

Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul

Instituto de Letras

Departamento de Literatura e Língua Estrangeira

ONLY FOR CHILDREN?
REEVALUATING HARRY POTTER

Maiara Fischer Pioner

PORTO ALEGRE - 2013

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Maiara Fischer Pioner

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Orientador: Prof. Dr. Ian Alexander

PORTO ALEGRE - 2013

*To Gustavo,
for being my Patronus Charm.*

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To Joanne Rowling, for writing such amazing books. This work is my way to pay homage to her work.

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“Some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again.”

C.S.Lewis

ABSTRACT

This work intends to show that the Harry Potter saga, written by J. K. Rowling, is not a series of books only for children, as it has been labelled. This work seeks to demonstrate that adults can also read and enjoy the books with an adult perspective. To do so, this work compares the journey of Harry Potter to the journey of the archetypal hero described by Joseph Campbell; it analyses the second volume of the Harry Potter series according to the morphology of wonder tales proposed by Vladimir Propp, and it discusses the fairy-tale genre in which Harry Potter fits. It also includes several excerpts from Rowling's interviews while and after writing the books, showing also the author's point of view on the subject.

KEY-WORDS: Harry Potter – J. K. Rowling – fairy-tales – Campbell – Propp

RESUMO

O presente trabalho tenciona mostrar que a saga Harry Potter, escrita por J. K. Rowling, não é uma série de livros exclusiva para crianças como foi rotulada. Aqui se busca demonstrar que adultos podem também ler e aproveitar os livros com uma perspectiva adulta. Para tanto, este trabalho compara a jornada de Harry Potter com a jornada do herói arquetípico descrita por Joseph Campbell, analisa o segundo volume da série Harry Potter de acordo com a morfologia do conto maravilhoso proposta por Vladimir Propp e discute o gênero literário conto de fada no qual a saga Harry Potter se encaixa. Inclui também diversos trechos de entrevistas com Rowling durante e após a escrita dos livros, mostrando a perspectiva da autora sobre o assunto.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Harry Potter – J. K. Rowling – conto de fada – Campbell – Propp

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INTRODUCTION

In my first semesters I knew I wanted to discuss Harry Potter in my final essay, I did not know then, however, which perspective I would approach, I just knew that it had to be about Harry Potter, because I thought I owed that to the series.

I read Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone in 2000, when I was 11 years old, (the same age Harry Potter finds out he is a wizard), and I got immediately fascinated by the story. I finished the book, but I wanted more; my questions were not answered. I did not know then that there were going to be seven books.

One day I walked into a bookstore (I already liked to read very much as a child), and then, I spotted a Harry Potter book with a different cover; when I found out it was the second volume, I was thrilled. I have a very vivid picture in my mind of that moment. I read the second volume and I found out that there would be five more of them. I was elated, seriously.

I was part of what I consider the lucky generation that grew up along with the character Harry. And so I waited anxiously for the new instalments, one after the other, rereading the others in the meantime. There was something that really upset me, though: besides waiting for Rowling to finish the next book, I also had to wait the period of time the Brazilian translator, Lia Wyler, took to translate them to Portuguese. So I resolved that I did not want to wait that extra torturous, endless amount of time anymore: I needed to learn English. I took a course, and I was a hardworking student; by the time the sixth book was released, in 2005, I was able to buy my original copy in English and find out more about the story at the same time as it hit the stores. It was so wonderful to read the book in the words that the author wrote. I ended up in love with the English language too. When the time came to take vestibular I did not know what course to apply for. The only thing I could think of was: "I like English very much, so I'm taking *Letras*".

Long story short: if it was not for Harry Potter, I would probably have taken longer to start studying English, and then, I would probably have entered another course. So I considered myself indebted, in the good sense, to write about Harry Potter, and, besides, this would be the most pleasant subject for me to write about.

The next step was to decide the approach I would give to my work. That was far more complicated. This choice also came from my personal experience. I always got

annoyed whenever someone said that Harry Potter was artless or that it was only for children, without even having read it. So, this work is an attempt to argue that no, this is not a children's book. Starting from the fact that I am not a child and I read it. Something must be wrong with me or with the common judgment. In my opinion it is the later one that is wrong, because it is not only me; thousands of millions of people have read it, and certainly not all of them are children. Once, Rowling was asked in an interview whether she had ever thought that the books were going to do as well with adults, and her answer was:

No. In all honesty, I didn't think it would do this well with anyone. I thought I was writing quite an obscure book that if it ever got published would maybe have a handful of devotees because I thought – It is kind of a book for obsessives. I thought, well, maybe a few people will like it a lot. I never expected it to have broad appeal. (ROWLING, 2000c)

It seems there are many "obsessives" in the world, since the seven books have sold more than 450 million copies worldwide so far. To introduce Harry Potter nowadays seems needless or at least redundant. Almost everyone who comes across this work will have heard of Harry Potter and will be able to say at least that Harry is a wizard boy. I will not try to summarize seven books, 3364 pages in a few sentences because the result would be catastrophic. But in the next chapters, when I discuss the narrative of the saga, it will be possible to have a big picture of the plot; also, the definition of some specific terms from the Harry Potter universe is given in footnotes.

The journey of Harry Potter from anonymity to huge success became itself a legend. The author, Joanne Rowling, was travelling by train when an idea for a story suddenly came to her: a wizard boy who did not know he was a wizard until he was 11. Then she spent years planning the story and going to cafes to write her book: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, which was rejected by many publishers until Bloomsbury gave the wizard boy a chance, publishing it in 1997. At that time Rowling was living through a difficult situation: she was an unemployed single mother, who depended on a welfare allowance to survive. But in that same year her book won its first of many prizes, the National Book Award. And in 1998 it was published in the United States by Scholastic Corporation with the title *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. From then on, the popularity of the novel only increased.

The subsequent volumes came and quickly became bestsellers, turning Rowling into a multi millionaire writer and a celebrity. The books became a series of blockbuster movies, a theme park, a pioneer online reading experience, Pottermore, and thousands and thousands of licensed products. It became a mania: Pottermania.

This mania contributes for the childish image. All the hysteria, the toys and the release parties of books and movies where people would go dressed up as characters from the book reflected an infantile image, although many adults took part in all this.

But here I am not dealing with the films, nor the theme park, or the toys. I am not dealing with the surroundings; I am dealing exclusively with the books, which are the essence of it all. And the books, in my opinion, do not deserve to be considered childish. As the following interview shows, Rowling did not write the book meaning it for children:

Are you surprised to see Harry Potter connecting with so many adults, as well as kids?

I didn't write with a target audience in mind. What excited me was how much I would enjoy writing about Harry. I never thought about writing for children – children's books chose me. I think if it is a good book anyone will read it. (ROWLING, 2000a)

Children's books are usually the ones that portray children as the main characters and that are marketed for children, and mainly, that are read exclusively by children and would little interest readers of older ages. Let us see if Harry Potter fits these criteria.

The main characters start the series as children, but they not only age, they really grow up. Harry, Ron and Hermione go through the experiences of adolescence and their way of thinking matures. We can see that clearly through Harry's perspective: in book one Harry believes that Dumbledore is the wise man who can solve anything, that his father was perfect and that Snape and Malfoy are pure evil. At the end of the series, however, after Harry has grown up, he sees that Dumbledore was not all-powerful and was capable of making bad choices in life, that his father was a human being with flaws and virtues, that Snape was a brave man and that Draco was worthy of pity.

Q: And when you wrote the first one, did you think of a designated reader?

A: That's the problem. I called it a children's story because the main character was a child. But it was always a child who I wanted to be older. And at the end he's a man, a young man but a man. (ROWLING, 2008)

So Harry Potter breaks the "Peter Pan pattern" and, as Lisia Cristina Paiva Nunes well pointed out in her master's dissertation, it was Rowling's editor who first labelled Harry Potter as a children's book:

The *Harry Potter books* have been first labelled as children's literature by Rowling's literary agent, Christopher Little, who told her that she would never make money writing children's books – which made her take a job as French teacher in Edinburgh while she finished the first *Harry Potter* book. Therefore, he was the first to categorize the books. (NUNES, 2010, p. 34)

And that is how the books were sold: as children's books. The most important factor is that they are also read by adults, in spite of having been marketed for children. Throughout this work, I will present possible reasons why Harry Potter appeals to so many adults and why it should not be considered children's literature.

To accomplish my mission, I am going to deal, in chapter one, with the journey of the hero from Joseph Campbell's work and discuss how Harry Potter resembles the archetypal hero; in chapter two I am going to approach the functions of a wonder tale from the perspective of Vladimir Propp and discuss how these functions are present in the second of the novels, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*; chapter three is going to be focused on the wonder tale/fairy-tale genre, defending that it should not be considered infantile per se; and finally, chapter four is going to be devoted to further discussion of the presented analysis and conclusion.

1. HARRY POTTER AND THE HERO OF A THOUSAND FACES

After analyzing many narratives and myths from various times and places, Joseph Campbell spotted that most of them shared the same patterns to tell a story, regardless of time, place or genre in which they are conceived. He called this set of patterns the monomyth. The monomyth deals with the journey of the hero and can be summarized in:

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 28)

In section 1.1 I am going to describe the journey of the hero and compare it to Harry Potter's journey. In section 1.2 I am going to describe the hero's transformations according to Campbell and discuss how much Harry reflects them. In section 1.3 I draw commentaries and conclusions from the comparisons.

1.1. The Journey of the Hero

The journey of the hero is composed of 17 stages divided into three parts: departure, initiation and return. Below I describe what each stage is about and how the narrative of Harry Potter fits in each of them; to do this I am considering the seven volumes of the saga as one whole story, because Harry's journey comprehends everything from the seven novels.

1.1.1. Departure

I – The Call to Adventure

This first stage of the hero's journey is when destiny calls the hero to leave his mundane life to enter an unknown world full of dangers, treasures and incredible feats. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 45 – 54)

Rubeus Hagrid is the herald who rescues Harry Potter from his muggle¹ relatives' house. He tells Harry the truth about his background: he is a wizard. His parents, also wizards, did not die on a car accident (as his uncle and aunt had told him); they were murdered by a powerful evil wizard who tried to kill Harry too, but failed. Being a wizard, Harry has a spot at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, a place full

¹ Non-magical people.

of magic where Harry will face many challenges and dangers but also where he will meet friends and come into possession of a small fortune left by his parents in Gringotts, the wizarding bank.

Campbell states that the herald that usually calls the hero for the adventure is usually dark, repulsive or frightening. It may be an animal or a mysterious being covered by a kind of veil. This is the first description we have of Hagrid:

A giant of a man was standing in the doorway. His face was almost completely hidden by a long, shaggy mane of hair and a wild, tangled beard, but you could make out his eyes, glinting like black beetles under all the hair. (ROWLING, 1997, p. 38)

He has a wild physical appearance, one that causes fright at first sight. The beard and hair cover most of his face giving it a dark and mysterious look. Hagrid is not a highly educated person; he was expelled from Hogwarts and became its gamekeeper. The fact that he is a half-giant (wizards in the Harry Potter universe are very biased against giants), plus the well known fact that he is fond of beasts that are normally feared by the others makes Hagrid an unwelcome guest for most people in the wizarding world.

II – Refusal of the Call

Some heroes refuse the call to adventure due to fear or unwillingness to leave what they consider safe and good. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 54 – 63)

Harry does not have anything to lose. Nobody loves him where he lives; he does not have friends or belongings, thus he accepts eagerly to join this completely different reality. Harry only has second thoughts because he thinks he is not good enough to be a wizard. His faltering is due to humbleness, not arrogance.

Hagrid looked at Harry with warmth and respect blazing in his eyes, but Harry, instead of feeling pleased and proud, felt quite sure there had been a horrible mistake. A wizard? Him? How could he possibly be? He'd spent his life being clouted by Dudley and bullied by Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon; if he was really a wizard, why hadn't they been turned into warty toads every time they tried to lock him in his cupboard? If he'd once defeated the greatest sorcerer in the world, how come Dudley had always been able to kick him around like a football? (ROWLING, 1997, p. 47)

In spite of his sense of inadequacy, Harry trusts Hagrid and starts his journey into the wizarding world. Anything was bound to be better than staying with the Dursleys.

III – Supernatural Aid

Those who answer the call meet, right in the beginning of the adventure, a protective figure (generally a male elder) who gives the hero talismans to protect him from the perils ahead. This protective figure represents the benign and protective power of fate, the promise that the hero is not alone, that if he trusts and perseveres other protective figures will come. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 63 – 71)

Although deprived of his parents, Harry encounters many parent figures in the wizarding world: professor Dumbledore – the elder wizard who guides him during his six years at Hogwarts and prepares him to duel Voldemort; Sirius Black – his godfather; Remus Lupin – an old friend of Harry’s parents who teaches him how to get rid of the Dementors² – and Ron’s parents who always welcome Harry in their home and treat him as one of their children.

The first protective figure Harry encounters, however, is Rubeus Hagrid who takes him to Diagon Alley³, where Harry buys a wand, books of magic, potion ingredients and other items he is going to need at Hogwarts. Hagrid also gives Harry an owl as a birthday gift, which becomes very helpful since most wizards use owls to communicate at distance.

IV – The Crossing of the First Threshold

After being helped and guided by the personification of fate’s goodness, the hero has to cross the first threshold to enter the unknown realm where danger awaits. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 71 – 82)

After having taken Harry to buy the necessary things to school, Hagrid gives him the travel ticket to go to Hogwarts and goes away. The ticket says Harry is supposed to take the train from platform nine and three-quarters at King Cross station at eleven o’clock. When Harry arrives at the train station he realizes there is no platform nine and three-quarters. Hagrid had forgotten to mention how to get to the platform, so Harry has to find out the way by himself. He asks for help to get to platform nine and three-quarters and for the train that goes to Hogwarts School, but the guard thinks he is only mocking him. When it is almost eleven, Harry hears a woman talking to her

² Dementors are dark creatures that drain people’s happiness and hope. They cause despair and unhappiness to who is near and they can suck someone’s soul by kissing the person.

³ A wizarding street.

children about muggles and platform nine and three-quarters, so he asks for her help. This woman is Molly Weasley, another parent figure of Harry's, she says:

'All you have to do is walk straight at the barrier between platforms nine and ten. Don't stop and don't be scared you'll crash on it, that's very important. Best to do it at a bit of a run if you're nervous.' (ROWLING, 1997, p. 70)

Symbolically, Harry has to leave the fear behind so as to be able to enter this new world, otherwise he will crash. Although he is instructed by Molly how to get in the platform, he has to cross the barrier by himself.

V – Belly of the Whale

The belly of the whale is an allegory for the unfamiliar dimension the hero enters after crossing the first threshold. After the hero enters this new dimension, he seems to die; he suffers a kind of rebirth or metamorphosis. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 82 – 95)

When Harry crosses the barrier between the two platforms, he simply disappears from the muggle world and enters the wizarding world where every wizard knows his legendary story.

'I'm Ron Weasley', Ron muttered.

'Harry Potter', said Harry.

'Are you really?' said Hermione. 'I know all about you, of course – I got a few extra books for background reading, and you're in *Modern Magical History* and *The Rise and Fall of the Dark Arts* and *Great Wizarding Events of the Twentieth Century*.'

'Am I?' said Harry feeling dazed. (ROWLING, 1997, p. 79)

Harry is mesmerized that someone whom he had never talked to before knows more about him than he does. Harry suffers a kind of metamorphosis when he enters the wizarding world: he is no longer the rejected boy who sleeps in the cupboard under the stairs. He is the famous "boy who lived", who survived Voldemort's attack.

1.1.2. Initiation

I – The Road of Trials

After entering the belly of the whale, the hero has to survive a succession of challenges. This is the favourite part of the myth-adventure according to Campbell. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 96 – 107)

The original departure into the land of trials represented only the beginning of the long and really perilous path of initiator conquests and moments of illumination. Dragons have now to be slain and surprising barriers passed—again, again, and again. Meanwhile there will be a multitude of preliminary victories, unretainable ecstasies, and momentary glimpses of the wonderful land. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 107)

We have in each book, usually at the end, dangerous tasks (the climaxes) which prepare Harry for his final task in book seven: destroying Voldemort.

In book one, Harry faces a series of challenges to rescue the philosopher's stone: getting rid of Devil's Snare (a plant that holds and suffocates beings to death), flying a broomstick to catch the right key to open a door, playing a life-threatening enchanted chess match, using logic to choose the right potion to proceed on the path – where a wrong choice would have had him drinking venom – and finally duelling professor Quirrell possessed by Voldemort.

In book two, Harry enters a hidden chamber, kills a Basilisk⁴, destroys evil Tom Riddle and saves Ginny Weasley.

In book three, Harry has to overcome his rage and desire for revenge to discover the truth about his parents' death and about Sirius Black. Right after, he repels more than a hundred Dementors with one powerful Patronus Charm⁵.

In book four Harry faces the three tasks from the Triwizard Tournament: stealing an egg from a dragon, rescuing his friend from merpeople⁶ in the depths of a lake and finding a cup in the middle of a maze full of dangerous obstacles. To top it all, Harry duels Voldemort and escapes from him and his Death Eaters⁷.

In book five, Harry fights Death Eaters to save his friends and to retrieve a prophecy from the department of mysteries.

In book six, Harry and Dumbledore go to a cave in Open Ocean to retrieve a horcrux⁸; they have to fight off hundreds of inferi⁹ to get out of the cave.

⁴ Basilisk is a gigantic snake that can kill with just a stare. If one looks indirectly (through a mirror, for example) into the Basilisk's eyes one will be only petrified, not killed.

⁵ The best defense against Dementors.

⁶ Merpeople is the Harry Potter universe version for mermaids.

⁷ Death Eaters are Voldemort's followers.

⁸ Horcrux is the object in which a dark wizard puts a part of his soul pursuing immortality. While the object is not destroyed, the wizard cannot die.

⁹ Inferi are dead bodies reanimated by a dark wizard to do his bidding.

In book seven Harry undergoes a series of obstacles to collect and destroy the Horcruxes. Then the ultimate task comes: to finish Voldemort for good.

II – The Meeting with the Goddess

The goddess is the model of perfection, the unconditional love, the personification of everything the hero craves, she is comforting and supportive. The goddess can be represented by a mother, a sister, a bride or a mistress. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 107 – 117)

Harry has two very important women in his life that can play this role: his mother and his future wife Ginny. Ginny only becomes really important to Harry in the sixth book. Harry does not have recollections of his mother, Lilly Potter, since she died when he was only one year old. However she, along with his dad, is extremely important to Harry's character. Lilly represents the care, love and protection that lacked Harry so much during his first ten years in the Dursleys' house. Old friends of Harry's parents tell him how kind, intelligent, brave and tender Lilly was.

When Voldemort first tried to kill Harry he gave Lilly the opportunity to step aside and save her own life, but she did not. She stood in front of her baby to shield him with her body and so Voldemort killed her. Thanks to Lilly's sacrifice, Harry did not die; the spell backfired because he was protected by his mother's love, and that protection remains with him for all his life, which is why Quirrell cannot touch him in the end of book one, and why he is safe inside aunt Petunia's house, because Lilly's blood remains alive in her veins.

Harry "encounters" his mother in three moments over the series. The first is in the Erised mirror¹⁰, where she appears only as a vision, a manifestation of his deepest desire (his family). The second is when Harry is duelling Voldemort in the graveyard scene in book four: Voldemort's wand regurgitates echoes of his recent past spells, thus his mother's echo comes out of the wand and talks to Harry. And in the last book, Lilly appears as a kind of ghost to support her son when he is about to surrender to Voldemort.

III – Woman as Temptress

¹⁰ The Erised Mirror reflects your deepest desire.

There usually is a woman in the hero's life that represents carnal temptation. The temptations to stray from the journey may come from other sources, though. The hero tries to resist them, but there may be a moment when he finally succumbs. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 118 – 123)

Ginny Weasley has always had feelings for Harry Potter. She starts the series as the shy and clumsy little sister of Harry's best friend. As the years go by, she demonstrates that she is much more than that: she is a tough, clever and skilful girl. In book six, Harry realizes her many qualities and starts to fall in love with her. He wants to declare his love but he is afraid of her reaction and, mainly, of Ron's reaction. Finally, after Gryffindor¹¹ wins the Quidditch cup¹², Harry gives in to his desire and kisses her in the middle of a full Gryffindor common room. They start dating right after this kiss, but Harry breaks with her in the end of book six for he is afraid of putting Ginny in danger.

'Ginny, listen...' [...] 'I can't be involved with you any more. We've got to stop seeing each other. We can't be together.'

She said, with, with an oddly twisted smile, 'It's for some stupid, noble reason, isn't it?'

[...]

'Voldemort uses people his enemies are close to. He's already used you as bait once, and that was just because you're my best friend's sister. Think how much danger you'll be in if we keep this up. He'll know, he'll find out. He'll try and get to me through you.'

[...]

'But you've been too busy saving the wizarding world,' said Ginny half-laughing. 'Well... I can't say I'm surprised. I knew this would happen in the end. I knew you wouldn't be happy unless you were hunting Voldemort. Maybe that's why I like you so much.'

Harry could not bear to hear these things, nor did he think his resolution would hold if he remained sitting beside her." (ROWLING, 2005, p. 602 – 603)

¹¹ Gryffindor is one of the four houses at Hogwarts. The others are Slytherin, Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff. Students are sorted to one of the houses in their first year.

¹² Quidditch is the most popular wizarding sport. Hogwarts has a Quidditch Cup every year.

Ginny is a temptation to Harry in the sense that if he stayed with her he would not have the perseverance to go and find the Horcruxes, to risk his life. He has to move on without her in order to accomplish his goal. This is an update to Campbell's theory: Ginny is not the negative figure of the sexually appealing woman who tempts on purpose the hero to do something wrong; she is the temptation to do something good: to be with her, build a family and live a quiet life. Harry knows that he cannot do that just yet, he has to accomplish his mission first.

IV – Atonement with the Father

The hero's father is often represented as an evil creature, the ogre father aspect is a reflex of the own hero's ego. As the hero grows more mature he sees his father in a more balanced and realistic perspective, he understands him, and as a consequence he sees the world differently as well. This is the moment when the son makes amends with his father. This atonement is the assurance of the supportive male figure through magic and talismans. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 124 – 145)

Harry is constantly reminded of how very much he looks like his father, James Potter, except for the eyes, which he inherited from his mother. In some instances his personality is also compared to James's.

When Harry rescues his godfather, Sirius, his father's best friend, Sirius tells him: 'You are – truly your father's son Harry...' (ROWLING, 1999, p. 303)

When Harry wonders if he did the right thing sparing Pettigrew's life, Dumbledore tells him: 'I knew your father very well, both at Hogwarts and later, Harry,' he said gently. 'He would have saved Pettigrew too, I am sure of it.' (ROWLING, 1999, p. 311)

Severus Snape is the only person who compares father and son based on flaws rather than virtues. Even then, Harry always defends his father, despite remembering nothing of him.

'How extraordinarily like your father you are, Potter,' Snape said suddenly, his eyes glinting. 'He, too, was exceedingly arrogant. A small amount of talent on the Quidditch pitch made him think he was a cut above the rest of us, too. Strutting around the place with his friends and admirers... the resemblance between you is uncanny.'

'My dad didn't *strut*,' said Harry before he could stop himself. 'And nor do I.' (ROWLING, 1999, p. 209)

In his fifth year at Hogwarts, however, Harry came to find out that Snape's allegations are not unfounded. Through the pensieve¹³, Harry gets to see some of Snape's memories when he was bullied by James and his friends at school. Those memories knock Harry's father off his pedestal.

He felt as though the memory was eating him from inside. He had been so sure his parents were wonderful people that he had never had the slightest difficulty in disbelieving the aspersions Snape cast on his father's character. Hadn't people like Hagrid and Sirius *told* Harry how wonderful his father had been? (ROWLING, 2003, p. 575)

For nearly five years the thought of his father had been a source of comfort, of inspiration. Whenever someone had told him he was like James, he had glowed with pride inside. And now... now he felt cold and miserable at the thought of him. (ROWLING, 2003, p. 576)

Harry goes from the extreme of blindly adoring to thinking that his father could have raped his mother, since she did not seem to like him. As time goes by and he grows older, though, Harry stops seeing everything in black and white, which is proper for children, he sees his father as a human being with virtues and flaws.

More important to the story than the deception with his father, however, is the deception he has with Dumbledore, a crucial parent figure of his. Harry used to see the headmaster as a good, generous, humble man, as someone capable of doing anything, unless it harmed innocent people.

However, in the beginning of book seven, Rita Skeeter releases a book entitled *The Life and Lies of Albus Dumbledore*, where she supposedly reveals several skeletons of Dumbledore's past. Harry reads in the newspaper an interview with Rita where she gives an overall on the book:

'[...] Let's just say that nobody hearing him rage against You-Know-Who would have dreamed that he dabbled in the Dark Arts himself in his youth! And for a wizard who spent his later years pleading for tolerance, he wasn't exactly broad-minded when he was younger! Yes, Albus Dumbledore had an extremely murky past, not to mention that very fishy family, which he worked so hard to keep hushed up.' (ROWLING, 2007a, p. 27)

¹³ Pensieve is a sort of basin used to review memories.

Harry does not believe a word of it, firstly because he knows that Rita Skeeter is a greedy, unscrupulous reporter who makes up stories to sell newspapers; secondly, because Harry is still attached to the image of a perfect Dumbledore. One thing, though, he realizes: that he never thought of a young Dumbledore, and what he could have done in his youth.

At Fleur and Bill's wedding, Harry has a conversation with Muriel Weasley and Elphias Doge about Rita Skeeter's book. Doge defends Dumbledore vehemently, although with no proof, while Muriel backs up the book's version reporting some facts. In this occasion, Harry finds out that Dumbledore lived in Godric's Hollow (the same village where Harry's parents lived) and that he had a Squib¹⁴ sister. The fact that Dumbledore had never mentioned either of these facts bothers Harry very much. It makes Harry wonder what other things Dumbledore used to hide.

Around the middle of book seven, Harry finally gets a copy of the book *The Life and Lies of Albus Dumbledore*. He reads the chapter *For the Greater Good*, where he finds a copy of an original letter Dumbledore had written to Grindelwald when he was seventeen. Grindelwald became a dark despot wizard, almost as terrible as Voldemort came to be. Dumbledore and Grindelwald were best friends when young. As a matter of fact, Rowling says in an interview Dumbledore was in love for Grindelwald. In this specific letter, Dumbledore shared his plans of ruling over muggles "for the muggles' own good". Skeeter's comment on it is this:

Astonished and appalled though his many admirers will be, this letter constitutes proof that Albus Dumbledore once dreamed of overthrowing the Statute of Secrecy, and establishing wizard rule over Muggles. What a bow, for those who have portrayed Dumbledore as the 'Muggle-borns'¹⁵ greatest champion! (ROWLING, 2007a, p. 292)

After reading this chapter, Harry feels completely outraged. He had always thought Dumbledore to be pure goodness and wisdom, now his hero is broken. Harry at the age of seventeen is on a deadly mission to defeat Voldemort on Dumbledore's instructions while the seventeen-year-old Dumbledore was planning to rule the muggle and wizarding worlds as a tyrant himself. Harry also cannot accept the awful way Dumbledore dealt with his family, while he, Harry misses his own so much:

¹⁴ A Squib is someone who was born into a wizarding family but has not got any magical powers.

¹⁵ A Muggle-born is someone who was born into a muggle family but has magical powers.

‘Harry, I’m sorry, but I think the real reason you’re so angry is that Dumbledore never told you any of this himself.’

‘Maybe I am!’ Harry bellowed, and he flung his arms over his head, hardly knowing whether he was trying to hold in his anger or protect himself from the weight of his own disillusionment. ‘Look what he asked from me, Hermione! Risk your life, Harry! And again! And again! And don’t expect me to explain everything, just trust me blindly, trust that I know what I’m doing, trust me even though I don’t trust you! Never the whole truth! Never!’

[...]

‘He loved you,’ Hermione whispered. ‘I know he loved you.’

Harry dropped his arms.

‘I don’t know who he loved, Hermione, but it was never me. This isn’t love, the mess he’s left me in. He shared a damn sight more of what he was really thinking with Gellert Grindelwald than he ever shared with me.’ (ROWLING, 2007a, p. 295)

From this moment on, Harry starts to have second thoughts on the worthiness of carrying on the destroy-Voldemort-mission. He does not know what or who to believe anymore. He feels betrayed by the man he was so loyal to: he had said more than once he was “Dumbledore’s man through and through”. Now he only had suspicions, anger and resentment towards Dumbledore.

Almost at the end of book seven, Harry receives the ultimate “stab” from Dumbledore: he gets to know that Dumbledore planned for Harry to die long ago, for Harry is the horcrux Voldemort had never intended to make, thus while Harry lived Voldemort would be immortal.

‘Dumbledore’s betrayal was almost nothing. Of course there had been a bigger plan; Harry had simply been too foolish to see it, he realized that now. He had never questioned his own assumption that Dumbledore wanted him alive. Now he saw that his lifespan had always been determined by how long it took to eliminate all the Horcruxes. Dumbledore had passed the job of destroying them to him, and obediently he had continued to chip away the bonds tying not only Voldemort, but himself, to life!’ (ROWLING, 2007a, p. 555)

Harry always thought Dumbledore liked him, that he cared for his safety and well being. At last, he discovers he has just been part of the plan for “the greater good”, which here meant freeing the world from Voldemort.

Harry eventually gets atonement with Dumbledore when they meet in the limbo. Harry goes to after Voldemort casts the killing curse on him. Dumbledore then opens his heart to Harry, he cries, confesses his past mistakes and asks for forgiveness.

‘Can you forgive me?’ he said. ‘Can you forgive for not trusting you? For not telling you? Harry, I only feared that you would fail as I had failed. I only dreaded that you would make my mistakes. I crave your pardon, Harry. I have known, for some time now, that you are the better man.’ (ROWLING, 2007, p. 571)

Harry starts to understand Dumbledore’s reasons for his acts. His admiration for the old wizard comes back slowly.

‘Master of death, Harry, master of Death! Was I better, ultimately, than Voldemort?’

‘Of course you were,’ said Harry. ‘Of course – how can you ask that? You never killed if you could avoid it!’

‘True, true,’ said Dumbledore, and he was like a child seeking reassurance. ‘Yet I, too, sought a way to conquer death, Harry.’

‘Not the way he did,’ said Harry. After all his anger at Dumbledore, how odd it was to sit here, beneath the high vaulted ceiling, and defend Dumbledore from himself. ‘Hallows¹⁶, not Horcruxes.’ (ROWLING, 2007a, p. 571)

While they are talking Harry realizes he forgives his old headmaster:

Dumbledore patted Harry’s hand, and Harry looked up at the old man and smiled; he could not help himself. How could he remain angry with Dumbledore now? (ROWLING, 2007a, p. 577)

It is interesting that neither James Potter nor Albus Dumbledore is an ogre, they have their flaws but they are not extremely perverse. Harry getting angry at his father for bullying a classmate and at Dumbledore for planning to seriously infringe human rights and abuse the weak people speaks directly to contemporary issues.

V – Apotheosis

Apotheosis is the moment of rest and fulfilment which the hero experiences after suffering some kind of death. At this moment he acquires a superior state of knowledge, wisdom, peace and love. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 146 – 166)

¹⁶ The Deathly Hallows are the three highly powerful objects supposedly created by Death and given to each of the three Peverell brothers. According to the legend the person who reunited the three Hallows would be master of Death.

Harry hands himself over to Voldemort intending to save the others. Voldemort performs the killing curse, but Harry does not die; only the piece of Voldemort's soul that was residing in Harry dies. Harry's soul is whole again. After the killing curse, Harry goes to a kind of limbo between the world of the living and the world of the dead. There he meets Dumbledore, who compliments him for his brave and noble act. In this moment it seems that the battle and the real world are suspended. Harry feels serene in that place. He talks to Dumbledore and finds out at last the whole truth about the link between Voldemort and himself. When he goes back to the living world he is a wiser man.

VI – The Ultimate Boom

The ultimate boom is the reason why the hero faced all the obstacles along the path. These obstacles prepared and purified him for the culmination of the journey. The achievement of the boom is the realization of the hero; it is when he acquires a deeper and more accurate view of life and himself. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 167 – 186)

All the snags that Harry overcomes prepare him to the moment he has to surrender to Voldemort. When Harry finally finds out that he is also a Horcrux, he is ready to accept and cope with the truth. Harry's sacrifice enables the destruction of the piece of Voldemort's soul that has resided in him and that established the link between the two of them. Free from Voldemort's soul, he is free from the recurrent pain in his scar, from the dreams and visions about Voldemort's acts and from his emotional charges: he is entirely Harry. Furthermore, the death of this Horcrux enables the death of Voldemort. The thing that Harry craves the most (besides having his parents back, which is impossible) is to have a calm normal life beside his beloved ones. His only hope for this is Voldemort's death, because he knows that Voldemort will never give up killing him. That is the ultimate boom for Harry: not being Voldemort's Horcrux any longer, and therefore, being closer to living his own life than he has ever been.

1.1.3. Return

I – Refusal of the Return

The hero has conquered the boom. For the cycle to be complete, though, the hero is required to return to the ordinary world to bestow the boom upon the others.

Sometimes the hero feels so good and peaceful in this other dimension (apotheosis) that he may refuse to return. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 187 – 198)

After the long talk Harry and Dumbledore have, Harry asks if he has to go back, Dumbledore says he has the choice of staying (dying) or going back to the living world. Harry is tempted to stay: it is quieter there, and Voldemort remains at large on the other side. However, all the people Harry loves and Dumbledore's words convince Harry to go back:

‘I think,’ said Dumbledore, ‘that if you choose to return, there is a chance that he may be finished for good. I cannot promise it. But I know this, Harry, that you have less to fear from returning here than he does.’ (ROWLING, 2007, p. 579)

II – The Magical Flight

If some kind of god gives the boom to the hero and commissions him to bestow it on other people, the final stage of his adventure is helped by all gods. On the other hand, if the hero obtained the boom without the permission of its safe keeper, or if the gods want him to stay, his return to the world will be full of obstacles. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 198 – 208)

Harry is wanted to go back to the living world, so fate helps him to return as it has always helped along all the way. When Harry says to Voldemort that one of them is about to leave for good, he scorns:

‘You think it will be you, do you, the boy who has survived by accident, and because Dumbledore was pulling the strings?’

‘Accident, was it, when my mother died to save me?’ asked Harry. [...] ‘Accident, when I decided to fight in that graveyard? Accident, that I didn't defend myself tonight, and still survived, and return to fight again?’ (ROWLING, 2007, p. 591)

These accidents are actually fate's work propelling the hero to be successful in his quest.

III – Rescue from Without

Sometimes, when the hero refuses to return to normal life or when he is being kept somewhere against his will, he must be rescued by external help. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 208 – 117)

Harry accepts going back to the battle: there is no need for rescuers. When he resumes consciousness in his material body, however, he receives an unexpected help.

Harry thinks that his chances of defeating Voldemort would be higher if he were not surrounded only by Death Eaters, thus he pretends to be dead. Voldemort, afraid of getting near Harry's body, sends Narcisa Malfoy to check if Harry is really dead. Narcisa gets very close to Harry and realizes he is alive. She asks him if her son is still alive, and Harry confirms it. Knowing that her only possibility of meeting her son immediately is walking to Hogwarts as part of the victorious army, she lies that Harry is dead. More than desiring her lord's victory she desires her son's safety. As a consequence, Harry is helped by this lie: Voldemort feels safe enough to free Nagini, his snake and the last Horcrux, from the enchanted protective cage where she was being kept. This enables her destruction.

IV – The Crossing of the Return Threshold

The hero's adventures take place somewhere we cannot see; the hero is lost for us. His return is described as a return from the beyond. Then, the hero has to find a way to share the wisdom acquired along his quest. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 117 – 228)

Voldemort casts the killing curse on Harry, it seems he is dead, but he is not. Harry pretends to be dead and his body is taken to Hogwarts. All his friends are grieving his death, Voldemort is gloating, and then, suddenly, his body disappears. He had hidden under his invisibility cloak to save Neville. The battle inside Hogwarts starts all over again. At one point, Harry casts a shielding charm to protect Molly Weasley and reveals himself. Cries of "Harry is alive!" are heard everywhere.

Harry faces Voldemort for the last time. This time he shares with everybody around the knowledge of the facts he found out recently. He is a wiser man, he shows superiority of character. He is not afraid of death. In the following part, he even advises Voldemort:

‘But before you try to kill me, I’d advise you to think about what you’ve done... think, and try for some remorse, Riddle...’

[...]

That wand still isn't working properly for you, because you murdered the wrong person. Severus Snape was never the true master of the Elder Wand¹⁷. He never defeated Dumbledore.' (ROWLING, 2007, p. 594)

Harry knows more than Voldemort, which allows him to win the final duel. One interesting fact in this last conversation between the two of them is that Harry calls Voldemort by his true name, Tom Riddle, something that nobody, except Dumbledore, has done. This simple fact sets them as equals; Harry shows that he is not afraid of him anymore.

V – Master of Two Worlds

Having overcome so many trials, the hero embraces life as it is. He renounces fears, ambitions and personal limitation. For a human hero, this step represents the balance between emotional/personal and practical matters. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 228 – 236)

Harry becomes master of Death, not because he reunites the three Deathly Hallows, but because he embraces death as part of life, he does not fear it. After Voldemort is vanquished, Harry decides the end of the Hallows. He dropped the ring¹⁸ when he surrendered to Voldemort in the forest and nobody knows it, so Harry decides to leave it there because the dead should not be disturbed. The cloak¹⁹, he decides to keep because it was his by right, it belonged to his family, and he is probably going to pass it on to his children when he dies. And there is the Elder Wand:

Harry held up the Elder Wand, and Ron and Hermione looked at it with a reverence that, even in his befuddled and sleep-deprived state, Harry did not like to see.

'I don't want it,' said Harry.

'What?' said Ron loudly. 'Are you mental?'

'I know it's is powerful,' said Harry wearily. 'But I was happier with mine.'
(ROWLING, 2007a, p. 599)

He fixes his old wand using the power of the Elder Wand and then he declares he is going to return this last Hallow to Dumbledore's tomb in the hope that if he, Harry,

¹⁷ The Elder Wand is one of the Hallows, it is said to be the most powerful wand in the world.

¹⁸ The ring contained the Resurrection Stone, another Hallow. The Resurrection Stone has the power to bring people back from the dead in the form of a ghost.

¹⁹ The Invisibility Cloak is the last Hallow.

dies a natural death, the power of the wand is going to die along with him. Renouncing that wand shows Harry's character: he is not ambitious. He makes a wise choice, for the wand would be too dangerous if it fell into the wrong hands and it could cause him more trouble.

VI – Freedom to live

After everything the hero has gone through, now he is free to move on with his life as an ordinary person. He has learned not to fear death, consequently, he lives the moment, he does not try to go back to the past nor worries too much about the future. The hero has reached a high level of wisdom and understanding. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 237 – 242)

After finishing Voldemort, Harry is finally free from the doom of the prophecy: Voldemort will no longer chase him down. Harry is free to live his life as a regular wizard, because in his words: 'I've had enough trouble for a lifetime.' (ROWLING, 2007, p. 600). He marries Ginny, the woman he loves, he has three kids, and he works as an auror²⁰ for the Ministry of Magic. In the epilogue, 19 years after Voldemort's final defeat, Harry, along with his wife, takes his children to board Hogwarts Express, as he himself had boarded it so many years before. Albus, one of his sons, shows the same anxiety and fear Harry had felt about ending up in Slytherin house. Harry is now in the role of a parent, he is wiser and more mature, he tells his son that there will be nothing wrong if he is sorted to Slytherin, but if that matters so much to him, he could choose Gryffindor.

'Albus Severus,' [...] 'You were named for two headmasters of Hogwarts. One of them was a Slytherin and he was probably the bravest man I ever knew.'

'But *just say*' -'

'- then Slytherin house will have gained an excellent student, won't it? It doesn't matter to us, Al. But if it matters to you, you'll be able to choose Gryffindor over Slytherin. The sorting Hat takes your choice into account.'

'Really?'

'It did for me,' said Harry. (ROWLING, 2007, p. 607)

²⁰ An auror is a wizard trained to hunt dark wizards.

The cycle is complete. Although everyone still recognizes him as the great Harry Potter – not only for being the ‘boy who lived’ but, mainly for being the man who got the wizarding world rid of Voldemort – he lives a quite normal life.

‘The scar had not pained Harry for nineteen years. All was well’ (ROWLING, 2007a, p. 607)

1.2. The hero’s transformations

According to Campbell, every hero has to undergo different stages to become who he needs to be, to conquer what he wants. Every aspect of the hero’s life and every experience he has contribute to change him, to transform him into the hero we have at the end of the story.

Everything that happens to Harry in his seventeen years of life and every choice he makes build up his character. A good example of time as a modifier is in book seven: Dumbledore leaves in his will the Golden Snitch²¹ that Harry caught in his first Quidditch match. When Harry touches the Snitch with his lips, it appears an inscription: “I open at the close”. He tries to understand this riddle for some months, until in the forest, on his way to surrender to Voldemort, he realizes what those words meant. He touches the Snitch again and says he is about to die; the Snitch opens and the Resurrection Stone is revealed to be inside it. Harry takes the stone and calls the spirits of his mother, father, godfather and Lupin to guide him into those last decisive minutes. If he had laid hands on the stone before, he might have called his dead beloved ones to “live” with him, which would have been a terrible decision, because, as stated in the book, the dead should not be disturbed. But, in those supposed last minutes, he was not summoning them to be with him, he was the one who was going to depart from life and join them. It was positive that he was only able to retrieve the stone from the Snitch when he was ready to make the right decision.

There are two types of hero according to Campbell: the primordial hero and the human hero. Harry is obviously a human hero.

But the makers of legend have seldom rested content to regard the world's great heroes as mere human beings who broke past the horizons that limited their fellows and returned with such boons as any man with equal faith and courage might have

²¹ The Golden Snitch is one of the four balls used in a Quidditch match.

found. On the contrary, the tendency has always been to endow the hero with extraordinary powers from the moment of birth, or even the moment of conception. The whole hero-life is shown to have been a pageant of marvels with the great central adventure as its culmination. This accords with the view that heroism is predestined, rather than simply achieved, and opens the problem of the relationship of biography to character. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 310)

Harry is a human who has suffered a lot in his life, but who never gives up his principles and who, in spite of everything, has an immense capacity of loving. Within the story, nevertheless, Harry is seen as someone special: he survived a killing curse cast by one of the most powerful wizards of all times when he was only a baby, suffering only one lightning scar in his forehead. For this reason, people think he must have superior skills, but the truth (not known by most) is that his mother died to save him, and this protected him from death. Harry constantly receives help in almost everything he does, but people do not think it diminishes his accomplishments.

In the end of the fifth book, Harry finds out that a prophecy had been made before he was born, it said:

‘The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches ... born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies ... and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not ... and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives ...’ (ROWLING, 2003, p. 741)

This prophecy enhances the notion that he was born to be a hero. In book six, the wizarding community starts to call Harry as “the chosen one” because they believe (although they do not know about the prophecy) that he is the person destined to kill Voldemort. This person, nevertheless, could have been someone else:

‘The odd thing, Harry,’ he said softly, ‘is that it may not have meant you at all. Sybill’s prophecy could have applied to two wizard boys, both born at the end of July that year, both of whom had parents in the Order of the Phoenix, both sets of parents having narrowly escaped Voldemort three times. One, of course, was you. The other was Neville Longbottom.’ (ROWLING, 2003, p. 742)

Voldemort, all the same, sees Harry as the real threat and goes after him, marking him as the boy to whom the prophecy referred. Harry does not have incredible magical powers. The power that Harry has and Voldemort lacks is the immense

ability to love. It is love that prevents Voldemort from invading Harry's mind. It is love that gives Harry the motivation to carry on with his ominous task and it is love that saves Harry's life in the end. Harry sacrifices himself to stop Voldemort from killing other people, and, thanks to this sacrifice, Harry does not die.

Although Harry seems to be someone destined to free the world from Voldemort, he is just a brave man with a strong character who does what is right. Any other wizard could have been in Harry's place: searched for the Horcruxes and killed Voldemort. A series of events and choices and Harry's personality, though, made him the one to accomplish it.

In the next subsections I describe the hero's transformations that Campbell mentions and how the character Harry Potter fits them.

1.2.1. The Childhood of the Human Hero

The folktales usually use the kind of hero that is rejected by society; he is the ugly duckling, the orphan, the handicapped, the stepchild. He has to endure a long dark period. The upshot of his childhood is the recognition of the hero when his true character is revealed. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 310 – 332)

Harry loses his parents when he is still a baby, then he is sent to live with his aunt, uncle and cousin. He is strongly rejected by his relatives, who think he is a freak. His aunt and uncle do not tell him the truth about his origins in the hope that by doing that they will eliminate the magic from him. He spends ten years of his life being treated as Cinderella: doing household chores and being repressed by his stepparents and stepbrother. Until, finally, he receives the visit of Rubeus Hagrid who tells him he is a wizard.

1.2.2. The Hero as a Warrior

The hero has to kill a monster. The villain is the selfish monster who wants everything for himself. His enormous ego is a curse for himself and for the others. He is always afraid that someone will come and destroy what he has conquered. He causes chaos, although in his mind he may be acting according to good intentions. There arises the claim for the hero who will free the world. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 333 – 339)

The tyrant is proud, and therein resides his doom. He is proud because he thinks of his strength as his own; thus he is in the clown role, as a mistaker of shadow for substance; it is his destiny to be tricked. The mythological hero, reappearing from the darkness that is the source of the shapes of the day, brings a knowledge of the secret of the tyrant's doom. With a gesture as simple as the pressing of a button, he annihilates the impressive configuration. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 335)

Voldemort believes he is the best wizard alive. He is so arrogant that he does not visit his Horcruxes to ensure they are safe, he thinks that no one will find out his secret. His biggest ambition is to be immortal and his second biggest ambition is to exterminate Muggle-born and Half-blood wizards²² to make a lineage of Pure-blood²³ wizards. Both times that Voldemort reaches full power over the wizarding world, chaos reigns; there is only fear and death. He kills anyone in his way or anyone who he thinks that disturb his plans. And this is how the prophecy is fulfilled:

‘But,’ said Harry, bewildered, ‘but last year, you said one of us would have to kill the other’

‘Harry, Harry, only because Voldemort made a grave error, and acted on Professor Trelawney’s words! If Voldemort had never murdered your father, would he have imparted in you a furious desire for revenge? Of course not! If he had not forced your mother to die for you, would he have given you a magical protection he could not penetrate? Of course not, Harry! Don’t you see? Voldemort himself created his worst enemy, just as tyrants everywhere do! Have you any idea how much tyrants fear the people they oppress? All of them realise that, one day, amongst their victims, there is sure to be one who rises against them and strikes back! Voldemort is no different! Always he was on the lookout for the one who would challenge him. He heard the prophecy and he leapt into action, with the result that he not only handpicked the man most likely to finish him, he handed him uniquely deadly weapons!’ (ROWLING, 2005, p. 476 – 477)

And that is what happens: Harry not only manages to destroy four of his Horcruxes, but he also comes back from limbo and kills Voldemort with a simple disarming curse.

1.2.3. The Hero as a Lover

²² Wizards Who have a wizard parent and muggle or muggle-born parent.

²³ Wizards with both wizard parents.

Frequently in the hero's path appears a damsel in distress, or a beautiful princess with whom the hero falls in love. He has to go through trials to deserve the woman. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 340 – 342)

The romance aspect is not much focused on in the Harry Potter series. Harry saves Ginny Weasley from Tom Riddle in book two, but at that stage he is not remotely in love for her. Yes, Harry kills a Basilisk and rescues the girl from the Chamber of Secrets, but she is not his princess yet. Harry and Ginny get to stay together for good only after Harry defeats Voldemort.

1.2.4 The Hero as Emperor and as Tyrant

It is possible to divide heroes into two kinds: the action hero and the supreme hero. The first is the one who gives continuity to the situation already in process; his symbol is the sword. The second is wiser, he opens people's eyes to some perspective of reality that was not seen before and gives impulse to a new situation; his symbol is the book or the sceptre. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 343 – 346)

Harry is an action hero. When Harry was born, Voldemort was already all-powerful. There were people trying to fight Voldemort. Due to the rebounded curse that was meant to kill Harry, Voldemort is off the scene for about ten years. After he resurrects, Harry takes part as the vital element on the fight against him. Harry does not go after trouble; trouble seems to chase him so he reacts instead of running away. In the second book, Harry draws Godric Gryffindor's sword from the Sorting Hat to aid him in killing the basilisk. Later on, Dumbledore tells Harry that only a true Gryffindor could have pulled the sword out of the hat. In the seventh book, Harry gets possession of the same sword again and one of the Horcruxes is destroyed with it.

Campbell says that sometimes when the hero is given power he can become an emperor or a tyrant. When he is blessed by his father he returns to represent him among men.

In his fifth year at Hogwarts, Harry becomes the leader of a group to study practical defence against the Dark arts, to pose resistance against Umbridge's administration.

'I think we ought to elect a leader,' said Hermione.

'Harry's the leader,' said Cho at once, looking at Hermione as though she were mad.

Harry's stomach did yet another back-flip.

'Yes, but I think we ought to vote on it properly,' said Hermione, unperturbed. 'It makes it formal and it gives him authority. So – everyone who thinks Harry ought be our leader?'

Everybody put up their hand, even Zacharias Smith, though he did it very half-heartedly.

'Er – right, thanks,' said Harry, who could feel his face burning. (ROWLING, 2003, p. 347)

Harry becomes this little group's master. He is their teacher, he says what to do, he does not, however, abuse his position nor does he feel comfortable in a position of authority. It is interesting that the group is baptized as Dumbledore's Army. They are representing Dumbledore in their resistance, they are pro-Dumbledore and against Umbridge and the ministry, Harry being the leader makes him the main representative of Dumbledore.

In book five, after Bellatrix kills Sirius, Harry chases her and performs the Cruciatus Curse, one that is only used by evil wizards and causes pain on its victim. Harry's curse does not cause prolonged pain, Bellatrix says that he must enjoy seeing others suffer in order to accomplish a good curse, justified hatred is not enough. In book seven Harry uses the curse against another Death Eater:

As Amycus spun round, Harry shouted, 'Crucio!'

The Death Eater was lifted off his feet. He writhed through the air like a drowning man, thrashing and howling in pain, and then, with a crunch and a shattering of glass, he smashed into the front of a bookcase and crumpled, insensible, to the floor.

'I see what Bellatrix meant,' said Harry, the blood thundering through his brain, 'you need to really mean it.' (ROWLING, 2007, p. 476)

Harry being more successful this time suggests that he is not so pure-hearted, he may enjoy others' suffering, not to the extent of a tyrant would, though.

1.2.5. The Hero as World Redeemer

The hero frees the world from a great evil, purging other people's faults with his own sacrifice. This should be developed in the next subsection. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 346 – 351)

1.2.6. The Hero as Saint

The saint hero renounces the world. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 351 – 353)

Harry acts like a world redeemer and as a saint when he sacrifices his life in order to enable Voldemort's death and save not only the people he loves but everyone else from the villain. His sacrifice not only destroys one of the Horcruxes but also protects everybody who is in Hogwarts at that moment against Voldemort and the Death Eaters.

1.2.7. Departure of the Hero

The last act in the biography of the hero is that of the death or departure. Here the whole sense of the life is epitomized. Needless to say, the hero would be no hero if death held for him any terror; the first condition is reconciliation with the grave. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 353)

It is interesting to see how differently Voldemort and Harry feel towards death. For Voldemort there is nothing worse than death. He desperately seeks immortality; the path he chooses to achieve it is creating a bigger number of Horcruxes than anyone else has ever done. In this way, Voldemort, in a maimed way, lingers in life forever (or until all his Horcruxes are destroyed).

Harry matures over the course of the books: in his first year, he gets startled when he finds out that Nicolas Flamel and his wife would die with the destruction of the Philosopher's Stone (they were both over than 600 years old and depended on the Stone to keep alive).

Dumbledore smiled at the look of amazement on Harry's face.

'To one as young as you, I'm sure it seems incredible, but to Nicolas and Perenelle, it really is like going to bed after a very, very, long day. After all, to the well-organized mind, death is but the next great adventure.' (ROWLING, 1997, p. 215)

Harry learns that there are far worse things than death. In the seven book, Harry becomes the true master of death, not because he conquers death or because he reunites the three deathly hallows, but because he embraces death as part of life. As a matter of fact, he volunteers to die and has a symbolical death.

1.3. Commentary

As we can see from the comparisons made above, Campbell's journey of the hero fits perfectly to Harry's journey. But times have changed since 1949, and it has two updates in relation to the standard journey. One of them is Ginny being a temptation to Harry settle down, be with her and forget about Voldemort, she is not a sexual temptation per se. The other adaptation is Dumbledore and James Potter being Harry's ogre-fathers. Neither of them is evil by nature; James bullied Snape because he was immature and wanted to impress Lily and his friends and Dumbledore once sought power and control over muggles. These modifications do not contradict Campbell, though:

In the later stages of many mythologies, the key images hide like needles in great haystacks of secondary anecdote and rationalization; for when a civilization has passed from a mythological to a secular point of view, the older images are no longer felt or quite approved. In Hellenistic Greece and in Imperial Rome, the ancient gods were reduced to mere civic patrons, household pets, and literary favorites. Uncomprehended inherited themes, such as that of the Minotaur—the dark and terrible night aspect of an old Egypto-Cretan representation of the incarnate sun god and divine king—were rationalized and reinterpreted to suit contemporary ends. (CAMPBELL, 2004, p. 246)

Campbell acknowledges that myths can be modified to conform to different times. The two referred stages adapt better in our contemporary times: doing the right thing, equal rights and respect people are very current issues in our society. The interesting thing is that people seem to expect the old model. When only the first books had been released, Rowling was asked if Voldemort was the true father of Harry. She denied and added that people were watching too much Star Wars – making reference to the fact of the villain Darth Vader being the hero Luke Skywalker's father. However, if Voldemort were Harry's father, he would have been a real ogre father.

In the section *the hero's transformations* – especially in *the hero as a world redeemer*, *the hero as a saint* and *departure of the hero* – it is evident the importance of death as a theme. The events revolve around Harry's surrender and his symbolical death. In an interview, Rowling comments on the fact that death is more than a possibility, it is a solid reality:

That was always the plan, that death should appear in that way. Since he was young until Chapter 34 of the seventh book, Harry is required to be a better man in that he is obligated to accept the inevitability of his own death. The plan of the books was that he should have contact with death and with the experience of death. And it was always Harry alone who had to have that experience. It all came down to conscience, because the hero had to live these things, do things, see things on his count. It's part of that isolation and sadness that comes with being a hero. (ROWLING, 2008)

It is interesting to see that Rowling speaks in generic terms above: Harry is the hero, and as a hero, he needs to face the challenges by himself. Harry Potter is the archetypal hero who fulfils the stages expected from a hero. And what does Harry's journey being echo of the traditional hero's journey proves? It may be seen as a good reason why Harry Potter appeals to both children and adults. The monomyth speaks to all of us human beings; it is present in the collective imaginary.

Campbell brings this ancient idea into his work too. Borrowing the term *monomyth*, a word he identifies as one coined by James Joyce, he puts forth the ancient idea — that the mysterious energy for inspirations, revelations, and actions in heroic stories **worldwide** is also universally found in human beings. People who find resonant heroic themes of challenges and questing in their own lives, in their goals, creative outpourings, in their day- and night-dreams — are being led to a single psychic fact. That is, that the creative and spiritual lives of **individuals** influence the outer world as much as the mythic world influences the individual. (ESTES in CAMPBELL, 1968, p. XXV)

As a result of being so easy for us to connect to and to unleash our emotional response, the journey of the hero has been appropriated intentionally many times to produce successful stories:

It is said that the executives at Disney saw in Campbell's journey of the hero much potential for their productions, and if we analyze the plots of *The Lion King* and *Mulan*, we can perceive many elements taken from Campbell's studies. Also, another director who was Campbellian before they worked side by side in shaping up elements for his film saga is George Lucas, who used the expertise of the scholar to outline the main plot and many elements of his *Star Wars*, one of the most successful film sagas of all time. (NUNES, 2010, p. 33)

But as this mythology lives inside us, many authors write unconsciously their plots inside the patterns Campbell spotted; personally, I think that it is Rowling's case.

Rowling's triumph is to revisit the old archetypes creating a different and exciting story. A story that does not use any kind of archetype, besides being difficult to conceive, risks not being successful since people would not identify with.

In other words, an archetype is a representation that could be identified by any person, in any culture, at any given time. In *Harry Potter*, we can find several archetypes, which explains, to a certain extent, why it appeals to both children and adults. Most importantly, it is interesting to remark that *Harry Potter* was written by a British author, having the United Kingdom as scenery: all the action unfolds either at Hogwarts, a castle in the North of Scotland, or at Diagon Alley, in London; or still in any of the dwellings of the characters, all of them somewhere in England or Scotland. That would suffice to justify the identification of the Anglo-Saxon public with the story, but then, how could we explain that a person reading *Harry Potter* in Brazil, whose landscape is so different, share the same feelings and sensations, and most importantly, sees the same images as any Anglo-Saxon reader? According to Jung, "the symbols are natural attempts to reconcile and reunite opposites within the psyche." (Idem,p.90) The symbols will explain why people all over the world understand the story, can see it the way the author has conceived it. (NUNES, 2010, p. 43)

The monomyth and the archetypes are a plausible explanation for the spread of Harry Potter Books to about 200 countries. That means that readers from Japan, China, Brazil, Australia, Canada, Egypt and so many others parts of the world enjoy the adventures of the British wizard boy.

2. HARRY POTTER AND THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE FOLKTALE

The English translated title of Propp's book, *The Morphology of Folktale*, is misleading, since Propp endeavoured to analyze only one type of folktale: the fairy-tale or as he calls it the wonder tale. He analyzed many Russian wonder tales in order to get to the general morphology of a wonder tale. In section 2.1 I analyze the functions of a wonder tale and how these functions are displayed in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and, in section 2.2 I make commentaries on the analysis and draw some conclusions.

2.1. Functions

To Vladimir Propp what really matters when we study a wonder tale is what the characters do inside the story; these are called functions. Functions are the basic and permanent constituent parts of the tale. While the characters may vary a lot, the functions are always the same. In folktales the sequence of the functions – that is, the order they are presented in the narrative – is fixed, in the wonder tale the sequence may suffer variation and some functions may be absent.

1. Functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled. They constitute the fundamental components of a tale.

2. The number of functions known to the fairy tale is limited. (PROPP, 1968, p. 9)

In this chapter I am going to analyze the second book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, following the parameters of Propp's proposed functions. I chose to analyze one book, instead of the seven books as a whole, because each one of the books represents a different sequence of functions for the books are cyclic.

This means to say that every beginning of a novel, in the saga, with the start of a new school year, represents a re-starting, on a new level; the events keep mounting, along each of the novels, month by month, always culminating around May or June, that is, at the end of the school year. Harry usually begins the year at school ordinarily; then things start to happen that end in the confrontation with his enemies in a life-or-death battle. (NUNES, 2010, p. 61)

Usually the wonder tale starts with an initial situation where the background of the plot is given. For Propp this is not a function itself but it is, nevertheless, an important morphological element.

In the beginning of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* we have a summary of Harry's background history, which we learned in the first book and is important to understand the second one:

It was this scar that made Harry so particularly unusual, even for a wizard. This scar was the only hint of Harry's very mysterious past, of the reason he had been left on the Dursleys' doorstep eleven years before.

At the age of one, Harry had somehow survived a curse from the greatest dark sorcerer of all time, Lord Voldemort, whose name most witches and wizards still feared to speak. Harry's parents had died in Voldemort's attack, but Harry had escaped with his lightning scar, and somehow – nobody understood why – Voldemort's powers had been destroyed the instant he had failed to kill Harry.

So Harry had been brought up by his dead mother's sister and her husband. He had spent ten years with the Dursleys, never understanding why he kept making odd things happen without meaning to, believing the Dursleys' story that he had got his scar in the car crash which had killed his parents.

And then, exactly a year ago, Hogwarts had written to Harry, and the whole story had come out. Harry had taken up his place at wizard school, where he and his scar were famous ... but now the school year was over, and he was back with the Dursleys for the summer, back to being treated like a dog that rolled in something smelly. (ROWLING, 1998, p. 9)

Here we get to know or remember the essentials about Harry: a wizard boy who did not know he was a wizard until recently, a boy who had lived miserably in his aunt, uncle and cousin's house for over a decade because his parents had been murdered by a dark wizard who tried to kill baby Harry too, but failed, and thus leaving Harry a marked and famous person.

According to Propp (1968), after the initial situation is depicted, the tale goes through the sequence of 31 functions, usually in the following order: absentation, interdiction, violation of interdiction, reconnaissance, delivery, trickery, complicity, villainy/lack, mediation, beginning of counter-action, departure, first function of the donor, hero's reaction, receipt of magical agent, guidance, struggle, branding, victory, liquidation, return, pursuit, rescue, unrecognized arrival, unfounded claims, difficult task, solution, recognition, exposure, transfiguration, punishment and wedding.

In Harry Potter, we can encounter all 31 functions, although their order of appearance differs substantially from the standard one mentioned above. This alteration is possible when we deal with a wonder tale, as is Harry Potter's case. Below I am going to analyze these 31 functions in the novel; how they match their correspondence in the narrative of the second book. The functions are in the order that they appear in the story, not in the order established by Propp.

I – Absentation

A member of the family leaves home or dies. The hero may need to rescue this person afterwards (PROPP, 1984, p. 31 – 32).

Harry's parents are long dead and their absence affects Harry very much, but in book two, this function applies better to the house-elf Dobby. In chapter two, Harry is locked in his room pretending not to exist – his aunt and uncle are having an important business dinner and they do not want Harry's presence – when Dobby appears out of nowhere and tells him he must not to go back to Hogwarts. Being a house elf, Dobby is enslaved to a certain family and cannot do anything that is not approved by his masters, otherwise he will be punished, neither can he leave the family: to be set free he needs to receive new clothes from his masters. Dobby puts himself at risk to come to Harry and warn him. In the end of this book Harry manages to ensnare Lucius Malfoy, Dobby's lord, to free the elf. Thus Dobby leaves home without permission, and Harry rescues him from slavery at the end of the story.

II – Interdiction

The hero is prohibited from doing something, usually leaving home, in other cases he is just advised to have/not have certain attitude. (PROPP, 1984, p. 32)

Dobby comes to stop Harry from returning to Hogwarts:

'Harry Potter must stay here where he is safe. He is too great, too good, to lose. If Harry Potter goes back to Hogwarts, he will be in mortal danger.'

'Why?' said Harry in surprise.

'There's a plot, Harry Potter. A plot to make most terrible things happen at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry this year,' whispered Dobby, suddenly trembling all over. 'Dobby has known it for months, sir. Harry Potter must not put himself in peril. He is too important, sir!' (ROWLING, 1998, p. 18)

Dobby tells Harry that he would do better staying at home that year because returning to Hogwarts is dangerous.

III – Violation of Interdiction

The hero ignores the prohibition and bad consequences arise from this violation. Generally, the villain is introduced at this point in a real confrontation or just on the lookout. (PROPP, 1984, p. 32)

Harry refuses to promise Dobby he is not going back to Hogwarts, so Dobby – in an attempt to have Harry expelled from the school – performs magic inside the house in front of his relatives and their guests. For that reason Harry receives an official report from the Ministry of Magic saying that if a new charm is performed by him he is going to be expelled. The Dursleys read the letter and find out he is not allowed to do magic outside school, taking advantage of that, they lock Harry inside his room under the threat of never releasing him. Later on he is rescued by Ron Weasley in a flying car. Here we have another violation: Harry is prohibited from leaving his room, however, he flees from the house.

When Harry and the Weasleys go to Flourish and Blotts to buy the books for the school year, Lucius Malfoy drops an old diary on Ginny's cauldron without anyone noticing. Through this diary Voldemort – the villain Dobby refuses to mention – is going to act inside Hogwarts.

Dobby tries twice more to send Harry back home and bad outcomes keep occurring. First he closes the passage to board Hogwarts express – Harry and Ron go to Hogwarts in the flying car, they land on a fighting tree, lose the car and get detentions for arriving in that way to school. Second, Dobby charms the Bludger²⁴ to chase only Harry in the Quidditch match – Harry ends up with no bones on one arm.

IV – Unfounded Claims

Someone falsely claims to have accomplished great deeds making himself look like the hero instead of the real hero. (PROPP, 1984, p. 31 – 56)

In book two we have the character Gilderoy Lockhart, the new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher. Having written many books about his supposedly amazing feats, he is a celebrity in the wizarding world. He is a pretentious good-looking man

²⁴ In a Quidditch match there are two Bludgers, iron balls bewitched to fly around and try to knock the players off their brooms.

who brags about himself. Throughout the book he acts as if he were more famous than Harry and tries to diminish him. This is what he tells Harry after he arrived to Hogwarts in the flying car:

‘Harry, Harry, Harry,’ said Lockhart, reaching out and grasping his shoulder. ‘I *understand*. Natural to want a bit more once you’ve had that first taste – and I blame myself for giving you that, because it was bound to go to your head – but see here, young man, you can’t start *flying cars* to try and get yourself noticed. Just calm down, all right? Plenty of time for all that when you’re older. Yes, yes, I know what you’re thinking! “It’s all right for him, he’s an internationally famous wizard already!” But when I was your twelve, I was just as much of nobody as you are now. In fact I’d say I was even more of a nobody! I mean, a few people have heard of you, haven’t they? All that business with He Who Must Not Be Named!’ He glanced at the lightening scar on Harry’s forehead. ‘I know, I know, it’s not as good as winning *Witch Weekly’s* Most-Charming-Smile Award five times in a row, as I have – but it’s a *start*, Harry, it’s a *start*.’ (ROWLING, 1998, p. 71 – 72)

He is always claiming to know more than the others. When the Filch’s cat is found petrified, teachers and students are around the crime scene trying to understand what happened. Lockhart, as always, has something to say:

It was definitely a curse that killed her – probably the Transmogrifian Torture. I’ve seen many times, so unluckily I wasn’t there, I know the very counter-curse that would have saved her ...’

[...]

I remember something very similar happening in Ouagadougou,’ said Lockhart, ‘a series of attacks, the full story’s in my autobiography. I was able to provide the townsfolk with various amulets which cleared the matter at once ...’

[...]

At last Dumbledore straightened up.

‘She’s not dead, Argus,’ he said softly. (ROWLING, 1998, p. 108)

This is one of the many times that Gilderoy boasted about his knowledge and was mistaken. We readers realize that there is something wrong with his character, that he is actually a fraud.

V – Reconnaissance

The villain, often in disguise, tries to obtain some information about his victim; he may use a variety of stratagems for that, the most common being interrogatory. (PROPP, 1984, p. 33)

In the end of the book we, readers, get to know that Voldemort used Ginny through his diary to reopen the Chamber of Secrets and attack Muggle-born students with the Basilisk. Furthermore, Tom Riddle finds out about Harry Potter's legendary history:

'The diary,' said Riddle. '*My* diary. Little Ginny's been writing in it for months and months, telling me all her pitiful worries and woes: how her brothers *tease* her, how she had to come to school with second-hand robes, and books, how –' Riddle's eyes glinted '- how she didn't think famous, good great Harry Potter would *ever* like her ...'

[...]

'It's very *boring*, having to listen to the silly little troubles of an eleven-year-old girl,' he went on. 'But I was patient. I wrote back, I was sympathetic, I was kind. Ginny simply *loved* me. *No one's ever understood me like you, Tom ... I'm so glad I've got this diary to confide in ... It's like having a friend I can carry round in my pocket ...*' (ROWLING, 1998, p. 228 – 229)

Pretending to be a reliable friend, Tom persuades Ginny to tell him more about Harry.

VI – Delivery

The villain succeeds on obtaining information about the victim. (PROPP, 1984, p. 34)

In her confidences to the diary, Ginny tells Voldemort about Harry Potter. Voldemort gets extremely interested in the fact that Harry has survived Voldemort's killing curse. When Ginny gets suspicious of the diary she throws it away and Harry finds it and picks it up.

'It took a very long time for stupid little Ginny to stop trusting her diary,' said Riddle. 'But she finally became suspicious and tried to dispose of it. And that's where *you* came in, Harry. You found it, and I couldn't have been more delighted. Of all people who could have picked it up, it was *you*, the very person I was most anxious to meet ...'

'And why did you want to meet me?' said Harry. [...]

‘Well, you see, Ginny told me all about you, Harry,’ said Riddle. ‘Your whole *fascinating* history.’ His eyes roved over the lightening scar on Harry’s forehead, and his expression grew hungrier. ‘I knew I must find out more about you, talk to you, meet you if I could. (ROWLING, 1998, p. 229)

Voldemort manages to talk to Harry and to know more about him.

VII – First Function of the Donor

The hero undergoes a kind of test or interrogation as a way to prepare him to receive the donor’s help or a magical object. (PROPP, 1984, p. 41 – 43)

After the double attack on Justin and Nearly Headless Nick, Harry is summoned to Dumbledore’s office. At this point in the story, most of the school thinks Harry is the person behind all the attacks. Dumbledore does not think this way, but he wants to ask Harry all the same if there is anything Harry wants to tell him. Furthermore, Dumbledore gives him some information that will prove useful later on:

‘fascinating creatures, phoenixes. They can carry immensely heavy loads, their tears have healing powers and they make highly *faithful* pets.’ (ROWLING, 1998, p. 155)

Because Harry shows loyalty to Dumbledore down in the Chamber of Secrets, Fawkes comes to his aid. When Harry is bitten by the Basilisk, the phoenix cries on the injury, healing it. Fawkes also helps Harry to return to Hogwarts by carrying him and the others.

VIII – Hero’s Reaction

The hero reacts to the donor’s test in a positive or negative way. (PROPP, 1984, p. 43)

When Harry is asked by Dumbledore if he wants to tell him something, his reaction is denial:

Harry didn’t know what to say. He thought of Malfoy shouting, ‘You’ll be next Mudbloods!’, and of the Polyjuice Potion, simmering away in Moaning Myrtle’s bathroom. Then he thought of the disembodied voice he had heard twice and remembered what Ron had said: “*Hearing voices no one else can hear isn’t a good sign, even in the wizarding world.*” He thought, too, about what everyone was saying about him, and his growing dread that he was somehow connected with Salazar Slytherin ...

‘No,’ said Harry, ‘there isn’t anything, Professor.’ (ROWLING, 1998, p. 156 – 157)

In spite of having many thoughts tormenting him, Harry decides not to share them with the Headmaster.

IX – Transfiguration

The hero literally changes appearance through magical means or he receives new garments or a palace that make him look different. The hero may also be confounded with someone else. (PROPP, 1984, p. 58)

Harry, Ron and Hermione are suspicious that the person behind the attacks on the students is Draco Malfoy. Hoping to get the truth from Draco they decide to prepare a Polyjuice Potion, a potion in which you add a bit of the person you want to transform into and, then, for one hour you will look and sound like that person. Harry drinks the potion and becomes a doppelganger of Gregory Goyle’s, one of Draco’s cronies.

X – Unrecognized Arrival

The hero arrives home or in another place anonymously or in disguise. For one reason or another, people do not recognize the hero. (PROPP, 1984, p. 56)

After taking the Polyjuice Potion, Harry and Ron, disguised respectively as Goyle and Crabbe, look for the Slytherin common room to talk to Malfoy when he himself finds them and, suspecting nothing says the password to enter the common room. Inside, believing himself to be in Crabbe’s and Goyle’s company, Draco tells them many things including that he does not have a clue about the identity of the Slytherin heir²⁵. The suspicion over Draco is, then, forcibly dropped.

XI – Trickery

After acquiring information about the victim, the villain goes further and tries to gain the victim’s collaboration. The villain, in disguise, attempts to deceive the victim through persuasion, magical means, fraud or coercion. (PROPP, 1984, p. 34)

Harry gets hold of Riddle’s diary, who he does not yet know to be Voldemort, and, the first time the diary communicates with him, asks Tom if he knows anything about the Chamber of Secrets. The answer comes quickly written:

²⁵ The Slytherin heir is the only person who, according to a legend, would be able to open the Chamber of Secrets.

Of course I know about the Chamber of Secrets. In my day, they told us it was a legend, that it did not exist. But this was a lie. In my fifth year, the Chamber was opened and the monster attacked several students, finally killing one. I caught the person who'd opened the chamber and he was expelled. But the Headmaster, Professor Dippet, ashamed that such a thing had happened at Hogwarts, forbade me to tell the truth. A story was given out that the girl had died in a freak accident. They gave me a nice, shiny, engraved trophy for my trouble and warned me to keep my mouth shut. But I knew it could happen again. The monster lived on, and the one who had the power to release it was not imprisoned. (ROWLING, 1998, p. 180)

Then, Riddle offers to show Harry when he caught the culprit. Harry dives into the memories of teenage Voldemort through the diary. First he sees a conversation between Tom Riddle and his Headmaster. Professor Dippet is apologising for not having conditions to accommodate Tom in Hogwarts during summer break as he had asked, due to the attacks on students that are happening and to the death of a girl; the Headmaster adds that they are not near to finding the offender and therefore the school is probably going to be closed anyway. Tom insists, saying that he would rather spend the vacations there than in the muggle orphanage where he lives. Then, Voldemort shows Harry the moment when he cornered the supposed culprit, Hagrid, with the supposed Slytherin monster:

‘It’s all over,’ he said. ‘I’m going to have to turn you in Rubeus. They’re talking about closing Hogwarts if the attacks don’t stop.’

‘What d’yeh –’

‘I don’t think you meant to kill anyone. But monsters don’t make good pets. I suppose you just let it out for exercise and –’

‘It never killed no one!’ said the large boy, backing against the closed door. From behind him, Harry could hear a funny rustling and clicking.

[...]

‘Stand aside,’ said Riddle, drawing out his wand.

His spell lit the corridor with a sudden flaming light. The door behind the large boy flew open with such force it knocked him into the opposite wall. And out of it came something that made Harry let out a long, piercing scream no one but he seemed to hear. (ROWLING, 1998, p. 184)

Harry comes to know that the beast is Aragog, the acromantula²⁶, Hagrid was taking care as a pet. By showing first his memory of the conversation with the Headmaster, Riddle intends to gain some sympathy as the orphan who had no other option than to hand in Hagrid. This is an attempt to gain Harry's trust by showing himself as the good guy, the hero who saved the school from more villainy.

XII – Complicity

The victim is taken in by trickery, unintentionally helping the villain. The hero is persuaded by deception or reacts to the use of magical means, falling asleep, for example. (PROPP, 1984, p. 35)

When Harry tells Hermione and Ron what he had witnessed in Tom Riddle's memory, they do not discard the possibility of Hagrid actually being the owner of the Chamber's monster; they know Hagrid is not evil, but they also know that Hagrid gives too much credit to dangerous beasts. Thus, Voldemort manages to make Harry believe him and suspect Hagrid.

When Ron criticizes Riddle for having finked Hagrid, Harry says that he can understand Riddle's attitude: Hogwarts had been the home that Tom never knew in the orphanage so it was only natural that he wanted to stay in Hogwarts for the summer break, and as the attacks were an obstacle to that, Harry could not blame Tom for doing something to solve the problem. As a matter of fact, Harry feels the same attachment towards Hogwarts, being happier in the school than he ever was at the Dursleys'.

Ginny is more seriously deceived by Tom Riddle. Believing herself to have encountered a friend in the diary, she writes in it many times, and in this way Riddle is able to control her actions while she is unconscious. After a while she gets suspicious, so she tries to get rid of the diary, but then when she finds out that Harry has taken it she steals it from Harry's trunk. She is afraid that the diary will tell Harry her feelings towards him. So the diary takes possession of her again, and she becomes Voldemort's tool to reopen the Chamber of Secrets and attack students.

XIII – Difficult Task

²⁶ A species of gigantic spider.

A difficult task is proposed to the hero, it may require endurance, patience, strength or intelligence. (PROPP, 1984, p. 56 – 57)

Harry and Ron visit Hagrid sometime after Riddle shows Harry his capture of Hagrid. When Dumbledore and Cornelius Fudge, the Minister of Magic, enter Hagrid's hut, the boys hide themselves under the invisibility cloak and they overhear that Hagrid is going to be sent to Azkaban²⁷ in order to prevent more attacks in the school, then Lucius Malfoy steps into the scene too and declares that Dumbledore is expelled from the post of Headmaster. Hagrid and Dumbledore are forced to leave Hogwarts, but they leave two messages to the boys:

‘However,’ said Dumbledore, speaking very slowly and clearly, so that none of them would miss a word, ‘you will find that I will only *truly* have left this school when none here are loyal to me. You will also find that help will always be given at Hogwarts to those who ask for it.’

[...]

Hagrid stood his ground, took a deep breath and said carefully, ‘ If anyone wanted to know ter find out some *stuff*, all they'd have ter do would be ter follow the *spiders*. That'd lead 'em right! That's all I'm sayin'.’ (ROWLING, 1998, p. 195)

Besides the enigmatic message of Dumbledore, we have here the challenge proposed by Hagrid to the boys: follow the spiders.

XIV – Solution

The task is resolved. (PROPP, 1984, p. 57)

Harry spends the next days after Dumbledore's and Hagrid's departure trying to figure out what those two riddles mean.

But what good were these words? Who exactly were they supposed to ask for help, when everyone was just as confused and scared as they were?

Hagrid's hint about the spiders was far easier to understand – the trouble was, there didn't seem to be a single spider left in the castle to follow. Harry looked everywhere he went, helped (rather reluctantly) by Ron. They were hampered, of course, by the fact that they weren't allowed to wander off on their own, but had to move around the castle in a pack with the other Gryffindors. (ROWLING, 1998, p. 197)

²⁷ Azkaban is the wizarding prison.

After much searching, they find a trace of spiders and realize that they seem to be going directly to the forbidden forest. On that night Harry and Ron go to the forest and follow the spiders until they are grabbed by two giant spiders which take the boys to Aragog's nest. Aragog is the same spider that Riddle had claimed to be Slytherin's monster fifty years before. Aragog tells Harry that he is not the monster of the Chamber and that Hagrid is not the person responsible for the attacks. Hagrid's riddle is solved, he is innocent. Before Harry and Ron attempt to leave the nest, though, Aragog gives his children permission to eat the boys.

XV – Return

The hero returns. The return may be presented as an escape. (PROPP, 1984, p. 53)

XVI – Pursuit

The hero is pursued. (PROPP, 1984, p. 53)

XVII – Rescue

The hero is rescued from pursuit. (PROPP, 1984, p. 53 – 55)

In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* these three functions – return, pursuit and rescue – overlap into one scene.

When Harry and Ron attempt to leave the nest, Aragog gives his children permission to eat them. The spiders start to circle the boys, there is no way out, and their wands are useless against so many spiders and they are still not proficient wizards. The flying car that had brought Harry and Ron to Hogwarts, and which had been hiding, abandoned in the forest, reappears from nowhere. Harry and Ron get inside the car, which drives them out of the forest and away from the spiders' reach.

XIII – Villainy or Lack

Villain harms someone from the hero's family or the family lacks something that needs to be acquired. Some stories have both villainy and lack. (PROPP, 1984, p. 35 – 39)

When the Chamber of Secrets is reopened, the Basilisk petrifies the cat Norris, the ghost Nearly Headless Nick and the students Colin Creevey, Justin Finch

Fletchley, Penelope Clearwater and Hermione Granger, one of Harry's best friends. The school is terrified of more attacks. And then, a student is taken to the Chamber.

XIX – Mediation

The hero finds out about the misfortune or lack. In an alternative way the hero is the one that is kidnapped. (PROPP, 1984, p. 39 – 40)

Harry and Ron overhear the professors and find out that a student has been dragged to the Chamber. A new inscription has appeared on the wall: "Her skeleton will lie in the Chamber for ever." (ROWLING, 1998, p. 217) The girl is Ginny Weasley, Ron's sister.

XX – Beginning of Counter-Action

The hero agrees to, or decides upon counter-action to solve the lack. This function is only present in tales that picture the hero as a seeker – the one who rescues the victim – not as a victim – the one who is rescued. (PROPP, 1984, p. 40)

Gilderoy Lockhart has been put in charge of going to the Chamber and rescuing the girl, since he claimed to know where the Chamber was and what it was inside. Harry and Ron decide to tell Lockhart what they know about the Chamber to help him to rescue Ginny.

XXI – Exposure

False hero or villain is exposed. (PROPP, 1984, p. 57 – 58)

When Harry and Ron enter Lockhart's office, they find him packing. Caught fleeing, Lockhart confesses to being a fraud.

'You mean you're *running away*?' said Harry disbelievingly after all that stuff you did in your books?'

'Books can be misleading,' said Lockhart delicately.

'You wrote them!' Harry shouted.

'My dear boy,' said Lockhart, straightening up and frowning at Harry. 'Do use your common sense. My books wouldn't have sold half as well if people didn't think *I'd* done all those things. No one wants to read about some ugly old Armenian warlock, even if he did save a village from werewolves. He'd look dreadful on the front cover. No dress sense at all. And the witch who banished the Bandon Banshee had a hairy chin. I mean, come on...'

‘So you’ve just been taking credit for what a load of other people have done?’ said Harry incredulously.

‘Harry, Harry,’ said Lockhart, shaking his head impatiently, ‘it’s not nearly as simple as that. There was work involved. I had to track these people down. Ask them exactly how they managed to do what they did. Then I had to put a Memory Charm on them so they wouldn’t remember doing it.’ (ROWLING, 1998, p. 220)

Not only had Gilderoy never done the feats described in his books, but also, he took credit from other people who had actually accomplished something, further still he erased their memories so he could sell books. More than being a greedy liar, he destroyed the lives of the people from whom he stole the memories.

XXII – Departure

Hero leaves home. If the hero is a seeker he usually leaves to rescue the princess. (PROPP, 1984, p. 40 – 41)

In spite of the shock of discovering Lockhart’s true character, Harry and Ron keep with the plan to rescue Ginny. They cannot go back, not if there is a tiny possibility of the girl being alive. They disarm Lockhart and force him to go along with them to the Chamber. They go to Moaning Myrtle’s bathroom and there they find the entrance to the Chamber. Harry speaks Parseltongue²⁸ to a micro snake engraved on a sink; it opens revealing a pipe large enough to fit a man. Harry slides down the pipe, leaving behind Hogwarts, which is for Harry his true home, and entering an unknown territory.

XXIII – Punishment

Villain or false hero is punished, sometimes he is forgiven. The general punishment for the villain is death. (PROPP, 1984, p. 58)

Harry, Ron and Lockhart are walking along the Chamber’s tunnel, when, in a moment of distraction, Lockhart takes Ron’s wand:

‘The adventure ends here, boys!’ he said. ‘I shall take a bit of this skin back up to the school, tell them I was too late to save the girl, and that you two *tragically* lost your minds at the sight of her mangled body. Say goodbye to your memories!’

²⁸ Parseltongue is the language of snakes. Harry finds out he is a Parselmouth in this same year when he speaks to a snake in front of many students. From that moment on, students start to think that Harry is Slytherin’s descendent, since he was the last wizard known to speak Parseltongue.

He raised Ron's Spellotaped wand high over his head and yelled, 'Obliviate!' (ROWLING, 1998, p. 224)

But instead of erasing the boys' memories, the damaged wand backfires causing an explosion, ceiling stones fall on the ground forming a solid wall that separates Harry from Ron and Lockhart. The spell hits Lockhart, and he is the one to lose his memory. Probably, there could not be a worse punishment for someone so vain and arrogant and mainly, for someone who erased so many people's memories.

XXIV – Receipt of a Magical Agent

Hero acquires use of a magical agent: animals, magical objects, helpers or new abilities such as super strength or the ability to transform into an animal. The ways the acquisition takes place are various: purchase, spontaneous appearance, manufacturing and indication are some examples. (PROPP, 1984, p. 44 – 49)

Harry proceeds alone into the depths of the Chamber and meets Tom Riddle who reveals himself to be Lord Voldemort. Suddenly Fawkes, Dumbledore's phoenix, enters the Chamber holding the Sorting Hat, both become crucial to Harry's victory, in spite of Voldemort's mockery:

'this is what Dumbledore sends his defender! A songbird and an old hat! Do you feel brave, Harry Potter? Do you feel safe now?'

Harry didn't answer. He might not see what use Fawkes or the Sorting Hat were, but he was no longer alone, and he waited with mounting courage for Riddle to stop laughing. (ROWLING, 1998, p. 233)

Further than increasing Harry's courage, Fawkes blinds the Basilisk – so Harry will not be petrified – and the Sorting Hat provides the sword that enables Harry to kill the Basilisk.

XXV – Branding/Stigma

The hero is marked by wound or brand. (PROPP, 1984, p. 50)

Right before Harry gets to stab the Basilisk, it bites him, leaving its poisonous fang in his arm. Harry pulls out the fang but it is too late, the venom has already sunk in. Lying on the floor waiting for his end, he feels Fawkes crying on his arm. The tears of the phoenix heal the injury and neutralize the venom.

XXVI – Struggle

Hero and villain join in direct combat. (PROPP, 1984, p. 50)

With the Basilisk dead and Harry miraculously saved from death, Tom Riddle decides to kill Harry himself, he raises his wand to cast a lethal curse, but at this moment Fawkes drops the diary in Harry's lap.

XXVII – Victory

The villain is defeated: killed in combat, defeated in competition or banished. (PROPP, 1984, p. 50 – 51)

Without thinking, Harry seizes the basilisk fang from the ground and stabs the diary. By destroying the diary, Harry destroys Tom Riddle:

There was a long, dreadful, piercing scream. Ink spurted out of the diary in torrents, streaming over Harry's hands, flooding the floor. Riddle was writhing and twisting, screaming and flailing and then ...

He had gone. (ROWLING, 1998, p. 237)

At this point in the series Harry does not know yet, but the diary was one of Voldemort's Horcruxes. Thus, Harry moves a step ahead to killing Voldemort for good.

XXVIII – Guidance

The hero is transferred to the object of the search: he is conducted through earth, water or air, someone points him the right way to go, he follows a trace, he uses magical means of transportation. (PROPP, 1984, p. 49)

After destroying the diary and Riddle, Harry takes Ginny and meets Ron and Lockhart. They all are wondering how they are going to go back to Hogwarts, then Fawkes carries them up through the pipe.

XXIX – Liquidation

Villainy or lack is resolved. (PROPP, 1984, p. 51 – 53)

Riddle is finished, the Basilisk is killed, the diary is destroyed and Ginny is still alive. Ginny is not blamed for the attacks; Riddle is proved to be the one responsible. Dumbledore resumes his Headmaster position and the petrified victims are cured with mandrake potion. All is fine then, things will be normal again.

XXX – Recognition

Hero is recognized by mark, stigma, object or wound. He is recognised for a difficult task he solved. (PROPP, 1984, p. 57)

During the year Harry had been worried that he might not belong to Gryffindor, and that he could be kindred to Salazar Slytherin because he speaks Parseltongue, a distinguishing mark of Slytherin. Tom Riddle had also stated that there were strange likenesses between them increasing Harry's fears. Dumbledore helps Harry to see himself in another perspective:

'You can speak Parseltongue, Harry,' said Dumbledore calmly, 'because Lord Voldemort – who is the last remaining ancestor of Salazar Slytherin – can speak Parseltongue. Unless I'm much mistaken, he transferred some of his own powers to you the night he gave you that scar. [...]

'So I *should* be in Slytherin,' Harry said, looking desperately into Dumbledore's face. 'The Sorting Hat could see Slytherin's power in me, and it –'

'Put you in Gryffindor,' said Dumbledore calmly. 'Listen to me, Harry. You happen to have many qualities Salazar Slytherin prized in his hand-picked students. His own very rare gift, Parseltongue ... resourcefulness ... determination ... a certain disregard for rules,' he added, his moustache quivering again. 'Yet the Sorting Hat placed you in Gryffindor. You know why that was. Think.'

'It only put me in Gryffindor,' said Harry in a defeated voice, 'because I asked not to go in Slytherin ...'

'*Exactly*,' said Dumbledore, beaming once more. 'Which makes you very *different* from Tom Riddle. It is our choice, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.' Harry sat motionless in his chair, stunned. 'If you want proof, Harry, that you belong in Gryffindor, I suggest you look more closely at *this*.'

Dumbledore reached across to Professor McGonagall's desk, picked up the blood-stained silver sword and handed it to Harry. Dully, Harry turned it over, the rubies blazing in the firelight. And then he saw the name engraved just below the hilt.

Godric Gryffindor.

'Only a true Gryffindor could have pulled that out of the Hat, Harry,' said Dumbledore simply. (ROWLING, 1998, p. 245)

After this conversation, Harry recognizes himself as a Gryffindor, and more importantly, as someone different from Voldemort.

XXXI – Wedding

Hero ascends the throne, marries or is rewarded in another way. (PROPP, 1984, p. 58 – 60)

Harry and Ron receive 400 points for Gryffindor and Special Awards for Services to the School. Dumbledore thanks Harry for having shown such loyalty to him in the Chamber and Hagrid thanks Harry for clearing his name and freeing him from Azkaban.

2.2. Commentary

As we can see *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* presents all the functions that Vladimir Propp has predicted for all wonder tales, although not in the same proposed order, which, as previously explained, is not a problem per se, since wonder tales, as the case of each of the books in Harry Potter's saga, do not need to follow it strictly.

It is interesting, though, to notice that some groups of functions stick together, which is only natural, since, for example, the *rescue* follows closely the *pursuit*, the inverse order being probably impossible, or at least harder to be found, once that to be rescued, someone has first to be pursued. Another explicit example is the fact that, in order for the hero to have a reaction to something that is given to him, he must first receive it, hence, *hero's reaction* following *first function of the donor*. As one last example, we can mention *difficult task* and *solution* being presented in this order, since the task cannot be solved before being previously presented.

For lack of time and space I have not analyzed the other six volumes, but the analysis of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* is enough to conclude that the Harry Potter saga belongs to the fairy-tale genre, with each book, as it seems from this analysis, having in itself Propp's functions and working each as a cycle inside the saga.

3. HARRY POTTER AND THE FAIRY-TALE

Having stated that Harry Potter belongs to the realm of the wonder tale in chapter 2, in this chapter I am going to discuss the genre itself. For the purpose of this work I am considering fairy-tale as a synonym of wonder tale, since my theoretical background, Vladimir Propp, C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien, do not seem to make a distinction between the two of them. In section 3.1 I present the definition of this genre and its origins; in section 3.2 I discuss the false beliefs surrounding the genre, in section 3.3 I talk about the appeal of the genre; and in section 3.4 I defend that fairy-tales can appeal to adults.

3.1. What is a Fairy-Tale? Where do They Come from?

Many people when they think about fairy-tales have a mental picture of how a fairy tale should be and it is probably a Walt Disney picture: princesses, princes, castles, ogres, gnomes, dragons, fairies and so many other extraordinary elements. According to Corso & Corso (2007), it has not always been like that, though; the original purpose of folktales was not to warn kids about the dangers of the world or teaching them not to disobey their parents with moral endings. European folktales, predecessor of modern western fairy-tales, were not destined specifically for children; their function was to get the villagers through the long winter nights and to entertain them from an empty stomach. Far from protecting children from reality with its many symbolisms, folktales talked about death, cruelty, starvation and the perils of the world.

Modern fairy tales emerged with the creation of childhood, a concept that did not exist until the 17th century. Many tales, then, were adapted to be read for children, the brothers Grimm are responsible for many of these adaptations; scenes of sex and explicit violence were taken out and happy endings were added. Writers like Hans Christian Andersen started to write stories directed for children, and by the end of 19th century children's literature was a considerable market.

In spite of the name, a fairy tale does not need to portray fairies. It is about "Faerie" which means the land or realm of fairies. This definition broadens the category: in Faerie we have not only fairies, but all sorts of magical beings and the common beings, the seas, the sky, the earth, the stars and everything that surround

us. Here I use Tolkien's definition of fairy-tale. And who would be better to define this genre than the man who created the *Lord of the Rings* world, an iconic Faerie?

a "fairy-story" is one which touches on or uses Faerie, whatever its own main purpose may be: satire, adventure, morality, fantasy. Faerie itself may perhaps most nearly be translated by Magic—but it is magic of a peculiar mood and power, at the furthest pole from the vulgar devices of the laborious, scientific, magician. There is one proviso: if there is any satire present in the tale, one thing must not be made fun of, the magic itself. That must in that story be taken seriously, neither laughed at nor explained away. (TOLKIEN, 2013, p. 3)

Harry Potter matches this description. It has all the elements: wizards, normal people (muggles), all sorts of mythological beasts, incredible feats, and beautiful landscapes. It deals with a magical place where magic is taken seriously. Although we find pieces of moral advice, such as when Dumbledore says to the whole school that we need to do what is right and not what is easy, this is not a moral tale, when Rowling was asked to what extent she conceived Harry Potter as a moral tale, she answered:

I did not conceive it as a moral tale, the morality sprang naturally out of the story, a subtle but important difference. I think any book that sets out to teach or preach is likely to be hard going at times (though I can think of a couple of exceptions). (ROWLING, 2004)

Harry Potter is much more of a fantasy and adventure story. And we could also see it as a political metaphor: Voldemort and his terrorism to form a lineage of only pure-blood wizards and Hitler and his war to purify the German race.

3.1. Common Beliefs

3.1.1. Infantile? Really?

Just for the fact that Harry Potter can be considered a fairy-tale, there will be people who will claim it to be, therefore, a children's tale. Why, however, should fairy-tales be considered infantile? What is in the nature of the genre that cannot be destined to adults?

Children as a class — except in a common lack of experience they are not one — neither like fairy-stories more, nor understand them better than adults do; and no more than they like many other things. They are young and growing, and normally have keen appetites, so the fairy-stories as a rule go down well enough. But in fact only some

children, and some adults, have any special taste for them; and when they have it, it is not exclusive, nor even necessarily dominant. It is a taste, too, that would not appear, I think, very early in childhood without artificial stimulus; it is certainly one that does not decrease but increases with age, if it is innate. (TOLKIEN, 2013, p. 4 – 5)

Maybe it is precisely the fantastic element that gives the genre a childish face. Children are believed to be more in touch with their imaginative side, and there are people who believe that children cannot distinguish reality from fantasy, so fantasy is considered part of the children's world.

Good stories often introduce the marvellous or supernatural, and nothing about Story has been so often misunderstood as this. Thus, for example, Dr Johnson, if I remember rightly, thought that children liked stories of the marvellous because they were too ignorant to know that they were impossible. But children do not always like them, nor are those who like them always children; and to enjoy reading about fairies — much more about giants and dragons — it is not necessary to believe in them. Belief is at best irrelevant; it may be a positive disadvantage. (LEWIS, 2013, p. 11)

As a matter of fact, what would be the fun of reading or listening to *The Beauty and the Beast*, for instance, if it was common for people to be transformed into horrible beasts by wicked witches? This tale would provide, then, the same feeling as any realistic story. The fun about fairy tales is precisely to read about things that we have never thought of, or that will never happen to us.

Maybe fairy tales are considered childish because this is a genre seen as simpler and, therefore, inferior in quality by critics and academics. We have a tradition of praising drama, tragedy and poetry as the great literature, the other kinds being less worthy of recognition. The funny thing is that many canonical texts such as *The Iliad*, *The Divine Comedy* and *Beowulf* are filled with the marvelous. Critics seem to think that writing a fantasy novel is much easier than writing another kind of novel. But is it so easy to write a fairy tale, or, better still, a good fairy tale? If writing a book like *Harry Potter* does not require much skill why do not more people do it and become millionaire authors like Rowling?

To make a Secondary World inside which the green sun will be credible, commanding Secondary Belief, will probably require labour and thought, and will certainly demand a special skill, a kind of elvish craft. Few attempt such difficult tasks. But when they are attempted and in any degree accomplished then we have a rare

achievement of Art: indeed narrative art, storymaking in its primary and most potent mode. (TOLKIEN, 2013, p. 6)

Writing something good that other people will enjoy reading is not an easy task, regardless of the genre.

3.1.2. Chaotic?

Another thing that may be a factor to undermine fairy tales is the false belief that the plot happens at random. Since we have many impossible things taking place, perhaps anything can happen in whatever way, but that is not the way how it works.

Nor are the marvels in good Story ever mere arbitrary fictions stuck on to make the narrative more sensational. I happened to remark to a man who was sitting beside me at dinner the other night that I was reading Grimm in German of an evening but never bothered to look up a word I didn't know, 'so that it is often great fun' (I added) 'guessing what it was that the old woman gave to the prince which he afterwards lost in the wood*. 'And specially difficult in a fairy-tale,' said he, 'where everything is arbitrary and therefore the object might be anything at all.' His error was profound. The logic of a fairy-tale is as strict as of a realistic novel, though different. (LEWIS, 2013, p. 11 – 12)

In Harry Potter at least I can affirm that the narrative is not arbitrary. In that world, a wizard does not simply wave his wand and everything is solved. One interesting passage that illustrates this is in *Half-Blood Prince*. In the first chapter the Minister of Magic is telling to the muggle Prime Minister that Voldemort is back and the dangers that it entails:

The Prime Minister gazed helplessly at the pair of them for a moment, then the words he had fought to suppress all evening burst from him at last.

'But for heaven's sake – you're *wizards*! You can do *magic*! Surely you can sort out – well – *anything*!'

Scrimgeour turned slowly on the spot and exchanged an incredulous look with Fudge, who really did manage a smile this time as he said kindly, 'The trouble is, the other side can do magic too, Prime Minister.' (ROWLING, 2005, p. 24)

Here we have the mistaken muggle logic that magic can solve every problem. To destroy Voldemort is not simple; it does not suffice to do magic, because Voldemort and his Death Eaters are extremely accomplished wizards too.

To perform magic in the world of Harry Potter is much more than waving a wand. When the wizard is more skillful he uses, for instance, non-verbal spells, that is, he performs the spells without saying the incantation out loud. In the sixth book, when Dumbledore and Harry are in a cave trying to retrieve a horcrux, Dumbledore leads the way, searching for traces of magic:

‘Here,’ he said. ‘We go through here. The entrance is concealed.’

Harry did not ask how Dumbledore knew. He had never seen a wizard work things out like this, simply by looking and touching; but Harry had long since learned that bangs and smoke were more often the marks of ineptitude than expertise. (ROWLING, 2005, p. 522)

Magic in Harry Potter’s world is something limited by rules: it is not random or free. That is why wizards and witches receive magic education at wizarding schools such as Hogwarts: they have to control their magic, to master it and to learn how to use it for the desired ends. To perform a spell one needs the right combination of sounds, the right intonation and the right wand movement. For some spells something else is required, to perform a Patronus Charm, for instance, one needs also to focus on a happy memory, and if the thinking is not intense enough or the memory is not happy enough, one will not be able to avoid Dementors. For the Cruciatus Curse, which causes pain, one needs to enjoy seeing others suffer, otherwise one will not perform a powerful curse. When Barty Crouch Junior disguised as Moody teaches his students about the killing curse he adds:

‘Avada Kedavra’s a curse that needs a powerful bit of magic behind it – you could all get your wands out now and point them at me and say the words, and I doubt I’d get so much as a nose-bleed. (ROWLING, 2000, p. 192)

To *apartate*²⁹ is also very difficult: one must be completely determined to reach one’s destination and move without haste, but with deliberation. If one fails partially in the attempt, one might *splinch* oneself, meaning that a part of the wizard’s body is left behind. Many wizards for this reason prefer safer means of transportation such as brooms and *Floo powder*³⁰.

The Ministry of Magic is responsible for creating laws for better usage of magic and to control those who trespass them. For example, the use of any of the three unforgiveable curses – killing, torturing and controlling curses – gives a perpetual

²⁹ To disappear from one place and appear in the desired place.

³⁰ Wizards can travel through fireplaces using *Floo powder*.

reclusion in Azkaban, the wizarding prison. Gamp's Law of Elemental Transfiguration limits the things that can be conjured, food and money, for example, cannot be materialized from thin air. Underage students are prohibited from performing magic outside school, otherwise they will be expelled. Wizards cannot have certain beasts as pets, dragons being one example. The main duty of the Ministry is keeping muggles unaware of wizards' existence. We can see that, in spite of being a magical world, it is an organized and politicized world.

Neither does Rowling write a sum of random magic events just to fill pages. She had serious thorough planning:

Do you know, J.K., where you're going?

Yes.

You do? You plot it out?

Yes, I spent five years-- it was five years before-- between having that idea and finishing the first book and during those five years I was planning the whole seven book series, so it's already written in stone. That's how it's going to happen. (ROWLING, 2000c)

So since the first book she knew there were going to be seven books, one for each year at Hogwarts and that in the last book they were not going back to school; she had the outline of what was going to happen in each book, and which characters would die. And she needed to know ahead to leave clues throughout the books, she had to make connections between books in order not to introduce things out of the blue. That is one of the fun things of rereading the books: discovering the clues that she had given beforehand. Some examples follow below.

In book three Harry, worried, tells Dumbledore he thought Sibila Trelawney had made a true prediction about Voldemort's ally going back to his master and helping him to regain power. Then, Dumbledore says that this elevates to two the number of true prophecies she has ever made. In book five we find out that the other prophecy was about Harry being the man born to vanquish Voldemort.

Riddle's diary appears and is destroyed in book two and we only get to know that it is a horcrux in book six.

Harry's neighbour, Arabella Figg, appears since the first book as the boring cat-loving old lady with whom Harry spent the days when the Dursleys went out and did not

want to take the boy along. In book five we discover she is a Squib placed strategically near Harry to watch over him.

In the first book when Dumbledore looks at himself in the mirror of Erised he says that he sees himself holding a pair of socks, Harry realizes he is lying. Only in the last book do we find out what he truly saw, and that is very relevant to the plot.

3.2. Why is it so Appealing?

Now we face a different question: why do people read fairy-tales? What is so appealing in this genre? And more important, what is so appealing in Harry Potter?

3.2.1. Escapism

With stories, and fairy-tales suit this purpose well, we can escape from reality for a moment, we can dive into the story that we are reading and forget a little about our own personal problems. We can exchange our humble life for a king's life, we can find our charming princes, we can fight dragons and rescue the princess, we can find endless pots of gold and live in a castle, while the bills wait in the drawer to be paid. For many people those scenarios seem far more exciting than day-to-day life. Reading wonder tales is a great help to recover when we are sick or depressed, nothing better for someone who is feeling ill than to laugh and thrill with the adventures of a hero.

3.2.2. A Way to Cope with Difficult Issues

On the other hand, fairy-stories can be a consolation for those who are living difficult times. We find hope for a broken heart, for someone's death and for the perspective of our own death. Rowling herself said that because of her mother's death, the series became more focused on the theme of death, it was her way to cope with the fact: Harry Potter served her as a form of escape, or yet, a therapy:

Let me tell you one thing. Simply the fact of writing the first book saved my life. I'm always told that the world I created is unreal; it was that which allowed me to escape. Yes, it's true; it's unreal up to a point. But not because my world was magical but because all writers evade themselves. Additionally, I did not write only to escape but because I searched to understand ideas which concerned me. Ideas such as love, loss, separation, death... and all that is reflected in the first book. (ROWLING, 2008)

To show how recurrent death is in the Harry Potter books, here follow some examples: Voldemort's desperate search for immortality and his creation of multiple

Horcruxes versus Harry's acceptance of death as part of life; the creation of the philosopher's stone by Nicolas Flamel who lived more than 600 years drinking its elixir; the life expectancy of wizards which are longer than muggles', the legend of the three deathly hallows that say that the person who reunites the three hallows becomes the master of death; the resurrection stone which enables one to call someone back to life in ghost-like form, the ghosts which are imprints of wizards who were too afraid to die and did not want to go on, the portraits that are a way to talk to someone who is dead, and the veil that is studied in the Department of Mysteries with much curiosity is linked to death. Nunes states that:

In this sense, I believe that one of the reasons why people reach for books like the *Harry Potter Saga* is that they seem to beckon with the possible answers to fundamental questions concerning who we are, what we are doing here, for how long, or where we are heading to afterwards. For a while the readers can use a universe such as Harry Potter's and leave reality for this fictional world whose "message" they have the conditions to decipher. (NUNES, 2010, p. 39)

Stories can be a source of possibilities for our own lives: we can see in a character's problem our own problem reflected, and seeing how this problem is dealt with inside the story may give us a perspective of how to (or not to) deal with it in the real life.

3.2.3. To Experience Intense Emotions

With fairy tales we have the perspective of a happy ending. In a world full of injustices, living a real life full of uncertainties, it is reassuring to read terrible events with the expectation or near certainty of an "and they lived happily ever after". Although predictable the happy ending might be, Tolkien believes that the good narrative is the one that makes us relieved when it finally comes.

It is the mark of a good fairy-story, of the higher or more complete kind, that however wild its events, however fantastic or terrible the adventures, it can give to child or man that hears it, when the "turn" comes, a catch of the breath, a beat and lifting of the heart, near to (or indeed accompanied by) tears, as keen as that given by any form of literary art, and having a peculiar quality. Even modern fairy-stories can produce this effect sometimes. It is not an easy thing to do; it depends on the whole story which is the setting of the turn, and yet it reflects a glory backwards. A tale that in any measure

succeeds in this point has not wholly failed, whatever flaws it may possess, and whatever mixture or confusion of purpose. (TOLKIEN, 2013, p.14)

The Harry Potter books provide us many of these turn-of-events moments, when we “catch our breath and our hearts lift”.

In the book one we feel shocked that Professor Quirrell is the one trying to steal the philosopher’s stone, and even more shocked when we find out that Voldemort is sharing his body, we feel afraid for Harry, but relieved when all is over and he is safe in the hospital wing.

In book two we are twisted by the fact that Tom Riddle is Voldemort and we feel distressed when he sets the Basilisk to attack Harry, however, when Fawkes enters the Chamber, Harry and we get more confident because if Fawkes is around, Dumbledore is around; when Harry stabs the diary we feel avenged for Ginny and the petrified victims.

In book three we get mesmerized to discover that Sirius Black is the good guy and that Ron’s pet rat is actually the animagus³¹ Peter Pettigrew who betrayed Harry’s parents. Then, we are worried that Harry and Hermione will not be able to rescue Sirius from the horrible fate of a Dementor’s kiss, but they fly triumphantly on the hippogriff Buckbeack and release Sirius.

In book four, when Harry is tied up in a graveyard surrounded by dozens of Death Eaters and Voldemort with his just-regained body, we fear for Harry’s life. Voldemort and Harry join in combat, but then their wands connect and we are touched by the appearance of the echoes of Harry’s parents. Harry grabs Cedric’s corpse and runs for the cup that can take him back to Hogwarts, but the cup is too far and Harry’s leg is injured, so he cannot run fast enough and Cedric’s body is too heavy, he is not going to make it, we are full of adrenaline, Voldemort is right behind him wearing a triumphant smile, but then Harry remembers the summoning spell “accio” and the cup flies to his hand and he is taken back safe. Barty Crouch Junior disguised as Professor Moody takes Harry to his office, he confesses that he was the one who

³¹ An animagus is a wizard capable of transforming himself into an animal.

transformed the cup into a portkey³², and he is about to kill Harry who is unarmed, when Dumbledore, McGonagall and Snape step into the scene, saving Harry.

In book five when Lucius Malfoy and other Death Eaters corner Harry in the Department of Mysteries, Sirius suddenly appears defending his godson, but then we cry with Sirius' death and run with Harry after Bellatrix to avenge Sirius. Voldemort himself appears then, and Harry has not the strength or will to defend himself; he wants to join Sirius in the afterlife. Dumbledore steps in and we have one of the best fighting scenes of the saga. Harry is safe again.

In book six Dumbledore dies and we do not believe it; the fans really could not believe he was dead: websites were created devoted to pointing out clues why he was not dead. We go after Snape with Harry, and when we finally reach him, he reveals that he is the Half-Blood Prince.

In book seven we are at Hogwarts and Death Eaters are outside attacking the school and Voldemort makes his voice echo across the school threatening everybody in case Harry does not surrender, but Harry will not give up, he will fight, or so we think; Harry discovers he is a horcrux and we are as shocked as he is, he must surrender so as to make Voldemort mortal again, and so he does, and we follow Harry's steps back into the forest where Voldemort is waiting:

It was not, after all, so easy to die. Every second he breathed, the smell of the grass, the cool air on his face, was so precious: to think that people had years and years, time to waste, so much time is dragged, and he was clinging to each second. At the same time he thought that he would not be able to go on, and he knew that he must. The long game was ended, the Snitch had been caught, it was time to leave the air ... (ROWLING, 2007, p. 559)

All hearts are tight, but he does not die; only the horcrux that lived inside him is destroyed. And we are back to the battle and we cheer along with the others when Harry reveals himself alive, but there is no time for celebration, Voldemort is there, and we read the dialogue between Harry and Voldemort with a pounding heart, anxious to know who will survive in the final strike, and it is Harry. Relief, enormous and welcome relief: the hero is not dead, the villain is, and the prospect of peace is on the horizon. In the epilogue, we are touched by the scene of Harry, Ron and

³² When you hold a portkey you are instantly teleported to the place that that portkey had been programmed to.

Hermione bringing their children to the Hogwarts Express; and we feel that feeling that only a good ending of a long and thrilling book can provoke. The final comforting words come: “all was well”.

3.2.4. The Real Unreal World

Every story creates a world in which that story exists; Frankenstein, for example, creates a world in which is verisimilar for a scientist to create a monster from parts of corpses. One of the consequences of the coherence of the Faerie world, as Tolkien indicates, is its sense of truth:

The peculiar quality of the “joy” in successful Fantasy can thus be explained as a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth. It is not only a “consolation” for the sorrow of this world, but a satisfaction, and an answer to that question, “Is it true?” The answer to this question that I gave at first was (quite rightly): “If you have built your little world well, yes: it is true in that world.” That is enough for the artist (or the artist part of the artist). But in the “eucatastrophe” we see in a brief vision that the answer may be greater — it may be a far off gleam or echo of evangelium in the real world. (TOLKIEN, 2013, p.14)

For Harry Potter fans, that world feels kind of real; it is like a parallel dimension. This is the author’s merit for writing something so intense and meticulous; Rowling describes emotions so well that we can really grasp what Harry is feeling; to illustrate this I quote parts of the dialogue between Harry and professor Dumbledore right after Sirius is killed:

‘Harry, suffering like this proves you are still a man! This pain is part of being a human –‘

‘THEN – I – DON’T – WANT – TO – BE – HUMAN!’ Harry roared, and he seized the delicate silver instrument from the spindle-legged table beside him and flung it across the room; it shattered into a hundred tiny pieces against the wall. [...]

‘I DON’T CARE!’ Harry yelled at them, snatching up a lunascope and throwing it into the fireplace. ‘I’VE HAD ENOUGH, I’VE SEEN ENOUGH, I WANT OUT, I WANT IT TO END, I DON’T CARE ANY MORE‘

[...]

‘I – DON’T!’ Harry screamed so loudly that he felt his throat might tear, and for a second he wanted to rush at Dumbledore and break him, too; shatter that calm old face, shake him, hurt him, make him feel some tiny part of the horror inside himself.

[...]

‘YOU DON’T KNOW HOW I FEEL!’ Harry roared. ‘YOU – STANDING THERE – YOU –’ But words were no longer enough, smashing things was no more help; he wanted to run, he wanted to keep running and never look back, he wanted to be somewhere he could not see the clear blue eyes staring at him, that hatefully calm old face. (ROWLING, 2003, p. 726-727)

We can feel Harry’s agony for the loss of his beloved godfather, even if we have not been through a similar situation in our own lives. The amount of details Rowling gives about her fictional world makes us feel as if we are reading something real. If you read *Quidditch Through the Ages*, for instance, you almost believe it is a real sport, such is the richness of details of the rules, the penalties, the story of the game and various teams. The following excerpt from this book describes the evolution of broomsticks:

Until the early nineteenth century, Quidditch was played on day brooms of varying quality. These brooms represented a massive advance over their medieval forerunners; the invention of the Cushioning Charm by Elliot Smethwyck in 1820 went a long way towards making broomsticks more comfortable than ever before (see Fig. F). Nevertheless, nineteenth-century broomsticks were generally incapable of achieving high speeds and were often difficult to control at high altitudes. (ROWLING, 2001b, p. 47)

The Potter universe feels even more real for the author who has lived with it for almost two decades. When asked if she felt like she had to say “goodbye” to Harry when she finished the last volume, Rowling answered;

Yes and no. Because I ... It sounds too corny for words, but I – I feel as though I know what he’s doing now. And I – so he’ll always be a presence in my life really. (ROWLING, 2007b)

Still about being true or not, there is an interesting passage in book seven: when Harry has a near-death experience, he goes to a limbo between life and death where he has a long conversation with Albus Dumbledore, before regaining consciousness:

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

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

‘Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but, why on earth should that mean that it is not real?’ (ROWLING, 2007a, p. 579)

This is the feeling we have when we read a good story: it happens only in our minds as readers, but it feels true. And because the series is composed of seven books, some of them thick, readers have more time to get attached to the plot and characters, so they create a stronger feeling of realness.

3.3. For Children and Adults

For all the arguments stated, Harry Potter should not be labelled as a children’s book, limiting it as if only children could enjoy the saga. If adults read Harry Potter and find something worthy in the books, as they do, then it is a story capable of interesting adults likewise. One could conclude this with the cliché: “Harry Potter is a book for children of all ages”, but I also do not agree with this statement, for good fairy-tales are real literature that can be read by adults as adults, not only by the children within the adults. Tolkien again:

It is usually assumed that children are the natural or the specially appropriate audience for fairy-stories. In describing a fairy-story which they think adults might possibly read for their own entertainment, reviewers frequently indulge in such waggeries as: “this book is for children from the ages of six to sixty.” But I have never yet seen the puff of a new motor-model that began thus: “this toy will amuse infants from seventeen to seventy”; though that to my mind would be much more appropriate. Is there any essential connexion between children and fairy-stories? Is there any call for comment, if an adult reads them for himself? Reads them as tales, that is, not studies them as curios. (TOLKIEN, 2013, p. 4)

It seems that adults have to make concessions to read a book that is (mistakenly) labelled as being for children. In the United Kingdom there are two versions of each Harry Potter book: one has a “childish” cover – with very colourful drawings – and the other has an “adult cover” – with simpler pictures and sober colours. The story inside is exactly the same, just the covers differ, for “the serious British adults” could be ashamed of opening a Harry Potter book in the subway, for instance, so the covers had a disguising purpose. A funny situation happened to me once: I recognized a Harry Potter book in the middle of other books that a Latin professor of mine was carrying and I said to him: “Nice, you read Harry Potter too!”, he quickly corrected me “No, I’m reading Harrius Potter.”, which is the version in Latin. And he added that there were virtually no current literary works printed in

Latin, so there was not much option. I guess that in his mind reading the book for the sake of practicing the language was more acceptable than reading for fruition. Lewis takes the argument further:

It is usual to speak in a playfully apologetic tone about one's adult enjoyment of what are called 'children's books'. I think the convention a silly one. No book is really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally (and often far more) worth reading at the age of fifty — except, of course, books of information. The only imaginative works we ought to grow out of are those which it would have been better not to have read at all. (LEWIS, 2013, p. 13 – 14)

Maybe that is a too strong perspective; maybe there are books we grow out of them because they deal only with children related issues. Nunes comments in her dissertation:

I here acknowledge that *Harry Potter* belongs in the field of Children's Literature. In the discussion in Part One I suddenly found myself deciding that the label truly fits (especially if you believe that we can have children of all ages). (NUNES, 2010, p. 84)

I disagree that *Harry Potter* belongs to the field of Children's Literature, and for me saying “especially if you believe that we can have children of all ages” sounds like a condescending comment to those adults who engage in such reading saying that they “have not let their inner children die”. But I think it is not about that, I think that fairy tales are not fit only for children. Sure, fairy-tales – just as almost any other literary genre, or music or movie – can be adapted for children, or made specifically for children. But the genre itself is not childish.

Who decided that fairy tales was a genre primarily childish? Not the children, but the adults. Some children grow up and discover other genres, and move to these other genres, but some grow up and still enjoy reading a fairy-tale. Does that make them less mature? I do not believe so; I think it is just a matter of taste. Just as some people like onions and others hate them; some people like fairy-tales and others do not, but there is no reason to undermine this genre as inferior, or simplistic, or childish. The same way some children enjoy western stories or spy novels, and does this fact transform these genres into children's literature? No it does not.

Obviously that there is literature specially designed for children which little appeals to adults or even teenagers, Rowling, as already said, in opposition to Hans Christian

Andersen, did not write Harry Potter specially for children. First of all, she wrote it for herself (an adult), because she thought it was going to be fun to write. So Harry Potter is a fantasy novel, a fairy tale but not the kind intended to put children to sleep narrating the beauties of a fantastic world. Rowling's world feels real because it is not divided between good and evil people: the characters have content and complex personalities. Rowling was talking in an interview about the contradiction of Voldemort not being pure-blood and his desire to "clean" the wizards' lineage, this is what she said:

Like Hitler! See! I think it's the case that the biggest bully takes their own defects and they put them on someone else, and they try to destroy them. And that's what he [Voldemort] does. That was very conscious-- I wanted to create a villain where you could understand the workings of his mind, not just have a 2-D baddie, dressed up in black, and I wanted to explore that and see where that came from. Harry in Book Four is starting to come to terms with what makes a person turn that way. Because they took wrong choices and he [Voldemort] took wrong choices from an early age. (ROWLING, 2001a)

And as a matter of fact we get to know Voldemort's background, how he came to be who he is; he is not just a guy dressing black with an evil laughter. It is also interesting to see how the characters evolve throughout the books, two good examples are Draco and Neville:

O percurso de Neville Longbottom evolui ascendentemente. Ele começa história sem auto-estima, em parte devido à maneira como foi criado. À medida que seus amigos e alguns professores vão lhe injetando confiança, Neville melhora como bruxo e como pessoa, mostrando facetas que a narrativa limitada e parcial até então não soubera evidenciar. Draco Malfoy, por sua vez, primeiramente era visto como antagonista de Harry, o oposto dele: um garoto mimado. No decorrer da história, sua família perde prestígio e, em virtude disso, Malfoy demonstra atitudes que o protagonista dificilmente atribuiria a ele e, conseqüentemente, também os leitores veem como surpreendentes. (GNEWUCH, 2011, p. 32)

The fact that both Longbottom and Malfoy suffer so drastic changes, the first becoming more confident, the latter less of a bully, to say the least about them, helps us see that the characters are profoundly built and developed throughout the story.

Rowling did not aim to tell a story to hide the horrors of the world from the children. She deals with so many current issues that afflict us: depression through the

Dementors, sadism through the Death Eaters, specially Bellatrix Lestrange, the betrayal of friends in the case of Peter Pettigrew, economic inequality through Ron Weasley who is constantly scorned by Draco for being poor, rejection through Harry, minority rights through Hermione and her campaign in favour of house-elves, bullying through Dudley and teenager James Potter, prejudice through the false belief that Muggle-borns would be worse wizards than pure-blood wizards, abuse of power through young Dumbledore and Voldemort, and feminism through the many strong female characters. Beloved characters do die, and we consider the possibility that Harry might die in the end as well.

As we can see, Harry Potter does not belong to the kind of “Disney fairy-tale” destined for children, where everything ends in a perfect and naïve way, much less does it belong to Children’s Literature per se. The saga is part of a much more fundamental area: the wonder tale/fairy-tale; and, for that reason, it appeals to adults who are attracted by this kind of reading. Further than that, we, children and adults, need magic in our lives.

Yes, that’s right. Humans need fantasy and magic. We have a need for mystery. Sir Frank Frasier (in *The Golden Bow*) says that in religion the man depends on God, but in magic the man depends on himself, which allows us to measure the capacity of man and magic becomes an ideal existence. Magic carries a human existence, in Book 6 the Prime Minister says to the Minister of Magic “You can do magic! Surely you can sort out anything!” and the minister answers: “Yes, the trouble is, the other side can do magic too.” We need magic and I defend it at all cause. Magic is a very important part of literature and that’s why it’s always going to be there. (ROWLING, 2008)

As seen during this chapter, the author herself did not see her work as “for children”, and the many readers that grew reading it and those who were already adults at first, are probably another proof that it is not a book exclusive for children, nor should it be.

Conclusion

In the introduction of this work, I approached the Harry Potter phenomenon and proposed to present reasons why Harry Potter appeals to so many adults and to discuss why it should not be considered a children's book.

In Chapter one, *Harry Potter and the Hero of a Thousand Faces*, I dealt with Joseph Campbell's monomyth, the journey of the hero and the transformations the hero goes through in his journey. I compared Harry Potter's journey to the journey of the archetypal hero that Campbell deals with. The comparison proved that Harry Potter can be related to the archetypal hero, and that, therefore, he speaks to all people, this being a possible reason for its appeal on adults and children alike.

That is what Rowling does: with a simple formulation, she reintroduces our children to, and refreshes the adults' memories of, ancestral archetypes such as the epic hero, the monster he has to vanquish, and the supernatural forces that surround him. (NUNES, 2010, p. 31-32)

As we have seen before, Rowling herself does not believe her work to be meant to one specific age of readers. To emphasize this point, the following excerpt from an interview shows us once more how she feels about the issue:

What do you think it is about Harry Potter that connects with so many people?

It's very hard to think about my work in those terms, because I really wrote it entirely for myself; it is my sense of humour in the books, not what I think children will find funny, and I suppose that would explain some of the appeal to adults. On the other hand, I think that I have very vivid memories of how it felt to be Harry's age, and children seem to identify strongly with Harry and his friends. (ROWLING, 2000a)

In Chapter two, *Harry Potter and the Morphology of the Folktale*, I talked about the 31 functions of a wonder tale proposed by Vladimir Propp and how these functions applied to *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, the second volume of the saga. This book proved to have all the functions but in a different order than the standard one. This conformity proved that Harry Potter belongs to a much more fundamental genre than children's literature: the wonder tale, which in this work was called also fairy-tale.

Fairy-tales are better explored in chapter three, *Harry Potter and the Fairy-Tale*, where I discussed the genre itself, approaching its origins and definition, prejudices,

functions and appeal. I concluded in this chapter that the fairy-tale genre has no reasons to be designated as children's literature by its nature.

We may conclude from all the analysis of this work that there are solid reasons to contradict the label of children's book that was put on the Harry Potter saga, and that this is a piece of literature that can be enjoyed by children and adults. In the words of Katherine Grimes:

Harry Potter books work with almost every group of people old enough to read. Young children read or listen to the books as though they were fairy tales. Young adolescents see in the series some means of coming to terms with the real world. Adults use them as a window on the world of younger people, but also as modern myths to help us understand eternal mysteries. Thus, Harry Potter serves as fairy tale prince for young children; then, like Pinocchio, he becomes a real boy for adolescents; and, finally, he serves as an archetypal hero for adults. (GRIMES, 2002, p. 90)

I agree with Grimes that different ages will read Harry Potter in different ways according to their different literary and life experience. I disagree, however, in the reasons she provides, especially when she says that children read the books as though they were fairy-tales. The Harry Potter saga, as already stated, can, indeed, be classified as a fairy-tale and, as already stated too, fairy-tales are not a genre exclusively for children. If we reread the same book at different ages we will have a different perspective on the book; actually, as Lewis suggests, the rereading provides a different reading experience in itself:

The re-reader is looking not for actual surprises (which can come only once) but for a certain surprisingness. The point has often been misunderstood. The man in Peacock thought that he had disposed of 'surprise' as an element in landscape gardening when he asked what happened if you walked through the garden for the second time. Wiseacre! In the only sense that matters the surprise works as well the twentieth time as the first. It is the *quality* of unexpectedness, not *the fact* that delights us. It is even better the second time. Knowing that the 'surprise' is coming we can now fully relish the fact that this path through the shrubbery doesn't *look* as if it were suddenly going to bring us out on the edge of the cliff. So in literature. We do not enjoy a story fully at the first reading. Not till the curiosity, the sheer narrative lust, has been given its sop and laid asleep, are we at leisure to savour the real beauties. Till then, it is like wasting great wine on a ravenous natural thirst which merely wants cold wetness. (LEWIS, 2013, p. 16 – 17)

Every time I reread Harry Potter – and I have reread the first four volumes at least 15 times – I find it amazing how much I can enjoy them with almost the same level of excitement as the first time. And sometimes I discover something different, because I look for smaller things that the anxiety of the first reading would not permit me to see. Other times, I just take one of the volumes and reread my favourite parts. The last three books I have reread fewer times, because time has passed and my life has got busier, I have had little time to devote to rereading the books that I already know almost by heart; I had to read books for my many reading disciplines in *Letras*. And I am not ashamed to admit that having read *The Iliad*, *Oedipus*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Decameron*, *Madame Bovary*, *Crime and Punishment* and so many other canonical texts throughout my undergraduate course, I find myself in the same position as when I entered *Letras*: finding Harry Potter the best reading I have ever had and the only book that I am certain I am going to reread till old age. I am glad that I had the opportunity to reread all the seven books again to write this paper, this time reading them carefully, with a student's eye, looking for material to write this work. And I am even happier to find out that the magic of the Harry Potter books has not diminished in the slightest after all this scrutinizing.

Of course this work allows room for more. Why was the order of Propp's functions different in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*? What led to this change, and why this specific order has come up? Would the order be the same in the other books of the series? Would all the functions even be present in the other books? Why did the updates on Campbell's monomyth come to be in Harry Potter? Are there other narratives where these same updates would be found? What led to this change over time? These are just some of the questions that come up. By a matter of space and time, these are questions to be further discussed in other works, being the important thing up to here, the fact that Harry Potter, as a fairy-tale, does not belong exclusively to children, but to all those who can somehow identify with it.

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