

From Princess to Villain: A Monomythic Analysis of Sophie's Transformation in Chainani's *The School for Good and Evil*

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the narrative arc of Sophie, a central character in Soman Chainani's *The School for Good and Evil* (2013), by mapping her transformation into a villain through the lens of Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey framework, also known as the Monomyth. Though traditionally reserved for protagonists, this model is applied here to explore how Sophie's development mirrors the structural path of a hero. Through close literary analysis of the novel, this study identifies thirteen out of Campbell's seventeen hero's journey stages reflected in Sophie's journey. These stages include the Call to Adventure, Refusal of the Call, Crossing the First Threshold, Belly of the Whale, Road of Trials, Meeting with the Goddess, Woman as Temptress, Atonement with the Father, Apotheosis, the Ultimate Boon, Magic Flight, Rescue from Without, and Crossing the Return Threshold. The analysis reveals that Sophie's arc is not merely a descent into evil but a transformative process that reconfigures the conventional hero-villain dynamic. Unlike the static villain figures often portrayed in traditional fantasy narratives, Sophie undergoes a complex emotional and psychological transformation shaped by rejection, internal conflict, and ultimately self-awareness. Her journey demonstrates that antagonists, like heroes, can experience meaningful character development structured around recognizable narrative patterns. This reframing invites a broader reconsideration of character roles in fantasy narratives, highlighting how antagonists, too, may undergo meaningful growth that parallels heroic transformation while ultimately serving different thematic functions.

Keywords: Character Arc, Hero's Journey, Transformation, Villain

INTRODUCTION

Literature has long positioned the hero and the villain as symbolic opposites, such as virtue versus vice or selflessness versus selfishness. These binaries structure the moral framework of many stories, casting the hero as a figure of admiration and the villain as a narrative threat. However, modern storytelling increasingly challenges this dichotomy, offering villains who are not merely evil by design but shaped by intricate personal motivations and emotional vulnerabilities (Schafer, 2011; Mahgoub, 2022). These characters often resonate more deeply with readers because they reflect the messy complexities of human behaviour.

One such character is Sophie from *The School for Good and Evil*, the debut fantasy novel by Soman Chainani. Originally believing herself destined for princesshood, Sophie is instead placed in the School for Evil, a narrative twist that compels both the character and the reader to question simplistic notions of good and evil. Her descent into villainy is not immediate, nor is it absolute. Rather, it is a gradual, conflicted journey that challenges her beliefs and redefines her identity. Chainani's portrayal of Sophie exemplifies the evolution of villain figures in

contemporary fantasy, where antagonists are no longer flat obstacles but integral agents of narrative transformation.

To investigate this complexity, Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey, first outlined in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (2004) in 1949, offers a compelling structural lens. Campbell's model identifies a series of universal narrative stages that chart a protagonist's transformation through departure, initiation, and return. Although originally applied to mythical heroes, this framework has been successfully adapted to analyze morally ambiguous or antagonistic figures (Vogler, 2007; Faria, 2008). By applying this model to Sophie's character, the article demonstrates that villainous arcs can parallel heroic ones in structure, even if not in moral alignment.

Despite the popularity of *The School for Good and Evil*, there has been limited scholarly focus on Sophie's character development through a narrative-structural lens. Previous studies have explored themes of gender performativity (Fitriani & Sunggingwati, 2021), linguistic style (Aryani Dewi & Sulatra, 2024), and appearance-based morality (Salsabila et al., 2024). However, none have examined the structural logic behind her transformation. This article seeks to fill that gap by applying Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey to Sophie's character arc. In doing so, it argues that her villainous trajectory reflects a structurally heroic pattern, complicating conventional binaries between hero and villain. This reframing offers insight into how fantasy narratives can portray antagonists as dynamic, narratively essential figures undergoing meaningful change.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the journey of Sophie as a villain in *The School for Good and Evil* (2013) by Soman Chainani, focusing on how her transformation aligns with Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey framework. The analysis is centered on narrative structure rather than thematic or psychological interpretation, with the aim of demonstrating how the stages of the hero's journey can be applied to a villainous character. The data for this study were drawn from the first novel in the series, which spans 544 pages and 38 chapters. The analysis is confined to this volume and does not include sequels or the Netflix adaptation. Specific narrative units, such as character descriptions, dialogue, plot developments, and internal monologue, were selected as relevant instances of character transformation. These textual elements were closely read, annotated, and categorized in accordance with Campbell's seventeen-stage hero's journey model, which includes the phases of Departure, Initiation, and Return.

The seventeen stages include: (1) Call to Adventure, (2) Refusal of the Call, (3) Supernatural Aid, (4) Crossing the First Threshold, (5) Belly of the Whale, (6) Road of Trials, (7) Meeting with the Goddess, (8) Woman as Temptress, (9) Atonement with the Father, (10) Apotheosis, (11) The Ultimate Boon, (12) Refusal of the Return, (13) Magic Flight, (14) Rescue from Without, (15) Crossing the Return Threshold, (16) Master of Two Worlds, and (17) Freedom to Live. Through this structured mapping, the analysis focused on identifying which stages of the Hero's Journey are reflected in Sophie's narrative arc, based on their relation to the character's progression, narrative significance, and symbolic function within the story. The analysis seeks to demonstrate that despite occupying the role of an antagonist, Sophie's character undergoes a transformative journey that mirrors that of a traditional hero. This methodological approach enables a reconsideration of villainy not as a fixed moral position, but as a dynamic narrative function shaped by structure and development.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents Sophie's journey as a villain that aligns with the stages of the hero's journey by Campbell. Throughout the novel, there are 13 stages out of 17 stages found in her journey. These are the Call to Adventure, Refusal of the Call, Crossing the First Threshold, Belly of the Whale, the Road of Trials, the Meeting with the Goddess, Woman as Temptress, Atonement with the Father, Apotheosis, the Ultimate Boon, Magic Flight, Rescue from Without, and Crossing the Return Threshold.

The Call to Adventure

In Campbell's Hero's Journey, the Call to Adventure marks the initial disruption of the protagonist's ordinary world and signals the beginning of transformation. For Sophie, this moment is not an external surprise but a long-anticipated desire. She dreams of being taken to a magical realm, believing she is destined for greatness in a fairy-tale setting. This obsession is reflected early in the novel: *"Sophie had waited all her life to be kidnapped. But tonight, all the other children of Gavaldon writhed in their beds. If the School Master took them, they'd never return"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 9). Unlike other children who fear the unknown, Sophie welcomes it.

Her belief in her goodness is performative. She constructs her identity through surface-level acts of virtue meant to appeal to a higher power. For example, she carefully recounts her deeds: *"First, she had fed the lake's geese a blend of lentils and leeks... Then she had donated homemade lemonwood face wash to the town orphanage... Finally she had put up a mirror in the church toilet, so people could return to the pews looking their best"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 13). These actions reveal her desire to appear virtuous and her assumption that such gestures will earn her the coveted role of a princess. Sophie's call to adventure, therefore, is not a sudden disruption but the result of long-standing ambition. Her obsessive preparation and self-image as a fairy-tale heroine mark the psychological beginning of her journey. This sets the narrative foundation for her eventual transformation, even as it foreshadows the subversion of the idealized role she seeks.

Refusal of the Call

Although Sophie has always dreamed of entering a fairy-tale world, she expects to be placed in the School for Good. Her excitement quickly turns to shock when she is sent instead to the School for Evil. This unexpected outcome challenges everything she believes about herself. Rather than accepting her role, Sophie reacts with denial and protest, showing that she is not ready to move forward on her journey. Her strong rejection is shown clearly in her words: *"No! I'm Good! It's the wrong one!"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 33). Even though she is physically placed in the new world, her mind refuses to accept it. This emotional reaction shows her unwillingness to let go of her old identity. She does not see this moment as the beginning of a new path, but as a mistake that needs to be corrected. This type of resistance fits well with what Campbell describes as the Refusal of the Call, where the character hesitates or refuses to begin their transformation.

Sophie's actions after entering the school support this further. When she says, *"Not that I question your authority, but might I see the School Master? I think he---"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 42), she is clearly hoping that someone with power can fix the situation and shows she has not accepted what is happening. Instead, she is trying to hold on to the story she imagined for herself. At this point in her journey, Sophie is not ready to take on the role the story has given

her. She is still holding on to the belief that she belongs in the world of Good, and she resists anything that challenges that idea. Her reactions show emotional distance and refusal, which match the early stage of Campbell's model where the hero struggles to accept change.

Crossing the First Threshold

Sophie's crossing into the unfamiliar world happens shortly after she is placed in the School for Evil. Still believing her placement to be a mistake, she looks for a way out and sees Agatha on the opposite side of the building near the School for Good, where she believes she belongs. She runs to her friend in desperation, but an invisible barrier blocks her path. This moment shows that she cannot return to her old world or enter the one she hoped for. Instead, she is stuck in a space she does not accept. When she refuses to give up, wolf guards violently drag her back to the Evil side, showing that her escape attempt is not only impossible but punished.

The scene is described as follows: *"Dazed by pain, Agatha watched in horror as wolves dragged Sophie by the hair back to Evil. 'You don't understand,' Sophie screamed, watching fairies snare Agatha. 'It's all a mistake!' 'There are no mistakes,' a wolf growled."* (Chainani, 2013, pp. 49-50). At this point, Sophie's continued denial is met with a harsh response, not just physically, but emotionally. Her claim that she was wrongly placed is dismissed, not by people, but by the world of the story itself. The wolf guards, now shown to be speaking creatures, enforce the rules of this new world.

The line *"There are no mistakes"* plays an important role in this stage of the journey. It represents the breaking point between Sophie's imagined identity and the truth she now has to face. Her belief that she could shape her own destiny by behaving well is rejected. The violent act of being dragged back across the boundary reflects the emotional cost of this realization. She is no longer in control of her story; instead, the story is now in control of her. This moment marks her true entrance into the unknown world, one that does not match her dreams, but one she must now face.

Belly of the Whale

This stage represents a moment of emotional surrender, when the character becomes fully consumed by the new world and leaves behind the comfort of their old identity. For Sophie, this turning point comes after repeated failures: she struggles in her classes, loses the attention of her prince, and finds no place in the world she believed she belonged to. Even when she excels in Evil, the success feels hollow, proof that she is becoming someone she never meant to be. Her decision to follow Agatha and seek help from the School Master marks her last attempt to escape. But instead of regaining control, she loses it entirely. The magical Storian pen begins writing their story without consent: *"Once upon a time, there were two girls"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 135). This signals a shift from free will to narrative fate. Sophie is no longer making choices; she is now part of a story already in motion.

When Sophie asks, *"Can we switch schools?"* and receives only a quiet *"No"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 136), her remaining hope collapses. The refusal is absolute, with no reasoning and no discussion. It confirms that her personal desires no longer shape the story. The School Master reinforces this by explaining, *"Once the Storian begins your story... we must follow it wherever it takes you"* (Chainani, 2013, pp. 136-137). The Storian then writes: *"Stupid girls! They were trapped for eternity!"* as a cruel declaration that locks Sophie into a role she never chose. This is Sophie's moment of metaphorical death. She no longer controls her path and must move forward in a story that defines her, not the other way around. Like Campbell's hero who is

swallowed by the beast, Sophie is consumed by the world she once romanticized. Her resistance ends, not from acceptance, but because she now understands there is no turning back.

The Road of Trials

This stage marks a series of difficult tests that challenge Sophie's sense of identity and push her further into the role of a villain. Rather than leading to growth or clarity, her trials create emotional confusion, instability, and moments of moral failure. Her first major trial occurs in the Doom Room, where she is publicly punished. In a powerful and symbolic act, her hair is violently cut: *"The blade slashed through her hair. Sophie stared at her long, beautiful gold locks on the black dungeon floor..."* (Chainani, 2013, p. 165). Sophie has always treated her appearance, especially her hair, as a symbol of her goodness and beauty. Losing it strips away more than her looks; it destroys the image she had built of herself. The scene, which ends with her *"quivering"* and crying, reveals her emotional collapse. She does not choose villainy here, but she is broken into it.

Her next test comes during the Trial by Tale, where students must survive a deadly forest. Sophie's repeated, frantic transformations, *"Poof! She was a slow pink warthog... Poof! Sophie's pink lovebird flapped into the air..."* (Chainani, 2013, p. 257) highlight her lack of control. Rather than using strategy or leadership, she reacts in fear. Each change is driven by panic, not confidence. These transformations show she has power, but it is unstable and directionless. She survives the trial, but it does not make her stronger. It simply exposes her confusion.

The emotional peak of this stage comes when Tedros is attacked, and Sophie refuses to help. *"Help him! Agatha cries. 'And end in five pieces?' Sophie shot back"* (Chainani, 2013, pp. 261-263). Her refusal to act is not about fear; it is about selfishness. She says, *"He needs me to be safe,"* revealing that her care for Tedros is conditional. In contrast, Agatha risks herself and suffers visible injuries. Tedros recognizes the truth and turns away from Sophie, accusing her of using him. This moment shatters the illusion Sophie had built about herself. She fails not because she is powerless, but because she chooses self-interest over sacrifice. These trials show Sophie's slow breakdown. She is not yet fully a villain, but each test strips away the story she wants to believe about herself.

The Meeting with the Goddess

In Campbell's structure, this stage often introduces a figure who offers emotional clarity, compassion, or support. It can represent unconditional love or a moment of meaningful connection that helps the character survive their trials. In Sophie's case, this figure is Agatha, whose quiet support contrasts with Sophie's emotional chaos. At a point when Sophie begins to collapse after dropping in her school ranking, losing her social status, and being rejected by Tedros, Agatha's care becomes a quiet but powerful turning point.

Rather than criticize Sophie or walk away, Agatha chooses to help in a selfless, unseen way. She secretly uses the mogrification spell to become a cockroach and tutor Sophie in the shadows: *"It's me!" the roach hissed. [...] "And bring your books"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 207). This moment is significant not for its drama, but for its humility. Agatha gains no recognition or reward, yet she does it anyway. Her help is invisible to others, but essential to Sophie's progress.

The impact of Agatha's support becomes clear: *"For the next week, the Malice Common Room turned into a cockroach's night school... Sophie's ranks immediately improved"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 209). This marks a small but important shift. Sophie's improvement is not

driven by manipulation or image, but through real effort that is made possible by someone who believes in her. Agatha's quiet presence offers Sophie a different kind of strength, not the power of control or beauty, but the comfort of being supported without condition.

Woman as Temptress

This stage in Campbell's model represents the hero's encounter with temptation, something that distracts them from their transformation. It is not always about romantic desire, but often about emotional or psychological escape. For Sophie, this temptation is not Tedros himself, but the fantasy he represents: a fairy-tale ending that validates her identity as good. At this point in the story, Sophie believes that a kiss from Tedros will prove her goodness and end her journey, allowing her and Agatha to return home. As the moment arrives, the path to that ending is wide open. But when Tedros moves to kiss her, Sophie hesitates: *"Sophie closed her eyes too and felt Tedros' warm, sweet breath as his tender mouth grazed her lips---'But we should wait,' Sophie said, pulling away"* (Chainani, 2013, pp. 218-219).

This pause reveals that Sophie does not truly want the journey to end. Even though she seems to have everything she desired, she chooses to delay it. Her hesitation is not about love, but about control. She wants to remain at the center of the story and extend the fantasy she has built for herself. Sophie's temptation lies in the illusion of the fairy tale. She is drawn not to Tedros as a person, but to the role he plays in her imagined identity. He symbolizes the reward she believes she deserves based on beauty and appearances, rather than growth or sacrifice. This moment shows that Sophie is not yet ready to let go of her fantasy.

Atonement with the Father

In Campbell's model, this stage represents a crucial encounter with a symbolic authority figure or someone who holds emotional or moral power over the hero. For Sophie, this figure is not a literal father, but Tedros. As the prince of Good, he represents everything Sophie has tried to earn: love, validation, and acceptance into the fairy-tale world she longs to belong to. Their confrontation becomes a moment of truth. When Tedros says, *"You can't cheat your way to love, Sophie... My heart never wanted you"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 272), it cuts deeper than romantic rejection. He is rejecting the foundation of Sophie's identity, her belief that love and worth can be won through beauty, performance, or manipulation. This moment leaves her exposed, as the fantasy she built collapses. Her emotional response is quiet but telling: *"Because you made me a promise," she breathed. 'I made you no promises,'"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 273). This short exchange marks the end of Sophie's illusion. She realizes that the connection she thought would redeem her was never truly shared. The fairy tale she clung to was hers alone.

Then comes the turning point: *"Sophie stared at him, stunned. Her eyes cast down. 'I see.' Slowly she looked back up. 'Then I'll be whatever you want me to be'"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 273). Her line, *"I see,"* signals recognition and an internal shift from denial to awareness. She now understands that she cannot define herself through Tedros. Her offer to become *"whatever [he] wants"* is not submission but surrender, not to love, but to the loss of it. This moment does not redeem Sophie. But it marks a shift in her journey, from chasing someone else's approval to stepping into a new, darker role. Her identity is no longer tied to love or goodness. It is now something she will choose, even if that means becoming something that she fears the most.

Apotheosis

In the Hero's Journey, apotheosis marks the symbolic death of the hero's old self and the emergence of a new identity. For Sophie, this stage is not marked by clarity or wisdom, but by rejection and irreversible change. As Agatha and Tedros are lifted away by magical fairies, Sophie is left behind: *"She stood frozen on the lakeshore, panting warm breath, alone in the darkness"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 315). The visual contrast is clear. While the others rise into light, Sophie is stuck, isolated in cold and shadow. This moment signals that she is no longer part of the happy ending. The story has moved on without her, and her imagined role as the heroine is shattered. Her emotional collapse becomes physical in this passage: *"Her muscles knotted with tension... her blood boiled hotter, hotter... a sharp pain stabbed her chin"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 315). These descriptions show her fury building to a near-breaking point. But instead of release, her anger leads to a physical transformation. The pain interrupts the spiral and introduces the next stage, not enlightenment, but mutation.

When Sophie sees a wart on her chin in a broken mirror, the transformation becomes visible: *"There was a thick black wart on her chin... she crawled past them to the last shard of mirror left on the wall and stopped cold"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 315). The wart functions as a symbolic judgment. It is not just a blemish; it marks her body with the villain role she has long tried to escape. Whether she accepts it or not, the story has now assigned it to her. The broken mirror deepens this symbolism. Once a tool Sophie used to shape her image, the mirror now reflects only fragments. She crawls toward it not out of vanity, but desperation to understand who she has become. Yet all she sees is a distorted reflection, echoing the loss of control over her own identity. Sophie's apotheosis is not a moment of clarity, but of collapse. The illusions that once defined her are gone. What remains is a version of herself shaped by rejection, anger, and the narrative forces she can no longer resist.

The Ultimate Boon

In the Hero's Journey, the boon represents the reward or realization at the end of the hero's inner transformation. For Sophie, this stage is not marked by salvation or enlightenment, but by the acceptance of a new identity, one that rejects traditional ideals of Good and embraces a darker sense of self. After being left behind by Tedros and Agatha, Sophie reaches emotional rock bottom. Her outer beauty is gone, her hopes are crushed, and she is no longer seen as worthy by those she once pursued. Yet in this emptiness, a new figure emerges: the School Master. His presence is not just romantic or seductive; it mirrors Sophie's inner reality. As the narrative states, *"He had her same maleficent coldness, the same pain raging in his eyes... She had made so many mistakes along the way. But at last, she had come"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 369).

This moment marks the culmination of Sophie's internal journey. The connection she feels with the School Master is based not on fantasy or appearances, but on shared experience: rejection, ambition, and a longing to be seen. Unlike Tedros, who represented external approval, the School Master symbolizes Sophie's acceptance of who she really is. In Campbell's model, the boon is often a moment of self-knowledge. For Sophie, it is the recognition that her power lies not in conforming to the idea of Good, but in embracing the role that fits her truth. The narrative reinforces this shift: *"After all this, she would have her happy ending... Sophie gazed up tenderly at the prince of her dreams"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 370). The fairy-tale kiss she once dreamed of is not given by a knight, but by a villain. Yet for Sophie, it feels complete. She no longer seeks rescue, but alignment with a figure who validates her darker impulses and reframes them as strength. Sophie's boon is not redemption, but realization. She has stopped

trying to fit into a world that rejected her. Instead, she claims a new story, one that redefines power, love, and identity on her own terms.

Magic Flight

In the Hero's Journey, the magic flight follows the moment of reward, where the hero must now return with the truth they have gained. For Sophie, this flight is not triumphant but shattering. It begins immediately after she receives what she believed to be her happy ending, only to realize it was another illusion. *"Devoured by a kiss, she saw at last she would never find love in this life or the next. She was Evil, always Evil, and there would never be happiness or peace"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 370). The word *"devoured"* shows how the kiss, which symbolized the climax of her transformation, instead consumes her. It does not bring peace, but despair. The phrase *"she saw at last"* marks this moment as a painful realization that neither love nor power through Evil has fulfilled her.

Yet, in this moment of defeat, a memory resurfaces: *"It's not what we are, Sophie. It's what we do."* This echo of Agatha's earlier wisdom reframes Sophie's identity not as fixed in Evil, but as shaped by action. This sparks a crucial shift. No longer passive in her own story, Sophie acts: *"Sophie tore herself from the School Master's grip"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 370). The physical act mirrors a deeper internal break. She is not just rejecting the School Master's love, but the entire narrative that framed her identity as unchangeable. Sophie's flight is not an escape from danger alone. It is an escape from the story she once believed in. It is her first active step toward reclaiming authorship over her life, however uncertain the path ahead.

Rescue from Without

In the Hero's Journey, the rescue from without often involves the guide or ally who helps the hero re-emerge from a place of despair. For Sophie, this rescue comes in the form of Agatha, someone who still sees her humanity after everything has collapsed. *"From behind, soft, warm arms suddenly wrapped her like an angel's and pulled her into the night sky"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 371). The imagery here is gentle and forgiving. Agatha's embrace offers Sophie not judgment, but grace. She does not try to correct Sophie's mistakes or redefine her morality. She simply pulls her away. In this act, Agatha lifts Sophie out of the roles she has struggled within, be it princess, witch, or villain, and restores her to something simpler: a person with flaws.

The rescue, however, is not final. As they emerge, the School Master advances, ready to strike. Sophie, exhausted and broken, sees Agatha in danger. Unlike earlier moments where she avoided sacrifice, this time she acts without hesitation: *"A body collided with hers and took her to the ground [...] Sophie lay beside her, Storian speared through her heart"* (Chainani, 2013, p. 372). This moment redefines Sophie's arc. Her final action is not driven by power, beauty, or ambition. It is driven by love and protection. The image of the *"Storian speared through her heart"* becomes both literal and symbolic. The very force that once scripted her into a villain is now the mark of her selfless choice. It is a redemptive act that counters the narrative she was trapped in. In doing so, Sophie reclaims her agency and reshapes what it means for her to love and be loved.

Crossing the Return Threshold

In Joseph Campbell's framework, crossing the return threshold involves the hero re-entering the ordinary world, changed by the journey. For Sophie, this return is quiet, emotional, and incomplete. The exchange that follows, *"A princess and a witch..." "Friends," Agatha gasped---* (Chainani, 2013, p. 374) collapses the rigid binaries she has struggled with

throughout her journey: Good versus Evil, princess versus witch. What remains is a more honest identity: two girls, not defined by roles or appearances, but by mutual understanding. This return to friendship is not a step backward; it is Sophie's most grounded truth. However, even this reconciliation is not fully under Sophie's control. As she and Agatha are suddenly forced to return, "*They were gone*" (Chainani, 2013, p. 374) becomes the story's final line. Their destination, Gavaldon, is not shown. The homecoming is implied, not illustrated. The ambiguity of the ending leaves Sophie's reintegration into her old world unresolved. She has crossed the threshold, symbolically severing ties with fantasy, but the aftermath of her transformation is still unknown. Therefore, Sophie does not return with answers, but with a quiet shift in identity, from a girl seeking love through status, to one who learns the meaning of love through sacrifice and friendship.

The findings of this study align with and extend previous research on villain character development within narrative frameworks. Faria (2008) applied Campbell's Hero's Journey to analyze Voldemort in the Harry Potter series, demonstrating that antagonists can undergo transformative journeys parallel to heroic structures. Similarly, this study confirms that Sophie's arc follows a recognizable heroic pattern despite her villainous role, reinforcing the notion that narrative structure transcends moral positioning. However, while Faria (2008) focused on a fully realized villain whose transformation is complete and irreversible, Sophie's journey remains incomplete, ending at the Crossing of the Return Threshold without achieving the final stages of Master of Two Worlds or Freedom to Live. This distinction highlights a key contribution of the current study: the recognition that villainous transformations need not reach full resolution to be structurally significant. Furthermore, while previous studies on *The School for Good and Evil* have examined gender performativity (Fitriani & Sunggingwati, 2021) and appearance-based morality (Salsabila et al., 2024), this research is the first to apply Campbell's framework specifically to Sophie's character arc, filling a critical gap in the structural analysis of antagonist development in contemporary fantasy literature. The study thus contributes to a broader understanding of how narrative theory can be applied to morally complex characters, demonstrating that the Hero's Journey framework offers valuable insights into villain characterization beyond traditional hero-centric analyses.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, Sophie's character arc in *The School for Good and Evil* aligns with Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey structure. Out of the seventeen stages of the monomyth, Sophie undergoes thirteen of them. The missing stages are Supernatural Aid, Refusal of the Return, Master of Two Worlds, and Freedom to Live. Her journey does not reach a full return as outlined in the theory, and her story ends at the Crossing of the Return Threshold without fully resolving into balance or integration. However, her consistent progression through the other thirteen stages, from Call to Adventure to Ultimate Boon and Rescue from Without, shows that her villainous transformation still follows a heroic structure. The result supports the idea that even a character coded as a villain can be the center of a hero's journey.

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