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Topic: Literary Analysis of Aristotle Mendoza's Heroes' Journey.

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this investigation entitled “Analysis of Aristotle Mendoza’s Heroes’ Journey” is to identify all the characterises of a hero, Aristotle Mendoza demonstrated in his journey. The book was analyzed through the Hero’s Journey theory by Joseph Campbell. This investigation will provide important aspect about the Hero’s Journey Stages what they are and what they involve.

## Chapter 1

### Introductory Framework

Young adult literature is a genre appreciated for different ages; of course, it will depend on the story and subtopics the book gives to the readers. Young adult literature can be those books whose audience are from 12- to 20-year-old. Interestingly, the common writer of young adult literature is adults, which appeals to younger readers. Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of the Universe written by Benjamin Alire Saez, whose book has been nominated and honored for a Michael L. Printz Award in 2013 for Excellent Young Adult Literature.

The book is more than young literature; other categories and genres are Romance, LGBT Literature, the letters stand for (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) and Bildungsroman. However, the book's main audience is teenagers, and the story of Aristotle and Dante is a beautiful story for everybody. In other words, the book is for that reader who has an open-minded perspective and good taste in books.

The protagonist is a young boy looking for meaning and purpose in life. Looking for something excited can provide more sense to his existence, and it will happen until he meets someone who changes his world completely. The purpose is to go deeper into Aristotle's story and analyze it to demonstrate how a simple and normal boy becomes a hero. Therefore, the story will be compared with the steps of the hero's journey by Joseph Campbell.

The desired outcome through this literary analysis is to show the protagonist as a hero and show what he did and went through to complete his story. Thus, the obstacles presented in his story are important. There are sensitive topics still present in society, like in the case of LGBT+. It is still a topic of taboo for some people, even though society is living in a modern time where a topic like that one is more accepted, but not at all. As well as in the case of

discrimination or stereotypes about Latino and Hispanic people living in the United States. On the whole, Aristotle and Dante Discover The Secret of the Word is a magnificent book to analyze for the quality of the story and the topics it contains that will make this work as excellent investigation for the heroes' journey of someone normal like you who face the reality of the world day by day.

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

The main objective of this literary research is to analyze the heroes' journey of the protagonist, Aristotle Mendoza, in the book Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe. This work will inspect the hero's life situations, environment, and influences that affected Aristotle in detail. "*Everyone is necessarily the hero of his own life story*" (John Barth, page 52). For this reason, it is important to explain the meaning of a hero, name the stages of the journey's hero, and identify characterizes of a heroin Aristotle Mendoza, besides demonstrating how the cultural environment can impact and affect him in his development as a hero.

The result expected is to stand out Aristotle Mendoza and his story of becoming a real hero without power. Normal people are their heroes, and what people need is to discover their true beliefs, ideas, and thoughts about their real them. This wok will use The Hero Journey theory to understand the elements of changes presented in the book that Aristotle Mendoza experienced during his heroes' journey—answering the question, what characteristics does Aristotle Mendoza present as a hero through The Heroes' Journey?

### **1.2 Objectives of the investigation**

#### **1.2.1 General Objectives**

- To investigate Aristotle Mendoza's heroes' Journey through The Heroes' Journey.

### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

- To enumerate the characteristics of a true hero presented on Aristotle Mendoza's personality development while going through a self-discovery sexuality acceptance process.
- To analyse the queer elements presented in the book that influenced the journey of Aristotle Mendoza.
- To illustrate how Aristotle's Mexican heritage affected Aristotle Mendoza's hero's journey based on the hero's journey.

### **1.3 Justification of the study**

Heroes are all those people who have overcome, exceeded their limits, and broken the unbreakable to succeed in their journey and save their world. People tend to think all heroes are just the ones who wear capes and pose as powerful, but heroes can also be normal people, and anyone can be a hero. The development of the heroes' journey comprises many factors that surround the hero's life and circumstances. Consequently, all those elements contribute to the final hero's development, thus explaining why normal people become heroes.

The book "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe" provides a magnificent example of changes and self-improvement in Aristotle's journey, where the protagonist, Aristotle Mendoza, discovered and woke up his awareness to be someone different he used to be before in the beginning of the story, showing a true himself and turning into a hero for himself, family and friends.

Aristotle and Dante Discover, the Secrets of the Universe, will help people understand, particularly teenagers who identify themselves with the protagonist. These influences limit them from showing who they are because of the oppression the influences can

cause on a person. Also, these factors and their impact of these elements of changes provoke teenagers' development.

The first factor to mention is parents, role models from childhood until adulthood. The way parents educate, treat, love, communicate, and behave near teenagers is an essential element that greatly impacts their development. Second, friends are another element that makes an impact too because the social interaction in teenagers is not the same as a parent when they interact. Teenagers retrain themselves because of fears, which makes teenagers not act naturally, limiting them to show what they are.

The last element is the heritage culture. When teenagers grow up in an environment with a specific culture, they need to deal with stereotypes about their heritage, so the same society creates and establishes norms. This type of culture should behave accordingly to stereotypes. This factor affects the teenagers thinking this, and other factors presented in the book were obstacles Aristotle Mendoza went through during his self-acceptance hero's journey. In this book, Aristotle Mendoza gets involved in those elements mentioned before, reflecting that human thinking and behavior can change when exposed to those elements of change. Aristotle faces difficulties and struggles with himself to process and understand life concepts, but these rocks on his path helped him in his journey to complete his hero's journey.

The focus and purpose are emphasized how normal people face everyday real-life adversities and become a hero in their own stories. Therefore, studying Aristotle Mendoza's life through the Hero's Journey by Joseph Campbell can be inspected which of the stages the book's main protagonist went through to form a character as a hero and allow him to accept himself. In short, the analysis of this book will provide insight of understanding to those teenagers who feel like the protagonist and those who are going through the same process of

self-acceptance as Aristotle Mendoza did to become the hero of his story Aristotle Dante Discover the Secret of the World.

#### **1.4 Antecedents**

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe is a very popular book written nine years ago for young readers and parents. Therefore, few pieces of research, investigations, or thesis are available about the book. Saying this, the information found as antecedents and similar work are the following.

Ratih Melur Dew Purnamasari, a student from Sanata Dharma University, in his/her thesis in 2018 named *The influences of Father's Involvement towards Aristotle Mendoza's Personality Development as Portrayed in Saenz's Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, analyzed from a psychological approach the importance of parenting, but in this case father parenting in the development toward his son's personality. This work pointed out that growth in an environment that lacks affection leads their children to feel isolated when socializing, reserve themselves for communicating with their parents, and lose confidence with their main point of contact against difficulties because they do not see and feel the support parents.

Indeed, this lack of affection for Aristotle affected his relationship with father and son. This even made Aristotle think his father did not love him as much as his mother because his father was cold and little talkative with him. In Aristotle and Dante's Discover the Secrets of the Universe, the work lets the reader know the weak and poor relationship between James, the father, and Aristotle Mendoza.

Aristotle Mendoza, in the book, transmits his inner thoughts about the situation of his father the points out the distance he felt when he tried to talk with his father compared with the good relation and communication he has with his mom. It is a huge difference, and the

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reason why this relationship did not work is that both Ari and his father kept their distance, and they did not understand each other. This was a concern for Ari's personality affecting him indirectly and becoming an obstacle in his journey as a hero.

Another work similar work is "*I don't belong anywhere. That's the problem.*" Written by Fanny Pérez Aronsson in 2015, a student from Uppsala University. In her master thesis, she investigated the influence and the big impact of the literary movement Latin American boom and what it generated in the society, emphasizes the media as one of the contributors for stereotypes toward Latino culture in films, TV, and news, as a result increasing discrimination, reducing diversity and mocking ethnicity.

Moreover, the research covers a vast field. She summarized them in Latino and Chicano studies because of the popularity of this ethnicity in the country United States. On the other hand, the investigation also focuses on the meaning of masculinity in society, describing what exactly is being a man. Both topics are related, so Fanny P. included in this work investigation about the Chicano masculinity in literature and film, but also she wanted to cross a point that even the topics are related, they differentiate each other, especially when she analyzed the books separately to give them their own individually.

The work referenced eight different books written by Latin and Hispanic writers with a similar theme about ethnic stereotypes young Latinos face and the reality of masculinity in Chicano society, including the controversial topic in literature, the coming of age. Among the eight books the project considered, Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe.

She exposed the reality of Aristotle Mendoza. What he felt in his life for being a child raised by Mexican parents and being Mexican American made him behave and act like the stereotype society implied for Chicano and Mexican American people. For the hero's journey of Aristotle dealing with society and struggling to fit into a world that he never felt part of it

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was just another rock in his path to overcome forgetting his goal of becoming a better person, getting the self-acceptance he needed, and coming out into a specific society where being gay, Latino and man was hardly acceptable.

Talking about the same field of Mexican culture and LGBT theme, Alberta Natassia Adji, a student from Airlangga University, wrote an article in 2016 about *Negotiation between homoeroticism and machismo in Aristotle and Dante discover the secrets of the universe* novel that implies the experience of Aristotle's Mendoza towards his sexuality as part of LGBT community, also discussing the norms society creates for hetero people to follow according to normal behaviors in the environment Mexican and Mexican American people lifestyle. The Queer theory was used for this work, taking reference also a book *Tropics of Desire* that helped support the analysis.

The objectives were one to demonstrate which of the two characters Aristotle and Dante, represents more homoeroticism and homosexual aspects, second to analyze the Mexican culture and the normalization of the machismo presented in the culture where both characters lived and the last one, the influence of the religion that cancel the LGBT relations especially in a culture where the heterosexual relations dominated.

As mentioned earlier, the book *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* certainly reflect all these topics. There are two types but not as a typical family where Aristotle family background is very religious, but tolerable instead the family of his best friend, Dante. His family is more open-minded towards the LGBT community and Mexican stereotypes.

*Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* tells a story about two good friends and romance between teenagers. Aristotle Mendoza is the one who became the representation of a true hero overcoming difficult situations in his youth while he was getting

mature physically and mentally. Ari Mendoza reflected on his journey of changes that helped him to be a better version of himself and defined a true personality attached to the real him.

For clearly point of view of the journey's heroes, there is an article "*El Héroe Literatura Y Psicología Analítica*" written by Ph. Jose M. Rodriguez Zamora, a master in linguistics from the University of Costa Rica. In his work, he explains the myth of hero in literature speeches evaluating from a psychological point of view of Carl Jung, a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who founded analytical psychology. Carl Jung thought the hero's journey was a necessary calling of life for people to accept or reject at some point in their existence. He seemed this journey to be essential for aiming and becoming a whole human. It explains that human beings are constantly evolving, discovering their conscious and unconscious and helping people find the awareness inside them.

The investigation provides a twisted perspective about the common and known journey. The emphasis is about people's lives and how human beings live in this world with many references like symbols, motifs, and metaphors whose elements are presented in our daily day, giving the meaning of an important role for humankind's existence and teaching important values. The work referenced the studies of Jung and the myth of the hero, the stages provided Jung and using the psychological analytics approach to understand the concepts for real-world in contrast to the fiction world.

Finally, there is work written by the ASCAJU (Asociación Costarricense de Adolescencia y Juventud) in a research called "*Adolescencia En Costa Rica, Análisis, Reflexiones Y Recomendaciones Para La Acción*" The reason to us this investigation in this work is because the field it covers, the research fields is for teenager and their development to adulthood.

In Aristotle and Dante's Discover the Secrets of the universe, this topic is relevant for the work, naming factors that affect teenagers similar to the same circumstances Aristotle Mendoza in his story went through. These factors are important for history and aim the purpose of the journey of a hero and reflect the difficulties teenagers could face.

Therefore, the investigation showed those factors that influence the teenager's process, such as social, cultural, and environmental, where the teenagers develop their personality and impact their youth. Also, this work emphasizes other aspects in the stages of the youth contribute to their development these aspects are biological, psychological, social, creative, and spiritual The thesis also educates parents about the importance of teaching teenagers different topics like physical health, sexuality, healthy food habits, and the problematic of drugs. In short, the work shows the importance of the family as a role for teenagers and the factors that are crucial for them to grow up in a safe environment.

### **1.5 Scopes**

This project will start studying the features of a hero, the process of a hero's journey, and its stages based on Joseph Campbell's theory. Also in this project, it will take the process of the hero and compare Aristotle's story. In this way, the main objective of turning the protagonist into a hero can be proved and achieved. Besides, the analysis of the book by research in meaning and the topics the book contains like its main topic, the themes, motifs, and symbols. Furthermore, the message of the whole story is transmitted to the reader, and alternative thoughts leave in readers' minds.

However, there are inconveniences to consider for this research. First, the amount of time to investigate for each topic and focus on the main elements that will provide the best contribution to the work can consume much time, and it is necessary to provide the right and

clear information for the readers, so they can understand easily what this work is about. An alternative objective is to make this work concise, clear, and accurate.

Second, this project can contain sensitive topics to discuss, and this work does not intend to offend any community or people. Instead, another aim is to promote and provide visibility for some problematic topics in society faces, but they are not exploring as much as they should be. In sum, the project will be done by a literary analyst of a book, retrieve the story with its essential elements, and take the characteristics of Aristotle Mendoza gives to apply the heroes' journey.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Theoretical Framework**

This chapter will be explained some necessary concepts, terms, and meanings that are relevant for the investigation. All the concepts, terms, explanations, and definitions that will be defined and explained are related to the main purpose and idea of the investigation. Therefore, the purpose is to provide all readers with a background of knowledge about some terminologies. This also helps to provide a better understanding of the theoretical information. In order to discuss the literary analysis, the investigation should consider some definitions and give them explanations and definitions. In sum, this chapter is a guide for any reader interesting in this work.

#### **2.1 What is literature?**

The world literature has an extended meaning, but basically, literature is a way of communicating and expressing human beings, conveying their imagination, thoughts, or opinions, either written, oral, or visual content. Most of the literature is represented in writing, and these pieces of literature include books, essays, poems, manuscripts, and others... The literature presents a variety of fields. For this reason, the literature is categorized accordingly to the information the work contains. For this work, the definition of literature will be the

following, according to Mads (2017), “The word itself comes from the Latin *litteratura*, meaning writing or incorporated knowledge” (p, 6). and adding other similar meanings for literature Farwis (2020) said that literature is “The world literature commonly known as pieces of writing that are valued as works.” (p, 3).

Literature has been part of humanity since people learned to transform their thought to text, making writing more aesthetic and important. People used to communicate before, mostly via letter, where they share experiences, feelings, and ideas to convey feelings and emotions to readers. Society has been adapting to a new era of literature. Technologies have been a useful tool for readers because they can access all kinds of literature and spread their opinions, comments, or evaluations studying works and providing their point of view based on what they read.

Even though literature has had a big evolution, people are not interested in reading. For this reason, people used to think that literature is just to read and read without purpose. People do not understand that literature is a world full of imagination from other people's minds. If they can learn the value of reading and analyzing information from literature works, they will discover the importance of literature in their lives.

## **2.2 What is a theme in literature?**

The theme is the central idea of every literature work the author wants to portray. In other words, the theme is that a specific message named as a subject of the story that the writer desires to convey to the reader. The theme is based mostly on the author's experience, adding personal feelings and emotions related to the theme the author sees more suitable for the work. A story without a theme loses meaning because it does not say anything about the topic and does not transmit the main idea. The theme does not have a specific category; there are many themes in literature, and they are universal because they are presented in all cultures

and ethnicities in the world. Finding a simple definition of the world theme, Nicholas (2016) defined theme like the following "A theme is simply this: a subject which interests the writer, and which is discussed in the text or portrayed in it in some way" (p, 1 ).

Even though the themes are chosen for the author, people as readers can add or change the story's main themes because they interpret the work from their point of view. Therefore, it is very common to find literature with more than one theme in the story. For example, in the book *The Great Gatsby*, a popular American novel in 1920, the theme of this story is about the American dream because the protagonist pursued his desire of becoming extremely rich. He did. Talking only about that theme can subtract other themes related to the work, such as society and class, love, or opulence. Therefore, it can be hard for some readers to define only one theme for literary works.

Moreover, in every story, those elements that will provide more details can ubicate the readers to track the theme of the literary work. Commonly, the authors convey the theme using their characters, setting, plot, symbols, and other elements that help the reader analyze the literary work correctly. In short, the theme is the main underlying message the author would like to transmit in his or her work, and the theme will be presented in every story. Regardless, suppose the story has more than one theme because the literary works are open to different interpretations from the readers. In that case, the audience will interpret based on what they perceive from those elements the story includes.

### **2.3 What is a symbol in literature?**

A symbol in literature is considered one of the literary devices that help analyze text for literary works. They are presented from the begging until the end of the story. In this way, the reader can recognize them. The symbols are not necessary only physical objects like

worlds, people, marks, letters, etc.... that represent literally the meaning. The symbols go beyond the denotation meaning. They can provide abstract meaning and hide deeper meaning in the symbol. Arthur (2017) defined in his book the symbolism in literature as the following "Symbolism in literature really is: A form of expression, at the best but approximate, essentially but arbitrary, until it has obtained the force of a convention, for an unseen reality apprehended by the consciousness." (p, 1).

The symbolism is everywhere, and this interpretation of symbols comes from the world's reality, like where a tree can mean nature or the birds can mean freedom per se. This is the importance of a symbol in the literature analyses because they look for deeper meaning in the story. Besides, the symbols let the authors deliver a message in context through narrative texts in different ways. The symbolism makes more appeals to the literary works, as mentioned before. It takes the reference from aspects of humankind, so people can understand and relate the meaning desired by the author to the readers.

To provide a good example of a symbol, the book *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne tells the story of a woman who was judged for adultery, and because of this, she was marked by a red-letter A. She needed to use that symbol in her clothes all the time, and everywhere she went. There are two meanings in just one symbol. The first interpretation of the symbol is in the red color that represents sin and devil for the puritans. From a denotative way, the a represents the initial for adultery, but and the end of the story, the letter provides a meaning of mercy, changing adultery for angel because the protagonist pure herself and pays for her sins. As mentioned in this example, a symbol can provide different interpretations, and those interpretations are related to the author's work and the interpretation of people.

## **2.4 What is a motif in literature?**

A motif is another literary device that contributes to the interpretation of literary works. The motif shares similar characteristics with the theme and the symbol, but they are different. The symbol and motif represent a symbol in the story. However, the difference between the motif and the symbol is that motifs are mainly abstract ideas, subjects, or concepts constantly presented throughout the whole story. They are repeated pattern that creates cohesion for the story.

On the other hand, the difference between the motif and theme is that motifs are more specific elements that help convey the main theme of the literary work. The theme is more overall of the entire message the author tries to deliver to the audience. As per Dr. Mitali (2018), the word motif defines as the following "A motif is basically a type of theme that helps unify the narrative and justify the and goal." (p, 13).

A popular motif is in *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare, the story of two lovers whose love was doomed since the begging because they were from different families. These families were in a big fight against each other. The motif is in the light and dark because, during the whole play, Romeo refers to Juliet as a source of light for him. Besides, they needed to hide their love in the shadow, and for this reason, they must sneak in the night. In this way, people cannot see them together. The motif of light and dark is repeated constantly during the whole play. The meaning behind it is that the light and are elements cannot coexist.

## **2.5 What is Literary Theory?**

As mentioned before, literature works provide much information, and because of that, it is necessary to analyze it. It can be hard to interpret the information if the author does not explain the works. The purpose of the theory is to discover the theories the author desired to transmit to the audience. The literary theories help interpret, analyze, and study the

information presented in a literature work from different perspectives. These methods are commonly used in literary analysis.

The literary theory provides a variety of lenses to critics that allow considering works based on certain assumptions. The literary theory also provides particular systematic approaches for the literary texts. Therefore, literary theory is just the principles that inform how critics make sense of literary works. Because the literary theory is open to criticism, there is an area that creates specific studies. It is called literary criticism. The purpose of literary criticism is to practice interpreting and writing related to literary works. They also help to make sense in literary analysis. In this work, it will be explained the most common literary theory and criticism in literature.

### **2.5.1 Queer Criticism theory**

This theory has been influenced by Feminism and Gender studies because those studies have been studied issues about sexuality, women's empowerment, and marginalization of groups in literature and culture. The theory does not label a specific population. For this theory, the word queer does not refer to being gay. In deep, it implies more in identities and behaviors that are out of the extraordinary or what people do not see as "normal," which tries to provide a view that all identities are social constructions. People's identities are constantly changing, saying that people's gender, identity, and sexual orientation are not based on human biological nature.

It is important to know the meaning of queer to understand the theory. Charlie (2020) defines queer as "Queer is an inherently politicized identity as it is a reclaimed slur that reflects non-normativity, anti-assimilationism, and radical politics" (p,3). In this quote, the last three terms related to the meaning of making a change or transformation in something, non-normative is when someone does not feel comfortable about the norms, anti-assimilations

is feeling opposed toward the culture or political, and radical politics try to replace or transform principals already established by society or the political system.

The purpose of the theory is to generate a change in the normative, norms, and society ideas constructions about human beings creating a new perspective about society and giving freedom to people to feel and express as they will. To define this theory, Hannah (2020) said that queer theory is “Queer theory as “indefinable” works as its own forms of definition. The insistence on indefinability hints at queer theory as a lens that emphasises the slipperiness of meaning and the transgression of categories and boundaries.” (p, 1).

### **2.5.2 Sociocultural Criticism Theory**

This theory is related to the influence that the environment of the society affected people's development—taking into consideration aspects such as culture, language, and socialization. So, its main goal is to demonstrate how other people impact people and how they apply their knowledge, skills, and values in the environment where they live.

Sociocultural criticism can be defined as “2. The cultural and social environment is objective, just like any object from the natural sciences. Humans are object oriented to these environments.” (John, 2020, p.4).

### **2.5.3 Mythological Criticism Theory**

This theory focuses on the archetypes that provide meaning and function to the literary works considering the cultural and psychological myth. This theory tries to look for universal story patterns based on human experiences. Also, the theory creates a mix of human beliefs, religions, human history, and people's imaginations. In other words, the theory analyses humankind's experiences and how these experiences are connected to the imaginative world of literature work. According to Andrew (2016), the mythological theory is "Based on the supposition that signs create meaning thorough the interaction of the signifier and the

signified, Barthes argues that current mythologies can be identified by the way they give a shared cultural meaning to a society” (p.4).

#### **2.5.4 New Criticism Theory**

This theory does not focus on the work's creator or any other information that is not relevant for the investigation. It focuses mainly on the content the work contains and its contribution to its meaning. Especially in its elements and devices to analyze, these elements and devices the theory observes are the words, characters, images, tone, style, symbols, motifs. According to Mary (2017), this theory is "New Criticism is the name given to the formalist movement in Anglo American literary studies that emphasized studying the literary text in isolation, without regard for anything external to the text, like history, psychology, or biography." (p.251).

#### **2.5.5 Psychological Criticism Theory**

The theory aims to analyze the author's work, taking information from the work and tries to identify the author's unintended message. Besides, the theory applies to those characters presented in the work. It analyzes the behaviors, beliefs, motivations, actions, reactions, thoughts, and feelings the characters show consciously and unconsciously. Through this theory, the readers can have a better understanding of the work and clear the doubts that can come up during the reading of the literary work, providing a different or unique point of view. "psychological analysis and that a psychological approach to such fiction will help us to understand the minds both of mimetic characters and of implied authors" (Bernard J. 2017, p.28)

#### **2.5.6 Reader and Response Criticism Theory**

The approach of this theory is to understand the reader's minds while they are reading or interpreting a piece of literature. For this theory, the readers are essential because they

consider the interpretation that they perceive. The main goal of reading and response is to examine, explain, and analyze the text based on personal reaction and point of view the readers perceive from the text. KM (2017) defined the theory as "The text has an objective structure even if that structure must be completed by the reader. He claims that all texts create "gaps" or "blanks" which reader must use his or her imagination to fill." (p, 220).

### **2.5.7 Biographical Criticism Theory**

For this theory, the approach focuses on analyzing the writer's biography to demonstrate the relationship between the author's life and literature. The theory tries to understand why the author wrote that work and if that work was written based on the author's experiences. Because different authors come from different periods, the biographical criticism considers these aspects of time such as political history, intellectual history, economic history, events history, and others. To have a better definition, Hans (2016) defined this theory as: "Central to this development is the shift from the abstract and structural approaches of the past to the situating of human experience as the starting point of historical interpretation." (p, 5).

### **2.5.8 Ethnic Studies Theory**

This theory focuses on studying all the literary works from different ethnic groups discriminated against and marginalized in United States history. Not only for African American culture but also other ethnic groups, Chinese, Latino, Indian, African, Irish.... Phillip Q. (2000) Said, "Ethnic studies requires interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary because of the multifacets, complexity, and interdependency of ethnic phenomena. Ethnic groups and their interrelations can be best understood form multiple and integrated perspectives." (p, 26)

## **2.6 What is literary Analysis?**

A literary analysis is a study about the work that expresses a writer. As well known, people's imagination does literary works. Because of that, it is necessary to understand the meaning behind the text the author is trying to convey to the readers. The author of any literary work intends to transmit experience and knowledge indirectly. In this way, the work can be more meaningful. There is a contrast in literary analysis between the author's perspective and the reader's interpretation. Celena (2016) defined literary analysis as “Literary analysis is also a public form of meaning-making, designed to contribute to a community of knowledge about literature as a whole and about particular literary texts.” (p,19). Therefore, the work needs to be analyzed piece by piece because you need to provide your arguments and prove what your belief and critical thoughts from the text are the same messages the author wants to say in work.

### **2.6.1 Elements for a literary analysis**

To better understand the process of the literary analyses, its purpose, and what it implies. It is necessary to mention the common elements in literary works. The literary analysis comprises many elements the authors provide to the reader. Each element can give a different interpretation, even if the element is under the same category. First is the plot of the story. The reader needs to understand the plot and summarize the main ideas, the events, or the important details of the story. This gives a good understating of what the literary work is about.

The second is the setting. The environment where the story takes place is very important because the setting describes areas where the characters develop. Also, it gives insight into the time, the economic status, beliefs, or behaviors. Sometimes some stories can have more than one setting, but the purpose is the same. The writers wanted to convey meaning through the environment. The third one is the characters. The characters in literary

works provide many references and meaning because every character has a unique personality, appearance, and behaviors.

Moreover, you can find the characters divided into protagonists, antagonists, and extra characters. Some of the characters can even portray the author's personality based on his or her experience, and other characters can be real people the author met in life. Mieke (2017) described characters as “Character for the anthropomorphic figures provided with specifying features the narrator tells us about. Their distinctive characteristics together create a character-effect.” (p,127).

Furthermore, some elements in the literary works are not obvious to the readers. These elements are hidden behind some objects, particular situations, or abstract details in work. They are literary devices, their many literary devices, but each of them is different from the other. Examples of literary devices are metaphor, simile, alliteration, symbolism, oxymoron, satire... among others. These elements will help to study the text deeper, provide meaning to work, and better understand the author's thoughts.

## **2.7 What is an approach in literature?**

The approach is the aim goal or focuses on analyzing in work. The approaches in the literature are related to the literary works and what is within the texts. So, the information can be studied with a specific emphasis. The purpose of approaches is to provide a critical approach in the literature to understand the piece of writing. In literary analysis, the approaches are very important because the different perspectives readers look at the piece of works can lose sense and meaning.

For this work, the approach chosen is The Heroes’ Journey with a little background of the mythological approach. The mythological is to study human imagination using myths and symbols; this approach provokes deep universal questions looking for similar answers. This

approach involves other criticism related to people's minds. These could be psychological, anthropology, history, or religion. Therefore, the approach looks for elements that provoke human reactions in the literature work. Charles (2019) defines myths as "The function of myth is to mediate fundamental contradictions in human existence, man's relation to man in society and to nature in the external world." (p, 23).

Moreover, the mythological approach is commonly associated with ancient stories about gods, heroes, and mortals. They are people with supernatural powers or tell stories about people who do an unforgettable and extraordinary feat. Another purpose of the mythological approach is to explain the origin and meaning of life. The works that have the literature approach attempt to respond to all questions regarding the protagonist's journey or the important events in the story using factual or real explanations.

Therefore, the mythological approach suits this work perfectly because the focus is to create a literary analysis of the book and related to The Heroes' Journey. This is why those important elements will be defined and explained in work to understand the main goal of the work better. However, the book's main protagonist is not a superhuman or god; the objective is to take all the characteristics of a hero and connect it with the main goal of The Heroes' Journey Theory.

## **2.8 The Heroes Journey as per Joseph Campbell**

It is necessary to provide information on the hero's journey for this work. This will be the main goal and idea for this literary analysis of the book *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of the Universe*, emphasizing heroism perspective, characterizing heroes possess, and what is needed to become a hero. They are many elements involved in the hero's journey. Joseph Campbell was the main exponent of this theory, who provided a different vision of heroism in literature and motivated other people to expose similar theories of the hero's journey.

The hero's journey is the process every story's main protagonist goes through to aim for a goal. The goal can depend on the purpose of the characters, but the objective is the same. Before the main character ends his or her journey, there is a sequence of events in the story, and through the story will also be a process of learning and changing. This will help the final development of the hero and can affect the development of those near the hero. Ben (2016) defined the journey of a hero as "The whole idea is of a hero and his adventurous journey into some cavernous underworld to obtain the secret of everlasting life for everyone else." (p, 3). Every hero at least tries to leave a legacy behind, inspiring others to complete and finish their journey.

Heroes are presented everywhere in books, comics, anime, shows, series, and even in the real world. The purpose of any hero's story is to show the challenges, obstacles, and difficulties they overcome to succeed in the journey. For this work, the emphasis of the hero's journey will be on real heroes, those heroes presented in real life, those who are made of bone and flesh and face the reality of the world. Every person has a story to tell and share, but not all of them can tell the world the story. For this reason, it is important to highlight how heroes are, and the characterizes they have because anyone can become heroes disregard the age, race, culture, beliefs, gender, or size.

If you analyze the great stories of famous heroes, you can find a common pattern in all their stories. First, they have a beginning. They tell who they are, what they do, what makes them unique and relevant for the story. Second, they face a challenge, a difficulty which they have to overcome to reach the journey's achievement, and third, is the lesson that it leaves for both the protagonist of the journey and for those who identify with the hero's story. Therefore, it is important to add and detail the process of every hero's journey and the steps that are included in that process.

**2.8.1 Joseph Campbell's 17 stages are summarized based on the Book *the Hero with a Thousand Faces*.**

In 1949 Joseph Campbell, an American professor of literature, investigated and researched the hero's mythology. *In his book called *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949),* he described the process every hero takes during his or her journey. Campbell summarized his narrative pattern in seventeen stages, which were divided into three categories. One the departure, two the initiation, and the last the return. Not all the stages apply to the hero's journey. Sometimes some of them are just presented.

1. The call to adventure: This is when the hero's life happens and forces him to start the adventure. It is a calling for the unknown quest. In this stage, the reader barely knows about the hero's life and his environment.
2. Refusal of the call: As soon as the hero hears the calling of the adventure, he or she fears because the hero feels obligations in his real world, he or she needs to do or because the hero does not feel prepared and scared to that unknown world.
3. Supernatural Aid: During the request, the hero meets someone who, in the future, will aid the hero in his journey. This person could provide a special skill, an object, or encourage the hero.
4. The crossing of the First Threshold: In this stage, the hero leaves the known world's comfort zone and goes on the adventure to the unknown world.
5. Belly of the Whale: Here is where the hero finally leaves behind his or her known world to somewhere dangerous world and faces the first encounters that will leave the hero wondering if he or she can overcome.

6. Road of Trials: The hero undergoes a sequence of tasks, tests, and ordeals where the hero could fail or succeed, and the purpose is for the hero can begin his transformation through the acquirement of experience.

7. The Meeting with the Goddess: The hero meets allies to help the hero in the journey.

8. Woman as the temptress: In this step, the hero encounters physical or pleasurable temptations that encourage the hero to abandon the journey.

9. Atonement with the Father: This is the critical point of the hero's journey. Where the hero faces the villain, someone who possesses a big power over the hero, the meaning of the father authority represents a past the hero had with someone or a situation that was not concluded. This thing appears again in front of the hero to get a resolution to move beyond.

10. Apotheosis: This is related to the previous step. Once the hero faces a big event in his journey, the hero acquires understating and knowledge that provides the hero a clear view of how he or she will continue the journey. Metaphorically, the hero is reborn stronger mentally or physically and gets ready for more dangerous adventures.

11. Ultimate Boon: This is the achievement of the goal of the adventure. In this step, the hero discovers the purpose of the request.

12. Refusal of Return: After going through a long journey of experiences where the hero gets bliss, wisdom, enlightenment, new skills, and discover his potential. The hero denies going back to the reality of his or her ordinary world.

13. Magic Flight: Even though the journey has been completed, the consequences of the journey bring more enemies for the hero. The hero prefers to go back home to evade more dangerous and unnecessary situations.

14. Rescue from Without: Some heroes will need the assistance of someone or something in returning home in the ordinary world because, at this point of the journey, the hero was wounded or feels weak after the big battle.

15. Crossing the Return Threshold: The hero returns at home as someone different he or she was before the request. The acquired wisdom will be a tool the hero can use to guide, share, motivate other people. The hero will figure out how to use and integrate the knowledge into the ordinary world.

16. Master of the Two Worlds: Because the hero has been going through a journey full of experiences, the hero should find the balance between the two worlds, the material and spiritual, also known as the inner and the outer world.

17. Freedom to Live: After the conclusion of this journey, the hero obtains freedom to live without fear of death. From this time forth, the hero chooses to live and enjoy his or her life as the hero's will.

After Joseph Campbell exposed the monomyth or the hero's journey in his book, describing the myth of the hero and the steps. Other writers also exposed the same idea. Some of them even reduced the steps. One writer stood out for his work, he used the information of Joseph's book as a reference, and he summarized the hero's journey in just twelve stages. Therefore, it is necessary to mention the work of Christopher Vogler provided in his book *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure For Writers* because his investigation takes information from Joseph Campbell's work and simplifies the process of the journey.

## **2.9 The Heroes Journey as per Christopher Vogler**

Christopher Vogler was a veteran story consultant for a major in Hollywood film companies. He also was the author of the book *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure For Writers*, written in 2007, taking inspiration from the book *The Hero of with Thousand Faces*

of Joseph Campbell. Christopher wanted to provide readers a new perspective about mythology's influence on stories, movies and handled himself in his work. More than the only source of information for the hero's journey, the book is also a guide for life. Christopher (2007) said:

The Hero's Journey is not an invention but an observation. It recognizes a beautiful design, a set of principles that govern the conduct of life, and the world of storytelling the way physics and chemistry govern the physical world. (Christopher, 2007, p Xiii)

### **2.9.1 The 12 stages of the hero as per Christopher Vogler in his book *The Writer's Journey*.**

In the same way, as Joseph Campbell described a sequence of stages for any hero, Christopher did the same, only that he summarized it to twelve stages. The difference between the two processes are the stages, for Campbell focuses on the hero what the protagonist needs to do and go through to achieve the goal of the journey. However, Christopher focused more on storytelling, which a writer should consider when writing about the journey of a hero, thinking more in the author's mind instead of the character itself.

1. The Ordinary World: Similar to the first stage in Campbell's work. The hero is in his normal and conforms habit. These are stages where the readers get little glimpses and clues about the character in his normal life living in the mundane world. Christopher (2007) “you first have to show him in that Ordinary World to create a vivid contrast with the strange new world he is about to enter.” (page, 10)

2. Call to adventure: The adventure appears in front of the hero by itself. It could be a problem or challenge to overcome. This call of adventure will place the hero out of the conform zone in the ordinary world. Christopher (2007) “The hero is presented with a problem, challenge, or adventure to undertake.” (page, 10)

3. Refusal of the Call: The hero doubts his capacity. He or she feels insufficient to take the risk of the adventure. The hero does not want to leave the comfort zone because of the fears of getting from the new journey. Christopher (2007) "This one is about fear" (page, 11)

4. Meeting with the Mentor: In this stage, the hero will meet someone who will motivate and influence the hero to go on the adventure. Besides, this person becomes the mentor for the hero who will prepare the hero for the unknown world. Christopher (2007) "It stands for the bond between parent and child, teacher and student, doctor and patient, god and man." (page 12)

5. Crossing the First Threshold: The hero finally committed to the adventure, feels prepared and ready to go to an unknown world and leave the ordinary world until his or her return. After this stage, the hero demonstrates the decision he or she takes and will face the consequences of this choice. Christopher (2007) "Now the hero finally commits to the adventure and fully enters the Special World of the story for the first time" (page, 12)

6. Tests, Allies, and Enemies: The hero explores the new world, learns, and adapts to the new rules. In comparison, the hero is discovering and exploring the world, faces trials, challenges, and tests. Also, during this time, the hero meets the allies who will help in the journey and the enemies to defeat. In this stage, the hero demonstrates how he or she handles the relationship with new characters and how the hero works under pressure and stress. Christopher (2007) "Once across the First Threshold, the hero naturally encounters new challenges" (page, 13)

7. Approach to the Innermost Cave: The hero approaches a dangerous place. This place could be the spot where the object or purpose of the request is hidden. This stage is also known as the second threshold for the hero. Before going to the gate of the challenge, the hero takes a moment to prepare, make a strategy, and reflect on it. Christopher (2007) "The hero comes at

last to the edge of a dangerous place, sometimes deep underground, where the object of the quest is hidden." (page 14)

8. The Ordeal: This is the stage where the biggest fears challenge of the hero appears, and the hero faces this challenge in a situation where the hero could live or die. This is another critical point in the hero's story because the result of this challenge will impact the hero physically, mentally, or spiritually. Christopher (2007) "Here the fortunes of the hero hit bottom in a direct confrontation with his greatest fear" (page, 14)

9. Reward: The hero conquers the big challenge. In other words, the hero survives and overcomes death. After this event, the hero can proclaim the rewards for defeating his or her greatest fear. This reward could be material like an object or important knowledge for a hero's life. Christopher (2007) "The hero now takes possession of the treasure she has come seeking, her Reward" (page, 16)

10. The Road Back: The point of returning for the hero, returning to home the ordinary world. However, the journey has ended, there will be consequences that will follow the hero. Christopher (2007) "We're crossing into Act Three now as the hero begins to deal with the consequences of confronting the dark forces of the Ordeal." (page 17)

11. Resurrection: This is the final test the hero must face, and through this test, the hero is transformed by these moments of death and rebirth to return to the ordinary world. In this challenge, the hero needs to use everything he or she has learned so far in the journey. Christopher (2007) "The hero who has been to the realm of the dead must be reborn and cleansed in one last Ordeal of death" (page, 17)

12. Return with the Elixir: In the final stage of the hero, the hero returns to the ordinary world as someone new because the hero has been through a transformative experience. What the hero brings to the normal world is the knowledge or the object that he will use to help others

in his or her world. Christopher (2007) “the journey is meaningless unless she brings back some Elixir, treasure, or lesson from the Special World.” (page 18)

These steps provided by Christopher V. are like the summary of the 17 stages from Joseph C. They share a similar process, but the difference is that one is easier to follow than the other. For this work, the work of Christophe will be taken under consideration because it will explain better and easier the story of the protagonist. Besides, the work references the original work that created the hero's journey. The story of Aristotle Mendoza works with both theories of the hero's journey, but because of the conditions of the work is better to use the theory that will provide a better meaning for the readers and the story that wants to be exposed through this story.

## **2.10 Archetypes in the hero's journey**

As it was mentioned before about the stages of the hero's journey. It is important to recognize the elements involved in the whole story. These elements are known as archetypes. The archetypes are those elements that add sense and meaning to the story. The author includes these elements to mean something, trying to convince the reader to observe the patterns. The patterns are constantly presented in the story. Therefore, the reader needs to understand what is going in the story and whom the characters are taking the role of what. In simple words, the archetypes describe the function or the role of the characters. Gabrielle (2019) defined archetypes as the following: "An archetype is a repeated pattern of behaviors based on the decisions you've made or wish to make in your life." (p, 8).

Why are these elements so important? The importance is to recognize the characters' relationship with the hero and the type of archetype or function they will play in the story. In the hero's journey, the hero is not alone during the adventure; the hero encounters people of all kinds who contribute something relevant. Somehow, this object or knowledge provided by

them helps the hero to succeed in the journey. These archetypes in the story also represent culture and social elements related to the real world because they are patterns that take inspiration from the reality of humankind, so they can recognize them and associate with the knowledge the reader possesses. Of course, the reader can interpret the archetypes as they want, as long as they connect the idea with the story.

### **2.10.1 Types of archetypes**

According to Christopher (2007) in his work, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*, the storyteller is mandatory to use tools to trade the story they want to convey to the audience. The most common and useful archetypes are the hero, the mentor, threshold guardian, herald, shapeshifter, shadow, ally, and trickster. These archetypes frequently appear in the story, and they are useful for any writer to understand them well. For this work, the elements will be described in summary, taking the information from Christopher Vogler presented in his book.

The hero is the first archetype to recognize because it is the protagonist. At first sight, this character shines more than others in history. Kendra (2016) defined in her book the word hero as the following "A hero, first and foremost, is a person on a quest for identity and wholeness." (p, 13). So, the hero needs motivation and purpose. This identity does not exist just because most heroes receive the meaning of inspiration or savior for the world. In the mythological approach, the hero can provide a different meaning. In Christopher's book, he said that the hero reflects two functions. One is the physiological function.

The hero portrays his ego in this physiological function, also known as the personality. This ego is changing and improving during the journey for those external factors the main character faces. So, the hero's personality in the first meet is not the same as the hero has in the end. The hero needs to separate this ego. In this way, the final result is a mix of two

personalizes that has been through many changes. Then, the audience function is to create a connection between the audience and the hero. The readers see the story through the eyes of the hero. People can even relate with the hero because this protagonist is described with qualities of humankind like emotions and motivations that everybody has experienced in life, so it provides the sense that a hero can be anyone. It is not only a specific type of person. It is more than that. A hero is a real person without powers too.

The mentor is the first archetype; It does not matter how strong, intelligent, or awesome the hero is. Any hero needs help from at least one person to aim and complete the journey. This archetype represents a guide who can attribute and influence the hero to continue when the hero feels lost. Robin (2020) defines mentor in his book as "The word mentor has Greek origins and means as "Wise guide." Traditionally a mentor was an older, more experienced person who was responsible for coaching and mentoring a younger person to fill a particular role." (p, 10). The hero must meet in his or her journey someone wiser, someone more skillful, someone who has something the hero lacks to the mentor can guide and assist the hero when it is needed with wisdom.

According to Christopher (2007), the mentor as a psychological function represents the self. This character acts as the conscious of the hero, someone who understands the hero feelings and minds when the hero is in trouble or does not know what to do; there is the mentor this conscious that will guide and provide pieces of advice to motivate the hero to do not give up. Moreover, the mentor takes the representation of parents representing the protecting spirit. Commonly, the mentor is older and wiser than the hero because this person should be superior in knowledge and expertise to generate motivation and inspiration for the hero.

Then, the threshold was guarding. During the journey, there will be tests all heroes need to conquer to prove their heroism, as well as all heroes should demonstrate their worthiness. This is the reason for the archetype. It is a guardian that represents an obstacle for the hero's journey and keeps people away, especially those who are not worth it to overcome a challenge and are not welcome to continue in the journey. This guardian could be people, objects, animals, or the force of nature. This obstacle is not necessarily the main villain to defeat; in fact, the obstacle is neutral. It is there to improve the hero because these archetypes prepare the hero before encountering the big challenge.

From the psychological point of view, the threshold guardian represents those obstacles people face every day like the weather, mean people, bad luck, or loss. The meaning behind this obstacle is to limit the hero. A deeper point of view Christopher (2007) provided for this archetype. He said the archetype could also be the internal demons of people. These demons hold back the growth and process of the hero. As the hero is in a journey of changing and self-discovering, the Threshold Guardian is this archetype that will provide improvement of determination and test the hero if he or she is ready to accept the challenge of change.

The next archetype is the herald. This archetype is the representation of an announcement for the hero. This event has the function of announcing the need for change, it is the call to action for a hero, so it is time to face the big challenge of the journey. After this announcement is made, a sequence of the following changes will come. Therefore the hero needs to be ready for this event. This archetype does not need to be a physical person who provides the news; it could be a situation or objects such as a letter, invitation, vision, or dreams. It just makes a brief appearance to announce the coming of significant change.

The next archetype is the shapeshifter, one of the characters the hero will meet in the journey is that person who is difficult to define in which side is, does this person help the hero

or betray it? According to Christopher (2007), in his book, he says that this archetype has an important psychological purpose because the shapeshifter expresses the energy of the animus and anima. Showing two sides, the bad and good, commonly this character represents something the hero does not have: that evil inside. This can be a possible obstacle, too; this archetype will have a purpose in the story: to make the hero doubt so that the hero can develop critical trust.

Another archetype is the shadow. This archetype represents the dark side. It provides the tension of anxiety in the story. This dark presentation could be a person like a villain or an antagonist who represents the opposite of the hero. Also, it could be conflicts from the past, situations of repression of feelings the hero deals with, like a secret of the past that the hero hides and does not tell because of fears. From a psychological point of view, the shadows are those traumas or feelings of guilt the hero denies unconsciously. The shapeshifter could represent an obstacle, but this obstacle is not the same as the Threshold Guardian what is a test to overcome and continue the journey. Instead, this archetype helps the hero conclude cycles and eliminate the burdens the hero is carrying inside.

The ally is another archetype in the hero's journey. There are many characters in the hero's story, and some of those characters will build a stronger and more real relationship with the hero than others. These are the hero's allies, those who will benefit the hero during the journey and together will overcome the difficulties, tests, and challenges. It is hard to conquer a quest without help. There are different kinds of allies. Of course, it will depend on the story. Besides, an ally can be a human, an animal, or even a spirit because the purpose of the allies in the hero's journey is to provide support and motivation. According to Christopher (2007), the ally as a psychological function represents the powerful internal forces that come to the aid when the hero is going through a spiritual crisis.

As per Christopher (2007), the last archetype is the trickster. This archetype is described as the clown character in the story, which gives entertainment and comedy. The purpose of this archetype is to relieve the tension when the story is getting tough and dark, so this archetype helps the hero and the audience relax and gives funny moments. From the psychological point of view, the trickster is a reminder for the hero to keep calm and do not take the situation so serious, keeping his temperance and toes over the earth, so the hero can control the situation when he or she is going under pressure, the trickster brings back a needed perspective in the hero's mind. Another particular characteristic about the trickster archetypes is that they contribute to making changes in the story. They can affect other characters with their way of thinking and their touches of humor, but they cannot change themselves. There is not an improvement in their personalities.

Those are the most common archetypes found in all hero's journey. These elements contribute a lot to the meaning and interpretation of the story, helping make the journey flow smoothly and helping the audience understand better. Moreover, from the psychological perspective, the archetypes add depth meaning and make the characters unique and special for every story. Christopher (2007), in his book, said the following for archetypes "The archetypes are an infinitely flexible language of character. They offer a way to understand what function a character is performing at a given moment in a story." (p, 79).

## **2.11 Biography**

Benjamin Alire Saenz was an American poet, writer, and novelist. He has been considered one of the best authors of stories for children and young adults. He was born at Old Picacho, New Mexico, with his Mexican cultural heritage. In 1972, he graduated from Las Cruces High School 1972. After that high school, he studied B. A degree in Humanities and Philosophy in St. Thomas Seminary in Denver, Colorado, in 1977. As soon as he

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finished, he decided to Theology at the University of Louvain in Leuven, Belgium. 1985 he left the priesthood; he serviced as a priest when he returned to Paso, Texas.

Four years later, he returned to school. He studied for an MA degree in creative writing at the University of Texas. Years later, he completed his first collection of poetry, *Calendar of Dust* that won the American Book Award in 1992. After that, He entered the Ph.D. program at Stanford and continued his studies for two more years. Similar poet's works made by Benjamin are *Dark and Perfect Angels* in 1993, *Dreaming the End of the War* 2006, *The Book of What Remains* in 2010. Moreover, his book for children and novels for adults and young adults are *Names on a Map* in 2008 and *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of the Universe* in 2012.

### 2.12 Plot

*Aristotle and Dante Discover, the World's Secret* is a story about two teenage boys around 15 years old. The first boy is Aristotle Mendoza, also known as Ari. He is a lonely boy and not very popular at school because he thinks people are lame. One day in the summer break, Ari was extremely bored, so he decided to go to the community swimming pool near the neighborhood as normal teenagers usually do, but the problem was that he could not swim. While sitting on the edge of the pool, another stranger teenager approached Ari. He noticed that Ari does know how to swim. This boy named Dante Quintana, in contrast to Aristotle, was a charming boy, popular, and very friendly. He also was a good swimmer and, for this reason, offered to teach Ari how to swim. This was the day the two boys started a good friendship.

The two boys became good friends that they used to visit each other at their homes. When he met Dante's father, Ari was impressed by their good relationship because he knew his relationship with his parents was not the same. As summer was almost ending, Dante

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informed Dante that he was moving to Chicago because his father got a job there, so they would not see probably until the next summer. This same day of the announcement, Aristotle and Dante were in the street in front of Dante's house when Dante saw an injured bird on the road. He desperately went to the rescue of the little bird. While he was talking to the bird, a car was coming on its way toward him, but Ari saved him, pushing Dante out of the road, and Ari was hit by the car. He needed to use casts for the rest of the summer.

Summer ended, Ari and Dante were far away from each other, constantly Dante wrote a letter to Ari telling them about his new life in Chicago and how much he does miss him. In one of the letters, Dante confessed his feeling about his sexuality and how scared he was to tell anyone, even Ari, because he did not want his friends to change for this circumstance. Both teenagers were living their lives and sharing the new experience they enjoyed when they were not together.

The next summer arrived, Dante traveled to Paso, Texas, to visit Ari's best friend. Ari was fine with Dante sexually, but Dante seemed uneasy with the situation. One day, in Ari's room, Dante wanted to share the gay experience with someone. Somehow, he convinced Ari to experiment with him. They kissed. He pretended the kiss did not mean anything for Ari, but for Dante, it meant a lot. This situation crossed a little distance between them. Ari discovered his aunt Ophelia had died. For this reason, he needed to go to her funeral in Tucson, Texas. When he returned, he found out his best friend was in the hospital because some guys beat him for kissing another guy. Aristotle was so pissed off for this situation that he confronted the guys and beat them too. He did. Aristotle hit brutally one of them.

Finally, Ari visited Dante at the hospital. Dante did not want to live under the shadows. He decided to come out to his parents and confess his feeling to Ari. At first, Ari did

not share the same feeling and was rejected because he feared opinions. After talking with his parents and Dante's parents, he realized his feelings for Dante and how much he meant for him. Through this experience and everything that had been going on lately, Aristotle Mendoza noticed that he was always in love with Dante since the first time he met him that day at the pool. In the end, Ari accepts himself and his feeling for Dante. He decides to be happy with Dante than suffering a life without him.

### **Chapter 3**

For this work, it is necessary to apply methodology research because when a work contains big information to analyze, it requires more elements that can help achieve the main goal of the work. For that reason, it is very common to use the methodology research in works like science or investigation because of those elements facilitate the investigations. As this work is a literary analysis of a book, implementing a research approach will be mandatory. Besides, this chapter also explains how the information categories depend on the source of information. To better understand and comprehend this literary analysis work, it is needed to give the definition that will help to understand concepts about the types of sources, approaches, and research.

#### **3.1 Research Approach**

For any investigation that needs to analyze big data is necessary to use research approaches. This will not only help to collect the data needed for the work but also will help to organize and analyze that information better. This is not something new. Researchers and scientists have been using research approaches and different methodologies in their experiments and investigation. Therefore, it proves that implementing the research approaches is mandatory for any type of investigation. To have general background knowledge, it is necessary to understand each concept and establish the function of each methodology and the approach that this work will need.

According to the Cambridge dictionary (n.d), the meaning of research is the following "to study a subject in detail, especially in order to discover new information or reach a new understanding." In other words, the research is the method that will contribute to inspecting the data detailly. In that way, all the information added to the work will give new information to evaluate. So, the main purpose of the research is to look for new information through the data collected in work. As it is known, there is a variety of information that can be evaluated. Then the research will focus on a specific topic to study because the main goal is to retrieve all the information related to the topic investigated and provide the right research and approach to that investigation.

Another term to define is the approach. According to Cambridge Dictionary (n.d), the meaning of the word approach is the following "to come near or nearer to something or someone in space, time, quality, or amount." The approach is like the main character to describe the research of the investigation, helping to ubicate the goal desire in the research and providing the how, how an investigation will obtain the result and analyze the data. There are different types of research approach for investigation. Among the variety of research approaches, qualitative research is the one that will fit better for literary analysis.

Qualitative research is a good choice for literary analysis in this work because the data collected from a book are texts and not a number. In the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d), the word qualitative has the following definition "based on information that cannot be easily measured, such as people's opinions and feelings, rather than on information that can be shown in numbers." Usually, qualitative research has an approach related to society and the elements related to people, religion, culture, behaviors, etc. Since this research and approach tries to measure and evaluate people's experiences, they can obtain a complex understanding of people's experiences from a small or large group.

On the other hand, the quantitative approach is not the best approach to analyze this literary investigation. This approach's main goal is to measure data from specific sources like statistics, numbers, polls, questionnaires, or surveys. In other words, using data that a number can only measure will provide specific results through a numerical evaluation. The Cambridge Dictionary (n.d) defines the word quantitative as the following “related to information that can be shown in numbers and amounts.”

As a conclusion for this first point, between the two approaches, the qualitative and the quantitative, the one that is more suitable and adapts better for literary analyst investigation is the qualitative approach because it is helpful to examine data that do not require numbers or another source to collect specific results. For the purpose and main goals desire for work, the qualitative approach will be implemented because it will provide good results, and it was mentioned earlier will inspect that data of the book better than another approach.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The qualitative method will be applied for this investigation because this literary analysis collects, inspects, and analyses the information through descriptive research in the protagonist's story. However, the focus will also be on the hero's journey in this case. Shona (2019) defined the descriptive approach as "Descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation or phenomenon. It can answer what, where, when and how questions, but not why questions." The book *Aristotle and Dante Discover, the Secrets of the Universe*, provides many symbols and literary devices that can provide different interpretations. As a result, the qualitative method using the descriptive research, the hero's journey theory will respond to the question defined at the begging of this work.

In order to prove and achieve the objective of the work. The process of this design research using the descriptive method will be the following: First, the information of the hero's story needs to be analyzed from the book. The data collection will be analyzed in quotes. From there, quotes will be taken to be inspected and compared, the second step is to compare those quotes and make a comparison with the hero's journey, trying to match the quote with one of the steps from the hero's journey theory, and finally, there will be an explanation to justify why the quote relate with that stage of the hero's journey.

This analysis can prove how the main protagonist of the story demonstrates those characteristics that heroes represent and how he becomes one. Also, it will help to demonstrate that the book can be studied under the mythological approach and the hero's journey theory. Therefore, it is necessary to use the qualitative methods because the studies of the quote can be interpreted from different points of view that will be more freedom interpretation when using the data collected from the book.

### **3.3 Information Sources**

It is necessary to retrieve information from valid and trusted sources that will contribute to the argument or add information to your work for any investigation. With the evolution of the internet and technologies, people have more access to sources than they used to be before. Moreover, people can use different kinds of sources, and these sources can be presented in physical or digital information. The Marriam- Webster dictionary (n.d) defines the world source as the following "a firsthand document or primary reference work

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This information source has a valuable purpose; they exist for a reason: information sources entertain, educate, or inform people through information. The information people can be used in many ways, but of course, the source's value and quality will depend on the

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information the person needs to use for the investigation. The sources are divided into primary, secondary, and tertiary sources. Using the sources properly is needed to understand the classification of the three main categories.

The primary sources are the information that comes from firsthand testimony or direct evidence. The information has not been edited or manipulated because they were created or experienced under a study, so they can tell what happened during a historical event or period. The primary sources are also known as the source. The primary sources are so valuable and restricted that they can be found mostly in libraries, museums, archives, historical societies or classified as special collections.

Using primary sources in investigation or researches can provide advantages and disadvantages, for example, the main advantage is that these documents are a direct source of the topic investigated and they can provide information that is unavailable elsewhere, on the other hand, the disadvantage is that they are so limited that can lack critical distance. Examples of documents cataloged as primary sources are interviews, speeches, diaries, birth certificates, journal science articles, or newspapers.

The main purpose of a secondary source is to study, analyze, evaluate, or interpret the information from the primary source. The secondary source is contrary to the primary source because this information was already manipulated by someone who did not participate in the investigation or experience the event. The secondary sources give second-hand information and commentaries from other researchers who need the information for their investigation. Besides, secondary sources will be written from an audience searching or investigating a topic.

The main advantage for secondary sources is that this information provides a variety of perspectives and insights given by experts because the source uses the raw material of the

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primary source. That information is analyzed and evaluated from a new point of view. The disadvantage is that this information found in the secondary source is limited to the field of the topic investigated. This means that secondary sources can use only the most relevant information. Some examples of secondary sources are biographies, textbooks, commentaries, editorial, and literary criticism.

The last one is the tertiary sources; this source is the mix of the two previous sources before because the information is a collection based on the primary and secondary sources. The thirdhand information commonly lists, summarizes, organizes, abstracts, or compiles ideas from alternative sources. Therefore the credibility of the source can lose cause there is not a particular author who can be valued and provide the credit needed for the information. However, it does not mean that information cannot be used, only that the information the tertiary provides is less trust and valid value to use in investigations.

For this type of source, the advantage is that it offers fast and short information for the topic, taking the most important points from the primary and the secondary sources, but the disadvantage is that it can distort the information for the topic because it is data collection of information presented in one source, besides that the source does not have much credibility to prove the origin of the source. Examples of tertiary sources are encyclopedias, bibliographies, abstracts, indexes, literature reviews, libraries, catalogs, and databases.

In short, the sources are very convenient and useful for investigations because they will provide the information needed for the topic, and the sources can make your statements and analysis more valuable and valid. For this reason, it is necessary to understand the importance of every source, the function, and the classification, so the information that will be used for any work can be related to the field of the study, so in that way, the expected goals, purposes, and approach of the work can be achieved.

### **3.4 Analysis Categories**

Data analysis is a complex but useful system used to collect data information in an investigation. Using this strategy can help inspect and analyze the data aiming to the goals of the investigation. This strategy of a data analyst is commonly used in science and business. From a business perspective, this analysis can be defined as "Data analytics involves analysing datasets to uncover trends and insights that are subsequently used to make informed organizational decisions." (Kristin, 2020).

This type of analysis for the quality approach opens a variety of categories to analyze information. The common are descriptive analysis, exploratory analysis, predictive analysis, and causal analysis. These types of data analysis can study the information for different kinds of purposes. For this work, the one that will be applied is the descriptive analysis. This one can organize the data, summarize the information, and present the information collected in a structural, organized, and nice way.

### **3.5 Data collection Instruments**

For the analysis of the book, the instrument that will be implanted in the table analysis using this type of instrument to collect and analyze the data will be easier and simpler to understand the information retrieved from the book, the interpretation provided by the investigator, and the elements of the information that related to the main purpose of and theory of the heroes' journey. Besides, this table analysis helps organize big data of information and presents the information collected in an understandable way for everybody.

The main goal of this work is to understand the correlation between the book Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of the Universe and the theory of The Hero's Journey by Joseph Campbell. The structure of the table will be the following. The table will be divided into three columns. Each one will be tagged with a category. The first columns are the quote

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that information retrieves from the book, the second columns are different steps of the hero's journey, and the third columns are the interpretation provided from the point of view of the writer of the book, providing statements that will prove the relation between the quote and the step of the theory.

Using these tables will help develop the tables' analysis from a clear perspective, and it will link the elements to contribute to the analysis expected between the book and the theory. The idea of the table's structure is the following, as an example of how the table will look like.

1 <sup>st</sup> Quote	2 <sup>nd</sup> Step of Hero's journey	3 <sup>rd</sup> Own interpretation

Also, for this analysis, there will be a second table. For this second table, the categories of the columns will differ from the first table because the elements to investigate are the queer elements the book contains, demonstrating how the hero in his journey was going through the process of self-discovering his sexuality and how these elements affected his entire journey. This will demonstrate that Aristotle Mendoza was a gay character who encountered many obstacles in his journey to discover and accept himself. This analysis will focus on the interaction between his family and friends with the hero. The table will look like the following.

1 <sup>st</sup> Quote interaction with	2 <sup>nd</sup> Queer criticism	3 <sup>rd</sup> interpretation

A third table will be included in this work to analyze the Mexican heritage of the hero and its impact on his development as a hero. This third table will be analyzing the Mexican heritage elements of Aristotle Mendoza presented in the book. It is important to mention this aspect because it will demonstrate that his heritage was another stone in his hero's journey that held the hero to reach his potential and conclude his journey successfully. The structure for this table will be following.

Mexican Heritage Quote	How affected him?	Interpretation

### **3.6 Collection data process and data analysis – Teoria vs. interpretation.**

As it was mentioned before, the compilation of the data will be withdrawn from one main source. The book Aristotle and Dante Discover the Universe is the main source where the information will be collected to be analyzed, compared, and interpreted with the theory and purpose of this work. Using this data table method will make the analysis of the information, the theory, and the interpretation more accurate because it can be applied to the information in boxes inside the table for proper comprehension. Moreover, this data table will help the information collected, and all the readers understand the information gathered and analyzed in a better way for reading it.

For this work, it is necessary to cross a point and emphasize how the theory fits and works for this literary analysis because the theory is more theoretical. There is an investigation that will help prove the interpretation. On the other hand, the interpretation should match with the information provided by the theory of this work. Therefore, it is important to understand both concepts. The theory and the interpretation are together because both contribute to the objective, the purpose, and the main goal of this literary analysis work.

## Chapter 4

This chapter will be presented the analysis, a deep analysis of the book Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of the Universe. The data presented retrieved from the book, and some instruments will be implemented to analyze the information collected, so the development of the investigation can be accurate. This chapter will be shown the right instruments used to study the information and how that information was obtained from the book according to the literary work selected.

The approaches, the information of the theory and the literary work, themes, motifs, and symbols will be explained in this chapter giving the reader a better comprehension of the literary work and the main goal expected to be aimed. Moreover, the distribution of the information in the book will be presented in a table. These tables will help understand the theory chosen and the connection with the literature.

One goal in this chapter is to summarize all the data collected previously. We are applying the theory with background and foundations plus the interpretation. So, the data collected can be interpreted and studied with the right theories and approaches that fit better for the literary work. The critical point of the chapter is to demonstrate, organize and represent the information collected for all readers, so this way the information in the book, the purpose, approach, and theory selected can be proofed and valid in the expected outcome of this literary work.

### 4.1 Approaches to the investigation

The approaches in the literary work are something that has been coming for ages for literary studies because it gives the works more meaning for the readers. The approaches in the literary work highlight more in interpreting, discussing, analyzing the main principles in complex and large works. Therefore, this work needs to explain to the reader what approach

is related to the book chosen. Besides, the reason and purpose this approach gives to the story. So, all the reader can understand the relationships among the book, the approach, and the story to tell of this work.

As it was mentioned, this study must have an approach that helps to examine the work to provide a good outcome for the work and comprehension for the readers and among the approaches and criticisms in literature, the approach chosen for this book; is the Heroes' Journey Theory because fits with the goals desired for the study analysis of the book. According to Richard Steward in his article about myth-archetypal approaches, he said that a myth approach is a tool used in tales to encourage the imaginative side of the reader through the inner experience.

Moreover, the myth approach covers more aspects in literary texts that help interpret the characters, the symbols, and images presented in the journey of the story emphasizing myths and archetypes. According to Jonathan Z. in his article about myth, he said that "Myths are specific accounts of gods or superhuman beings involved in extraordinary events or circumstances in a time that is unspecified, but which is understood as existing apart from ordinary human experience."

The myth approach plays a huge role in literature because the approach somehow links to human history. Humankind is a living being who is constantly wondering about the meaning of existence and looking for meaning everywhere on the earth that can contribute to getting an answer to those questions to explain how the world works and the mystery of life.

#### **4.2 Theories vs. literary work**

To get a complete, accurate, and appropriate result for this work. This part of the chapter will establish a comparison between the text of the book and the theory, so this way, it can be proved if the objectives can reach the main goal, or they cannot. There will be some

tables divided into three columns for this work, and each of them will contain a category. In this way, the information will be analyzed. The three categories will be first, the quote retrieved from the text, next, one of the steps of the Hero's Journey theory, and the last one is the explanation of why the quote is related to that step of the theory.

#### 4.2.1 Analysis of the Story

The following information in the table is based on the data collected during the work investigation. The tables below will be more relevant information about the book, the theory applied to the text, and the explanation of the correlation between the first and second columns.

The stages for the Hero's Journey.

**Table 1**

Quotes	Steps from the Hero's Journey	Explanation
<p>“One summer night I fell asleep, hoping the world would be different when I woke.” (page 5)</p> <p>“As far as I was concerned, the sun could have melted the blue right of the sky. Then the sky could be as miserable as I was.” (page 5)</p>	<p>Ordinary World</p>	<p>This is where the hero talks about his life, the beginning of the journey. The hero says the problems he has, and the audience can notice the unhappy life he faces day by day. The key element in this step is the background and the story the hero gives to the spectators.</p> <p>Angel Aristotle Mendoza, the story's hero, gives insights into</p>

<p>“I had the urge to leave the house. Not that I have anywhere to go.” (page 8)</p>		<p>his life. It can be observed that Aristotle was not satisfied with his current life. He struggles every day with it. This world where he lives now does not motivate him. He feels trapped in a cruel world he desires and asks the universe to change it. So, he can stop suffering.</p>
<p>“I decided to go swimming at the Memorial Park pool. It was a small idea. But at least the idea was mine.” (page 9)</p> <p>"That's when I heard his voice, kind of squeaky. "I can teach you how to swim." (page 17)</p> <p>“Dante became one more mystery in a universe full of mysteries.” (page 19)</p>	<p>Call to an adventure</p>	<p>The call for adventure can be different for any hero. For this case, it will guide the hero to a new world. Commonly, the hero is unaware of this call, so they do not notice how this crucial step can change their lives completely after meeting the person introducing them to the adventure of encountering the important event.</p> <p>In this part of the story, the hero will discover a new world, the hero follows his instinct, and he ends the encounter with the call to adventure because from this</p>

		<p>point on, Dante will introduce him to his vision of the world.</p> <p>Aristotle will engage in the adventure for this person who provokes his curiosity.</p>
<p>“You’ve already hurt me. That’s What I wanted to say” (page 143)</p> <p>“I think I was pushing Dante. He had given me a piece of himself that he had never given to another human being. And I hadn’t even bothered to look at it. (pages 141-142)</p> <p>“Dante’s leaving in a week. I’m glad. I need a break from him. I’m sick of him coming over every day just because he feels bad. I don’t know if we will ever be friends again.” (page 149)</p>	<p>Refusal of the Call</p>	<p>The doubts emerge in the hero's mind. Consequently, the hero makes excuses or explanations to avoid getting into the adventure. The hero is afraid of uncertainty. Even though the fear hits the hero, he challenges himself and goes into the adventure.</p> <p>In this stage of the journey, Aristotle questioned his friendship with Dante; he wondered if he could continue his friendship after the accident because he felt like Dante was a friend of him for feeling petty of him. What happened after the accident was the reason Ari got confused. He could not understand why he could not</p>

<p>"I guess I did miss Dante. Even though I tried hard to not think about him." (page 169)</p>		<p>leave Dante and return to his normal simple life. However, Ari knew that he wanted to continue his friendship with this magnificent boy. The first reason is that he likes spending time with him, and second, he got feelings for Dante, these feelings he showed them in anger and hatred against him trying to keep his distance and forget, just in this way he could stop feeling and thinking what he felt for Dante.</p>
<p>"Gina Navarro. Somehow she felt entitled to hound me because she'd know me since first grade." (page 156) "I found Ileana's Locker with the help of Susie Byrd" (page 187) "Gina says every boy is a dog. That Gina. She was like my mother. I had her voice in my head" (page 213)</p>	<p>The Meeting with the Mentor</p>	<p>The mentor represents the strength and the empowerment the hero needs to get confidence and clear his mind of fears and doubts. Gina and Susie were friends of Aristotle. There were some aspects the hero could not understand about people, especially boys. Gina and Susie made him see a different point of</p>

<p>“Gina. Navarro. I’d know that voice anywhere. I couldn’t decide if I really like her, or I was just used to her.” Page (page 215)</p> <p>“I listened to Gina and Susie talk and I thought it was nice that they knew how to talk and how to laugh and how to be in the world. But it maybe it was easier for girls” (page 232)</p>		<p>view about girls' and boys' behaviors. Ari's doubts were about his identity, and sexually, he sometimes could not figure out how things work. The hero finally recognized that Gina and Susie provoked a comfortable zone in a way he did not feel with other boys. Also, these two characters guided him to try new things in the world the hero wanted to do, but he was afraid of doing it, like drinking beers, smoking cigarettes, kissing, and dating girls.</p>
<p>“They beat him, he whispered. They beat my Dante all to hell. They cracked some ribs, they punched his face. He has bruises everywhere. They did that to my son”. (Page 304)</p> <p>"Next thing I knew I was standing in front of Dante,</p>	<p>Resurrection</p>	<p>After a sequence of events, the hero breaks the chains of fears that restrain him from reaching his great potential. So, the hero resurrects like someone completely new.</p> <p>The hero fights against his deepest and scariest nightmare in this part of the journey. Aristotle was scared when he found out</p>

<p>looking at his puffed up, punished face. He was unrecognizable." (page 306)</p> <p>"Ari? My father's voice was soft. Ari, Ari, Ari. You are fighting this war in the worst possible way" (page 319)</p>		<p>what happened with this friend Dante. In this part of the story, the hero realizes the importance of his friendship with this person because somehow Dante was his world, and he did not want that this world ended. He was struggling with his anger. He wanted to get revenge on all the boys who hurt his best friend. After all these events, Ari learned that his feeling of anger comes from his love for Dante. He did not let anybody hurt his precious word. This was a big test for Aristotle because he noticed how his life changed because of this person he met, this person who turned his world completely until this point in his life.</p>
<p>"I wanted to them that I'd never had friend, not ever, not a real one. Until Dante" (page 308)</p>	<p>Return with elixir</p>	<p>The end of the story. A hero is a new person with more knowledge and power. The hero knows better himself. It is like a</p>

<p>“I wanted to them that he had he changed my life and that I would never be the same, not ever.” (page 308)</p> <p>“All the answers had always been so close and yet I had always fought them without even knowing it. Form the minute I’d met Dante, I had fallen in love with him”. (page 358)</p> <p>“Image that. Aristotle Mendoza, a free man. I wasn’t afraid anymore.” (page 359)</p>		<p>realization for the hero to finally completely accept his new life with gratitude.</p> <p>It was a long journey for Aristotle Mendoza. His journey was very introspective. He always asked and looked for answers he did not understand until he met Dante. He realized that it is unbelievable how a person can change and impact someone else. At the end of the story, the hero rebored as someone who knows more about life and does not feel afraid of being himself. Aristotle can finally be the person who wants to be and live how he desires. He will use his knowledge to help others. Moreover, it can be said that Aristotle did the same and saved Dante's life and his parents. Aristotle changed many people's lives through his journey, but especially he saved</p>
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		himself that was the reward of his journey.
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The theory applied only in half of the whole journey for this table. In this case, the ordinary worlds with only six steps fit in the analysis of the book applying the theory of the hero's journey. The book Aristotle and Dante discover the secret of the universe is a book that feels real and presents an ordinary world without any superpower. Even though the book presents a normal world, Aristotle's story can demonstrate how the hero's journey can apply to common people. There is a hero within everybody because there is a story to tell and share with the world.

In the second table for this work, the information will be analyzed from a different literary theory: the queer criticism presented in the book. From that point of view, the hero's personality can be studied, and it will give a better understanding of the character development in his journey. All type of events people faces and the background where they develop affect the hero's life. Therefore, it is important to mention the hero's events during his journey.

**Table 2**

Quote	Queer criticism	Interpretation
“I hated taking a shower with a bunch of other guys. I don’t know, I just didn’t like that.” (page 15)	The queer criticism analyses and contest the heteronormative structures and relations of meaning.	Aristotle does not feel comfortable with other boys; he feels like other boys just like being disrespectful and intolerant because they always talk about girls, but in a sexual way. In society,

		<p>the normal feel comfortable with other boys because they are supposed to be normal, but it is not always true. Some men do not feel the same and do not like sharing the same space.</p>
<p>“I wondered what it was like, to be the kind of guys that cried over a death of a bird.” (page 55)</p>		<p>It is common to hear expressions like "boys do not cry." This kind of comment in society emphasizes that boys do not have feelings and should be rude and tough. In the story, it is very noticed that Aristotle oppressed his feelings, but on the other side, Dante is a sensitive boy who is not afraid of crying in front of other boys.</p>
<p>Why didn't they come?" I asked. "My uncles and aunts? Why didn't they come?" They didn't approve of your aunt." Why not?"</p>		<p>This is a clear example of heteronormativity about a society that people of the same sex cannot be together because it can involve many</p>

<p>She lived with another woman. For many years." Franny," I said. "She lived with Franny." (page 285)</p>		<p>problems in the real world. Specially rejections from the family or others. They do not accept another type of love because society says that it is not normal and goes against normativity.</p>
<p>"I am guy. He's a guy. It's not the way things are supposed to be." (page 349)</p>		<p>Following the normative of society, love only exists between men and women. Nevertheless, it is not true, love is everywhere and in different forms as well, that love is for everybody does no matter the sex of the person.</p>

**Table 3**

In the last table for this work, the data will be analyzed the heritage background of the hero and how this affected him somehow. This is because of the stereotypes about Latino culture. It is important to say that the book was written when discrimination was more present in the United States. So, it is necessary to highlight the elements the book says about the Latino culture, especially the Mexican Heritage of the hero. The Hero, Aristotle, demonstrated two sides about his heritage. This analysis will explain the character's development and the struggles generated by the hero.

Mexican Heritage Quote	How does it affect him?	Interpretation
<p>“He introduced me to his father, the English professor. I’d never met a Mexican-American man who was an English professor” (page 24)</p>	<p>This was a stereotype Aristotle had about Mexican- Americans. He used to think that Mexican people dedicate to something more related to them.</p>	<p>This example of stereotypes presented in the book creates the idea that people from some countries cannot succeed in education. In other words, heritage is linked to our future education and work. One example to clarify is when Mexicans go to the United States. They think that all Mexicans are construction workers and cannot perform different jobs.</p>
<p>“Why do Mexican like nicknames?” (page 39)</p>	<p>This does not affect Aristotle directly, but it makes him ponder it. He sees that is normal in Mexican culture.</p>	<p>Throughout the story, most of the people's names are very Latin, so Ari says that is normal for him, but the perspective of Dante about Mexican names is that they complained about adding nicknames when they already have names. For Ari,</p>

		<p>the culture of name is not an issue. It is more a reality he accepted without complaints.</p>
<p>By kicking your skinny little asses to the Mexican border,” I said. I guess I was just afraid these guys were going to hurt Dante. I just said what I felt I had to say. (page 52)</p>	<p>This issue affected his temper. He thought that he needed to be rude and Macho for being Mexican.</p>	<p>Aristotle was proud of his heritage, but sometimes it affected his aptitude with others. He was not afraid of the fighting because he felt strong. This was part of two things: first, because he is Mexican and does not feel afraid, and second, because of his masculinity, he will not let anyone mess with him.</p>
<p>“He studied me. You look a little pale. I still look more Mexican than you do.” (page 72)</p>	<p>Aristotle could not understand why his friend, half Mexican too, was whiter than him. Aristotle has the idea that all Mexican look similar, at least in the color of their skin.</p>	<p>As human beings, all people have different genes. Even though the genes are linked to the heritage, it does not mean people will be the same. There is a variety of people, they are proud of their heritage, but sometimes they do not follow the same</p>

		structure as others. In this case, Dante was different even he has Mexican. He did not feel like one and did not look Mexican either. However, Ari believed that all Mexicans were similar in appearance and behaviors.
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### 4.3 Themes, Motifs, and Symbols

#### 4.3.1 symbols

The meaning of symbols in literature could represent and stand something else in meaning. These symbols are not necessarily literal. They give meaning to the object and turn them into a different interpretation. Besides, these symbols commonly are the images, the setting, characters, objects that provide deeper ideas. The author's purpose of giving the symbol is to provide a more descriptive and meaningful story.

##### 4.3.1.1 Birds

The birds in the story represent being pure and innocent and restricted. In the book, Dante was always rescuing them and helping them when the birds were in danger. From the point of view of Aristotle, he noticed the innocent, fragile, and peaceful boy Dante was for being such a kind guy. Also, Aristotle and Dante were like little birds growing and exploring a new world. This is their freedom, both always going everywhere and doing what they like.

On the other hand, there was another point of view. It was the risk of helping the birds because Dante risks his life every time he tries to assist them. The accident Aristotle suffered

was because of a bird that was in need. When both tried to rescue the bird of that night, it marked them forever in their lives. This was a restriction for them because when they remember a bird after the accident, thoughts come to Aristotle's mind like a flashback of that painful accident. Neither one of them wanted to talk about it.

#### **4.3.1.2 Rain**

The rain showed during the hard times the characters were going through because of the night accident happened. Aristotle pondered every time it rained and wondered what would have happened if he had not saved Dante. He gave himself a response about his doubts, and it helped him to overcome the accident. Also, it rained when Aristotle and Dante met again after a long time. They ran naked in the rain. Therefore, the rain here represents relief and clarity for everybody because, after every rainstorm, good things, joy and happiness come. First, the car did not kill Aristotle just injured him and broke his leg and arm, and second, they reunited after a long period. The rain can also be interpreted as sad and a source of hope, like a fresh start or renewal.

#### **4.3.1.3 The accident**

Even though it is a tragic moment for everybody, the accident in this story symbolically speaking represents the true and deep love for someone. The night of the accident, Aristotle was not conscious of what he had done. Suddenly, he jumped to save Ari from being hit by the car. He described his action as an instinct reaction of this body. It was very unexpected even for him. He said that he would never do such a thing for someone else. This action of love, he did for Dante.

Ari's father knew that this brave action his son did for Dante was to save his life and more because he loved him. His son had strong feelings for his fellow, and Aristotle would have preferred giving his life for him and seeing his lover alive instead of suffering his loss.

Until he spoke with his father, Aristotle realized that his heroic action was not for friendship. It was for the real love, appreciation, and deep feelings he felt and denied for his good friend Dante.

#### **4.3.1.4 Letters**

Friendship never ends when there is communication. The letters between Aristotle Mendonza and his friend Dante represent promises and memories. Before and after the accident, it was said that Dante would move to a different City in Chicago, so when the summer end this happened. Ari and Dante will not see each other again until the next summer. Because they were away from each other, they mailed. In these letters, they shared his daily day in the new place, good and bad news, new people they met, what their parents did lately, and their thoughts about the new city and how they feel separated. Therefore, the letter in this story is the promises they said each other about meeting again the next summer and the memories they could not share because they were living in faraway places.

#### **4.2.1.5 Dreams of Bernardo**

Ari used to have dreams about his brother who was in prison, and he quite remembers his brother in his life, but he had this figure of this brother in his dreams only. One of the dreams about his brother was that he seemed him across a river, and Ari could not reach him because it was impossible for him. These dreams about his brother symbolize his admiration and respect for him. Talking about his brother with his parents was prohibited in the house because they did not like to remember why one of their sons was arrested and put in prison.

The parents preferred not to talk about the topic and pretend that Bernardo did not exist at all. Even they did not have photos around the house, all Bernardo's stuff was hidden in a box. Ari wanted to preserve his brother figure and not forget him like his parents used to

do. It would be different if their parents had spoken more about his brother without any limitation, so in this way, Ari could take his admiration for his brother further.

#### **4.2.1.6 Art**

The art in the story represents the unknown world to be discovered. When Ari met Dante, he discovered art in various forms like poems, draws, frames and books. Ari realized that Dante life in two worlds. One world is the one he interacts and shares with people, the normal world, but then, there is the world of knowledge where Dante enjoyed reading, playing, and creating. It was a new world for Aristotle. He learned much art because of Dante.

For this reason, it is important to say that art is a symbol for Aristotle. Aristotle, as well as Dante, liked to learn and know more about everything. It was a new whole world he did not know until Dante introduced him to explore more and more. Most importantly, the art was a way they deeply connected by sharing their opinions, points of view, and discussion about a piece of art of something. They were kids that enjoyed the art so much in many ways.

#### **4.3.2 Motifs**

The motifs are akin to the symbols in literature, but they have the main differences. As well as a symbol, the motifs are images, ideas, or objects that represent and give the meaning of something; what makes the difference between a symbol and a motif is that motifs occur again and again during the story. The motifs are not necessarily physical things; they can be words, phrases, colors, or senses. To identify them, it is critical to note those repetitive events presented in the story, so in that way, the motifs can be identified because they are always presented.

##### **4.3.2.1 Homophobic**

This motif contradicts the main theme of sexuality because the story shows hate crimes against gay people. The way homophobia is presented in the book is behind three main scenarios. The first one is the secret of Ari's brother until the end of the story. It is said that he is in prison that he murdered a transvestite. The second hate crime against the LGBT community is when Dante is beaten by some guys who see him kissing another boy, and the last one is the denial when Aristotle suppresses his feelings and thoughts about Dante. He stated in them mentality of saying himself that he is not gay because it is not right, and it cannot be gay until he hated himself for feeling that way.

#### **4.3.2.2 Secrets**

The secrets are presented in every moment of the story. Everybody in the novel keeps a secret to protect people they love, but this pretention of protecting someone leads them to destruct the trust with others. A good example is the secret of Ari's brother, Bernardo. His parents did not want them to know the truth because they thought that he could not handle the reality of the situation. After all, Ari had a different perspective of his brother. He remembered him as someone nice, lovable, and great brother, but he was not. Sometimes his brother was violent and did not control his anger. This is the reason Ari constantly kept his distance from his parents. He felt like they were not really with him.

The other main secret in the story is the journey of Ari's father in the war. He did not like to talk much about it because the war brought him awful memories that he could never forget. This secret made him feel lonely, reserved, and difficult to communicate with his son. Ari just wanted to know more about his father and talk with him to talk with his mom. In short, the relationship between father and son was not good because the secret restrained them from establishing good relations between father and son.

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The last secret in the story is the secret of Ari's love for Dante. This was an obvious love most of the characters noticed, but they preferred not to say it because they could ruin their friendship. Aristotle saved and hid Dante's feelings and real thoughts for a reason. Instead of Dante, he expressed his feelings for Aristotle but hid his real intentions for the same reason. He did not want to make an awkward situation. He did not want to end his friendship with his best friend. As well as their parents, they noticed the love Ari and Dante had. Thus they preferred to ignore the situation and let them explore and discover by themselves, even if it meant seeing their sons suffer because of love.

### **4.3.2.3 Mexican- American Culture**

This motif has been presented since the beginning of the story. The first example was about skin color. Aristotle has darker skin than Dante. He did not understand why if he was half Latino too. The book gave background about Aristotle's parents, Jaime Mendoza and Liliana Mendoza. Ari constantly described their behaviors like her mom. The latter is very religious devoted to her religion, and loves serving in the church as it is very common in the Latino culture.

Moreover, Ari said that he has many families because Mexican families are big. Besides, the stereotypes Aristotle said as jokes about becoming a gangster and joining in gagging as Mexican people used to do in Paxo, Texas. Both are Mexican- Latino. While Aristotle is proud of his heritage, Dante feels ashamed and embarrassed of being Latino because he believes that Latino people are uncultured and violent.

### **4.3.3 Theme**

The theme in literature is the message or the lesson of the story for the reader and the main topics the author intended to involve in the book; all the themes are subject to the

perception of the readers, which means that there is more than one theme in the literary work. Moreover, the symbols and the motifs are guides that help the readers understand the main theme. In short, the theme is the book's central idea, and the author uses different literary devices to deliver the message or lesson for the reader so that they can interpret their theme better related to the perception of the reader.

#### **4.3.3.1 Sexuality and Identity**

The book *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, tells a story about two teenagers who grew together and became best friends. The book took the reader to explore and discover the identity of the teenagers. What is relevant here is the problems Ari and Dante went through individually to finally accept themselves and understand their feelings towards someone of the same sex. The book developed the story in the 1980s in Paso, Texas. During this time, the morality of the society influenced people's behaviors, so topics such as homosexuality were something for not discussing or seeing. People did not accept it.

This was one of the themes the book presents. Aristotle and Dante were living a world full of stereotypes and homophobia. For this reason, it was hard for them to find their identity and adapt to this world. Also, it should be said that their Mexican culture also influenced their identity. They used to think that Mexican people behaved like they did because it was part of the culture. So, these partners they observed in their environment confused them and affected their process to define themselves and clarify who they are in the world.

Besides, telling the boys' stories about they are trying to find their identities. The book also remarks on the topic of sexuality. Many moments in the book represent the topic, for example, the first time Aristotle and Dante met for the first time. They felt a connection and attraction to each other. Ari and Dante were men in normal concepts, but their doubts about

sexuality emerged after they met. For the first time, Ari felt feelings and behaved differently with someone who captivated his attention, and this person was of the same sex.

In short, these themes are highlighted in the story because the story tells the reader how these boys were from auto discovering, self-acceptance, and exploring. They started when they were boys until they reached maturity. It was a long process Aristotle and Dante did to define, clarify, and understand their identity and sexuality. The book demonstrates the themes through a love, romantic and cute story of two teenagers who do not understand their feelings and attractions toward each other. Besides that, their journey is not easy when they live in an environment full of stereotypes and social morality.

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

This final chapter will discuss the conclusion and recommendations based on the investigation the researcher has done for the literary work. All the conclusions will come from the theories, researcher opinions, and approaches applied, in this chapter will be present the conclusions of the objectives too. Moreover, the recommendations are from the experience this literature gives to the researcher will help for future investigation or studies where the expertise can be used.

#### **5.1 Purpose of the conclusion**

The conclusion is the collection of the ideas explaining how they connect, link, or relate to the research questions, concluding those answers. From an academic writing point of view, the conclusion summarizes the main points the researcher gives to the investigation.

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Another way to for the meaning of conclusion is that the investigator provides the final thoughts in conclusion. In other words, the conclusion is the closure of the investigation.

Based on the studies made by experts, the investigator of the work can get to those conclusions of the topic because the investigator can make his or her judgment of the information he was investigating. The studies helped to achieve the conclusions. They provide a different point of view and extend the investigator's information, taking this analysis to a deeper and further investigation with more meaning. For this literary work, there were many conclusions for the analysis of the book "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of the universe. The mythical approach and the literary elements were applied in the research to reach the information necessary.

As was mentioned before, the conclusion is the last argument given to an investigation. In order to obtain the conclusion, there is analysis in the premises and development of the ideas the research involves, which help define the truth, the validation, and proof the information collected. This is a literary work. For this reason, the conclusions are expected to be proofed and defended by interpretation according to the information analyzed in the book, the approach selected, and the theory previously defined for the research.

The previous information the investigator of the work has, plus the rich experience of knowing the research provides, contribute to an extent incredible way the topic of the work. It can be said that through this investigation, it can be concluded that Aristotle Mendoza, the protagonist of the book, demonstrates to be a hero, in his story he showed patter of the hero's journey in the real world, even though the many topics the book covers such as LGBT romance, discrimination, stereotypes, homophobic, among others... The protagonist, Aristotle

Mendoza, leaves in the reader's mind that he is a true hero who overcame the difficulties and conquered the quest.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

There should be set up some objectives for any investigation to work with. These objectives will help the investigator and the readers to understand and know what this research is about. So, the objectives will help describe the process the research needed to follow to reach the purpose desired of the work. The general and specific objectives of the investigation will be summarized. Cited and explained at the end of the research, this will help to show how the objectives were obtained.

### **5.2.1 Conclusion of the General Objective**

- To investigate Aristotle Mendoza's heroes' Journey through The Heroes' Journey.

This research aimed to analyze the story of the book Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secret of the Universe through the Hero's Journey theory because the purpose desired was to prove that the main Character Aristotle Mendoza can fit as a hero. In the story, it can be seen that the process and development of the protagonist went through. From the begging of the story, Aristotle demonstrated to be someone difficult to deal with and did not expect anything from the world. He was tired of the life he was living and wanted to make changes in his life, but he did not know-how. He was stuck in his reality.

There was a process in Aristotle. As the story was going on, the hero, during his process, started to demonstrate changes in his life. At the end of the story, he was someone new. He changed his vision and perspective of the world and finally discovered his identity and sexuality. That was something he was struggling with. Therefore, Aristotle demonstrates an example of a hero through this journey. All his journey presented in an ordinary world

following six stages of 12. Thus, the stages were only six. It can be proved that the stages are presented in the theory of Joseph Campbell in the book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

### **5.2.2 Conclusion of the first Specific Objective**

To enumerate the characteristics of a true hero presented on Aristotle Mendoza's personality development while going through a self-discovery sexuality acceptance process.

The first objective was to analyze the personality development of the hero and his process to discover his sexual identity. The story demonstrates that Aristotle Mendoza overcame his fears of being himself. He finally accepted his sexuality and stopped restraining his feelings for Dante. Like any hero, Aristotle showed the reader that he is a hero. He was the hero of his own story. It is important to say that the story was presented in an ordinary world where power does not exist, just the reality of human beings.

Therefore, Aristotle Mendoza can be considered a normal hero like everybody in the world can be because he could change his ordinary world, his life, and the lives of their loved ones. He went beyond his capacity and broke his chains that restricted him from becoming the person who wanted, his real himself. It is necessary to mention that being a hero is more than having power. A real hero is a person who wants to make changes in his life and save the people they love most. It means to question his values and learn to grow in mind and spirit. Aristotle Mendoza shows all the aspects of a real hero. He went through a long process of learning. It was a journey that everybody can go, as long as you can adapt to changes and defeat the fears of adventure.

### **5.2.3 Conclusion of the second Specific Objective**

To analyze the queer elements presented in the book that influenced the journey of Aristotle Mendoza.

As the book's main theme is sexuality and identity, there are many queer elements presented. These queer elements during the whole story affected in a good way the hero. Aristotle was living in a world full of heteronormativity. He had difficulties with that because he did not belong to that world. The main problem was that Aristotle did not understand the normal behaviors of boys. He even thought and said that he was not like them. Somehow, he feels so different than the rest of the boys.

In his journey of discovering this sexuality, Aristotle Mendoza faced these queer elements. At the beginning of the story, Aristotle lets the readers know that he is different, and after meeting his best friend, Dante gets into a gay world. A world he would never have found without the help of Dante. Aristotle did not escape this reality and accepted these queer elements in his life. At the end of the story, they understand why he felt different than other boys, why he felt more comfortable with girls, and why sometimes he felt so angry with little things in his life because this anger was the love of being himself and being accepted by himself as gay.

#### **5.2.4 Conclusion of the third Specific Objective**

To illustrate how Aristotle's Mexican heritage affected Aristotle Mendoza's hero's journey based on the hero's journey.

Aristotle's background tells us that he was half Mexican. He showed pride of his heritage, but this heritage affected him somehow because he had a mockery perspective of being Mexican. However, he also felt that being Mexican means acting in stereotypical behavior. This was the problem he had with his Mexican heritage; he followed some stereotypes because he thought it was the way he needed to react sometimes. This issue mainly affected his aptitude and behavior with people.

However, Dante, his best friend, taught him to understand that being Mexican can be different. It is not necessary to be the same as the stereotypes. Dante showed a different vision of being Mexican. It is ok to feel proud of his heritage, but it is not necessary to follow society's stereotypes about a culture. Therefore, the perspective he had about his heritage just made him to act wrongly sometimes and say jokes about it that were not funny for his family and friends. Here is when the hero starts to change this attitude and behavior.

### **5.3 Restatement of the Research Question**

Those events and circumstances generate a transformation in Aristotle Mendoza of becoming a hero based on Joseph Campbell's Hero theory? In all the hero's journey of Aristotle Mendoza, there is a protagonist's development. This development was coming from the decisions the hero made in his journey. In his journey step by step, Ari started making changes in his life. So, many events were presented in the story the hero faced to become a hero. These events were part of the process of learning. Without these events, the hero would never reach his real potential.

Moreover, it is important to highlight that for any student who would like to study and explore the LGBT topic. The person needs to be sure about its importance because, through this way, the topic can explore the aspects it involves, especially sexuality discovery and self-acceptance. Like in the case of Aristotle Mendoza, who finally accepted himself, but this change affected the people around him, his family, and his friends. The main character demonstrated an experience of freedom in a world where this option could not be possible.

The analysis of this work demonstrated how Aristotle Mendoza turned himself into someone else facing real life and dealing with people. Dante was the person who made him to change. In his journey, Aristotle faced these situations that made him the hero. He ended

discovering his real him. The same situation pushed him to become the hero he is now, someone wiser, stronger, and not afraid of the world. It is important to say that these events tell what happened and express the feelings and thoughts the hero had during those events. For this reason, it helped to understand better the hero development.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

After all the investigation process, it is recommended to give advice and recommendations for future researchers. This will help the investigators to facilitate tools and advice to investigate those areas that require more attention and identify those areas of improvement to get an excellent and extraordinary investigation. The following recommendations are for those investigations like this one, in this case, a literary analysis of a book. These are pieces of advice and recommendations for students of any grade who need to work in a literary analysis of a book for academic purposes. So, the recommendation given in this section will work for those literary investigations.

The first recommendation for any literary research is the investigator before starting the investigation. The person should understand and familiarize with the literary work because the information needs to be clear for the investigator. There are many literary works, so the pages of the book will be a factor to consider. It is a long novel it would take more time to analyze, but it is a short novel. There will not be enough data to add to the investigation. Reading the novel is not enough. It is necessary to take note while reading through this way, the information can be read effectively, and important details will not be missed.

Moreover, the book chosen for that investigation should be a literary work that provokes interest in the investigator. It is important because the interest of the investigator will reflect in work. It is chosen a book that is not what the investigator wants. It will be complicated to talk about something that it is not pleased to discuss. Instead, if the book

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chosen fascinates, the investigator will generate inside the reader many ideas to discuss and helpful material that can be added to the research.

However, not all books can work for literary research. The book should be a book that can provide important information to investigate. So, the book should include a story with purpose, characters with development processes, themes, symbols, and approaches.

Therefore, before choosing a book. The research can ask some questions; this process can help to determine if the book works or does not. Ask the following questions: Do I like this book? Does the book contain an extended story with juicy information? What is the book about? What do I want to investigate in this book?

Another recommendation, as soon as the book the research defines the book to be studied. It is recommended to identify the best approach, analyze the different theories and criticisms. This will help determine which one of them can fit better for the investigation. It is like doing a second analysis for the book selected. All of this can help create good objectives that will be included in the research as the book as the objectives are crucial in the whole process of the literary works. It is recommended to investigate first what will be analyzed in the book.

The third recommendation for any investigation is to dedicate enough time to the research. The best recommendation to give in this advice is to create a schedule, establish a specific time and date to work on the project, note the encounters and difficulties that work is presenting, and check the teacher. Researching proper time management will help avoid errors and rush with the project. So, if the works need adjustment and edit information in the data, the research will have time to fix those issues and successfully conclude the work.

Another recommendation is to ask for help when it is needed. Sometimes the investigation can be a struggle. So, it is recommended to consult any doubts with the teacher

in charge. This will help to clarify the doubts and work correctly on the work. So, it is important to identify what is needed and ask the teacher for advice to solve the issues. The teacher is a guide that will help the investigator with the project, but the teacher will not do the whole work. Therefore, communication between teacher and student is essential for the project.

Another recommendation for the investigation is to read more and look for more information on the studied topic. Sometimes the information the investigator has is not enough. It is recommended to read more and more about the topic studied. This extra information will help generate more thoughtful and accurate opinions, thoughts, and ideas to discuss. The new information can be interpreted better and from different points of view. Of course, the extra information should come from reliable resources.

The final recommendation for any investigation is to consider that this project can be useful for other investigators who will talk about the same or similar topic. So, it is important to create a good project that can benefit others. In cases like this work that is a literary analysis, the recommendation about approaches is the psychological, mythological approach and the Heroes' Journey theory because they are the easier approaches for this type of investigation.

If some changes can be made for this project, it would be the structure. This type of work has a complex structure. Some of them are repeated and unnecessary, like all the theories that need to be included. It would be better to focus on the main theory chosen for the work. Also, it would be easier and faster to take references from a few valuable sources instead of looking for definitions and meaning in many books. It is complicated and tiring. In short, the project let the research much experience for future investigation and for those who will start a new literary work project.

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