watto (which Jinn wins) is that Anakin be freed from slavery. When Anakin wins the race, Watto reluctantly hands him over to the Jedi. Unfortunately, however, Anakin's mother remains a slave. Jinn tries to free her as well, but Watto will not free two slaves. Upon learning that he is free Anakin is overjoyed, for now he can pursue his dreams as he's always wanted. When he learns that his mother won't be going with him, Anakin almost changes his mind about leaving. His mother has been his entire world, and he doesn't wish to leave her.

Campbell said that, if he wishes to grow and mature, "the boy first has to disengage himself from his mother, get his energy into himself, and start forth." (Flowers 168) Though Anakin is ten years old, nearing the age when children begin to separate themselves from and form identities independent of their parents, he fears beginning this process of separation. He does not wish to leave his mother, because it will mean leaving behind a life in which he is the dominant figure for one in which he will be one Padawan learner among many, his life regulated by the Jedi Council.

In an interview George Lucas said that in *Star Wars* “The idea is not to be afraid of change... *Star Wars* shows progression. You may be frightened – and it’s sad because you’re leaving something behind – but you go forward. That’s what life is about. You can either have a good attitude about change or a bad attitude about it.” (Kline 150) Faced with the prospect of leaving his mother behind in slavery and being alone for the first time in his life, however, Anakin runs back to his mother, telling her that he can’t go, that he doesn’t want things to change. Shmi Skywalker tells him that change is something that cannot be stopped, only accepted. She tells her son not to be afraid, but such advice is pointless. Because she doted on her son, Shmi Skywalker did not prepare him for a life outside of the home and mother.

In his work *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, Jung observed that “Child means something evolving towards independence. This it cannot do without detaching itself from its origins: abandonment is therefore a necessary condition, not just a concomitant symptom.” (Jung 168) Campbell echoes this when he describes the “puberty or initiation rituals of early tribal societies, through which the child is compelled to give up its childhood and become an adult—to die, you might say, to its infantile personality and psyche and come back as a responsible adult.” (Flowers 152) In aboriginal cultures, when young boys were deemed ready to enter manhood, the fathers force their sons away from their mothers and take them to the outback. There the boys are circumcised, tested and taught the history and lore of the society. It’s a rite of initiation, marking the transition from childhood to manhood. When the *men* return, they are married to their pre-selected wives and take up the duties expected of responsible men.

In the Aboriginal nation the union between a man and a woman is an essential part of the society, a union the Jedi Order denies its members. They live their lives alone, for fear of where opening themselves up to human feelings may lead them. The Jedi teach that emotions could be

used to turn a Jedi to the Dark Side, and the Jedi teach their Padawans to shun personal relationships because they believe that relationships can lead to attachment and attachments can lead to jealousy, what Yoda calls “the shadow of greed.” Greed can be used to turn Jedi to the Dark Side, so they forsake relationships in an attempt to avoid that fate. Even Jedi who have known each other for a long time show few traces of friendship or affection for their colleagues. One scene in *Episode II* shows Obi-Wan Kenobi, Yoda, and Mace Windu deep in conversation. These men have known and worked with each for years, but there is no hint of anything but business to their conversation. Their relationship is one of convenience, one that allows them to better perform their duties as Jedi. They know each other well, but they are not friends, and friendship is something a hero always needs. In addition to offering the hero a safe haven his friends, relatives, and companions can also serve as a check. When the hero begins to show excessive pride and love for himself and his abilities, his friends and family can rein him in, remind him of his purpose and the need to sacrifice his desires and his love for himself. This is what essentially takes Anakin from the path of the hero: he cannot surrender his own self-interest for the sake of his duty. He places his desires above his responsibilities, and the strength of his desires destroys him.

Despite the consequence developing relationships have for Jedi, the need for them is understandable. All living things need contact with other members of their species and “Beyond the sensibility of congregating is a clear human need for peer companionship.” (Zimmerman 96) Heroes in mythology often have friends and companions with them on their quests: Odysseus had his soldiers, Jason the other Argonauts and Luke Skywalker had Han, Leia, Chewbacca, C3PO and R2-D2. They aid him in the completion of his quest and, in addition to being there for him and loving him, serve as his connection to the outside world, reminding him of the cause and

people for which he is fighting. The isolation of the Jedi is what separates the Knights of the Jedi Order from the traditional hero.

Anakin's upbringing and his ability to love set him apart from the other Jedi and Padawan learners. The Jedi have a very strict policy when it comes to Force-sensitive children. When they locate a child capable of using the Force, they take the child from his or her family at or shortly after the birth. This is done so that the child will not develop relationships with or loving feelings for their family. The Jedi teach abstinence from love and relationships because they fear "the power over the ego wielded by human love." (Decker & Eberl 155) This works for most of the Padawan learners they take in, children who, raised from birth among the Jedi, know no other life, and do not see the importance of having relationships. Growing up in the self-denying world of the Jedi, the Padawan learners have little to no sense of self and do not see the value of forming and maintaining relationships. Like one of the orphan asylums Eileen Simpson visited, the Jedi Order suppresses the individuality of its Padawans and Jedi Knights. Simpson noted that, in the asylum, "The regimentation and dreary routine did not provide a milieu stimulating to the development of a sense of self." (Simpson 158) The Jedi raise Padawans to devote their lives, even sacrifice them if need be, to the Order and the Republic. They teach the children to believe that, in the long run, an individual life is not worth much weighed against the life of the Republic.

Joseph Campbell told Bill Moyers that when "someone becomes a judge, or President of the United States, the man is no longer that man, he's the representative of an eternal office; he has to sacrifice his personal desires and even life possibilities to the role that he now signifies." (Flowers 14) It is the same with the Jedi, when they take their oaths they surrender their own desires for the sake of their calling, dedicating themselves to a cause far greater than their own

lives. This does not leave any room for individual self-interest. The Jedi also show no consideration for their fellow man, other than as people in need of protection. Considering them as human beings would make their job difficult, for the Jedi cannot think of the few that might be hurt by their actions. They learn to keep their minds on the bigger picture; the greater good they believe will be achieved because of their actions.

Though they are encouraged to shun relationships and not to develop loving feelings for others, Jedi are taught the importance of compassion, of being sympathetic for the suffering of others. “But such compassion without attachment, without possession and being-possessed, is a superficial, abstracted, intellectualized form of love. Attachment and possession are forbidden [to the Jedi] because such connections to particular things and people lead to fear for them and fear of losing them. And fear leads to the Dark Side. Therefore, the love of the Jedi Knight must be a detached love—if it can indeed be called love with its willingness to sacrifice friends and loved ones for the perceived higher good.” (Decker & Eberl 155) Anakin, who was not raised by the Jedi, rejects this lesser form of love. The first ten years of his life were spent in the home of his mother, and in those ten years Anakin develops the capacity to love and the ability to form relationships. Yet because the relationships Anakin forms serve the purpose of satisfying his own desires, he becomes vulnerable to manipulation by anyone who sees the insecurity and anger underlying his desires.

Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones is the film in which Anakin Skywalker becomes an actual orphan and begins his descent to the Dark Side of the Force. Set ten years after the events in *The Phantom Menace*, this film finds Obi-Wan Kenobi a full Jedi Knight. Anakin (now twenty) remains a Padawan learner and Padme Amidala, the woman with whom Anakin fell in love in the first film, serves as senator for her home planet of Naboo. The Jedi

Masters believe Anakin to be the chosen one and, as events in *Episode II* (particularly Anakin being assigned a solo mission though not yet a full Jedi) communicate, give him more freedom than the average Padawan learner. Anakin is aware of their perception of him, and this influences his behavior and feeds his pride. Obi-Wan's treatment of his student has the same effect. The Jedi Knight views Anakin as a brother, as they originally studied under the same Jedi Master. They are very close, so close that Anakin doesn't give Obi-Wan the respect his teacher deserves.

Anakin's resentment of Obi-Wan becomes clear when the two are given the assignment of protecting Senator Padme. The senator expresses her displeasure at having still more bodyguards around her, preferring that her would-be assassin be stopped. Obi-Wan tells her that they weren't assigned this case to catch the guilty party; their only duty is to protect her. Ignoring his master's statement, Anakin promises Padme they will find who's trying to kill her. When Obi-Wan corrects him and tells Anakin that he should follow his lead, Anakin asks why he should do so. Obi-Wan, though stunned by his student's open defiance, does nothing more than verbally reprimand his student. Anakin, once again seeing that no severe punishment comes to him for his poor behavior, continues to do as he pleases.

Anakin is an example of what Jung called the infantile individual:

An infantile individual is infantile because he has freed himself insufficiently, or not at all, from the childish environment, that is, from his adaptation to his parents. Therefore, on the one side, he reacts falsely towards the world, as a child towards his parents, always demanding love and immediate reward for his feelings; on the other side, on account of the close connection to the parents, he identifies himself with them. The infantile individual behaves like the mother and father. He is not in a condition to live for himself and to find the place to which he belongs... He remains, as far as his emotional life is concerned, still far behind himself. (Jung 275)

The Aboriginal ritual of initiation described earlier served as a rite of passage for young men coming of age. There was no such initiation ritual for Anakin. Like the Aboriginal youths he

was taken from his mother, but unlike them he received no training on the matters of responsibility and sacrifice. While the Jedi taught him how to use his power, they did not instill in him the morals necessary for the sound exercise of it. The Jedi Knights take Anakin from his mother; detach him from his origins, before he is ready for such a separation. Since he was not free to choose when to separate from her he will never be able to do so.

When the Jedi took Anakin from his mother he lost the one person who might have guided him in the ways of morality. The Jedi taught him to reject his emotions rather than use them to grow into a complete and healthy individual. Jedi are not supposed to rely or act on emotions but to be stoic and independent, to put their trust in the Force and not in each other. Hence Anakin has no one to show him the path to maturity. Because he lacks someone to teach him how to be a mature adult; Anakin has no idea of the responsibilities and sacrifices a man is expected to make. He remains childlike, demanding that his wants and needs be instantly satisfied.

As a child-like adult Anakin continues to long for his mother, a longing Jung called “a hindrance on the path to this [the separation of the son from the mother], taking the form of a psychologic resistance, which is expressed empirically in the neurosis by all manners of fears, that is to say, the fear of life.” (Jung 288-289) Separated from his mother, Anakin desperately clings to the woman who becomes her replacement and her substitute, the senator Padme Amidala. He does love her, but his words to her speak of his desperation, his insatiable need for love and unconditional acceptance. He tells her that when he is without her it’s like being unable to breathe. The love he has for his wife is the love of an infantile individual, one who needs more love than he gives in return.

Had Anakin remained longer in the home of his mother, he may have matured into a person capable of both giving and receiving love. However, her death robs him of that opportunity. This tragedy leaves Anakin angry and full hate for himself and for those who killed his mother. He felt that had he been stronger in the Force he might have been able to save her life and he cannot forgive himself for failing her. Frozen at the emotional age of ten, Anakin's consciousness remains that of a young child. He will not respond well to change and will do everything in his power to ward off the effects.

Anakin Skywalker's emotional immaturity results in a weak sense of self. At the age of ten, he had not yet defined himself as an individual separate from his mother, so even when he is full grown he relies on others to define his identity. He's unable to exist on his own, as he has never had to do so, and he needs the feedback of others on how to live his life. Anakin doesn't exist as an independent individual. He moves from living with his mother to being taken care of by the Jedi. From there he enters into a marriage with Padme, from which he demands much love and comfort. He does not know how to function on his own, and is absolutely dependent on those he loves. The premature loss of his mother creates a terrible need in Anakin; he cannot, and does not wish to live without love and he will do anything to get it.

According to Eileen Simpson the "kind of attachment formed to the mother will determine the emotional tone of relationships children develop with others throughout life. If the mother goes away, or dies, or is unresponsive, they will become either 'anxiously attached' or 'cold and inhibited.'" (Simpson 152). The death of Anakin's mother created in him a great need of love. He clings to Padme desperately, demanding complete love and acceptance from her. He tells her that his life is completely empty without her, he can think of nothing else but her, and claims to experience physical pain when he is without her. Such claims speak of a needy

personality; one who cannot control or rein in his desires and passions. Because he remains still strongly connected to his mother, Anakin's entire world changes when she dies. Harris described how the loss of a parent during one's childhood can leave one feeling as though the world had ended. She said that the world the child faces is marked by strangeness; nothing is like it was before. In her book *The Loss That Is Forever: The Lifelong Impact of the Early Death of a Mother or Father*, Harris states that the orphan child needs to make its way in a new world without the guidance and love of a parent, but that not all can make this transition.

The death of his mother sends Anakin into a great rage. Freeing his mother was his motivation for leaving her all those years ago, and when she died, so did his purpose. The woman he defined himself through, the woman he believed he was sacrificing himself for, is dead and Anakin is lost without her. All the lessons he's been given about not giving into anger and hatred prove futile here as the future Darth Vader makes his first descent into the dark side of the Force. Anakin slaughters the entire village of Sand People: men, women and children. He spares no one, so intent is he on avenging his mother. Anakin takes the lives of many for the loss of one; killing mothers, fathers, and children, innocent and guilty alike to alleviate his own pain, though nothing can do that now.

Anakin is an orphan unable to face and recover from his mother's death. At Shmi Skywalker's funeral her husband tells her goodbye, saying how grateful he was to have her in his life, how much he loved her and will miss her. When it is Anakin's turn to speak, however, he says "I wasn't strong enough to save you Mom, I wasn't strong enough. But I promise you, I won't fail again." Anakin's words reveal his self-centered outlook on life. Even at the funeral of his mother, he can only think of himself. Shmi Skywalker's death marked the beginning of Anakin's obsession with loss and immortality. His obsession and guilt instill in him the desire to

control that which cannot be controlled, and his efforts to do so drive him to insanity and darkness.

In her research, Harris found that children are more prone to feeling guilt over the death of a parent than an adult is but observed that no one “felt guilty because they had actually wished the death. Instead, guilt seemed to come from feeling that they had somehow failed the parent and were thus, at least in part, responsible for the parent’s death.” (Harris 42) Anakin knows of the things he can do because of his ability to use the Force, and he believes it should be enough to save his mother, though he discovers that doing so is impossible. Anakin tells Padme that he knows he could have saved his mother, and Padme tells him that he’s not all powerful. Anakin snaps at her “Well I *should* be. Someday I will be. I will be the most powerful Jedi ever. I will even learn to stop people from dying.”

The power to cheat death is typically in the hands of gods in mythology, though sometimes it is even beyond them. Despite that, it is a power Anakin wishes to make his own. Raising someone from the dead or ensuring that they do not die at all is a disturbance of the natural order of the universe. All living things must eventually die, and it is important that one accept the inevitability of death and embrace life. In her study of the psychological effects of orphanhood, Maxine Harris observed that the child who loses a parent comes to see death as a thief. “The child feels robbed or cheated by untimely death, robbed of the relationship and robbed of the parent who is now gone.” (Harris 262) She also noted that when “one thinks of death as a robbery, one feels not only victimized, but cheated and angry as well.” (Harris 262) Anakin feels great anger over losing his mother, and cheating death becomes Anakin’s greatest desire, and he will use any means to do so. He’s full of anger for himself for not being strong enough to save his mother and angry at the Jedi for withholding power from him. He refuses to

accept that the death of his mother as beyond all control, and his inability to move past his mother's death influences the way his second relationship develops.

The early death of his mother instills in Anakin a great need for love and a great fear of losing love a second time. Having felt this pain once, Anakin becomes determined to never lose someone to death again. He will do anything to keep the ones he loves with him, and his desires come to corrupt and dominate him. In an interview included as a special feature on the original *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones* DVD George Lucas noted that "the problem Anakin has in this whole thing is that he has a hard time letting go of things. As he sought more and more power to try to change people's fate so that they're the way he wants them, that greed goes from trying to save the one you love to realizing you can control the universe." (Lucas) He sees the ability to cheat death as the ultimate power, one that not only would ensure that Anakin's loved ones would always be with him but one that would leave his loved ones indebted to Anakin, giving him complete control over them.

In her research Maxine Harris found that, for some orphans, the loss of their parents made them desperately seek someone who would love them in an effort to replace the love they lost so early. These orphans can believe "that not only happiness, but survival itself depends on finding the needed partner. For these individuals it becomes unthinkable to consider that love, once found, might be lost." (Harris 155) The possibility of losing another loved one haunts some survivors, regardless of the success they have had in subsequent relationships. One man, despite the fact that he and his wife have been married for twenty-five years, admitted to always holding part of himself back from her, that he is "always looking for signs that she is going to leave me. Either she will get sick, meet someone else, maybe her plane will crash. I am not going to let it hurt me again like it hurt me before." (Harris 148)

Like any child who's afraid of the death of a loved one, Anakin desperately needs to talk to someone about his feelings and have them be taken seriously. In his book Neil Chethik cites a study conducted by Columbia and New York University in 1996 that focused on children and their recovery from grief. What the study found was that children "who felt the surviving parent listened to them and was otherwise open to their concerns were less likely to be depressed or overly anxious after the death." (Chethik 40) Chethik said that one way to help children move past their grief is to let them know they can talk about the death and their feelings about without fear of having those feelings belittled or dismissed. The Jedi discourage Anakin from dwelling on his feelings, saying that feelings and emotions can only blind him to the importance of his mission. As a consequence his feelings and anger fester inside and soon consume him.

Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith opens five years after the events seen in *Episode II*. The opening scenes show Obi-Wan Kenobi (now a Jedi Master) and Anakin Skywalker on a mission to rescue the Chancellor Palpatine, who has seemingly been abducted by Count Dooku, a fallen Jedi Knight. The mission is successful, but Anakin kills Dooku, knowing that all his teachings go against it. They return to the capital, where Padme reveals to him that she is pregnant. Anakin is initially overjoyed at this news, but soon this knowledge comes to torture him. He begins to have prophetic-like nightmares of Padme dying in childbirth. These dreams haunt him, for the last time he dreamt about the death of a loved one the dreams came true.

As a result of these dreams Anakin Skywalker becomes obsessed with the possibility of losing his wife. Now he is more desperate than ever to control the fates, having things turn out the way he wants them to be. "It is Anakin's desire to control things that are ultimately outside of his control, in defiance of the natural order of the universe established by the will of the Force,

which leads to his moral downfall.” (Decker & Eberl 13) He still blames himself for his mother’s death, and the fear of losing Padme makes him determined to do whatever it takes to save her from dying.

Troubled by his nightmares, Anakin seeks the advice of someone he believes is wiser than he. He goes to Yoda for council and comfort, telling the Jedi master that he has had visions of someone close to him dying. For all his wisdom, Yoda gives Anakin horrible advice, as George Lucas noted in an interview on the DVD. Yoda denies Anakin the chance to freely discuss his fears about death, telling him that “Death is a natural part of life. Rejoice for those around you who transform into the Force. Mourn them do not. Miss them do not. Attachment leads to jealousy, the shadow of greed that is. Train yourself to let go of everything you fear to lose.” Yoda is like most other Jedi, raised by the Order from the earliest point of his life. It is unlikely that he has ever loved anyone, and therefore he can neither relate to nor provide any comfort for Anakin. The advice he gives Anakin, to let go of Padme, is something Anakin cannot accept. He exchanged wedding vows with Padme, committing himself to her. He will not let go of his love for Padme, for doing so would mean denying who he is. He loves her so greatly that she is all he can think about. The object of his love thus becomes the object of his obsession, an obsession that drives him to madness.

Anakin’s love forms the core of his life, and he will use any means to prevent its loss. Joseph Campbell called love one of the five main virtues and functions of a knight, but he added that “One way to go crazy is to have one function dominate the whole system and not serve the order.” (Flowers 240) Anakin allows his love for Padme to dominate his life, even his sworn duty to the Jedi Order cannot survive against it. His love is so great that he is unable to exercise logic or sound judgment. As he told Padme when she argued for not giving into their love “You

are asking me to be rational. That it is something I cannot do.” As an orphan, Anakin will do anything not to lose love a second time, and by so doing makes himself vulnerable to Palpatine’s manipulation.

Many heroes in mythology and history are brought down by a tragic flaw. Oedipus had his obsession with the truth, Hamlet his indecisiveness, and Macbeth his hubris. Anakin Skywalker’s is his loyalty; he would never consciously abandon or betray someone he cares for. His flaw lies in his judgment, as he gives his loyalty to the wrong person. He would do anything to save someone he loves, and Palpatine knows this. Palpatine, because of his strength in the Dark Side and the trust Anakin has placed in him, is able to use Anakin’s best qualities to ruin him, and he does this by turning Anakin against those who truly care for him.

Part of Anakin’s disdain for the other Jedi comes from within, but some of it is the result of Chancellor Palpatine’s manipulations. Chancellor Palpatine uses Anakin’s fear, lust for power and his love for Padme to turn the young Jedi to the Dark Side. Campbell pointed out that the quest of the hero is often a quest for the absent father. The father is the figure in myth who acts as the hero’s guide into the outside world. The good father teaches the hero what is necessary if one is to become a strong individual, one who uses what he’s been given for the benefit of all mankind. The bad father can repress the son, controlling him to the extent that the son loses his independence and free will. The domineering father can force the son to live forever in his shadow, and keep him from forming a life of his own. Unfortunately Anakin chooses the wrong man to be his father substitute. Palpatine seduces Anakin to the Dark Side by promising to teach him the power to save Padme’s life, a power Anakin believes the Jedi would never share with him.

Palpatine has his own reasons for seeming to form a friendship with Anakin. He wishes to use Anakin to help him overthrow the Jedi. The future Emperor senses how powerful Anakin is, and knows he would be a useful tool if he served the Dark Side, so he begins to turn Anakin against the Jedi Order. In one conversation, Palpatine refers to all the talks they've had, which implies that the Padawan tells Palpatine everything that frustrates or troubles him. Anakin enjoys the man's attention, so much so that he comes to see the man as a father figure. Anakin is vulnerable to the chancellor's manipulations because he maintains a sense of self, albeit a weak one. Having been deprived of his mother's love and guidance, Anakin longs for someone to replace everything he lost by leaving her. Yet because he is not emotionally or mentally mature, Anakin comes to rely on the wrong mentor. "The common themes that appeal to us in... heroes are that of the search for significance and the guidance of a good parent." (Oropeza 248)

Anakin has two father substitutes, Obi-Wan Kenobi, who has his best interest in mind, and Palpatine, who wants to use Anakin to further his evil cause. Unfortunately, Anakin chooses to trust Palpatine instead of Kenobi, because Palpatine flatters him and tells him everything he wants to hear. As an infantile adult, he craves recognition and praise of his achievements, and Palpatine provides this for him. Jedi are not supposed to desire reward or recognition, but Anakin is not like other Jedi.

Aware of his great potential in the Force and enslaved to his desires and emotions, Anakin believes that nothing should be impossible for him. Chancellor Palpatine, the future Emperor, has known Anakin since he was first accepted as a Padawan learner and takes advantage of the boy's arrogance by outrageously flattering him. Palpatine tells Anakin that he sees him "becoming the greatest of all Jedi, more powerful than even Master Yoda." Anakin sees the Force as the key to ultimate power and believes that a Jedi who controls it could work

miracles if he so desired. What Anakin doesn't understand is that the Force is not something to be controlled. In a seeming contradiction, a Jedi masters the Force only by surrendering to it. To surrender to the Force a Jedi must understand himself completely, he must see all his flaws, desires, talents and gifts and be willing to sacrifice them wholly. This is seen in *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back*, when Luke Skywalker turns to Yoda for training as a Jedi. The Master tells Luke that a Jedi must be completely serious and absolutely dedicated to his mission, he must not crave adventure and excitement. A Jedi's focus should be on the Force and his duty to peace above all else. Only when a Jedi is absolutely calm can he best serve the Force, becoming the instrument, not the master, of it. This is what Anakin was unable to accomplish. He could not let go of his pride or surrender himself to the Force, so consumed he was by his obsession with power.

Some orphans become obsessed with the attainment of immortality, and many heroes in mythology have gone mad or destroyed themselves in the quest to achieve it. Anakin is no different. His lust for power comes to dominate him, isolating him from the ones he loved, so much so that that they have no choice but to fight against him. He has come to stand for all that they despise, hatred and tyranny, until they are left with no choice but to turn against him, though it torments them to do so. Padme and Obi-Wan both loved Anakin, but they failed him. Their love for him was so strong that it made them blind to his faults and until the darkness took him over. They could not see the peril that he was in until it was too late to save him.

Though tragic, Anakin's fall was necessary, not just for his salvation, but for the galaxy's. Luke came into being because his father would not be denied love, because Anakin defied the teachings of the Jedi Order. Seeing the child before them, the two remaining Jedi Masters, Yoda and Obi-Wan Kenobi, decide to send Luke to Tatooine, where he will grow up in

the home of his aunt and uncle. They have seen too late the error of Jedi denying themselves families and love, and send Luke to those who will care for him and will raise him with love, something the Jedi would not be able to provide. Having the love of a family will be the best preparation Luke could have for the challenges awaiting him. When he is grown, when Luke finds out that Vader is in fact his father Anakin Skywalker, the son cannot bring himself to turn his back on his fallen father. The son of the man who destroyed both the Republic and the Jedi Order would prove the instrument through which their restoration was accomplished. The son loved his father so much he would die to save him, and Luke's sacrifice reached Anakin when nothing else could.

The last line of Matthew Stover's novelization *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* reads "*The dark is generous, and it is patient, and it always wins—but in the heart of its strength lies weakness: one lone candle is enough to hold it back. Love is more than a candle. Love can ignite the stars.*" (Stover 2005) [emphasis in the original] *Star Wars* teaches many lessons, but it seems that the most important lesson is of the cleansing and redemptive power of love. Standing in the Death Star, Darth Vader watches as his son sacrifices himself for his father. Luke loves his father so much that he was willing to die for him, knowing that it might be the only thing that could save Anakin. With the release of the first trilogy and "With such an understanding of the background story, we finally come to appreciate why Luke recognizes the good in his father. It's because Anakin doesn't fear to go where love takes him, both when his love of Padme takes him the darkness and when his love of Luke brings back again." (Decker & Eberl 156) Seeing his son on the verge of death, not just any death but death at the Emperor's hands, awakens Anakin from the selfish existence in which he's always lived. Watching Luke writhe in agony, Anakin chooses to save his son, though doing so costs him his life.

In discussing Lucas' films, Joseph Campbell told Bill Moyers that "*Star Wars* is not a simple morality play, it has do with the powers of life as they are either fulfilled or broken and suppressed through the action of man." (Flowers 179) After decades of focusing only on himself, Anakin Skywalker overcomes his own hate and lust to attain the level of compassion necessary to die for someone he loves. James Lawler wrote that, in discussing Anakin's tortured character, "We understand that his destiny, subtly and beautifully orchestrated by the will of the Force and the magic of George Lucas's art, has all along been to love. By loving in a way that's truly unconditional, without fear of the darkness into which his love leads him, he fulfills his destiny, destroys the Emperor, and so brings balance to the Force." (Decker & Eberl 156) Anakin Skywalker loves so strongly that he would pay any price to keep the ones he loved from harm. In his willingness to die for another, he becomes Joseph Campbell's true hero, one who would sacrifice everything he valued to save the life of another.

CHAPTER 9

HARRY POTTER AS A SACRIFICIAL ORPHAN

The third and final orphan superhero this thesis will examine, like Anakin, would gladly die to save the lives of those he has come to love. Each of the four films produced thus far charts another step in Harry's evolution from an orphaned boy, with no one to consider or live for but himself, to the child of destiny, one who will sacrifice everything, even his life if need be, to save his adopted world from destruction. The wizard world that educates Harry and his friends is under threat from Lord Voldemort, a powerful sorcerer bent on finding the key to immortality. Voldemort and his minions will kill anyone who gets in their way, be it witch, wizard, or Muggle (J.K. Rowling's term for non-magic humans).

Harry Potter, the newest addition to a long line of orphan heroes, grows from an abused boy to a powerful wizard in the films based on Rowling's books. Considered a child by those around him, the orphaned wizard repeatedly defeats a sorcerer who has killed those more experienced than he. For all his power, however, Harry Potter is still young and still trying to discover where he belongs. Like many heroes he is set apart from those around him, both within the wizarding and the non-magic communities. His destiny calls him onward, demanding that he put aside his own needs and desires to accept the burden and isolation that is his birthright.

In his writings, Joseph Campbell compared the journey of the hero to an identity quest, arguing that if he is to successfully fulfill his destiny, the hero must gain a true understanding of himself. This knowledge is often gained by descending into the unconscious mind, symbolized in mythology by the descent into the underworld. The hero descends and meets those he knew in life. He emerges with a greater understanding of himself and the burdens he must carry. Harry's life and story, told over the course of the four films produced about him thus far, takes the form

of an identity quest. Orphaned at the age of one year, Harry's past and heritage is a mystery to him. Each film covers one year of Harry's life, and with each passing year he comes to learn more about himself. His life, his very identity, is connected to Lord Voldemort, the sorcerer who murdered Harry's parents.

Like Batman and the Joker, Harry and Lord Voldemort, whose real name is Tom Riddle, have more in common than the hero realizes. Riddle's mother, a witch herself, died giving birth to her son. The infant was left in an orphan asylum, as his father, a non-magical human, abandoned his wife when she told him the truth about her abilities. Riddle, as book six in the Harry Potter series reveals, grew up feeling powerless in the asylum. When his magical abilities surfaced, Riddle saw them as a tool to gain power over his fellow inmates. He used his powers to torment the other orphans, even before he began his education at Hogwarts. At Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry Riddle honed his skills, always keeping his mind on the absolute power he desired to possess. Abandoned, deliberately by his father and unwillingly by his mother, Voldemort did all he could to insure that he would never be powerless again, no matter who he had to kill to achieve his goal. Voldemort killed Lily and James Potter because they were protecting their son. Harry, then only an infant, was Voldemort's target all along. To discover why Voldemort sees him as so great a threat, Harry must discover the truth about his past and heritage, knowledge that his parents' deaths denied him. He must discover the truth about Voldemort as well, as this knowledge may prove the key to Voldemort's undoing.

Danny Fingeroth wrote that the appeal of orphans to the American imagination is this: "that our petty lives would be rescued from the mundane by a simple revelation: *our parents are not really our parents.*" (Fingeroth 66) "To be an orphan means that our possibilities are endless. We are not from the small town, confining neighborhood, the constricting ethnic ties we have

told are ours. . . . Further, if one is an orphan, especially one without any seeming family ties, one is free, in the fantasy conception of such things, to do and go as one pleases.” (Fingeroth 67)

Harry Potter lives the dream everyone has at some point in childhood: that they are really a prince or princess, sorcerer or sorceress, and any day now their real parents will come to take them home to a world where magic is real. Except in Harry’s case, the dream turns into a nightmare. The world he enters is fraught with danger, for he is hounded by an evil wizard who will not stop until Harry, and those close to him, are dead.

The dangers Harry Potter faces in this new wizarding world are both internal and external. He is eleven years old when he enrolls at Hogwarts, the age when most children are beginning the process of separating from their parents and forming their own independent identities. The Jungian scholar Anthony Stevens wrote that “In addition to developing consciousness and differentiating between and from the parents, the *hero archetype* is about leaving home, overcoming fear and establishing personal autonomy in the world.” (Stevens 85) [emphasis in the original] Yet Harry, through his orphaning, has already established autonomy and an independent consciousness.

When Harry enters the wizarding world, the world of his parents, that autonomy is threatened. Not only does Harry meet people who knew his mother and father, but he learns the true circumstances of their deaths. These two factors make his sense of loss fresh and strong again. Everyone who knew his parents serves as a reminder of everything he lacks, of the people that he will never know. The man from whom he buys his wand reminisces about the day his parents came into his shop, recalling their talents as a witch and wizard. Professors at Hogwarts comment on how much Harry looks like his father, except that he has his mother’s green eyes. Harry is sorted into Gryffindor house, the house his parents lived in while attending Hogwarts.

He becomes the Seeker for Gryffindor Quidditch team, like his father before him. The more time Harry spends at Hogwarts, the more he learns about his parents. This new knowledge draws him closer to his parents at an age when most children are beginning to draw farther away from the home and family.

The “adolescents’ search for identity includes their lessening dependence on their parents and increasing identification with their peers.” (Whited 99) Harry Potter is distinguished from the rest of his classmates in that he already had an established independent identity when he arrived at Hogwarts, an identity that would be slowly undermined as he discovers more about his parents.

During the natural process of identity formation, adolescents encounter a crucial hurdle: differentiating themselves from their parent(s). Unfortunately, Harry’s orphan status complicates his identity formation. The typical adolescent (like Ron, George, or Fred Weasley) struggles to liberate himself from the parental web of influence through a long period of rebellion; however, the orphan’s identity quest differs. Sharon Stringer argues that ‘[y]oung adult literature includes many stories of parents who left home. For some protagonists, parental absence triggers an identity search and separation from the family. Until they reconnect to this missing parent, orphans may feel as if an important part of themselves is buried’ (7-8). Consequently, Harry undergoes a search of identity formation fraught with conflict because his search for the truth about his parents brings him closer to them, which in turn complicates his ability to create an identity separate from them. (Heilman 175)

Harry’s quest is further complicated by the need to discover who his parents were, and who he is. Voldemort viewed him as a danger for a specific reason. Campbell noted that the hero must separate himself from the home and family for the purpose of completing his quest. The mystery of Harry’s destiny as the one chosen to destroy Lord Voldemort is tied up in the orphan wizard’s heritage, a heritage that is still unknown to the boy. The success or failure of Harry’s quest to kill Lord Voldemort hinges upon his success or failure in reconnecting to his lost family and heritage. He is an unusual hero and adolescent in that he must return to the symbolic home of his parents if he is to grow and complete his quest. While connecting to his parents is a necessity, it

is also something that Harry deeply desires and therefore it is a danger to him. The danger is that, having connected to his parents, Harry, who has never known their love, may not wish to break the connection. He must reconnect to them to discover why Voldemort tried to kill him that night, but if he remains connected to them he will never be able to fulfill his destiny.

One of the key scenes in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* involves the Mirror of Erised. (The word Erised is desire spelt backwards.) Inscribed on the mirror's frame, also written backwards, are the words "I show not your face but your heart's desire." Harry discovers the mirror one night while he was trying to hide from a Hogwarts professor. As he stands in front of the mirror, his parents appear behind him. For the first time in his memory Harry is looking at his mother and father. The images of his parents look and smile at him and the reflection of his mother places her hand on Harry's shoulder. In response Harry moves his own hand to his shoulder, hoping to touch his mother's hand. His expression as he realizes that she is not there is heart-breaking. He's confused, but then he realizes that what he sees is not real. His mother is not there, and she will never be. Yet night after night he returns to the mirror, becoming so focused on it that he even forgets about finding the sorcerer's stone, a talisman that Voldemort needs to gain a new body.

Before he finds the mirror, Harry is determined to find the stone before Voldemort can so that he can prevent the sorcerer's return to power. Discovering the Mirror of Erised, delighted in seeing his parents standing beside him, all of Harry's other desires fall away.

At its core, Rowling suggests, desire can be both alluring and dangerous. Children need to understand, on whatever level, its complexity. Rowling does not minimize childhood longing. She offers this small allegory with the understanding that the search for identity is reflected in that mirror—as Harry sees his family behind him, and desires only to return again and again to that vision of himself, . . . If the mirror reflects what we most long for, it also evokes the fear that accompanies such desire and the loss that engendered it. (Whited 134)

For days Harry neither eats nor sleeps, he's content to sit in front of the mirror and stare at the image of himself with his parents. When he takes Ron to see the mirror, his friend asks if he thinks the mirror shows the future. Harry replies "How can it? Both my parents are dead." The mirror evokes feelings of joy and sadness in Harry, joy because he gets to see his parents, sadness because seeing them reminds him of the unavoidable truth that they are dead. As sad as the mirror makes him feel, he still goes back to it, so strong is the desire to have his parents alive once more.

It takes a visit from Albus Dumbledore to rescue Harry. He tells Harry that the mirror "shows nothing but the deepest, most desperate desire of our hearts... But know this Harry. This mirror gives us neither knowledge nor truth. Men have wasted away before it, even gone mad. It does not do to dwell on dreams Harry, and forget to live." Dumbledore's intervention saves Harry from sinking into grief for his parents, but that grief does not go away.

"Although Harry cannot grieve actual, physical relationships with his parents, he can and does grieve the relationships he was never able to establish with them." (Heilman 65) Everything in the wizard world reminds him of his parents and what is missing from his life. For instance, he's given his father's old invisibility cloak. Harry feels closer to his father while he wears the cloak, but this connection to his father further separates Harry from the Hogwarts community. However, his father's gift enables Harry to thwart Voldemort, for without it Harry and his friends would never have been able to reach the Stone. The cloak allowed them to move through Hogwarts undetected by the night watchman, and so they were able to make their way unseen to the section of the castle housing the Stone.

The final scenes of the film lead toward an inevitable lone showdown between Harry and Voldemort. Standing in the hidden room (the new home of the Mirror of Erised) Voldemort

requests then demands that Harry give him the stone. Harry looks all the while at the images of his parents staring silently back at him. When he pulls the stone from his pocket, tempted to give it to Lord Voldemort, the reflections of his parents vanish. He has always wanted them to be with him, but now he knows that this can never be. Now Harry sees Voldemort's lies for what they are and, as a result, is able to resist the dark wizard.

The burden and duty of the mythological hero and the child of destiny is that, in the end, he must fight alone. He can have companions on his quest, as heroes like Luke Skywalker and Harry Potter do, but in the end the battle will be between himself and his foe. The hero of myth is the only one capable of doing what he does, no one else can shoulder his burden. When Voldemort tried and failed to kill Harry Potter, he unwittingly gave some of his powers to the infant wizard. This happened because Lily Potter died to save a son she loved, and it is her love that still protects Harry, as Dumbledore later reveals. By the gift of magic and love, Harry, in some ways, is as strong as Voldemort, if not stronger. The prophecy that foretold his birth said "he will have power the Dark Lord knows not." (Rowling 841) The foretold power is the love of which Dumbledore spoke. Harry Potter loves the wizard world that has become his home, and loves the people who dwell within it. He will die to save the people and the world he loves, and he would consider his death a worthy sacrifice.

Harry Potter, despite his success in finding friends at Hogwarts, remains an outsider. Every wizarding family knows of Harry Potter, he became famous the moment his failed assassination at the hands of Lord Voldemort ruined the evil wizard. He has a permanent reminder of that night, the lightning shaped scar on his forehead. The mystery around Harry only grows due to the fact that he lives in exile from the wizarding community for the next ten years. Yet, as with so many heroes, the trials Harry undergoes during his exile prepare him for the

harder trials that lay ahead. He develops compassion and a great empathy. The abuse he endured at the hands of his family “predispose him to identify with the abused.” (Whited 57) He has great empathy for those in the wizard world who are abused and downtrodden: house elves whose magic is controlled and directed for slave work; centaurs and half-giants like Hagrid who are looked at with hatred and disgust for no other reason than they are not fully human; and Muggleborns like Hermione, called Mudbloods by those who believe in the “purity” of magical families. These groups are treated with scorn by some in the wizarding world because they were born different. Harry befriends and protects those deemed inferior by a sizable part of the wizarding community, as he feels a deep connection with those oppressed by it. An orphan, raised by a non-magic family, Harry is the symbol of everything pure-blood wizards despise. Like his parents Harry Potter feels great loyalty to those he cares for and shows compassion for the victims of prejudice, two qualities essential to the character of a hero.

While his exile equips Harry with the skills necessary to fight for the wizarding community, it also isolates him from that community, even after he reenters it. His scar, the sign of his mother’s love and protection, is also a symbol of the burden placed upon him. Voldemort was left near death because he tried to murder Harry, and the wizard unintentionally passed on some of his powers to the infant that night, hence Harry’s ability to speak the language of serpents. Other wizards recognize Harry by his scar, and view him as special because of what happened to him. Yet he is viewed as an outsider for the same reason, a distinction that only grows sharper once it becomes known that he speaks Parseltongue and attacks on the Muggleborn witches and wizards begin. As revealed in *Harry Potter & the Chamber of Secrets*, he becomes the number one candidate for the Heir of Slytherin in the students’ eyes, and they come to fear him for this reason. “Harry is outside, at times almost outcast from, the main body

of the school, because he is—and masters as well as students know this—different.” (Whited 18)

Yet Harry’s status as an outcast is actually a saving grace. He was not raised in the magical world and doesn’t know the rules other magical children are taught. He has what Dumbledore calls “a certain disregard for the rules.” Harry understands, perhaps better than anyone else, what Voldemort returning to power would mean. If stopping Voldemort means breaking a few rules, then Harry would gladly break them. He knows that he most likely will be punished for it, perhaps even expelled from Hogwarts, but he considers that a worthy price to pay. He knows the alternative would be much worse, and if he can save those he loves from suffering and death, he would not hesitate to do so, even if it meant his own death.

Campbell wrote that “the one in exile from the community is a nothing. From the other point of view, however, this exile is the first step of the quest.” (Campbell 383) Harry is in exile at the start of each film, trapped in his uncle’s home. When he returns to Hogwarts however, his exile does not entirely end. He carries the effects of it with him. He is set apart from the other wizards because of his scar. It is the mark of his destiny, a permanent reminder that he is different from those around him. He survived a curse that never fails to kill, and he was an infant at the time. His scar, his recklessness, his seemingly insane courage and the powers he possesses that were formerly only found in dark wizards guide him toward his ever-present fate as the one chosen to face Lord Voldemort. Each year he moves closer to Lord Voldemort and farther away from the normal wizarding community. All save Harry’s closest friends shun him once he’s suspected of attacking other students at the school. In hindsight however, their abandonment of Harry is actually a eucatastrophe, Tolkien’s word for a happy disaster. During this time Harry finds a diary with the name Tom Riddle embossed on it. The diary is empty, or at least seems to be so. Harry’s discovery of Tom Riddle’s diary provides a magical window into Hogwart’s past.

The diary looks back fifty years in Hogwart's history, to the last time the Chamber of Secrets was opened. The monster attacked several students then as well, and succeeded in killing a Muggleborn student before the attacks ended. The diary names Hagrid as the party responsible for the killings, but the location of the Chamber and the type of monster remain a mystery.

The diary also reveals that Tom and Harry have something in common. Riddle is an orphan like Harry, and their shared struggles lead Harry to develop a connection with the boy. Later it is revealed that the diary (and the spirit it contains) is the source of unrest at Hogwarts and once again Harry is forced into a showdown with Voldemort, who at this meeting appears in the form of a sixteen year old boy.

The fact that Voldemort takes the form of a person Harry trusted deeply disturbs the young wizard. Later, in Dumbledore's office Harry reflects on everything Voldemort told him, and is greatly troubled by it. "Harry remains paired with Voldemort for reasons that Voldemort understands better than Harry." (Whited 20) Riddle tells Harry that "There are strange likenesses between us, after all. Both half-bloods, orphans, raised by Muggles. Probably the only two Parselmouths to come to Hogwarts since the great Slytherin himself. We even *look* something alike..." (Rowling 317) As Dumbledore tells Harry later, there is much Harry and Voldemort have in common, outside of their magical abilities. Both are resourceful, cunning, and do not respect most rules. Harry remembers how, last year, the Sorting Hat (which determines which of the four Hogwarts houses a student will be placed in) told Harry he would do well in Slytherin. Yet the hat placed Harry in Gryffindor because Harry asked it to. Dumbledore tells Harry that this makes him very different than Voldemort, that "It is not our abilities that determine who we truly are, it is our choices." Harry is different than Voldemort in that, when offered the chance to achieve great power, he rejects it.

Harry's orphanhood, his anger, and his isolation make him seek out ways to overcome them. His trials give him the strength to transcend his painful origins and find the love necessary to fight for the home and family he's made at Hogwarts. Voldemort, in contrast, gave into his anger, used it to seek power and revenge; revenge against the father who abandoned him before he was even born and revenge against the Muggles who tormented him in the orphanage. At their mercy for so many years, Voldemort became obsessed with gaining as much power as he could, power that would allow him to rule over wizards and Muggles alike.

Harry's past and present connects him to Lord Voldemort. The dark wizard is bent on Harry's destruction for reasons that are still unknown four films and six books into the series. The prophecy that foretold Harry's birth also said that he and Voldemort must fight to the death. Voldemort will never stop hounding Harry, and Harry will not be free to live his own life while Voldemort is alive. Also, with Harry's parents dead, the only person who knows why Harry is a threat to Voldemort is Voldemort. Harry must confront the wizard if he wishes to discover the truth about himself and his family, to understand why they were so great a threat to Voldemort.

In the next film in this series, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, Harry Potter grows closer to his father than ever before, an occurrence made possible through the arrival of James Potter's oldest friends, Remus Lupin and Sirius Black. In his book *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* Joseph Campbell describes Atonement with the Father as one of the steps in the initiation of the hero (136). The father is meant to act as a guide for his child, instructing him on the path to maturity and adulthood. Harry Potter, in the beginning of the third film, is full of rage and not at all in control of his emotions, lashing out at the Dursleys for their unceasing abuse. Things come to a head when his Aunt Marge, Vernon Dursley's sister, comes for a visit. Like her brother she has nothing but scorn for the deceased Potters and their "wayward" son. She remarks

aloud that if Harry had been left on *her* doorstep, she would have turned the baby over to the first orphanage she could find.

The evening goes downhill from there. Marge does not contain her insults to Harry, and hints that his mother was an ill-bred mongrel. While Harry tolerates Marge's insults about him, the debasement of his mother is the final straw. "He has too many unresolved feelings about his parents' death and especially about his father to suffer Aunt Marge gladly." (Granger 77)

Angered beyond all reason, Harry loses control of his magic. Aunt Marge begins to inflate, expanding to twice her normal size. Now literally full of hot air, she floats out the open door and into the atmosphere. Angered and hurt over the loss of his parents, Harry lashes out, punishing those who speak ill of them. At the age of thirteen Harry is still very young and has no stable adult figure in his life to teach him the virtues of self-control and self-discipline. Lacking a strong father figure, he will have to look inside himself for these strengths, but the lack of a father figure leaves him unsure of how to do so.

The death or absence of the father is a common occurrence in myths, legends, and fairy tales. The lives of characters such as Cinderella, Snow White, Telemachus, Oedipus, and Hamlet change forever following the death or departure of their fathers. These characters face new obstacles that threaten to overwhelm them once their fathers are no longer there to protect them. Some are unable to carry the new burden of responsibility, while others find the strength to make their lives, and the lives of those around them, better than they were before. With his father gone, the hero must look inside himself to learn how to be a man. He has to become the man he believes his father would have been and act as the guide his father should have been. Not having a father often forces the hero to grow up, often before his time, and the hero suffers for this lack.

It is like following a map on which the destination is clearly marked, but the way to reach it has been erased. The hero must learn how to be a man without anyone there to show him the way.

James Potter “is both the father who deserts the child and the one who protects him, the god who puts us in this dangerous world filled with death, including the knowledge of our own at an unknown time, and the god who sustains us and gives us renewed life. Finally, he is the creator who lives on in us.” (Whited 110) At the age of thirteen Harry is out of control. He desperately needs and seeks the guidance of his father, and his absence is the ultimate source of Harry’s anger. It is this anger that causes him to turn on his family, and it is this anger that Harry will transcend before the year is out. The trials he will face this year enable Harry to grow closer to his father and forgive those who wronged them both. Harry’s strength and mercy develops through a renewed connection to his father and the realization that his father lives on in him.

Though his father is dead, it is in Harry Potter’s third year at Hogwarts that he grows closer to his father in ways that were unavailable to him before. One way will lead Harry further along the path to maturity and atonement with James Potter, while the other leads to a fate worse than death. Before the start of his third year at Hogwarts, a wizard named Sirius Black escapes from Azkaban, the wizard prison. The entire wizarding community believes him to be the one who betrayed Lily and James Potter to Voldemort the night they were murdered. Azkaban is guarded by ‘dementors’. These foul creatures prey on the mind and soul, taking away every happy memory and feeling from their victims until they finally lose their minds.

Harry Potter has more than one encounter with the dementors over the course of the year, encounters that will reopen the wounds of his orphaning. The first time Harry sees a dementor is on the train to Hogwarts. The monster stops the train and climbs aboard, searching each cabin for Black. When it enters Harry’s it stops in front of the boy. As it nears Harry, the boy feels a cold

chill go through him as all happiness and serenity drains away. Before Harry passes out he hears a woman's high-pitched scream, followed by evil laughter.

“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... soul-less and evil. You'll be left with nothing but the worst experiences of your life.” (Rowling 187) In an interview, J.K. Rowling described how the depression she suffered in her younger years helped her in the depiction of the dementors, creatures who drain all hope from their chosen victims, until that person forgets who they used to be. Remus Lupin, the new Defense against the Dark Arts professor at Hogwarts, tells Harry that the presence of the dementors causes a person to relive their worst memories. Harry's worst memory, one buried so deep that it was beyond his conscious recollection, is the death of his parents. Hearing them die reawakens a terrible agony in the boy, but he derives a peculiar joy from it as well.

After the dementors attack Harry a second time, he asks Professor Lupin to teach him how to ward them off. To perform a Patronus charm (the only defense against the dementors), a person must concentrate on an overwhelmingly happy memory and speak the words *expecto patronum*. Yet Harry has difficulty conjuring one at first. He thinks of the first time he flew on a broomstick but, as Lupin said, that memory is not happy enough. To fight off a dementor the memory chosen must be one that is completely happy, but Harry has difficulty in choosing a suitable memory. Orphaned before he got to know his parents, sent to live with relatives who did nothing but abuse him, Harry has known too little happiness, and fails in his first few attempts at conjuring the Patronus.

Finally settling on one strong memory, Harry tells Lupin before casting the spell that “It's not... happy. Well, it is, it's the happiest I've ever felt. But it's complicated.” When Lupin asks what memory he chose, Harry says he thought about his parents, “Seeing their faces. They were talking to me, just talking. That's the memory I chose. I don't even know if it's real. But it's the best I have.” It is difficult for Harry to find happiness, though he has found friends at Hogwarts who love and care for him. He sees his friends Ron and Hermione constantly surrounded by their families, which only reminds him of what he does not have. Nothing would make him happier than to be with his mother and father, but that can never be. His pleasure is tied to his pain, and imagining himself with his parents only makes him more aware of the impossibility of that happening.

His difficulty in finding a happy memory is not the only reason he fails to conjure a Patronus at first. As awful as it is for Harry to listen to his parents dying, in a peculiar way he enjoys hearing it. Though their dying pleas pain him, it is the first time in Harry's conscious memory that he has heard the voices of his mom and dad. “Terrible though it was to hear his parents' last moments replayed inside his head, these were the only times Harry had heard their voices since he was a very small child. But he'd never be able to produce a proper Patronus if he half wanted to hear his parents again...” (Rowling 243) If he's successful in warding off the dementors he will never hear his parents' voices again. But if he does not ward the dementors off, choosing instead to sink into the buried memory of his parents, Harry will never be able to come back from it and will waste away and die.

Despite the danger of losing himself, Harry nonetheless desires to hear his mother and father. His father's last words were a command to Lily to take Harry and escape, and Lily's last words were spent pleading to Voldemort to take her life instead of Harry's. Both Lily and James

were willing to die so that their son would live, and Harry learns in that moment how great their love for him must have been. The memory helps Harry to feel the connection and love for which he desperately longs. Giving into that longing, not resisting the dementors will mean Harry's death, a possibility that tempts Harry. It would be so easy for him not to resist, believing that then he could be with his parents forever.

Though surrendering to the dementors offers an easy way for Harry to reconnect to his mother and father, it is not the only way. The second way is harder, but, as in all things, it is the better choice. Not only will it lead Harry to a deeper understanding of his parents, it will also show him what really happened to his parents, knowledge that later saves an innocent man from a fate worse than death. Remus Lupin and Sirius Black (the latter wrongly convicted of betraying the Potters and murdering Pettigrew) were James Potter's best friends when he attended Hogwarts. Sirius Black and James Potter were so close that Potter named Black Harry's godfather. These two men tell Harry what really happened the night Voldemort killed his parents.

After revealing the truth of Pettigrew's betrayal to Harry, Lupin and Black cast a spell that forces Pettigrew to resume his human form. In their anger at Pettigrew's betrayal, the two men want nothing more than to kill Pettigrew immediately. Harry however, stops them. A moment ago Pettigrew told Harry that his father would have shown him mercy, and his observation pulls Harry up short. Pettigrew had been James' friend at Hogwarts, and he did know James well. Though he has lied in the past, now, at the moment of his death, he tells the truth out of sheer desperation, and Harry realizes just how true his declaration is.

Harry knows that Pettigrew deserves to die for all that he's done but chooses to spare his life nonetheless. Harry does so because, as he tells Sirius afterwards, he knows his dad wouldn't

have wanted his two best friends to become murderers just to get revenge on Pettigrew. Everything Harry learned in the past few hours, from Pettigrew's betrayal of his family to the ever-present loyalty and regret of Lupin and Black, changes him. "He is transformed by these revelations, so he is no longer the out-of-control, angry boy who blew up ... Aunt Marge—on Privet Drive for carelessly insulting his parents. Harry has become a young man capable of forgiving both Black for making Pettigrew the Potters' secret-keeper and Pettigrew for betraying his family to Voldemort." (Granger 144) In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* Campbell describes that, in undergoing the initiation his father plans for him, the hero and the father become one (137, 349). Now the hero is prepared to serve as father to his sons, to fulfill the role of guardian and guide. As the hero of the wizarding community Harry must fill the void his father's death created in his life. Growing closer to his father's friends, gaining a clearer knowledge of what his mother and father were really like through the recollections of Remus and Sirius allows Harry to see the strength, love, and loyalty of his parents in himself, a grace that will soon save more than one innocent life.

In the final showdown with the dementors, armed with the understanding of his father Lupin and Black provided, Harry finds the strength to summon the Patronus when he finds the strength of his father inside himself. In summoning the Patronus, he surrenders his pride and anger and asks for guidance from the one person he knows can aid him in this struggle. The phrase *expecto patronum* is nothing less than a plea for the presence and protection of the father. These words are derived from the Latin language. In his book *Looking for God in Harry Potter*, John Granger explains how *expecto* means "to look out for, await, long for expectantly" (Granger 142) while *patronum*, which "comes from the root *pater*... means 'father.'" (Granger 142) Therefore, to say *expecto patronum* is to say "I look for the figure of my father." (Granger

142) Harry, having found his father's strength, love, and mercy inside himself, calls on his father to save him and, in an abstract way, his father does.

The shape Harry's Patronus assumes is that of a stag, the shape James Potter assumed when he became an Animagus. "Harry at the end of *Prisoner of Azkaban* has realized his identity with his father." (Granger 146) [emphasis in the original] James Potter lives on and through his son, and, when Harry Potter realizes this, he does something that he would not have believed was possible: he saves himself. Harry had always looked to others to save him before, whether it was Dumbledore pulling him from Quirrel's grasp or the headmaster sending Harry the tools he would need to defeat Riddle. Now, having found his father's strength deep within, Harry is able to save himself. He will always need and will always have his parents' love, but he no longer has to depend on them for survival. He has made their strength his own, and in doing so is able to save both himself and Sirius from a fate worse than death. Campbell said that all heroes are called to surrender themselves to a higher purpose, to accept the destiny and burden laid upon them, if they are to succeed. It is in the act of surrender that Harry finds his greatest strength: the love and loyalty he feels for his friends and guardians. He would die to protect them, just as his parents' died to protect him. Realizing and accepting the power and wonder of his father's love, Harry Potter surrenders to his fate. He accepts that he might die, but knows that if that is the price of Sirius' salvation, it is one he would gladly make. In surrendering himself to destiny, surrendering himself to his father, Harry finds the key to salvation.

The fourth film in the Harry Potter series, *Harry Potter & the Goblet of Fire*, is the film in which Harry undergoes the most change to date. In the previous film, he realized his identity with his father and now, in the next school year, he will leave him behind. He has accepted his father as a part of himself, but, as his actions this year demonstrate, proves himself a far better

person than his father was as a teenager. James Potter, the heir of an ancient wizarding family, was arrogant and cruel in his youth. A sequence in a later book shows one of Snape's (the Hogwarts Potions Master) memories. The memory makes it clear that James, while one of the most promising students in his years at Hogwarts showed neither kindness nor mercy to those outside of his circle of friends during his teenage years. Unlike Harry, James Potter was something of a bully at the school, using magic to torment and humiliate less popular and talented students like Snape. When James and Sirius spot Snape sitting on the green going over a test he had taken, they march straight up to him and James uses a spell to hang Snape upside down by one ankle, causing his robes to fly over his head, exposing his underclothes. Sirius and James, finding the situation hilarious, howl with laughter. Harry, knowing what it's like to be scorned and looked down on, never used his magic to humiliate anyone, no matter how much he disliked them. In contrast to his father, Harry repeatedly uses his magic to help others, even though doing so in no way benefits him, as several instances in this film attest.

The events in *Harry Potter & the Goblet of Fire* center on the Tri-Wizard Tournament, in which Harry is one of the students selected to participate. The tournament involves three trials that will test the students' strength and magical prowess. The first trial, in which Harry has to face a dragon, reveals the young wizard's physical strength. In the second trial, the strength Harry demonstrates is strength of character. The second test of the tournament (to retrieve a person who has been taken, under enchantment, to the bottom of a fathomless lake) invites Harry to forsake himself in favor of the survival of others. He prejudices his own success through the belief that others are at risk. Harry's sacrifice and selflessness are unnecessary, at least in terms of the competition. Yet Harry's inner character and loyalty made it impossible for him to leave anyone behind. As his rescue of Ron and Gabrielle reveals, Harry would die before allowing a

defenseless person to perish. He would never forsake someone to win a game, no matter how high the stakes. He has become his parents' son in the truest sense of the word, for he would rather die than abandon an innocent. His actions during the trials show that Harry possesses a maturity far beyond his fourteen years. Many people demonstrate selfish or spiteful behavior in their teenage years, such as Fred and George Weasley who place bets on the outcome of the tasks, shouting for all to hear that the odds improve if one of the champions dies, or Ron Weasley, who turns his back on Harry for a time because he believes his friend put his name in the Goblet. He jumps to the conclusion that Harry is lying to him, though Harry would never lie to anyone. Harry's loss, his struggles, and his pain put an end to his childhood. Having no one to depend on, Harry learned early on that he would have to take care of himself, eventually coming to believe that he could rely on no one but himself.

What Harry has to learn is that everyone, even heroes, must rely on another from time to time. Harry could not even have begun the second task without Cedric's or Neville's help, and it is unlikely he would have survived the first task had it not been for Hagrid's aid. Maxine Harris wrote that "Self-reliance is perhaps the strongest of the barriers that individuals erect to keep themselves at a distance from others:" (Harris 159). As a hero and a champion in the tournament, Harry must learn to surrender his own pride if he wishes to succeed and admit to himself that he needs the help and knowledge of others. He could find a family at Hogwarts if he allows himself. People there care about him, but his early loss makes it difficult for him to respond to this. He has been independent for so long, it is difficult for him to admit that he needs the care and guidance of others, yet care and direction is exactly what he needs to move forward, in life and in the tournament.

A sense of direction is literally what Harry will need to complete the final task in the Tri-Wizard Tournament, which takes place in a labyrinth. The Tri-Wizard Cup lies at the center of the labyrinth, and the first champion who touches it will be declared the winner. A labyrinth is a highly significant image in mythology. It can be a physical maze, such as the one Theseus makes his way through, but it can also be a symbol for a descent into death, darkness, and the unconscious mind. The opening lines of Dante's *Divine Comedy* describe the traveler as being lost in a dark wood, unable to find his way without a guide. Things happen to those who enter a labyrinth; even the ones who emerge unharmed do not emerge unscathed. The labyrinth presents many dangers, the least of which are physical. As Dumbledore tells the champions before they enter the labyrinth, the real danger is to the mind: "In the maze, you'll find no dragons or creatures of the deep. Instead, you'll face something even more challenging. You see, people change in the maze. Oh, find the cup if you can. But be very wary, you could just lose yourselves along the way." In a labyrinth one can lose oneself, one's sanity, and one's purpose.

According to the Crystalinks Website, "A labyrinth is an ancient symbol that relates to wholeness. It combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a meandering but purposeful path. It represents a journey to our own center and back again out into the world."

(<http://www.crystalinks.com/labyrinths.html>) The labyrinth has been compared to a pilgrimage, upon entering, a being surrenders himself. When he reaches the center, having been purified by the struggles of the journey, he attains union with God. Having reached the center he becomes whole, attaining a full awareness of himself and his unity with the world. Yet not all are able to reach their center, and become lost within the maze or worse, are consumed by it. The four champions make their way to the center, but Delacour and Krum become lost, leaving only the two Hogwarts students to vie for the prize. Pushing and clawing at each other, Diggory and

Potter race toward the goblet, mere yards away. Diggory trips and the labyrinth begins to consume him, its vine pulling him into the walls. In desperation he cries out to Harry for help, and Harry stops.

For one terrible moment Harry does nothing, watching as the labyrinth begins to consume Cedric, who by now is only moments from death. With one final glance at the cup, Harry turns back to Cedric, freeing the wizard from the grip of the labyrinth. These two wizards are known for their loyalty and dedication, yet for a moment both were reduced to an almost animal consciousness. Each was willing to do whatever it took to win, no matter who suffered for it. Yet seeing Cedric writhe in torment makes Harry remember himself and he goes back, giving up eternal glory to help another. This act of self-denial affirms Harry's status as the heir to a long line of heroes, establishing his connection with them and revealing the truth in Joseph Campbell's description of the labyrinth:

Furthermore, we have not even to risk the adventure alone; for the heroes of all time have gone before us; the labyrinth is thoroughly known; and we have only to follow the thread of the hero-path. And where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god; where we had thought to slay another, we shall slay ourselves; where we had thought to travel outward, we shall come to the center of our own existence; where we had thought to be alone, we shall be with all the world. (Campbell 25)

The moment he chooses to save Cedric connects Harry Potter with all the heroes that have gone before. At that moment in time, the object Harry desires more than anything else is the Tri-Wizard Cup. Not only will taking the cup declare him the winner of the Tri-Wizard Tournament (that in itself would be a remarkable feat, for Harry is younger and less schooled in magic than his opponents), but he would also win eternal fame and glory, not to mention a thousand gold galleons! The object of Harry's desire is his for the taking, but taking it would mean leaving his opponent behind to die. When Harry turns back, he gives up the thing he wants the most for Cedric's sake. The Tri-Wizard cup has been compared to the Holy Grail, the cup

that promises eternal life to whomever drinks of it. Eternal glory is equivalent to eternal life because it implies that the one who attains it would be remembered for all time, his story echoing through the generations to come. To turn one's back on all that for the sake of a *rival* is a true act of sacrifice. Cedric is not only Harry's rival in the tournament, but Harry's rival in life. The two men (for they cannot properly be called boys after all they have faced) are in love with the same woman, the Ravenclaw student Cho Chang. Harry pictures himself emerging triumphant from the labyrinth with the cup, Cho staring adoringly up at him, her feelings for Cedric forgotten. To win her, and win the cup, all Harry would have to do is leave Cedric behind. But, against his own desires, Harry goes back to help Cedric. How many, when faced with the same choice as Harry, would do the same? As an orphan Harry has been abused, neglected, and unloved for his entire life. Winning the tournament would win the love and admiration of the wizarding world, and once and for all he would prove that he truly belonged in it. His decision to save Cedric shows that he is willing to sacrifice everything he wanted to help another. Harry is therefore a hero to look up to because we want to believe that, in the same circumstances, we would make the same decision. "People commonly think of Heroes as strong or brave, but these qualities are secondary to **sacrifice**—the true mark of a Hero. Sacrifice is the Hero's willingness to give up something of value, perhaps even her own life, on behalf of an ideal or group. Sacrifice means 'making holy.'" (Vogler 38) [emphasis in the original]

Harry's sacrifice startles Cedric. Though he was crying out for help, Cedric did not believe that Harry would actually return for him. Upon standing Cedric says "For a moment there I thought you were going to let it get me." Harry replies, "For a moment so did I." His statement implies that, if he had been in Harry's position, he might have left the wizard behind. Harry's sacrifice consequently awakens a spirit of sacrifice in Cedric. For the first time since the

tournament began Cedric and Harry have come to appreciate the other. Their decision to take the cup together shows that each has sworn their loyalty to the wizarding community of Hogwarts, for now they are thinking of what would be best for all, not just for themselves.

Sadly, the sacrifices Harry and Cedric have just made are not the final sacrifices of the film. The cruelest is still to come. The cup transports Harry and Cedric to a graveyard wherein Peter Pettigrew murders Cedric and renders Harry helpless. Voldemort has Harry in his grasp, and now wants to kill the teenage wizard. When he frees the young wizard from his restraints Harry runs behind Riddle's tomb. Voldemort screams out: "Don't you turn your back on me, Harry Potter! I want you to look at me when I kill you! I want to see the light leave your eyes!" Every villain has a weakness, a flaw that cannot but bring him down, and Voldemort's is his hubris, what the Greeks defined as overweening pride. He has always lusted for power and indeed is able to use his power to terrorize others. Voldemort will never be satisfied, however, until he sees the effects of his power. Voldemort's hubris, insecurity, and lust for power have their source in his youth, by all accounts a very harsh one.

Like Harry, Voldemort is an orphan, but unlike Harry he had no family willing to take him in. His father abandoned his still-pregnant wife when he learned she was a witch, and Voldemort's grandfather and uncle were imprisoned in Azkaban for crimes against Muggles. Young Riddle discovered his magical abilities early, and took pleasure in using them to torment the other orphans. He enjoyed seeing the others cringe and cower before him, a pleasure he retains to this day. Voldemort wishes to look at people and know they fear him, as proven in his fury when Harry turns his back on him. Hubris has been the downfall of many a hero and villain, and by turning his back on Voldemort Harry denies the Dark Lord what he desires most, recognition and fear of his power.

The fight does not end there. Harry walks out to confront Voldemort, a fourteen year old facing the most dangerous sorcerer of the age. All he says is “Have it your way then.” He knows in his heart that he stands no chance against Voldemort. Without any hope of winning the fight, Harry makes the decision to face his foe nonetheless. If he is to die, he wants to die as bravely as his parents did. And maybe there is the slight chance that he could take Voldemort with him. If he doesn’t try, Voldemort will move unchallenged through the magic community, killing and terrorizing those who get in his way. Harry cannot bear to see that happen to his adopted home, could not bear to think of all the innocent people who would die just as Cedric did. He would gladly surrender and sacrifice himself to keep that world safe, and if doing so means his death, it is a price he is ready to pay.

“The hero,” as Campbell wrote in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, “is a man of self-achieved submission.” (Campbell 16) In facing Voldemort, Harry Potter is prepared to submit to his fate. Campbell wrote that “the hero would be no hero if death held for him any terror, the first condition is reconciliation with the grave.” (Campbell 356) Unlike Voldemort (whose name translates into “flight from death”), Harry believes that there are worse things than dying. Spending a life enslaved to a tyrant, living a life without love and hope, are two fates he sees as worth than death. As Dumbledore told the boy in Rowling’s novel *Harry Potter & the Sorcerer’s Stone*, “to the well-organized mind, death is but the next great adventure.” (Rowling 297) Harry submits to death and fate when he faces Voldemort and, in so doing, escapes death once more. He and Voldemort draw their wands and simultaneously cast spells at one another. Voldemort once again tries to use the Killing Curse on Harry, and Harry casts a spell of disarming, one that should knock Voldemort’s wand from his hand.

Once the spells are cast however, something unexpected happens. The spells meet in mid-air, and a golden beam of light connects the two wands. This strange effect occurs because Voldemort's and Harry's wands share cores, in this instance a feather from the same phoenix. When a wand meets its brother "They will not work properly against each other... If, however, the owners of the wands force the wands to do battle... a very rare effect will take place. One of the wands will force the other to regurgitate the spells it has performed – in reverse." (Rowling 697) The joining of their wands testifies to a very important truth about Voldemort and Harry.

The two wizards have been bound together ever since Voldemort tried to murder Harry thirteen years ago. Each in a way played a role in the creation of the other. Harry, as the stories reveal, is an extremely powerful wizard. It is doubtful that many teenage witches or wizards could survive a direct attack from Lord Voldemort, but Harry has done so on not one but five separate occasions, starting when he was just over a year old. Yet it is entirely possible that Harry Potter would not have the magical strength he possesses had Voldemort not tried to kill him. As we learned in Christopher Columbus' film *Harry Potter & the Chamber of Secrets* Voldemort unintentionally gave Harry Potter some of his powers the night he failed to kill the child. Harry speaks Parseltongue, the language of snakes, because Voldemort speaks Parseltongue, so who can say what other powers Harry received from the Dark Lord. The truth is that Harry, despite his innate magical talent, is not that good of a student. He never reads the assigned books, barely shows up for his classes, and his friend Hermione has to force him to do his homework. It seems that he would be very poor at magic, yet somehow he is able to defeat one of the most powerful wizards of the age. Voldemort wanted to kill Harry in an effort to escape his fate, and instead he created the one wizard powerful enough to challenge him. In a sense, this makes Voldemort Harry's second father. Though he was sired by James Potter, Harry

wouldn't be the wizard he is if Voldemort had not tried to kill him. Voldemort's mistake, in more ways than one, gave Harry the powers he would need to defeat the Dark Lord.

As Voldemort tells his followers, Lily Potter's sacrifice protected her son from Voldemort's curse. Once the wizard could not touch the boy without experiencing pain but this is no longer the case. As Harry's blood was one of the ingredients used to restore Voldemort to his physical body, Lily Potter's protection now extends to Voldemort as well. Voldemort only sees how having Harry's blood flowing through his own veins benefits him. He can now touch the boy without pain, but he seems to be overlooking something important. Voldemort became something of a magical father to Harry when he gave the boy his powers and now, since Harry's blood restored Voldemort to a physical form, Harry has fathered Voldemort as well. Voldemort would not have regained his body or his powers had it not been for Harry's blood, but the blood seems to be of greater import than that.

Salvation and protection through blood is a very common theme in mythology, both pagan and Christian. Many cultures believe that taking something of your enemy into yourself (his blood, his eyes, his flesh) gives the consumer the ability to see through the eyes of his enemy, as well as bestowing upon him the strength, gifts, and talents of the one from whom he partakes. Something of Harry is in Voldemort now, just as there is something of Voldemort in Harry, and only in time will readers and viewers know the true significance of Harry's gift of blood. The symbol of blood as protection, as a saving grace, is a very Christian theme as well. The Bible says that the blood of Jesus Christ, shed in His death on the Cross, washes away all sins. In dying on the Cross, Jesus offered Himself up as a sacrifice (taking the place of all the pagan sacrifices that went before), and to gain salvation a person need only offer their lives to Jesus, ask forgiveness for their sins and live according to His example. In housing Harry's blood,

Voldemort also houses the love of and protection of Harry's mother. Though Voldemort can touch Harry now, he may not be able to do anything else to him. The spell created by Lily Potter's sacrifice (the spell present in Harry's blood) will not allow Voldemort to attack or harm her son. Now that Harry's blood (with the weave of protection still intact) is in Voldemort, the Dark Lord may not be able to harm Harry, not without suffering the consequences himself. It is probable that, due to the shared blood, any spell or curse Voldemort casts on Harry will have the same effect on Voldemort as it would on Harry. With Harry's blood in his body, Voldemort might not be able to attack Harry without personally suffering pain, perhaps even the pain of death. Whatever the reason, Voldemort has not attacked Harry since that night in the graveyard.

“Heroes don't just visit death and come home. They return changed, transformed. No one can go through an experience at the edge of death without being changed in some way.” (Vogler 160) Harry faced and survived death at the hands of Voldemort once again, and this struggle altered him profoundly. Though he survived attacks from Voldemort and his servants before, this time is different. Back in a physical form, Voldemort's powers are magnified many times over, and Harry has no hope that he could survive an attack from a mature wizard. He does survive, through the grace of his parents, but the experience changed him forever. His enemy has returned, restored to his full strength, and Harry returns to the wizarding world with the boon of this knowledge. In the conclusion of the film Hermione asks “Everything's going to change now, isn't it?” Harry looks at her, placing his hand on her shoulder, and simply replies “Yes.”

Now that Voldemort has regained his magical powers, Harry knows that nothing is ever going to be as it was. In the previous film, Harry accepted his identity as the child of his father. Now one year later, Harry accepts his identity and burden as the child of destiny. Though not fully aware of what transpired the night his parents were murdered, Harry knows the events of

that night placed a terrible burden on him. In receiving some of Voldemort's powers, Harry became the only person capable of defeating the Dark Lord. This transfer of power, more so than Harry's orphan status, places him forever outside of the magical community, even after he re-enters it as a Hogwarts student.

One of the last sequences of *Harry Potter & the Goblet of Fire* shows Harry sitting alone in his room. After the tragic events of the past few days, he needs time to be alone and think of all that has taken place. Dumbledore, however, does not leave Harry alone for long. While all the other students are outside waiting to board the train home, the headmaster goes to Harry's dormitory to speak to the young wizard. Harry tells him what happened that night in the graveyard, how his and Voldemort's wands connected and the shades of his parents reappeared. Dumbledore tells Harry that no spell can reawaken the dead, and then the headmaster and the film audience watch as the hope dies in Harry's eyes. Seeing this, Dumbledore puts his hands on Harry's shoulders and speaks to the boy: "But remember this, you have friends here. You're not alone." Here, however, Dumbledore is mistaken. Harry Potter, like all those burdened with a choice, is alone. He can think of no one better suited for the task than himself. Chance and choice have laid this burden upon him, and he accepts it because he knows he is the only one capable of shouldering it. The next sequence of the film visually confirms Harry's status as an outsider, even within the magical community. He approaches the courtyard where the students of Beauxbatons, Durmstrang and Hogwarts are saying goodbye to old and new friends. The young witches and wizards are smiling and laughing as they hug their friends goodbye for the summer. It is a picture of happiness and peace for the students are blissfully unaware of the trouble that is coming. For a short while they enjoy peace, a peace Harry has fought so hard to maintain. They are free and happy because of his sacrifice, because of his choice, yet they do not know it.

Harry walks toward the courtyard with a bittersweet smile on his face. He walks toward the courtyard, but he does not enter it. He has made a choice, and because of that choice he cannot share in the peace and happiness for which he sacrificed himself. He stands on the edge of the courtyard, watching the happy faces of those within, knowing that he can never join them. He will remain alone, because he alone can carry the weight of his destiny. Anyone who wishes to be with Harry will have to join him on the outside, as Ron and Hermione do. “The Harry Potter stories chronicle the process of the child’s movement from the initial consciousness of himself as the central character in his story... to a sense of his own power and responsibility to a larger community.” (Whited 126) Through his orphaning, his discovery of his parents’ world, the burden of destiny and the sacrifices it asks of him, Harry Potter chooses to accept the fate and responsibility awaiting him in the magical world, though that same fate places him outside of it. All Harry wants is a family to love and protect him, but in the wizard world he finds himself called on to act as protector and guardian, a burden he accepts. Though there may be similarities between Harry and Voldemort, the most important thing is what separates them. Harry would gladly die to protect those he loves, just as his parents died for him. With the acceptance of his destiny Harry is an orphan no longer. He finds a kinship among all the heroes who have gone before, those who were willing to die for what they believed. He would gladly die, sacrificing the gift of life itself, before allowing an innocent person to suffer. He knows first hand what would happen were Voldemort to return to power. Knowing this, knowing that death might be the price asked of him, Harry would willingly die to keep those he loves safe. As a hero, as an orphan who is all too familiar with the effects of evil, Harry could never consider doing anything else.

While Harry Potter has much in common with the other orphan heroes discussed in this thesis, he differs from them in one very important respect. Anakin Skywalker’s story ended with

his death and return to the good side of the Force. While Batman is still alive and fighting crime in Gotham City, both readers and audience know that he will always remain as he is. His journey is over, and he will never leave Batman behind. In contrast, Harry's story and heroic journey are far from over. There is still one book left to be written in the series, and three films yet to be made. Though Harry's story is nearing completion there is still much to be explained. The orphan wizard is only beginning to see the depths of his power and accept the burden of destiny, yet he remains in the dark as to why this burden is upon him. He knows that Voldemort sees him as a threat, that he is the reason his parents died, but the full truth about his life is still denied him. He does not yet know why Voldemort fears him and him alone, why he is such a danger to the Dark Lord. The story told in the books and films is the story of Harry's identity quest, his efforts to discover the truth about himself and his fate. Harry and his audience are on the same journey; neither knows the whole truth about his life and fate, and both will discover the truth at the same moment, at the end of the journey.

In having read and watched all Harry Potter books and films released to date, it seems that one possible ending will be death. J.K. Rowling said in an interview that many characters will die in the final novel. This is only speculation, but it is possible that Harry may be one of them. Even if he does die, that may not be the end of his story. J.K. Rowling imbues her books with much resurrection imagery. One of the important animals in the novels and films is a phoenix, a bird that bursts into flame every five hundred years then is reborn from the ashes. It is a symbol of rebirth and resurrection, and Harry has had much contact with this bird. It is probable that Harry will die in the seventh book, only to be magically reborn more powerful than before.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

The goal of this thesis was to analyze the importance of the orphan hero to the American people, to explore why this archetypal figure appears again and again in stories and films, but it only scratches the surface. There are many other storied orphans out there, male and female, super and ordinary. There are female superheroes whose stories are just as significant as those of the popular male superheroes. Rogue of the X Men gives up her chance to get rid of her powers forever in favor of using them to fight for mankind with the other X Men. Her wish to give up her powers is not detestable, for her ability denies her any physical contact. With a single touch she draws the life out of anyone, and she cannot control this ability. Facing a life without any human touch, Rogue desires to be rid of her ability. When given the chance however she declines, choosing a solitary life for the sake of duty. Wonder Woman leaves her home behind forever to serve humanity, giving up the life of an Amazonian princess to fight for a world in which she does not belong. Heroes do what is right, though it often goes against their own desire for a normal life. They sacrifice themselves so that others can have the simple pleasures they can never possess. There is much more ground to explore in the phenomenon of the superhero story, a genre that only recently has begun to be taken seriously by the general and scholastic public. The tales of superheroes have been dismissed as escapism before, but remain relevant and popular. Tales of superhumans go back thousands of years, and show no sign of losing their popularity or appeal for humankind.

Popular heroes reflect the needs and ideals of the society that adopted or created them. The prominence of the orphan hero in otherworldly film has its source in the cultural orphanhood of the American people. We are a nation of diverse groups, descendants of people who left their

homes and cultures behind for the sake of a better life in the New World. The success we enjoy comes at the loss of our heritage, and our popular heroes reflect this loss. Tales of heroes serve to impart lessons to mankind, providing examples of how and why to lead a life of morality and sacrifice. The lives of heroes are told through the media of the spoken and written word, and most recently film, serving as vessels for the ideals of a people, channels through which to communicate the hopes and traditions of a society to future generations.

The films studied in this thesis, and the lives of the characters they revolve around, reinforce a basic human belief. We would like to believe that, given great powers, we would make the right choices. With power comes the temptation to misuse that power. The appeal of the orphan hero is that he is given great power and uses it for the good of others. Batman, Anakin Skywalker and Harry Potter each made the decision to sacrifice their lives for others. A hero is ultimately a symbol of strength, love, and sacrifice, a person who offers up his life and dreams for the sake of another. This is the path we should all strive to take, and the heroes show us the way, as they have always done.

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