



Magic is Might

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Magic is Might 2012 Proceedings of the International Conference

Edited by
Luigina Ciolfi and Gráinne O'Brien

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Introduction to “Magic Is Might 2012”

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1. About the Conference

This edited collection gathers the research papers originally presented at the “Magic Is Might 2012” conference, held on July 23-24 at the University of Limerick (Ireland).

“Magic is Might 2012” brought together a group of international academics discussing the cultural influence of the Harry Potter books and films across disciplinary boundaries. Indeed, the selection of papers that were presented at the conference covered a wide multi-disciplinary span: from literary analysis, gender studies, media and technology, e-commerce, law and many more. The programme of “Magic Is Might 2012” and the resulting edited collection we present here are a true testament to the wide cultural influence that the Harry Potter books and films have had on various aspects of scholarship and of society.

In recent years, increased attention to popular culture phenomena and to their impact on audiences has led to a corresponding academic interest in analyzing and understanding related issues. Much research has been conducted on the impact of popular films, TV programs and music on cultural production, audience participation and textual and narrative analysis. Harry Potter is no exception: with 450 million copies sold by 2011¹ and extensive related media in the forms of major motion pictures, video games and online reading resources such as “Pottermore”², the story of the Boy Wizard has undoubtedly made a resounding impact on popular culture, and has generated a community of dedicated fans and followers that has been studied as a phenomenon in its own right (Anelli, 2008).

From a scholarly perspective, research has been conducted on both the construction and crafting of the story by author JK Rowling and by the makers of the films produced by Warner Bros., and on the effect that this fictional universe has had on audiences and, particularly, fans.

The years of publication of the books and films have also coincided with unprecedented development of online communication and interaction mediums, thus being connected to

¹ Source: http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/complete_coverage/harry_potter/

² <http://www.pottermore.com>

high visibility and fast development of fan communities and to intense participation by fans and readers online (Anelli, 2008), leading to the proliferation of fan-made art, fiction, themed-crafts, music and much more.

With this backdrop in mind, it is not surprising that scholarly literature on the study of the Harry Potter series has been appearing for some years (see for example the edited books by Heilman, 2008 and Sims, 2012). Similarly, academic events on Harry Potter have been held around the world for over a decade. One notable example is the academic track at LeakyCon³, the largest fan convention on Harry Potter, which was established in response to increased interest in in-depth debate around the series; other events have included “Phoenix Rising”⁴, “Terminus”⁵ and “Harry Potter Conference”⁶.

Interestingly, the year 2012 saw the first academic conferences on Harry Potter being held in both Ireland and the United Kingdom, the former documented in this volume and the latter having taken place at the University of St. Andrews in May 2012. Both events had a wide disciplinary span and a peer-reviewed programme of presentations, attracting speakers from several countries.

Interestingly, another similarity between the two events is the widespread media attention they received in their respective countries.

In the UK, several national newspapers covered the event, with some expressing open criticism over whether Harry Potter “deserves” academic study (Rainey, 2012; Flood, 2012). In Ireland, although “Magic Is Might” received very positive commentary by Irish national newspapers (Hayes, 2012; Woulfe, 2012; Duggan, 2012) recognising the cultural significance of JK Rowling’s work, media personality Ray D’Arcy questioned the appropriateness of the conference on his popular show⁷ on the Irish national radio station Today FM, and invited one of the organisers to “defend” the event as something that a respected public university should endorse.

Quite naturally, the “defense” of academic events on Harry Potter is the fact that academics find Harry Potter interesting as a literary work and as a popular culture phenomenon, and that it sparks the desire to be understood better, even by scholars who are not themselves fans of the series. Indeed, studying Harry Potter does not equal with being a fan of it: nonetheless its effect on readers and on other domains (such as education, technology, business, etc.) is worthy of investigation. Little did we know that in organising “Magic Is Might 2012” we would find ourselves arguing on the academic freedom to examine and reflect on what shapes contemporary culture and leads to new knowledge in so many disciplinary fields.

This debate on Harry Potter as a subject of academic study interestingly connects to both the invited presentations hosted at “Magic Is Might 2012”: the opening remarks by Eoin Devereux and the keynote presentation by Mark Patrick Hederman (which is included in its entirety in this volume).

Devereux, building on his own extensive research on audiences and fandom, particularly regarding popular music (Devereux, 2009), remarked on how popular culture fans tend to

³ <http://www.leakycon.com/>

⁴ <http://www.thephoenixrises.org/>

⁵ <http://www.terminus2008.org/>

⁶ http://www.chc.edu/News/2012/September/Harry_Potter_Conference/

⁷ <http://www.todayfm.com/shows/weekdays/ray-darcy-show/Overview.aspx>

be “pathologised” as obsessive and extreme by others, contrarily to other followers such as, for example, sport fans. Their motives and the forms of their following are singled out; linked to this is also the questioning of whether certain aspects of popular culture should or should not be studied in more depth (Devereux, 2007).

Hederman’s keynote – included in this volume - refers to writings where the likes of Harold Bloom and A.S. Byatt declared the poor value of Harry Potter in comparison to other works of fiction that have been subject to scholarly inquiry. Hederman, however, responds:

“They keep on telling us what they think we should be doing, rather than telling us the meaning of what we prefer to do. They slam films or books which we love, not because of what they are in themselves, but because they are not what these critics think they should be. Complaining that Rowling is not Tolkien, that Harry Potter is not The Hobbit, that the Half-Blood Prince is not Lord of the Rings is about as helpful as telling us that surf boards are not submarines. Of course they’re not: they were meant to be, and to do, completely different things” (Hederman, this volume, p. 105)

Hederman argues that the undeniable impact (if only in terms of sheer numbers) of the Harry Potter series is in itself worthy of investigation.

The papers in this volume indeed show that an analysis of the Potter phenomenon brings useful insights at many levels. As ongoing research is investigating issues of audience participation, alternative readings, cultural and technological ramifications, as well as more established socio-scientific analyses on themes such as religion, race, gender and sexuality, we feel that “Magic Is Might 2012” represents these open debates comprehensively and makes a valuable contribution to a field of study that has attracted the interest and enthusiasm of many.

2. About this volume

What follows in this book is a selection of 19 research papers that have been included into the main Conference programme after a peer-review process of paper proposals. The contributions span three continents and a wide range of institutions. The themes emerging from the papers are several.

Technology and digital media emerge as a popular focus, including reflections on how Harry Potter has generated a vast fan-made narrative production online (Leogrande, Jones), discussions on how the magical mechanisms of interaction featuring in the story can inspire the design of real-world technology (Eggen and Eggen), and an analysis of the economic aspects of commercialising the series online (Colbiørnsen).

Another theme is the study of the finer details of the Harry Potter world, from food (Trieu) and homes (Ciolfi), to particular notable characters (Saraco, Andrews, Zarzycka) also in comparison to other literary works (Benham).

Privilege and divisions in wizarding society are examined by another cluster of papers, with particular attention to privilege (Brown, Nuttall) and institutional order (Aghtan).

Finally, we see a range of structural analyses of the series and characters through overarching themes (Mroczek, Loidl, Flegar), with a particular focus on Queer Theory readings (O'Brien, Cuntz-Leng).

Additional presentations included in the conference that do not feature in this book of proceedings but that we wish to acknowledge were: Natalia Wieham (University of Cologne) “Our Fellow Kreacher: The portrayal of non-human animals in Harry Potter as a reflection on the human-animal divide”; Michael O'Rourke (Independent Colleges Dublin) and Karin Sellberg (University of Edinburgh) “HoP: Horcrux Oriented Philosophy”; Emily Roach (Roehampton University) “Sexualising Severus Snape: Queer Erotics and Slashing in Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince”.

Overall, we feel that this collection of papers offers a tremendous representation of current scholarly work surrounding Harry Potter, and we are very proud of having presented these contributions to the conference delegates in Limerick, and to readers worldwide through this book.

3. Concluding Reflections

A great accomplishment of “Magic Is Might 2012” was the partnership between the Interaction Design Centre in the Computer Science and Information Systems Department and the Department of Sociology at the University of Limerick in both hosting the event and shaping the conference’s thrust. It is extremely significant that a bridge has been established between different areas of academic research in providing a venue for discussion for a multidisciplinary community such as this.

This partnership was at the core of the conference. Moreover, the event benefited from the contribution of other collaborators.

Another very important part of “Magic Is Might 2012” was The Trial, held in the University of Limerick Moot Court and hosted by Norah Burns of the UL School of Law, where, following the procedural steps of an actual trial, the participants discussed (following the events portrayed in “Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix”) whether the character Dolores Umbridge was unlawfully kidnapped by Centaurs, against the counter-argument that she had herself been guilty of trespassing and discrimination against them.

Each paper session and The Trial led to lively discussions and debates, and many of the presenters acknowledged other attendee’s comments and queries as a source of improvement and advancement of their own research – which we see as a measure of the success of the event.

In this short Introduction we hope to have provided an exhaustive overview of the extraordinary network of collaborations that has made “Magic Is Might 2011” such a rich and varied event, and we expect that this volume is both a tangible representation of the event and a useful resource for the international scholarly debate on Harry Potter.

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The Trial was designed and facilitated by Norah Burns and the UL School of Law, who we thank also for making the UL Moot Court available for the conference.

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The Making of Home Places in *Harry Potter*

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Abstract

This paper examines the characterisation of homes in the Harry Potter series, with the goal of showing how JK Rowling portrays contrasting associations between an environment's physical characteristics and its lived qualities. Drawing from insights on the definition of *place* as the physical environment that is experienced by humans and invested with actions, values and emotions, I will discuss in particular four homes featuring in the books and portrayed in the films, and present their diverse structural and experiential characteristics. I will also show how the most unlikely of domestic spaces (forbidding, cold and often downright dangerous), Hogwarts, becomes the real and ideal "home" in Harry's story.

1. Introduction

In this paper, I will discuss how in the Harry Potter series houses are constructed into homes from a place-centred perspective. We refer to *place* as the concept of lived space, whereby a geometrical and structural extension (e.g. space) is made into place by virtue of the experience of humans occupying it. According to the phenomenological school of geography, adopting an experiential perspective to the study of the physical world is useful for it takes the perspective of actors, rather than that of structure (Tuan, 1977). Where space normally refers to geometrical extension and location, *place* describes our experience of being in the world and investing a physical location or setting with meaning, memories and feelings. Space and place must be conceptualised with respect to the human body, as "the human being, by his mere presence, imposes a schema on space" (*ibid*: 36). Space is organised by people so that it conforms with and caters to their biological needs and social relationships. Places are entities, which "incarnate the experience and aspirations of people" (Tuan, 1971, p.281). Tuan emphasizes this perspective on agency:

"To live in a place means to experience it, to be aware of it in the bones as well as in the head. Place, at all scales from the armchair to the nation, is a construct of experience; it is sustained not only by timber, concrete, and highways, but also by the quality of human awareness" (Yi-Fu Tuan, 1975)

Similarly, Bachelard (1958) studied how the experience of intimate spaces (mainly the home), generates emotional responses and, interestingly, poetic images that represent our attachment to the physical world. Literature regularly plays on the deep connection between lived qualities and spatial qualities in creating evocative presentations of domestic spaces, all the way from C.S. Lewis' linking of a wardrobe to the secret cubbyhole leading to the world of Narnia (Lewis, 1950), to Suzanne Collins' contrasting

of the comforts and dangers of the Capitol with Katniss Everdeen's dilapidated home in District 12 in "The Hunger Games".

Throughout the seven Harry Potter books, we see several houses and homes in their relationship with Harry and other characters. In other words, we see how these spaces are made into places by the actions, values and emotions that people invest in them.

Furthermore, such agency shapes houses into homes in sometimes unexpected and contrasting ways.

Overall, houses and homes are very important in the series, as we can look at the story as a quest for Harry's true home. Not surprisingly in this respect, Number Four Privet Drive is mentioned in the very first line of "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone", and it is the place from where the narration begins.

In the story we subsequently encounter a set of deeply different homes, with diverse physical and experiential characteristics: from Privet Drive to Twelve Grimmauld Place, each house offers different spatial traits and even more different "lived" qualities. In a way, we make these places ourselves together with Harry, as we learn about and imagine his world – in Yi-Fu Tuan's words: "To experience is to learn; it means acting on the given and creating out of the given" (Tuan, 1977, p.9).

In the following sections I will show how some of the houses featuring in the books are made into homes in ways that are often contrasting with the physical and structural qualities of them as "spaces", showing, on the other hand, how they are experientially constructed by the actors in the story, through their personal, social and cultural interactions.

JK Rowling thus plays with different constructs of "home" that can be read from a place-making perspective, as Sack (1997) argues: "As all places, they are made what they are by agency" (Sack, 1997).

In the Harry Potter books "agency" is deeply linked with magic: not only in terms of performing spells or brewing potions, but, as Dumbledore reminds us, in terms of actions and choices that lead to the deepest, most mysterious and complex magical bindings.

Through an exercise of "topoanalysys" (as defined by Bachelard, 1958), i.e. the linking of spatial qualities to lived qualities, I also want to show how the most unlikely of domestic spaces, Hogwarts, becomes the real and ideal "home" in Harry's story.

2. Number Four, Privet Drive

Going back to my first point, what in the books is structured to conform to the stereotype of the perfect home *physically* (either Muggle or Wizard), is not a "good" home when it comes to values, nurturing and shelter.

Let's look at the one Muggle home we get to know in good detail in the books: Number 4 Privet Drive is the perfect suburban picture of the middle-class "good home". It is clean, tidy, spacious, and with all mod cons. In terms of how the Dursleys have made Number 4 into a home, it responds to the image of a "Family home" by all criteria: there are comfortable rooms, including a guest room for welcoming others, there is a well-stocked fridge, there are plenty of family photos decorating the meticulously tidy and gleaming

surfaces. However, while such a home nurtures the Dursley family, these characteristics are also the signs of Harry's exclusion:

"The room held no sign at all that another boy lived in the house, too."
 (Philosopher's Stone, p.19)

While the house is a safe space for Harry against the Death Eaters and Voldemort thanks to Lily's blood magic (Maätita et Al. 2012), it is far from a true home to him. During his years at Number 4, Privet Drive Harry inhabits the most unsuitable spaces: the cupboard under the stairs, that is dark, cramped, dirty and full of spiders (and in fact not a space fit for human habitation at all); and then the "smallest bedroom" crammed with disused and broken objects: "Nearly everything in here was broken" (Philosopher's Stone, p32). To the Dursleys, Harry is someone at odds with their lifestyle, who should be shunned and out of sight.

The smallest bedroom becomes by all accounts a prison in Chamber of Secrets, where the door is locked, a cat flap installed to provide Harry with scanty meals, and bars are fitted at the window to avoid his and Hedwig's escape.

Harry is seen as a danger for the house: Aunt Petunia refuses to leave him alone there:

"And come back and find the house in ruins?", "I won't blow up the house!"
 said Harry (Philosopher's Stone, p.22).

Overall, Magic in general is the destructive force of Privet Drive, something that will break the surface of a perfect home into bits. In Philosopher's Stone, Uncle Vernon tries to keep out the letters from Hogwarts that are forcing their way inside; in Goblet of Fire, Mr. Weasley manages to penetrate into the house but also practically destroys the Dursleys living room.

As a matter of fact, magical agency in Privet Drive only seems to work without damage when the Dursleys are away: for example when the advance guard manages to rescue Harry in Order of the Phoenix. Otherwise, the signs of Harry's magical life are hidden (also by him, often hiding his magical belongings under the floorboards), and magic performed when the Dursleys are around generally has disastrous consequences (see Dudley's tongue in Goblet of Fire, Aunt Marge's blowing up in Prisoner of Azkaban, or Mr. and Mrs. Mason's pudding incident with Dobby in Chamber of Secrets).

Finally, in Deathly Hallows, the threat of magic on Privet Drive is too great, and the Dursleys have to leave their home in order to preserve it. Although the house has been somehow protected by Lily's blood sacrifice, the constant threat of magic to its normalcy has finally found its way in. Whereas magic as it is represented by Lord Voldemort's threat on Harry is not exactly a positive force, the contrast between the perfect home concealing a hostile environment provided by Privet Drive is antagonised by the magical world, where Harry can live a full –if yet dangerous- life.

However, we can see how this imperfect home in a perfect house is realised not only towards Harry: in some ways, Privet Drive is a place of abuse of Dudley too, where he grows up into a spoilt, arrogant and bullying adolescent, raised by adults who are too

afraid of difference and change to educate him to tolerance and respect. By enforcing the superficial stereotype of the perfect, normal, safe home, the Dursleys manage to create a bad home for both the children they look after.

In Deathly Hallows, Harry is at last able to view the house with some fondness only when it has become empty of the Dursleys: the “agents” who made the perfect house into such an imperfect home are out of the picture, and Harry, now an adult and freed of his unwilling bond to Privet Drive, can look back at his own bittersweet memories of the place.

3. Dark Homes: Malfoy Manor and Number Twelve Grimmauld Place

Whereas Number 4, Privet Drive is the only Muggle home that we see in some detail, we have the opportunity to explore several wizarding homes across the seven books. Some feature only for brief parts of the story, such as Snape’s home, Spinner’s End, and the Gaunts’ hovel in Half-Blood Prince, and Bill and Fleur’s Shell Cottage and the Lovegoods’ house in Deathly Hallows. Others we get to know better, such as Twelve Grimmauld Place, Malfoy Manor and the Burrow.

Malfoy Manor in Wiltshire and Grimmauld Place in London are grand old buildings belonging to two of the best-known and wealthiest pureblood families, the Malfoys and the Blacks.

Whereas Grimmauld Place has had a strange fate and a “fall from grace” linked to Sirius’s personal history, Regulus’s death and the successive decline of the Black family, Malfoy Manor is by all exterior signs the “good home” of the Wizarding world: handsome, well to do, full of heritage and safe. There are magnificent objects: chandeliers, soft carpets, and a manicured garden with a bubbling fountain and pure white albino peacocks kept as impressive and extravagant pets.

However, it is also home to deception and plots, it is the Death Eaters headquarters, and a scene of torture and murder as well as the harbour of Death Eater ideology. Harry himself enters it as a prisoner of Snatchers in Deathly Hallows: he is bound, hit by a hex and in fear for his life, and yet he cannot help noticing his grandeur:

“The drawing room dazzled after the darkness outside; even with his eyes almost closed Harry could make out the wide proportions of the room. A crystal chandelier hung from the ceiling, more portraits against the dark purple walls” (Deathly Hallows, p. 370)

The Malfoys status and respectable front are the cover to boundless ambition and cruelty. To Draco, Malfoy Manor is ultimately a good home, and it seems that the only redeeming feature of the Malfoys is their attachment to each other: in the end Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy don’t care for Voldemort and the Death Eaters anymore, as far as their son is alive, and their family can preserve itself.

Malfoy Manor harbours this duplicity between a caring family and a ruthless attitude to treating others in the structural overlap between the magnificent drawing room and the secret chamber underneath it, a gloomy, dark and bare space where dark objects are

hidden (as revealed by Draco in Chamber of Secrets) and prisoners kept (as we see in Deathly Hallows): they are mirror images of the duplicity of its inhabitants.

Twelve Grimmauld Place used to be a similarly splendid representation of the wealth and power of a “good” family, however it is now derelict as much as the power of the Black family has faded – partially by the intentions of Sirius who rejected the family home and only took an interest in preserving it when made to by Dumbledore and the Order of the Phoenix.

Grimmauld Place is as grand as its past: an imposing townhouse in London, handsomely decorated and full of precious artefacts. We see tapestries, silk wallpaper and rich fabric hangings, a large kitchen with countless implements, a fancy bathroom, and a stately drawing room full of ancient magical objects.

However, when Grimmauld Place was perfect and prosperous, it was also a house harbouring pure-blood supremacy, willingly feeding a son to the Death Eaters and pushing another one away at the age of sixteen as a bad egg.

We in Deathly Hallows see that Sirius expressed his personal views in making his bedroom appear in complete contrast with the rest of the house: the colours of Gryffindor cover the silk wallpaper, and Muggle-made images of motorbikes and bikini-clad girls decorate the walls. On the other hand, Regulus’s private space is physically the embodiment of the perfect pureblood Slytherin.

The physical appearance of Grimmauld Place, when we see it for the first time in Order of the Phoenix, represents the “dark” values of the Black family even more than Malfoy Manor does. The representation of this is physically visible for example in the house elf heads decorating the hallway, the dark magic objects proudly displayed in the drawing room cabinet, the snake symbolism we find around the house, such as the front door knocker, the door handles and the bathroom taps that have the form of open-mouthed serpents (Deathly Hallows, p. 191), and, of course, in the ancient tapestry (which interestingly is represented as a room in the Order of the Phoenix movie) representing the Black family tree.

When Harry first enters Grimmauld place, it is a decaying building, although it has been recently re-occupied by Sirius, and shortly after by the Order of the Phoenix, and slowly being turned into the headquarters of the anti-Voldemort resistance. As Sirius points out, the house’s appearance is now true to its essence: “It is black, it’s filthy”.

Grimmauld Place is the embodiment of its past masters and their way of thinking, and Sirius and the Order are trying to make it into something diametrically opposite – the house, as a living embodiment of such agency, resents it:

“Snape might refer to their work as ‘cleaning’, but in Harry’s opinion they were really waging war on the house, which was putting up a very good fight” (Order of the Phoenix, p. 109).

The cleanout is never truly completed due to Sirius’ death and then to Snape’s murder of Dumbledore’s, leaving Grimmauld Place as a house in-between its past and its present. Poisoned by Sirius’ frustration, Dumbledore’s distance and the tensions between members of the Order and within Harry himself, Grimmauld Place is not a haven for

Harry at first. Paradoxically, it becomes a home for Harry, Ron and Hermione at its lowest point: abandoned, emptied of its treasures by the thief Mundungus Fletcher, with a lonely and surly Kreacher who now is under Harry's reluctant responsibility.

It is Harry, Ron and Hermione's effort in understanding Regulus' story, reconciling the Black family actions with their consequences, and then in forming a plan of action to recover the locket Horcrux that turns Grimmauld Place finally into something close to a nurturing home, and Kreacher into a willing house elf:

"The Kitchen was almost unrecognisable. Every surface now shone: copper pots and pans had been burnished to a rosy glow, the wooden table top gleamed, the goblets and plates already laid for dinner glinted in the light from a merrily blazing fire, on which a cauldron was simmering" (Deathly Hallows, p. 185).

4. The Burrow

Purebloods they may be, but the Weasleys represent a type of Wizard family completely at odds with the pride and prejudice of the Blacks. Their home in Devon, The Burrow, is a place where Harry feels at last welcome and liked.

However, again, JK Rowling couples the Weasleys beliefs and lifestyle in contrasting fashion with the structural identity of their home.

The Burrow is *physically* completely out of the canon of what a good home should be. It's not even a house as such: it's a stone pigsty with additional floors stacked crookedly on top of each other, and kept together by magic.

The grounds are unkempt and littered with rusty cauldrons, wandering chickens and old boots, the garden is overgrown and gnomes run free there. Inside the Burrow, rooms are cramped, shabby and a little messy, and the furniture is old and battered. The stairs are uneven and the passageways narrow. Everything is worn out by time, by the Weasleys' inability to afford refurbishments, and by the everyday wear and tear of a large family.

Although the house is rickety and rundown, Harry feels immediately comfortable there by seeing it as the natural opposite of Privet Drive, as he says to Ron in Chamber of Secrets: "This is the best house I have ever been in".

It is untidy and shabby, but The Burrow is welcoming (and not only to Harry), literally nourishing (due to Mrs. Weasley's great cooking), physically and emotionally warm and relatively secure. Interestingly, it is the first home JK Rowling shows us where there are books that are read (in Privet Drive they had never been touched).

Ron's room is as battered as the rest of the house (or even more so, for it is right beneath the ghoul in the attic), but it is a happy place, representing Ron's familiar comforts, his happy childhood, and where his personality can be freely expressed – something that Harry has never been able to do in Privet Drive.

The Burrow is not an "ideal" home, but it's the most "normal" one, housing conflicts (for example Molly's interference in her children's lives as they grow up, and the long and painful rift with Percy), as well as loving relationships.

It is not exactly safe either: the magic in the air can become undisciplined, there are regular explosions from Fred and George's room, and a ghoul permanently lives in the attic.

Rowling places positive agency within a space that is far from perfect in its physical features. Clearly, she does it firstly to contrast the Burrow against both Number Four Privet Drive and richer wizarding households to make the point that love matters more than means or pride, but also to maintain the strategy of depicting how unexpected experiential accounts of places emerge out of their physical accommodation.

5. “The first and only place he had felt at home”: Hogwarts

This view on agency as the true determinant of what makes a house a home is reaffirmed in the representation of Hogwarts as the closest thing Harry has had to a home, until he finally makes his own at the end of the series.

In the narrative, we see several occurrences of Harry thinking of Hogwarts as a home and of “feeling at home” there.

Everyone is welcome at Hogwarts, nurtured with good magical education, supervision, good food and a warm bed. Indeed, the four “houses” (if only in name) are a sort of family for the students, the common rooms are physically some of the most home-like of the environments at Hogwarts and physically they embody some of the houses’ characteristics: from the reflective space of their tower for studious Ravenclaws, to the well-worn comfort for boisterous Gryffindors in their common room.

However, overall it is difficult to picture Hogwarts in a way that fully complies with the structural criteria of a good home. It is forbidding, daunting, drafty and cold. It can be deceiving (with staircases moving around and doors, and indeed entire rooms, that cannot be found or opened), and downright dangerous.

As Harry arrives at Hogwarts for the very first time, Dumbledore announces to the students:

“I must tell you that this year, the third-floor corridor on the right-hand side is out of bounds to everyone who does not wish to die a very painful death”
(Philosopher’s Stone, p. 95).

Students have died there, and the castle also harbours dangerous creatures and equally dangerous magical objects.

Notably, the Chamber of Secrets, the space embodying the prejudice and excesses of Slytherin’s brand of magic and the inspiration for Lord Voldemort’s conquest of the wizarding world, is situated deep inside Hogwarts, indeed almost at the very roots of the castle.

Nonetheless, Hogwarts holds a very important quality that we associate to a home: it is nurturing and empowering, rendering people able to deal with hazards inside and outside of the castle, and it is indeed already a home to a great many people, like for example certain teachers (Hagrid, Trelawney, McGonagall), and to Dumbledore himself. As with any home, some rooms are protective and nurturing: providing accommodation,

education and understanding. Others are more forbidding, for example Snape's dungeon rooms, very much linked in characteristics to his personal history.

Of course, Hogwarts is even more of a home to the orphaned boys – Harry Potter and Tom Riddle. Indeed, Harry uneasily realises how similarly him and the young Lord Voldemort feel about the castle when Dumbledore explains:

“(...) ‘Voldemort was, I believe, more attached to this school than he has ever been to a person. Hogwarts was where he had been happiest; the first and only place he had felt at home’. Harry felt slightly uncomfortable at these words, for this was exactly how he felt about Hogwarts, too” (Half-Blood Prince, p. 404).

The concepts of agency and placemaking are key here, because Harry and Tom manage to make very different personal places out of the same physical space that they both consider home. Here Tom hides a horcrux, establishes the Death Eaters, controls and unleashes the monster of Slytherin, frames an innocent student for a crime that he himself has committed. On the other hand, Harry finds true friendship, love and self-confidence and puts his life in danger several times to protect Hogwarts itself.

Holding within itself countless magical possibilities and power, and letting its inhabitants shape it into the home they feel it should be for them, it's the greatest home-like quality Hogwarts shows, enabling action and choice, the deepest form of magic.

6. Conclusions

To conclude, Rowling's treatment of home places in the Harry Potter books plays extensively on the contrast between their experiential characteristics and their physical and structural nature.

As spaces are made into places by agency, we can see a parallel between this notion and that of magic, as the force leading to conscious, deliberate actions to affect the physical world as well as the characters' relationships. While the Muggle home in Privet Drive is endangered by magic as it embodies the Dursley's close-minded and neglecting attitude towards Wizards, magical households are *enabled* by magic to represent the values of their inhabitants.

Furthermore, we see the contrast between the solidity, magnificence and neatness of places such as Malfoy Manor and Twelve Grimmauld Place against racist and dangerous mindsets; and between the untidy shabbiness of the Burrow and the democratic values upheld by the Weasley Family.

The way magic is used to shape society and personal relationships determines the true identity of these home places.

Hogwarts, as a stronghold of old magic and almost as a source of magical power in itself, is presented as the space with the greater potential for agency. Harry Potter and Tom Riddle are the two most notable characters to make Hogwarts into a home, despite the

little domestic appeal of such a space. They do it, however, in opposite ways by making strikingly opposite choices

Readers are called to immerse themselves into and re-imagine this world, and in the flow of possibilities by which magic is truly realised, thus, in Bachelard's words: "It seems as though it could greet us every day of our lives in order to give us confidence in life" (Bachelard, 1958, p. 54). It is something that JK Rowling encouraged us to do at the conclusion of the book and film series by saying that "Hogwarts will always be there to welcome you home".

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Cauldron Cakes, Pumpkin Pasties, Butterbeer and Firewhisky: Negotiating Food, Drink and British National Identity in the *Harry Potter* Series

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Abstract

This paper evaluates food and drink in the *Harry Potter* series. The unique British-ness of the texts effects the representation of food and prompts questions and discussions concerning British identity and British cuisine. Throughout the series, J.K. Rowling describes elaborate feasts of roast beef, sausages, potatoes, peas, carrots and other British fare. This wholesome food nourishes, comforts and heals and is also described alongside imaginative fictitious sweets. Not only do the fantastically delectable sweets literally buzz, fizz and whirr, but they also induce strange side effects on eaters including levitation, on-demand nosebleeds, on-demand vomiting, and fire-breathing amongst others. This fantasy of seemingly endless variety and limitless manipulation of food and confectionery reflects similar promises purported by recognisable brands and products of major British food and sweets manufacturers. Importantly, the British wizards' food and sweets contrasts with that of foreign wizards and non-wizards. This distinction translates into further discussions of the sociality associated with the consumption of food and drink in the wizarding world. The Three Broomsticks, the Leaky Cauldron and the Hog's Head serve alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages in what are effectively, British wizarding Inns and Pubs where butterbeer, firewhisky and mulled mead is consumed by Hogwarts students and staff. These British variations of food and drinks exist alongside foodstuffs deemed as non-British and 'other' in the series. This essay observes how divisions between differing groups in the texts underscore subtle xenophobic assumptions about the 'other' and their respective foods: foreign wizards are critical of British cuisine; conversely, giants and half-giants alike dine on exotic fare, often deemed inedible by British wizards. In a fantasy world where wizards exist alongside non-wizards, areas of food consumption are also worth analysing. Elves are relegated to eating quarters separate from non-elves while goblins choose to withdraw themselves completely from the dining company of wizards. Food does more than simply satiate the appetites of the series' characters: it can powerfully unite and divide those in the wizarding world. Rowling's imaginative food and drink creations do not merely tantalize readers, but convey much more about the complexities of food, drink and sociality.

1. British Food and Confectionery

From the beginning of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, readers are introduced to a wizarding society distinctive from British reality. Notably, when Harry enters the wizarding world for the first time, he encounters a foreign community with wizarding currency and banks (*Philosopher's Stone* 50), a wizard-governing ministry of magic (51) and several shops selling wizarding instruments and supplies (56): all of which are situated away from familiar British streets and society. Interestingly however, while the series emphasizes how different the two communities are, often, some blurring between muggle and wizarding societies occurs. What is particularly fascinating about the *Harry Potter* novels is that it is as much a series about British childhood as it is about a magical world: the muggle world identified in Rowling's stories is not simply a generic society of non-magical people, but rather, reflects a distinctly British realm. For Giselle Anatol, Harry's entrance into the wizarding sphere is not marked as an entrance into a wholly foreign world; rather, the wizarding world, especially in Hogwarts, resembles a fantastical version of British reality in which the intersection of both worlds enables Harry to "remain in the

very heart of Britain as he supposedly travels to a foreign space [where] British cultural centrism and isolationism are effectively maintained" (167). The language, characters and details such as the types of food and drinks created and consumed in the books translate into broader observations about British culture. Despite being set in a wizarding world separate from a fictitious British society, the *Harry Potter* series feature details about food and drink that suggest the two societies are not as different as they initially seem. Fantasy converges with a very real notion of British culture throughout the stories. I intend to expand on this notion further by arguing that the ways in which food and foodways are represented throughout the novels reflects British cultural traditions that crucially inform understandings of British national identity.

Significantly, as a fantastical Boarding School tale, the *Harry Potter* series reflects British boarding school life in children's literature; Karen Manners Smith asserts that Rowling's texts are part of a literary tradition of British boarding school stories dating back to the mid-eighteenth century (70). Smith highlights how the distinct British-ness of the boarding school tale not only extends to the representations of game and sport but that "food might be the most important—almost obsessive—part of boarding school life and stories" (81). Notably, Smith emphasizes that the food at Hogwarts is "recognizably British fare" (82) and that "it is cozy and familiar to Rowling's readers" (82): ultimately, it is British cuisine that connects both the muggle and wizarding worlds in *Harry Potter*. In most instances, muggles and wizards eat the same foodstuffs. Not only is British food described at great length throughout the series, but British food is represented as the *ideal* food in the texts. When Harry sits down for his first meal at Hogwarts, Rowling writes how his "mouth fell open" (*Philosopher's Stone* 92) in astonishment when he sees "roast beef, roast chicken, pork chops and lamb chops, sausages, bacon and steak, boiled potatoes, roast potatoes, chips, Yorkshire pudding, peas, carrots, gravy, ketchup and, for some strange reason, mint humbugs" (*Philosopher's Stone* 92). In fact, the inclusion of mint humbugs in this particular list is not so strange at all, primarily because it underscores the way in which Rowling's idealistic food descriptions reveal the unique British-ness of the texts. Even when Rowling invents particular foodstuffs for her wizards, they are really fantastical variations of typical British food: traditional British sweet and savoury treats such as cakes and pasties, become *cauldron* cakes and *pumpkin* pasties (*Philosopher's Stone* 76) emphasising that the students, are in fact, living in a distinctly British wizarding society.

When Harry visits Honeydukes for the first time, he sees "shelves upon shelves of the most succulent-looking sweets imaginable[:] creamy chunks of nougat, shimmering pink squares of coconut ice, fat, honey-coloured toffees; [and] hundreds of different kinds of chocolate in neat rows" (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 147). Though these sweets are similar to those in the average British sweet shop, Rowling's creations also include variations of traditional British sweets: instead of jelly beans, "there was a large barrel of Every Flavour Beans" (147); fizzing whizzbees are a literally levitating sweet that bear similarities to the British flying saucer candy (147). Confectionery historian Nicholas Whittaker notes how British sweets are often regarded as "simply edible toys" (118); this is especially apparent when British sweet-makers created fun sweets "like Toofy—[which was] denture-shaped bubblegum that was all the rage in the 1950s" (118) and other confectionery including "jelly fried eggs, candy bracelets [...] and liquorice watches" (65). This playfulness is also featured in Rowling's fantastical special effects sweets. Special effects sweets including "Droobles Best Blowing Gum (which filled a room with bluebell-coloured bubbles that refused to pop for days)" (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 147) echo the everlasting gobstoppers described in the British children's classic, *Charlie and the Chocolate*

Factory (1964). Furthermore, the absurdity of sweets in the wizarding world is emphasized by such creations as “strange, splintery Toothflossing Stringmints” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 147), “fragile sugar-spun quills and exploding bonbons” (147) and other sweets including “black Pepper Imps [,] Ice Mice [and] peppermint creams shaped like toads” (147). These sweets allow eaters to literally breathe fire for their friends, hear their teeth chatter and squeak and feel toads hopping realistically in their stomachs (147). The parallels between British confectionery and Rowling’s fantastical sweets draw attention to the series’ British-ness.

In the same way that real British joke confectionery delights the average young consumer, so too are “confections [...] a source of delightful disgust throughout the series” (Damour 19). The selection of ‘Unusual tastes’ candy sold at Honeydukes extends the playfulness of Rowling’s sweets even further; these include blood-flavoured lollipops and cockroach cluster (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 147). Even Bertie Bott’s Every Flavour Beans consists of unappetizing flavours such as earwax (*Philosopher’s Stone* 218) and bogey (78). Again, these creations are not unlike absurd sweets manufactured by British confectionery companies. In *Sweets: A History of Temptation*, Tim Richardson notes how an old Lake District mint cake company, Wilson’s, created “a spectacularly vulgar range that includes Chocolate Snotty Noses (with green fondant), Dinosaur Dollops, White Chocolate Maggots, Cowpats (fudge), Seagull Droppings, Rabbit Droppings, Donkey Droppings and something called Zoopoo” (314). Though these specific sweets are not the ones described in Rowling’s texts, nor are they actually made of the ingredients after which they are named, it is evident that the absurd sentiment of such sweets are just as much a part of British confectionery as the confectionery in Rowling’s fictitious wizarding world.

The absurdity and gross-out theme of Rowling’s fantastical confectionery is further extended in Fred and George’s skiving snackboxes. For Fred and George, their playful sweets are not simply for enjoyment and entertainment but enable consumers to engage in mischievous behaviour: the twins’ confectionery line includes sweets such as nosebleed nougat, fainting fancies and puking pastilles, all of which were designed to allow willing consumers to fake illnesses in order to be excused from class whenever they like (*Order of the Phoenix* 97-8). What is particularly interesting is that because Fred and George’s sweets have an intended gross-out effect on characters and readers, their descriptions also mirror an entire range of gross-out candies found in the British confectionery industry. Richardson asserts that “in recent years the craze for sour [...] sweets has led to a dizzying array of cartoon packet designs showing kids’ heads being blown off or their mouths turned inside out by the krazy [sic] effect of the candy” (45). These sweets are not unlike those in Honeydukes, nor are they much different from the fainting-vomit-and-nosebleed-inducing sweets Fred and George create; what makes Rowling’s creations particular enticing to readers is that, unlike packet designs of some British sweets, the side-effects promised by the names of a Honeydukes or skiving snackbox sweet can and does actually occur in the texts. Ultimately, the wizarding world has sweets that allow the wishful thinking of the average British child to come true.

2. Drinking Culture

Whether it is tea, butterbeer or firewhisky, the drinks, like the food represented throughout the *Harry Potter* series combine the fantastical wizarding world with British drinking culture. In Claire Masset’s brief history on *Tea and Tea Drinking*, she acknowledges that “the social history

of tea and tea drinking tells us much about the British including their culture [and] industry” (5). Importantly, Masset also notes how in hard times, “it seems that most Britons turn to tea for solace” (41); in a similar vein, Julie Fromer writes in her history of Victorian tea-drinking that from the nineteenth-century on forward, tea became a dependable and comfortable part of everyday life (1). This use of tea for calming and consoling purposes in British culture is extended in several instances throughout the *Harry Potter* series. When Hagrid receives a letter from the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures asking that a hearing take place to determine whether or not Hagrid’s Hippogriff, Buckbeak, ought to be ‘disposed’ of (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 162) a distraught Hagrid is consoled by Harry, Ron and Hermione. As Hagrid howled, Ron piped up, “Er—shall I make a cup of tea?” (163). Ron explains that making a cup of tea is what his “mum does whenever someone’s upset” (163). For Ron and the Weasleys, who are often portrayed as an idealised British family, tea is much more than a hot drink: it is an expression of care and consideration to another person. Following the conjuring of the Dark Mark at the Quidditch World Cup in *Goblet of Fire*, a worried Mrs Weasley is comforted when her family returns home safely and Hermione makes her a cup of tea (131). The repeated use of tea as a consoling beverage in the series coincides with the view that the everyday consumption of tea, as Fromer puts it, “gives it meaning, providing shape and order to [...] one’s place within the family, the community [and] the nation” (8).

In addition to tea, other beverages including butterbeer, mulled mead and firewhisky are consumed by the characters throughout the series. While Rowling does not go into detail about the ingredients or brewing methods of her fictitious drinks, there are overlaps in the ways in which beverages are consumed throughout the series with British drinking culture. These drinks are often consumed at the Leaky Cauldron, the Three Broomsticks and the Hog’s Head, which are essentially wizarding versions of traditional British pubs. When Harry tries butterbeer for the first time, Rowling writes how as he “drank deeply” (149), he concludes that “it was the most delicious thing he’d ever tasted and seemed to heat every bit of him from the inside” (149-50). Though readers cannot be sure whether or not butterbeer actually contains alcohol (Smith 82), its calming and warming effects on Harry mirror the effects of real drink. This warming effect is not limited to butterbeer however. Importantly, the name of Rowling’s fictional brand of whisky, ‘Ogdens Old Firewhisky’, implies that when consumed, it will likely warm up the drinker, an effect not unlike that of traditional whiskies. Though whisky is often regarded as the national drink of Scotland, it has gradually been adopted as the dominant Spirit in Britain (Burnett 169). Traditionally whisky has been used, when heated, for improving health as well. Hot whiskies, or toddies, are drinks “composed of whisky or other spirituous liquor with hot water and sugar” that date back to the mid-seventeenth century and were used for restorative purposes to battle cold British weather (Burnett 186). In her distress, Mrs Weasley consumes a variation of hot whisky when “Mr Weasley insisted on pouring a shot of Ogdens Old Firewhisky” (*Goblet of Fire* 131) into her tea. By including these beverages in her series, Rowling adds another British dimension to an already distinctly British fantastical world.

While tea, butterbeer and whisky are represented as restorative drinks in Rowling’s novels, the consumption of alcoholic beverages acts as a rite of passage for the male characters—particularly Harry and Ron—in the series. In Robert Hartnett’s study of alcohol consumption amongst young males, he notes that in Britain, “initiation to alcohol, gaining access to the places where it is served and the development of specific drinking cultures are important *rites de passage* of youth” (62). It is implied in Rowling’s texts that alcohol consumption marks an

entrance into adulthood for Harry and Ron. Drinks including Firewhisky and Mead are often reserved for adults throughout most of the series and not for Harry or Ron's enjoyment. In fact it is only at the Hog's Head, a seedy pub in the wizarding world, that Ron can even contemplate ordering a drink like firewhisky, which he "always wanted to try" (301). Ron's curiosity reveals both a desire to taste the firewhisky, but also to be able to order and consume alcohol like the adults in the stories. When Dumbledore collects Harry from the Dursleys in *The Half-Blood Prince*, he politely offers them and Harry "Madam Rosmerta's finest oak-matured mead" (51). It is there that Harry tries mead for the first time and "had never tasted anything like it before, but enjoyed it immensely" (51). By allowing Harry to drink mead in what was to be Harry's second-to-last year at Hogwarts, Dumbledore symbolically invites Harry into the realms of adulthood. Notably, *The Half-Blood Prince* begins with Harry and Dumbledore enjoying this glass of mead together and ends with Harry bearing more responsibilities for the fate of the wizarding world than any other adults, besides Snape or Dumbledore, throughout all the novels. This act essentially ushers in Harry's coming-of-age.

Though the adults in the series socialise while drinking and for the most part, drink responsibly, there are instances where excessive drinking does occur. In several of the stories, Hagrid often consumes huge amounts of alcohol: he orders four pints of mulled mead in one sitting (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 150), and often drinks from a pewter tankard (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 92; *Goblet of Fire* 282) which is described as "as big as a bucket" (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 92). Hagrid turns to alcohol when he worries that he could lose his job (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 92); he finds solace in drink following Aragog's funeral in *Half-Blood Prince* (455). Ostry argues that for Hagrid, his alcoholism demonstrates the fact that he "essentially lack[s] self-control and seems to deserve [his] lower status" (Ostry 96). Similarly, when in a deep depression, Winky the elf begins consuming six bottles of butterbeer a day (*Goblet of Fire* 466). In her brief state of alcoholism, Winky becomes "so filthy that she was not immediately distinguishable from the smoke-blackened brick behind her" (466) and "was clutching a bottle of Butterbeer and swaying slightly on her stool, staring into the fire" (466). Winky hiccoughs for the remainder of the sequence (466) and consumes such a large quantity of butterbeer that her "eyelids drooped and suddenly, without warning, she slid off her stool onto the hearth, snoring loudly" (467). In Brycchan Carey's analysis of the house-elves in Rowling's series, he notes that Winky's eventual "breakdown and drift into alcoholism [...] are then outward signs of the psychological difficulty she has adapting to her freedom" (110). Though it is not entirely clear who exactly Hagrid and Winky represent in British society, it is difficult not to interpret their struggle with alcoholism as beings of 'lower status', as an inaccurate, but stereotypical reflection of lower classes in Britain. This is complicated by the fact that giants and elves in the series are often doubly-stereotypically represented as both lower-class and Other. This complication is explored further in the next section.

3. The 'Other' and Foreign Food

While this paper analyses food and drink in relation to British national identity, this section explores how the consumption habits of the Other are represented throughout Rowling's series. The familiarity and nostalgic association with traditional British foodstuffs in the novels are at times, juxtaposed against foreign foods. This contrast emphasises and perpetuates the idealisation of British food and drinks. Carolyn Daniel analyses comparisons made between British and French food in the novels and argues that when Ron looks upon Hermione's dinner

of Bouillabaisse disdainfully, “Ron’s close-mindedness is crushing [because] [h]e dismisses the bouillabaisse as other along with those who eat it, including Hermione” (18). This is not the only time in which British food is held in high esteem in comparison to French cuisine. In *Goblet of Fire*, French student Fleur Delacour is represented as unfairly critical of British food saying, ““It is too ‘eavy, all zis O’gwarts food,”” (352) and frustratingly exclaims how, because of this food, she will not be able to fit into her dress robes (352). Moreover, in *Half-Blood Prince*, Fleur exclaims that Bill is lucky marrying her: she will ensure that Bill is fed well because, according to Fleur, “[...]‘ze British overcook their meat, I ‘ave always said this” (591). By criticising British cuisine, Fleur distinguishes herself even further as foreign, and particularly, as a foreigner incapable of appreciating the idealised British food described in the texts. However, she does redeem herself in *Deathly Hallows* by effectively providing food, shelter and safety for Harry and others in Shell Cottage, a role not unlike Mrs. Weasley’s, who, throughout the series, is often represented as an idealised British housewife.

As an Other in the texts, Hagrid’s cooking and eating habits are a variation of traditional British fare. Though it is not clear whether or not Hagrid is a racialised other, he is represented as foreign and distinct from other British characters in the texts. Because he is part giant, part wizard, Hagrid’s own unique biological make-up is reflected in the types of food he prepares and consumes. Importantly, Hagrid maintains a unique bond with Harry, Ron, and Hermione over the course of the series, when he invites them to tea in his hut. These visits are often marked by a well-intentioned Hagrid serving inedible variations of British food. In *Philosopher’s Stone*, Hagrid offers them stoat sandwiches (169) and rock cakes that “almost broke their teeth” (104). In *Prisoner of Azkaban*, “Hagrid poured them tea and offered them a plate of Bath buns” (202) but, as Rowling writes, “they knew better than to accept; they had had too much experience of Hagrid’s cooking” (202). By their fourth year at Hogwarts, Harry, Ron and Hermione are served beef casserole at Hagrid’s but quickly lose their appetites after “Hermione unearthed a large talon in hers” (233). Hagrid’s excessive servings are also recalled when he brewed tea “in his enormous copper kettle” (*Half-Blood Prince* 216) and “slammed down three bucket-sized mugs” for his friends (216). His cooking is often deemed considerably inedible, to the degree that it is only out of desperation that Harry willingly consumes his food (*Half-Blood Prince* 216). While Julia Park notes that “these details distance Hagrid’s food from the delicacies prepared in the school kitchens and symbolically mark Hagrid as distinctly lower class” (Park 185), it is clear that his diet not only distinguishes him as lower class but, I would argue also further classifies him as a foreigner who remains excluded from others in the wizarding world. Though his desire to be normal is articulated through his bungled attempts to cook British food, Hagrid remains an outsider. Despite his general benevolence, Hagrid is ultimately excluded from Rowling’s definition of British normality. Because of these failures, Hagrid maintains his role as an Other in the stories.

In addition to giants, other beings in the texts including elves and goblins also consume in the series. In fact, the elves are set apart by the apparent paltry nature of their diet, while their energies seem to be primarily focused on satisfying the appetites of witches and wizards. When Harry, Ron and Hermione enter Hogwarts’ Kitchen for the first time in *Goblet of Fire*, they are greeted by Dobby who welcomed them with “a large silver tray laden with teapot, cups [...] a milk jug and a large plate of biscuits” (329). Elaine Ostry notes how, problematically, “the wonderful food and luxury of Hogwarts is [...] based on the “slave labour” of the house-elves [...] The situation of the house-elves unites the issue of race and class, and Rowling shows how

even the liberal bastion of Hogwarts engages in racist/classist acts” (Ostry 96). While elves, like slaves, are relegated to separate dining quarters and ultimately, live to whole-heartedly serve their wizard masters, goblins choose to withdraw themselves from the dining company of wizards altogether. In *Deathly Hallows*, when Bill and Fleur tend to Griphook at Shell Cottage, he refuses to eat with the other wizards and witches. Anatol highlights how “Harry is disgusted by [Griphook’s] insistence on eating “lumps of raw meat, roots, and various fungi”—a diet that many young readers will find equally repulsive...the narrative reinforces the idea that goblins—like giants and elves—are not only unassimilable but also subhuman” (122). Significantly, Griphook’s diet of raw meat, roots and various fungi closely resembles Japanese and Chinese fare; moreover, references to the “goblins’ “dark slanging eyes” create an obvious resonance between goblins and Asian peoples” (Anatol 120). This emphasizes Griphook’s identity as a racialised Other. In the end, his diet is distinguished from the ideal British food and foodways represented in the texts.

Lord Voldemort, as the ultimate Other is often described as “less than human” repeatedly throughout the series. While it is difficult to imagine Voldemort dining on traditional British fare, he does, in fact, eat. Voldemort’s consumption however, is again, similar to Other beings and creatures in that he consumes food distinctive from fare eaten by muggles and wizards. Voldemort commits the most heinous acts of deception and murder in the texts and his betrayal of humanity in murdering innocent people is reflected in his eating habits. Strikingly, while the Others represented in the series consume foods deemed inedible by other British characters, Voldemort’s food is not only inedible but his consumption habits also veer on the taboo. In *Philosopher’s Stone*, Voldemort consumes unicorn blood which Firenze the centaur remarks is “a monstrous thing” (188) and that “only one who has nothing to lose, and everything to gain, would commit such a crime. The blood of a unicorn will keep you alive, even if you are an inch from death, but at a terrible price” (188). Firenze highlights that an act of slaying “something pure and defenceless to save yourself [...] will [cause the slayer to] have but a half life, a cursed life, from the moment the blood touches [their] lips” (188). This act sums Voldemort’s character well: he disregards the horrendousness of such acts, so long as he is able to achieve his own aims. It is worth mentioning how the significant connections between Voldemort’s “snake-like face” (*Deathly Hallows* 592) and unconventional eating habits identify Voldemort as Other. This association with snakes is emphasized further when he milks Nagini to stay alive (*Goblet of Fire* 14). This act is taboo in the series because, by consuming milk, or, essentially, venom from Nagini, who happens to be one of his own horcruxes, Voldemort partakes in a strange form of cannibalism. This act renders Voldemort as even more sub-human than other beings throughout the text: by contrasting Voldemort’s eating habits to that of the noble British wizards, the idealistic representation of British food in the series is maintained.

4. Conclusion

What is fascinating is that the unique British-ness of the *Harry Potter* series significantly affects the representation of food and prompts questions and discussions concerning British identity and British cuisine. Food does more than simply satiate the appetites of the series’ characters: the ways in which food is prepared, consumed and shared in the texts ultimately reflect and uphold traditional British assumptions about proper food preparation and consumption habits. The drinking culture represented in the series also uses cultural signifiers that reflect notions concerning health, rites of passage and identity in British society. The preparation and

consumption habits of the series' characters reveal the varying degrees in which they conform to Rowling's representation of British normality in her stories. In the end, Rowling's imaginative food and drink creations do not merely tantalize readers, but convey much more about the complexities of food, drink, sociality and British identity.

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The Evil Within: Why Voldemort is More Terrifying than Sauron to a Modern Audience

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Abstract

Every hero requires a villain. The more terrifying the villain, the more heroic the hero becomes. I argue that the worldwide popularity of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series is, in part, attributed to Lord Voldemort's effect on a modern audience. Lord Voldemort has several traits that make him an intimidating villain, traits that he shares with Sauron from *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. While intentionality cannot be proved with certainty, I assert that the similarities between Voldemort and Sauron – specifically the branding of their possessions, the importance of and fear inspired by their names, their desire for immortality, and their inability to comprehend love – are too precise to be dismissed as mere coincidence. Yet Voldemort is more relevant and more terrifying to modern readers than Sauron because Voldemort resembles a modern terrorist in his humanity and connection with the hero. The threat of a hostile foreign power amassing an army is still scary, but it is more frightening to know that people we live and work beside every day might perform criminal acts tomorrow. It is even more frightening to realize that the capacity for violence is within all of us, just as it is within Harry and Voldemort. It is this realization that makes Voldemort more frightening and compelling than Sauron for a modern reader.

Every hero requires a villain. The more terrifying the villain, the more heroic the hero becomes. I argue that the worldwide popularity of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series is, in part, attributed to Lord Voldemort's effect on a modern audience. Lord Voldemort has several traits that make him an intimidating villain, traits that, coincidentally, he shares with Sauron from *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. While intentionality cannot be proved with certainty, I assert that the similarities between Voldemort and Sauron – specifically the branding of their possessions, the importance of and fear inspired by their names, their desire for immortality, and their inability to comprehend love – are too precise to be dismissed as mere coincidence. Yet Voldemort is different than Sauron; Voldemort and his followers are much more like modern terrorists Sauron and his legions. Death Eaters are not like the foreign terrorists of unknown lands that most people in the Western world picture, but rather, men like the 2005 London bombers who had friends, families, and the possibility of different futures before choosing to commit acts of terrorism. Furthermore, I argue that the similarities between Voldemort and the hero, Harry, reveal that the capacity for evil resides within everyone and it is not ones race or nationality that determines ones future but ones choices. The realization that the capacity for violence resides within everyone makes Voldemort more frightening and compelling than Sauron for a modern audience.

The similarities between the character and behavior of Voldemort from *Harry Potter* and Sauron from *Lord of the Rings* are numerous and strangely similar, suggesting that Rowling may have reused traits that she knew were effective for previous generations. First, both Sauron and Voldemort brand their possessions. Sauron marks his Orcs with his symbol to claim them as his own and to broadcast that identity to others: "The Orcs in service of Barad-dûr use the sign of the Red Eye" (*Two Towers* 20). Voldemort also marks his followers, the Death Eaters. Professor

Snape reveals that “Every Death Eater had the same sign burned into him by the Dark Lord. It was a means of distinguishing one another” (*Goblet of Fire* 710). Harry describes the mark as “something like a vivid red tattoo—a skull with a snake protruding from its mouth” (*Goblet of Fire* 645). When Voldemort presses the mark on his own arm with his wand, the symbol burns black not only on his own arm, but on the arm of every one of his followers, thus summoning them at a moment’s notice. By branding their followers, these villains declare ownership that is not easily forgotten either by their followers or their enemies.

In addition to branding possessions, both villains alter their name, then perpetuate fear surrounding its use until each villain is identified by insinuation alone. In *Lord of the Rings*, Sauron does not “use his right name, nor permit it to be spelt or spoken” (*Two Towers* 20). Instead, Sauron uses the symbol of the Red Eye, mentioned above. Similarly, Voldemort is originally named Tom Marvolo Riddle, but he violently opposes keeping his “filthy Muggle Father’s name” and changes it to Lord Voldemort (*Chamber of Secrets* 314). After the villains change their names, fear further alters each name into a less specific and more venerating title. With Sauron, “those who perceived his shadow spreading over the world called him the Dark Lord” (*Silmarillion* 289). In *Harry Potter*, Voldemort is also called the Dark Lord, though usually only by his followers (*Order of the Phoenix* 593).

Finally, each villain is so terrifying that the general public refuses even to speak their names and refers to them only by insinuation. In *Lord of the Rings*, when the Bree innkeeper, Butterbur, is unable to say Sauron or even Mordor, the name of Sauron’s evil lands, Aragorn refers to both as “the Shadow in the East” (*Fellowship* 210). Pippin, in *Return of the King*, is also unable to say Mordor. Referencing Black Riders with his guide, Beregond, Pippin explains, “I know of them, but I will not speak of them now, so near, so near,” and he is unable to finish his sentence (*Return* 39). Beregond replies quietly, “So near to Mordor? ... Yes, there it lies. We seldom name it” (39). The warrior Boromir is able to say Mordor, but cannot speak Sauron’s name. He explains in the Council of Elrond, “I have heard of the Great Ring of him that we do not name” (*Fellowship* 293). A similar predicament occurs in *Harry Potter*. Harry learns quickly that most people call Voldemort “You-Know-Who” or “He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named” because they are too frightened to speak his true name. Hagrid explains to Harry:

“Well—I don’ like sayin’ the name if I can help it. No one does.”
 “Why not?”
 “Gulpin’ gargoyles, Harry, people are still scared.” (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 54)

When Harry uses the name at Hogwarts, Harry’s best friend Ron Weasley says “‘Stop saying the name!’” in a terrified whisper, as if he thought Voldemort could hear them” (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 260). Dumbledore advises Harry to speak Voldemort’s name because it cancels some of the fear that surrounds him: “Call him Voldemort, Harry. Always use the proper name for things. Fear of a name increases fear of the thing itself” (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 298).¹

¹ This behavior begets Harry’s capture, however, in *Deathly Hallows*. Voldemort, aware that the only people bold enough to speak his name aloud are his enemies, places a Taboo on his name so he can know and, thus, capture anyone who uses his name. Ron explains, “the name’s been jinxed, Harry, that’s how they track people! Using his name breaks protective enchantments, it causes some kind of magical disturbance ... anyone who says it is trackable” (*Deathly Hallows* 389-90). The trace ensures that even those who, like Harry, are brave enough to use Voldemort’s true name now must return to “You-Know-Who” in order to evade capture; fear of the name is preserved.

In addition to instilling fear, both villains desire and take steps to obtain immortality. While seeking immortality is a goal many villains aspire to achieve, Voldemort and Sauron's methods for obtaining immortality by placing part of their soul in an object outside their body are eerily similar. Sauron, though not a mortal being, desires to remain in Middle Earth and rule over it forever.² He creates a master ring of power to rule the rings of power that he gave to men, dwarves, and elves: "but secretly Sauron made One Ring to rule all the others, and their power was bound up with it, to be subject wholly to it and to last only so long as it too should last. And much of the strength and will of Sauron passed into that One Ring" (*Silmarillion* 287). The Ring is an extension of Sauron and holds part of his being. This is comparable to a horcrux from *Harry Potter*. A horcrux "is the word used for an object in which a person has concealed part of their soul ... Then, even if one's body is attacked or destroyed, one cannot die, for part of the soul remains earthbound and undamaged" (*Half-Blood Prince* 497). Both Sauron and Voldemort create objects that contain part of their souls to further their aims toward immortality.³ As long as part of their soul remains, the villains cannot be completely vanquished.

Though immortality has, in a sense, been obtained by the villains, there is hope for the heroes because both villains have a fatal flaw: they cannot comprehend love. It is not the strength of an army that defeats either Sauron or Voldemort; it is the sacrifice of a few. Sauron seeks the One Ring desperately, but he believes that whoever has the ring will use it against him in battle. Sauron never suspects that the ring is en route to be destroyed by two such unlikely heroes as hobbits.⁴ It is because of Sauron's blindness that two hobbits and their love of the Shire and for each other perform what an army of Elves and Men cannot. Voldemort has the same fatal flaw. In the beginning of the series, Voldemort performs the killing curse on Harry but Lily Potter's love saves him. Dumbledore explains to Harry:

Your mother died to save you. If there is one thing Voldemort cannot understand, it is love. He didn't realize that love as powerful as your mother's for you leaves its own mark. Not a scar, no visible sign...to have been loved so deeply, even though the person who loved us is gone, will give us some protection forever. (*Sorcerer's Stone* 299)

It is because of his mother's love that Harry is protected and the curse is deflected upon Voldemort, nearly killing him,⁵ but Voldemort does not learn his lesson. In *Deathly Hallows*, Harry lets Voldemort attack him, an act that saves Harry's life but destroys the piece of

² Sauron is a Maia; he does not have the gift of death that the race of men received and can live for thousands of years.

³ And both of their attempts were at least partially successful. When Sauron lost the ring in battle he was "for that time vanquished, and he forsook his body, and his spirit fled far away and hid in waste places; and he took no visible shape again for many long years" (*Silmarillion* 294). When Voldemort tried to kill Harry as an infant, Harry's mother's sacrifice protected him and the curse rebounded on Voldemort: "I was ripped from my body, I was less than spirit, less than the meanest ghost...but still, I was alive....I settled in a faraway place, in a forest, and I waited" (*Goblet of Fire* 653). Both villains are placed in a state neither living nor dead and are forced to hide in removed places but they are not destroyed because of the ring/horcrux that they created in order to protect them.

⁴ "For Frodo the Halfling, it is said, at the bidding of Mithrandir took on himself the burden, and alone with his servant he passed through peril and darkness and came at last in Sauron's despite even to Mount Doom; and there into the Fire where it was wrought he cast the Great Ring of Power, and so at last it was unmade and its evil consumed" (*Silmarillion* 303-04).

⁵ "My curse was deflected by the woman's foolish sacrifice, and it rebounded upon myself" (*Goblet of Fire* 653).

Voldemort's soul that is inside Harry (708). Harry's sacrifice facilitates the destruction of one of the last of Voldemort's horcruxes, weakening Voldemort. As in *Lord of the Rings*, it is the destruction of the pieces of soul (often by less-heroic characters like Ron and Neville) that leads to the villain's vulnerability and ultimate demise.

Yet despite the numerous similarities between Sauron and Voldemort, their goals and methods are quite different, each one speaking uniquely to the contemporary audience's personal experiences of war. Sauron wants to "cover all the lands in a second darkness" (*Fellowship* 76). He amasses a conventional army to conquer lands that he intends to rule. Voldemort, on the other hand, wants to be "the greatest sorcerer in the world!" (*Chamber of Secrets* 314). Voldemort has a select band of followers, many of whom are covert, with whom he wreaks havoc, spreading damage, fear, and panic. Mr. Weasley tells Harry that Voldemort's followers like to torture Muggles for entertainment: "Harry, that's their idea of fun. Half the Muggle killings back when You-Know-Who was in power were done for fun" (*Goblet of Fire* 143). Courtney Strimel asserts that Voldemort is "the quintessential terrorist figure because he is...completely unambiguous. At every moment he poses a threat to society, and his sinister actions consequently cause pain, terror, and confusion to both the Magical and Muggle communities" (43). Whereas Sauron's tactics are more relevant and terrifying for the post-World War audience,⁶ Voldemort's methods speak more to current readership living under threats of terrorism and seemingly-random acts of violence against innocent citizens.

Several specific political elements within *Harry Potter* have a direct correlation to modern events and are, understandably, more compelling for a modern audience. Nathaniel Rivers argues that especially in the beginning of *Half-Blood Prince*, Rowling is describing our current world (106). The Ministry of Magic pamphlets, for example, are eerily similar to those the Department of Homeland Security has been printing in the United States since the events of September 11, 2001. Julia Turner asserts that "Rowling culls the scariest elements of modern life and uses them as a kind of shorthand, a quick way to instill fear" (109). The Death Eaters, for example, "spread fear in familiar ways. They destroy bridges. They murder innocents. They compel children to kill their elders" (Rivers 108). When the Death Eaters start terrorizing the Muggle world, this "fantasy" series starts to become even more realistic and frightening for young readers, as Turner notes, "In 1998, when the first Harry Potter book came out, Voldemort was a fantastic villain, a symbol of evil in the abstract. Today, however, as we substitute for our abstract fear of Voldemort the very real fear we've felt in our own immolated cities, the [latest] book resonates in ways that the old ones have not" (110). Voldemort began as an abstract evil, reminiscent of Sauron, who does not have a physical form other than the all-seeing Red Eye. But Voldemort gains a physical body by the end of *Goblet of Fire* and becomes a villain that Harry and the readers know more definitively.

One of the key differences between Sauron and Voldemort is the proximity of the relationship between the villain and the hero. First, Sauron and Frodo occupy completely

⁶ Tolkien was intimately acquainted with war. He served in WWI and confessed in the introduction to the second edition of *Lord of the Rings* that "By 1918 all but one of my closest friends were dead" (Croft 16). Though Tolkien was already working on his Middle Earth mythology and languages before and during his time in the service, certain images in the books were highly influenced by his experiences. Croft argues that "the dead faces floating just below the surface of the water" seen when Frodo and Sam travel through the dead marshes "were a standard image in Great War memories and fiction" (17). In addition, "The fortification of the Rammas Echor, the outwall of Minas Tirith, is a reminder of the futility of the Maginot Line, which gave France a false sense of security against German invasion" before World War II (Croft 61).

opposite ends of the cultural and socioeconomic spectrum. Sauron is a Maia, an ancient and immortal spirit with tremendous power. Frodo, on the other hand, is a Hobbit, a Halfling, a mostly inconsequential race roughly the size of a human child. Harry and Voldemort, however, are both human and, biologically at least, on an equal playing field. Secondly, Frodo only knows that the ring must be destroyed whereas Harry and Voldemort have been intimately connected since Harry was a child. Voldemort himself says,

There is a strange likeness between us, after all. Even you must have noticed. Both half-bloods, orphans, raised by Muggles. Probably the only two Parselmouths to come to Hogwarts since the great Slytherin himself. We even *look* something alike.” (*Chamber of Secrets* 317)

I argue that the similarities and this apparent intimacy between Voldemort and Harry make Voldemort a more real and frightening villain than the abstract Sauron. Kelly Noel-Smith and Taija Piippo have also analyzed the similarities between Harry and Voldemort but come to differing conclusions. Noel-Smith argues that Harry and Voldemort “represent polarized aspects of good and evil, that is, are split part objects of the same whole object” (206). But Voldemort and Harry are not split opposites, because Harry often wrestles with the evil desires within him and is not an innocent, faultless hero,⁷ a point also highlighted by Catherine Deavel in “A Skewed Reflection: The Nature of Evil” (146). Piippo is more on point when she argues that “Tom Riddle, is quite an obvious manifestation of [Harry’s] darker side, the heir of Slytherin, who possesses all those unwanted characteristics by which Harry fatalistically fears to have been tied down” (69). In other words, Piippo argues that Voldemort is a physical manifestation of Harry’s darker side and the characteristics that Harry tries to hide and repress. I argue that by creating a hero who not only has flaws but has the *same* flaws as the villain, Rowling has removed the expansive divide often found between hero and villain, as in the case with Frodo and Sauron. Harry resembles Voldemort so much so that Harry could *become* a villain.

The parallels between Voldemort and Harry’s lives make Voldemort simultaneously more human and more frightening than Sauron because they demonstrate that evil is not an outside abstract force but a human capability within everyone. Paula Soares Faria argues that Voldemort represents a new villain archetype, one who follows the same journey as the hero but one that does not lead to redemption. She believes that this archetype speaks to modern readers: “By mingling and mixing the hero and villain archetypes, Rowling seems to respond to our times by providing readers everywhere with a hero and a villain who are above all human, and with the

⁷ Harry has a terrible temper, he sometimes nurtures his aggression and desire for revenge, he repeatedly desires to bring the dead back to life, and he desires power that is not always for the greater good. His desires are manifested in his obsession for the Deathly Hallows. After hearing about them for the first time, “Harry hardly slept that night. The idea of the Deathly Hallows had taken possession of him, and he could not rest while agitating thoughts whirled through his mind: the wand, the stone, and the Cloak, if he could just possess them all...” (*Deathly Hallows* 434). He desires the Elder Wand because of the strength and power that it would provide: “desire for the Elder Wand, the Deathstick, unbeatable, invincible, swallowed him once more” (435). The stone is needed to bring his parent’s back to life, a wish that the first book reveals as Harry’s deepest and darkest desire: “Harry’s repressions are revealed early on in the encounter with the Mirror of Erised in *Sorcerer’s Stone*” (Piippo 74). Harry already possesses the Invisibility Cloak: it belonged to his Father and has already provided Harry with control in numerous situations, sometimes enabling him to exact revenge without detection.

possibility to see them interconnected in their humanity" (Faria 100). Frodo never sympathizes with or tries to comprehend Sauron, yet Harry can understand and even relate to Voldemort because of the traits and experiences that they share. This connection destabilizes the clearly defined and often racial boundaries between good and evil that are prevalent in *Lord of the Rings*. Though choice is not entirely removed from the trilogy, there are not any good Orcs or evil Hobbits. Smeagol turns into Gollum and Boromir tries to take the ring, yet their "evilness" is a result of the presence and power of the ring, not personal choice. *Harry Potter*, on the other hand, provides characters such as Stan Shunpike and Draco Malfoy whose definitive placement as "good" or "bad" characters is never clearly resolved. As Sirius Black so clearly states, "The world isn't split into good people and Death Eaters" (*Order of the Phoenix* 302). Terrible acts of violence and those who commit them are often unexpected, sudden, and seemingly random, as opposed to a clearly identified army marching towards a predetermined target. The men who committed the London Railway bombings on July 7, 2005, for example, were men who lived, worked, and raised their families in England; no one knew that they were terrorists until after the bombings. In another example, Timothy McVeigh, the man who orchestrated the Oklahoma City Bombing, was not a known criminal or even a threat before April 19, 1995 (Russakoff). Similarly, many of the Death Eaters are covert operatives and not known to be Death Eaters until they perform a public act of violence, and though some families or houses are, stereotypically, more likely to choose a certain path, the aptitude for violence is within everyone; it is a personal choice whether or not to pursue that path. The understanding that the ability to become a villain is within all of us is the most terrifying aspect of all. Evil is not a defined outsider like Orcs or Trolls; the capacity for evil is within.

In conclusion, there are numerous similarities between Sauron and Voldemort, including the villains' branding of their possessions, the importance of and fear inspired by their names, their desire for immortality, and the fatal flaw that leads to each villain's demise. Yet Voldemort is more relevant and more terrifying to modern readers than Sauron because Voldemort resembles a modern terrorist in his humanity and connection with the hero. The threat of a hostile foreign power amassing an army is still scary, but it is more frightening to know that people we live and work beside every day might perform criminal acts tomorrow. It is even more frightening to realize that the capacity for violence is within all of us, just as it is within Harry. Yet as Dumbledore so wisely says, "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities" (*Chamber of Secrets* 333). Harry does not become like Voldemort; he chooses to fight the evil within. Readers can choose to do the same.

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“The Bravest Man I Ever Knew”: Severus Snape and Gothic Trauma in the Harry Potter Series and Fan Fiction

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Abstract

Gothic influences upon the *Harry Potter* series, traced and analyzed by a number of critics, seem especially visible in the characterization of Severus Snape, from his appearance through the role performed in the plot to the personal history. This presentation, however, intends to approach the abovementioned character from a specific perspective of the Gothic understood, after Steven Bruhm e.a., as a cultural convention preoccupied with handling broadly understood trauma, and mediating between its individual and collective dimensions.

The paper moves from arguing that the Gothic trauma is a significant factor affecting the construction of Severus Snape as the original character in J. K. Rowling's novels to analyzing selected fan fiction works in order to demonstrate the hero's Gothic potential at work, as it is developed and employed in texts discussing various aspects of physical, psychological and social trauma.

1. From Trauma to Fan Fiction

This paper is aimed to show how selected pieces of fan fiction, also known as fanfics, focused on Severus Snape counteract three harmful phenomena generated by what Anne Rothe calls “popular trauma culture,” referring to the perpetuation of trauma and its repercussions by American media and popular culture after World War II (2011, 1-4). While Rothe's discussion is concerned mostly with real life trauma accounts aspiring to the nonfiction status, but in fact structured by formulaic narrative patterns (2011, 2), fan fiction discussed hereby overtly employs a fictional apparatus of the Potterverse to approach such problems as the functions of trauma narratives in the fandom community and beyond it. Specifically, *Lost and Found* by Borolin addresses controversies around the trope of suffering within the fan fiction community, and *Cherokee Camp* by Grugster exemplifies a conscious approach to narrative formulas and the discrepancy between the cathartic potential of fiction and the rough actuality of trauma experience. Finally, *Just to Be* by Amarti offers a counterexample to one of the main failures ascribed by Rothe to popular trauma narratives, namely, the decontextualization of sufferingⁱ. Thus, the self-awareness presented by the three fan texts will be argued to provide fan fiction practice with a potential to become a diversified, yet productive pop cultural form of handling trauma-connected issuesⁱⁱ.

1.1 “Popular Trauma Culture” and the Gothic

Among numerous negative attributes of “popular trauma culture,” three specifically relevant for the further discussion are:

- 1) employing trauma themes to make the audience “revel in their own sentimental arousal, rather than [act] to eliminate the depicted suffering” (Rothe, 2011, 165);

- 2) depriving trauma of the political or social background and depicting it as resulting from individual predicaments rather than systematic failures (5, 23-24);
- 3) enforcing trauma themes into narrative scenarios based on a reassuring movement from torment to happy ending and featuring an epic “victim-cum-survivor” protagonist granted a morally superior status (2); a trope dangerous in that, as argued by Michael Bernstein, it may serve to justify violence and abuse as contributing to personal growth (in Rothe, 2011, 89).

Unsurprisingly, the classic Gothic convention with its formulaic characters, schematic solutions and overall sensationalism is seen by Rothe as an indirect reinforcement of “popular trauma culture” (5, 46). However, many representatives of Gothic studies ascribe the Gothic a more productive potential, as exemplified by Steven Bruhm, who perceives the above-mentioned convention as a cultural trauma aesthetics employing formulas, fantasies and exaggeration to bridge individual experience of protagonists with collective traumas haunting the Western society (2002, 260-261). Thus, despite its political ambivalence recognized, among others, by Jerrold E. Hogle (2002, 12-13), the Gothic convention remains an important carrier of themes revolving around traumatic experience. As Hogle argues, the politically moderate or subversive interpretation of Gothic works depends mostly on the receiver's own reactions (2002, 18-19), to which some receivers give the shape of fanfics.

2. Fan Fiction Practice and the Gothic Severus Snape

Considered by some to be a politicized practice by default (Busse and Hellekson, 2006, 18; Derecho, 2006, 71-72), fan fiction is usually preoccupied with the exploration of the original material's blank spots and alternative developments (Derecho, 2006, 74-76). As a practice, it is a collective activity in which the circulation of the text between the author, the beta-reader and other readers-reviewers is crucial (Busse and Hellekson, 2006, 6-7). Thus, a fanfic text is affected by multiple voices and perspectives (2006, 7), which prevents any single ideology from being enforced by a controlling author on a muted audience – a factor which becomes especially relevant when the fan text consciously addresses social or political issues.

2.1 Gothic Severus Snape in the Original Series

In the exemplary fanfics discussed hereby, the above-mentioned subversive potential of fan fiction coincides with explorations of a character pointed by Maria Nikolajeva as the most intellectually and morally challenging in the Harry Potter series (2011, 196; 204), and by Susanne Gruss as typically Gothic (2011, 42), namely: Severus Snape. The selected stories manage to problematize some of the formulas which Rothe finds harmful for trauma handling, and at the same time make use of the trauma-focused potential offered by the Gothic convention. While a whole list of Snape's Gothic attributes might be developed, those most relevant in the trauma context are:

- 1) his appearance, interpreted by Veronica L. Schanoes as generically Gothic (2003, 132). As underlined by Christine Berberich, Rowling's descriptions of the Potions Master focus on his aesthetic flaws and uncanny aura, which contrasts him with other characters (2011, 151-152) and puts him in a position close to that of the Gothic Other, who often embodies an object of social rejection (2002, Hogle 13);
- 2) suffering, both physical, as the character is depicted as attacked or hurt at several points of the series (Rowling, 1998, 134; 2001, 616; 2003, 569-571; 2004, 389, 407; 2005, 563-564; 2007, 527-528), and emotional – derived, first and foremost, from the

repentance-based character of Snape's motivation to sacrifice himself for the Order of the Phoenix' cause (Rowling, 2007, 543-545). The demands of his double persona, called by Nikolajeva an "excruciating disguise" (2011, 195), bring him to the verge of self-torture and provide him with features of an aggressor and a victim at the same time, thus inscribing the character into the spectrum of sado-masochism, which is seen by Katarzyna Ancuta as a crucial attribute of the Gothic (2004, 130);

- 3) the moral ambiguity implied by the above-mentioned duality and characteristic of Gothic protagonists;
- 4) being conditioned by flashbacks, memories or consequences of past choices and experiences (Rowling, 2003, 572; 2007, 551-552) – a feature which reflects both the imprint of the past on the present, characteristic of the Gothic convention in general (Hogle, 2002, 2) and its specifically trauma-focused variant (Bruhm, 2002, 268-269).

2.2 Gothic Severus Snape in the Presented Fanfics

All three fanfics discussed below elaborate on the original Snape's trauma-related Gothic attributes, either subverting them or exploring in detail and turning into plot triggers. The "othering" impact of Severus' appearance is mitigated by the character's centralization, or turned into a source of his attractiveness (Amarti, 2012 Old, n.p.; Borolin, 2012 Secret, As, n.p.). His hero/villain attributes become transformed into a more explicit positive constitution, or the duality is questioned altogether due to a general complication of the moral continuum constructed by the given text. The complexity of Snape's suffering and his relationship with the past, in turn, belong to the most significant fan-fiction-inspiring issues, which may, though does not have to, lead to their subsequent subversion. E.g. in *Just to Be* his past relationship with Lily Evans is preserved, but complicated and provided with an erotic aspect (Amarti, 2012 Severus, n.p.), and in *Cherokee Camp* the significance of Snape's victimization as a student is amplified (Grugster, 2012 Doc, n.p.)ⁱⁱⁱ. While each of the texts discussed below handles the character's Gothic potential differently, their general preoccupation with it constitutes a firm background for counteracting the "trauma for fun" syndrome in the case of Borolin's *Lost and Found*; the simplification of narrative formulas in the case of Grugster's *Cherokee Camp*; and the political isolation of suffering in the case of Amarti's *Just to Be*.

3. The Presented Fanfics and the Trauma Discourse

3.1 *Lost and Found* by Borolin^{iv}: Against Trauma Glorification in Fan Fiction

The problem of appropriating trauma-related subjects for fun in the realm of fan fiction is addressed by Whitehound, a co-author of one of trademark hurt-comfort^v fanfics, *Lost and Found*, which focuses almost entirely on Snape's recovery from an extreme case of torture at the hands of the Dark Lord. On her FanFiction.Net profile, she writes as follows:

tales of last minute rescues, of terrible things being put right, should be dramatic, touchingly revealing of character, and a way of practising for when we have to help traumatized people in our real, outer life. And Snape is the ideal subject for this sort of story, because of his precarious position *vis-à-vis* Voldemort.

All too often, though, h/c [hurt/comfort] fanfics turn out to be badly thought out, and either unpleasantly sadistic or stickily sentimental, or both . . . They forget that it takes a long time to recover from trauma . . . Even more importantly they forget that people who have been abused, tortured, traumatized are still *themselves*, have their own private agendas and react in ways which are expressive of their particular personality – which in Snape's case will include being rude, ill-tempered,

uncooperative, ungrateful and generally bloody-minded. (2011, n.p., original emphasis)

Thus, the author's commentary, which can also be read as a specification of guidelines for her story, deals not only with the inconsiderate treatment of grave topics, but also the schematic plots and especially the depiction of trauma as a sublimating experience. In *Lost and Found* the healing process is far from linear, while Snape in the position of a "survivor" is depicted as affected by that the traumatic experience in many ways, in some ways perhaps improved, yet certainly not perfected.

3.2 Cherokee Camp by Grugster: Against Trauma Embellishment

While Whitehound's considerations are relevant mostly for the sphere of fan fiction itself, Grugster – the author of *Cherokee Camp* – offers a unique insight into the interchanges of fan writing with the extratextual reality. In her story, Snape takes Harry and Draco, deeply affected by Death Eaters' cruelty, to a therapeutic establishment run by Native Americans. In the process, it turns out that Snape himself used to be the "camp" patient due to his teenage self-harm practices, while as a grown-up he has developed an alcohol addiction, and both predicaments continue to haunt him.

Snape's peculiar situation challenges the reassuring stereotype of a successful healing, as in Chapter 65, i.e. approximately at the current moment of the plot development, he admits that he has arrived at a dead end of his therapy (2012, n.p.). It also deprives him of an empowered "survivor" status, as he remains conditioned by his weaknesses and requires help. What is, however, perhaps the most striking aspect of Grugster's writing is its declared purpose, described on the author's homepage as follows^{vi}:

I work in a children shelter with girls and young mothers with their babies and toddlers. So my experience [of] work with abused, neglected, hard to educate and sometimes criminal children influence[s] my writing a lot. . . . I often exaggerate things in my stories. For example Harry or Severus often look very vulnerable and weak. I need them to be like this so that I can send one of my strong characters to 'rescue' them. That soothes me because at my work I [am often unable] to help or [I am] too late. (n.p.)

Thus, the formulaic factor, though present in *Cherokee Camp*, is self-consciously employed by the author, who actually acknowledges its sharp contrast with the real life scarcity of happy endings.

3.3 Just to Be by Amarti: Against Trauma Isolation

The last fanfic to be considered in this paper is mostly focused on the political and social circumstances of suffering. In *Just to Be* by Amarti the hypocrisy of the post-series wizard society is reflected in the way that society treats the children of Death Eaters killed or otherwise eliminated during the war. Abandoned, abused and supported only by Snape, the children attract Hermione's attention, which initiates a difficult process of improving their situation and condition. Though the story develops a romantic sub-plot involving Hermione and Severus, it is fuelled by the main characters' struggle against social and psychological prejudice, institutional injustice, political dependencies, and bureaucratic sluggishness (Amarti, 2012 Old, A Modest, Philanthropic, The Lobbyists, n.p.). Simultaneously, the theme of war experience, underpinned by a real life inspiration, as suggested by Amarti in "Prologue: The Forgotten" (2012, n.p.), is explored on a more personal level of Snape and other characters' background stories (2012 Prologue, Old, Broken, Sit, Just, Liberation, Resignation, n.p.).

Thus, the individual suffering is framed by a network of broader connections and, in the case of the abandoned children, explicitly shown as a result of various systematic failures. Though the story development can be inscribed in the general "happy ending" formula, its conclusion is bitter-sweet, as not all Snape's dependents can be saved. Additionally, the post-war positioning of the fanfic undermines the idyllic aura of the original series' closure, not only pointing to the imperfections of the victorious "good" community, but also depicting particular characters as affected for life by their war experience. While the story does not make profound allusions to real life situations, it explores some political and social mechanisms leading to victimization and recognized by many reviewers as applicable to the extratextual reality (JillianUnleashed, 2011, n.p.; TequilaNervous, 2011, n.p.; Ceralyn, 2011, n.p.; Sylphides, 2011, n.p.; Kikibell's Kitten, 2012, n.p.; Graynavarre, 2012, n.p.).

4. The Potential of Fan Fiction in Addressing Trauma-Connected Themes

It is to be remembered that any consideration of the real vs. the fictional in the case of fan fiction relies on the credit given to the declarations of both authors and reviewing readers as far as their references to the extratextual reality are concerned. It is also to be remembered that the texts discussed above are just three arbitrarily selected samples from an ocean of fan fiction and while I regard them as spectacular examples of certain broader tendencies, they are not representative of the phenomenon as such^{vii}. Finally, the subversion of some literary formulas in fanfics may, and often does, come at the price of reinforcing or developing others. While that issue goes beyond the scope of this paper and invites a thorough stand-alone consideration, its relevance is to be recognized in that it underlines the embeddedness of fan fiction as a phenomenon in the entertainment-based cultural market – a factor which might serve as a grave argument to include fan writing fully in “popular trauma culture” together with all its faults as defined by Rothe. Still, it is the fact most frequently pointed by scholars as politically significant, namely, the informal, non-commercial, and, as already mentioned, multivocal character of fan fiction that supports my conviction about fan texts’ ability to serve as an effective means of counteracting the exploitation of trauma-connected themes, if only by identifying such problems in the micro-scale realm of the fan activity itself and thus promoting sensitivity towards the cultural abuse of suffering in broader terms.

While this discussion has been too selective and fragmentary to depict fan fiction as an actual alternative to the types of popular trauma narratives criticized by Rothe, it has been aimed to show the potential of the discussed cultural practice to:

- 1) undermine conventional narrative formulas, in the above examples represented mostly by the motif of a happy ending or the transforming power of traumatic experience;
- 2) provide popular forms of trauma exploration with a political and social background which can sometimes be expanded onto the extratextual reality (e.g. a comment written by a *Lost and Found* reader claiming to be a Chile citizen appreciates the authors’ handling of torture consequences, which constitute a common problem in his or her actual community (Nocturnus, 2006, n.p.);
- 3) mitigate the abusive aspect of the violation of the border between accounts of suffering and the pleasure-oriented fiction by altering the purpose and intention of the latter, as in the case of *Lost and Found*, intended as a counter-voice to the “torture fic” fashion; or *Cherokee Camp*, whose author claims to use stories to vent her frustration with facing trauma in the real life. Another possibility to redirect a fan text from the sphere of entertainment to that of social activism is provided by the already discussed multivocality of fan fiction practice^{viii}.

The stories mentioned in this paper can definitely serve as examples of pop cultural self-awareness as far as the treatment of trauma topics is concerned. That kind of sensitivity is

spectacularly illustrated by fan approaches to the complex figure of Severus Snape, who provokes possibly the strongest controversies among the original series readers; as a Gothic figure, encourages the exploration of trauma-connected issues among fanfic writers; and, finally, being a fictional character partially inspired by a real person, symbolically bridges the gap between literary imagination and the extratextual reality which affects the lives of actual individuals, as confirmed by the case of John Nettleship, who – having been suggested by J.K. Rowling herself as the model for the Potions Master, subsequently became a kind of a cult persona within the Harry Potter fandom (Whitehound, A True, n.p.)

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ⁱ While I had preliminarily considered contacting and possibly interviewing authors of the three fanfics directly, I eventually decided to let the publically accessible texts speak for themselves and limited the source material for this paper to resources available on the Fanfiction.Net website and the authors' homepages. It is my conviction that, though reaching beyond the limits of the public access might have enriched my analysis and raised its credibility, it might also have shifted the focus of this paper from the general phenomenon of fan fiction as a cultural practice, which is my main interest, towards case studies of individual authors and stories. I have also chosen not to question the privacy boundaries marked by the fanfic authors and stick to the data which they had originally made public. That is why I have made no effort to identify the identities of the three authors and preserved their Internet nicknames.

ⁱⁱ My understanding of "popular culture" in this case exceeds Rothe's scope of interest, which is limited mostly to mass media and seems, at least up to some extent, inscribed in the high versus popular polarity (5, 156). While the relationship between popular culture and participatory culture, to which fan fiction unquestionably belongs, might serve as a subject of an extended stand-alone discussion, the basic ground for treating participatory culture as a part of popular culture is that the former term as employed by Henry Jenkins refers to both the activity of mass media receivers and its connection with entertainment as a starting point for other aspects of involvement (Jenkins, 2006, n.p.).

ⁱⁱⁱ One of the fanfic authors scrutinizing Snape's position and personal history, as well as subverting their moral implications is Loten, whose *Post Tenebras Lux* (2011) or *Chasing the Sun* (2012) are worth recommending as detailed analyses of the character's functions in the original series.

^{iv} As explained in the author's profile, "Borolin" is a collective penname for two fanfic authors: Whitehound and Dyce (Borolin, 2008, n.p.)

^v "Hurt/comfort" is one of fan-fiction-specific genres, consisting of stories devoted to the exploration of a broadly understood suffering and healing of the chosen character(s). As pointed out by Busse and Hellekson, an extensive study of that type of fan texts is offered by Camille Bacon-Smith in *Enterprising Women* (Busse and Hellekson, 2006, 18-19).

^{vi} As declared by Grugster, English is her second language; the bracketed phrases in the quotation below are those which required a grammatical correction.

^{vii} My intention during the research for this paper was to approach fan fiction first of all as texts available for any Internet user. Therefore, while I do recognize the crucial importance of their dynamic bonds with fandom as a community, I did not use any community-related criteria (e.g. website popularity rankings; particular authors'

positions in the fan community; or the specific Snape-fandom recommendations) when selecting the stories to be included in my analysis. I did narrow the search scope down to one of the most accessible fan fiction websites, FanFiction.Net, and in terms of its search filters, I traced mainly stories written in English, featuring Severus Snape as the main character and exceeding 5000 words, that is, extensive enough to offer a detailed insight into the issues of my interest. The close connection of those issues with trauma has implied “Angst” or “Hurt/Comfort” categories as the ones I investigated most carefully, yet the genre preference was not my primary assumption, and neither was any specific rating filter, though, again because of the trauma focus, all three stories are recommended for mature readers. Thus, the crucial common denominator of the fan texts I refer to is their responsiveness to the problems with the depiction of suffering as identified by Rothe, the employment of Snape as the central figure and the trigger of trauma considerations, and finally – on the technical side – the susceptibility to effective summarizing for the demands of this paper.

^{viii} Such a shift is exemplified, among others, by Kourion’s *Signal to Noise* – a fanfic which has not been included in this analysis as it is focused on Harry Potter as the protagonist, with Snape as a background character. The story, offering a detailed and multi-sided insight into the problems of self-harm and eating disorders, is declared by the author to be based on her own experience, yet what seems even more relevant, its online publication has provided a platform for numerous readers to share their direct or indirect experience or simply thank for the opportunity to learn something about conditions affecting the lives of people in their immediate environment (LotusAndWine, 2007, n.p.; iheartmwpp, 2007, n.p.; CrimsonTearsKK, 2007, n.p.; ebec17, 2011, n.p.). Independently of the credibility of the comments triggered by the story, or their detachment from the actual politically informed counteraction – the lack of which is one of the main Rothe’s accusations against cultural depictions of suffering (45, 165) – the awareness-raising aspect of the fanfic seems difficult to deny.

Humdrum Magic: Design Explorations into the Magic of Everyday Life

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Abstract

In this paper, the following questions will be addressed: *What are the key challenges of today's designer of intelligent systems and products? And why does taking a wizard's perspective help a designer overcome those challenges?* Three key design challenges staged in the experience economy paradigm will be discussed to find answers to these questions. These challenges will be explained from the viewpoint of an experience designer and illustrated with examples taken from past and present Ambient Intelligence research programs; in addition they will be reviewed from the perspective of the wizarding world as presented in the Harry Potter books. It will be shown that the study of magical objects in fantasy literature such as Harry Potter can serve to educate, inspire and broaden the minds of designers of intelligent systems, products and related services.

1. Introduction

While over the years Mrs. J.K. Rowling was creating and revealing her wizarding world to us ordinary muggles, significant research efforts were spent in the big industrial and academic laboratories to investigate how to enhance our future living environments with intelligent systems, products and related services (Aarts et al., 2001). The European program on Ambient Intelligence represented one of the biggest research efforts in this area (Aarts and Marzano, 2003). “*In an ambient intelligence world, devices work in concert to support people in carrying out their everyday life activities, tasks and rituals in easy, natural way using information and intelligence that is hidden in the network connecting these devices. As these devices grow smaller, more connected and more integrated into our environment, the technology disappears into our surroundings until only the user interface remains perceivable by users* (Wikipedia, 2012a).” It was in this multi-disciplinary program, the first author of this paper worked as a design researcher to explore the possibilities of Ambient Intelligence through concrete experience prototypes (Eggen and Kyffin, 2006).

It is a designer's mission to create value both from a people's and business perspective. There are, and have been, many theories and ideas within the Industrial Design discipline on how to do this ‘job’. Brand and Rocchi (2011) identify the following four paradigms: the historical *industrial* economy (product ownership/mass production), today's *experience* economy (experience/marketing & branding), and the future emerging

paradigms of the *knowledge* economy (self actualization/knowledge platforms) and the *transformation* economy (meaningful living/value networks). Today the knowledge economy is unfolding, but both the writing and publication of the Harry Potter books, and the design research on Ambient Intelligence took place under the spell of the ‘experience’ paradigm.

While design thinkers are already directing their mindsets towards the newer paradigms, true experiences of ambient intelligence in everyday life are only just emerging. At this moment in time, the majority of people have never experienced smart environments populated by intelligent artefacts that show autonomous, meaningful and appropriate behaviour and that serve their physical, (socio-) psychological and cultural needs. As a consequence, and with high probability, first encounters with the ambient intelligence world will become a magical experience. This strongly resembles the situation when Harry Potter was first introduced to the world of wizardry and its magical objects. What can designers of intelligent systems learn from Harry’s experiences, or from the wizards that created this magical world?

Magic, as described in the Harry Potter universe, allows wizards to break certain laws of nature and produce effects that go far beyond what is possible today with state-of-the-art muggle technology (Wikipedia, 2012b). Effectively, it allows wizards to create magical objects that would perfectly fit the world of Ambient Intelligence: magical objects support the activities of wizards in an easy, natural way, using hidden information and intelligence. This observation led to the main questions that will be addressed in this paper: *What are the key challenges of today’s designer of intelligent systems and products? And why does taking a wizard’s perspective help a designer overcome those challenges?* Three key design challenges staged in the experience economy paradigm will be discussed to find answers to these questions. These challenges will be explained from the viewpoint of an experience designer and illustrated with examples taken from past and present Ambient Intelligence research programs; in addition they will be reviewed from the perspective of the wizarding world as presented in the Harry Potter books.

2. Challenge 1: Designing for experiences

An experience is considered as “*a story that emerges from the dialogue of a person with his or her world through action*” (Hassenzahl, 2011). Experiences are worthwhile to live, remember and communicate to others as they relate to basic human needs for autonomy, competence, relatedness, etc. This means, a designer cannot design experiences (stories) as such; a designer can only design *for* experiences, i.e. create artefacts or environments that enable the emergence of stories. As a consequence, the value of interactive systems lies in their ability to support and mediate user experiences rather than in the underlying technology or the physical artefacts as such.

The ‘Phenom’ project (Hoven and Eggen, 2008) provides a helpful example to illustrate the challenge to design *for* experiences. In this project, we developed a system to support the recollection of memories. Initially, the project focused on fast and efficient retrieval of photos that were considered digital representations of memories. Interactions of users with early prototypes showed that the photos only act as a trigger to start the recollection process. The real memories emerge and become tangible in the form of stories told by

users. This insight caused the project to shift its focus from ‘information retrieval’ to ‘storytelling’ and the role various artefacts like souvenirs, photo albums, and physical aspects of the environment play in the experience of recollecting.

While experience designers were realizing that the actual challenge is to design *for* an experience rather than the design *of* an experience, some great examples of magical objects following this new mindset had already been presented in Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone (Rowling, 1997). Bertie Bott’s Every Flavour Beans (BBEFBs) are a prime example of this. These beans are randomly assorted children’s sweets that come in a large variety of colours and an even larger variety of flavours. The most unusual thing about BBEFBs is that the assortment includes flavours that are generally not associated with candy or even regular food. With flavours such as earwax and vomit it could be tough to understand why a product concept such as BBEFBs would be successful at all. However, as the Phenom project has shown, it is not the actual product related experiences, but the stories that arise from these experiences that are key to their success. In the Harry Potter books, the consumption of BBEFBs is also almost always a social experience and it seems that everyone who partakes in these scenes has their own personal stories to tell regarding the beans.

‘Ah! Bertie Bott’s Every Flavour Beans! I was unfortunate enough in my youth to come across a vomit-flavoured one, and since then I’m afraid I’ve rather lost my liking for them – but I think I’ll be safe with a nice toffee, don’t you?’

He smiled and popped the golden-brown bean into his mouth. Then he choked and said, ‘Alas! Earwax!’

- Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone

Oddly enough, these magical objects were designed at a time when muggle designers were just starting to discover the merits of designing *for* experiences instead of simply designing them. The Phenom - BBEFBs comparison is just one example of many; our current work on intelligent playgrounds (Bekker et al., 2010), in which intelligent play objects are designed to stimulate social interaction and physical play by providing motivating feedback to players’ behaviour, could have been equally well reviewed from a Quidditch perspective. It is a testimony to the strength of the Harry Potter books that readers, including designers, around the globe should have already been able to attain a grasp on experience design at a time real world designers were uncovering the new paradigm.



Figure 1: Phenom – an intelligent living environment supporting the recollection of memories (left); Bertie Bott's Every Flavour Beans (right).

3. Challenge 2: Understanding basic user needs

One way to create design propositions that are truly valued by people is to match the ‘looks’ and interaction possibilities of the product or system (i.e. its form) to the ‘things’ the product or system is supposed to do according to people (i.e. its function). However, current experience design practice increasingly starts from the premise that both form and function should follow from insight into why the system can help people to satisfy their basic needs. To uncover people’s basic needs, designers apply user-centred design approaches that actively involve end-users in the design process. Within the Ambient Intelligence program, for example, we applied design methods inspired by ethnosemantics to investigate commonsense routines people apply to manage and organize everyday life (Eggen et al., 2003a). The insights we gained from these studies formed the basis for many design research projects. The ‘Home Radio’ project is a representative example, which addresses the basic need expressed by family members to ‘*stay in touch*’ with each other and their home, extending the home experience beyond the boundaries of the physical house (Eggen et al., 2003b). People can tune in to Home Radio, from anywhere, to see, hear, and interact with their closest relatives, the people they love and like most, home events, activities and information. Home activities, for example, are coded by the corresponding utility streams they generate (gas, electricity, water, communication and information). This coded information is broadcast on the web and family members can tune in to this stream. At the receiver end (e.g. your office) the coded information is rendered and presented in the environment by audio-visual means.

Once again, this emerging new design adagio was already present in magical objects in Harry Potter. One of the most important keys to the success of the Harry Potter series is the great insight J.K. Rowling seems to have for portraying basic human needs in her characters. It is therefore not surprising that the magical objects she created for the Harry Potter universe are also very much in touch with these needs. Examples such as the Mirror of Erised, which shows the viewer’s innermost desires (Rowling, 1997), the Rememberall, which turns red as soon as its user has forgotten something important (Rowling, 1997), are but a few examples. The example however, which draws the closest parallel to the aforementioned Home Radio project, is the Whereabouts Clock as used by

the Weasley family in Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (Rowling, 1998). The Whereabouts Clock is not, as its name would suggest, a device for telling time, but is instead a more social interface that shows the ‘whereabouts’ of different members of the family. Instead of the regular hands of a clock, its hands each represent a different family member and they shift position as soon as the whereabouts of that family member change. The positions it displays range from the obvious (Home, Work, etc.) to more esoteric positions (Lost, Mortal Peril, etc.) (Rowling, 2000). Out of all the magical objects in Harry Potter, the Whereabouts Clock shows most to what insight into the basic needs of users can lead to: Elegantly designed products that not only have great potential commercially (Sellen et al., 2006), but also have a chance to significantly improve the quality of people’s daily lives.

Mrs. Weasley glanced at the grandfather clock in the corner. Harry liked this clock. It was completely useless if you wanted to know the time, but otherwise very informative. It had nine golden hands, and each of them was engraved with one of the Weasley family’s names. There were no numerals around the face, but descriptions of where each family member might be. “Home,” “School,” and “Work” were there, but there was also “Travelling,” “Lost,” “Hospital,” “Prison,” and, in the position where the number twelve would be on a normal clock, “Mortal Peril.”

Eight of the hands were currently pointing to the “home” position, but Mr. Weasley’s, which was the longest, was still pointing to “Work.”

...
“Oh your father’s coming!” she said suddenly, looking up at the clock again. Mr. Weasley’s hand had suddenly spun from “Work” to “Travelling”; a second later it had shuddered to a halt on “Home” with the others, and they heard him calling from the kitchen.

- Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire



Figure 2: Home Radio – supporting family members to stay in touch with their home (left); The Weasley Family Clock a.k.a. the Wherabouts Clock (right).

4. Challenge 3: Seamless integration into everyday life

During the many interactions we had with people, time after time, it turned out that the use of intelligent systems and products should be seamlessly integrated in everyday activities that at closer inspection seem to be driven by hidden personal and social user needs. The primary task or activity the product was originally designed for is carried out subconsciously focusing the ‘true’ user experience on the underlying user needs. Family members, for example, indicated that daily household tasks like vacuum cleaning or ironing are often considered boring, but that, on the other hand, the nature of these activities enables them to create precious moments in time where they can daydream and reflect on or escape from their daily worries (Eggen et al., 2003a). It is considered extremely important for the designer of future intelligent systems to be aware of possible interferences between the use of the system and the rhythms and patterns of everyday life. These social and cultural aspects of the design of intelligent environments, of course, need to be supported by appropriate technological implementations of interaction design. Intelligent systems can only behave intelligently if they actively communicate and interact with their environment (just like people). As human attention already seems to have become a scarce resource today, the ubiquitous computing scenario in which intelligent systems will be everywhere in our environment and compete for people’s attention could easily lead to situations that would be totally unacceptable to people. Therefore, as was already recognized in the early days of ubiquitous computing (Weiser and Brown, 1997), *Calm Technology* needs to be developed that makes better use of the periphery of the human perceptual and cognitive system. People are only subconsciously aware of what happens in the periphery of the perceived situation, but when desired or necessary this information can immediately be put in the centre of attention. Calm technology prevents overloading people with information by presenting this information in the periphery. The ‘Data Fountain’ and the ‘Birds Whispering’ projects were carried out at the department of Industrial Design of the Eindhoven University of Technology (Eggen and Mensvoort, 2009). Both projects explore the possibilities of making use of architectural space by decorating it with awareness information. The ‘Data Fountain’ project uses a real-life fountain to display dynamic information structures extracted from the Internet. Within the ‘Birds Whispering’ project audio-only renderings of a colony of birds were designed and implemented in an actual office space. Data-carrying birds could roam the office space and react to the presence and behaviour of office workers.

The way magic is integrated into the daily life of wizards is informative for the designer faced with the challenge to design intelligent systems that fit the rhythms and patterns of everyday life. Looking at magical objects in the wizarding world, it becomes clear right away that, despite their magical properties, they often assume the form of ‘ordinary’ everyday objects, just as muggle objects do in the muggle world. This phenomenon becomes most apparent when the wizarding world is viewed through Harry’s eyes for the first time and magical objects that often seem perfectly mundane to other wizards continue to amaze him. Upon further examination, it appears J.K. Rowling has already designed some truly ‘calm technology’ objects for the wizarding world. Several examples include: The ‘Magical Ceiling’ above the Hogwarts main hall that mirrors the outside weather (Rowling, 1997), the ‘Secrecy Sensor’, a squiggly golden aerial that vibrates as soon as lies are being told nearby (Rowling, 2000), the ‘Black Family Tapestry’, a large

piece of cloth that has been in use since the 13th century, but has apparently updated itself as new family members were born (Rowling, 2003), the ‘Foe-Glass’, a mirror, which displays the proximity of the owner’s enemies by bringing them in and out of focus (Rowling, 2000) and not to mention the enormous variety of magical portraits and photographs in use throughout the books and movies. All these objects are convincing examples of artefacts that display information and that have seamlessly merged with the humdrum of everyday life in the wizarding world. Also the Whereabouts Clock, discussed earlier, is an example of a design that derives its success not only from its functionality, but also because of its ability to merge into the background of everyday life. In order to overcome the challenge under discussion, it is very important for designers not to be limited in their imaginations when it comes to designing technology interfaces, an ability which wizards have apparently long since mastered.



Figure 3: Data Fountain – decorating the environment with awareness information (left); The fake Alastor 'Mad-Eye' Moody and the shadows of his enemies in his Foe-Glass (right).

5. Concluding remarks

The main question of this paper was to investigate whether the key challenges faced by today’s experience designers could be informed by taking a wizard’s perspective. For all three challenges that were discussed we have found working examples from the world of witchcraft and wizardry that presented successful solutions.

In this paper, we could only scratch the surface of the enormous amount of inspiring magical objects that populate the world of Harry Potter as described in the books of Mrs. J.K. Rowling (Wikipedia, 2012c). However, already after reviewing only a relatively small number of magical objects in this paper, it has become apparent that by studying magical objects within fantasy literature such as Harry Potter, many insights can be gained that are relevant for the design of real-world intelligent systems, products and related services.

Concerning future work, many more magical objects show high potential as research subject for muggle designers. For example, we believe the analysis of objects such as the Howler, the Rememberall, the Quick Quotes Quill and the Foe-Glass would definitely yield relevant insights and inspiration for modern day muggle designers. At this moment, however, time constraints and space limitations concerning the present contribution to this conference have prevented us to properly conduct such analyses. Furthermore, many magical objects that were encountered during this research were left untouched for the

purpose of this paper because of the relatively high ‘level’ of intelligence granted to these objects or the nature of the ‘intent’ with which the intelligence was imbued. Objects like the Goblet of Fire or the Sorting Hat, for example, have the ability to perfectly judge someone’s character. The ‘intelligence’ required for such tasks goes way beyond our current understanding and definition of intelligence; including such items in this paper would have invariably provided us with more questions than answers. Also, while objects such as Horcruxes and the Marauders’ Map are captivating examples of intelligent and even successful designs, their creators’ intents stand leagues apart from the reasons for which current muggle technology is designed. Researching the magical properties of wands could lead to even more ‘curious’ results (*the wand chooses the wizard!*). When viewing magical objects from these perspectives, intriguing questions like ‘Is such a level of intelligence even desirable?’, ‘Could imbuing an object with intelligence possess an intrinsic value?’, or ‘If technology ever approaches these levels of intelligence, would the societal role of a designer change with it?’ come to mind. From the discussions above, we conclude that a more systematic study of magical objects should be encouraged. Results could lead to completely new insights that would inform, enrich and transform the design paradigm of intelligent systems.

The importance of further study into the subject is also illustrated when the parallel between magical objects in the wizarding world and recent developments in muggle technology is mapped in time. Some of the humdrum magic that seemed pure fantasy more than a decade ago, when the first Harry Potter books were published, has become a lot less unrealistic today. Actually, projects like ‘Home Radio’ (Eggen et al., 2003b), ‘The Intelligent Playground’ (Bekker et al., 2010), Microsoft’s ‘Whereabouts Clock’ (Sellen et al., 2006) or Apple’s ‘Find Friends’ App provide evidence the appearance of magical objects in the muggle world really is about to happen.

In conclusion, in this paper we have shown that the study of magical objects in fantasy literature such as Harry Potter can serve to educate, inspire and broaden the minds of muggle designers. Further research on the subject should be encouraged to morally and practically prepare today’s designers for a future in which objects currently considered magical, will be a technological reality.

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Anticipating Exceptionalism: Institutionalised Silence and the State of Exception in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*

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Abstract

Throughout J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, readers are brought into a world drawing inexorably closer – and then, finally, into – a violent and incoherent state of crisis. Indeed, the slide from working legal and political order to chaotic and unpredictable despotism under Voldemort's regime is, in many respects, such a effortless shift that it raises questions as to whether the various institutions of legal and social control within the wizarding world in fact facilitate rather than impede the growing disorder within the public sphere.

This chapter employs the theoretical framework of critical theorist Giorgio Agamben to suggest that the society in crisis which is evident by the seventh book of the *Harry Potter* series follows the conditions of a “state of exception”. Confining this discussion to the textual version of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, this presentation thus organises around three interrelated points. Firstly, it argues that we may read the “exceptionalism” of this social crisis as present within the discourses of institutional order found in the legal and educational wizarding systems. Secondly, it examines how the *inability to respond* manifests as a key principle upon which this governance functions to monitor, control and discipline its subjects. Thirdly, it investigates how the silence of the impossible response anticipates elements of Lord Voldemort's own antagonistic agenda and, indeed, creates the very conditions upon which he eventually returns to dominance. Finally, it explores other possible ways to negotiate silence and the impossible response, and what this may mean in the context of the readership of the *Harry Potter* series and within a wider socio-political conscience.

1. Introduction

Vicious, arbitrary, fascistic: these are three powerful and oppressive descriptors which can and have been (quite appropriately) attached to the governmental presence established in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. Perhaps whimsical and loosely parodic when first characterised, the figure of institutional order becomes increasingly intrusive and domineering as the books progress; indeed, by the fifth book, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, we as readers realise with undeniable certainty that the society into which we are brought is drawing inexorably closer – and then, finally, into – what can arguably be described as a violent beginnings of despotic control under the name of a *state of exception*.

State order is always in a condition of severe anxiety within *Harry Potter*'s wizarding world, cowering at the unspoken prospect that the series' antagonist, Lord Voldemort, might return to impose his tyranny once more upon the populace. As this possibility and its attendant social disorder become increasingly noticeable, so too does the Ministry of Magic, as the governing body of wizarding society, strengthen its own regulative impositions in order to prepare for this re-emergence. Yet, oddly, the eventual slide from functioning legal and political order into a chaotic and unpredictable subsistence overshadowed by Voldemort's terror (as depicted in the final two novels of the series) is, in a great many respects, also an effortless and unremarkable shift. No coup d'état, no overthrow or revolution: the transition from overwrought Ministry regulation to Voldemort's sinister regime is insidiously smooth and almost unnoticeable. As if anticipated – indeed, as if settling into a mould that

had been prepared years in advance – the changeover from one to the other is terrifyingly *silent*.

This chapter situates itself within this incubating period of governmental lockdown which is portrayed to chilling and dramatic effect in the various political and juridical processes of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Engaging particularly with the work of critical political theorist Giorgio Agamben, this analysis seeks to interrogate not the rationality or legality but rather the *means by which* the indiscernible nature of this political changeover becomes possible. Firstly, it examines the juridico-political tactics adopted by the Ministry of Magic in reaction to the burgeoning fear of Voldemort's re-emergence and consequent social upheaval, paying particular attention to two instances in which institutional disciplinary action. This analysis highlights the peculiar role of *silence* as integral to not merely these processes of government but the regulatory structure of the *Harry Potter* political reality as a whole as organised around Agamben's concept of a state of exception.

Next, this chapter addresses the palpable interrelation of the Ministry of Magic's anxious strategies of silencing in a state of emergency and the tactics employed by Voldemort to maintain control as he siphon the currents of power into his own political pool. It argues that silence – and, in particular, silence as the conditioned impossibility of a response – constitutes one of the underlying fundaments of Voldemort's regime and, as such, is the *medium* through which social control is shifted unnoticeably from Ministry hands. By reconsidering silence as a medium, this essay hopes to view this particular political condition of silence as not simply a tool for repression but, rather, as a far more complex and productive mechanism of social negotiation. With this in mind, the chapter thirdly explores alternative engagements with this agent of power also depicted in book five of the series.

To those presently reading this chapter, it hardly seems necessary to justify such an analysis of this now-iconic children's storybook. The arguments in favour of serious scholarship on the *Harry Potter* texts and phenomena are many – certainly more than can be competently canvassed by this author – and have been discussed in other forums (see, e.g., Alemán 2012). As such, they will not be thoroughly addressed here. Nor does this essay attempt to identify themes which 'directly' or 'intentionally' engage with contemporary political critique. However, it will step beyond the wall of fiction to suggest ways in which such a reading of silence and the tactics with which one engages in or with silence extrapolated from *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* may be pertinent both to its readership as well as within a wider socio-political conscience.

2. The Inability to Respond and Anticipating Exceptionalism

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, perhaps to a far greater extent than any of the previous or following instalments in the series, locates its action within the realm of political process. Indeed, several themes in relation to political power recur with irrefutable regularity throughout the fifth book, including administration, bureaucracy and control, each element unduly and obscurely hostile to the novel's titular protagonist: 'unduly' as bureaucratic power appears to be exercised almost arbitrarily based primarily on the fancies and dislikes of the Ministry of Magic's leading executors, Cornelius Fudge and Delores Umbridge, to organisations and individuals; and 'obscurely', as the path which this exercise of governmental power travels appears carefully tailored to avoid the appearance of persecution in preference to that of discipline.

The difference between these qualities is telling, as it signals the continuation of an institutional (albeit tenuous) order rather than the installation of a despotic regime. Indeed, desperately attempting both to deny the return of bloodthirsty antagonist Lord Voldemort to the wizarding world and to subdue the chaos created in his awakening, the Ministry of Magic's response to this oncoming emergency in *The Order of the Phoenix* tends unsurprisingly towards attempting to preserve the status quo. Thus the fifth book bears witness to a remarkable intensification of the Ministry's powers of control not by physical violence and irrational commands (persecution) but by the careful, if somewhat hysterical, perpetuation of political and individual *silence* (discipline) (see further, Agamben 2005: 47).

The signs of this extension of institutional power are evident throughout the fifth book of the series, marked by the breakdown of the separation of powers between Hogwarts as the educational arm of society, the Ministry of Magic as the executive and administrative, and the Wizengamot as the judicial. As is carefully extricated by Benjamin H. Barton (2006) in his review of the sixth book in the series, with a judiciary residing within and populated by the Ministry, the similar lack of separation between the administrative, legislative and executive, the absence of any mention of a voting system, a governmental structure which appears to be 'one hundred percent bureaucracy' with each office and committee below the Minister 'staffed by a junior minister with their own area of responsibility' (p.1533), a press which disseminates Ministry propaganda, and no independent bodies able check government abuses and balance the exercise of power, Rowling does indeed appear portray a government comprised of – and compromised by – 'a corrupt, self-perpetuating bureaucracy' (p.1531). Tabloid magazine *The Quibbler* goes so far as to suggest that the economic powerhouse of the community's banking sector, Gringotts, is also being inexorably absorbed within the hulking body of the Ministry of Magic (Rowling 2003: 173).

It is within this distinctly unitary configuration of civil governance that even the haven represented by Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, a place free from the Ministry's overbearing reach at the beginning of *The Order of the Phoenix* (see Rowling 2003: 136), falls within the grasping hands of the administration. The sanctioned interference upon school grounds of Ministry member Delores Umbridge, whose squat and toad-like physique and squeaking imperiousness perhaps best embodies the flat and unreceptive body of the Ministry itself, provides a microcosmic stage for the government's extension into all aspects of social control. Umbridge, like the administration that she represents, responds to the growing disorder within the public sphere by extending her own powers of control and influence; moreover, her increasing, then totalised power to make unilateral decisions concerning punishment, regulation and the inclusion and exclusions of members from school society signal the undeniable evolution of an autocratic, fascistically-inclined state.

Within this series of encroachments and demonstrations of arbitrary, but not dictatorial, governance we may find a state of exception: a governmental condition at "a threshold of indeterminacy between democracy and absolutism" (Agamben 2005: 3). Similar to a state's declaration of emergency powers or martial law, a state of exception is premised on the concept of a politico-legal *necessity* to exercise powers in suspension of the formal rigour of legislative and/or judicial process in order, paradoxically, to protect and preserve that very process which it suspends. In the wizarding world of Harry Potter, the conditions for a state of exception surface in the anticipation of an emergency which is a quite literal *emergence* – that is, Lord Voldemort's return. Their tactic for defending the status quo Ministerial order is both

simple and naive – the production of a theoretically impenetrable and overarching silence.

Harry's disciplinary hearing in front of the Wizengamot may provide an example of the production of this silence strategy. Held in the obscurity of a disused Ministry of Magic courtroom – appropriately titled the “Department of Mysteries” (Rowling 2003: 124) – for offenses committed under the Decree for the Reasonable Restriction of Underage Sorcery, this trial bears all the formal hallmarks of a tribunal: a panel of three investigatorial “interrogators” (rather than an adversarial system of two members of counsel arguing in front of a judge – at least, this is so when the court scene opens); the accused, obliged to answer all questions of the panelists; and, in this case, witnesses for the accused.

Yet this judicial fact-finding exercise, in which a series of questions are posed to be answered by Harry, appears in essence not to be investigatory at all, as Cornelius Fudge's perfectly perfunctory examination technique curtails Harry's ability to respond. Harry's thwarted answer to enquiries, “Yes, but –” followed by an interruption, checkers the page no less than five times (p.129). The continuous interruption and repression of Harry's testimony not only countermands his ability to posit any kind of legal defence, but it also demonstrates the Ministry of Magic's production of very specific silences. Firstly, it operates within the premise of listening, revealing, investigating or unveiling (as one of the key roles envisaged of the Ministry); and, secondly (and in conjunction with this first point), it intentionally stifles or subdues any response to its own inquiries. Thus, in essence, what Harry's repetitive response at the Ministry's hearing, “Yes, but –”, exemplifies is the applied formula of Ministry control by asking for the response that cannot be or is refused the right to be spoken. This manufactured silence sits in the peculiarly liminal position of that which is neither order nor violence but at the same time both order and violence – that is, it creates the conditions for only an impossible response.

In a likewise manner does the state of exception compromise governmental order in the microcosm of Hogwarts. Seeking to regain political equilibrium, the Ministry of Magic instates Umbridge as Ministry representative at the school, and later increases her governing powers by appointing her as the first High Inquisitor of Hogwarts (Rowling 2003: 274). The circumstances around which such a post is created are oblique at best: a “surprise move” launched by the Ministry of Magic (p.274), this new legislation simultaneously cause the resignation of two Ministry dissenters, silencing even the possibility of internal opposition and political response from the legislative function (p.276).

Yet perhaps more revealing of a quiet state of exception than the hasty and undebated passage of this proposed position into law is the exercise of the powers which it confers. Similar to the Ministry of which she is a member, Umbridge brokers her heightened right to control in the anticipation of general emergency through the medium of silence. Her role as “High Inquisitor” of Hogwarts quite literally implies the task of *asking questions or interrogating* an upper echelon of authority. Yet her process of enquiry includes banning all those freedoms that we identify with a free and democratic nation, such as freedom to organise, freedom to associate and freedom of speech. Already, this pattern of asking for an unspeakable response is emerging.

The question of how this power is recognised as a valid form of authority is inextricably linked with how it is applied. Firstly, the origination of Umbridge's law-making and law-administering powers as High Inquisitor is intractably circuitous, following its own incontestable logic. Her methods, which generally attempt to preclude the participation of the student body and faculty in particular forms of

communication, are clumsy and reactive at best: Educational Decree Number Twenty-Four attempts to dictate the circumstances upon which groups of more than two students may associate or unionise (p.313); Educational Decree Number Twenty-Six prohibits teachers from giving students information which is not strictly related to the subjects that they teach (p.486); Educational Decree Number Twenty-Seven threatens any student in the possession of *The Quibbler* magazine with expulsion (p.512). Each poster pasted to notice-boards on school grounds announcing yet another decree by Umbridge is curiously titled “By order of the High Inquisitor of Hogwarts” and “The above is in accordance with Educational Decree Number ...” (see, e.g., p.313). These laws are thus passed on the same hierarchical level as the Ministry of Magic that appointed Umbridge to her post (also by Educational Decree), contributing to the flattened, indivisible landscape of opaque government power – the decree creates the High Inquisitor who creates the decree which creates the High Inquisitor, and so forth. Umbridge’s orders as High Inquisitor thus self-perpetuate her role as High Inquisitor and appear as “radically removed from any juridical determination” (Agamben 2005: 50). Fulfilling the dark promise of her name, the authorisation of Umbridge’s political power is shady and obscure, inscrutable by others.

Secondly, mimicking the bureaucratic style of Ministerial control, Umbridge exercises her power through the mode of questioning and discipline, and in conditioning the impossible response. Indeed, she arguably takes this aspect to its perverse but perhaps logical extremity in her rigorous procedures for social correction. Perhaps the most fascinating moment of this administration of silence is occasioned by the series of corporal punishments that Harry receives in her office for allegedly telling lies concerning Voldemort’s return (that is, acknowledging the state of emergency). Silence in this setting – as it does in many punitive environments – with an almost palpably stifling oppressiveness created by the intertwined elements of the “pure violence” of the punishment, and the quietly incomprehensible logic of the Ministry’s exercise of power.

Analysing Walter Benjamin’s “Critique of Violence”, Agamben notes that:

While violence that is a means for making law never deposes its own relation with law and thus instates law as power ..., pure violence exposes and severs the nexus between law and violence and can thus appear in the end not as violence that governs or executes ... but as violence that purely acts and manifests. (Agamben 2005: 62)

There is something in this formulation of politico-judicial violence applicable to the punishment to which Harry is subjected. Forced to write the phrase *I must not tell lies* with a special quill for “as long as it takes for the message to sink in”, as Umbridge directs (p.240), his disciplining becomes a literal *branding* upon the skin, each line tracing and retracing a cutting pain along his hand, each mark on the paper a remarking of Umbridge’s original condemnation, of the sentence Harry had written on the paper a line above, and of the same words sliced into the skin. If the act of writing lines on paper recalls the power of the law that Harry had stubbornly sought to contest, each redoubling with this magical quill removes the justification of law further away from this cruel display of power.

Here also the silence underlies the nature of this punishment: watching Harry as he feels the pain inflicted by the bewitched quill upon writing, Umbridge asks him vaguely, “Yes?”; Harry’s response, “Nothing”, is telling, and not the least because the punishment is not verbal. For “nothing” *can* be said, as speaking itself is negated,

replaced by silence in this twisted disciplining procedure which obscures the hand of the disciplinarian. In fact, the punishment forces a kind of multiple self-incrimination or double-testimony: a confession on paper and simultaneously a self-branding on the skin. As Harry writes (and rewrites, magically upon his hand), Umbridge asks, “Yes?” but the question cannot be answered; the punishment has already spoken for him. Indeed, throughout the detentions, we find Harry in fact saying less and less – by the third day, he is completely silent. And, although in some small way Harry may attempt rebellion in his silence (a refusal to show weakness or give in), it is all the more impotent a strategy because it is the very response which Umbridge (and, by default, the Ministry) desire: the silence of an unspeakable response.

3. The Quiet, Coup-less Coup and the Silences of Lord Voldemort

There is an obvious reason for the Ministry’s emphasis on the suppression of speech – individual speech acts (with corresponding wand flick) operate in Harry Potter’s wizarding world as Austinian performative utterances *par excellence* (see generally Austin 1962). Things *happen* when one speaks; even more than this, words themselves become agential. Notably, although one can be spoken *for* (for example, the Ministry speaks on behalf of people on a great number of occasions), the potential action *of* speech is never abrogated; it can only be stopped in two ways – by speaking first and cutting off the speech of the other, or by rendering speech *unspeakable*.

The most pervasive example of this is, of course, the very name of Lord Voldemort. Repressing his name, replacing it poorly with the moniker of “He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named” or “You-Know-Who”, wizarding society seeks to circumvent Voldemort’s response, and his potential re-emergence within the response. Of course, the effacement of the name is already a *response*, a reaction to Voldemort’s original emergence. The refusal to utter Lord Voldemort’s name is therefore a silence that *invests* significance: “Fear of a name increases fear of a thing itself”, as Dumbledore says sagely in *The Philosopher’s Stone* (Rowling 1997: 216). However, more immediately, the displacement of power onto the signification of the words “Lord Voldemort” blurs the boundary between the person, the name and the response itself. In other words, Voldemort is not only the anticipated emergency triggering a state of exception, he is also styled *as the response itself* in this verbal repression which has become entrenched throughout the wizarding community. (Indeed, this is something that Voldemort plays on later by placing a Taboo on his name.)

This is a society that functions off and within its repressions, that collectively refuses to or is unable to speak lest the response be invested with power; yet this fear is exactly what also simultaneously *empowers* the response, even the response which is a *silence* of an unspoken response (and, after all, his name was taboo long before it was Tabooed). Indeed, it is by assimilating this tightly bound relation between silence and power that Voldemort manages to so very neatly and *silently* overturn the order of the wizarding world towards his own ends.

Throughout the series, Voldemort actively *brokers* silence, particularly by trading in fear: silence becomes his political tool. Condemned but unkillable, powerless and speechless, while it is true that before his re-emergence Voldemort must act through the power others, this very silence that we expect to confine him in fact *enshrouds* him, allowing him to position himself and his followers in anticipation for his inevitable reversal of order, of the unannounceable coup that he is about to stage. The disbelief that people exhibit when confronted with the very possibility of Lord Voldemort’s return throughout books one to five (despite the general anxiety over pronouncing his name), affords Voldemort and his followers an almost

untrammelled freedom of movement. In other words, the symbolic (non-)spaces that he malevolently occupies and weaponises are those in which there *is no response* as it has been refused or denied, where political representation can only register as a silence. With this in mind, is unsurprising that Voldemort can and does with a fair amount of regularity employ the use of not just wandless but also speechless – and thus unsignifiable and unrepresentable – magic.

If the most constantly applied bureaucratic tactic of control in Harry Potter is denying subjects the space to answer, it perhaps becomes a little clearer how Voldemort is able to thoroughly absorb – and be absorbed within – the Ministry of Magic’s regulative practices, assimilating them seamlessly into his own antagonistic agenda (and vice-versa). Indeed, further into timeline of the series, while Umbridge works as a key Ministry administrator in the final book (committing various Crimes against Muggle-borns), her role as a Ministry spokesperson becomes fairly indistinguishable from that of a Death-Eater. The Voldemort and the Ministry’s political ideologies have synchronised, with Voldemort’s motives quietly authoring and authorising the Ministry’s actions.

Much more can be addressed in relation to the specific interrelations between the concepts of silence and the unspeakable response, but which cannot be discussed in this paper due to the constraints of space and time. In consideration of this, it is perhaps best to revise and summarise the mechanics of this (seriously compromised) control within the *Harry Potter* universe. Firstly, in the face of possible emergency, the governmental power overextends, seeking to preserve the workings of its bureaucratic regime by broadening its power into areas that were previously not under its control. Power in these circumstances spreads horizontally and bureaucratically, without clear hierarchical command structures or adequate checks and balances. Secondly, this expansion is accepted by its governed populace because it takes the form of discipline rather than persecution, administration rather than despotism. Thirdly, this line between legitimate order and autocracy is negotiated by producing silences through the question which does not allow for response or the inquiry which cannot be answered – the rhetorical question which produces silence. Finally, while seemingly intractable because it surreptitiously denies space for further argument, it can be thoroughly co-opted by the skilful negotiator who is able to *occupy* the (non-)spaces of silence. It is here that the opportunity lies to pervert the already overwrought structures of governance while maintaining the sheen of legitimacy and enact the silent coup.

4. Other Strategies of Power and Positioning Worldly Silence

Voldemort’s tactics of silence offer a counter-manoeuvres to this form of governmental control. However, there are certainly several others which are applied during *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* which cause moments of breakage, in which the silence produced by the Ministry founders and fails. One of these has already been mentioned in passing: speechless magic, which always carries the threat of power without words.

A second strategy is harnessed when Hermione, brilliantly assessing the balance of silence and speech, machinates an *extreme democratisation* of the response itself, by having Harry’s account of Voldemort’s return published in *The Quibbler*. Harry relinquishes control over the words which he had until then refused to speak to anybody – that is, he cedes up his own silence, which up this point had surely been assisting the Ministry’s agenda by allowing him to be portrayed as a mad or attention-hungry young boy – and instead he *disseminates*. Harry’s response is therefore

brought outside of the realm of this silence-speaking dialectic by which Ministry power asserts itself; and Umbridge's heavy-handed attempt to reintroduce unspeakability in order to regain control over this now un-owned response by threatening expulsion to any student in possession of the magazine backfires quite spectacularly. "Oh, Harry, don't you see?" Hermione notes with glee, "If she could have done one thing to make absolutely sure that every single person in this school will read your interview, it was banning it" (p.513). Released from the system of unanswerable question, brought to the *demos* of the wizarding order, the Ministry can no longer stem the spread of the response.

The political message embedded in this part of the narrative is obvious and to this extent unnecessary to dwell upon. In an often-quoted passage from an interview, Rowling states:

The Potter books in general are a prolonged argument for tolerance, a prolonged plea for an end to bigotry... I think that it's a very healthy message to pass on to younger people that you should question authority and you should not assume that the establishment or the press tells you all of the truth. (Rowling 2007)

If one of Rowling's inferences throughout her books is that authority is not one which orders but one which suggests and questions – one with which the populace often complies, then the counter-politics of questioning must also be one of dealing with silences. For the "younger people" that Rowling identifies, silence abounds, for instance, in the gulf between childhood and adulthood, the difference between the negligible juvenile outburst and the legitimate grown-up utterance, the play of youth and the work of maturity. How often, we might suppose, are children asked questions which they are not expected to answer?

While this question may be important to bear in mind, there is another significant proposition that has been canvassed in the course of this chapter: that the "silence" of such an expectation is not one that gags or represses the option to speak, but is one which is *produced*. That is, silence *is* a political medium – it can be negotiated, harnessed or fragmented just as it can be manufactured. And as passive as such a strategy may first appear, it may also be insidious, opening unnoticeable spaces for quiet and absolute appropriation of order.

However, we cannot disregard the requirement of *exceptionality* in both the strategy of producing the impossible response and of channelling silence – the state of exception is required in order to induce others to *listen*. Harry's refusal to recount the tale of Cedric Diggory's death, the successfulness of the smear campaign in *The Daily Prophet*, and a certain prior legendary status as The-Boy-Who-Lived all work to pull Harry into this space of silence and unspeakability. Even when vindicated – when Voldemort's return is finally acknowledged – Harry appears to be in no more socially acceptable a position than he was previously, as he transitions from being madman to being target. And, indeed, if the regular order of wizarding society and the Ministry of Magic can be said to have been stabilised and preserved on the silencing of Voldemort and the communal unspeakability of his name; then Voldemort's state of exception can likewise be said to have instituted when Harry can no longer safely respond, when those around him can no longer safely listen to him – this is the point at which Voldemort, once the silent and unrepresentable, becomes recognisable *as* the State, calling for Harry's death. This is also the point at which Harry must (and does)

learn to more fully harness the space of silence beyond the unspeakable response and the silence-speaking dialectic as a form of resistance.

5. Conclusion

Silence harasses *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* in multiple forms and towards various ends. At the institutional level, it is employed as a strategy of control in anticipation of an emergency that threatens the order of the state, and in the fifth book particularly takes the mode of an inquiry to which a response cannot be given. Such a silence appears as both the result of disciplinary action and *self-inflicted*, brought about by the silent party and thus entirely within the realm of individual responsibility.

This chapter has argued, however, that silence is not merely the repressive tool of undemocratic state power, but is the productive political medium into which a state of exception, even at a protean level, is nested. If silence is the medium for control in the face of such a state of exception, it is also (by its very definition) a manoeuvre of desperation which avoids the response because it refuses to acknowledge what it might deliver. Indeed, within the wizarding world of Harry Potter, it is coupled with the overextension of governance institutions into areas which they had no previous authority. In this situation, border between acceptable order and a despotic regime becomes unclear, blurring until almost indistinguishable.

The indistinct boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate control, we have seen, create a (silent) space of political potency. Within a social environment which employs tactics of control by silence, order does not need to be overthrown or displaced by violent despots but simply co-opted and redeployed *from within*. By occupying the spaces of silence, by styling himself *as* the response that cannot be spoken, Voldemort succeeds in bringing about a quiet revolution of ideologies, marked perhaps in its very unremarkability. This is only one of many ways in which the silence can be challenged or broken, but perhaps one of the most effective – and certainly one of the most damaging – within *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* and the series as a whole; and at a more abstract level, the model of silence as a productive medium may also have a political and socio-cultural salience beyond the pages of Rowling's fiction. The silences of Harry Potter are pregnant with Voldemort's malevolence; however, the silences of worldly order are perhaps even more sinister, as undetectable as they are to the naked eye. Yet, perhaps, by the same token, they may be shaped into the seeds of possible change.

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The Good, the Bad and the Malfoys: The Role of Free Will in the Creation of the Criminal Child in the *Harry Potter* Series

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Abstract

The struggle between the forces of good and evil lies at the heart of fantasy fiction and the *Harry Potter* series is no exception. This paper investigates the ways in which Rowling's texts complicate the good/evil dichotomy through their representations of criminal child characters. By examining the villainous Tom Riddle and Draco Malfoy alongside the heroic Harry Potter, and focusing in particular upon *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2005), I explore the moral implications of the series' rejection of the nature/nurture debate in favour of an emphasis upon the free-will origins of crime.

"The world isn't split into good people and Death Eaters" – so says Sirius Black in *The Order of the Phoenix* (271). Taken out of context, this comment might point to an enlightened view of criminality by suggesting that the term 'Death Eater' is not synonymous with evil. In reality, Sirius is responding to Harry's association of the vile Dolores Umbridge with the Dark Side. The implication instead, therefore, is that you do not have to be a Death Eater to be evil – a rather bleak message on the eve of Voldemort's return to power. Regardless of how Sirius's claim is construed, however, it does point towards a sense of moral complexity in the series. M. Katherine Grimes argues that:

Little children do not see shades of grey or ambivalence in behaviour; instead, they separate the world into good and evil: Albus Dumbledore versus Voldemort, Harry Potter versus Draco Malfoy, the sacrificial James and Lily Potter versus the selfish Vernon and Petunia Dursley. (91)

While the books clearly uphold this simplistic good/evil dichotomy on one level, I want to consider whether, on a more complex level, the texts prompt older readers to interrogate this dichotomy through a focus upon the origins of criminality in youth.

The nature/nurture debate rages throughout the series – particularly with regards to the schoolboy Tom Riddle, begging the inevitable question, is he born evil, or do his circumstances make him so? In an essay on the acquisition of knowledge in the *Harry Potter* series, Lisa Hopkins observes 'the books' general preference for nurture rather than nature', as they place emphasis on the value of learning and practice over natural ability (30). This privileging of nurture over nature extends to the series' debate about the origins of criminality. The nature stance is most commonly advocated by the evil and the unenlightened. Harry's bigoted Aunt Marge is a staunch believer in the hereditary nature of criminality, as she claims:

"If there's something rotten on the *inside*, there's nothing anyone can do about it. [...] It's one of the basic rules of breeding," she said. "You see it all the time with dogs."

If there's something wrong with the bitch there'll be something wrong with the pup—" (Azkaban, 24).

Rita Skeeter, too, expresses similar views in her hate campaign against Hagrid in the *Daily Prophet*, condemning him as dangerous on account of his giant heritage (*Goblet*, 380-2). In a different way, Voldemort and his followers privilege nature over nurture by asserting the superiority of those with pure blood. In contrast, Dumbledore – the indisputable font of knowledge – recognises the crucial role that nurture plays in the creation of the immoral character. He defends Kreacher, the unpleasant house elf who betrays the Order of the Phoenix to Voldemort, suggesting that "Kreacher is what he has been made by wizards" (*Phoenix*, 733). Seemingly, in Dumbledore's view, the criminal is made and not born. Yet this view is complicated somewhat by Dumbledore's later assertion in *The Half-Blood Prince* that Voldemort's mother's family were "noted for a vein of instability and violence that flourished through generations due to their habit of marrying their own cousins" (200-1). Perhaps, after all, there is some truth in the idea that Voldemort was born evil.

Ultimately, however, the nature/nurture debate is rendered irrelevant by the outcome of the doubling of Harry Potter with Tom Riddle throughout the series. In *The Chamber of Secrets*, Riddle emphasises his symmetry with Harry:

"There are strange likenesses between us, Harry Potter. Even you must have noticed. Both half-bloods, orphans, raised by Muggles. Probably the only two Parselmouths to come to Hogwarts since the great Slytherin himself. We even *look* something alike . ." (233)

There are other connections too: Harry's wand is the twin of Tom Riddle's (*Stone*, 65); Harry and Tom are both the image of their absent fathers and are greatly influenced by them; in *The Half-Blood Prince*, Dumbledore reveals that "Hogwarts was where [Riddle] had been happiest; the first and only place he had felt at home", which causes Harry discomfort as he acknowledges that 'this was exactly how he felt about Hogwarts, too' (403-4); finally, in *The Deathly Hallows*, we discover that "part of Lord Voldemort lives inside Harry" – a fragment of Voldemort's soul which is responsible for Harry's "power of speech with snakes, and a connection with Lord Voldemort's mind that he has never understood" (551).

This doubling encourages a direct comparison between Harry and Tom and prompts the question, why did two characters so ostensibly alike, growing up in such similar circumstances, become polar opposites? What distinguishes Harry, the hero, from Voldemort, the villain? It is Dumbledore, again, who provides the answer as he informs Harry:

"You happen to have many qualities Salazar Slytherin prized in his hand-picked students. His own very rare gift, Parseltongue . . . resourcefulness . . . determination . . . a certain disregard for rules," he added, his moustache quivering again. "Yet the Sorting Hat placed you in Gryffindor. You know why that was. Think."

"It only put me in Gryffindor," Harry said in a defeated voice, "because I asked not to go in Slytherin . . ."

"Exactly," said Dumbledore, beaming once more. "Which makes you very *different* from Tom Riddle. It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities." (*Secrets*, 245)

Simply put, though his circumstances might have been against him, Harry is a hero because he chooses to be. He chooses Gryffindor over Slytherin in *The Philosopher's Stone* (91). In *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, he chooses to let Wormtail live rather than exacting revenge upon him for the death of his parents (275). And, in *The Deathly Hallows*, Harry makes the bravest choice of all – to die in order to defeat Voldemort (564). By contrast, Tom Riddle makes a conscious decision, whilst still in the orphanage, to use “magic against other people, to frighten, to punish, to control” (*Prince*, 259). At school, he chooses to reject his father’s name in favour of one which “wizards everywhere would one day fear to speak” (*Secrets*, 231). He later takes this rejection a step further as he decides to murder his Muggle father and grandparents, “obliterating the last of the unworthy Riddle line and revenging himself upon the father who never wanted him” (*Prince*, 343-4).

In the end, then, the series seems to propose that the distinction between hero and villain comes down to the choices that they make. Chantel Lavoie emphasises the significance of this message to the child readers of the series, suggesting that:

Children, too, have important decisions to make, and Rowling’s texts emphasize that they need to consider individual preference, conscience, and right and wrong rather than what the majority think or do. These choices should be informed, reflecting both self-reliance and cooperation – involving group or family loyalty and “grown-up” negotiations between those shifting boundaries. This idea is not something from which Rowling shies. (42)

By confronting children with the importance of making the right decisions, the texts encourage them to recognise their own moral responsibility. In light of Dumbledore’s privileging of choice, the nature/nurture debate loses its significance as the series implies that free will ultimately overrides both of these considerations. The focus upon nature and nurture absolves the child of responsibility for his crimes – either he is born evil or he is made so by circumstances beyond his control. In contrast, the series’ emphasis on the free-will origins of crime constructs an unsympathetic image of the criminal child as someone ultimately responsible for his own immorality. This stress upon the crucial role of free will in the descent into criminality reinforces the simplistic good/evil dichotomy and threatens to destroy the series’ moral complexity, particularly with regards to the construction of the criminal child.

This threat is, perhaps, closest to fulfilment in the representation of Draco Malfoy – Harry’s arch-nemesis at Hogwarts. In contrast to Tom Riddle, Draco’s alignment with the Dark Side is enforced through his portrayal as a comic villain. He becomes the butt of jokes throughout the series: the reader is encouraged to look on with gleeful approval as Draco is slapped round the face by Hermione after he insults Hagrid in *The Prisoner of Azkaban* (216); we are expected to delight in the idea that, after a clash with Dumbledore’s Army at the end of *The Order of the Phoenix*, Draco and his henchmen, Crabbe and Goyle, ‘resembled nothing so much as three gigantic slugs squeezed into Hogwarts’ uniform’ (761); and, despite Hermione’s assertion that “He could really have hurt Malfoy”, who could resist the urge to snigger at the image of “Draco Malfoy, the amazing bouncing ferret” as he is punished by the impostor Mad-Eye Moody for a cowardly attack on Harry in *The Goblet of Fire* (183). Draco and his cronies are caricatures of evil – ugly, unpleasant and bigoted – and are, consequently, as Lavoie puts it, ‘signally fit to be spat upon’ (38).

There is a change, however, in the representation of Draco Malfoy, if not of his Slytherin companions, when he is faced with the reality of becoming a Death Eater in *The Half-Blood Prince*. Up until this point, while he has approved of Voldemort's principles and played the role of villain to Harry's hero, he has not yet become criminal. Confronted with the prospect of murdering Dumbledore in *The Half-Blood Prince*, Draco undergoes a drastic transformation, as Harry observes:

Was it just his imagination, or did Malfoy, like Tonks, look thinner? Certainly he looked paler; his skin still had that greyish tinge, probably because he so rarely saw daylight these days. But there was no air of smugness, or excitement, or superiority; none of the swagger that he had had on the Hogwarts Express, when he had boasted openly of the mission he had been given by Voldemort . . . (443-4)

Moaning Myrtle's description of Draco in the same book suggests an even more dramatic change. In her view "he's sensitive, people bully him, too, and he feels lonely and hasn't got anybody to talk to, and he's not afraid to show his feelings and cry!" (*Prince*, 433). Nowhere, in this image, is the villainous caricature that readers have learnt to loathe. So what is it that has brought about Draco's transition from comic villain to tragic figure? The answer, again, lies with Dumbledore and the question of free will. When Draco finally confronts Dumbledore at the end of *The Half-Blood Prince*, ostensibly ready to kill him, he tells Dumbledore, "I haven't got any options. [. . .] I've got to do it! He'll kill me! He'll kill my whole family." (552) It is Draco's family who have forced him into this untenable position through their preoccupation with the Dark Arts and their support of Voldemort. Voldemort's selection of Draco for the task of murdering Dumbledore is, as Narcissa Malfoy observes, "vengeance for Lucius's mistake" (*Prince*, 38) in failing to obtain the prophecy about Voldemort and Harry in *The Order of the Phoenix*. Draco, then, does not choose the criminal path he takes in *The Half-Blood Prince* but is, instead, forced onto it. This is a crucial scene in the series' construction of the criminal child. Despite Dumbledore's insistence that the path to criminality is ultimately *chosen* by villainous characters, here the series begins to consider the possibility of a character whose free will is reduced to such an extent that his descent into criminality becomes inevitable.

Being the son of Death Eater parents, however, does not in itself appear to be an adequate excuse for Draco's deference to the Dark Side. As Dumbledore points out, free will can override upbringing. Sirius Black is the prime example of this as he defies the views of his unsavoury, pure-blood family – including his brother Regulus and cousin Bellatrix, who join the ranks of the Death Eaters. Sirius, in contrast, is the only member of his family who is not placed in Slytherin and he dissociates himself further from his repulsive relatives by running away from home as a teenager. He is only able to make this decision, however, because he has a support network which offers him an alternative lifestyle. As a Gryffindor, he is able to escape the evil influence of the Slytherins and instead befriends James Potter, whose parents "adopted [him] as a second son" (*Phoenix*, 103). Sirius finds a surrogate family to replace his own unsatisfactory one. Harry, too, has a vast network of support, including Dumbledore, Ron and Hermione, Hagrid and, later, the Weasleys and his godfather, Sirius. Even his deceased parents crop up from time to time to lend their support. John Kornfield and Laurie Prothro emphasise the crucial significance of this network to Harry's moral development. They speculate that:

Without all this support, who knows what kind of new family Harry might have sought when he escaped the abusive environment of the Dursley household? Perhaps he might have been drawn to the evil Draco Malfoy, who initially offers his friendship to Harry.' (198)

Harry has the freedom to reject Draco's friendship in favour of a better offer from Ron and Hermione. In contrast, Draco himself is ironically condemned to the fate which he warns Harry against – that of “making friends with the wrong sort” (*Stone*, 81) – as the Sorting Hat immediately places him in Slytherin (*Stone*, 90). The Slytherins' evil reputation precedes them and Draco's friends – if they can be called such – are, like his parents, firmly situated on the Dark Side.

Draco, then, lacks Harry's vast support network and, faced with a kill or be killed situation in *The Half-Blood Prince*, there are very few people to whom he can turn. Moaning Myrtle, a maudlin ghost who haunts the Hogwarts' bathrooms is his only confidante. A miserable recluse, as powerless in death as she was in life, Myrtle makes a fitting companion for the disenfranchised Draco, but not a useful one. Draco's best hope of salvation comes from Severus Snape who has sworn the ‘Unbreakable Vow’ in order to protect him (*Prince*, 41); Snape's position as a double agent, working for both Voldemort and Dumbledore, however, severely restricts his agency to help and Draco, believing that Snape is truly loyal to Voldemort, rejects his offer of support, claiming “I know what you're up to! You want to steal my glory!” (*Prince*, 303). Even Dumbledore is an inadequate protector, as he is unable to approach Draco for fear of alerting Voldemort. As Draco prepares to kill him, Dumbledore does make a last-ditch effort to help Draco, asking him to “[c]ome over to the right side [. . .] and we can hide you more completely than you can possibly imagine.” (*Prince*, 552-3) But it is a case of too little, too late. Draco barely has time to consider this lifeline before it is snatched away from him by the arrival of his Death Eater companions. Draco, it seems, is given little opportunity to act other than he does since his cry for help is only heard by those powerless to assist him.

There is a danger that the reader, too, will overlook Draco's plight in *The Half-Blood Prince* as it is inevitably filtered through Harry's viewpoint. Lavoie observes that, throughout the series, ‘revolting descriptions of Slytherins are in keeping with the third-person narrator's empathy with Harry's perspective’ (37). This narrative bias is particularly evident in Draco's representation: in Harry's eyes, Draco is indisputably a villain and, consequently, his suffering is marginalised. Far from sympathising with Draco on observing his dramatic transformation in *The Half-Blood Prince*, Harry is instead ‘cheered’ by the thought that Draco's ‘mission, whatever it was, was going badly’ (444). Draco's personal plight is overlooked. Similarly, when Harry later encounters Draco ‘crying – actually crying – tears streaming down his pale face’ (*Prince*, 488), any possibility of exploring Draco's predicament is displaced by the ensuing duel in which Harry leaves his enemy ‘shaking uncontrollably in a pool of his own blood’ (*Prince*, 489). At the end of the text, however, Harry's attitude towards Draco undergoes a crucial development as he considers Dumbledore's death scene:

[H]e had not forgotten the fear in Malfoy's voice on that Tower top, nor the fact that he had lowered his wand before the other Death Eaters arrived. Harry did not believe that Malfoy would have killed Dumbledore. He despised Malfoy still for his infatuation with the Dark Arts, but now the tiniest drop of pity mingled with his

dislike. Where, Harry wondered, was Malfoy now, and what was Voldemort making him do under the threat of killing him and his parents. (*Prince*, 596)

This is a significant breakthrough as Harry's shift in perspective encourages the reader, too, to feel the 'tiniest drop of pity' for Draco, inviting them to view him as victim rather than villain. Draco's 'victim' status is developed further in *The Deathly Hallows* as Harry's earlier musings about Draco's fate are answered by a vision in which Voldemort forces Draco to torture another Death Eater. With Draco's free will now reduced to almost nothing as he is used and abused by Voldemort, Harry can no longer overlook his adversary's suffering: 'Malfoy's gaunt, petrified face seemed branded on the inside of his eyes. Harry felt sickened by what he had seen, by the use to which Draco was now being put by Voldemort.' (*Hallows*, 145) The plight of the inevitable child criminal is finally confronted as the image of the tormented Draco Malfoy moves from Harry's peripheral vision to 'the inside of his eyes'.

Reflecting on his character's development towards the end of the series, Tom Felton reinforces Draco's newfound status as, in his words, a 'victim of terrible circumstances' (Felton, 2011). Yet, moving beyond the idea of Draco's victim status, Felton also observes that while, in *The Deathly Hallows*, Draco's 'allegiances lie with his family and he's terrified of Voldemort, there seems to be some sort of inner compulsion to maybe, not help, but certainly not hinder' (Felton, 2011). There are several instances of Draco 'not hindering' in *The Deathly Hallows*. Most obvious, perhaps, is his reluctance to confirm Harry's identity as he is brought to Malfoy Manor by Snatchers so that he can be handed over to Voldemort:

"Well, Draco?" said Lucius Malfoy. He sounded avid. "Is it? Is it Harry Potter?"
 "I can't – I can't be sure," said Draco. He [...] seemed as scared of looking at Harry as Harry was of looking at him. (371)

It is in this possible defiance of his family's interests and wishes that Draco is finally able to distinguish himself from his father. Despite their physical similarities, Harry notices that 'while his father looked beside himself with excitement, Draco's expression was full of reluctance, even fear' (*Hallows*, 372). Could it be that, in a small way, Draco is finally beginning to resist his father's corrupting influence? Seemingly, when his free will is all but extinguished, Draco stands still, refusing to take another step towards the Dark Side. In a later scene, at Hogwarts, Draco tries to prevent Harry from securing Ravenclaw's diadem – a regressive step on the moral spectrum, it might seem – but he orders Crabbe and Goyle not to kill Harry as "The Dark Lord wants him alive –" (*Hallows*, 506). This in itself is hardly heroic but the fact that Draco is inside Hogwarts to begin with, rather than outside the castle with Voldemort and his army, suggests a measure of resistance. While Crabbe's assertion that "we decided not to go. Decided to bring you to 'im" (*Hallows*, 505) suggests their loyalty to the Dark Lord, Voldemort himself views Draco's absence as an act of defiance, telling Lucius Malfoy that: "If your son is dead, Lucius, it is not my fault. He did not come and join me, like the rest of the Slytherins. Perhaps he has decided to befriend Harry Potter?" (*Hallows*, 515-6) Draco never comes this close to redemption, but it is more likely that his presence at Hogwarts stems from his desire to avoid fighting for Voldemort than from a plan to capture Harry.

Draco's actions towards the end of the series must be judged in relation to those of his family and, in particular, his father's exploits. While Lucius remains at Voldemort's side, a grovelling servant somewhat akin to Wormtail, Draco defies the Dark Lord and, by extension, his father through his absence from Voldemort's army. Despite Voldemort's

power, it is Draco's withdrawal from Lucius Malfoy's influence that is the more impressive feat. Though a wider support network, or lack thereof, has a significant impact upon Harry, Tom and Draco throughout the series, it is ultimately the father who shapes their character and motivates their behaviour and decisions. Harry and Tom's fathers are absent but, nevertheless, powerful. Tom's discovery of his Muggle father's abandonment of him and his mother leads him to fashion himself in opposition to the elder Tom Riddle, embracing his magical roots in an attempt to obliterate not only his own Muggle line but the Muggle race in its entirety. Harry, on the other hand, constantly strives to live up to the idealised image of his father created by James's companions in the wizarding world. The choices of both hero and villain, therefore, are informed and, arguably, restricted by their construction of the father figure. In Draco's case, this image has a tangible reality as Lucius actively manipulates his son's beliefs and behaviour through a combination of gifts, high expectations and a lack of affection. Draco, like Harry, adopts his own father as a role model, constantly seeking his approval as he unthinkingly parrots Lucius's snobbish, bigoted views for the first five books. Draco is only able to question his belief system and his father's suitability as a role model following Lucius's fall from grace as he is imprisoned in Azkaban at the end of *The Order of the Phoenix*.

Harry's own idealised image of his father is also damaged towards the end of *The Order of the Phoenix* as he enters the Pensieve and witnesses James's cruel bullying of Snape, causing Harry to conclude that 'his father had been every bit as arrogant as Snape had always told him' (*Phoenix*, 573). It is, perhaps, this realisation that paves the way for Harry's later sympathy for Draco's compulsion to remain loyal to a fallible father. Yet Harry's changing attitude towards Draco also stems from Harry's closer association with his mother in light of the revelation of his father's flaws in *The Order of the Phoenix*. Harry begins to develop more consciously qualities that he recognises in his mother, such as compassion for disenfranchised characters who succumb to the lure of the Dark Arts. Just as Lily pities Snape during their time at Hogwarts, so Harry begins to sympathise with Draco, and even Voldemort, in the final two books of the series. Draco, too, undergoes an emotional development in *The Half-Blood Prince* – most obviously through his friendship with Moaning Myrtle – under the influence of his mother, whose love for her son and desire to protect him ultimately outweighs her loyalty to Voldemort.

Despite these parallels between Draco and Harry's relationships with their parents, however, there is a significant distinction between their decision-making processes. While Harry and Draco's free will may be equally restricted by parental influence, this influence differs in form from the Potters to the Malfoys. James Potter, though admittedly "a bit of an idiot" (*Phoenix*, 591) as a teenager, develops into an unambiguously 'good' father, while Lily is indisputably the ideal mother who makes the ultimate sacrifice to protect her son. Lucius Malfoy, in contrast, is irredeemably evil, while Narcissa is, at best, morally ambiguous. For Harry, taking the right path is a case of following his parents' example and is, consequently, an easy choice. For Draco, in contrast, the path of least resistance – that which his parents have taken – is, inevitably, the wrong path. Making the right decision, therefore, poses a much greater challenge for Draco than it does for Harry. Judged by Harry's moral code, Draco is a coward. But the standards to which Harry and his companions adhere are impossibly high. When faced with the same choice as Draco – between criminality and death – the hero will always choose death. Consequently, Harry becomes the impossible hero who champions a dangerously extremist and potentially damaging ideology: that it is better to die than to submit to criminality. In light of Harry's blinding example, Draco's minor defiance of the Dark Side is overlooked, ensuring that, at best, he becomes recognised as a tragic

figure – a ‘victim of terrible circumstances’. Through its construction of a child criminal character whose free will is considerably diminished, the series encourages its readers to adopt a more complex view of morality. Ultimately, however, it upholds the simplistic good/evil dichotomy. ‘Villains’ may be pitied but never praised as, regardless of their moral progress – or lack of regression – they will always be judged against the heroic ideal. Draco will never live up to this ideal but maybe he should be given credit, all the same, for his ‘inner compulsion to not hinder’. Draco Malfoy is no hero but, perhaps, in the end, he should not have to be.

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Why Queers Never Prosper in the Wizarding World: Phallocentrism, Heteronormativity and Wandlore in the Harry Potter Series.

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Abstract

In the Harry Potter series, there is one aspect that is consistent throughout the ever-changing story, the wizard or witch's wands. 'The wand chooses the wizard' and, from that moment, a witch or wizard must always have their wands to hand when in the wizarding world. This paper will examine 'wand politics' and how they manifest themselves as a representation for the emphasis placed on phallic power in the wizarding world. It will examine how the presence of wands diminishes those who are not considered to fall into the category of heterosexual males. Working on the hypothesis that Lord Voldemort and Albus Dumbledore are the main 'queers' in the Harry Potter Series, this paper will compare them with the heteronormal Harry, and discuss how the relationship that all three have with their wands is reflexive of their acceptance into normal society. It will also discuss the place of The Elder Wand, and how it should be seen as the ultimate phallic object, and analyses the impact that mastering this wand would have on the formation of society as a whole. In the magical world, the wand is without a doubt the most important aspect. I will examine how wandlore can be interoperated as the importance placed on the phallic, patriarchy, heteronormativity, and masculinity in the wizarding world, and how in this society queer characters will never be able to raise to the levels of the heterosexual man.

1. Introduction

The presence of wands in the wizarding world does not require a great deal of interpretation. However, close analysis of the books and films can demonstrate just how unbalanced wandlore politics within this fictional world really are. Wands are symbolic of the importance placed on phallic power in a universe where men hold the main positions of authority. The importance of patriarchy, the importance of men and the emphasis on power represented by these phallic objects in the wizarding world cannot be denied. The necessity for every member of the wizarding world to carry a wand, even though as children it is clear that they have the ability to channel their magical powers without ever coming into contact with the objects, is telling. Though children exhibit abilities to channel their magic without the need of any medium, upon entering the wizarding world, they are required to obtain a wand in order to ensure their magic can be monitored and controlled. There is an awed sense of respect placed on wands, and wand power and use is strictly monitored. Upon entering the wizarding world it is clear that every member of society must adhere to a set of guidelines that reflect this respect of phallic power in order to be accepted as a normal member of the society. The choosing of a wand is almost ceremonial, and seen as one of the most exciting and iconic moments in a young witch or wizard's introduction into the wizarding world.

This chapter is a snapshot of the paper presented at 'Magic is Might 2012', which sought to demonstrate how heterosexuality and 'normality' are championed in the

wizarding world. It will examine the place of wands, in demonstrating how queerness, and more specifically homosexuality, is diminished through the politics and rules surrounding wand use. It will also touch on the relationship that Albus Dumbledore and Lord Voldemort had with wands throughout their lifetimes, and how their attitudes towards wands and their obsession with power were reflective of their queer nature. It will compare these two queer characters to the heteronormal Harry, and discuss how their experience with wands demonstrates that, despite what we are initially led to believe about how abnormal and quirky the wizarding world is, queerness in this world is never entirely accepted. In the wizarding world, heterosexuality is without a doubt the dominant, and anyone not seen to be 'normal', even in this world of queerness, is unacceptable. The terms 'heteronormative' and 'heteronormativity' will appear often throughout this chapter in relation to Harry, Voldemort and Dumbledore. These words are defined as the 'institution of heterosexuality', the idea that heterosexuality is the normal, socially acceptable way to live life (Giffney 2009, p.368).

2. In a world of queers, who are the queers?

David Halperin defined queer as 'Whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an essence. 'Queer' then, demarcates not a positivity but a positionality vis-à-vis the normative' (Halperin 1995, p.62).

In past papers and publications I have stated my belief that the wizarding world created by Rowling is the perfect microcosmic queer world. Within this world, nothing is normal and everything is strange and exciting (O'Brien, 2010). However, once we step into that world, the queer nature of the environment disappears, as the magic that made the world queer becomes the normal and accepted way to behave. Magic and magical beings becomes the dominant and we, the Muggles, are no longer the majority, and therefore become the queers. The queerness that is forced on the Muggles however is only temporary, because as the Muggle world is left behind we begin to see just how queer the magical world can be. The world created by Rowling comments on and criticises our world's prejudices. It mirrors the isolation of queer members of our society, through her representation of the 'lesser beings': house elves, goblins, werewolves, vampires etc. Though the books appear to criticise the way our society isolates members that are not considered normal and accepted, and are socially queer, it still champions heterosexual straight men, and demonstrates how in every society, they repeatedly come out on top. So let's ask the question why are hetero-normative males the only group of society that is allowed to prosper completely in the wizarding world? More specifically let's examine the case of Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore and Lord Voldemort, and the history of their wand use and their connection to The Elder Wand, as one controlled it, one desired it and one mastered it, to examine how wandlore benefits those that are straight and conform to the wizarding world's expectations of what is acceptable and normal behaviour.

3. Three Men and A Wand

'The wand chooses the wizard' (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Warner Brothers, 2001)

While these words were not technically Rowling's (they can be credited to the screen writer of the first movie) they have become iconic in their own right, and the inspiration for them did not come from nowhere. From the very beginning, we are thought to believe that the wand has a mind of its own, and therefore chooses its owner for a reason that is unknown to even the people who create them. It is said the bond between a wizard and his wand is a connection that is nearly impossible to break, even though we see evidence throughout the series of wands changing hands and being replaced when they are destroyed. Wizards in the world are attached to their wands completely, and we see repeated evidence that when a wizard is without his wand, he feels incomplete. In the series only men are separated from their wands, Neville, Harry, Ron, Hagrid and Lord Voldemort being the most obvious that come to mind. When Harry borrows her wand, Hermione does not appear to demonstrate the same loss that we see from the perspective of the men. It may be there of course, but she does not voice it, and therefore we are unaware of the effect that being without her wand has on her. She is sorry that she is responsible for the destruction of Harry's wand, and gives hers over without argument, adhering to Harry's will without question, wanting to make up for what she sees as her mistake leading to the smashing of Harry's phoenix wand (Rowling, 2007). The feeling of being without a wand is described to be akin to the powerlessness and often failure described to be experienced by impotence, which is an exclusively male phenomenon (Minsky 1996, p.187).

Albus Dumbledore was outed in 2007 by Rowling as a homosexual who fell in love as a young man with Gellert Grindelwald. It is implied this love was unrequited, and ended with the death of Albus' sister. It has been revealed by Rowling that the trauma Dumbledore experiences resulted in Dumbledore's decision to never embark on another relationship, and instead dedicated his life to teaching children, guiding them (BBC News 2007). In accordance to societal expectations, Dumbledore can be viewed as a 'safe' gay. An almost asexual homosexual, who though his orientation is directed towards men, it is irrelevant as we do not see him engaging in any kind of romantic relationship throughout the series. His love for Grindelwald is more implied than confirmed and there is no evidence to suggest that Gellert returned the infatuation. Dumbledore admits that he attempted to avoid a confrontation with Grindelwald until it became clear that he could not avoid him. It was during this duel that he took control of the Elder Wand, an event that is implied in the first book, long before we as readers become aware of its significance to the final story.

From his conception, Tom Riddle was destined to live an 'abnormal' existence. His mother, Merope, was mistreated and abused by her family. Tom's father was a local Muggle man, Tom Riddle, Sr. Merope magically seduced him through magical means, probably a love potion. She tricked him into marrying her. Resulting from this Riddle, Jr. was conceived under unusual, even queer, circumstance, particularly in terms of sexual consent. Consumed with guilt at her action, Merope stopped giving Tom, Sr. the love potion, hoping that he would love her without the magic or at least stay for the sake of their unborn child. The Muggle abandoned Merope once she removed him from her spell. She died during childbirth, and left Tom to be raised in a Muggle orphanage until Dumbledore, who was given the responsibility to tell him about Hogwarts, arrived. The child Dumbledore encountered was already exhibiting some serious psychological issues.

He demonstrated serious paranoia, kleptomania, and was a ‘quasi pathological child’ (Stockton, 2004). He had suffered a traumatic conception and birth and a loveless early upbringing. As a result he was practically incapable of growing up ‘normal’ in accordance with the societal view of what normal is—which I believe includes being heterosexual. While Voldemort’s sexuality is debateable, insofar as the lack of evidence regarding any kind of physical or sexual attraction, or indeed any attachment to any other human being, the fact that he is ‘queer’ within the confines of being socially queer and unaccepted by the dominant society in every aspect of his life is undeniable. The first evidence of Tom Riddle being required to repress himself occurred while he was living in the Muggle orphanage, an environment he should never have been placed in. It was here that he learned that he was different. He told Dumbledore,

‘I always knew I was different...special...Always, I knew there was something’
(Rowling, 2005, p.321).

I propose this difference was not only related to his magical gifts, but to his queerness as well. Voldemort’s awareness that he does not fit in with the society around him has caused him to lash out against the other children in the orphanage. Tom Riddle was able to use his powers to punish them for behaviour he himself had decided was socially unacceptable, all of which he does without the use of a wand. Voldemort’s first encounter with Dumbledore would have caused him some temporary relief. It was at this moment he realised he was not ‘alone’, that there were others like him in the world. I argue this relates not only to his magical gifts, but to his queerness as well. It is probable that Voldemort’s first meeting with Dumbledore was not only his first encounter with a wizard, but also his first encounter with the only character from the stories we know to be confirmed to be a homosexual. It was during this first encounter that Voldemort discovered he was not the only wizard in the village. After arriving at Hogwarts, an environment where he was finally amongst others like him, Voldemort thrived, though the damage done to his psyche as a result of years of repressing his nature and his magic was irreversible. Though he was popular and well liked, he lived a secret life, where he became consumed with a desire for power.

Harry Potter, despite his unusual upbringing in a Muggle world where he is the queer, abnormal member of society, literally forced to live in a closet, enters a world where he is not only universally loved and accepted: he is famous. While Harry attempts in some ways to isolate himself from the society, becoming resentful and oftentimes bitter about the fame that was thrust upon him as a baby, he also becomes arrogant, defying those in authority and believing that he always knows best. As the series progresses he becomes the definition of the hetero-normative male figure: attractive, powerful, threatened by another alpha male, Cedric Diggory, and constantly feeling the need to prove himself. Harry does exactly what we expect him to do, sacrificing his girlfriend’s happiness to protect her, embarking on a quest where his way is the only way, before ultimately defeating Lord Voldemort, marrying Ginny and having three children with her, thereby living happily ever after. At the completion of the series, Harry is portrayed as the very definition of health, happiness and acceptance by normal society. Despite his troubled

upbringing we see him grow into what we would see as a normal and accepted Muggle adult (Rowling 2007, p.759).

4. What have Queers got to do with an Elder Wand?

Having outlined the personality of the three characters chosen to be the focus of this chapter, I would like to turn my attention to the relationship these three men have with wands in general throughout the series, before focusing on the ultimate representation of phallic power in the wizarding world, The Elder Wand. Though we are only made aware of this wands existence in the final book, looking back, it is not difficult to see how Rowling set up what would become the final showdown between Harry and Lord Voldemort over the Elder Wand, which will be discussed later on in the chapter.

The moment that Harry gets his wand is the one he had most anticipated since finding out he was going to be entering the wizarding world.

'A magic wand... This was what Harry had really been looking forward too...'
(Rowling 1997, p.81)

Harry proves to be a difficult customer, with Ollivander having to pick almost every wand in the shop for him to use. We have to wonder what it is about Harry's personality that made it so difficult for Ollivander to find a match, and why, given the connection between the two of them, Ollivander did not just start with the wand that was said to be the brother of that one that killed Harry's parents and gave him the scar that would brand him for the rest of his life. Harry's attachment to his wand is clear throughout the series, even stating at one point, when it goes missing, that he felt incomplete without it. When his wand is broken in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, he is incapable of accepting that it is gone, instead he carries the pieces close to his heart until he finds a way that he can repair them. In the end it is Harry, the embodiment of heteronormative perfection, that appears to be destined to become the master of the Elder Wand (Rowling, 2007).

After Lord Voldemort's return at the end of *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* two things happen. First he becomes obsessed with wands and other representations of the phallic. Second, he cannot get them to function for him properly, or at the very least, the way he expects them to perform. Voldemort's phallus, like his penis, refuses to function 'normally' meaning the way that it is expected to behave, as he is now out to the entire wizarding world for the queer that he is. As his frustration builds he becomes more obsessed with obtaining more power and becoming the master of the ultimate phallus, the Elder Wand.

Dumbledore's relationship with wands again differs from the other two. He had learned from his mistakes of the past and is no longer obsessed with obtaining power, and yet he is the owner of the most powerful wand of all time, though he is not the master of it. We see here, through his relationship with his wand, the same 'safe' control that we have already associated with Dumbledore's homosexuality. We know that it is there, yet we are not offended by it, because it is not a threat to us in the same way that Lord Voldemort as the owner of the Elder wand would be. Dumbledore's claim to Harry that he was only meant protect the Elder Wand, that he was not worthy to master it, is an interesting reflection on the obsession with power that Dumbledore, like Voldemort, fell

victim to in his youth. He speaks of how unworthy he was to master it. Once again we come back to the idea that Dumbledore, because of his sexuality, sees himself as unequal, or less than Harry, the perfect heteronormal hero that everyone loves and accepts without question.

The Elder Wand itself warrants serious analysis when we consider what is known about it from the books, and the extra material gathered by the fans of the Harry Potter world. It is also the most significant object to connect these three men, one who desired it, one who controlled it, and the one who mastered it. It has a trail of death behind its history, and though it has had many owners, none have been female. The fight for the wand of ultimate power is bloody and vicious, leading to the rumour that the owner of the wand had to be murdered at the hand of the person who wishes to acquire it, rather than simply having to win the wand in the course of a duel. In a world that is obsessed with phallic imagery, phallic representation, and the dominance of heteronormativity and masculinity, surely there is no better object to point to for examination than the Elder Wand. According to Lacan, the symbolic phallus is representative of being the ultimate man (McAfee 2004, p.32). Therefore, in this wizarding world, the master of this ultimate symbol of strength and power, will essentially become the most accepted.

All three men have relationships with their wands that could be considered obsessive. Dumbledore went to great lengths to ensure that he maintained his control of the most powerful wand of all, in order to protect it. It was his intention to die as the wand's true owner, and therefore to ensure that the most powerful wand in the history of the wizarding world died with him. Lord Voldemort let his desire for the Elder Wand become more powerful than his obsession with obtaining Harry, something that would have appeared impossible given his behaviour in the previous six books. Harry allows his desire to become the master of the Elder Wand, and of the Deathly Hallows, to throw him from this quest to find Lord Voldemort. The Elder Wand, it would appear, is the one object that could deter all these men from their goals. It is my belief that the idea that owning it, controlling it, would create a sense of completion and power demonstrating just how important the wand is, and, as a result, demonstrating how important it is to have the biggest and most powerful penis in the wizarding world. No matter who you are this status would be respected, and would therefore make others accept you, ignoring all other perceived flaws in your behaviour, and follow you without question.

5. Conclusion

At the conclusion of the series, the Elder Wand has become more dominant in the story line than any other issue raised throughout the series. At the climax of the final battle between Lord Voldemort and Harry, it is revealed that through a series of coincidences, Harry has become the Master of the Elder Wand. In this final scene, we see the heteronormal Harry triumph over the queer Voldemort, not only by defeating him, but by stripping him of his last victory. When forced to do battle against its true Master, the wand bounces back and kills Lord Voldemort. In this way, he has effectively committed suicide, and Harry is left pure and innocent, the perfect untainted hero, though he is credited with defeating the Dark Lord. Ultimately Harry rejects the responsibility of being the master of this powerful phallic object, opting instead to mend the wand given to him by Ollivander in the first book. This decision is questioned by Ron (who has his own

issues that require an entirely separate examination), who recognises Harry is turning down the chance to be the owner of the unbeatable wand, and instead supported by Hermione and by the portrait of Dumbledore, who see the wand for what it is: more trouble than it is worth. With this decision we are left to wonder about the new society that has been created in the wizarding world with Voldemort defeated and the Elder Wand gone. Though it is implied that the world is more peaceful and accepting, we have to remember that the war took the two most queer members of society, and we must face the reality that though the world may be more peaceful, it is so because members of the world will now be conforming to a new set of societal norms and expectations, one where it would appear queerness, and the Elder Wand are not welcome.

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Wand Privilege: Perceptions of superiority and inferiority in wizarding society

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Abstract

In this paper, I examine the various forms of privilege that are portrayed in the *Harry Potter* series, including class privilege, pure-blood privilege, and human privilege. Using Peggy McIntosh's *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* as a framework, I outline the forms of privilege that wizard-born students benefit from and Muggle-born students do not. I then examine the treatment of sentient non-humans by wizarding society. I argue that, while overt prejudice is largely condemned, the portrayal of more implicit examples of prejudice is more complex, reflecting real-life manifestations of privilege and inequality.

1. Wand Privilege

In her interview with *Time* magazine in 2007, J. K. Rowling asked 'What did my books preach against throughout? Bigotry, violence, struggles for power, no matter what' (Gibbs, 2007). It is apparent from the beginning of the *Harry Potter* series that prejudice, tolerance and intolerance are among the major themes of the novels. Harry encounters prejudice from the moment he arrives in Little Whinging to live with the magic-hating Dursleys. Although Harry came to the Dursleys as a baby, with no memory of life with his witch and wizard parents, the Dursleys consistently treat him as if he is tainted by their magical influence. In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, we learn that the living room 'held no sign at all that another boy lived in the house', suggesting that the Dursleys have attempted to erase Harry's existence (Rowling, 1997). Upon Hagrid's arrival, it is revealed that the Dursleys have in fact sought to erase Harry's identity as a wizard; Vernon declares "We swore when we took him in we'd put a stop to that rubbish," while Petunia describes Harry's parents (and, by implication, their son) as 'strange' and 'abnormal' (Rowling, 1997). Their erasure of Harry himself suggests their inability to separate their nephew as an individual from his magical background, suggesting an attitude of 'blood will out' that parallels racist and classist attitudes. It is clear that Harry suffers constant prejudice during his young life with the Dursleys; however, perhaps surprisingly, the series begins to examine bigotry and intolerance as a broader theme upon his entry into the wizarding world.

One of the most obvious forms of prejudice in *Harry Potter* is hatred of Muggles and obsession with blood purity. These prejudices are generally associated with Death Eaters; it is made clear throughout the series that characters who hate Muggles and Muggle-born wizards are bad people, often irredeemably so. Dolores Umbridge, one of the series' most unlikeable characters, reveals her prejudice against Muggle-born witches and wizards during her time as a member of the Muggle-born Registration Commission in the Voldemort-controlled Ministry of Magic:

Umbridge laughed a soft, girlish laugh...

“No...no, I don’t think so, Mrs Cattermole. Wands only choose witches or wizards. You are not a witch.” (Rowling, 2007)

Later in this scene, Umbridge proudly announces “I am related to the Selwyns...indeed, there are few pure-blood families to whom I am not related,” a statement which underlines her pure-blood prejudice; not only does she condemn Muggle-borns and half-bloods, she attempts to bolster her own pure-blood credentials by claiming to own objects allegedly belonging to pure-blood families – in this case, Slytherin’s locket (Rowling, 2007). The fact that Umbridge is lying about the locket’s origin (she does not know that it belonged to Salazar Slytherin, and obtained it from Mundungus Fletcher) subtly hints that Umbridge may in fact be attempting to ‘pass’ as pure-blood, both by physically displaying her supposed heritage and by publicly standing against those who are not pure-blood. In comparison, the Weasleys are entirely pure-blood, but rarely seem concerned with their blood status; furthermore, their family heirlooms, such as Ron’s chess set, are not used as a public display of their wizarding credentials, but simply as useful and beloved possessions. Throughout the series, Rowling subtly parallels blood status and race, suggesting that although there are distinct differences between magical and non-magical ‘cultures’ that should be celebrated, only the bigoted see one ‘culture’ as superior to another, and attempt to dehumanise those who do not belong to their favoured group.

The series also condemns classism, in particular through its portrayal of the elitist Malfoy family. While the Malfoys are as obsessed with blood purity as the other Death Eaters, they are also preoccupied with wealth and social status. This is evident in their interactions with the equally pure-blooded, but much less affluent, Weasley family. The second time Draco Malfoy appears in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, he comments to Ron “No need to ask who you are. My father told me all the Weasleys have red hair, freckles and more children than they can afford” (Rowling, 1997). This exchange indicates that Malfoy has inherited his snobbish attitude from his family, something confirmed in later books. Upon meeting Mr Weasley in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Lucius Malfoy comments “Dear me, what’s the use of being a disgrace to the name of wizard if they don’t even pay you well for it?” (Rowling, 1998), while at the Quidditch World Cup, he makes a similar remark: “Good Lord, Arthur...What did you have to sell to get seats in the Top Box? Surely your house wouldn’t have fetched this much?” (Rowling, 2000). The Weasleys may be as pure-blooded as the Malfoys, but these exchanges show that it is wealth and status, as well as magical background, that are important to Lucius and his family.

Draco’s condescension to Ron marks him as a bad wizard, ‘the wrong sort’, long before his connections to Voldemort are revealed (Rowling, 1997). Rowling’s message is clear; bigotry is the sign of an evil, or at least an extremely unpleasant, witch or wizard. When these witches and wizards attain a position of power, as many of them do during the Second Wizarding War, the result is the establishment of the wizarding equivalent of a fascist state, complete with propaganda intended to dehumanise those seen as inferior:

[The pamphlet’s] pink cover was emblazoned with a golden title:

MUDBLOODS

And the Dangers They Pose to a Peaceful Pure-Blood Society

Beneath the title was a picture of a red rose, with a simpering face in the middle of its petals, being strangled by a green weed with fangs and a scowl. (Rowling, 2007)

During peacetime, however, the majority of the wizarding world seems to be a fairly inclusive place. In the eyes of most wizards and witches, overt prejudice against Muggle-borns is as distasteful and taboo as overt racism is in Muggle society. Lucius Malfoy feels comfortable insulting Arthur Weasley in front of the Minister for Magic; however, he does not make any anti-Muggle comments to Hermione:

Mr Malfoy's eyes had returned to Hermione, who went slightly pink, but stared determinedly back at him. Harry knew exactly what was making Mr Malfoy's lip curl. The Malfoys prided themselves on being pure-bloods; in other words, they considered anyone of Muggle descent, like Hermione, second class. However, under the gaze of the Minister for Magic, Mr Malfoy didn't dare say anything. (Rowling, 2000)

The implications are clear; while Lucius Malfoy can make classist comments to Arthur Weasley with impunity, any overt anti-Muggle sentiment will not be tolerated. However, under the surface, wizarding society is arguably not so enlightened. Throughout the series, we see many examples of more subtle, implicit prejudice that are not condemned or addressed in the same way.

Hogwarts does not discriminate against students on the basis of parentage; neither, except when controlled by Voldemort, does the Ministry of Magic. However, it soon becomes clear to both Harry and the reader that children born to wizarding families have a certain level of privilege in Rowling's society. Muggle-borns may be accepted at Hogwarts, but not every student will be a Hermione, able to read and absorb the entire history of the wizarding world in the summer before starting school. Harry is often placed at a disadvantage because of his lack of knowledge of significant historical events or social stereotypes; for example, he does not understand the connection between being a Parselmouth and using dark magic. Even Hermione struggles occasionally – she finds it extremely difficult to grasp the relationship between wizards and house elves (although her outsider perspective arguably gives her a greater insight into the situation than those from wizarding backgrounds, something I will explore later in this paper). I will examine these 'wizard privileges' by analysing them in relation to Peggy McIntosh's list of examples of privilege in her essay, 'Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack', a list that examines white privilege in contemporary society (McIntosh, 2000).

2. "I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind and me"

It soon becomes apparent to Harry and the reader that witches and wizards rarely have to interact or engage with the Muggle world unless they choose to do so. There are several

all-wizarding communities, such as Hogsmeade, and wizarding children who do not attend Hogwarts are generally home-schooled or sent to wizarding schools in Europe; there is no mention of any children with magical ability attending Muggle schools. Indeed, the only children from magical backgrounds who attend Muggle schools are Squibs, who are consistently treated as second-class citizens in the wizarding world. The most prominent Squib in the series, Argus Filch, occupies the least prestigious staff position in Hogwarts, that of the caretaker; he is shown little respect by students and staff alike. However, at least Filch has been offered a place, however humble, amongst wizards; the majority of Squibs, as I have already noted, are essentially banished to the Muggle world. As Ron's Auntie Muriel informs Harry at Fleur and Bill's wedding:

“In our day Squibs were often hushed up...[they] were usually shipped off to Muggle schools and encouraged to integrate into the Muggle community...much kinder than trying to find them a place in the wizarding world, where they must always be second class...” (Rowling, 2007)

As these examples show, children from magical backgrounds are only educated alongside non-magical people in exceptional circumstances. Students from magical families make up a dominant culture in Hogwarts, and although there are many students from Muggle backgrounds, little is done to help them assimilate with an entirely new society. In Hogwarts, children from anti-Muggle backgrounds are invariably placed in Slytherin; furthermore, although it has been established that Slytherin will accept half-bloods such as Snape and Voldemort, there is no record of any Muggle-born students being placed in Slytherin House. As House common rooms are private, all Slytherins have access to an environment in which they know they will not have to interact with Muggle-born students. By contrast, Muggle-borns have no spaces that they do not have to share with students from wizarding families; Ravenclaw, Gryffindor and Hufflepuff all contain pure- and half-blood students. They must also attend lessons with the Slytherins, and cannot avoid teachers with anti-Muggle biases, such as Snape.

3. “I can remain oblivious of the customs of [Muggles] who constitute the world’s majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion”

As I have already established, wizarding families can choose not to associate with Muggles, and it is apparent that even ‘good’ wizards make little effort to do so. Even Arthur Weasley, with his keen interest in Muggle culture and technology, has obviously spent little to no time in the Muggle world; while accompanying Harry to his hearing at the Ministry of Magic, he is revealed to be ‘not very good with Muggle money’ and ‘delighted with the way the stile swallowed his ticket’ (Rowling, 2003). While Muggle Studies is taught at Hogwarts, it is not mandatory, and there are many examples of wizard-born students simply not understanding things about their Muggle-born counterparts. Sometimes, this can be as innocuous as Seamus poking the footballers on Dean’s poster to get them to move, or the laughable attempts of the wizards at the Quidditch World Cup to emulate Muggle clothing:

One of them was a very old wizard who was wearing a long flowery nightgown. The other was clearly a Ministry wizard; he was holding out a pair of pinstriped trousers and almost crying with exasperation.

“Just put them on, Archie, there’s a good chap, you can’t walk around like that, the Muggle on the gate’s already getting suspicious-”

“I bought this in a Muggle shop,” said the old wizard stubbornly.
“Muggles wear them.”

“Muggle *women* wear them, Archie, not the men, they wear *these*.”
(Rowling, 2000)

However, the general lack of knowledge amongst wizards can often cause harm to Muggles. The Weasleys destroy some of the Dursleys’ property when they attempt to travel to their house via Floo powder, and the failure to keep up the masquerade at the Quidditch World Cup means that Mr Roberts, the owner of the campsite, has his memory wiped ‘ten times a day’ (Rowling, 2000). As the example of Lockhart indicates, an overdose of Memory Charms could result in permanent brain damage; however, there is never any concern for Mr Roberts’ long-term health.

4. “I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race”

It is apparent from the attitudes of the Malfoy family that dark wizards do not expect Muggle-borns to have as great an aptitude for magic as pure-bloods:

“The teachers all have favourites, that Hermione Granger-”

“I would have thought you’d be ashamed that a girl of no wizard family beat you in every exam,” snapped Mr Malfoy. (Rowling, 1998)

However, Rowling soon establishes that ‘good’ wizards do not share this prejudice. Later in the same novel, Ron and Hagrid enlighten Harry and the reader on normal wizarding views:

“There are some wizards – like Malfoy’s family – who think they’re better than everyone else because they’re what people call pure-blood...I mean, the rest of us know it doesn’t make any difference at all. Look at Neville Longbottom – he’s pure-blood and he can hardly stand a cauldron the right way up.”

“An’ they haven’t invented a spell our Hermione can’t do,” said Hagrid proudly, making Hermione go a brilliant shade of magenta.
(Rowling, 1998)

However, later in the series, it is revealed that even ‘good’ – or at least ambiguous – wizards do not necessarily share these views. When Harry meets Slughorn in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, this soon becomes apparent:

"Your mother was Muggle-born, of course. Couldn't believe it when I found out. Thought she must have been pure-blood, she was so good."

"One of my best friends is Muggle-born," said Harry, "and she's the best in our year."

"Funny how that sometimes happens, isn't it?" said Slughorn.
(Rowling, 2005)

Although Slughorn immediately qualifies his opinion with the words "You mustn't think I'm prejudiced!", it is obvious that he is confusing prejudice with hatred. (Rowling, 2005) Slughorn believes that, because he does not dislike Muggle-borns, he has not developed any prejudiced attitudes towards them; however, this is not the case. While Slughorn apparently has many friends who are Muggle-born witches and wizards, and viewed Lily Evans as a particular 'favourite', it is clear that he expects students from Muggle families to be less able than pure-bloods. His words make it clear that he viewed Lily – and later, Hermione – as a "credit" to their non-magical backgrounds.

5. "I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race"

Upon entering their third year, students at Hogwarts can choose to take several new subjects, including Muggle Studies. This class indicates that a certain amount of progress has been made in accommodating Muggle-borns. The class is intended to teach students from magical families about Muggle life, and to dispel prejudice; as Voldemort comments in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, "Professor Burbage taught the children of witches and wizards all about Muggles...how they are not so different from us..." (Rowling, 2007). However, there are some problems with this class. Firstly, it is optional; in contrast, classes about magical culture, such as History of Magic, are mandatory until a student's sixth year. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the class is aimed at students from wizarding backgrounds. Upon hearing that Hermione is intending to take Muggle Studies in her third year, Ron is incredulous: "What are you doing Muggle Studies for?...You're Muggle-born! Your mum and dad are Muggles! You already know all about Muggles!" (Rowling, 1999). As they will have attended Hogwarts from the age of eleven, Muggle-born students will not know many aspects of Muggle history or culture. Because they are not encouraged to learn these things at Hogwarts, they may soon become out-of-touch with the Muggle world. This is presented as desirable rather than problematic. There is no record of any Muggle-born student pursuing a career in the Muggle world after Hogwarts; Hermione, for example, joins the Ministry of Magic. The assumption is that Muggle-born students will be glad to leave the Muggle world behind, rather than maintaining a connection to their birth culture as well as integrating into their adopted culture. This privileges wizarding society over Muggle society; there is a general belief that Muggle-born students will not wish to return to what is seen as an inferior way of life.

6. “I will feel welcomed and ‘normal’ in the usual walks of public life, institutional and social”

As the previous sections of this chapter indicate, there is little effort made in wizarding society to accommodate Muggle-born students, or their families. Although Harry is welcomed at the Burrow in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, he is certainly not treated as ‘normal’, particularly by Mr Weasley, who seems to see him as something of a curiosity:

Mr Weasley liked Harry to sit next to him at the dinner table so that he could bombard him with questions about life with Muggles, asking him to explain how things like plugs and the postal service worked.

“*Fascinating!*” he would say, as Harry talked him through using a telephone, “*Ingenious*, really, how many ways Muggles have found of getting along without magic.” (Rowling, 1998)

Similarly, Hermione’s parents are clearly intimidated by their surroundings during their visit to Diagon Alley – they are reported as ‘standing nervously’ at the counter in Gringotts, and are immediately targeted by Mr Weasley as another source of information on Muggle life (Rowling, 1998). However innocent his intentions may be, Arthur Weasley’s manner singles the Grangers out as unusual – we are told that ‘He pointed excitedly at the ten-pound notes in Mr Granger’s hand – emphasising their outsider status in this wizarding environment (Rowling, 1998).

It is true that sometimes these disparities in privilege are addressed – for examples, Harry reprimands Slughorn on his condescending attitude towards Hermione – but often, they are either played for laughs or glossed over entirely. Despite the general social rejection of overt anti-Muggle prejudice, Muggle-born students still face challenges at Hogwarts that their magical counterparts do not, and may be forced either to turn their backs on their Muggle heritage, or expose their families to being treated as constant outsiders.

7. Magical non-humans

It is clear from these examples that humans from non-magical backgrounds face various difficulties in wizarding society; however, they are rarely excluded altogether. The same is not always true for the several races of non-human, sentient creatures featured in the series. Throughout the series, we learn of the fraught history between wizards and non-human races, particularly house elves and goblins.

7.1 House Elves

Unlike prejudice against Muggle-borns, poor treatment of house elves is something found even amongst ‘good’ wizards. Sirius Black hated pure-blood prejudice, and left his family for that very reason; however, while he may have treated his Muggle-born counterparts as equals, he was often cruel and even violent to his family house-elf, Kreacher, treating him little better than the Malfoys treated Dobby; at one point he tells him “Keep muttering and I will be a murderer!”, while on another occasion he ‘seized

Kreacher by the back of his loincloth and threw him bodily from the room' (Rowling, 2003).

It is stated in no uncertain terms that house-elves are slaves to their wizarding masters; however, the majority of wizarding society seem to accept this without question. Nearly-Headless Nick argues that 'House-elves don't want sick leave and pensions!', while Ron states the situation even more explicitly; "Hermione – open your ears...They. Like. It. They *like* being enslaved!" (Rowling, 2000). This acceptance of 'happiness in slavery' is so prevalent that it has been internalised by the house-elves themselves; even Dobby, considered to be very rebellious by his peers, admits that he argued against Dumbledore's original offer of higher wages and more time off:

"Professor Dumbledore offered Dobby ten Galleons a week, and weekends off," said Dobby, suddenly giving a little shiver, as though the prospect of so much leisure and riches was frightening, "but Dobby beat him down, miss...Dobby likes freedom, miss, but he isn't wanting too much, miss, he likes work better." (Rowling, 2000)

The most prominent member of wizarding society to stand up for house elf rights is Hermione, who, unlike people from wizarding backgrounds, can see the unfairness of the house elves' situation. However, her actions often cross the line and become oppressive in and of themselves. Hermione does not attempt to understand house-elf society; she asks an obviously distraught Winky how much she is being paid, and later comments 'Once the shock's worn off, and she's got used to Hogwarts, she'll see how much better off she is without that Crouch man', dismissing Winky's loyalty to and love for her master as simply bad judgement (Rowling, 2000). She also attempts to impose her views, however well-meant, on the house-elves without their permission; we learn that she has attempted to trick the house-elves into freedom by hiding clothes around the Gryffindor common room. Although Hermione's intention is to help the house-elves, her methods leave much to be desired; rather than speaking to the house-elves directly and asking their opinions on how to improve their situation, she attempts to impose human values on a non-human race, an action that betrays her privilege – she automatically views the human way of doing things as superior. Ironically, her plan to free the Hogwarts house elves results in Dobby receiving more work; he takes on the task of cleaning Gryffindor Tower in its entirety, as he alone cannot be affected by the hidden clothes. Had Hermione learned about house elf culture prior to forming S.P.E.W., she may have taken a more sympathetic and effective approach to winning rights for house elves.

7.2 Goblins

Goblins are background figures throughout most of the *Harry Potter* series; initially, Harry's only interaction with them takes place when he is removing money from his vault at Gringotts. However, as the series continues, the reader is given a little more insight into goblin culture, particularly with regards to how they view wizards. It becomes clear that there is an undeniable degree of wizard privilege in the interactions between wizards and goblins. Although Gringotts is owned by goblins, and is intended to be autonomous, events during the Second Wizarding War suggest that wizards have little difficulty in

asserting their authority; Griphook's reason for leaving the bank is because 'Gringotts is no longer under the sole control of my race. I recognise no wizarding master' (Rowling, 2007). While goblins do have some degree of power, particularly during peacetime, it is clear that wizarding views of the world are privileged over theirs; for example, wizarding views of property and ownership are normalised, while the views of goblins are portrayed as strange and threatening:

"To a goblin, the rightful and true master of any object is the maker, not the purchaser. All goblin-made objects are, in goblin eyes, rightfully theirs...They consider our habit of keeping goblin-made objects, passing them from wizard to wizard without further payment, little more than theft." (Rowling, 2007)

Goblins are rarely in a position to defy wizards openly; on the occasions they have done so, wizards, with their superior magical resources, have triumphed, as in the wars referenced in the Hogwarts History of Magic lessons. Instead, they must resort to subterfuge, as Griphook does; first by allowing the Death Eaters to keep the fake sword of Gryffindor, and then by deceiving Harry, Ron and Hermione and attempting to trap them in Gringotts. This subterfuge suggests that goblins do not have the social status to challenge wizards directly, a result of their lack of privilege.

8. Conclusion

It seems that wizarding society, when not controlled by the Death Eaters, has made many advances in dismantling overt prejudice, particularly against Muggle-borns attempting to live in the wizarding world. However, it is also apparent that further progress needs to be made towards ending systemic prejudice, particularly with regards to wizarding attitudes towards Muggles and to creatures who are sentient, but not human. Voldemort and the Death Eaters may no longer be a threat, but wizarding society is no utopia; instead, like its Muggle counterpart, it is flawed, with much progress yet to be made.

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From the Sorcerer's Stone to the Magic Quill: Transmedia Storytelling and the Potterverse

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1. Introduction

The Harry Potter series had the serendipitous benefit of bursting on the world at the same time that Web 2.0 technology and devices made it easier for people all around the world to connect. The result was a virtual book club of millions, sharing their love for The Boy Who Lived and arguing about their perspective on Rowling's narrative. The next logical step for fans was creating their own narratives, extending and adding to the stories in innovative ways. Harry Potter fans waved their wands and became among the first and most recognizable masters of transmedia storytelling.

What is Transmedia Storytelling?

Transmedia storytelling refers to telling a story across different platforms. The term was first defined in 1991 by Marsha Kinder to describe franchises used primarily by large corporations to gain consumer participation with their commercial endeavors (Kinder, 1991). Media scholar Henry Jenkins later described the process by which collaboratively developed content was beginning to flow across media (Jenkins, 2003). Jenkins correctly predicted that collaboratively planned multiplatform storytelling would become the inevitable future of entertainment. He also was among the first to see this as a result of fan activity, not merely the result of corporate actions. Jenkins and others followed the ways in which transmedia storytelling unfolded, and later expanded the definition and explanation:

Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story (Jenkins, 2007, section 1).

By this time, fan created transmedia activities had become more than many had anticipated. As Jenkins explained,

Transmedia storytelling is the ideal aesthetic form for an era of collective intelligence. Pierre Levy coined the term collective intelligence to refer to new social structures that enable the production and circulation of knowledge within a networked society. Participants pool information and

tap each other's expertise as they work together to solve problems. Levy argues that art in an age of collective intelligence functions as a cultural attractor, drawing together like-minded individuals to form new knowledge communities (Jenkins, 2007, section 8).

Transmedia storytelling is not new. Jenkins reminds us that Charles Dickens was an example of an author who combined innovative technology, the economics of serialization, and an open dialogue with readers to track fan responses and reactions as the basis for revising his work (Jenkins, 2009). In modern times, there are many examples of fan-based, rather than corporation-based transmedia storytelling. Jim Henson's Muppets and Walt Disney's princesses are examples of how beloved stories and characters serve as springboards to toys, games, books and even amusement parks where fans are transported to the world of the narratives and fantasies come alive. The *Star Wars* movies, the television show *Lost*, and the trading card games *Pokemon* and *Yu-Gi-O* had all spawned fan-based content. The Harry Potter series had ignited material that was immediate, widespread and included an unusually creative and unique range of transmedia material.

Pamela Rutledge provided of the best case studies of how transmedia activities might develop and their relation to the original narrative. She described what might happen to the story of the three little pigs and the wolf if it were the foundation for additional works across multiple media platforms:

The basic story would be told in an anchoring medium, such as a novel, TV show, or film. The wolf has a companion website would give us opportunities to learn more him, the path that led the wolf to his current antisocial tendencies, and give us a glimpse of his inner genius, such as showing his mathematical schematics of the impact of wind velocity on the materials of straw, sticks and bricks. We would also be able to find maps of the turnip field, apple tree, local market and County Fair and strategic attack positions. We would follow the wolf as he plots and adjusts his plans at each volley by the pigs. On a Ning network, Wolf supporters form Team Wolf and contribute strategy, information, additional maps, and alternate endings and plot developments. On a blog, the first little pig details the family history, his paranoid suspicions of a dark figure lurking about his house that led to the pigs decision to live apart rather than together. An Anime comic takes fans on the first little pig's visions of a pig super hero saving the world and avenging evil as personified by wolves. The second little pig Tweets his chronicle, seeking advice on sustainable building materials and the relative merits of straw and sticks from other Twitterers, and relaying breaking news: @littlepig2 walls of house bowing inward, sticks flying off roof – help! The third little pig has a cooking series shot on location from the Stone House kitchen posted on YouTube with ways to make Parsley Turnips, Baked Apples, and Stewed Wolf Surprise. He hides clues for secret ingredients in his dishes in lyrics of songs and the YouTube trailers and encourage viewers to send in their stories about

home cooking and wolf encounters to be shared on a website. He publishes a cookbook with recipes, clues to the location of the remaining house of stone, and phone numbers with changing recorded messages of cooking tips and pig gossip.

The hypothetical transmedia version of the Three Little Pigs is not the repurposing of story across different platforms. It is the creation of a holistic narrative that unfolds in different and unique manners across different media. It allows for a dialogue between creator and participant.... Additional options might be a Three Little Pigs Kei Tai novel distributed in chapter segments to mobile devices; a geo-based iPhone app; Wolf Attack, an educational video game based on the physics concepts of construction and destruction; and development of an MMORPG. (Rutledge, 2011, section 1).

In this case, all of the transmedia content and activities are designed and developed by the original authors and their businesses. There is no mention of fan activities. Although many corporations have begun using transmedia creations as part of a planned marketing campaign, the organic and unplanned fan creations found Rowling's novels to be rich source material.

2. The Potterverse Takes Shape

There seemed to be something different about the Harry Potter series right from the first novel. The usual content was there: fan fiction appeared and websites sprang up (notably Mugglenet by then 12 year old home schooled Emerson Spartz, and The Leaky Cauldron, now the force behind LeakyCon gatherings). Then midnight gatherings for book releases also became opportunities for real world and virtual fan gatherings where idea and resource sharing created a new type of connected community (Elliott, 2007). As Jenkins described it, individuals entered into a process of hunting and gathering information and content across multiple media platforms, pooling their knowledge and comparing notes (Jenkins, 2010). Potter fans produced material that seemed to raise the bar in terms of fan innovation. A few examples follow.

- The term *Pottermania* was used to describe the hysteria surrounding the books and fans of all ages (later called *Potterheads*) who discussed and analyzed all aspects of the novels (Tucker, 1999).
- In 2007, Alex Benape founded the International Quidditch Association, which will host the sixth Quidditch World Cup in 2013 with teams representing Australia, Europe, and North America (International Quidditch Association, 2012).
- *The Mysterious Ticking Noise*, a 2007 online episode of Potter Puppet Pals (a puppet show begun in 2003 by Neil Cicerega with parodies of characters from the novels) has over 137 million views and won a 2008 YouTube comedy award (Gina, 2008).
- Heidi Tandy, a lawyer who co-founded Fiction Alley.Org (one of the largest

online collections of Harry Potter fan fiction) helped create and run the Harry Potter Educational Fanon, an organization that ran seven international Harry Potter educational and fan gatherings and specializes in intellectual property and internet law (Russom, 2003).

- The Harry Potter Alliance began by raising awareness and funds about the genocide in Darfur (Snyder, 2007) and has continued to mobilize fans to help solve real world problems (Harry Potter Alliance, 2012).

Many previous fan works had merely aggregated information from original source material (“canon”) and did little to advance the story. The Potter fans seemed eager to create new works based on small or large aspects of Rowling’s work, but each with its own twist. One of the most unique contributions is Wizard Rock. Sometimes referred to as Wrock, the term refers to music, generally in the rock genre, with songs that refer to characters from the Potter novels. Wizard Rock began in Massachusetts with Joe and Paul DeGeorge, and over 100 other bands have performed and produced Potter-related music (Rose, 2007; Grossman, 2009). This is another example of something far from anything Rowling imagined happening when her books were written and published.

3. Why the Potterverse is True Transmedia

Jenkins described seven key principles of transmedia storytelling (Jenkins, 2009). These characteristics can be seen in Harry Potter fandom examples. The principle of spreadability refers to the capacity and willingness of the public to participate in the circulation of media content. Through spreading this content, economic and cultural value are generally increased, although there may be a danger of overexposure and “cheapening.” The contrasting metaphor is drillability, in which consumers explore in-depth narrative extensions. One particular aspect, such as a character, may capture the fancy of an individual or group and become the source of greater discussion and complex work. One could argue that wizard rock is an example of both characteristics, depending on the group and songs (Carroll, 2005).

Continuity is a characteristic by which some fans and media almost religiously maintain a connection to canon. All new content is plausible within the original source material. When fans cosplay (seek to dress and act as characters), they generally attempt strict coherence to established canonical personas. In contrast, multiplicity explores alternate characters and versions of stories that may only tangentially tie to the original. A fan may create an entirely new character, or a rich backstory for a character who is barely mentioned. Harry Potter fan fiction and fan gatherings see examples of both of these. A story called *Hermione and the Pizza Boy*, well known as an example of bad fan fiction, is as an example of multiplicity. The story contains not only strong sexual details, but the only loose tie to the Harry Potter canon is the main character; she bears no resemblance to Rowling’s character except her name (Fairlight, 2009).

With seriality, the narrative is broken up or separated into a number of chunks across one or more media platforms. Rowling herself did this not only with the original series, but also with components such as schoolbooks and a prequel. The movies added to the narrative. Fans write fan fiction in chapters or sections. Podcasts and blogs, along with

conventions, often add to and continue narrative arcs. One of the interesting things about seriality in transmedia storytelling is the degree to which some sections or chunks allow or block individuals without prior background knowledge to enter the narrative at any point other than the beginning.

Subjectivity is a principle by which extensions explore the main story through new eyes, inventing backstory or new characters. Fans may give voice to characters with which they have found affinity. Presenting the same story from an alternate perspective is often done. In slash fan fiction, for example, homoerotic pairings such as Sirius Black/Remus Lupin become more than just two of the four Marauders. Slash is one example of how creators of original narratives may be conflicted regarding just how far from the original transmedia storytelling may travel.

The principle of world building is one that attracts many fans. They seek to take something that may be a passing mention or small bit in the original narrative (like mention of a building) and seek to provide a richer understanding and description. For example, fans provided drawings and models of The Burrow long before it appeared in the movies, complete with floor plans and furniture extrapolated from the sketchy details in the novels. Another example is cataloguing and attempting to summarize and list elements of the narrative in order to capture as much of the “world” as possible. World building is related to another principle, that of immersion. Immersion brings the fan into the world of the story; this can happen in real life or digitally. This is contrasted with extractability, by which the fan takes aspects of the story away with them and into everyday life. Long before the first Wizarding World of Harry Potter theme park appeared in Orlando, Florida, fans who were adept at crafts had made their own versions of snitches, house scarves and wands to keep the magic alive in their daily lives.

The final principle refers to performance. Jenkins provided deeper examples of the variations on how fans elect to engage with narratives in performance-based ways (Jenkins, 2009). Some performances may be invited as part of the original creators' planned activities and extensions. The Harry Potter fandom has been wildly creative without the invitation – or permission – of Ms. Rowling. The following examples demonstrate the power of transmedia storytelling. Lena Gabrielle has written all or part of several musicals based on the Potter novels, including *The Untold Tale of Beedle the Bard* performed and videotaped at Ascendio 2012 (Gabrielle, 2012). Brad Neeley created *Wizard People, Dear Reader*, a complete parody narration to accompany the first Potter film, which has been downloaded over 180,000 times and helped challenge the degree to which copyright and fair use can be interpreted (Werde, 2004). Arguably the most famous performance related to the Potter novels have been written and performed by Team Starkid, a musical theater group formed in 2009 by a group of then-students at the University of Michigan. *A Very Potter Musical*, their first production, was filmed and posted on YouTube, where it went viral. It was followed by other Potter-related productions (*A Very Potter Sequel* and *A Very Potter Senior Year*). Darren Criss wrote and sang many of the songs, and starred as Harry. He is currently in the cast of the television show *Glee*, and replaced Daniel Radcliffe on Broadway in the musical *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (Votta, 2012). These three examples of fan-inspired and authored compositions and endeavors demonstrate how true transmedia storytelling moves the narrative, as well as the people involved in the creative process, to places and platforms far beyond those imagined by the original author.

4. Branding, Franchising, Copyright and Creativity

The examples above demonstrate how fan-based transmedia storytelling adds and adapts the primary story. In a capitalist and business-oriented world, it follows that some individuals and corporations would view transmedia storytelling as untapped sources of profits. The distinction has less to do with the products and activities and more to do with the motivation and planning. When corporations plan transmedia marketing campaigns, they develop calculated responses. The primary question is how to make money from fans who will often pay for anything associated with the original narrative. These calculated responses generally add little to the original story, and do not seek to adapt or create new material. Geoffrey Long (2007) noted the variation and “murky” terminology of phrases and words like open world and closed world narrative structures, and canonical versus apocryphal elements. He suggested some distinction based on the original plan proposing the terms *hard*, *soft* and *chewy*. *Hard* describes anything designed from the outset as a transmedia narrative, such as a movie series like *Star Wars*. *Soft* describes texts that emerge after the popularity of the original, such as the unplanned *Star Trek* series that followed the original years after its cancellation. *Chewy* describes a situation in which transmedia narratives may have been considered, but are held off until the success of the original is monitored and measured; these narratives then move into hard entities. Aaron Smith explains that: “*Lost* may be the closest to ‘chewiness’, after it set a definite end date at six seasons, allowing the producers to plan out all future transmedia extensions (Smith, 2009, Classifying Transmedia Stories, section 8)”.

In the new world of digital media, companies find it more difficult to maintain control over properties for which they have paid license and franchise fees. There are multiple accounts of corporations sending cease and desist letters to fans, with varying results. Courts are helping to define the boundaries of copyright infringement and fair use in matters of transmedia adaptations. It is often difficult to decide how fans fun and love of a property are different from the results of companies’ efforts to market, promote, and brand a franchise.

Joanne Kathleen Rowling has been a key figure in the path of transmedia storytelling. She, her publishers, and later Warner Brothers, protect by legal maneuvers entities they see as copyright infringement (Wu, 2003). However, she also shrewdly realized that fan creators were primarily, and most importantly, *fans* of her work. Their activities began and connected in all ways to the novels. Rather than diluting the importance of her stories, transmedia storytelling aided in their devotion, with generally positive results. While George Lucas attempts to maintain strict control over all things connected to Star Wars, Rowling established a fairly positive and laissez faire relationship with fans and their creative works. So when Rowling and her lawyers sued fan Steve Vander Ark and RDR Books over his planned publication of the Lexicon, the fandom took notice and watched as the trial progressed (Nocera, 2008).

The conflict between fair use (a principle that the public is entitled to freely use portions of copyrighted material for particular reasons) and copyright infringement (in which the public must seek permission from the copyright holder) is of particular importance in transmedia activities. A main principle in court decisions questions the transformative nature of the work. Courts explore the degree to which the material taken from the original work has been transformed into something new and has added value to the

original versus decreasing profits or value. Sampling, remixing, mashups and vidding are some of the activities that raise questions related to transmedia activities. Many argue that it is ludicrous for Disney to sue for copyright infringement when the company appropriated fairy tales from the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Anderson who published long before copyright protections. Fans argue that no text exists in isolation, and that concept is explicit in transmedia storytelling. The Stanford Copyright and Fair Use Website (<http://fairuse.stanford.edu>), the Organization for Transformative Works (<https://transformativeworks.org>), and Creative Commons (<http://creativecommons.org>), are three of the many organizations dedicated to monitoring and working with individuals and corporations in an effort to allow creativity to flourish within the digital era.

5. Transmedia Storytelling, Education and Beyond

Digital skills are at the heart of education. Two main categories related to transmedia storytelling. First, it is important that individuals be able to express their thoughts and creativity in new and innovative ways. Technology is advancing at lightning speed, and future employers will desire those who can not only utilize existing applications, but are flexible and resilient as changes occur and create new opportunities. Second, it is critical that all people become aware of the underlying messages and agendas behind digital content that may overwhelm them. To take innovations at face value and with cursory examination of superficial content would be to risk misunderstanding and ignorance. Evaluation and complex analysis are essential skills for all global citizens.

The Web 2.0 world allows and fosters participation at many levels. What seems like a media explosion is not merely the result of advertisers and corporations. User-generated content crosses platforms and culture. It has become easier to follow different media with tablets, smartphones and networks. Far from a fad, the collaborative nature of daily experiences through social media, blogs and wikis, and other devices and applications allow, if not force, schools to participate in the digital world. For many students, they do not find opportunities or necessary production equipment within their classrooms. They return home from school and begin a different type of learning with personal tools and trial and error independent instruction. As a result, fan-created material often developed by young individuals with nothing to lose in efforts to play with ideas and see what develops may often precede and exceed corporate-planned ideas.

At its best, the material and innovations that result help push the boundaries of transmedia storytelling forward. Each new component contributes its own part to the new narrative; there is never a total encapsulated whole. The type of material and the relation to the source may also differ. Mittell (2011) discusses this as “What Is” versus “What If?” transmedia storytelling. Jenkins (2012) referred to similar concepts as affirmational versus transformative. In affirmational works, often described as sanctioned and seen as more masculine in nature, new material holds to the original work, and generally maintains the intent and direction of the original story. Transformative works tend to move in non-sanctioned directions (such as slash) and are viewed as more feminine in nature. Creators appropriate the original text and provide their own interpretations (“fanon”), with little concern over relation to canon. Both types of material have found a place in some classrooms, where innovative teachers recognize that student responses can

take place in a variety of formats.

The importance of supporting young people as critical thinkers who can evaluate the situations and material is also essential. The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) provides resources for individuals to assist them in developing habits of inquiry in young people related to media. The Core Principles of Media Literacy Education (NAMLE, 2007) include foundational ideas and questions to ask that cause consumers to recognize the power and persuasion of the messages bombarding them daily. Questions related to economics (Who paid for this?) and representation (What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?) can help increase understanding and be the insights that form the source new work. Teacher education is beginning to help educators foster this type of analysis in students. Among the suggestions offered by NAMLE are the following:

- Ask questions when *making* media as well as *using* media;
- Using multiple means of expression (image, sound word);
- Focus on a media document's significance (including who benefits and who is disadvantaged) rather than trying to determine whether a particular piece of media is "good" or "bad;"
- Move through anger and cynicism about media to skepticism, reflection, and action.

Everyone who is a member of the global community through media must begin to challenge the passive stance taken by media consumers, and examine the impact of the messages.

Harry Potter is a logical entry point for exploring transmedia storytelling. One can hardly find any individual who has not been touched by Rowling's boy wizard in some way. Melissa Anelli, webmistress of The Leaky Cauldron, worked for two years to help develop Pottermore. The website represents a partnership between Rowling and Sony, and provides interactive experiences to compliment the seven books. The Wizarding World of Harry Potter theme park in Orlando, Florida, is expanding, and a similar park will open in Osaka, Japan. The Warner Brothers Studio Tour in Leavesden, England, hosts up to 5000 visitors each day. The Harry Potter Alliance has active chapters (at high school, college and community levels) in 35 states and 10 countries to raise money for and awareness about social problems. The organization has become a model of fan activism. One of its causes seeks to encourage/force Warner Brothers to use only fair trade chocolate in the souvenir candy sold in the gift shops. The campaign, entitled "Not in Harry's Name," demonstrates how transmedia efforts can change the world. These efforts are result of the popularity of the series, the character of Ms. Rowling, and the creative collaboration of fans.

Henry Jenkins suggests that the future will continue these trends. He has been one of the key presenters at the annual Futures of Entertainment conference, which held it's sixth gathering in 2012. At these and other events, media producers and audience members discuss ways that transmedia storytelling and participatory culture may shape new landscapes. Questions explored include the following:

- How is transmedia linked to a push towards interactivity and participatory culture?
- What does it mean to structure a franchise around the exploration of a world

rather than a narrative?

- How are these worlds moving from the film and television screen into other media, such as comics, games, and location-based entertainment?
- How do we make sure that the spectator understands the relationship between events when they are piecing together information from different platforms and trying to make sense of a mythology that may span multiple epochs?
- What does it take to motivate consumers to invest deeply enough into a transmedia franchise that they are eager to track down new installments and create buzz around a new property?

Jenkins and others see a new breed of customer in the future. “Prosumer” is a term used by many including Alvin Toffler, and described in detail by Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010). The prosumer is not only a more thoughtful media consumer, but is also ready and able to produce and share his or her own versions and adaptations of music, prose, poetry, art and performance based on original narratives. While Joanne Rowling did not necessarily foresee the future when she sent her first novel to numerous publishers, she willingly entered a relationship with fans after the publication that has been nothing less than historic.

Transmedia storytelling is not new, but the spread and variation have increased in the digital world. Scholars like Henry Jenkins have legitimized the incredible talents of fans who use the canon as a springboard for their own work. Transmedia work is not merely found in corporate public relations or marketing efforts. Novice and veteran teachers around the world are using the power of transmedia storytelling venues with students as opportunities for differentiated instruction, critical thinking, and digital communication. Harry Potter has provided millions of people with first-hand transmedia experiences. Individuals became immersed in the narrative, and chose to create and share original elements that contributed to a dynamic and more participatory experience. While struggles may continue over who owns the character, plot and other features, the ease of collaboration, communication and creativity in the Web 2.0 world demonstrate that one can never truly own and limit ideas. In this way, Joanne Rowling really did cast a magic spell, and all are the richer for the experiences.

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Split Seven Ways: The Magic of Death in the Harry Potter Novels

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Abstract

Various scenes throughout each of the *Harry Potter* novels maintain that, like muggles, witches and wizards respond to the death of loved ones with mourning and sadness, and both groups are uncertain of what their own death will be like and what, if anything, exists for them beyond death. However, in the *Harry Potter* novels there are magical objects and abilities that are available to witches and wizards to use to prolong their life and- sometimes indefinitely- avoid death. The ability to create ghosts, the philosophers stone, the pensieve, and horcruxes is apparent to many magical beings and their existence suggests that death is not final or unknown, but rather it can be detained or avoided.

These magical abilities that prevent death might seem, at first, appealing to readers- they certainly do to many in the wizarding world including, for a time, Harry- and provide one more reason why the fantastical wizarding world seems so appealing. However, it is revealed throughout the series that cheating the natural order of death with magic is complicated and does not result in very desirable effects; only the darkest sorts of wizards are willing to commit the questionable actions required to avoid death.

This paper will address how the *Harry Potter* novels address death in a way that muggle (non-magical) readers can relate to, rather than portraying death as a problem that can easily be resolved by a magical spell or ability. Death, I argue, is one of the most comparable elements between the wizarding world and the muggle world; the one instance where the fantastical inclusion of magic cannot effectively resolve a shortcoming of the muggle world. This paper also explores how the portrayal of realistic death and loss in the novels is one of the elements that appealed to many readers and contributed to the word-of-mouth marketing strategy that was imperative to the success of the series.

1. Introduction

My books are largely about death. They open with the death of Harry's parents. There is Voldemort's obsession with conquering death and his quest for immortality at any price, the goal of anyone with magic. I so understand why Voldemort wants to conquer death. We're all frightened of it.

- JK Rowling to Tatler Magazine in 2006

Since the inception of the *Harry Potter* novels, readers of the series have been acutely aware of the important role that death plays in the series. The tragic death of Harry's parents at the hands of the ruthless Lord Voldemort begins and anchors the series, driving the plot of the novel as the source of much of Harry's frustration and turmoil and in turn his motivation to defeat the most evil dark wizard. The death of Harry's parents is just the first of many character deaths throughout the series, and each death contributes to the serious, sombre tone that surrounded an otherwise exciting and upbeat storyline. In the first three books in the series Lord Voldemort does not make an appearance; it is his past evil deeds and his villainous mantra that inform and maintain the sinister practices of

the dark wizards who antagonize Harry and other similarly good-natured wizards in a series of classic "good versus evil" showdowns. The villains in the first three novels always cause some sort of obstacle for Harry to struggle against, however they are ultimately always outsmarted and defeated by the protagonist and his obvious, yet inexplicable, powerful grasp of magic. In *Philosopher's Stone*, *Chamber of Secrets*, and *Prisoner of Azkaban*, good always triumphs over evil and Harry, Ron, and Hermione are able to relax and celebrate their victories with end-of-the-year festivities.

Then, in March 2000, about four months before the release of *Goblet of Fire*, JK Rowling startled fans when she revealed in an interview that a character would die in the latest instalment of the series: ""I've said all along there will be death" she told the *Associated Press*, "[a]nd yes, you see a death in book four" ("Brace Yourself Readers"). This announcement, which both worried and excited fans, caused word-of-mouth and online conversations about the book to explode as readers debated about which character it might be. These arguments were fuelled by subsequent comments Rowling continued to make in interviews leading up to the release of the fourth *Harry Potter* novel, including the ominous remark that the death would be of a character that "[fans] care about" (Treneman "JK Rowling the Interview"). By killing off a character through presumably violent means, Rowling provided a parallel between the wizarding world and the muggle world and brought the action of the novels out of a child's fantasy realm; violence, in Harry's world, could no longer be understood as just which wizard or witch could cast the more powerful spell. Violence, as it is in the muggle world, could be abrupt and irrational. In the *Harry Potter* novels, Rowling presents death as an experience that is similar to that in the real world of the reader: the characters grieve and mourn the death of loved ones, death is not entirely understood as any ideas about the afterlife are not certain, and any magical abilities or objects that exist to prevent death have undesirable consequences that are not appealing to most wizards and witches. Death is just as feared by the wizarding world as it is by the muggle world and, in emphasising that death is inevitable for everyone, Rowling added a very realistic, poignant element to her story that fascinated and intrigued readers. In this paper, I will explore how death is a feature of the wizarding world that departs from the realm of fantasy because, ultimately, its effects are the same as in the non-magical world and, because of this, Rowling's mention of killing off characters prompted word-of-mouth conversations about the series to become effective marketing strategies.

2. Marketing Magic: Death Sells

While many marketing strategies were involved in promoting the *Harry Potter* novels, word-of-mouth marketing is said to be the strongest contributor to the success of the series and is especially responsible for maintaining the continuous popularity of the series (Gunelius 41). Many word-of-mouth discussions were prompted by things like more prominent displays for the *Harry Potter* novels in bookstores and, starting with the fourth book, midnight releases parties that added a sense of urgency to the hype. However, I will argue, it is the deaths of the characters in the novels that were the most contested and discussed issues in word-of-mouth conversations about the books, especially in online forums where fans around the world could discuss the books with one another. Midnight release parties were well-attended, in part, because people wanted to start reading the books as soon as possible in order to find out which characters would be

meeting their demise. Rowling's announcement about the upcoming death of a character "fans care about" in the fourth novel, the subsequent focus on death throughout the series, and Rowling's later remarks about the death of characters in upcoming novels, is what I believe propelled the flurry of excitement and interest in the series to an unstoppable force that would elevate and sustain the popularity of the series. Indeed, the most remarkable increase in popularity, according to early sales figures, occurred between the third and fourth books; *Prisoner of Azkaban* sold 68,000 copies in the first two days¹ in the United Kingdom, whereas *Goblet of Fire* sold three million copies (over forty-four times more than the third novel) in the first day alone. Each new release outsold its predecessor on the first day of its release, however the biggest increase was between the third and fourth books. Now, of course, there are several factors that contributed to this rise in popularity. For instance, the release of the fourth book marked the first time that the latest novel in the series was released simultaneously in the United Kingdom and the United States. This was because the demand for the books in the United States was very high and the books had reached a level of popularity that rivalled that in the United Kingdom, and the *Harry Potter* series was quickly becoming a global phenomenon (Gunelius 52). In turn, this warranted the beginning of midnight release parties in North America so that the books could be released simultaneously across the world. Midnight release parties inherently promote a sense of urgency by providing the perception of a "got-to-have-it-first" demand, and in turn draw attention to the books being sold at these parties. Furthermore, hype around the film adaptation of the first book in the series coincided with the release of the fourth book, as plans for the film had been confirmed and actors were starting to be cast by July 2000, when *Goblet of Fire* was released.

Though word-of-mouth marketing strategies were simultaneously encouraged by the publishing marketing strategies, I believe that they were mostly driven by the rich content in the books that encouraged debate and discussion and that the topic that most provoked this debate and discussion was death. Up until the fourth book, the conflict that occurred in each individual book was ultimately resolved at the end of that story where good triumphed over evil (though, arguably, there was always an overarching sense of mystery throughout the series). However, when Rowling revealed, prior to the release of the fourth book, that she would be killing off characters throughout the series, a new conflict was presented that readers knew could have implications for the "good" characters in the series. That is, it was implied that Harry would have more than just a timely obstacle to deal with; rather, Harry and his friends were about to face challenges that could have implications on their livelihood and existence.

What was intriguing for readers, I think, about Rowling killing off one (and then more) of her characters is that this is incredibly rare for a children's book and that by killing off a character in the fourth book she was also writing them out of the remaining three books in the series. Fans who were entranced by the intricacies of the storytelling and the detailed descriptions of the characters had come to identify with and care for the characters as if they were close friends, and were concerned that one of their favourites might not survive to appear in the remaining books. Rowling had posited a scenario in which a character wouldn't merely be killed off at the end of a series, but would be killed off before living out the full potential of their fictional lives. Thus, midnight book releases were consistently attended by fans who couldn't wait to find out the fate of

¹ Single-day sales figures are not available for *Prisoner of Azkaban*.

beloved, albeit fictional, characters and- at the time when the internet was becoming very popular and widely-used- wanted to find out before these plot-points were revealed and spoiled for them online. The conversations around this intriguing insight into the series likely sparked interest in the books for non-fans who heard about the "death" plot point and were curious to find out what was so compelling about the series for readers to care so deeply that a character would soon meet their demise. This is not to say that readers were only reading to find out which characters would die; the quality and vividness of the content of the *Harry Potter* books primarily motivated fans' initial interest in the books, and ultimately allowed Rowling to be able to cause an overwhelming amount of hype over the release of small amounts of information about the plot; if readers' did not care for the characters or have an understanding of their importance to the overall storyline, then information about the fate of the characters would be trivial and ineffective to use as a marketing strategy to drive perpetual interest in the books. While perhaps a variety of information about the development of the characters could be of interest to fans, any information that hinted about the death of a character seemed to be the type to most cause conversation among fans and encourage the rapid sale of the books.

Proof of fans' fascination with which characters would survive the series is most evident in the online forums and websites centred around the Harry Potter series. Though it is certainly beyond the scope of this paper to detail the amount of content available on *Harry Potter* websites that focuses on death in the novels, it can be reasonably stated that online conversations about this topic are vast and rampant and, at least up until the release of the seventh book, were featured prominently on fan sites. One of the most concrete examples of fans' fascination with debating which characters in the series would live and which would be killed off is a book published in 2006, based on the content from a fan website. Between the release of the sixth and seventh *Harry Potter* books, there was much speculation about how the series would end and most of this speculation was concerned with the fate of the lives of the characters. One of the largest Harry Potter fan websites, MuggleNet.com, published a book of predictions about the seventh book called *What Will Happen in Harry Potter 7: Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Falls in Love and How Will the Adventure Finally End?* The book sold an astounding 300,000 copies (Gunelius 57), which is a very impressive amount for a timely publication that would become dated in less than a year's time. The most frequent predictions in the book centre around which characters are likely to be killed off- hence the title of their book that promises to analyze "Who Lives, Who Dies". Indeed, every single chapter in the book has a section which speculates whether a character is likely to die and which character would likely be responsible for their death. This book even includes a chart entitled "The Survival League" that details the odds each character has of surviving- something that required extensive analysis and understanding of the characters and plot. After six *Harry Potter* books, death became the one feature that fans were most concerned with and fans wanted to know which characters would die, and for what cause? What this points to, I think, is the strong emotional attachment that readers have formed with the characters; readers became invested in the series to such an extent that they were genuinely concerned about the fate of several fictional characters. Further to this point, fans were aware that the seventh book would be the final book in the *Harry Potter* series, and so even if a character did die in the book it would not have any effect on their presence in the rest of

the series simply because the series was not going to continue regardless of which characters survived. Fans were not concerned about the fates of their favourite characters because they wanted to see them through to more books, as might have been the case with the fourth book, but rather it appears that they were genuinely concerned about these fictional characters and could not imagine an untimely or ill-fated death happening to a character whom they had grown to love and connect with. JK Rowling had created such a vibrant cast of characters that readers were certain that their lives would carry on despite the end of the series; that is, unless they were killed off before the seventh book ended. Death, as Rowling makes very clear throughout the books, is as final and inevitable for magical beings as it is for muggle readers.

3. There Isn't a Spell for Everything

Rowling has always been candid about the fact that her books are "largely about death" (*Tatler*) and often cites the hardships she faced when dealing with the loss of important people in her life- her mother, most notably- as influences for the way Harry himself attempts to mediate the death of his friends and family. In many interviews, Rowling appears somewhat sympathetic towards Voldemort and his endless quest to avoid death; Voldemort's greatest motivator is the fear of death, which is something that most anyone can relate to. His desire to avoid death and prolong his own life is something Rowling and readers cannot fault him for. Rather, it becomes his ruthless strategy to avoid death that renders him villainous when he comes willing to violently and senselessly take the life of others in order to ensure his own death is prevented.

Another reason why death was such an engaging factor for fans is that death is an element of the wizarding world that is so similar to their own muggle lives. Various scenes throughout each of the *Harry Potter* novels maintain that, like muggles, witches and wizards respond to the death of loved ones with mourning and sadness, and both groups are uncertain of what their own death will be like and what- if anything- exists for us beyond death. The novels try to convey an emotional sense of loss with the death of a character, mimicking that of the real world. In the books, death usually comes unexpectedly and at a cost, usually as an implication of Voldemort's endeavours and his quest to maintain his immortality. In an interview given just days after the release of *Goblet of Fire*, Rowling remarked:

People die, but do you care when they die? Do you absolutely have a sense of how evil it is to take another person's life? Yes, I think in my book you do. I think you do. I think you see that it is a horrific thing. I have enormous respect for human life . . . And here we are dealing with someone, I'm dealing with a villain who does hold human life incredibly cheap. That's how it happens: one squeeze of the trigger. Gone. Forever. That's evil. ("JK Rowling Interview")

The experience of death, for both those who die and those who are affected by the loss of friends and family, is exactly like that in the muggle world: death is often sudden and can come about through unnatural means; it is not as alarming to realize that everyone will die as it is to realize that others can be (violently and/or intentionally) responsible for our own death. Death, for muggles and wizards alike, is final, irreversible, and inevitable: there is no magic spell that can indefinitely prevent death or that can bring someone back

from the dead. Rowling has always insisted that, despite some of the death-delaying spells and abilities that wizards and witches can possess, death cannot ever be reversed (Trenman).

This parallel between the real world and the wizarding world allows readers to identify with the characters who experience loss through death and allows them to become emotionally invested in the story. The novels, in a fantastical sense, may serve as escapist literature and allow readers to imagine a world where death can be avoided or the burden of loss could be relieved with a magical spell. It may appear to readers that witches and wizards have more options and insights in regards to the preservation of their own life and their life beyond death because the wizarding world does present some abilities and opportunities for witches and wizards to prolong their lives or avoid the finiteness of death: the philosophers stone and horcruxes are objects which allow the user to prevent death, and wizards and witches can choose to become a ghost and avoid the uncertainty of the afterlife completely. However, the *Harry Potter* novels reveal that these opportunities have side effects that result in unfavorable outcomes and most witches and wizards do not actually utilize these options. Thus, the wizarding world does not present a more preferable experience of death than that which we know in the muggle world; death is an unknown state that is feared by witches and wizards just as much as it is by muggle readers. Thus, when hearing that a favorite character in the series might die, fans were aware that the character would be gone completely and would not be able to be hastily revived through any application of magic.

4. Split Seven Ways

However, despite my insistence- and Rowling's- that the wizarding world parallels the muggle world in terms of how death is mediated and understood, there are some magical objects and abilities that exist in the wizarding world that are to be used exactly for the purpose of delaying death. For instance, in *Philosopher's Stone* readers are introduced to some of the ghosts that roam the corridors of Hogwarts and, after Harry's initial startle upon seeing them, readers are informed that seeing ghosts is a common occurrence for witches and wizards. The way that ghosts feature so prominently in the wizarding world might seem, at first, appealing to muggle readers: wouldn't it be wonderful if our loved ones could remain with us after their demise, albeit in a different form? This seems like a good idea to Harry, too; after the death of his uncle Sirius, a sad and frustrated Harry eagerly questions the ghost Nearly Headless Nick: "[p]eople can come back, right? As ghosts. They don't have to disappear completely" (Rowling, *Order* 758). Nick painfully informs Harry that while "[w]izards can leave an imprint of themselves upon the earth, to walk palely where their living selves once trod . . . very few wizards choose that path" (*Ibid*). Nick reveals that being a ghost is not as marvellous a state as many would think it to be and alludes to it being a very torturous and arduous experience; he admits to Harry that he became a ghost because he was afraid of death and could not bravely face the unknown reality of the afterlife. While many muggle readers might wish that their deceased loved ones could return to them in the form of a ghost, Rowling presents a reality of ghosts that is not very idealistic. Indeed, Rowling revealed in a February 2000 interview that, within the realm of magic, "the happiest people do not become ghosts" ("J.K. Rowling Interview, Scholastic"). Certainly, the people whom are most important to Harry (his parents and Sirius) do not become ghosts and no other

beloved characters that die in the series return in this state; Rowling's belief in and allusion to a satisfying afterlife is a belief that readers could take comfort in when their favorite characters were killed off. The opportunity to resist death by becoming a ghost is not an appealing one, and thus Rowling suggests that the characters who do not return as ghosts are somehow happier and more at peace than they would be had they returned as a ghost.

Another magical object that can be used to prolong one's life is the Elixir of Life, which is first introduced to us in *Philosopher's Stone*. The Elixir of Life will keep one alive as long as they continue to consume it; however, readers learn in *Half-Blood Prince* that it is not an entirely reliable source and one would have to become completely dependent on it because if they became unable to access the Elixir, they would die very quickly (*Ibid* 470). The Philosopher's Stone is the object from which the Elixir of Life is created. However, unlike the elixir, the Philosopher's Stone will prolong one's life as long as they remain in possession of the stone. This seems like a most brilliant contraption to a young Harry who, having grown up amongst muggles, understands the desire for eternal life: "[a] stone that makes gold and stops you ever dying!" said Harry. 'No wonder Snape's after it! *Anyone* would want it'" (Rowling, *Stone* 161). However, Dumbledore cautions Harry that "humans do have a knack of choosing precisely those things which are worst for them" (Rowling, *Stone* 215) and resists the idea that eternal life is something that people should desire or seek out. In fact, Dumbledore proceeds to destroy the only stone in existence to prevent anyone from the temptation of acquiring and using the stone, essentially saving them for a fate he believes would be worse than death. After seeing the pains Voldemort and Professor Quirrell go to in order to acquire the Stone, readers become privy to the fact that eternal life through means of the Stone is not desirable, and they also witness how desperate people are to obtain this stone and how this desperation turns people greedy and manipulative.

In *Half-Blood Prince* the concept of the "horcrux" is introduced, which is certainly one of the most fascinating magical objects to be described in the series. Harry- and readers- learn that wizards and witches are able to divide their soul among several items (that become horcruxes) with the intent of preserving their life indefinitely; one cannot die until all of their horcruxes- not just their physical body, but their soul- are destroyed². Ideally, the ability to create a horcrux would be an excellent way of prolonging one's life and securing oneself against an untimely or accidental death. However, the novels demonstrate that splitting up one's soul is problematic and, indeed, soon after the concept is presented, readers- and Harry- learn that horcruxes are actually a form of very dark magic and are not at all easy or desirable to create. Professor Slughorn explains that "existence in such a form . . . few would want it, very few. Death would be preferable" (Rowling, *Half Blood Prince* 465). It is curious that an artifact that would pose a solution to a problem so many people fear would be so much more undesirable than the problem of death itself. This is because, as we find out, the only way to create a horcrux is by performing "the supreme act of evil" (*Ibid*) and to murder someone. The horcrux poses a problem to the natural order of death and so its creation is complicated and sinister in order to prevent witches and wizards from performing it. When the natural

² It is interesting to note that Rowling suggests that the body is a separate entity from the soul and that even though the body might fail or be destroyed, the soul is what continues to exist in the afterlife. Much can be discussed in regards to this feature of the series, but is beyond the scope of this particular paper.

order of death is compromised, there is a price to pay that puts the user in an unfortunate situation; life that is given unnaturally is only gained by taking away another life unnaturally. Creating a horcrux literally splits the soul apart and figuratively breaks up the "purity" of the soul; Voldemort was so willing to avoid death that he split his soul seven times but in turn murdered seven victims and, as the primary villain of the series, is extremely evil and his afterlife can only be expected to be hellish. The *Harry Potter* novels suggest that death is actually a more preferable experience than the alternative because even magic cannot provide eternal life inconsequentially; death, even in the wizarding world, is a part of life.

5. Conclusion

The *Harry Potter* novels demonstrate that many of the options available to wizards and witches to prolong their lives are not actually desirable or even reasonably obtainable; Nearly Headless Nick warns Harry of the unpleasant fate of being a ghost, while Slughorn warned Tom Riddle that splitting one's soul in order to preserve one's life could actually result in a situation worse than death. In *Philosopher's Stone*, Dumbledore wisely suggests to us that death is not something to be feared, but rather something that can bring about relief and revitalization while the quest for eternal life is actually rather excruciating; he remarks that death "really is like going to bed after a very, *very* long day. After all, to the well-organized mind, death is but the next great adventure" (Rowling, *Stone* 215). Harry is constantly reminded that his ability to love, something that Voldemort does not have, makes him stronger and more powerful than his enemy and will always allow him to succeed. Indeed, it is Harry's ability to love and to remember the love his deceased friends and family had for him that allow him to endure so many challenges and strive to defeat the most evil wizards and witches (their evilness is seemingly defined by their inability to love). The *Harry Potter* novels demonstrate, then, that our relationships with others should not be based on life or death, but rather on life and love. Those whom we love in life will remain a part of us and our lives long after their death, for death is merely physical but love is transcending and eternal and is what has the power to motivate and inspire us to achieve our goals. Harry's quest to defeat Voldemort was provoked by the death of his parents but it was the knowledge of their love for Harry and for other people in their lives that inspired Harry to want to avenge their death. Readers can certainly understand and empathize with Harry and the ways in which the characters contend with life, death, and love in the wizarding world mimic the ways that readers do in the muggle world. This parallel makes the books truly come alive for readers and, I believe, is one of the most engaging features of the series that led to the books' ability to increase and maintain its popularity. As Harry approaches Voldemort for a final battle and his deceased friends and family reappear to encourage and inspire him, and as Harry is able to defeat Voldemort because of the magic and power that is available to him because of Snape's love for Lily, it is evident that it is love, in all forms, that truly conquers all.

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Keynote Paper

“Harry Potter” Archetype of the Child as our future in the 21st Century

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As of June 2011, Joanne Kathleen Rowling author of the Harry Potter books, has sold about 450 million copies and has had her work translated into 67 languages; the last four of the series consecutively set records as the fastest-selling books in history, making the *Harry Potter* brand worth in excess of \$15 billion.

A friend of mine was in China recently. He had the privilege of meeting several groups of primary school children. He asked them, through an interpreter, what books they were reading. They said Harry Potter. When at the turn of a new century someone dreams up a child, which a whole generation of our children spontaneously recognize and adopt as their mascot, then we have to sit up and take notice because here we may have a dream of, or for, our future.

The incontrovertible fact which no one can deny is that huge numbers of children, and adults, all over the world have been accompanied by Harry Potter and his friends as their most important guides throughout their childhood and through the childhood of this century. In the Balmoral Hotel, Edinburgh, a note is scrawled: ‘J. K. Rowling finished writing *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* in this room (552) on 11 January 2007,’ so in the decade between 30th June 1997 when the first book of the series was published to the first decade of the 21st century we witness the most influential writing in the history of the planet and the most formative cultural phenomenon of the childhood of the 21st Century.

Are we dealing here with sterling or with straw? Can 450 million book-buyers be wrong? Harold Bloom, Sterling Professor of Humanities at Yale, says ‘Yes, they can be wrong!’ In a, by now, infamous review for the *Wall Street Journal*, July 11th 2000, Bloom realises that ‘Rowling . . . is at least a millennial index to our popular culture.’ But this, according to him, is more a reflection on us than on her. Harry Potter, for Bloom, represents the dumbing down of global readership everywhere. Rowling is preparing our children to spend the rest of their lives reading Stephen King! ‘So huge an audience’ says the horrified professor of Sterling, ‘gives her importance akin to rock stars, movie idols, TV anchors, and successful politicians. Her prose style, heavy on cliché, makes no demands upon her readers.’ In other words Harry Potter is the ultimate brain candy for 21st Century morons.

A.S. Byatt, herself a booker prize winning novelist, agrees with Bloom: ‘It is written for people whose imaginative lives are confined to TV cartoons, and the exaggerated (more exciting, not threatening) mirror-worlds of soaps, reality TV and celebrity gossip. She speaks to an adult generation that hasn’t known, and doesn’t care about, mystery.’¹ Byatt reads the Potter books as pasteurized-processed cheez-food, and the adults, who are also reading these books as too dim to tell the difference between fast food and the fare of a four-star chef.

This is a constant phenomenon in the world of so-called experts. They keep on telling us what they think we should be doing, rather than telling us the meaning of what we prefer to do. They slam films or books which we love, not because of what they are in themselves, but because they are not what these critics think they should be. Complaining that Rowling is not Tolkien, that Harry Potter is not The Hobbit, that the Half-Blood Prince is not Lord of the Rings is about as helpful as telling us that surf boards are not submarines. Of course they’re not: they were meant to be, and to do, completely different things.

If we at least agree that the Harry Potter books make up part of a genre which we can describe as ‘fantasy novels,’ then we can begin to identify the place they occupy on the library shelves of world literature. There is an ancestry of fantasy books as varied and as weighty as any other literary tradition, against which Harry Potter has to be measured. But there are different species within this category itself.

There is ‘High Fantasy’ and ‘Low Fantasy’ with a ladder of gradation between the two. High and low in this instance are positions on a scale and not value judgements. High fantasy is set in an alternative, entirely fictional world distinct from the real, or everyday, world. This ‘secondary’ world which fantasy creates is internally consistent but its rules differ from those of the ‘primary’ world in which most of us live. Low fantasy, on the other hand, is set in our primary, or ‘real’ world, which then is allowed to include magical elements.

Tolkien, C.S.Lewis and J.K.Rowling can illustrate three descending steps on this ladder from high to low fantasy. Tolkien’s fiction creates a world of its own and provides detailed maps, a geography and a history of this fictional world to help us negotiate it. C.S.Lewis moves us into a world parallel to this one through portals from our own primary world. Narnia, for instance, can be accessed through a wardrobe which exists in our ordinary everyday world. Once we are through these doors we enter a completely different world with its own geography, history and economy.

Harry Potter is ‘low fantasy,’ or, as I prefer to think of it, ‘sacramental’ fantasy: a presentation of our world after the incarnation, after the definitive entry of God into this, our primary world. These books present us with a distinct world-within-a-world. The structures of our familiar world remain in place, but within these structures strange things happen.

These stories are part and parcel of the primary world in which we all live. The inner world which they evoke provides the magic which should be an integral part of the world in which we live. It is another world within this one, although most of the mundane inhabitants of our primary world are unaware of it. This is also what

¹ *New York Times*, 7/7/2003.

St John describes in his Gospel [1:10]: ‘He was in the world (*en to kosmo*), and though the world (*ho kosmos*) was created through him, the world (*ho kosmos*) did not know him.’ In one sentence you get three different nuances with regard to the word ‘world.’ The first use of *kosmos* refers to the physical realm into which Jesus Christ has entered. The second refers to the created order for which He is responsible as the Word of God; the third refers to the ‘muggle-world,’ or the world of those who fail to recognize Him.

Harry Potter fits into the fantasy map ‘as a missing puzzle piece. These books don’t make you fall to your knees — you’re having too much fun to do that. They may freak you out from time to time, and there will be monsters; but they will restore the world we know at the end. It’s not high-church magic, but it’s good enough magic for everyday wear; not numinous, but full of high spirits, in every sense of the word. And therefore “ersatz” [the word used by Byatt to condemn these books] strikes me as a massively unfair word; it implies that something is passing for something else — that the Potter books are trying to be numinous fantasy and failing. And I don’t think they’re trying at all. They’re an entirely different species. Rowling is a storyteller, to some extent in the tradition of Enid Blyton. She can spin a yarn, write a suspenseful story which makes us want to turn the pages. We also care about her characters.’² Byatt and Bloom ignore the incarnational tradition of magic books.

J.K. Rowling, like Charles Dickens, whose bicentenary we celebrate this year, is an archetypal storyteller – she tells it as it comes out of our collective unconscious. All such stories wear local costume, though they reach down to the depths where they connect with the global network of universal experience. Although the details may be particular, the storyline is typical, anyone in the world can relate to it.

In 1909, at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, Freud and Jung were in America for seven weeks on a lecture tour. While there, they analysed each other’s dreams. Jung’s most important dream was one of the causes of his break with Freud and was also one of his most important contributions to psychoanalysis. He dreamt that he was on the top storey of an old house which was very elegant and well furnished. He marveled in the dream at the possibility that this could be his own house. And then he realised that he had only visited the upper storey and had no idea what the lower floor was like, so he decided to explore. He found everything underneath much older. And after a while he noticed that the stone slabs of this lower floor were moveable. There was also an iron ring attached to one of them. He was able to use the ring to move the slab and reveal a narrow stone stairway which descended to further depths. He went down these stairs and lowered himself into a cave cut out of rock. Bones and pottery were scattered in the dust with two human skulls half-disintegrated. I’m not sure whether it was Harry Potter which he discovered in this dream.

Freud and he offered different interpretations of this dream. For Jung this dream became the template of his version of psychoanalysis. The house was an image of the psyche. The room on the upper floor was our day-to-day conscious personality. As he moved downwards, the lower floor was the first level of the unconscious which he

² Doris Egan (1955—), American screenwriter, producer, and writer, www.dorisegan.com/.../for-they-will-say-both-yes-and-no-a-reply-to...

thought of as our personal unconscious. The area unveiled by loosening the stone slabs on the ground floor was what he called the collective unconscious.

C.G. Jung believed that he had unearthed the world of the most primitive levels of our psyche, our common heritage as human beings, shaped by all our ancestors. He invented the term 'archetype' to describe the decipherable elements which make up at least part of this vast uncharted area. Archetypes are like the slides which we project from the unconscious upon the walls of the conscious world we inhabit. They give us some indication of the nature of the unconscious and the machinery which creates and projects them. Jung discovered that archetypes were 'identical psychic structures common to all' and made up 'the archaic heritage of humanity.'³ In other words they come with the package of being human and they give us some clue of the make-up of the unconscious, some handle on how to cope with it. Literature and dreams record examples of this universal phenomenon.

The archetype of the Child is one of the ever-recurring motifs in individual dreams as well as in world mythology and literature. It represents the potential future both of each one of us and of our societies. It symbolizes the whole personality in its development. For Jung, 'The mythic child symbolizes the lifelong process of psychological maturation'. Like all archetypes, it is bi-polar, exhibiting both a "positive" and a "negative" aspect. The "positive" side appears as the Divine Child who symbolizes newness, potential for growth, hope for the future. The "negative" side is the child who refuses to grow up and meet the challenges of life, waiting instead for the ship to come in and solve all our problems."⁴

Jung wrote his descriptions of the child archetype in 1941. It corresponds dramatically with the Harry Potter story. The appearance of the child, Jung tells us, may be in the form of a god or a hero. Their arrival is often associated with miraculous birth and early struggles and adversities. Such universal themes of insignificant beginnings and miraculous birth represent the emergence of a new and as yet unknown future from a somewhat squalid and monotonous present reality. Harry's parents are killed and he is left an orphan on the doorstep of the Dursley's. He is like the divine child who knows not from where he comes.

Marie-Louise Von Franz, who worked closely with Jung for over thirty years, analysed *Le Petit Prince* of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry as one of the archetypes of the Twentieth Century, in her series of lectures *The Problem of the Puer Aeternus*. This series which also examined Bruno Goetz's story *The Kingdom Without Space*, presented the negative side of this archetype, as the child who refuses to grow up and meet the challenges of life. We could present Harry Potter as an example of the positive aspect of this archetype, as the heroic Child for the 21st Century.

Archetypal stories are ones to which every single one of us can relate simply because we happen to be human beings. There are two basic archetypal stories underpinning the mythology of our Graeco-Roman and our Judeo-Christian culture: the Odyssey

³ C.G.Jung , III 'The Transformation of Libido' and IV 'The Origin of the Hero', contained in Part II of *Symbols of Transformation* (Collected Works, Vol. 5) Bollingen Series XX, Pantheon, New York 1956, # 224 & #259 .

⁴ von Franz, Marie-Louise. *The Problem of the Puer Aeternus*. 3rd Edition, Inner City Books, Toronto, 2000.

and the Exodus, the journey and the escape. In Homer's version, of course, they are all wearing sandals and togas, but in Joyce's twentieth century adaptation of Ulysses the same archetypal journey is situated in Dublin on June 16th 1904. These details are irrelevant; it is the journey which matters to all of us and in all of us. We have all moved from one place to another even if it was simply a day's excursion to the seaside: thus we relate to archetypal stories of a journey: Star Trek or Wanderly Wagon are basically the same story even though the first travels through the galaxy and the second through the prairie. Whether our journey is from the nursery to the dining room or from Mars to Venus, they are still recognizable as journeys.

As for the Exodus: Moses, Pharaoh, the pillar and the cloud, the red sea, the plagues, the desert and the promised land: we've seen them all with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, who have been tuning in to our archetypes on the big screen for most of a century. But let's not forget the network in ours psyches into which they plug their wares. *The Great Escape* is not just Steve McQueen's story, it's my story and your story and everybody's story.

Because we all have escaped from somewhere, from the nursery, from the family, from our job or from our school, so we can relate to *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Alexander Dumas' great saga which captured the imagination of the world. This archetypal story has been borrowed and transformed into plays, musicals, films and T.V. series, the world over. In 1994, a Stephen King novella, *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption* was made into a film voted by many as their favorite film of all time [Pace Harold Bloom!] – with Morgan Freeman standing in for Nelson Mandela. Andy Dufresne is sentenced to two consecutive life sentences at Shawshank State Penitentiary for murdering his wife and her lover. He is later assigned to the prison library, as easier work where he can be protected from bullying and can use his exceptional banking skills to help the guards and the inmates of the prison. The very first book he puts into the library is *The Count of Monte Cristo*, which is both an acknowledgement of, and a reference to, the film's source.

Harry Potter is an introduction to the notion of incarnation, a contemporary catechesis about magic, and the possibility of prophecy, in our workaday world. But the books are also about ourselves essentially, and are a recognizable description of the condition of each one of us. Because in one way or another we've all had a rotten childhood! We're not talking about the petty details here, we're talking about the big picture. Every one of us is surrounded by Dursleys – there are hundreds of them at this conference, for instance, I spend my day trying to avoid them! The archetypal story, whether Mickey Mouse or Little Red Riding Hood, has enough of the familiar to allow me to recognize it and enough magic in it to make me want to move out with them elsewhere.

Harry Potter is local, and British, and monocultural, at one level but that is only the outer wrapping; inside it changes from Clark Kent to Superman [or perhaps the other way round from Super hero to his bespectacled alter ego Harry Potter] and it glides into our collective unconscious.

What was necessary, for instance, to allow the series fly the Atlantic and land in the United States? Steven Spielberg, apparently, was interested in making the movies of the series, but when J.K. Rowling heard that he wanted to put Harry into 'Hogwarts High' instead of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, she turned instead to Chris Columbus, [not the one who discovered America by the way] who

promised 'they would film entirely in the United Kingdom and use an all-British cast.'⁵

Neil Harper, in 'Farewell Father Christmas: Marketing the British Trilogy to the US' tells us that in addition to changing the title of the first novel from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* to *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, the words "letterbox," "motorway," "queue," "dustbins," "jumper," "biscuit," "bogie," "Father Christmas," and "timetable" all had to be translated into American. But this is skin deep plastic surgery and not heart transplant.

Arthur Levine, the US editor for Rowling's novels, says, 'I wasn't trying to 'Americanize' them ... What I was trying to do was translate, which I think is different. I wanted to make sure than an American kid would have the same literary experience that a British kid would have. A kid should be confused or challenged when the author wants the kid to be confused or challenged and not because of a difference of language.'

It is true that the Harry Potter series is part of a long tradition of British school novels, which American children will have to confront regardless of whether a biscuit is called a cookie or a lorry a truck. But every child can imagine the experience because Harry Potter is an archetypal story.

Jung's most sustained analysis of the child archetype provides the basis of what I say next.⁶ Archetypes are living psychic forces which can promote human growth if understood and incorporated into our lives, but which, when neglected, may cause negative reactions.

The function of the child archetype is to appear from the unconscious as a warning. It represents all that other side of ourselves which has been neglected in our perfectly understandable attempt to improve our lot and get ahead, as we say. The child who appears in our dreams or in our literature tries to compensate for, or correct, the inevitable one-sidedness and extravagance of the conscious mind in its ideological attempt to construct the best of all possible worlds. The child archetype tries to remind us of all those other realities and sides of ourselves which we have left out in the often somewhat myopic programme of wellbeing which we have constructed without giving them enough attention. Archetypal dreams and stories are the natural result of too much conscious concentration on a few contents to the exclusion of all others. Since the child is essentially a potential being, the child motif signifies anticipation of a future which can pave the way for change that might satisfy more comprehensively the full reality of who we really are. As a figure, the archetypal child represents the future development of ourselves as human beings.

The child in our dreams or in literature represents a moving towards independence. This usually requires the added symbol of abandonment as a necessary precondition for the detachment of the child from its origins or from anything that might be connected with the imprisoning circumstances in which we find ourselves. The symbol of the child anticipates a new higher state of consciousness which may

⁵ Nel <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0241527/trivia> quoted in Kara Lynn Andersen, "Harry Potter and the Susceptible Child Audience" page 11 of 11 CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 7.2 (2005): <<http://docs.lib.psu.edu/clcweb/vol7/iss2/2>>

⁶ C.G.Jung , "The Psychology of the Child Archetype", contained in Part IV of *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (Collected Works, Vol. 9i) Bollingen Series XX, Pantheon, New York 1956, # 259 to #305 .).

remain only a mythological projection if it is not actually integrated into our plans for the future. Although the child of our dreams and of our stories is often delivered into hazardous situations and is in continual danger of extinction, he or she possesses supernatural powers far beyond the human. The invincibility of this child is the measure of our determination to press on into the future and to achieve the ultimate goal of wholeness for our humanity.

So what is the archetypal story of Harry Potter telling us essentially: that we should not harness our children to the business requirements or the short-term economic growth of our countries. Just because some multinational is offering payment for a number of jobs to be done does not mean that our children's prospects should be tailored to meet this need. A new form of slavery to the imperative of economic growth should not become the aim of our educational system. We have borrowed our education systems from armies, conquerors, mathematicians, scientists, technologists. These should provide only one half of what education might mean, if even that. The Industrial revolution, the scientific revolution, the technological revolution, the cybernetic revolution: all these have transformed our lives and we are grateful to them. We know also that they need young hands to keep them going, to make them work, to maintain the infrastructure of our Western World. But these very important realities with which our education system is obsessed, have been allowed to crowd out the tiny flowers of imagination. There must be more to life than science; there is more to science than technology. That more is an inner garden of the imagination which each of us should be allowed to cultivate, where we should be encouraged to dwell for at least some part of our days and lives. Our children have no time for dilly-dallying, no space for inner or outer exploration, no opportunity for dreaming. Every minute of every day is full up with 'learning.' They have no time to be children, they've grown up before they were allowed to know what was happening.

W.B.Yeats wrote in his introduction to Lady Gregory's *Gods and Fighting Men* (1904) 'Children at play, at being great and wonderful people' are the true reality of what we are and what we should become. 'Mankind as a whole had a like dream once; everybody and nobody built up the dream bit by bit and the story-tellers are there to make us remember.' But the children of the twentieth century had put away these ambitions for one reason or another we simply grew into ordinary men and women. J.K.Rowling experienced this defection at first hand before she found a publisher to launch her counter-attack.

Harry Potter has never been the star of a Quidditch team, scoring points while riding a broom far above the ground. He knows no spells, has never helped to hatch a dragon, and has never worn a cloak of invisibility. All he knows is a miserable life with the Dursleys, his horrible aunt and uncle, and their abominable son, Dudley - a great big swollen spoiled bully. Harry's room is a tiny closet at the foot of the stairs, and he hasn't had a birthday party in eleven years. But all that is about to change when a mysterious letter arrives by owl messenger: a letter with an invitation to an incredible place that Harry - and anyone who reads about him - will find unforgettable.

So goes the Potter promotional blurb. The corresponding truth is that every one of us, who suffered through so-called 'free' education during the 20th century, is Harry Potter. Imagination was given no birthday party and had its room in a dust cupboard under the stairs.

Harry Potter is an orphan who discovers at the age of eleven that he is a magician who is living in a world of non-magical or ‘muggle’ people. If only each one of us had made that important discovery before we were imprisoned in secondary school from twelve to eighteen. Unfortunately, in the Muggle world in which we live, anyone who does happen to detect the working of magic and imagination in any child, will see to it that the Ministry of Magic [in our case read Ministry of Education] sends ‘Obliviators’ to cast Memory Charms upon such children—causing them to forget the wonderful gift they were displaying so naturally at the beginning of their school life.

The person who tries to thwart Harry and all the children at Hogwarts school is Lord Voldemort which means, in a mixture of many European languages, someone who ‘wishes death’ instead of life on everyone with whom he comes in contact. Voldemort is simply a synonym for what Eric Fromm defined as ‘necrophilia,’ in his 1963 pamphlet *War Within Man*.⁷ There Fromm contrasts the healthy ‘biophilic’ character orientation, which is open to life, growth, change, and the future, with the unhealthy ‘necrophiliac’ character, which dwells in the past, and attempts to render the world static, fixed, predictable, and dead. The necrophiliac personality fears life because of its messiness, its randomness, its uncontrollability. And so they do their best to control it through brute force, fear, torture, and ultimately death. Many institutions today could be described as necrophiliac. We can recognize so many of the people who run & ruin our world. No matter what their political, religious, or ideological affiliations, they share the same basic traits & worldview. They worship strength and lack of feeling; they glorify the mechanical, doing their best to become machines themselves. We've all met them, and suffered because of them. Their obsessive fear, and compulsive need to control that fear, affects everybody around them, especially those who refuse to submit to their murderous control. Like Field-Marshall Montgomery's governess, whom he describes in his autobiography, she would get up every morning and say: ‘go out and see what that child is doing and stop him!’

On the question of Christianity, many conservative Christian parents refuse to allow their children to read the Potter stories which, they claim, promote witchcraft and wickedness. Pastor Jack Brock of Christ Community Church in Alamogordo, New Mexico, had a holy bonfire on the Sunday after Christmas, 2001, and burnt the Potter books publicly as ‘an abomination to God and to me.’ Richard Abanes in *Harry Potter and The Bible*, shows a direct link with ‘current paganism’ and the practice of witchcraft, as well as ties to the occult and new-age philosophies. Connie Neal’s book *What’s a Christian to do with Harry Potter?* has a chapter entitled: ‘What would Jesus do with Harry Potter?’

I am sure that J.K.Rowling would not want her books to be exclusively aligned to Christianity or a secret Sunday school introduction to the Bible. However, she has said on many occasions that she is a church-going Christian and that just as Harry Potter is recognizably English because of her own background, the series ‘is also steeped in the Christian Tradition which spawned both the author and her hero’.⁸

⁷ “War Within Man. A Psychological Inquiry into the Roots of Destructiveness. A Study and Commentaries” is a pre-publication of Fromm’s concept of biophilia and necrophilia as it was later published in *The Heart of Man* in 1964, reissued by Harper Collins (June 1980).

⁸ Schafer, Elizabeth D, *Exploring Harry Potter*, Beacham’s Sourcebooks, Beacham Pub. Corp., 2000.

But, of course there are other sources from the unconscious also; the Potter mythology has many classical allusions among others.

As a Christian myself I find that her books give children an opening to the kind of mystery which Christianity embodies. This is not an extraterrestrial world but the world of incarnation where the mystery is present at every step we take. I agree with John Killinger when he says that ‘the only newness about Rowling’s fictional world is the freshness with which she treats old themes and invents new ones. The world of magic and miracle has been around for a long, long time, and is an intrinsic part of the Judeo-Christian heritage, whatever explanations conservative Christians may wish to offer for it.’⁹

Catie Hoch was just six when she was diagnosed with a cancerous kidney tumour. As the cancer continued its relentless, and inevitably fatal, progress, her only escape was into the magical world of Rowling’s schoolboy wizard. When her condition worsened suddenly at the age of eight and she was told she had only months to live, a friend of the family wrote to the author’s publishers about the then unpublished fourth book which she said Catie would not live to read. When Catie had only days to live, Rowling rang her to read chapters from the unfinished manuscript of the fourth book, *Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire*. Catie died, on May 18, 2000, aged nine.¹⁰ Jo, as she asked Catie to call her, had read to her the end of the book that meant so much to her.

I hope that there is not a person on this planet who would have wanted Rowling to find out whether this little girl was a Moslem, a Christian, a Hindu, or Jew before reading her the story. J.K. Rowling would want every child in the world to read her stories and I hope that Christianity would never become aligned with the necrophiliacs who would try to stop this from happening.

In an interview during an Open Book Tour on Monday October 17th 2007, Rowling said that her books have always, in fact, dealt explicitly with religious themes and questions, but that until *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the books had never quoted any specific religion. That had been the plan from the start, not because she was afraid of inserting religion into a children’s story, but rather, because she was afraid that introducing religion (specifically Christianity) would give too much away to fans who might then see the parallels.

"To me [the religious parallels have] always been obvious," she said. "But I never wanted to talk too openly about it because I thought it might show people who just wanted the story, where we were going."

One example, when Harry visits his parents' graves in Chapter 16 of "Deathly Hallows," entitled "Godric's Hollow," he reads the quote On his parents' tombstone: 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death' [which is a quote from 1 Corinthians 15:26], while on the tombstone of Dumbledore's mother and sister he reads, 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' from Matthew 6:19. Hermione tells

⁹ John Killinger, *God, The Devil, and Harry Potter*, St Martin’s Press, 2004.

¹⁰ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-153024/How-Harry-Potter-gave-Catie-dying-wish.html#ixzz21NIjO9Ng>

Harry shortly after he sees the graves, that his parents' message means 'living beyond death. Living after death.' These are not only explicitly Christian themes basic to resurrection theology, they are also helps towards the defeat of Voldemort and all forms of necrophilia in our own world.

Instead of bemoaning the fact that so many people are reading these stories or complaining that they denigrate, or are opposed to, the Christian message, we should be rejoicing that any literature causes such excitement. J.K.Rowling has a relationship with our children, and indeed with ourselves as children, which we should envy and encourage. Far from trying to stop the lights we should be helping them to burn more brightly. She is doing more for imagination than any other single force in our thoroughly bleak and businesslike century. As she might say herself: 'I take my hat off to you – or I would, if I were not afraid of showering you in spiders.'

T(r)ends Towards Infinity

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Abstract

Current non-realistic serial literature has a remarkable tendency towards continuation after the main narration has concluded. In this context paratexts, "those liminal devices and conventions both within the book [...] and outside it [...] that mediate the book to the reader" (Genette, XIII), are of vital importance. Paratextual material in various forms, especially belonging to the subcategory epitext (situated outside a book, as opposed to peritext situated inside the book) assists in keeping the audience's attention: Additional chapters in later editions, explorations of details in book(let)form, encyclopaedias and other representations of background information on the created characters and worlds ensure a continued presence of "publishing phenomena" in the market. The providing of such material bears a striking resemblance to bonus features included on DVDs and Blue rays: Provided material allows a closer look at already 'consumed' material, adding depth and duration to the experience.

Presently, non-realistic book series, especially in the field of YA literature, are expanding remarkably, both within the book sector and into other media formats. This holds true for the period between the release of individual installments in a series and for the time after the narrative arc of a series has concluded. In other words, there is an established tendency to fill gaps of sometimes several years between publishing the volumes of a series and the obvious blank space after the last novel has been released. Here *Harry Potter* is no exception - on the contrary.

This paper takes a closer look at the dynamics of this trend by observing its importance within fan culture, the forms it takes, and the issue of timing. Besides the *Harry Potter* series, a few remarks will also be made on the *Twilight Saga* and the *Inheritance Cycle* in order to widen the perspective.

1. Paratexts, Blanks and Bonus Material

In his essay *Moments of Television* John Fiske talks about "texts living beyond their time, always with unfinished business to perform" (Fiske, 66). This unfinished business can be understood as Wolfgang Iser's 'gaps' that are part of every narrative and are currently, in part, filled by bonus content. In principle, gaps make reader response possible by providing an opening for individual interpretation (see Iser, 284). However, when a series is not completed, interpretation is *not* simply suspended, waiting for the complete narrative to be available. Jonathan Gray's analyses of television programs can easily be applied to the literary field here:

[I]t would be ludicrous to think that we simply tuck away our interpretive efforts into small corners of our brains, waiting until after the series finale to make sense of a text. [...] Especially, too, since many serial programs leave us wondering what will happen next, frustrating the narrative delivery system by dragging it

out over multiple years, many viewers will actively look for clues in producer's paratexts regarding what will happen next. (Gray, 42f)

Thus, gaps are filled by forms of paratexts. Gérard Genette defines paratexts as "those liminal devices and conventions both within the book [...] and outside it [...] that mediate the book to the reader" (Genette, XIII). He analyzes what, beside the text as raw material, affects audiences. His theory dates back to 1987 and initially referred to literary texts only, but was later extended to include other media as well. In his original concept, Genette differentiates between peritext, situated inside a book (dedication, acknowledgment, foreword, illustrations...), and epitext, situated in a book's periphery (interviews, speeches, marketing slogans, pretexts such as manuscript pages...). (see Genette, 7) As a combination of peritext and epitext, paratext is practically limitless and represents a complex field of analyses.

In the context of this analyses, the paratextual material is narrowed down to representations that add narrative content in the form of a written text, namely, explorations of details of plot in form of booklets, encyclopaedias, and additional chapters or storylines distributed via the internet. All examples are author-generated material. Reader-generated material, such as fan fiction, is excluded in this context for matters of brevity and because the focus of this analyses lies on the role and timing of *official* bonus contents in regard to the reception process.¹

The providing of the mentioned material bears a striking resemblance to bonus features included on DVDs and Blue rays: Deleted scenes, extended scenes or comments by creative personnel allow a closer look at already viewed or read material, adding depth and duration to the experience.

Especially non-realistic fictions, which "maintain their narrative coherence and become credible through the uncanny detail with which they are evoked" (Tatar, 14), leave many blanks to be filled with additional contents because there is always much unexplored territory where Otherworlds or secret, supernatural communities are concerned. Therefore, every kind of fantasy novel allows for much room for bonus material to be presented.

2. Target Groups

The simple market principle of supply and demand motivates this trend towards apparently infinite continuation. A characteristic of literature as well as television fandom seems to be that passionate recipients demonstrate an insatiable thirst for 'more': more plot, more books, and more information about the characters' histories or futures. Within the movie industry, the *Harry Potter* series demonstrates this ever-increasing need for instance with the Ultimate Editions. Those of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* and *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* sold out quickly; therefore, the Ultimate Editions for *Prisoner of Azkaban* and *Goblet of Fire* were produced in greater numbers and sold at a higher price.

I would like to link the desire for 'more' with Maria Tatar's term of "enchanted hunters": child readers who are "active seekers of those glittering portals to forbidden and enchanting lands" (Tatar, 27). I propose to extend this concept to passionate readers of all ages in accordance with Tatar's additional comment that "[e]nthralled by word and narratives, we roam the textual terrain, wondering at its beauty and wandering in its lush intellectual precincts" (Tatar, 27).

The merry hunt for written stories can be associated with the possible enjoyment and absorption during a reading process, which can be described as 'flow', with reference to the psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. He defines it as a "sense of exhilaration,

a deep sense of enjoyment that is long cherished" (Csikszentmihalyi, 3) which originates in "a sense that one's skills are adequate to cope with the challenges at hand, in a goal-directed, rule-bound action system that provides clear clues as to how well one is performing." (Csikszentmihalyi, 71) The 'goal-directed, rule-bound action system' corresponds to the read story in the context of this paper. The basic measure of one's success would be to have made a temporary excursion into another world or, in the case of a child reader or an inexperienced reader, to have finished reading a book which, particularly in the fantasy genre, can be quite bulky. The feedback about the reader's success can be prolonged and become a multifaceted activity in itself when, after finishing a novel, the enchanted hunter hunts for more, to re-create or extend the sense of flow. To this end, he or she can either turn toward the next book in a series, if existent; towards medial transformations, like movies or graphic novels; or – most relevant in the context of this analyses – towards companion books, spin-offs or other bonus material. Therefore a trend towards continuation and expansion is motivated by the market principle of supply and demand.

Also, provided material is the foundation of follow-up communication – the exchange between readers on the texts they read. This is in fact a key motivation for reading in general and plays a central part in fan activity and participatory culture: As Nancy Baym argues in her research on the reception of soap operas, "postviewing and previewing interaction [between fans] are as important to fans as is the actual viewing" (Baym, 14). This can be easily transferred to the reception of serial YA literature. The pre-reading experience is determined by material yet to be released. Without expected continuation, or new material in any form, objects for debate are lost, and regular anticipatory interaction would be expected to cease. Additionally, the media analyst Henry Jenkins comments: "The fan community pools its knowledge because no single fan can know everything necessary to fully appreciate the series." (Jenkins, 118) For continued appreciation of a series, for maintaining interest, it seems to be fundamental to provide new information in various forms on a gradual as well as a regular basis. For great pleasure lies in speculating the future, waiting for secrets to be uncovered and in shared anticipation, all of which mark participatory culture (see Lexe, 4). Breanna Mroczek also references that in her contribution to this volume when she observes that the announcement of a character's murder (which turned out to be Cedric Diggory) heightened the anticipation of *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*.

Series, whether books or on television, in general regularly operate with clues or hints: small plot-points, allusions, or parallels from other texts within the same genre are used to attempt to determine what will happen next. This is a crucial, if not *the* crucial aspect of fandom with a not yet completed series as object. It provides much material for discussion and also provides an opportunity to prove individual readers' 'success' inside the community, if it turns out that their conjectures were right. Here, the concept of flow and the importance of follow-up communication work together as two elements providing the foundation of prolonging the enjoyable experience connected with the reception of book series. Without expected continuation, or new material in any form, objects for debate would be lost. Once a narrative has concluded, as it has with *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the level of attention and the flow of news are expected to recede. The same is true for long waiting times between installments: if fans go too long without news of any kind, frustration and loss of interest are natural consequences.

3. Provided Contents

Here, publishing and other entertainment industries step in to provide new material and thereby ‘feed the fire’. The addressed hunt for more is e.g. well represented in the publishing of encyclopaedias, which set out to provide detailed insights into the created worlds. Examples are Stephenie Meyer’s *The Twilight Saga: The Official Illustrated Guide*, and Christopher Paolini’s *Eragon’s Guide to Alagaesia*. Meyer includes, amongst other things, biographical notes on almost all mentioned characters, frequently asked questions, and four ‘outtakes’, of which three were also available on her website prior to the encyclopedia’s release – along with several of the questions. Paolini’s guide contains many illustrations, pop-up elements, and a texture probe of dragon skin, along with textual input.

It is important to note that Meyer’s and Paolini’s guides are provided in book format, whereas Rowling has chosen the internet to distribute additional material. One of the latter’s benefits lies in the potentially unlimited space available, something that cannot be achieved with a published book which naturally cannot extend beyond a certain number of pages. On the other hand, an encyclopedia focusing on the narrated world of a novel seems a natural extension when presented in book-format.

In any case, the internet is vital not only for marketing purposes, but also for short textual bonus material: Most pre-publication or post-publication narrative bonus contents (such as a first page, parts of a chapter, extras, or outtakes) are distributed via the word wide web.



Figure 1. Outtakes-section on <http://www.stepheniemeyer.com>

Figure 1 shows the outtake section of *New Moon* on Stephenie Meyer’s website. The presented contents were, as previously mentioned, later included in the guide. Christopher Paolini’s website does not include narrative bonus material at all. However, the author cooperates uncommonly closely with one particular fan site to which there is a link in his homepage: shurtugal.com. Shurtugal hosted a “monthly question and answer session with the author” (see <http://shurtugal.com/interviews/monthly-qas-with-christopher-paolini>). While this did not in fact take place more often than about every third to fourth month, it nevertheless constituted a regular point of contact between author and fans, providing new material at relatively regular intervals. It was always presented in the form of transcripts, and the author tended to give very elaborate answers; therefore, I am considering it as a narrative text.

With respect to the *Twilight Saga* and the *Inheritance Cycle* bonus material in booklet format, holds only one example: the spin-off *The Short Second Life of Bree Tanner*. It

is written from the perspective of a young vampire, who dies after a short appearance in *Eclipse*, the third *Twilight* novel, and thereby provides a different angle to the main narration in said book.

Bonus material can undergo a change from epitext to peritext, for instance, by including material in subsequent editions, like sneak peeks of the next book in a series. Thus far, this has not happened with *Harry Potter*; however, later editions of *Twilight* (part one in the *Twilight Saga*) include a couple of pages from *New Moon* (the second book) and so forth. A slightly adapted procedure is encountered when, in anticipation of the release of the concluding installment of the *Inheritance Cycle*, a sneak peek was included in a reprint edition of the previous book, *Brisingr*.



Figure 2. 'Brisingr' as an example of inclusion of bonus material in a reprint edition

Conclusively, with respect to the popular *Twilight Saga* and *Inheritance Cycle*, narrative author-generated bonus material is present although limited. In contrast, in the case of *Harry Potter* we are looking at a rich harvest: There are metafictional booklets (*Quidditch Through the Ages*, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, and *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*); additional sections and narrated background information could also be found on J. K. Rowling's website (prior to relaunch) and on *Pottermore*. Indeed *Pottermore*, in advance of the beta test and its final release in April 2012, was expected to replace the so-called Scottish Book, a *Harry Potter* encyclopedia that may be published in the future.²

4. Questions of Timing and Multiplying Effect

We have already mentioned that in regards to paratexts as bonus material, the issue of timing is central to avoiding the loss of audience interest.



Figure 3. Timeline of the release of the Harry Potter septology



Figure 4. Timeline of the release of the Harry Potter series including selected bonus material



Figure 5. Timeline of the release of the Harry Potter series including selected bonus material and the movie adaptations

As seen in Figure 3 the obvious gaps in the release continuity of the *Harry Potter* series are the years 2000 to 2003, 2004, and 2006. It is interesting that the major fansites, *Mugglenet* and *The Leaky Cauldron* originate around the first gap.³

Quidditch Through the Ages and *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them* were released in March 2001. With *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* having been released in July 2000, this publication date, eight months later, marks the time when (following the previously established one-year-pattern) the next novel would have been expected.

In May 2004, once again the vacuum year after a new release, J. K. Rowling's website went online: A frequently asked questions section, updated diary entries, and eight openings of the secret room (in fandom often referenced as the room of requirement) made for irregular inputs of news and clues from 2004 to 2007. This can definitely be seen as vital written narrative bonus material within participatory culture. Especially the openings of the room of requirement's door each time presented big news within the fan community. With the upcoming release of the last novel in 2007, the expected hole left by the series was a clearly expressed concern 'inside' (on forums, in comment sections) as well as 'outside' (in press coverage) of the *Harry Potter* fandom. Towards the end of the same year, one of seven handwritten and author-illustrated copies of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* was auctioned, giving room to speculation about when this book would be published in the traditional sense. Moreover, the winner of the auction, Amazon.com, put a transcript of the stories within the book on their website. Thereby material was provided five months after the last expected publication.

Figure 4 presents the filling of the blanks in the release continuity by the mentioned bonus material. Here, the companion books are represented with a smaller orange book, the author's website and *Pottermore* as bulbs. The result of including the movie adaptations in the presented timeline is demonstrated in Figure 5. A comparison between the three figures clearly shows that when bonus material (and the movies) are included a relatively regular pattern emerges.

Overall, six to twelve months have been established as the preferred period for releasing major bonus material; the interim between the secret door openings, which provided only snippets, varies between two and six months.

In general, when looking at the timing of bonus material the timing of announcements must be considered alongside the actual releases; for speculation and anticipation start with the knowledge that something is coming. For instance the announcement of the regular publication of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* was made on July 31st 2008. This marks about seven month after Amazon.com released transcripts of the book's contents as well as roughly a year after *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* was published. The actual publication date was December 2008, a little under six more months later.

The strategy of making the most of a release has been perfected by the movie industry in recent years. Not only teaser trailers are distributed, but also teasers, promos and previews of teaser trailers, which last only a few seconds. This could be observed in

the context of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1* and *Part 2* and in recent days is excessively used in context with *The Twilight Saga Breaking Dawn* – which is also split in two, thereby (arguably) following the example of the *Harry Potter* franchise.

To the same effect new material is often connected with other releases. An interesting example in this regard is *Pottermore*: *Pottermore* was announced in June 2011, about three weeks before the eighth and last *Harry Potter* movie was released. Just as with the book *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the movie was also anticipated with both a laughing and crying eye. A countdown on youtube leading up to a video promising new material and the possibility for users to shape the platform by providing a beta test is an operative example of the mechanics of popular culture's tendency towards continuation and expansion. According to the original setup, the beta was to start in mid-August, and the site would be launched in October. In practice *Pottermore* officially opened in April and the time frame therefore, if involuntary, again lay within the six to twelve months radius.

When comparing the bonus material releases in connection with *Harry Potter*, the *Twilight Saga* and the *Inheritance Cycle*, it can be said that, for one, J. K. Rowling has simply released more material. The use of the internet to distribute much content is not exclusive to *Harry Potter*, but the regularity and the total sum and diversity of material available in connection with the boy wizard definitely stand out.

The observation that new bonus material often is at least loosely connected to other releases can be verified by looking at the *Twilight Saga*: Stephenie Meyer's companion book, *The Short Second Life of Bree Tanner*, which was announced in March 2010, four months after the release of the second movie. The book was released in June 2010, almost simultaneously with the third movie, *Eclipse*, in which Bree Tanner plays a part. *The Official Illustrated Guide* was announced in January 2011 and was released in April 2011 only 3 month later, and at the same time, six months before the follow-up movie, *Breaking Dawn Part 1*, thereby once again preparing the way for the film. Christopher Paolini's *Eragon's Guide to Alagaesia* was released in November 2009, a little over a year after the third book in the four-book cycle. The referenced edition, featuring the bonus chapter from the fourth book, was released in April 2010, five months after the guide and in the vacuum year before the publication of *Inheritance*, the last novel. The publication announcement of *Inheritance* was put forth in March 2011, a year after the referenced edition of *Brisingr* and seven months before the actual release of the concluding novel. Thus, the dynamic between announcement, actual release date and releases in the near future can be understood as a verifiable vital ingredient in popular culture.

5. Closing Thoughts

In general, the providing of background information ensures continued audience attention and thus a continued presence of 'publishing phenomena' in the market. In the movie sector, the corresponding tagline 'with never before seen footage' accurately summarizes the essential dynamic. Bonus features such as additional chapters, edited contents, or companion books allow a closer look that adds depth and duration to the reception. All these elements mingle in the postmodern, globalized entertainment community and necessarily shape expectations and the approach to bestselling book series in the context of popular YA literature. Jonathan Gray sees one crucial function of paratexts in their role as entryways into the text (see Gray, 35). In accordance with the presented observations, it can also be understood as a way to avoid the exit: When Harry left Hogwarts, fans stayed behind with ample

opportunities to prolong the experience alone as well as together. For the show must go on.

Notes

1. For thoughts on ‘prosumers’ and their productivity see Cathy Leogrande’s contribution to this collection.
2. The name originates in an interview conducted between JK Rowling and Melissa Anelli, John Noe, and Susan Upton of the fansite *The Leaky Cauldron* on the podcast *Pottercast*. (see http://pottercast_old.the-leaky-cauldron.org, Pottercast 130, 13:19-13:55, last accessed 20/4/2012). Even though *Pottermore* was created to provide additional material an encyclopaedia might still be available at some point (see http://www.jkrowling.com/en_GB/#/about-jk-rowling/faqs-and-rumours, last accessed 20/4/2012).
3. The first was founded in fall 1999 the latter “started in 2000 as a badly designed one-page roll of news”. (see <http://www.mugglenet.com/aboutus.shtml>, last accessed 20/4/2012; <http://www.the-leaky-cauldron.org/info/siteinfo>, last accessed 20/4/2012).

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The Power of Mother: Archetype and Symbolism in the Harry Potter series

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Abstract

The importance of family unit, and mothers in particular, has been at the heart of much work in children's literature since the age of oral storytelling. Numerous stories revolved around different aspects of mother(ly) characters, and many were created in honour of mothers. Accordingly, Dr. Seuss and Roald Dahl often spoke openly of the beneficial influence their mothers had on their writing. On the other hand, J. M. Barrie's mother's obsession with his deceased brother was the most likely cause of Barrie's psychogenic dwarfism, resulting in one of the most distinguishable characters in children's literature, Peter Pan. Similarly, J. K. Rowling's loss of mother and her status as a single mother at the onset of the Harry Potter series reportedly had a great impact on the development of the novels. This paper, therefore, focuses on the figure of mother, absent, substitute and symbolic, in the Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling. By examining the Jungian mother archetype and its manifestation on various symbolic levels, it will be discussed how Rowling's narrative of loss intensifies vicarious experience on the part of the reader. Furthermore, the author's biographical data and identity as an important part in the construction of the seven novels will be intertwined with the fictional and linked to "orphanhood" and "Otherness" evident in the Harry Potter series. Finally, it will be shown in which way the power of the mother figure has brought into existence the defining of the central characters, institutional structure, spells and magic, as well as creation of original language and neologisms. Taking into account the postmodern and poststructuralist feminist theories, it will be discussed in which way language and literary discourse shape individual experience, the primary reason why the Harry Potter series, a mixture of genres and worlds, constitutes an immensely powerful contemporary work of fiction.

1. Harry Potter and the Mother Archetype

According to Gibson in "Beyond the Apron: Archetypes, Stereotypes, and Alternative Portrayals of Mothers in Children's Literature" (1988), mothers are a group very frequently depicted in children's literature and their appearance varies from archetypes characteristic of folklore and myth, to Carroll's caricatures or Barrie's stereotypes. Similarly, the world-famous Harry Potter "heptalogy" by J. K. Rowling revolves around the figure of mother, absent, substitute and symbolic. Most likely owing to the circumstances surrounding her life at the time when Harry Potter came into existence, J. K. Rowling makes the mother the essential ingredient which permeates all the "elements of fiction" (Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson, 2005). In other words, the plot and the theme are strongly related to the mother's sacrifice, the characters either archetypal or archetype-driven, the setting is in the domain of the mother and the "signified," and Rowling's style opulent with word play, nonsense and prosody characteristic of the "semiotic" maternal body. In many ways the Harry Potter series is a testimony to the power of mother and her symbols, which makes this work of fiction universal and accessible to an audience of a great scope. Indeed, this story, much like the story of anyone's life, begins with the mother.

By using archetypes Rowling appeals to the "inherited elements of human psyche which reflect common patterns of experience throughout the history of human consciousness"

(Biechonski, 1998-2004: 6). In *Four Archetypes* Carl Jung defined archetypes as “primordial images,” ideas in the human mind which allow for an endless variety of manifestations in different historical periods and cultures (Gibson, 1988). In other words, archetypes open up possibility for the richness of expression, the best example probably being the Demeter/Kore (Persephone) myth which “incorporates the image of mother as mother, as goddess, as daughter, as earth, as maiden, as creative nature, and so on.” Accordingly, in the essay “The Mother Archetype” (1938/1954; *Aspects of the Feminine*, 1982) Jung divides mother archetypes into three major categories:

1. personal mother / grandmother / stepmother / mother-in-law
2. nurse / governess / remote ancestress
3. mothers in a figurative sense - goddess (Mother of God, the Virgin, Sophia) / maiden (Demeter and Kore) / the beloved (Cybele-Attis myth)

Moreover, he provides a list of mother-symbols representing “mothers in a figurative sense:”

1. goal of our longing for redemption (Paradise, the Kingdom of God, the Heavenly Jerusalem)
2. things arousing devotion or feelings of awe (the Church, university, city or country, heaven, earth, the woods, the sea or any still waters, the underworld and the moon)
3. places standing for fertility and fruitfulness (cornucopia, a ploughed field, a garden; a rock, a cave, a tree, a spring, a deep well)
4. vessels (the baptismal font, vessel-shaped flowers such as the rose or the lotus)
5. the magic circle or mandala
6. hollow objects (ovens and cooking vessels)
7. the uterus (*yoni*) and anything of a like shape
8. animals (cow, hare, helpful animals in general)
9. evil symbols (the witch, the dragon or any devouring and entwining animal such as a large fish or a serpent, the grave, the sarcophagus, deep water, death, nightmares and bogies - Empusa, Lilith, etc.)

In this list Jung provides the most important faculties of the mother archetype, which in a broader sense encompasses the following:

The qualities associated with it are maternal solicitude and sympathy, the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility. The place of magic transformation and rebirth, together with the underworld and its inhabitants, are presided over by the mother. On the negative side the mother archetype may connote anything secret, hidden, dark; the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate.

(139)

As Acocella claims, the archetypal structure permeates Rowling's work, in other words “Rowling's books are chock-a-block with archetypes, and she doesn't just use them; she glories in them, plays with them postmodernly” (Pennington, 2002: 86). Accordingly, J. K. Rowling's work reflects the qualities of Jung's mother archetype by reinforcing the mother's

sacrifice, an institution of magic and growth, a hero guided by instinct, as well as the antagonist who is attached to the protagonist through prophecy and blood. Already in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997), written while J. K. Rowling as a single mother experienced personal crisis and poverty (Rowling, 2010), one detects the presence of archetypes and mother-symbols in most of the categories suggested by Jung. For the purpose of illustrating this point, the following table contains all the manifestations of the mother archetype evident in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*:

Archetype / Symbol	<i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (1997)</i>
personal mother / grandmother / stepmother / mother-in-law	Lily Potter, Molly Weasley, (Neville Longbottom's grandmother)
nurse / governess / remote ancestress	Albus Dumbledore, Rubeus Hagrid
goddess / maiden / the beloved	Hermione Granger
redemption / fertility and fruitfulness	Philosopher's Stone
devotion or feelings of awe	Hogwarts, Gringotts, the Forbidden Forest
vessels	the Sorting Hat, Invisibility Cloak
mandala / the uterus (yoni)	Mirror of Erised
hollow objects	objects in Hagrid's hut and pockets, Remembrall
animals	Animagi (cat), owl (Hedwig), dog (Fang, Fluffy), unicorn
evil symbols	snake, dragon (Norbert the Norwegian Ridgeback), Restricted Section, nightmares

Table 1. Mother archetypes and mother-symbols according to Jung in Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

Therefore, mother archetypes and symbols in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* encompass characters, magical objects, locations and animals/creatures. Additionally, Rowling also assigns the qualities of the mother archetype to male characters, as is the case with Rubeus Hagrid, Keeper of Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts, who delivers baby Harry Potter to the Dursley's doorstep, and is known to "take all sorts of things out of the pockets of his coat: a copper kettle, a squashy package of sausages, a poker, a teapot, several chipped mugs and a bottle of some amber liquid which he took a swig from before starting to make tea" (Rowling, 1997: 40). Moreover, Hagrid embraces the care of a variety of beings throughout the series. Likewise, Albus Dumbledore, the Headmaster of Hogwarts, "the greatest wizard of modern times" (77) and the carrier of paternal order and reason is also the guardian and giver of mother-symbols, e.g. the Mirror of Erised, Fawkes the phoenix, the Pensieve, Horcruxes and the Hallows, who wears "long robes, a purple cloak which swept the ground and high-heeled, buckled boots" (12). Furthermore, as the "perpetrator" of nonsense, quite uncharacteristically of great literary wizards, Dumbledore "had swapped his pointed wizard's hat for a flowered bonnet and was chuckling merrily..." (150). Therefore, in the *Philosopher's Stone* mother archetypes / symbols display diversity and all-inclusiveness of motherly experience.

2. Magical Manifestations of the Mother Archetype

Rowling reports to have also written the first novel while experiencing the heavy personal loss of her mother to multiple sclerosis, which is why it "had changed a lot since my mother had died. Now, Harry's feelings about his dead parents had become much deeper, much more real..." (Section: Biography, 2008). Accordingly, she claims that her books are

“largely about death” and the overcoming of death (Greig, 2006), the “ultimate other of children's literature” (Johnston, 2009). It is, therefore, evident that Rowling's status as a single mother and her personal feelings of “orphanhood” significantly influenced the course of the Harry Potter series. Harry Potter is an orphan character belonging to the large literary body that originated in the oral tradition of storytelling and was later embraced by authors such as Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, Frank L. Baum, or Frances Hodgson Burnett. Nguyen argues that Harry's “loss” creates a “point of identification” for readers which leads them to identify with the wizarding community and its struggles (2011: 24). Yet, as opposed to authors who created orphaned heroes for the purpose of providing them with ample freedom to undergo their quest and find their place in the community (Martin, 2002), Rowling chooses to make the Potters an integral part of the story and weave their “traces” or “the past passage of living beings” (Ricoeur, qtd. in Zimmerman, 2009) into the plot.

2.1 The All-encompassing Mother's Sacrifice

Foremost, Lily Potter's sacrifice is what initiates the plot, defines the main characters and creates conflict. The moment in which Lily Potter protects her son from the Killing Curse which rebounds and destroys Voldemort instead, is the source of infinite protection and “old magic” (Rowling, 2000: 566), “Lily's ancient female magic preserved her son for future greatness even as it also damaged Voldemort by destroying his body – thus giving the world time to rest and recuperate in the endless war of good against evil” (Pharr, 2002: 55). However, it is also the moment in which Harry's “Otherness” by birth and fame becomes one of his chief features. According to Wandinger, the books are “suffused with the language of *sacrifice*” which intensifies as the series progresses (2010: 27-8). Therefore, Lily as “the loving mother” (Jung 1938/1954) conditions Harry Potter to decide giving his life for others in a manner of “post-Biblical, Christian, sacrifice in an exemplary way” (Wandinger, 2010: 39-40) in the final book of the series. As Dumbledore notes:

Your mother died to save you. If there is one thing Voldemort cannot understand, it is love. He didn't realise that love as powerful as your mother's for you leaves its own mark. Not a scar, no visible sign... to have been loved so deeply, even though the person who loved us is gone, will give us some protection for ever. It is in your very skin...”
 (Rowling, 1997: 216)

This notion is what creates the point of distinction between the protagonist and the antagonist. Even though it is evident that Harry Potter and Lord Voldemort, both orphans, share several connections, such as the Killing Curse scar on Harry's forehead, wands made out of the same phoenix tale, or the ability to speak Parseltongue, Tom Marvolo Riddle is a “product of coerced and loveless union” (Rowling Web Chat, qtd. in Croft 157-8) whose mother tricked his father into marrying her by giving him a love potion and later, after she was abandoned, died of despair. Accordingly, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2005) explores Voldemort's past and the household “of the utmost barbarism, stupidity, social neglect, and racist arrogance...” (Wandinger, 2010: 42). Therefore, Voldemort as a product of “the terrible mother” (Jung, 1938/1954) is “terrifying and inescapable like fate” (139), focused on violent and loveless deeds, mostly due to his rejection of his past, as well as “familial and institutional intimacy” (Nguyen 2011: 23). Finally, Voldemort represents what Ursula Le Guin speaks of in “The Child and the Shadow” (1975), namely one's less agreeable aspect of personality that must be confronted and accepted:

The shadow is the other side of our psyche, the dark brother of the conscious mind. It is Cain, Caliban, Frankenstein's monster, Mr. Hyde. It is Vergil, who guided Dante through hell, Gilgamesh's friend Enkidu, Frodo's enemy Gollum... The shadow stands on the threshold between the conscious and the unconscious mind, and we meet it in our dreams, as sister, brother, beast, monster, enemy, guide. It is all we don't want to, can't, admit into our conscious self, all the qualities and tendencies within us which have been repressed, denied, or not used...

(qtd. in Cockrell, 2002: 20)

This notion is also evident in the fact that during the course of the series Lord Voldemort inadvertently becomes a “trace of her [Lily's] love” and Harry Potter is revealed to be a Horcrux or one part of Voldemort's split soul and must deliberately let himself be destroyed (Zimmerman, 2009). Due to their fated connection, Harry Potter as a hero also has the advantage of the insight of the secrets of his shadow, and, in the words of Joseph Campbell, gathers specialised knowledge of his nemesis by “reappearing from the darkness that is the source of the shapes of the day, bring[ing] a knowledge of the secret of the tyrant's doom” (qtd. in Pond, 2010). It is, thus, the power of the mother's sacrifice that creates the distinction between the hero and the villain, the characters' choices, and consequently death and survival.

2.2 Institution of Devotion and Awe

Equally, the setting in which all the prominent wizarding characters, creatures and objects reside, and significant events take place is the mother-symbol, the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Accordingly, Trites views Hogwarts as “an institutional setting of socialisation that teaches the protagonist both his abilities and limitations” and “simultaneously increases and decreases adolescents' sense of their own power” (qtd. in Cantrell, 2011: 196). Hogwarts stands for the extraordinary, arouses what Jung terms “devotion and feelings of awe” and “calls attention to the awe and wonder of ordinary life” (Natov, 2001: 315). It is “perched atop a high mountain... its windows sparkling in the starry sky,” a “vast castle with many turrets and towers” (Rowling, 1997: 83) in which owls deliver mail, subjects such as Potions, Defense Against the Dark Arts, Herbology or Transfiguration are part of the curriculum, portraits speak, and secret passageways and chambers are continually discovered. As the headmaster Albus Dumbledore himself admits, “Oh, I would never dream of assuming I know all of Hogwarts' secrets...” (Rowling, 2000: 363). Therefore, Hogwarts is also a space of mystery and ambiguity or, as Natov claims, “a liminal space that tests the mettle of the child hero [...]” (2001: 318). Moreover, in “‘Same-as-Difference’: Narrative Transformations and Intersecting Cultures in Harry Potter” (2005) Behr defines our own mundane “Muggle” world as the “Signifier,” defined by Lacan as apparent, controlling and connected to word or language, whereas the world of wizards bears similarities to Lacan's “signified” (concept) and is perceived by Muggles only partially, if at all (122). However, even though seemingly only a mirror of the “real” world, wizards live in a world that is in fact more concrete, which is in accord with Julia Kristeva's theory of the “semiotic,” or the very real pre-Oedipal stage of identification with the mother before the acquisition of language (Taylor, 2006). Thus, Muggle photographs, the “Signifier”, capture only a moment in time, as opposed to the wizard ones that move and interact, the memories of wizards are tangible and can be captured in vessels, such as the Pensieve, or a book, like Tom Riddle's diary. Likewise, dreams and desires can be materialised in the Mirror of Erised. Containing both the righteous

and nurturing aspects of wizardry, as well as those mysterious, poisonous and destructive, Hogwarts is “the first and the best home he [Harry Potter] had ever known” (Rowling, 2007: 558).

2.2.1 Magical Objects and Places

Due to its historical and cultural significance, as well as transformational qualities, Hogwarts houses almost an infinite number of mother-symbols. Note the description of Hagrid's hut:

Hagrid lived in a small wooden house on the edge of *the Forbidden Forest*. A crossbow and a pair of galoshes were outside the front door. When Harry knocked they heard a frantic scrabbling from inside and several *booming barks*. There was only *one room inside*. *Hams and pheasants* were hanging from the ceiling, a *copper kettle* was boiling on the open fire and in a corner stood a massive bed with patchwork quilt over it.

(Rowling, 1997: 104)

Similarly, on his “quest” for identity and empowerment, Harry Potter encounters a number of magical objects and spaces, one of them being the Mirror of Erised in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Because of its shape and content (uterus/mandala), the mirror is strongly associated with the feminine. In accord with the inscription which reads, “*Erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi*,” the mirror shows “nothing more or less than the deepest, most desperate desire of our hearts” (157), which in Harry Potter's case constitutes the first vision of his family, with his mother the central figure in the reflection, causing him to feel a “powerful kind of ache inside him, half joy, half terrible sadness” (153). However, the mirror gives “neither knowledge or truth,” (157) and though it enables Harry to acquire the Philosopher's Stone, it also gives him terrible nightmares, demonstrating the ambiguity of the mother archetype. Likewise, the Pensieve introduced in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2000) is a “vessel” that holds people's thoughts and memories. Therefore, by entering the substance that is “like light made liquid – or like wind made solid” (507), Harry Potter is allowed direct access into the history of his family and made aware of both their qualities and flaws, but also given knowledge of Voldemort's development, as well as the truth requiring his own sacrifice in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007). Additionally, chambers, such as the Room of Requirement, which is sometimes “there, sometimes, it is not, but when it appears, it is always equipped for the seeker's needs” (Rowling, 2003: 343) offer the potential for both refuge and doom. The Room, which has the function of Dumbledore's temporary bathroom, the secret hiding place of Dumbledore's Army, but also the vault for Voldemort's Horcrux diadem, reflects the dual nature of the mother archetype, evident throughout the novels. As Cantrell notes, “as a multivalent any-space-whatever, the Room is safe and dangerous, invisible and permeable, as open to evil intentions as it is to good ones” (2011: 206). Finally, the “hollow objects” as the symbols of “the terrible mother” are Voldemort's Horcruxes or objects containing parts of his soul, revealed in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2005) as Tom Riddle's diary, the Ring of Peverell, Slytherin's locket, Hufflepuff's cup, and Ravenclaw's tiara, all of which are destroyed chiefly due to the knowledge gained from the Pensieve. Thus, the magical objects and places as mother-symbols reflect the ambiguity of the mother archetype pertaining to knowledge and insight.

2.2.2 Animals

Likewise, the appearance of numerous animals throughout the series suggests the presence of the mother archetype, as, for example, the slain unicorn in the *Philosopher's Stone* which represents the mother's sacrifice. Those are "helpful animals" such as Fawkes, Dumbledore's phoenix in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998), or the Hippogriff Buckbeak in the *Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999), but also Animagi, or wizards who can take shape of an animal, such as Minerva McGonagall who appears at the very beginning of the series as "a cat reading a map" (Rowling, 1997: 8) or Sirius Black who can transform into a black dog (Rowling, 1999: 365). Another aspect of the motherly force in the shape of an animal is the Patronus Charm (*Expecto Patronum*), which is "a kind of a positive force, a projection of the very thing that the Dementor feeds upon – hope, happiness, the desire to survive – but it cannot feel despair, so the Dementors can't hurt it" (Rowling, 1999: 257). In other words, the Dementors feed on loss of hope and self, which Rowling herself reportedly experienced in the form of clinical depression in the period following her divorce and her mother's death ("Harry Potter's Magician", 2003). The Patronus, therefore, appears as a corporeal animal and is an outward representation of the emotional and the product of one's imagination (Zimmerman, 2009), which takes on the outward form of the Signifier and creates "the place of magic transformation and rebirth" in the domain of the mother archetype as the "outward manifestation of inner strength" (204). On the other hand, Voldemort's association with "the terrible mother" is revealed in his snake-like appearance, his face "chalk white with glaring red eyes and slits for nostrils, like a snake" (Rowling, 1997: 212) and his pet and Horcrux, the snake Nagini, both created as the result of his fear of death. Once more ambiguous, the mother-symbol of the animal suggests the desire to heal and sustain life.

Though "orphanhood" and "Otherness" define Harry Potter as a character, Hogwarts is a constant source of familiarity and support of his absent family through memories and images in the Mirror of Erised, through the Patronus he conjures, Snape's memories in the Pensieve, and Hogwart's records. However, the school's greatest lesson, according to Pharr, is that good and evil indeed exist "with choice the thin but crucial wall between them, and power the charm that can make that fragile barrier disappear" (2002: 63). Not surprisingly, this is also one of the chief features of the mother archetype.

2.3 Linguistic Prowess

According to Natov, in the Harry Potter novels the words "Expecto Patronum" ("I await a protector") produce a corporeal shape containing "the narrative of Everychild – the right to knowledge and expression of self" (2001: 321). In many ways Rowling's style reflects the connection to the motherly aspects of language. Accordingly, Rowling plays with language postmodernly and intertextually, separates different aspects of language, its meaning, sound and form. Her divergent thinking produces deviation from the norm, both social and linguistic (Ensinger 55-6), perceivable in the existence of Bertie Bott's Every-Flavour Beans with flavours such as toast, coconut, pepper, spinach, sardine, ear wax or "a vomit-flavoured one" (Rowling, 1997: 217), ghosts that were not properly beheaded, such as Nearly Headless Nick, books such as *Curses and Counter-Curses (Bewitch your Friends and Befuddle your Enemies with the Latest Revenges: Hair Loss, Jelly-Legs, Tongue-Tying and much, much more)* by Professor Vindictus Viridian (62), or "shops selling robes, shops selling telescopes and strange silver instruments Harry had never seen before, windows stacked with barrels of bat spleens and eels' eyes, tottering piles of spell books, quills and rolls of parchment, potion bottles, globes of the moon..." (56). Furthermore, Rowling transforms

language by using words and roots of words, including those from foreign languages, when devising names for spells, such as *Expecto Patronum*, *Accio*, *Imperio*, *Expelliarmus*, *Engorgio*, or *Riddikulus* (Lacoss, 2002). For example, *Alohomora* or the Unlocking Charm is said to have derived from the West African word meaning “friendly to thieves” (“First Day of JKR/WB vs RDR Books Trial”, 2008). Names, too, reveal meanings as is the case with Argus Filch, who carries the name of the guardian in Greek mythology, the Malfoys' name which means “bad faith” (Draco—“dragon,” Lucius—“Lucifer”), the names of Crabbe and Goyle which bear resemblance to crabs and gargoyles, Remus Lupin, whose lupine nature is reflected in his name in two ways (Lupin—“lupine,” Remus - brother of Romulus, who suckled on she-wolf) (Cockrell, 2002), or Voldemort, meaning appropriately “a flight from death.” Rowling revels in word play, using puns such as “How did you get here?” Harry asked, looking for another boat. ‘Flew,’ said Hagrid. ‘Flew?’” (Rowling 1997: 50-1), sound patterns as alliteration in Godric Gryffindor, Helga Hufflepuff, Rowena Ravenclaw, Salazar Slytherin or “Mimbulus Mimbletonia” (Rowling, 2003: 340). Moore points out that the initial letters in names also bear significance, e.g. the s's are sneaky (Snape, Severus, Sirius, Slytherin), h's heroic (Hermione, Hogwarts, Hedwig, Hagrid), f's unpleasant (Filch, Flitwick), and French-sounding names represent difficult people (Madam Pomfrey, Malfoy, etc.) (qtd. in Natov, 2001). In addition to using anagrams (e.g. Tom Marvolo Riddle = I AM VOLDEMORT; Rowling, 1998: 337), mirror writing on the Mirror of Erised, and prosody in songs, J. K. Rowling also uses much nonsense to produce a humorous effect, as is the case in Dumbledore's opening address to the students at Hogwarts, “Welcome to a new year at Hogwarts! Before we begin our banquet, I would like to say a few words. And here they are: Nitwit! Blubber! Odment! Tweak!” (Rowling, 1997: 91-2). As mentioned before, Dumbledore in his wisdom is the “perpetrator” of nonsense who claims to see himself “holding a pair of thick, woolen socks” when he looks into the Mirror of Erised (157), provides various types of advice which seem at odds with common sense and speaks “Mermish, Gobbledygook and Parseltongue” (Webchat with J. K. Rowling, 2007).

Much like the depiction of the wizarding world versus the Muggle world, the wizarding terminology offers up the possibility of the dissolution of language. According to Kristeva, the “semiotic” (*le semiotique*) aspect of the language is the one connected to the maternal body (Morgenstern, 2000: 115) and it encompasses “the voice as rhythm and timbre, the body as movement, gesture and rhythm; prosody, even word-play, and especially laughter...” This energy is repressed by the symbolic, or the realm of language. Therefore, Lechte's theory of “the poetic” emphasises the relationship of the “symbolic” and “semiotic” which leads to “making and breaking of discourse,” in other words, “the tendency of the semiotic (rhythm, timbre, prosody, word-play, laughter) is to constantly seek to dissolve the sign back into the body and thus alert us to 'the material basis of the symbolic,' the symbolic counteracts to shore up the ruins” (115). Though J. K. Rowling obviously respects the rules of the “symbolic” or the Law of the Father pertaining to language, it is the “semiotic” or the motherly aspect of language that shapes the identity of the Harry Potter series. The use of such language, among other neologisms and portmanteau words such as “Muggle” or “Quidditch,” has drawn readers into the vicariously lived adventure of the young wizard. Therefore, aside from the analysis of children's Internet comments which revealed that majority of children wanted to attend Hogwarts at the boarding school age (Desmond, 2001), reports were also made by *The Wall Street Journal* and *Newsweek* of “Potterisms” frequently used in the workplace (Lacoss, 2002). Natov recognises that “words themselves suggest the magical power of language to mean, as well as to evoke and connote” (2001: 315). In this way Rowling's motherly aspect of discourse is the foundation for the world of wizardry which is eagerly relived by the reader.

Many examples in the Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling point to the fact that several aspects of motherly features affect the main elements of fiction. Rowling, both from the perspective of the mother and the child who experienced the loss of mother, depicts the aspect of motherly behaviour in terms of sacrifice and self-confrontation. Secondly, there is the aspect of motherly perception and its ambiguity pertaining to sharing of knowledge and insight, as well as the desire to heal and sustain life. Finally, there is the motherly aspect of transformation, both social and linguistic, which allows for the dissolution of meaning, sound and form, as well as the creation of new concepts and terminology, reflecting the tension between the “symbolic” (language) and the “semiotic” (prosody, sound, word play). The deviation from the norm created through the existence of the wizarding world, its “loss” and “Otherness,” create a place of refuge for a reader facing obstacles in an unjust world. Dr. Seuss, the number one American children's writer, often said that his mother was responsible “for the rhythms in which I write and the urgency with which I do it” (Morgan, 1995: 7). Such is also the case with Rowling who creates the symbolic narrative of the mother, written in the language of the mother and revealing the dual nature of the mother. For language might be in the domain of the father, but creative language and the story most certainly begin with the mother.

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And yes, thank you J. K. Rowling!

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Harry Potter and the Unsettling Subalterns

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Abstract

On his first visit to the Ministry of Magic, the locus of power in the wizarding world, Harry Potter sees a golden statue showing a centaur, a goblin and a house-elf “looking adoringly up” at a beautiful witch and a noble-looking wizard (Rowling, 2003:117). Critics have suggested that the statue makes visible the embedded power relations that, despite the best efforts of Hermione, are rarely challenged by the narrative thrust of the series. In this paper, however, it will be argued that Firenze, the centaur, Griphook, the goblin, and Dobby, the house-elf should rather be seen to function within a complex dialectic of appropriation and resistance that mirrors enduring patterns of colonial and postcolonial interaction. Similarly, it will be suggested that the uneasy positions occupied by these characters may correspond in some ways to that of Gayatri Spivak’s (1992) ‘subaltern’, a colonial subject constructed both by European discourse and his or her internalization of that discourse.

However, given that critics like Bhabha (1994) have complicated our understanding of the colonial paradigm by pointing out that such subalterns may serve as agents of resistance against rather than of compliance with the very discourse defining their subordination so that mimicry is defined by him as “at once both resemblance and menace” (1994:86), an attempt will also be made to establish to what extent the various characters listed in the previous paragraph are positioned by Rowling to either collude with or subvert their own subordination and to what extent interaction between Rowling’s young wizards and other wandless magical races can be seen to either explore or simply endorse conservative social mores.

On his first visit to the Ministry of Magic, the locus of power in the wizarding world, Harry Potter finds himself confronted by an ornate fountain:

A group of golden statues, larger than life-size, stood in the middle of a circular pool. Tallest of them all was a noble-looking wizard with his wand pointing straight up in the air. Grouped around him were a beautiful witch, a centaur, a goblin and a house-elf. The last three were all looking adoringly up at the witch and wizard. (J.K. Rowling, 2003:117)

Although Harry is too preoccupied with his impending disciplinary hearing to pay much attention to this symbolic structure, the sycophantic grouping nevertheless makes visible the embedded power relations that many critics feel underpin much of Rowling’s narrative. Farah Mendelsohn (2002:181), for instance, argues that “[t]he structure of J.K. Rowling’s books is predicated upon a status quo and a formal understanding of authority in which hierarchical structures are a given”. In this case the dominance of the witch and wizard is clearly established by their centrality, relative height and exaggerated good

looks. Even more significantly, the raised wands held by the human figures are not merely professional tools but visible indicators of imperial privilege since clause three of the Code of Wand Use categorically states: “*No non-human creature is permitted to carry or use a wand*” (Rowling, 2000:119). Although magic may be performed without wands, Griphook, the goblin, reveals that this restriction with all its dehumanizing implications is bitterly resented by many of those who are disadvantaged by it:

‘The right to carry a wand,’ said the goblin quietly, ‘has long been contested between wizards and goblins.’

‘Well, goblins can do magic without wands,’ said Ron.

‘That is immaterial! Wizards refuse to share the secrets of wandlore with other magical beings, they deny us the possibility of extending our powers! As the Dark Lord becomes ever more powerful, your race is still set more firmly above mine! Gringotts falls under wizarding rule, house-elves are slaughtered, and who amongst the wand-carriers protests?’
(Rowling, 2007:395)

Suman Gupta (2003:85) points out that Rowling’s series “plays deliberately and self-consciously with different worlds” including our own. Certainly, the subordination of wandless magical creatures such as centaurs, goblins and house-elves within Rowling’s magic world clearly evokes patterns of exploitation found in contemporary life. While the alien qualities of centaurs, goblins and house-elves are most obviously indicated by the equine lower bodies of the centaurs, the long fingers of the goblins and the bat-like ears, enormous eyes and diminutive size of the house-elves, they are also defined as other by more subtle and yet also more familiar markers of difference. While Firenze, the friendliest of the centaurs is dazzlingly blonde (Rowling, 1997:187), Ban, his antagonist is “black-haired and –bodied” as well as being much “wilder-looking” (Rowling, 1997:185); the centaurs’ chosen weapon is also the bow and their abduction of Dolores Umbridge (Rowling, 2003:666) is a clear demonstration of unleashed physical power, which deprives the witch both of her wand and for a considerable period, any power of speech (Rowling, 2003:748). Similarly, goblins, including Griphook, have swarthy faces and “dark, slanting eyes” (Rowling, 2000:387) that Jackie C. Horne (2010:81) finds suggestive of the ‘stereotype of the Jewish moneylender’ and Dobby, the house-elf, not only has “an ugly brown face” (Rowling, 1998:249) but also speaks in a way which Brychan Carey (2003:103) argues is strongly “reminiscent of 1930s and 40s Hollywood misconceptions of African-American dialects”. Given these indicators of racial profiling, it is difficult to argue that characters such as Firenze, Griphook and Dobby do not function within a complex dialectic of appropriation and resistance that mirrors enduring patterns of colonial and postcolonial interaction.

Effectively then, it is possible to argue that Rowling’s wizarding world positions all non-human magical beings as ‘subalterns’, a term first used by Gayatri Spivak (1992) to designate a colonial subject constructed both by a dominant discourse and his or her internalization of that discourse. Even some of the characters themselves show an awareness of this; Hermione Granger describes the house-elves as ‘slave labour’

(Rowling, 2000:162) and contemptuously dismisses Ron Weasley's claim that servility is natural to these creatures by arguing that it is people like Ron "who prop up rotten and unjust systems" because they are simply too lazy to question social assumptions (Rowling, 2000:112).

Many critics would agree, differing only in whether, like Carey (2003), they feel Rowling encourages her readers to resist such entrenched ideologies of difference or whether, like Mendelsohn (2002) or Jackie C. Horne (2010), they feel Rowling's work entrenches, in varying degrees, both hierarchy and prejudice. However, such approaches to the power relations described in the novels are necessarily simplistic in that they locate responsibility for both oppression and liberation solely in the hands of the dominant human witches and wizards thus overlooking the fact that critics like Homi Bhabha (1994) have complicated our understanding of the colonial paradigm by suggesting that subalterns should not be denied agency and read only as victims, but instead recognized as potential agents of resistance against rather than of compliance with the very discourse defining their subordination since, as Bhabha (1994:86) puts it, the colonial subject's mimicry of imperial norms constitutes "at once both resemblance and menace".

A clear illustration of this apparently paradoxical claim can be found in the presentation of Rubeus Hagrid, the half-giant Hogwarts' gamekeeper. Like the other subordinate magical beings previously identified, Hagrid is easily physically distinguished from the dominant witches and wizards, not only by his enormous size but also by his dark colouring and wild appearance. When Harry first meets him, he is described as a "giant of a man" whose face is almost completely hidden by "a long, shaggy mane of hair and a wild, tangled beard" beneath which his eyes glint "like black beetles" (Rowling, 1997:39). Despite an early attempt to integrate Hagrid into the wizarding world, his recalcitrant otherness has led to his expulsion from Hogwarts, the significance of which is highlighted by what is presented as having been the almost metonymic destruction of his wand. In discussing this humiliating experience, he recognizes the significance of it himself, saying simply, "They snapped me wand in half an' everything" (Rowling, 1997:48). Like the house-elves, Hagrid is also shown to be linguistically othered in that he speaks in an undefined parody of a rural working-class dialect. His flawed grammar is indicative of his low social status, which is further emphasized by his uncouth behaviour: he wipes his mouth with the back of his hand, belches in public, cooks and eats dishes that the children find utterly inedible and when moved by emotion, loudly blows his nose into a series of huge handkerchiefs.¹ Yet, Hagrid's otherness is also curiously empowering. Rather than ride a broom, he roars through the sky on an enormous motorbike and when he needs to cast a spell, he does so by waving a battered pink umbrella:

Hagrid seized his umbrella and whirled it over his head. 'NEVER -
' he thundered 'INSULT – ALBUS – DUMBLEDORE IN – FRONT – OF
– ME!'

¹ Julia Park (2003:185) observes that while upper class members of wizarding society rarely reveal any emotions other than "anger and smugness", Dobby and Hagrid regularly cry openly.

He brought the umbrella swishing down through the air to point at Dudley. There was a flash of violet light, a sound like a fire-cracker, a sharp squeal and next second, Dudley was dancing on the spot with his hands clasped over his fat bottom, howling in pain. When he turned his back on them, Harry saw a curly pig's tail poking through a hole in his trousers. (Rowling, 1997, 46-48).

By punishing Dudley in this way, Hagrid comically parodies wizard behaviour, but also subtly undermines the reverence for wands and broomsticks shown by the society from which he has been excluded. Remembering Hagrid's adroit manipulation of this unlikely wand substitute, observant readers are likely to question wizarding superiority when they see wizards struggling to control damaged wands or ones which belong to others later in the series.

The subtlety of Bhabha's observation is also beautifully illustrated in the interaction between Harry and Griphook in which Harry is forced to recognize that the goblin's behaviour uncomfortably mirrors his own less desirable qualities. After having rescued Griphook from imprisonment by Voldemort's followers, Harry asks him for help in robbing a vault in Gringotts Wizarding Bank, which the goblin has earlier left because it is no longer under goblin control and his pride will allow him "to recognize no wizarding master" (Rowling, 2007:244). Harry, who by his own admission has paid little attention to Professor Binns's classes on the goblin rebellions of the eighteenth century which he found "as boring as Percy's cauldron bottom-report" (Rowling, 2000:342), is therefore unprepared for Griphook's initial antagonism. When the goblin finally agrees to help him, Harry is also taken aback when he makes his co-operation contingent on payment in the form of the sword of Godric Gryffindor (Rowling, 2007:408-409). Harry and Ron then reveal their own preconceptions about goblin cupidity by attempting to buy Griphook off with the balance of the treasure in the vault they intend to rob. The outraged goblin unexpectedly gains the moral high ground by saying that, unlike the boys, he has no interest in treasures to which he has no right. Harry and Ron are then reluctantly forced to agree to give him the sword once they have gained access to the vault. However, it is clear that neither boy really intends to honour the bargain since Ron suggests giving Griphook a fake sword and escaping before he realizes he has been tricked while Harry resorts uncomfortably to prevarication:

'He can have it ... after we've used it on all of the Horcruxes. I'll make sure he gets it then. I'll keep my word.'

'But that could be years!' said Hermione.

'I know that, but *he* needn't. I won't be lying ... really.'

Harry met her eyes with a mixture of defiance and shame.

(2007:411)

In his negotiations with Griphook, Harry is thus forced to encounter duplicity not as a sign of goblin otherness but as a repressed aspect of himself. This recognition of his own flaws may later make him more tolerant of Dumbledore's youthful flirtation with the

magical fascism of Grindelwald, but ironically, it also deprives him of any lingering illusions of wizarding moral superiority. The lesson is powerfully reinforced when Griphook takes advantage of the confusion caused by the magical proliferation of burning treasure within the Lestrange vault to claim his prize: “One hand holding tightly to a fistful of Harry’s hair to make sure that he didn’t fall into the heaving sea of burning gold, Griphook seized the hilt of the sword and swung it high out of Harry’s reach” (Rowling, 2007:436). As Harry finds himself used and abused as a means to the goblin’s desires, he also realizes that these actions uncomfortably shadow his own attempt to use the goblin as a means to an end and that the dishonesty he has perceived as uncharacteristic and forced on him only by extreme circumstances is seen by Griphook as entirely predictable: “[I]n that instant Harry knew that the goblin had never expected them to keep their word” (Rowling, 2007:436).

The disconcerting temporary alliance with Griphook also leads Harry to an awareness that his understanding of the magical world is necessarily partial in the sense of being both biased and incomplete. He has always seen the sword of Gryffindor as a great wizarding treasure, but Griphook insists that it was seized by Gryffindor from the goblin leader Ragnuk the First (Rowling, 2007:409). Bill Weasley also explains that “[t]o a goblin, the rightful and true master of any object is the maker, not the purchaser” (Rowling, 2007:418). Not only does this conversation have obvious relevance for debates in our world concerning the real ownership of objects currently on display in the museums of former colonial powers, but in his interactions with Griphook, Harry is forced to question his preconceptions and enter what Bhabha (1999:1) calls “a third space” that “is part of an unceasing process or movement that is at once in-between and beside the assumed ‘polarities’ of conflict, unsettling any essentialist or foundationalist claim to the ‘originary’ that they make”.

The employment of Firenze, the centaur, to teach divination at Hogwarts creates another of these illuminating interstitial spaces marked by containment within Hogwarts and yet difference from it. Firenze and his herd are confined to the Forbidden Forest by a ministerial decree which permits them “certain areas of land” (Rowling, 2003:665). Within these “reservations”, the centaurs maintain an illusion of independence. When Firenze agrees to work with Dumbledore against Voldemort, he is banished by his herd whose members see any collaboration with humans as an entry into “servitude” (Rowling, 2003:615). Yet, as his classroom reveals, Firenze makes few compromises with the wizarding world, which generally brings to work on magic the same Cartesian rationality more usually associated with scientific method. The desks and workbenches of Hogwarts resemble those of any conventional school, but Firenze’s domain is altogether different: “The classroom floor had become springily mossy and trees were growing out of it; their leafy branches fanned across the ceiling and windows so that the room was full of slanting shafts of soft, dappled green light” (Rowling, 2003:529). When the centaur dims the room/glade so that stars become visible on its ceiling, Parvati Patel eagerly begins to show off the astrological knowledge she has gained from her previous divination teacher, Sybill Trelawney. However, Firenze quickly challenges assumptions of wizarding superiority by dismissing this as “nonsense” and stating that Professor

Trelawney is a human and therefore “‘blinkered and fettered by the limitations of your kind’” (Rowling, 2003:531).

The undefined space in which the lesson takes place thus both recognizes and challenges the assumptions the young wizards and witches bring into it and within this liminal zone, Harry and his classmates find the space they need to gain new perspectives on centaurs, education and, most importantly, on themselves. Firenze, we are told, “was nothing like any human teacher Harry had ever had. His priority did not seem to be to teach them what he knew, but rather to impress upon them that nothing, not even centaurs’ knowledge was foolproof” (Rowling, 2003:532).

Unlike Harry’s relatively brief and contained encounters with Firenze and Griphook, interaction with Dobby and other house-elves is more sustained and more intricately woven into the structure of the Potter series. Disturbingly too, far from resenting their condition of perpetual servitude to wizarding families, most of the house-elves appear to relish it, a characteristic that, given contemporary attitudes to issues of slavery and personal freedom, has precipitated something of an ideological furor as critics have compared the elves to enslaved African-Americans (Mendelsohn, 2002; Ostry, 2003; and Carey, 2003), unliberated housewives within chauvinist societies (Kellner, 2010; and McDaniel, 2007) and even allegorical representations of the natural inequalities present in our world (Gupta, 2003). The fact that the house-elves can only be freed if they are given clothes is also seen by Mendelsohn (2002:181) as a method of denying agency to the oppressed while Julia Park (2003:185) argues that, in writing about the house-elves,

Rowling means to draw a parallel to slavery, but, once again, because she frequently uses the elves for comic effect, she spoils her effort at social commentary. There is nothing funny about slavery, and the author’s depiction of an enslaved class as something to entertain her readers is reprehensible. Her demeaning use of these characters ... betrays her middle-class, patronizing attitude toward all types of laborers, and specifically unpaid/ underpaid workers.

Anyone sharing such views is liable to feel outraged when Rowling turns Hermione’s efforts to raise awareness of these creatures into something of a joke, so that her Society for the Protection of Elvish Welfare comes to be known by the acronym S.P.E.W. (Rowling, 2000:224). This apparently dismissive levity seems so startlingly inappropriate that it almost forces instinctive agreement with Gupta (2003:120), who states unequivocally that Hermione’s outrage at the elves’ condition is completely understandable and the fact that “it is presented as an eccentricity and taken as an eccentricity by all around her ... shows that the Magic world is incomprehensibly irrational from any our world perspective”.

How then can one explain the fact that, as Horne (2010:88) points out , the idea that house-elves “want to be enslaved is one held not by the overt icon of evil, but by almost every adult the teens respect – explicitly by Fred and George and Hagrid; implicitly by

the Weasley parents, who silence Hermione's questions; and even by Dumbledore, who, though sympathetic to Dobby, does little as the leader of the institution of Hogwarts to change its reliance on uncompensated elf labour"? The problem of just how to interpret the role of the house-elves is so pervasive that even Jack Zipes (2001:183) finds himself asking in ironic exasperation whether Rowling can really be trying to show "that workers have such a low political consciousness that they will not listen to an enlightened leader like Hermione". Certainly, given Winky's obvious and very real unhappiness after she is forcibly freed by her master (Rowling, 2000:330), one cannot surely continue to believe that Rowling wishes her readers to endorse Hermione's efforts to trick elves into unwittingly freeing themselves by hiding knitted hats in little heaps of refuse (Rowling, 2003:230).

Might it not be possible that the very strength of the critical resistance to the idea that the house-elves, with one or two exceptions, generally value their traditional servitude may reflect the difficulty of relinquishing strongly-held cultural beliefs about what others *ought* to want? By taking on the responsibility for freeing house-elves regardless of the wishes of the elves themselves, Hermione is, in fact, assuming authority over them as surely as Slughorn does when he sets an elf to tasting all his drinks to ensure that none of them have been poisoned (Rowling, 2005:454).

Interestingly too, Dobby dies after disarming Narcissa Malfoy while asserting not his freedom to serve only himself, but rather his freedom to choose whom he wishes to serve:

‘You dirty little monkey!’ bawled Bellatrix. ‘How dare you take a
witch’s wand, how dare you defy your masters?’

‘Dobby has no master!’ squealed the elf. Dobby is a free elf and
Dobby has come to save Harry Potter and his friends!’ (Rowling,
2007:384)

Significantly, after his death, Harry refuses to use his wand to dig a grave for the elf. Instead he demands a spade and begins to dig “with a kind of fury, relishing the manual work, glorying in the non-magic of it, for every drop of his sweat and every blister felt like a gift to the elf who had saved their lives” (Rowling, 2007:387). By choosing to deprive himself of the wand that marks his privileged status, Harry enters into a curious freedom, and it is in this liberating third space that he conceives the beginning of the plan that will culminate in the defeat of Voldemort: “He looked down at his handiwork for a few more seconds, then walked away, his scar still prickling a little and his mind full of those things that had come to him in the grave, ideas that had taken shape in the darkness, ideas both fascinating and terrible” (Rowling, 2007: 389).

It is also worth noting that Ron, whose wizarding background ensures that he rarely questions the norms of his own society, silently picks up a spade and helps Harry in the final stages of their grim task and at the end of the series, it seems to be the memory of this moment that enables him to understand that he must learn to question neither the house-elves' servitude nor the pleasure they take in it, but simply his own ethical responsibilities within such a paradigm. When Harry wonders if they should “...get the

house-elves fighting””, Ron reflects on Dobby’s death while protecting him and replies simply, ““we can’t order them to die for us”” (Rowling, 2007:502).

It is possible to see in his words a regrettably paternalistic response to the relationship with the house-elves, but I would prefer to argue that in her presentation of magical subalterns, Rowling is primarily concerned with stressing the importance of continuously *listening* to others rather than simply assuming the right to speak on their behalf. It is only by silencing the hegemonic clamour of dominant codes that one can hope to access Bhabha’s third space from which the liminal negotiation of intersubjective and collective experience can begin since, as Bhabha (In Rutherford (ed.), 1990:210) himself states, “...no culture is full unto itself, ... not only because there are other cultures which contradict its authority, but also because its own symbol-forming activity, ... always underscores the claim to an originary, holistic, organic identity”.

Similarly, contemporary theorists of both reading and popular culture argue that an awareness of potentially totalising structures is not enough to explain the complexities of their reception. As John Fiske (1989:33) puts it in his analysis of art as a means of imposing values in *Understanding Popular Culture*, the critic also needs “an often contradictory, sometimes complementary, knowledge of the everyday practices by which subordinated groups negotiate these structures, oppose and challenge them, evade their control, exploit their weaknesses, trick them, turn them against themselves and their producers”. Thus, as Marlene Goldman (2007:810) puts it: ‘Contemporary ethical criticism is not simply concerned with our relationship to literature and to the good, but, more specifically, with our relationship to the other’. For this reason, Zahi Zalloua (2009:5) suggests that what is in contention in current debates about literature and ethics is nothing less than “the paradigmatic status of the face-to-face encounter as a fruitful model, or at the very least a source of inspiration for thinking differently”. Zalloua then draws on the work of Emmanuel Levinas (1969), Jacques Derrida (1993) and Derek Attridge (2004)² to suggest that

[a]nalogously related to the self’s exposure to the other, characterized in Levinasian terms by excess and opacity, the reader’s relation to the work takes the form of an interpellation. In the act of reading, the reader confronts a “double-bind”, a hermeneutic hesitation between two conflicting injunctions. The first is to thematize or make sense of the

² In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas (1969:50) locates what he calls the “ethical moment” in the face-to-face encounter with the other, an experience he sees as leading inevitably to cognitive frustration since the face of the other must always “exceed the idea of the other in me”. Crucially, such encounters therefore expose as illusory the autonomy and supposed self-sufficiency of the self. In responding to this, Derrida (1993) questions aspects of Levinas’s ethics of difference by insisting on the relationality of the other and pointing out that although it is true that there is always something surprising about the other, this is only so in relation to what we were expecting. Derrida therefore foregrounds the value of creative hesitation between the need to reject the other and the drive to assimilate it by translating it into the same. In applying these insights more directly to the experience of literary otherness, Attridge (2004:130) suggests that “[t]o find oneself reading an inventive work, is to find oneself subject to certain obligations – to respect its otherness, to respond to its singularity, to avoid reducing it to the familiar and the utilitarian even while attempting to comprehend by relating it to these”.

work's aesthetic otherness – that is, to adhere to the rules of literary discourse: to conform to the protocols of commentary in order to communicate the text's meaning to oneself and one's community of readers. The second, however, is to attend to the work's inventiveness – its seductive refractoriness – to recognise that the attempt to give meaning and the appeal to contextual markers (cultural, historical or authorial) might very well elucidate aspects of a literary work but can never exhaust that meaning nor fully meet nor answer its demands. (2009:5)

In a similar way, Attridge (2004:3) argues that “the experience of literary works consistently exceeds the limits of rational accounting”. Rather than seeing this as a restriction or flaw, however, he fiercely rejects instrumentalism or “the treating of a text ... as a means to a predetermined end” (2004:7) and instead stresses the productive nature of such transcendence. By doing so he hints at a new way of presenting the ethical dimension of reading by suggesting that words do not only mean but “show us what it is to mean” (2004:109). This “showing”, Attridge (2004:59) explains, “is experienced by the reader (who is, in the first instance, the writer reading or articulating the words as they emerge) as an event ... which opens new possibilities of meaning and feeling”. In this way Attridge (2004:125) reshapes the conventions of ethical criticism by suggesting that “[a] responsible response to an inventive work of art, science, or philosophy ... is one that bring it into being anew by allowing it ... to refigure the ways in which I, and my culture, think and feel”.

It seems then that contemporary ethical criticism endorses active interaction between reader and text in the belief that transformed and transformative meaning arises from creative negotiation between self and other. Given this, it becomes clear that the most ethical form of narration is no longer and perhaps never was that which unequivocally reinforces received values, whether conservative such as those of the wizarding world or liberal such as those espoused by Hermione, but is rather what Mikhail Bakhtin (1984:6) describes as “double-voiced discourse” or open-ended texts that privilege no single voice, offer no definitive interpretation, and provide no unequivocal answers for their readers. Bakhtin affirms that in such texts the author creates not “voiceless slaves... , but *free* people, capable of standing alongside their creator, capable of not agreeing with him and even of rebelling against him”. In ethical fiction of this kind, the text attempts to reflect on various ideological positions and not simply offer a single dominant one in an attempt to open up not the well-worn track pointing the way to social conformity but a ludic space facilitating exploration and negotiation and promoting Derrida's hesitant equilibrium between the familiar self and the unexpected other.

Bearing these insights in mind, it becomes clear that what Harry's unsettling encounters with Griphook, Firenze and Dobby eventually reveal is that it is only by opening themselves to difference and allowing narrative transformations of both themselves and others, that Rowling's characters and, through them, also her readers can, in Drew Chappell's (2008:292) terms, hope to “embrace qualities of postmodern childhood – ambiguity, complexity, agency, resistance – rather than accept binaries promoted and

constructed in traditional literature” and the unquestioned cultural assumptions on which such narratives are generally founded.

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Harry Potter and the Chamber of Commerce: J.K. Rowling's Pottermore.com as the extension of the Harry Potter brand in a digital context

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Abstract

With the launch of the website Pottermore.com, author J.K. Rowling has extended the Harry Potter brand into the digital realm. After seven books and eight films, the Potter saga continues with an online multimedia experience and ebook versions of the Harry Potter books. The site, which is free to join and use, opened for beta users in August 2011, and subsequently, following a number of postponements, was launched to the general public in March 2012. Pottermore serves three main functions: 1) A social network for fans and readers, 2) A platform for games, puzzles and additional content tied to the Harry Potter brand, and 3) An online store for ebooks and digital audiobooks.

This paper seeks to provide the background for Pottermore, identify the publishing strategy behind the digital launch, and discuss its implications for the book industry and the publishing supply chain. Focus is on the third main function of the site, i.e. the Pottermore Shop, the online store providing ebook versions of the Harry Potter books for the first time and on the specific kind of digital publishing that Pottermore represents. The study forms part of the author's PhD project on digital strategies and internationalization in the publishing industry.

1. Pottermore = More Potter

The Harry Potter book series is an outstanding publishing success story. The sales figures for the seven books on the wizard boy of Hogwarts have surpassed 450m copies¹, making it the all-time bestselling book series². But Harry Potter is more than a series of books; the brand also encompasses eight films, computer games, theme parks, miscellaneous merchandise and other related media content. The success has spiraled author Joanne Rowling from oblivion to stardom, making her a powerful figure in the publishing world. The Potter series is also a world-wide fan phenomenon and in several respects a cultural landmark. The book series ended with *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* in 2007, and in 2011 the final chapter of the film series was due to end. The evident question was: Will there be more Potter? The answer turned out to be Pottermore.

2. The Pottermore launch

¹ According to Neil Blair of Rowling's former agency The Christopher Little Agency, cf. <http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/wireStory?id=13292040>.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_best-selling_books#List_of_best-selling_book_series

In the summer of 2011, rumors began spreading of a website by the name of Pottermore.com, and anticipations arose that new content around the Harry Potter universe would be revealed. When the site itself appeared in June, it showcased nothing more than a few little pieces of information and a link to a Youtube video featuring J.K Rowling, author of the Harry Potter books.³ In the video Rowling says she wants to “give something back” and indicates that Pottermore will be “an online reading experience unlike any other”. She continues to state that:

The digital generation will be able to enjoy a safe, unique online reading experience built around the Harry Potter books. Pottermore will be the place where fans of any age can share, participate in and rediscover the stories. It will also be the exclusive place to purchase digital audiobooks, and, for the first time, ebooks of the Harry Potter series. I will be joining in too, because I will be sharing additional information I've been hoarding for years about the world of Harry Potter.

On July 31st 2011 Pottermore.com was launched. However, initially, access to Pottermore was restricted to one million users around the world. Early users had a function of beta testers, providing feedback via a ‘Beta feedback’ button on the Pottermore.com pages. To qualify for early access you had to register and subsequently find a “magical quill” through a number of steps including a Potter related riddle. Access to Pottermore was then granted to the lucky few in the period from end of July to mid-September. As stated by Rowling in the announcement video, full access to the public was intended from October 2011. However, due to technical issues with the site, the beta period was extended until March 2012 when the Pottermore Shop opened with ebooks and audiobooks; and finally, the full site was launched in April.

Initial reports on sales and visitors to Pottermore indicated a good start. Ebook sales were worth over £3m in the first month following the opening of the Pottermore Shop on March 27th, and 22 million visits from 7 million users generated more than 1 billion page generations.⁴ The sheer numbers are impressive, but then again, since Pottermore is a unique publishing venture, how do you compare?⁵

3. What is Pottermore?

Basically, Pottermore.com is a web site. It is the official portal or platform for the distribution of Harry Potter related content and provides a community for Potter fans and

³ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5DOKOt7ZF4>

⁴ <http://www.thebookseller.com/news/pottermore-e-book-store-sells-%C2%A33m-first-month.html>

⁵ Comparisons with other bestselling ebook titles like Jonathan Franzen’s *Freedom*, Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games* and E.L. James’ *Fifty Shades* trilogy are made harder because actual sales numbers are difficult to get hold of. Major retailers like Amazon (and Pottermore) prefer to release the numbers that look good, making comparisons subject to guesswork and rough estimates. Worldwide sales figures are even harder to come by than sales for each national market.

readers all over the world. It is available in five languages: English (UK and US), German, French Spanish and Italian.

The Pottermore Terms & Conditions (Section 2.1) gives a good description of the various aspects of the site:

Users can enjoy features based around the Harry Potter books, play Games (...) and take part in the Pottermore community by posting messages and uploading pictures inspired by the Harry Potter series. Users can share their activities on Pottermore.com with other registered users of Pottermore.com. Through the platform, it is intended that users of 18 years of age and above can also visit and register with the Pottermore Shop to purchase a variety of eBooks, digital audio books and other items, for themselves or as gifts for others.⁶

Pottermore is a free service. Visitors need to be registered, and can then enjoy background material and participate in wizard-like activities such as mixing potions, practicing spells and duel with other users. The user moves through the site in a structured manner following chapters in the book series (see fig. 1).



Fig 1. Screenshot from Pottermore.com showing the path users must follow

In the Pottermore Shop one can find ebooks and digital audiobooks of the entire Harry Potter series in English (UK and US), French, Spanish, Italian, German and Japanese. Ebooks are compatible with all major e-reading platforms, including the dominant Kindle reading device from Amazon.

In essence, Pottermore.com performs three main functions:

⁶ <http://www.pottermore.com/en/terms#about-pottermore>

1. Pottermore is intended to function as a social network and communication platform for fans and readers.
2. Pottermore offers interactive and multimedia experiences involving games, challenges and substantial amounts of additional content provided by the author.
3. Pottermore, through the Pottermore Shop, is an online retailing operation for digital media content and the only place to buy Harry Potter ebooks and digital audio books.

The third main function, the Pottermore Shop as a publishing, retail and distribution strategy, is foregrounded in this paper.

4. Who is behind Pottermore?

The site clearly states that J.K. Rowling herself is behind it, declaring in the banner “Pottermore – by J.K. Rowling”. A slim banner at the top of the site identifies Japanese games and consumer electronics giant Sony as the main collaborator for the project. Pottermore is owned by Pottermore Limited, founded by Rowling with Charlie Redmayne, former executive vice-president and chief digital officer at HarperCollins, as CEO, and listing among others, Rowling’s agent Neil Blair among the management team. The communications agency adam&eve was responsible for the launch strategy⁷, which also involved several Harry Potter fan sites (The Leaky Cauldron, MuggleNet and Harry Potter Automatic News Aggregator (HPANA)). Apparently, Rowling and her team also consulted with Melissa Anelli of the Leaky Cauldron in the development of Pottermore.⁸

The site is built by digital creative agency TH_NK. Rowling’s UK and US publishers Bloomsbury and Scholastic are cited as partners, but remain in the background. Warner Bros, who owns the film rights and manages the Harry Potter rights issues, are even more pushed aside, as are games producers Electronic Arts, who are behind the Harry Potter video games. The ebook vendor OverDrive provides the digital infrastructure for the Pottermore Shop, an area in which they are experienced given their role as the primary ebook lending collaborator for US & UK libraries.

Perhaps the most surprising thing revealed in relation to the Pottermore launch is that J.K. Rowling herself retained the digital rights for Harry Potter. This is an unusual practice in publishing and helped pave the way – by sheer fortune or shrewd business sense – for self-publishing of the Potter series. The ebooks are published by Pottermore Limited.

As a digital venture by a bestselling author, the Pottermore site is exceptional. By essentially sidestepping the middlemen, notably her publishers Bloomsbury and Scholastic, and the computer game and film series’ rights holders (EA and Warner Bros.), while simultaneously promising ebook access on all platforms, Rowling seems to demonstrate a rare form of control of the publishing supply chain. As such, Pottermore is a genuine innovation and has the potential to shake up the relationship between

⁷ http://press.pottermore.com/launch/pottermore_teambiographiesandcompanyprofiles_230611.pdf

⁸ <http://twitter.com/#!/melissaanelli/status/83973801603383297>

publishers, retailers, digital resellers and technology providers, authors, agents, readers and fans.

5. Pottermore as a publishing strategy

As the amount of books being published is increasing, the struggle for attention and recognition is also increasing (Squires 2009: 26, Thompson 2010: 11). Furthermore, books are competing for attention with other media formats like films, computer games, TV shows and a plethora of internet based formats. How do you stand out in this media saturated environment?

5.1 Branding and risk

From a marketing point of view, branding and brand management offers a solution. A key objective in brand management is to make your products or services stand out, and make sure that consumers maintain the right impression of the brand. In publishing, brands can take several forms: Pitsaki (2008) distinguishes between Corporate brands (Publishing houses), Product brands (The Series), The Person as brand (Authors) and The Work as brand (The Content). In the case at hand, both “Harry Potter” (The Series) and “J.K. Rowling” (The Author) are stronger brands than “Bloomsbury” or “Scholastic” (The Publishing houses), in the sense that they are more easily recognized and differentiated from other competing brands.⁹ The strength of the Harry Potter brand is that it combines marketing effects from the different forms (the author brand, the series brand, the work as brand).

Another value in brand management is that it can aid in avoiding extensive *publishing risk*. The trade book publishing industry is very much exposed to financial risk, in the sense that their business relies upon being able to tell what will be a bestseller (and how to create such a bestseller). In fact, one of the key functions of the publisher is to take on the (financial) risk of publishing a book, thus unburdening the author (Thompson 2010:19).

Thompson (2010) argues that publishers to a large extent are geared towards creating a few extreme bestsellers (rather than a large list of tolerably well-selling titles), what he calls “Big books” (Thompson 2010, see also Coser et.al 1982). The logics behind this system include hype, buzz and a “web of collective belief”: “Big books do not exist in and by themselves, they have to be *created*” (Thompson 2010:194, author’s italics). The track record and platform of a well-known author is a very valuable asset in this risk prone business. Brand-name authors and backlist “provide the counterweight (...) to offset the inherent riskiness of frontlist publishing” (Thompson 2010:212). Being able to

⁹ It is probably safe to say that this is characteristic of the world of book publishing in general: Very few publishing houses have a brand name that can compete with any of their most famous authors or with the titles of bestsellers in terms of recognizability. That is not to say that publishing houses do not have brands to manage and leverage. In fact, in some respects, publisher brands have a stronger impact than author names and book series’ titles, especially if you take the long term view.

rely on the strength of a configuration of brands, as in Rowling's Harry Potter series, is most valuable to publishers, as it eliminates some of the risks involved in taking content to market.

5.2 Protecting and controlling the brand

Pottermore can be seen as a way of enforcing control and protecting the Harry Potter brand. This exercise of control is not new to publishing in general or indeed to the print history of the Harry Potter book series. Rowling and her lawyers have diligently protected the brand through its publication history since 1997. This includes protection from premature Potter releases in bookstores; from unauthorized fan fiction; from parodies and pirate versions; and from commercialization of the brand by anyone but Rowling and her official partners (cf. Striphias 2009 and Jenkins 2006 for more on the management of the Potter brand and the so-called *Potter wars*).

While being truly exceptional as a digital publishing platform, Pottermore must be recognized as a logical continuation of the Potter brand management in the material book world. Following the argument of Ted Striphias in *The Late Age of Print* (2009), I consider Rowling's venture to be in line with the historical inclination to enforce control over distribution, production, contribution and commercialization of the Potter brand: “[B]ehind every celebratory Potter release there lies a logistical operation whose pace, intricacy, and tight controls were, until recently, quite alien to the book industry” (Striphias 2009:149). The Potter series has been managed quite expertly in terms of timing releases and feeding the eager fans just the right amount of material at the right time (see for instance Loidl in this volume).

The beta user strategy in one sense implies a new approach for Harry Potter launches, in that new content is not released synchronously to all users, as was the case with the books (from *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*) and the films. Releasing the service to beta users for testing and feedback also indicates that Rowling was willing to let go of complete control over the universe. However, by creating a division between early users and the common public, it contributes to the “manufactured conditions of scarcity” (Striphias 2009:145) that mark the book’s distribution. Beta users enjoy the benefit of exclusivity, while the general public must linger in anticipation of what Pottermore will contain. Of course, beta testing also allows fans to contribute with valuable feedback to the site (and as such, to the object of their fandom), and “help shape the experience”, as Rowling stated.

According to Striphias, the enforcement of control takes a different turn in a digital context:

If creating a reliable and efficient distribution apparatus counted among the book industry’s major problems in the first half of the twentieth century, then fine-tuning and securing that apparatus comprise two of the industry’s most pressing concerns today (Striphias 2009:149).

Pottermore can be seen as the digital response to these concerns. Issues like piracy and file sharing are obvious worries in the publishing industry at this point. Timing whether new titles are to be released simultaneously or consecutively is an example of the kind of decisions that have become more challenging with digital piracy. But there are also other challenges, related to the new digital channels for distribution and retail.

5.3 Digital retail

Publishers are concerned about the power of digital distributors/retailers such as Amazon, Apple and Barnes & Noble. These companies have gained an increasingly strong position in the world of books through their respective digital ecosystems. Amazon's Kindle is the dominating e-reading device and forms part of a locked-in system in which Amazon retains control over almost the entire value chain of publishing. Similarly, Apple's mobile multimedia platforms iPhone and iPad are more or less tied to the iTunes store (for music, video and other audio-visual media) and App Store (for software applications such as book apps tailored for the devices). Owners of Barnes & Nobles' popular Nook device are equally reliant on content from the B&N platform.

The primary obstacle is Digital Rights Management (DRM) on the ebooks which makes it near impossible for consumers to transfer content across the devices, even if it has been legally purchased. When Rowling actually manages to offer ebooks from the Pottermore Shop across all major devices, she has in a sense broken the proprietary system. A visitor to Amazon.com will find the Harry Potter ebooks on display, but will have to leave the site to purchase these books, a practice that is unprecedented and does not comply with the practices of the digital front-runners. As one observer put it: "[I]f any author could get Amazon to change its policy, it's J. K. Rowling".¹⁰

Rowling's partnership with Sony could also aid in repositioning the Japanese company as a player on the international ebook publishing scene. Sony's line of e-reading devices, the Sony Reader line, is among the longest-running in the young ebook publishing business. The first version was launched in 2006, but Sony has been lagging behind Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Kobo in the important English language markets. A new version the Sony Reader is supposed to come preloaded with the first book Harry Potter book, *The Sorcerer's Stone*. Along with the ebook versions in general, the Sony/Potter package has also been delayed.

6. Pottermore's impact on book industry power relations

The world of books is marked by an enormous stream of new titles; and characterized by creativity and innovations of the artistic kind. It is usually not the place for technological innovations, however. Until recently, book industry executives have been cautious to invest in technological inventions. But things have changed over the last years, especially following the launch of Amazon's Kindle e-reader and Apple's iPhone and iPad devices. The influx of technology companies into the book industry have forced and inspired traditional publishing actors to create new products, services and platforms. Digital

¹⁰ <http://paidcontent.org/article/419-three-ways-pottermore.com-could-change-book-publishing/>

formats provide ample opportunities for telling stories across different media, so-called transmedia storytelling (Jenkins 2006, cf. also Leogrande in this volume). Publishing companies, like other content providers grappling with digital challenges, also aim at synergies and economies of scale by creating multiple revenue streams based on the same content. Traditional media companies hope that this so-called COPE-strategy (Create Once, Publish Everywhere) can help them maintain a sustainable cross-platform business model (Bechmann 2012). Pottermore.com represents one such approach to digital publishing.

Evidently, it is early to predicate the exact implications of the Pottermore extension of the Harry Potter brand. We need to divide the issue into smaller parts, asking about impact on different levels and in different contexts. We shall disregard here issues of artistic impact and are forced to withhold evaluations of strictly financial impact, mostly because it is too soon. Instead we shall focus on implications on publishing business power relations, an aspect that can become quite interesting to see unfold. It involves a possible shake-up of the relationship between publishers, retailers, digital resellers and technology providers, authors, agents and readers.

6.1 Publishers and retailers

The Pottermore venture seems to sidestep both traditional publishers and retailers, and as such has managed to frustrate at least the latter party.¹¹ Although publishers Bloomsbury (UK) and Scholastic (US) are involved and will receive a cut of sales, the dominant partner is Sony. Even the digitally empowered Amazon and Apple are pushed aside by the magic wand. We have already touched upon how Rowling and especially Amazon are testing their strengths over Pottermore and are reminded that Rowling was second only to Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos in newspaper the Guardian's 2011 ranking of the most powerful figures in the world of books.¹² Given that Pottermore ebooks are actually available for all major reading devices, that means Rowling has found a way to circumvent the format "war" that marks digital publishing today, where the proposed industry standard Epub file format is pitted against Amazon's proprietary AZW format, and where DRM obstruct users from transferring files across reading platforms.¹³

As mentioned, with the Pottermore Shop, Rowling has managed to direct customers from Amazon.com (and other ebook vendors) to her own site. In doing, so, argues Matteo Berlucchi of book trade web site Futurebook.net,¹⁴ "Pottermore transformed Amazon

¹¹ See for instance: <http://www.thebookseller.com/news/physical-bookshops-frustrated-pottermore.html>

¹² <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/datablog/2011/sep/23/books-power-100-list>

¹³ Epub is recommended as the industry standard file format by International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF), a trade and standards association for the digital publishing industry. AZW is a proprietary format for ebooks used exclusively on Amazon's Kindle devices.

¹⁴ Berlucchi is CEO of social ebook retailer Anobii.

from a fierce ebook retailer into a tame ebook shop window”¹⁵. Fig. 3 illustrates how ebook buyers are redirected to the Pottermore.com site from Amazon.



Fig. 3: Screenshot of the page which appears when customers are redirected from Amazon.com to Pottermore.com

Control of the purchasing stage of the user journey means having access to end user details. This is a crucial element in digital retailing, because, as Berlucchi points out: “Who sells the ebook owns the relationship with the customer.”¹⁶ Rowling’s move thus “shifts the power from retailer to publisher”, with considerable benefits for the latter:

- they gain direct access to the user/reader for marketing purposes
- they have total and final control on the price of their ebooks
- this approach does not affect the retailers as they could still earn healthy ‘introduction fees’ and also retain data on the user
- the publisher controls how much they pay the retailer who has procured the customer
- they build a customer base
- they gather invaluable user data for statistics and future planning¹⁷

We should add that not only does Amazon lose the purchasing point of the user journey, but they also lose the advantage of tying customers to their own reading device, as Harry Potter ebook buyers can choose to access their books on several devices. Fig. 4 shows the availability of Harry Potter ebooks for various platforms and formats.

6.2 Film and games

Interestingly, the rights holder for the Harry Potter films and games, Warner Bros. and Electronic Arts, hold no stake in Pottermore. Both companies have huge amounts of experience with digital and audiovisual content, but they were sidelined for the Pottermore release. Reportedly, the UK visual design company Atomhawk created the digital artwork for Pottermore.com.

¹⁵ <http://futurebook.net/content/has-pottermore-cast-riddikulus-spell-amazon>

¹⁶ ibid

¹⁷ ibid

6.3 Agents

Furthermore, Rowling actually changed publishing agency in front of the digital launch. Rowling parted with longtime agent Christopher Little prior to the Pottermore launch and is now represented by Neil Blair, a former associate of the Little agency. Christopher Little had been Rowling's agent since 1996 and helped build the Harry Potter success story. It was also with his agency that the domain Pottermore.com was registered in June 2009. In any case, Blair's role in the development of Pottermore points to the fact that agents can perform vital tasks in the digital book ecosystem.

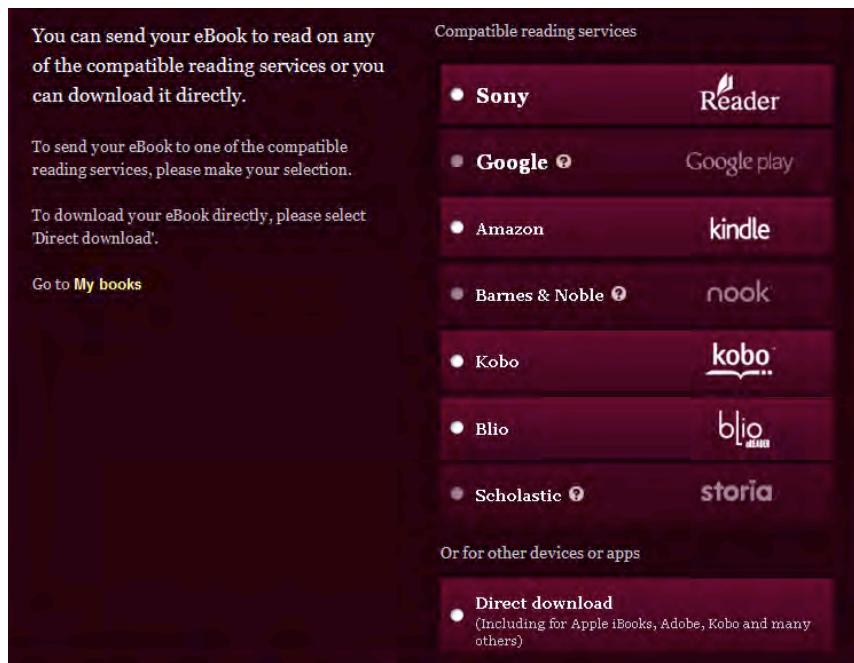


Figure 4: Screenshot of Pottermore Shop indicating the availability of ebooks for all major e-reading platforms

6.4 Fans and readers¹⁸

As for the fans and readers, they seem to be getting both more content on their hands and a platform from which to discuss Harry Potter, but perhaps at the expense of getting caught in a commercial web which is controlled by the rights holders, including the highly esteemed author herself. Potter fans have proven themselves to be a resourceful and creative team and have previously been in legal disputes with Rowling and her lawyers (Striphias 2009, Jenkins 2006). It remains to be seen how they will cope with the kind of assimilated social networking that Pottermore can offer. Harry Potter as a fan phenomenon is of a scale that can barely be controlled. This is indicated by the extreme amount of fan fiction devoted to the Potter universe, much of which is straying far away

¹⁸ Of course, the Harry Potter series started out as a children's book series, but as it has gradually transcended that segment and become a cross-over success for readers of all ages, I will not address the issue of marketing and creating services specifically for children.

from the mostly family-friendly official version. In fact, fans of Harry Potter have already launched a social network called MyHogwarts.com, a site which offers many of the same type of features that Pottermore offers, but which is run by fans alone (see also Jones in this volume).

6.5 Authors

Finally, we have the authors. The dominant stakeholder in Pottermore is the author herself, thus indicating that writers can take a prominent role in the digital supply chain. Rowling's initiative can be considered the most extravagant in a line of self-publishing ventures recently. With the ebook breakthrough in the US and UK publishing your work directly to the reader has become an increasingly viable option for authors. Amazon especially has paved the way for self-publishing a large scale with its Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP). Authors like Amanda Hocking, J.A. Konrath and John Locke have reached astonishing sales as KDP self-publishers. But J.K. Rowling is in a class of her own. Not only is Rowling a genuine star author, Pottermore also has the backing of Sony and is built upon a global brand and a very large and loyal fan following. Pottermore is self-publishing on steroids. And, needless to say, those steroids are not equally distributed among authors.

6.6 Disintermediation? Reintermediation!

Wired magazine has likened the Pottermore strategy to rock band Radiohead's self-release of the album *In Rainbows*, emphasizing what has been termed the disintermediation of middleman publishers.¹⁹ This begs two comments:

First, when considering the impact on publishing supply- and value chains and so-called *disintermediation* we should be aware that digitalization rarely means creating fewer links between artist and the public. Rather, the intermediaries have new names. They are now agents, digital resellers, aggregators, or multimedia developers. In the case of Pottermore, we find digital intermediaries such as Sony, TH_NK, OverDrive and the Blair agency. The term that has been launched to describe this phenomenon is "reintermediation" (Martin & Tian 2010:135). Fig. 5 illustrates the traditional supply chain for publishing, from author to reader via well-known intermediaries like publishers, printers and book stores.

¹⁹ <http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2011-06/23/pottermore-radiohead-publishing>

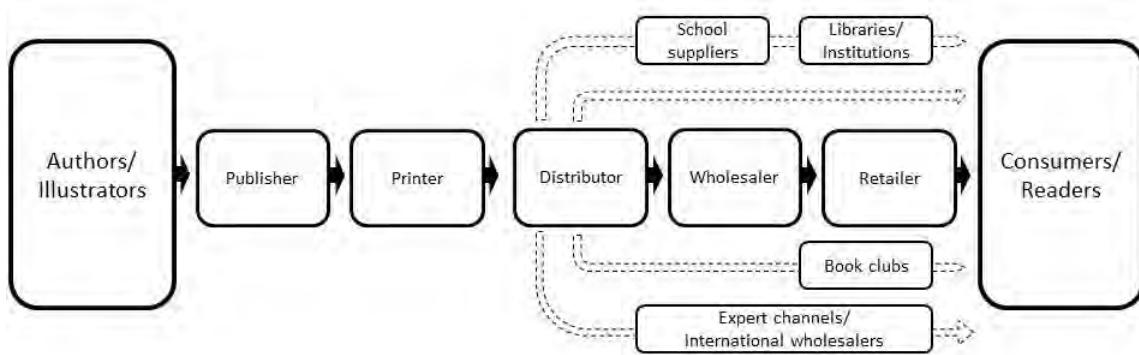


Fig. 5: A traditional supply chain for book publishing, from Martin & Tian (2010:134)

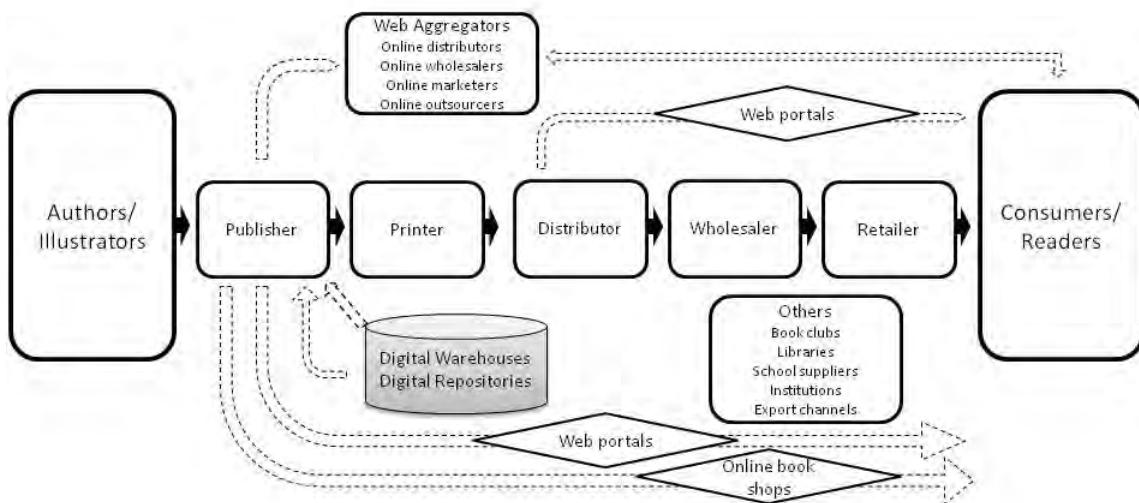


Fig. 6: A digital publishing supply chain, from Martin & Tian (2010:135)

Figure 6 demonstrate how the digital supply chain opens for direct publishing models (from author via web aggregators, portals or online book shops to readers). But the figure also shows how the digital supply chain introduces a number of new channels and intermediaries between author and reader.

Secondly, as Wired's analogy with one the biggest rock bands in the world indicates, this is not a strategy for everyone. Rowling herself is quite aware, as she stated in a press conference:

I am lucky to have the resources to do it myself and I think this is a fantastic and unique experience that I could afford to take my time over to make this come alive. There was really no way to do it for the fans or me than just do it myself. Not every author could do this, but it's right for Harry Potter.²⁰

²⁰ Press release quoted in <http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2011-06/23/pottermore-radiohead-publishing>

This aspect also leaves it somewhat difficult to make long term predictions on the book industry based on Pottermore. I hold that Pottermore provides more a powerful illustration than an example to be copied. As Striphias (2009) argues on the Potter phenomenon in general:

Harry Potter is (...) an exceptional case when it comes to the book industry's everyday operations. The series is a best seller's best seller, with unusually broad appeal, but its success – or, more precisely, the conditions surrounding its success – aren't yet applicable across the book industry as a whole (Striphias 2009:173).

What will prove interesting to see, is whether Rowling's initiative might be followed by similar attempts by other star authors. There are extremely few authors of her commercial caliber out there, but a scenario with other big name authors (e.g. James Patterson, Stephenie Meyer, Paulo Coelho) doing self-publishing on a grand scale is not unthinkable. That might have serious repercussions in an industry increasingly preoccupied with and centered on bestsellers and *big books*.

7. Conclusion

Pottermore provides an example that the power of the author and of popular fiction brands like Harry Potter can be transferred into the digital realm. Ultimately, the impact of Pottermore depends on the success of the platform in the long run and the successful delivery of services and products on all three main functions of the site. Many questions still remain unanswered at this point: Will casual readers find their way to Pottermore.com? Will fans favor the structured environment of the official fan site (the Chamber of Commerce) over established sites like Mugglenet.com or the fan initiated MyHogwarts.com? Will ebooks customers like having to deal with several digital shop windows? Can Rowling beat Amazon in a full scale power struggle? How will it affect the Harry Potter brand if Pottermore turns out to be unsuccessful in the long run? By launching Pottermore J.K. Rowling extended the Harry Potter brand into territories that are hard to control.

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Pottermore: Encouraging or Regulating Participatory Culture?

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Abstract

In June 2011, a website appeared containing J.K. Rowling's signature and the words '*Pottermore*: Coming Soon.' Revealed weeks before the release of the final film instalment, it provoked much speculation and gave fans hope that the series wouldn't end with the film. As new details came to light, *Pottermore* was revealed to be a free, collaborative website in which fans would be able to find extra-textual information on characters and places, upload artwork, be sorted into houses, buy ebooks and connect with the series on a much more interactive level. Yet not everyone is convinced. Lev Grossman notes 'Every time I see more of the Potterverse realized in other media [...] It takes away from the marvelous, handmade Potterverse I've got going on in my head and replaces it with something prefabricated.' Yet Henry Jenkins argues the opposite, suggesting that 'Those of us who are more enthusiastic about transmedia [...] see these materials as expanding our knowledge and deepening our experience of the story.' With such contradictory opinions on the role that *Pottermore* might play in shaping canon, fans' relationships with the text, and participatory culture itself, the site raises some very interesting questions.

Rowling has been surprisingly supportive of fan culture in the past, albeit on a selective basis: she is well known for her dislike of 'slash' stories, and has attempted to close down the Harry Potter Lexicon. This paper seeks to examine the impact that *Pottermore* may have on Harry Potter fandom by addressing existing notions of what participatory culture means, conducting an analysis of the site's content, and questioning fans on their fan activities on and outside of *Pottermore*. It asks the question of whether Rowling's 'collaborative' website will actually regulate the fandom, rather than encouraging a more participatory form of culture.

1. Introduction

In this paper I explore the role that *Pottermore* plays in shaping canon, fans' relationships with the text, and participatory culture. I argue that in certain, specific ways *Pottermore* does encourage participation amongst and between fans, but due to restrictions placed on the site's content, it regulates participatory culture in the *Harry Potter* fandom in other important ways. I begin this analysis by giving a background to *Pottermore* and exploring the notion of participatory culture before turning to an analysis of the site. I had planned to undertake interviews with *Harry Potter* fans to examine how they believe the site has affected their relationship with the source text and fandom but, due to the site's public launch being pushed back to April 2012, my call for interviewees had not yielded any responses by the time of writing.

In June 2011 a website appeared containing J.K. Rowling's signature and the words '*Pottermore*: Coming Soon.'



Fig 1. Pottermore website

Clues also began appearing on *Harry Potter* fan sites such as The Leaky Cauldron and MuggleNet. These clues took the form of geographical coordinates which, when entered into a site called Secret Street View, revealed hidden letters, spelling out the word 'Pottermore'.



Fig 2. Secret Street View website

Another advertising campaign, posted online and broadcast in Times Square, announced that 'the owls are gathering'. These animated owls turned out to be congregating on the branches of a special Pottermore channel on YouTube, on which, on 23rd June 2011, J.K. Rowling announced the launch of the Pottermore website.

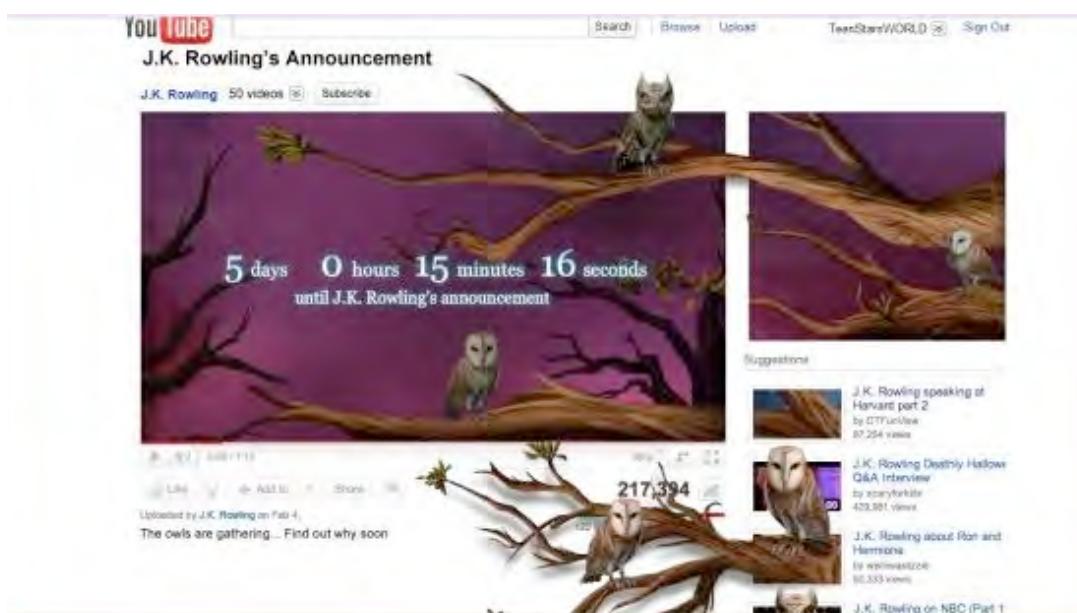


Fig 3. Pottermore YouTube channel

In her announcement, Rowling said that the site would include material on the wizarding world that she had ‘been hoarding for years’ as well as being a place for users to post their own interpretations of Harry and the books. Users of the site would also be able to interact with ‘key story moments,’ find extra-textual information on characters and places, upload artwork, be sorted into houses and buy ebooks. This announcement sparked much speculation, both by fans and scholars. Henry Jenkins suggested that Pottermore may be the most highly visible transmedia project to date, working on the levels of intertextuality and multimodality. Pottermore is able to shape the original text’s meaning by providing fans with additional information about the world of *Harry Potter*, such as Minerva McGonagall’s marriage to Elphinstone Urquart:

Known to successive generations of students as ‘Professor McGonagall,’ Minerva - always something of a feminist - announced that she would be keeping her own name upon marriage. Traditionalists sniffed - why was Minerva refusing to accept a pure-blood name, and keeping that of her Muggle father? (2011, online)

Jenkins suggests that we might think of this a ‘more interactive version of the kinds of “further stories” or notes on the mythology that J.R.R. Tolkien’s estate has been slowly feeding *Lord of the Rings* fans in the decades since the author’s death’ (2011, online). He also suggests that multimodality is represented by the interactive moments in the books which, in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, include a sorting hat process and Ollivander’s wand shop. These allow fans new ways of interacting with the story. Rather than simply being given new information about the texts, Pottermore users become a part of the text through their interaction with Ollivander and the sorting hat, allowing them, as Simon Pulman notes to ‘better integrate themselves into the fiction and find solidarity with other users’ (2011, online).

1.1 Defining Participatory Culture

For a fandom as active as that of *Harry Potter*, Pottermore raises some interesting questions, but before I reach these I want to examine what we mean when we say participatory culture. In his book, *Textual Poachers*, Jenkins describes participatory culture as activities that involve people enjoying, discussing, and reimagining a specific text. This 1992 study of *Star Trek* fans, undertaken before the internet was as commonly-used or as easily-accessible as it is now, examined fan clubs, zines and online mailing list discussion groups. With the advent of more sophisticated technology, however, participatory culture has become more accessible to all. In their 2009 report, *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture*, Jenkins et al. expanded upon his earlier definition to consider participatory culture as ‘a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing creations, and some type of informal mentorship’ (2009, p.xi). Mirko Schaefer, however, argues that in examining participatory culture we cannot consider user activity alone: we must also take into account the software and technology on which these activities take place, as well as the underlying power structures between user and corporation. He argues that what has been called participatory culture is actually a complex discourse consisting of the following factors:

- a. a rhetoric that advocates social progress through technological advancement
- b. a cultural critique demanding the reconfiguration of power relations
- c. the qualities of related technologies, and
- d. how these qualities are used for design and user appropriation
- e. the socio-political dynamics related to using the technologies (2011, p.14)

With regard to Pottermore then, I want to examine not only the way in which users of the site are able to interact with the text and each other, but the ways in which the power relations between Rowling, Sony and *Harry Potter* fans are configured.

2. Examining Pottermore

On Pottermore, readers work through each chapter chronologically before proceeding to the next. Each chapter contains ‘moments’ which can be explored by clicking on the Flash-based artwork and zooming in to examine the content in more detail. Within some of these moments are items which can be collected for later use (money, ingredients for spells, books) or which unlock new material from Rowling. Users are also able to ‘favourite’ and ‘like’ chapters, moments, places, characters and objects. In this paper I will be limiting my discussion to Chapters One, Five and Seven because these are among the most interactive elements of Pottermore and highlight the ways in which fans and the site interrelate.

2.1 Number Four, Privet Drive

The first moment in Chapter One is Number Four, Privet Drive. Users are presented with a tabby cat (recognisable as Professor McGonagall to fans) sitting under a street sign.



Fig 4. Number Four, Privet Drive

Double clicking on the image allows users to zoom in and pick out more details, such as the cloudy sky of the ‘dull, grey Thursday’ that Rowling describes in the book. To the top left of the screen is a pointer which, when selected, opens out to reveal information about the moment. A small sidebar contains information from the book itself, and the main screen provides fans with previously unreleased background information. In the case of Privet Drive, users are given Rowling’s thoughts on the name of the street and her experience of walking into the film set to find herself in an exact replica of her childhood home.

Fig 5. J.K. Rowling's Thoughts

Below this is a comments section, on which Pottermore users can leave comments about the moment, the chapter or the site itself. Comments left on Number Four, Privet Drive are a combination of fan reactions to the moment, Pottermore and the *Harry Potter* series as a whole. Users rarely seem to interact with each other on these comment sections but moments do allow for further user participation in the form of fan art. Users are given an option to upload their own artwork to the site using the ‘add a drawing’ button. Fans are able to browse their computer to select the relevant drawing which, subject to moderator approval, will then be displayed on the site. Drawings of Number Four, Privet Drive

range from an illustration of Harry's acceptance letter to detailed portraits of Daniel Radcliffe as Harry and fan messages to Rowling thanking her for the site. The quality of the artwork, as of much fan art, ranges from amateur to professional and its content and style reflects the ages, abilities and (some) interests of Pottermore users.

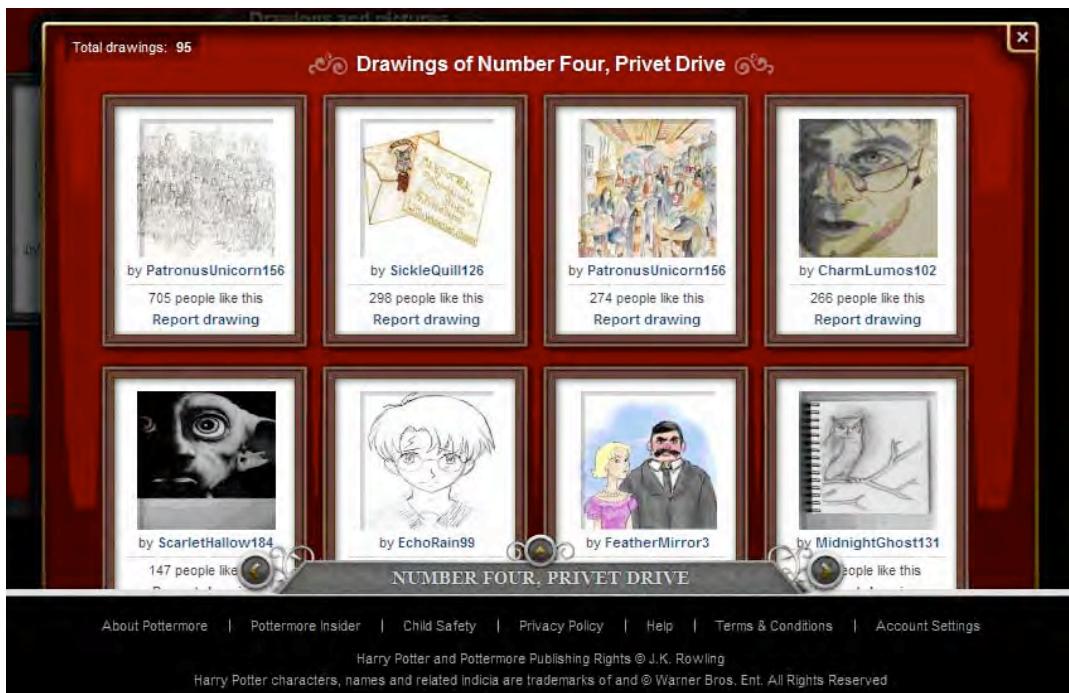


Fig 6. Fan art on Pottermore

Number Four, Privet Drive (and moments like it) is perhaps the best example of intertextuality on Pottermore. Users are privy to information on both the books and the films, and are given insight into why and how Rowling wrote. Fans have been, almost universally, thrilled to discover this extra information, as SeekerRose184, in her review of Pottermore, says:

I have to mention Jo's new insights about different characters and objects that you'll find in many chapters throughout the tour. I liked reading them all, especially the back-story of McGonagall and how Petunia met Vernon. Also liked reading my Common Room welcome message of Hufflepuff House! And all the new information about wand woods and their properties. I really wish there was even more info though. (2011, online)

These extra-textual notes, however, bring with them complications in the relationship that fans have with the canon text. Henry Jenkins argues that 'Those of us who are more enthusiastic about transmedia [...] see these materials as expanding our knowledge and deepening our experience of the story' (2011, online) but Lev Grossman (and other *Harry Potter* fans) suggests the opposite: 'Every time I see more of the Potterverse realized in other media [...] It takes away from the marvellous, handmade Potterverse I've got going on in my head and replaces it with something refabricated' (2011, online).

2.2 Ollivander's

As users progress through the site they undertake the same journey as Harry, discovering the cupboard under the stairs, meeting Hagrid, and receiving a Hogwarts acceptance letter. Ollivander's, at which users are able to choose their wand, is the last moment of Chapter Five. This chapter provides fans with a wealth of information and interactions with the site: school books, from the list provided in Harry's acceptance letter, can be bought from Flourish and Botts'; cauldrons from Potage's Cauldron Shop; spell ingredients from the Apothecary; equipment from Wiseacre's Wizarding Equipment; and pets from Eeyelops' Owl Emporium and Magical Menagerie.



Fig 7. Diagon Alley

While some of these items are essential for students at Hogwarts (such as the pewter cauldron size 2), others can be chosen by users themselves, allowing fans a much more immersive experience as Alaa Jasim notes:

So, first things first, I had to buy all my wizard supplies – books, wand, that sort of thing. You can even pick an owl, cat or toad to take with you to Hogwarts! Being a bit of a *Harry Potter* nerd means that this was rather exciting for me. (2011, online)

It is, however, the moment in which users receive their wands which is perhaps the first exciting section of the site. Andrew Sims, in his *Hypable* review of Pottermore, suggests that two of the outstanding features of the site are the wand selection and the sorting process, but noted that he clicked through the first few chapters without reading anything in order to reach these moments. I would contend that most Potter fans, who have grown up with the series and already know what houses they wish to be in and what wands they would like, did the same.

In order to be chosen by a wand, users must answer six questions devised by Rowling and with three wand cores, thirty-eight wood types and a variety of lengths and flexibilities to choose from, users can be fairly certain they will be receiving a reasonably unique wand.

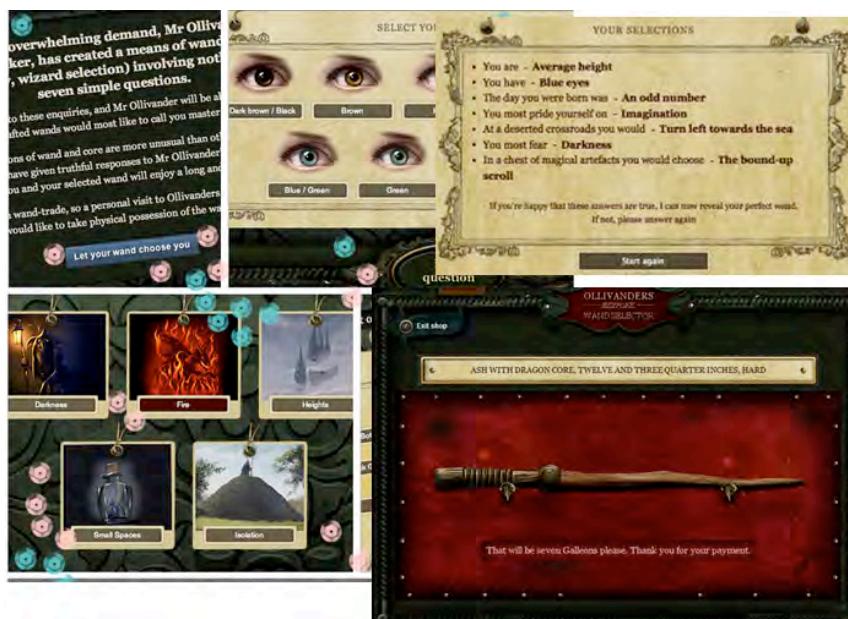


Fig 8. The wand process

Much like the other key moments on the site, Rowling has provided a great deal of information on wands and what each core and wood means. Drawing on Celtic and Greek mythology to explain the properties of different kinds of trees, and including ‘notes’ from Ollivander on the process of wandmaking, Pottermore provides much more detail than was previously contained in the books. With this additional knowledge fans are able to not only examine their wands in more detail, but to analyse the wands of characters in the series. Draco, for example, owns a wand made of hawthorn wood which is ‘adept at curses, and [...] seems most at home with a conflicted nature, or with a witch or wizard passing through a period of turmoil’ (2011, online). An apt description of the character, as many fans would attest.

Of course, some fans were disappointed with the wand that they received, as LeviosaVine180 noted on Pottermore: ‘My wand’s brittle, and that’s a bit shocking to me. I always imagined myself to be a swishy/ springy wand person’ (2011, online). But the majority of comments on the moment and reviews elsewhere were favourable, as Andrew, a teacher from northwest Minnesota, notes:

I had always envisioned myself having a Willow wand with Unicorn hair core, somewhere around fourteen inches. I had determined that about myself after I read on J. K. Rowling’s official website that, according to Celtic lore, the Willow was the ‘official’ tree for my birthday (which is April 20th). [...] Needless to say, I didn’t get Willow. After answering such seemingly frivolous questions as eye color [...] as well as some important personality-related questions [...] my wand chose me. It does have a Unicorn core (I knew all along that I wasn’t a Phoenix or Dragon person), and it is 14 1/2 inches (determined by the question about my height), but the wand’s wood? Pear. Yes, pear. I didn’t even know they made wands from the wood of a pear tree. [...] After scoffing at my wand for a moment, I read Ollivander’s

description about wand woods, and my contempt turned to understanding.
(2011, online)

2.3 The Sorting Hat

After Ollivander's, the next key moment for fans is the sorting ceremony. Similar to Ollivander's, fans answer a series of questions. The sorting hat then chooses a house based on the answers to those questions, and a welcome message for that house is displayed.

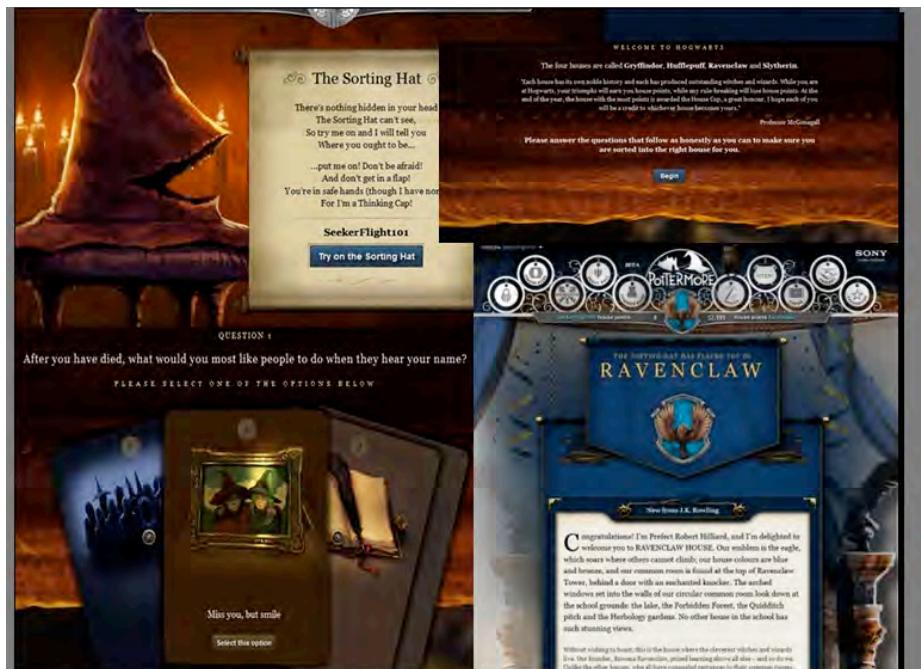


Fig 9. The sorting process

Despite the inclusion of more background to each of the houses, and Rowling's attempts to point out misconceptions about the houses, most notably Hufflepuff, that readers have, the sorting process has been perhaps the most controversial among fans. As I've already mentioned, most *Potter* fans know what house they should be in, having found themselves identifying with a particular house long before the incursion of Rowling's Sorting Hat test. To be placed in another by the Pottermore sorting hat has thus caused some upset. Jess Tompkins writes about being placed in Gryffindor after identifying as a Slytherin since the age of 11, and notes that when she first saw the scarlet banner pop up on her screen, it was like discovering that she had been adopted. Her heart sank and she felt empty:

The *Harry Potter* generation who grew up with these books, myself included, had found themselves identifying with a particular house of their choosing long before the incursion of J.K. Rowling's Sorting Hat test on Pottermore. For me, that house was Slytherin, from the very moment I first fell in love with the wizarding world at age 11. I identified with the Slytherin mentality of the cunning and capable mind, the desire to thwart adversaries, and the aspirations of greatness. I always wanted to be something more than what I

was in middle school: an awkward, loner of a girl who felt frequently misunderstood among her peers. Eleven-year-old me wanted to have the satisfaction that I had been right about being a Slytherin, that it was okay for me to identify with them because I understood them. Eleven-year-old me wanted wish-fulfillment. But 11-year-old me didn't get that. When I first saw the scarlet banner pop up on my screen, it was like discovering that I had been adopted. My heart sank and I felt... well, empty. (2011, online)

Henry Jenkins suggests that while the language of Rowling's announcement video 'hints at a more open-ended structure of participation, wherein fans share their thoughts, speculations, and creative works with each other, the only features specifically described constitute preprogrammed interactivity -- such as the Sorting Hat -- which sets the terms of our engagement with the storyworld' (2011, online). Rowling is thus, he suggests, offering fans what they *already* have on their own terms. When that is compounded by being placed into the 'wrong' house, fans may become disillusioned with the site and thus feel less inclined to participate in games and add user-generated content. I would suggest that this has further implications for the participatory culture Pottermore seeks to foster.

3. Pottermore and Participatory Culture

The Harry Potter Automatic News Aggregator responded to the launch of Pottermore by saying the site would act as an integral part of the fandom and extend active fandom discovery until the end of 2013 at the earliest:

To me, Pottermore will act as an integral part of the fandom for the next few years [...] because of the interactive nature of Pottermore, and the fact that each novel's storyline will be released months apart (*Sorcerer's Stone* in October, *Chamber of Secrets* in early 2012), the Pottermore storyline may not conclude for at least two years - extending active fandom discovery until the end of 2013 at the earliest [...] What does this mean? The *Harry Potter* fandom is on the verge of embarking on a new, monumental journey, something which has never occurred and probably will never happen again, as Rowling has been famously private about her writings in the past. Pottermore will be truly a one-of-a-kind experience where fans will have the opportunity to dictate what they want to see come out of it, both from Jo and fellow fans....I believe the whole fandom discovering brand new canon together is the most important aspect of Pottermore. The ingenious sorting, play-along aspects and digital store with the first ever *Harry Potter* e-books? That's merely icing on an already delicious cake. (2011, online)

Has Pottermore then become an integral part of the fandom since its launch? And how has it affected participatory culture? In the announcement she gave in June 2011, Rowling said 'Just as the experience of reading requires that the imaginations of author and reader work together to create the story, so Pottermore will be built in part by you, the reader.' Users are certainly able to upload some kinds of user-generated content and interact with each other in limited ways on the site. But the assertion that Pottermore will

be built in part by the reader is one with which I would disagree. Simon Pulman notes that *Harry Potter* has sustained a number of hugely vibrant fan communities, which have served as ‘repositories of information, meeting places, trading posts and even creative studios for fan endeavour,’ over the years. He also points out that these fan sites were not officially sanctioned and thus could be neither controlled nor monetized by Rowling and partners (2011, online). Jenkins similarly notes that Rowling has shown many signs that she wants to continue to shape and control how fans respond to her work even after she finished writing it, citing the epilogue to the series as an example:

We can see this in the epilogue to the last novel, which seems to pointlessly map out futures for all of her characters, including shaping the ‘ships’ (relationships) between them, in what amounts to spraying her territory. Many fans would have preferred a text which was more open ended on that level and allows them more freedom to speculate beyond the ending. She decided to ‘out’ Dumbledore not through the books but via her own discourse around the books. She tried to shut down the *Harry Potter Lexicon*. So, it is abundantly clear that she likes some of her fans more than others and that any effort to facilitate fan interactions also represents an attempt to bring fandom more under her control. (2011, online)

Pottermore, for all the extra information and interactivity it gives fans, remains steadfastly Rowling’s creation. Fans are unable to upload music, videos, certain kinds of fan art or fanfiction to the site. Fanfiction, while not the only form of participatory culture, is one of the most prevalent fan activities (at the time of writing fanfiction.net lists almost 600,000 *Harry Potter* stories in its archives) and it allows fans to reinvent and reimagine familiar texts. One sub-genre of fanfiction, known as slash, posits a homosexual relationship between certain characters, and, in *Harry Potter* fandom, favourite pairings include Draco/Harry and Harry/Snape. As Pottermore is billed as a child-friendly site it must be kept ‘safe’ for its members. Jenkins rightly points out that while this means the site will comply with the US Children Online Privacy Protection Act (and its overseas equivalents), which sets restrictions on the exchange of personal information, it may also mean ‘a space where you can read the stories without encountering any of that dratted “pornography” that some (many actually) of the adult fans have been producing’ (2011, online). In other words, for many fans, safe means censored, regulated, or policed. As Jenkins further notes, ‘the promise is that ‘You,’ ‘Us,’ will help shape the future of the franchise but only in terms specified by Rowling and by the companies involved in overseeing this site’ (2011, online). By not allowing fanfiction to be uploaded, Rowling prevents fans from exploring character motivations and background, or what would have happened if the plot had moved in a different direction and retains control over how fans engage with Pottermore.

4. Conclusion

The question of whether Pottermore encourages or regulates participatory culture is not, then, as easy to answer as it may seem. To revisit Jenkins, et al. for a moment, participatory culture has low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, support for creating and sharing creations, and members who feel a degree of social connection

with one another. However, Jenkins, et al. also suggest that, while not every member must contribute, all must believe they are free to contribute and that what they contribute will be appropriately valued. The Pottermore website, in part due to the problems that led to the delay in its launch and in part due to the constraints placed upon its users because of rules surrounding child safety and copyright, does not appear to have many users who believe that they are free to contribute or that their contributions will be appropriately valued. Simon Pulman, however, suggests that the biggest struggle Pottermore will face lies not with the extent to which fans feel their contributions will be valued, but with avoiding the ultimate fate of most “official” fan communities:

Because IP owners are used to working in release cycles and focusing on return on investment, official communities tend to be focused around major releases. They launch with fanfare and users migrate to check out the initial content... before gradually returning to the fan sites from whence they came, frustrated by lack of updates and more oppressive monitoring of what they can say and do. (2011, online)

Pottermore then, while relying on the *Harry Potter* fandom to actively participate in it, does not provide a strong incentive for creative expression and I would thus suggest it should be considered an interactive technology rather than a form of participatory culture. Furthermore, I would argue that by allowing fans to only upload fan art to the site and limiting the ways in which users can interact with each other, Pottermore is indeed regulating participatory culture. But, for fans who are, as Henry Jenkins notes, trying to repair ‘the damage done in a system where contemporary myths are owned by corporations instead of owned by the folk’ (1997, online), Pottermore and the wealth of new information about the *Harry Potter* series which it is generating, may actually be encouraging much, much more.

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Six Times Trouble: Queering the DADA Teachers

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Abstract

Every Hogwarts school year is defined by Harry Potter's new teacher for Defence Against the Dark Arts (DADA): Quirinus Quirrell, Gilderoy Lockhart, Remus Lupin, Moody/Barty Crouch Jr., Dolores Umbridge, and Severus Snape. Apart from his relationship with Albus Dumbledore, Harry's encounters with these teachers are the most important lessons during his way into adulthood. It is important to note that all six possible role-models to the hero are defined by their highly ambivalent character. Every DADA teacher turns out to be hiding something, has a secret identity, and is untrustworthy, evil or at least strange. There is Quirrell's lavender turban and his double-identity as host for Voldemort. Lockhart's role-conception follows the Sissy-stereotype from the Classic Hollywood era. Lupin's second nature as werewolf is a secret that references closeted homosexuality and AIDS. Furthermore, Moody has not only a secret identity; he gets a perverse kick from pain and transfiguration. Also, Umbridge enjoys tantalizing Harry. And finally, Harry's eyes are eroticised as fetish for Snape.

This paper seeks to investigate the role-conception of the DADA teachers from a film scholars' perspective by exploring their queer potential, mainly focussing on their relationship with the hero and on their appearance in the movies. Concluding, the significance of the DADA teachers for Harry's final role as heterosexual husband and father in the epilogue of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part II* will be discussed. Read under a queer lens, the ambivalence of all the DADA teachers and their unique relationship with the hero offer a fertile ground for speculation how the DADA teachers influence Harry's process of sexual (and possibly queer) maturation.

1. Introduction

Apart from *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the structure of every *Harry Potter* novel and movie is defined by the Hogwarts school year. Each year is notably characterized by the new teacher for the subject Defence Against the Dark Arts (DADA) who changes annually – rumour has it that the position is hexed: Quirinus Quirrell (Ian Hart/Richard Bremmer) in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (GB/US 2001), followed by Gilderoy Lockhart (Kenneth Branagh) in the second instalment *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (GB/US/DE 2002). Remus Lupin (David Thewlis) comes for Harry's (Daniel Radcliffe) third year in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (GB/US 2004), Alastor "Mad-Eye" Moody alias Barty Crouch Jr. (Brendan Gleeson/David Tennant) teaches Harry in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (GB/US 2005). In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (GB/US 2007), the Minister's undersecretary Dolores Jane Umbridge (Imelda Staunton) comes to Hogwarts. Finally, the former Potions professor Severus Snape (Alan Rickman) who despises Harry and acts unfair towards the Gryffindors all the time – Harry and his friends even suspect Snape to be a follower of Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes) – becomes Harry' last DADA teacher.

Besides the intense relationship between Harry and his mentor Albus Dumbledore (Richard Harris and Michael Gambon), these are the most important lessons for the hero's initiation into adulthood. In theory, the DADA subject should be quintessential in the preparation of the hero for his fight against Voldemort. But the main curriculum of

each year does not take place in the classroom (cf. Appelbaum 2009, 88). Nonetheless, Harry learns a lot from these teachers who – except for Quirrell – all give him special lessons or detentions that establish the exceptional relationship between mentor and disciple.

In *Harry Potter*, all these teachers hide something. They start as respectable role models but all have a secret identity, are untrustworthy, act strange, wish Harry ill, or emerge as the main source of evil. As they all represent alternative lifestyles, their character ambivalence and strong inner discrepancies can be interpreted as a specific queer predisposition of the DADA teachers, while “queer” means that they generally act subversive towards normativity and are dysfunctional measured by heteronormative criteria. In the following, it will be shown that Harry internalizes the importance of heteronormative adjustment through the negative examples of his DADA teachers. Their eventual failure shows the perils of self-denial, double-facedness, ambiguity of character, and queerness. The scope of this paper is to investigate *Harry Potter* from a film scholars’ perspective, analysing the role-conception of all six DADA teachers, their queer potential, their relationship to the hero and their visual appearance in the movies. As Harry’s way into adulthood is paralleled by his way into sexual maturation, I aim to identify how those teachers offer non-heteronormative alternatives to the family role-model represented by the Dursleys or the Weasleys. Concluding, the significance of the DADA teachers regarding Harry’s final designation as heterosexual husband and father in the epilogue of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part II* (US/GB 2011) will be discussed. A so called “Queer Reading” of the DADA teachers will unfold how the portrayal of potentially queer characters reinforces Harry’s adoption of his predetermined position as heterosexual husband and father.

2. Queer Reading

Halperin defines queer in a very broad sense as “whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant” (Halperin 1995, 62). Following Halperin, queer is not exclusively an umbrella term for non-conform concepts of gender, sexuality, and desire like lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, asexual, incest, or BDSM. This definition is useful when looking for queerness in *Harry Potter* because some might argue that no openly lesbian or gay characters exist in the saga. On second thought, some will recall the surprisingly small uproar – by Stephens described as “nonreaction” (Stephens 2009, 21) – related to Rowling’s public declaration on a promotion event for the last *Harry Potter* novel that she “always thought of Dumbledore as gay” (Rowling 2007). But still, it is most important to notice that Rowling’s extratextual outing of Dumbledore only underscores the blind eye which the author, the text, and the movie adaptations did turn on sexuality, especially on queer sexuality. Dumbledore’s sexuality remains invisible (cf. Kebarle 2009) in the canonical works, a gap or “Leerstelle” (Iser 1979) in Wolfgang Iser’s sense. But invisibility does not mean that something is not there or does not exist. Just like Dumbledore, the example of the six DADA teachers gives evidence that the striking absence of sexuality from the text/film prevents the characters in no way from being queer. The queerness floating around the *Harry Potter* franchise becomes not only visible through Dumbledore’s outing or in the Slash phenomenon of fans writing their own queer *Harry Potter* fan fiction (cf. Willis 2006, Tosenberger 2008). That queerness is already apparent in the pretext will be exemplified by the following attempt

to lift the invisibility cloak that covers the sexuality of the DADA teachers using the method of queer reading.

According to gender scholar Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, queer reading can be understood as a reception strategy that aims to reveal the hidden queer subplots of certain novels (cf. Kosofsky Sedgwick 1985) and other works of art. Queer reading originated as a method in the field of literature studies, but has been adopted successfully for the queer analysis and re-reading of film by Benshoff and Doty. Doty claims for queer readings in film analysis that “queer readings aren’t “alternative” readings, wishful and willful mis-readings, or “reading too much into things” readings. They result from the recognition and articulation of the complex range of queerness that has been in popular culture texts and their audiences all along” (Doty 1997, 16).

The fantastic world of *Harry Potter* and the fantasylands of other examples from the fantasy genre position themselves in opposition to reality and the boring, normative “muggle” worlds. This main opposition functions as initial point to understand the variety of queer subplots that grow beneath the normative surface of such narrations. But it is to be noted that mainstream media texts, like the *Harry Potter* series or fantasy movies in general, need to exclude sexuality radically (cf. Cuntz-Leng 2011), and queer sexualities and forms of desire in particular, to address a wide audience including children. Possibly, this is the reason for the general invisibility of sexuality in fantasy movies and the high amount of Leerstellen. Queer readings fill these gaps as Rowling’s example perfectly reveals. Rowling herself becomes a queer reader: Her extratextual analysis of Dumbledore as a homosexual character is just another possible and legitimate queer reading of the text. Since it has not been discussed in the canonical text, Dumbledore’s homosexuality is not an immovable truth like Harry’s scar on his forehead or the name of his owl.

3. Quirinus Quirrell

Due to his name, a first hint to the possible queerness of Quirrell is given from the first moment. Furthermore, Quirrell’s stuttering, the lavender robes, and the eccentric turban as reference to the New Age movement with its promises of sexual indifference and diversity, mark him as queer. At first, Harry (and the audience) fall for the Gothic horror conventions and suspect black-dressed, pale, and severe Snape to be the villain. Due to the unsaid main principle of the Wizarding World “nothing is what it seems”, it turns out that Quirrell is no harmless sissy but an evil two-faced queer, which is as well a popular motif of the horror film genre.

If we define Quirrell as the possessed body, that body creates an immediate link to the character of the innocent girl Regan (Linda Blair) of William Friedkin’s horror classic *The Exorcist* (US 1973). Like her, Quirrell is emotionally and physically possessed by a disembodied demon; he is an “innocent overtaken by the horrors of a perverse queer sexuality” (Scahill 2010, 49). Contrary to Regan, it is far more difficult to understand Quirrell as the victim in his final confrontation with Harry at the climax of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*. This lack of compassion can be explained through the presence of the Mirror of Erised: Because of the existence of a second face on the back of Quirrell’s head, the transformation of his human body marks him as Kristevan abject (cf. Kristeva 1982) while his true self remains intact. In the Mirror of Erised, Quirrell/Voldemort is able to look at the audience and at Harry with both faces at the same time. This doubled gaze causes a predominance of the look and the boundary between

monster and victim, between object and subject of the gaze, becomes nonexistent (cf. Mulvey 1989). The abject body – describing bodies that lost their normal form, functions and integrity – causes repulsion and fear (cf. Kristeva 1982, Creed 1993); Quirrell not only hosts but has fully transformed into the monster. While female Regan and the male demon possessing her do never coexist, the fusion between Quirrell and Voldemort has become irreversible. The implied homosexuality of sharing one male body with another male consequently leads to Quirrell's downfall. While he is unable to satisfy the needs of his master, the queer's body is burnt by the hands of the truly innocent child – in this case not Regan but Harry.

4. Gilderoy Lockhart

Lockhart is a revitalisation of the popular sissy stereotype of the 1920s and 1930s, the golden era of Classic Hollywood Cinema. The sissy is a male character who evolved from social stigmas against male femininity and stands out through his effeminate behaviour like interest in beautiful clothing, smooth movements, flamboyant mannerisms and narcissism that establish a “silent connection between effeminate and homosexual” (Russo 1987, 26). The sissy appears to be weaker than the other male and female characters like, e.g., the Cowardly Lion (Bert Lahr) in *The Wizard of Oz* (US 1939) or the costume designer (Drew Demorest) in *The Broadway Melody* (US 1929). In the case of Lockhart, the Cornish pixies incident allows the audience to recognize very early in the narration that he is even weaker than the children before it is clear that he is just an imposter and lacks magic talent.

In fantasy cinema, the sissy is rarely a positive character but a strong tendency to assign effeminate traits to villains can be detected as the examples of Frank'n'Furter (Tim Curry) in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (GB/US 1975), Captain Hook (Dustin Hoffman) in *Hook* (US 1991), or Jean-Baptiste Emanuel Zorg (Gary Oldman) in Luc Besson's *The Fifth Element* prove. Although Harry never falls for Lockhart as much as clever Hermione (Emma Watson) does, he is unable to identify the dangerous potential of Lockhart whose magical impotence combined with his sissy narcissism make him a dangerous factor that is easy to underestimate. With Lockhart, Harry learns something about his own quality of manliness and again another lesson in his magical education never to judge a book by its cover.

In the end, Lockhart is defeated by his own weapon: Ron's (Rupert Grint) broken wand as symbol for magical impotence fires back the only charm Lockhart mastered and makes him loose his mind, glamour and mask.

5. Remus Lupin

In contrast to Quirrell and Lockhart, Lupin starts as a positive role-model at first sight. His defence of Harry against the Dementor on the Hogwarts Express establishes him as competent and caring. But the lessons from the other two instalments tell the audience to stay doubtful and observe. Hence, Lupin appears suspect because of his mysterious absences from school and his immense enjoyment of the drag-to-be performance of Snape as Neville's (Matthew Lewis) grandmother in the classroom. But Harry is not suspicious at all; the experiences with Quirrell and Lockhart were unable to corrupt his unshakeable belief in good.

Because Harry has no permission to leave Hogwarts on Hogsmeade weekends, Harry and Lupin spend a lot of time together. Harry learns practices of self-defence and attains confidence in his own abilities. Lupin starts to become a father figure to the hero, through his individual support of Harry and the link he represents to the late Lily and James.

This new friendship is corrupted when Harry accidentally learns about Lupin's secret identity. In the tradition of the Jekyll/Hyde-formula of the horror genre, Lupin hosts an uncontrollable, evil second nature as a werewolf. It is a Freudian 'It' that contrasts Lupin's controlled, caring 'I' (cf. Freud 1992). Therefore, the discrepancy between Lupin's consciousness and his unconsciousness as visualized by the antithetic figures of the shy friend and the uncontrollable monster, disqualify him as a companion to Harry who consistently avoids ambivalent characters.

The transmissibility of the werewolf curse via bites and bruises establishes a connection towards a venereal disease like AIDS and therefore with homosexuality. In this context, it is fitting that director Alfonso Cuarón instructed actor Thewlis to play Lupin in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* as a "gay junkie" (Thewlis 2007) to accentuate Lupin's severe sickness. Siamak Naficy summarizes that "Professor Lupin is the fall guy for the stigmatized outsider. [...] the one we fear, the one we demonize – he is the homosexual, he is the immigrant, he is the AIDS victim, he is the one with a "bad" religion, and so on" (Naficy 2006, 213). Consequently, Harry abandons Lupin after the Shrieking Shack incident as his father figure. Instead, Sirius Black takes his place when Harry learns the truth about his godfather Black. This is an interchange of the good/evil-binaries that are so characteristic for the whole series: Sirius Black is expected to be bad but turns out good in the end; Lupin is expected to be good but turns out as dishonest, two-faced and monstrous. Although Harry later tries to sustain their relationship when visiting the dismissed teacher in his bureau, the insurmountable gap between the two characters becomes obvious through the spatial arrangements, camera angles and the stiff dialogue.

For the sake of completeness, it has to be stated that in the book version of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Harry's latent dislike of Lupin's inability to fit into conform gender norms once again becomes visible when Lupin asks Harry to accompany him in the quest to find Voldemort's horcruxes instead of staying with his wife Tonks and their child where Harry reacts with anger and rejection.

6. Mad-Eye Moody

The uncovering of Mad-Eye Moody's hidden identity comes despite his ostentatious looks and manners as a surprise: He hides a totally different person. The Death Eater Barty Crouch Jr. is able through the inflationary use of polyjuice potion to wear auror Moody as a mask and to live a borrowed life. Because of his physical weirdness, Moody seems to function as the perfect hideout for Crouch Jr. in his ambition to cover evil with evil, queer with queer.

Firstly, by using polyjuice potion to fully transform into another person, Crouch Jr. tries to beat Harry on his own grounds – recalling Harry's transformation with polyjuice in his second year at Hogwarts. In contrast to Harry and his friends who execrate the taste of the potion and the process of transformation, Barty's masochistic enjoyment of repulsion and pain becomes eye-catching. Moreover, he is not only pleased by his own transformation and the painful consumption of the disgusting potion; as Moody's im-

personator, he enjoys punishing Draco Malfoy (Tom Felton) with transfiguration into a ferret (a rather eroticised experiment that ends in Goyle's (Josh Herdman) trousers) as much as he enjoys demonstrating the Cruciatus curse on a living subject. Furthermore, Barty consumes the polyjuice potion in public like liquor instead of using the secrecy of a school toilet which can be read as a sign for Crouch's exhibitionist desires that mark him as object (cf. Mulvey 1989). This exhibitionism is contrasted by the revolting voyeuristic habit of Moody to observe everything with his magical eye that indicates a subject status of the character as possessor of the gaze.

In conclusion, Moody's sadistic nature combined with his status as bearer of the look on the one hand and the masochistic desires and voyeuristic needs of becoming the object of looks of Barty Crouch Jr. on the other hand get intertwined in the sadomasochistic Crouch/Moody-dichotomy. That the masquerade of Crouch Jr. cannot be discovered by any of the adult characters and that eventually both Moody and Barty are destroyed, proves, how related the queernesses of Crouch and Moody actually are.

7. Dolores Umbridge

The BDSM-topos as signified by the Crouch/Moody-dichotomy is further explored in the sadistic character of Dolores Umbridge who comes to Hogwarts on behalf of the ministry of magic. She enjoys tormenting Harry, the other students, and the staff. Her sadistic desires are masked by her hyper-femaleness; she is a great example for the ability to perform gender and to use womanliness as a masquerade (cf. Butler 1988, Riviere 1994). She is mimicking a patriarchal ideal of heteronormative womanhood (cf. Gallardo/Smith 2009). Her high-pitched voice, the kitten saucers, the pink clothing, or her absolute loyalty towards minister Fudge's (Robert Hardy) authority serve as cover for her perverse and sadistic desires that are best portrayed in a condensed way through the perfidious badness of Umbridge's magical quill.

As only female character in the line of Harry's DADA instructors, it is tempting to read Umbridge as lesbian. However, the above statement on masquerade and on Umbridge's relationship to Fudge together with her bad relations to other female characters – Amelia Bones (Sian Thomas), McGonagall (Maggie Smith), and Trelawney (Emma Thompson) – provides little foundation for this assumption.

In Hogwarts, where a queer character like Dumbledore functions as the ultimate yard-stick for right and wrong, her hyper-conformity and her constant performance of non-queerness appear as deviance from the norm, as an alien presence. With Umbridge in charge and Dumbledore gone, all former rules in Hogwarts seem to be reversed. She even forbids the students to do magic and reforms Hogwarts into a muggle boarding school muggles like the Dursleys would highly appreciate. Therefore, Harry is forced to re-establish the old order to metaphorically save the magical society. Through his leadership of Dumbledore's Army (which not accidentally becomes shortened as DA like the DADA subject), he becomes the secret leader of the school until Dumbledore returns while Umbridge ends up with a gang of centaurs – possibly raped (cf. Abinante 2007).

8. Severus Snape

The relationship between Severus Snape and young Harry is very complex and difficult from the beginning of the saga. Contrary to the other DADA teachers that mainly inter-

act with the hero in a one-year-period, Snapes transformation from good to bad and back again is a subtle and gradual process that developed over six long years. Over this time, Snape is always defined by changing identities, loyalties, and positions. He is the greasy teacher, the Slytherin, the Death Eater, the double agent, the sensitive child, the bully and the bullied, the lover, the murderer, and the Half-Blood Prince.

The major part of the possible queerness of Severus Snape results from his love-hate-relationship to Harry. Snape desires Harry as a substitute for his impossible love for Lily while he despises him as substitute for his undying hatred and envy towards his school rival James. Therefore, while only Harry's eyes remind Snape of Lily, the eyes become Snape's fetish and he is obsessed with the desire of Harry's gaze.

Snape's (bisexual) desire to become the object of Harry's gaze starts with the complex dramaturgy of looks that characterizes their first meeting in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* that follows the dramaturgy of the first meetings of tragic lovers in melodramas like *Gone With the Wind* (US 1939) or *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (US 1992); it grows further with Snape on stage as the object of gazes and Harry as bearer of the look in the duel club sequence with Lockhart in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*; culminates in the erotic power play of gazes in the Occlumency lessons of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* and gets its furious end in Snape's final words "Look...at...me" (Rowling 2007, 528) where he becomes for the last time an object of desires while desiring to be an object. In Snape's death scene, he finally gives in to Harry's predominance of the gaze.

9. Conclusion

Through the method of queer reading, the latent fluidity of the categories gender, sex, and desire in the Wizarding World becomes evident. All six DADA teachers lack a heteronormative relationship and fail in the end: Quirrell burns to ashes, abandoned by his master; Lockhart loses his mind and his reputation; Lupin loses his job at Hogwarts, Harry's trust and dies – after all – together with his potentially transgender, highly ambivalent wife Tonks (Natalia Tena); Barty Crouch Jr. receives the Dementor's kiss and even his double Moody is killed by Death Eaters; the sadism of Umbridge is violently punished through the gang rape by centaurs; and finally, Snape dies not only without a fulfilment of his desires for Harry's mother but without the certainty that his life debt towards her had been paid-up and that Voldemort had finally been defeated.

That the non-heteronormative behaviour of the DADA teachers cannot remain unpunished and that furthermore with Dumbledore the most important possibly queer role-model dies is the essential lesson for Harry. It serves as the signpost on his way into adulthood and into a heteronormative relationship with Ginny (Bonnie Wright) because it appears that the superficially unconventional world of witches and wizards has no space for the deviant. The new possibilities for tolerance within the magical society after Voldemort's downfall do not include queer life plans. Instead, the saga takes an extremely conservative turn and leaves (queer) audiences unsatisfied. But it might be a consolation that this leaves new spaces for Slash fan fiction to correct this drawback.

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“You think I was going to use my filthy Muggle father’s name forever?”: Tom Riddle, the Abject Child

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Abstract

This paper will apply Julia Kristeva’s theories of abjection and psychosexual development, discussed in her essay *Powers of Horror*, to J.K. Rowling’s Tom Riddle. The abject can be generally defined as anything that we consider dirty, revolting, or horrifying. Encounters with the abject trigger these reactions because the abject “disturbs identity...[and] does not respect borders, positions, rules;” the abject is “the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite” (Kristeva, 1982). Traditional representations of the abject include corpses, which we could become, as well as bodily fluids and the mother, which our bodies used to possess and no longer do. I argue that Tom Riddle himself is abject; his composite identity as both Muggle and wizard is something he comes to regard as filthy, especially as he learns more about his wizarding ancestry. According to Kristeva’s theory, one can only recognize the abject after they have established a separate identity from their mother, which is usually done through the acquisition of language. However, this critical moment for Riddle comes when he discovers that he is Slytherin’s heir and takes the name Lord Voldemort, separating himself from his Muggle father. For Riddle, the abject includes reminders of his Muggle parentage and encounters with Muggle-born wizards. When confronted with the abject after his critical moment of self-identification as Slytherin’s heir, Riddle reacts in horror because he is reminded of the other side of himself: that which he could be but is not. As a result, Riddle must “permanently thrust aside [the Muggle part of his identity] in order to live” (Kristeva, 1982). With this in mind, the paper will explore the ways that Riddle attempts to cast off his Muggle parentage and the Muggle weakness of death, and connect his view of the abject to his ideological goal of purging the wizarding world of Muggle-borns.

This paper will apply Julia Kristeva’s theories of abjection, discussed in her 1982 publication *Powers of Horror*, to J.K. Rowling’s Tom Riddle. In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva explains what happens psychologically when we encounter that which disturbs “identity, system, [or] order” (p. 4). These things that disturb us—the “abject”—do so because we recognize them as “not me. Not that. But not nothing either” (p. 2). They remind us that the boundaries we consider absolute—including those between the body and the outside world—are actually tenuous. There is something, perhaps something undefinable, in the middle.

We find the abject in the unclean, the impure, the uncontrollable, “the radically separate” (p. 2), or the “in-between, the ambiguous, the composite” (p. 4). With this broad definition, the abject can be anything from the skin that forms on the top of a glass of milk; or bodily fluids; or a corpse; or a person who does not embody what we have come to expect as normal. We generally react to these things with fear or disgust, and in doing so, Kristeva argues that we are unconsciously reacting to a threat to our own subjectivity, i.e. the abject forces us to acknowledge the tenuous boundary between “I” and “not I” because the abject is between the

two. We are afraid because the abject exists between inside and outside, alive and dead, clean and unclean—and so it does not obey the binaries we use to order our world.

Kristeva argues that this disgust stems back to the child's need to distinguish himself as separate from his mother, an act that Jacques Lacan says begins when the child recognizes his own image in the mirror and is completed when the child acquires language. These two developments help the child understand himself as a subject, as opposed to an indiscriminate extension of his mother. Kristeva says that failure to separate from the mother means that the child will be devoured and lose "the totality of his living being" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 64).

Before the mirror moment, Kristeva claims that there is another stage most closely associated with abjection because the child has already begun his separation (Kristeva, 1982, p. 13), but has not yet completed it. Kristeva argues that though the child has not yet recognized his own image, he has realized that he does not share his mother's body. He is in between, existing in a world in which boundaries must be created. According to Kristeva, whenever we encounter anything that reminds us of this in-between state of semi-communion with the maternal, we experience abjection.

With this definition in mind, I will argue that Tom Riddle, whose identity is "in-between" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 4) in that he is both wizard and Muggle, is abject. To illustrate this point, I will do four things. First, I will identify the abject vocabulary that Rowling's characters use to describe wizards of mixed parentage. Second, I will apply Kristevan theories of psychosexual development to Tom Riddle as he transitions from orphaned child to Heir of Slytherin. Third, I will analyze abject moments which Tom Riddle attempt to cast off the Muggle part of himself. Finally, I will examine the larger cultural ramifications of Tom Riddle's abject identity by arguing that his lack of a clean and proper identity destabilizes the clean and proper state.

The wizarding world regards itself as separate and bounded, open only to those who possess magical power. Many wizards consider Muggle-born wizards and even Squibs to be socially inferior and physically repulsive. Indeed, even the slur "Mudblood" demonstrates how many of Rowling's characters conflate dirt or lack of cleanliness with mixed parentage. It is preferable to have unambiguous "pure blood." In Kristevan theory, blood is already abject in itself. In this case, blood is doubly abject because not having the right kind of blood disturbs order and challenges wizard identity.

As a child, Tom must negotiate a split identity. Even more extraordinary is the fact that Tom is not descended from just any wizard, but from Salazar Slytherin, one of the four ancient witches and wizards who founded Hogwarts School. As such, Tom spends his life seeking out and failing to obtain a singular, uncomplicated identity as Slytherin's Heir, even rejecting the name he shares with his father so he can assume the new name of Lord Voldemort. Voldemort's actions as an adult, in which he attempts to conquer death and rid the wizarding world of Muggle-born wizards, compound his own abjection and cause others to view him as the terrifying evil incarnate.

Tom Riddle spends his early life entirely unaware of his wizard identity, although he does tell Dumbledore that he "always knew [he] was different" and "special" (Rowling, 2005, p. 271). By the time Tom begins attending Hogwarts, he has rejected his non-magic identity as not special. However, despite his attempts to classify the non-magic as "not I," Tom must always negotiate his composite identity. The non-magic is him, and at the same time, it is not him.

As he takes his place in the wizarding world, Tom experiences moments of intense abjection when he “finds the impossible within” and realizes “that the impossible constitutes [his] very *being*” (Kristeva, 1982, p. 5). His identity is often disrupted when he is reminded of his Muggle parentage, and later, of his own mortality. Tom’s attempts to abject his Muggle parentage are self-protective, but doomed to fail because his status as a half-blood prevents him from fully assimilating into wizard culture. His desire to have a clear, unambiguous, powerful identity is, and always will be, denied.

Tom Riddle only experiences abjection after he recognizes himself as Slytherin’s Heir. Although the abject stems from a separation from the mother, it makes sense to equate the mother with Tom Riddle, Sr., not Merope Gaunt. We can interpret Tom Riddle, Sr.’s lack of a wand—a phallus-like object that is equated with power—as feminine and thus maternal. With this in mind, Tom Riddle, Jr.’s attempt to establish himself as a subject dictates that he must separate himself from his feminized father. Dumbledore’s visit to the orphanage sets into motion the pre-mirror stage that Kristeva argues is a prime moment for abjection. “I know that you are not mad,” Dumbledore tells Tom. “You are a wizard” (Rowling, 2005, p. 270-271). This is the moment that triggers Tom’s “birth” from the maternal space of the orphanage and puts him on the path to learning language and culture in the wizarding world.

As eager as Tom is to leave the orphanage, the orphanage’s matron, Mrs. Cole, who has acted as Tom’s mother figure up to this point, is just as eager to “birth” him out. She treads carefully during her conversation with Dumbledore, not wishing to jeopardize his willingness to take Tom away; she is only willing to say that Tom is “funny” and “odd.” It is only when Dumbledore promises that Tom has a place at Hogwarts that she reveals that Tom “scares the other children” (Rowling, 2005, p. 287) and that several children have sustained lasting mental trauma after interacting with him. Mrs. Cole realizes early on, just as Tom does, that he does not belong there and that he is not like the other children for whom she cares. Although she is eager to expel him, Dumbledore’s reminder that his school “will not be keeping him permanently” and that Tom “will have to return here” periodically (Rowling, 2005, p. 288) is, in effect, a reminder that Tom cannot fully separate from this Muggle space in which he was brought up.

Although it is not detailed in any of Rowling’s novels, Tom Riddle’s mirror moment—the moment when he recognizes himself as an individual separate from the maternal—occurs when he realizes that he is the heir of Slytherin. The separation can only be complete, however, when the child acquires language. In the *Potter* novels, this occurs when Riddle begins to speak Parseltongue. The language allows Riddle to open the Chamber of Secrets, the act that fully defines him as Slytherin’s heir. At this point, Tom has not only abjected his Muggle father, but also his witch mother, choosing instead to reach back through his genealogy to seek out a symbolic father, Salazar Slytherin.

The Chamber of Secrets—the site of Tom’s mirror moment and the space where Tom reveals his new name to Harry—is rife with abject imagery. First of all, it is located in the bowels of the school and can only be entered through a bathroom, the place where all excrement—the most tangible manifestations of the abject—can be discreetly disposed of. Second, as Alice Mills suggests, “the basilisk can be understood as an excretory abject.” The snake “[slides] along inside the damp, slimy pipes and [emerges from the bowels]” just as feces would, and when the individual encounters the abject basilisk, he or she dies (Mills, 2006, p. 9). Compounding these images of the abject is Slytherin’s association with “toilets and sewage pipes

by way of the basilisk that comes ‘slithering’ out of the Slytherin statue’s mouth” (Mills, 2006, p. 11). Tom’s attempts to wrest himself firmly on one side of the wizard/Muggle boundary *here* of all places highlights the horror of his composite identity.

In addition to actually murdering his father, Tom also attempts to completely blot out his father’s existence by rejecting his name. Tom’s ability to give himself a “new name” indicates his newfound ability to determine his own identity and to reject an identity given to him by someone else, a name that literally marks him as his father’s double. Later, the memory of his sixteen-year-old self asks Harry incredulously, “You think I was going to use my filthy Muggle father’s name forever? I, in whose veins runs the blood of Salazar Slytherin himself, through my mother’s side? I, keep the name of a foul, common Muggle . . .?” (Rowling, 1998, p. 314) Here, he values the clean blood from Salazar Slytherin, and represses the “filthy” and “common” part of his identity. Unfortunately, even after changing his name, Tom cannot ever fully expunge his unclean Muggle identity.

After Tom opens the Chamber of Secrets, he experiences numerous moments of abjection in which he is reminded of his former, and yet ever-present, Muggle identity. The first of these moments occurs when Professor Dippet denies Tom permission to stay at Hogwarts over the summer because the school is considered unsafe, asking Tom, “You live in a Muggle orphanage during the holidays, I believe?” (Rowling, 1998, p. 244) This reminder that his identity is unstable prompts Tom to frame Hagrid in the hope that if the attacker is caught, he will be allowed to remain in the wizarding world. He can neither acknowledge his identity as Slytherin’s Heir, nor can he face returning to the orphanage. Even when he purposely hides his identity, he receives a Special Award for Services to the School with “T. M. Riddle” engraved on it (Rowling, 1998, p. 231). Though Tom desires a special name that will separate him from his father, ironically, he earns a permanent place in Hogwarts school lore under his Muggle designation.

As Tom develops, he begins to associate the Muggle or ordinary part of his identity with the most ordinary end that all humans must meet: death. Dumbledore believes that Tom views death as a “shameful human weakness” (Rowling, 2005, p. 363), and that he has created Horcruxes to avoid it. Voldemort’s Horcruxes are created by “ripping” the soul through the murder of another human being. The Horcruxes, which are created in an attempt to render him immortal, are themselves abject because they are not alive though they contain a piece of his living soul. As Horace Slughorn explains to Tom, “the soul is supposed to remain intact and whole. Splitting it is . . . against nature” (Rowling, 2005, p. 498). Just as the soul should be clean and proper, so too should the objects that become Horcruxes also be clean and proper. However, once these objects are transformed into Horcruxes, they become strangely human-like, possessing the knowledge and ability to physically and mentally destroy those who possess them. The diary possesses Ginny Weasley in *Chamber of Secrets*, leeching strength and vitality from her and forcing her to reopen the Chamber. The locket, with its “tiny heartbeat” (Rowling, 2007, p. 278) and “living eye” (p. 375) torments Harry, Hermione, and especially Ron, preying on their worst fears when they wear it. The ring tempts Dumbledore and his desire for power, and when he succumbs and tries to wear the ring, its fatal curse blackens Dumbledore’s hand. Nagini, a murderous female snake, devours her victims. When Horcruxes are threatened, they fight back, and when they are destroyed, they bleed and die rather than simply break.

The creation of the Horcruxes is also the trigger that prompts everyone else to view Voldemort as horrifying, or abject, instead of just evil. His apparent achievement of immortality, his ability to manipulate others' minds and bodies, and his existence without a body are all examples of the abject. Once the Horcruxes are created, however, Voldemort still cannot fully rid himself of his father's Muggle identity, nor can he avoid encountering reminders of the abject: other Muggle-born or half-blood wizards. Most importantly, even with the Horcruxes seemingly anchoring him to the mortal world, Voldemort is still unable to permanently avoid death. Harry's ability to systematically destroy the Horcruxes demonstrates that mortality is inevitable for everyone. Though it may be delayed in the wizarding world, through the use of Horcruxes or other magical means, no one in the series is able to truly and permanently expel death as the ordinary end to human life. Voldemort knows, as Dumbledore tells Harry, that "without his Horcruxes, [he] will be a mortal man with a maimed and diminished soul" (Rowling, 2005, p. 508-09). In the final moments of battle, Harry tries to force Voldemort to confront his abject. He addresses him not as Voldemort, but as Tom Riddle, denying him the repression upon which he has survived up to this point. Up to this point, Voldemort has gained power by claiming to be super-human, but here, Harry charges him to "be a man" (Rowling, 2007, p. 741). His death emphasizes the commonness that Riddle has struggled against since childhood. When killed, "Tom Riddle hit[s] the floor with a mundane finality, his body feeble and shrunken, the white hands empty, the snakelike face vacant and unknowing" (p. 744). The emphasis on Tom Riddle's mortal body, on his corpse, reinforces the idea that his fragmented identity has been annihilated, and expelled from Culture.

Tom's struggle with his abject identity triggers essentially all of the action in the *Potter* series. The novels are set in a time in which political and cultural instability—caused by Voldemort—threaten to annihilate the collective identity the wizarding world has formed for itself. Just as Tom struggles with his "essentially divisible" identity (Kristeva, 1982, p. 8), so does his society, which relies too heavily on the wizard/Muggle binary for law and order, struggle with the "mixed" child who defies categorization and thus threatens to plunge that society into chaos.

Holly Blackford argues that Tom Riddle is not born evil or with the belief in racial superiority, but that he is the product of the society in which he lives, that of a "school culture" that emphasizes "needing pedigree, winning, and dominating" (Blackford, 2011, p. 157). It is no wonder, she argues, that Tom, thrust into a society that already emphasizes lineage and status, would feel "shame" about his "lack of purity, family, belonging, and accoutrements" (p. 157). It follows then, that although Tom's "distaste for 'Mudblood' . . . [is] a value judgment stemming from cultural conditioning" (p. 170), he is not unconscious of his own blood status, and the inability to reconcile the two may have led him to internalize the value system that leads him to genocide. It has been often noted that this desire to "purify" the wizarding race has direct parallels to the real-life genocide of the Holocaust, and that in this parallel, Voldemort can be compared to Adolf Hitler. Of course, the series presents absolutely no evidence that the belief that Muggles are inferior originates with Tom/Voldemort; we at least know of Dumbledore's defeat of another pure-blood enthusiast, Gellert Grindelwald, in 1945, years before Voldemort comes to power. Furthermore, as various characters often claim throughout the series, Voldemort would not be dangerous if he lacked support. Voldemort is certainly the standard-bearer, but

Rowling never makes the case that the belief in pure-blood superiority begins with him, or ends with his death.

This violence waged by Voldemort and his followers destabilizes the orderly, lawful wizarding world, and blurs the boundary between good and evil. Kristeva argues that “any crime, because it draws attention to the fragility of the law, is abject, but premeditated crime, cunning murder, hypocritical revenge are even more so because they heighten the display of such fragility” (1982, p. 4). It is exactly this kind of crime that characterizes both Voldemort’s regime, and, as Harry points out, the Ministry of Magic’s response to Voldemort. Voldemort is quickly able to not only undermine law and order, but also to subvert it, to cause government officials (like Barty Crouch, Dolores Umbridge, and Rufus Scrimgeour) to behave ruthlessly and even cruelly in the name of preserving order.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the series takes a much darker turn after the real-life terror attacks of September 11, 2001. Many critics have pointed out the mirrors between Harry and Voldemort’s world and the real world, and have argued that Rowling takes on the nature of good and evil as a central theme. Jennifer Sattaur argues that the terror in the *Potter* novels is especially jarring because it comes from the knowledge that “the threat is coming from within” (Sattaur, 2006, p. 6). Where I believe Sattaur goes wrong, however, is her claim that the series relies too much on firm, established binaries of good vs. evil and us vs. them. Sattaur is dissatisfied with Rowling’s attempts to “blur the lines” in the later books, probably through the characters I just mentioned, but in fairness, she is writing from a limited frame of reference that does not include the last book, which had not yet been published and which complicates Dumbledore as the embodiment of good. Sattaur argues, I believe incorrectly, that Rowling sets the series up for an ending in which “evil [will be] destroyed altogether” (p. 10). Though Tom is destroyed, the prejudice against Muggle-borns and the overreliance on pedigree—in short, the schools of thought that Blackford argues create Tom Riddle and prompt the recognition of himself as abject—continue to exist and to threaten the orderly, lawful, peaceful society. Rowling does not suggest that evil can be defeated, but rather points out the need to recognize the tenuous, and often blurred, boundary between good and evil and to acknowledge the need to continuously repress or delay evil. She suggests as much when Dumbledore tells Harry in Book One that “if [Voldemort] is delayed again, and again, why, he may never return to power” (Rowling, 1997, p. 298) and when Snape calls the Dark Arts “eternal . . . unfixed, mutating, indestructible” and compares them to a “many-headed monster, which, each time a neck is severed, sprouts a head even fiercer and cleverer than before” (Rowling, 2005, p. 177).

Against threats of instability or change, our instinct is to fight to preserve established or intrinsic systems of order that we have internalized as good or safe. We protect the boundaries of our clean and proper society by perpetuating laws and institutions that maintain a Foucauldian sense of discipline and thus help us avoid chaos and confusion. To preserve order, we perpetuate laws and institutions that maintain “the disciplined mass” (Foucault, 1991, p. 168) and suppress or exclude those who may seek to challenge the established order. The school which teaches Tom Riddle that magic is might is just one example of these institutions.

Unfortunately, in maintaining systems of discipline and order, we create the conditions for harmful feelings of inferiority in the Other. According to Judith Butler, the subject is both produced from and dependent on established power systems, and the subject’s attachment to these systems is a “psychic effect . . . of the workings of power” (Wilkie-Stibbs, 2006, p. 325-

26). What's more, according to Butler, because dependence on others is a natural condition of the child, the child is then the quintessential subordinate subject (Wilkie-Stibbs, 2006, p. 326) who is more likely to obey and embody the status quo. Moreover, the child is likely to be subjected to institutions—schools, orphanages, etc.—who have “clearly defined goals of training children and adolescents” (Trites, 2000, p. 22). We see this theory in practice when Tom learns what society values and tries to shape himself to fit those ideals. After spending time in these institutionalized spaces, Tom embraces magic because he knows that magic is the path to belonging and power. Unfortunately, as I have already explored, his composite identities make total conformity—or discipline, as Foucault would call it—impossible. It follows, then, that not only do we create conditions for the Other to feel inferior, but we also create trauma for those who are not included in culture, but cannot join a community of Others either.

Judith Butler, in *Gender Theory*, cites Iris Young’s reimagining of the abject to explain various types of discrimination. According to Young, “the repudiation of bodies for their sex, sexuality, and/or color is an ‘expulsion’ followed by a ‘repulsion’ that founds and consolidates culturally hegemonic identities along sex/race/sexuality axes of differentiation” (Butler, 1990, p. 133). We cast these Others outside of the border of the state, or of accepted social circles, in the name of self protection, just as we would expel filth from the borders of our bodies. “In effect,” Butler writes, “this is the mode by which Others become shit” (p. 134).

Butler acknowledges, however, that neither the body nor the state can achieve this “impossible impermeability” (Butler, 1990, p. 134), and that some bodies who are feared will always infiltrate the society that is composed of bodies that are desired. In Tom Riddle’s world, this is clear when Muggle-born students enter Hogwarts each September. This disruption of the state’s “clean and proper” body reifies the discrimination against the Other. Each time the Other tries to assimilate, “the national ego expels the undesirable face from its ranks” (Wilkie-Stibbs, 2006, p. 324). Thus, the state reaffirms the Other’s status as different or unclean, as the “stranger that inhabits us” (Kristeva, qtd. in Wilkie-Stibbs, 2006, p. 325). This person, according to society, is “not us” and must be cast out. Although there are pure-blood wizards who do advocate for a pluralistic society—the Weasleys, for example—most wizards, the Weasley family included, maintain some sense of hierarchy, even over other magical creatures like goblins or house elves, if they do not set store by wizarding blood status. Moreover, although families like the Weasleys are wholly accepting of wizards of mixed parentage, they never leave their community of fellow wizards. To them, Muggles and their way of life are amusing, strange, exotic—anything but normal.

In the end, Tom Riddle, the child whose identity is in constant flux, becomes Lord Voldemort, the murderer who is widely regarded as the most evil wizard of all time. He never escapes his own abject identity, but rather deepens it as he immerses himself in the sinister. In his struggle and failure to separate himself from the maternal space—to obey the cultural attitudes that shape all behavior—Lord Voldemort becomes yet another manifestation of the abject for everyone else. His reign is especially terrifying, and he is especially abject, because he is the murderer who used to be the handsome Tom Riddle, who was once the brilliant Head Boy of Hogwarts. He embodies the idea that evil can come from anywhere, even from someone who has been previously recognized as so good. Voldemort is, as Kristeva says, “the killer who claims he is a savior” (Kristeva, 1982, p. 4), a corrupting force who perverts the accepted value system and thus horrifies himself and terrifies everyone around him.

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