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Evolution and development of the character of Ron Weasley from the saga of Harry Potter by JK Rowling

To what extent the family and social context of the character Ron Weasley of the saga of Harry Potter by JK Rowling influenced in the development of his personality?

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Introduction

There isn't a secret that our development as a person is due to the constant influence that our environment gives to us. When we are born we started to follow the same steps that our progenitors, and in the youth, we started to look at ourselves. This can be a little difficult if you feel a lot of pressure or insecurity.

In this extended essay, it will be studying the question: "To what extent the family and social context of the character Ron Weasley of the saga of Harry Potter by JK Rowling influenced in the development of his personality?" I selected this character because I saw that he presents more insecurities, and for that, it can be interesting to know the reasons for his behaviour. In this way the present work will study the circumstances where Ron is placed, to know the beginning of his performance.

Thus, it will be examined the family and social environment where Ron is located, how he feels about it and how he unwraps in it and also the influence that it gives to him. All these relate whit what the experts say about it. Finally, it will be shown how he developed himself through the saga.

Concluding that all this investigation proves that Ron's personality development is closely related to his family and social context.

First Chapter

1.1 Family context

1.1.1 Ron's family

Ronald Bilius Weasley, known as Ron, is the sixth son of the Weasley's, a family of pure-blood wizards. He enters to Hogwarts at the age of 11 until 17, belonging to the house of the brave, Gryffindor. He also appertained to a numerous family, having five brothers and one sister.

"I'm the sixth in our family to go to Hogwarts. You could say I've got a lot to live up to. Bill and Charlie have already left— Bill was head boy and Charlie was captain of Quidditch. Now Percy's a prefect. Fred and George mess around a lot, but they still get really good marks and everyone thinks they're really funny. Everyone expects me to do as well as the other, but if I do, It's no big deal, because they did it first. You never get anything new, either, with five brothers. I've got Bill's old robes, Charlie's old wand, and Percy's old rat" (Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, p 99-100).

Having this as a base, we can understand that Ron felt that he needs to climb a big fence of goals that his brothers left in Hogwarts. Even if they didn't ask him to do it, because it was something that he had considered.

Another thing that we need to have in mind is his parents. His father Arthur Weasley worked for the Ministry of Magic, and his mother Molly that was a housewife. Both believed in the equality of all the magic's persons and muggles.

Although, they have limited economic resources due to the little money that the head of the family earned, also because Molly didn't have a job. For that, his brothers and sister needed acquiring second-hand stuff, something that sometimes made Ron felt uncomfortable because he wants to have his own things and not things that belonged to others, mostly because they were old and

battered. As we can see in the fourth book, when his mother bought him a formal suit for the gala, but it was an old fashioned one and made Ron felt uncomfortable wearing it. However, all this is rewarded with the love and the emotional stability that they parents gave to him. Like we can see in the first book, when the car of candies stops in front of their cabin. Ron's parents didn't give to him money, especially for candies because it was a waste of money and they didn't have enough income to give themselves the pleasure to spend in that stuff. Nevertheless, Molly made sandwiches in case he was hungry during the travel, proving that they care for him even though they don't have much to give him. Also, Molly calls Ron by the nickname of Ronnie in a lovely way.

Molly had a strong temper she was always behind his sons, looking that they didn't make a fuss. But like all the mothers she has a huge heart, she is overflowing with kindness something that we can see in the whole saga. At Christmas, she used to knit a sweater for each member of the family, even for Harry. Without mentioned the way how she treats him, she was like a mother for Harry, like she mentioned in the fifth book "He's not your son" said Sirius quietly "He's as good as" said Mrs. Weasley fiercely." (Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, p.90).

On the other hand, we have Arthur Weasley, a big fan of the muggles (persons without magic, like us) stuff. Comparison with Molly he is more relaxed and tries to look at the things with calm. An example of this is when Fred, George, and Ron went to Dursley's house for rescue Harry and take him to the Burrow, all this in the blue Ford Angelina of Mr. Weasley. Molly was outraged and angry with her sons, but when Arthur heard about it his reaction was different.

“Your sons flew that car to Harry’s house and back last night!” shouted Mrs. Weasley. “What have you got to say about that, eh?” “Did you really?” said Mr. Weasley eagerly. “Did it go all right? I — I mean,” he faltered as sparks flew from Mrs. Weasley’s eyes, “that — that was very wrong, boys — very wrong indeed. . .” (Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, p 39)

Despite this, it doesn’t mean that he doesn’t worry about his children, even for Harry. He, like Molly, is behind his sons especially Ron and Harry that every year gets in trouble.

An important thing to mention is his character referring to the teasing towards his family and wizards of blood not pure.

“The company you keep, Weasley... [Referring to Herminore] and I thought your family could sink no lower —” (...) Mr. Weasley had thrown himself at Mr. Malfoy, knocking him back-ward into a bookshelf. (...) there was a yell of, “Get him, Dad!” from Fred or George; Mrs. Weasley was shrieking, “No, Arthur, no!” (Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, p 62)

The same behaviour pattern that his children have.

“No one asked your opinion, you filthy little Mudblood, (Referring to Herminore)” he spat

“Flint had to dive in front of Malfoy to stop Fred and George jumping on him, Alicia shrieked, “How dare you!”, and Ron plunged his hand into his robes, pulled out his wand, yelling, “You’ll pay for that one, Malfoy!” and pointed it furiously under Flint’s arm at Malfoy’s face” (Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, p 112).

1.1.2 Family influence

1.1.2.1 Parents

Parents have a very important function as role models. Children at a young age are very observant, in this way the behaviours that their parents have towards different people of their social circle are imitated and implementing. These attitudes are usually transmitted along with beliefs. Ron’s

parents, for example, come from a pure-blood wizard family something that gives them a “status” in the wizarding world, but Mr. and Mrs. think that it is ridiculous and that all the magic and no magic creatures have to be respected. They also have no poor blood friends that in the wizard world are considered as abominations, like Hagrid who is a half-giant wizard.

Another important fact is their parenting style. Diana Baumrind establishes three parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. Permissive parents do not impose penalties and accept the behaviours and desires of their children even if they are negative. Authoritarian parents shape and control the attitudes of the child, and in a way to emphasized firm control, they ignored the opinions of their child. But there is a middle point, and these are authoritative parents. They encompass both sides, children have restrictions but also autonomy.

In the case of Ron, he has authoritative parents. Both of them are lovely and kindness, but with different characters, having a compensation relationship. As I explain in the first chapter, Molly has a strong temper in comparison to Arthur who is more permissive. This conjugal balanced relationship provides a better development in both sides, making Ron a person with own initiative but who knows the limits.

We also need to consider that children copy their parent’s behaviours in certain situations, in this way parents give advice and indirect orientations for the resolution of problems. Arthur is a passive person but his reaction to certain situations could be aggressive and immature. He can’t stand when people

mess with their family and close friends, an attitude that their sons share, having the impulse of fighting when they are facing those types of situations.

1.1.2.2 Siblings

Many time it happens that when we judge the role of the family we don't give much relevance to siblings. Dunn in his book *Siblings Relationships in Early Childhood* concluded that the relationship between siblings deserves more attention due to the complexity of encompassing two important interactions for the development of a person, the complementary parent-child relationship and the reciprocal and mutual influence of peers. Proving that the sibling's relationships also help to develop social understanding skills.

In this way, Ron's siblings have a great impact on him. Older siblings are "role models" and for that young siblings try to follow their steps to do what they think is right. Because siblings are the closest to the reality, something that Adler argued.

Through his investigations he noticed that children, in most of the cases, at a young age pay attention to how their parents treat their siblings, acquiring indirectly characteristics and behaviours of them. As "role models" siblings are used as sources of social comparison, posing behavioural parameters.

Nevertheless, specialist has considered as another influent factor the number of siblings which each family have. Number of siblings has a detrimental impact on child quality, in the sense that they limit available resources to foment the individuality of a child, stuff that also affects in the reach of their achievement (Blake, 1981). As I mentioned in the first chapter, Ron is the penultimate of seven siblings, which means that his development would be

influenced by the number of siblings that he have. In a large family, the economic resources and the time spend to establish a better relationship have to be distributed equitably. But sometimes this didn't happen, making feels "less" important one of the members. Ron has all these brothers that hoard the attention because of their excellent academic and sports performance, and their sympathy. And then there is Ginny, who is the youngest, and the only girl, in the family and with these factors she has a "place" in the family.

Yet, his parent's don't have the economic level to support a large family, in this way Ron was in need to acquire the belongings of his older brothers, which limit his individual development. Not having his own things makes him accept, and deal with, the likes of his older brothers. A good example of this is his wand. A wand chooses its owner, but Ron didn't go through this "test" because he receives the wand of his brother Charlie as he mentioned in Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. A wand can be inherited, but this does not assure the best results.

"The wand chooses the wizard. (...) The best results, however, must always come where there is the strongest affinity between wizard and wand. These connections are complex. An initial attraction, and then a mutual quest for experience, the wand learning from the wizard, the wizard from the wand."(Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, p.494)

Second Chapter

2.1 Social context

2.1.1 Ron's social context

Hogwarts is a boarding school, and for that is like a second home for students due to the long time that they spend on it, almost 10 months, although they have holidays for Christmas and Easter. Thus, we can say that the school has a big influence on students, even more, if we consider that the relationships made there determine student's personality.

Though the saga we can see Ron has two close friends, Harry and Hermione, both shine with their own brightness. Harry because he's the boy who survives to You-Know-Who and Hermione because for her intelligence, leaving Ron in the shadow because he is only a guy with low average scores and without a dark past. He is like another normal student, and that isn't bad, but when you surround yourself with people that have a "High level" you feel the need to be as high as them, and when you didn't get there you could feel inferior.

As we can see in the sixth book with presence of Slughorn, the new Darks Arts teacher. He made a little club, "Slug Club", and invited students who have parents with a high charge or with an interesting past like Neville and Harry, he also invited Hermione for being a close friend of Harry and her good grades. Even Ginny, Ron's sister, was invited, something that made Ron felt excluded, especially since he also had a great deal of participation during the development of certain battles.

“(...) *Ron, who did not seem to have taken kindly to being ignored by Slughorn.*” (Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince, p. 234).

Another scene is when the name of Harry appeared as one of the chosen for the Triwizard Tournament, even if he didn't put his name on it, Ron didn't trust him and he resented with him for “*not telling him the truth*”, even if he did it. His reaction was different with the one that Harry had been expecting, and this could be because even if he doesn't receive the same attention that Harry he counts on him, with his friendship and confidence something that made he felt part of the history.

“Look,” said Hermione patiently, “it's always you who gets all the attention, you know it is. (...) Ron's got all those brothers to compete against at home, and you're his best friend, and you're really famous — he's always shunted to one side whenever people see you, and he puts up with it, and he never mentions it, but I suppose this is just one time too many...” (Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, p. 289-290).

As Hermione mentioned it's always the same thing, Ron feels that is under the others not only in his family but in his social circle. This makes him feel more insecure about himself, something that we can also find in the same book, time after they makeup, they began to worry about found a partner for the dance. But for Ron, it seemed illogical that Harry to be worried about that.

“Listen, you're not going to have any trouble. You're a champion. You've just beaten a Hungarian Horntail. I bet they'll be queuing up to go with you” (Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, p. 389).

We also need to mention the presence of one character, Malfoy. He, like Ron, is a pure-blood wizard but their differences are in the ideologies of his

family. Unlike to the Weasley's the Malfoy's thinks that they have more power for the fact on being pure-blood, and for that, he also thinks that the half-blooded are an abomination, not being worthy for the use of magic

He, like his father, was always behind Weasley looking for the opportunity to pull off face his low economic level, which makes Ron's school life more difficult because his insecurity started to grow more and more for the teasing that he receives. Like we can see when he started to play Quidditch in the fifth book, he has the potential but he was so afraid of failing something that doesn't let him show it, even more, if Draco was behind him pulling into his face his bad performance in each match.

Besides, we can say that he doesn't look for attention, but when he got it he enjoys it, as we can see in the third book *The Prisoner of Azkaban* when he woke up in the middle of the night and found Sirius trying to kill him. All the school wants to know what happens and for that Ron received all the attention for a moment and we can see how he enjoys it:

"Ron has become an instant celebrity. For the first time in his life, people were paying more attention to him than to Harry, and it was clear that Ron was rather enjoying the experience. (...) he was happy to tell anyone who asked what had happened, with a wealth of detail." (*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, p. 270).

2.1.2 Social context influence

As I mentioned, Hogwarts fulfills the function of second home for the students. Like Ines Blažević said, "The importance of today's school is reflected in a sense that the school should be a community of growing up in which students feel successful and satisfied". If in your home you learn about the "outside", in the school you face it.

When Ron arrived in Hogwarts he knew that he had an image due to the achievements of his older brothers. He wasn't expecting to do something great as them, even if he felt some pressure of it. But when Harry's fame began to increase after his continuous feats, he started to feel more insecure about himself.

In this sense Rubin H., K, Bukowski M., W & Parker G., J (2006), cited in James (1890), tells us that humans have "an innate propensity to be noticed, and to be favorably noticed, by our species" (p.26). Ron begins to feel the need to be noticed on his own. Something that is known as the theory of symbolic interactionism, where Mead tells us that it is our ability to self-reflect, to understand and acquire the perspectives of others on us, are these exchanges between the individual and the group of peers that allows the formation of a self-concept. Through the interaction with others and their opinions about our person, coming to reflect on them. Ron's image of himself was the shadow of someone else, not only of his family but also of his friends.

2.1.2.1 Peers

Social influence is not only about the people that you know and the time you spend with them, is the nature of relationships, like closeness, that also contributes to the development as a person. Knowing more as "best friends".

The Golden Trio: Hermione, Harry, and Ron have a close relationship, for that they have more influence on Ron. This reciprocal relationship makes feel Ron more comfortable because he always counts with their support. A good example of this is the Order of the Phoenix. Ron was behaving strangely, and that was because he was training secretly for the auditions of the new Keeper of

the Gryffindor Quidditch team. When Harry found out about it Ron excused himself because he thought he would laugh at him, but Harry didn't, he was so enthusiastic with the idea and set out to help him. But Ron didn't have a good performance in each match, because he felt pressure about what people were saying about him, even that Harry was there for him trying to comfort him and putting all his effort in each match, in this way Ron wouldn't feel guilty for losing.

And there was Hermione who also supported him during this process, and also promoted his academic development.

Third Chapter

3.1 Evolution of Ron`s personality

As the saga develops we go deeper into the context of Ron and his characteristics. At first instance, we noticed an attitude of courage and loyalty to situations of danger. Likewise, we can see an impulsive instinct to make decisions without meditating on them beforehand.

His insecurities are not only about him and his role in society, but also about the economic status of his family. Having a close relationship with Harry makes him an example of comparison, both for his growing popularity and the money he possessed.

This attitude of inferiority in the face of Harry's presence begins to develop more deeply in the fourth book, at the age of 14 more exactly.

In the next books, in the stage of adolescence, we see how it begins to acquire new interest as it is the Quidditch. However, his insecurities play a trick on him in every game, since although he has the capacity to do so, he lets himself be guided by negative comments. This pressure increases when Malfoy begins to annoy him much more frequently.

However, there are certain aspects of Ron that are still intact, such as people taking him into account and recognizing his achievements. *"They did!" said Neville. "And the dragon's true too!" There was a smattering of applause and a few whoops; Ron took a bow.*" (Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallos, p. 578)

Even his ambition to have power is still present, something that becomes present after choosing which of the three deathly hallows was better in their own opinions. *“You’re supposed to say the Cloak,” Ron told Hermione, “but you wouldn’t need to be invisible if you had the wand. An unbeatable wand, Hermione, come on!”* (Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, p.414)

But, there is a situation that makes us see his development in general.

During the battle of Hogwarts Ron loses his brother, Fred, watching him die in front of his eyes. Later on, after a sudden flight into the woods, he and his companions cross paths with dementors. These creatures feed on people's happiness, leaving their victims in desolation. But there is a spell that can drive him away, the Expectus Patronus. It can be summoned through a happy memory, increasing its difficulty in moments of despair, so self-confidence can also play an important role in casting the spell¹. When this occurs Harry, who was the best at handling the spell, couldn't face them, but Ron could. He was the first of the three to summon him despite having lost his brother. While it is true, at first we are shown his difficulty in counteracting negative situations at this crucial time we see better management of his emotions, which shows an improvement in his personality, highlighting his self-confidence.

¹ FANDOM. (s.f). Harry Potter Wiki. Encantamiento patronus. para. 20

Conclusions

Ron has been constantly influenced by his family, who was determinant for the formation of certain attitudes and the perspective that he has on the world. However, through this investigation it has been founded that his siblings have more impact due the time he spends time with them. They not only share the same family context but also the same social context, reforming their role as influencers.

Ron's social context also played an important role in the development of his personality. The values his family inculcated in him were reinforced by the social environment to which he was exposed. Hermione and Harry were his main pillars as they gave him the security, respect, attention, and affection he needed to enhance his skills.

In conclusion, the influence of both, the family and social context, is closely related to the development of Ron's personality. This research has shown that Ron was always surrounded by people who supported him, both in the social and family context. Both contexts were initially presented as limiting factors for the development of his personality because he felt inferior in the presence of his friends and siblings, which increased his insecurities. However, at the same time, they promoted a positive reinforcement which helped him to solve his doubts about himself, getting better as a person. It must also be rescued that some aspects of his personality are still maintained, such as his desire to be recognized and to succeed.

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