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Tesis de Licenciatura

The Hero's Journey in Arya Stark

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this work is to analyse the extent to which the female character Arya Stark in *Game of Thrones* follows the stages proposed by Joseph Campbell to be considered a heroine. Therefore, we explore the different movements of the path followed by this character throughout the development of the story. We consider the order of the stages to prove whether the Initiation stage gives Arya the wisdom needed for her transformation and we also explore her heroic traits in the way she risks her life for a cause that goes beyond her own existence. As a result, a content study has been carried out by means of the observation of two episodes from the series, concentrating on the aspects that are central to prove our hypotheses.

KEYWORDS: Carl Jung, archetypes, Joseph Campbell, Hero's Journey, Christopher Vogler, Game of Thrones, Arya Stark.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

This research aims to analyse one of the female characters in the series *Game of Thrones* by applying Joseph Campbell's theory of the Monomyth. He developed a general framework to describe a particular structure found across stories, which he referred to as *The Hero's Journey*. This journey consists of different steps and starts by a calling to adventure, which stems from crisis or challenge that moves the Hero to action and to commit to that risky and unpredictable path. Even though there may be a refusal to the call owing to the fact that it can be seen as challenging, the Hero finally crosses the threshold, entering the unknown, stepping out of the comfort zone (S. Gillian and R. Dilts, 2009, p. 16).

This is the reason why we have posed a main question which will guide the whole research. The present study attempts to answer the following question: *To what extent does Arya Stark's path in the series Game of Thrones follow the Hero's Journey stages developed by Joseph Campbell?*

In this regard, the hypotheses that stem from the research question are the following:

- a. Some of the stages of the Hero's Journey seem to be present in Arya Stark's path, although they appear in an order different from the originally developed by Joseph Campbell.

- b. Arya Stark's transformation stems from the wisdom gained in the Initiation stage.
- c. Arya Stark's heroic traits appear to be shown in the Return stage in the way she risks her life for a cause that surpasses her own existence.

Theoretical framework and background

In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell (2004) develops a framework to describe a fundamental structure found in narratives, which he refers to as the Monomyth. Campbell carries out a comparative study with the aim of analysing the similarities among myths and dreams across different cultures and moments in history. Through the analysis of their symbols and archetypes, he finds out a common narrative pattern, which leads him to conceive mythology as a representation of the human psyche.

Campbell compares that pattern to a journey that consists of a series of stages the Hero inevitably goes through, namely: the *Departure Stage*, the *Initiation Stage* and the *Return stage*. The author calls the first step of the mythological journey the *Call to Adventure*, which takes place in the *Departure stage*. It is a calling from destiny that leads the Hero to an unknown place. There might be a *Refusal to the Call*, which turns the adventure into a negative experience, and the subject is a victim that needs to be rescued. This consists in the refusal to change or to abandon what is considered the subject's own interests. If the call is not refused, the first encounter will be with the supernatural aid or protective

figure who will encourage the Hero to cross the threshold and provide him with the tools to face what lies ahead.

The first step of the journey is the crossing of the first threshold, which implies a commitment to the journey and entering a zone of new experiences; the watchers at those boundaries may be dangerous, but those powers are diminished and overcome by courage. The Hero is immersed into the unknown, the *Belly of the Whale*, which implies facing the first obstacle. Although the Hero appears to be dead, there is a rebirth.

In *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structures for Storytellers & Screenwriters*, Christopher Vogler (2007) analyses the Hero's Journey as a set of universal patterns or principles found in storytelling, which are in turn drawn from the studies of Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell. The pattern of the Hero's Journey may be expressed in a variety of ways, although the foundations of the stories remain constant. According to Vogler, Campbell's ideas are in line with what Carl Jung (1981) refers to as *Archetypes*. These are characters and energies found in dreams and myths across cultures that repeat endlessly, which stem from the collective unconscious of humanity. Jung suggested that the archetypes reflect different features of human mind useful to live life. Therefore, these stories found in dreams and myths accurately reflect the human psyche, reason why they are unrealistic yet appealing. Vogler also describes the stages of the Hero's Journey, which involve separation from the Ordinary World, the descent and the return.

In *Archetypes in Female Characters of Game of Thrones*, Makjanić Gloria (2018) analyses the character of the series Arya Stark as the Explorer, following Jung's analysis. There, the writer claims that Arya's path fits the Hero's Journey. However, little is said about the way in which the steps of the journey are observed and the way they develop. Besides, due to the fact that at the moment when the research was written, the series was still to be finished, the writer admitted that it was unknown what would become of the character.

In the paper *Game of Thrones: Ser Brienne of Tarth and a Feminine Reinterpretation of Classical Heroes*, Rosa María Stoops (2020) admits heroic traits in some characters such as Tyrion, Jaime Lannister, Jon Stark, Daenerys Targaryen, including Arya Stark. However, she states that they should be considered subordinate to Brienne's journey due to their "distinct archetypical configurations and their incomplete arc of development" (p.42). Nevertheless, the author does not account for this assertion.

Methodology

With regard to the procedure chosen to attain our object of study, a content study will be carried out. This will imply revising the literature at our disposal in order to get the information needed to analyse the issue.

The corpus will be the series *Game of Thrones* itself, taking into consideration episode ten from the first season (*Fire and Blood*) and episode three from the eighth and final season (*The Long Night*).

We will analyse the corpus in the light of Joseph Campbell's work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (2004), *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (2007) by Christopher Vogler and *The archetypes and the collective unconscious* (1981) by Carl Jung.

We will analyse the different scenes of the aforementioned episodes of the series, focusing on the aspects that are significant for our purpose. After collecting the data from the sources mentioned before, we will concentrate on the way the path followed by the character fits into the different stages of the Hero's Journey following Campbell, trying to show whether or not the Initiation stage gives Arya Stark the wisdom for her transformation and finally, if Arya Stark's heroic traits are shown in the way she risks her life for a cause that goes beyond her own existence.

Organisation

The present research has been organised into the following sections, some of them divided into subsections. Chapter one introduces the problem that gives rise to this research. Chapter two deals with the literature review based on the ideas exposed by Joseph Campbell regarding the *Monomyth*, Christopher Vogler *Hero's Journey* and Carl Jung's *Archetypes*. Chapter three is devoted to methodology and chapter four to our results and discussion. Finally, chapter five will present the conclusions, in which the hypotheses derived from the research question will be either confirmed or rejected.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

“THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES” BY JOSEPH CAMPBELL

Joseph Campbell develops a framework to describe a fundamental structure found in narratives, which he refers to as the *Monomyth*. The latter consists of a series of stages that the Hero inevitably goes through.

Departure Stage

The first step of the mythological journey takes place in the departure stage and is referred to as the *Call to Adventure*, which is a calling that leads the Hero towards an unpredictable path. There may be a refusal to the call, to abandon the ordinary world. However, if the call is not rejected, the *Supernatural Aid* or protective figure will lead the Hero to cross the threshold while providing him with the tools that will be needed.

There might be a *Refusal to the Call*, which turns the adventure into a negative experience and the subject turns into a victim that needs to be rescued. This consists in the refusal to change or to abandon what is considered the subject's own interests. If the call is not refused, the first encounter will be with the *Supernatural Aid* or protective figure who will encourage the Hero to cross the threshold and provide him with the tools to face what lies ahead.

The *Crossing of the First Threshold* implies a commitment to the journey and entering a zone of new experiences; the watchers at those boundaries may be dangerous, but those powers are diminished and overcome by courage. The Hero is immersed into the unknown, *the Belly of the Whale*, which implies

facing the first obstacle. Although the Hero appears to be dead, there is a rebirth.

Initiation Stage

During the Initiation stage, the Hero moves through *the Road of Trials*, for which the amulets or advice of the supernatural figure met before will be useful. The Hero has to face all his fears and figure out how to change so as to move on to the next stage of the journey. The next stage is the *Meeting with the Goddess*, who will help and provide the Hero with a solution. It is the final trial of the Hero to win the gift of love. However, the Hero has to face temptations that must be overcome in order not to be misled or go astray from the quest. This stage is known as *Woman as the Temptress*. *Atonement with the Father* occurs when the Hero encounters with the one who has the power. The Hero will apply what he has learnt so as to face the punishment and justice set by the father. It is in the *Apotheosis* step that the Hero is free of all fear as he has achieved a state of enlightenment, which allows for *The Ultimate Boon* or the goal of the quest to be achieved.

Return Stage

During the *Return stage*, there may be a *Refusal of the Return* to the ordinary world after having experienced the bliss of the other world and share the boon with others. Returning to the ordinary world can be dangerous as the Hero must escape with the boon, which is known as *the Magic Flight*. This is the

reason why some kind of *Rescue from Without* is sometimes needed, as the Hero may require assistance to return to the ordinary world. The *Crossing of the Return Threshold* means entering the ordinary world, which will imply retaining and integrating the wisdom gained on the quest into ordinary life. As a *Master of the Two Worlds*, the Hero entails a balance between the perspectives of both the ordinary and the special world. Lastly, *Freedom to live* means getting rid of all fear.

“THE WRITER’S JOURNEY: MYTHIC STRUCTURES FOR STORYTELLERS & SCREENWRITERS” BY CHRISTOPHER VOGLER

Christopher Vogler analyses the *Hero’s Journey*, described as a set of universal patterns or principles found in storytelling, which are in turn drawn from the studies of Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell. The pattern of the *Hero’s Journey* may be expressed in a variety of ways, although the foundations of the stories remain constant.

Campbell’s ideas are in line with what Carl Jung refers to as *Archetypes*. These are characters and energies found in dreams and myths across cultures that repeat endlessly, which stem from the collective unconscious of humanity. Jung suggested that the archetypes reflect different features of the human mind useful to live life. Therefore, these stories found in dreams and myths accurately reflect the human psyche, reason why they are unrealistic yet appealing.

Vogler describes the stages of the Hero's Journey: *Ordinary World*, *Call to Adventure*, *Refusal of the Call*, *Meeting with the Mentor*, *Crossing the First Threshold*, *Tests, allies, enemies*, *Approach to the Inmost Cave*, *Ordeal*, *Reward* (seizing the sword), *The Road Back*, *Resurrection*, *Return with the Elixir*.

The Hero is taken out of the *Ordinary World* to enter into a completely new one. There is a *Call to Adventure* which sets the Hero's goals. The Hero may be reluctant and may not want to commit to the journey. The role of the *Mentor* is fundamental to prepare the Hero to undertake the quest through advice, guidance or magical equipment. Now is when the Hero enters the *Special World* by *Crossing the First Threshold* and taking action. This means that he will face *Tests, allies and enemies* which will lead him to the *Inmost Cave*, where the object of the quest is hidden. This is the moment when the Hero faces the *Ordeal*; his life is at risk, and he might even die as a result. However, the Hero survives death and takes the *Reward*, which can be material or immaterial. *The Road Back* begins, and the Hero is followed by the forces disturbed as a result of having seized the treasure. This is what arises in the Hero the desire to return to the *Ordinary World*. The entrance to that World will occur after the *Resurrection*, which is a step characterised by another life and death moment. After this, the Hero will return reborn and with new insights resulting from the experience. Finally, the Hero *Returns with the Elixir*, brought from the *Special World*, which is something valuable.

The archetypes

Carl G. Jung employs the term archetype to describe patterns of personality present in recurring character types and relationships, which are in turn common to humans and highly recognisable. The author suggests that there may be a collective unconscious analogous to the personal unconscious. This is seen in fairy tales and myths, which reflect culture stemming from the collective unconscious that remain constant throughout times and cultures.

Archetypes as flexible character functions

Vogler suggests that archetypes are not necessarily fixed or rigid roles played by a character throughout the story, but temporary functions necessary to achieve certain goals. The author compares these functions to masks, worn depending on the occasion to attain different effects. Thus, a character may show qualities pertaining to different archetypes.

These functions are facets of the Hero's personality, built throughout the journey by means of the incorporation of energies and features of different characters the Hero meets along the way. Characters manifest aspects of different archetypes as they are manifestations of the parts that make a complete personality.

The most common archetypes

According to Vogler, the most common archetypes are: *Hero*, *Mentor (Wise Old Man or Woman)*, *Threshold Guardian*, *Herald*, *Shapeshifter*, *Shadow*, *Ally*, *Trickster*.

Hero

The term *Hero* is Greek and means “to protect and to serve”. The Hero is someone who sacrifices his own will and needs for the good of others. With regard to the psychological function, this archetype represents the ego. The latter is the part of the self that separates from the mother and perceives itself as separate from the rest of the human beings. The *Hero* archetype illustrates the ego’s search for becoming a complete human being in order to build identity and achieve wholeness. Within the *Hero*’s mind, different aspects of the personality can be found: teachers, guides, demons, gods, betrayers, allies, among many others. The task of the ego is both to integrate and find a balance among all those aspects to become the *Self*. Heroes represent the journey each person experiences through life and the transformation of the soul.

Dramatic functions

Audience identification: The dramatic function of the *Hero* is to get the audience to identify with qualities common to everyone. These universal qualities are a combination of traits that may be contradictory.

- Growth: Everything the *Hero* goes through during the quest, the drawbacks and goals achieved, produces growth and learning in the form of knowledge and wisdom.
- Action: The *Hero* performs the most crucial action of the story, which implies putting a lot at risk.
- Sacrifice: The *Hero* also performs acts of sacrifice for the benefit of others.
- Dealing with death: The *Hero* always faces death, threat of death or symbolic death. The *Hero* may die and be reborn or actually offer their life for a great cause.

Heroism in other archetypes

The *Hero* archetype is not only shown in main characters as it can also be seen in the heroic acts of other characters.

Character flaws

Flaws make the character more human and thus appealing, as the audience identifies with their imperfections and weaknesses. Imperfection or lack also represents a starting point for the character's growth.

Varieties of Heroes

Due to the fact that *Hero* is a concept that can manifest in different ways portraying different energies, there are different kinds of *Heroes*, among them, *Willing and Unwilling Heroes*, *Anti-Heroes*, *Tragic Heroes*, *Catalyst Heroes*.

Despite the fact that *Heroes* generally represent positive figures, they may also show the negative side of the ego.

- Willing and unwilling Heroes: Heroes may be committed to the task ahead or show some unwillingness during the quest, seen in the lack of motivation and passiveness. The Hero will need some motivation to take an active role in the adventure.

- Anti-Heroes: This Hero does not represent the opposite of a Hero. It is a type of Hero that may not act according to the moral standards of society but with whom the audience sympathises. There are two types of this kind. The first one behaves like Heroes usually do but acts with cynicism or manifests a wounded quality. The second type does not manifest admired qualities or acceptable ways of acting.

- Group-oriented Heroes: These Heroes start the journey in the Ordinary World as part of society, and adventure moves them to an unknown World. Their story consists of the separation of the group they belong to, their lone adventure far from home and their return and encounter with the group. In the end, they have the choice to go back to the Ordinary World or remain in the Special World.

- Loner Heroes: These Heroes are alienated from society. They live in the wilderness. Their journey consists of three acts: Their re-entrance into a group into which they do not feel comfortable; their adventure into that group; their return to a state of solitude. Sometimes, these Heroes may decide to stay with the group, remaining in the Special World.

- Catalyst Heroes: Catalyst Heroes are central characters which do not suffer changes along the journey. In fact, their main function is to produce changes in the ones surrounding them.

Mentor, Wise Old Man or Woman

This is a figure who helps, protects and trains the Hero. They usually give the latter gifts and play the role of donors. *Mentors* are often inspired by divine wisdom or speak as if they were the voice of a god.

In the human psyche, *Mentors* represent the god within everyone, the *Self*. They represent the wiser and nobler part within the psyche, a conscience which guides the Hero. *Mentor* figures are often former Heroes who have gone through a road of trials and have overcome, so now they impart their wisdom and knowledge. They represent what the Hero aspires to become and to achieve.

Teaching is a fundamental function of the *Mentor*, which can often go both ways, as the *Mentor* also learns from the students. Gift-giving is also an important function of the archetype that implies temporarily aiding the Hero by giving a gift, such as a magic weapon, which should be earned. In Propp's analysis of the Russian fairy tales, donors provide characters with gifts after passing a test or trial. This implies sacrifice and commitment.

In some cases, the *Mentors* act as inventors. Therefore, their gifts are designs and inventions. Some *Mentors* may act as a conscience by reminding the Hero of essential moral standards. However, the Hero sometimes rebels against

conscience. Mentor figures may also motivate the Hero so that he can overcome their fears and thus take heart to commit to the journey. They provide the Hero with information and support that may be useful later. *Mentors* may also lead the Hero to sexual initiation as a means of higher consciousness or to experience the divine.

Types of Mentors

Similar to Heroes, *Mentors* are willing or unwilling. They may teach in spite of their will or even teach by setting a bad example.

- Dark Mentors: The *Mentor* archetype can, in some cases, mislead the Hero into crime and danger. Sometimes they act as *Threshold Guardians* who attempt to interfere in the Hero's path, by casting doubt, discouraging and eventually halting them, thus becoming an obstacle to the next stage.

- Fallen Mentors: *Mentors* may experience crisis and may find it difficult to encourage and guide the Hero.

- Continuing Mentors: Their value relies on the fact that they set tasks and set stories in motion.

- Multiple Mentors: The Hero may be trained and taught by multiple *Mentors*. Apart from giving gifts, they also provide emotional support and advice.

- Comic Mentors: These *Mentors* appear in romantic comedies and give the Hero some advice about love. The Hero may find themselves in trouble after following the advice, but in the end, everything works for good.

- Mentor as shaman: Sometimes *Mentors* are related to the figure of the shaman or tribal healer. Through dreams and visions, they generally travel to special worlds and help the Hero do the same and get some guidance on the quest.
- Inner Mentors: In this case, as the Hero has internalised the archetype with its set of rules and behaviour, there may be no need for them to get the advice of a *Mentor*. This is usually found in Westerns or film noir stories.
- Placement Mentors: *Mentors* may appear early in the story or at a crucial moment in later stages of the story.
- Flexibility of the Mentor archetype: *Mentors* are not rigid character types but functions or jobs different characters may perform. In some cases, characters having a role as one particular archetype may shift to the role of *Mentors* in order to teach or to provide the Hero with something.

Threshold Guardian

At the gateway to a new world, Heroes encounter obstacles that attempt to keep them out from it. They are not usually the main villains or antagonists but the ones who warn and protect the villain. However, the energy of the *Threshold Guardian* is not always represented in a character but also in animals or objects that serve the purpose.

Threshold guardians may represent the ordinary obstacles everyone faces. On a deeper psychological level, *Threshold Guardians* represent the internal demons

that may try to prevent growth and progress or test the Hero's willingness and determination to accept the challenge on the path to adventure.

Threshold Guardians' main job is to challenge and test the Heroes, who face the apparent obstacle by either running away or facing it. Instead of trying to defeat the presumed enemies, Heroes can also make temporary alliances with them by becoming like them in order to overcome the enemy.

Signals of new power

Threshold Guardians result in a benefit for the Hero, and successful Heroes are the ones who recognise this. That is why they do not perceive them as threatening figures or enemies, but as *Allies* that are useful in what is to come and that anticipate the advent of success.

The Heroes recognise resistance as a strength or positive attribute that allow them to see past the surface impressions. They usually learn the *Guardian's* skills that will be useful to go on, whether they decide to avenge the *Guardian* in the end or not.

Herald

Heralds are energies or forces that present a challenge to the Hero and proclaim the coming of a considerable change, posing a *Call to Adventure*. This forces the Hero to make a decision and take action to face the conflict.

Heralds announce the need for change. This announcement can come from any source, such as a dream figure, a person, among others. *Heralds* offer a

challenge and provide motivation, a call to adventure, thus keeping the story moving.

Types of Heralds

They can be positive, negative or neutral figures. The *Herald* may be a mask worn temporarily by a character that typifies mainly another archetype. They usually appear at the beginning of the story, setting it in motion. However, they may emerge at any point in the story.

Shapeshifters

They are not easily noticed by the Hero or the audience on the grounds that their appearance and traits change. They may mislead the Hero. In fairy tales, this characteristic is traditionally embodied in witches, wizards and ogres.

The psychological function of this archetype is connected to a significant purpose, which is to express what Carl Jung refers to as *animus* and *anima*. The former refers to the male traits in the female unconscious, while the latter represents the female elements in the male unconscious. According to this theory, everyone has both male and female characteristics necessary for internal balance.

Shapeshifters bring doubt and suspense to the story. A typical *Shapeshifter* is the femme fatale or woman as temptress or destroyer. This can be embodied both in female and male characters.

Mask of the Shapeshifter

This function can be present in any character in the story, including the Hero, who can act as a *Shapeshifter* in romantic situations, when escaping a trap or before the *Threshold Guardian*.

Shadow

It represents the energy of the obscure side of something, that which is hidden, suppressed or rejected about the inner world. The negative aspect of the *Shadow* is seen in villains, antagonists and enemies.

The *Shadow* threatens to destroy the person. If not brought to light, it may become a powerfully destructive force. The *Shadow* challenges the Hero, creating conflict and exposing them to a life-threatening circumstance.

Masks of the Shadow

The energy of the *Shadow* archetype can be present in a single character or in any character at particular moments. Even the Hero can reveal a *Shadow* side and be overtaken by it when manifesting a desire to die, when acting in self-destructive or selfish ways or when abusing their power. Therefore, a *Shadow* can be a character or force outside the Hero or the Hero's own repressed parts of their personality. External *Shadows* must be overcome by the Hero, while internal *Shadows* can be diminished by bringing them to consciousness.

Ally

An *Ally* serves a variety of functions such as helping, advising and even challenging the Hero. One useful function of *Allies* is to introduce the audience to the unfamiliar world. The *Ally* sometimes sees that world from a perspective similar to that of the audience. *Allies*, who are not necessarily human, suggest alternatives to aid the Hero in solving a problem and round out the personality of the Hero by showing the way.

Allies may stand for unveiled parts of the personality that need to be brought to the surface to serve a purpose. Therefore, *Allies* may represent internal forces that help in spiritual crises.

Trickster

The *Trickster* embodies both naughtiness and desire for change. This archetype is represented in characters such as clowns and comical sidekicks. *Tricksters* provoke laughter and healthy change and transformation; they bring balance to drama by causing relief and enjoy causing trouble for pleasure.

Stages of the Journey

Act I: Separation

Stage one: The Ordinary World

It is the familiar base from which the journey begins. Sometimes the *Ordinary World* foreshadows the moral dilemmas and battles of the *Special World*. It also suggests the dramatic question of the story. Heroes need both an inner and an

outer problem. They need a moral dilemma or inner problem to solve. There must be an identification between the Hero and the audience. They need to be relatable by showing universal goals, needs, drives and desires. This creates a bond between the Hero and the audience. Every Hero has weaknesses and flaws that make him real and easy to relate to.

Heroes always lack something or something has been taken from them. Some stories show a Hero lacking nothing until a relative is killed, which sets the story of revenge into motion. Sometimes Heroes seem to be well-balanced on a psychological level. However, they may hide a psychic wound of rejection, betrayal or disappointment, which makes them vulnerable, weak or guarded. These wounds, either physical or emotional, humanise the Heroes.

The *Ordinary World* is the place where the backstory of the Hero, such as his social class, upbringing and habits or opposing forces that affect him are made known. However, the audience has to figure some things out so as to put the pieces together as the story unfolds. The *Ordinary World* sets the theme of the story, which is what will come next and what gets the Hero along the journey.

Stage two: The Call to Adventure

After the main character has been introduced, there must be an initiating incident that triggers the story and keeps the story rolling. The *Call to Adventure* may be received from a message or messenger, a new event, dreams or something that implies the time for a change and gets the Hero to move towards growth. There might also occur what Carl J. Jung refers to as

synchronicity, which is the casual occurrence of events, words and ideas signalling the need for change. The Hero may also be summoned by temptation.

In some cases, the *Call to Adventure* is triggered by someone performing as a Herald, who may be positive or negative, a guide or an enemy, or even neutral, but it contributes to getting the Hero to step into the unknown and undertake the adventure by means of a challenge or an invitation. The adventure may be set into motion by the loss of something valuable as well. Sometimes, there is no other way out and the Hero's only choice is to run into the adventure.

Stage three: Refusal of the Call

Due to the fact that the adventure may be life-threatening, refusal can be a temporary response. In the end, the Hero will accept the call either by a stronger motivation or a sense of honour. Persistence in the refusal of the call might lead to tragedy. However, there are Heroes who can show willingness to undertake the road to adventure. In the case of *Willing Heroes*, the refusal of the call represented by fear and doubt is expressed by other characters who will warn the Hero about the risks of taking the road ahead.

After conquering their fears and before the beginning of the adventure, heroes may face the *Threshold Guardians*, powerful figures who attempt to raise fear and doubt. Nevertheless, the limits set by the *Mentors* or *Threshold Guardians* will be inexorably crossed by the Hero owing to the so-called *Law of the Secret Door*. According to this law, although Heroes know the limits, they will surely

be led by curiosity to open that secret door in their desire to know what is hidden.

Stage four: Meeting with the Mentor

The function of the *Mentor* is to provide the Hero with something that will be needed on the journey, such as magical gifts, supplies, teaching, training, knowledge, guidance or protection. Vladimir Propp, in the study of the Russian Folktales, calls the characters representing this energy “donor” or “provider”.

Mentors keep the story rolling, influencing the mind of Heroes by changing or directing their will. *Mentors’* motives are not always good as they can betray the Hero or even turn into villains. Sometimes the mask of the *Mentor* is used to mislead Heroes and venture them into a dangerous adventure and even a life of crime.

Act II - A descent

Stage five: Crossing the First Threshold

There are usually external forces that cause the Hero to run out of choices and discover that it is crucial to make an important decision and cross the *First Threshold* into the *Special World*. There are also external events that lead the Hero to the *Threshold Crossing*.

As the Hero approaches the *Threshold*, they will probably encounter *Threshold Guardians*, who block the way and are part of the training of the Hero. This usually marks the limits between the two worlds and the *Crossing* demands

courage from the Hero as there is no turning back. The entrance into the *Special World* may cause exhaustion, disorientation or frustration.

Stage six: Tests, Allies and Enemies

Adjustment to the *Special World* implies testing by means of difficult trials and challenges, obstacles that prepare the Hero for what comes ahead. As there are new rules in the *Special World*, the Hero must be quick to learn them. This also involves making *Allies* or *Enemies*. The Hero must discover who is trustworthy and who is not.

There may be long-lasting bonds between a Hero and an *Ally*, who supports the Hero in his adventure. *Sidekicks* usually provide comic relief. Even a team can be forged. On the other hand, rivals are types of enemies that attempt to defeat the Hero in the competition.

Stage seven: Approach to the Inmost Cave

At this stage, the Hero will find both terror and amazement. They will face the main ordeal of the journey. As the Hero approaches the *Inmost Cave*, he will be on the limit between life and death.

Act II B - Initiation

Stage eight: The Ordeal

There must always be death and rebirth. Heroes face death, which may represent great fears, failures, changes in relationships or in their own

personalities. Generally, they survive the main ordeal. Having had an experience on the verge of death, the Hero comes back home changed and transformed.

The *Ordeal* should not be confused with the *Climax* of the Hero's Journey. The former is the central event in it, the crisis that produces a sense of death and revival. The crisis usually takes place in the middle of the story, as it separates the two halves of the story. Nothing will ever be the same.

The *Ordeal* represents a battle with an opposing force, such as a villain, an antagonist or an opponent, all of them encompassed in the archetype of the *Shadow*. The *Shadow* stands for the negative possibilities of the Hero himself as the villain is the Hero's *Shadow*. Thus, the villain may be an external character, but the greatest opponent for the Hero will always be their own *Shadow*. The *Shadow* stands for everything rejected, like fears and qualities, which are sometimes projected onto other people. The *Ordeal* may also be a crisis of the heart, common in love stories.

Stage nine: The Reward

This has to do with the results of having survived death. The aftermath of the *Ordeal* is the *Reward*. The Hero takes something in exchange, what he or she has been looking for in the *Special World*; it's a payback for having faced death during the *Ordeal*. Joseph Campbell refers to this as "The Ultimate Boon". Sometimes, there may exist what Campbell calls "Elixir theft", which is a medium for medicine.

After conquering death, the Hero is recognised as special or different. The troubles faced make him or her a new being and because of this, a new phase begins; it is the “Initiation phase”. Facing death provides the Hero with new powers and perceptions. Therefore, the reward may be represented in the understanding of a mystery or in identifying deceptive behaviour. After surviving death, the Hero is more intuitive and may even become clairvoyant. Sometimes, Heroes can experience deep self-realisation, which allows them to perceive with clarity.

Act III - Return

Stage ten: The Road Back

After having faced the *Ordeal* and getting the *Reward*, Heroes must decide whether to remain in the *Special World* or return to the *Ordinary World*. Most choose the *Road Back* and some may continue on the journey to a new destination. The Hero usually returns to the *Ordinary World* and tries to put into practice everything learnt in the *Special World*. This can be a tough task to accomplish because of scepticism and disbelief.

This return may be characterised by a new crisis and road of trials. Sometimes, villains or *Shadows* not completely defeated during the *Ordeal* can rise again, seeking retaliation. This may involve chase scenes and magic flights.

Stage eleven: The Resurrection

This is the final test of the journey. This is the *Climax*, similar to the *Supreme Ordeal* in which the Hero experiences death and rebirth. They must meet death again and change before entering the *Ordinary World*. This change is seen either in behaviour or appearance and is necessary in order to enter the *Ordinary World*. It includes a mixture of the outstanding parts of the old selves and everything learnt along the journey.

During this stage, Heroes must be tested for the last time and demonstrate that they have retained the lessons of the *Supreme Ordeal*. This is only shown in the Hero's application of the wisdom gained in the *Special World*.

The implications of the final and crucial confrontation with the *Shadow* or villain are usually broader than that of the *Ordeal*, as the threat is not just for the Hero, but for the whole world. Therefore, what is at stake is greater. In many action films, the *Resurrection* is shown as the biggest battle and ultimate of the story, in which life and death are the only possible results. In general terms, Heroes survive this battle and defeat the villain. However, there are some tragic Heroes who die. In this case, those Heroes are *Resurrected* as they and their lessons live in the memory of those for whom they have died.

Sometimes, Heroes must make a choice that tests their own values. They may behave either according to the old and flawed ways or in accordance with the new being they have become. The latter will prove that they have really learnt the lessons of the *Special World*.

The *Resurrection* often marks the *Climax* of the story, an explosive and loud moment, the highest peak of drama. Nevertheless, the *Climax* may represent the fact that all the conflicts and tensions are harmoniously solved and turned into peace.

The character arch represents the changes in the character, which must be gradual. The real treasure in the experiences of the *Special World* lies in the inner and lasting changes. In some cases, the *Resurrection* may imply a sacrifice by the Hero, such as leaving an old habit or belief. The main purpose of the *Resurrection* is to show that the *Old Self* has been left behind and demonstrate the changes by means of actions. The old addictions and traps are not there anymore. This must be seen in behaviour and actions.

Stage twelve: Return with the Elixir

After surviving death, Heroes return to the place where it all started, to the *Ordinary World* or they go on with the journey. They start a new life, different to the one previous to the journey, as they have changed. They *Return with the Elixir*, with something to share with others.

There are two story forms: the circular and the open-ended. In the former, there is a sense of closure and completion. It is the most popular design, in which the narrative returns to the point of departure. This return may be physical or metaphoric. In the latter, there may be loose ends, unanswered questions and unresolved conflicts, which provide a sense of ambiguity. Some stories continue in the minds of the audience or bring new questions.

The *Elixir* may be literal or metaphoric, which implies what led the Heroes to undertake the adventure, such as wisdom, money, fame, power, peace, love, and happiness.

“THE HERO’S JOURNEY” BY S. GILLIAN AND R. DILTS

The Hero’s Journey Framework

Joseph Campbell developed a general framework to describe a structure found across stories, which he referred to as “The Hero’s Journey”. There are different steps in the journey, being the first one the calling to adventure, which originates from crisis and makes the Hero move along an unknown path. Despite the fact there may be reluctance to respond to the call and embark on the adventure, the Hero will cross the threshold, thus leaving the *Ordinary World* and entering the *Special World*.

While navigating the journey, the Hero will need the help of guardians who will provide him with either knowledge, guidance or tools and whatever necessary. However, the Hero will have to face his own demons and shadows that try to hamper the journey, keeping him from achieving the call. In spite of the fact that the threat might be perceived as external, the real problem lies in what is within, because as S. Gillian and R. Dilts state in “*The Hero’s Journey. A Voyage of self-discovery*” “what turns something into a demon is my response to it”.

There is transformation and growth in the Hero, who must learn not only to deal with the outside (which Campbell refers to as *trials*) but also master what

is inside so as to succeed in the journey. The return home involves sharing with others what has been learnt. Therefore, the process affects not only the Hero himself but extends to the community.

The Generative Self

The authors explore another major framework, apart from the one relating to the steps of the Hero's Journey. This framework has to do with both the tools and consciousness developed to carry out the journey. They describe three different levels of consciousness necessary for transformation and success during the Hero's Journey: *Somatic*, *Cognitive* and *Field Mind*. Each of them may operate at different levels of consciousness: primitive/regressive, basic and generative. The primitive level is the *Somatic* mind, connected to the lack of self-awareness. The *Somatic* mind has to do with a primary pattern of intelligence within the body; the basic has to do with the Ego or conscious separateness. It is the *Cognitive* or logical mind; the generative, on the other hand, relates to conscious wholeness. It is the consciousness connected to the different *Fields* that surround the Hero, inherent in the social system. The Hero's Journey depends on the connection of the Hero with each of these minds. The passage through these levels is useful for addressing the challenges that the Hero goes through. The Hero must move from a primitive to a higher state of consciousness by integrating and aligning the three minds so that learning occurs.

The authors highlight the importance of staying centred and aligned, that is, maintaining the commitment to the calling, despite the obstacles and resistance the Hero may find along the way. This will provide the Hero with the resources needed to deal with challenging situations. Therefore, connecting to the centre or calling is crucial. The Hero develops a *Generative Somatic State* through a *Generative State*, which consists of aligning and centring and allows the journey to be realised. Campbell explains this as crossing thresholds and battling with demons. This needs to be seen in the three minds. *Centering* relates the unity of the mind and the body and the mastery of the somatic base so as not to dissociate from it, which creates a disembodied conscious mind. When facing a negative situation, there is no need to try to get rid of it on the grounds that every challenge represents an opportunity for healing or transformation, by bringing it into a generative state, thus turning into a positive experience, a resource. However, in order not to get caught in the surrounding problems and be absorbed by them, *Centering* is essential. The centre is described as an open channel (first level of the cognitive mind/space that holds the content) through which the cognitive consciousness moves (second level of the cognitive mind/content), which allows the Hero to positively connect to the problem and act freely and creatively. For the authors, the key is not the experience itself (first level) but the relationship someone has with what is being experienced (second level/content). The second mind is the foundation of the *Generative Cognitive Mind*, which is a meta-level of the

mind. Therefore, developing a somatic wholeness allows the Hero to use their mind to get the most out of the experience, whatever it may be.

Sponsorship is the principle that arranges the second mind. It is entering into the generative space that allows the Hero to meet and deal with the realities in a safe and skilful way. It doesn't mean destroying those disturbing energies but integrating them with other aspects of himself, thus bringing about transformation. It means healing, transformation and awakening.

Integrating the Shadow

If Heroes lose their centre, they may be taken over by an archetypal energy that, if negative, might lead to unexpected behaviours. Therefore, *Centering* brings about wisdom in behaviour. This is possible through *Sponsoring* the aspects or archetypal patterns of the psyche by accepting them all, using them for transformation, which allows the Hero not to be governed by them.

The Generative Field

There are many coexisting fields in life which can be positive or negative and this depends on the response to the challenges they may present: disconnecting the *Center* and forgetting about the resources or giving place to the *Generative Field* that allows for moving beyond the threat or problem.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Our object of study will be approached through a content study. Our research will be developed by means of the revision of the literature chosen for the analysis: *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (2004) by Joseph Campbell, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (2007) by Christopher Vogler, and *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1981) by Carl Jung, applied to our corpus: the tenth episode in the first season (*Fire and Blood*) and the third episode in the eighth and final season (*The Long Night*) of the series *Game of Thrones* itself.

We will focus on the character Arya Stark. Through the observation of the episodes relevant to our analysis, we will concentrate on Arya Stark's journey. We will study the ways in which the path followed by Arya Stark fits into the different stages of the Hero's Journey by Campbell.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Game of Thrones

Game of Thrones is an HBO series which corresponds to an adaptation of George R. R. Martin's series of books called "*A Song of Ice and Fire*". The plot in *Game of Thrones* is not built around a single and linear story, as there are numerous plot lines coexisting and interrelating at the same time throughout the different seasons.

In this section, we will make a contextualisation of the fictional universe in which action takes place, introducing the main facts around which the plot of the series originates. Action takes place in a fictional world made of three continents: Westeros, Essos and Sothoryos. Westeros is politically organised under the Seven Kingdoms, which has King's Landing as the centre of all. These Kingdoms are delimited by The Wall in its northern border, where the Free Folk live, and even further north there is a land where the White Walkers are thought to be found.

Most of the action takes place in Westeros. King's Landing is the capital of the Seven Kingdoms in Westeros, the place where the Iron Throne stands. Each kingdom has a capital, which is ruled by the most powerful noble family in it. In turn, that house has dominion over vassal houses, which serve it. All of the kingdoms owe allegiance to the Crown, although each of them has certain independence in terms of customs and religion. There are also some wardens responsible for the defence of each of the cardinal points of the realm. They are also responsible for the command of the armies in times of conflict.

After the death of Jon Arryn, King Robert rides towards Winterfell to offer Eddard Stark become the new Hand of the King, which he accepts. That triggers the following events in the story and is the point of departure of the stories shown in the TV show.

House Stark

This house is located in Winterfell, in the north of Westeros. It belongs to the Seven Kingdoms and is the noble house in charge of all of the northern territories. It is also appointed as the Warden of the North. Its sigil is a black direwolf, and its motto is "*Winter is coming*". These words are connected with a peculiarity of the seasons in Westeros, where either summers or winters can last for long periods of time. Therefore, hard times may be ahead. Those words also relate to their role as Wardens of the North, reason why they must always carry out surveillance in their territory.

Arya Stark

Arya Stark is the youngest daughter of Lord Eddard Stark and Catelyn Tully. Arya spends most of her childhood at Winterfell until her father accepts becoming the Hand of the King and moves with him to King's Landing, together with her sister Sansa.

Arya despises the idea of following the traditional pattern of a highborn girl, which means marrying a lord and becoming a lady, since she dreams of being a knight. While packing things for her trip to King's Landing, Arya is given a

sword as a gift by his half-brother Jon Snow, who is also about to leave for the Night's Watch. She ironically names it Needle as she does not enjoy the typical activities ladies learn to do, such as needlework. In the opening episode of season two, entitled "*The Kingsroad*", Arya affirms in this regard: "*Sansa can keep her sewing needles. I've got a needle of my own*" (14:58). This scene introduces one of Arya's main interests, which is to gain expertise in swordplay. Besides, it is necessary to point out the role of Jon as a *Mentor* or *Donor*, on the grounds that he gives Arya a gift which will eventually contribute to her protection. Arya has a great affection for Jon, which makes the sword an important amulet and will accompany her along her lonely journey as a sort of reminder of her origins and the place where she belongs. It will also foster her heroic traits as it will let her open to new opportunities, since the mastery of the sword will allow her to be confident enough during the trials she will have to go through, to the point of risking her own life when facing the greatest enemy on earth.

Vogler (2007) suggests that "*the seeds of excitement and challenge*" (p. 87) can be found in the Ordinary World. He also affirms that "*The hero's problems and conflicts are already present in the Ordinary World, waiting to be activated.*" (p. 87). Arya faces different internal and external conflicts that, according to Vogler (2007), prefigure the Special World thus "*foreshadowing battles and moral dilemmas*" (p. 87). Arya will not forget or forgive the responsibility of those involved in the murder of her innocent friend Mycah and Sansa's direwolf and in the separation from her beloved direwolf Nymeria,

just to mention an example. These events cause an emotional wound in Arya and both anticipate and resemble what she will have to go through later in the story. She experiences the loss of people she loves, who die in unfair ways and out of lust for power. She must also face evil people who will try to harm her, which will foster her transformation as a way to survive as well as to do justice.

Vogler (2007) suggests that before going into the adventure, the Hero is introduced to the audience so that their goals, drives and desires lead the public to identify with them. This way of introducing the character, by showing her interests, needs and her external or internal conflicts (misfortunes, flaws, physical wounds) may contribute to the development of a bond between the Hero and the audience. Arya resists her expected role as a lady so, once in King's Landing, her father finds out that she has a sword and she reminds him of the fact that she is not interested in being a lady. Therefore, Arya starts training in the art of combat with Syrio Forel, a Braavosi master sword-fighter. Later, when Arya asks her father (Eddard) about the possibility of being a lord in the fourth episode of the first season called "*Bastards and Broken Things*", Eddard explains to her that she will marry a high lord and rule his castle, to which Arya replies: "*No. That's not me*" (25:18). This makes it even more clear Arya's interests. Arya's awareness of who she is of what she wants is crucial for everything she will have to face during the *Road of trials*, so as not to get caught in those challenging situations.

Syrrio Forell trains Arya in the art of combat and provides her with significant insights into how to deal with crucial moments in life, so he represents the figure of the *Wise Old Man* depicted by Jung (1981):

The wise old man appears in dreams in the guise of a magician, doctor, priest, teacher, professor, grandfather, or any other person possessing authority. The archetype (...) always appears in a situation where insight, understanding, good advice, determination, planning, etc., are needed but cannot be mustered on one's own resources. The archetype compensates this state of spiritual deficiency by contents designed to fill the gap. (p. 216)

Syrrio also takes the form of *Mentor*, taking into account Vogler's analysis of the Jungian archetypes. Syrrio's influence seems to guide Arya throughout the journey, as she will be resilient enough to fight against all odds. In fact, every hurt contributes to her growth in the form of knowledge, which fosters her transformation.

There are some anticipations that foreshadow that Arya will have to suffer throughout the journey and will be forced to undertake the road to adventure despite the threats and fight against all odds, even when her life is at stake. This fact seems to foster heroic traits in Arya, which will be made clear in the *Return* stage, as she risks her life for a great cause. This also highlights the role of the *Mentor*, the archetype Vogler (2007) describes as the one who teaches, trains and helps Heroes overcome their fears. Syrrio provides Arya with a clue

to survive in life-threatening situations. That relates to the role of what Campbell (2004) refers to as the *Supernatural Aid*:

Not infrequently, the supernatural helper is masculine in form. In fairy lore it may be some little fellow of the wood, some wizard, hermit, shepherd, or smith, who appears, to supply the amulets and advice that the hero will require. (p. 66)

In the eighth episode of season one, when a guard cuts Syrio's wooden sword into pieces, Arya pleads with him to run away with her. However, he replies that a man like him does not flee. He then urges Arya to leave and reminds her of his previous teaching; he once again asks her: "*What do we say to the God of death?*"(5:39), to which Arya replies: "*Not today*" (5:42). Syrio's teachings, as well as his emotional support, will have such an impact on Arya, that they will remain in force throughout the road ahead, motivating her to overcome her fears and commit to the journey.

Arya will face evil forces in her journey that will try to hamper her or even destroy her. We see how she kills someone for the first time and how this fact is repeated. Thus, this event seems to represent the crossing of a limit. After performing the act, even though she looks surprised, she runs away without remorse or distress for having killed someone. Although it is not clear in the scene whether she does that intentionally or accidentally, she will later boast about having killed a boy and will also admit doing that because she had to. This makes it evident the presence of the dark side of the *Shadow* in Arya, who

starts considering taking the life of her opponents a just cause and a way out to do justice. Carl Jung (1981) develops the idea of the *Shadow* and argues that:

The shadow is a living part of the personality and therefore wants to live with it in some form. It cannot be argued out of existence or rationalized into harmlessness. This problem is exceedingly difficult, because it not only challenges the whole man, but reminds him at the same time of his helplessness and ineffectuality. (p. 20)

Vogler (2007) expands upon the idea of the *Shadow*. He describes it as the dark side of the inner world, which in turn can be present in the Hero:

Heroes themselves can manifest a Shadow side. When the protagonist is crippled by doubts or guilt, acts in self-destructive ways, expresses a death wish, gets carried away with his success, abuses his power, or becomes selfish rather than self-sacrificing, the Shadow has overtaken him. (p. 66)

Arya also witnesses the trial and execution of her father Eddard, who has agreed to declare himself guilty of treason before the crowd in return for mercy and who is betrayed by King Joffrey, who orders his execution. This represents a turning point in Arya, as nothing will ever be the same.

The events described up to Eddard's beheading represent what Vogler defines as the *Ordinary World* and is the starting point of the journey, which anticipates the dilemmas as well as the inner and outer conflicts of the *Special World*. It

also shows Arya's upbringing and social class, her habits, her interests and also the opposing forces that threaten her. Both Winterfell and King's Landing (although for a short time) are both familiar and safe places for Arya, and even when she despises some of the people there, she knows that she is still with part of her family and what Syrio has taught her forces her to stay at home as she is doing something that pleases her. Vogler (2007) affirms in this regard:

The Ordinary World is the context, home base, and background of the hero. The Ordinary World in one sense is the place you came from last. In life we pass through a succession of Special Worlds which slowly become ordinary as we get used to them. They evolve from strange, foreign territory to familiar bases from which to launch a drive into the next Special World. (p. 87)

The events stemming from the execution of Eddard Stark represent what Campbell (2004) describes as the *Call to adventure*:

(...) it marks what has been termed "the awakening of the self." (...) the call rings up the curtain, always, on a mystery of transfiguration —a rite, or moment, of spiritual passage, which, when complete, amounts to a dying and a birth. The familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand. (p. 47)

The aim of our research is to identify the extent to which Arya Stark's path relates to the different stages of the Hero's Journey as described by Joseph Campbell. In spite of the fact that special consideration will be given to the tenth episode in the first season (*Fire and Blood*) and the third episode in the eighth and final season (*The Long Night*), it will also be necessary to mention and develop events that take place throughout the story which are relevant or somehow affect Arya's journey, so as to carry out a complete analysis.

In order to give an answer to our research question about the degree to which Arya's path fits into the model provided by Joseph Campbell, we will examine the order in which the stages of the Hero's Journey occur in the story. This will help us determine whether they follow the proposed pattern or sequence. Such as Houman Sadri (2020) suggests:

In summary, an ordinary figure, of age yet still fundamentally an innocent, leaves the comfort of home, immerses him or herself in the unfamiliar and extraordinary events of an outside world of which he or she has no real experience, fights and wins a decisive victory and, once this is done, returns home with some essential boon or blessing. (p. 4)

Therefore, as derived from the research question, one of the hypotheses we will test is whether the stages appear in an order different from that originally developed by Joseph Campbell. We will also attempt to examine Arya's transformation, to decide whether the latter stems from the wisdom gained in

the *Initiation* stage. Besides, we will study Arya's heroic traits in connection with the way she risks her life in the *Return* stage.

“Fire and Blood”

At this point, given that Eddard has been beheaded, Arya is taken to safety by Yoren. She is given a new name (“*Arry*”) and changes her appearance. Yoren warns Arya about the challenges and adventures to come, making it clear that they will be travelling in bad company and urges Arya to be cautious in order to survive. The role of Yoren is connected to that of what Campbell (2004) refers to as a *Herald*, the one who announces the adventure. Yoren poses a challenge to Arya and makes it clear that a time for change has come. He acts as a messenger, who contributes to getting Arya to step into the unknown and undertake the adventure. According to the analysis made by Vogler (2007) of the Jungian archetypes, the *Herald* is the one who summons the Hero for the adventure: “The job of the Herald is to kick away these supports, announcing that the world of the hero is unstable and must be put back into healthy balance by action, by taking risks, by undertaking the adventure.” (p. 101) When departing from King's Landing in order to get to the Wall, Yoren announces the long journey ahead as well as the coming of Winter, event which may be associated with what Joseph Campbell in “*The Hero with a Thousand Faces*” refers to as the *Call to adventure*, which takes place in the *Departure stage*. In this regard, Campbell (2004) affirms the following:

(...) destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown. This fateful region (...) is always a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight. (p. 53)

This is the first stage in the Hero's Journey developed by Joseph Campbell (2004), and on Arya's journey, it takes place in the same order proposed by the author. Destiny, by the imminent emergence of a war between the House Stark and the Lannisters, forces Arya to abandon King's Landing and depart to a place completely unknown to her. The adventure is set into motion by the execution of Eddard Stark, so Arya's only choice to survive and eventually do justice is to run into the adventure, abandoning King's Landing. The comfort of Arya's everyday life is disrupted, so a formidable challenge must be undertaken:

A new person, condition, or information shifts the hero's balance, and nothing will ever be the same. A decision must be made, action taken, the conflict faced. A Call to Adventure has been delivered, often by a character who manifests the archetype of the Herald. (Vogler, 2007, p. 56)

The *Call to Adventure* implies a separation from what is known and represents a passage to an unfamiliar place where the old patterns and ideas are no longer

valid, which in turn gives room for transfiguration. Such as Williams (2017) affirms:

Following a Call to Adventure, (...) heroes find themselves in a foreign situation with a significant life problem. Whatever the type of call, the hero's change in circumstance is often unanticipated, often unpleasant, sometimes traumatic, throwing the individual's everyday life into confusion and chaos (Williams, 2016). (...) the hero is separated either partially or completely, physically or psychologically from their old life. The separation phase of the hero's journey has begun. Solutions must be found. (p. 71)

Eddard's execution marks the coming of Winter for Arya and causes a deep emotional wound in her heart, which influences her decisions along the journey; taking justice into her own hands will become her main goal. Arya's loss is the incident that indicates that a time for change has come and triggers everything that befalls her afterwards, although that will, in turn, lead her towards opportunities for growth.

The expression "*Winter is coming*" uttered by Yoren is not fortuitous. Firstly, it is the motto of House Stark which, as guardian of the North, must always be ready to face anything that may arise. It implies that challenging times may always be ahead. Besides, in Westeros, seasons are unpredictable and can last for long periods of time. During winter, it is hard for people to survive not only because of its length but because of its harshness. Their survival relies on their

own abilities to deal with it. Nevertheless, that expression has a deeper meaning; it is a way to be ready for the ordeals found along the way, a reminder that summer will not last forever and that the coming of challenging times is inexorable; so the only way of having a chance to go through them successfully is by being prepared.

As it was mentioned before, upon leaving King's Landing, Yoren holds back Arya, preventing her from coming closer to the courtyard and cuts her hair so that she can look like a boy and thus have fewer chances of being recognised. She is also given a male name, Arry. Despite the fact that Arya seems too overwhelmed by her plight to react to Yoren's commands, it can be noticed by her expressions that she seems reluctant to face the road ahead, which represents a risky adventure; in other words, there seems to be a *Refusal of the Call*, as she is in fact forced by Yoren to abandon a place where she might have stayed if it wasn't for his insistence, either to avenge her father's death or because of the comfort of being in a much more familiar place. In this regard, Campbell (2004) points out the following: "the refusal is essentially a refusal to give up what one takes to be one's own interest." (p. 55). Vogler (2007) suggests that: "You stand at a threshold of fear, and an understandable reaction would be to hesitate or even refuse the Call, at least temporarily. (...) This halt (...) serves an important dramatic function of signalling the audience that the adventure is risky." (p. 107)

However, persistence in the refusal of the call might have led to tragedy, as Arya would have probably died if she had stayed. According to Campbell

(2004), “Refusal of the summons converts the adventure into its negative.” (p. 54). If Arya had not answered the call, she would certainly have needed to be rescued.

Before leaving, Arya encounters the first obstacle as she joins the group led by Yoren. Arya bumps into a boy, Hot Pie, who together with his mate Loomy Greenlands, ask her about the sword she is carrying, as they suspect she has stolen it. They shove Arya to the ground while trying to take Needle from her. Vogler (2007) suggests that: “At each gateway to a new world there are powerful guardians at the threshold, placed to keep the unworthy from entering. (...) but if properly understood, they can be overcome, bypassed, or even turned into allies.” (p. 49)

The boys try to cast doubt and stop Arya by raising fear and questioning her worthiness to embark on such a journey with them. However, she defends herself by pointing Needle at Hot Pie and, by facing them, Arya puts aside her fears, which seems to make it clear that she is finally determined to accept the challenge of separation and transfiguration. Arya has to face enormous challenges from now onwards.

Hot Pie and Loomy Greenlands, whom Arya runs into before departing as well as the rest of the group of recruits of the Night’s Watch, may stand for what Campbell (2004) refers to as “*Threshold Guardians*”: “(...) the hero goes forward in his adventure until he comes to the “threshold guardian” (...). Such custodians bound the world (...) standing for the limits the hero's present

sphere, or life horizon. Beyond them is darkness, the unknown, and danger;”
(p. 71)

With regard to the *Threshold guardians*, Vogler (2007) points out that they are at the gateways of the new world attempting to block the way and raising fear: “Heroes (...) may still be tested by powerful figures who raise the banner of fear and doubt, questioning the hero's very worthiness to be in the game. They are Threshold Guardians, blocking the heroes before the adventure has even begun.” (p. 111)

The main functions of these guardians at the gateways of the Special World are both challenging and testing the Hero. They signal the limit between two instances: the *Ordinary* and the *Special World*. Arya's determination to move forward on the path to adventure shown in the act of not running away, is what gives her access to the *Special World*. In fact, although at first Arya attempts to attack the opponents, she will eventually make them Allies since they become good companions on her journey.

Arya overcomes her fears and proves being courageous enough to abandon King's Landing with the Night Watch's recruits and travel with them, thus *Crossing the First Threshold* (the border that separates the two worlds), to discover what lies ahead, knowing that there is no turning back and facing whatever the journey has in store for her: “The adventure is (...) a passage beyond the veil of the known into the unknown; the powers that watch at the boundary are dangerous; to deal with them is risky; yet for anyone with competence and courage the danger fades.” (Campbell, 2004, p. 76)

Eddard's beheading and the imminent emergence of war push Arya to *Cross the First Threshold* into a new world and get her to commit to the journey. Such as Vogler (2007) suggests: "(...) the hero finally commits to the adventure and fully enters the Special World (...) by **Crossing the First Threshold**. He agrees to face the consequences of dealing with the problem or challenge posed in the Call to Adventure." (p. 12)

Arya is now ready to respond to the call and begins her quest. She is immersed into the unknown, leaving behind everything that has been part of her everyday life up to that moment, as she is even forced to forget about whom she has been by being given a new name. Vogler (2007) points out that: "That special courage is called making the leap of faith. Like jumping out of an airplane, the act is irrevocable. There's no turning back now. The leap is made on faith, the trust that somehow we'll land safely." (p. 130) This leap into the unknown may also stand for the stage Campbell (2004) calls the *Belly of the Whale*:

The idea that the passage of the magical threshold is a transit into a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale. The hero, instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died. (p. 83)

Arthur Maia Baby Gomes (2020) points out that:

As soon as the hero meets with the unknown he is swallowed by it rather than controls it. He needs to be born again, and for that, he must

die, symbolizing his departure from the world from which he came. (...)
The Belly of the Whale can be understood as the shock between the set of values the hero held up until he crossed the threshold and the new environment he will inhabit during his journey. And as soon as this shock is made clear enough, he has, finally, departed, entering the level of Initiation. (p. 18, 19)

“The Long Night”

At this point, Arya has come back to Winterfell after a long journey, full of trials and challenges and has reunited with the remaining members of her family. Such as Makjanić (2018) affirms about Arya’s return:

She carried out and survived her journey and came back home, to the same place she started from, but nothing is truly the same anymore. Her siblings have greatly changed, her parents are gone, and Arya herself is no longer the same girl from the beginning of the story. (p. 14)

Arya has clearly gone through a process of transformation, which implies death and rebirth. Campbell (2004) points out that: “The adventure of the hero represents the moment in his life when he achieved illumination—the nuclear moment when, while still alive, he found and opened the road to the light beyond the dark walls of our living death.” (p. 241)

That transformation process Arya has undergone results from everything endured during the journey. In this regard, Williams (2017) mentions that:

Most importantly however, by the return, heroes have been transformed (Allison & Goethals, 2017; Campbell, 1993; Vogler, 2007; Williams, 2016) through a death and resurrection process: the death of the old self and the birth of a new more capable self. This new self is in possession of new information, able to utilize new polar-opposite skills, and to act in a manner that transgresses previous notions or limitations of how to live. As Campbell described it, transformed heroes have “come to a new level of understanding, what your relationship to life might be. That’s the creative act” (Toms, 2005). (p. 69)

This episode shows everyone getting ready to fight on a dark night at Winterfell as the Army of the Dead approaches Winterfell. There is a great army awaiting the White Walkers and their hordes of undead. This episode represents the coming of Winter for the whole world. Thousands of years before, there had been a winter known as “*The Long Night*”, which lasted a generation and caused thousands to die. That Winter had been generated by the White Walkers and it is due to the threat that they, along with the Army of the Dead, represented for the entire world that a fortification known as the Wall had been built in order to keep them away in the northern area of Westeros. Nevertheless, they have returned and nothing seems to stop them.

The battle begins but, as the enemies are countless, they are difficult to defeat. The blizzard summoned by the White Walkers makes it hard to hit the targets because of the strong winds. As the army retreats into the castle, Arya throws

flaming arrows to the enemy and eventually prevents the Hound from being attacked. In spite of the fact that Arya had attempted to get rid of the Hound on some occasions, such as when she leaves him alone to die while he, badly wounded, begs her to kill him, a sort of bond seems to have been created between them; she will later confess that she has removed him from her list and will even thank him after making her change her mind about killing Cersei on her own. Arya has probably become aware of the different ways in which the Hound, despite his flaws, has protected her. It also seems that Arya identifies with the Hound's life story, one full of injustice and cruelty. She appears to understand that his behaviour, which she often despises, is just a result of everything he has endured. This relates to the *Shadow archetype*, about which Vogler (2007) suggests that: "The Shadow can also shelter positive qualities that are in hiding or that we have rejected for some reason." (p. 65). In this case, the Hound's positive qualities seem to be hidden behind a fortress built as self-defence fostered by repressed traumas and feelings. Vogler (2007) points out that: "This energy can be a powerful internal force with a life of its own and its own set of interests and priorities. It can be a destructive force, especially if not acknowledged, confronted, and brought to light." (p. 66) Arya continues fighting and kills many in the Dead Army, showing great expertise. The undead come from everywhere, but her movements are quick and accurate. Beric Dondarrion urges the Hound not to give up and keep on fighting, to which he replies that they are fighting Death, which cannot be defeated. Beric highlights Arya's bravery while she is fighting Death. Arya has

faced Death many times before along her journey and, because of all the experiences she has gone through, she does not seem to be afraid at all. Arya has experienced what Campbell (2004) describes as *Apotheosis*:

Like the Buddha himself, this godlike being is a pattern of the divine state to which the human hero attains who has gone beyond the last terrors of ignorance. "When the envelopment of consciousness has been annihilated, then he becomes free of all fear, beyond the reach of change." This is the release potential within us all, and which anyone can attain—through herohood; (p.139)

Sadri (2020) points out that the hero "(...) must endure "Apotheosis," or life in death, (...) to achieve their goal. This means that they must allow their old self to die, and be reborn into a new, more apt and worthy state, before the elixir can be theirs." (p.17) Arya seems to have achieved enlightenment, which makes her face the enemies fearless. Besides, from the lessons received by her master Syrio Forel shown in the sixth episode of season one called "*A Golden Crown*", she had learned the following statement, to which she adhered: "*There is only one god and his name is death. And there is only one thing we say to death: "Not today"*" (15:48). On many occasions, and particularly after her father's murder, she affirms that the only god she believes in is Death. This means that the only truth for her is the inevitability of it which, at the same time, helps her become a risk-taker and fearless in every ordeal faced. The belief that there is nothing to lose paradoxically made her see the chances of

saying “no” to death and gave her the courage to fight it and eventually defeat it. Such as Gomes (2020) states: “The Apotheosis is the transformation, the complete dissociation with the mundane character of the hero, and his turning into a god of sorts. Being powerful enough, the hero can cause a disruption in the established order.” (p. 20)

There are other moments of *Apotheosis*, in terms of Campbell, for Arya; for example, when she meets Melisandre for the second time, who reaffirms what she had anticipated about the fact that other people would die in Arya’s hands. Arya finally seems to have understood the meaning and importance of the words pronounced by that woman she had come across some time before. Such as Gomes (2020) points out: “Return is described by Campbell as the level in which the hero must prove that his apotheosis did not make him uninterested in the matters of the ordinary world from where he came from, and which he must save.” (p. 21)

Those words have now become meaningful to Arya. Thus, it can be argued that Melisandre plays the role of the archetype represented in the *Wise Old Man* (magician or sorceress) stated by Carl Jung (1981), as her prophesy seems to guide Arya in her next step to take: “The archetype of spirit in the shape of a man, hobgoblin, or animal always appears in a situation where insight, understanding, good advice, determination, planning, etc., are needed” (p. 216)

After the exchange of words with Melisandre, Arya manages to stab the Night King, destroying him and his army. That defeat of the Night King proves that Arya has achieved a balance between the perspectives of both the Ordinary and

the Special World, as she has integrated the teachings of every experience into what she has become now; it is a mixture of the relevant features of the old version of herself and everything learnt along the journey, which contributed to her transformation. The mastery of the Special World allowed her to be skilled enough once back in the Ordinary World and, thus, do what she was meant to do. Campbell (2004) refers to this as a *Mastery of the two worlds*:

Freedom to pass back and forth across the world division, from the perspective of the apparitions of time to that of the causal deep and back—not contaminating the principles of the one with those of the other; yet permitting the mind to know the one by virtue of the other—is the talent of the master. The Cosmic Dancer, declares Nietzsche, does not rest heavily in a single spot, but gaily, lightly, turns and leaps from one position to another. It is possible to speak from only one point at a time, but that does not invalidate the insights of the rest. (p. 212)

By the same token, Sadri (2020) points out that:

This final victory and resolution cannot be achieved if the hero is unable or unwilling to return home with the boon. It is only when the return threshold is crossed with this hard-won prize that the hero can truly be the “Master of Two Worlds” (Hero 229). They are at last the person they set out upon the Hero’s Journey to become. (p. 7)

That defeat means that the threat that has overwhelmed people since ancient days is no more. The mission is thus accomplished and humanity can rest in peace, as it is free from danger. Death was in front of Arya and she did not miss the opportunity to defeat it. She was about to be defeated but she made use of the last of her strengths in order not to be killed and save humanity from its end. In spite of the fact that Arya had been able to murder many people on her list, the journey prepared her to fight an even greater enemy she would not have thought of. Arya has risked her life for a great cause, as she saved humanity from its doom. Arya's willingness to put her own life at risk on behalf of others proves her heroic traits. Vogler (2007) points out that :

*People commonly think of Heroes as strong or brave, but these qualities are secondary to **sacrifice** — the true mark of a Hero. Sacrifice is the Hero's willingness to give up something of value, perhaps even her own life, on behalf of an ideal or a group. (...) At the heart of every story is a confrontation with death. (...) Heroes show us how to deal with death. They may survive it, proving that death is not so tough. They may die (perhaps only symbolically) and be reborn, proving that death can be transcended. They may die a Hero's death, transcending death by offering up their lives willingly for a cause, an ideal, or a group. (p. 32)*

Arya proves that she has really learnt the lessons of the Special World. According to Vogler, this may represent the *Resurrection*, as it is the climax

and the final test of the journey in which Heroes face the most hazardous encounter with death. Sonnenburg (2017) stresses that:

The hero's journey helps overcome shortcomings of design thinking and leads to new perspectives and insights, especially in the crossing of the return threshold, when the prototype, the boon, is applied in the known organizational world. Sonnenburg stresses that bringing the prototype back to the organization can be even more challenging than travel through the unknown world. (p. 6)

Arya meets Death again and demonstrates that she has retained the lessons of the *Ordeal*, since she applies the wisdom gained in the Special World. The implications of this crucial confrontation with the Night King are broader than that of the *Ordeal* because, in this particular case, the threat is not just for Arya but for the entire world. Vogler (2007) suggests that: “The Ordeal is a major nerve ganglion of the story. (...) It should not be confused with the climax of the Hero's Journey — that's another nerve center further down near the end of the story” (p. 156) He also points out that:

This is often a second life-and-death moment, almost a replay of the death and rebirth of the Ordeal. Death and darkness get in one last, desperate shot before being finally defeated. It's a kind of final exam for the hero, who must be tested once more to see if he has really learned the lessons of the Ordeal. (p. 17)

The central crisis or Supreme Ordeal is like a midterm exam; the Resurrection is the final exam. Heroes must be tested one last time to see if they retained the learning from the Supreme Ordeal of Act Two.

(...) the Resurrection stage represents a field trial of a hero's new skills, in the real world. It's both a reminder of death and a test of the hero's learning. (p. 199)

Finally, Arya will show that she has got rid of all fear when she later decides to leave Winterfell again to try to murder Cersei and when she later moves on to a new adventure in search of what is west of Westeros, which corresponds to the stage described as *Freedom to live*. Arya is not afraid of the change she is about to make, knowing that every lesson contributes to her growth. Such as Campbell (2004) affirms:

He does not mistake apparent changelessness in time for the permanence of Being, nor is he fearful of the next moment (or of the "other thing"), as destroying the permanent with its change. "Nothing retains its own form; but Nature, the greater renewer, ever makes up forms from forms. Be sure there's nothing perishes in the whole universe; it does but vary and renew its form." Thus the next moment is permitted to come to pass. (p. 225)

In this regard, Stephan Sonnenburg and Mark Runco (2017) point out:

Within the lifespan of a human being, “there are multiple hero journeys...with varying degrees of suffering, healing and transformation” (Efthimiou, 2017, p. 152). Campbell (2004) explains, “what I think is that a good life is one hero journey after another. Over and over again, you are called to the realm of adventure, you are called to new horizons” (p. 133). (p. 4)

Everything that occurs in the episode depicted above, is the result of what Arya has gone through while in King’s Landing and after fleeing as a Night’s Watch recruit. The elixir Arya returns with after her journey is crucial to face what lies ahead. The whole journey before coming back to Winterfell has prepared her to confront and defeat a common enemy of all humankind. Therefore, we consider it necessary to examine previous events relevant to both the analysis and the understanding of Arya’s feat in the former episode in depth. We will analyse significant experiences taking place in previous episodes in relation to Arya’s transformation process and the way that relates to the stages in the Hero’s journey and the way they unfold. Vogler (2007) states that:

The Hero's Journey is a skeletal framework that should be fleshed out with the details and surprises of the individual story. The structure should not call attention to itself, nor should it be followed too precisely. The order of the stages given here is only one of many possible variations. The stages can be deleted, added to, and drastically shuffled without losing any of their power. (p. 19)

Arya's quest

As Arya departs from King's Landing, her wounds and hatred towards the ones who have harmed her loved ones increase and every night before sleeping she starts reciting a list of names of the people she wants to kill, as if it was a prayer. Only then will she be able to sleep. Williams (2017) affirms that:

Disbelief permeates their thinking, usually mixed with grief over losing aspects of their old life (e.g., the loss of colleagues, or one's health, financial security or a loved one) and fear of the future (e.g., What happens now?). Most heroes want and require time to digest the events of the call, the consequences of separation, particularly those who have experienced the unwanted or traumatic kind. Heroes however soon realize that inactivity is not an option. (p. 70)

From that moment onwards, taking revenge on those responsible for her sorrow will become her main goal as well as reuniting with her family, which will not be an easy task. Such as Vogler (2007) states:

To humanize a hero or any character, give her a wound, a visible, physical injury or a deep emotional wound. (...) Your hero's wounds and scars mark the areas in which he is guarded, defensive, weak, and vulnerable. A hero may also be extra-strong in some areas as a defense for the wounded parts. (p. 92)

After having crossed the *First Threshold*, Arya is out of her comfort zone and moves through the *Road of trials*, which marks the beginning of the *Initiation Stage* and in which she will have to face and overcome a series of difficult challenges that will eventually prepare her both internally (greater insight and awareness) and externally (improvement in her fighting skills) for the ordeals to come.

In order to move through the series of tests and obstacles, Arya has to face all her fears and learn how to change so as to succeed and move on to the next stages of the journey. The *Road of Trials* equals the stage described as *Tests, Allies and Enemies* in Vogler's analysis (2007): "It's a new and sometimes frightening experience for the hero. No matter how many schools he has been through, he's a freshman all over again in this new world." (135) In accordance with it, Arya will need to identify both allies and enemies, which will help her achieve the ultimate goal: "It's natural for heroes just arriving in the Special World to spend some time figuring out who can be trusted and relied upon for special services, and who is not to be trusted." (p. 137)

Arya will also have to learn the new rules and codes of the Special World. As Williams (2017) points out: "As stated, invariably the Call to Adventure leaves heroes facing an unfamiliar life problem where existing knowledge and previous life skills will not suffice (Vogler, 2007; Williams, 2017)" (p. 71)

Arya will have to get used to moving on in a context surrounded by evil forces that will continually threaten her. Such as Vogler (2007) suggests:

Heroes can also make bitter enmities at this stage. They may encounter the Shadow or his servants. The hero's appearance in the Special World may tip the Shadow to his arrival and trigger a chain of threatening events. (...) Enemies include both the villains or antagonists of stories and their underlings. Enemies may perform functions of other archetypes such as the Shadow, the Trickster, the Threshold Guardian, and sometimes the Herald. (138)

However, Arya will also meet people who will make the way easier for her. On this journey, the training received by her master Syrio Forel as well as the amulets, such as the sword gifted by his half-brother Jon will be useful. Such as Campbell (2004) affirms, during the *Road of Trials*:

Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials. This is a favorite phase of the myth- adventure. It has produced a world literature of miraculous tests and ordeals. The hero is covertly aided by the advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper whom he met before his entrance into this region. Or it may be that he here discovers for the first time that there is a benign power everywhere supporting him in his superhuman passage. (p. 89)

Arya at Harrenhal

After departing from King's Landing, the group of recruits is taken to Harrenhal as captives. There, Tywin Lannister makes Arya his cupbearer, as he praises her wit because of having posed as a boy to make it safer to travel. In the Special world, Arya is tested by means of challenges and trials that will eventually prepare her for greater difficulties. Campbell (2004) affirms that:

The original departure into the land of trials represented only the beginning of the long and really perilous path of initiatory conquests and moments of illumination. Dragons have now to be slain and surprising barriers passed—again, again, and again. (p. 100)

Harrenhal is a castle totally different from the ones Arya has seen before. It is a place in ruins, where even the smell of dead bodies can be detected from afar and where people are enslaved to work for the war and are also brutally tortured by the Lannister troops in search of the Brotherhood Without Banners. Vogler (2007) suggests that the Special World marks a complete contrast with the one left behind: "The audience's first impressions of the Special World should strike a sharp contrast with the Ordinary World. (...) A Special World, even a figurative one, has a different feel, a different rhythm, different priorities and values, and different rules." (136)

That introduces the new set of rules and values of the Special World, where Arya must get rid of all the preconceived ideas about life, face her fears and figure out how to change in order to overcome every obstacle. Williams (2017)

suggests that: “The separation phase signals, either a sudden or gradual split from some or all aspects of the Hero’s previous life. Separation inevitably creates a significant life problem, where existing knowledge is insufficient and existing coping skills ineffective” (p. 69). That also relates to what Campbell (2004) points out regarding the *Road of Trials*, which involves a “process of dissolving, transcending, or transmuting the infantile images of our personal past.” (p. 93)

Vogler (2007) also affirms that during this stage, the Hero makes allies and has to face enemies. At Harrenhal, Arya comes across people with evil intentions, although she strengthens ties with Gendry and Hot Pie, with whom she befriends. Gendry and Hot Pie turn into what Vogler refers to as *Allies*. With regard to the Allies, he affirms that: “heroes have been paired with friendly figures who fight at their sides, advise and warn them, and sometimes challenge them.” (p. 71)

According to Campbell (2004), after the call is summoned, the first encounter will be with the *Supernatural Aid* or protective figure, who provides the Hero both with guidance and the required amulets: “For those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure (...) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass.” (p. 63)

Arya encounters a man called Jaqen on the way, a former recruit she met before being taken to Harrenhal. She has risked her life to help him and two more men get out of the cage after a fire started. Jaqen is a professional

assassin who belongs to a group known as the Faceless Men in the service of the Many-Faced God and has the ability to change his appearance depending on the situation. Thus, he stands for the archetype referred to as the *Shapeshifter*. Vogler (2007) affirms in this regard: “Shapeshifters change appearance or mood, and are difficult for the hero and the audience to pin down. They may mislead the hero or keep her guessing, and their loyalty or sincerity is often in question.” (p. 59)

Therefore, similar to what happened with Syrio Forel in King’s Landing, Arya also meets someone who stands for the *Supernatural Aid* at Harrenhal. In Campbell’s proposal, this stage is supposed to be observed before *Crossing the First Threshold*. However, in this case, it also occurs in the fifth place. Therefore, a variation in relation to the order of the stages proposed by Campbell can be noticed.

As Arya has saved three lives, Jaqen offers to kill three people she wants dead in return. Jaqen later helps her to escape with Gendry and Hot Pie, and it is evident that she would not have been able to survive without the help and protection of this man. Taking into consideration the archetypes proposed by Jung (1981), Jaqen can be said to represent the *Wise Old man*:

The old man always appears when the hero is in a hopeless and desperate situation from which only profound reaction or a lucky idea -in other words, a spiritual function kind-can extricate him. But since, for internal and external reasons, the hero cannot accomplish this himself, the knowledge needed to compensate the deficiency comes in

the form of a personified thought, i.e., in the shape of this sagacious and helpful old man. (p. 217)

Jaen also plays the role of a *Mentor* taking into consideration Vogler's analysis of the Hero's Journey, on the grounds that he, as if inspired by divine wisdom, protects, aids and provides Arya with a gift. Arya's *Meeting with the Mentor* occurs at a crucial point in which she needs some guidance, so she considers it advantageous the idea of learning Jaen's skills to carry out her plan. Arya shows a great interest in Jaen's knowledge and wisdom, which relates to Vogler's idea that the *Mentors* represent what the Hero aspires to become: "Mentors in stories act mainly on the mind of the hero, changing her consciousness or redirecting her will. Even if physical gifts are given, Mentors also strengthen the hero's mind to face an ordeal with confidence." (p. 120)

Vogler (2007) points out that the provision of a gift is also an important function of the *Mentor*:

(...) the Mentor, whose many services to the hero include protecting, guiding, teaching, testing, training, and providing magical gifts. (...) Meeting with the Mentor is the stage of the Hero's Journey in which the hero gains the supplies, knowledge, and confidence needed to overcome fear and commence the adventure. (p. 112)

Besides, he highlights Propp's analysis of the Russian fairy tales, in which some characters play the role of donors but only after some sort of sacrifice or

commitment or after having passed certain tests. Both the help received by Jaqen and the “magical present” (Vogler, 2007, p. 41) or coin he gives Arya after abandoning Harrenhal, represent what Arya has earned after having risked her life to save Jaqen from an imminent death. Vogler also suggests that one of the roles of the *Mentor* archetype is to “plant information” (Vogler, 2007, p. 43) that will later become relevant in helping the Hero. Despite the fact that Arya does not understand the way in which Jaqen works and what the meeting with him represents, it helps her dispel her fears and gives her the strength and courage to move on, knowing that there is much more to be disclosed. Arya will not forget Jaqen’s words and the coin received will turn into a tool or amulet that will eventually give her new opportunities to learn the skills needed to face the ordeals ahead successfully, as it will allow her to meet Jaqen again. Later on, after being able to kill a soldier, she will even take the coin and whisper Jaqen’s words “*Valar Morghulis*” as if it were a kind of powerful amulet and as if she knew that there was something else about Jaqen she needed to find out. Marie Hansen (2017) suggests that:

Her meeting with an advocate of a religion that trains expert assassins is then something that is bound to have a serious influence on her life, and consequently her conversion process. After Jaqen H'ghar, a member of the guild of the Faceless Men, has given her the opportunity to wish for him to kill three people for her, it takes no more than the first of those wishes to come true for her thirst for killing to increase (...) Just with the help of a small whisper, her kill list, her prayer, has

lost a name, and she realises how easy it is to take a person's life – this time, it only took her a whisper. The feeling seems to awaken something in her, making her crave more, almost causing an obsession with death where she continuously wishes people dead for the slightest pain or discomfort they may have caused her. (p. 53)

Arya and the Hound

Arya continues moving on through the *Road of trials*. In this regard, Sadri (2020) affirms that:

The hero will find him- or herself on the "Road of Trials," beset by different ordeals and tests, and will subsequently be obliged to confront forces that are not only beyond his or her proper understanding, but are also far more powerful and influential than he or she is. (p. 5)

As she continues her journey with Gendry and Hot Pie, the group is captured once again; this time, by the Brotherhood Without Banners. When Arya is told that the reunion with her family will be delayed because of personal interests, she calls them hypocrites and runs away. This proves that in spite of the fact that Arya desires to reunite with her family more than anything, she cannot stand the hypocrisy of the Brotherhood. However, Arya does not get far as she is kidnapped by the Hound, who has already been set free.

Arya is now a hostage of the Hound, which represents a new trial and will pose new challenges. In the Special World, Arya must get used to the fact that in

order to survive, she needs to do things she would not have thought of and that she must rely on what she has been taught earlier as well as learn the ways of the Special World: “Initiation, by default, requires heroes to undertake deeds they do not know how to do, may not want to do, and are unsure they can do” (Williams, 2017, p. 71) Even though Arya has always fought against injustice, she seems to become aware that she must learn new codes in order to survive. Such as Vogler (2007) states: “The new rules of the Special World must be learned quickly by the hero and the audience.” (139)

The Hound teaches Arya that some actions or events, in spite of being harsh, are acceptable as long as they contribute to moving forward. The Hound stands for the *Father archetype*, since it represents justice and wrath on the one side, but mercy and grace on the other side. Arya seems to experience all of these different feelings through that archetype, on the grounds that despite considering that what is being done is wrong and her fear of being punished for her acts, the latter makes her feel more confident as she is at the same time able to overcome the problems that arise on the way.

Arya’s encounter with the Hound represents what Campbell refers to as *Atonement with the father*. The Hound has taken her as a hostage and Arya’s vulnerable state makes it hard for her to escape without suffering the consequences of it. However, in spite of the fact that the Hound reprimands Arya when he considers it appropriate, he also protects her on some occasions. The Hound guides Arya with advice which, although it is not always morally correct, helps her survive. Arya is taught how to move forward in order to

survive and must accept the way life unfolds and trust upon the fact that what she does is what is needed and, thus, the right thing to do. Therefore, Arya must come to terms with her life situation. Campbell (2004) declares that:

Atonement (...) requires an abandonment of the attachment to ego itself; and that is what is difficult. One must have a faith that the father is merciful, and then a reliance on that mercy. Therewith, the center of belief is transferred outside of the bedeviling god's tight scaly ring, and the dreadful ogres dissolve. (p. 120)

Later, when they arrive at the wedding of Arya's uncle disguised as farmers, they are told that the feast is over and that they should leave. As a result of a series of betrayals, Arya is determined to avenge the deaths of her loved ones increases to a great extent. Nothing is left of the way her former life used to be, so she has nothing else to lose. Arya quickly forgets about the punishing side of the *Father* archetype that may remind her that what she is doing is wrong or destructive from the Ordinary World's perspective; instead, she sees the merciful and graceful side of the *Father*, as she faces reality moving away from former concepts and ideas about the world should work.

Arya at Braavos

Arya takes different decisions throughout this journey, for example, when she uses the coin Jaqen has given her to travel to Braavos instead of reuniting with

her half-brother Jon. This decision can be taken as the stage on the Hero's journey that Campbell (2004) refers to as the *Refusal of the return*:

When the hero-quest has been accomplished, (...) the adventurer still must return with his life-transmuting trophy. 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. But the responsibility has been frequently refused.
(p. 179)

Arya may have looked for another way of returning home; instead, she decides to move forward into that Special World she is immersed. She has discovered in Jaqen something special that might be useful for her so, after witnessing Jaqen's mysterious but outstanding skills, she will not miss the opportunity of meeting him again and becoming her apprentice. Such as Hansen (2017) affirms:

Arya, who has always been preoccupied with sword fighting, and later has an obsession with death and killing, seems to find exactly what she has always dreamed of in a religion that worships a god of death and teaches the art of assassination. Upon finding a place that she might call home, a faith that might benefit her needs, Arya starts the more formal part of the conversion process in becoming an apprentice and adopting the practices of the Faceless Men. (p.59)

On the second episode of the fifth season, the Faceless Man teaches Arya that she must learn to be “*no one*” (45:25). He will take the form of a *Mentor*, who will provide Arya with what will be needed for the rest of the journey through a series of trials. Taking into consideration Vogler’s analysis (2007), the Faceless Man may represent the archetype of the *Wise Old Man*, who trains the Heroes and gives them gifts. This man also speaks as if he was the voice of the Many-Faced God as he imparts his knowledge and wisdom. Besides, Arya aspires to become like him and achieve his skilful ways of killing without being recognised. However, this will not be an easy task owing to the fact that Arya will have to pass through a series of tests to earn the gifts, which involves absolute commitment: “The function of Mentors is to prepare the hero to face the unknown. They may give advice, guidance or magical equipment.” (p. 12)

Jaen tells Arya that in order to learn she must serve, not herself but the Many-Faced God. Consequently, as part of becoming “*no one*”, she is ordered to discard all her belongings. Although Arya obeys him, she throws all her things away except for Needle, which she hides among some rocks. Hansen (2017) highlights the following:

The feeling that she might originally have had, that by joining the Faceless Men she will regain her identity, is replaced by the frightening feeling of losing herself completely. While she tries with all her might to let go of her identity and become a Faceless Man, she also holds on for dear life to what makes her who she is. This becomes especially evident

when she refuses to let go of her belongings after the Kindly Man tells her to do so. (p. 62).

She thinks she might be doing what is necessary for her to become a servant of the Many-Faced God by ridding herself of her belongings in the end, but she still keeps Needle, her sword, as she knows it is the last and strongest link she has to her home, and if she lets go of it, she will be letting go of herself forever. (p. 63).

When Jaqen confronts Arya with the question of leaving behind everything that makes her who she is, before she can utter a word, he replies to his own question by saying that Arya is not ready to become “no one” but “someone else” (16:36). Hansen (2017) indicates that:

The religion demands the convert to give up their entire identity, and “... offer up all you are to Him of Many Faces. Your body. Your soul. Yourself...” (FfC 356), which means that Arya will have to give up all her possessions, her name, her memories, and her dreams, which includes her hate for the people who have scorned her, and her dreams of killing them. She must in fact give up her entire list, her whole reason for seeking out the Faceless Men in the first place. (p.61)

This instance represents a change in the world already known to her and in her own identity. That relates to the movement of the Hero towards a zone of renaissance and transfiguration Campbell (2004) names the *Belly of the Whale*:

This popular motif gives emphasis to the lesson that the passage of the threshold is a form of self-annihilation. (...) But here, instead of passing outward, beyond the confines of the visible world, the hero goes inward, to be born again. The disappearance corresponds to the passing of a worshiper into a temple- where he is to be quickened by the recollection of who and what he is, namely dust and ashes unless immortal. (p. 84)

The arrival of Arya at Braavos also represents, according to Vogler (2007), the *Approach to the Inmost Cave*, where the Hero experiences both terror and amazement:

The hero comes at last to the edge of a dangerous place, sometimes deep underground, where the object of the quest is hidden. Often it's the headquarters of the hero's greatest enemy, the most dangerous spot in the Special World, the Inmost Cave. When the hero enters that fearful place he will cross the second major threshold. (p. 14)

Vogler (2007) also argues that: “This is the Approach to the Inmost Cave, where soon they will encounter supreme wonder and terror. It's time to make final preparations for the central ordeal of the adventure.” (p. 117). The objective of the Faceless Man is to recruit Arya to become “*no one*”, which implies self-annihilation in terms of not gratifying personal desires. In this way, she must not serve herself but the Many-Faced God alone. Nevertheless, this represents a great challenge for Arya and creates an inner conflict, which will

get her into trouble and great danger as she will be on the limit between life and death. She, once again, has to face a kind of loss of identity to serve the Many-Faced God and do his will while leaving her own aside. Again, everything she holds dear must be left behind. The act of not getting rid of all her personal belongings makes it clear that Arya, in spite of being eager to learn the skills of the Faceless Men and going through that process whatever it takes, is not completely committed to becoming “no one” but “someone else”, which in turn implies transformation. Such as Campbell (2004) states: “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.” (p. 85). Arya will allow others to bend her own will only to a certain extent and as long as that does not interfere with her goals and beliefs. Such as Hansen (2017) affirms:

Is she willing to let go of her list in order to serve the Many-Faced God and give herself to him completely? If she does, the whole reason for her conversion to begin with disappears, and she is left as no one, a servant of Him of Many Faces, not Arya Stark, assassin and avenger.
(p. 61)

Arya faces a series of tests to prove that she is really willing to become “no one” and serve the Many-Faced God. Her first job is to pose as a merchant to kill a man. However, instead of killing the merchant, she takes the life of someone she was not asked to. This act may relate to temptations that attempt

to mislead the Heroes and make them go away from the quest. Sadri (2020) highlights that:

In facing temptation, the hero finds themselves in the liminal space between the ability to continue on towards the Apotheosis needed to gain their boon and the sudden failure of their quest. This opens up the potential for multiple non-linear pathways within their Hero's Journey, some of which lead to disaster. The act of either giving in to or resisting temptation occurs in a space where the individual hero's Monomythical journey is simultaneously ongoing and over: it is this very liminality that is the stage's strongest underlying characteristic. (p. 39)

As a result of her disobedience, she is punished by being rendered blind. This punishment, in spite of being severe, will force her to go through a kind of training that will end up improving her fighting skills. As part of the training, Arya is forced to live on the streets as a beggar and is repeatedly hit by the Waif as she cannot see the opponent's movements. This relates to what Vogler (2007) refers to as *Tests*:

The most important function of this period of adjustment to the Special World is testing. Storytellers use this phase to test the hero, putting her through a series of trials and challenges that are meant to prepare her for greater ordeals ahead. (..) The Tests may be a continuation of the Mentor's training. Many Mentors accompany their heroes this far into the adventure, coaching them for the big rounds ahead. (136)

Later, Jaqen allows Arya to return to the House, makes her recover her sight and gives her a second and last chance to become one of them. She is commissioned to murder Lady Crane, who is an actress. However, she does not seem to be fully convinced of killing Lady Crane since she regards her as a good woman and considers it unfair to take her life without knowing or caring about the reasons for that. Arya is not aware of the fact that she has been followed by the Waif, who has witnessed her act of disobedience.

The Waif intends to kill Arya and wounds her badly. However, Arya escapes by jumping into a river and seeks refuge with Lady Crane, who takes her to her house and heals her wounds. Once Arya falls asleep, the Waif gets into the house and kills Lady Crane. Arya manages to escape but is pursued by the Waif. It is necessary to point out that without the help of Lady Crane, Arya would not have been able to survive after the fierce attack. This represents the assistance the Hero needs to return to the *Ordinary World*, which Campbell (1994) refers to as *Rescue from without*: “The hero may have to be brought back from his supernatural adventure by assistance from without. That is to say, the world may have to come and get him.” (p. 192) On that regard, Campbell (1994) also argues that: “Whether rescued from without, driven from within, or gently carried along by the guiding divinities, he has yet to re-enter with his boon the long-forgotten atmosphere where men who are fractions imagine themselves to be complete.” (p. 201)

Arya manages to hide from the Waif, although she is discovered because of the trails of blood she has left behind. Arya retrieves Needle from the hiding place

and putting out the light of the candle in the room, she starts fighting her attacker. The Waif may be related to what Vogler refers to as the enemies found on the way, who attempt to defeat the Hero: “Heroes can also make bitter enmities at this stage. They may encounter the Shadow or his servants. The hero's appearance in the Special World may tip the Shadow to his arrival and trigger a chain of threatening events.” (p. 138) This also relates to the *Shadow archetype*, about which Vogler (2007) suggests: “The negative face of the Shadow in stories is projected onto characters called villains, antagonists, or enemies. Villains and enemies are usually dedicated to the death, destruction, or defeat of the hero.” (p. 65) The Shadow challenges the Heroes and forces them towards life-threatening circumstances. The Waif challenges and tests Arya, who endures the strict training and the abuse because the skills learnt will be useful in what is to come. Such as Vogler (2007) points out: “The function of the Shadow in drama is to challenge the hero and give her a worthy opponent in the struggle. Shadows create conflict and bring out the best in a hero by putting her in a life-threatening situation.” (p. 66) Arya’s escape and her attempt to return to Westeros are dangerous due to the fact that her life is at stake. Arya’s final fight with the Waif represents, according to Vogler (2007), the *Ordeal*, a crisis that produces a sense of death and revival. Arya fights an opponent that leaves her on the verge of death, which ultimately provides her with greater insights as well as the power to fulfil the quest:

Now the hero stands in the deepest chamber of the Inmost Cave, facing the greatest challenge and the most fearsome opponent yet. This the

real heart of the matter, what Joseph Campbell called the Ordeal. It is the mainspring of the heroic form and the key to its magic power. (...)
The simple secret of the Ordeal is this: Heroes must die so that they can be reborn. (p. 155)

Vogler (2007) also affirms that: “Heroes don't just visit death and come home. They return changed, transformed. No one can go through an experience at the edge of death without being changed in some way.” (p. 156). During her stay in Braavos, Arya appears to have died. However, there is rebirth. Everything that Arya went through while in the House of Black and White contributed to her personal transfiguration and was also a preparation for the trials that would follow. The series of trials Arya was faced with attempted to make her leave her true identity behind, who she has been up to that moment. However, she was not willing to become “*no one*”, so before leaving she reaffirms who she is. She will later put into practice the skills acquired during the training in her seek of revenge. Makjanić, Gloria (2018) points out that:

In Braavos Arya faces another frequent motive: death and rebirth. She does not literally die, but after she is brutally attacked by the Waif, something shifts and she changes her narrative: she faces Jaqen, affirms her identity as Arya and uses her acquired skills to carry on her journey of revenge. (p. 13)

As the Faceless Man had anticipated, even though Arya failed to become “*no one*”, she certainly became “*someone else*”. Arya appeared to have died but there was renaissance. Her former being was still there, though transformed. Arya’s transformation is seen in the second episode of the seventh season, when she meets her direwolf Nymeria on her way home, whom she pleads to come with her. However, the direwolf walks away into the woods. Arya realises that there is where it belongs and that she has also gone through a process of transformation. As Nymeria leaves, Arya whispers “*That’s not you*” (47:40), words that resemble the ones she had used with her father when he claimed that she should marry a powerful lord. Both have gone through a process of transfiguration and things cannot be the same anymore.

Arya manages to kill the Waif as a result of the training she received while she was blind. After that, she takes the face of the girl to the House of Black and White. In the eighth episode of the sixth season, entitled *No One*, Jaqen makes it clear that she has completed the training as a Faceless Man when he affirms: “*Finally a girl is no one*” (56:20). Nevertheless, Arya affirms defiantly that she will never be “*no one*”: “*A girl is Arya Stark of Winterfell and I’m going home*” (56:26). She then leaves the place determined to return to Westeros. Arya’s reply to the Faceless Man is connected to the *Apotheosis* stage in the Hero’s Journey developed by Campbell (2004), in which the Hero is free of all fear because of having achieved a state of enlightenment and realisation:

Like the Buddha himself, this godlike being is a pattern of the divine state to which the human hero attains who has gone beyond the last

terrors of ignorance. "When the envelopment of consciousness has been annihilated, then he becomes free of all fear, beyond the reach of change." This is the release potential within us all, and which anyone can attain—through heroism; (p. 139)

Vogler (2007) suggests that:

The Ordeal in myths signifies the death of the ego. The hero is now fully part of the cosmos, dead to the old, limited vision of things and reborn into a new consciousness of connections. The old boundaries of the Self have been transcended or annihilated. In some sense the hero has become a god with the divine ability to soar above the normal limits of death and see the broader view of the connectedness of all things. The Greeks called this a moment of apotheosis, a step up from enthusiasm where you merely have the god in you. In a state of apotheosis you are the god. Tasting death lets you sit in God's chair for a while. (p. 171)

Arya has recognised what is within, which is the result of having faced several challenges. She has achieved what Campbell (2004) calls the *Ultimate Boon* or the goal of the quest, which grants her with new insights and power:

The ease with which the adventure is here accomplished signifies that the hero is a superior man, a born king. Such ease distinguishes numerous fairy tales and all legends of the deeds of incarnate gods.

Where the usual hero would face a test, the elect encounters no delaying obstacle and makes no mistake. (p. 160)

After having survived the fight with the Waif, Arya proves her fighting skills and her ability to face the enemy fearlessly. This relates to what Vogler (2007) refers to as the *Reward (or Seizing the Sword)* and the *Return with the Elixir* :

*Having survived death, (...) The hero now takes possession of the treasure she has come seeking, her **Reward**. It might be a special weapon like a magic sword, or a token like the Grail or some elixir which can heal the wounded land. Sometimes the "sword" is knowledge and experience that leads to greater understanding and a reconciliation with hostile forces. (p. 16)*

*The hero Returns to the Ordinary World, but the journey is meaningless unless she brings back some **Elixir**, treasure, or lesson from the Special World. The Elixir is a magic potion with the power to heal. (...) Sometimes the Elixir is treasure won on the quest, but it may be love, freedom, wisdom, or the knowledge that the Special World exists and can be survived. (p. 18)*

Those difficulties Arya has confronted to return to the Ordinary World is what Campbell (2004) refers to as the *Magic Flight*. Despite the fact that it was not easy to leave Braavos, Arya was finally able to escape with the reward. Arya

leaves the Special World with new insights and abilities, which will prove their worth in the future:

On the other hand, if the trophy has been attained against the opposition of its guardian, or if the hero's wish to return to the world has been resented by the gods or demons, then the last stage of the mythological round becomes a lively, often comical, pursuit. This flight may be complicated by marvels of magical obstruction and evasion. (p. 182)

That also relates to the stage Vogler (2007) refers to as *The Road Back*: “This stage marks the decision to return to the Ordinary World. The Hero realises that the Special World must eventually be left behind, and there are still dangers, temptations, and tests ahead.” (p. 17)

Vogler (2007) also points out that:

Heroes gather up what they have learned, gained, stolen, or been granted in the Special World. They set themselves a new goal, to escape, find further adventure, or return home. But before any of those goals are achieved, there is another test to pass, the final exam of the journey, Resurrection. (p. 193)

Once Arya leaves Braavos, she has the choice of coming back home. However, she believes that what used to be her home is being controlled by House Bolton. Despite the fact that she still has the opportunity of looking for her family, she decides to continue with her revenge on the ones who are still on her list. Arya takes revenge by killing Walder Frey and his men, making it clear

that Winter has come to House Frey. This may also be associated with what Campbell (2004) calls the *Refusal of the Return* that may occur after having experienced the bliss and enlightenment of the *Special World*: “Numerous indeed are the heroes fabled to have taken up residence forever in the blessed isle of the unaging Goddess of Immortal Being.” (p. 179)

Finally, Arya decides to go back home. This represents what Campbell (2004) refers to as the *Crossing of the Return Threshold* and entering the Ordinary World. There, Arya will prove to have retained and integrated the wisdom gained on the journey:

The two worlds, the divine and the human, can be pictured only as distinct from each other (...) The hero adventures out of the land we know into darkness; there he accomplishes his adventure, or again is simply- lost to us, imprisoned, or in danger; and his return is described as a coming back out of that yonder zone. Nevertheless (...) the two kingdoms are actually one. The realm of the gods is a forgotten dimension of the world we know. And the exploration of that dimension, either willingly or unwillingly, is the whole sense of the deed of the hero. (p. 201)

It betokens too a conviction of the waking mind that the reality of the deep is not belied by that of common day. This is the sign of the hero's requirement, now, to knit together his two worlds. (p. 212)

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this work has been to study the extent to which Arya Stark's path in the series *Game of Thrones* follows the Hero's Journey stages developed by Joseph Campbell. In this section, we will present the answers to the question that has led the present study, which also implies either confirming or rejecting the hypotheses exposed.

The main hypothesis stemming from the research question is the following:

Some of the stages of the Hero's Journey seem to be present in Arya Stark's path, although they appear in an order different from the originally developed by Joseph Campbell. According to what the analysis performed has

revealed, this hypothesis is confirmed. Arya starts taking lessons with Syrio Forel, who turns into the *Supernatural Aid* owing to his teachings during her stay at King's Landing, whose impact remains strong throughout the journey. Here, a change in the pattern originally proposed by Campbell (2004) can be observed. Later, Arya receives the *Call to Adventure* when she has no choice other than leaving King's Landing, for which there seems to be a *Refusal to the call*; Arya finally crosses the *First Threshold* and, after that, she leaps into the unknown, which represents the stage entitled *Belly of the Whale*.

As soon as she leaves King's Landing, she is immersed into the *Road of Trials*.

Later, she finds the *Supernatural Aid* in her meeting with Jaqen at Harrenhal.

Both the stages *Meeting with the Goddess* and *Woman as Temptress* were not observed, so another modification with regard to the model proposed by

Campbell (2004) can be noticed. After that, Arya is taken as a captive by the Hound and, during this process, it occurs what Campbell (2004) refers to as *Atonement with the Father*. Once Arya is able to escape from the Hound there is a *Refusal of the Return*, as she decides to meet Jaqen again at Braavos.

Arya's experiences in the House of Black and White can be associated with the *Belly of the Whale*. There she faces a series of difficult challenges, which involve leaving her own will and desires aside. This is why she is faced with temptations, which almost causes her to go astray. Once Arya is determined to leave Braavos, she still has to face dangerous threats. This corresponds to the stage regarded as *Magic Flight*, in which Arya, badly wounded, needs to be helped in order to survive: *Rescue from Without*. Once she faces the main ordeal, which leaves her on the verge of death, there is a moment of *Apotheosis*, observed when she faces the Faceless Man and reminds him about the fact that she is "someone". She is then ready to depart with the *Ultimate Boon*.

After that, Arya decides to avenge her mother's and brother's murder by Walder Frey, which can also be connected with the *Refusal of the Return*. She is then able to *Cross the Return Threshold*, retaining and integrating the wisdom gained on the quest into ordinary life, which is shown in the balance she proves to have acquired between the experiences of both the *Special* and *Ordinary World* by killing the greatest threat for humankind, the Night King. This corresponds to the *Mastery of the Two Worlds*. This takes place after another moment of enlightenment or *Apotheosis* stemming from her encounter

with Melisandre, who reminds her of what she was meant to do. The last stage of the journey, *Freedom to Live*, is seen when she demonstrates having got rid of all fear after her transformation, in her decision to go on a new adventure to a completely unexplored land. Everything summarised above makes it clear that there is a difference between the order in which the stages occur in Arya's journey and the model proposed by Campbell.

In relation to the second hypothesis, which states that *Arya Stark's transformation stems from the wisdom gained in the Initiation stage*, it can be argued that it is partially confirmed. From the beginning of the series, we learn that Arya showed great interest in becoming a lord and improving her fighting skills, although it is not after everything she had to face along the journey that she gained the necessary training and confidence to fight the most powerful enemy on Earth. Arya's process of transfiguration can be noticed from the moment she leaves King's Landing, in which she moves through the *Road of Trials*. Before that, her sole desire had been just to become a knight and learn the water dance fighting style. However, after her father's murder and the separation from her family, her purpose became the revenge upon those on her kill list.

Arya meets Jaqen, whose help leaves her eager for more, as she finds out that there is a way to carry out her plan effectively. Jaqen's influence, which stands for the *Supernatural Aid* stage, represents a turning point in Arya's path. Along the journey, Arya manages to kill people who have harmed her own without mercy or remorse (such as the soldier she came across after the wedding,

Polliver or the man she had met at Harrenhal), but when she is finally free to decide where to go, she looks for Jaqen at the House of Black and White to begin her training as an assassin, event that has a great influence on her transformation.

We have formerly related Arya's training in the House of Black and White to the stage described as *Belly of the Whale*. However, in spite of having a huge impact on Arya's conversion process, it does not correspond to the Initiation Stage. Consequently, we can point out that ***Arya Stark's transformation stems from the wisdom gained both in the Departure and in the Initiation stage.***

Moreover, Arya's transformation, which eventually allows her to succeed in killing the Night King, goes beyond her outstanding abilities to fight and kill. The key to being able to face such a challenge is also the balance between the inner and the outer worlds, the insights and discernment gained on the journey. Arya's identity had been constantly threatened: when having to pose as Arry after leaving King's Landing, when hiding her true identity while being Twyn Lannister's cupbearer or as an apprentice of the Faceless Man to become "no one". However, she stayed true to herself while achieving the goal of the quest or getting the *Ultimate Boon*. She got what she had been searching for and moved on. This is shown when she confronts the Faceless Man, saying: "*A girl is Arya Stark of Winterfell, and I'm going home*". This confidence in the fact that who she was and what she had was enough, is what makes her face the Night King without hesitation.

With regard to the third hypothesis affirming that *Arya Stark's heroic traits appear to be shown in the Return stage in the way she risks her life for a cause that surpasses her own existence*, it can be said to be confirmed. Arya Stark risks her life in order to protect, and ultimately save, not only her brother Bran but the world at large, which makes her fit the role of the Hero archetype as she puts her safety at risk for the good of others. She is willing to perform what Vogler (2007) refers to as an act of *sacrifice* for the benefit of everyone. Arya also deals with *Death*. Such as Vogler (2007) affirms:

At the heart of every story is a confrontation with death. If the Hero doesn't face actual death, then there is the threat of death or symbolic death in the form of a high-stakes game, love affair, or adventure in which the Hero may succeed (live) or fail (die).

Heroes show us how to deal with death. They may survive it, proving that death is not so tough. They may die (perhaps only symbolically) and be reborn, proving that death can be transcended. (p. 30)

Besides, Arya complies with the dramatic function of the Hero due to the fact that her feelings and experiences are common to ordinary men, which can make the audience *identify* with her. Arya's *Flaws*, which are simultaneously the starting point for her growth, make the audience identify with her imperfections and lack. The next aspect that shows Arya as a Hero is the *growth* (knowledge and wisdom) she experiences during the quest, stemming from both the drawbacks and achievements. Another aspect that proves Arya a

Hero in the *Return* stage is *action*, as she performs one of the most significant acts in the story, in which there is a lot at stake. She is willing to offer her life for a great cause as she faces Death itself.

The main objective of this study was to explore the stages of the Hero's Journey in Arya Stark. We can affirm that the analysis meets the general objective on the grounds that a thorough study of both the journey and transformation undergone by the character has been carried out.

Taking into consideration the research question that led the present study, it can be argued that Arya Stark's path in the series *Game of Thrones* goes through most of the stages in the Hero's Journey developed by Joseph Campbell, except for those referred to as *Meeting with the Goddess* and *Woman as Temptress*. Therefore, Arya embodies the characteristics of the Hero in each stage.

Limitations & Implications

The present study is subject to some limitations. Therefore, we will address the issue that has hindered the analysis of the object of study. The main limitation of this study relies on the fact that we have analysed the character only in aspects related to heroic traits. Besides, in spite of the fact that Arya's personality patterns were mainly a reaction towards the reality surrounding her as well as a result of the incorporation of features of different characters she meets along the way, we were not able to analyse Arya's path in terms of her moral character as a heroine because of the scope of the present study. Therefore, it has become relevant in light of the analysis made, to study Arya's

Stark heroic traits in terms of moral standards and the manifestation of aspects related to other archetypes.

With regard to the implicatures of the present study of the proposed research, it can be mentioned that it may be useful to understand the Hero's Journey in the light of the character of the series *Game of Thrones* chosen for our analysis. It may also be useful for people who love films with heroic characters. As regards the importance this research might have in the teaching practice, it can be highlighted the examination of literary studies as a curricular source to provide students with strategies that enable them to expand their abilities in relation to the analysis of literary texts, coming from different sources and presented in diverse formats. Besides, the fostering of that way of approaching literature, by means of contents that can be meaningful for the students, may eventually contribute to the acquisition and development of language skills.

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APPENDIX

	Stages in Campbell's Monomyth	Stages in Arya Stark's Journey
Departure Stage	1 Call to Adventure	1 Supernatural Aid
	2 Refusal of the Call	2 Call to Adventure
	3 Supernatural Aid	3 Refusal of the Call
	4 Crossing the First Threshold	4 Crossing the First Threshold
	5 Belly of the Whale	5 Belly of the Whale
Initiation Stage	6 The Road of Trials	6 The Road of Trials
	7 The Meeting with the Goddess	7 Supernatural Aid
	8 Woman as Temptress	8 Atonement with the Father
	9 Atonement with the Father	9 Refusal of the Return
	10 Apotheosis	10 Belly of the Whale
	11 The Ultimate Boon	11 Rescue from Without
Return Stage	12 Refusal of the Return	12 Apotheosis
	13 Magic Flight	13 The Ultimate Boon
	14 Rescue from Without	14 Magic Flight
	15 Crossing the Return Threshold	15 Refusal of the Return
	16 Master of Two Worlds	16 Crossing the Return Threshold
	17 Freedom to Live	17 Apotheosis
		18 Master of Two Worlds
		19 Freedom to Live