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**Hermione, Ginny and Dolores in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*:
a feminist approach to gender and power**

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ABSTRACT: Reading can have a significant influence in people's life. Through reading people can relax, have fun and learn things. Nowadays, the importance of reading has been of great debate within schools and universities, and many governmental programs are being implanted to promote reading. Thus, books may induce people's behavior and the way they see the world, particularly children and adolescents, who are developing their mental activities and are open to learn things faster than an adult. Popular literature presents a variety of themes that call the attention of the target-audience, such as the fantasy genre. Bearing this in mind, the objective of the present study was to investigate how three female characters from the phenomenon and best-seller *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* were portrayed: Hermione Jean Granger, Ginevra (Ginny) Molly Weasley and Dolores Umbridge. The goal was to discover whether the author was able to break the tradition of representing women as weak, stupid or sentimental, for example. This research was based on three main themes: popular literature, feminist criticism and representation. The hypothesis was that, although J. K. Rowling tries to innovate in the depiction of such characters, she is not able to break the tradition completely. The analysis showed that the author did not indeed break the tradition, which permeates social structures, but that nevertheless she was able to create strong, intelligent and worthwhile female characters.

KEYWORDS: popular literature, representation, female characters

RESUMO: A leitura pode ter uma influência significativa na vida das pessoas. Através da leitura as pessoas podem relaxar, se divertir e aprender. Hoje em dia, a importância da leitura tem sido bastante discutida nas escolas e universidades, e muitos programas governamentais vem sendo implantados para promover a leitura. Portanto, os livros podem induzir o comportamento das pessoas e a forma como elas veem o mundo, especialmente crianças e adolescentes, que estão desenvolvendo suas atividades mentais e estão abertos a aprender mais rápido do que um adulto. A literatura popular apresenta uma variedade de temas que chamam a atenção do público-alvo, como o gênero fantasia. Tendo isso em mente, o objetivo do presente estudo foi investigar como três personagens femininas do fenômeno e best-seller *Harry Potter e a Ordem da Fênix* foram retratados: Hermione Jean Granger, Ginevra (Gina), Molly Weasley e Dolores Umbridge. A intenção era descobrir se a autora foi capaz de quebrar a tradição de representar as mulheres como fracas, estúpidas ou sentimentais, por exemplo. Esta pesquisa baseou-se em três temas principais: a literatura popular, a crítica feminista e representação. A hipótese era que, apesar de JK Rowling tentar inovar na representação de personagens, ela não é capaz de quebrar a tradição por completo. A análise mostrou que a autora de fato não quebrou a tradição, que permeia as estruturas sociais, mas que, no entanto, foi capaz de criar personagens femininas fortes, inteligentes e de valor.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: literatura popular, representação, personagens femininas

1. Introduction

Popular Literature has been influential in the formation of individuals ever since the printed word became available to a wide audience of readers. In spite of recent concerns that television and the Internet might discourage people from reading, the interest concerning reading has effectively increased – perhaps due to the spread of education among the less privileged and the growth of political interest among people, or even due to the very advancement of technologies, such as the personal computer. In any case, it is possible to notice that reading has become an enjoyable hobby, not only as an intellectual activity, which just the most privileged ones could afford to have in the past. As Cristina Clark and Kate Rumbold assert in their paper “Reading for pleasure: A research overview”, reading without being forced to implies that an interesting outcome can emerge from this task. In relation to reading being considered a hobby, therefore a pleasure, the authors explain:

Reading for pleasure refers to reading that we do of our own free will anticipating the satisfaction that we will get from the act of reading. It also refers to reading that having begun at someone else’s request we continue because we are interested in it. It typically involves materials that reflect our own choice, at a time and place that suits us (6).

Therefore, the number of what we call *popular books* has also increased, along with the number of genres. Besides the already acknowledged types of fiction, such as the short story and the novel, a few more have appeared over the years, such as the new adult¹ and the steampunk – although this latter is actually a sub-genre of science fiction. Indeed, the fantasy genre, to which the book I chose to be analyzed belongs, for both children and young adults, has become quite visible within popular literature if we consider the amount of copies sold and read all over the world. However, why is *Harry Potter* seen as a popular book? The term popular literature refers, generally speaking, to books that appeal to a large number of people. Its access and the range of themes we can find in them call the attention of the target audience – children and adolescents. It allows readers to perceive reading literature as a fun and relaxing activity, in which they are not tested, as in Literature classes, for instance. Students do not feel discouraged or afraid of it – reading becomes a pleasure.

¹ A recent genre that deals with teenagers’ problems, particularly in regards to the passage from youth to adulthood.

With this idea in mind, it is clear that there is a connection between popular literature and best-sellers – books that many people buy (Merriam-Webster, “best-seller”). Best-sellers are, therefore, one of the key elements that can transform readers’ perceptions, ideas and thoughts, since people are very impressed and interested in the world of possibilities that they can find in such books. The juvenile phenomenon and best-seller *Harry Potter* written by J. K. Rowling is an example of this genre: Rowling's books reached millions of children all over the world and have been influencing them for over a decade. Another example that also shows fantastic literature has a wide coverage is the recent phenomenon *A Song of Ice and Fire*, written by the American novelist and screenwriter George R. R. Martin. Both series deal with fantasy and the world of possibilities, displaying a large number of characters and their unique personalities.

Taking into consideration who wrote the book series *Harry Potter*, a relevant matter already rises: the writer is a woman. This is not so unfamiliar, since many women have been writing and making fortunes with their books in the field of fantastic literature, such as Cassandra Clare, with *The Mortal Instruments* series, and Stephenie Meyer with *Twilight*, for example. But Joanne Rowling (worldwide known as J. K. Rowling), born on July 31, 1965, in England, was one of the first women to become a millionaire by writing popular literature. Over 120 million of her books have been sold around the world, making *Harry Potter* the best-selling book series in history (Grabianowski, “The 21 Best-Selling Books of All Time”). The first book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, was published in 1997, by Bloomsbury Publishing, and three years later it was translated into Portuguese by Rocco Publishing. The entire series, composed by seven books, develops the story of a young wizard who needs to fight the dark forces with his friends throughout the narrative. Since the author deals with many sensitive and recurrent issues, such as death, love and friendship, children and young adults all over the world have read them and identified with some of the characters, either male or female. This identification is significant for the formation of their selves, since they are potentially open to changes during childhood and adolescence. And the identification with adventurous and likable characters helps them acquire a taste for reading, and this influence, thus, is responsible for guiding their minds, thoughts and perceptions.

Considering the wide influence of the *Harry Potter* series, this paper will focus on the representation of three of its significant female characters: Hermione Jean Granger, Ginevra

(Ginny) Molly Weasley and Dolores Jane Umbridge. Bearing in mind theories about feminism, popular literature and representation, the aim is to analyze the depiction of these female characters in the fifth book of the series, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. I intend to investigate if Rowling tries to innovate in the depiction of female characters, by breaking a tradition which has persisted for centuries in the field of literature, or if she maintains the traditional portrayal of women, as will be presented and further discussed in the review of literature.

The monograph is organized in the following way: contextualizing my study and describing my general objective; introducing important concepts concerning popular culture, feminist criticism and representation, as well as presenting the plot of the novel *Harry Potter and Order of the Phoenix* in the review of literature. In the sequence, the method section brings an overview of the book selected, how it is developed, and the procedures and steps that follow. Lastly, the analysis is carried out and the final remarks are presented.

2. Review of literature

In order to reach my objective, I provide information about the plot of the book chosen, along with issues concerning popular literature, feminist criticism and representation. Since Harry Potter is part of popular literature, the subtopic popular culture presents what is considered popular and how the book analyzed here maintains a position in the field. As for feminist criticism, the subtopic brings matters about women writers and patriarchal society. Finally, it is not possible to talk about female characters without debating about representation, which will also be part of the review of literature.

2.1 Harry Potter

The *Harry Potter* book series is composed by seven books, all published by Bloomsbury. The first book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, was published in 1997, and the last one, *Harry Potter and Deathly Hallows*, was published ten years later, in 2007. The story is centered on the main character, Harry James Potter, who finds out he is a wizard – and not an ordinary one, but the wizard responsible for the disappearance of the Dark Lord. In the first book, he meets Ronald Weasley and Hermione Granger, who later become his best friends and stay by his side throughout the whole series. The main plot of the series is related to Lord Voldemort, the Dark Lord, who wants to take over the wizarding world, as well as to subjugate the non-magical people. Along with him, there are the Death Eaters, his faithful servants seeking the same ideals. The story, thus, is focused on a male character that is going through childhood and youth, and needs strength, knowledge and the help of his friends to face the challenges that appear in his way.

The fifth book, selected for my analysis, starts with Harry Potter, the protagonist, spending his last days of vacation in his uncle and aunt's house. He is not happy to be there and wants desperately to go to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, where he has spent his school days since he discovered he was a wizard. The main event in the book concerns the arrival at Hogwarts of a High Inquisitor, Dolores Umbridge, who starts to create panic among professors and students. In order to be prepared to fight against Lord Voldemort, the great villain of the series, Harry Potter and his friends form a group called Dumbledore's

Army. They have meetings to practice spells, since Umbridge does not let them do it in their regular classes. For this investigation this is the most suitable book of the series to be analyzed, since we have many passages concerning the subjects of my study, Hermione, Ginny and Dolores, and how they interact with other characters.

2.2. Popular Literature

Much of the current academic interest in popular literature arose in the context of Cultural Studies in the mid-1950s, which has Stuart Hall as its most important representative figure. The thinker and theoretician was born in Jamaica in 1932 and studied in Oxford. He was invited, later in his career, to join the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham. He is known for having challenged the division between high and low literature, advocating that all cultural objects deserve attention. Cultural Studies is, then, a multi- or post-disciplinary field which emphasizes the relation between power and politics, and enlarges the meaning of “culture”.

Popular Culture is harder to define, for it carries controversial meanings. According to Storey (1-2), although many definitions have been proposed, no one has reached a consensus on this matter. It is clear, on the other hand, that popular culture is directly connected with mass culture, an issue that has risen since the 1920’s and which became an object of study in the context of Cultural Studies, as mentioned above. Also, the capitalist economic model and the industrialization that began over a century ago have led to the commercialization of culture, that is, selling intellectual works for profit.

Although defining popular culture is not an easy task, defining the two terms apart from each other is possible. As proposed by Raymond Williams, culture can be defined in many ways, but the primordial definition for this paper is when he claims that culture is “the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity” (90). Taking this definition into consideration, we have a reference to the popular – the novel, comics, and so on (Storey 2).

The term “popular” is also defined separately by Williams, who postulates four meanings for it. For this paper, the following definitions are the most suitable to be discussed: “well liked by many people” or “inferior kinds of work” (237). The first definition works with

the concept that since it is popular, in this case popular literature, it is at the same time mass culture. Being mass culture means that many people are probably going to like it. As previously stated, best-sellers are books bought by a large number of people, all around the world. Thus, the book that reaches the category of best-seller has probably been read by a considerable number of people, and possibly the majority of them liked it. On the other hand, the second definition brings a set of issues concerning the *better* culture, in other words, the *high culture*, a separation denied by Stuart Hall and his followers in Cultural Studies. It would be interesting to discuss this problem further, but for the objective of this monograph it is sufficient to see popular culture as defined by Storey: that particular culture many people are likely to fancy. Finally, it is important to notice that dictionaries also contest the notion of a “better culture”. The Canadian Encyclopedia, for instance, refutes the concept of *high culture*, and provides the following explanation:

Popular literature in English is writing which has shown wide and continued acceptance, measured by sales, frequent imitation, adaptation to other cultural forms and general commercial success. The word 'popular' is meant as a synonym for 'successful,' not as an antonym for 'serious.' Certain books are carefully tailored by authors and publishers to capture the attention of a wide range of potential readers. (The Canadian Encyclopedia, “Popular Literature in English”)

Thus, popular literature is literature for large groups of people, available and most of the times more accessible than other types of literature, either because the price is more affordable, the demand is higher, or the vocabulary and grammatical structure is easier than the classics. The plots are also familiar, more digestible, or in case of more “controversial” topics, presented in an easy-to-process format. Moreover, popular literature may fit into the category of best-seller – literary works that reach millions of readers. Within the quantity of popular literature sold in Brazil and other countries, there is a significant number of fantasy books among them, a genre that frequently attracts children and young adults. As previously mentioned, Harry Potter is the best-selling book series in history and its substantial influence on children and young adults should not be neglected.

2.3. Feminist Criticism

Women have been struggling for equal rights for centuries, primarily regarding education and afterwards for the right to vote. In 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote one of the first books of feminist philosophy, claiming that it was necessary

to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are almost synonymous with epithets of weakness, and that those beings who are only the objects of pity and that kind of love, which has been termed its sister, will soon become objects of contempt.

Wollstonecraft's request to women is just one of many. Trapped at home, many women had no control over their own lives. They had a blurred notion of the society in which they lived, because it was always through men's perspectives that they understood the world. As a matter of fact, the idea that women always need, for example, "to be rescued" from the terrible dragon is still perpetuated in our literature and in our history. A change in this scenario of male protagonists that fight and of girls that need help has needed a change for a long time. Fraya Katz-Stoker, in her article *The Other Criticism: Feminism vs. Formalism*, asserts that

Feminist criticism can never be merely formal because women recognize, out of the experience of their own oppression, what a powerful weapon art, especially literature, is. Literature is a major component of the educational process, and that process, not biological determinism, shapes our destiny. In seeking to destroy patriarchal ideology in order to better the position of women in society, feminist criticism is a political act. (326)

In order to try to change or, as she says, destroy patriarchal ideology, it is necessary to adopt a feminist perspective towards everything we see or read. Analyzing a literary phenomenon like Harry Potter brings questions that still need to be solved or at least critically considered since we are dealing with a young audience. The writer, although being a woman, still reproduces aspects of patriarchal ideology in her books. The process of destroying such ideology does not happen overnight; it is a lengthy process and requires attention. Furthermore, it represents how feminist criticism should be applied to all readings and

analyses, especially concerning influential books as the one discussed in this monograph. The position of women as characters in such books is of major importance, for the way they are depicted illustrates the position of women not only in literature but also in life.

Finally, it is of extreme relevance to point out that Rowling was instructed to use a gender-neutral pen name by her publisher, in this case J. K. Rowling, because it would be better if her readers, especially male ones, thought the writer was a man rather than a woman (J. K. Rowling, "Biography"). This meaningful suggestion only evidences once again how women are still underestimated as writers, and considering the larger picture, as serious professionals.

2.4. Representation

Representation is another rather complex issue which leads directly into the concept of reality. Many questions have been asked as to whether anything exists outside representation, that is, before it is formulated through discourse. Be it as it may, the issue here has to do with the way women have been represented (conceived or imagined) in literature. According to Lois Tyson in *Feminist Criticism*, the representation of women has traditionally been closely related to patriarchal ideology, which posits that men are better, stronger or smarter than women. This way of thinking is inextricably placed in our society – passing from father to son, mother to daughter, father to daughter, mother to son, and so on. It is in the media – movies, TV series, soap operas – and even in schools and universities that such stereotypes should be closely examined and shattered. Gender roles are more often than not presented and accepted as a dichotomy: women are considered weak, emotional and submissive, whereas men are represented as strong, rational and decisive (Tyson 81-114).

Sexism is present everywhere, including in literature. Tyson explains that patriarchal ideology promotes ideas and concepts that sometimes go unnoticed due to thousands of years of history, but through a critical analysis it is possible to defamiliarize and criticize them. Thus, ideologically, it is through discourse (literary or not) that we can either reinforce or change the way things are traditionally represented. And it is interesting to perceive that a novel might lie between the two extremes: *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*

frequently both weakens and reinforces patriarchal ideology through women's characterization.

In addition to this misleading common-sense conception that women are, for instance, less intelligent than men, there is also the reverse: if the woman is not an *angel in the house*, she becomes a shrew. *La domination masculine*, written by Pierre Bourdieu, explores many remarkable issues concerning the masculine domination, and how this domination is embedded and naturalized in our society. Bourdieu states that when women are not able to subvert the relation of domination, their representation changes and they become evil beings, with a negative identity (*A dominação masculina*, 43). In view of this idea, it is important to emphasize that women were and might still be predominantly depicted within the family sphere – as mothers, daughters, and housewives; whereas men are portrayed within the public sphere – at pubs, clubs, and so on (72). The present analysis intends to see if the representation of the characters in *Harry Potter and The Order of the Phoenix* exhibits some stereotypes.

3. Method

This research aims at investigating how three characters of the book *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* are depicted: Hermione Granger, Ginevra Weasley and Dolores Umbridge. Since this is a literature research, the analysis will take into account how the characters are represented, and how this representation is aligned with desirable and undesirable traits in the depiction of women in relation to contemporary feminist theories. The importance of this study arises from the fact that the book has a massive influence on children and young adult's minds. Thus, it is important to perceive how female characters are represented in order to see the way this is being connected to real life – the real positions readers take towards gender issues. The hypothesis so far is that, although Rowling tries to innovate in the depiction of female characters, she cannot break a tradition which has persisted for centuries in the field of literature. Therefore, significant passages will be explored to corroborate or refute my hypothesis and afterwards to connect data with the theoretical feminist framework.

The selection criterion for this monograph was related to many factors, such as the knowledge and appreciation of this researcher concerning the novel, and the interest in researching gender in twenty-first-century literature. I wanted to discuss gender issues, because I often question the roles of female characters in stories. By doing that, I realized I could work with popular literature written by a woman, for the purpose of analyzing a popular book. Moreover, the main interest in the Letras program is due to my early experiences and my first contact with books, which was, as a matter of fact, through the Harry Potter series. It is important to explain that the fifth book was chosen because of the number of studies regarding the other books of the series, mainly the first and the last one, respectively *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. The fifth book was selected also because it is longer than the others and there are more points of view, that is, we can perceive throughout the narrative that more importance is given to characters other than the protagonist. By selecting to analyze such book, I figured I would have the opportunity to display the importance of reading popular culture, and to see that gender roles in literature may be changing, even if slowly. At last, it is important to point out that my first intention was to analyze Hermione Granger, Ginny Weasley and Bellatrix Lestrange;

however, in the course of this semester I realized the character Bellatrix did not appear as much as I expected. In fact, she only appears in chapter thirty five, although she is sometimes mentioned through the narrative, firstly on page 105. Thus, I decided to examine Dolores, a very distinct character in the novel, as I will discuss later.

The book chosen to be analyzed here is *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, published on June 21, 2003. Five years later it was translated into Portuguese by Rocco Publishing. As previously mentioned, this is the longest book in the series, with 607 pages (the UK version). With her success among children and young adults, the author continued writing the series of seven books until 2007, when she ended it, always dealing with delicate issues and bringing interesting characters to be examined.

In order to guide this study, the following research questions are proposed:

- 1) How are these female characters, Hermione, Ginny and Dolores, portrayed in relation to the literary tradition? What are their predominant characteristics?
- 2) How are the characters represented from the male characters' points of view, especially the protagonist's?
- 3) How do they see each other – given that they are women – and what do they think about their own gender?

4. Analysis

This section will bring my analysis concerning the characters selected and my research questions which will be addressed later in the Final Remarks. The analysis will focus on the representation of these characters, and how they are portrayed through three perspectives: the literary tradition, their own points of view, that is, the character's, and the protagonist's. I will present evidence from the book and they will be problematized and discussed closely. At some point, I will increase the scope of the subtopic due to the interaction between characters, considering mainly the way they perceive each other, e.g., how Hermione perceives Ginny.

4.1 Hermione Granger

Hermione Jean Granger is a Muggle-born² student of Hogwarts, daughter of dentists, and friends with Harry and Ron, whose most striking feature is her smartness. Her first appearance occurs in the first book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, in chapter four, when the protagonist, Harry Potter, is heading to the School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, shortened Hogwarts. Although this study aims at investigating the fifth book of the series, it is important to perceive how one of the most essential female characters of the book first appeared in the juvenile phenomenon. The appearance occurs while Harry is trying to make friends with a boy who shows up in his cabin, Ronald Weasley. It is possible to see their connection, how both characters, since the first moment, seem to have affinity and are very likely to be friends. As for Hermione, however, the reception changes. The girl shows up in the cabin, interrupting their conversation and Ron's demonstration of doing magic. The girl is there in order to find out to where Neville's toad has escaped. At first sight, she seems a bossy and annoying girl to the boys and her attitude does not change for some chapters: "She had a bossy sort of voice, lots of bushy brown hair, and rather large front teeth." (p. 79).

Although the character's first attempt to become friends with the boys does not work, in the course of the book the situation is changed. By saving Hermione from a Troll in the

² A person who has not magical blood and is not able to do magic in the inner world of the novel. Hermione, for instance, is daughter of muggles, but she develops magical ability and is able to do magic, even though she is from a non-magical family.

lady's room, Harry and Ron seem to accept her, as well as being accepted by her. The feeling towards this relation is confusing, but it seems that their relationship could only exist when she realized they cared about her, even risking their lives for her – as she will do later in the series.

In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, therefore, the main characters' friendship is already established; they are inseparable and have gone through many problems and adventures together. Hermione first appears in chapter four, as it happened in the first book, along with Ron Weasley. Her first action at the sight of the protagonist is to cry out, happy and anxious at the sight of her friend. Ron, on the other hand, does not seem so excited, he keeps calm and even a little indifferent: “Let him breathe, Hermione,' said Ron, grinning as he closed the door behind Harry.” (61).

This first glance at the character brings to mind the literary tradition of female characters as emotional and affectionate, while male characters are supposed to be indifferent, not gentle. Another passage in the same chapter exhibits a similar portrayal. The moment is tense, Harry is shouting, outraged, that Ron and Hermione did not send him a letter when they were apart, on vacation. Hermione tries to change the situation, trying to explain what happened, but Harry does not allow her to do it. She is desperate, saying they are sorry, “her eyes now sparkling with tears” (64). Ron, once again, is impervious, trying to reason with Harry.

Along with her profound caring and sentimental attitude, Hermione is also depicted as humanitarian, as a person who cares for other beings, such as the house-elves, magical creatures used as slaves to do menial work. In the fourth book, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, she even creates the *Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare*, ridicularized by Ron as SPEW (73). This typically female nurturing characteristic contrasts with her best friends and even with other characters of the series. In chapter six, for instance, Mrs. Weasley, Ron's mother, is giving them bottles to get rid of Doxys in the house. Mrs Weasley, then, wonders about what the house-elves had been doing all these years there, as if they were obliged to keep the house clean and free of Doxys. Hermione gives her a “reproachful” look (95). Another very remarkable example regards her relation with Kreacher, the house-elf of the Largo Grimmauld where Harry Potter and their acquaintances are staying before the school begins. The house-elf, being created in a traditional wizardry family, keeps the same ideals

and thoughts as his masters; so for him Hermione is a “Mudblood”, someone that does not deserve to be in the magical world. In many passages while they stay at the house, Hermione attempts to keep a conversation and to be kind to him, but the house-elf is always muttering reproachful things about her and her friends.

'This is Harry, Kreacher,' said Hermione tentatively. 'Harry Potter.'
Kreacher's pale eyes widened and he muttered faster and more furiously than ever.

'The Mudblood is talking to Kreacher as though she is my friend, if Kreacher's mistress saw him in such company, oh, what would she say –' (101)

'Well, now you understand what dreadful lives they lead, perhaps you'll be a bit more active in SPEW!' said Hermione hopefully, as Mrs Weasley left them to it.' (145)

Towards the end of the novel, we also perceive her caring towards other beings, such as centaurs. In the context of this passage, Hermione is with Harry, leading Dolores through the Forbidden Forest – Hermione's idea to get rid of the woman – when Dolores starts attacking the centaurs that appear, fearing for her life, especially because she believe they are “Filthy half breeds! Beasts! Uncontrolled animals!” (665). The giant Grawp emerges and helps them, but also kills some centaurs, by accident. Although the centaurs might have killed them all, Hermione is still described as someone who cares about them. Ron, as a contrast, is shown as an insensible character (669). It is important to point out that the character that might be the only representation of a male caring figure in the book, and even in the whole series, is Rubeus Hagrid, a half-giant, friends with the trio – although his portrayal verges on the comic³.

Another striking feature that is present in the book considering Hermione is her potential to do magic. Ron’s magical skills, for instance, happen to be a disaster, and this is one of the biggest contrasts that implies that, although she is a dentists' daughter, she can be more skillful than the great majority of the characters – if not the most intelligent of them. She is the characterization of a young lady who wants to prove her value to others through knowledge. Being a muggle in the story means, for the traditional families of pure-blood, a

³ Rubeus Hagrid constantly helps the trio in their adventures and has a kind heart, mainly regarding magical creatures. For instance, he helped his giant half-brother, Grawp, hiding him in the Forbidden Forest in the fifth book, even if meant being injured or killed by him.

person who does not deserve to be considered a wizard or a witch, even if s/he can do magic better than anyone else. Hermione proves her value throughout the story, either by being the first one to answer questions asked by professors (233), and thus gaining point for her House, or by explaining how to practice a charm properly (333), or even by using logic, as for example, when she finds out Hagrid had been beaten up by giants (374).

Considering the plot of the novel, the final event takes place when Harry and his friends are trying to discover if Sirius, Harry's godfather and their friend, was taken by Voldemort, the great villain, and they are deciding whether they have to go to the Ministry of Magic or not. Hermione, using her logic, senses there is something odd about the situation, and tries to reason with them, but Harry is taken by his feelings towards Sirius and is not able to think straightforwardly. This is one of the moments Hermione is the reasoning mind.

'Look, I'm sorry,' cried Hermione, 'but neither of you is making sense, and we've got no proof for any of this, no proof Voldemort and Sirius are even there –' (646)

This quality, therefore, contributes to how other characters see her throughout the story. She is, in many cases, resorted to by friends and colleagues in order to solve a doubt or to try to find a solution amid chaos. Ron, for instance, is constantly asking for her notes or for help with some essay, playing with her conscience.

'How would it be,' she asked them coldly as they left the classroom for break (Binns drifting away through the blackboard), 'if I refused to lend you my notes this year?'

'We'd fail our O.W.L.s,' said Ron. 'If you want that on your conscience, Hermione...'

'Well, you'd deserve it,' she snapped. 'You don't even try to listen to him, do you?'

'We do try,' said Ron. 'We just haven't got your brains or your memory or your concentration - you're just cleverer than we are - is it nice to rub it in?'

'Oh, don't give me that rubbish,' said Hermione, but she looked slightly mollified as she led the way out into the damp courtyard. (207).

She frequently relents and helps them with their assignments, as happens in chapter fourteen. In many points their positions are clear, as for instance, Ron's: "Ah, Hermione, you're a life-saver" (268). As for Harry's perspective, it is possible to see a similar opinion, that is, for the protagonist, Hermione is a very intelligent girl, and he asks for her opinions as

something that is for certain and can be trusted (249). An important passage that deals with the way characters comprehend each other is in chapter twelve, entitled “Professor Umbridge”. At this point, the students already know that the Defence Against the Dark Arts professor is changed. To make it clear, each school year corresponds to a book. In their fifth year a new professor is selected by the Minister of Magic to teach Defence Against the Dark Arts: Dolores Umbridge – the other character chosen to be analyzed in this monograph. Their first class, however, is different from everything they have seen previously. They will not be able to practice magic, only to learn theory – and that is the major reason behind the creation of the Dumbledore's Army. Towards the middle of the chapter, Professor Umbridge tells them to open the book and simply read a chapter, but Hermione refuses to do it. This is the moment when we see a slight portion of what Harry, the protagonist, thinks of her: “Harry could not remember Hermione ever neglecting to read when instructed to, or indeed resisting the temptation to open any book that came under her nose.” (217)

His point of view and opinion in regards to Hermione is clear and corresponds to what the majority of characters think about her. In chapter thirty-five, it is possible to see a similar thinking coming from the protagonist, but this time it is confused. It is not clear if his panic is focused on losing his best friend or on his own guilt, because he drove her to danger.

A whine of panic inside his head was preventing him thinking properly: he had one hand on Hermione's shoulder, which was still warm, yet did not dare look at her properly. *Don't let her be dead, don't let her be dead, it's my fault if she's dead...* (699)

There are not many passages that show how Ginny perceives Hermione. In fact, there is only one passage, on page 310, where it is possible to see a closer relation between them. However, this passage is more related to the portrayal of Ginny than to Hermione's, therefore, I am going to focus on it in the next subtopic. As a matter of fact, Hermione and Ginny are good friends as shown in the previous books, but they are developed differently and usually do not appear together. While Hermione is Harry's trustful and smart friend, Ginny is Ron's youngest sister. Only in the sixth book the protagonist will start developing an attachment to her; until then, they are only friends.

Hermione's feelings towards Umbridge, on the other hand, is more present in the book. It is visible that Hermione dislikes Dolores and vice versa. The first moment, for instance, when Hermione takes notice of Dolores is not a pleasant situation. She is alarmed, trying to

understand what a woman who works for Fudge, the Minister of Magic, is doing in Hogwarts (184). This quarrelsome relation is more explored after the feast. The headmaster, Albus Dumbledore, starts his usual speech, but Dolores interrupts him, telling about how the school is going to work that year. At this point, Hermione answers, when asked by Ron, that “the Ministry's interfering at Hogwarts” (193). She is using her intellect to try to understand why Umbridge is there, and she does not seem comfortable with this.

Another significant encounter takes place when Hermione disagrees with Dolores about the chapter of the book they are reading. Dolores does not accept her opinion and takes five points from Gryffindor (284). At this point, Hermione is furious, and does not let Harry meddle in their discussion. Furthermore, many of Hermione's actions throughout the book are motivated by her anger towards Dolores. When they are deciding how they are going to organize their meeting to form the secret Army, Hermione explains it is important for them to learn to defend themselves, and if Dolores is not going to do it, Harry must do it. The idea was important and was crucial to happen outside school, in their weekend in Hogsmeade⁴ because, according to her, “I don't think Umbridge would be very happy if she found out what we are up to.” (297). That is, she is aware of the consequences, but she is more interested in doing something, even if it means disobeying an order. Finally, her view concerning Dolores comes close to evident hatred: “That foul, lying, twisting old gargoyle!” (397), “... the stupid puffed-up, power-crazy old –” (551), “That evil woman!” (637).

At long last, we see the relation is out of control. Hermione cannot handle her wrath towards Dolores – and this will be better explored in the subtopic Dolores Umbridge. In short, the reason behind this feeling is that Dolores is making everything turn upside down. As a logical and reasonable person, Hermione needs order and clear instructions. But when Dolores arrives, the whole school structure changes. Hermione's portrayal has many faces, and the way she perceives other female characters is not simple. On the other hand, her depiction of Ginny and Umbridge is a bit unclear. Ginny does not appear so much in the book as to allow more textual evidence, not as present as the other two characters at least. Dolores, conversely, is a professor, so her real feelings and thoughts are in many occasions hidden. She is an older woman, in a position of power, and her actions are always being evaluated.

⁴ Hogsmeade Village is a wizarding village within the context of the story. Third year students are allowed to spend their weekends there, as long as they have their guardian's authorization.

Finally, it is important to notice that her words and actions might be more valid and taken for granted instead of the students' considering her position – firstly as a professor, later as the Headmistress.

In conclusion, Hermione Granger is the smartest person in the group and she was probably created, among other reasons, to be the solver of problems – becoming then a female character of great importance for the plot. Her representation differs sometimes from the tradition, but she maintains some aspects of it. Despite her superiority regarding her intelligence, she is still described as physically and emotionally weaker than her best friends – without mentioning her magical skills, and her caring towards other beings is much more evident than the others'. As far as I could analyze, she does not play the role of a mother, or wife, for instance – her portrayal shifts. It is possible to say that Hermione is a strong character, but her representation still keeps something of the tradition.

4.2 Ginny Weasley

Ginevra (Ginny) Molly Weasley is the seventh child and only daughter of Molly and Arthur Weasley. Being the only girl in the family, with six older brothers, already depicts a different kind of female character. The pure blood family is in constant contact with non-pure-blood people, so they are considered “blood traitors” by traditional magical families, such as the Malfoy. The girl's first appearance occurs right in the first book, but it is very superficial. Harry discovered he was a wizard and had to take the train to the school. However, he must go through the Platform Nine Three Quarter. In this passage in chapter six, a redheaded family appears and the boys go, magically, through the brick platform. Ginny is there, but her appearance may not even be noticed at first sight (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, 69-70). Moreover, she will only appear again by the end of the book, when Harry is returning to his uncle and aunt's house. Ginny's relation with the main character and the plot of the series will develop only in the second book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, when she discovers an old diary and starts to write in it, and strange things start to happen in the school. The most striking point concerning the character is that, although she does not appear in the book selected as much as the other two female characters, her presence and depiction is of extreme importance to feminist issues.

Ginny's first appearance in the fifth book occurs only in chapter fourteen, after Harry shouted, irritated by the lack of information of his friends during vacation, as the passage mentioned in the above subtopic. Ginny opens the door, quietly, and says: "Oh, hello, Harry! ... I thought I heard your voice" (66). As it is well known from the previous books, Ginny was in love with Harry Potter since the first time she saw him. This feeling is not reciprocal up to the present book, but the change in regards to her attitude is visible. In this novel, she does not feel affected, that is, shy or even nervous in front of him as she used to. She is treating him normally, although we are going to see she still feels something for him, but does not intend to suffer, since he does not show interest in her so far.

Ginny is, therefore, a strong character that differs from the tradition if we consider her actions and abilities. She is skillful, not as much as Hermione, for instance, but her most significant feature concerns Quidditch, a magical version of football. In the story, Harry and Ron are very interested in the sport, but Hermione does not like it. Hermione is often portrayed as a girl who does not understand the sport and is not interested in learning about it. Ginny, on the other hand, turns out to be the Seeker in the fifth book, right after Harry gets prohibited to play Quidditch by Dolores. Being a Seeker is of a great importance for the game, since it ends only when the Golden Snitch is caught by the Seeker. When Harry discovers he was replaced, he feels surprised and even skeptical, to what Angelina replies "she's pretty good, actually" (400).

It is also possible to see there is some mention concerning Ginny's ability in using spells and charms. After they decided to form the Dumbledore's Army, with 29 members, a room is selected and Harry starts teaching them, as suggested by Hermione. In chapter eighteen, they are learning a spell to repel Dementors and Harry is walking around the room, watching them. His opinion concerning Ginny, at the sight of her training, is simple and direct: "She was doing very well" (349). Another passage that also corroborates the portrayal of a strong character that does not seem to follow the tradition is in chapter twenty-three. Harry is angry again, because he has had a vision of Ginny's father being attacked by Voldemort's snake and he is afraid he may become possessed. Ginny yells at him, telling she knows exactly how it is, since she was once possessed by Voldemort and what he is sensing is something else (441).

Although actions and skills are important for the characterization of Ginny, the feature that better fits her is her bravery. In many passages she is willing to risk everything to help her friends, such as when she offers herself and Luna to stay at the end of the corridor to Dolores's office in order to prevent the students from going that way (649). In other passages, we see how she does not give up, even after being caught by Dolores (654). In addition to that, it is possible to notice she might be considered, in the absence of Hermione, the best witch among the group, through Ron's speech:

'Couple of Stunners, a Disarming Charm, Neville brought off a really nice little Impediment Jinx,' said Ron airily, now handing back Hermione's wand, too. 'But Ginny was best, she got Malfoy – Bat Bogey Hex – it was superb, his whole face was covered in the great flapping things.' (670).

Furthermore, Ginny is depicted as a stubborn character, while she tries at the same time to be independent, refusing help every time she needs it. This portrayal is present when the group formed by Harry, Hermione, Ron, Ginny, Neville, and Luna goes to the Ministry of Magic looking for Sirius. There is a battle against the Death Eaters and Ginny breaks her ankle. She tries to be calm, but when Harry asks Luna to help her, she feels outraged: “It's only my ankle, I can do it myself!” (702). In spite of her resolution, she falls to the ground, and Luna needs to help her.

Finally, Ginny's depiction in relation to her own feelings is explored, even if lightly. In chapter twenty-nine, when Harry is trying to understand his relationship with Cho, it is possible to see that Ginny tries to help him, to guide him – even though the readers are aware of her feelings towards Harry (577). In other moments, we see she is present, as well as her brother, trying to reason about the situation, but not preventing her friends from doing what they need. The final remark is present in chapter twenty-two when Harry has a vision that Mr. Weasley was attacked by Voldemort's snake and the Weasley family finds out. Differently from Hermione, Ginny does not cry or seems fragile if we take into consideration that her father could have been severely injured. She only stays in the chair “curled like a cat (...), but her eyes were open” (423). In the next chapter, again we have a different portrayal if compared with Hermione. When Harry is feeling bad, and angry, as it happens often in the novel, Ginny is not kind or delicate. She goes straight to the point and allows herself to get angry as well, since the boy is trying to put all the guilt upon his friends. Later on in the same

chapter, in addition, we see that when Mr. Weasley, her father, leaves the hospital, finally cured, she is the first child to get to him and hug him (431). The passages are few, but some aspects there help to build the character's portrayal.

Bearing in mind other characters' points of view and taking into account that Ginny is the character that appears less in the book, the moments concerning the way other characters see her are not so frequent. As for the protagonist, there are two passages when his position towards her is clear. As mentioned above, Harry is surprised when he discovers Ginny has replaced him as seeker in Quidditch: "Harry gaped at her" (400). This can be also analyzed in general terms: he would not be glad if anyone else had taken his place, either woman or man. However, in the second passage in which he is watching Ginny play Quidditch, we see he does not accept that Ginny can be as good as him: "He was quite impressed by Ginny's performance but he knew if he had been playing he could have caught the Snitch sooner..." (508).

Hermione's perspective towards Ginny is shown in chapter sixteen when the trio is discussing relationships, especially about girls and their feelings, and Hermione lets slip that Ginny is dating Michael. At this point, Hermione's reaction is of a girl who knows Ginny is right in doing it. At the same time, we see Ginny might still like Harry, but now decided to move on, to have real relationships, not a platonic one, and this is of great importance for feminist issues. This passage brings different points of view, as will be exposed further:

'(...) But the more people the better really—I mean, Michael Corner and his friends wouldn't have come if he hadn't been going out with Ginny—'

Ron, who had been draining the last few drops from his Butterbeer bottle, gagged and sprayed Butterbeer down his front.

'He's WHAT?' spluttered Ron, outraged, his ears now resembling curls of raw beef. 'She's going out with—my sister's going—what d'you mean, Michael Corner?'

'Well, that's why he and his friends came, I think—well, they're obviously interested in learning defence, but if Ginny hadn't told Michael what was going on—'

'When did this—when did she—?' (310)

It is clear Ron's disapproval in regards to his sister's love life. It is possible to infer that he is not happy his sister is dating a boy, not essentially because she is a woman and should be interested in one man in her whole life, or even wait for the "right man", but mostly because she is his little sister. On the other hand, there is Hermione, and her opinion

concerning Ginny's relationship is different – it is as she believes Ginny is right in moving on, as presented below in the continuation of the passage:

'They met at the Yule Ball and got together at the end of last year,' said Hermione composedly. (...)
She turned into the shop. Harry and Ron followed her.
'Which one was Michael Corner?' Ron demanded furiously.
'The dark one,' said Hermione.
'I didn't like him,' said Ron at once.
'Big surprise,' said Hermione under her breath.

At this point, they change the subject slightly. Ron wants to know why Ginny is no longer interested in Harry, which implies that he prefers her sister to date his best friend, rather than another boy:

'But,' said Ron, following Hermione along a row of quills in copper pots, 'I thought Ginny fancied Harry!' Hermione looked at him rather pityingly and shook her head.
'Ginny used to fancy Harry, but she gave up on him months ago. Not that she doesn't like you, of course,' she added kindly to Harry while she examined a long black and gold quill.
Harry, whose head was still full of Cho's parting wave, did not find this subject quite as interesting as Ron, who was positively quivering with indignation, but it did bring something home to him that until now he had not really registered.
'So that's why she talks now?' he asked Hermione. 'She never used to talk in front of me.'
'Exactly,' said Hermione.
...
'Ron,' she said severely as she turned and trod on his feet, 'this is exactly why Ginny hasn't told you she's seeing Michael, she knew you'd take it badly. So don't harp on about it, for heaven's sake.' (311)

This excerpt then shows the main characters have distinct opinions concerning Ginny's love life. There is Ron, the overprotective brother who does not like to hear his little sister is dating a boy; Hermione, who defends Ginny and does not judge her for her actions; and Harry that seems a little indifferent, as if the news is no big deal, but he might be starting to realize he has feelings for Ginny, considering his opinion given through the narrator's voice in the excerpt above. Taking this into account, it is interesting to notice that Ginny's relationships are further discussed during the novel, especially at the end. She is indeed the only character chosen to be examined in this monograph who has an active love life. In chapter thirty-eight,

for instance, she explains to Ron she broke up with Michael because of the match of Quidditch and she does not feel upset or heartbroken (763).

It seems as if she is not concerned about what others will say about her relations. She is relaxed, not worried about finding her Prince Charming. This depiction escapes from the traditional way of representing a female character. Ginny does not expect to be rescued or to find her soul mate at first sight. It is interesting how the author portrays her since the beginning of this novel as a developing girl, a girl who learns about herself and lets herself be happy. The change of boyfriends, for example, is a relevant part of her personality, which is present mostly in the fifth and sixth book of the series. As this monograph only discusses the depiction of three female characters in the fifth book of the series, it is possible to tell that Ginny is the only character depicted outside the tradition in regards to her love life. She is in charge of her own decisions, and not even her brother is able to prevent her from feeling and learning without limitations – keeping in mind that this is a juvenile phenomenon, then intercourse among characters, whether adolescents or adults, is not explicit nor mentioned. The relationship issue remains within the youthful passion.

Finally, the way Dolores perceives Ginny is not developed in the book. In fact, there is only a passage in which Dolores addresses her, in chapter thirty-two, when the group is caught by her and Harry and Hermione are responsible for leading Dolores to the Forbidden Forest. Before Hermione has this idea, Dolores looks at the students, all of them from the Dumbledore's Army, and fixes her eyes on Ginny, saying: “Well, it looks as though Hogwarts will shortly be a Weasley-free zone, doesn't it?” (654). Nevertheless, her displeasure is directed to all Weasleys, not just Ginny. Apart from that, there is no direct interaction between them. In the next subtopic, I will finally bring passages in which it is possible to notice how Ginny feels about Umbridge, and the way Umbridge perceives Hermione.

4.3 Dolores Umbridge

Dolores Jane Umbridge is a witch and the Defence Against the Dark Arts professor in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Her age is not mentioned in the book, as well as any family member. She is introduced only in the fifth book of the series, so considering the way she is described and her position in the Wizardry world she seems to be in her fifties. Dolores is the only adult female character that I chose to analyze in this monograph, because the target audience, as mentioned before, is children and adolescents and it is important to perceive how a female adult is also characterized in the novel in contrast to the other two characters. Anyhow, the first topic that arises is directly related to her first name. As it may be known, Dolores is a Spanish word for “pain”. It is not possible to affirm for sure that the author chose the name on purpose, but considering her depiction, we can assume the choice was deliberate, due to her main goal in the story: to cause pain to the protagonist.

Dolores first appears in chapter eight, named “The Hearing”, while Harry Potter is being judged whether he is guilty or not for using a spell. In the beginning of the novel, as explained in the previous sections, Harry is in his uncle’s and aunt’s house, but a pair of Dementors – evil creatures that consume people’s happiness – appear and he needs to produce a Patronus Charm, a charm to expel such creatures. Nevertheless, he is under age and he is prohibited to use spells outside Hogwarts. In the previous books, however, he has used a couple of them, and since this is not the first time, there is a possibility he might be expelled for breaking the rules. In order to avoid this, Dumbledore arranges a hearing, given that Harry only performed the charm because both Dementors were going to kill him and his cousin, Dudley. Dumbledore believes that someone has sent the Dementors towards Harry’s neighborhood, expecting he would be expelled, and keep quiet about Voldemort’s return within the magical world – which would be a threat to Fudge’s mandate as a Minister. In this chapter, therefore, the Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge, the Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, Amelia Susan Bones, the Senior Undersecretary to the Minister, Dolores Jane Umbridge and other witches and wizards are there to decide Harry’s future. On page 134 Dolores is then presented and described through Harry’s perspective:

He thought she looked just like a large, pale toad. She was rather squat with a broad, flabby face, as little neck as Uncle Vernon and a very wide, slack mouth. Her eyes were large, round and slightly bulging.

Even the little black velvet bow perched on top of her short curly hair put him in mind of a large fly she was about to catch on a long sticky tongue.

'The Chair recognises Dolores Jane Umbridge, Senior Under-secretary to the Minister,' said Fudge.

The witch spoke in a fluttery, girlish, high-pitched voice that took Harry aback; he had been expecting a croak.

It is possible to perceive that Harry does not like her at first sight. He compares her with a toad, and everything about her is annoying, from the way she dresses to the way she speaks. As the antagonist, we imagine that she might be a problem for Harry Potter. The author already guides the reader to dislike Dolores, without giving a chance to other judgments. This first portrayal is significant, because it is Harry's first view of the character – and since the story is narrated through his perspective, it becomes the reader's perspective.

Dolores' next apparition happens only in chapter eleven, while Dumbledore is speaking to the members of Hogwarts. As shown before, her presence in the school is not enjoyable, especially for the protagonist and his friends. Her first attempt to display herself as an important member of the school occurs when the headmaster is speaking and she interrupts him. This interesting passage begins when the headmaster introduces the new professors, including her, and Dolores starts clearing her throat, with a distinct *Hem, hem*. Later in the novel this will be her trademark; whenever she needs attention and seeks to talk, she will say "*Hem, hem*". The moment is a bit tense, while Dumbledore tries to continue his speech, but is interrupted once again. Finally, he gives up and lets her speak. At this point, we see the great majority of students and professors are feeling unease with the situation.

Dumbledore only looked taken aback for a moment, then he sat down smartly and looked alertly at Professor Umbridge as though he desired nothing better than to listen to her talk. Other members of staff were not as adept at hiding their surprise. Professor Sprout's eyebrows had disappeared into her flyaway hair and Professor McGonagall's mouth was as thin as Harry had ever seen it. No new teacher had ever interrupted Dumbledore before. Many of the students were smirking; this woman obviously did not know how things were done at Hogwarts. (191)

Dolores' depiction, therefore, is very different if we take into consideration the other two characters studied here. She is an older, a more experienced witch, and an antagonist – the major character in the novel who is against the protagonist and is responsible for his

failure. Differently from Hermione and Ginny, Dolores' portrayal is clear through the way she is described. Her appearance and actions are essential for her characterization as it happens in many passages. Another moment considered substantial for the analysis is the excerpt below, situated in chapter thirteen, when Harry gets his first detention and goes to her office.

The surfaces had all been draped in lacy covers and cloths. There were several vases full of dried flowers, each one residing on its own doily, and on one of the walls was a collection of ornamental plates, each decorated with a large technicoloured kitten wearing a different bow around its neck. These were so foul that Harry stared at them, transfixed, until Professor Umbridge spoke again. (239)

This passage deals with Dolores' external appearance, more specifically with her surroundings – her workplace. It is difficult to understand why the author decided to depict Dolores with a vague conception of the “feminine”. That is, Dolores is depicted as a cat lover, she is frequently wearing pink clothes and speaks with a certain fragility and elegance. It seems there is an interesting play in the portrayal: although Dolores may appear docile, peaceful, and a good person, she is actually fierce, determined and the great villain of the novel. It is also possible to say that the way she talks and behaves is fundamental to the development of a sense of anger and discomfort in the characters, and consequently in the readers.

Considering Dolores depiction so far, it is clear she has a great influence in the novel. The author has indeed entitled four chapters in reference to her, either directly or indirectly. It begins in chapter twelve, called “Professor Umbridge”, a whole chapter focused essentially on her. The chapter brings many other issues and depictions as well, but she is the center – especially at the moment in which Dolores teaches them and the protagonist and his friends can form an opinion about her. The next chapter appears immediately afterwards: “Detention with Dolores”. She is no longer “Professor Umbridge” - she becomes just Dolores, and the chapter will display her main characteristic: wickedness. The other chapter mentioned is entitled “The Hogwarts High Inquisitor”. This chapter is not named in her honor as directly as the previous one, however we see her position has changed here. She is no longer a professor, or simply Dolores, she turns into an Inquisitor, and this fact gives her even more power. Finally, there is chapter seventeen, entitled “Educational Decree Number Twenty-four”. This is the chapter that less recalls Dolores, but during the reading we see she is the main person responsible for the educational decrees in Hogwarts – she starts creating decrees in order to

control the students. Taking these four references into account, it is possible to say that she is the only female character who has the opportunity of having four chapters named in her honor. J. K. Rowling does not do that with Hermione and Ginny, for instance, as it was discovered through this analysis.

Dolores is also depicted through her own speech and way of talking to others. The first example found is in chapter thirteen, while Harry is in her office, to complete his detention and Dolores tells Harry she wants him to write *I must not tell lies*, with a soft voice (240). This type of description is frequent in the book. Dolores is frequently speaking softly (220, 282) and sweetly (246, 554). However, as stated before, she is also compared with a toad, as for instance in their first class, when Harry looks at her and is reminded “forcibly of a large fly perched unwisely on top of an even larger toad” (215). The comparison goes on; the way she speaks also resembles a toad: “he had been expecting a croak” (134).

Dolores' main feature is then her wickedness. Unlike Hermione or Ginny whose main objective is to help the protagonist, Dolores' main purpose is to serve as a spy for the Minister and not let the students learn anything about Defense. Harry and his friends, however, do not like this attitude, so she becomes a threat to them. She sends to detention Harry and anyone who opposes her, and does not care about using every means to get what she wants, including becoming the headmistress, which takes place by the end of the book. She is also described as a proud woman who feels superior to any other being – and that differs completely from Hermione. In chapter thirty-three we have a great depiction of her, which begins on page 664 and ends on page 666. This is the moment when Hermione has the idea of taking her to the Forbidden Forest and they meet the centaurs, and later the giant Grawp. While Hermione cares about the centaurs, even if they planned on doing them harm, Dolores feels superior, and starts hurting them.

'I am Dolores Umbridge!' said Umbridge in a high-pitched, terrified voice. 'Senior Undersecretary to the Minister for Magic and Headmistress and High Inquisitor of Hogwarts!'

...

'So be very careful! By the laws laid down by the Department for the Regulations and Control of Magical Creatures, any attack by half-breeds such as yourself on a human-'

'What did you call us?' ...

'Don't call them that!' Hermione said furiously, but Umbridge did not appear to have heard her. Still pointing her shaking wand at Magorian, she continued, 'Law Fifteen “B” states clearly that “any attack by a

magical creature who is deemed to have near-human intelligence, and therefore considered responsible for its actions-” (664-665)

Dolores is, thus, presented as evil throughout the whole novel. In one of her last moments, when she catches Harry and his friends in her office, she considers the possibility of using one of the prohibited Curses: the Cruciatus Curse – a spell that makes a person agonize in pain. She confesses she sent the Dementors after Harry, and decides that by using the curse they would tell her what she wanted (658).

Finally, as the antagonist, her fate is almost certain: she will not succeed. In the end of the novel, in chapter thirty-eight and after being dragged by the centaurs through the Forest, Dolores is at the hospital wing, along with the other injured characters. She seems traumatized and Harry and his friends do not feel sympathy for her condition.

Professor Umbridge was lying in a bed opposite them, gazing up at the ceiling ... Since she had returned to the castle she had not, as far as any of them knew, uttered a single word. Nobody really knew what was wrong with her, either. Her usually neat mousy hair was very untidy and there were still bits of twigs and leaves in it, but otherwise she seemed to be quite unscathed. (748)

It is important to focus on how the other two female characters analyzed in this monograph interact with Dolores. As in the previous sections, Ginny does interact so much with Umbridge. However, one passage in chapter sixteen shows clearly she does not like Umbridge either. In the passage, Harry, Hermione and Ron have called some students to meet at Hogsmeade in order to form a group, which later on will be named Dumbledore's Army. When the group begins to disperse, Ginny appears as a comic relief and at the same time demonstrating her opinion about Dolores.

'Hem, hem,' said Ginny, in such a good imitation of Professor Umbridge that several people looked around in alarm and then laughed. *'Weren't we trying to decide how often we're going to meet and have defence lessons?'* (308)

On the other hand, Dolores interaction with Hermione is very frequent, as presented in the first section of the analysis. In chapter fifteen, Harry and his friends are having their second class with her, and when Dolores tells them to read the book, Hermione raises her hand. Dolores does not seem to like Hermione asking questions; however, it is as if she had changed her mind in regards to the way she deals with the girl:

Professor Umbridge had noticed, too, and what was more, she seemed to have worked out a strategy for just such an eventuality. Instead of trying to pretend she had not noticed Hermione she got to her feet and walked around the front row of desks until they were face to face, then she bent down and whispered, so that the rest of the class could not hear, “What is it this time, Miss Granger?” (283)

Her unpleasantness is clear in the passage. She does not like to be questioned, especially by a girl who has strong arguments against her. A specific moment that depicts this relation happens by the end of the novel, in chapter thirty-two. At this point, the group is caught by Dolores and she orders them to tell what they were doing in her office. Hermione then seems to be crying and tells they need to tell her, that there is no point in hiding the information. Dolores’ mask finally falls: “‘Well, well, well!’ said Umbridge, looking triumphant. ‘Little Miss Question-all is going to give us some answers! Come on then, girl, come on!’” (658). Finally, in the continuation of the passage, there is a unique moment in which the three characters analyzed in this monograph are represented once again through the protagonist's point of view: “Ginny was staring at Hermione as though she had never seen her before. Neville, still choking for breath, was gazing at her, too. But Harry had just noticed something. Though Hermione was sobbing desperately into her hands, there was no trace of a tear.” (659).

Dolores is by far the most difficult character to analyze, not because her personality is very complex, but because the author’s intention is not very clear. Dolores is a very determined woman, who does not let anyone get in her way, and who fights for what she believes, even if it is not a good thing if we consider the protagonist’s goal. She is the greatest evil in the fifth book – and a woman, not a man. Differently from the other female adults in the series, such as Minerva McGonagall – Harry's Transfiguration professor – she is there to cause problems and to be hated. Her portrayal as the antagonist differs from the tradition if we take into consideration that most women villains are described with a dark atmosphere surrounding them. Dolores is always wearing pink, she does like cats, and at first sight she sounds to be kind and friendly.

5. Final Remarks

Because of the limitations of a monograph, the analysis has focused on the representation of three characters: Hermione, Ginny and Dolores. Taking into consideration my first research question and bearing in mind the hypothesis, it is possible to say that J. K. Rowling tries to innovate in the depiction of female characters in the novel; however, she is not able to break completely from the literary tradition. Hermione, Ginny and Dolores are indeed complex characters, who constantly maintain and break the tradition – whether by showing they can be intelligent, strong or even not nurturing. As this is a popular book and has a wide influence among children and adolescents, it was interesting to discover the author does not rely exclusively on the portrayal of women as fragile, affectionate or emotional. Analyzing only one character, or not taking into account an adult figure, it would not bring satisfactory findings.

In relation to the second research question, it is important to point out that the book is written in the third-person narrative, so the readers are allowed to know the protagonist's thoughts and ideas, in a general way. That is, his point of view is the point of view of the reader, but in some moments it is possible to notice the author gives voice to other characters as well. Consequently, Harry's opinion about Hermione is clear: he likes his best friend, but I did not find evident that showed that Harry accepted Hermione as superior to him in other matters than their studies. At some moments they have arguments, especially in the fifth book, and although they are substantially *equals*, Harry always believes he is right. As for Ginny, the depiction is simple: she is a good friend of his, but up to the fifth book, *Harry Potter and Order of the Phoenix*, he does not feel anything towards her. In some passages, as it was presented in the analysis, he still feels superior, but this feeling is not well explored so as to show whether the feeling is connected to the fact that she is a woman, especially in regards to Quidditch, or if he simply thinks he is better than everyone in the game. Finally, his opinion about Dolores is depicted throughout the whole novel. He has a special hatred for her, and vice-versa, mainly because she is the antagonist, and no matter what she does, it is not going to be nice to him.

The third research question dealt with the way the characters analyzed here perceived each other. During the analyses there were significant data, and it was possible to notice that

Ginny, as the least mentioned character in the book, does not have an expressive relation with the other two. Hermione is her friend, but she does not mention clearly any opinion about her. On the other hand, Hermione defends Ginny when Ron argues about her boyfriend – which indicates they might have talked about the issue before, and have some affinity and trust to talk about boys. Finally, Hermione and Dolores have a major relation, almost as much as Harry and Dolores in the novel. Hermione hates the woman for her actions, while Dolores does not like Hermione for being such an inquiring girl.

It is clear that there are more male characters than female ones in the whole series, as well as in the fifth book. However, the author is able to create strong and complex female characters with kind hearts, sharp intelligence or determination, such as Hermione, Ginny and Dolores. The women in Harry Potter, in the specific case of my study, two teenagers and an adult, do not seem to fit into the traditional representation of women as either good or bad; they do not need to be the opposite of each other: they are often changing, showing how complex they can be, whether it means using their intelligence, strength, or power to fight for what they think is right.

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, written by a woman in the twenty-first century, brings a variety of topics to be analyzed. For this monograph I decided to focus on three major issues: popular literature, feminist criticism and representation. Although all of these issues are not easy to be defined – and there is not a consensus among theoreticians and thinkers on what actually each of them operate in the real world – the goal was to contextualize them in the context of the book. As mentioned above, it is interesting to study such a book taking into account its influence on children and youth. Although the novel is in the field of popular culture, it should not be neglected or disparaged as something bad or worthless. In addition, it is important to adopt a feminist perspective towards what we see, hear and read. Analyzing such representations shows that writers, especially women, are becoming aware of this literary tradition permeated in our literature. The woman's role in society, and thus in literature, may be changing, but there is still a long way to go. It is possible to say, finally, that women writers are starting to kill *some* angels in the house, but they must still struggle, consciously or not, to get rid of other angels inside their minds.

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