

## **Fantasy as a Defense mechanism in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone***

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Fantasy or day dreaming is a situation imagined by an individual which expresses certain desires or aims on the part of its creator. Fantasy is also used as escapism, which is a mental diversion by means of entertainment or recreation as an escape from the perceived unpleasant, boring aspects of daily life. Sigmund Freud considered fantasy a defense mechanism. Freud considered that these phantasies include a great deal of the true constitutional essence of the subject's personality and that the energetic man is the one who succeeds by his efforts in turning his wishful phantasies into reality whereas an artist can transform his or her phantasies into artistic creation. Any individual, who is not able to fulfill his or her desire, gratifies it in his or her imagination.

J.K. Rowling, even when she was very young, had a high imaginative power. Those imaginations got piled up and she has become the author of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. She has made her young characters successful in their ventures.

Rowling was teased because of her name, Rowling. But she made her character, Harry Potter's name very popular in her novel. Everyone brightened even on hearing the name, Harry. The name has gained its popularity among the wizard world but none has seen Harry. In Chapter Five, one of the persons in the Leaky Cauldron pub says, "Always wanted to shake your hand – I'm all of a flutter" (74). This is how J.K. Rowling has portrayed Harry Potter and has given importance to the very name, Harry Potter. Since Rowling's name was teased by her school friends, she has made the name, Harry, very popular in her novel.

When Rowling was nine years old, her family moved to a little village called Tutshill. She did not like her school as it was small. To compensate this, she has created a magic school which is very big and is loved by many children all over the world. Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is a huge, long-winded, quite scary-looking castle, with a junk of towers and battlements. The castle has extensive grounds with sloping lawns, flowerbeds and vegetable patches, a lake called The Black Lake, a large dense forest called the Forbidden Forest, several greenhouses and other outbuildings, and a full-size Quidditch pitch. There is also an owlery, which houses all the owls owned by the school and those owned by students.

After spending two years in the Tutshill Primary, Rowling went to Wydean Comprehensive School. One of the toughest girls in school picked a fight with her. Even though Rowling was quiet and a good student, she fought back against the bigger girl. She became famous for standing up to the bully. Though she became popular by fighting against and withstanding the senior girl, she spent the next few weeks peering nervously around the corners. She does not like fighting in real life as she does not have the confidence to face the consequences. But she likes adventures. She imagined of fighting battles. Her dream of being adventurous is fulfilled by her characters in the novel. Harry and his friends indulge themselves in many adventures throughout the novel such as defeating the troll, playing Quidditch match, searching books in the restricted area, sending away Hagrid's dragon safely from Hogwarts, and above all these, finding the philosopher's stone with great difficulty and overcoming the hurdles.

Rowling has said that her teenage years were unhappy. Her home life was complicated by her mother's illness and a strained relationship with her father, with whom she is not on speaking terms. Jo worried a lot about her mother as she was not getting any better. She decided to have a change and left London for Manchester, a city in northern England.

One evening, Rowling had a big fight with her boyfriend. She went to a nearby pub, a place where people gathered to eat and drink. Alone at a table, she thought about how satisfying it would be to smack something at her boyfriend's head.

May be a big iron ball. Perhaps while flying on a broomstick! (Pollack 36-37)

She has fulfilled her smacking desire by creating a game called Quidditch, in her novel. Quidditch is a wizarding sport played on broomsticks. When Harry was playing his first

Quidditch match at Hogwarts, “a Buldger decided to come pelting his way, more like a cannon ball than anything, but Harry dodged it” (201).

Soon after Rowling conceived the idea for Harry Potter, her mother died. It was too terrible for her to imagine. To lift her spirits, Rowling then moved to Oporto, Portugal, to teach English as a foreign language. Rowling missed her mother very much and longed to see her. Though she was not able to see her mother after her mother’s death, she wanted to gratify her wish by making Harry see his parents in the novel. So, she invented a magical mirror, the Mirror of Erised. The mirror shows anyone, who looks in it, their greatest desire. When Harry looks in the mirror, he sees his mother and father whom he has never seen. If Rowling could have looked in the Mirror of Erised, she would have probably seen her mother.

After eighteen months in Oporto, Rowling met Portuguese television journalist Jorge Arantes in a bar and found they shared interest in Jane Austen. They married on 16 October 1992 and their child, Jessica Isabel Rowling Arantes was born on 27 July 1993 in Portugal. Rowling had previously suffered a miscarriage. The couple separated on 17 November 1993. Seven years after graduating from university, Rowling saw herself a failure. Her marriage had failed, and she was jobless with a dependent child, but she described her failure as liberating and allowing her to focus on writing. During this period, Rowling was diagnosed with clinical depression and planned suicide. Despite all her failures, she made herself win through the victories of her characters. Harry and his friends got victory in all their ventures.

Harry along with his friend, defeats the troll, during the Halloween night in the toilet. Harry has been selected as a young seeker to the Gryffindor Quidditch team. During the game though Harry’s broomstick goes out of his control, endangering his life, he manages to climb on it and catch the Snitch. The biggest victory and achievement of Harry and his friends is protecting the philosopher’s stone.

J.K. Rowling, before publishing her first debut novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, led a life of poverty, failure, and disappointments. Thus she has made all her characters successful in the novel. Whatever she wanted to happen in her life, whatever she could not achieve in her real life, she has made it happen in her fantasy novel, which is a defense mechanism. Rowling has not only imagined of being successful, she has also made her dreams

of being popular like Jane Austen come true by writing a fantasy novel. Though written as a defense, through her novel, Rowling has made her life a real success. Thus *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, a novel written during the worst part of Rowling's life, is a defense mechanism through which Rowling has tried to come out of her sufferings.

### **Works Cited**

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