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**The Journey of the Villain in  
the Harry Potter series:  
An Archetypal Study of Fantasy Villains**

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## **Abstract**

Fantasy has featured in our culture since the beginning of times. From ancient mythology to futuristic Sci-Fi, stories have been filled with fantastic characters and settings. Disguised under the cover of the fantastic there is a heavy load of symbolism being conveyed through structures called archetypes. The idea of archetype as a symbolic structure which is repeated countless over time and space was identified and studied by the psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung and these archetypes can be recognized in many forms of art or even in dreams. Fantasy usually has archetypes as its basic structure. The symbols expressed as archetypes are supposedly understandable through cultures, and yet, each culture may express the same archetype in different ways. An important archetype that too often features in fantastical stories is that of the hero. Joseph Campbell has explored it, based on Jung's archetype theory, and called the pattern that composes heroes worldwide the Monomyth or the hero journey. This journey can be clearly seen in stories from ancient folk-tale and mythology to contemporary works, which is the case of the Harry Potter series. A literary phenomenon of the 21st century, the Harry Potter series tells the story of a boy wizard and his journey into herohood. In every hero journey, its pinnacle is reached in the confrontation with an arch(e)-villain. Every step in the journey bears a symbolic significance and the villain as part of that journey follows the rule. The villain is mostly the force to which the hero has to oppose, he is also a representation of the unknown; therefore this character is usually presented without a past or reason to be. However, the villain in the Harry Potter series, Lord Voldemort, lives his own journey; one which is incredibly similar to the archetypal journey lived by the hero, Harry. This thesis studies the archetype of villains in fantasy literature and the journey of the hero as it can be related to the villain in the Harry Potter series. This study is based on the archetypal

theory of C. G. Jung and on the pattern traced for the hero by Campbell. The journeys of both villain and hero are compared for the proposition of a contemporary understanding of the villain archetype.

**Key words:** Harry Potter, archetype, Joseph Campbell, journey of the hero, villain, fantasy, pop culture.

## Resumo

A fantasia tem sido parte da nossa cultura desde o começo dos tempos. Da mitologia antiga às ficções científicas futuristas, as histórias têm sido repletas de personagens e cenários fantásticos. Disfarçado sob o aspecto do fantástico existe um grande volume de simbolismo sendo transmitido através de estruturas chamadas arquétipos. A ideia de arquétipo como uma estrutura simbólica que é repetida inúmeras vezes através do tempo e espaço foi identificada e estudada pelo psicanalista Carl Gustav Jung, e esses arquétipos podem ser reconhecidos em várias formas de arte ou até mesmo em sonhos. A fantasia geralmente tem os arquétipos como sua estrutura básica. Os símbolos que são expressos através de arquétipos são supostamente entendidos por todas as culturas, mas ainda assim cada cultura pode expressar um mesmo arquétipo de maneiras diferentes. Um arquétipo importante que aparece em histórias de fantasia com muita frequência é o do herói. Joseph Campbell estudou esse arquétipo baseando-se nas teorias de Jung e chamou o padrão que compõe os heróis do mundo todo de monomito, ou jornada do herói. Essa jornada pode ser vista claramente em histórias desde antigos contos folclóricos e mitologias até obras contemporâneas, como é o caso da série Harry Potter. Um fenômeno literário do sec. XXI, a série Harry Potter conta a história de um menino mago e sua jornada para se tornar um herói. Em toda jornada do herói, o ápice é atingido no confronto com um arquivilão. Cada estágio da jornada tem um significado simbólico, e o vilão, como parte dessa jornada, não foge à regra. O vilão é primordialmente uma força contra a qual o herói tem que lutar, ele é também uma representação do desconhecido, portanto esse personagem é geralmente representado sem um passado ou uma razão de ser. No entanto, o vilão da série Harry Potter, Lord Voldemort, vive sua própria jornada, a qual é incrivelmente similar à jornada vivida pelo herói, Harry. Esta dissertação estuda o arquétipo do vilão nas literaturas de fantasia

e analisa de que forma a jornada do herói é associada ao vilão da série Harry Potter. Este estudo é baseado na teoria de arquétipos de C. G. Jung e no padrão traçado para o heróis por Campbell. As jornadas de ambos, vilão e herói, são comparadas, na série, com o objetivo de propor um entendimento contemporâneo do arquétipo do vilão.

**Palavras-chave:** Harry Potter, arquétipo, Joseph Campbell, jornada do herói, vilão, fantasia, cultura pop.



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“Suddenly he had come to believe in the importance of the mission, and with that belief, it seemed, had come acceptance of the larger situation. The realization that some genuine values underlay all the funny fantasy stuff he was seeing. Maybe he didn’t really believe in magic, but he did believe in those values, and was willing to sacrifice in order to support them.”

Piers Anthony

## 1. Introduction

Fantasy has been a part of stories since the beginning of story-telling until today. Every culture has its own way of introducing fantasy into the stories, whether it is through magic, supernatural or inexplicable events, personification of animals or intertextuality with legends and myths. The Harry Potter series<sup>1</sup> is a contemporary success of fantasy literature that crosses the barriers of world culture including age and gender. A potential reason for its cultural comprehensiveness may actually be included in one of the aspects of fantasy, which is myth. Fantasy stories are often underestimated and overlooked by the academy and the general public as a minor literature; nonetheless, it is a genre that carries a heavy symbolic load, which is of paramount importance for literature and culture in general. Fantasy is particularly appealing to children and letting them enter and discover this world of symbolic meaning in literature is essential for the development of the child's psyche and for their growth in face of the world.

Much of the symbolism present in myth is expressed through a structure called archetype. The main mythical feature of the Harry Potter series is the archetypal journey of the hero, which is lived by Harry in every separate volume of the series, but also in the sequence as a whole. The mythology expert Joseph Campbell has studied and described in detail this journey as it features around the world. The journey of the hero, in general terms, symbolizes the effort of growing up. A crucial step in that journey is the overcoming of obstacles and the hero's confrontation with the villain.

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<sup>1</sup> The volumes that compose the series, in chronological order, are: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*.

Usually undeveloped, the villain is the main part in the development of the fantasy hero. In the Harry Potter series the main villain, Lord Voldemort, appears to be more developed than the typical fantasy villain. Although his goals remain the same, power and glory, the villain has a past which is not only told to the reader, but to Harry as well. The hero cannot help but to recognize how similar their stories are.

This thesis aims at exploring the typical fantasy villain and contrasting it with the portrayal of such character in the Harry Potter series. Moreover, this thesis also explores the significance of the portrayals of fantasy villain in the many forms they may appear. These explorations will be made focusing on the archetype that delineates those characters. First studied and established by Carl G. Jung in his work *Man and His Symbols* (1968), archetypes are expressions of human characteristics that are common to every culture. They are expressed mainly in dreams and in myth. Myth, on its turn, is highly related to fantasy literature in general. Contemporary stories of heroes and conquerors follow the same archetypal pattern of ancient stories. Considered by Jung as a universal human necessity, the archetypes are inherent in the mythology of such stories. This thesis will follow the presented line of thought, first showing the relationship between fantasy and myth. Then, I will investigate how archetypes work in mythology and determine the main archetypes to be studied here. With those concepts in mind, I will explore and delineate qualitatively the typical fantasy villain, contrasting this villain with that of the Harry Potter series in order to evidence the differences in their construction. I will establish that the proximity of the figures of hero and villain in the Harry Potter series is uncommon in typical fantasy. This proximity gives rise to characteristics that are not primarily attributed to the archetypes that define those characters; therefore, propitiating a new and more elaborate archetype, especially for the villain.

## 1.1. Fantasy Literature and Myth

Fantasy literature and stories are mostly recognized by the featuring of magic or other supernatural elements in an improbable, extraordinary set of circumstances. Many attempts to define literary fantasy have been made by critics, theorists and writers of fantasy. Some of these definitions try to distinguish fantasy from stories such as fairy tale, folktale and legend, but it actually leaves them all a little blurred where a definition is concerned. In my perception all of these types of stories share things in common and they can actually be imperceptibly interwoven with relative ease.

Professor Brian Attebery tries to distinguish those categories based on definitions given by other scholars. His definition of fantasy is comprehensive and includes distinctions between fairy tale, folk tale and legend. However, even though well based and developed, there is no consensus among scholars of a final definition on the subject. For the genre of fantasy Attebery arrives at the following description:

[Fantasy is] any narrative which includes as a significant part of its make up some violation of what the author clearly believes to be natural law. (...) And fantasy treats impossibilities without hesitation, without doubt, without any attempt to reconcile them with our intellectual understanding of the working of the world or to make us believe that such things could under any circumstance come true. (1980: 2)

Let us carefully consider this definition. In order to have a violation of natural law, we also need a demonstration of what such law is, however obvious the expression “natural law” may seem. So fantasy, in order to display the extraordinary also has to display the ordinary or some sense of familiarity.

Another important part of Attebery’s definition is that it considers the outsider’s perception, that of the author’s and consequently the reader’s, in order to establish these laws. Therefore, the “natural law” being broken inside the book does not concern only

the characters, but predominantly what is outside such book. In fantasy, approximating the events to the reader is an important feature as it brings the archetypes portrayed in the story to the reader's realm of natural law. Moreover, considering only the inside world of the story would be very limiting for a definition of fantasy, as Attebery himself points out:

Eric Rabkin explores an equally limited subgroup: fantasies which contradict, not our accepted model of the world, but rather the model generated within the story itself. That is, his fantasy is what is more generally termed *nonsense* or *absurdity*; it involves periodic overturning of the ground rules of the fiction. For Rabkin, "true Fantasy" is represented by *Alice in Wonderland*, and the internally consistent mode favored by MacDonald or Tolkien is classed, without further examination, as "fairy-tale."(1980: 3)

A comprehensive view of fantasy is important here as it permits the inclusion of several types of stories such as those that belong to the realm of fairy tales, folktales, legend and especially myth. All of them, again, displaying very similar characteristics, but we can try to distinguish one from the other. Attebery's understanding of fantasy, therefore, is going to be the one considered for this thesis, since much of the contemporary fantasy novels are comprised of those ancient story modes. They permeate our current western pop-culture as well in novel, movies, comic books and even TV series under the guise of new outfits. Traces of multiple genres can be found as comprising the fantastic.

Attebery also tries to separate those stories which he considers to comprise the realm of fantasy: folktale would have peasant roots and they would be concerned with the problems of peasant life. They would be told "not as fact but as entertainment." (1980: 4) Standardized descriptions and actions with little detail are characteristics of folk tale. The tales collected by the Grimm brothers in the early nineteenth century are

an example of a written version of those folktales. The fairy tale would be a written, later and more complex version of the folk tale. Now not so worried about the individual problems of everyday peasant life, the hero of the fairy tale is out to seek the greater good for his community (Attebery, 1980: 4-6). A single story can carry characteristics of folktale and fairy-tale, which narrows the distinction between the two. The same story can still share characteristics of legends or myths.

Legends are stories based on people, settings and actions that supposedly existed. The myths are generally stories of gods and heroes that involve supernatural elements and events that may or - most probably - may not have happened. The myths, as the legend, were also once regarded as true facts. However, myths make up a part of every culture. Myths are stories that are constantly retold and spread by people and peoples; therefore, one myth can have more than one version, according to the culture it features.

Scholars have been fascinated by myth and have endlessly researched about them. Still, we can neither accurately establish the origin of myths, nor define it precisely and differentiate a myth from other forms of folklore without finding several similarities. We can, however, propose possibilities for the existence of myths.

One of the possibilities for myths is that they were first told as an attempt to explain natural phenomena, the environment and human nature. They help to shape our world and our experience. The folklore specialist Stith Thompson talking about the reasons for the existence of myths says that “there are certain psychological compulsions which impel people to tell tales of a particular kind. Dreams, fears, and stresses – it is from these that come the gods, the heroes, and the tales about them.” (1974: 171) And he even considers the possibility that some myths came from dreams. In our current Western culture, people tend not to give myths the importance they

deserve. According to Carl G. Jung, in his book *Man and His Symbols*, myths are related to dreams, as to how they come from men and are understood by them. Jung states about these symbols used by men: “Consciously we may ignore them, but unconsciously we respond to them, and to the symbolic forms – including dreams – in which they express themselves.” (1968: 98) These symbolic representations, which are part of the human unconscious, are the archetypes. Archetypes can be primarily found in the construction of myths. Archetypes are the basis for the construction of myths and they appear in the form of symbols.

Mythical stories usually personify or mystify the aspect or phenomenon that is being discussed, making the story symbolic. The details of each mythical story may vary immensely from culture to culture; nevertheless, the main symbolic content remains the same. For example, every culture will have its own creation myth, how the story of the myth is going to develop, particular characteristics of the characters, the setting or circumstances may vary immensely, and yet, all creation myths remain stories that intend to describe or explain the creation of the world and everything in it. In this way, even though the story around the archetype changes the symbol is preserved. Every culture needs its myths. They are an attempt at understanding the world, human nature and even the values we carry.

The myth in itself is neither “good” nor moral. The function of the myth is to propose a meaning to the world and human existence. Through myths the idea of reality, values and transcendence emerges, giving shape to the world. The archetypes that compose the mythical stories are supposed to be understandable even in different cultures. For that reason, every culture has its own myths, but the same archetypes usually feature in all of them. Archetypes are considered a universal structure. They are the essence around which the myths, legends and fairy tales are built.



The Harry Potter series is a story loaded with the symbolism from those stories: legends, myths and fairy-tales meet in a harmonic construction around primordial and modern archetypes. By understanding the construction of myths we can better understand the purpose of and use for archetypes, which propitiates a more clear understanding of the archetypes to be explored here, namely the Hero and Villain archetypes.

The Harry Potter series tells the story of a boy who discovers he is a wizard. His life changes from that point on and he embarks on his Hero Journey. Harry embodies the archetypal Hero, and as such he finds in his way a long road of trials to overcome before he can face his arch(e)-villain<sup>2</sup>. Voldemort, the archetypal villain, enters Harry's life very early, making him an orphan. During his journey Harry is constantly learning, about his past, his enemies and his own life. Harry's cyclical Journey is lived through the seven volumes of the series.

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<sup>2</sup> The arch villain is the main villain in the path of the Hero. He represents the hero's nemesis and is the character who will reflect the villain archetype.

## 2. The Harry Potter Series

The success of the Harry Potter series has reached now about 200 countries worldwide and it has been translated into 64 languages. The story about the young wizard has gained fans of all ages and races. Although the setting for the story is 20<sup>th</sup> century England, the archetypes that are part of the construction of the story enable people from different cultural backgrounds to identify with the characters and story of the series. Harry lives the archetypal Hero Journey repeatedly in each volume of the series, and also if we look at the series as a whole. During his road of trials Harry has to first identify his enemies and then come up with strategies to defeat them. The hero learns and grows with the surpassing of every new challenge and those become increasingly difficult, building up for the encounter with his nemesis.

Voldemort is the arch(e)-villain in the series and his first meeting with Harry takes place when our hero is just one year old. The reader learns the truth about Harry's family and past along with Harry himself in the first book of the series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Hagrid, the gamekeeper from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, is the one who tells Harry about the tragic death of his parents and his potentially brilliant future as a wizard. At school he finds a mentor in Professor Dumbledore, as well as loyal friends who will help him in his adventure: Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. During his first years at Hogwarts Harry meets his first trial. Voldemort, after the attempt on Harry's life as a baby, lives a parasitic life sharing other people's bodies. The unsuspecting Professor Quirrell is the current host for what is left of Voldemort. The Professor willingly agreed to serve the Dark Lord after being lured by promises of power. Harry feels as his duty to thwart their plans to steal the philosopher's stone that is hidden at the Hogwarts castle. The stone would grant

immortally to its possessor and, in Voldemort's case, would enable him to have a body of his own again.

Harry, with the help of his friends, was able to stop Voldemort from taking the stone and in the process expelled the villain from Quirrell's body. Harry learned in the end that he was able to defeat Quirrell and Voldemort thanks to a magical protection the sacrifice of his mother cast upon him. Although Harry and his friends are successful in stopping Voldemort, the villain is able to flee.

Upon Harry's arrival in the wizarding world and at Hogwarts the boy has to learn to distinguish friend from foe. Draco Malfoy is the first wizard boy Harry meets, even before arriving at Hogwarts. Draco immediately exposes his conviction on the superiority of pure-blood wizards<sup>3</sup> and Harry is able to recognize the bias of such conviction. At Hogwarts a more difficult challenge is presented in the form of Professor Severus Snape. The Professor is such a puzzling riddle that Harry is incapable of accepting him as an ally until the very last book when the boy finds the whole truth about Snape. Harry's first impression of Snape is fear inspiring: dark, serious, humorless and ambitious, the Professor makes no efforts for showing any signs of amiability or mercy. He displays an overt hatred for Harry and his friends and favors the students from his own house despite their wrong doings. Harry is in constant dispute with Snape and Malfoy throughout the series.

Following the series chronologically, in the second book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Voldemort is hiding after the frustrated attempt to steal the philosopher's stone, but he sends one of his followers, Lucius Malfoy (Draco's father), to place a very special diary among the children's belongings. The diary actually contains a piece of Voldemort's soul, which starts to dominate the innocent Ginny Weasley and drive her into doing terrible things. She sets loose a monster in the castle,

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<sup>3</sup> A wizard whose family is composed only by other wizards.

the basilisk, and kills its enemies, coxks. Harry has to save her before Voldemort finishes consuming her soul and bring his 15-year-old self back to life. In the book, Harry has a first glimpse into Voldemort's past. Before finding out what was happening to Ginny, Harry comes into possession of the diary and is taken inside a memory from the time when Voldemort attended Hogwarts. At that time he was not Voldemort yet, but went by his given name of Tom Riddle. Consequently, as Tom, Voldemort wins Harry's trust and shows the boy events from the last time the chamber - where the basilisk lived - was opened. Tom's edited version of the story leads Harry into believing Hagrid was guilty for the attacks in the past and consequently for those in the present as well. Eventually, Harry finds the true identity of Tom and with the help of the weapons sent by Dumbledore the hero is able to defeat the basilisk and destroy the diary along with the piece of Voldemort's soul alive in it.

With his attempt to regain a body frustrated once more and during Harry's third year at Hogwarts, Voldemort is very much out of the picture. In *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* Voldemort remains in hiding, scheming other ways to actualize his come back. Meanwhile Harry has to deal with what he thinks is a more imminent threat: his godfather, Sirius Black. Sirius is thought to be the one who gave up the location of the Potters's hiding place twelve years before. The family was protected by a spell and Sirius was supposed to be their secret keeper: only him could know and divulge the place, and if he did the spell was broken. However, at the last moment Black decided not to be their secret keeper, but to entrust the responsibility to another friend, Peter Pettigrew, and it was him who betrayed the Potters causing their death.

The plot of the third book revolves around the escape of Black from prison and his attempt to go after the traitor and punish him. In that process, Sirius also intends to get acquainted with his godson and prove his innocence to him. In the end, Black is

successful in his pursuit, but Harry prevents him from killing Pettigrew in a display of mercy for his enemy. Pettigrew ends up running away and going to the encounter of the much debilitated Voldemort. Peter is the servant who is going to help bring Voldemort back to full power in the next installment of the series.

The fourth novel, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, begins with the gruesome murder of a man by Voldemort. Frank is killed for merely seeing the Dark Lord in the old house that belonged to his father. Voldemort is using the house to hide while his followers put his plan into action. Meanwhile, that year Hogwarts is holding the Triwizard Tournament and the school has invited two guest schools to participate in the event. One of Voldemort's most loyal followers, Barty Crouch Jr., infiltrates the school by taking the appearance of the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, Mad-Eye Moody. The fake Moody illicitly enters Harry in the competition and makes sure Harry is able to overcome every challenge of the Tournament. The objective was to lead Harry to victory, for when he reached the final goal of the last challenge, The Goblet of Fire in the center of a maze, would become a portkey<sup>4</sup>, which transported Harry – and his unfortunate school mate Cedric Diggory – to a graveyard where Voldemort waited. The Dark Lord and his servant, Peter Pettigrew were there, ready to perform a resurrection ritual, for which they needed Harry's blood. Pettigrew ruthlessly kills Cedric and is forced to cut off his own hand for the completion of the ritual.

*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* is a turning point in the series. For the first time the reader is able to experience the cruelty and total disregard with which Voldemort kills and takes advantage of his followers. It is also the moment when Voldemort is completely restored to power. He battles Harry in the graveyard in full

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<sup>4</sup> An object, usually something ordinary, that is charmed to teleport the person who touches it to a predetermined place (Rowling, Goblet: 66).

force, but because of their strong bond, now reinforced twofold, and their twin-cored<sup>5</sup> wands, Harry is able to escape.

With Voldemort back and the bond between hero and villain strengthened Harry can even experience Voldemort's feelings. That happens in the fifth book *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* when the villain is able to plant images in Harry's mind. The false images are mixed with real images that Harry has access to, sometimes even seeing through the villain's eyes. Throughout the novel Harry becomes susceptible to Voldemort's moods, being then prone to rage waves.

Meanwhile, it is high time Harry learned to deal with Snape. With the return of Voldemort Harry becomes even more suspicious of the Professor. Although Snape has Dumbledore's unconditional trust, Harry feels he knows better. His lack of trust in Snape and naivety combined unfold into the death of Harry's godfather, Sirius Black. Snape also tries to teach Harry how to block Voldemort's access to his mind, but the boy does not take the lessons seriously. In fact, he sometimes thinks the inside pieces of information he gets from Voldemort are very useful and, therefore, he does not want to shut them out.

The plot of book five revolves around a prophecy made at the time Voldemort attacked Harry and his parents. The villain believes this prophecy contains the key to finishing Harry once and for all. In fact, it was because of this prophecy that Voldemort attacked the Potters in the first place. However the Dark Lord only heard part of the prophecy and now that he is back he wants to hear all of it. But only Harry can have access to the record of the prophecy that is stored in the Ministry of Magic. The Order of the Phoenix, a sort of militia led by Dumbledore, intervenes to fight the Death Eaters that are reunited under the command of Voldemort. The Order succeeds and the villain

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<sup>5</sup> A wand is made of wood and has a core of some magical element, for example, unicorn hair. Harry's and Voldemort's wands have a phoenix feather core, a very rare element. The two feathers came from the same bird and it has only ever given those two (Rowling, Stone: 65).

is unable to recover the prophecy that is destroyed during the battle. In the end, he tries to dominate Harry's mind, but, again, the protection cast by the boy's mother prevents it.

During the fifth novel the magical community remained skeptical about the return of the Dark Lord, since it was only witnessed by Harry. With the open confrontation and mayhem at the Ministry of Magic people in general – in special the Minister for Magic – are forced to recognize the truth. In face of this situation, in the sixth novel, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, the members of the magical community are preparing themselves for the imminent war. Allegiances are sought, as well as weapons and strategies.

Dumbledore takes up the task to prepare Harry for the battle. He wants the boy to understand his enemy and their unique situation of joined souls. The Professor scheduled sessions where he would show Harry his memories from himself and from other people who had contact with Tom Riddle. These memories tell pieces of Tom's history and they are the key to understanding the villain. Even though told only by a few scattered pieces of memory, we can put them together to trace the villain's path.

Tom's mother, Merope, lived in a shabby, filthy shack along with her father and brother. The family, despite the poor living conditions, was very proud and self-important about their descent: they were the only descendants of Salazar Slytherin, a very powerful and important wizard, one of the founders of Hogwarts. Merope, however, did not seem to share the other's pride or values (the same held by Salazar: the superiority of wizards), and she fell in love with a Muggle<sup>6</sup> boy, Tom Riddle, from the village nearby. Since she could not get his attention by herself, she decided to charm the boy with a love potion. They eloped and after a while she got pregnant and chose to stop feeding him the potion. Without being subject to the potion, Tom ran away back to

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<sup>6</sup> A person with no magical powers; not a wizard (Rowling, Stone:43).

his parent's house in the village. Merope was left alone and with no money in London. After her baby was born Merope saw that he had a home in an orphanage. Very weak and debilitated she decided not to fight for her life and let herself die soon after the birth.

Her son, Tom Marvolo Riddle, was raised in the orphanage, and since an early age he found out he was able to do strange things, like commanding people and objects. With his gift he bullied and stole from other children until the day Dumbledore paid him a visit. The Professor offered Tom a scholarship at Hogwarts and also told him that he had his special abilities because he was a wizard.

At Hogwarts he stood out as an exceptionally gifted wizard. He was very charming and with his careful flattering of the right people he was able to manipulate the children as well as the school staff. Dumbledore seemed to be the only one who did not trust him like everybody else. At school also he found out about his ancestry and was outraged to discover that his mother, a descendant of Slytherin, had so little respect for her ancestry as to fall for a Muggle and be subject to his despise.

After six years of school, Tom decided to look for his living family. He found his uncle, Morfin, old and abandoned living in complete misery at the same house he grew up in. Tom finds out from him where his father lives in the village close by. Voldemort then confused his uncle's memory with a charm, stole the ring he had on (an heirloom from Slytherin), killed his father and grandparents in their home, and framed his uncle for the crime.

After finishing off his family Voldemort went back to Hogwarts and researched about Horcruxes. He found out that in killing a person one has its soul torn apart. With the casting of a spell this part of the soul can be stored in an object that consequently becomes almost indestructible. Such object, the Horcrux, prevents the person from



dying by keeping that piece of soul stored in it earthbound. Even if the original body of the whole soul is destroyed the person is able to survive in an inhuman, despicable form. Voldemort in his greed for power decided to make six Horcruxes, dividing thus his soul in seven pieces, the most powerful magical number. The objects to store the pieces of Voldemort's soul were carefully chosen: they had to be valuable and special in themselves. He chose his diary, which held the proof of his Slytherin descent, Slytherin's ring and locket, Hufflepuff's cup and Ravenclaw's tiara, all of which were considered as treasures left by the founders of Hogwarts, and finally his pet snake Nagini, which he could watch closely, protect and control.

Up to the sixth book Harry and Dumbledore were able to recover and destroy two of the six Horcruxes: the diary, destroyed in book two and the ring, destroyed by Dumbledore. Harry spends most of the seventh book searching and trying to destroy the remaining Horcruxes. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the war between Voldemort and the magical community has broken out and Voldemort is in rapid ascension to power. Hogwarts and the Ministry are dominated by his Death Eaters, many half-bloods<sup>7</sup> are hiding to avoid death or prison and not much open resistance is possible under the dictatorship. By the end of the novel Harry was able to destroy three of the remaining Horcruxes and Neville destroys the fourth, unknowingly, by slashing Nagini's head off.

Open battle is fought at Hogwarts castle, and it is there that Harry defeats Voldemort. Harry found out he was the seventh Horcrux, made unintentionally and, therefore, he had to give himself to death. Voldemort cast the killing curse on Harry, but because of their bond, he only attained the separation of his soul from Harry's. In that moment Harry fully understands his whole journey and because of his enlightenment he is able to finish Voldemort off.

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<sup>7</sup> A person who is born of parents who are a wizard and a Muggle.

The seventh book of the series ends with the resolution of Harry's Journey. The book's finale shows the reader that Harry lived on to experience a happy adult life with wife and kids. The last chapter is intended to put a definite end to the series, despite the public's demands and speculations of a continuation. The popularity of the books also makes them an easy target for criticism, from literature experts to concerned parents. Some parents worry about the witchcraft background for the stories and critics claim that the books are actually overestimated and not worthy of the frenzy they cause. In the beginning of the series' success the acclaimed critic Harold Bloom gave his view on the books. According to him the books "will not enrich mind or spirit or personality." (Bloom, 30-08-08) Bloom's analysis of the whole series, however, is based on the reading of a single volume. In his review he is even bothered by apparent incoherences in the book that would be sorted out later on in the series. Still, other critics<sup>8</sup> agree with Bloom, having done the same amount of reading as him.

With the release of the following volumes of the series, more criticism started to arise, many of which disagree with Bloom. The analyses made on the books cover many different fields in the study of literature. From historical relevance to post-modern deconstruction, the Harry Potter series is subjected to serious analyses by serious literary critics. Some of the published criticism on the Harry Potter series is discussed in the following section.

## 2.1. Harry Potter Criticism

Because the series only came to an end very recently (the last book was released on July 2007), most criticism done so far is based on partial readings of the series.

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<sup>8</sup> Those include A.S. Byatt, Anthony Holden and Melanie Reid, for example.

Those, however, include at least the first four volumes of the series. Collections of essays, articles and entire books comprise the body of publications concerning the series.

Lana A. Whited, a professor of English at Ferrum College, edited one of the first scholarly collections of essays on the Harry Potter series: *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon* (2004). Her intention was to acknowledge the series as worthy of serious and in-depth examination. In her collection she includes several different subject matters: there are two essays dedicated to exploring the Harry Potter series' place in the tradition of fantasy or "the magical genre." The next section features articles that talk about how the series is influenced by epic, myth and folklore, including one essay that discusses Harry's aspects as a character of fairy tale, his behavior and the representation of situations of real life and also his path as an archetypal hero. The essay "Harry Potter: Fairy Tale Prince, Real Boy, and Archetypal Hero" explores the aspects of the hero archetype which occur in fairy tales, in other fantasy fiction and real life, such as the good vs. evil duality, the loss of the parents, the struggle of the hero on his quest. The essay also proposes an interpretation of the possible effects on the readership of some of the steps in the hero journey. This last analysis will be useful in the conclusion of this thesis, since I propose here that hero and villain live the same journey, but the effects of those journeys may prove to be different. Two more essays discuss the novel's relation to reality as well as the influence from realistic novels. Elisa T. Dresang explores Hermione's heritage from characters that share her name. From Greek mythology to D.H. Lawrence the Hermiones of literature are compared to their contemporary in fantasy in a tradition of strong female characters.

Psychological approaches are used to explore Harry's behavior and the depiction of authority in the books. Lana Whited and Katherine Grimes in the essay "What would Harry Do? J. K. Rowling and Lawrence Kohlberg's Theories of Moral Development" (2004) explore how the books reflect Lawrence Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development. The theory tries to describe the stages through which each person goes, from childhood to adulthood, in the development of moral understanding. The essay shows how characters considered evil or nasty, even though they are adults, are stuck in the first stages of that development. In contrast, Harry and his friends go through the stages in a clear development of moral sense.

In the essay "You Say 'Jelly,' I Say 'Jell-O'? Harry Potter and the Transfiguration of Language" (2004), a linguistic approach is proposed by Philip Nel when he examines issues of translation. The author discusses the changes in meaning a translation may convey. He focuses on the translation of the books from British English to American English and the effects this kind of translation may cause on the work and on the reader. Further essays explore other cultural factors inside and outside the books such as how the books reflect British culture of past and present.

Whited's collection (2004) is very comprehensive as it covers an array of subjects effectively and without bias. With her book she promotes a broader understanding of the themes in the series for scholar and the general public. The Teacher's Educator Elizabeth E. Heilman compiled a book with similar purposes. Her collection, *Harry Potter's world: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (2003), intends to study the Harry Potter series' place in literature and culture. For such purpose the book suggests a view from multiple critical perspectives. It covers the cultural studies perspectives with essays that explore some of the impacts of the series drawing parallels with different cultures as well as providing a serious literary study on the books.

On the topic of reader's response and interpretation the essays discuss how the books are accepted by a very young audience and the challenges some of the features of the books may pose, such as the long length of the books and the new vocabulary coined by the author. One essay also explores how some readers go beyond the books and construct their own stories on their own view of the world created by Rowling.

On the topic of literary perspectives one essay shows how the books recover the tradition of what the author, Maria Nikolajeva, calls the romantic hero, which, in fact, is the hero who follows the pattern traced by Joseph Campbell. Another author, Anne H. Alton, describes how the books mingle different literary genres such as detective fiction, horror, pulp fiction, gothic, school story, fantasy, quest romance, adventure and myth. She concludes that the mixture is done very successfully and it diversifies the readership of the books.

On the subject of critical and sociological criticism the portrayal of social relations is discussed in the essays "Comedy, Conflict, and Community: Home and Family in *Harry Potter*," "Images of the Privileged Insider and Outcast Outsider" and "The Civic Leadership of *Harry Potter*: Agency, Ritual, and Schooling." Questions of power and oppression are addressed as well as how fiction influences social behavior outside the books, either for the maintenance or change of that behavior. On the line of gender issues the editor of the book, Elizabeth E. Heilman writes the essay "Blue Wizards and Pink Witches: Representations of Gender Identity and power," which argues that women are undervalued in the series. The article also makes a good point in saying that when the women characters are stereotyped, as motherly or over-sensitive figures, for examples the men also suffer from a stereotyping in the other extreme: they have to assume the role of alpha males, not being allowed moments of weakness.

Heilman shows in this collection of essays how the books can be approached by many different angles and she suggests that many more could be proposed.

John Granger, on the other hand, focuses on the exploration of literary studies for his interpretation of the books. In his book *Unlocking Harry Potter: Five Keys for the Serious Reader* (2007) he explores the aspects he considers essential for the understanding of the books. In order to prove his view he even includes in the book a chapter of predictions for the last book of the series based on his five keys. Interestingly, many of those predictions turned out to be right.

What Granger calls his five keys are literary aspects he believes to set the internal logic and structure for the Harry Potter series. The first key he calls “Narrative Misdirection.” By that he means that Rowling is an unreliable narrator. As a third person narrator and partially omniscient (we only have access to Harry’s thoughts), we get the story mostly from Harry’s perspective. But since his is a limited perspective, we do not get all the facts of the story. Granger argues that this is done carefully and intentionally by Rowling so that we live the story with Harry, sharing his frame of mind, increasing thus, the reader’s level of identification with the hero.

The second key is “Literary Alchemy”. Granger shows here that Rowling uses her alchemic knowledge in order to set the general logic of the books. From characters’ names to the books’ themes, Rowling carefully applies alchemy’s philosophy and method. Granger concludes that Harry is in fact the philosopher’s stone in the process of purification.

“The Hero’s Journey” is the third key. Granger discusses in this chapter how Rowling applies Campbell’s Hero Journey in the construction of the main character. He focuses his argument on how Rowling manages to repeat the hero cycle every year of Harry’s life in school and keep this repetition fresh and enjoyable.

The fourth and fifth keys concern the post-modern aspects of the books. In the fourth chapter the author claims that Rowling makes use of literary post-modernism in the construction of her plot. Some of the post-modern aspects he mentions include the support of the marginalized, exploration of otherness, misdirection, self-mockery and mixture of genres. In the fifth chapter he discusses how the characters represent post-modern thought, such as fragmentation and deconstruction. His analysis is centered on the character of Dumbledore.

In a more spiritual approach, Geo Athena Trevarthen proposes a course-book on the series. In *The Seeker's Guide to Harry Potter* (2008), she points out elements of spirituality present in books such as shamanic and alchemical rituals as well as natural and elemental allusions and associations. She also explores Rowling's use of the Hero Journey, focusing on the types of heroism displayed by different characters in the book.

In *Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays* (2003), edited by Giselle Liza Anatol, the language used in the essays is clearly directed to a more scholarly audience. The essays in this compilation discuss the books under the light of theories of child development, literary influences, historical context and moral and social values. In that last subject the essay by Veronica L. Schahoes makes an important point. The author discusses concepts of good and evil as they are presented in the books and she relates those concepts to the use of meta-literature in the series. She argues that the concepts of good and evil and literature are intertwined, thus attributing value to the representations of written language, in the many forms they appear in the series.

Furthermore, the journal *Children's Literature in Education* has published 6 articles since 1999 with the Harry Potter series as main subject. Some of them should be mentioned here. "The Magic of Harry Potter: Symbols and Heroes of Fantasy" explores the multiage appeal of the Harry Potter series. It argues that the magic stories help

readers to find meaning in the events of their lives because of the use of symbolisms. The books are analyzed with basis in Bruno Bettelheim's *The Use of Enchantment* and the development of the hero figure as described by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Two case studies are presented as illustration. "The Politics of Terror: Rereading Harry Potter" draws a direct connection between the Harry Potter series and socio-political issues such as terrorism. The analysis is focused on the good vs. evil relationship and morality issues as they are presented in the Harry Potter series. The author analyzes some aspects of the novel such as the use of magic, frightening storylines and character ambiguity. The author argues that those aspects are beneficial to children as they make them think about issues such as why some people are considered evil, why difference is often believed to be bad, and why good people do bad things.

Turning to philosophy, the series edited by William Irwin, *Popular Culture and Philosophy*, dedicated one volume to the study of the series. *Harry Potter and Philosophy: If Aristotle Ran Hogwarts* (2004) includes texts from professors of philosophy, ethics, English and arts. The articles in that collection investigate themes such as how friendship is depicted in the books for Harry and Voldemort; the self-deception characters like the Dursleys submit themselves to; what attributes of a person can be considered virtues and why; the nature of evil as for its existence and perpetuation, and the resolution of the contradiction between foreknowledge and free-will. The articles provide an insightful view on the books through serious philosophical interpretation.

In a psychoanalytic, Jungian approach, the psychologist Gail A. Grynbaum published an article on the archetypes that are represented in the series. "The Secrets of Harry Potter" (2003) explores Harry as representing the archetypes of the Orphan and



the Resilient Young Masculine, and Voldemort as the archetypal Vampire. Her study is also based on alchemical philosophy. Alchemical thought imparts that in order to obtain the perfect, purified matter it is necessary to join and harmonize opposites. This conciliation also seems to be the objective of the hero in the Harry Potter series. The acceptance of the contradictions in his life is what purifies Harry. The archetypes embodied by the characters complete the alchemical imagery and philosophy.

In the examination of the Harry Potter books proposed here I will use mainly the theory of archetype as described and defined by the psychoanalyst Carl G. Jung in his book *Man and His Symbols* (1968). This theory is used by Joseph Campbell to determine what he calls the Hero Journey, or Monomyth. In his book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1993), Campbell describes the pattern followed by the mythological heroes around the world. Although the two are the main theorists to be applied in the analysis, the ideas of other main names in the field, such as Bruno Bettelheim and Vladimir Propp may also permeate the discussion. My intention is to read Campbell's theory and the villainous character of the series side by side. Campbell's findings are based and complemented by Jung's theories; both of which are essential for the understanding of the villain proposed here.

### **3. An Archetypal Study: The Critical Approach**

As the archetype is an essential structure in the construction of myths, it is important for us to comprehend the concept of archetype in order to understand and explore the mythological aspects in the Harry Potter series. The development of the concept of archetype had a milestone in the work of C. G. Jung. Before his psychoanalytic view on the term it was used with a slightly different connotation than it is nowadays. In a preface for his work *The Myth of the Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History* (1974), Mircea Eliade recognizes the importance of Jung's work on the study of the term: "In our day the word [archetype] has been rehabilitated by Professor Jung, who has given it a new meaning; and it is certainly desirable that the term 'archetype' should no longer be used in its pre-Jungian sense unless the fact is distinctly stated." (xv) The pre-Jungian sense Eliade mentions refers to archetypes "as synonyms for 'exemplary model' or 'paradigm'." (xv) As it is defined in *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, archetype is "an original model after which other similar things are patterned." (Archetype, 10-04-08) This pre-Jungian connotation can be seen in the works of many writers on the subject of mythology.<sup>9</sup>

Jung's current definition of archetype shares similarities to the pre-Jungian usage of the term. The idea of universality is one of those similarities. The archetypes that compose regional lore can be found in the mythologies of several and completely distinct cultures. Every culture has its own myths, but the same archetypal structures usually feature in all of them. They are considered universal. They are the essence around which the myths, legends and fairy tales are built. The archetype exists beyond the story. It is produced by man and propitiates psychological growth and the development of human psyche.

In his book *Man and his Symbols* (1968) Jung defines archetype thus:

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<sup>9</sup> Some examples of those writers include Plato, Pliny, Augustine, Sir James G. Frazer, Eugenio d'Ors among others.

The archetype is a tendency to form [conscious] representations of a motif – representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern. There are, for instance, many representations of the motif of the hostile brethren, but the motif itself remains the same. (58)

The archetypes are the structure behind myth, the structure that holds the symbolic meaning of the myth. However, archetypes may not have a definite form: “[E]xperiences seem to show that archetypal forms are not just static patterns. They are dynamic factors that manifest themselves in impulses, just as spontaneously as the instincts.” (1968: 65-6) One archetypal structure may have different patterns and may vary according to collective need. One image may manifest itself in similar but distinct archetypes. Let us take as example villain archetypes. As we will see later, in chapter 4, the villain may be a tyrant, a lurking threat or even seemingly harmless at first sight. Each of these would constitute a variant of the villain archetype; although different, they would all share archetypal characteristics that identify them as villains. These variations in the form of one given archetype were probably the product of collective or individual need. In the same way, new constructions of archetypes may still arise according to the need in time and place. That is the possibility being explored here: a new understanding of the archetype of the villain. Although archetypes are a universal structure they also are passive of variability. The details or context in which a story is built does not matter, whether it is Darth Vader in a futuristic Sci-Fi saga or the Big Bad Wolf in a children’s fairy tale, the archetype is intrinsic in the representation of the characters.

Jung’s comparison of the production of archetype with basic instincts is also very helpful in understanding this concept:

What we properly call instincts are physiological urges, and are perceived by the senses. But at the same time, they also manifest

themselves in fantasies and often reveal their presence only by symbolic images. These manifestations are what I call the archetypes. They are without known origin; and they reproduce themselves in any time or in any part of the world – even where transmission by direct descent or “cross fertilization” through migration must be ruled out. (...) [Archetypes] are, indeed, an instinctive *trend*, as marked as the impulse of birds to build nests, or ants to form organized colonies.” (1968: 58)

The manifestations of an archetype – in dreams or fantasy stories – would be an instinct of the unconscious to deal with a situation. A primal way of the psyche to assimilate, understand and resolve reality. In the same way we have a physical response to an external stimulus; we can have a psychic or unconscious response to an event. That last case would result in the production of archetypes. People are born with some instincts, for example a baby is born afraid of the dark and knows he has to suckle for his mother’s milk. Similarly, our psyche is born with the ancestral imagery that composes the archetypes.

Other theorists who investigate myth describe their view on the subject remarkably similar to Jung’s ideas. Although they do not mention the term archetype, the ideas of universality and of an instinctive compulsion to produce and propagate mythical stories are concurrent with Jung’s ideas. Lord Raglan, who studied the mythical patterns, refers to myths as related to rituals and the production of myth related to recurrent emotional need:

The essential truth of the myth lies in the fact that it embodies a situation of profound emotional significance, a situation, moreover, which is in its nature recurrent, and which calls for the repetition of the ritual which deals with the situation and satisfies the need evoked by it. (...) a myth with its associated rituals is something which meets a recurrent human need. (1974: 123-4)

Although not intentionally touching psychoanalytic interpretations of myth, Raglan's description of the essence of myth is very similar to the instinctive interpretation given by Jung, especially when Raglan mentions "profound emotional significance" and the need for myth as being universal.

Stith Thompson moves a little closer to Jung's ideas as he states:

The actual reason for the existence of stories about the gods, and perhaps about the heroes, is the fact that there are certain psychological compulsions which impel people to tell tales of particular kinds. Dreams, fears, and stresses – it is from these that come the gods, the heroes, and the tales about them. (1974: 171)

Although Thompson claims not to follow any psychological line of interpretation (he discards the theories of Jung, Freud and Erich Fromm), his view on myth is analogous to the interpretation given by Jung. Thompson mentions how the stories fulfill psychological compulsions and Jung claims the stories, and consequently their archetypes, are products of instinctive impulses. Even though Raglan and Thompson did not mention the term 'archetype' directly, they reached a similar conclusion to Jung's (and among themselves) as for the influence of myth and archetypes in people in general. That shows how archetypes, which are the base structure of myth, work unconsciously even when we try to rationalize it.

The scholars mentioned above were trying to account for conscious manifestations of the unconscious. For Jung this would be further proof of the unconscious nature of archetypes: "...if archetypes were representations that originated in our consciousness (or were acquired by consciousness), we should surely understand them, and not be bewildered and astonished when they present themselves to our consciousness." (1968: 58) Myths are endlessly explored exactly because there can be no conscious explanation for their origin or production. To clarify what constitutes the archetype, Jung tells the story of a little girl who wrote down a collection of her dreams.

Those dreams puzzled her father for they were completely out of context with the girl's life. Nothing in her experience would have caused her to produce such images. As Jung analyzes those images they prove to be part of several mythologies for hundreds of years – as far as we can have knowledge of. (1968: 58-64) Jung concludes:

Emotional manifestations, to which such thought patterns belong, are recognizably the same all over the earth. (...) Naturally, if you identify the psyche with consciousness, you can easily fall into the erroneous idea that man comes into the world with a psyche that is empty, and that in later years it contains nothing more than what it has learned by individual experience. But the psyche is more than consciousness.” (1968: 64)

The production of archetypes is inherent to the human psyche. It is independent from experience or rational thought. The little girl mentioned in Jung's text dreamt ancient mythology, but she was also developing her own. It was the manifestation of her psyche trying to make sense of her world. In doing that it emulates the concerns that gave rise to those mythologies in the first place.

Not every production of archetype, however, would be unconscious, just as basic instincts can become conscious behavior with experience (something that did not cause fear, for example, may start to do so following a bad experience). Nevertheless, archetypes are an essential function of the psyche. We respond to them as they are produced and received by our unconscious. We find their symbolic representation not only in dream and myth, but in most stories and literature told by man. They create a mythical subtext that holds the symbolic meaning produced by the psyche. It is in literature that we can see more clearly the manifestation of archetypes, and where we can also more easily study them for their significance.

The theorist Northrop Frye applies the concept of archetype to literature. His archetypal criticism tries to uncover the patterns that compose literary stories and

interpret them as for their symbolism. According to Frye, archetypes are symbols in work and they help in the understanding of a piece of literature by connecting this piece to the body of literature as a whole:

I give the name archetype [to] a typical or recurring image. I mean by an archetype a symbol which connects one poem with another and thereby helps to unify and integrate our literary experience. And as the archetype is the communicable symbol, archetypal criticism is primarily concerned with literature as a social fact and as a mode of communication. By the study of conventions and genres, it attempts to fit poems into the body of poetry as a whole. (1973: 99)

In order to determine an image as typical or recurring a work cannot be seen only through an individual perspective, but rather as a piece that composes and is inserted among other similar works or in the whole of literature.

Frye also argues that “archetypes are most easily studied in highly conventionalized literature: that is, for most part, naïve, primitive and popular literature.” (1973: 104) He explains that he does not apply those terms derogatorily; on the contrary, he is referring to the archaic quality of that literature and the use of popular forms. They are popular because they are recurring, therefore, they speak to and are essential constituent of the culture they feature, and they even afford the possibility of being spread throughout cultures:

The fact that the archetype is primarily a *communicable* symbol largely accounts for the ease with which ballads and folk tales and mimes travel through the world, like so many of their heroes, over all barriers of language and culture. We come back to the fact that literature most deeply influenced by the archetypal phase of symbolism impresses us as primitive and popular. (1973: 107-8)

The Harry Potter series fits perfectly in Frye’s description of this highly archetypal literature. The series is constituted of those primitive types of literature such as myth

and fairy tales and those stories cross “all barriers of language and culture.” The mixture of story types and their archetypal content tie the Harry Potter series to the tradition of literature; more strongly and specifically to a mythological and symbolic tradition. For being riddled with influence from those primitive and popular stories, the Harry Potter series also carries their symbolic significance. This significance can be better explored and understood through the theories of Jung and Campbell.

The archetypal structures that will be dealt with in this thesis are those that represent the hero and the villain. The archetype of the hero is described by Jung thus: “The universal hero myth, for example, always refers to a powerful man or god-man who vanquishes evil in the form of dragons, serpents, monsters, demons, and so on, and who liberates his people from destruction and death.” (1968: 68) This brief description is what Campbell later studied in detail and called the Journey of the Hero or Monomyth. Each step of this Journey has a symbolic meaning. This meaning “has a wider ‘unconscious’ aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained.” (Jung, 1968: 4) Depending on the stage or state in a person’s life and varying from person to person, the meaning of the Journey may change or some part of it will stand out for that person.

The writings of Campbell, as he acknowledges and advises in the preface of his book, are based on psychoanalytic studies. His definition of myth, archetype, ritual and religion are all based on psychoanalytic understandings of the terms. As he describes what he calls the Monomyth, Campbell also explores dreams as personal productions of the universal archetypal images. On the importance of those images he concludes:

Apparently there is something in these initiatory images so necessary to the psyche that if they are not supplied from without, through myth and ritual, they will have to be announced again, through dream, from within – lest our



energies should remain locked in a banal, long-outmoded toy-room, at the bottom of the sea. (1993: 12)

The production of archetypal images is essential to the development of the psyche, so much so that it is independent of external stimuli, but exposing the psyche to external archetypal imagery helps the unconscious production of them. Literature would be one vehicle for these external stimuli. The archetypes that compose a story such as the Harry Potter series propitiate, then, psychic growth and development. The archetypes focused in this research were developed to fulfill our modern needs, even though they are ancient and primordial, as it is the case of the Hero and Villain archetypes.

Fantastic stories often feature a hero who undergoes a series of trials that can be described as a Journey. Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* studied the path followed by the heroes of several different cultures and traced a pattern that is common to all of them with slight variations. According to Campbell the saga of the hero is constituted of three essential parts: departure, initiation and return. Here is a short description of some of the main stages of this journey. In the departure the hero is seen in the common world, a world that is familiar to him, but where he not always feels comfortable. He then receives a call to adventure, something that compels him to engage in the adventure, that means a sudden change is introduced in his world. This call requires the crossing of a threshold which can be physical or symbolic. The threshold opens up the possibilities in the life of the hero, but he is usually guided by a protector in the exploration of those possibilities. In the initiation the hero finds friends or companions that will follow and help him in his adventure. A series of trials succeed the hero's discovery of the world. He has to overcome the obstacles that culminate in the ultimate challenge of facing his strongest enemy. This fight, or even some of the obstacles that lead to it, may result in death or dismemberment, which can be symbolic or literal. Through those trails and suffering he understands the forces that rule his life

and overcomes his ignorance and fear. The return takes place when he goes back to his world, sometimes refusing to do so and generally finding it difficult to readapt, but he usually brings with him some boon from the other world that will help him. The journey described by Campbell is part of what constitutes the archetype of the hero. The hero undertakes a journey that can be understood as a journey towards the self. He has to undertake it in order to grow, to acquire wisdom. This knowledge comes usually through suffering, and this suffering through loss and the confrontation of an antagonizing agent, i.e. a villain. He is the element that brings the hero to his path. For the hero archetype, facing the fears and coming out victorious means growing up.

Works of fantasy around the world feature this pattern of the Hero. This Hero may be portrayed in many different forms: he may be human, super-human, animal, a prince or a peasant of any culture or gender. The variety of representations of the hero figure speaks to the local need of the reader or hearer of the tales. In the same way this variety happens to the archetypal Hero, it also happens to the archetypal Villain that is part of the Journey. The representation of the Villain and of the nature of the evil he represents may vary, but they all share the characteristics that identify them as villains.

#### **4. The Villain in Fantasy Literature**

In this chapter I will outline a profile for villain figures in fantasy literature. In order to do that I will base my considerations on relevant fantasy material (stories that have been well divulged and accepted by their readership) and theoretical approaches to

the subject, focusing mainly on the work of Marie-Louise Von Franz, a disciple of Jung. The work of Von Franz is based on fairy tales; however, as my working definition of fantasy comprehends many types of texts, we will see how her findings may enhance the understanding of the novels that compose the Harry Potter series. The intention is to explore the construction of the villain and his role in the stories.

#### 4.1. Defining the villain

In fantasy literature the hero can be directly associated with his archetypal journey. Similarly, the villain will also be associated with an archetype. However, compared with the hero's, the villain's archetype seems simpler and will be characterized by his deeds or individual characteristics rather than the events of his life or his path. As we have seen in the third chapter of this thesis, the villain is part of the construction of the hero archetype. An essential part, I would say, for he is the goal of the journey, the center of the maze. How the hero faces his villain is what defines his journey. Without a villain and the obstacles posed by him/her, there would be no need for a journey.

The villain archetype, however, is usually not as developed as the hero's. In general, it does not unfold into a path or carry multiple symbolisms into it. The idea of the general villain refers to the one the hero encounters as soon as he crosses the threshold. His existence precedes the hero's and what is shown about this villain does not give him dimensions as a character, usually resulting in a supernatural, unreal and not believable entity. Examples of those include the White Witch in *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, Sauron in *Lord of the Rings*, and the Nothing that spreads through Fantasia in *The Neverending Story*. In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, where Campbell describes in detail the path of the hero, he mentions the villain thus:

The figure of the tyrant-monster is known to the mythologies, folk traditions, legends, and even nightmares, of the world; and his characteristics are everywhere essentially the same. He is the hoarder of the general benefit. He is the monster avid for the greedy rights of “my and mine.” [...] The inflated ego of the tyrant is a curse to himself and his world – no matter how his affairs may seem to prosper. (1993: 15)

In this definition the villain is greedy and utterly selfish; therefore, all of his deeds would be ruled by those characteristics. When Campbell mentions the tyrant here he is referring to King Minos’ story, but greed and desire for power are frequent characteristics of many types of villains, including the three examples mentioned above.

The villain is also associated with the hero’s father. The father would represent the initiatory image, the barrier the son/hero has to overcome in order to take his place as the center or reference of a community:

Whether he knows it or not, and no matter what his position in society, the father is the initiatory priest through whom the young being passes on into the larger world. And just as formerly, the mother represented the “good” and “evil,” so now does he, but with this complication – that there is a new element of rivalry in the picture: the son against the father for the mastery of the universe. (Campbell, 1993: 136)

The overcoming of the father does not imply a battle of good vs. evil, but a struggle for maturity. The son/hero has to abandon his childish notions of the world in order to become a grown man and take his father’s place. In this sense the father becomes a terrifying being and one the son/hero has to match up to. According to Campbell, the father is the villain the hero has to symbolically swallow, in order not to be swallowed.

Moreover, the villain archetype can also be seen in the interpretation of the symbolism of the cards in the Tarot of Marseille. According to Hajo Banzhaf, a tarot expert, the tarot cards reproduce archetypes which can be identified with the Journey of

the Hero in the order the cards are traditionally numbered. Number 15 in the tarot of Marseille is The Devil card. It represents the adversary and the tempter. This card is connected not only to the dark or evil outside, but it also refers to the traps and dualities we carry inside ourselves. The Devil card and its imagetic representation show the hidden side of things and invert the ruling order:

In instructions of the agnostic faith, the devil was often adored as true friend and god of humanity, in opposition to the unjust and vindictive god of the Christians who, despite all his power, asked for the sacrifice of his own son in order to reconcile with humanity. On the contrary, the devil was adored in the form of Lucifer/Prometheus who, in pity of men who vegetated in the dark and cold, stole the divine fire and handed it to them, suffering the most monstrous punishments for his act. (Banzhaf, 2000: 116-7, translation mine)

Cunning and power are characteristics attributed to that archetype. The villain carries the characteristics which the hero has to oppose to. In that perspective we can talk about evil as being the opposite of good, and not an entity by its own. It would be defined by the denial of good: “As darkness is nothing but the absence of light, and is not produced by creation, so evil is merely the defect of goodness.” (Sharpe, 20-02-08) The comparison of light and darkness made by Sharpe is very appropriate when dealing with those fantasy characters.

Fantasy villains are often associated and identified with the dark: Darth Vader, in *Star Wars*, masters the Dark side of the Force; Ged from The Earthsea cycle has to face a shapeless, cruel and ruthless Shadow; the land of Mordor, the dwellings of the Dark Lord Sauron, means ‘dark land’ or ‘land of shadows’ in the languages Tolkien created for his work of fantasy; and Voldemort in the Harry Potter series is also called the Dark Lord by his followers. As for every light a shadow is cast, for every hero there should be a villain who is a negative reflection of the brightness of the hero’s light. The

villain then is a representation of the shadow of the hero. In *A Wizard of EarthSea* that idea is made literal by Ged having to fight a shadow that was brought into the world by him and was, in a way, his reflection, his own dark side set loose.

This inversion of perspective brought by the villain would imply a new or broader world view. This broader view would give emphasis to the materialistic aspects of life. Material concerns take over spiritual ones resulting in pessimism and accommodation. About the symbolism in the image of the Devil card<sup>10</sup> Banzhaf says: “The Devil’s raised hand claims: there is nothing else than the apparent reality. Therefore, the Devil also symbolizes a strictly materialistic view of life.” (2000: 117, translation mine) “The thumb, which represents will-power, is not recognizable.” (2000: 114, translation mine) The Devil’s power comes from the material world or his materialistic view and this power is the same he uses to tempt his victims, leading them to forget about their will-power.

As an archetype, people have the need to produce such images representative of the characteristics described above. For example, if parents forbid their children to watch horror movies, that would not prevent them from imagining a monster in the closet or hidden under their beds. Such images are, therefore, necessary for the development of the psyche; nevertheless, they would also adapt themselves to the culture they are produced in:

These are known figures in folklore who are called evil spirits and live in that part of nature which is somehow uncanny or dangerous to that sociological group of people. For people who live near the sea they would be sea demons; for people who live near primeval forests, they would be spirits of the forests; and for mountain people, they would be spirits of the mountains and glaciers. (Von Franz, 1995: 171-2)

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<sup>10</sup> See attachment 1

Marie-Louise Von Franz here considered the places where these archetypes are produced. She considers the villain as a manifestation of nature's power or evil because that is how the villain features in most fairy tales due to the circumstances those were created. Therefore, we should also consider time as a cultural factor of influence. At the time fairy tales were more a part of daily life for adults as well as for children, the dangers of nature were one of the biggest concerns. The fairy tales reflected that by featuring villains who were symbolic of nature's power. Each epoch has its own concerns, be it nature, government, people's violent behavior, war, science or terrorism. The tales of each time will reflect those fears in their villains.

The Journey of the Hero is repeated an infinite number of times in literature, nevertheless, those heroes remain appealing. Although each one of them reflects a local or even personal culture, the meaning and importance of the archetypes in the stories remain the same and universal. For example, J. R.R Tolkien is said to have written his trilogy *The Lord of the Rings* based on the WWII. The organization of the events may reflect his view on the war, but they also reflect his view on several other matters, consciously or unconsciously. The interpretation of the story and the appeal it has today would also have something to do with the situation of the world nowadays.

#### 4.2. The Villain and Evil

The psychoanalyst Marie-Louise Von Franz, a disciple of Jung, studied the representation of evil in fairy tales from many different cultures. Some of her remarks should be useful here in determining what types of evil fantasy addresses and how it is represented in the figure of a villain. A first idea for the manifestation of evil presented

by Von Franz follows the symbolism expressed in the tarot card. She points out that a unilateral pattern of behavior leads to a disturbance either in nature or society (1995: 190-3). The materialistic and unilateral behavior of the villain archetype tips the scale leaving the spiritual side neglected. Human behavior should be composed of both.

Von Franz explains that our behavior is composed of several patterns some of which are even contradictory, but this clash of behavior or patterns is necessary to make an individual whole:

Thus patterns of behavior even on the animal level are not a nicely regulated affair; there is no central office where there is a reasonable switchover from one behavior to another. It is even possible that for that reason nature invented our higher forms of consciousness to create such a central office and avoid the inadaptability which is to be found on the animal level. But whatever the reason, we display these same features, for a woman can get into a conflict between self-preservation and the protection of her children, exactly the same conflict as the hen, and we constantly get into other life situations where patterns of behavior collide. (...) So to be completely swept away by one of the behavioral patterns always contains a certain danger. (1995: 181)

That danger is brought upon not only the individual, but the community as a whole. Nevertheless, the propensity for that kind of unbalance exists for everyone; it is not something predetermined, even though it can be influenced by experience: “So, in a way, evil *is* a skeleton. It is that spirit of ‘no life and no love’ which has always been associated with the essence of evil. It is destructiveness for its own sake, which everybody has in himself to some extent.” (Von Franz, 1995: 210) Lack of harmony is a characteristic that surrounds people’s lives and it is expressed in the stories told by people. An important characteristic of evil is to cause this disharmony and unbalance by being at the same time desirable and undesirable.



Von Franz discusses how the images that appear in the stories are at the same time repulsive and attractive. That duality, as she describes, is part of human nature as well. Terrifying events fascinate us. Villains of fantasy often exercise that alluring power over others characters. Let us take for instance the modern Star Wars trilogy. Although Anakin Skywalker, soon to be Darth Vader, knows about the destruction and suffering the Dark side of the Force brings, he is inevitably stricken by the power it brings along. In the end, the attractive effect wins over him and he no longer sees the repulsiveness in committing atrocious acts such as killing several little children. The villain's main goal is to finally turn the hero to his point of view, to the fascinating aspect of evil, as Darth Vader later attempts to do with Luke a number of times. The dual aspect of evil tears the hero; however, the villain is taken by the attractive side and no longer finds evil repulsive, showing again his unilateral behavior. The same happens with Voldemort in the Harry Potter series. Tom Riddle, soon to be Lord Voldemort, knows the consequences of using the Unforgivable Curses (spells that kill, torture and control the minds of people) or of creating horcruxes (tearing the soul apart and transferring a piece to an object); however, he uses the curses and creates the horcruxes anyway, because he is completely fascinated by the power those things bring to him. Initially his goal is to kill Harry, but at one point he sees the advantage of having him as an ally and tries to seduce him. Not only Voldemort, but also the power of magic itself, the same that fascinated Voldemort, is constantly teasing Harry into forgetting about the abominable side of evil. The hero has to have contact with that side so he can better understand the forces around him. The villain is taken by the alluring side of evil without really understanding it. His view of the world and his behavior becomes unilateral which is an aspect that brings about more evil.

It can be argued, nevertheless, that some heroes may display this unilateral aspect as well, even though for the other extreme. For example, a hero such as Superman, when faced with the choice between self-preservation and saving the life of others, would not hesitate and choose the latter; the heroic instinct would take over and saving other people's lives would be the only reasonable thing for Superman. Just as in the same situation a villain such as Lex Luthor would have no inner conflict in harming or killing others for personal gain. Protecting others in detriment of himself is apparently a display of unilateral behavior in Superman and in many other heroes.

When discussing the question of why superman is good and does what he does, the writer and expert on the history of Superman, Mark Waid, ended up by finding the duality in that character:

Superman aids those in peril because he senses a higher moral obligation, and yes, he does it because his natural instincts and his Midwestern upbringing drive him towards acts of morality — but along with that genuine altruism is a healthy amount of self-awareness and a surprisingly enviable ability on his part to balance his own internal needs with the needs of others in a way that most benefits everyone. In helping others, Superman helps himself. In helping himself, he helps others. When he comes to the aid of other people, he is exercising his distinctive powers and fulfilling his authentic destiny. That, of course, benefits him. (20-02-08)

Superman is an almost indestructible superhero. Saving or helping other people not always means putting his own life at risk. However, even when it does mean risk, saving people is also a self-indulgent behavior. Altruism and self-interest find a balance in Superman. The same can be said about other heroes; for example, Harry fiercely fighting Voldemort does save the lives of several people and magical creatures, but it

also serves Harry's own purposes. He seeks personal revenge for the death of his parents and to save his own life as well. Contradiction and conflict are to be found in the apparently instinctive decision the hero makes of going towards the danger. He does not risk his life recklessly; he risks his life in the attempt to survive. The hero is able to reconcile those two opposing feelings, altruism and self-interest. When faced with a situation with contradictory options, the villain chooses the option that will benefit him the most, not caring to the harm it may cause to others. One-sidedness is one of the most common ways from which evil may arise.

Evil in fairy tales also often appears in the form of natural evil. Von Franz equates the monstrous or villainous figures of fairy tales to natural phenomenon:

If we take the monster of this story<sup>11</sup> as a personification of such phenomenon of evil in nature, then we can say that it is supernatural. It is highly numinous and therefore highly fascinating, which is why one has all this pleasurable excitement about it. And it is frightening! It is as terrifying as it is attractive, and it is an absolutely nonpersonal and nonhuman phenomenon. It is like an avalanche, or lightning or a terrible enemy animal. There are things like this; illness and death, and spirits in nature, monsters, ogres which appear to be as real as other destructive phenomena in nature, and you have to deal with them. (1995: 152)

She points out that when facing a natural evil there is no ethical dilemma being proposed. In the face of an avalanche you can either run or try to protect yourself, in the face of a ghost you have basically the same options. The supernatural beings Von Franz refers to are the kind of evil that is outside, but they can also be brought to the inside

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<sup>11</sup> The story mentioned is a Chinese fairy tale called "The Horse Mountain Ghost." In that tale a peasant man on his way home finds a terrifying monster in the forest. Believing the monster has not seen him, he tries to run by taking a path that is seldom ridden across the forest. Not long after that, the monster appears in the form of the neighbor's son and tricks the peasant into carrying him on his horse. After a while, the monster reveals itself and the peasant is left so scared that he could only talk about it after a few days.

through contamination or possession. Images of natural evil are archetypal because they can be found in a multitude of cultures, wherever man had to live and deal with nature. Nature, on its turn, is related to divinity. Some phenomena cannot be explained and are attributed to divine will. That is so, even if a phenomenon happens to cause evil.

When this supernatural evil is brought to the human level, it brings with it the dehumanization of that person or character:

What is interesting is that by falling into evil [the character] gets supernatural powers, superhuman gifts and qualities (1995: 156). In the archetypal experience of evil, evil powers are seen as a crippled human, or a distorted thing, and I think we should therefore understand it symbolically and see in that the projection of a human psychological fact, namely that evil entails being swept away by one-sidedness, by only one single pattern of behavior. (1995: 179)

This brings up once more the point about unilateral behavior, and this time including the idea that it is also a form of dehumanization, since duality is a characteristic of human behavior. The villain characters seem to be built on this vicious cycle where evil, dehumanization and unilateralism complete and enable each other. This cycle would bring with it the characteristic deeds of the villain described in the archetype, such as greed, selfishness and power.

Although Joseph Campbell focused his research on the hero, we can find in his description of the hero archetype characteristics to contrast with the villain. Campbell mentions the duality of the hero and the conflict of opposite forces in him:

The “Wall of Paradise,” which conceals God from human sight, is described by Nicholas of Cusa as constituted of the “coincidence of opposites,” its gate being guarded by “the highest spirit of reason, who bars the way until he has been overcome.” The pair of opposites (being and not being, life and death, beauty and ugliness, good and evil, and all the other polarities that bind the

faculties to hope and fear, and link the organs of action to deeds of defense and acquisition) are the clashing rocks (Symplegades) that crush the traveler, but between which the hero always pass.

This is a motif known throughout the world. (1993: 89)

If the villain can be identified by his unilateral behavior, the hero, in turn, can be identified by his duality. Most important, however, is the hero's ability to face this coincidence of opposites and emerge victorious, keeping the duality within himself. The motif of duality, as Campbell discusses, is worldly known, but the contrast of the dualities with the one-sidedness of the hero is also a constant feature of the hero and villain archetypes.

#### 4.3. The Role of the Villain

Although unilateral, underdeveloped and sometimes even inhuman, the villain is of paramount importance in fantasy stories. Besides giving a reason for the hero to enter into his path, the villain carries important symbolism into that path as well. He is the dark figure that waits for the hero into the new world the hero is entering.

Campbell sees the new world the hero has to enter into as the symbolic representation of the hero's situation in life: "Beyond [the limits of the hero's present sphere] is darkness, the unknown, and danger; just as beyond the parental watch is danger to the infant and beyond the protection of his society danger to the member of the tribe." (1993: 77-8) A child's parents represent the child's scope of world knowledge. In starting out the adventure of growing up the child feels the parental protection has been taken away, thus opening the door to a dark and frightening new world.

The aspects attributed to the new world are also the characteristics that are most related to the villain. The villain symbolizes the new world. He is dark, unknown and

dangerous. He would be a living representation of all the hero's apprehensions in the crossing of the threshold. As the hero journey is one towards growing up, the villain is the personification of what it means for the hero to grow up: "The lands of the unknown (desert, jungle, deep sea, alien land, etc.) are free fields for the projection of unconscious content." (Campbell, 1993: 79) The villain embodies that projection from the unconscious. For that reason the villain is such an important part on the path of the hero. He is not only the danger that exists outside, but also a materialization of the hero's unconscious, of the danger inside.

Conversely, the opposite view on the situation is also possible where the parents are not the protectors, but the threat or even both simultaneously. Campbell himself talks about the father figure projected onto the image of the villain. So the new world and the villain also represent the father to be surpassed. This symbolism can be plainly seen in the performance of James M. Barrie's play *Peter and Wendy* where the same actor is required to play the part of Mr. Darling, Wendy's and the boy's father, and Captain Hook, the villain. Although paradoxical, the images of protective father and dangerous villain can be fused into one. This fusion is even appropriate, for it only adds to the contradictions the hero has to face on his path.

Another duality can be seen in the fact that although often dangerous and frightening, the new world may also be fascinating, which evokes the same duality that characterizes evil in fantasy. Some villains show their attractive side before showing their repulsive one. They show themselves as incredibly beautiful (sometimes even supernaturally so), reputable and irreprehensible in their actions. In Philip Pulman's series, *His Dark Materials*<sup>12</sup>, Mrs. Coulter is the fascinating villain. She is incredibly alluring in every trait, but her intentions and ideas are definitely villainous. In the first

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<sup>12</sup> The name His Dark Materials refers to the series composed by three volumes, namely, *The Golden Compass*, *The Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass*.

book of the series, *The Golden Compass*, the idea of exploring new places is also fascinating to the heroine Lyra and, accordingly, Mrs. Coulter is the personification of her idealizations about the North, of everything she expects to find in her adventures. Mrs. Coulter would constitute an example of an alluring or deceiving type of villain.

On the other hand, in stories featuring the dark type of villain usually the goals intended by them are grand and their every action is turned towards their pursuit of power. Villains such as Darth Vader, Lord Sauron, Ged's shadow and Lord Voldemort can be seen in their search for power. Their objectives are to dominate and destroy. Conversely, villains of the fascinating type usually pursue an ideology and try to implement it through power. Mrs. Coulter believes Dust is bad and uses her power to try and minimize the influence of Dust, even if by cruel means. Anakin Skywalker also embraces an ideology and in the attempt to implement it by force he becomes Darth Vader. Before becoming Darth Vader, while still young and full of potential, Anakin was not the villain but an unsuspecting prodigy in the eyes of the other Jedi.

Lord Voldemort incorporates these two types of villain, the dark lord and the fascinating youth, in different times of his life. Unlike Anakin, as a young prodigy his pure blood convictions were already infused in Voldemort and, as Mrs. Coulter, he was willing to use cruel methods in the pursuit of them. When Harry first meets Tom Riddle as living memory in a diary in the second book of the series, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, our young hero feels instantly connected to that boy. He sees their characteristics in common and feels that Tom would be someone who would understand him. Tom fascinates Harry, and in showing the boy the events of the past, Tom actually starts to impart in Harry the idea that Hagrid is not such a harmless person. Only at the very end of the novel does Harry find out who Tom Riddle really is, the young Lord Voldemort, and his real intentions.

Evil can have a few different representations in works of fantasy, it can be natural, or supernatural and reflect many different kinds of fear varying according to time and place. The prevalent characteristic of evil, no matter its origin, is its duality as something fascinating and terrifying. Accordingly, in the Harry Potter series evil also exercises this contradictory influence, but adding to it we can see the ambiguity of evil as well. Many characters in the series, including the hero, stand on the line between good and evil, right and wrong. The duality, and in the case of the Harry Potter series, the ambiguity of evil, is a major challenge to be faced by the hero in his Journey. Because of that, the Harry Potter series provide interesting material for the analysis of complementary characteristics of evil.

## **5. The villains in the Harry Potter series**

The Harry Potter series, as a long seven-part story, provides the opportunity for the development of the characters. That is true as much for the characters representative of good as for those of evil. They have the chance to experience, reformulate their behavior and explore the possibilities of the archetype they represent.

The objective of the hero is to confront his arch(e)-enemy in a final battle. Voldemort is definitely that enemy, and in order to fight him Harry has to, first, find and



destroy the parts of his soul stored in objects, called horcruxes, that are spread through different places. Besides the seven-part arch(e)-enemy<sup>13</sup>, every now and then, Harry has to face minor enemies, which actually teaches him a lot about the right attitude to take in view of his final battle. Each villain represents a challenge, an obstacle Harry has to overcome and for each one a different kind of strategy is demanded of Harry. He learns about himself by fighting and more importantly having to live with some of the evil characters in the book.

### 5.1. Evil and Villainy in the Harry Potter series

As Marie-Louise von Franz discusses in her book *Shadow and Evil in Fairy Tales*, evil mostly appears in fairy tale as symbolism for the forces of external nature and the destruction or evil it may cause. The same can be said about a number of examples of well-known contemporary fantasy literature. The evil nature of the characters is even represented in the land they inhabit, which is often desolate and destitute of life. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Mordor, Sauron's land, is a devastated place and wherever his forces and alliances take over the land, it becomes a reflection of Mordor. The Nothing in *The Neverending Story* is a destructive force with no form or corresponding entity. Wherever it comes about it leaves nothing, not even remains and debris, just Nothing. The White Witch in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* condemns the land to a perpetual winter, where life proves difficult to bloom or resist the cold. The wolf in the fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood* and every other animal that features in fairy tales as opposing figures are also representative of the threatening power of nature.

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<sup>13</sup> Voldemort divided his soul into six Horcruxes. In order to defeat him, Harry has to destroy each individual part before facing the corporeal Voldemort.

All of the examples above are representative of an evil that befalls a land with unstoppable power. The origins of the villain figures are unknown and when we, as readers, enter the story, it is as if these villains had existed forever and the people afflicted by their evil had just to learn to live with them, similar to how we have to learn to live with the destructive power of nature.

In the Harry Potter series the villain and the evil it represents is of a different kind. Voldemort does not have a land of his own or impose a destructive pattern or condition upon his world. We are told of how he came about, the specific circumstances of his birth and although his life is long, he is no exception in wizard's standards, for wizards live considerably longer than Muggles. Therefore, Voldemort is not a timeless evil, like, for example, Sauron, who has lived for generations, had been defeated in remote times and comes back as a formless agent of evil.

Moreover, Voldemort was not born Voldemort, he was born an ordinary boy, like Darth Vader, but unlike him, he chose to become Voldemort gradually since early on his life. Voldemort and Darth Vader have a known origin, and because of that a comparison between the two would bring up some interesting points. On the one hand, we have Anakin who was born under special circumstances. He is conceived without the need for a male human father, but by the power of the midi-chlorians.<sup>14</sup> He is thought to be the prophesized child who would bring balance to the Force. The religious, especially, Christian symbolism is unmistakable here. On the other hand, Tom Riddle was born out of a manufactured love induced by a love potion. His mother died at childbirth and he was raised as any other orphan. He does discover later to possess magical powers, as Anakin discovers he has the Force strong in him, but even in the

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<sup>14</sup> In the Star Wars universe midi-chlorians are particles of living energy that exist across the galaxies. They are the main vehicle through which the Force is manifested.

magical world Tom is considered a normal child. There are no expectations of him fulfilling any specific destiny, even though he proves to be extremely talented at school.

The hero archetype is present in both stories, but the development of their stories proves them to be symbolically different. The turning point from virtue to vice for both is also considerably different. When lured by the promises of the Dark Side of the Force, Anakin suffers for the actions he had to take and his primary intention in following this path was to save the woman he loved. His transformation into Darth Vader is almost overnight and it comes about traumatically through an extreme fight between Anakin and his mentor. The place where this fight happens also complements the symbolism of destruction: a lava covered planet. By the time we reach the classic trilogy Darth Vader has become that unstoppable force without a definite origin. Voldemort's change is gradual and very much deliberate. In his adulthood Voldemort went to ask Dumbledore for a job position as a teacher. At that time his fame was still growing, not many people knew him as Voldemort and not many people feared him yet. There was a physical transformation in process that indicated supernatural evil taking place. However, his process is carefully chosen: each Horcrux, their hiding places, his allies, his next move, everything. And more importantly, there is no noble purpose behind his actions. He is not trying to achieve a right end through the wrong means as Darth Vader, but a selfish end through dangerous and harmful means. The importance of will in this process and in the Harry Potter books cannot be underestimated and it will be dealt with in detail on chapter six. Both villains, Voldemort and Darth Vader, became tyrants because they wanted to impose their will on a community. However, their first contact with evil happened through different means.

In typical fantasy the contact with evil, by the hero or even by the villain-to-be, happens, in many instances, through apparently harmless means. There are usually clear

divisions between what is good or evil as much for people as for objects and powers. This division, though it may not be clear to the eye, is inherent to the thing, creating the illusion of harmlessness. Professor Quirrell, for example, in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, was even pitiful in Harry's eyes at first sight, but his true nature was hidden and unchanged. What belongs to each realm cannot be changed no matter how hard the hero tries. He has to learn the purpose of things, just as the Master Hand tells Ged in *A Wizard of Earthsea*:

To change this rock into a jewel, you must change its true name. And to do that, my son, even to so small a scrap of the world, is to change the world. (...) But you must not change one thing, one pebble, one grain of sand, until you know what good and evil will follow on that act. The world is in balance, in Equilibrium. A wizard's power of Changing and of Summoning can shake the balance of the world. It is dangerous, that power. It is most perilous. It must follow knowledge, and serve need. To light a candle is to cast a shadow.... (Le Guin, 2004: 44)

That can be said to be one characteristic of the hero archetype. Before being able to change the world, all heroes have to acquire knowledge about it. In order to understand the consequences of their actions they have to recognize the shadow cast from their light. Not recognizing the shadow causes many problems and it is one of the obstacles the hero has to surpass in his journey. Villainy is hidden in the most innocent-looking objects, and in the illusion of power. The hero may become a vehicle for evil, even though his intention is to do good.

Some examples of evil means being used for good purposes include: *The Neverending Story*, where Bastian is given the Aurnyn, which grants him the power of making wishes come true. Although he uses those wishes to try and help the creature of Fantastica, every wish he makes turns out to be harmful to others and himself as they make him forget who he is and what his purpose in Fantastica is; The one ring in *The*

*Lord of the Rings* can only serve the purposes of Sauron, the purposes of evil. Even if at first someone intends to use it for good it ends up by corrupting them and bringing destruction to others. The Star Wars saga, again, presents close similarity to the Harry Potter series and comparing them helps to illuminate the question about the means through which evil is conveyed. The Force is divided into Light and Dark sides, and this division is very clear-cut. There are powers available only to the Dark side and once one uses them one is changed forever. Anakin, like the other heroes intended to use the Dark powers for good; however, he is inevitably, permanently and completely corrupted.

In the Harry Potter series this division is, most of the times, not so clear-cut. Most means can be used for either good or evil and what determines it is purpose. Magic in the series can be compared to knowledge in general. It is available to all wizards and can be used for a number of different purposes. Analogously, the same science that can find a cure to a devastating disease can manufacture destructive biological weapons. Magic in the Harry Potter series works in a very similar manner; it can be used to heal and to kill with the same ease. As compared to typical fantasy, the difference in the Harry Potter series is that there is no “Dark Side of the Force” as in Star Wars and the other examples given above. Any power is available to any one. The Unforgivable Curses, for example, constitutes of three curses that have the power to command, torture and kill. They are called Unforgivable because they are, obviously, evil and any one who makes use of them, without authorization, is sent automatically and immediately to prison. However, the key here is in the expression “without authorization.” Aurors, agents of magical law reinforcement, are allowed to use them. Many Members of the Order of the Phoenix use them and even Harry, and none of them are punished for that, exactly because of how and why they used them. These are

examples of the good guys putting “evil”<sup>15</sup> means to work without necessarily being corrupted by it.

Another important feature of the Unforgivable Curses is that they inevitably show one’s intent, as Geo A. Trevarthen argues in her book *The Seeker’s Guide to Harry Potter*:

The importance of each individual’s self-determination is underscored by the curses the Ministry deems unforgivable. The unforgivable curses all infringe upon a person’s free will and interfere with them at a level of essence. (...) As fake Moody and Bellatrix note at various points in the books, you really have to get behind them to work them. Your whole magical will and desire must be focused on torturing and killing. This indicates quite clear *mens rea*, or criminal intent. (...) By contrast, Harry can cast *sectum sempra*<sup>16</sup> with no clue as to what it will do, other than that it’s “for enemies.” (2008: 126-9)

In the Harry Potter books intention accounts for the actions. Evil is intentional and often purposeful. It is not an inexplicable, unstoppable force; evil has to be chosen as much as good. Even though Harry did not know what the spell *sectum sempra* would do, he knew it was definitely a combat spell and as such he used it in a dispute with Malfoy, his enemy, as the instructions told him to. He chose to use it and take the risk, but it was an educated choice, it did not happen against his will or out of pure ignorance.

Horcruxes are a kind of magic that is definitely evil; a Horcrux is created through evil actions. Once it is done, a Horcrux does not have the power to turn a person evil or to distort a good purpose into an evil act. They are definitely instruments of evil, but they are also created through evil: by killing or committing deliberate acts of evil a person splits his/her soul and is able to store it in an object. The object is endowed

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<sup>15</sup> I used inverted commas above because evil in such context becomes a very relative term.

<sup>16</sup> *Sectum sempra* (Spell used to seriously cut another person) - In Latin, "sectum" means to "cut, wound, or amputate" and "sempra" is derived from the word "semper" meaning "always" or "at all times." Hence, "to wound always" or "make a permanent wound." (MuggleNet, 24 May 2008)

with the power of such soul and becomes almost indestructible. The purpose in creating a Horcrux is to prevent oneself from dying. There is no possibility of good intentions behind a Horcrux; therefore although definitely evil it still differs from the examples of evil means or instruments from typical fantasy as for the matter of purpose.

In many examples of fantasy we can see how things, people and other creatures have a pre-determined purpose and we could even call it essence. Those fantasies seem to follow Platonic ideas about Metaphysics and Forms. The Form or 'ideal' of something would be something like its essence. A Form cannot be fully grasped in linguistic terms. As Professor Marc Cohen from the University of Washington points out: "one must invoke a kind of knowing that is not a matter of grasping a definition of one term by means of other terms, but of grasping **the thing itself** (Cohen, 4-07-08, emphasis Cohen's)." The thing itself is what Plato calls the Form of something. It exists independent of the material thing or of our understanding of this thing in our reality.

A Form represents the perfect idea of something:

While both Beauty Itself and other items are characterized by beauty, Beauty Itself is simply and solely beautiful. This characterizing variant emphasizes the *Phaedo's* claims that a Form is *monoeides*<sup>17</sup> and one (*Phaedo* 78b4ff). Beauty is nothing but beautiful and thus is completely beautiful, differing from other beautiful things in that they are much else besides beautiful. Helen [of Troy] is a woman and unfaithful and beautiful. (Silverman, 3-07-08)

The Form is the ideal, the essential quality of something, material or abstract. And in being perfect it is not tinged by any other quality or particulars. This idea of the perfect, unchangeable essence is what seems to appear in most fantasies. Objects and people have an essence that they cannot escape from, as it was mentioned in the examples above. This can be more clearly seen in Philip Pullman's series *His Dark Materials*.

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<sup>17</sup> single in form, of one kind

Destiny and subsequently essence are major themes in the series. You can only be what you are supposed to be if you don't try to change what you predeterminately are in essence. For example, the bears in the first book, *The Golden Compass*. Bears, in the trilogy's universe are conscient being who can communicate with humans and other beings and have organized communities. Although each bear is different from each other in their particularities, they all share essential similarities that make them bears. Among other characteristics, they must live in cold areas and hunt their own food; they are extremely crafty with metal; their armors are like a second skin or even like their souls and they are very astute and cannot be tricked. When the bear's King, Iofur, tries to change one part of his bear essence, he winds up by changing it completely. Bears do not have daemons<sup>18</sup> like humans do, but he desperately wants one. In wanting to change this one bit of what he is he loses his essence entirely. In the dispute for the throne between the present king, Iofur, and the rightful king, Iorek, we can see how the inherent essence of something works for the integrity of that thing:

So [Lyra] looked, but her tears kept her from seeing what was really happening, and perhaps it would not have been visible to her anyway. It certainly was not seen by Iofur.

Because Iorek was backward only to find clean dry footing and a firm rock to leap up from, and the useless left arm was really fresh and strong. You could not trick a bear, but, as Lyra had shown him, Iofur did not want to be a bear, he wanted to be a man; and Iorek was tricking him. (Pullman, *Compass*: 309)

Iofur was stronger, bigger, more prepared, more rested and with a better armor than Iorek, but still he lost. It was not because Iorek had any kind of supernatural power or help to win over Iofur, but because Iofur was no longer a Bear. He could not refuse one part of his essence without losing it completely. Iofur at this point was neither Bear nor

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<sup>18</sup> An external representative of the soul that displays the appearance of an animal corresponding to their owner's characteristics.



Human and because of that he died. In that example it is possible to see Plato's view of essence at work in a fantasy story.

Plato's theory of Form also fits perfectly the concept of archetype. It can be seen in what is called the "one over many" principle:

A famous passage in the *Republic* (596a) suggests a **semantic** role for the Forms ("there is one Form for each set of many things to which we give the same name"). That is, when you use the word 'just' and I use the word 'just', what makes it one and the same thing that we're talking about? Plato's answer is: the Form of *Justice*, the "one over the many."(Cohen, 4-07-08, emphasis Cohen's)

Although there are innumerable stories about heroes, we can call all of those characters heroes, despite their differences, because they share essential similarities that makes them heroes. Those similarities are described as the journey of the hero by Campbell. The joining of this principle with the other characteristics of Form mentioned here gives us the primordial idea of what later would be developed by Jung as the concept of archetypes.

In Harry Potter, although archetypes are the main basis for the construction of characters, an opposing philosophical theory to Plato's is also at play, namely existentialism. While the trilogy *His dark Materials* shows a quest for free will and for the possibility of choice over destiny,<sup>19</sup> in the Harry Potter books choice is a pervading possibility constantly put to use. The valorization of choice over destiny or essence is a central point of the existentialist philosophy. It distinguishes man from other creatures and objects, while the Theory of Form considers all things to work in the same way. A main claim of existentialism is that "existence precedes essence":

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<sup>19</sup> Paradoxically, in the series, freedom of choice is only possible with the fulfilling of the destinies of several of the characters. Lyra, Will, Mary, Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter, all have to stay true to their destinies (or essences) and choice is denied especially to Lyra.

No general, non-formal account of what it means to be human can be given, since that meaning is decided in and through existing itself. (...) In contrast to other entities, whose essential properties are fixed by the *kind* of entities they are, what is essential to a human being — what makes her *who* she is — is not fixed by her type but by what she makes of herself, who she becomes. The fundamental contribution of existential thought lies in the idea that one's identity is constituted neither by nature nor by culture, since to "exist" is precisely to constitute such an identity. (Crowell, 3-07-08, emphasis Crowell's)

A person is not defined by what he is, but by what he does. The Harry Potter books' internal logic reflects this idea. For example, the students are sorted into houses because of their intrinsic characteristics, which would presuppose an essence they would have to stay true to. However, the sorting into houses does not define the students or their actions. Ravenclaws are supposed to be intelligent and thirsty for knowledge, which are characteristics that can be used to describe Hermione who is at Gryffindor. Gryffindors, on their turn, are supposed to be brave and daring, nevertheless, Ron is constantly scared and doubtful about engaging into adventures. There is no essence to being a wizard or even any specific kind of wizard such as a Gryffindor, as we can see to be the case in the previously given example of the bear characteristics in *The Golden Compass*. Identity is formed by choice and purpose and not by destiny. The reality of choice is what brings about the dualistic aspect that should compose human life. That may propitiate the readership with a higher level of identification with some characters.

Another aspect of existentialism is the non-prescription of values. In Plato's theory of Forms value is presupposed. Forms are supposed to resolve metaphysical and moral questions simultaneously:

For Plato, **goodness** and **being** are intimately connected. Plato's universe is value-ridden at its very foundations: value is there

from the start, not imposed upon an antiseptic, value-neutral reality by the likes of us - external imposers of value on what in itself has no intrinsic value. The Form of the Good is at the top of the hierarchy of Forms, illuminating all of the others knowing what something is can't be divorced from knowing whether it's good. One can't know what it is to be an *F* unless one knows what it is to be a good *F*: a non-defective example of its kind. (Cohen, 4-07-08, emphasis Cohen's)

Forms are ideal and perfect and therefore good. Being a Bear means fighting; war is in their blood and their armor is their soul; therefore killing and fighting are natural things for them, it is part of their essence, their Form. In the series *His Dark Materials*, it is not questioned whether Bears are good or bad. They exist to fulfill their essence, which expresses goodness and perfection. Failing to fulfill this essence is what causes evil, for example: Iofur, as was described before, loses his bearhood, but also causes the other bears to be unhappy and lost; Mrs. Coulter denies her motherhood and during that time she institutes cruel practices on several children in her world. When she re-discovers her motherhood or womanhood, it catalyses a radical change in her to the point of her committing the ultimate sacrifice for her child and her love. Lord Asriel is a man who wants to overthrow God (or play Satan), and he does not measure consequences to get his way, such as killing his daughter's best friend. Metatron was a human being who decided to be God and turned out ruling over free-will among other acts against humanity. Most of the examples of evil happening in this series can be seen as acts against one's essence.

In the *Harry Potter* series the existentialist notion of value is at play, which makes evil a more relative concept:

Sartre speaks of the "ideality" of values, by which he means *not* that they have some sort of timeless validity but that they have no real authority and cannot be used to underwrite or justify my

behavior. For Sartre, “values derive their meaning from an original projection of myself which stands as my choice of myself in the world.” But if that is so, then I cannot, without circularity, appeal to values in order to justify this very choice: “I make my decision concerning them — without justification and without excuse.” (Crowell, 3-07-08)

A person’s choice cannot be justified by value. Choice is always possible, therefore a good or bad act cannot be justified by the lack of choice. There are no absolute values in existentialism and that can be seen in the Harry Potter books as much for the hero as for the villain characters. Harry for example chose to be placed at Gryffindor house. He asked the Sorting Hat not to put him in Slytherin, and for an eleven-year-old Harry, it was the same as asking not to be bad. He had to deliberately choose good in order to really be so. Similarly, Tom chose to be evil, to kill and to harm, all the time knowing exactly what he was doing. In this example we can see how choice, and not essence, leads to determining values of good and bad. Because of the possibility of choice, heroes and villain also sway on the morality line dividing right and wrong. The hero can choose to break the rules and the villain can choose to be compassionate. True to existentialism, in the Harry Potter series evil does not happen by accident, and accordingly the same can be said about good.

As we have seen, purpose defines the object in the Harry Potter series and not the opposite as it happens in typical examples of fantasy. Evil, in this context, is neither an independent force nor can it be symbolic of the power of nature; rather it is human and purposeful. Although objects and powers may seem a clear matter in the Harry Potter series, people, on the other hand, are not, as we have seen, to be the case of the villains in the series.

### 5.1.1. The Malfoys

The family name here is the first indication of their nature.<sup>20</sup> Draco Malfoy is the first Hogwarts kid Harry meets in the series: they were both buying school robes at Madam Malkin's Robes for All Occasions. In this first encounter Draco already exposes the paradigm him and his family live by, that is, their pure blood convictions; the same philosophy followed and spread by Voldemort:

“Oh sorry,” said [Draco], not sounding sorry at all. “But they were *our* kind, weren't they?”

“They were a witch and a wizard, if that's what you mean.”

“I really don't think they should let the other sort in, do you? They're just not the same, they've never been brought up to know our ways. Some of them have never even heard of Hogwarts until they get the letter, imagine. I think they should keep it in the old wizarding families. What's your surname, anyway?”(Rowling, Stone: 60-1)

From Draco's first scene the reader is led to dislike the character and his whole family. In the next book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, we meet Draco's father and discover how dangerous he really can be. He is the trigger for the whole of the second book's plot by placing Tom Riddle's old diary into the Weasleys' belongings. Without his help the diary may have not ended up with Ginny Weasley. However, although Lucius Malfoy seems to be helping his master, Voldemort, he is in fact looking out for himself. He serves Voldemort only to the point where it serves his personal interests: it grants him power in his midst and also the protection and back up from people more powerful than him, that is, Voldemort himself, members of ministerial departments and even the Ministry for Magic. At the time Voldemort lost his powers in the attack to the Potter's home, and his followers were being sent to prison, Lucius pleaded being under the Imperious Curse. He denied any connections with Voldemort and his other

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<sup>20</sup> In Latin, "malus" means "bad" and "mal" means "pale." "Mal foi" means "bad faith, an act with bad intentions, or a malicious act" in French. "Mal de foi" means a "loss of faith." The similar French phrase "Mal *fait*" can be interpreted as "badly made" or "evil deeds." In Arthurian legends, Lancelot (King Arthur's greatest knight and his betrayer) is sometimes called "Le Chevallier Mal Fait" (the "mal fait" knight). (Mugglenet, 24-04-2008)

followers because, at the time, that would serve his interests best. He is one of Voldemort's followers but he lacks the essential qualities for it: he is not loyal or submissive. His predominant trait is selfishness.

Draco is taught from an early age the values of his family. He learns from his father his selfish behavior and also to lie, cheat and con while avoiding being caught when it serves his interests. Draco, however, has a closer relationship to Harry, seeing that both attend Hogwarts. They became rivals from their first day at the school and engaged in disputes and fights as often as they could. However, their fights are never definitive, for as big as their despise for each other may be, the rules of the school and their confinement to it demand that they learn to live and share the same space. Although Draco is an opponent his age and one which, most probably, Harry could defeat, Harry cannot just finish him in battle. The circumstances in which they live in demand Harry to develop other strategies to deal with those enemies that are closer to him. Potter has to exercise will-power to control his temper and not fall for Draco's provocations. He has to develop combat strategies not to attack, but to defend. In fact the disarming spell, *Expelliarmus*, becomes Harry's combat signature and it is with it that he ultimately defeats Voldemort.

Both boys have to play by the rules Hogwarts imposes or else both should be punished, as it happens in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* when Draco tries to catch Harry breaking the rules. It turns out that in the attempt Draco broke the rules himself (Rowling, Stone: 167-76). After that lesson they were both more careful. Also with Draco, Harry has to learn to forgive by getting over their petty disputes and growing out of them. By the end of the series Harry saves Draco and eventually Draco learns to co-exist with Harry in their adult lives. By having an enemy he cannot actively fight, Harry actually learns how to face the other villains in his life.

The first time we see Draco's mother, Narcisa, she displays a different side of the family, one we have not seen up to that point. She appears in the initial chapters of book six, worried about her son and the task that was assigned to him by Voldemort. She asks Snape to take care of him and protect him no matter what happens. By the end of the series the Malfoy family redeem themselves as all of the members show a high level of concern for each other following Narcisa's example. They love one another and this love proves to be stronger than their selfish interests. Although all of them are villains during the series and play an important part in Harry's life, they eventually give expression to the good in them through this love and their family ties.

### 5.1.2. The Death Eaters

Death Eaters is the name given to Voldemort's loyal followers. They include men and women from different social positions that share Voldemort's goals. They aspire to power through their connection with the Dark Lord very much like Lucius, who is one of them. The Death Eaters represent the typical followers of the arch(e)-villain. They act solely as they are ordered and although a sect of followers is comprised by several people, they all act together and in a similar manner resembling a single entity under the command of the villain. They have no individual identity or personality and sometimes not even individual names, especially when they are in great numbers, such as the army of orcs in *The Lord of the Rings* or the Imperial Stormtroopers in *Star Wars*. In the Harry Potter books these followers appear in a smaller scale, but they are everywhere there is a villain. Draco has his mates, Crabbe and Goyle, follow him around and do his bidding, while their parents, including Draco's, do the biddings of Voldemort. Even Dudley parades around with his gang of bullies.

The followers are an extension of the villain's powers and they represent the seductive side of the villain at work. They are attracted by the alluring side of evil and they are taken by the same influence the villain tries, at some point, to exert over the hero. The Death Eaters are seduced by the promise of power. Professor Quirrell tells Harry exactly how he was taken by this promise:

“He is with me wherever I go,” said Quirrell quietly. “I met him when I traveled around the world. A foolish young man I was then, full of ridiculous ideas about good and evil. Lord Voldemort showed me how wrong I was. There is no good and evil, there is only power, and those too weak to seek it. (. . .) Since then, I have served him faithfully, although I have let him down many times.”  
(Rowling, Stone : 211)

In this instance Harry is not hooked by that promise. Later, when his pursuit becomes one towards knowledge, good and evil do prove to be relative concepts, but for a different reason than sheer power. Harry has a strong connection with Voldemort and he carries a piece of the Dark Lord's soul in him, very much like Quirrell. By the 7<sup>th</sup> book of the series, Harry starts to take advantage of this connection and even enjoy it.

### 5.1.3. Snape

Professor Severus Snape is without a doubt the most ambiguous, complex and challenged character in the series.<sup>21</sup> In response to the questioning of what Snape's example of morality may cause on children, the children's specialist, Courtney B. Strimel, argues in her essay “The Politics of Terror: Rereading *Harry Potter*” that, characters like Snape are actually a good influence on children's perception of the real world:

Certainly, most of the characters appear ambiguous at times, but that ambiguity relates to strong Moral themes running throughout

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<sup>21</sup> His fickle morality is the target of criticism from several communities.



the series. People, both “good” and “bad,” make mistakes in the series and in the real world. The ambiguity, then, in *Harry Potter* is more realistic for young readers as they navigate the complexities of morality. (2004: 46)

Snape’s complexity does prove to be a challenge not only for children, but for adults as well, especially when some critics fail to see the importance of such a character.<sup>22</sup>

In the last installment of the series Snape is definitely redeemed and may even be said to have gained the status of a “good guy,” with Harry’s son even being named after him. However, that does not change his past behavior and that he is considered a villain for most part of the series. His despise for Harry is undeniable and the injustices he commits in the name of this hatred have instances spread throughout the series. Besides his present actions (at the time the narrative of the novel is happening), Snape’s past actions are also condemnable: he was a member of the Death Eaters and still carries the Dark Mark in his arm. Snape antagonizes Harry, who treats Snape as an enemy he cannot fight, but unlike with Draco, one he fails to learn from. Conversely, despite all the evidence against Snape, he is the depository of Dumbledore’s unwavering trust. That fact has puzzled Harry until the very last moment when he finally unravels the truth about Snape and the boy finds out that, as much as Snape had been unjust to him, he had returned the gesture by misjudging and distrusting the Professor.

Veronica Schanoes explores Snape’s ambiguous behavior in her essay “Cruel Heroes and Treacherous Texts: Educating the Reader in Moral Complexity and Critical Reading in J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* books”(2003). She goes to the heart of the question about the character’s ambiguity when she suggests that Snape proposes a very refined distinction:

Rowling forces her reader to distinguish between nastiness and wickedness, between subjective hatred and objective evil. She

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<sup>22</sup> Strimel cites in her article, for example, Richard Abanes, author of the book *Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace Behind the Magick*.

forces her reader to think beyond herself and her private identification with Harry to develop an awareness of the alliance necessary in order to do the right thing. This kind of distinction is one that few texts produced for adult consumption make; Shakespeare may remind us that a man may smile and smile and yet be a villain, but there is no corresponding line noting that a man may go out of his way to humiliate us and yet be a hero. (132)

Snape is cruel, nasty, petty and vindictive, but that does not mean he is evil. The distinction between nastiness and wickedness a character like Snape proposes is one very hard to accomplish. It takes educated readers (and writers as Schanoes suggests) to be able to grasp the nuances of that character. As it was previously discussed here, there is the seductive type of villain who makes wickedness seem reasonable and on the other hand, there is Snape who provides a mirror image for that: a good guy who performs good acts wickedly. Snape's relationship with Harry is troubled since the beginning because Harry is unable to perceive Snape's true intentions.

In the fifth book, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, we are shown why Snape hates Harry so much. It is not because of Harry himself, but because of Harry's father: James Potter bullied Snape throughout their entire time at Hogwarts. In one chapter Harry dives inside Snape's memories, and the teacher starts to gain the sympathies of the readership along with Harry's. From executor he is transformed into victim. The look into the villain's past or his side of the story has commonly the intention to arise this kind of sympathy. Examples of that can be found as much in fantasy as in other literary genres. Some examples in fantasy include the modern *Star Wars* trilogy where a great share of the audience could identify with the villain Darth Vader in his process of disillusionment, suffering and wrong choices. In the contemporary treatment of the story of Superman for TV, the series *Smallville*, the

villain, Lex Luthor lost his loving mother and baby brother when he was still a child. For the remainder of his childhood and as a young adult Lex is continually mistreated by his father, who refuses to show his son any expression of paternal love. It is implied that Lex becomes the villain because of his tragic losses at childhood combined with the neglect of his father. Mrs. Coulter in *His Dark Materials* is redeemed by the end of the third book of the series. Differently from the examples above, her present change rather than her past sufferings is what causes the audience to look at her with sympathetic eyes: she rediscovers her love for her daughter and Lord Asriel and eventually helps the child to fulfill her destiny with the sacrifice of her own life. However, Mrs. Coulter also gives reasons for making the choices she made in the past. The audience has the chance to reassess their opinions of the villains as they are shown under this humanizing light. The villain ceases to be a pure, empty agent of evil and is turned into a person who suffered injustices and wound up by making poor decisions.

Snape fits into this redeemed villain archetype, whose better expression we can see in the theatre of William Shakespeare in the character of Shylock from *The Merchant of Venice*. The humanization of the villain is not a new feature of literature, although in fantasy it does not happen so often. Shylock's seminal speech where he defends his humanity despite any of his previous and future acts is one of the highest points in the play and definitely the most remarkable. It expresses the essence of this villain archetype:

He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the

same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction. (3.1.51-69)

In this speech at the same time Shylock is affirming his humanity he states his villainy, justifying it in the injustices he suffered. He exalts his human qualities and exempts himself from guilt, for the circumstances he was submitted to made him the villain he is today. However, given the chance he will surpass his “masters” in villainy. Snape fits this archetype. Even though Harry sees Snape’s memories without his consent, what Snape suffered in the past becomes the excuse for his actions in the present, like it happened to Shylock. Snape does not become any nicer to Harry, rather he finds reason to become nastier. Even though he has actually been on the good guys’ side all along, he displays villainous qualities: he takes advantage of his position over Harry and delights in making the boy’s life more difficult. He is petty and ambitious, but also loyal. Snape is a complex character because he is the grey area between black and white, and especially in fantasy this is rare. As Strimel argues, this ambiguity, seen not only in Snape, teaches “children that ‘good’ people sometimes make poor decisions and perpetrate bad acts just as ‘bad’ people are capable of positive acts.” (2004: 46) In characters that are three-dimensional, emulating real life, we can never be sure of what their “real intentions” are. Snape contributes to the evolution of the redeemed villain archetype by adding this three-dimensionality to it.

#### 5.1.4. Lord Voldemort

We have seen that the Harry Potter series features more than one kind of villain archetype. The redeemed villain is exemplified in the characters of the Malfoy family and Professor Severus Snape. The villain followers are represented as the Death Eaters. And we have Lord Voldemort, the arch(e)-villain of the series. He is not redeemed as the Malfoys or Snape. Although we do have the opportunity to see his past, it does not redeem him, but rather it provides the steps for the construction of his villain journey. The intention in showing or telling the villains' past or their reasons is usually to humanize those characters. The feeling it arouses, as much in the audience as in the hero, is of sympathy and even pity.

Voldemort's story is different. His past is not intended to cause any sympathetic feeling. The critic John Granger argues that this is an example of the books' post-modern aspects and he discusses how Rowling tells us Tom Riddle's life:

[Voldemort] is, post-Horcruxes, simply a shattered person, whose soul and humanity have been deposited in physical objects as a means to a mechanical, murderous immortality. He is himself a "deconstructed text," that no longer has an independent existence or value. Even though we learn about his painful childhood in an orphanage and about his mother's trials, Ms. Rowling never suggests there is something understandable or pitiable in the evil person Tom Riddle chooses to become in his pursuit of power. He is also not a conceptual evil that can be parsed, broken down and made relative, "the product of external forces outside his control." Rowling presents her prime villains and his henchmen as a very real wickedness, the product of human error and choice, that must be resisted at all costs, even death. (...) Rowling never soft-pedals the reality of Riddle's wickedness, his culpability for his condition, or the necessity of resisting this evil courageously and sacrificially. (2007: 208-9)

Tom Riddle is not pitiable because he made conscious choices on who he wanted to become. He deliberately chooses evil; it is not something that happened to him or was imposed on him, he was not tricked into it. And unlike the redeemed villain he does not regret his choices. The evil he represents cannot be related to the external evil of nature, as is common in fantasy, or any other external force. He represents the evil within and the reality of choice as great, but terrible. Granger also mentions Riddle as being Potter's doppelganger; that is because they show intrinsic similarities that can be described as archetypal. Voldemort lives the same journey as Harry.

## **6. The Journey of the Villain in the Harry Potter Series**

Harry Potter is the hero of the successful fantasy series discussed here. He unquestionably goes through the three main stages of the journey of the hero every year as he ventures into the wizarding world for a new school term. He also experiences the variant steps of each stage as the reader follows his story from infancy to adulthood in the series as a whole. However, in this series the villain, Voldemort or Tom Riddle, also undergoes this journey. We learn about his past and that he too goes through the same

stages as Harry every year. With a closer look, we can see how alike they really are. Both characters, as they get acquainted with each other, notice some similarities between themselves. Riddle points those out to Harry in their encounter in the chamber of secrets.

Because there are strange likenesses between us, Harry Potter. Even you must have noticed. Both half-bloods, orphans, raised by Muggles. Probably the only two Parselmouths<sup>23</sup> to come to Hogwarts since the great Slytherin himself. We even *look* something alike... (Rowling, Chamber: 233, emphasis Rowling's)

That uncanny similarity is more than just superficial. The characteristics Riddle enumerates have important significance as they can be identified as archetypal. Harry and Voldemort share the same archetypal journey and they resemble each other even in the details.

The hero journey Joseph Campbell traced can also work for the villain in the Harry Potter series. The journey of the human hero initiates at his childhood. From that time the hero already displays distinct history and behavior:

The child of destiny has to face a long period of obscurity. This is a time of extreme danger, impediment or disgrace. He is thrown inward to his depths or outward to the unknown; either way, what he touches is a darkness unexplored. (. . .) Fostered in the animal school, or, like Siegfried, below ground among gnomes that nourish the roots of the tree of life, or, again, alone in some little room (the story has been told a thousand ways), the young world-apprentice learns the lesson of the seed powers, which reside just beyond the sphere of the measured and the named.

The myths agree that an extraordinary capacity is required to face and survive such experience. The infancies abound in anecdotes

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<sup>23</sup> Wizards who can speak the language of snakes.

of precocious strength, cleverness, and wisdom. (Campbell, 1993: 326-7)

During childhood the hero is deprived from the knowledge of his special origins and usually has a humble or troubled childhood to face. We can see that trajectory being followed from ancient mythology to modern sci-fi, as Campbell points out, “the story has been told a thousand ways,” then, in the same way it happens to Harry and Tom. Harry was ignorant of his and his parents’ abilities until he was eleven and was invited to join this new world. An orphan, he lived with his maternal aunt and uncle who mistreated and isolated him. Most of his eleven years were spent “alone in some little room.” Accordingly, he shows that determination and strength Campbell mentions, by not letting it get to him in an irreparable level. He does not harbor feelings of revenge or hatred towards his family.

Tom Riddle was also an orphan. His mother died shortly after giving birth, and his father had abandoned them long before that. Brought up in an orphanage, Riddle did not receive much affection or comfort, just like Harry. None of them made any ties in the Muggle community (non-magical people), seeing that they were not attached to their families, or had any friends: “[Harry]’d never had friends before Hogwarts, Dudley had made sure of that.” (Rowling, Chamber: 174) “I trust that you also noticed that Tom Riddle was already highly self-sufficient, secretive and, apparently, friendless? (...) He preferred to operate alone.” (Rowling, Prince: 259) This lack of emotional ties of both characters imbeds them with the Orphan archetype.

This archetype sometimes features in the development of the Hero archetype. The psychoanalyst Gail Grynbaum discusses the significance of this archetype, based on Von Franz’s study:

we should not interpret [the orphan’s abandonment] through the lens of personal neurosis of the abused and neglected child we



have all come to know so well from the lore of psychotherapy, but leave it in an archetypal context to mine for deeper meaning. That is, “namely that the new God of our time is always to be found in the ignored and deeply unconscious corner of the psyche (the birth of Christ in a stable).” (7-12-07)

The abandoned child is symbolic of the abandoned or ignored part of ourselves. It is the hidden potential to be discovered through the Journey. Both Harry and Riddle embody that archetype and that potential. They have in common the Orphan archetype, which composes the Hero Journey.

The Orphan longs to be discovered and recognized, to be free to explore and understand his existence:

Harry grows up as a spirited yet lonely boy who, like many orphans and other alienated children, fantasizes about being rescued by someone special who will recognize him for his true value. (...) Early on, Harry notices he has unusual talents, such as an ability to talk to snakes at the zoo, that position him uncomfortably between two worlds. (Grynbaum, 7-12-07)

Grynbaum’s interpretation of Harry and his characteristics as the Orphan can be applied to Riddle with no alteration. Although lonely and overlooked, the Orphan feels he can be more than what he is. Just like many mythological heroes, the hero – and here, unexpectedly the villain – have started out their Journey in obscurity and loneliness to be destined to great things.

However, Riddle, differently from Harry, did display mischievous behavior since childhood, in his bullying and scaring the other children in the orphanage. Nevertheless, this cannot be pinned down as evidence or the reason for his future as a villain. Dumbledore, although worried about the boy’s behavior, could have no idea of the real potential for villainy in him: “‘Did I know that I had just met the most dangerous Dark wizards of all time?’ said Dumbledore. ‘No, I had no idea that he was

to grow up to be what he is. However I was certainly intrigued by him.” (Rowling, Prince: 258) Other mythological heroes have also shown such harmful tendencies in the beginning of their Journeys. Joseph Campbell mentioned the story of how the mythological Hindu savior, Krishna, “was a mischievous little boy” (Campbell, 1993: 327) and, nevertheless, a hero. Even Harry’s father was a shameless bully as a teenager and turned out to be a great wizard and a good person as well. Of the thousands of ways the difficult childhood of the hero could be told, Harry’s and Tom’s ended up being the same. As Campbell said, the childhood is the first step in the making of the hero where he starts displaying his special characteristics. The setting for the childhood of both villain and hero are very similar, but each one developed his own distinct way of dealing with it and both were able to cope.

The next step in the Journey, the call to adventure, is also common for both. Harry and Tom are invited to attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in this new and unknown world. Both are a little skeptical about the call, as is usual, but they accept it gladly and cross the threshold into the unknown. The acceptance of the call is the opening of the door to new discoveries:

The first stage of the mythological journey – which we have designated the “call to adventure”- signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown. (. . .) [I]t is always a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight. (Campbell, 1993: 58)

The call shows the hero is ready to start the process of growing up or attaining enlightenment and knowledge of the world. He leaves the sphere of the known to face the dangers of the unknown, and both boys discussed here were prepared during their

childhoods for the endurance of hardships in their future. The call is the confirmation of the Hero's special qualities and the time when he has to put them to test. Hero and Villain in the Harry Potter series find in this new world not only the hardships of their Journey, but also the delights the exploration brings.

In accepting the adventure the hero is provided with help for the journey ahead: "For those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon force he is about to pass." (Campbell, 1993: 69) Harry and Tom alike have that protective figure in Dumbledore. He is the old wise man who can answer their questions and supply them with the weapons they need for their adventure.

The willingness to join this new world, Hogwarts, is followed by an archetypal ritual of passage. Every student would experience a symbolic rebirth. The ritual for the welcoming of the first-year students has existed for as long as the school itself. Both Harry and Tom had to go through the ritual of rebirth into their new lives. Katherine Grimes describes the experience: "all first-year students – and, significantly, only the first-years – are ferried across water to Hogwarts, a sort of rebirth completed when the Sorting Hat puts them into their new houses." (2004: 119) Water carries a strong symbolism of birth or rebirth. Mythological heroes are often put into water for either their salvation or doom.<sup>24</sup>

In the case of the Harry Potter series the boat ride to the castle carries that symbolism. Significantly, not only the does hero go through this ritual, but every wizard about to start their education: heroes, villains and every other child alike. This rebirth provides a contrast to the hero's, and here villain's as well, first birth. As babies they were born alone and unable to establish ties. This rebirth propitiates them an

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<sup>24</sup> Examples of those heroes include Moses, who was put in the Nile in a basket, Romulus and Remus on the Tiber, Karna from Hinduism floating in the river Ganges and even Jesus and his cousin John Baptist in initiating the rite of baptism with water. (Grimes, 2004:118)

opportunity for a new life in community. All children are reborn together and placed into their new accepting families. Both Harry and Riddle make ties in their respective houses, even though those ties have different meaning for each of them: Harry makes friends, and Tom makes loyal followers. A few years after joining their new families both boys are intrigued about their original ones.

At Hogwarts both Harry and Tom try and find out about their magical heritage. They want to learn what kind of people their parents were. At first, Harry is proud to follow his father's footsteps as a Quidditch<sup>25</sup> player, and not differently, Tom is proud of his ancestry when he discovers himself to be a descendant of Salazar Slytherin, one of the four Hogwarts' founders. Both find their purposes in honoring their parents' memories. Harry's parents have died to save his life – he finds out at Hogwarts – so he sees as the work of his life to honor their death by fighting their killer, Voldemort, and, more importantly, everything he stands for. As for Tom's history, Slytherin left Hogwarts because of his ideals: he believed only all-magical families should be allowed to attend the school. Although Tom was a Muggle-born (his father was not a wizard), he saw fit to follow Salazar's ideals. In order to do that, he took control of the basilisk stored in the Chamber of Secrets at Hogwarts by his ancestor. With that Voldemort killed his first victim.

Harry and Tom took upon themselves the challenges set in their pasts. The Chamber of Secrets is a common ground for both of them. It symbolizes what Campbell calls “the belly of the whale:”

Allegorically, then, the passage into a temple and the hero-dive through the jaws of the whale are identical adventures, both denoting in picture language, the life-centering, life-renewing act. “No creature,” writes Ananda Coomaraswamy, “can attain a higher grade of nature without ceasing to exist.” Indeed, the

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<sup>25</sup> Quidditch is the most popular sport in the wizarding world.

physical body of the hero may be actually slain, dismembered, and scattered over the land or sea. (Campbell, 1993: 92)

For Riddle the discovery of the Chamber was his breakthrough, his purposes confirmed in the physical construction of a temple dedicated to his very ideals. Thence, along with his first kill, Tom slayed his soul and had it scattered. When Voldemort killed his father he tore his soul apart and stored one of its pieces in his diary, making that object his first Horcrux. From that point, Tom Riddle ceased to exist; he sacrificed himself willfully for the birth of Voldemort.

When Harry went into the Chamber he was pursuing his personal objectives, but those included the saving of someone else's life. The difference between the villain and the hero can be seen here, not in the act of the sacrifice itself, but in the purpose it serves. Harry was willing to lose his life or suffer dismemberment when fighting the basilisk to save Ginny and destroy the diary, thus preventing more harm. Tom lacerated his soul in detriment of others. His sacrifice is only possible with the sacrifice of others, and the purpose of the dilaceration of his soul serves only himself. Campbell points out that the sacrifice is precisely what makes the hero: "The hero of yesterday becomes the tyrant of tomorrow, unless he crucifies *himself* today." (Campbell, 1993: 353; emphasis Campbell's) Campbell's statement implies that the self-sacrifice to which the hero is submitted to has to be willful. The refusal to this selfless submission is what makes tyrants and villains. In this case, the sacrifice took place, but the villain is born from that. Tearing one's soul apart in several pieces and having it scattered in material symbolic forms is a sacrifice. The name of these objects, Horcrux, indicates their nature. From Latin *horr* is the root for *horrendus*, which means horrid, frightful ("horr(i/o)"); and *crux* means cross or *cruciare* for crucify("cruci-, crux"). Then, the *Horcrux* can be understood as a "horrible, terrible cross." The word may also be related to the words *hoax* + *crux*, which leads to the interpretation of a "deceitful, adulterated cross" or even

an “adulterate essence” as in English *crux* may refer to the essence or main feature of something (“hoax”; “crux”). Both interpretations imply the corruption of the meaning of the cross or of crucifying and the unholy nature of that object. In this case, then, we have a selfish crucifying, where the objective is the eternal life of the torn soul and not enlightenment for the benefit of others, as the objective of the hero should be. Although the act of sacrifice can be seen as happening to Harry and Tom, the symbolic significance for each one is what differentiates hero from villain.

Not only the meaning of the name, Horcrux, but the specific choice of objects made by Voldemort show the perversion of symbolisms from the journey of the hero. All the objects chosen to store Voldemort’s soul were round-shaped. The diary, although rectangular when closed, has to be opened when it is to give access to the stored soul. The turning of the pages of the diary delineates a circular outline. Slitheryn’s ring was naturally a circle-shaped band and it was also encrusted with a round stone. Slitheryn’s locket was also round-shaped, and the chain to put it around the neck also forms a circle. Ravenclaw’s tiara was naturally round and Hufflepuff’s cup also repeats the pattern. Lastly, the sixth Horcrux, which completes the seven-part soul in the circular pattern followed by the previous Horcruxes, is the snake Nagini, which evokes the image of the ouroboros; the snake with its tail in its mouth.

The circle is a very strong symbol, which has been part of man’s unconscious since the beginning of times<sup>26</sup>. The circle is, in fact, an archetype. It is a symbol of

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<sup>26</sup> The psychoanalyst Aniela Jaffé explains that the circle as a symbol pre-dates practical utilization of the shape, for example in the form of the wheel:

In non-Christian art, such circles are called ‘sun wheels.’ They appear in rock engravings that date back to the Neolithic epoch before the wheel was invented. As Jung has pointed out, the term ‘sun wheel’ denotes only the external aspect of the figure. What really mattered at all times was the experience of an archetypal, inner image, which Stone Age man rendered in his art as faithfully as he depicted bulls, gazelles, or wild horses. (1968: 269)

The historical survey shows the archetypal nature of the circle, as it originated in man’s unconscious as a symbol that later permeated many aspects of man’s life, such as architecture, religion, literature and art.

wholeness of spirit: “[the circle] expresses the totality of the psyche in all its aspects, including the relationship between man and the whole of nature. (. . .) [The symbol of the circle] always points to the single most vital aspect of life – its ultimate wholeness.” (Jaffé, 1978: 266) Voldemort chose a symbol of wholeness, spirituality and perfection to store his shattered, earth-bound, corrupted soul. The corruption of the circle symbol is a further corruption of the sacrifice of the Hero. In many accounts of the Journey, the circle represents the attainment of enlightenment by the Hero, and it often appears at the completion of his Journey. For Voldemort, the Horcruxes are also the summit of his Journey; they are what make him God-like. The same symbol features in the crucial moment of both journeys; the Hero’s and the Villain’s. The symbol of the circle found in both journeys put together, evidence the contrast of the perfection of enlightenment and the destruction of the soul.

The Ouroboros is another archetype that is distorted in the Journey of the Villain. The Ouroboros, similar to the circle symbolism, represents the cyclical nature of the universe. It is the representation of the need of destruction for the renewal of life. The mouth is the destructive force and the tail the generative one. In making the Horcruxes, Voldemort was attempting to interrupt the cycle of life. He intended to prevent his life from ending, to stop his death; therefore, going against this cyclical nature of things. Accordingly with Voldemort’s pattern of distorted symbolisms, his last Horcrux is a symbol of cycles, of the need of death for life to continue.

Voldemort chose seven as the number of parts he would tear his soul, into the number of sacrifices he would make. In the books, seven is said to be the most powerful magical number, but the symbolism of that number goes beyond that. Grynbaum analyses the significance of the number seven as it refers to the number of volumes in the series as well:

The number seven is an apt one to mirror a shaman's journey; seven is frequently used in fairy tales and spiritual/religious texts to refer to the completion of a cycle that symbolizes dynamic wholeness. In ancient Egypt seven (. . .) was the symbol of eternal life. What Harry is undergoing in the course of these books is nothing else but the development of the ability of a mediumistic nature to survive in two worlds. (30-07-07)

The hero, Harry, goes through a seven-part journey to attain enlightenment and to become the master of two worlds. Those are not the Muggle and Magical worlds, but life and death. His destiny, of which he is unaware, is to reconcile with the cyclical nature of life. The villain, Voldemort, also goes through a seven-part journey, at Hogwarts and in the making of his Horcruxes, but he intentionally seeks the secrets of life and death. He chose his journey and his sacrifices in order to become master of the two worlds. His journey is composed of sacred elements that he desecrates for his own purposes.

In the light of the interpretation presented here, the Journey of the Villain can be understood as a corruption of the Journey of the Hero. In the Journey of the Hero, hero and villain are opposing forces. In the Harry Potter series, as the villain takes possession of the archetypes associated with the hero, those symbols become corrupted and not conflicting any more. The symbols of life and death, good and evil, are not opposing forces, but they mingle as one is tinged by the other. The journey of the villain reveals the dark side of good and the bright side of evil.

The making of the Horcruxes was the highest point in Voldemort's journey. For him they represented the secret to immortality; corrupted immortality nonetheless. The journey, however, is not completed at this point. He has to go back to his first world, where he began, in order to complete the cycle.



Even after Voldemort was formed as a villain he still completed his cycle in accordance with the hero journey. In order to finish the journey, the boys have to return and go back to the Muggle world every year. So their journey is renewed and relived with the beginning of each school year.

The full round, the norm of the monomyth, requires that the hero shall now begin the labor of bringing the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess, back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds.  
(Campbell, 1993: 193)

Harry and Tom finish the hero cycle and restart it yearly. The knowledge they acquired in Hogwarts, about the world and about themselves, helps them make peace with their first world. This knowledge and their attitude towards their world are their blessings and, the prospect of going back to Hogwarts the following year is what helps them in this return.

### 6.1. The Villain-Hero Relationship

As we have seen, Harry Potter and Tom Riddle live remarkably similar journeys even though the former is the hero and the latter the villain. Their hardships and their purposes have the same symbolic sources. Some fantasies feature the villain living a quasi Hero Journey. In those fantasies, however, it is highly unusual to find such close similarity between hero and villain as we find in the Harry Potter series. We can see as an example how the journeys are for Luke Skywalker and his father Anakin. Their childhood was considerably different: Anakin and his mother were slaves and even

after becoming a Jedi there was nothing he could do to change his mother's situation; Luke was raised by loving host parents who, although humble, would give him as much comfort as they could. Anakin was taken from his mother as a young boy to be trained by the Jedi order; Luke was already a young adult when he came across a distress message he chose to follow and which led him into contact with Jedis. Anakin was thought to be the prophesized Jedi who would bring balance to The Force. He was faced with that knowledge since childhood. Although he has fallen to the Dark Side, by the end of the saga he is redeemed by giving his life to save his son and kill his Master, thus fulfilling the prophesy and the role of the hero. Anakin was also conceived without a father, which makes his coming into the world especial and heroic since conception. Anakin's life was burdened since his childhood, and exactly because of that and his fall the Jedis made sure Luke did not have to endure the same hardships. The supernatural or divine surrounded Anakin's life from conception, while Luke's was made as mundane as possible. Anakin's hardships and later his love for Amidala gain the audience's sympathies making him the redeemed villain and ultimately the hero. However, Anakin does not complete the full cycle as he does not return to his native land with the boons of his learning.

In the Harry Potter series, Dumbledore points out to Harry several times that he should feel no more special than any other wizard. His surviving the attempt on his life when he was a baby was not by some unexplainable divine deed of his, but by the arrangement of the circumstances that were not accidentally set. Harry's mother losing her life to protect his son was a conscious choice of hers. As was Merope's to let her life fade from her despite her son. In the series, a prophesy is also uttered, but, again, Dumbledore exposes that any prophesy is only as meaningful as one believes it to be.

One can choose to follow it or not. Harry is not more skillful or powerful than any other wizard.

In pointing out that Harry is just another normal boy with choices, Rowling is actually making her character more verisimilar. The importance of making the hero a human rather than a divine being is discussed by Campbell:

But the makers of legends 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 found. (...)

This accords with the view that herohood is predestined, rather than simply achieved, and opens the problem of the relationship of biography to character. Jesus, for example, can be regarded as a man who by dint of austerities and meditations attained wisdom; or on the other hand, one may believe that a god descended and took upon himself the enactment of a human career. The first view would lead one to imitate the master literally, in order to break through, in the same way as he, to the transcendent, redemptive experience. But the second states that the hero is rather a symbol to be contemplated than an example to be literally followed. The divine being is a revelation of the omnipotent Self, which dwells within us all. The contemplation of the life thus should be undertaken as a meditation on one's own immanent divinity, not as a prelude to precise imitation, the lesson being not "Do thus and be good," but "Know this and be God." (Campbell, 1993: 319)

The usual mythological hero of supernatural deeds, such as Anakin Skywalker, is usually presented as a divinity beyond humanity; thus, an example not to be followed, but contemplated from afar. Ordinary humans can only aspire to divinity, but have to content themselves with their present situation. In this view, knowledge or divinity is not available to everyone, but only to those allowed and predestined for it, no matter

how much humans wish or strive for it. In such view, the human and the divine are considered completely separated.

However, the other extreme is also reproached by Campbell: following an example literally can only lead to imitation and could not lead to real enlightenment or transcendence as the objective of the hero requires. Rather, Campbell supports a middle ground between those two common views: the journey of the hero is neither to be followed nor contemplated. It is symbolic and as such to be understood and absorbed. Divinity lies in transcending the literal and using the knowledge from other people's journeys, combined with one's own journey in the unveiling of strength and sublimity inside oneself.

The fewer supernatural characteristics the hero has, the easier it is to achieve that effect. A hero such as Harry Potter is verisimilar enough to propitiate identification with the reader and fantastical enough to discourage literal imitation; thus, facilitating the transcendent experience Campbell defends. What of a villain, then, that presents such similar journey and characteristics as the hero? The villain, being so intrinsically close to the hero, becomes the counter-example. Knowing the path of the hero and how he transcends humanity becomes as important as knowing how to avoid the path of the villain. The revelation of the divine being within us all comes with the revelation of the profane potential as well.

The relationship of Harry and Voldemort is closer than that of father and son. Not only does Harry carry a piece of Voldemort within him, like a son would of a father, but Voldemort also carries Harry's blood in his veins. In the attempt on Harry's life, Voldemort tore his soul one more time and unwillingly made Harry his seventh Horcrux. For the confection of a new body, Voldemort had to use some of Harry's blood in order to complete the enchantment and recompose his material form. They can

feel each other's emotions and even their intentions. They are connected not only by their journey, but by a physical and spiritual bond as well. They are not the two distinct sides of the same coin; together they form one image. This relationship is important because it puts both on the same level. Neither is Voldemort the father with the upper hand, nor is Harry the supernatural hero with divine protection and a mission.

## **7. Conclusion**

Fantasy Literature is an essential genre not only for children, but for adults as well. It is usually loaded with symbolism that, although disguised under a cover of the fantastic or supernatural, relates directly to the challenges of the real life of the reader. Much of these symbols in fantasy are carried through the archetypes that compose those stories. Archetypes are primordial images that are a constituent part of man's psyche, or unconscious. Those images, along with their universal symbolism, are produced by men

despite their conscious choices or experiences. They can be compared to an action or reaction brought about by primitive instincts. Archetypes, like instincts, are universal to a race and, although an archetype may be manifested differently in distinct cultures, it carries the same symbolism anywhere it is found.

The symbolism of archetypes is an essential part in the structure of a fantasy story. The specific archetypes that were explored here were the villain and, by consequence, the hero archetypes. In the Harry Potter series, as in many typical works of fantasy, the hero archetype can be clearly seen through his journey. Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* described that archetype and that journey in detail as they appear in many cultures around the globe. The hero journey is lived by heroes of countless fantasies, and in all of them its pinnacle can be found in the confrontation with the villain.

The villain is the hero's nemesis and his final test in the journey. This character may incorporate evil in many different forms. It may represent evil as it can be inflicted through nature, by a supernatural or divine force or by man himself. The representation of the villain speaks of the fears experienced by the community or culture that created it. The hero is the solution for that fear, an entity capable of resolving it whether with supernatural aid, personal strength or conjoined forces.

As in comparison to the hero journey, the villain archetype is usually considerably underdeveloped. Despite their variable representations, the villain is, ultimately, a representation of the unknown, of that which cannot be understood, but should be vanquished. A more developed villain archetype shows this character as a person or entity that suffered injustices and is misunderstood. Once the circumstances that originated the villain are revealed to the hero, this villain is redeemed by his past of

sufferings and misfortunes. Usually the villain repents and may even be reinstated to the community.

In the Harry Potter series, we can see the arising of a different kind of villain archetype. The new villain presented in the Harry Potter series describes a villain archetype with the same journey as the hero. This journey of the villain can be found in some contemporary examples of typical fantasy, but, differently from the Harry Potter series, the journey of the villain usually results in the redemption of such villain. In typical fantasy, the villain who went through the journey is usually one who started out with a hero potential but was fooled, tricked or seduced by the alluring side of evil. Eventually, he may commit an act of great selflessness which would put him back on the path of the hero. A good example of this can be seen in the character of Darth Vader from the Star Wars saga.

This archetype warns for the dangers outside, for the external evil influences which may turn this potential hero into a wicked villain. The villain archetype presented in the Harry Potter series develops into a villain journey; however, that path does not lead to redemption. The villain in the Harry Potter series warns for the dangers within; for the choices made consciously and carefully even if under the influence of pride. Voldemort is not a villain to be pitied, nor is he one to arise forgiveness and compassion from the hero or the audience. He is not to be feared and destroyed as the typical fantasy villain; he is a villain to be observed and understood. He brings about not the compassion or strength of the hero, but his capacity for comprehension. In comprehending his opposite, the hero can comprehend himself better. The final goal of the hero journey is not knowledge for its own sake, but an enlightened understanding of his life and of the ones that surround him.

As it was previously discussed in chapter three, each variation of an archetype speaks to its own time. The creation of a new archetype, represented here by Voldemort, is not merit solely of the author, but of the audience as well. The archetype existed in the reader's mind before it was put on paper by the author, and, for that reason, Voldemort is representative and necessary in our time and that may be one reason why this new archetype is so widely spread. Grynbaum discusses the production of new archetypes in Jungian terms:

Jung argued that when an archetype is activated in a group's collective psyche, the images of its energy will appear in the group's stories, myths and folktales. He further believed that any story that has spread across oceans and the millennia has done so only because it speaks to a psychological experience that is common to us all. (30-07-07)

It is not possible to say whether the Harry Potter series will survive the test of time, but it certainly has "spread across oceans." The fear a villain such as Voldemort speaks of is exactly of the reasons which brought his ruin: the persistence in ignorance, the illusion of power and the allures of self-deception. The threat is human and comes from within to be extended without.

As a new representation of the villain archetype, Voldemort is never the ultimate unknown for Harry. From the beginning, he is strangely familiar. In the second book of the series *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, when Harry comes into possession of Tom Riddle's diary, this feeling is clearly conveyed:

Harry couldn't explain even to himself, why he didn't just throw Riddle's diary away. The fact was that even though he *knew* the diary was blank, he kept absent-mindedly picking it up and turning the pages as though it was a story he wanted to finish. And while Harry was sure he had never heard the name T. M. Riddle before, it still seemed to mean something to him, almost as



though Riddle was a friend he'd had when he was very small, and half-forgotten. (Rowling, Chamber: 174)

Harry feels his connection with Voldemort from the start. Hero and villain are intrinsically connected and they recognize that the other is an essential part of their journey. Unlike, for example, Ged, in *A Wizard of Earthsea*, whose dark side is manifested into a villainous shadow, which Ged is only able to recognize as a part of himself much later in his adventure. Ged starts to feel his connection with the Shadow only as it grows stronger and gets closer to him. He rejects the shadow and spends most of his adventure running from it, instead of learning from it. In this novel, the villain is the unknown from another place, which is also unknown and indescribable. None of Ged's masters can explain the existence or purpose of the Shadow. And even when Ged reunites with it, he cannot explain it. He is able to face and assimilate his dark side, but he does not acquire conscious self-knowledge from it. Conversely, Harry seems to always be running towards Voldemort. He feels their connection even when Voldemort went through his weakest moments, and Harry wants to take advantage from their link, even if his attempts prove to be naïve or are later frustrated.

Voldemort is a puzzle that has to be put together by Harry. Dumbledore provides Harry with the pieces, but all the way Harry is able to see and analyze the connections of that puzzle, so that in the end what he uncovers is himself. The unknown stops being the ultimate mystery and is replaced by the known, but not really seen. Voldemort represents ignorance, not only in the sense of not knowing but also of refusing knowledge. In a similar idea, the psychologist Gail Grynbaum explored the significance of good and evil in the series in terms of consciousness and unconsciousness: "Rowling is clear that it pays to trust the self, and that the 'self' is a progressive undertaking of one's own personal power. Evil for her seems to be a form of unconsciousness. Consciousness, of the kind Harry is developing, leads to greater

integrity and compassion.” (30-07-07) A new understanding of the archetypes of hero and villain proposes a distinction no more based merely on good vs. evil. The ambiguity of the characters in the series and their three-dimensional representation make this kind of clear-cut value attribution almost impossible. The new archetypes are rather based on a distinction of knowledge vs. ignorance, not only an intuitive knowledge, but the desire and the pursuit of it. Knowledge of one-self and life lead to an enriched existence. Ignorance, on the other hand, is characterized by pride, self-deception, and the illusion of power over others or on its own.

Voldemort, although brought up with access to a good education, is proud consequently blind to the fact that he does not know everything. He overestimated his formal education and developed his own beliefs, putting the latter above all else. We can compare him, for example, with Hagrid, an ignorant in the most common sense of the word. He was expelled from school at an early age and did not have access to any kind of formal education. However, maybe even because he was denied it, he does not underestimate the value of knowledge.

Another very important feature of this new description of villain archetype is the proximity of Voldemort's journey with Harry's. They have trodden the same path and ended in opposite sides of the road. The hero journey is full of symbolism, the significance of which reaches each reader in a different way. Alongside the potential for multiple meanings, each step of the journey has an intrinsic significance. M. Katrine Grimes talks about the significance of the difficult birth or childhood of the hero as to its effect on the audience: “This common archetype, the birth despite many odds, allows the reader or hearer to identify with the hero's special destiny, the idea that the gods wanted the hero's birth – and by extension, our own – so much that they overcame any obstacle to get him and us to earth.” (2004: 118) This, as was discussed in chapter six is

the orphan archetype. The author of the essay discusses how this episode of the journey appeals to the audience and how it facilitates their identification with the hero character. Nevertheless, the same episode is true for the villain, so it should facilitate a similar identification.

In the Harry Potter series, the same complications can be seen in the birth of the villain and hero. They are conceived and survive against all odds. Although both hero's and villain's lives were saved by human intervention, the miraculous survival evokes the supernatural and the feeling of a greater destiny. Grimes also points greatness as the destiny of the orphan archetype: "If we are destined to greatness, a lowly birth will not prevent us from achieving distinction. On the other hand, even if we are born as though destined for nothing, we can be reborn as persons of eminence and great deeds." (2004: 118) The rebirth the author talks about here is the symbolic rebirth that may happen in the life of the hero. Indeed, as it was described in chapter six, both villain and hero experience a rebirth ceremony when they first entered Hogwarts.

Grimes argues for the reader's identification with the orphan archetype because it sends an optimistic message. The orphan is able to rise above extreme difficulties and that archetype says that strength may come from the most unexpected places. This is the idea which should be received by people's unconscious through that archetype. Tom Riddle, however, took the idea to the extreme and, once again, distorted another symbol of the journey:

You think I was going to use my filthy Muggle father's name for ever? I, in whose veins runs the blood of Salazar Slytherin himself, through my mother's side? I, keep the name of a foul, common Muggle, who abandoned me even before I was born, just because he found out his wife was a witch? No, Harry. I fashioned myself a new name, a name I knew wizards everywhere

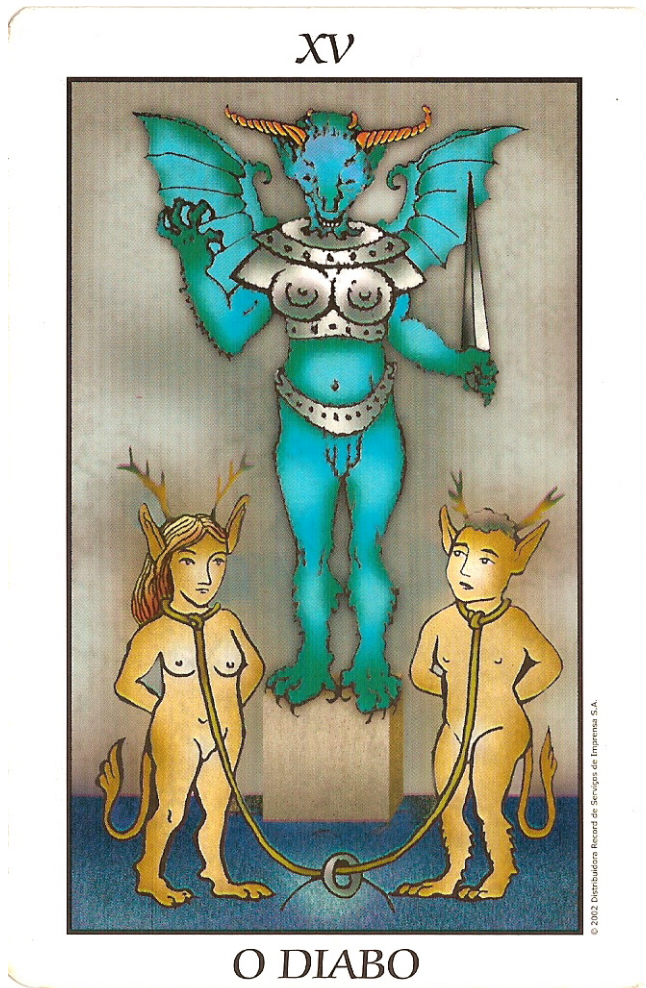
would one day fear to speak, when I had become the greatest sorcerer in the world! (Rowling, Chamber: 231)

Voldemort was outraged with his own lowly birth, and on the occasion of his rebirth he discovered a new identity which could lead him to real greatness. But Voldemort takes the thought to the extreme. The journey of the hero indeed inevitably leads to greatness. And as the villain in the Harry Potter series lives the same journey of the hero, his path also leads to greatness. The task is to choose to understand greatness or to achieve it blindly. At the time Harry finds out his and Voldemort's wands are connected, at the time Harry starts his journey in the same path as Voldemort, Mr. Ollivander, the wand shop owner, tells Harry to heed greatness: "I think we must expect great things from you Potter ... After all, He Who Must Not Be Named did great things – terrible, yes, but great." (Rowling, Stone: 65) Greatness is available to all who would accept the call to adventure, but our ultimate destiny is our choice.

This thesis aimed at the demonstration of the manifestation of a new villain archetype represented primarily by the character of Lord Voldemort from the Harry Potter series. As it was previously discussed, every occurrence of a new archetype reflects a necessity of the time and culture where it was manifested. Further exploration of such archetypes could bring therefore, a better understanding of our time and of the people who respond to it. In the specific case of the Harry Potter series, a work of fantasy so widely spread and popular, the exploration of such archetypes may unveil connections among the cultures which embraced them. We have seen that the villain archetype and the fear it represents are an essential part of the development of a hero figure. By mingling and mixing the hero and villain archetypes Rowling seems to respond to our times by providing readers everywhere with a hero and a villain who are above all human, and with the possibility to see them interconnected in their humanity.

## **8. Attachments**

- 1- The Devil Tarot Card



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